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General sense of why they care about jazz. Why do you care about it? Why should we care about it?

I care about jazz for the same reason that I care about music. Music is emotion through sound and that's what jazz is. Jazz is just one form of emotion through sound. I think one of the things that makes jazz so special is that it allows you to convey your emotions in one of the most spontaneous and immediate and direct ways as possible and that's kind of the special thing about jazz is the improvisational nature of the music, so it's really representing what you feel and what you're experiencing at the moment.

Is there something very American about that spontaneity, do you feel that?

I mean, there's no question that jazz is an American art form. It was, it originated and was developed in America. And most of the best and most innovators of the music have been American. But I think the feeling of jazz and the spontaneity of jazz; that's not specific to a nationality or to a culture or to a continent. I mean, the feeling of jazz spontaneity expression through sound, that's universal. That's human.

Saxophone is the King.

Saxophone is definitely a prince. I mean you know, there are a few kings, a few instruments can share the throne of jazz. Saxophone and tenor sax is definitely one of them.

Why?

Saxophone just sounds right in the jazz context. I mean, what more can be said about it. It's, I mean, there's no question that saxophone is a very vocal sounding instrument. I think the sound of the saxophone in a jazz context is

one of the closest sounds to the human voice. And I think ultimately musicians, in whatever context they're in are trying to approach some kind of vocal quality. They're trying to sing through their instruments. So the saxophone, I think, has a very vocal quality. Also with jazz, the technical possibilities of the saxophone are very open ended. They're almost unlimited, I think. Through the saxophone, musicians, jazz musicians have been able to accomplish a lot of things technically, harmonically, melodically, that can't be accomplished on other instruments.

They try to imitate. They say that after Charlie Parker, everyone tried to imitate Charlie Parker on every instrument.

Sure. Sure. Yes. That's true, I mean some of the most, some of the most, some of the most imitated jazz musicians have definitely been saxophone players. But trumpet players are important too, I mean, you know, Louis Armstrong was probably the most important improviser in jazz so, you know, saxophone is one of many important instruments.

You want to tell me something else about the saxophone?

Yeah I do. One thing which I think is very special about the saxophone in jazz is the emotional breath and range of the instrument. I think through the saxophone, so many different emotions and emotional tones can be produced and communicated. You take an artist like John Coltrane, for example, I mean the way he played the saxophone on one level there was so much intensity and fire and passion and urgency and on another level there was so much sweetness and poignancy and softness. So, I think that kind of emotional range may be unique to the saxophone in jazz.

I wonder if that kind of emotional range is also part of what jazz is about, too. Can encompass everything in human life, the highs, the lows.

I think any great music has a great emotional range. But the thing about jazz is the subtlety of emotion that can be expressed through the music. Through improvisation, when you're dealing with the master improviser. So many different levels and sub levels of emotion can be communicated through the music and the more a jazz musician delves into his or her art and the more a jazz musician learns about his or her instrument, the more emotion can be expressed.

Audience may not understand what they're hearing.

I think, I think the most important thing with any music is that the audience feels the music. I don't, I think with a music like jazz, yes, it can help to understand what's happening technically but ultimately what matters is the emotional power of the music. One thing about jazz is that because of the subtlety of the emotion expressed in jazz sometimes, it doesn't hit listeners,

at least not in a superficial level, it doesn't hit listeners with the impact that other musics have. But I think if the listeners get beneath the surface, as soon as they get beneath, beneath the surface of the music, they can really experience such a broad range of emotion.

They say that jazz is for grown ups and rock and roll is for teenagers, but anyway.

I don't know, I don't know whether I'd say that jazz is a music for grownups, I think that jazz is a music for sensitive listeners and for patient listeners. But I think every listener has the capability of being sensitive or patient, it's just that in our culture today, we often don't encourage sensitivity or patience in listening to music or in anything else for that matter.

Rhythm drew you into jazz

Is that what I said?

The beat and the feeling of the jazz rhythm is what attracted you to the music. Do you remember that?

Maybe move on. It might come up in another context.

Jazz today and the idea of labels and categories

Sure.

And fitting into a box. Meaningful as a label?

The word jazz means something and it's fine to use the word jazz, but words can only mean so much in the context of musical experience and musical expression. I mean, sure there are types of music that most people would call jazz and there are types of music which most people wouldn't and I'll use the term jazz as often as anyone else. But ultimately, a label is only a half-truth. Whatever label you put on a music, it never really describes what's happening emotionally and the label jazz, the definition of that label has changed and evolved over time. I mean, there was a time when people said bebop wasn't jazz and now bebop is considered the cornerstone of modern jazz. So, yes, I mean, the label means something and it's okay to use it but I think we always have to be aware of the limitations of labels.

What it means to be an artist today after all that's come before and not wanting to imitate the past. After fusion, free jazz there's no where for it to go. Where is jazz going?

Right. Right.

What should we be looking for in where jazz should be going or is going?

Right, right. Well I mean, I definitely do not agree with the statement that jazz is dead. Let me say that again. I definitely do not agree with the statement that jazz is dead. I think jazz is as alive and is well and as active and creative as it's ever been. But I think we have to get out of the framework of seeing jazz as a music which has to develop in a logical linear fashion. I think the days of being able to see, you know, the clear, step by step evolution of jazz from one style to another, those days may be gone. You know, I think, after free jazz, after we've broken down form and melody and harmony so that there's no preset form, there's no preset rhythm, no preset harmony, I mean, where do you logically go after that? Well, you can't logically go anywhere, but there's so much room for originality in the music, still left, and I think with so many different artists today you can hear that originality. I think we just have to take a slightly different approach to the music. We can't necessarily expect to see a new radical style the way we saw bebop or the way we saw free jazz in the forties and the sixties but there's plenty of room left for originality.

So, innovation?

Innovation is definitely still possible in Jazz. I think we see it everyday. I think every new artist who comes out who plays from his or her soul is an innovator because every new artist is playing something original from his or her soul. I think the problem is that there's too much of a focus on newness, and too little a focus on originality. I mean, those two terms, new and original, they may sound the same, but they have different connotations. New is a very scientific, very analytical term. It's a very antiseptic term. When you think new, you think about breaking something down into its constituent elements, and determining, OK, which of these elements are different from anything that's gone before. When you talk about originality, it's a more organic, more natural concept. If I hear something which is original, if I describe something as being original, that's something that hits me as a whole sound, a whole experience. It's not that I'm dissecting it, trying to compare it to what's gone before. It's just- it is original and unique in the way it makes me feel, and that's what we should be talking about with Jazz. And I think we hear originality everyday with every original artist who comes out.

So our film is ending after twelve hours. Where is Jazz?

Once again, we have to — ah, once again when answering the question of where is Jazz going, we have to get away from a linear conception of Jazz. Jazz right now is going in so many different directions, and they're all original directions. I think there's a lot happening in terms of the combination of Jazz with other sounds from around the world. Or from within American music. There's a lot happening with the combination with, with R& B, Jazz with hip-

hop, Jazz with Latin music, Jazz with West Indian music, Jazz with Gospel music. And there's a lot happening in terms of the combining of Jazz within itself, umm, the important thing is that Jazz is moving, expanding in many different directions. And that there are original artists out here who have something original to say. Who are expressing their original feelings and original experiences as human beings today. And as long as that continues, Jazz will be fine. And I know that will continue.

That's great. Did you want to talk more about labels?

Ah, sure — I don't even remember what I was going to say.

Miles Davis — you specifically talked about the mid-sixties band. The Herbie Hancock... What was it about that band do you think was so important?

Do I need to talk about them? (Competing voices) That band, the sixties Miles band was one of the freest bands in the history of Jazz. What made them so remarkable was their ability to take forms that existed and to even stay within the forms but play so freely and paint these wild pastel-like pictures, um over these forms....

What was it about the band that was so. So...

I think the freedom of that band, their freedom lay in their ability to transcend the forms that they were still playing within. They could take a form which was pretty basic, a sixteen bar, thirty-two bar form and they could dissolve it and play around it, play within it, play over it in such a way that you could barely hear the form anymore. They would reconstruct their own forms spontaneously over that form, yet, the minute that you thought that you were lost, I'm sorry, I lost my train of thought.

Do you think there was an influence of Ornette Coleman and what he was doing? What did Miles think of Ornette?

I don't want to go on record saying what, what Miles thought of Ornette, but I think undoubtedly, what Ornette was doing at the time influenced Miles because it influenced Miles through the members of his band. I know that Herbie Hancock, Tony Williams and probably Ron Carter and Wayne Shorter as well were heavily influenced by what Ornette's band was doing and I think the freedom of Miles Davis's band in the sixties owes a lot to the freedom of Ornette in the late fifties and the sixties, but I think the freedom that they were dealing with was slightly different because in the case of Ornette's group, they were starting a lot of times with without any preconception of what the form should be or what the harmony should be. They were, in a sense, free from the beginning. They were playing from the beginning over a free structure. Whereas in Miles's case, in most cases, that band was playing over established structures over established rhythms, established harmonies

and established forms and then the band would depart from those forms and be free within those forms, so it was just a question of where the different bands were starting, but a lot of times, the end result was the same. Not, not the same in terms of emotional impact, but the same in terms of the level of freedom.

Weather Report. You like Weather Report?

I love Weather Report.

Why?

Because Weather Report is a true fusion band in the best sense of what fusion should be. I mean Weather Report truly did fuse jazz traditions with rock traditions, with some rhythm and blues with world music, but you never got the sense with Weather Report that the fusion was artificial or scientific. It was always incredibly organic and natural. And also, unlike a lot of other fusion bands, with Weather Report, they always managed to preserve that jazz depth and the jazz spontaneity in their music. Weather Report's music always sounds raw and on the edge and real. And I think that isn't true of a lot of other fusion musics, especially some of the fusion that came later.

Miles' early fusion bands.

Yeah, I mean Miles, Miles created fusion in the sense or, I mean, no one artist creates any music but Miles was at the vanguard of the fusion movement. All the major fusion groups of the early and mid seventies came out of what Miles was doing. I mean, Jose Allino played with Miles and Wayne Shorter played with Miles and they formed Weather Report. Herbie Hancock played with Miles and he formed Head Hunters. Chick Corea formed, Chick Corea played with Miles and he formed Return to Forever. Tony Williams played with Miles and he formed Lifetime.

Wynton told us that Miles sold out, just wanted to make more money, just wanted to sell more records.

Do I agree with that? I don't believe that Miles sold out but I'm not in a position to say whether Miles sold out or not. I don't think anyone but Miles is in a position to say whether he sold out because to say that an artist sells out means that an artist is making a conscious choice to compromise his music. To to weaken his music for the sake of commercial gain. In a sense, to say an artist sells out is to say that artist is not playing the music that he or she really wants to play. That artist is making, allowing economic considerations to influence his or her musical choices. No one can know that except Miles. All I know is that I like pretty much everything Miles did and has done, you know. So, so I like everything that Miles did before fusion and after fusion. I like everything Miles did up through "TuTu and Amandla." So, I enjoy that music. Whether he sold out or not isn't important to me. What's

important to me is that I think the music speaks and the music has life and emotion from beginning to end. Whether, whether an artist sells out or not is something only the artist can tell you and only the artist should, should be concerned with.

Wayne Shorter's contributions to Miles and his early seventies records. What did he bring?

To Miles's fusion bands or to. . .

Not right. . .

I mean he did play with some of what, what, but I can tell you what Wayne Shorter brought to Miles' band of the sixties.

No, I'm sorry. . .

No, that, it's fine, it's fine. I can't imagine the sixties band without Wayne Shorter. I can't imagine it without any of those, those folks. But Wayne perhaps more importantly than anyone, he brought this almost ethereal quality to the music. Just the way he played the saxophone, the air and the space and the way he played shapes and colors and textures instead of, instead of lines and notes. That was key to the way that band sounded. And I think if he hadn't been there, the band wouldn't have had that almost ephemeral kind of sound. It wouldn't, wouldn't have had that airy sound. It wouldn't have been able to manipulate shapes and colors the way it could. Also, from a compositional standpoint, I think, you know, Wayne stands almost supreme of all the composers in that generation. And his contributions to what Miles's group did compositionally, I mean, I mean pieces like "Nefertiti" pieces like like, let me think what else he did.

Ornette Coleman. What was he trying to do?

I think Ornette was trying to overcome what he saw as the limitations of preset form and preset harmony and preconceived rhythm. I mean, what Ornette wanted to do was play exactly what he felt at the moment and he didn't want to be limited by a preconceived notion of what the harmony should be. A preconceived notion of what the form should be. Ornette really wanted the group to improvise at the spur of the moment and to create form and structure at the spur of the moment. I think that's a lot of, I think that's something that people forget about Ornette. They say, "Oh, Ornette was free," you know, "They just all played free." Well, well they were free, but they created their own structures. They created their own harmonies as they went along. So it wasn't that there was an absence of structure in Ornette's music. It was that his bands were able to create their own structures from scratch.

(Other people talking at the same time) A lot of people who couldn't play with him, you know, or were scared by what he was doing, attacked it. Questions, it's the technical elements, yeah.

So Ornette scared a lot of people. Actual violence around his music. Why?

Sure. Why? People get scared by things that aren't familiar to them. I think, you know, there are a lot of people who didn't understand what Ornette was doing or maybe they understood it but they realized that they couldn't adjust their playing . . .

One more time. We heard that people got into fistfights a lot at the Five Spot.

Really? I didn't know that. I didn't know that.

This terrifying to a lot of people.

Sure.

To understand how high the stakes were.

Right. People, people do get frightened by things that they don't understand. Or maybe they understand it but through understanding it they realize that they aren't equipped to participate in it. I mean, there may have been many musicians, critics, listeners who who understood what Ornette was doing but for whatever reasons, realized that they couldn't play the music or they couldn't relate to the music so they got, they got scared and the fear led to anger and who knows what came next. But unquestionably Ornette's music was full of power and emotion and honesty. Ornette was not jiving. Ornette knew what he was doing. Ornette felt what he was doing and his music was an honest depiction an honest expression of what he knew and what he felt. I think another misconception of Ornette's music is that it lacked melody. You know, a lot of people said, "Oh, Ornette just sounds like a bunch of noise. I can't follow the melody." Ornette's music is pure melody. It's melody, not constrained by predetermined harmony. It's, Ornette played melodies from beginning to end. He played the melodies that he heard and he created an atmosphere. He created a context where he could be free to play whatever melody he heard because he didn't have to worry about linking that melody or fitting that melody to a pre-established harmony.

With rock and roll, the audience wasn't there. Did he expect too much of the audience?

I think there are elements of Ornette's music that are very demanding. Ornette's music sounds different and it sounds surprising even now what thirty years later, forty years later. It's it sounds different. It, you know, it

catches you off guard. But that's not a reason to run away from the music. I think if you listen to some Ornette pieces, they are as accessible melodically as anything that's ever been written. Listen to "Lonely Woman." That is one of the most beautiful, one of the most powerful and one of the bluesiest melodies you're ever going to hear. That melody is pure gold. I can play that record for anyone from any walk of life who likes any type of music and I guarantee you, if they open their minds and open their ears, they're going to love that piece of music because it's such a soulful melodic piece of music.

Sonny Rollins. We have people saying he's a titan, he can do everything. What is it about him in the early years of his career.

Sonny Rollins is a master improviser. Sonny Rollins had this uncanny ability to balance the demands of spontaneity and structure. Sonny Rollins, Sonny Rollins is a master story teller. Sonny Rollins could take a solo and play exactly what he was feeling at the moment. Play entirely original feelings, play entirely unrehearsed ideas yet at the same time construct something which is completely logical and completely meaningful from beginning to end. Sonny Rollins had the ability to take a theme, develop it, discard it, and just when you think it doesn't exist anymore, throw it back in there. Sonny Rollins's solos, I think are models of what structured, spontaneous improvisation should and could be.

Branford said to us that John Coltrane played obsessively, that he couldn't stop playing. What was he after in his single-mindedness of playing all the time.

I don't know if I can answer what Coltrane was after, I think only Coltrane can answer that but unquestionably Coltrane was one of the most dedicated musicians that jazz has ever seen, that the world has ever seen, I mean, that the level of his focus, the amount of discipline, the dedication of his music was stunning. I mean, he was someone who from all reports practiced 'round the clock. He was never satisfied and I think, actually I shouldn't say that because I don't know if he was ever satisfied. John Coltrane never rested. He always needed to move. He, once he discovered one thing, he realized ten, twenty more things that there were to discover. He kept on pushing himself and he never allowed his art to either stagnate or to even rest, it was constantly moving and I think in that way he was singular and he was also a model for many musicians to comp, you know, John Coltrane raised the standards of what it means to be a dedicated musician.

Particular album

Sure. I mean that I enjoy the totality of Coltrane's work. But there's two records in particular which I think are essential to my experience as a human being. "Crescent" and the "Love Supreme" suite.

“Love Supreme” crossed over to a much wider audience. Why?

The spirituality of “Love Supreme,” and the honesty of the music. The depth of the music. I think that record is one of the purest jazz records, ever. I mean the intent is so pure and the feeling is so pure, I think with that record you just feel, you feel that the artist, you feel that John Coltrane is just, he’s laying his soul out there, you know. It’s right there, it’s one of the purest forms of expression you’re ever going to hear.

I mean that’s probably one of the first records I’ve ever heard, that’s one of the first records I ever heard and I hope it’s the last record I ever hear, I mean it’s one of the greatest records of all time.

What are sheets of sound?

Sheets of sound was basically a scalar technique that Coltrane used. He would, over any particular harmony there’s a scale and over any particular chord, there’s a scale associated with that chord. And he would play over that chord by running up a scale and then running down the same scale or another scale. It was a very, very linear way of playing and it was a way of playing that forced a lot of notes into a very small space. I think sheets of sound scared a lot of people. It bothered a lot of people because technically it was so dense and there were so many notes but even throughout the sheets of sound period, there was all these melodies. There were all these melodies that sang above, that you could hear singing above the sheets of sound. It would almost be like Coltrane took a melody and took some key melody notes and then filled those melody notes in with these layers and layers of scales. But the melodies were still there and if you listened closely, you can still hear those melodies.

Dexter Gordon - when he came back to America in the 70s did he bring something back with him?

I don’t know too much about that, I mean, you know, I don’t know too much historically about about what he, you know, I know that he came back in the seventies but to me the Dexter Gordon recordings that were the most important were the Blue Note recordings that he made I guess in the in the early sixties. “One Flight Up,” “Dexter Calling,” “Go,” which is probably my favorite Dexter record.

What is it about those records?

He’s just so strong on those records; he’s just so powerful and his tone is so big and he’s so confident and you know, in many ways he kind of, he kind of, the ideas that he’s playing are very quintessentially bebop ideas in many ways. But there’s this power and this confidence and you know, maybe you could say masculinity, you know, just this strong big sound that that runs throughout all these ideas and that’s what appeals to me.

Herbie Hancock — lessons he offered to Miles of operating between different genres and bringing them into jazz. What are the dangers of being limited to one genre?

Oh, you want me to talk about the dangers of being limited or you want me to talk about Herbie Hancock? I mean, those are two. . .

Start with Herbie Hancock.

I mean, one thing that's always amazed me about Herbie Hancock is his ability to move beyond categories and beyond genres, I mean, he's a musician who's been comfortable playing the straightest of straight ahead jazz and the wildest of free jazz and the funkiest of non-jazz, you know, and he's also been able to combine so many different elements, I mean, he's been able to cross into different styles . . .

Go ahead.

He's been able to cross into different styles and he's also been able to walk the line between different styles. Herbie Hancock has been able to create music which combines so many different influences but still always has his singular sound and his singular touch.

Lester Young — quintessential Lester Young moment.

I think the most influential work of Lester Young was the work that he did, I guess, in the late thirties with the Count Basie band, with the Kansas City Seven. There's some recordings, I think, with this group which was called "Joe Smith" but was basically Count Basie's small group and then of course the stuff with the Count Basie Orchestra. Lester Young was one of the most important improvisers in jazz. I think Lester Young defined something which to me is central about jazz which is this feeling of relaxed intensity. I mean, Lester Young, yes, his style became a certain school in jazz, you know, and his style influenced a whole group of musicians who became known as cool players, but I think there's something about his playing which transcended any one school or one style, I mean what Lester Young brought to jazz improvisation was this feeling of relaxation, of air, of openness, of just of just being cool, just being relaxed but at the same time there's this driving, there's this electricity to his music but it's a subtle electricity so that whole, that whole way of playing kind of brought in this relaxed intensity which to me is central to what jazz is about.

Charlie Parker — whatever comes to mind, what should people know about him?

Well, obviously Charlie Parker is one of the greatest innovators in jazz. Perhaps he's, I don't know, I'm trying to think of something, trying to distill his music.

Impact he had.

Everyone after Charlie Parker borrowed from Charlie Parker. I mean, his thumbprint is in the music of every jazz, sorry...

Bad metaphor anyway. Charlie Parker's sound and Charlie Parker's style is in the music of every jazz musi. . . Charlie Parker's sound and Charlie Parker's style is in the music of every jazz musician who came after Charlie Parker. I mean, I mean, there's no one who came after Charlie Parker who doesn't have some Charlie Parker in him.

Why? Why is this just so unquestionably influential?

That's that's a hard question to answer. The only, way I can answer it is that jazz is a language. Jazz is a language with a vocabulary and Charlie Par, Parker created new words and new phrases which became basic to the jazz vocabulary. You know, if you take the English language, can you imagine, you know, speaking the English language without verbs. Okay. Well, you know, Charlie Parker brought what are the equivalent of verbs in the English language. Charlie Parker brought what are the equivalent of verbs to jazz music.

What is jazz? What are you listening for that makes you know it's jazz?

Well, there, there are elements which to me make up my definition of jazz. One of those is improvisation. I think improvisation is central to what jazz is. It would be hard for me to call something jazz which didn't have a heavy dose of improvisation in it. But ultimately it really doesn't matter. I mean, labels suck. That's the bottom line. We need them, we need labels, we need to be able to use labels like jazz to describe music, but labels for music don't really have definitions. They're they're suggestions rather than definitions. They kind of suggest a group of styles and a group of musics. But they never really describe what the music is about.

You could have gone in a lot of different directions. But you chose this. What is it about this type of music that made you want to dedicate your life to it?

Jazz allows me to express myself in a way that no other form of music does. I mean, through improvisation in jazz, I can express myself in one of the most honest and direct ways. I mean, once again, jazz allows you to play what you feel at the moment. And that's what . . .

Jazz allows you to play what you feel at the moment. And that's what has always attracted me to the music. And that's what continues to attract me to the music. I mean, that element. That spontaneity. That improvisation is the reason that I'll be playing jazz until the day I die.

So you have to go on the road?

Yeah, you do, it's too bad. I mean, I love to travel, but the glamour of being on the road, I mean, that wears thin real fast. That wore thin for me after about two months. Being on the road is work. It's hard to wake up in a different bed every night. It's hard to, you know, be on a different continent every month, you know It's hard to not have that sense of home and that stability that you have. The emotional, psychological, and physical stability that you have of being in the same place on a daily basis. But you have to go on the road in order to play music for people around the world. And that's what I want to do is play music for people around the world, so I'll put up with the road in order to do what I love to do and I've been fortunate enough to have been granted the opportunity to do what I love to do. So that keeps me on the road.

Anyone else or more about anyone?

I don't know, I mean if you think we're cool then . . .

I don't know what you would say.

I don't know what I would say either because I don't even know what I said.

This mid-sixties band.

Their freedom, their openness and their level of group interplay. Group telepathy almost. I mean, I don't know if there's ever been a group of five musicians who communicated spontaneously with each other as well as those five musicians. They could, they could do anything with any form, with any tune because they knew each other so well as musicians, and I mean, and that music will always sound cutting edge and always sound modern because I can't imagine a greater level of group interplay.

Oh, you're talking specifically about rhythm and blues? Or. .

You want to know about me, that's pretty personal, I mean, is that really a province. Well, I mean, I grew up listening to all kinds of music. You know, I mean, I can, touch upon that if you want, you know, 'cause that's kind of my thing, I guess.

I grew up listening to all kinds of music, jazz, rhythm and blues, soul, rock and roll, classical, Indian-African music, and yes, those styles are very different but there are emotions and there are experiences which are

universal and there are connections between all those different forms of music. And ultimately, what's important about any piece of music is not the category under which it belongs. It's the emotions that are being expressed and I think that's something which is very important for a jazz musician always to keep in mind. I mean, yes, we as jazz musicians have to honor the jazz tradition and yes, we have to know our music and its language but we also have to keep an open mind and an open ear to everything around us because ultimately, I think, we're not trying to play jazz, we're trying to play ourselves through music and jazz just happens to be a style that we're working with. But if we close ourselves off from the other forms of music that are out there, our other experiences, then we're not going to be playing good music and we're not going to be playing good jazz because we're not really going to be playing the fullness of our experience, and the totality of what we have to say.

The End