

Ricardo Futre Pinheiro

PERPETUATING THE MUSIC:
ENTREVISTAS E REFLEXÕES SOBRE JAM SESSIONS

Com depoimentos de Aaron Goldberg, Chris
Potter, Bill Pierce, Nicholas Payton, JoAnne
Brackeen, Bill Stewart, Scott Colley, Jason Moran,
entre outros.

Papiro Editora
Porto 2013

FICHA TÉCNICA

Título	Perpetuating the Music
Autor	Ricardo Futre Pinheiro
Editor	Papiro Editora Porto Rua de Pinto Bessa nº 615 4300-433 Porto t. 220 120 144/5/6/7/8/9 f. 220 120 143 e. info@papiroeditora.com b. blogdapapiroeditora.blogspot.com s. www.papiroeditora.com
Ano de Edição	Maió 2013
Coordenação Editorial	Papiro Editora
Coordenação Gráfica	Papiro Editora
Design	Papiro Editora
Distribuição	BUK Distribuição telefone: 220 120 144/5/6/7/8/9
ISBN	978-989-636-697-1
Depósito Legal	

Aos meus Pais e Avós

AGRADECIMENTOS

A realização deste livro não teria sido possível sem o contributo das pessoas que nele participam. Para além da sua disponibilidade em partilhar o seu vasto conhecimento sobre a música em geral e o jazz em particular, estes músicos desempenharam também um papel muito importante na revisão das transcrições das entrevistas. São pessoas que, para além de grandes interpretes, compositores e improvisadores de jazz, são também importantes pensadores da música.

Não posso também deixar de agradecer à pessoas que em Portugal me facilitaram o contacto com alguns destes músicos: Paulo Gil, João Gil, e Luís Hilário.

Não quero também deixar de agradecer a todas as pessoas que ao longo do meu percurso mais me têm apoiado: os meus pais, avós, tios maternos, mulher e filho.

ÍNDICE

Prefácio-----	9
I - Aaron Goldberg-----	13
II - Ben Monder-----	37
III - Bill Pierce-----	45
IV - Bill Stewart-----	55
V - Chris Potter-----	59
VI - Jason Moran-----	63
VII - Joanne Brackeen-----	67
VIII - John Farnsworth-----	77
IX - Julius Tolentino-----	87
X - Mitch Borden-----	97
XI - Nicholas Payton-----	107
XII - Scott Colley-----	117
XIII - Alguns Dados Biográficos dos Músicos-----	121
Referências-----	129

PREFÁCIO

Este livro é constituído por um conjunto de entrevistas realizadas em torno do tema da *jam session* de jazz. Resulta do trabalho de terreno (Burgess 1984) levado a cabo entre 2003 e 2005 em Manhattan, no âmbito do projecto de doutoramento que realizei em Ciências Musicais (Pinheiro 2008 e 2012). Os depoimentos aqui apresentados emergem originalmente de entrevistas etnográficas semi-estruturadas (Spradley 1979) com músicos de jazz e o gerente de um clube, tendo sido complementadas com observações realizadas em cinco espaços de performance situados em três bairros distintos de Manhattan: Harlem (Lenox Lounge e St. Nick's Pub) Upper West Side (Cleopatra's Needle e Smoke) e Greenwich Village (Small's).

Com a publicação deste livro, pretendo evidenciar as perspectivas dos músicos entrevistados, procurando contribuir, a partir de uma visão “de dentro” da cena do jazz (ou *emic*), para o aprofundamento do estudo das implicações que esta prática performativa poderá ter no percurso dos músicos de jazz, nomeadamente em Nova Iorque.

As entrevistas tiveram lugar nos E.U.A. e em Portugal com reconhecidos músicos do meio de Nova Iorque, assim como também com outros frequentadores de *jam sessions* de várias gerações e raças. Tendo em conta que a realidade do jazz em Nova Iorque não se cinge somente à elite dos músicos famosos, sendo configurada também pela performance e relações entre centenas de músicos desconhecidos do grande público, preocupei-me não só em entrevistar músicos estabelecidos na *jazz scene*, mas também outros para quem a *jam session* representa uma prática performativa importante. Contudo, para este livro selecionei aquelas realizadas com músicos consagrados.

O contacto com os diferentes músicos e intervenientes que participaram neste estudo foi estabelecido das mais diferentes formas. Inicialmente, parti de relações pessoais, potenciando a minha experiência profissional enquanto músico de jazz. O relacionamento com alguns promotores de concertos em Portugal facilitaram o meu contacto com músicos que em determinada altura se encontravam no país, geralmente no âmbito de digressões pela Europa. Estes concederam-me acesso a bastidores de teatros, salas de concerto, e a hotéis.

Por outro lado, a minha experiência enquanto antigo aluno do Berklee College of Music permitiu o acesso a músicos de alguma forma relacionados com a instituição: professores, alunos e antigos alunos. Estes, como eu, viviam ou tinham vivido em Boston, mas tinham contacto com o meio de Nova Iorque. Muitos dos antigos alunos, mudaram-se para aquela cidade a fim de seguir as suas carreiras profissionais. O contacto com os diversos interlocutores foi realizado em clubes e cafés, localizados na sua grande maioria em Manhattan, Nova Iorque.

A marcação das entrevistas constituiu um processo complexo e diverso. Em Portugal, este processo tornou-se mais fácil pelo facto de ter acesso aos bastidores de locais de performance durante o tempo que antecedia a actuação. Deste modo, antes do teste de som (ou por vezes depois), tive a oportunidade de entrevistar músicos, muitas vezes sem restrições temporais. Noutros casos, os entrevistados foram previamente informados pelo promotor do evento do meu interesse em realizar a entrevista. Neste caso, a uma hora marcada, encontrava-me com o músico no átrio ou bar do hotel. Em Nova Iorque, a marcação das entrevistas era realizada pessoalmente, muitas vezes nos clubes. Estas teriam lugar passados uns dias ou semanas e também em clubes antes do início dos eventos, ou em grande parte dos casos em cafés localizados na cidade. Apenas duas entrevistas foram realizadas por telefone.

Dado o meu background musical, os participantes na sua generalidade encararam as entrevistas como uma “conversa entre colegas”. Apesar de alguns me terem enquadrado num contexto “jornalístico”, desenvolvi conversas abertas nas quais os músicos abordaram as questões que coloquei de forma sincera. A minha relação com os participantes deste estudo foi de forma geral bastante próxima, tendo sido importante no estabelecimento de uma empatia entre entrevistador e entrevistado.

O guião das entrevistas foi sendo alterado no decurso da investigação, não só de acordo com os indivíduos entrevistados, mas também com o conseqüente surgimento de novas questões. As perguntas efectuadas têm um carácter aberto e organizam-se, na sua generalidade, progressivamente do geral para o particular. As entrevistas foram gravadas em *Mini-Disc* e transcritas.

Por forma a captar com rigor as nuances do discurso dos músicos, optei por não traduzir as entrevistas para Português, mantendo-as na língua original – Inglês.

Espero que estes depoimentos sirvam para clarificar o leitor em relação à forma como estes músicos constroem a ideia de jam session, e à importância desta ocasião performativa enquanto forma de aprendizagem, de construção de redes profissionais, e de estabelecimento de hierarquias de competência.

I - Aaron Goldberg

RP: What's your own definition of a jam session? What's for you a jam session?

AG: Ok. As you were speaking I was thinking that really there's two types of "sessions", as we call them in English. There's a kind of confusion, maybe there's even three types of "sessions". Sometimes when you say "I did a session", it might mean that you did a recording session. In which case you mean that you went into the studio, you recorded music, and you were... hopefully you were paid, you know. Perhaps it was for an album, or a demo, or something like that...that's one kind of "session".

Then we have another kind of session which is more common. You meet a musician in a club and you say: "we should play together. Let's do a session!" And usually what that means is you call a few musicians and they come over to your house, or you go over to their house, or you meet in a kind of a neutral location like a rehearsal studio, and you just play songs together. Maybe you play standards, or maybe someone brings some original music. It's just like having a rehearsal. But often it's not a formal rehearsal: you're not rehearsing for a particular gig or concert. You're just having fun, basically, playing music and you're trying to find a musical connection with the other musicians, you know? "Oh! This guy sounds great! I want to play more with him so we can develop something together, a musical friendship."

And for me, those kind of sessions – informal sessions, like rehearsals with people I didn't know - were very important for me for two reasons: first to meet lots of musicians, great musicians, to become part of the scene and someone that people might think of when they say "I need a piano player," "Oh! Have you heard this guy, Aaron Goldberg, I just played a session with him yesterday!"... to become someone more known than a just new cat who comes to New York that no one's ever heard before. Someone might not have done a gig with me but might have played with me in my house or their house, so: "He can play, he's good!." So both for that first reason of meeting musicians, and also even more importantly, for the second

reason that it gives you the opportunity to practice making music with people. You can only practice so much by yourself. In order to become a great jazz musician you have to play with people, and you have to be able to take risks with people, and to learn to interact, and to learn to listen, and to learn to accompany. All these kind of skills, you can only learn by actually playing music with other people. And so the only opportunity you have to do so is either on a gig, in a concert kind of situation live in front of an audience, or in these kinds of “sessions” or informal rehearsals.

My sense is that for the older musicians back in the day - Charlie Parker’s time in the fifties, forties, even into the early sixties maybe - when jazz was more popular and there were more gigs, there were thus more opportunities for people to play together. Musicians might have three or four gigs a night so they may not have had time to even do these kinds of sessions. They might not even have had the motivation. They’d sleep all day, they’d get up at two in the afternoon, they’d play a gig from four to six and another one from seven to eleven and then a late night one from twelve to four in the morning, and they would go to bed. And they have had eight hours of playing with people. Also maybe there were more formal jam sessions, the third kind of “sessions” I was talking about.

A “jam session” is held at a pre-determined location, and is publicly advertised as a jam session, people know: “Ok, I show up at this time and there’s gonna be someone there who runs the jam session - meaning, someone inviting up musicians to play. Maybe you get to play one song, maybe you get to play two songs. You don’t know who’s gonna be there. There might be hundreds of people there waiting to play, there might be only a few people there waiting to play. Could be anything. You don’t...really don’t know what it’s gonna be like. There might be great musicians, or there might be terrible musicians. You never know who you are gonna play with: it’s luck! Essentially it’s luck.

Maybe there were more of those kind of sessions – jam sessions - before. That’s my sense. Maybe instead of having the second kind of session which I was just talking about, in people’s houses or something similar, thirty or forty years ago they would have jam sessions. And maybe they were more restricted: you were only really encouraged to play if you were really

good. The musicians who weren't as good, they would just come to the jam sessions to listen, they wouldn't come to play. I might be wrong here, this is just my sense. I mean I'm twenty-nine years old, so I didn't live through this time. But my sense is that there was more of a sense of etiquette forty or fifty years ago. There was a jam session etiquette meaning: you respected the great musicians so much that if you were not good, you never tried to play with them. I think that that's missing today.

If you go to a jam session now everyone wants to play, even if they are not good musicians. The overall result is that the quality of music at these jam sessions gets lower and lower and lower. So much so that the better musicians, they don't want to go to these jam sessions anymore. When there was more etiquette the jam sessions were better because all the musicians that came to play were better. I think it's even worse today, I mean...

I just played a gig and I happened to leave the stage a little bit early, and I encountered a drummer who was there listening to the gig. It was not even a jam session, it was a normal gig in a club. And he kept asking me: "Oh, can I sit in? Can I sit in with the band? Can I sit in with the band?". And I told him: "Well, it's not my gig! It's not my concert, so you have to ask the bandleader. First ask the drummer and then ask the bandleader!". Normally, if someone says "Can I sit in, can I sit in?" you would expect that they are gonna be very good. I mean it's not a jam session, it's a normal gig. So if someone says "I want to play! I wanna play! Can I sit in? I'm good!", you expect them to be really good.

RP: To have a minimum level...

AG: To have a minimum level. Because it takes balls, you know, takes courage to do something like that... to follow really good musicians onstage. So you assume: "Ok. If he really wants to play, he must be great! I must really want to hear him and he must know that I'm gonna really want to hear him. So I said: "Look, you ask them", and I think the other musicians, the bandleader and the drummer, they said "Well, this guy really wants to play, he must be really good!", you know? And I wasn't there when he played, I had already left, I didn't hear him, but apparently he was terrible. I think that kind of thing would never had happened thirty years ago. I think it would have been widely known that if you weren't great...if that

had happened thirty years ago, he would have been beaten. You know, other musicians would turned around and picked him up and thrown him off the stage. People are nice these days. They don't pick anyone up and throw 'em off the stage.

RP: Throw a cymbal at him...

AG: Throw a cymbal at him! Yeah!... So, my point is that jam sessions now tend to be filled with musicians that are more like students, you know? They want an opportunity to play. And I feel for them, they need a place to play! They need to grow. And they want to meet other musicians, so they go to these jam sessions. And at night sometimes, especially in New York City, you can't practice in your apartment. There's nothing musical for you to do at night. So if you're not gonna go the movies or hang out with your girlfriend and if you wanna play music and you don't have a gig, maybe you have to go to a jam session at night. So because most of the musicians are students, I think that the more professional musicians tend to stay away.

Not everyone... I mean you have examples of famous musicians stopping by these jam sessions playing a tune or two, you know. Lots of people that we know... I mean... Wynton Marsalis is famous for showing up at jam sessions and playing. Roy Hargrove goes out a lot and plays and... Sometimes, once in a while I'll go, you know. If it's late and I have a lot of energy, and I wanna look for a jam session. But much more often than going to those kind of formal jam sessions, I have these informal sessions at my apartment, and I can say with confidence that if I had never had that experience of playing lots... hundreds... maybe even a thousand of those kind of sessions I would never had developed into a professional musician. I would never have been able to play... and I would never have met the people that I met, and never developed the musical relationships that I developed. And I think it's true for almost everyone in my generation.

Obviously you're doing lots of interviews with people of different ages, but I would say that... I predict that you're gonna discover that a lot of musicians around my age – late twenties, early thirties, mid twenties - they'll also say a similar thing. They have had a lot of experience with these kind of informal sessions, and they were really important to their growth. And

these sessions don't pay you any money, you know, but you get invaluable experience playing with other live musicians that there's just no other way to get.

RP: Thank you very much. That was a very good answer.

AG: It was a good question!

RP: Thank You. First I would like, if possible, to have a definition, or do you have one, of "sitting in". What do you mean by "sitting in"?

AG: Sure.

RP: What's your concept of "sitting in"?

AG: Ok. "sitting in"...

RP: I'm sorry, these are hard questions... I know because we use these words every day...

AG: No, no. It's not hard. It's a good question. What we mean by "sitting in" when we say "sitting in" is if you're "sitting in" on a gig or on someone else's gig, it means that you have not been hired to play that gig. You are perhaps invited by one of the musicians who was hired to play on that gig, or maybe you decided you were gonna stop by and listen and you brought your instrument, you know. Maybe you were coming from your own gig and it finished early and you know that your friend is playing at this other club so you're gonna come by and hear him and you bring your instrument. And somebody in the bandstand sees you there with your instrument and says: "Oh, pssst! Look who's here, you know! Joe Lovano is here with his horn! Let's invite him to come up and sit in. So what that means is: he's not officially a member of the band, but he's there in the audience and everybody in the band know this guy is really good. Or at least one person on the band knows this guy is really good. And the bandleader, if he knows the guy, he might just invite him to come and play a song that everyone knows. Or somebody in the band, if the bandleader doesn't know the guy, someone in the band might say: "That guy is really good! Have him come and sit in".

It depends on the situation. The more formal of the situation, the less chance there is that someone's gonna sit in, no matter how good they are. So, in part, that's because if you give... if you're giving a concert in a big orchestra hall, for example, logistically it's very difficult to get someone from the audience on to the stage. And also maybe you've prepared a program, so

you know, “O.k. We’re gonna play a seventy five minute show, and we know exactly what songs we’re gonna play”. And no matter how great the musician is that’s there to sit in with you, it would change the program too much to invite him. So he’s not gonna sit in. Maybe if there’s an encore, he’ll come and sit in. So let’s say, everyone is clapping, there’s an opportunity for a little bit of informality. We can say: “Oh, we’re gonna invite our friend so and so to come up on the stage. In those kind of formal concerts you don’t usually have people sit in. But in clubs it’s more informal, it’s more casual, the music might run very, very late, there’s more confusion, there’s more maybe uncertainty about what’s gonna be played, what songs are gonna be played, you have people sit in quite often. And normally they’re people that either the bandleader or the members of the band play with commonly. So they know each other well. They’re usually friends of the band. And maybe they know the music, some similar music, or maybe they’re just good friends. So sometimes I have gigs with my trio, just piano, bass and drums...

R.P: Omer Avital and Ali Jackson...

A.G: Or I have another trio in New York with Reuben Rodgers and Eric Harland.

...

A.G: And I have a lot of friends that play saxophone--for some reason. I play with a lot of saxophone players. I love saxophone players and I’ve always loved saxophone players...and I play a lot in saxophone players’ bands. And some of my best musician friends are saxophone players. So I’ll say, “I’m playing with my trio but come down, bring your horn and sit in!” So at the end a lot of trio music, sometimes it’s nice for the audience and for us to have an extra man come up. Adds a new dimension... or two, you know. Maybe you have two different guys come and play different songs. So I often invite people to come sit in on my gig. But they’re usually people that I know and I tell them: “Ok, I’m playing this time, this place. If you’re not doing anything, I’ll put you on the guest list, you don’t have to pay. Just come and play with us”. And often times they do. Once in a while someone will come that I don’t even know is gonna come. And I see them and say: “Come and play, man. Come and play!”. And that’s pretty common. Is that a good definition?

R.P.: About the physical space: what do you think is the most probable space for jam sessions? Which spaces are more important than others? What other spaces are possible for having jam sessions? And how does it affect your playing?

A.G.: Any of these kinds of jam sessions? Are you counting the second kind of jam session as a session?

R.P.: Of course. If you want to talk about each one of them, it would be great.

A.G.: Well, I'm gonna stop talking about the recording session, because that's a different kind of thing... so the two different kinds of jam sessions, we'll call one the formal one with friends, and then the other one is the informal one where everyone is invited. So the first kind of session... you can have it anywhere. My favorite place to have a session is just my house. You, know? And when I moved to N.Y. I made sure that I was going to be able to play music in my house, because I knew that it was going to be important to me to have these kind of sessions. And I didn't want to live anywhere that the neighbors were gonna complain and the police were gonna come and stop me from playing music in my house. And I had bought a drumset, a small drumset, because drummers, they don't wanna bring drums to a session. So if you're gonna have a session you better have drums there. And a bass player will usually bring his bass, it's no problem. But drums, you have to have a drums. And of course, you have to have a piano if you're a piano player. So, I had a piano, so for that reason I was fortunate. The nice thing about playing in someone's house... it's comfortable, you know. It's a home. Everyone feels comfortable, you know. Maybe people come and you have some tea together, or you have some food, you know? You can stop whenever you want, relax, watch television, or listen to some music, or sit on the couch and talk... and it's free! You don't have to pay anything. So, I mean you are already paying your rent, so you might as well... hopefully your neighbors like music, or they're not home during the day, and it's not a problem. So, someone's home. Either my home, or someone else's home. It's nice to go to peoples' homes because you learn so much about them. People like to see where each other lives and... I like going to my friends' houses. And often... one thing that that means is that you tend to have a lot

of sessions with people that live close to you. Because it's much more difficult for someone who lives in the Bronx to come to my house in Brooklyn. I mean, it's N.Y.C., but it takes more than an hour to get from their house to my house. So if they only have a few hours in the day free... It's sad, I mean... I wish... there are musicians that I just don't play with as much as I would like to just because they live in Bronx or Harlem and I live in Brooklyn. I tend... Especially because a lot of these sessions tend to happen at the last minute, so O.K.: "Oh! What am I doing tomorrow? Nothing. Oh, let's call... It's midnight, you know. Let's see if...". So and so calls me: "Let's play. I wanna play with you!". I say: "ok. Let's try to do something tomorrow!". I leave a few messages. No one calls me back. It's like eleven or twelve in the morning. And the session is supposed to start at one. I need to find a bass player. I know there's no way that someone's gonna come from Harlem to get to... So I call the guys that live close to me. So anyways, the house is the first place... Of course if do you live in a place where you can't play, then you're forced to find a place where you can play. It used to be... you could use to have these kind of sessions or rehearsals at... say, Smalls, when Smalls was happening... The owner of Smalls, Mitch, was extremely kind and he gave the space, he loaned the space to musicians who needed to rehearse, even to have sessions. So you could sign up in a book... say: "O.K. I wanna do a session at this time, this day", and invite the musicians, and you could do it for free. That's very special. And it's not normal. But there were many years when a lot of musicians were having sessions at Smalls, N.Y. That's why Smalls is so close to the hearts of so many young musicians in N.Y., for that reason.

And the other place is obviously a rehearsal studio. So you might pay twenty or thirty or forty dollars an hour for the space. And you rent the space and maybe everyone pays a little bit, or you... you know... maybe you'd pay the whole thing, if it's your idea. And you all meet in this central location and you pay for the time. And usually those places have good drums. You're paying for them so usually the environment is nice. But no one wants to do it because... that's the last resort, because you have to pay, and no one likes to pay for these kind of things.

R.P: And they're not that comfortable...

A.G: It's not as nice as someone's house. On the other hand, there's no neighbors that can complain. And I've had many neighbors complaining. Even though I've tried to be careful to find places to live where my neighbors are gonna understand, doesn't matter. Maybe your neighbors in your building understand, but the neighbors across the street don't understand. So the Police come and knock on the door... Normally the Police are understanding, because we're jazz musicians. We don't play really loud music.

R.P: Yeah. That's true... you're not playing rock or anything...

A.G: We're not playing really loud and a lot of people actually like our music. So I think the Police, usually they expect the worst, you know, when someone calls the police saying: "Someone's playing really loud music...bla, bla, bla...". And they come over and they can barely hear us: rak, taka, tak...and some nice saxophone. And they say: "Oh! That's sounds good. Continue, forget it!". And there's a law in N.Y. that says you're allowed to play music up to ten decibels. So we never play louder than ten decibels anyways. People that call the police don't know that law. Up until ten o'clock at night, or something like that. So as long we're not playing late at night... There's a noise law that says that you're allowed to make noise up until a certain hour. And we usually play in the middle of the day, and so nothing serious has ever happened.

R.P: And about the jam session? The other kind of...

A.G: The other kind of jam session. So those kinds of jam sessions, those formal... sorry, I shouldn't say ...formal and informal is misleading. On the one hand they're more formal, because they're set in a certain location and a certain time. It usually happens every week, or even every night, you know. There's gonna be... When Smalls was happening in New York, we knew there was gonna be a jam session at Smalls every night starting at two in the morning. So if you were awake at two in the morning and you were in New York and you wanted to play, and you were willing to take a risk... You could go to Smalls and play at the Smalls jam session. But right now there are just a few jam sessions, like at this place called the "Up Over" in Brooklyn, near my house, every Monday night. They happen on a certain day... or Cleopatra's Needle... they have a jam session on a certain time.

So there's a few clubs everyone knows: "O.k. On Monday nights...", it's usually Monday nights, because it's a night that...

R.P: That's weak in terms of ...

A.G: That's weak in terms of regular gigs. There's not a lot of gigs that happen on a Monday night. Sometimes Sunday nights, or another night. The "Jazz Gallery" tried to do a jam session like late night on Saturday night. Because sometimes Saturday nights are the nights that people stay out the latest, so you can have the late night jam session and maybe an audience is gonna come. All those kind of jam sessions, the ones that I was calling 'formal' are also informal because even though they're set at a certain time, it's informal who's gonna come. And it could be hundreds of people or no one. Those happen at clubs. They happen at jazz clubs and they're usually jazz clubs that have normal gigs for, you know, set bands the rest of the week. One night of the week they decide to have a jam session.

R.P: O.K. I have a lot to ask you...

A.G: Ask me everything...

R.P: O.k. About some of your experiences. Is there a first experience you recall, or any important experience you recall?

A.G: My first experience...

R.P: Playing in a jam session.

A.G: ... in a jam session.

R.P: Or some important you recall, like you were playing...

A.G: Either kind of jam session? Or... you were talking about the

...

R.P: It's open. You can talk about whatever you want.

A.G: I think that... I can say two things. I mean...I grew up in Boston, so when I was young and in high school and I was just learning to play, I didn't have enough confidence to really go to jam sessions and sit in. And I was... honestly, I wasn't good enough, really to play at jam sessions... I'm trying to remember now... There was a place... I think... There was a place called "Alexander's" that was in Boston and used to have jam sessions. And I remember when I was just finishing high school I think I started to go to those places and maybe sit in. Maybe the summer after high school... I started to find those kind of places. There were a few places in Boston

but I didn't go very often and I didn't ... they weren't very important in my development. And at that point I didn't quite realize how important it was to have these other kind of jam sessions in peoples' houses. And also I didn't know a lot of musicians in Boston, because I was just a high school kid. I knew the other kids that went to my high school and those were the people that I played jazz music with. And I hadn't really become a part of the Boston jazz scene. Then I went to the New School for a year in 1991-92. And at the New School I started to realize the importance of having these more informal sessions at peoples' houses or at school. That's another thing I should say, is that the other place that people have these kind of... I got to come up with a good word for them... these sessions, we will not call them "jam sessions", we'll just call them sessions...

R.P: Practice Sessions.

A.G: Practice Sessions. Rehearse... Yeah. We'll just call them practice sessions... is at schools. I mean, a lot of practice sessions happen in school classrooms in hours when there are no classes. So when I was going to the New School every day, if we could, we would find a room at a certain free time that we could sign up for it, and get together with different students from the school and play. And of course... that's something you don't have to pay for. You're already paying for your schooling...

R.P: And it's a lot!

A.G: And it's a lot! So along with that comes the privilege to use those rooms. And sometimes, the people that would come and play at those sessions wouldn't necessarily be students at the school. All you need is one guy who's a student at the school, or a faculty at the school, maybe. And... so I did a lot of sessions starting when I went to the New School in 91-92 at school: those kind of practice sessions. So early experiences with those... I mean I had so many of those. I mean that's how I met a lot of the musicians that I play with today. I met Omer Avital at the New School doing sessions. You know, we used to just play duo in little rooms. We wouldn't even sign up. We would just look through, look for rooms like: "Anybody in there?", and we would go and find the key and get inside and play duo. Guys I still play with... Avishai Cohen, the bass player, Joe Strasser, the drummer... these guys were all people that I went to school with.

Avi Lebovich, the trombone player, who else was there? ... Adam Cruz, the drummer, all these people I went to school with. So we would do sessions all the time. And then other musicians that weren't going to the New School would come and hang out at the New School and do sessions. I met lots of people that way too...oh, this bass player Johannes Weidemuller that I played a lot with then. He was in school with us. Who else? There were people that were doing these kind of sessions that I didn't know, they were kind of more established, a little bit older, they were coming all the time to play these sessions at the New School. Like, Brad Mehldau, and Larry Goldings, and Peter Bernstein, and guys that I knew by sight but I never played with them because they were a little bit older and more established than me. And Joshua Redman, actually, I met at the New School, by chance. He had come to the New School to do a rehearsal or some kind of session with a student that I knew, and I saw: "That's Joshua Redman" and I...at that point I knew I was going to go to Harvard, so I said hi to him. I said: "Oh, I'm this guy and I'm going to Harvard", and I talked to him about his experience of being a jazz musician and going to Harvard studying nonmusical things.

R.P: He went there?

A.G: He went to Harvard. Yeah. He went to Harvard before me, though. So by the time...

...

A.G: So, it was very common to meet musicians at these kind of sessions, that's my point. And I met a lot of people that I still play with.

Then, equally importantly when I came back to Boston... I had done a gig with this guy named Hal Crook. I had invited Hal Crook to play with me, actually, on one of my gigs when I was still just like finishing high school, through a connection. I knew somebody who knew Hal Crook. My high school jazz teacher knew Hal Crook and he helped introduce me to Hal, and Hal was very helpful because when he realized how young I was, and that I was coming back to Boston to go to College he gave me the names of all his favorite Berklee students...musicians and New England Conservatory student musicians. And their phone numbers. And it was invaluable for me to meet people. So the summer after I went to the New School, before I

started Harvard, I was just calling these guys, you know? “Oh, you wanna come over? Let’s play in my house, come play in my house!”. And luckily I had courage. And at that point I had confidence because I had gotten better and I knew that I could play. Not that I was great, but I was good enough that these guys would come to my house, they wouldn’t be so disappointed. They wouldn’t be like; “Oh! I wasted my time!”, you know. They would be like: “Oh, this guy is young and he’s gonna be cool”. So... and then through one, you meet another one, you meet another one, you meet another one... And so before I even started at Harvard, I knew a lot of musicians who went to Berklee. And through those musicians I met new ones that I still play with like Reuben and John Lamkin... Darren Barrett, Jimmy Greene the saxophone player. I mean all of these guys that I spent my four years of college at Harvard playing with, none of those guys went to Harvard. They went to Berklee or N.E.C. Some of them went to Hart School in Hartford. And I met a lot of them essentially because I got that list from Hal Crook, and I starting calling these guys who went to Berklee. And I got involved in the Berklee scene. In fact people, most people thought I went to Berklee because they’d see me playing at Berklee all the time. And I’d had so many Berklee friends. In fact not only the Berklee students thought I went to Berklee, but the Berklee administration for some reason even thought that I went to Berklee. I was doing a rehearsal at Berklee School of Music in 19... no, recently like 2001 or 2002 once when I happened to be in Boston, and I saw the Berklee alumni Bulletin Board some note that said “Aaron Goldberg...”, it had a picture of my latest CD and said “Aaron Goldberg, Class of 97 releases his second CD along with Berklee alumnus Reuben Rogers and drummer Eric Harland. And I never took a class at Berklee in my life. I was never enrolled in Berklee. But I was there so much that I think somebody in the admissions office decided that they’d see me there so I must have been a student, and they made up the idea that I’d graduated in 97. So anyways, all those... the whole thing started because of Hal and all those numbers that he gave me. So that was very, very, very important for me. All those experiences that I had.

R.P: And about the jam session?

A.G: More like...O.K. a real jam session in a club. When I was going to the New School they used to have jam sessions at this club called the Village Gate. And they used to... there was a period of time when those jam sessions were led by New School students. So, I was given the opportunity to lead the jam session there a few times. So I met musicians like that, and also when my friends were leading the jam sessions I went down there and played with them. It was usually in the afternoon, I think... weekend afternoons. And then at Wally's in Boston, they used to have jam sessions in Sunday afternoons.

R.P: They still have them...

A.G: And they still have them. It's a tradition going back, I don't know... forty years or something like that. And they used to... If you actually were in the house band you'd get paid fifteen dollars to do those gigs. And you would play for a while and then people would come and sit in. And I'd spend a little time sitting in, but more time I spent just being hired to play in the house band. Teodross Avery was, I think, the guy that I played with in the house band.

R.P: So in the jam session you can be ... some people are paid to ...

A.G: Some people are paid to be there, to play at the beginning of the session and to make some good music and to be there in case there are no bass players that show up, or no piano players that show up...exactly.

R.P: So you would just go... is there someone important you, like you met or you played with some important cats or...

A.G: I would say... I never met any... I never have started a musical relationship with any famous person at a jam session. Only with other not-famous people, like students. Or just young musicians that were looking for places to play. People that maybe later became famous. Or semi-famous, you know, more established. And ... I developed long term musical relationships with my peers whom I might have met at these kind of sessions. But I never... I don't think I can remember an example of meeting someone really famous at those kind of jam sessions. Partially because I was never the kind of guy that went to a lot of those sessions. I never... I never... In a way I was lucky. I never needed to. Because I could always have sessions where I lived. So I didn't need to go to those jam sessions to meet musicians. I usually

did them either because I was being paid to be in the house band or just by chance once in a while I would be awake in a late hour and would go by. But I met most musicians at my house or at the school, like in a practice room, having these kind of practice sessions.

R.P: O.K. About the repertoire. What do you think is the repertoire that is chosen, from where comes this repertoire. Which are the characteristics of this repertoire and what is its importance? Whatever... You can talk to me a little bit about that.

A.G: I mean, again, the two different kinds of sessions. I mean, at the practice type sessions I would say fifty percent, or sixty to seventy five percent of the time you're playing standard repertoire. It's been handed down through the generations and each generation of jazz musicians added songs to the standard repertoire. But you also end up playing a lot of "Blues", you know, kind of simple song forms. And because there's enough time in that situation, to learn songs... sometimes you just learn songs by ear like someone says... "Do you know...I don't know... Stabilemates!?" and someone will say "I kind of know it... remind me what's the bridge"... And you teach them... "Oh! I remember the bridge!". Or "Do you know this Charlie Parker head called Laird Bird?" and they'll say: "No!" and they say "It's a Bird Blues with a Bird Blues Changes and the melody goes like this uhmmm...". "Oh yeah! I remember that one! Teach that to me again". So you teach to them. So you spend maybe ten minutes teaching the tune and then another ten minutes playing it and there's time. That's why they're called "practice sessions", because you're actually learning things sometimes on those sessions: tunes that you have known or new tunes you wanna know. Someone will bring a chart and say: "Ok, have you ever heard this tune?". And you actually read the tune and you learn the tune like that. Or someone will bring some original music and say: "Can we try my tune out?" Maybe they have a new tune they never heard before and they bring it to these practice sessions just to see how it sounds. So that repertoire is more diverse, much more diverse than the repertoire that you'd find at a jam session in a club, because in a club there's a time pressure. Every time there's a new... there's a new guy coming up to play, there are another three guys waiting to play. So you don't wanna waste a lot of time. So "What are we gonna play?"

“We’re gonna play ...” and usually someone just starts playing... boom, or... It’s bad etiquette sitting there and saying: “Oh, I don’t know this, I don’t know this, I don’t know this...” and often times it’s hard to find tunes everyone knows, especially these days because the people that go to jam sessions, they’re sometimes not professionals. They’re students. So they don’t know as many songs. So you often get the same types of songs that get played at all jam sessions and they get played for a really long time because everyone wants to take a long solo. And all these guys that have been sitting in their houses and practicing all day with nothing to do but practice, practice, practice, they have all this information that they wanna try to play in their solos, so they take really long solos. And they’re self-indulgent. So it can... songs can be forty-five minutes of “Cherokee” or “Blues”... these kind of songs. And that’s another reason why the better musicians or the more experienced ones don’t want to come to these jam sessions, because they don’t want to sit there and play “Cherokee” for forty-five minutes. Especially if you are not a horn player, because if you are a horn player you play your solo and you leave. You play your solo and you go to get a drink, you talk to a pretty girl at the bar. But if you’re a bass player, you’re really in trouble. And it’s not so much fun always to accompany musicians unless they’re great. I mean, if they’re great musicians I can play a song for hours, but if they’re not great it’s hard to sit there and play.

R.P: Why? What do you think happens special... especially?

A.G: Because they fill you with ideas, you know. And there’s more interaction. So it’s more fun, there’s more conversation. And there’s more inspiration. But if you’re just trying to accompany someone who doesn’t sound that good, trying to make them sound good that’s too much work. It’s too much work for you and it doesn’t give you anything in response, you know. In music there has to be give and take. And the accompanist shouldn’t always be giving and soloists be taking. Soloists should be giving too, and the accompanist gives back and it’s an equal exchange.

R.P: Like you’re making a net for the other guy to...just to work in and his not giving you anything...

A.G: Just to work on, yeah. Maybe he's not even listening what you're playing. Maybe he's so interested in practicing his own stuff on the bandstand that he's not even listening to you. That can be a drag.

R.P: Ok. And ... what set of rules do you think there are, implicit or explicit in a jam session, or in both cases. Do you think there are some rules that are musical or social, or whatever?

A.G: I think that in the informal... in the practice sessions at someone's house, the only rule there is that you are going to be a nice guy, you know. I mean you don't want to invite someone to your house someone that's going to be an asshole. If you never heard the guy before you don't know whether he's good... even if he's not that great it's o.k., because you haven't left your house, you know. So you'll invite him over... Sometimes I'll invite people to play at my house even if I'm not quite sure how good they are, because for me it's low risk. As long as they are a nice guy, you know. I'm going to enjoy the experience. At a jam session, I mean, it's hard to say, I mean, I think that I wish there were more rules, you know. I think these days there are not enough rules. And so the quality of the jam session declines. I mean, I think that it used to be that even in these kind of jam sessions the rule was "if you can't play well, you don't play". But I don't think that rule exists anymore. I think if it exists, then the definition of "well" has changed. So all you have to do is be able to play some notes on your instrument and you seem to play enough well. I mean, the rules should be... I'll tell you what the rules should be. Rules should be: if you can't play at least as well as everybody else that's up there playing, you shouldn't be there. So there should never be someone up there that's much worse than everyone else. That's the drag. If everyone's at the same level -it doesn't really matter what the level is- everyone's gonna have fun. So you might have a low level jam session, or you might have a high level jam session and that's all good. There's a place for a low level jam session. I mean people have to learn. But the problem is if someone from a low level comes to a high level jam session. Then you have a problem because they might not know the same songs, they might not even know that if they don't know the song they shouldn't play. Sometimes you have people that just play anything just because they're embarrassed to admit that they don't know the song. That's breaking a rule, you

know. If you don't know the song don't play. Just admit that you don't know it. Just lay out. Don't play your instrument. I would also say for horn players especially: "Take short solos". Be sensitive to how many other musicians are waiting to play and be sensitive to the rhythm section guys that have to sit there and play, and play, and play. Don't let the songs go on too long. Don't have everyone play on the same songs. Take turns. What else? Other rules? It's sort of... these are all just guidelines to make sure everyone has a good time, you know. Just be sensitive to that fact that everyone should be having fun. And try to make the experience good for everyone else, not just for yourself. I'll say that the general rule is ... Don't be self-centered...

R.P: O.K. And how about... How do you think creativity can come up or not in a situation like that? I mean, what musically happens? In those situations do you think that creativity can be decreased or increased?

A.G: O.K. I mean, the best kind of sessions feel like concerts, in a sense that even if you've never played with the guys before it feels like you have. So in that sense there's a good communication, everyone's listening to each other, everyone's sensitive to each other, and there's a kind of camaraderie, there's a sense of teamwork. It's not just about you playing your shit and me listening to you and accompanying you. It's about us. How can we make music as a band? So it's like every song is a new little spontaneous but successful band. So that can happen, even at the jam sessions in clubs, if you have good musicians there playing at the same time. It can be like a spontaneous little concert with a band that sounds like is been playing together forever, even though it hasn't. In those kind of situations you can be creative. Because you know that you can take a risk and someone is gonna trust you, your risk taking, and they're gonna follow you. And there can be all kinds of interaction. The same types of stuff that makes music great in a normal concert, can happen in a jam session. But it has to happen with good musicians. So often times what you have happen is when you do go to a jam session, on the occasion that you do go to these jam sessions in clubs where the musicians might or might not be good, you look around and you see: "Oh, Who else is here? Oh, I know that guy, he's good!" or "I've played with him before". You try to find your friends or the people that you know for sure are good and you say: "Oh, are you gonna play?" and he say: "Yeah!" and he

said “Ah, O.k. He’s gonna play. Let me try to go up there when he plays”. It’s like: “Are you gonna play?” “Yeah”. “O.K. Let’s try to go up there together and play together”. So maybe you all go up on stage together so you don’t have this problem with somebody not being at the level, trying to make sure that that doesn’t happen. Because you want it to be fun for everyone. Same with sitting in, you know. You’re gonna sit in on a gig, you’re trying to make sure that the people that are going to play at the same time as you are gonna be good. Then you have the opportunity to be creative. It can be just as great as a gig. It just depends on the other musicians that are playing with you.

R.P: O.K. Thank you very much. How about the relationship of the jam session with the learning process of the musician. What do you think you can learn within the jam session in terms of what kinds of competences you think are developed? What kind of competences you think are demanded.

A.G: There’s no question that in both kinds of jam sessions, both kind of sessions you can learn songs, I mean, repertoire. This is very important. I mean, you learn repertoire either in the moment like in the practice sessions: someone will teach you a new song, or you’ll go to a jam session and you’ll hear somebody playing a song that you don’t know and you realize: “Oh my God, everybody else knows this song and I don’t know it. I better go and learn it”. Or you might even be on the bandstand and somebody says; “O.k, Let’s play this!” and you don’t know it. And you realize: “Oh shit, I’m being a drag”, you know, “I’m holding this people back because I don’t know this song. I should know it”... “So we’ll play something else”, “Oh, I don’t know that”... So there’s another song you have to know. So you go home sometimes and you think: “Wow, these guys wanna play these songs. I really should know these songs”. And so you develop repertoire like that. The same thing in the practice sessions. Someone says: “Can we play this?” “No I don’t know it”, “Can we play this?” “No, I don’t know it”. So it’s a drag. But that’s also how you learn. I mean, that’s how you learn what you should know. So a body of common knowledge develops, via people calling songs that you don’t know and then you learn them. Next time they call it you know it, but maybe somebody else doesn’t know it.

And then you say: “Oh, you don’t know it? You should go learn it!”. And he goes home and learns it. And then everyone else does the same thing.

R.P: So now you’re in the position to...

A.G: ... to show it to someone else. So there’s that. The other thing that you can learn is... first of all, just...every time you play with people, you learn. Every time you play with people, you develop your improvisational skills and your social...musical social skills, you know. So just, experience... everybody needs experience. It might be the most important way to get better. So any type of experience you have is good experience. Any type of playing that you do with other people is good. So just on that pure physical...physical level of experience you can learn a lot at these jam sessions just by doing. So just by playing those six-hour gigs at Wally’s, those jam sessions with lots of different people you can grow, not just in terms of repertoire, but just by playing your instrument. You get more facile, you get more confident, you learn to take risks, and the other thing is that you can learn from other musicians all the time. No matter what the situation. Whether it’s a gig, or a practice session or a jam session. Every time you hear somebody else you can be inspired, if they’re good, and you can also steal little things from them. “Oh, Wow, what was that that they played?”... “Oh, Wow! I like the way they do this! I like the way they phrase. I like the way they swing. I like the way they play over minor chords” you know. “I wanna learn to do that!”. And then you go home and... “He was kind of doing something like this... Oh, O.K.”. You steal like that, just by listening to records...

...

A.G: Or if you like them, I mean, a more efficient way or more long-term way is to continue to try to play with the people that you have met in those kind of sessions, and develop over time some common vocabulary... just by listening to them a lot. Maybe one time was not enough. Maybe you heard somebody that is great...

R.P: I think Mark Turner and Kurt have a very wide vocabulary together...

A.G: From playing together lot’s of time and talking about music. Exactly...

... So everyone that plays together over a long time, they share something.

...

A.G: Those kind of longstanding musical relationships are very special for personal, and even more for musical reasons, because you have a community with whom you share your art, you know. It's like a school of painters or a school of writers. They all talk about their work and they interact. In music this connection is even more strong. Because you're actually making music together. Unlike painters and writers, what you create is a product of the interaction of the musicians. It wouldn't be the same without any...without the contribution of each person. So what you make is bigger than your individual personalities. So those relationships are even more important, I think in music than in other kinds of art.

R.P: This was going to be the next question I was going to ask you, so... Yeah, I think that's very important, what you said.

How about the influencing... how do you think the external factors like the audience can influence?... If it can.

A.G: You know, the audience, I think, at a jam session is often comprised to musicians. Other musicians who wanna play. So in a way, there's pressure I think to play even better, at a jam session than there is on a regular gig. Because you're playing for people that are maybe a part of your musical community. Even if they're not that good. I don't know if that's good or bad. I mean, it's probably both. It's definitely... I think it decreases creativity because it makes you... it can make you nervous, or can make you out to impress. I think also if there are a lot of musicians on the stage with you and they play the same instrument as you, say there's maybe like five piano players or ten saxophone players playing on the same song, it can increase competition. The sense of competition like: "I wanna play better than that saxophone player, I wanna play better than..." And I think generally that's both good and bad. It's good in the sense that makes you want to improve, you know, it makes you want to grow. It's bad in the sense that in the moment it doesn't make you play your best, because you're conscious of something other than the music itself that you're playing, which is never good. I mean, the best way to be creative and play your best is to be completely

in the zone, thinking about nothing but the other music... the music that you're playing and the other musicians that you're playing with. Not be conscious of: "Oh, so and so is in the audience", or "This guy is waiting to play". All those things make you play worse. Over the long term, they might make you play better because you want to be always getting better. So if you hear people that are better than you it helps you to get better. But in the short term, in the moment, it might make you play worse.

...

R.P: How do you think you can make this... You told about this kind of playing being at the same level. How do you judge that hierarchy? ... number of years?... your vocabulary?... your technique?...

A.G: Good question. It sort of like asking how do you hear whether someone is good? How do you know that you're good and how do you know that someone else is good?

R.P: ...evaluate...

A.G: How do you evaluate.

R.P: parameters...

A.G: Parameters, yeah. It's hard to say... I mean, there's a broad answer and a specific answer. The broad answer is that one thing that you... one skill that you gain just from experience and from listening to a lot of music and playing a lot of music with a lot of different people is that you can tell instantly whether someone is good or not. You don't have to hear very much to know... you hear a few minutes (or even seconds!) of someone playing, you can pretty much tell. Now, that's the broad answer. You just know, you can hear it, even if they don't play a similar style as you.

R.P: They don't have to play hard stuff... a hard tune or a lot of notes...?

A.G: No. Usually not. I mean, there are exceptions. Sometimes you hear somebody on a bad night, they sound bad, and you hear them again later and they sound great. You say: "How did they...?"... Or sometimes people get better, you know. You hear some people on a bad day and then they just get better. You hear them two months later and: "Wow! So much better!". Or you first hear them play a type of tune they don't play well, etc., There are exceptions, but generally you can just tell, and quickly. Now, if

you ask more specifically what are the parameters that you are evaluating, I would say the answer is: first of all, they are not conscious. You're not saying: "Ok, this guy gets a nine out of ten for phrasing and a ten out of ten for speed and a three out of three for musicality"...

R.P: Like Berklee ratings!

A.G: They're not ratings. You're not grading these skills in your head. However, I mean, if you ask me to make a list of things that are important, I could make a list for you, you know. And one would be... you know, melody. Is this guy playing good, beautiful, convincing melodies? Is he improvising melodies? That's number One. Two: This is kind of general. Is he boring? Or is he exciting to listen to? Does he hold my interest? It's like reading a book. I know it's a good book because I want to turn the page. Do I want to turn the page of his solo? Do I wanna hear what he's going to play next? Three: Does he Swing? I mean, does he swing or, if you're not playing swing music, does he make me wanna tap my foot? Is his sense of rhythm really strong? Four: Does he have command over harmony? Does he hear the harmony that belongs with the tune? Does he hear the original harmony of the tune and does he play things that respect that harmony or display knowledge of the harmony, even if chooses not to play the harmony? You can hear that he's moving in and out of the harmony and thus he knows what he's doing. Not playing random stuff. Five: is he listening to the other musicians? Can you hear that he is interacting with them and that what he is playing is changing what they are playing, and is he leaving space for them and are they leaving space for him and is there a kind of communication going on? Does he have good communicative powers? Six: Is he eloquent, is he convincing in the sense that you can hear when someone speaks Portuguese or English, can they string ideas together... Is he telling a story? You know this is related to the second thing I mentioned: am I interested in what he's about to say? If I am interested, then when he says what he says, does it makes logical sense, given what he said before? Is there a coherence that comes along with the solo? More parameters? I don't know... Does he have command of different types of songs, different types of melodies? Can he play a ballad and play beautiful? Can he play a fast burn-out tune and sound beautiful... I mean, a great musician sounds

great in multiple contexts, not only in one context, I think. Does he sound like himself? You know, does he sound... is he a copy of someone else? And does he have his own kind of... unique personality? These are all important. Let's see... and then more simple things like: Does he have a good sound? You know, I mean, does he make a beautiful sound from his instrument? Or if not a beautiful sound, at least a personal, convincing sound? You know, a sound that sticks in my head? And then, I guess the last thing is... Do I remember him when I go... more abstractly... Do I wanna play with him? I mean, how do I evaluate somebody that I really, really wanna play with again? It's so simple, like: you just leave... and you want his number. Do I wanna get his number, do I care? And maybe another aspect of that is that once in a while you might hear somebody that you think is great, but you might not ever care about playing with again because although he's great he's not gonna sound great with me, you know. You respect him but you might not care about developing a musical relationship with him because you might not be compatible. That's not a parameter that you evaluate someone's skill by. It's just a parameter that you evaluate. Whether you wanna play with him again or wanna continue to make music with him. Most of the time that you hear somebody great, you wanna play with them! Even if they sound totally different from you: because there's something you wanna learn from them or you wanna understand what makes them great, you know. And usually great musicians are also interesting people, so you know... you wanna understand who this person is and how they got to be great and why, and maybe you make a new friend. Even if you don't find a new person for your band. Something's usually... or even if they're a student. You know like: "O.K. They don't sound great yet, but they're gonna be great". And you wanna keep your eye on that person: "Oh, he's gonna be interesting, I wanna see what he does later"...

II - Ben Monder

RP: First of all, how would you define a jam session? What is for you a jam session? What's your own definition of a jam session?

B.M: A jam session? I mean, in a distinction between things that going in clubs and things that are going in peoples homes...

R.P: Yeah. If you think it's an important distinction. Tell me a little bit about it.

B.M: Well, there is. There are two different sort of... I haven't really been to many club jam sessions, but from what I've seen, I don't know, it's a lot of people waiting around to play one or two tunes and there's not much interaction or band cohesion. Some sort of, the rhythm section plays their role and generally, you know, you play standard tunes that are commonly known and whoever has the solo sort of blows on top of it for generally too long, and... This is sort of a thing that people do when they first get to town and they... feel like they need to play and they need to be heard by people. I don't think too many people are big fan of it.

And then there is one I'm more familiar with which is informally getting together at people houses. We're going through each other's original music or playing standards, or playing free, I mean... depends who you're playing with. There are a lot of different "clicks" and scenes in New York and probably anywhere, you know. Each has sort of a different aesthetic viewpoint, so...

R.P: And do you recall any particular experience you had in... in can be in either of those two cases you mentioned? Any important experience you had and why do you think it was an important experience. It can be good or bad or...

B.M: Yeah, I think the bad ones are probably intentionally forgotten, but I actually remember one session at the Blue Note which has been hosting a session like an after hour thing for years and years and I think there was... I was probably around like... I was maybe like 23 or 24 and I went to one session that was called the "West End Gate" which no longer exists. But there was a session there and I remember waiting around forever and playing

one tune and... one or two tunes and sounding really bad cause I would get really nervous you know in those situations. And then being frustrated and then going down to the Blue Note where Ted Curson at that time... I think he moved to Europe or something, but he hosted that session for a long time... and when I got up on stage and I was very pissed off about that last session that I failed at and ... so it kind of... got on my nerves and he saw this, you know... kid come up and set up so he thought he was going to fuck with me, so he called of this tune... he called off Tune Up but he called it of really, really fast, like crazily fast and...

R.P: Like what? Cherokee or something?

B.M: No, it was just Tune Up. It wasn't a hard tune...

R.P: Oh, Tune Up! O.K., O.K.

B.M: So I'd been practicing a lot and anyway I ended up you know having no problem with the tempo, so he was kind of... I felt like I sort of ruined the occasion. So that was actually a kind of a good experience. I mean, it was not musically satisfying thing, but it was just like close. I proved to this guy that I could handle myself. I think that's what a lot of those sessions are about: just sort of proving yourself to people. It's not even really about music so much.

R.P: So what do you think makes you nervous in a jam session, and doesn't make you nervous in a concert situation?

B.M: Oh, no! I would get nervous in a concert too. I mean it's a... you know, I'm talking about a long time ago. I'm somewhat more relaxed now.

R.P: Good for you, because you play so much, it would be a massacre for you!

B.M: Yes, it would be very stressful! I don't know, I think even now I wouldn't be so comfortable just going up and playing one tune. I mean, because that's like all of a sudden if you're just going up there and you're like sitting in somewhere, you're sort of the focus of attention. And you haven't really built any kind of rapport with rest of the band through the evening. And it's just a little bit of an artificial situation and you're wondering like "What am I even doing here? Am I suppose to show somebody that I can do something" or... "Can I really take time and do something musical?"

But that's not really what it's about, because you're not really supposed to be up there for that long, you know what I mean? I just avoid it. I never sit in anymore, or go to sessions anymore.

R.P: About the repertoire: Can you tell me a little bit about it? Is it important? It's not important? What are the main characteristics of the repertoire you can play there? And why is it important, if it's important. Why is not important, if it's not important. And you can talk on both situations you mentioned previously, if you like.

B.M: Yeah. Well, as I said I've really been out of the... I haven't done a session in a club for so long, I don't know what's going on now.

R.P: So if you prefer, you can talk about the home session situation.

B.M: Yeah, I don't really do too many of those either, but... You know, I'd say it's important just in general to have a vast repertoire, but people are generally pretty forgiving if you don't know certain things. I know for myself. I've forgotten a lot of tunes and I ... I don't really do that many gigs where I have to play standard tunes. Like I said, I don't play that many sessions so I kind of rely on my few maybe like a hundred tunes that I know at this point. Which is really very little. I think it's kind of regional, you know. Also from what I hear certain cities there are certain tunes that are more commonly played than others. I mean, I don't know if you're asking what I think is important...

R.P: Yeah! I just like to know your opinion. So...

B.M: Well, my opinion is that you should know as many tunes as possible! I don't practice that much, you know... someday maybe I'll learn more tunes.

R.P: O.k. Why is that important, to know a lot of tunes? Why do you think it's important?... to know a lot of tunes.

B.M: If you're playing with someone... if someone hired you for a gig, you gonna accompany that person's repertoire ... you can... if he calls a tune you don't have to stand there and say: "I don't know that one"... "I don't know that one"... "I don't know"... you know what I mean? If you're not interested in playing standards, obviously it's not that important, you know. I'm not gonna tell everybody... Just as a professional it's probably a good idea.

R.P: Do you think are there rules to follow in either of the two situations you mentioned? Are there rules? If are there rules, why do you think...

B.M: Do you mean protocol?

R.P: Yeah, yeah.

B.M: I think there is a reputation for musicians to just try to steal the spotlight and solo for too long, and I think at this point there's maybe an unspoken rule that frowned upon. It's just... just take it easy and wait to everybody take their turn. That's probably... I think that's probably the case at this point. I think maybe if you're getting together with people, you don't wanna, especially with people you don't know that well, you don't wanna put a chart in front of them of your original music which is like nearly impossible to sight read. That will probably be a no-no. But you know, I told you in the beginning I really ...I don't ... I hardly do any sessions at all of any sort of, you know. I'm trying to think back more ten years when I did a lot more of them.

R.P: O.k. It's o.k. It's great! How you think the jam session can contribute for the relations between musicians, if it can contribute with that? And the relation of the musicians and their audiences. Do you think... can it help?

B.M: Well, listen, the sessions is maybe you know apart from doing gigs, it's the best way to learn how to play jazz. So in that sense you're doing your audience a favour cause you're gonna sound better, you know. If you're doing a session... But you can also get used to not playing for an audience which can be... I mean, if all you do is sessions, you get in front of a crowd and it's just a completely different experience. Like you're disoriented and you might not, you know, play your best, so...

R.P: Do you think there's a chance you can learn something? What do you think you can learn or "dislearn"? In a session or in a jam session, or...

B.M: What I learned from the club sessions is that there's really not much point to them (ri-se). And it's just like a lot of people sort of trying to get their name out or just to circulate, and it's just too many people trying to do the same thing. It's just... seems a little desperate, a little futile.

So, in a private session... what I've learned? I don't know... It's just a way of honing your skills. You just work on weaknesses in a low pressure situation. It's like a form of practice.

R.P: So how... may I ask you this question? How did you... you said it seems desperate, the jam session and stuff... (...). How did you manage to stand out? You're one of my favourite guitar players in N.Y. How did you manage to stand out in the music scene?

B.M: I don't know! (ri-se)

R.P: Just happened?

B.M: Yeah, I guess. I don't know, I... That's a tough one... I mean, you know, first of all I've been here forever, you know. I'm here for like 20 years now. So I just end up... from hanging around for so long end up playing with a lot of different people. Some people hear you and... and you get hired for one thing or another. And I always did a lot of writing and I finally was able to put a CD out...

(...) I don't know. I mean, I suppose I got a little attention just because I was so much different than other things people were doing, I don't know... I met Maria [Schneider]. I suppose being in her band gave me a little bit of visibility.

Actually Ben [Street] and Jim [Black] whom I played with in trio for a few years, I met at a session (ri-se). So, at somebody's basement. Actually I guess it was in Ben Street's basement. A sax player friend of mine called me up and had me come over there. And I'd never met either one of them before. And I was intrigued by them. I couldn't tell if I like their playing at that point because it was so obscure to me. But I thought: "I wanna investigate this!", so I ended up playing. And plus they lived right in my neighbourhood, so... we ended up playing quite a bit and I started getting gigs as a leader with those guys. So I guess that's one way were the sessions really were a big help.

R.P: What you think would be the role, if there's a critical element in a session even in a home session... what you think it's the role of the critical element? What do you think can be evaluated and criticized? How do you do that? How do you manage to deal with that? With each other, with

yourself? Is that important to have a session and to use critique to improve stuff or not?

B.M: What do you mean by critique? You mean if you talk about... and critique each other?

R.P: Yeah, or each other or yourself. Or you feel there's a need to change something? You think the session can help up with that, or not?

B.M: Well, maybe the best way is... I used to, and a lot of people tape themselves during sessions and then later figure out what could be improved and what could be changed... I don't know, I think it's really hard to be critical while you're engaged in the process. And it's rare that you get together and actually like give each other constructive criticism. I think people are a little too sensitive (ri-se)... for that, unless you know them really well and almost nobody asks for that and nobody volunteers it. I mean I almost wish it were different and people were a little bit more forthcoming and honest.

R.P: So maybe sometime if you don't like something, maybe you just prefer not to say anything because you're gonna hurt...

B.M: Oh no, you never say anything... I mean I know a couple of people that open their mouth, but that's rare.

R.P: O.k. So one last general question. What would you say would be the importance of the session, of the club session, the home session, to you... to the music, to improvised music, jazz music... I don't know what to call it... in N.Y. What do you think it's the role or the importance, or not if you think it's not important, of those two kinds of... it's like a conclusion to you. Would you like to conclude something?

B.M: Well, it's an institution. And it existed ever since the music formed and came known as jazz. So... I think it's important to have a place to play without the pressure of like the expectation of an audience. Although often time there are audiences in jam sessions. But it would be hypocritical for me to say that I thought they are important, because I try to avoid them. I don't really see that much musical viability in them. And you know, like I said before, ... gigs they are not that... and there is so many people applying for very few gigs, that the private session is one of the best ways for really learn how to play. And I know a lot of great players that...they will freely admit that they learn their craft mainly from doing sessions with people. And now

they may be successful doing lots gigs now, but to a certain point they relied on the session too... and learned their craft.

III - Bill Pierce

RP: Can you tell me what's your own definition of a jam session? What it represents for you? What is a jam session for you?

B.P: It's just pretty simple, I mean this is... Well I mean, there are like, you know... basic... is a place where people... an informal situation for people to come and play. It's not a set repertoire but is either an organized jam session or a sort of... let's see: sometimes there are open jam sessions at clubs or even houses, peoples homes... it's open to anybody. And there's jam sessions that people put together with friends and like minded musicians and, you know, selective. And they're both sort of the same purpose. Essentially it's an informal situation where may or may not have a pre determined even style of music. Generally it's gonna be a similar style. The repertoire might be the one thing that, you know, open. You're not gonna have like mainstream or swing guys using a jam session with more modern musicians. I mean is usually like mined musicians and generally friends or even if it's an unorganized like at a club, people know who the people are... in a perfect world, yeah! So when you come to one it's kind of open ended. You're not playing necessarily for the audience to see a band...you know, like an organized band with organized music, and organized program. So it's basically this kind of impromptu, and for some people that's more exciting than the more formalized, you know, repertoire and performance. I don't know how musicians feel... When you're younger, when you're trying to learn it's more important probably being part of a jam session because that's usually the opportunities you get to play and learn and test yourself and find out where you are. As you get older jam sessions tend for me like, not to be that interesting. I'd rather have something that I know everybody's like-minded and there's no surprises of the negative kind. Although, surprise still is the element of jazz I guess, that is the most, probably, significant part, or the "impromptness", or the possibility of something really exciting happening, so I think a lot of times the general public and the promoters of festivals, they kind of like that idea, so if you put like Cecil Taylor with Coleman

Hawkins, you know something exciting is gonna happen, sometimes, this is a disaster, you know...

R.P: What can happen in those situations?

B.P: You can be a real disaster... I mean, sometimes it can be exciting if people are willing to compromise or not be so rigid about their own stylistic preferences or their own musical identities... Generally not, I..., I don't know if it's 50/50 or not, because that's..., those kind of jam sessions are like accesables, they call it jam session but in sense it's a promoting symbol, Why don't we put this person with this person, and see what happens, 'cause it's gotta be exciting 'cause it's so different ,so you know, you put two people really different together, sometimes it's more a fight than anything, so it's a..., that's a different thing, I mean, it's still a jam session but it's kind of forcing that organize or program thing, and it's more like the idea that, or something really, really, exciting like the old days when guys discover things right at the spot , I mean it's kind of idealize sort of idea about a jam session..., but when I was younger, jam sessions, generally, somebody had'em at the house and you were invited, generally, sometimes you crashed and..., but it would be just a bunch of people playing , and sometimes they were, so ok, well..., there would be some rules, there's clubs Wally's, down here in Boston, they always used to have an open jam session on Sundays, I don't know if they still have it, but this was back when really, Wally's was still more old guys then young guys , now it's more students running everything..., back in those days you had..., you had to more or less be invited but if you just crashed, they let you played, but they'd embarrassed you too, if you didn't played well...and, to me is more a learning situation for young musicians, and it's still a place for older guys to get together and just play and have fun, you know..., that happens probably in every city , not so much..., I haven't be in a jam session in years, I don't know if anybody of my generation really has them anymore, that happens sometimes, but generally not, you know..., using jam session, or really rehearsals for gigs, but I mean..., It's a significant part of history of jazz, and the development of jazz and it's still viable... I think in New York there are probably more sessions in New York, than anywhere because there's a zillion musicians there, most of them don't have jobs, so, just to do something. Why are you practicing

if you don't have a chance to play? So you play for yourself and you play for other musicians and sometimes out of those situations gigs happen, you make connections and stuff like that, so I assume that's happening in New York... I never was a part of that when I was in New York, cause I was older, I already had a gig, so I didn't, I wasn't really a part of it...

R.P: You were playing in the Jazz Messengers?

B.P: I was doing the Jazz Messengers, and I really started being in New York a significant amount of time, and they used to have evening jam sessions at the clubs. The Blue Note used to have one, that was the one that I knew about the most cause you some of my friends were running them, or was a..., and then I think down the street at the place that used to be in that corner, from the Blue Note..., I can remember the name of it anymore, was right down the street from the blue note, it changed, Blue note actually bought it I think, that club, but it was a nice club I remember, and that was in Manhattan, they never had'em at the Vanguard and probably other places, but probably at Brooklyn and other places probably tons of them....

R.P: Uptown...

B.P: And uptown, yeah..., Oggy's, and....

R.P: And you have Cleopatra's Needle, and Smoke...

B.P: Yeah right..., so that's new. See, those places I'm not really familiar with, but you know, it's a good business thing for a club owner: you get guys who play for free, all right, you get musicians, they gonna probably spend a little money, maybe buy a drink or so, for musicians it's a good place for people to check them out. So, it's kind of a, you know..., it's not like some people really taking advantage of anybody, it just a situation and then in the case of the way the business is now, so limited, you know..., there is an opportunity for people to play, chance to, you know..., work out some things, or maybe this attest that you'd been working on at home, for practicing, so it's so viable thing, and still, you know..., it still has its place, I mean..., yeah.....

R.P: Ok, you were saying about, there are rules, and you follow the rules, what kind of rules?...

B.P: Well, sometimes people will say, ok, we don't wanna have, you know, ten saxophone players playing, would have like maybe four in this

tune or what you wanna play, or they'll have like 30 minutes for guys to play. I mean, those kind of rules, just more like for, just so it doesn't get out of control, or bizarre, you know..., I mean, those kind of rules, and usually there's no musical rules that I know of, and usually that's not a part of it, I mean, you kind of agree upon a shared repertoire, and I don't know, from city to city, and from place to place, sometimes the repertoires are the same standards, stuff that people had been playing for the last fifty years. But occasionally new tunes come in, and you know, and it becomes a part of that particular group of people, or that club, or that scene... Those kind of rules, I guess, I mean, if you come in and call a tune that nobody knows, some original that nobody ever heard of before, doesn't make any sense, so people still play the standards. You're supposed to know Cherokee and Blues in all keys and, you know, Giant Steps and Moment's Notice. I mean, there's a wide repertoire, styles, to some degree but not, not the newest tune by the newest guy... I mean those are kind of rules, so it's organized to some degree, and it's not embarrassing, or it's not a pain in the ass for the people, especially for the rhythm section players 'cause those are the guys who are sitting out there flagging along while these guys play forever... That's another thing too, the rule might be just don't play so long, you know..., don't wear everybody out, don't bore everybody to death, and then we have the rhythm section...

R.P: You're not Coltrane or anything...

B.P: Yeah..., 'cause I mean, who wants to be a rhythm section when guys like taking advantage of you either to stroke their ego, or just to be a pain, some people are like that, they just wanna play forever, 'cause they practice a lot, so they figure they wanna get it all out, but that's not the, it's not in the spirit of the thing, it should be collective but a lot of times it's not really that collective, it's more individual, people trying to ..., well I'm really good so check me out, as opposed of a shared thing that everybody can enjoy, but it's up to the individuals and the place too, you know...

R.P: So, you didn't do any jam sessions?

B.P: Oh, I did a lot, in Boston, oh yeah...

R.P: Do you recall any particular experience?

B.P: I just remember that some times they were totally embarrassing 'cause you really didn't know as much as you thought you know, you didn't played as well as you thought you would, and some times you were really affirming, you know..., well I can really do this, or I can really hang with this guys, you know..., so oh! man, some of the best music I, some of the greatest musicians I met in jam sessions, 'cause we used to have, I used to live in a place on Jamaica Plain, where we had an organ, an electric piano, a set of drums always set up, so Larry Young just to come and play there, Lenny White, Stanley Clark, Steve Grossman, Dave Liebman..., I mean all kinds of people, because my former roommate who lived in the same building, we weren't roommates anymore, but it was a bunch of musicians, there was like, about eight apartments, like two..., like four in each side, and on one side on the second floor was my friend and another drummer, a trumpet player and a drummer, and me and another saxophone player, basically we just played all the time, we drove everybody crazy, but..., because the trumpet player going to school, the New York School of Performing Arts, he knew all these guys, oh! Well, a lot of them, and then the other, there was a piano player who knew all the guys, you know..., like some of the really..., like Larry Young that's why we got him out there, and we would be friends, you know..., we'd see these guys and say, ok you can come on and play if you want, or we'll take you to have something to eat, show you was going out around town, and in most times guys were really cool about this, a lot of guys I still know, guys who are big or well known, I kind of met them in some of that jam sessions, and in plus there's the guys in town, I mean, there were guys who, I went to Berklee, but other guys went to the conservatory, so I didn't really know them that well, but we got to know one another trough the jam sessions, there was great players, I mean, the ones from in-town, people..., names that people may not know, but still really great musicians, who either live here, or live on Europe, all kinds of people, you know..., Wilby Fletcher, I remember was a young drummer that you may not know, but played..... for a long time, Sid Sims, I mean, there were tons of guys, a lot of guys, but those are some of the main guys, Lenny White, and Grossman, and Larry Young ...

R.P: What do you think it was important with all those guys? What made you recall them?, What happened importantly in terms of creativity, or improvisation?...

B.P: It's not the creative so much, it's just knowing that you are part of something, you are part of the brotherhood if you wanna call it that, or you know, membership of the performing musicians, or improvising musicians, jazz musicians, you can get in a jam session, you can play with guys, and you know, and you can be a part of it, and be, you know, you belong, that's kind of what it is more than anything, I mean, sometimes there were self or realizations, you know... play like a... maybe a tune you'd never thought you could play before, all of the sudden it make sense, or something, it clicked, Oh!..., whatever..., but if you did it...., the only way you'll be able to play is to play, practice is one thing, but playing and performing it's a different..., it's "the thing" to do, that's how you get it, and then beyond that it's playing in front of an audience and being able to communicate with the audience. I mean, but all these things stepwise or gradual sort of a processes, or experiences that one can learn to do, and that's it, I mean, that you can play with your peers, people that you have the same age, the same minds, and that you can play with the real, uh, you know, the much better players, or the well known players...

R.P: What particular skills do you think you can develop in a situation?

B.P: Every skill that you need to be a musician, especially in Jazz, but even professional.., I mean, just being able to pick up things, you know, real quick, you know, really being improvising, and if you don't know a tune, you can listen to the other people play and...I mean, this is all the rudiments of music, it's exactly the same thing you do on practice but it's a, it's a, a more hands-on application, I mean, this is what is really like, I mean, 'cause a lot of times even when I've done gigs, I just to play with Freddy Hubbard, and I remember he would, on occasion and other people too, they'd asked "do you know a song?", and you say "Yeah!", and you might know it, sometimes they ask you if you know a song, and you say no, and they play it anyway, so you have to be able to, you know, to think and to hear, and to be able to make it work, I mean, 'cause a lot of times, that's what the old

guys, they didn't really ask people if you knew things, you're supposed to know them, you're supposed to know everything, I mean you're supposed to know whatever they called, if you wanted to work with those guys that's what you had on mind, you had to be able to, to pick up stuff quickly, or you have to at least be professional enough to get through it and not to look too stupid or too inadequate, and then maybe go, you know, go back to the practice for learning it better, but those are the kind of skills you learn to be able to play, you have to develop repertoire, you know, to be a professional musician, people don't think about that too much now, young people to me don't think to really understand it, you don't take a Realbook to a gig, you have to know, you have to know the repertoire, it doesn't matter what genre music it is, if is classical you have a repertoire that you can play, if it's jazz it should be the same thing, and this is not reading music, this is just knowing music, you know...

R.P: And to a jam session too... I've seen people taking Real Books to jam sessions...

B.P: No god, I can only imagine that going on in New York, people would laugh you out there, but maybe things are different now, I mean in Boston it was, it wasn't quite as tough, but in some of the jam sessions the same rules apply, you know, "don't bring a book in here man, if you don't know it then sit down", you know...

R.P: Listen...

B.P: Yeah!, "listen and if you can learn it from sitting down, maybe the next time you'll know it but don't bring a Fake Book man", that's like insulting to some musicians, especially old guys, they think you're crazy...

R.P: And, do you think there are other critical elements that can appear in a jam session and that can help you develop your playing?

B.P: Well, yeah, sure, of course. Learning how to handle rejection if you don't do well, or if other guys don't seem to particularly you know warm... you know what I mean? You have to learn to be confident in yourself, you know. It's a part of it. If you get, you know, rejected, or if you don't play so well... well, so what, you know? You just have to kind of pick it up, go back to the practice room and sheer. So self confidence, stability to be a profession musician and just to know who you are musically and even emotionally, I guess.

R.P: So what kind of aspects do you think are valorized... valued in your playing or in yourself, or in your way of handling people, or talking to people, or just being... What kind of aspects you think are more valued and less valued?

B.P: I mean, in that situation... I don't know. I guess if you're just... if you're good, I mean and you play what is being played and you play well, and as opposed to a person who only can do one thing maybe or only can play "Blues" or... I mean, I guess if you play weakly, if you don't have a good sense of time, you know, people will be aware of it and of course they won't call you. I mean, what's valid is the way you handle yourself, if you do a good job, or even to somebody if you don't do well, but there's a sense of that you really are "studice" about it and you wanna really learn it. And musicians can pick up one... I guess, old musicians. I'm kind of always thinking in terms of the old musicians to the young musicians, as opposed to the same peer group, because that's kind of different anyway... but I think what you really learn is professionalism, number one. The beginning idea of professionalism, because what you do with your friends and in jam sessions is one thing, but when you're in front of an audience it's another level of criticism, or a professionalism that has to be handled and maintained, because in people paying money that you play, and plus it's this, it's this different, it's more of a communicative aspect in a different level, it's like you're not dealing with musicians so it's another way of dealing with. The musicians understand a lot more than the audience to some degree, but the audience is the people that you eventually would have to deal with and who you really are trying to reach, you know, in one way or the other, playing a ballad or something like that...

R.P: So, mainly in a jam session the audience you would say they're musicians?

B.P: The audience is musicians, and is like your peer group, it's like the people who judge you from really knowing the aspects of what you're trying to do, those are the people that really kind of know, in terms about whether not if you, you know, of the rudiments of music, rather you had a good time, you had a good ears, good technique, and good sense of history and repertoire in your playing. I mean, they don't know that, even in a gig,

you may not need that so it's different, but I think if you don't come through the jam session aspect about it, you'd still gonna be lacking something so, I mean, you really start to figure out what's necessary in jam sessions. Sometimes you find out what you really are more gear to work to, I said, you might find out sadistically, "well I really, this is what I wanna do now", even of hearing it in yourself or hearing it in somebody else. It's development and it's research in a sense, self research, but also the stimuli that you get from the others players, you know, so sometimes you come to a better realization of what you want, what you want your musical personality to be about...

R.P: Ok, I think that's pretty much it (...). Thank you very much.

IV - Bill Stewart

RP: What is for you a Jam session? In what occasions? Where? And when? for

BS: Well, a jam session is when jazz musicians play together, usually it refers to jazz musicians. And Jazz is a traditional music, there are traditional elements in it, but there's also a lot of room for individuality, and so a jam session is when the players get together and they play, you know, the songs that everybody grew up hearing or, you know, songs that most of the jazz musicians know and they come together and they play, it could be, you know, musicians who had never met each other or something like that...

RP: And these songs they play... What kind of songs are usually chosen? And which kind of repertoire do you think fits to what kind of situations?... like there are songs that are more appropriate to a situation ...

BS: Well, the main thing in a jam session, I think, it's that the people, the musicians playing, agree on that song that they all know. If they don't all know it, then somebody is gonna be on a disadvantage. It's gonna be hard for them to, you know, maybe play.

RP: These songs usually are what kind of songs?

BS: Standard songs like from a jazz repertoire, or Broadway shows...

RP: Ok. What do you think...? What characteristics do you think are important in terms of the physical space? Which places do you think are most important for playing? How can it affect you're playing?

BS: I don't think it is really important, but it tends to happen a lot in clubs, not at a concert setting, although in the 50's, and also 60's there was "Jazz at the Philharmonic", which were famous players getting together as a jam session, very famous people, you know, like Lester Young, and Roy Eldrige, and people like that. But it really doesn't matter as long as the sound in the room is ok, and there are other instruments there to play, anything... anything will work.

RP: Ok. Do you recall any particular experience? And, why do you recall it?

BS: Involving a jam session...?

RP: Yes, do you recall any particular session?

BS: I remember when I went to New York. There was a jam session after-hours late night at the Blue Note. After the regular band for that week had played, there was a jam session afterwards. And I remember in the late 80's I was a young musician, and wanted to come and, you know, meet other musicians and play, and get a chance to be heard. So I went to that jam session to play sometimes and, sometimes I would get to play and sometimes I would stay there all night and not get to play, because they would call you up, and everybody would sign a little sheet. But there were also always a little politics involved, as far as you got invited up at what time or whatever. And I remember getting to play sometimes, and sometimes not, but then I started getting called to play the jam session, so I was the house drummer on the jam session, and then other people would come in and sit in, but that was one that I remember.

RP: Ok. What do you think jam sessions have to offer to jazz musicians? To people that are learning, professional musicians, etcetera?

BS: It's just a chance to play with other people, at often times musicians tend to practice at home, and work on things at home, and they don't get a chance to try them, you know, in context. So, for many people who don't get to play with other musicians often enough, who are maybe not working every week, or every night, it's a nice chance for them to play. Also for very young musicians who are not used working regularly. I'm a working musician, I don't go to jam session ever, you know... I don't do it. I don't need to. It's something I used to do, and now, it's like if I have time off I'm gonna stay home.

RP: Relaxing...

BS: Yeahh...

RP: What set of rules do you think that are involved in a situation like that?

BS: There are no really clearly drawn rules for that. Some jam sessions are more loose then others, some are like... anybody can play, and some are like... well you can play if we know you, maybe you can play, you know. So there's all different kinds... so there's nothing really said. Every situation is different.

RP: Ok, do you want to say any last comments?

BS: I think I'm ok. You have what you need? Did I answer the questions?

RP: Yes, you did. Thank you very much.

BS: Thank you.

V - Chris Potter

RP: First of all, What's for you a jam session? Who plays with who, in what occasions does that happen or can it happen?, When?..., or Where?..., etcetera, etcetera.

CP: Uhh, Well a jam session is..., is where people who don't usually play together, get together and play. I mean..., it usually happens at a club, you know..., and uhh..., different people sit in, that is they bring their instruments and everyone, I mean..., there's a repertory of songs that everybody knows..., so you..., you know..., you can have songs that you can play together even if you've never played together... That's what jam session is.

RP: What you mean by sitting in? ... Sitting in is...

CP: Sitting in means... means that you... means just playing. Like if you bring your horn, you know..., someone says "do you wanna sit in?", "sure I'll sit in", so then you play a tune.

RP: About that repertoire: usually what kind of repertoire is chosen? And what different kind of repertoire can fit into what kind of situations?

CP: Well there's... there's sort of a... there's a lot of songs that most Jazz players know, you know. Like we all know a lot of the same songs because we've listened to famous jazz recordings, you know. We've learned how to play those songs so that, anywhere in the world that you go..., you know... you can sort of say "Ok, why don't we play All The Things You Are?", and everybody knows what that means, and you can play together.

RP: So, usually there are..., there are show tunes songs, or jazz standard songs?

CP: Yeah..., I mean... There's some I guess that probably come from Broadway shows, and there's others that were written by jazz musicians, but..., you know... like well known... Thelonious Monk' tunes, or Duke Ellington' tunes, or John Coltrane tunes, or whatever.

RP: If you are in a jam session, what kind of repertoire would you use in certain circumstances or in other situations? ... According to the musicians, or the venue you're playing in, or the town, or whatever. Do you usually start playing some kind of tunes instead of other ones?

CP: Let's see..., well I mean..., I would probably begin, if there was a bunch of players that I didn't know, I'd probably begin by calling some tunes that pretty much everybody knows. A Blues or something like that...

RP: So, simple tunes?

CP: Pretty, pretty simple..., yeah..., you know..., if there were musicians that I knew better, and I knew what style they play, you know I... maybe I would know a little bit more, or maybe..., you know..., if I know somebody would be familiar with some Ornette Coleman tunes..., you know, then I might call that, but usually not.

RP: Ok. Speaking about the physical space in itself: what characteristics do you think are important in that space? Which venues do you think are most important? How can it affect your playing, and the ensemble playing?

CP: Jam sessions are always..., you know..., sort of a loose occasion, or not quite as formal as other occasions. And usually if it's a good jam session, it usually happens late at night..., after the gig, or something like that. And you know... everyone had a couple of drinks, and everyone is enjoying themselves..., you know. And it's..., kind of a hard atmosphere to just..., create. It has to sort of..., happen...

RP: Do you think that that atmosphere can happen usually after concerts? Late at night? That can create the perfect environment for happening some good music?

CP: Yes. I mean, you can never tell. It's always..., is the combination of the musicians who were playing and the... you know... and the audience, and everything..., it's... you know... it's one of those things that are impossible to predict.

RP: How do you think can the audience affect the music? In which ways?

CP: Well, the audience affects..., affects music no matter what kind of music it is. It has a huge..., a huge roll, in the experience of the musicians, and of the audience, you know. If you can feel that an audience is open and receptive to the music, it's so much easier to play, you know. And the more that you feel comfortable playing, then the more you're able to give, and the more they receive, you know. It's like it goes back and forward, back

and forward, you know. So that's... that's the same no matter what, what situation it is.

RP: What do you think was the most important musical experience in a jam session? Any experience that you can remember, and why do you remember it? And how was it important?

CP: You mean like...

RP: If it was important...

CP: Some sort of a jam session thing that was record?

RP: Something you can recall..., something that you remember for some reason...

CP: I'm trying to think... (ri-se) I'm trying to think...

RP: You must have played in thousands... I know... (ri-se)

CP: I guess I've done it a lot... I don't do it that often anymore, you know... I feel like... It gets to be a bit much... But I'm..., trying to think of a great jam session experience... It definitely happened. I remember a good one at the Montreal Festival a couple of years back...

RP: Can you tell me a little bit about what happened? What did you feel?

CP: Well, I... I don't remember everybody that was playing, but I remember Jeff Ballard was playing drums and, it's some sort of situation where the rest of the mus..., of the band dropped out, so we just played duo for a long time...

RP: Wow...

CP: I remember... Chick... Corea was at the bar hanging out, and you know... he was like... yeah! (ri-se). And we went for a long time...

RP: In duo?

CP: Yes.

RP: Wow...

CP: And, you know... I remember that was a good one (ri-se).

RP: What, what do you think happened that made it so special?

CP: You know, it's like I'm saying, it's the people that were there, it's a bunch of musicians, bunch of my friends, you know. It's just that... I don't often have a chance to play with Jeff, you know, So... so we were... you know, happy to have a chance to play together... that sort of thing...

RP: And, what happened musically?

CP: I have no idea, but it felt good.

RP: Ok..., it felt good.

CP: Yes.

RP: Ok. So, to summarize more or less, what do you think does jam sessions have to offer to the musician? ... to the professional musician, to the beginning musician or apprentice?

CP: I think it can be very very useful for musician's learning... I mean, a lot of times, jam sessions, especially in New York now, you know... it's like... there might be thirty saxophone players that wanna play you know. They all play in the same tune, and it will go on for about five hours, and it's not that interesting to anyone really you know. That's the bad side of the jam session, you know... But then the good side can be just that people have a chance to play together that don't know each other, maybe you get to know someone that you never... you know... never really knew, or... I mean that was... that was a way that I learned tunes too. It's just being in a situation where people called tunes that I didn't know, and maybe I heard them once or twice but I didn't know them, so... you know...

RP: You will learn them on the spot?

CP: I will learn them, yes... because I'd be... I would say "Yeah! Sure, I'll take a solo on this", and, then I'd have to really figure it out.

RP: Ok. I think that's pretty much it.

CP: Cool!

RP: Ok. Thank you very much.

CP: Sure, you're welcome.

VI - Jason Moran

RP: How would you define a jam session? Who usually is supposed to played with who, and in what circumstances? And where, and when?

JM: Ok..., jam sessions usually happen at a club, and on mostly... the club, it doesn't have to be a jazz club, it just can be a club that have music and instruments. Usually the people who go there are... are very comfortable with the scene of that club. They might not even be the best player, but they are the ones who the club looks to, to kind of a... keep everything in order. Some people, you know, decide to write down, you know, names on a list of people who's gonna play, what many times becomes a... so what limits the session nowadays is that musicians don't come to learn from other musicians, they come to impress other musicians, because they think that maybe, you know, Roy Haynes will come sit in the club and hear them play, and then they will be discovered. So they're not going to the session as much to work on new ideas but just to, most of the time, kind of rehash what they already know and show of. And... of course you should get comfortable with playing with musicians. The session can serve a lot of functions. Mostly for a beginner it's great that they can get to play with the rhythm section or musicians that they don't know, and they can see if they know tunes, and they can get on the stand, they can learn, they're listening, so everything is being improved very quickly if you play with people that you don't know. But then to the people who are professionals, or the people who are studying a lot, amateur musicians, the point of the session is to..., it's to then..., sometimes to just play, period, and which can be a great thing. I think one of the better jam sessions I've seen, or had heard, has been the session that happens in Chicago with this great saxophonist Von Freeman, who plays. He is eighty-one years old, he plays every Tuesday at this club on west side of Chicago, and he is playing his ass off, and anybody who's in town, most professionals musicians who are in town, on a Tuesday night go to see Von Freeman. And that's the kind of jam session that you want to go to, but most... ninety percent of the jam sessions aren't like that. Ninety percent of jam sessions are about some other thing, but not about learning...

RP: What do you think happens in that situation? What does he [Von Freeman] offer?

JM: Well he, as a musician and as a person, is very open, very warm, very friendly. So you can always talk to him. You don't have to know him at all. And he would treat you like your... his best friend. That really helps the musicians who would come there to play. In New York is not so much like that. You gotta know such and such to get there to play, or you just can just walk up there, and they'll be really rude, and... but sometimes that works. When I was in New York... well I still live there... but I never went to jam sessions, because the two times I went, I hated it. I didn't like it: the scene, and it was very late at night, and...

RP: The vibe or....?

JM: The vibe, the music, the scene, everything. It just wasn't what I was about, and so I decided to more... to work on what I was working on in my lessons with Jackie Byard, and then I played a lot in school. So I had experience playing with people, and I didn't need to search for that, going to the jam sessions to really learn or something...

RP: So you didn't do a lot of it?

JM: No, no...

RP: But did you do like sessions, with... other kind of sessions with friends?

JM: Yeah, Yeah, I would do sessions like that with friends at school. When I was in high school I played a lot with other people...

RP: Where did you go to?

JM: Manhattan School of Music, New York.

RP: Yeah...

JM: And... so everybody has find their own way. But the session, really for most people, can serve as a great place for you to learn really quickly, you know. And it's always... you're nervous when you get up there. They might call something you don't know, but that's when you can use your ear, you have to learn it, listen to the bass player, listen to the piano player chords, and then learn it...

RP: Ok. So what's -if you recall one - what was for you the most important experience? I know you didn't go a lot, but do you recall any

important jam session where something happened that you really liked or hated?

JM: There was a... when I was still in high school in Houston, I would play with this older drummer, who really sounded like a cross between Art Blakey and Elvin Jones. And he was just an amazing... powerful drummer. And to play piano with a powerful drummer and to also be able to play on top of it, that'll be hard driving beat...

RP: Like a McCoy kind of stuff?

JM: Yeah, yeah... so you had to play with power... and sometimes he liked what I played, and sometimes he didn't like what I played. But what I liked about playing with him was his honesty, you know. That's what you need as a young musician. So that was the session, or those were the sessions that I really enjoyed, where I really improved really quickly...

RP: Ok. I think we're pretty much over...

JM: are you sure?

RP: Yeah.

JM: Ok.

RP: Thank you very much for your time.

JM: My pleasure.

VII - Joanne Brackeen

RP: What's your definition of a jam session? What is a jam session for you?

J.B: Well, a jam session... that's something that I used to do when I was just starting to play, and we would have jam sessions, what would it be then was... usually, there would be a group that was hired for the job, and then people would come and sit in, they were working but they would come, and they would be invited. They would pretty much have to be known by the musicians who were working, and thought that they were good enough or would be a big pleasure to play with, and they would sit in. So it was, in those days, a very good way to meet new musicians and to have fun in the band stand and hear new musical ideas. But once you get situated in the Jazz world and you become known, you get too occupied in your own jobs and creating music, putting bands together, and all the things that are involved. It's not something that... that I would take part in very often. Every once in a while, they would have like a... there was a I.A.J.E. [International Association for Jazz Education] conference in January, that was in New York, and they had a special jam session, and it was made up of people, mostly that were on the jazz quarter website. And so we got asked by Lois Gilbert who runs that website, who we'd like to play with, and so on like that... So it was a jam session, and not everybody played together that was set up, but it went pretty well... They have all different kinds of jam sessions. I know my students go to and I don't really attend those, but I think that's a different situation, but they wish that was like the one that I described...

R.P: Ok, you were talking about "sitting in". I would just like to ask you, what do you mean by that? Can you define "sitting in"? What is for you "sitting in"? What does it mean?

J.B: Well, it doesn't happen now, but back in the 1970's or whatever, it did happen: somebody would ask you to come and play. They would have a job and they'd know you played your instrument very well. Maybe toward

the end of the night, they would ask if you wanted to come in and play, and sit in and play with the group.

R.P: So, it's somebody that doesn't belong to the group initially...

J.B: Yeah, but it would only... they would only be asked to sit in if they were a very good player.

R.P: Ok, so we would say it's some kind of a recognition thing to invite somebody to play?

J.B: Yes, if somebody in the group knows you and so on...

R.P: About the physical space, what do you think would be the most important or probable spaces for it to happen?

J.B: Well, it used to just happen in clubs where there were working groups and toward the end of the night, they would have what they called the jam session. I think they still do that in here in New York...

R.P: Yes, they do, I've checked ...

J.B: They have one at Cleopatra's Needle and...

R.P: Smoke...

J.B: I also think... the Blue Note.

R.P: Yes, I've been to Cleopatra's needle too... Can you tell me about any particular experience in a jam session context that you recall for some reason, and that was important for you, and why was it important for you?

J.B: Well, would it been important for everyone, around thirty-five to forty years ago. Music then, at that point was based on how well people played, and the musicians were the ones who decided who could play and who couldn't play so well. So these days, the jazz critics try to decide who's playing well because they get paid off by some of the record companies who have the artist album out, and so it's all economics. In the old days it was very important because you couldn't sit in unless you really could play and then you got to meet new people and they got to meet you, and share ideas. And I think that was the most important thing.

R.P: So do you think right now the jam sessions that might happen maybe they don't have the old spirit? Would you say that?

J.B: Oh, no they don't, no... A lot of times some of my students would go to a jam session..., well, they try to set it up, but they don't know

who can play and who can't, so you just walk in and put your name on a list, and whenever your number is called you get up and play, and...

R.P: Whether you play or not...

J.B: And maybe you can play good but maybe the drummer and the horn player that were playing when you first came in, you thought you wanted to play with, maybe it's their turn to finish and they invite another horn player and another drummer up that can't play to well. And then you're up there playing with somebody that you don't want to play with. So they try to organized it now, and that's often what happens. That happens more often than the ideal situation, which was how it was thirty or forty years ago. That's how we all learned how to play: by sitting in and playing with people who really could play and knew us, and that was helping us along. But now, they just put a bunch of people together, so they don't really know who can play, who can't play, and it's just kind of... That's what I heard from my students, and I didn't go. That's what I heard, but they all told me the same story. But I still told them to keep going out, just so they can get known. So I think it's still good, but not as effective as it used to be but it's good...

R.P: Ok, and do you recall playing with someone special in a jam session?

J.B: Oh! I played with everybody special. When a was a teenager I played with people... Harold Land, Dexter Gordon, these people are not all living now, but they were very famous at that time...

R.P: Wow, it was at what... at the Blue Note, or...?

J.B: No, I was in California then, by the time I came here... Well, actually I sat in with Art Blakey, and right away I got the job, so...

R.P: Wow, when was that?

J.B: 1969.

R.P: That was before Billy Pierce joined the band?

J.B: Probably before he joined the band.

R.P: I just talked to him, like some hours ago. It's funny...

J.B: Yeah, he's a friend of mine. I call him "the frog", because he always wears this little frog around his neck.

R.P: (ri-se) That's very interesting...

J.B: It used to be a very important part of the culture, but now it's not as significant, it's still important, but not like it was, because you know, the whole music world run more by economics than by the actual knowledge of the music...

R.P: Yeah, I definitely agree with you ...

J.B: And, what can we do? I don't know...

R.P: Definitely. I agree with you totally... About the repertoire, would you like to talk a little bit about what kind of repertoire was or is played in jam sessions, or can be played in jam sessions?

J.B: Well, I just tell students to go to the jam session and write down every tune they heard is played, and make sure you know all of those tunes. You know, go a few times and see what people are playing.

R.P: And what kind... how would you define those tunes? How do you catalogue those tunes?

J.B: They might just play standards, or jazz tunes, it's not too complicated, because the fact that it's a jam session. It wouldn't be anything very complicated.

R.P: There's another important aspect that I would like to ask you about. It's about the rules. Do you think there are rules in jam session? What kinds of rules are implicit? Are they formal?

J.B: Well, the rules that used to be, were very simple. You just had to be able to play. Now? I don't know what the rules are now, they don't have those rules.

R.P: So to play, you mean...

J.B: You had to know your instrument. You had to know all the tunes that were going on. You had to be able to play at any... in any key, at any tempo.

R.P: You mean, like following the changes, defining the chords...

J.B: Of course. You had to know all of these before you went in to the session.

R.P: What could happen if that wouldn't... if you went to a jam session and play, and you didn't know this tune or you didn't know to play in this key?

J.B: They would ask you to get off the bandstand immediately.

R.P: Ok. So that...

J.B: I don't know what happens now...

R.P: Ok, but for me it's important to compare and contrast what's happening now, and what happened some years ago, it's great. So, the critique elements on the jam session were just verbal, they just would say...

J.B: Well, it probably wasn't even verbal. You get up there and probably just get some kind of vibrations from the people in the band to get off and you would get off. That's all. There was total respect for the musicians knowledge of music at that... in that era. That was before we had the stars coming up... the Wynton Marsalis era in the 80's. And that's when the jam sessions kind of totally changed.

R.P: Do you think it was the commercialization of the music? What do you think changed in the musical environment, or in jazz scene?

J.B: The economical situation. People suddenly... the promoters and things suddenly wanted to become very rich, just they could get that way. You know, it's interesting because in sports the same thing happened, you know. All the players that were getting a certain amount of money in the 70's, suddenly the salary for the people playing baseball, and football, and basketball, suddenly got huge. And we have the music that went right along with it, you know... Miles Davis and some of those groups... They were getting huge amounts of money that had never been gotten before...

R.P: Maybe some other people lateral to the music wanted to profit with that...

J.B: Yeah, of course. People presenting the music saw somebody else do it, and they figure they wanted to do it too, and then I guess all the record companies thought they join in too: "let's see what we can get out of these musicians", and they did it. And, you know, also with the pop and rock groups: they started getting a lot more money too. All in the 70's, something happened there, I'm not sure what it was. And then, things became being ruled by different rules. And the rule was, I guess, if you wrote for a famous magazine or whatever, and a lot of people read it, you would write too, you wanted to be the next jazz star. And that person would become a jazz star... There's nobody that becomes a jazz star that couldn't play.

R.P: That's true.

J.B: But, you know, some of them have bigger names than what they ought to.

(...)

R.P: I would like to ask you also, what do you think can happen musically? And, what is important to happen in a jam session? What good things can happen?

J.B: Well, the good things that could happen... If you go in and you get some people that are playing on a similar level, then they can share new ideas. Some of them would have ideas that the other one never thought of, and there could be a tremendous sharing. One person would be strong in certain areas the other person is weak in, and they can pick it up right on the spot. It's like learning a language. You're learning from your friends. It's great.

R.P: In what kind of situations?

J.B: It could be an ideal situation, which it was in those days. And there was no criteria, by the way: I'm a woman, I'm white, and all the people I played with were black and were all men, and nobody ever thought to tell me I couldn't sit in. Now it's all... you have to be a certain age, you have to look a certain way, (ri-se) you can't be too fat, you can't be too thin. They're making it into another thing...

R.P: Yeah, it's all about looks now...

J.B: Well, not all, but you know, there's been a lot of that going on...

R.P: Yeah, I totally agree.

J.B: I mean, I heard somebody at a club - I'm not gonna mention the names - but someone who wanted to work at one of the well-known clubs here, and they couldn't get the job, and after they lost thirty pounds they got the job.

R.P: Wow!

J.B: I'm not gonna tell you who it was, but it happened.

R.P: Wow, that's crazy...

J.B: Yeah, well... So the club owner can do what the club owner wants to do...

R.P: Like have beautiful people playing or whatever...

J.B: (ri-se) As if this guy played better after he lost the thirty pounds, which he didn't...

R.P: Maybe he played worse because he had to go to the gym and do some exercise or whatever, and he couldn't practice! But he got the job...

J.B: (ri-se) That's right! That's not a jam session but that's a club scene. We're just talking about that, because we don't have really that much going on with jam sessions. That's kind of a pretty much thing of the past other than the ones that they organize. And those jam sessions in the past were not organized. There were someone working on a job and someone just happened to come by.

R.P: Another thing. In what kind of situations do you think can creativity be influenced and influence music? What do you think can happen in a situation like this? ...In terms of creativity?

J.B: Are you referring to the jam session? Oh. Of course, is the same thing as the learning process.

R.P: When creativity can happen and why, and what can happen... how do you translate that into music?

J.B: Well, when you're in tune with each other and they happen to call up the right people that work well as a group together, a lot of creativity can happen. It can happen anyway. You know, we're used to hear Charlie Parker records with some people that didn't even play well at all, and he still sounded great. But it's gonna happen for everyone evenly matched and they kind of have the same kind of vibe. Here's a possibility of it happening. You can't just say it is going to happen in this situation or not. You never know.

R.P: What do you think we can learn... a person can learn in a jam session? Which skills do you think are developed?

J.B: Well, you know, you need to have all your basics. Then, the skill that is developed through a jam session is being able to play with different kinds of rhythm sections and combinations and horn players, you know. You learn how people play, how to communicate better with them, something that without having the experience of playing with other people, you really can't play your best. So it's very important, you know, to be able to get together with people, different people, not always the same people. Then you can learn connections, how to do things.

R.P: How would you say an audience in a context like that can influence the music?

J.B: Audience influences the music... I think there's a big influence, because they probably don't know nearest much about the music, but they can feel if it's happening or not. So that's great.

R.P: How would you relate the jam sessions with the regular work of the jazz musicians? Where... in which areas... how can it intersect with the working environment of jazz musicians?

J.B: A jazz musician probably, since he started a career, and once everything that probably have happened, pretty much past up the need for a jam session. But a lot of times people will put together an "all star" group which would be a bunch of musicians that all play really well, but they never played together. And you can come up with some very exciting things happening that way. That's great. And perhaps it's somewhat the jazz musician's responsibility to help some of the people coming up, you know. So where these days you couldn't have someone sit in with you because of the... being run by economics. The club owners only want the people whose names are out on the thing to appear. So the audience doesn't complain and want their money back. But how we do that is through teaching. And we have like ensembles and classes and master classes. So it isn't through the jam session, that's not so possible anymore. But we still... I think that the musicians, of course, feel like they want to pass on their art. And occasionally, there is a jam session where you can do that. So that's a good way.

R.P: O.K. In some kind of conclusion: What would you say... What's the ultimate importance of the jam session within the jazz scene? ... For the players, for the teachers, for everybody...

J.B: I think it depends on the level, you know... who set up the jam session, the way that it was organized and the goals that it is supposed to accomplish. But it can be a great thing, you know.

R.P: If it's well organized or...

J.B: If it's well organized and they pick the musicians that are people capable of organizing things but also can play well. And it can come up as a great experience.

R.P: And what can happen if that doesn't happen? If it's badly organized or the musicians...

J.B: Then, no one's gonna be happy. Nobody that's playing is gonna enjoy it and nobody who's in the audience will enjoy it very much.

R.P: O.K. Thank you.

J.B. Thanks.

VIII - John Farnsworth

... ..

RP: For how long are you leading the house band in the jam session here at Smoke? More or less...?

JF: For about six years.

RP: Did you play here from the start?

JF: No, not from the start, but a half-year after it started I began to run the jam session.

RP: Are you the leader since then?

JF: Yeah. Monday nights... every Monday night. When the club first opened in 1999, the owners were just trying to figure out what kind of programming they were going to have. The club has really transformed itself into the type of club it is today. Before Smoke opened, there was a club called Augies in the same location. Did you ever go there?

RP: No. But I interviewed Bill Pierce and he told me a little bit about that.

JF: That was more or less an informal place for college students to come and drink for cheap while listening to us play. Augies provided a great space for up and coming musicians. My brother Joe led the band on Friday and Saturday nights. He would bring in "guest " artists like Junior Cook, Cecil Payne, John Jenkins, Eddie Henderson and Harold Mabern to play with us. Music was there seven nights a week.

RP: Probably more like... Smalls kind of thing?

JF: Well... different. At Augies we passed the hat for money. So when Smoke opened up, the owners wanted to make it a more upscale club. No more passing the hat. The new direction of the club took shape the very first night, the grand opening. Joe put a band together that included Goerge Coleman, Harold Mabern, Mike Zissman and himself. The next weekend I brought in Slide Hampton. From there, it just snowballed. All of a sudden big names, big names, big names... The owners then started to fill in the mid-week slots with other bands. They started a jam session night on Thursdays. They eventually moved the jam to Monday and...

RP: Why do you think they did that? Why Monday's a good day for having a jam session?

JF: Well... Mondays in New York are a little different than most other nights. Most jazz clubs have a policy where Tuesday to Sunday is the headliner, and then Monday is an off night. Some places are closed. The Village Vanguard has the "Vanguard Jazz Orchestra"... The Up Over Café in Brooklyn has a jam Monday night... It's really a night for musicians to get out and play.

RP: Cleopatra's Needle also has jam sessions on Sundays, Mondays and Tuesdays...

JF: Yeah, I led a jam there for a year. I was at Cleopatra's on Thursday nights. But that one started around one o'clock... or twelve o'clock, I can't remember. It was a late night. The jam session began after someone finished their sets. Right now at Smoke, I do my sets from nine to eleven. And then from eleven to three, three thirty in the morning, I run the session.

RP: O.k. And for how long do you have the same guys playing with you? Like, is it usual to change... you change a lot the band, or just keep the same guys?

JF: Well obviously, whenever my brother Joe's in town, he plays the drums. I pretty much use John Webber on bass and Mike LeDonne on piano. That's the basic rhythm section. I will change it up sometimes by bringing in Harold Mabern on piano.

RP: Is he the special guest?

JF: Well, there's always a special guest. My idea for the gig was to have it billed as "The John Farnsworth Quintet featuring a Special Guest". Tonight is Joe Magnarelli on trumpet. Sometimes I say: "Ladies and Gentleman... I always advertise a special guest, but the band is really full of special guests". If Joe can't make it on drums, I might call Victor Lewis. Other horn players that have played include Eddie Henderson, Steve Turre, Jim Rotondi and Frank Lacy.

RP: It also helps... It brings a lot of people to the club too.

JF: It does.

RP: Do you have a good relationship with the owner of the club?

JF: Very good relationship.

RP: Do you usually make your suggestions like: “I think we could have a special guest...”?

JF: I don't have to run it past him. He trusts me. He's known me since the Augies days. We're friends. He knows that whoever plays will be very good.

RP: In terms of being the leader of the band, what other things you decide or not?

JF: Well, o.k. So tonight Joe Magnarelli is playing trumpet...

RP: You decide the band you are going to call? You decide what songs are gonna be played...?

JF: I confirm my band a few days before Monday. As far as choosing the songs, I talk with the “Special Guest” to figure out a good program.

(...)

RP: You were talking about things that you decide being the leader of the house band.

JF: Sometimes I will pick the rhythm section based off who the “special guest” is. For instance, when I play with Frank Lacy, I will call a few different people.

RP: He is a member of the Mingus Big Band...

JF: Exactly. He was one of the guys that I play with all of the time. I went to school with him years ago at Rutgers University. So I knew there was a certain personnel that might fit in good with him. He has a good friend, a bass player, Radu Williams, that...

RP: Who hooks up good with him.

JF: Who hooks up good with him. So when Frank plays I will ask Radu to make it also... Of course I'll keep my brother Joe on drums.

RP: Of course. Well, he is very versatile, so...

JF: He fits right in. All of those guys could fit right in but it's good to change things up a little bit. Have a little variety.

RP: You do that because of the band itself or because of the audience, or because of the club, or...?

JF: The change?

RP: Yes.

JF: It's really for the music. I change the personnel for the music. I knew we can develop a rapport with Radu on bass. He doesn't play with me at all, except when Frank is here. I will either call Carlton Holmes or Rick Germanson to play piano with Frank. Each week I plan the repertoire of music that will make the "special guest" feel comfortable. Last week I spoke with Duane Eubanks about what tunes we should play. It was the first time that any of us had played with him. Basically we figure out what tunes we all know, or are familiar with. I'll write out a chart on most of the stuff, so everyone is comfortable for the two sets. Usually it's like six tunes per set. So the next time we play again we will have a collection of tunes that we have already performed. We start to develop a nice band sound over time.

RP: In what way do you think it is important for you to be on the house band? Why do you think - if do you think that - it's important to play in Smoke and be in the House Band at Smoke? Why is it good for someone... you or any other guy... want to make part of a band like that?

JF: The first response would be to have a steady gig. That's the most important... Times are hard. Not many people have the opportunity to have a steady gig. It's also something just to shoot for every week. Like tomorrow, I'll start thinking forward to the next Monday. Who will I call... if it's someone that I don't know so well, I'll have to think of tunes that we can get together. It's great to be able to play with so many great musicians. It's a very comfortable gig. Once we finish our two sets, the guys can cut out or hang out.

RP: They don't have to... they're not forced to stay, they don't have to stay?

JF: No, there are always enough players to start the jam. Musicians are always coming in. In all of the years doing the jam there has always been a piano player, a bass player and a drummer ready to play at eleven o'clock. So by eleven thirty, I wanna make sure that the jam sessions is going.

RP: But do you have to stay until the end?

JF: Yeah.

RP: You're the only guy who's supposed to stay?

JF: Yeah. Those guys can cut out. I mean... I'm sure it isn't news to anybody that Monday nights don't pay a lot. So to get these guys to do the

first two sets and then hang out till three o'clock in the morning for the same money would be asking quite a bit of them. Most of the guys end up hanging out but it isn't because of lack of musicians. There's always a list of forty people that are going to sit in that night. I guess that's a little pat on my back. I try to make it comfortable so that musicians come back week after week, year after year.

RP: It's great. What do you think the club ... why is it good for the club to have jam sessions? What does the club owner earn...? What does he earn by having jam sessions? Why is it good for the club?

JF: The club is packed with people on Monday night. The audience loves to hear my band and then to watch all of the jam musicians get together and make music. Everyone pays a little cover charge and has a drink minimum.

RP: Even if you're a musician?

JF: Even if you're a musician, otherwise the house would be packed with musicians, some of which would not spend any money. I feel bad that they have to pay, but... I mean, it's a business. They have to keep the club...

RP: Of course, otherwise... the owner has to pay the band. He's got expenses...

JF: He's got expenses... yeah.

RP: Do you think this jam session is different... In what aspects do you think this jam session is different or similar to jam sessions in other places. Like for example, you played at Cleopatra's...

JF: Yeah.

RP: What do you think might change?

JF: What's the difference? One difference is that Smoke has a beautiful stage and sound system. I can't remember if there's an actual stage at Cleo's, is there? It is easier to control the jam when the musicians have to actually get up on the bandstand. I remember that at Cleo's there would be horn players all over the place.

RP: It happened yesterday, I was there. It was like ten horn players playing almost on the same tunes.

JF: Yeah. It gets too long. I don't want to hear a song going on for twenty-five minutes.

RP: Do you think that's bad for the audience, or...

JF: It's bad for the audience, and it's bad for me. I have to be there until three thirty, I don't want to hear "Invitation" for two hours. There are certain tunes that if you call, the guys will just stretch and stretch and stretch. And if you have four horn players playing it can get...

RP: Out of hand...

JF: Yeah. Everyone wants to play.

RP: Why do you think there's a lot of people wanting to play? Why do you think people come to jam sessions?

JF: Well... it's an easy way to get a nice rhythm section. I mean, if you're a horn player or if you're a rhythm section guy you just come and all of a sudden you have a band.

RP: Harold Mabern on piano!

JF: Yeah! Yeah! One of the many good things about Harold is that he'll hang out. Harold loves to play a couple of tunes with the jam session guys. It's also a great place to meet and hear other musicians.

RP: Do you think there are some musicians that always come to these jam sessions, like a group of musicians that you often see? Do you know them through the years?

JF: Yeah. It goes in waves. Some people have been coming every week since the beginning, while some people will just come for a few weeks. There is always a new crop of musicians coming to town.

RP: Did you meet any musicians in a jam session that you hooked up with... whom you played later or had some gigs or...?

JF: Yeah... Actually, I have to think about it for a minute... The first person who comes to mind is a piano player - Kenny Asher -, not well known in the jazz circle, but he's been around a long time. He has arranged music for James Brown, Paul Simon and Lenny Kravitz. He and John Williams wrote "Rainbow Connection" for Sesame Street. I've called him for the gig because he had been coming by and plays great.

RP: Do you notice any difference in the way people face jam sessions, different kinds of people? It's a question that might hurt people's sensitivities,

but do you think there's a type of person that comes with different types of attitude to jam sessions? For example, Japanese students... do you think they come with a different attitude compared to European players? Or if a guy is black and comes from Harlem...?

JF: Yeah. Most definitely. I don't know how would I categorize...

RP: Of if it's a woman...

JF: Yeah. I don't want to get in the categorizing...but I would definitely say that there are people who do come with attitudes. I don't look at a Japanese person and think: "O.k. I know his attitude", "Here's a black person from Harlem, I know his attitude". Each person brings their own attitude to the table. Some of the greatest musicians that come through are very humble.

RP: Of course. So why do you think what takes a musician... a well known and established musician like for example Wynton Marsalis is well known for showing up at sometimes jam sessions... why do you think they show up? Do you think it's for commercial purposes, just for hanging out, just play, or show themselves...?

JF: Yeah. Probably all of that, I don't know what order. Each person has a different agenda right? Maybe to hear some other musicians, hear someone new.

RP: For example, you are a quite known guy. You have a great bio. If you were not a part of the house band, what would make you show up at a jam session? Why would you show up at a jam session...?

JF: I would go to...

RP: Probably you wouldn't show up, I don't know...

JF: No, I would. But I think the thing for me would be just to get out and play. But then you always meet some new people or reunite with, some people which you haven't seen in a long time. And yes, its politics too.

RP: Yeah, but that's part of the life of everyone. In every field.

JF: Yeah. I definitely see a lot of phone numbers being exchanged...

RP: In jam sessions?

JF: Yeah. Like tonight, I'll definitely see a lot of musicians giving cards back and forth.

RP: And what do you think is valued if you're watching a jam session or if you're playing in a jam session? What kind of things you like to hear or see in a musician? What makes a musician successful in a jam session... playing in a jam session? What do you think is more valued...?

JF: What do I like to hear?

RP: Yeah. You and... or everybody else. What's the perfect guy that can come to a jam session? Why is he a good player and why do you like to hear him?

JF: First of all, I like to hear that he really knows the tune that he's playing.

RP: What do you mean by know the tune?

JF: Say he calls "Stella By Starlight". I would expect that he can play the melody and play over the chord changes. I want to hear him play the melody right, correctly. That's what I like in a musician. That isn't necessarily true for the guy sitting next to me. I've seen people go crazy for someone who actually doesn't sound that good but is dancing all over the place.

RP: Like doing his act...

JF: That goes over, you know. I don't really... that's not what I like.

RP: How much do you think in N.Y., in terms of interval of money, usually house bands earn... in jam sessions in New York? Like an interval...

JF: Each situation is different depending on the club; it may depend on the hours involved or the day of week.

RP: Probably in Smalls they pay less than they pay in Smoke for sure...

JF: I don't know. I wouldn't even say that for sure... Each owner is different. Each guy that books the gig has their own relationship with the club owner. So...

RP: But if you would say an interval, what interval more or less ...

JF: Let's see... you know what? O.K. I can give you an example. When I was doing Cleopatra's Needle about six years ago, they were paying something like 120\$ for the whole band.

RP: For three guys?

JF: Like three or four guys.

RP: Thirty or forty each...

JF: I remember walking out of there with like twenty-five dollars... or thirty dollars. It wasn't much more than thirty bucks. That is just one situation.

RP: And the club in Manhattan that pays more the house band in a jam session? For example, I don't know, there are no jam sessions now at the Blue Note, but if there were, probably would be the club that paid more, I don't know...How much would you say...

JF: I have no idea what they pay. When I first came to town I would always go to that jam session. Ted Curson was running that. That was around 1984.

RP: At the Blue Note?

JF: Yes. That session started after the last set of music by the featured band. If Milt Jackson had a weeklong thing there Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday like two sets, the music was done about 12. The jam sessions started about 12.30 and it would go to about three. Friday and Saturday the music would go to maybe 2 a.m. and the jam session just be like an hour and a half. The same with Sunday. I don't know how much they got paid.

RP: It's possible to someone to earn like 200 bucks in one gig? One person like...in a jam session? That's impossible...

JF: I would say to musicians: "Get as much as you can!". It would be nice for everyone to make 200\$.

RP: And do you think there are clubs who are willing to do that?

JF: No (ri-se). But I don't know. I don't know... I don't think so, but...The reason why jam sessions happen is that the club owner wants them to happen, right? That's the bottom line. The club has to make money on the jam night to justify keeping their doors open. I'm lucky enough to be in a situation that the club is making money, we are making money and encouraged to create the kind of music we like.

RP: Thank you very much.

IX - Julius Tolentino

RP: For how long do you play here in the jam session?... as a member of the house band?

JT: Maybe... I mean, long time, maybe seven, eight years.

RP: You're the leader of the house band for seven or eight years?

JT: Yes. Since I moved to New York, pretty much.

RP: Did you play in jam sessions before that?

JT: Yes, I used to come here to Smalls at that time, Augies... there's a place...

RP: Now Smoke...

JT: Now Smoke... Can't remember any other jam sessions at the time. There's always somewhere to play.

RP: How old are you?

JT: I'm thirty.

RP: So you were very young, when you moved...

JT: When I moved to New York. Yes.

RP: When you're the leader of the house band in a jam session, what are you entitled to do? What do you do as a leader? What kind of responsibilities do you have? What do you decide?

JT: It's kind of different than running a regular gig. I'm trying to make it go as smooth as a regular gig, but you know, when there's other people coming in and sitting in, we try to let everybody play but maintain the level... the professional level of the music. And then try to change tempos to make sure it doesn't get boring for the audience.

RP: How can you try to maintain the level of the music? Which aspects do you think are important?

JT: Knowing who comes and sit in, you know? If you know certain person's... strengths... make sure that they play in certain kind of tune.

RP: And if you don't know the people? So there's a lot people who come that you know for a long time?

JT: For a long time. Just for being here. But yeah, there's always people that you're not sure... you know, you never met before and try to let

them maybe call a tune and see what kind of tune they call, what kind of ... how much repertoire they know or whatever.

RP: You can also evaluate that by the kind of tune people call?

JT: Sometimes yes.

RP: Can you give me an example?

JT: If you call a certain tune like, for instance, "The End of a Love Affair", some guys... some people don't know that tune. You know, you kind of gage how much repertoire they have under their fingers. If they don't know something like everybody knows like "There Will Never Be Another You" or something like that, we're like "O.K., let's just play a blues!". If they can't do that... they just don't play at the jam session (ri-se).

RP: How can you don't let somebody play? You don't call their names, or...let him or her play one tune...?

JT: You just let them play a tune. If they can't really hang, I just call somebody else up. If they're really...there's a point where they really can't play and they're just somebody who walk off the street who doesn't pursue this for a living... well is not...

RP: At a professional level...

JT: Yeah, is not... not even professional, but semi pro, somebody who hasn't really know how to play at all, because sometimes we just get crazy people in New York come up want to... "Well, I can play the drums!", and they can't play the drums. That happens every once in a while... but not too much.

RP: What do you think you gain by having this job here, being the leader of the house band? How is that important to you? You do it for so many years, so you think is important? ... and it is for sure...but how?

JT: Well, first of all, it's important just to play as much as possible. So when I first moved to New York I had a lot of "study gigs" in bars for just tips, you know. ... in different places, just to play and learn repertoire. But this... I mean... this is a little step above that, and it helps in a way just to play every week and most important, network. I met... I've had a lot of gigs just being here. So if you have somewhere to play every week you say: "Oh, you want to come down and check me out?", and someone will come hear you. So that's important. And it's nice to hear younger musicians

coming up. There's always great talent in New York and they're always coming to jam sessions when they first move. So you always get to hear the upcoming guys and... you know, hear guys get better and work on their... you know... hone their instrument and music.

RP: So you like to follow also...

JT: Yes, it's very rewarding to hear younger guys or whoever get better and stuff, change ... it's nice, you know... to feel part of the scene...feel part of it. It's like a family.

RP: Why do you think it is also important for other people to come here... to play?

JT: To network. To meet other musicians. And of course, just to be heard. I can think of a lot of guys just coming to New York, coming to a jam session and the word gets around: "Oh, you know this cat is a really good piano player, you know?", and the word gets around: "Oh, yeah, he sounds really good!". So you know, things...

RP: What do you think the club gains in having jam sessions? Why is it good or not for the club or for the club owner to have jam sessions?

JT: It's a way for the clubs to have live music and get a lot of different musicians to come to a club, you know what I mean? And audience members see... like... so many musicians. It's impressive to see that many musicians play tunes and hearing different voices and stuff. So in that way that helps and then also, you know, musicians come down see who's playing and they came down another night just to see the music, you know. It helps all around the business, I think, having jam sessions. A lot of the clubs in New York have a jam session most every night.

RP: Even in terms of money and...

JT: Yeah, I'm sure it does, you know. Especially if you charge a minimum... like musicians always want to come and play and I remember a lot of guys go down to Smoke on Monday nights. There's a minimum there and is always packed. The jam session is always packed and... Visiones used to have a jam session...when I first moved to N.Y., and it was always packed, you know, every night. In New York you can play.

RP: And here what is the policy for musicians, they have to...?

JT: They have a list, especially for people that I don't know, you know. Especially for the rhythm section. A lot of horn players that come down I know and... to not play on a tune because it gets too long. It is not a big deal.

RP: And about the... drinking? Musicians have to drink or...?

JT: Yeah. Supposedly yeah. It's nice, I mean, to support the jam session by giving business back up. Sometimes the owner understands that musicians come in to play and they don't necessarily want to spend money every night because they're playing every night...

RP: In what aspects do you think this jam session is different or similar to jam sessions in other places, like for example Smalls, or for example Smoke or whatever?

JT: I don't know.

RP: You think it's very similar, it's different...?

JT: I think it's pretty much similar. I mean I've been lucky. In my jam sessions there are always good musicians always come down whenever I'm there usually...

RP: Because they know you're coming here, or...?

JT: Maybe they like the way I run the jam session and usually it works out pretty smooth and there's always high quality musicians. I try to make sure...

RP: That works because they know the leader of the band, and they know he's going to be there?

JT: Maybe. Maybe a little bit, yeah. But I think they're all pretty much the same kind of thing, you know.

RP: So you think... There are some musicians you told me that you know that come here for a long time. For how long do you usually see people coming?... Like there are people coming here like for a month, for one year, five years?

JT: Yeah. Since I've been here I've seen guys come and go, you know. Not just at this jam sessions, but just being in the New York Jazz Scene. I've seen a lot of people who try to come here and play. It's a hard living. A lot of guys go home, you know what I mean?

RP: Why?

JT: Because it's just hard to do. Sometimes they spend four years in school and they realize it's just hard to make a living just playing music. They end up getting day gigs and...

RP: What's a day gig?

JT: Just like work in an office job, you know what I mean? And eventually, you know, they play less and less... you really have to make a sacrifice to really try to play this music. So I've seen a lot of guys come and go... good musicians... even a lot of good musicians come and go, you know. But I've been fortunate and a lot of the guys that I still see from the beginning when I first moved to New York that are still... you know, a lot of them are playing... the more of them. So it's just a matter of sticking to your guns and just practicing a lot.

RP: O.K. And ... I asked you before...what doors can it open to you... , but for those musicians who still come here for all those years...?

JT: Well it's not necessarily just coming to a jam session. You can't just come to jam sessions and expect to be working in New York. You have to, you know, have a kind of ability to meet and talk to people. You know, I think is important to get to know musicians that play the same instrument. So if an alto player... for instance, I know a lot of alto players that I like Mark Welsh, Sherman Herby, and Steve Wilson... all those guys recommended me to do things. Other saxophone players have recommended me to play in big bands and because of that, I've been very fortunate to have a lot of gigs around town and stuff. It just comes and goes, you know. And you can throw something their way and it just goes back and forth. But they have to hear you and they have to appreciate that you can play, you know what I mean?

RP: You met Steve Wilson in a jam session?

JT: Steve Wilson... I met Steve in Hartford. He came down to a gig. And then when I moved to New York, I hooked up with him once and he actually recommended me to do the Basie Band. So, he's come down here to check me out. A couple of months ago he was here, not too long ago.

RP: But you asked him to come or he came by his own?

JT: He just came by. He just came down here and I was playing out here. He was over at Smoke. I haven't seen Steven in a while.

RP: Great. Did he play?

JT: No, he didn't play that night.

RP: Do you think that... what competences has to have a musician to play well in a jam session... to have a good performance at a jam session?

JT: I mean, it's just feeling comfortable and having a certain repertoire. You know, you just have to do your homework. Practice, learn solos, make sure you know... you play some changes, you know. Sound intelligent when you play and just play in tune. Just be a good musician having something to say in your instrument, you know, having a voice, or try to develop a voice... it's very important.

RP: Do you think this is a good place for developing or helping...

JT: For me it has. If I have an important gig... it might just not an important gig, but if I'm playing like in a festival with my own group or something, and I want to work on some music... you know, sometimes I get the band and just play, you know. It's like a paid rehearsal. It helps. So if I have a record date, I want to work on some music, I bring music, you know... A lot of times I bring even originals and work on it at the gig, because it's hard to get cats together sometimes.

RP: And these musicians who play with you at that jam session would be the guys who are going to record the gig with you or...

JT: Sometimes, sometimes not.

RP: I've seen that you don't play always with the same musicians. Why is that? How do you do that? How do you manage to do that and why?

JT: I just... I have certain sound I like to hear, so the guys that I usually use kind of have the same background and play at a certain level, play certain kind of things that I like to hear, so... I use the same circle guys, basically.

RP: But you change the guys?

JT: Yes. We change every once in a while just to... guys go out of town, you know. Guys have gigs and... well sometimes I'm not even...

RP: Not because "O.K, this week I don't want to listen again, or I don't wanna play with this guy, or I'd rather play with this one?"

JT: Sometimes... not really though... not really. All the guys I call, I would like to play every week. There's so many musicians in New York, you just try to... you know, it is also networking too, you know. A lot of bass players have called me for gigs and so I call them for this. And if I have a piano player call me for a gig I like to throw something back... drummers, you know.

RP: ... What do you think might take well-known musicians to come to a jam session? An established very well known musician like Wynton Marsalis, for example. He is known for dropping by at jam sessions. Why would he...?

JT: He has come here many times.

RP: Why do you think he does that?

JT: Just to play. Just to be on the scene, you know. Eric Reed used to come here all the time when I...

RP: What do you think do they gain with that?...

JT: I don't know, I think they want to hear the younger guys, you know. Who's playing, who's not playing... Roy comes down...

RP: Roy Hargrove?

JT: He just likes to play. Some guys go off for different reasons, I think... it's important for guys like that to come down and have other guys, especially young musicians, to hear them. It's really important...

RP: Do you think it's good for commercial purposes too?... For them, for their career, to show off themselves? Not in a bad way, of course...

JT: Yeah, I mean... I don't think they need... people like that don't even need to do that. They just come as they like the music, love the music, and want to... Frank Weiss came down here, I had Nicholas Payton come down...they just come down because... you know... not because is gonna help them in a way. They're trying to hear who's playing and... you know...

RP: Why do you think they're interested in listening who's playing, listening new cats?

JT: Because those guys got young guys in their bands, you know what I mean? I think it's as simple as that. I know Vincent Harry runs a jam session every Monday... or he used to up at the Up Over and I think E.J. used

to go down there and sit in, and now he's in the band, you know. It's just about seeing who's available... you know.

RP: And about why do you think... in what way interaction shapes what you're playing? Can it happen right away in the first song with different musicians, musicians that you've never played with, or do you think you need more songs, like to play two, three or four songs with the same musicians before it can happen... and have good interaction and good conversation going on?

JT: Yeah, to a certain extent. But if there are guys that can play it's obvious you're gonna have fun, you know what I mean? It might take a couple to get warmed up, but there's a lot of guys that are so-so or can't play and... you try to be nice about it, but try to get up guys that can play.

RP: ... In what kind of interval would you say a jam session in New York usually pays?

JT: That's a good question.

RP: What would you say is a good well paid jam session house band and a very bad jam session house...?

JT: Well, I think a lot of the places in New York, they're known for fifty-dollar gigs, you know what I mean? ... Which is an average thing. You play in a bar for fifty bucks and it's been like that for a long time, which is sad. But it's just the way it is. Sometimes, you know, when I first came to New York I would play for less just to play, you know what I mean?

RP: A fifty-dollar gig for a jam session would be good... well paid in the scene?

JT: I can't say it's not... it's not good... it's just an excuse to get out of the house and play, really, the music. You don't really do this to make money. This is not... you know what I mean... basically this is just gas for me. So it...

RP: Do you live...?

JT: Not that I live far, but it's just not anything, you know what I mean? It doesn't really acquaint to anything... just... it's little pocket change, really. But it's not really about that so...

RP: Do you think the jam session tries to recreate a little bit the environment where everyone... we grew up listening to play... Parker and

Monk and whatever? Do you think that now, in New York, people are trying to recreate that kind of learning environment or exchanging information environment?

JT: I don't know if they're trying to recreate it. It's just how it's done. I mean, jam sessions... informal... have been going on since I don't know how long, so... it's just the beginning of music, I mean, not even jazz music. So, I don't think anybody is trying to recreate it, the jam session, you know what I mean, unless...

RP: Maybe I can ask some other way. How do you think the jam session relates itself with the tradition of jazz and do you think it is that important for the learning process of the musicians?

JT: Definitely. I definitely... just sharing ideas, because a lot of times musicians can play their gigs and stuff and people don't get to interact from, you know, different circles. I mean like if... It's just important to hear all the players and what they are doing, and, you know. The interaction is very important, do you know what I mean? I'm always eager to hear somebody play some different stuff. It makes me go home and practice different stuff, you know. So, it's very important.

RP: I think it's pretty much it... Thank you.

X - Mitch Borden

MB: Do you want to talk about the jam session? Jam sessions are the thing that I have to do because it works for me. 'Cause I'm a second line club and I can't get the big names, and the jam session is important not only to the players but to the audience to. 'Cause they have to see that this music is represented by a lot of young devoted people that will play in these sessions and try to learn the craft the right way. And you see the same players, they go around to the sessions and they're really devoted to learning jazz that way, from playing at sessions.

RP: Why do you think they want to learn jazz that way? Because of the history of jazz? Because of the past?

MB: No, I'm sure they try it the other ways to. I'm sure they tried school... A lot of them have gone to school and gone to...

RP: But they still go to jam sessions.

MB: That's the final phase. To be able to improvise on the fly. And it's like, there's not so many professionals that wanna go that... It's tuff out there, you know? ... play the song a few times. It's not true anybody can play a solo. Anybody can get up there and fall on our face. That's not playing a solo. Playing a solo it's very hard.

People are attracted to jazz because they have an extra sense of time. You know, in classical music, you don't need that to progress, although it's necessary to get to a high level. So jazz has all that rhythm in it, but you have to be very good. I have to be able to count off 16 bars so precisely with everybody else. And 32. And 64 bars. You can't end in the middle of your solo. You can't end in a middle of a group of bars, you know? I mean they used to play shorter solos, but now solos are traditionally at least 64 bars.

RP: Why do you think is that? Because of the LP's?

MB: They say it was because of the records were so... 78's, you couldn't play a long solo. But the jazz artist wants to play a long solo because he has to speak... tell the whole story. It's a ... I think most people put their solos in the three movements. The beginning, the middle and end of the solo. The end of the solo kind of restates everything. It's sort of like say

what your gonna say with a little intro, say it and then say what you said, but restated. The premise, premise conclusion. It's logical. Most people solos are very logical.

RP: Are you still the owner of Smalls?

MB: Hmmm.

RP: Because you were the owner previously...

MB: Yeah... Ten years, man... Well he wants me to be the owner. Is no fun being the owner. Most of the time you get to book the bands and you don't have to pay to go to the concerts, but there's like a lot of court things. Always with the police, court and suing, fire department. I was there today. They were putting the fire alarm system still, at Fat Cat. And tomorrow - one more day - I have to be there at eight in the morning. I get to bed at four, I live up in "inward", I'm working with two hours sleep here. But it's good, I like to work. And then I'll rest. I'll have periods where I'll be very lazy and be pretty observing...

RP: For how many years do you watch jam sessions?

MB: When I first started, I was a bit naïve because I came out of San Francisco and the scene is different there. I was considered to be a jazz violist out there, but when I got here I was like a laughing stock. But the scene is much more strict out here, very strict. I started of catching a wave of great players that lived at Smalls and unfortunately they're all dead now.

RP: Who?

MB: I lived with Tommy Turrentine, and he was very strict. He was...

RP: In what sense?

MB: Don't be bullshitting if you can't play shit. Stay home and shit.

RP: What do you mean by playing shit? It's like not following the chords or the harmony, or trying to impress?

MB: Usually trying to impress. Made him the angriest.

RP: You think that happens a lot in jam sessions right now?

MB: Well, you can see it, because when you're trying to impress usually your tone goes to hell and then you get this kind of very loud, kind of "rushy" tone and it's kind of nervous, so...you know. But it happens at jam sessions because its kind of nerve wrecking up there. It is a little bit... you're

not gonna play your best, so... but if you relax up there, you play good. Session players are no slouches, you know the ones that...

RP: They're not, excuse me?

MB They're not born musicians, the ones they go to these sessions are good. The ones that I see are very good.

RP: So, but you see guys where? In Smalls and Fat Cat? Do you think the jam session is different in other places? In other clubs? Do you think Smalls and Fat Cat have a different Jam... kind of different musicians, or a different atmosphere?

MB: We have a tradition of straight ahead standards, but I think that's the only thing you can do at jam sessions. I mean, unless you're talking about like the Jerry Garcia Jam. That's a different thing altogether. That doesn't really happen in N.Y... the sessions I've seen. I mean if you start playing out like that, it's kind of experimental, or someone's gonna play "Cherokee", it's not gonna work. I mean that's when things go wrong, it's like fighting and stuff. I mean, they used to do that. There was like Ornette Coleman and the "Loft Jazz Scene" and they would like bust in on a straight ahead jam session and start playing atonal, and modally tonal stuff over like... you know, "Nice Work And You Can Get It"! And that causes little riots!

RP: But what... they would get pissed off at each other or just musically...they were struggling musically?

MB: No, something about like jazz and freedom and that the freedom represented by the black man's emancipation... also had to do with the freeing up of the music. Like, you know, playing standards is like playing Ira Gershwin, the white man's music. But that's not true.

RP: This was like what? In the sixties? It started in the sixties?

MB: It was seventies too. I saw that go down. It was very bizarre. The seventies jazz died. I went to see Bill Evans who could really play and there were maybe five, seven people in the audience, that's it. At the Vanguard. It was really bad. And the radio stations went of the air, they had country music. And by in large, I think the country music is the music of America, and Americans are listening to very popular music. And really the jazz listeners are the older people and the people from New York who... people from all over, but jazz is almost like counter culture. Once you understand jazz, it's

like another second language to you, and becomes something like a destination spot. People will come to N.Y from Italy to go to Smalls, you know. I know a lot of Italians that do that.

RP: It's a very charismatic club. Why do you think it's an important club? Not only worldwide, but also why is it in the heart of so many young musicians here in New York?

MB: Well, I think that we stuck to one theme, you know: the bebop. That's... you get a lot of respect for that, I think. I mean, straight-ahead jazz. And it's very hard to do that, you know...

RP: But you have other clubs with bebop and maybe a lot of young players don't bring those clubs on their hearts, like they bring Smalls. I know a whole generation of musicians who really have this appreciation for Smalls.

MB: It might be the ones that I actually employed. Sometimes, four bands a night, it was almost eighty musicians... different musicians a week. You might be talking to the people that worked at Smalls. Of course, you like the club that you work at. Now, on the other hand...

RP: All the guys like Mark Turner and Kurt... from those guys to Aaron Goldberg, even some friends of mine like Nuno, Mafalda and Afonso... they all have this really big...

MB: Yeah! We all had great times down there. Come on! Those were the guys that, you know, stay up all night...

RP: And these are the guys I know. It must be hundreds of other people I don't know...

MB: Kurt has a ...Kurts's very funny... I appreciate that because I'm very fond of Kurt Rosenwinkel. We don't... sometimes we're playing it cool, he comes in, he's checking out some of the new guys, you know like Mike Moreno and these guitarists that are kind of...

RP: Mike Moreno was a friend of Nuno at the New School...

MB: Yeah... and they're chasing Kurt, like they used to chase the Bird. A lot of these guitarists are chasing Kurt. And he knows it. He comes in real cool and we look at each other and kind of wink. We're both trying to kind of checking out the new young guys. But, of course there is a special legion they have with Kurt.

RP: But you think the relationship they have with owner of Smalls or Mitch is different from the other clubs in New York? You think you relate yourself with the musicians in a different way? Like for example the owner of Smoke, or whatever...?

MB: Yeah, is true. Maybe I'm a little nicer because I'm not so business like... but I was talking to David Schumafer and he was talking about Harry Connic Jr. and he has to be in that band. He gets like... he needs that money. He's not always happy with the music. It's really too straight-ahead big band sound. And I love that. The Christmas record, and "I'll be Home For Christmas". Some of those great songs on that record are really good. The whole thing is really great. But I was saying that probably are situations that musicians get into were they feel like they have to take a job and they don't really respect the owner, but they need the money, and you know...

RP: You think that doesn't happen in Smalls, and probably happens in some other clubs?

MB: I think... well Smalls... it's a written that "I'll give you everything I got". You can stay there, you can sleep there, I'll feed you, I'll help you with your rent. That's a whole different thing. That's why musicians like that. I help them get their instruments sometimes... But these musicians are really poor. It's like in the movie Dexter Gordon comes back in N.Y. and he's treated very roughly by the... and he's supposed to be... Bud Powell returns to N.Y. for a minute and he's treated like shit. He stays in the worst hotel and there's a million bands in N.Y. at that time and they're blowing Hard Bop now, and it's a touching scene in the movie... that "Round Midnight" movie. And I learned things in jazz movies like everybody else, you know? ...

RP: So you think like the ideology behind Smalls is a little different of some other clubs? The values of the people that run Smalls?

MB: My style is easily fair. I try to not to run it... What we have at Fat Cat and Smalls are the same bands, and they share the space and they even share the scheduling. If a band needs a switch they know "I'll switch with so and so", "We'll take this and we'll do that". It's kind of family with the musicians, and I think maybe in and out of Smalls and Fat Cat there's close to a hundred musicians that been used regularly. I'm going back to my old beginnings using Jason Lindner every Monday, Gregory Tardy

every Tuesday, Myron Walden every Wednesday, and today I have a band rehearsing...

I'm looking at Fat Cat as something that needs fixing. Smalls is like so perfect now. Sometimes it's like when I was trying to paint - my father taught me painting - you got to know when to stop. Otherwise it becomes too much stuff out there.

RP: I read in an interview once that you said like: "We don't have a bar at Smalls, and I wouldn't want to change that. I'd rather not have anything if I would have to change anything at Smalls". Do you think it changed a lot, now with the bar and... or the spirit is more or less the same?

MB: I think people are looking past that. They are looking at the bands. That band ... I have beautiful pictures in 94. ... For some reason, I created a vibe in Smalls that immediately you recognize. So that's kind of jazzy and focuses on the band and in jazz, and it's not... I kind of went like up against the big guys, you know, Vanguard and the Blue Note, and I said: "I want to make a jazz club and the focus is going to be on the music, not the bar, not food...". I tried a lot of silly things: I had a donation box instead of a doorman, I used to cook and give out free food, I am friends with the owner of Burritoville and we had free potato chips and rice and beans... we have free popcorn now!

RP: Why would you say that Smalls is an important club in the jam session scene in New York?

MB: Well, there were seven of them a week, till eight in the morning for ten years. That's a lot of jam sessions. And you know it got to be the thing that works for me, as I said. It's really something to witness, a jam session. To see someone who you know... his emotions are taught and he's trying to get up there and play a solo on a jam session. And he knows, every one knows the history of sessions: from Roy Eldridge to the great jams at the Philharmonic.

RP: Do you think they try to live that again, or recreate that...create that atmosphere.

MB: I think that "Jazz At The Philharmonic" with Charlie Parker, Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young, Roy Eldridge, you know, I think Billie Holiday is on that too...they found out, they just found some new shit...

and they have Thelonious Monk in Jazz At The Philharmonic. They just found it.

RP: Is there any Ella Fitzgerald also?

MB: Yeah! Yeah, there is... and Billie. And those were jam sessions. But the jam session, you know... I found out that Charlie Parker recorded his first record when he was 25, but he started professionally when he was 15-16, and he played many jam sessions, ten years of jam sessions before he made his first record. So, I mean, in nowadays you come out of high school and you think you can play jazz because your teacher knows how to play Freddie Hubbard licks... I don't think we're going to see the likes of... well, if we are going to see the likes of someone like Charlie Parker, it's going to come out of someone who's very diligent and goes to all these jam sessions. And I don't want to name any names, but there are some good players in New York right now. You got to play a lot of hours everyday. Maybe shed four hours a day and play two hours a day, and then go to the session late at night at the clubs after hours till late in the morning... And there's your ten hours a day of practicing, like a classical musician does. They do six to twelve, classical musicians. Pure practice. That's why they are so good.

RP: Why do you think it's good for... or is it good for any club in New York to have a jam session? Is it lucrative? Why the Blue Note had a jam session? Why Smoke has a jam session? Why Cleopatra's Needle have a jam session? What do you think the owners of these clubs... why is it good for them... if it's good for them?

MB: You know, it is good.

RP: What you think the jam session can do to a club...the good things? Can bring to a club?

MB: It's just an amazing beautiful process. There's nothing else like it.

RP: And in terms of like money? Is it profitable?

MB: It's very good. It costs less to run than a regular show. And there's a big attraction there of course. I mean, the right way... the way I like to do it is like spend all your money on one guy like Jimmy Cobb and then we have a "Jimmy Cobb Jam Session". Everybody's going to want to play with

Jimmy Cobb. In fact they're were like playing there and then take a photo picture like a photo album.

RP: Like a tourist thing...

MB: Yeah. The musicians were doing that, you know? And then you know... Some... that was a nice one. We had a session with Jimmy Lovelace and Laurie and Frank... That was great, they can really play. They make a singer sound great... that was a good trio. They did that every Saturday night.

RP: What do you think it takes... there are some musicians that are well known for showing up at jam sessions, like Wynton Marsalis. Why do you think they would go to a jam session? They're already established musicians, they don't need to go to a jam session, they... Why do you think they go?

MB: Well, I don't know if that's true. I think that to play bebop you have to own your chops, and I think someone like Wynton would be going because... I don't know if his schedule will allow for a lot of bebop playing, and so it's probably a good thing for him to go.

RP: So you don't think it could be like a promotion thing, or like ...

MB: No...

RP: ... just for chops, he would go there.

MB: I would say like Richie Vitale, right, the trumpeter Ritchie Vitale? He played with Frank Sinatra for years. He's retired from the Frank Sinatra Band because Frank Sinatra died. He goes to more jam sessions than anybody I know. And you know what? He sounds more incredible than everybody I ever heard. And the reason is he is so well practiced. He can play, you know, inside and out, because...

RP: How old is he?

MB: Maybe my age, you know, "fiftyish". But he still goes. Ned Goold, he goes to all the sessions. That why he plays the way he plays. He's not afraid to go, he'll sit in any by session.

RP: Do you know some other known guys, or established guys that go to a lot of jam sessions?

MB: I prefer not to name names, but I'll name those two: Ned Gould and Richie Vitale. Go to all the sessions and that's why they can play like that.

RP: O.K.

MB: Play any song, any style, you know. That happens because going to all the sessions. People are calling up all these tunes, maybe...

RP: How much do clubs in N.Y. usually pay to the hose band, to each member in a jam session?

MB: I don't wanna say that... But is much cheaper than regular shows. Because the way I do it, I keep it really cheap. But I say: "as soon as the session starts, go home! You don't have to stay". House bass, house drums, house piano, they don't have to stay. They play the opening set...

RP: They also stay sometimes...

MB: Some people would. The bass player has to stay. There are never enough bass players. And this guy Dana is going out... I'm loosing some of my sub... I used to hire an extra bass player, just to keep the sessions going.

RP: Now you have Neal, no? But Neal...

MB: Neal Caine. Yeah. We're lucky to have him now. He's from Harry Connick's Band. But Neal's music is different from Harry's music. I'm saying that they are a lot of compromises a musician has to make, you know.

RP: So what would you say in a general way the big importance of the jam session in the New York scene. Why do you think the jam session would be important for the jazz scene in N.Y., in this specific city? What does it make to the jazz scene that is a good thing? If you think is a bad thing you can say that too.

MB: You do play your best... when you do play your best, when you have a great performance, it is live and it is in front of an audience. And this is a chance for people to play in front of an audience, and play their best. And when you play your best in front of an audience like that... let's say I play my best at home on practice. So what? Doesn't count. There's no almost there. This doesn't count at all. And of course you play very often our best things. It doesn't count. When a tree falls in the woods, no one hears it. As I said, it's a place for people to really play their best, because, you know, you're

inspired by the audience. You really are, because there's a certain energy you get from a live performance.

RP: Do you think the audience at Smalls has a different energy than the audience in other clubs? Because in Cleopatra's Needle, they have dinner and people are eating.

MB: I never been there, so I can't comment. But it's nice to have, like I said, it's easy for me to get established right away because I focused everything on the music.

RP: I noticed that even in the configuration of the club...

MB: You just have someone in charge of like decorating the room or in charge of the show. The musicians know what to do. That's what I found, that's what I say. It's either they figure it out real quickly or they always know what to do. I don't have to be there most of the time. You're saying... maybe it's true that the musicians are on my side or I'm on the musicians' side. Maybe that's what it is. I kind of feel for them.

RP: Why do you feel for them?

MB: I guess the way I went into the business... I was like so naïve and ... they all helped me along, and owe I it to them. And it's so... I'm behind them because they... because they're really in front. I didn't know anything. I thought I knew, but I did not know. And so you come to N.Y. and you think you know and then you learn a lot of shit and... so... I mean... And I don't know anything, but for some reason I know like: "Oh, this is a bad night, don't get upset... it's not the music". Not to make the association of a bad night, because it could be like economic changes or weather changes. You can't say: "no one came tonight, the music must suck." You got to use your ear for that, you know weather the music is good or bad. And don't like... that happens sometimes in business they call it the band date, you know, not having a lot of foresight, so like: Let's get rid of this band! ... And you've kind of changed and made a little money, but you really thrown yourself away of course. I think in a long run that's not good, because people won't respect that. You got to stay on course. O.K.

RP: Thank you very much...

XI - Nicholas Payton

R.P: First of all, can you tell me what's for you a jam session? What is your own definition of a jam session? The general characteristics? In what circumstances does it happen? What style is played at what time? What kind of musicians, instrumentation, duration...

N.P: I remember being very young going to jam sessions and people were much older, very open to all levels or kinds of musicians on different levels. I think it's a chance for musicians to sort of commune together and share ideas in a very musical way that allows for an exchange that is, I think, quite different from having a band. In a steady band you're working with a set amount of cats every night, you probably have a repertoire of same music that you're dealing with and you're sort of working towards the specific type of ideal or sound you're trying to achieve and refine, if you've already achieved a group sound. With a jam session, the parameters are quite different, you know. Maybe the cats don't know each other at all, maybe they're friends, but they call tunes or standards that everyone knows and I think it allows for people to probably blow more. I mean, if you are on a gig, you know, people are not gonna sit up and maybe take ten minute solos, but at a jam session, people can really stretch out and listen to one another and feed off each others' ideas I think in a way that being in a steady band you don't really do.

R.P: And what do you mean by blowing? Blowing is like expand yourself more or...

N.P: Yeah, I think like... if you're playing in a band you're... you know, in my band we play a lot of original music, so you know the set up and the purpose for what we're trying to do as a group is sort of different then say went into a club, after-hours and played with some cats, sort of like... what we're doing... we don't play together very often but we're sort of selecting tunes and just gonna have fun. There's not a lot of tight arrangements, not a lot of that type of organization, but I think within that we play tunes that everyone is familiar with, so we don't have to worry about where we're gonna connect or... you know, what's gonna happen, you know. And

you can just feel free and play. At a jam session anyway. That's my feeling of it. Plus, you get to hear and meet people that you probably would not normally get a chance to play with in other situations. In a lot of jam sessions I know I've played with a lot of people who... you know, they have their own bands, I have my own band, but you know, if we meet someone at a jam session we sort of get a chance to share ideas and play them, you know.

R.P: O.K. Thus the physical space... is it important? What are the most important or probable places where that can happen? And which characteristics should it have or how does that affect, or can it affect? If it does...

N.P: I've seen many different types of jam sessions, like where I'm from in New Orleans, is very informal. You know, almost any gig, you know, can turn into a jam session. A lot of cats at the end of the performance, they open it up and invite people on. Or there are certain gigs that are sort of in place specifically for that purpose. They have the house trio or something like that -a rhythm section-, different people come up and play throughout the night. Like I said, in New Orleans where I live is very informal, but in New York I've seen jam sessions where people sign in a list, you know. They go down a list and they call names. You go up and play one tune and that's it. There's so many people...

R.P: You stand all night like waiting...

N.P: Right... you know, in New Orleans is not like that. There's not as many people, so you know. In New York you might have thirty, fifty cats who want to play. Obviously, you can't let them all play on one tune. You know, that wouldn't be very fun for especially the rhythm section players.

R.P: Like playing "Cherokee" for three hours!

N.P: For like fifty minutes! You know...

R.P: O.K. And do recall any kind of experience that you think it was important? And why was it important?

N.P: I think for me...

R.P: If it was...

N.P: Yeah. Playing in jam sessions or even being invited to sit in I think has afforded me opportunities, not only to play with musicians who I've never played with before, but for them to get a chance to hear

particularly younger artists, you know, it's sort of been a "showcase" ... you know, because I've sat in with people like Milt Jackson, or you know Hank Jones, or Elvin Jones. I've gotten a call later to work with them and to record with them, and I think is very important. It's sort of an informal gathering that allows people who aren't in a normal working situation to be able to share ideas. I think that's the most important aspect of it.

R.P: O.K. And about the repertoire: you told me... talked to be about the repertoire. Which kind of repertoire you think is more used...

N.P: You know, Standard tunes, you know... all the standards like...

R.P: "All the things you are" ...

N.P: "All the things you are" and all the bebop tunes like "Confirmation", "Donna Lee", a lot of Blueses, Rhythm Changes, you know, nothing really usually too intricate, I think.

R.P: O.K And what do you think... what characteristics does that kind of repertoire has in common? What do you think?

N.P: ... If we're dealing like form, I mean Blueses, you know, twelve bars, or you know standard song form AABA. You know, things that people can grasp, or you know, even a lot of the standard tunes if you don't know them, by playing a lot of standards you develop sort of an ear for being able to hear familiar chord progressions, and so you learn them. I remember hearing a story about... Ray Brown told me they were back in the forties sometime in Harlem at a jam session and I think Lockjaw Davis called "The Song is You" and Bird didn't know it at the time. He got up and he played a couple of choruses and really scuffled through it. He didn't really sound that good. And then a couple of other cats played and he was sort of like in the back like noodling around... and then he came up and just wailed, he just nailed it.

R.P: O.K. And how is this repertoire chosen? For example in new Orleans or in New York. How does that process happen? ... Choosing the repertoire...

N.P: Usually, you know, people sort of make a collective decision of what they're gonna play. Sometimes it's not. Sometimes, you know, you go to jam sessions and someone might invite you up and purposely call a hard

tune that they know you may not know, or really fast to sort of make you test yourself. Like “Cherokee” in B (estala dos dedos com tempo rápido). Let’s go! You know, people do that too (ri-se alto). You know, or modulate, you know, every chorus...

R.P: one half step up. Yeah. In “Cherokee”.

N.P: So different people have different techniques... of doing things. For me if I invite cats to sit in, I like to try it to make it as easy as possible for the...

R.P: So...which kind of repertoire would you start playing in that situation?

N.P: Maybe like a Blues. That’s nothing...even a beginner starting jazz, hopefully that would be one of the first forms that you learn and deal with. And then from there, you know.

R.P: Would you have problems playing like with a cat that doesn’t know a lot or is not at your level?

N.P: No, I’ve done it all the time. I think it’s great. I mean, when I was younger I... a lot of people let play with them who I know I had no business working with, but that’s a part of it.

R.P: So you think... maybe you feel you’re giving back something...

N.P: Yeah. Definitely. You never know who can or can’t play, I mean...

...

Sometimes you’re shocked. You might see a shy, timid kid in the audience and they come up and they’re killing or something. You never know.

R.P: That’s true. Which kind of... if there are any, which kind of rules are there ...that are there on the jam session... present, like formal or informal?

N.P: I don’t know if they’re always acknowledged. I mean, for one, I think cats should always be mindful of how many people on the stage, and not to take up too much time playing long, because I think after a while it can become very boring if they’re so disorganized, and every horn player wants to come up and take ten choruses on “Invitation” or something, you know. I think there should be some protocol like, you know, people be mindful of how many people are up there. If there are a lot of horn players or

whatever coming up to play that, you know, everyone should be respectful of the time and make their little statement, take a chorus or so, and step to the side and let someone else play.

R.P: O.K. And what do you think is needed for you... what do you need to play in a jam session and respect some of these rules? What do you think is expected from you? Like, how can I put this... I mean, do you think that playing... not playing too much...?

...

N.P: I think you should know your limitations. Some people, I think, they're very brazen like, you know, they'll get up on a tune just to play that they don't really know and they'll scuffle through the changes. I mean, I don't think you should do that. You know, if you don't know the song or whatever, sit out and maybe wait 'til somebody calls something that you can play. Don't jump up on "Giant Steps" or whatever if you're even struggling to play a Rhythm Changes... I mean... But, you know, some people don't really respect the music enough or the bandstand enough to do that. They'll just play on anything just to play. And Long. I think that's a matter of respect.

...

R.P: How about creativity? How do you think can happen something really creative? Or how do you think the creativity can be influenced in a situation like that?

N.P: I think people still have to be listening to each other and still playing as a collective—even though it's not a set or study band. I think it's even more important that people are attuned and looking and listening to what's going on, so they can respond to it. So it's just not complete cacophony, you know. And I think that's the risk of what may happen in a jam session at its worse is that people are just playing, whoever's soloing is not interacting and responding to the rhythm section, the rhythm section players may not be listening to the horn players, after a while they might get tired or... you know, if it's gone on so long... So that's why I think these certain rules perhaps may prevent that kind of thing from happening. If everyone just be aware and try to work as a unit. Even though it's not a set band. Every time I play with musicians, I'm trying to play within the context of

the group. Because for me, my statement as a soloist doesn't mean anything if we don't all sound good. Doesn't matter what I have together. I'm trying to play with the cats who are there—be it at my level, above my level, beneath my level, that doesn't matter. You're trying to make the most music you can out of every situation.

R.P: And... Besides this, do you think there are some other stuff you think can... should happen during a session? Like, besides interaction? Is there something more you think that can happen?

N.P: People should have a good time. I think that's the main thing. They enjoying playing... let people be relaxed and play...

R.P: O.K. In terms of learning, what you think does the jam session gives you in terms of learning for your life as a musician and as a person?

R.P: It can be many things, like I said. You know working with people of different levels, learning how to have to respond and communicate with someone who you've never perhaps played with before. It forces you into a situation of not being comfortable. Not to be complacent and to actively try to work with somebody who may have a different conception of time. Maybe you're a bass player who likes to play behind the beat. Maybe you're playing with a drummer who plays a little bit on top. You still got to find where we can work together. Also, in terms of repertoire, perhaps sometimes it's good to play songs... you know, you go to jam sessions and people call things you don't know. So that you can add and expand and grow... you know, being put in a situation that is not completely comfortable for you, I think, sometimes is the way you grow. If you're always calling your own tunes and used to being in a situation and creating your own group environment where you're comfortable, I think it's very easy to be complacent. When you play with someone who may not fit your idea conceptually of how you like to perform, I think it forces you to try to be unique. I think we all need that from time to time.

R.P: Thank you very much. That was a very nice answer... as all the other ones. And how about the social relations that happen. What you think can happen in terms of social relationships? The public or the audience, you think it can... influence? In what ways can it influence? What kind of

social interaction can happen between the musicians, and musicians and audiences?

N.P: I think that's a good way to sort of break down a lot of the barriers, you know. And a lot of areas, I noticed, maybe the music seems a bit cliquish. You have cats who stylistically are in a certain bag or only play from a certain period, or who come from this side of town... I've never really liked that, you know. I like... I think the music scene should be wide open, with jazz musicians. I mean is already hard enough to play jazz as music then to have cliques and infighting within the structure of jazz music. Hopefully, in the best case scenario, at a jam session is an opportunity for the musicians from all these different schools, all these different arenas to come together and try to find some common denominator that links us all. I think there's something that links us all... I mean, regardless where we come from: New Orleans, or New York, or Europe, or wherever else. You know, I think it's amazing we can come together with...you know like, here, our drummer was not able to make it so this cat Bruno is going to play with us tonight and he knows the tunes and bamm we're gonna hit! We've never played together before but we're able to make music, because there's some common things as jazz musicians that we all share. And at a jam session, hopefully, we try to find those things that sort of link us together and how we can find our similarities as opposed to trying to weed each other out and be the competitive spirit of intimidation and all these other things sometimes I think that aren't important. I think is good to be... to have some level of, I think, criticism and being in situations sometimes where you don't know a lot. Because it makes you grow. But it has to be in a healthy, productive way.

R.P: And about... now that you mention, about that criticism... what do you think can be evaluated and criticised in a situation like that? Which are the parameters?

N.P: A lot of things, you know. Everything from you know, if you're playing the changes, to maybe if you have good time or bad time, maybe your weaknesses can be exposed in terms of being able to play certain tunes, like you know I said before, that you don't know... You know, if you are a rhythm section player learning how to be able to comp behind people who have different styles of playing. Everyone doesn't always play the same, you

have to adjust what you do to what's going on. It's about giving and being open to everything, you know. I think to be closed and only very selfish and individualistic is not only not a good nature for a jam session, but for jazz, period. Hopefully a jam session forces you to be in a situation where you have to... you have to socialize, or else, it won't be successful.

R.P: O.K. And how do you think this critique can take effect? Like, what do you think can happen if this is not happening... this cat's not listening...?

N.P: You have to acknowledge, you know. And sometimes you can discuss something with somebody, and you can do something about it, sometimes you can't. Some people can accept criticism well. Some people can't accept it. Some people give good criticism, some people don't give good criticism. So you have to sort of know what the parameters are. What you can and cannot accept. You also you have to be honest with yourself. Sometimes, you know... I don't think we all like be told what is wrong with our playing, but I think sometimes it's necessary, you know. You have to sort of let, you know... in jazz music you have to leave your ego, you know. You can't bring your ego to the bandstand, because it can be a very dangerous thing. Not healthy ego in terms of self-confidence. That's something different. But the fact that you're always right or your way is the only way, that kind of thinking is not conducive to a good group communication.

R.P: O.K. And in terms of ... going back in terms of the social relationships. What do you think... what kind of parameters can establish the status of each musician? So how can you say like: "O.K. This cat..."

N.P: I think that's very objective, you know. I mean to... someone... to say someone's good or bad... I think there are certain criteria that you can be judged by, like you know, if someone has a certain level of some harmonic knowledge or if someone knows a tune or doesn't know... sort of maybe bullshitting their way through it, you could tell. Or somebody has good time or bad time. Intonation, phrasing... if they're playing a lot of notes, but there's really no space, no use of rhythmic inflection, you know. All these different kinds of things you tell. But you know, these are things that we can judge ourselves, I mean. You know, tapes don't lie. I mean, if you record yourself, when you play it you can hear it and you can tell what you

are and what you are not doing at any given moment, if you're honest enough with yourself. I think we all know what our strengths and weaknesses are. Hopefully, you know. We try to bring those things that we can't do so well up, you know, up to certain standard, but you never reach this whatever... it's a constant process of evolution and development. I don't think any musician, not any great musician, ever gets satisfied with a particular level... at being at a certain level.

R.P: O.K. Thank you very much. And how would you relate the jam... we're almost done... How would you relate de jam session with the work world? What do you think connects, or not, them?

N.P: How people of all different walks of life, from different social, cultural, racial, religious, musical, stylistic backgrounds can still come together, and in the best situation can make music together. And you can still retain your individuality. But we can do that as a collective, as a whole, and make something very unified. I think it's the same thing in the world, that's why we have problems now. So much of what we're dealing within society now is so very negative because we think... everyone thinks that they're right, that they are the beholder of the absolute truth. And as long as you think that way, if you play that way, then you'll never be able to play with other musicians, because there's more than one way of approaching this. There are many different approaches, so we'll have to learn, not only as jazz musicians, but furthermore in the world as a society: how can we retain our individuality and respect someone else for having a different opinion, but still come together and realize that we both have to be on a stage, we both have to be on this planet and live together, so let's respect each other and our differences and learn how to work with one another. And everyone prospers. Everyone moves forward.

R.P: O.K. So, just for closing, what is for you then the major importance, or what's the big importance of the jam session for the musicians? What you think is the ultimate importance...?

N.P: I think to be able to have, I think, the... I think it's important to the very communal aspect of this music, to be able to have situations for people of all age ranges, of all levels, of all backgrounds, to be able to have somewhere that they can go and play and exchange ideas, have a drink with

one another, talk, whatever the jam session situation is. It presents a forum for people from all different areas to come together and sort of celebrate this great music. That's the way I feel...

R.P: O.K. Nicholas, I thank you very much for your words. They are valuable to me. And I wish you the best of luck in your playing, in your life and in your career.

N.P: Thank you.

XII - Scott Colley

RP: The first thing I would like to know is what's your opinion... what is for you a jam session? Who's supposed to play, usually with who, in what occasions, where, and when?

SC: Could you rephrase that? Like what...

RP: Yeah..., What's for you a jam session? What happens? Who is supposed play with who? In what occasions? Where and when?

SC: For me now?, or for people in general?

RP: For you, for you.

SC: I don't really go to jam sessions anymore. Very, very rarely. Open..., what you're talking about, open jam sessions, happen like in a club where anybody comes and sits in, and...

RP: Yeah, but you can talk me about the several types you can think of.

SC: Well, for me there's, there's a big distinction between, let's say..., a club where everybody plays till the end of the morning and anybody just kind of comes up and plays, and what we would maybe refer to as just a session, where people... where friends get together, and play. But I'm always getting together with friends and working on music, these musicians included [Bill Stewart e Chris Potter]. So, to me, that's an important process to do. Obviously you're not doing it in a preparation for a particular concert or project but you get together and play, just to work out ideas and to develop things. And the difference between that... I guess I was never that interested in open jam sessions because... I mean, sometimes it could be very interesting and there was, there was a time when I moved to New York where I did a lot of it. And I think it was valuable to just... to get out and meet musicians and play every night. And maybe this is just because I'm a bass player, but the tendency was that everyone would play and try and show everything they had. And if you're playing behind tenor players, all playing a hundred choruses of the Blues, and everybody is trying to play everything that they know and show everybody else how much they know... then to me that, it comes counter to the music. On the other hand, I met a

lot of musicians doing it, you know... And the thing that was of the greatest value to me was that I could meet other musicians who had similar interests. I could just look around and listen to people and see who was really listening and who had an interesting, you know, had the most interesting ideas, or ideas that were similar to my own.

RP: How can you check that, like, be aware of that? If they are listening? What do you feel musically when that happens?

SC: I know immediately when some of the men I'm playing is listening to me, and that's the only musicians... I'm probably more clear on it that I was at the time when I moved to New York and I was just... I thought that was really something that I was supposed to do: stand back there and play time for people who weren't listening to me. But now I kind... To me music is a language, so the fundamental thing that I look for in all music is communication, conversation. So it doesn't matter if the music is written or improvised. That process of hearing each other and reacting to each other is fundamental. So anytime that's lost, I'm not interested in the project, is kind of like, ok... I wanna have a dialog whether, even if I'm playing something that's very simple or if it's a groove oriented project of some kind of thing where is... I don't mind playing something simple as a back drop or something else, but I wanna know that there's a conversation. So when I was playing in jam sessions I could recognize that immediately: if a horn player was improvising over something I was playing. I can tell whether or not they're listening to me, and I wanna know that what I'm doing even if is in the background at that particularly moment is... what I'm playing is influencing what they're doing, and vice versa.

RP: Ok. About the space... the physical space. Do you think there are places that are more important than others? How can it affect your playing? Where do you think it happens mostly, or it should happen mostly in that particular kind of space?

SC: I think that every space and every group of people, on stage and off stage, will affect, what is played and how. And in terms of sound, I'm very conscious in how a room sounds and in what way I'm gonna amplify my instrument, and how I'm gonna approach physically the space.

RP: So, it's like you analyze the room. When you get there you play a couple of notes, you analyze it and you do your sound according to that?

SC: Yeah... And also in terms of what grouping of musicians... If it's a piano, and bass, and drums, or is it... Fender Rhodes, and bass, and drums... or no drums, you know. All those things affect the way that I would approach a sound and I try and have many different ways of amplifying the instrument: different "mic-ing" positions, different things that I'll do. Especially for acoustic bass that is a very challenging instrument to record and to play live and reacts very much to a space. Something that works one night doesn't work at all the next night, and so you have to be conscious of that... certain things that... certain intricacies. Or things you'd be able to play in one space, you really can't in other space. Sometimes, especially during large concerts, sometimes you're in a situation where if I play certain things that are too intricate, it gets lost in all the space that's there and it just doesn't sound right. And then in those situations I might play much simpler. But I play a lot of improvised music, so that is there a lot for me to do. If I'm really listening to a space, I find what works well in that space, and try not to have to many preconceptions about, what I wanted to happen: "I wish we could play all that intricate stuff that we did last night here"... and it doesn't work, and so you try and find the things that work best...

RP: And about... what about the audiences? How does that can affect your playing, especially if you're playing in a session? How do you think the audience can also interfere with the music, or not...?

SC: The energy of the audience is obviously is very important, although I don't play things that are specifically go for applause or things that'll get a reaction. You can feel when an audience is really listening and (...).

So you obviously feel the reaction when you do certain things, or certain silence, quality of silence. When is appropriate at certain... Especially in a tour like this, where we're doing twenty cities or something like that... in many different countries, you get to feel, but... you know different people in different regions of the world react differently. Some areas... they're much more vocal, some areas maybe not, but they could be just as in to the music, just in different way. So you have to be used to that too, 'cause you...

RP: Can you, or..., do you want to talk about some important experience you had in the context of a session...? Something you can remember that, that marked you in some way... A specific event...

SC: Uh... nothing comes to mind...

RP: Ok... So just if..., just to conclude, I know you have to go to dinner, I'm having a lot of fun having this conversation but... Finally, what do you think a jam session has to offer to the jazz musician? To the professional musician, and to the student also?

SC: I think at its very best, it could offer something that feeds ideas to different musicians, gives them new exposure to different ways of approaching music, and to allow, you know, allow musicians who had never played together to experiment and search for new, for new ways of playing.

RP: Ok..., thank you very much.

SC: Thank you.

XIII - Alguns dados biográficos dos músicos

Nesta secção dou atenção ao percurso profissional dos músicos que participam neste livro. Grande parte deles já tiveram a oportunidade de tocar e/ou gravar em conjunto.

Para elaborar os perfis dos músicos apresentados em seguida utilizei várias fontes incluindo as entrevistas por mim realizadas, biografias, dicionários e enciclopédias (Feather e Ira Gitler 1999, Carner 1990, Jenkins 2004, Kernfeld 1988), e discografias (Ramsey 1977, Bruynickx 1980, Scheffner 1990 e Cook 1992 e 2004)¹. Em adição, indicarei em nota de rodapé informação relativa a algumas das gravações que documentem a importância da actividade profissional dos músicos biografados, assim como também aquelas que reflectam a existência de relações profissionais entre os participantes no livro.

Chris Potter

Nascido em Chicago a 1 de Janeiro de 1971, aos doze anos Chris Potter ganhou o prémio de jovem talento para saxofone da International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE) e aos treze já trabalhava profissionalmente. Em 1989, depois de ter sido votado o melhor instrumentista de liceu nos Estados Unidos pela revista *Down Beat*, Chris Potter muda-se para Nova Iorque com uma bolsa de estudos para estudar na *New School for Social Research*. Durante o primeiro ano em Nova Iorque, para além de frequentar a universidade, o saxofonista integra o grupo do trompetista Red Rodney. É também durante este ano que Chris Potter conhece músicos (professores e alunos) que vêem moldar a sua vida profissional futura: Brad Mehldau, Kenny Werner e Owen Howard. No ano seguinte muda-se para a

¹Toda a informação que possa eventualmente não estar disponível em formato bibliográfico foi retirada de páginas pessoais dos músicos na Internet, ou foi-lhes solicitada directamente.

Manhattan School of Music. Com vinte e dois anos de idade, Chris Potter grava o seu primeiro disco como líder para a editora Criss-Cross. Desde então já gravou dezenas de discos como líder e “side-man”, tendo tocado com músicos como John Scofield, Dave Holland, Jack DeJohnette, Jim Hall, Dave Holland, entre outros.

Recebeu o Jazzpar Prize (um dos mais respeitados galardões no panorama do jazz mundial) e em 1999 esteve entre os cinco finalistas nomeados para o Grammy Award na categoria de Melhor Solo Instrumental de Jazz do Ano. Esta nomeação diz respeito a um solo de saxofone em “In Vogue” do disco de Joanne Brackeen (também participante neste estudo) “Pink Elephant Magic”². Neste disco colabora também o trompetista Nicholas Payton.

É de momento um aclamado saxofonista e compositor no meio do jazz internacional e toca regularmente com o contrabaixista Scott Colley e com o baterista Bill Stewart (também participantes neste estudo) com os quais desenvolve uma relação musical com vários anos.

Tal como Joe Lovano, Chris Potter já tocou no grupo de Paul Motian: Paul Motian Trio³. Lovano participa também como convidado no disco de Potter intitulado “Vertigo” de 1998⁴. Como Ben Monder, que participa também no estudo, Chris Potter gravou também com a “Paul Motian and the Electric Bebop Band”⁵.

Chris Potter teve também a colaboração do baterista Billy Hart no seu disco “Moving In” de 1996⁶.

² Brackeen, JoAnne. *Pink Elephant Magic*. Arkadia 70371. Gravado em Março de 1999. JoAnne Brackeen, piano; John Patitucci, contrabaixo; Horacio “El Negro” Hernandez, bateria; Chris Potter, saxofone tenor e soprano; David Liebman, saxofone soprano; Nicholas Payton, trompete; Kurt Elling, voz; Jamey Haddad, percussão.

³ Motian, Paul. *Paul Motian Trio: 2000 + One. Winter & Winter 910 032*. Gravado em 1999.

Paul Motian, bateria; Chris Potter, saxofone tenor; Steve Swallow, baixo eléctrico, Larry Grenadier, contrabaixo; Masabumi Kikuchi, piano.

⁴ Potter, Chris. *Vertigo*. Concord CCD 4843-2. Gravado em Abril de 1998.

Chris Potter, saxofone tenor, saxofone soprano, clarinete baixo, piano; Kurt Rosenwinkel, guitarra, Scott Colley, contrabaixo; Billy Drummond, bateria, Joe Lovano saxofone tenor.

Bill Stewart

Bill Stewart é um dos mais reconhecidos bateristas do panorama do jazz mundial. Nasceu em 18 de Outubro de 1966 em Des Moines, Iowa nos Estados Unidos. Frequentou o William Paterson College em New Jersey entre 1986 e 1988 onde estudou com o pianista Harold Mabern, o contra-baixista Rufus Reid e com o saxofonista Joe Lovano. Foi com Joe Lovano e John Scofield que gravou o primeiro disco “Snide Remarks” como líder em 1995⁷. Para além de ter pertencido ao grupo do John Scofield durante cinco anos, Bill Stewart trabalhou com Maceo Parker, Larry Goldings, Bob Belden, Peter Bernstein, entre muitos outros e integrou o trio de Pat Metheny.

Stewart colabora regularmente com Chris Potter e Scott Colley com quem já gravou “Subliminal”⁸ (1998), “This Place”⁹ (2000), “Traveling Mercies”¹⁰ “Lift: Live at the Village Vanguard”¹⁰ (2004), entre muitos outros. Bill Stewart já teve também outras oportunidades de colaborar com estes músicos separadamente no âmbito de outros projectos.

⁵ Motian, Paul. Monk and Powell. Winter & Winter 910045 2. Gravado em Novembro de 1998.

Paul Motian, bateria; Steve Cardenas, guitarra; Kurt Rosenwinkel, guitarra; Chris Cheek, saxofone tenor; Chris Potter, saxofone tenor; Steve Swallow, baixo eléctrico.

Motian, Paul. Reincarnation of a Lovebird. Jmt 514016-2. Gravado em Junho de 1994.

Paul Motian, bateria; Don Alias, percussão; Steve Swallow, baixo eléctrico; Kurt Rosenwinkel, guitarra; Wolfgang Muthspiel, guitarra; Chris Potter, saxofone tenor; Chris Cheek, saxofone tenor.

⁶ Potter, Chris. Moving In. Concord CCD 4723. Gravado em Fevereiro de 1996.

Chris Potter, saxofone tenor; Brad Mehldau, piano; Larry Grenadier, contrabaixo; Billy Hart, bateria.

⁷ Stewart, Bill. Snide Remarks. Blue Note 32489. Gravado em 1995.

Bill Stewart, bateria; Joe Lovano, saxofone tenor; John Scofield, guitarra, Eddie Henderson, trompete; Bill Carrothers, piano.

⁸ Colley, Scott. Subliminal. Criss-Cross 1157. Gravado em Dezembro de 1997.

Scott Colley, contrabaixo; Bill Stewart, bateria; Chris Potter, saxofone tenor, e Bill Carrothers, piano.

⁹ Colley, Scott. This Place. Steeplechase SCCD 31443. Gravado em Setembro de 1997.

Scott Colley, contrabaixo; Chris Potter, saxofone tenor; Bill Stewart, bateria.

¹⁰ Potter, Chris. Lift: Live at the Village Vanguard. Sunny Side. Gravado em Maio de 2004.

Chris Potter, saxofone tenor; Scott Coley, conrabaixo; Bill Stewart, bateria; Kevin Hayes, piano.

Scott Colley

Scott Colley é de momento um dos contrabaixistas mais solicitados no meio do jazz internacional, especialmente em Nova Iorque. Para além de ser um acompanhante reconhecido é também líder do seu grupo. Nascido em Los Angeles, estudou jazz e composição no California Institute for de Arts, onde se graduou em 1988. Mudou-se então para Nova Iorque no início dos anos 90, tendo tocado e gravado com Jim Hall, Joe Henderson, John Scofield (que como vimos está relacionado musicalmente também com Bill Stewart), Rick Margitza, Andrew Hill e muitos mais. Para além de ter colaborado com estes músicos, Colley toca regularmente com Chris Potter e Bill Stewart em projectos orientados por estes, ou mesmo no âmbito do seu trio. É de notar também a colaboração com o guitarrista Ben Monder que também participa no estudo, especialmente em dois discos do saxofonista Tim Ries ¹¹ “Universal Spirits” e “Imaginary Time”. Em “Imaginary Time” Scott Colley partilha também a secção rítmica com o baterista Billy Hart que, por sua vez e como vimos anteriormente participa também no disco “Moving In” de Chris Potter.

Scott Colley já gravou para as editoras Criss-Cross, Steeple Chase, Arabesque e Palmetto, entre outras.

Ben Monder

Ben Monder estudou na Universidade de Miami e no Queens College. Residente na área de Nova Iorque há mais de vinte anos, o guitarrista já tocou com Jack McDuff, Marc Johnson, Lee Konitz, George Garzone, Kenny Wheeler e é o guitarrista regular da “Maria Schneider Jazz Orchestra”. Tal como Chris Potter, Ben Monder já integrou o grupo de Paul Motian: “Paul Motian and the Electric Bebop Band” ¹², e leccionou por três anos no New England Conservatory em Boston. Ben Monder já teve também, como vimos anteriormente, a oportunidade de participar em várias gravações discográficas em conjunto com o contrabaixista Scott Colley (incluindo uma com o baterista Billy Hart).

Entre projectos seus ¹³ e de outros músicos, Monder já gravou mais de noventa discos e faz parte de uma geração de jovens músicos que tentam encontrar novos caminhos musicais no campo do jazz.

Joanne Brackeen

JoAnne Brackeen nasceu na Califórnia do Sul em 1938 e é outra participante que pertence á geração de Cecil McBee. A pianista, uma das mais aclamadas no panorama do jazz mundial já teve a oportunidade de tocar e gravar com vários músicos que também participam neste estudo, nomeadamente com Billy Hart e Cecil McBee. Um dos seus inúmeros discos enquanto líder “Snooze” ¹⁴ (1975) em trio, tem a participação destes dois músicos. A pianista gravou mais vezes com McBee e Hart, de onde se destacam os discos “Tring-a-ling” ¹⁵ com ambos e “Live at Montmartre” ¹⁶ de Stan Getz com Billy Hart na bateria. É importante também referir que a pianista se relaciona profissionalmente com Chris Potter (que ganhou um Grammy através de uma performance num disco seu, como já foi referido) e com

¹¹Ries, Tim. Universal Spirits. Criss-Cross Jazz 1144. Gravado em Outubro de 1997. Tim Ries, saxofone tenor e saxofone soprano; Scott Wendholt, trompete; Ben Monder, guitarra; Scott Colley, contrabaixo; Billy Drummond, bateria.

Ries, Tim. Imaginary Time. Moo Records, MP-60052. Gravado em Maio de 1994. Tim Ries, saxofone tenor, alto e soprano; Randy Brecker, trompete; Ben Monder, guitarra; Scott Colley, contrabaixo; Joey Baron, bateria; Billy Hart, bateria; Scott Wendholt; Frank Amsallem, piano; Charles Gordon, trombone.

¹²Motian, Paul. Europe. Winter & Winter 910063-2. Gravado em Julho de 2000. Paul Motian, bateria; Anders Christensen, baixo eléctrico; Chris Cheek, saxofone tenor; Pietro Tonolo, saxofone tenor e soprano; Ben Monder, guitarra, Steve Cardenas, guitarra. Motian, Paul. Holiday For Strings. Winter & Winter 910069-2. Gravado em Novembro de 2001.

¹³Das gravações discográficas enquanto líder distinguem-se “Dust” de 1997 e “Excavation” de 2000:

Monder, Ben. Dust. Arabesque Jazz AJ0131. Gravado em 1997.

Ben Monder, guitarras; Ben Street, contrabaixo; Jim Black, bateria.

Monder, Ben. Excavation. Arabesque Jazz AJ0148. Gravado em 2000.

Ben Monder, guitarra; Jim Black, bateria; Skuli Sverrisson, baixo; Theo Bleckmann, voice.

Nicholas Payton que participou também na mesma sessão de gravação e neste estudo.

Brackeen, tal como Bill Pierce (que participa também neste estudo), tocou e gravou com o lendário baterista Art Blakey¹⁷, tendo colaborado também com músicos como Dexter Gordon, Harold Land e Charles Lloyd. Depois de se mudar para Nova Iorque em meados dos anos 60, a pianista teve também a oportunidade de trabalhar com Woody Shaw, Dave Liebman, Joe Henderson, Stan Getz, Sam Jones, Eddie Gomez e Jack de Johnette. JoAnne Brackeen tem também experiência no âmbito da educação leccionando na New School University em Nova Iorque e na Berklee College of Music em Boston.

Bill Pierce

William Pierce é um aclamado saxofonista do meio do jazz internacional tendo já participado em mais de oitenta gravações discográficas, onze das quais como líder. Para além de ter tocado com Stevie Wonder e Marvin Gaye, Pierce é conhecido pela partilha do palco com o trompetista Wynton Marsalis no grupo de Art Blakey: “Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers”¹⁸. Tal como JoAnne Brackeen, Bill Pierce faz parte do grupo de músicos que tiveram a oportunidade para integrar esta reconhecida “escola” de Hardbop. Para além de ter tocado com músicos como Bobby Watson (também no âmbito

¹⁴ Brackeen, JoAnne. *Snooze*. Choice CRS 1009. Gravado em Março de 1975.

¹⁵ JoAnne Brackeen, piano, Cecil McBee, contrabaixo; Billy Hart, bateria.

Brackeen, JoAnne. *Tring-a-Ling*. Choice CRS 1016. Gravado em Março e Maio de 1977. Nova Iorque. Michael Brecker, saxofone tenor (Março); JoAnne Brackeen, piano, Cecil McBee, contrabaixo (Março); Billy Hart, bateria; Clint Houston, contrabaixo (Maio). Getz, Stan. *Live At Montmartre*. Steeplechase SCS 1073/74 - 2CDs. Gravado em Janeiro de 1977.

¹⁶ Stan Getz, saxofone tenor, JoAnne Brackeen, piano; Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, contrabaixo; Billy Hart, bateria.

Blakey, Art. *Jazz From Japan*. RCA SMJX 10086. Gravado em Fevereiro de 1970.

¹⁷ Art Blakey, bateria; Bill Hardman, trompete; Carlos Garnett, saxofone tenor; JoAnne Brackeen, piano; Jan Arnet, contrabaixo.

deste grupo), Pierce foi membro do quinteto do baterista Tony Williams entre 1986 e 1994. Tocou também com Hank Jones, Freddie Hubbard, James Williams, Terence Blanchard, Mulgrew Miller, Roy Haynes, Max Roach e Elvin Jones. Pierce é de momento director do departamento de “woodwinds” na Berklee College of Music onde é colega de JoAnne Brackeen.

¹⁸ Blakey, Art. Live At North Sea and Montreux Big Band. Timeless 150. Gravado em Julho de 1980.

Art Blakey, bateria; Bill Pierce, saxofone tenor; Bobby Watson, Saxofone tenor; Valerie Ponomarev, trompete; James Williams, piano; Charles Fambrough, contrabaixo; Wynton Marsalis, trompete, Branford Marsalis, saxofone alto e barítono; Robin Eubanks, trombone, Kevin Eubanks, guitarra.

Blakey, Art. Recorded Live At Buba's. Who's who in Jazz 21019. Gravado em Outubro de 1980.

Art Blakey, bateria; Wynton Marsalis, trompete; Bobby Watson, saxofone alto; Bill Pierce, saxofone tenor; James Williams, piano; Charles Fambrough, contrabaixo.

Blakey, Art. In Sweden. Evidence ECD 22044. Gravado em Março de 1981.

Art Blakey, bateria; Wynton Marsalis, trompete; Bobby Watson, saxofone alto; Bill Pierce, saxofone tenor; James Williams, piano; Charles Fambrough, contrabaixo.

Blakey, Art. Album of The Year. Timeless 155. Gravado em Abril de 1981.

Art Blakey, bateria; Wynton Marsalis, trompete; Bobby Watson, saxofone alto; Bill Pierce, saxofone tenor; James Williams, piano; Charles Fambrough, contrabaixo.

Blakey, Art. Straight Ahead. Concord CCD 4168. Gravado em Junho de 1981.

Art Blakey, bateria; Wynton Marsalis, trompete; Bobby Watson, saxofone alto; Bill Pierce, saxofone tenor; James Williams, piano; Charles Fambrough, contrabaixo.

Blakey, Art. Keystone 3. Concord CCD 4196. Gravado em Janeiro de 1982.

Art Blakey, bateria; Wynton Marsalis, trompete; Branford Marsalis, saxofone alto; Bill Pierce, saxofone tenor; Donald Brown, piano; Charles Fambrough, contrabaixo.

Blakey, Art. Oh By The Way. Timeless 165. Gravado em Maio de 1982.

Terrence Blanchard, trompete; Bill Pierce, saxofone tenor; Donald Harrison, saxofone alto; Johnny O'Neal, piano; Charles Fambrough, contrabaixo, Art Blakey, bateria.

Aaron Goldberg

Nascido a 30 de Abril de 1974, Aaron Goldberg é um jovem pianista que se afirma na “jazz scene” através da relação e colaboração com músicos como Wynton Marsalis, Joshua Redman, Kurt Rosenwinkel entre muitos outros. Originalmente de Boston, Goldberg mudou-se para Nova Iorque para estudar na New School University onde estabeleceu contactos com importantes músicos da “jazz scene”. Goldberg recebeu ao longo dos anos vários prémios entre os quais o Clifford Brown/Stan Getz Fellowship atribuído pela International Association of Jazz Educators (IAJE). Entretanto, e depois de estar integrado na “jazz scene” em Nova Iorque, o pianista decide estudar em Harvard, graduando-se em 1996 em História e Ciência, com uma concentração em “Mente, Cérebro e Comportamento”. Durante este período, Aaron Goldberg estabelece também contactos com músicos ligados à Berklee College of Music e ao New England Conservatory, enquanto continua a manter os contactos feitos em Nova Iorque.

Actualmente reside nos subúrbios de Nova Iorque e colabora com Peter Bernstein, Stefon Harris, Mark Turner, John Ellis, Nicholas Payton¹⁹ (que também participa neste estudo) e Tom Harrel. Para além da relação desenvolvida com estes músicos, Aaron Goldberg tocou com Freddie Hubbard, Betty Carter, Kenny Garrett, Michael Brecker, George Coleman, Bill Pierce (também participante neste estudo), Buster Williams e Lenny White. O pianista passou grande parte do ano de 2005 em digressão com o quarteto de Wynton Marsalis e com a Licoln Center Jazz Orchestra.

Nicholas Payton

Nicholas Payton nasceu em Nova Orleans a 26 de Setembro de 1973 no seio de uma família de músicos. Estudou na Universidade de Nova Orleans com Ellis Marsalis (pai de Wynton Marsalis) e tocou não só pelos Estados Unidos como por vários outros continentes. Uma referência no que diz respeito ao trompete, Payton colaborou com Clark Terry, Marcus Roberts, Herbie Hancock, Jesse Davis, Elvin Jones, Joshua Redman,

Christian McBride, Roy Hargrove e Wynton Marsalis, o que o faz estar ligado fortemente à “jazz scene” em Nova Iorque. Tocou também na Joe Henderson Big Band e colabora regularmente com muitos outros músicos como Aaron Goldberg, que como vimos também participa neste estudo.

Jason Moran

Jason Moran é um jovem pianista residente nos subúrbios de Nova Iorque como muitos outros músicos de jazz. Estudou com Jacky Byard na Manhattan School of Music e já teve a oportunidade de colaborar com Cassandra Wilson, Sam Rivers, Steve Coleman, Greg Osby e Stefan Harris. É líder em várias gravações discográficas, das quais se destaca “The Bandwagon”²⁰ gravado ao vivo no reconhecido clube “Village Vanguard” para a Blue Note. Este é o seu quinto disco lançado pela editora, tendo já até esta data lançado um sexto.

Moran teve também a oportunidade para gravar com outros músicos participantes deste estudo como Billy Hart²¹, Scott Colley²² e Joe Lovano²³.

¹⁹ Entre inúmeras colaborações incluindo tournés por diversos países europeus e africanos, podemos referir uma das últimas no disco de John Ellis “One Foot In The Swamp” de 2005.

Ellis, John. One Foot In The Swamp. Hyena TMF 9330. Gravado em 2005.

John Ellis, saxofone tenor e soprano; Aaron Goldberg, piano; Nickolas Payton, trompete; John Scofield, guitar; Jason Marsalis, bateria; Gregoire Maret, harmónica; Roland Guerin, contrabaixo.

²⁰ Moran, Jason. The Bandwagon. Blue Note 80917 Gravado em 2003.

Jason Moran, piano; Tarus Mateen, baixo; Nasheet Waits, bateria.

²¹ Schweizer, Christophe. Full Circle Rainbow. The Montreux Jazz Label 01142. Gravado em 2003. Christophe Schweizer, trombone; Ohad Talmor, saxofone tenor e soprano; Jason Moran, órgão Hammond B3; George Colligan, órgão Hammond B3; Billy Hart, bateria.

²² Osby, Greg. Symbols Of A Light (A Soltion). Blue Note 31395-2. Gravado em Fevereiro de 2001.

Greg Osby, saxofone alto e soprano; Jason Moran, piano; Scott Colley, contrabaixo; Marlon Browden, bateria; Marlene Rice-Shaw, violino; Christian Howes, violino; Judith Insell-Stack, viola; Nioka Workman, violoncelo.

²³ Lovano, Joe e Greg Osby. Friendly Fire. Blue Note 499125. Gravado em Dezembro de 1998.

Jason Moran, piano; Joe Lovano, saxofone tenor, soprano e flauta transversal; Greg Osby, saxofone alto e soprano; Cameron Brown, baixo; Idris Muhammad, bateria.

John Farnsworth

Jonh Farnsworth é trombonista e saxofonista e lidera a “banda da casa” na jam session do clube Smoke que se realiza todas as segundas-feiras à noite. Licenciado pela Rutgers University e Mestrado pela Massachussets University, Fransworth já teve a oportunidade de colaborar com músicos como Eddie Henderson, Frank Lacey, Joe Magnarelli, Jim Rotondi, Steve Turré, Harold Mabern, Junior Cook e Slide Hampton. Já tocou também na Aretha Franklin Big Band e nas Big Bands de Glenn Miller, Illinois Jacquet, Frank Foster, Artie Shaw, Archie Shepp e Charles Mingus.

Julius Tolentino

Julius Tolentino é um jovem músico no início dos seus trintas que lidera a “banda da casa” na jam session do Cleopatra’s Needle à segunda-feira. Graduou-se pela Hart School of Music onde teve a oportunidade de estudar com Jackie McLean, e mudou-se de seguida para Nova Iorque onde actualmente reside. Desde esta altura já teve a oportunidade para colaborar com Antonio Hart, Cecil Bridgewater, Charlie Persip, Eric Reed, Billy Drummond, The Duke Ellington Orchestra, Kevin Mahogany, Christian McBride, Natalie Cole, Cecil Brooks e Cyrus Chestnut. É presentemente membro do grupo Illinois Jacquet Big Band (onde John Fransworth também já colaborou).

Tolentino já tocou também em reconhecidos palcos como o Carnegie Hall, Blue Note, Licoln Center, Festival de Jazz de Newport, entre muitos outros.

Referências:

- Borden, Mitch. 2005. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 6 de Junho de 2005.
- Brackeen, JoAnne. 2004. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 5 de Agosto de 2004.
- Bruyninckx, Walter. 1980. *Sixty Years of Recorded Jazz: 1917-1977*. Bélgica: Walter Bruyninckx.
- Burgess, Robert. 1984. In *The Field: An Introduction to Field Research*. Londres: Routledge.
- Carner, Gary. 1990. *Jazz Performers: An Annotated Bibliography of Biographical Materials*. Greenwood Press.
- Colley, Scott. 2003. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 4 de Outubro de 2003.
- Cook, Richard e Brian Morton. 1992. *The Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD, LP and Cassette*. Nova Iorque: Penguin Books.
- Cook, Richard e Brian Morton. 2004. *The Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD (Seventh Edition)*. Nova Iorque: Penguin Books.
- Farnsworth, John. 2005. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 6 de Junho de 2005.
- Feather, Leonard e Ira Gitler. 1999. *The Biographical Encyclopedia of Jazz*. Oxford University Press.
- Gibson, Dave. 2005. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 18 de Julho de 2005.
- Goldberg, Aaron. 2003. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 16 de Novembro de 2003.
- Hart, Billy. 2003. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 26 de Outubro de 2003.
- Jenkins, Todd S. 2004. *Free Jazz and Free Improvisation: An Encyclopedia (Vols.1 e 2)*. Greenwood Press.
- Kernfeld, Barry (ed.). 1988. *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz*. Londres: MacMillan.

McBee, Cecil. 2003. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 26 de Outubro de 2003.

McCloud III, Andy. 2005. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 18 de Julho de 2005.

Monder, Ben. 2004. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 10 de Setembro de 2004.

Moran, Jason. 2003. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 23 de Outubro de 2003.

Payton, Nicholas. 2003. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 17 de Novembro de 2003.

Pierce, Bill. 2004. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 5 de Agosto de 2004.

Pinheiro, Ricardo. 2012. *Jazz Fora de Horas: Jam Sessions em Nova Iorque*. Lisboa: Universidade Lusíada Editora.

Pinheiro, Ricardo. 2008. “Jammin’ After Hours: A Jam Session em Nova Iorque”, Tese de Doutoramento, Departamento de Ciências Musicais, Faculdade de Ciências Sociais e Humanas, Universidade Nova de Lisboa.

Potter, Chris. 2003. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 4 de Outubro de 2003.

Ramsey, Frederic Jr. 1977. *A Guide to Longplaying Records*. Nova Iorque: Da Capo Press.

Scheffner, Manfred, ed. 1990. *Bielefelder Katalog: Jazz*. Stuttgart: Vereinigte Motor-Verlag.

Spradley, James. 1979. *The Ethnographic Interview*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Stewart, Bill. 2003. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 4 de Outubro de 2003.

Tolentino, Julius. 2005. Entrevista realizada com o autor, 5 de Julho de 2005.

