



Phoebe Jacobs

Location: Friar's Club

Date: N/A

I want to start with Benny Goodman and his childhood

Well, if you think about Benny living in Chicago, being the 12th child of a Jewish family, Russian immigrant Jews from, from the old country and his father a tailor and he wasn't an athlete, he was just one of the kids who would try to, he was the smallest of his family, and in Hebrew school where he went is where he learned about music. So that the world was, it was in the 20s and the world was kind of rough and the money was tight but Benny's family had love, companionship, he adored his mother and his brothers and sisters and it was a good, good childhood.

How did he get into music?

Well, Benny did go to, as I said, Hebrew school as is the custom of all good Jewish boys. They go to Cheder and they learn how to be a barmitzvah boy and in going to the Hebrew school, they had instruments there. And Benny went with his two brothers and he was the smallest of the trio of Goodman boys, so he got the littlest instrument, the clarinet 'cause it was very light. His brother, Harry, who was a big zaftig guy, he got the bass. So, that's how Benny was introduced to music.

How did he treat the music? What did he expect of his musicians.

Well, you're gonna, we shoot ahead a couple of years when Benny was perfecting the ability to handle his horn. I guess he treated the music like a kid might who loved baseball who loved his baseball bat. His horn was everything to him. And anything he could make come out of it was exquisite and he was constantly a perfectionist. He was listening to jazz in Chicago then. There was a lot of jazz. Louis Armstrong was there, there were a lot of

wonderful musicians and I guess Benny always adored and respected the way the Black man handled his music. Because all through Benny's life, he went up to Harlem when he was in New York or in Chicago he would go to the dance halls and he treated his horn and his music like a lover would a gorgeous woman.

What did expect of the musicians who played with him?

The same perfection that he expected of himself. Benny Goodman was hardly a jazz conductor. Benny Goodman was a maestro. When he got on the bandstand, he meant business. He could have been a surgeon ready for operation, everybody had to be on their toes and know exactly what they were doing.

What's the ray?

My version of the ray was Benny being angry, irritable, annoyed and he figured by looking at you, you'd understand just what he meant. But Peggy Lee has given me a different definition of the ray, Peggy Lee who worked for him a long time and became my dear friend over the years, told me that it was not a ray that had anything to do with you. That Benny would look at people like a pane of glass. He was so busy and so absorbed in himself and his music and what he was going to do that he looked right through you, like you weren't even there. You got the both stories, that's the ray.

He's not popular one is he?

Well, I don't, I was very protective of Benny for that reason, Benny was always a wonderful man, but Benny was very private, he was very aloof. He never buddy-buddied with his musicians, he never said, "Hey fellas, let's go down to Harry's and have a beer." Or anything because he was always involved with himself. But Benny was a good man and a good boss, and the guys didn't like it. Particularly jazz musicians who Benny was attracted to. They did not like that he didn't hang out. Because everybody, in those days everybody hung out. Louis, Duke, I mean anybody that was in jazz hung out.

How did he deal with money? Was he cheap?

Benny, I would say he was conservative. Let's not call him cheap. He was a conservative man even though he was married to a Vanderbilt and Alice was a very substantial lady of great wealth. And Benny earned a great deal of money and Benny made fabulous investments, he still was very conservative about how he spent money.

Did the guys say that he was cheap?

Well, I'd like to tell you one little story. I used to be a contractor, so I hired musicians for Peggy Lee. And Benny always loved to see who Peggy had accompanying her because he respected as the years went on her great growth in handling accompaniment because remember Peggy brought "Lill Green, Why don't you do Right?" to Benny. He was not in that bag at that time. In the, in the 30's. So he'd call and he'd say, "Who is Peggy hiring, who's she going to have at the Basin Street East?" And I'd tell him. "Well, what is she paying 'em?" I'd say, "Five hundred for this guy, and seven-fifty for. . .," "Oh, I'll never pay that." Yet, the next time he worked, he made sure that he got Peggy's drummer or Peggy's pianist because he respected her ability in choosing musicians. But he was conservative and cheap.

Tell me the story about the bracelet.

Well, Mr. Goodman used to perform at Ralph Watkins Basement Street East establishment twice a year. And it was his custom to give out gifts when he left. He had a lovely lady, Muriel Sequin working for him and she'd take orders from Benny, "Go get Phoebe something," or "Get the captain something," or whatever and I think with the fashion was gold bangles, and I had one little skinny one from Peggy which was very lovely but Benny decided his has got to be twice as thick and he naturally inscribed it, ordered it inscribed so Muriel took it to have it inscribed and it said, "To P.J. from Benny Goodman." He just didn't write to Phoebe Jacobs from B.J., he had to have top billing.

How did jazz influence our language?

Well, for example, I think, that in order for people to be part of the now tempo, we'd like to imitate a jazz musician, like the first time I heard a guy say, "Well, that's cool." Well, I came home and I pulled that on my mother, so she says, "It's hot, what are you telling me it's cool?" Well, not realizing that cool was not a state, a condition of something, cool was a condition of how it appeared, how it looked. And, or the word crazy, crazy that we put into our language to mean something very, very good, extremely good, that didn't, it wasn't a state of mind, it was a jazz musician saying that this was great, and today, I believe there are many expressions that we use and maybe kids are taking this into rap as well. By creating their own language. It's kind of a private communication. It's like if I was a horn player and I picked up and I blew a couple of notes and you were a horn player and you answered me, well when we haven't got our instruments and we want to like really have a secret conversation, we're going to talk in the jive lingo. And the real jazz stuff.

John Hammond.

John Hammond was a very beautiful addition to the jazz scene. John Hammond was a cultured, well-educated, well-mannered, distinguished gentleman highly respected in his community who brought people like Count Basie and Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton into the jazz world for recognition. Normally they might have taken twenty, thirty years for them to be accepted. But when John Hammond brought Benny Goodman Quartet to the Vanderbilt mansion for a private party and had these wonderful people that were highly involved in the arts and because of John Hammond, Sol Hurok hired Benny Goodman for Carnegie Hall. John Hammond was a great influence in jazz, gave jazz the distinctive, wonderful value that it had in our society.

What motivated him?

Just something he dug. I mean, it's like any generation, a kid wants to make their own statement. Let's say John Hammond's family were into opera and chamber music and somebody took him up to Harlem and he heard some of this swinging stuff up in the ballroom or something and he really dug it, so that's why he wanted to be this individual and get into the jazz world. In addition to the fact, I believe that John Hammond was always very philanthropic. Again, getting that from the Vanderbilts who were also philanthropic and most of the musicians were hungry. There wasn't a lot of work. They needed work and John could open doors.

Louis Armstrong

Oh, my love. Yes, he was very great.

Tell me about Louis Armstrong.

Well, Louis Armstrong was a, I don't believe Louis Armstrong was a real human being, I believe, I still believe that God sent him to this earth to be a special messenger, to make people happy. You see, I think that music is therapy, for me, music has always been as intoxicating as alcohol or a reefer or any kind of drugs. The sound of music could stimulate in me love, happiness, creativity and I think Louis Armstrong was sent here as a messenger of the good Lord 'cause I'm very spiritual to make people happy. And that's what he dedicated his life to doing.

What did you feel when you watched him perform?

Well, I guess Louis became a teacher for me. Watching the way Louis lived his life and performed and did his work taught me what people can do with themselves if they really are passionately involved and dedicated. When Louis performed, he gave of himself totally to his audience. He stopped at nothing, he, he couldn't blow loud enough, he couldn't hit a high enough note. It was like he, he always wanted to have more and give more than he could to transmit and communicate to people his love and his passion for what he was doing.

He spent his whole life on the road, too.

Yes. He did.

Tell me about the life on the road.

Well, life on the road, I have to get into a social situation which I'm not very happy about was always pretty hard. The few trips that I made with Louis, we couldn't go into a diner and eat together because Marty Napoleon was white and maybe had a white drummer or something, I don't remember the other guys that might have been at the time but if we went into a diner they wouldn't serve us. And I'm talking about the sixties, late fifties, a white woman with Black men, they didn't care if they were stars. You couldn't get waited on. We couldn't stop and get rooms with private baths or anything. They wouldn't take us. And I don't think I ever looked like a hooker, or that I was involved with him sexually or intimately but they would treat me like I was, very shabbily and I guess I was very unhappy about the social condition in America.

Benny Goodman was open with the relationship with Black players, but did he do anything to advance Blacks in music?

Well, now that question... Benny Goodman was the first highly respected musician that fought to have Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton in his group. In fact, when we, Benny went to the Ambassador East, I heard this story that he checked out because they would not admit Teddy Wilson and Lionel Hampton to the hotel. And Benny didn't care. His musicians were very important to him. He never thought about color. I was present when Governor Rockefeller invited Benny Goodman to perform at Pontico Hills and the bus pulled up and we all went, Muriel and I went around with the boys to the back of the house and Benny went with us. And the governor walked in and he said, "Mr. Goodman, we have a place at the table for you." So Benny says, "I always stay with my men." That was Benny, I mean, he didn't care if they were Black or white, or what, that was his band and that's where he stayed.

Louis and Lucille, tell me about their relationship.

Oh. Louis and Lucille were beautiful. In fact, Louis was such a romantic. He had to have two of everything. But he only had one wife. He had to have, if he had a dog, a male dog, the dog had to have a girl. So his last dogs were Trumpet and Trinket. Mr. Glaser, Joe Glaser, his agent, gave him these Schnauzers. So Trumpet was the male and after a while they got Trinket, was the little girl. Now Louis was playing Romeo and Juliet all his life. He'd eye Lucille up look at her all, legs and say she was a thoroughbred, "Look at those ankles. She looks like a good little filly." I mean, he loved everything about Lucille. He treated her like she was a little doll and he was in love with love, he was very romantic. Extremely romantic man.

Was he a good family man?

Yes. He adored family. He adored his sister, Beatrice, who was Beatrice Collins, he called her Momma Lucy and they had a wonderful relationship. She was very loving of him and he of her. And his step-brother Hendry and William and Hazel and his momma. Wherever he was he would call them. In fact, one time he called me and he said, "You know, it's Momma Lucy's birthday, send her a refrigerator." I said, "Louis, we're in New York and she's in New Orleans. Let her call Sears Roebuck or something. He said, "Yeah, but you know if I send the money, she won't do it." So I said, "Well, I'll do it." I called Sears Roebuck in New Orleans and her sent, you know, but that's the way Louis thought about Momma Lucy. He had to send her things and know he wanted her to know he thought of her.

He had a house in Queens. What was his relationship to the neighborhood?

Well, Louis was a people person. And if Louis came home to the neighborhood, very often the neighbors would have banners out, "Welcome Home Pops." He'd sit if the weather permitted, he'd sit on the steps in the front of his house and buy kids Good Humors. They knew had to come when the Good Humor truck came by. Louis'd be buying them popsicles and he'd ask them, "Was your homework good? Were you a good boy?" And he was kind of friendly, let them buy, play the horn and in the wintertime he'd have grab bags for the kids and he and Lucille would have a party and have the neighborhood kids in. Oh, he just loved his neighborhood. He went to his neighborhood barber on Northern Blvd. every time he needed a shave and a haircut. He was that kind of a man. He was a man of the people. He loved everybody.

How did he deal with getting old?

Well, you know, Louis used to call his sickness an intermission. You know, he said, "Listen, you know, in show business you've got to have an intermission." He'd be laying in the hospital with a couple of tubes in him and

you'd say something to him and he said, you know, "This is intermission." Or, "We're taking a five-minute break," or some such. And he wrote, he used to write constantly about the things that were going on in the hospital room-- about the nurses and the shape on that nurse and did you see the ass on this nurse. Louis just took it all in. Nothing ever stopped him.

Did he know how serious his condition was, towards the end?

No. No. Louis always felt he was going to make something better. When Dr. Zucker who was his physician for many years after Schiffy died, said, "Louis, you cannot take the engagement in the Waldorf Astoria, you will die on the stage." He said, "Well that's where I want to die."

Tell me about Joe Glaser.

Oh my, Joe Glaser was, I guess what you'd call a self-made man. He was a man who lived in the era of survival of the fittest. In Chicago, during the days of Al Capone when he was growing up and I guess men of the sporting element had nightclubs. He had one of them and used some strong arm stuff here and there to get things done. He heard about this young, bright trumpet player that came up from New Orleans. And, and Joe Glaser wanted to get hold of him, so he did. And Joe Glaser was really Louis' father, I think. He was, to Louis, he was like a father figure because he was really interested in exposing Louis to the public because he knew he was something special but he was also interested in protecting Louis. And caring for Louis. He gave Louis the feeling of confidence and if you read anything about Louis' life and Louis' own statements, he says, "Somebody once told me, get yourself a nice good white guy and he'll take care of you." Because remember, Louis grew up in a time when Black people didn't make their own way in night clubs. And we were going through this enormous change of Black musicians being able to play in dance halls where white people went. You know, that was a whole change in our, in our whole structure. So Joe Glaser opened all these doors for Louis and gave him protection.

People say that he was a thug, that he exploited Louis.

Well, I can't say that, whether I know, I don't know anything about that so I really can't say that was true or not. When I came into Louis Armstrong's life which was sometime in the forty, forties, I would say I respected Mr. Glaser. I got the feeling, I met Mr. Glaser bought Sarah Vaughan a house when she had no place to live in Newark and didn't have money. So I looked to Joe Glaser and I thought to myself, "Why, thank God for a man like Joe Glaser." So what if he's taking a little bit for himself. That's part of the game of the commercial world, isn't it? But he left enough for Louis to enjoy life and have a nice home and a nice, nice car and Louis seemed happy with it.

And beyond the business arrangements, there was some connection between these two.

Well there was, I guess, again, Louis being the kind of person he was. He was so appreciative of kindnesses, of thoughtfulness, of caring, he was so sensitive to people that he always was very grateful to Joe. But I don't, he didn't enjoy socializing with Joe. In fact, I remember once we talked about going to a Chinese restaurant and I said, you know, "Mr. Glaser and Doc Schiff are coming by." "Oh," he says, "I don't want them to go, tell me what to eat," you know, "I want to order myself." In other words, Joe would even try to take care of Louis, what he ate, you know, and how much he ate or how much he drank. But Joe is a rough man. A very rough man. He was very abusive. His language was the language of the streets. He was extremely generous. He had a Rolls Royce and he loved dogs and animals and used to give Louis all his pets. He gave him toy bulls when he entered his dogs in a Westminster Kennel Show. Because he just didn't have ordinary dogs. He always had champions and I guess Louis was his champion and he treated him like something very special and caring. And with regard to him taking more than he should have, Louis never complained.

Louis' upbringing.

Oh sure. Louis didn't talk about the kind of upbringing he had, he wrote about it. He wrote, I've seen compositions, because he used, he was an avid writer. He had, he loved his typewriter or he'd write longhand and he'd write about how he grew up. He, he was dragged up really in slums of New Orleans, but he knew no different so he didn't think that he was living poorly until he went to the Karnofsky's and when he got a job with the Karnofsky's on the wagon and he saw the way this little Jewish family lived and they had dishes that matched and chairs that they could sit on and clean clothes, he recognized that there was another way of life. And, but he was happy, he was always a happy little boy. He was even happy when he recalled stories about that waifs' home that he was in. Louis always saw the donut, never the hole. And I guess that's the way he was even when he was a little boy.

What were your feelings when you heard that he had died? Where were you?

Okay. I got a call at a quarter to seven in the morning. I was in my bed. From Oscar Cohen who inherited Associated Booking Corporation which was Louis Armstrong's booking office when Joe Glaser died. And Oscar Cohen called and said, "Phoebe, Pops is gone. Come meet me." I was then an executive for the Rockefeller Center on special events and I worked for Mr. Brody then who had the Rainbow Room and Grille and the restaurants downstairs and I said, "I'll be right over to the office whenever you tell me." And he said, "I'll be at the office at eight o'clock on 57th Street and Park Avenue and we'll start making phone calls," or whatever he said we were

going to do. My heart broke. But I guess I knew in the flash of that moment, that Louis would never die. Because Louis was a spirit. He was a spirit in as much as he encompassed my life, I know he must have touched on millions of people. However, I never in my wildest dreams, and I'm a wild dreamer, did I ever know that he could have reached the people he reached to in his lifetime until I got involved with the mail that Mrs. Armstrong received when he died. When I opened a letter addressed to Mrs. Satchmo, USA, that's it and she got it. I knew what Louis meant.

Piece of music

I guess when I think Louis Armstrong, I think of two songs that he wrote, one is "Someday," because Lucille told me a whole story of how he wrote that. And the other was, "Just for a Thrill," which he gave to Lil Hardin in settlement for their divorce. And of course I was a Ray Charles nut and Ray did such a beautiful job on "Just for a Thrill," that I remember those two songs.

Duke Ellington

Mr. Ellington was a really, I guess as close as jazz could get to a dedicated composer would be Duke Ellington. He was Leonard Bernstein, Tchaikovsky, George Gershwin, Jerome Kern, because if you think about what Duke Ellington wrote, his serious music, his religious music, his jazz music, his Cotton Club music, it was unbelievable and then one time I remember working with Duke and he said, I had made the host of the city of New York and this was in 1971, I said, "Duke, you know, that you're going to be the host of the city of New York, don't you think you should write a song?" And this was five o'clock on the afternoon. Eight o'clock at night, he said to me, get me a recording studio, I just wrote your song for you. And he wrote a song, "New York, New York," which incidentally nobody took up but Cander and Abba, whoever was writing New York, songs for New York later. But he did that, and then when I went to a sacred music concert in San Francisco, at a church where he, his sacred music was performed, I realized that Duke Ellington was a very unique, look how lucky I was, to have been at a place in our musical history, in our jazz history to know someone like Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington. My God.

Backstage Ellington

I saw a charming, hospitable, cordial, divine gentleman who was as smooth as silk, absolutely. I believe that the women that slept with Duke Ellington never really knew him. Because there were so many Ellingtons. Mr. Ell, I could see four or five personalities of Duke Ellington in one evening depending on who it was. If it was Joan Crawford who came up for dinner because she was president or an officer of Pepsi Cola and he was going to

Russian and we wanted Pepsi Cola to go to Russia, Duke was one man. And if an eighty-three year old woman was having a birthday party and her rich son hired Duke Ellington's orchestra, Mr. Ellington would be another man. He had the ability -- he was a great actor, tremendous actor. I think Duke could have gone into films very well. He was self-educated. There was, he had a library that was so extensive that when I helped his son, Mercer, dispose of his books, he had eight versions of Alice in Wonderland, he had Mark Twains, Dickens, Marx, Shakespeares, well you know he wrote four Shakespearean suites, he had a Bible of every religion in the world. Duke had it. Art, he painted, he did ever, he did so many, he designed clothes. One time he said to me, "Would you go to Capezio's and order me some slippers." Well, I thought he wanted bedroom slippers, you know, I mean, Capezio made ballet slippers. He said, "But ask them to put a soft sole on it, not, not chamois, a soft leather." He was a man who designed a velvet pair of moccasins for himself. And Capezio made it. "I hate these starched shirts," he said, "Get me something silky and soft. I want Sea Island cotton with a soft collar, and none of those stiff ties. I want one of those soft ties." Now he designed all this himself. Another time he said to me, "Would you go to an upholstery store and get me a lot of slipcover swatches?" I said, "Slipcovers, what are you mak, what are you doing?" He said, "I want to make some formal jackets. I don't like this nonsense the tailor is giving me. So he made a mattress ticking jacket, a Tartan plaid jacket, a, things that you see today that are very fashionable. Duke was wearing them in the fifties, he designed them, himself. He was an amazing man.

Duke and women. Duke liked women. Women liked Duke.

Oh my dear, that's the understatement of the year. Mr. Ellington was adored by ladies all his life. And he reciprocated by adoring them. Well, you know, most of his material was written, inspired by ladies. Of course his "Sophisticated Lady," I think was his great statement and he took great joy every night in saying when he was going to perform, I'm dedicating this tune to the most beautiful woman in the room and you know who you are, don't you, darling? So everybody sitting there would think, "Well this 'Sophisticated Lady's' just for me." But that was Ellington.

What did he say when he walked on the stage all the time?

Mr. Ellington would walk on the stage every evening and say, "Good evening." Just as gently... well he would, no, he would sit at the piano, before, he would say it from the piano, he would say, "Good evening." And in his dedication to a song, he would say, "This is to the most beautiful woman in the room and you know who you are." And proceed to play "Sophisticated Lady." I love you madly. That was Ellington he, all his life. He did have one very involved relationship with a woman who I grew to know and love and shared confidences with. Her name was Evie Ellis Ellington. In fact Mercer had her internment up at Woodlawn Cemetery where Ellington is buried. And

Ellington was always, I think Evie was his protection. In other words, every time he got too involved with another woman, he'd always say, "Well I have to go back to Evie." And ironically, Evie was brought to New York when she was sixteen years old by Joe Glaser. She was Joe Glaser's girlfriend. And at that time, Mr. Ellington was handled by Joe Glaser. And he fell in love with Evie when she became a showgirl in the Cotton Club. She was a showgirl in the Cotton Club when Lena Horne was a chorus girl and Lucille Armstrong was a chorus girl. So there's the six degrees of separation right there, you have them all together.

Ella Fitzgerald seems so private and so enigmatic. Tell us about her.

Ella Fitzgerald was a very shy lady. She loved to sing. Music consumed her. And she loved people. But she was afraid of getting too intimate. Remember we're also talking about a period of relationships between Black and whites and show business people where they were afraid to trust others. They were afraid. They didn't know who was looking to get something from them or looking to screw them. Or, like when you think about Duke selling a song to Irving Mills for seventy-five dollars, do you expect him to have faith in other people in doing business? You know, they were all rip-offs. So Ella held herself together and became a very private person because she didn't, she was afraid of people hurting her. But she did get a great deal out of her fans by the adoration that she got, never believing that she was as great as everybody told her she was. But she was also like Duke, and like Louis, passionately involved in her craft. There's nothing that she wanted more, even when she was in a wheelchair than to go out there and knock her public out and give of herself. She adored singing and adored performing.

Did she think she was good at it?

No. She always tore herself down. She'd come off the stage and she might say to me, did you see that? I didn't even hit that note. I couldn't even remember the words, wasn't I terrible. It was awful. Oh, I don't know, I don't know what they're applauding for. I'm awful. She always tore herself down. Well, so did Goodman. Goodman always felt he didn't have the right reed in his clarinet, that he never played correctly, but isn't this true of great people? Great people are never satisfied with what they're doing. They always feel they want to improve. It's like Louis, when he hits C he wanted to hit a higher note. He wanted to hit it louder. He wanted it to be fuller, richer. Because they could never give enough of themselves.

Sarah Vaughan

Oh, God, Sarah was a child that never grew up. A very beautiful, sad little lady who was dedicated, also, to music. And I think if Sarah could have studied, Sarah would have been an opera star. 'Cause she had almost a

three octave range. And she used to practice arias from operas. Sarah also loved, loved singing and a curious thing about Sarah was, when I traveled with her for a while and I'd say, "Sarah, I'm going out, can I buy you something?" She said, "Yeah, get me some joke books and movie magazines." If now could I tell somebody downstairs I'm getting these joke books for Sarah Vaughan, they thought I was a nut. Either that or she'd say to me, "Find out if I can rent a Singer sewing machine and get me some material, I'll make us nightgowns." Now here's a woman who could go into any store and charge any nightgown she loved to make clothes. She loved to sew. She insisted that I teach her how to crochet which I did backstage and she made, she loved her daughter and her mother very much and she made bedspreads for them and, you know, she used to do theses squares, these granny squares out of cotton and she was very good at what she did.

Did she get the success she deserved?

Well, I don't think it's success. I think she did not get the recognition she justifiably deserved. That's what I think Ella did because Ella had Norman Grantz. Louis did because Louis had Joe Glaser. Benny did because Benny had Muriel Zuckerman, John Hammond, Saul Urock, a lot of. . . You cannot be a one-man band and make it in the jazz world. The jazz world in those days was hard. You had to have somebody out there fronting for you, fighting for you . Making it happen for you .

Did you ever run into the drugs and the heroin and this stuff?

Of course. Well, I only ran into it in the sense that a lot of musicians would bring around pot. I mean, we were just involved, I mean, I smoked reefers because it was easier than getting a hangover. I mean, if you wanted to unwind, and relax a little bit, so you smoked. And it was something that made you feel good and you'd go to sleep and get up the next morning without feeling your head was out here. They did try to sell us heavy stuff, but I'd say most of the people I knew would not take it. They were scared of it. Either that or it was too expensive. But they'd come around, come around just like someone who wanted to sell you a hot mink coat or a hot diamond ring. That ilk of people attracted loose money and swinging things happening. And we never thought about it as being criminal because they didn't give it to children. We weren't involved in, in hard drugs with kids like they are today. So people would shrug it off. There were a lot of people in the band that used it, but they never influenced anybody else.

But you knew the stories about Charlie Parker. . .

Oh, sure, of course. We knew they were doing it. We knew they were needling, you know, they were involved with that. But there was nothing anybody could do about it. You'd try to straighten, I remember Louis talking

to a few guys, many times, but they, you know, these cats didn't want to do that. They wanted to do their own thing and actually, I think it gave them strength. I think it gave them the strength to perform, the strength to continue, to go on. That wonderful thing that happens when you're transformed from this sober world to the world of intoxication was what they needed. Their music ceased intoxicating them, they needed something more. I really believe that's what it was.

Is that what is at the heart of jazz music? What is it about this jazz music.

Well, what I've learned about jazz music, I learned when I was in Europe. In 1974, I succeeded in convincing Lucille Armstrong, the widow of Louis Armstrong, to visit Europe under the auspices of the State Department and in stimulating Lucille to do this, I did it saying that she owed the world some thank yous for the outpouring of love they gave her when Louis died. It took her two years to answer the mail that she received from every corner of the world regarding Louis' death. When we were in the iron curtain countries where we saw the sickle and the hammer and women standing with machine guns on the corner in Poland and Rumania and we went to Warsaw and the camps and all and Lucille spoke to a fifteen-year-old boy who said to her, "I loved Louis Armstrong." And Lucille said, "Well, how, you did, you didn't even see him. What do you know about him?" "Louis represents freedom to me. Jazz is freedom. We can't play music any way we want. We must play music the way it is written. Jazz can go, a jazzman can go out there and play anything he wants and say it his own way." So jazz represented freedom to people all over the world.

You love this music, don't you?

Oh, I love this music. I do. But jazz is now just more than just a music, jazz has become a whole style. It's an interpretation of music now. I mean, 'cause when I think about the "Song of India" that Tommy Dorsey played, Sy Oliver arranged which is classic, but it's a jazz, it's, the style is jazz. And that's what jazz has become, a style. We're growing, remember, I was there when jazz started to be born. You know, when it went from ragtime to jazz in the twenties, I started to become aware of jazz in the thirties. My father had a speakeasy, he had jazz pianists in it and I became aware of jazz but then I've lived through the growth of jazz. It got a mustache, it grew hair, it got bigger, it smoked cigars, it smoked pot, but jazz was growing until it went into the Leonard Bernsteins and the Philharmonic orchestras and the Gershwins and everything and it got all kinds of new things to it so when you talk jazz now, you just can't talk "St. Louis Blues." You just can't talk, "Sleepytime down South." You're talking jazz, you're talking about what's stylish in music. What's happening in music. Is that not true?

I believe you.

And it's never going to stop. It's never going to stop. I mean, jazz is a freedom of expression. Jazz is a colorful interpretation of things. Jazz is something that's it's so American because America doesn't hide. Doesn't have any pretenses and jazz musicians are free and natural. Man, they'll go out there and they'll keep their shirts are wet and their hair is disheveled and their jackets are all over the place. They're going to blow, honey, they're going to make you feel what they want you to feel and that's what it's about.

The End