

# AN INTERVIEW WITH HORACE SILVER

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*Pianist and composer Horace Silver had recently released an album for children on his own record label entitled, "Guides to Growing Up."*

WHAT WAS THIS LIKE? THIS WAS A NEW DIRECTION FOR YOU IN A WAY. THE LAST DIRECTION THAT YOU HAD ON RECORD WAS THE "MUSIC OF THE SPHERES..."

Well this is really an extension of what I've been doing, conceptually, since the early '70s. Because I started into a metaphysical approach to music about 1970, when I did a series of three records called "The United States of Mind." I don't know whether you're familiar with those or not. Well, that's when it started.

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Actually it started one record before then, really, when I think back to it. It started with a record called, "You've Got to Take A Little Love." The whole record didn't have a metaphysical approach, but some of the tunes on there had my older concept, you know. And there were, maybe three or four tunes on that album that had a metaphysical concept. But that was really the first inception of this.

Then came "United States of Mind," those three records. That started it. Then I suppose I said to myself after that, 'I'm not going to bombard my

fans with this particular concept; I'll go back to my other "straight-ahead" conceptual thing.' Then, when I got into the "Silver and..." series, I kind of got back to the metaphysical approach throughout that series. And this is a continuation of it.

Actually, I've wanted to go in this direction, musically, since around 1967, when I first got vibes to go in this direction with my music. The only difference being now is that when I was with Blue Note – although thank God, when I was with Blue Note, all the years I was with Alfred Lyons and Frank Wolf, and after they sold it to Liberty and on to United Artists, thankfully, I had pretty much of a free hand to do what I wanted to do. I could use the musicians I wanted to use, I could record my own material, whatever material I wanted to record. They had faith in me that I would always come into the studio with the music together – rehearsed, well-written and ready to record.

And I didn't have too much of a problem with that except when I started getting into... Well, when I started getting into "United States of Mind," I had done the first record and they weren't too keen on my using singers at that point, you know? They were used to me doing my instrumental thing, and that alone, and they weren't too excited about me using singers. So someone in the company, after the first record came out, said, 'Well, gee, why don't you go back and do some of your older things, instead of doing this?' And I said, 'Well, look, this is like a three-act play. The "United States of Mind" is a three-record set and we're not doing the whole three-record set at one time and packaging them to sell together in a three-record package. We're doing one record at a time, you know? Give it a chance!' I said, 'This is just like the first act of a three-act play! Wait until the other two come out

and then judge it.' So I went on and I completed it. And soon after that, not right after, but soon after that, came the "United States of Mind" series of recordings. And they also had a metaphysical approach. But somehow I always kind of felt, and maybe it wasn't expressed so much in words to me, but I had sort of a feeling that I could go only so far with my metaphysical concept in music. Because if I went too far, what they would consider overboard – which wouldn't be overboard to me at all –

I might not only turn them off or ostracize the company from myself but maybe even turn some of my fans off, you know.

So I tried to dish it out in small doses, you know, not too much at one time.

WELL IT'S SO MUCH A PART OF WHAT YOU DO.

But now that I have my own company, I feel completely free. As I said before, I've really been blessed throughout my career with Blue Note, inasmuch as I've had pretty much of a free hand. But I don't even have to consider now, anyone at the top having any kind of disappointment in me or any kind of feeling that I'm going a little too far out. 'Oh, Horace Silver is getting too spiritual with his music,' or something. You know 'going too far out with it. It's not going to sell, blah blah blah, this that and the other.'

And, quite naturally, I've got my own company now and I want the records to sell, but I mean, I just have something to do with the music! And I've felt this way, as I said, since 1967, I've wanted to this in music. And I've done it to some degree. But now, I can do it totally. I don't have to worry about anybody coming down on me because I'm getting too far out or something. I'm going to go all the way. As far as my heart and soul takes me, wherever the powers that be lead me! And I'm concerned about sales just as well as they were concerned about sales when I was with them; and I was concerned about sales, too, when I was with them. I didn't want them to lose money or not have sales. But money is not the main objective with me right now. I've got to make it to exist and I want to make, not only for me to exist but for the company to exist, but I have other goals, higher goals in my estimation, than just money right now, you know. And I'm going on and pursue them. I'm going to take

that chance, if you can call it that. Because I realize that maybe what I'm doing now, conceptually, in music, might turn some of my fans off. And some of them are very delighted with it, because I've spoken to many of them who are very delighted with the approach I'm taking to my music now. And I suppose there are some I might have lost along the way. But I feel that those I've lost, I'll gain some other new ones who will take their place, and maybe even more who will come into the fold. I've just got to do my thing. And this is, I feel very strongly about this. I've got to go on and do it. You know, I'm investing my savings in this company, and I'm just going on. I'm not going to be happy half doing it, you know, with some other company. So I'm going on and just take my savings and invest it and keep on investing it and go on and work my ass off and try to make a go out of it, you know? Because it's what I feel. And it's what I gotta do, that's all.

***But now, I don't have to worry about anybody coming down on me because I'm getting too far out or something. I'm going to go all the way.***

WELL THIS IS DEFINITELY THE TIME TO PURSUE SOMETHING LIKE THAT TOO. IT'S THE TIME IN YOUR LIFE, IT'S THE TIME IN YOUR CAREER, IT'S THE TIME IN THE MUSIC, TOO. I REALLY THINK SO. THE PEOPLE WHO HAVE LISTENED TO JAZZ, I THINK, IN TERMS OF NUMBERS HAS GROWN. THERE'S BEEN A LARGER RESPONSE TO JAZZ IN RECENT YEARS, EVEN ON A COMMERCIAL LEVEL. IT'S ALMOST COMMERCIALLY VIABLE THESE DAYS. AND PROJECTS LIKE THIS, I THINK, ARE THE FRONT END OF JAZZ. IT'S AN EXPLORATION, STILL, FOR YOU.

Exactly. You know, anytime – it seems like anytime there's anything spiritual in the music or anything spiritual, period, there's a certain

segment of people who get turned off or frightened by that, you know?

Well, I'll give you an example. This just happened to me two or three days ago. I met this lady that I know very well. And I had sent her one of my brochures, you know, hoping to get a sale from her for a record or a cassette. And I ran into her and she said, 'Oh, I got your brochure and I read it.' And she said, 'Tell me something, is this religious music that you're writing now?' I said, 'Well, it depends on how you look at it.' I said, 'The word 'God' is mentioned in there a couple of times, but in my estimation, it's not overly religious.' I said, 'The record is called "Guides to Growing Up," and it has some recitations by Bill Cosby and what he's doing is trying to talk to kids, giving them proper values to accept in life, to grow up with. Something that any parent would do in their homes, if they had the time or think about it. To give their kids some values to grab on to and learn, live with, grow up with.' I said, 'The music on here is a continuation of what Horace Silver has always been. Hopefully the music has grown in composition; hopefully my playing has grown, hopefully my writing has grown, musically and all of that.'

And I also explained to her, the music is not little kiddie music, you know. It's not teeny-weeny, what do you call it, 'Mary Had a Little Lamb,' or something. This is jazz, and actually, it's adult music. But it's music for everybody. And adults can listen to it and enjoy it as well as kids! But the titles of the tunes and the lyrics and recitation is dedicated to the kids, so they can listen to and learn good principles of life.

And once I explained that to her, she ordered two albums! (*Laughs*) But she was kind of, you know, if I hadn't run into her and said that to her – she was probably thinking this was overly-religious music or I've turned into a Jesus freak or something. Way out, super religious type of album. I don't know what she thought about it. But once I explained it, she bought two albums for her kids.

THAT'S REALLY WHO IT'S –

And I may mention too, that she is not a jazz fan. I mean this lady is a business acquaintance, actually. She's not a staunch jazz fan. I mean, she

knows about jazz. She's heard about myself and some other name people in the business, but she's not a staunch jazz fan. But, she was just concerned about the music being overly religious or too spiritual or something.

You know, I think people have a mistaken concept of what spirituality is. I think they're thinking about a dogmatic approach to spirituality, you know? Hell and Brimstone and all that other stuff they used to preach from the pulpit. This is not none of that stuff. This is principles, good living, spiritual principles, it's good philosophy, good psychology. Sometimes good physiology. That's what's in a lot of the music that we're writing.

## ***You know, I think people have a mistaken concept of what spirituality is.***

THE DIRECTION OF SPIRITUALITY YOU'VE GONE IN WITH YOUR ALBUMS IS AN INNER SPIRITUALITY – OF COURSE, THAT'S REDUNDANT TO SAY – BUT YOU HAVE A TALENT IN YOUR WRITING TO SHOW THE CREATIVE PROCESS. YOU'VE DEVOTED A COUPLE ALBUMS TO THAT. NOT JUST THE LAST ONE, BUT ONE OF THE "SILVER AND..." SERIES –

"The Process of Creation Suite," yeah.

Well, I try to make people think with my music, you know. With the titles and the lyrics and what-not. I try to make them think. And get them aware of something other than the material life. Because we're all consisting of spirit, mind and body. And we, including myself, get overly hung up sometimes in the material life, you know? You get up in the morning and you get dressed and you wash up and you eat and you've got to go to work, and you've got this appointment and you've got that appointment, and you've got to pay this bill and you've got to pay that bill, and you have a confrontation with this guy and that guy, and this problem is on your mind, and that problem is on your mind, and you've got to do this for the kids and you've got to do this for Uncle Harry, or whatever. And

you're running around, and you get so enmeshed in the material life you don't even stop to consider for a moment that there's something beyond that, within your own very self! You're not just this body.

In fact, the body is only something you're using as a vehicle. That you consist of a mind inside this body and a spirit inside this body. And you have to put a little time aside everyday to contact that part of yourself. And to think about that part of yourself! That you exist in those realms also, outside of this outer realm, you know. Because everything in the outer realm, you know, OK, that's fine for a while, but pretty soon life starts kicking you in the butt, you know? And you get perturbed and depressed and befuddled and everything. And it's not until you kind of draw away from this outer life and kind of attune yourself to this inner life that you can gather yourself together!

THAT'S VERY CLOSE TO JAZZ, TOO. AND I THINK THAT'S ONE OF THE VALUES THAT I HAVE FOUND IN THE MUSIC, IS THAT IT REALLY BROUGHT ME CLOSER TO MY SPIRIT THAT WAY. IT HELPED ME DISCOVER THAT PART OF MYSELF, AND IT CONSTANTLY DOES THAT.

Well, the mere fact that jazz is primarily improvisation forces one to – you know, you're not dancing, 9 times out of 10, to jazz, like the other types of music. You're mostly sitting down, either at home or in a club or concert, listening. And you're projecting that inner part of yourself to the music. OK, your foot might be tapping or you might be snapping your fingers, but primarily, if the cats are really great improvisers, you know, great artists, you're really zeroing in to the harmonies that the guy is playing on his instrument; the ideas and the flow and the rhythm, the melody and the harmony and everything. You know, you're into all that, concentrating on it. So you've got the inner part of yourself working there.

But with the other types of music – and don't get me wrong, because dance music is fine – it's good exercise, it's a lot of fun. It's good as far as it goes, but it doesn't go far enough. You know, that is, if you involve yourself totally with dance music, 100 percent of the time, I feel very sad for that person. On the other hand, I think everybody should involve himself with some dance music at some time. It's good; it's healthy.

There should be times when you sit down, listen to some good classical music, some good jazz or some kind of music that makes you go inside yourself and makes you concentrate. Get into the music.

TAKE THE OTHER HALF OF THE JOURNEY...

Yeah, right.

***But pretty soon life starts kicking you in the butt...and it's not until you attune yourself to this inner life that you can gather yourself together!***

THOSE TIMES, FOR A LOT OF PEOPLE, ARE TOO FEW AND THERE'S MORE OF THAT CONCENTRATION ON THE MATERIAL ITEMS. IT'S A SYMPTOM OF TWO THINGS THAT WAY. IT'S THERAPY!

Well, yes it is, actually. It very much is that. People are afraid to know the other part of themselves. They're afraid of what's there. I don't know, a lot of people just like to live in the outer world and the outer self without ever contacting the inner part of themselves. They don't know what's there and they're afraid of what's there. And it's really silly, because there's nothing to be afraid of. It's fun, and it's enlightening and it's uplifting, and it does wonders for the person who gets involved in that other part of themselves, you know.

VERY BASICALLY, IT'S WHAT WE ARE... TO BE AFRAID IS TO BE DENYING YOURSELF OF SOMETHING, BECAUSE OF THE THINGS THAT YOU DO DISCOVER WHEN YOU'RE NOT AFRAID. WHEN YOU TAKE THE STEP TO UNDERSTAND BOTH PARTS OF YOURSELF, OF OURSELF. AND IT'S A DISCUSSION THAT WE CAN GET OFF ON, I KNOW!

Yeah, oh yeah.

I THINK YOU AND I ESSENTIALLY UNDERSTAND. AND A LOT OF PEOPLE UNDERSTAND AND A LOT OF PEOPLE DON'T, AND IT SEEMS THAT IT'S SOME PEOPLE'S ROLE TO HELP PEOPLE UNDERSTAND.

Uh-hmm.

DO YOU THINK OF YOURSELF THAT WAY?

Yes, I do. I have a great love for humanity. I guess I always have, since I was a little kid. I always was concerned about the feelings of other people – physically or mentally, you know. It would always hurt me to see somebody suffer. I would always feel very broken up about watching another person suffer physically or mentally. I've always tried to help. So I kind of look on myself as doing that. I feel that, well, you know, I can only say that in my life, studying metaphysics has been a great blessing to me. It has improved my life. It has improved me as a man. It has improved me physically, mentally, spiritually. And it's a very fascinating subject to me.

I'm a Virgo, and you know how analytical Virgos are. I've always been analytical about my music, you know, about deciphering chord changes – what is this chord and what is that chord. And you know, how does this work and how do you put that together, and all of that kind of thing. And one day it all of a sudden hit me, 'Well, what about life? Let me dissect life!' And what is it all about? And metaphysics has helped me greatly to understand what I feel life is all about. I'm not saying I have all the answers, but I have a hell of a lot more than I had before I got into metaphysics. And it's a very beautiful study, a very fascinating study, and it's nothing to be afraid of! Why some people are afraid of it, I don't know. Well, as I said before, I think really they're afraid of what they might find within themselves, or they may not like what they find within themselves, you know? That's why a lot of time, things that I express in the music – in the lyrics and what-not – might have a tendency sometimes to turn someone off. Because they might say, 'What the hell is Horace Silver talking about, preaching all this stuff to us.' You know. 'What is that?' Well, actually, what they are afraid of is that they might examine themselves and find something inside that they don't like. They don't want to deal with, you know. If you have something

wrong inside, a character defect or a personality defect, and something in the lyric mentions that, you know, you might shy away from that: 'What the hell is that; that's nonsense!' But actually, if you take the time to deal with what that lyric is discussing and deal with yourself, you'd find out that there is something, maybe, wrong inside that you have to pay attention to and correct.

But so many people don't want to take the time to correct. We spend a lot of money on the proper foods and diet and what-not, and exercise and pills and all kinds of medications to keep us healthy and everything on the physical level, but we spend very little time trying to check out our psychology, let alone our philosophy. We don't get into the mental part of us or the spiritual part of us. We neglect that totally, most of us do.

***We spend money on the proper foods and diet and what-not, and exercise and pills and medications to keep us healthy, but we don't get into the spiritual part of us.***

THAT'S THE EASIEST PART TO NEGLECT.

Yeah, because it's a very hard part to deal with. It's much simpler and easier to go out and get some pills or some medication, or try to exercise or do a special diet or something to try to correct your health. Actually, in many cases, especially in chronic cases, it's not really the body that needs the healing, it's the soul. There's something inside spiritually that's not right. But most of us don't want to deal with that, because we've lived with these negative patterns within ourselves for so many years – 30, 40, 50 years – and we're like an ostrich who tries to hide its head in the sand, denying that this is wrong with us. Simply because we're afraid to deal with it. And once we face it and say to ourselves

'This is what's wrong with me; I'm lacking this spiritually,' or 'Mentally I'm lacking this. I've got to change this about myself.' That's a hell of a hard thing, first to admit and then to accept, and then to deal with it, is a hard thing. And it takes time! You can't change a negative quality about yourself, that's been going on within yourself for 20 or 30 years. You can't change that overnight or with a snap of the fingers. You can't just go out and buy a pill and change that! You've got to change your whole lifestyle, your way of life, your way of thinking. And that takes a lot of courage. The courageous man is the one who will deal with that and accept it and go ahead and work on that, and overcome those lesser parts of himself, his nature.

BUT, AS YOU SAY, IT'S A MATTER OF FINDING IT FIRST AND ACCEPTING IT SECOND.

Well, you know, we can be led to it. People can be led to what they need. But the thing is, will they accept it. The lyric might call to someone's attention some certain lack within themselves, but they gloss over it go right on, because they don't want to take the time, or they don't want to admit it. Or they don't want to take the time it's going to take to overcome it and get rid of that negative part of themselves. It's not easy.

***People can be led to what they need. But the thing is, will they accept it...It's not easy.***

IN MANY CASES, IT'S NOT SOMETHING THAT YOU CAN REALLY EXPECT MUCH HELP ON EITHER, FROM OTHER PEOPLE AROUND YOU...

Well now, if you go to a reliable and competent psychiatrist, sometimes you can get help there. Or a psychologist. If you're that far gone that you need those type of people. And many of us are. Many of us do need help from psychiatrists and psychologists. There are also spiritual practitioners. People from the Church of Religious Science; they have spiritual

practitioners who help people with this type of thing, with spiritual lacks. They have people who are trained in this will counsel other people. Of course the person has to take this counsellor into their confidence and talk openly and freely – like you would with a psychiatrist almost. And they can point out to you what spiritual things you are lacking and try to get you in tune with that, you know.

Because it's the soul in many cases that needs the healing, not the body. I mean, there are many cases that the body needs the healing itself alone, and there's nothing wrong with the soul. But my firm belief is that any chronic condition, it's the soul that needs the healing, because the medication or the physical therapy that you're getting on the outside helps, but only temporarily. And then after a while, the symptom comes back again. So when it's chronic like that, it's not the body. OK, you keep on getting your physical treatments, fine, because you've got to relieve the pain that those symptoms bring on. But also you've got to know that you've got to go beyond that and deal with your spiritual self and your mental self, because that's where the problem lies, there. And once you correct that, then the body will correct itself too.

HOW ARE YOU RELATING ALOT OF THIS TO CHILDREN?

We're not getting into that, in this particular album, with children. No, in "Guides to Growing Up," we're simply talking about – well, let's read some of the titles of the tunes...

SURE...

"Accepting Responsibility," the lyric there deals with little kids accepting responsibility for chores and stuff they have to do around the house for cleaning up their room, for emptying the garbage, getting the mail. Another words, they've got to work for their allowance, you know. You get a dollar or two bucks allowance, whatever, per week, you don't get it for doing nothing. It's a means to teach them you've got to work for things in life; you don't get everything for free. So if you give your kid an allowance, make them earn it! Make them dump the garbage everyday, or clean up his room, put his toys away, get the mail. Whatever. Little things like that so he can learn responsibility.

That's what that lyric is about.

"Reaching Our Goals in Life," Bill Cosby does a recitation on that, and that's about what we want to make out of our life, what do we want to become? What do kids want to become? What do they want to do with their life; they should think about this and not let parents or anybody else sway them as to what they want to do. They should do their own thing; not be pushed into something that they don't want to do with their life. They shouldn't let the parents or relatives force them to be a doctor if they don't want to be a doctor. They should think very seriously about what they want to be and ask divine guidance to help them decipher what they want to do. Then they have to make up their mind that they're going to do it. Of course it takes time, it takes a lot of hard work and study; they have to apply themselves.

***I don't think they realized what the concept of the album was until we got into some of the overdubs with Cosby and with the vocalists.***

Then there's a tune called "Learning to Be Unselfish," which is dealing with little kids and their selfish ways. You know, not sharing things with other kids and all of that.

THAT'S AN IMPORTANT ONE...

Yeah! Then there's one called "Helping Others," which is simply all about helping other people, without expecting a reward in return. Many times – especially kids – will help somebody because they think they're going to get something out of it. But to help just for the sheer joy of helping.

IT'S GOOD TO FOLLOW THE OTHER ONE, I NOTICE. THE TWO KIND OF GO HAND IN HAND.

Then Side Two starts off with "Finding Good Rules to Live By." If I was going to write this same recitation for an adult, I would say, "Finding a Philosophy of Life to Live By." And then there's one called "Honesty and Self Control," which is a lyric dealing with kids not stealing, and having self control, and not fighting, and not doing a whole lot of negative things that they do occasionally. Then the next tune is called "Managing Your Money," which is trying to teach them the value of saving, putting some money aside so that they don't always have to be dependent on mom and dad all the time to give them something. If they want to save to buy something, it's good for kids to start learning how to save early in life. I'm thankful that my dad taught me very young to save. Of course, my uncle always used to tell me, 'Save some, spend some. Don't save all, don't spend all.' (*Laughs*) Mix it up, you know. And I think that's good philosophy to adhere to. And I think that kids should start getting into that early in life. It'll put them in good shape for later years. Then the final tune is called "The Things that Really Matter." This is, again, a recitation by Cosby, speaking about what's really important in life. And it's not always the material things that are important. There are other things that are far more important.

And that's the album. And we've got Joe Diario on guitar, Eddie Harris on tenor sax, Roy McCurdy on drums, Bob Magnusson on bass and vocals by Feather. And Bill Cosby doing recitations, of course.

ALL VERY FINE MUSICIANS, TOO. WHAT WAS THE SPIRIT IN PUTTING THIS ALBUM TOGETHER? IT WAS DONE, I KNOW, LOCALLY.

Yeah, it was done in Los Angeles.

HOW DID YOU FIND THE RECEPTION WITH THIS IDEA?

With the musicians?

YEAH.

Good. I don't think they exactly knew what I was doing when I first started out with the music. I mean, that is, the lyrical content and the title. They didn't know the title of record when

we started rehearsing the music. All of the musicians are top flight, excellent, pro musicians and friends of mine. Very capable and very cooperative and we had a lot of fun rehearsing the stuff. But I don't think they really realized what the concept of the album was until we got into putting some of the overdubs on with Cosby and with the vocalists. Then they started to realize what the concept is; and they liked it. I've heard some good reports from them how they like it and how some of their friends like it.

THERE'S AN EXCITEMENT THAT'S BEEN GENERATED ABOUT THE ALBUM. I HEARD ABOUT THE ALBUM FROM OTHER PEOPLE BEFORE I HEARD ABOUT IT FROM YOU. IT'S THAT KIND OF PROJECT, I GATHER. PEOPLE WHO HAVE BEEN INVOLVED WITH IT ARE WILLING TO TALK ABOUT IT. AND THAT'S USUALLY A GOOD SIGN.

Yes, it is. Yes.

OVERALL I GATHER THAT PEOPLE UNDERSTAND, AT LEAST THE PEOPLE HERE THAT I'VE SPOKEN WITH, ROY AND BOB. THEY UNDERSTAND WHAT YOU'RE TRYING TO DO, WHAT YOU'RE DOING. I THINK THEY ARE WITH YOU IN THAT WAY.

Well I'm happy to hear that. It's beautiful. That's beautiful.

WHAT'S THE PROJECTION FOR THIS, COMMERCIALY? WHAT IS IT THAT YOU HOPE TO DO WITH THIS ALBUM REALISTICALLY. ARE YOU GOING TO TRY TO SELL IT TO CHILDREN OR ARE YOU GOING TO TRY TO SELL IT TO ADULTS? IN A MARKETING WAY.

I'm going to try to sell it to everybody I can sell it to! You know. It's dedicated, as I said before, the lyrics, the title of the tunes and the recitations are dedicated to pre-teenage children. But the music is adult music. It's jazz. It's straight-ahead jazz. It's good, swinging, cooking music. It has depth and profundity to it. So therefore it's something that the adults can dig – they can get into it. The lyrical content is dedicated to pre-teenage kids, but as I said on the back of the liner notes somewhere here, we as adults are not above checking out some of these things ourselves!

You know, a lot of these things that I've just talked about, these song titles and what they mean, and what the lyrics are saying, I can't say honestly that I've learned all of that myself. I

can't say that "Learning to Be Unselfish," for example, I can't say that I'm totally an unselfish person. I think I am, I hope I am, I'm trying to be. But am I really? There might be some areas of myself where I'm still a little bit selfish! So even though this is for kids, for us adults, it wouldn't do us any harm to check it out too!

***I'm going to try to sell it to everybody I can! The lyrics, titles and recitations are dedicated to pre-teenage children. But the music is adult music. It's straight-ahead jazz.***

I know I look at it every now and then and try to examine myself and say, 'Now, wait a minute, am I being selfish in this respect or that respect?' You know?

IS THERE ANY ATTEMPT TO INTRODUCE IT TO SCHOOLS...

Well, you know, I'm trying to get into that. This is a one man operation here. I don't have money at this moment to hire other people to work with me. But I'm trying to get into all of that. You know, I've been sending brochures out to my fans and my friends, and I've met with some success there. I've gotten some orders in the mail. This is, incidentally, we're going mail-order with this at the moment. My goal is to always have this mail order, but also get into the stores. I've got to start zeroing in – in fact, I'm going to start working on this, this coming week – trying to zero in on some record distributors to get the album into the stores. I've got to check out some distributor in the east and some in the midwest and some back here on the west coast, to try to get the album into the stores. But it is available now through mail order. And we send the orders out as soon as they come in. This is a brand new business, and I'm very excited about



it. And when I see some orders come in I get real happy and I get them out right away, sometimes the same day they come in – or at least by the next day. I get them right back in the mail so people don't have to wait for them.

But you know, with this particular album, I think it's good music for everybody, for kids, but also it's good listening music for adults. Those of us adults who feel we don't have to concern ourselves with the lyrical content – we don't have to pay that much attention to it. But Eddie Harris is playing his what's-his-name off on here! (*Laughs*) And all the guys on here are cooking! And I thought I played very well on it myself. And therefore, they can dig that part of it, you know.

THESE ARE ALL YOUR COMPOSITIONS...

Yeah, these are all my compositions. But let me make something clear, too. This "Guides to Growing Up," this is our first album on my own company label, which is Silveto Productions, Inc. Now every album after this is not going to be dedicated to the children. This is for the children. The next one is going to be more adult-oriented. I have a lot of different ideas for various albums. All of them will be different.

***I feel like a person who has been sitting on the edge of the pool, dipping his little toe in from time to time...But now I'm immersed in water up to my head, and it feels good!***

THAT'S NICE. IT'S GOOD. SILVETO PRODUCTIONS SOUNDS LIKE SOMETHING THAT YOU'VE BEEN WANTING TO DO FOR A LONG TIME.

It certainly is. Yeah. And I'm happy to be getting into it. You know, I feel like a person who has sort of been sitting on the edge of the

pool, dipping his little toe in from time to time, maybe he'll dip his ankle in, or up to his knees or something. But now I feel like I'm immersed in the whole pool. I'm in water up to my head, you know, and I'm getting ready to swim in it! And it feels good!

WELL, YOU'LL PROBABLY FLOAT ANYWAY. NO MATTER WHAT EFFORTS YOU MAKE. I THINK THAT'S SOMETHING THAT YOU'VE BEEN REAL GOOD AT DOING. JUST ABOUT EVERYTHING THAT YOU DO, YOU DO WELL.

Well, thank you.

IT'S EXCITING FOR ME TO THINK ABOUT THIS KIND OF ALBUM COMING OUT BECAUSE KIDS TODAY ARE GROWING UP AND THE WORLD IS JUST GETTING MORE AND MORE HECTIC AROUND THEM. FAMILIES HAVE CHANGED IN DEFINITION A GREAT DEAL OVER THE LAST TEN YEARS OR SO. AND THEY'RE GOING TO CONTINUE TO CHANGE, I THINK, BEFORE THEY SLOW DOWN.

IT'S THIS KIND OF EFFORT BY YOURSELF AND BY OTHER PEOPLE WHO –

SOMETHING THAT GETS IN TOUCH WITH PEOPLE WHEN THEY'RE YOUNG, YOU KNOW. WHEN THEY'RE REAL YOUNG. I REMEMBER READING THINGS AS A KID THAT IMPRESSED ME, MUCH THE SAME WAY AS YOUR ALBUMS IMPRESSED ME. AND THAT'S GOOD – THAT'S ALWAYS BEEN SOMETHING THAT I'VE BEEN ABLE TO UNDERSTAND AND FALL BACK ON. STORIES WRITTEN BY PEOPLE AND AS A KID, BOOKS THAT I'VE READ. AND THIS IS THE KIND OF THING THAT I THINK CHILDREN WILL BE ABLE TO LOOK TO AS WELL.

Well, you know Bob, I'm hoping that the parents will buy this record or the cassette for their kids and play it around the house a lot, you know. I don't think it's advisable for a person to say, 'Well, look, little Johnny, sit down. I want you to listen to this record.' You know. But just put it on while they're around. While they're in the house playing or around, you know, put it on. Eventually it'll seep in.

I say that because I had an experience with my son this past summer. I'm divorced and on holidays and what-not, and I have him every summer for the whole summer. And this summer – you know, he's nine-and-a-half years old and he's basically into rock'n roll like most

of the kids his age are. But he likes jazz too, but not like he likes the other type of music. I was playing my jazz records quite a bit while he was here this summer. One particular Thelonious Monk record I played quite a lot, you know. Not on purpose – just because I liked it. I played it over and over. And one day I heard him singing something. And I said – to myself – what is that he’s singing? It sounds familiar. And I listened carefully, and he was humming Monk! Off the record! And I’ve heard him humming it ever since, you know? So it proves that if one is around it often enough and hears it often enough, it’ll seep in sub-consciously.

So that’s how I feel about this record. If the parent plays it often enough around the house while the kids are around, they don’t even have to say anything to the kid. And kids are familiar with Cosby, because they see him on TV all the time on commercials and the other children’s programs and what-not. So I think they’ll probably recognize Bill Cosby’s voice. But to just play it and let them hear it without saying anything and if they play it enough, eventually – hopefully – it’ll seep in. You know?

***One day I heard him singing something. And I said 'What is that he’s singing? It sounds familiar.' And I listened carefully, and he was humming Monk! Off the record!***

THAT’S THE BEST WAY TO LEARN STUFF. TO SIT WITH IT IN FRONT OF YOU KIND OF GIVES IT AN EFFORT THAT’S NOT NECESSARY.

Well, you can’t force anything on anybody. Especially kids. You can’t force anything on them. They resent it. But if you just play it around the house when they’re around. Not let

them know you’re playing it for them, but just play it when they’re around –

PLAY IT FOR YOURSELF! (LAUGHS)

Yeah! Well, you could be digging it and enjoying it and they might be playing and not paying any attention, but after a while you might hear ‘em humming one of the melodies and you might even hear ‘em half-way reciting something that’s on the record that Bill Cosby had said.

THIS TRIGGERS AN IDEA THAT I’VE BEEN INTERESTED IN FOR A WHILE. AND THAT IS THAT EDUCATION FOR CHILDREN AS FAR AS JAZZ GOES HAS BEEN – AT LEAST WHEN I WAS GROWING UP AND THROUGH THE SCHOOLS – WAS REALLY RATHER POOR. THERE WASN’T MUCH EXPOSURE TO THIS MUSIC. IT WAS SOMETHING THAT I HAD TO SEEK OUT AS AN INDIVIDUAL. AND THAT’S, I THINK, WHAT IT ALWAYS IS AS FAR AS JAZZ GOES. BUT THERE WAS NO REAL OPPORTUNITY TO DO THAT AS A YOUNG CHILD.

AND SOMETHING LIKE THIS IS A STEP IN THAT DIRECTION. HOW WOULD YOU SEE JAZZ EDUCATION, IDEALLY, IN SCHOOLS? IN AN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM? HOW WOULD YOU SUGGEST THAT SOMETHING LIKE THAT MIGHT COME ABOUT? WOULD IT BE THE SAME CONCEPT AS USED IN TEACHING ABOUT CLASSICAL MUSIC?

Well. You know, the concept that Leonard Bernstein uses on TV with the kids. That would be a good one to apply to the jazz music, too. For kids. Playing some of it and explaining it, dissecting it. Showing kids how it’s put together. Giving them a history of jazz. Going back from the slavery times with the gospel music and on up into the Dixieland period – you know, going through the evolution of jazz. The history of it and everything. And showing them all of that. And having some people play and explaining the various instruments to them. Explaining what the trumpet is, and how it works – explaining all the valves and everything like that. And the saxophone and the keys on it and how you put the air into the instrument. All of that would go along with it. It would be quite an extensive course, I would imagine. But it’d be very enlightening

IT'S SOMETHING THAT ALOT OF SCHOOLS AREN'T REALLY APPROACHING STILL, RIGHT NOW. IN TERMS OF JAZZ...

No, they're not.

DO YOU THINK IT'S EVER GOING TO BE SOMETHING THAT SCHOOLS APPROACH, OR WILL IT ALWAYS BE SOMETHING THAT SOMEONE HAS TO KIND OF GO AFTER – LEONARD BERNSTEIN NOTWITHSTANDING.

I really don't know, Bob. I hope that it will get into the schools. For right now, for this time span, I would hope it would at least get into a high school level.

Maybe they wouldn't get it into the elementary schools right away. But I think the high school kids are ready and able to get into it. Of course, the college people are pretty much into it. They have the various courses and what-not at colleges, you know.

THAT'S TRUE.

But I think the high schools should start something up with it. It would be a good idea. Because by that time, a kid reaches that age, he's more susceptible to sitting down and projecting himself into some music. When they're in the elementary grades they might not want to sit still too long, you know. But the high schools would be a good place to put that now, because they've got it at the colleges. Now if we could get it into the high schools, it would be fine.

WELL, IT'S SOMETHING THAT WILL PROBABLY HAPPEN OF ITS OWN ACCORD, OVER TIME...

DO YOU SEE – I'M VERY OPTIMISTIC AS FAR AS JAZZ GOES. AS FAR AS ITS BECOMING A PART OF OUR SOCIETY. AT LEAST IN THIS COUNTRY. AND I RUN INTO PEOPLE WHO ARE SOMETIMES NOT SO OPTIMISTIC AS MYSELF. YOU'VE COME THROUGH A PERIOD OF SO MANY STYLES IN JAZZ AND SO MANY TIMES WHEN JAZZ HAS BEEN POPULAR, AND THEN THROUGH PERIODS WHERE IT CAN'T SUSTAIN ITSELF – AS FAR AS RECORD ALBUMS. I'M SPEAKING OF THE '50s COMPARED TO THE '60s.

THERE'S BEEN AN UPSURGE AGAIN IN INTEREST, AT LEAST IN THE AMOUNT OF RECORDINGS. YOU'RE ABILITY TO DO THIS, AS AN INDIVIDUAL IS A RESULT OF AN INCREASE IN INTEREST. DO YOU SEE IT TAKING ROOT IN ANY WAY? OR DO YOU THINK IS JAZZ IS ALWAYS GOING TO BE ONE OF THOSE ART FORMS WHICH IS KIND OF FLOATING IN FOR A COUPLE YEARS, THEN ITS NOT POPULAR ENOUGH SO IT KIND OF GOES UNDERGROUND FOR A WHILE. YOU HEAR WHAT I'M SAYING?

*Alot of times if we don't say it's jazz and we just play it, people will sometimes tune right into it.*

I see what you're saying, yes. I think in many instances people will respond to the music if they didn't know it was jazz. Now, I have no qualms about calling the music 'jazz.' I'm very proud of the word. I think it's a beautiful word. And I feel it has some beautiful positive vibrations to it. But alot of times if we don't say it's jazz and we just play it, people sometimes tune into it, get right into it. But if you say it's 'jazz' first, because of the stigma that's gone before, they kind of shut themselves off from it alot of times. Which is a drag.

But I think, given the opportunity to be aired more on the radio and on television that it will become more accepted by the general public.

And, getting back to the term 'jazz,' you know, there are certain jazz musicians I know who don't like the term jazz, they'd rather not have it called that. It doesn't bother me to have it called that. It's been called that for many years and, to me, it's a beautiful word. But so many people who don't really know jazz, they take a negative viewpoint of the word.

It just needs exposure. It needs to be played more on TV, more on radio, concerts, everything. Plus, I think the public needs some musical education. The general public needs a musical education. You know, to each his own. God gave us all types of music, and all of it is

beautiful. Different strokes for different folks and all of that type of thing. We can't all like the same thing. But, given a chance, I think jazz would win over a hell of a lot more people than it has in tune with it at the present moment, if it would just be given a chance, given the exposure.

***It just needs exposure. It needs to be played more on TV, on the radio, more concerts.***

But, you know, that's where I think the general public needs to be educated. We're getting back to that material-spiritual-mental thing again. Primarily the general populous wants a physical music that they don't have to concentrate on. They don't want to take the time to go to a classical concert and sit and listen and try to get something out of the music. Project themselves into it and come away with something lasting, or give them some inner emotions. All they want to do is fingerpop and dance! Fine. For some portion of their life, fine. That's all very well and good. But primarily they don't want to take the time. Because jazz – and I've said this all before – is on a par with classical music. It's American Classical music. It's been called that before. I didn't coin that phrase. But you have to sit and listen to it and absorb it and put yourself into it, and let it put itself into you. And once you do that, you come away from it stimulated and uplifted, you know? It's not to say that you don't come away from going to a discotheque and dancing and come away stimulated, too. But it's a different type of stimulation. It's more of an outer stimulation, where classical music and jazz gives you more of an inner stimulation, you know. But the general public is surfacy. They want to stay on the outside of everything, the physical realm. They don't want to take the time to concentrate on that, you know. Just like they don't want to take the time to go and hear a good lecture by somebody that they could learn

something from. They don't want to make that effort.

AND LACKING THAT, THEY LACK THE BENEFIT OF IT, TOO.

Right, and then on the other hand, of course, the media, they want the bucks. That's all they're concerned with. The bucks. And so, since these people, the general populace, want to deal with physical music all the time, the outer-type of music – that's what they want, so that's selling, that's what's making the money, so that's what the media is going to give them. And the more the media gives them that, the more they want it, and the more they want it – it's like a, what do they call it, a vicious cycle or something. It just never stops.

What we need, I think, are some courageous media people (*Laughs*) who will take a chance and do something different. Because I for one – I'm sure there are many others, too – get tired of hearing the same old stuff on television and radio all the time. Over and over and over, the same type of music. It gets very very boring. Some of it's good, some of it's very listenable, but alot of it is very boring.

***I get tired of hearing the same old stuff on television and radio all the time. Over and over.***

TO A MUSICIAN, I IMAGINE YOU CAN SEE THE MUSIC THAT IS BEING PLAYED TODAY SOUNDS SO MUCH LIKE MUSIC THAT WAS BEING PLAYED 20 YEARS AGO, PARTS OF IT, AND PARTS SOUND LIKE MUSIC THAT WAS PLAYED LAST YEAR. IT'S TIRING IN THAT WAY. IT DOESN'T SEEM AS IF A POPULAR SONG IS MAKING THE SAME KINDS OF ADVANCES THAT SOMETHING WITH IMPROVISATION MIGHT MAKE.

You know, I just saw a TV show the other night with Tony Bennett. I say God bless Tony Bennett. We all know that he loves jazz. He's made it evident, he's made it clear, time and

time again. On TV and radio broadcasts. That he's a jazz lover. His talent is of such a high calibre, that he reaches the masses. That is, he's not a rock'n roll performer, but I mean he's a popular performer and he reaches a lot of people. And he's got a great voice and puts over a song so beautifully and with so much feeling and everything, you know. And when I saw him on TV the other night, he had Sarah Vaughan on there with him, and who else, Harold Land was on there with him. Harold had been doing some work with him. And whenever he gets the chance to, he always projects jazz into his music as much as he can. And I think that's beautiful.

THIS WAS ON PUBLIC TELEVISION.

Yeah, it was, yeah. Well, you know, public TV is really the only place you can find any decent jazz. I wish there was more of it even on public television. For my tastes there's not even enough of it on public TV. But at least you do find some very fine things on public TV from time to time. Now, the other commercial channels, very very rarely. Actually there was more jazz twenty years ago on regular commercial TV that there is today. At least in those days you had Errol Garner and George Shearing. Well, Shearing, I see Shearing alot on Johnny Carson's show or Merv Griffin or somebody like that. Garner was on alot and Oscar Peterson, and people like that were on. I don't see too many jazz personalities like that. Dizzy used to be on quite often. But I don't see him on very often anymore.

SONNY ROLLINS WAS ON THE JOHNNY CARSON SHOW.

Yeah, I heard he was on. They should do more of that type of thing.

AND YOU'D THINK THAT THEY WOULD, BECAUSE AT THIS POINT, I WOULD THINK THAT THERE WOULD BE SOMETHING COMMERCIALY VIABLE IN IT. AND THAT'S WHAT THEY'RE LOOKING FOR. I THINK THAT THEY'D FIND IT.

Well, it's a vicious cycle. They want the money. They want to make the money. And you can't fault them for that. They have a big operation to run there. But then again, they don't give jazz a chance to prove itself. How is jazz going to make any money for them if they don't ever give it a chance? Now, they put jazz on one or two or three times, or half a dozen times and it isn't a

huge money-maker right, they, bam, take it off. And you can't educate the world to jazz overnight! Even rock'n roll took a little time to grow. I don't know what the answer is, to tell you the truth!

WELL, ITS PROBABLY SOMETHING THAT WILL UNFOLD OF ITS OWN ACCORD.

(Laughs) No doubt.

***It's a vicious cycle. They want to make the money. And you can't fault them for that. They have a big operation to run there.***

IT'S INTERESTING TO TALK ABOUT THOUGH. I'M OPTIMISTIC BECAUSE I THINK THAT THE EXPOSURE IN THE LAST COUPLE OF YEARS HAS BEEN GREAT, AS FAR AS THE MUSIC GOES. AND THE PUBLIC SPECTRUM – PUBLIC RADIO AND PUBLIC TELEVISION – ALL OF THIS ACTIVITY IN RECENT YEARS HAS BEEN VERY GOOD. AND IT'S THE RIGHT TIME, BECAUSE THE USE OF THE MEDIUM, USING A MEDIUM LIKE TELEVISION, IT'S POSSIBLE TO REACH AN ENORMOUS NUMBER OF PEOPLE NOW. SOMETHING LIKE THAT MIGHT MAKE A DIFFERENCE.

Um-hmm.

I WANT TO ASK YOU A QUESTION. YOU SAID THAT YOU'VE BEEN LISTENING TO THELONIOUS MONK OVER THE SUMMER. WHO DO YOU LISTEN TO WHEN YOU LISTEN TO MUSICIANS?

Well, I listen to alot of things, you know. You're sitting in my living room now, you see all my record collection. See those, all those cabinets over there, full, and that over there is full of records, and the bottom is full of tapes. Over here is records and down there is more tapes. You know, so I've got a whole bunch of stuff to listen to. And I listen to most all of it, when I have a chance to.

But I can tell you who I listen to most for inspiration. I listen to all of my mentors. I have a tape, a reel-to-reel tape of Coleman Hawkins, one side is all Coleman Hawkins and the other side is the Nat King Cole Trio. And I was listening to that. Now those two people are some of my mentors. You know, I idolized Hawk and King Cole. I listened to Prez, I used to try to play like Prez when I played the tenor saxophone. One of my mentors. And Bud Powell and Thelonious Monk...

THESE ARE PEOPLE WHO YOU SAW AS WELL...

I saw them. I had the honor of seeing them. Yeah, right. And Art Tatum, and Teddy Wilson, and Miles Davis of course. And J.J. Johnson and Art Blakey. Kenny Clarke and Max Roach. I mean all the cats, all the cats that inspired me when I was coming up. And still inspire me. A lot of them have passed on, but their music still lives on, and it's still great music.

Listen, I dig out the original version of "Body and Soul" by Coleman Hawkins and you know, when you put that record on, the background is dated – you know, they're playing them 'eggs' in the background, them whole notes. You know, four beats to a bar. And the background sounds a bit dated, but you listen to that version of "Body and Soul," I guess it was done in the '20s. But Hawk sounds as modern on that thing – his solo – as anybody would today! Or as he would today if he was still living, you know.

And I listen to those old masters for inspiration. And I listen to everybody that I can. As I say I've got a large collection here. But when I feel a little musically sluggish and in need of some pep and inspiration in terms of practice or writing, I'll pull out some Tad Dameron or some Duke Ellington, or somebody like that, you know? And get inspired! It'll make me feel like practicing, it'll make me feel like writing.

YOU STILL HAVE THOSE PERIODS, I'M SURE.

Oh yeah, sure.

YOU CAN'T SIT DOWN AT THE PIANO FOR A WHILE.

You can't be fertile all the time. No, you have those dry spells. But thank God they don't last too long.

IT SEEMS THAT PART OF THE TALENT OF LIFE IS LEARNING HOW TO GET AROUND THOSE DRY SPELLS. OR NOT GET AROUND THEM, BUT GET THROUGH THEM! GET TO THE OTHER SIDE OF THEM.

Yeah, yeah.

***The background sounds dated, but you listen to that version of 'Body and Soul.' I guess it was done in the 1920s, but Hawk sounds as modern on that as anybody would today!***

AS I MENTIONED, YOU DID SEE A LOT OF THOSE PEOPLE WHO INSPIRED YOU AND WHO YOU STILL LISTEN TO –

Plus I worked with a lot of them too! You know, that was a great blessing, to work with Coleman Hawkins and to work with Lester Young and to work with Miles Davis and Art Blakey. All those guys like that. What a privilege. What an honor. What a schooling! *(Laughs)*

AT LEAST!

AS A MUSICIAN IT'S SOMETHING YOU HAVE TO DO. YOU REALLY HAVE TO GO AND AT LEAST HEAR THESE PEOPLE IN PERSON TO FEEL THEIR FULL IMPACT. MUSIC LIKE JAZZ IS THAT WAY. IT'S BEST APPRECIATED WHEN YOU'RE SITTING RIGHT THERE IN FRONT OF IT. AND EVEN BETTER APPRECIATED, I IMAGINE, WHEN YOU'RE PART OF IT AND CREATING IT.

BUT LISTENERS THESE DAYS ARE SO ATTUNED TO LISTENING TO ALBUMS. DO YOU THINK THAT MAKES A DIFFERENCE? ARE THERE FEWER OPPORTUNITIES TO HEAR PEOPLE LIVE THESE DAYS? IT'S TRUE THAT YOU CAN ONLY SEE ART BLAKEY ONCE A YEAR HERE IN LOS ANGELES.

Well, it depends on where you live, you know. I mean, Art Blakey lives back on the east coast. So

he only comes out here maybe once a year, twice a year at the most. And so you try to see him when he gets out here if you're an Art Blakey fan. But you know as well as I, there's a lot of good jazz that comes out here.

You've got Concerts By the Sea, you've got the Lighthouse, the Parisian Room. So we get a lot of good east coast bands out here as well as the good west coast bands. But there's nothing wrong with checking out the records. Sometimes, especially out here, I can see where people including myself, have a tendency sometimes, because everything is so far away, to zero in on the record collection.

And then when Art Blakey is over there at the Parisian Room in L.A. or somewhere, you say Monday, 'OK, I think I'll wait until the weekend and go over and check him out.' And then comes Friday and get involved in a TV show or something and you say 'Well, I'll go tomorrow night.' And then tomorrow night, maybe you're not feeling too good or something and before you know it the week is shot and he's gone and you haven't seen him. (*Laughs*)

RIGHT! THAT'S THE WAY IT SEEMS TO WORK!

But we got to get out of that, including myself. Because who knows how long God is going to spare these great artists to being amongst us. You know, so many of them have gone on. Garner's gone, and Bud Powell's gone, and so many. Art Tatum is gone, Charlie Parker is gone, Coltrane is gone. Thank God we've got their records to still remember them by, their great talents on the records. I think we had better get out and see these people while they're still alive. You know, hear that good live music, let them give us a blessing through the music!

IT'S A DIFFERENT KIND OF BLESSING, TOO. IT REALLY IS. THERE'S SOMETHING THAT'S HAPPENING THERE THAT'S NOT HAPPENING ON A RECORD. OR IT'S HAPPENING ON A RECORD BUT YOU CAN'T SEEM TO GET IT ON THE RECORD...

Well, I don't agree with that completely. I don't agree with that completely. You get it on the record. But you don't get as much of it. Of course, it depends on the record, too. Some records come off great, some records come off mediocre and some records don't come off so

well. But if the record comes off great and the spirit is on the record – the spirit of the session, the cats were really cooking in the studio or in a nightclub, wherever they taped the record from – if it's a cooking, grooving session, you're going to get it there. But you don't get that much of it. What do you get? Twenty minutes on each side of the record at most. And heck, you can go to the club and listen all night long! Plus, you're right up close and the vibes are just running all through you're body! This is just second hand. From the tape to the record and on through the speaker and all of that. Plus, you know, when you're live, you see them there in flesh and you see their motions and their actions when they're playing. That has a lot to do with it too, I think.

You know, we hear the great sounds on the record and it fills us with a great upliftment of happiness and joy. But when we see the person, we not only get the sound of the music that uplifts us, but we get the smile on the guy's face when he's playing. We see his gyrations and everything, how he's grooving to the music. And we get into it with him, you know? If his body starts to swaying while he's playing, you kind of move and sway with him, you know?

***I think we had better get out and see these people while they're still alive. You know, hear that good live music, let them give us a blessing through the music!***

YEAH, YOU'RE RIGHT. THAT'S THE WAY IT HAPPENS. AND IT'S WONDERFUL MUSIC THAT WAY. IT ALWAYS WILL BE, I THINK.

THIS IS SOMETHING WONDERFUL THAT YOU'RE DOING TOO. AND I CAN'T SEE HOW ANYONE WHO HAS PLAYED WITH MILES AND WITH HAWK AND WITH ART BLAKEY, CAN NOT BE STEPPING IN THIS DIRECTION. WHAT YOU'RE DOING TODAY, AS YOU SAY, SEEMS TO BE A

CONTINUITY OF ALL THAT YOU'VE DONE MUSICALLY. AND THE DEPTH. IT JUST GETS DEEPER; IT JUST GETS MORE WONDERFUL.

Thank you.

AND KEEP IT GOIN'! (LAUGHS)

I'm going to try to. I'm going to do my best. I need the support of the public. I need the support of you and people like you. Disc jockeys and magazine writers and newspaper writers. And I need the support of the general public.

As I said before, I put my savings into this record company, and I really believe in it, and I'm going to lay with it as long as I can. I need the support of people to keep it going. I can't – if I put out three or four or five records and nobody buys them then I'm going to go under and I'll have to, and I'm not going to give up but it's going to take a while longer to get it together. But if anybody out there wants to help, they can purchase a record. So I'll be waitin'! (Laughs)

[Pause in tape]

[Talking about early days...]

THAT'S SOMETHING I CAN RELATE TO! ALL THE LOW-PAYING GIGS... THAT WAS IN NEW YORK?

That was in Cauteret, New Jersey.

IN NEW JERSEY, STILL. AND IT WAS AFTER STAN GETZ.

Yeah. I had to play alot of those gigs that I didn't like to play after Stan Getz, because I didn't have my 802 card. In New York you have to belong to the union. I belonged to a union, but I belonged to the Connecticut union. When I left Connecticut to go with Stan Getz I belonged to the Connecticut union. Which was OK, because we would travel all around the country and my card was paid up and it was valid, you know, wherever I played.

But once I started to live in New York City, I had to join the local 802 union, or otherwise they wouldn't let you work consistently. You could only work one night a week. If you didn't have an 802 card. Therefore, I had to get an 802 card, and in order to get it at that time, you had to wait 6 months before they would give you a card. And you'd have to prove your residency

by either bringing in your rent check or stub or something. And they would send a union official periodically to your apartment to check to see whether you were living there. They were strict. And you weren't supposed to work more than one night a week for six months! Now how are you going to live in New York City working one night a week? Unless you've got a hell of a lot of money saved up. I did have some money saved up, but I didn't have that amount of money saved up. So I got this little job working out in Cauteret, New Jersey. Nobody knew about it. The New York officials didn't know I was going out of town every Friday, Saturday and Sunday night to play this little jive gig. But it helped to pay my rent, because I was renting a room. A friend of mine from Connecticut, his sister, had an apartment in the Bronx and I used to stay in her apartment. She rented me a room. Ten dollars a week or something for the room.

## **Now how are you going to live in New York City working one night a week?**

And so I used to play over there in Cauteret, New Jersey for ten dollars a night on the weekends, and make 30 dollars for the weekend. That, plus what little I had saved held me through the six months. Plus, once in a while, I'd get another night during the week somewhere in town. Working a one-nighter or something. Which would help out.

IT MUST HAVE BEEN A LONG SIX MONTHS.

Yeah, it did seem kind of long! (Laughs)

ONCE YOU GOT THE CARD, DID THINGS CHANGE PRETTY RAPIDLY IN THE CITY FOR YOU?

I wouldn't say rapidly. Hittin' and missin'. But I managed to hang on. There was never a time when I was hungry. You know. There was never a time when I couldn't pay my rent, my hotel bill. Or whatever. In the beginning I was staying, as I said, in this lady's apartment. But later on I decided I would rather be on my own. I'd rather



have my own privacy. So I moved into a hotel, which cost a little bit more.

But there was never a time when I didn't have enough money to pay my hotel bill. There might have been a time when I didn't have enough money to pay it, but I had money saved in the bank, so when it got down to that nitty-gritty, I would just go to the bank and draw out the money to pay my hotel bill, you know. That's where I'm talking about on the album, "Guides to Growing Up," which is called "Managing Your Money." If my dad didn't teach me how to save, I would never have been able to do that. I'd be, when the deal went down and I didn't have any money that week, they'd probably have put me out of my hotel room because I couldn't pay my rent! But I had something put away, so I would just go to the bank and draw out a little bit to pay the rent. Now, I couldn't do that every week. I'd deplete my bank savings. But there were weeks when I did have to do that. But I never went a week without paying my rent, and I never went without food. I ate well and had my hotel bill covered. And I went to a few movies. Well, I was always going out to the jazz clubs. It didn't cost me anything to go out to them, because having played in them with Stan and a few other people, you'd just walk past the admission booth. They'd know your face and you could go on in and sit and listen. And you didn't have to necessarily spend any money. I didn't drink anyway, and I still don't drink, so I wasn't buying drinks. Maybe I'd buy a Coke or something. Not to appear to be cheap or something! *(Laughs)*

But I'd go in to hear the music and to meet the cats. And to hang out on the scene, and maybe get a chance to sit in. Or to meet guys and pass your phone number around. A lot of times, if you were on the scene, listening to other groups play and talking to the musicians who are hanging around on the scene, a guy would say, 'Hey give me your phone number, I might have a gig for you next week.' The phone rings next week and he's got a gig for you!

YEAH, THAT'S THE WAY IT HAPPENS, TOO.

But you've got to be on the scene. You know, you can't sit at home and wait for it to happen.

YEAH. AND THOSE ARE SCUFFLIN' DAYS FOR YOU.

Yeah. But they were fun days. I'll tell you, I had a ball back in those days. Because I'd go out early part of the night and wouldn't get home until sun-up. Because I'd make all the rounds of the clubs. I'd go to Birdland, from there I'd go someplace else. Maybe wind up at Minton's Playhouse uptown in Harlem. After hours. They'd have an after-hours thing going from 4 o'clock in the morning until daylight or until noon sometimes. So I would just want to get around and get a chance to play! Get a chance to sit in wherever I could. And experience the experience of sitting in with other people – name people especially – and also to sit in let somebody hear me. Get heard. Maybe somebody would like what I did and say, 'Hey man, give me your number, I might have something for you.'

***I'd go to hear the music and meet the cats. And to hang out on the scene, maybe get a chance to sit in.***

WHEN DID THAT START TO...THAT MUST HAVE CHANGED SLOWLY. MAYBE IT DIDN'T. WHEN DID THAT START TO CHANGE? WHEN YOU STARTED ACTUALLY WORKING FOR A NAME GROUP AT THAT POINT? WHAT WAS THE NEXT STEP AFTER THOSE DAYS OF MOVING AROUND.

Oh, the next step was Art Blakey. With the group which had Clifford Brown and Lou Donaldson, Curly Russell on bass. That was the next step. But that group didn't last very long. Only a few weeks, you know. That kind of petered apart because there wasn't no work for us.

WAS IT TOUGH IN THOSE DAYS AS FAR AS WORK?

Yeah it was kind of tough. It seemed like all the guys who were playing the hard driving, swinging jazz, they'd give them Monday night at Birdland. And the rest of the guys who were

playing that easy-going kind of jazz, they'd give them the full six nights a week. You know, they'd play from Tuesday through Sunday. Give us the off night on Monday night! You know! (Laughs)

But I was very fortunate though, I must say. Oscar Goodstein, who was the manager at Birdland at that time took a liking to me. Because after working down there several times I asked him, I said 'Oscar, you know I live in the Bronx, and the lady whose apartment I'm renting a room, there's no piano there. And I have no place to practice. Would you mind terribly if I came down here during the day when the guy's sweeping up or something and practiced on the piano?' He said, 'No. All you've got to do first is call the clean-up man and find out, because we have bands here who are rehearsing, bands who are playing here sometimes who are rehearsing. You just call and find out if anybody's scheduled to rehearse that day and if there's nobody rehearsing here, you're welcome to come on down and practice.' So I used to go down there during the daytime. The cat would be running the vacuum cleaner or throwing out beer bottles and stuff, and I'd be down there practicing.

***I used to go down there during the daytime. The cat would be running the vacuum cleaner or throwing out beer bottles, and I'd be there practicing.***

THAT'S NICE.

So he was very good to me. Plus, he used to throw me in with a lot of pick-up groups working there. Because a lot of times they'd have a regular band – an established band – working there for a week or two weeks and opposite them, they'd put together kind of a thrown-together, pick-up band. A lot of times he would

be very instrumental in getting me in with some of those thrown-together bands. I'd have a week or two's work there.

YOU GOT TO WORK WITH A LOT OF DIFFERENT PEOPLE.

Yeah, I worked with a lot of different people there. I worked with Slim Gaillard there and I worked with Chubby Jackson and Bill Harris and Serge Chaloff; with Kai Winding, and oh a bunch of different people. I can't think of them all now.

THAT'S ALMOST LIKE A HOUSE PIANIST KIND OF THING.

Sort of, yeah.

AT BIRDLAND. WHEN WAS THIS? AS FAR AS A DATE.

It's in the '50s I guess. Somewhere in the '50s. I don't remember when.

A LOT OF THE TRIO STUFF THAT YOU DID. THAT WAS RECORDED IN THE MID-50s, WASN'T IT? THE BLUE-NOTE REISSUE SIDES?

I'm bad for dates. I couldn't give you an exact date on it. Somewhere in the '50s.

WAS THAT A TIME WHERE YOU WERE PLAYING WITH OTHER GROUPS AND DOING TRIOS SEPARATELY, OR WAS THE TRIO YOUR MAIN ACTIVITY AT THAT POINT?

No, the trio wasn't my main activity. I was working with other groups.

THAT'S ALSO, A LOT OF THAT MUSIC, I SENSE, IS DIRECTIONAL MUSIC FOR YOU. IT WAS ABLE TO LEAD YOU TO OTHER THINGS. SOMEHOW THE TRIOS TO ME SEEM MORE FORMATIVE FOR YOU. IN DEVELOPING YOUR OWN SOUND. BUT ART BLAKEY WAS UNMISTAKABLY WITH YOUR SOUND, WHEN YOU WERE WITH HIM. ART BLAKEY IS AN INCREDIBLE CAT. HE'S STILL GOIN' AT IT!

Yeah. He's still going strong. He'll always go strong. If he's a hundred and ten, he'll still be going strong. That's the kind of a guy he is. He's phenomenal.

I MET HIM WHEN HE WAS OVER AT THE MAIDEN VOYAGE AND HE HAD HEARING AIDS!

In both ears?

NO, ACTUALLY, ONE EAR HAD A HEARING AID AND THE OTHER ONE WAS STUFFED WITH COTTON.. JUST INCREDIBLE. HOW IS HE LISTENING?

He's got an amazing spirit. His spirit is undaunting, I guess you could say.

HE'S STILL BRINGING UP SOME FINE YOUNG MUSICIANS. THAT'S A ROLE THAT SEEMS TO BE TAKEN IN JAZZ.

Uh-hmm.

THE ESTABLISHED MUSICIAN WILL HELP THE ATTENTION OF YOUNGER MUSICIANS. IT SEEMS TO BE MORE DEFINED IN JAZZ THAN IN ANY OTHER MUSICAL FORM. CLASSICAL MUSIC DOESN'T REALLY, YOU DON'T HAVE A MENTOR –

Well, I don't know that much about the classical music scene, but I would imagine they have mentors. I would imagine a classical master would take some young dude under his wing and help cultivate him.

I know in jazz, you know, we're helping each other. If I get a fine young talent, it's helping my music to sound better. And I'm helping him to grow into something; mature. What I look for and hopefully like to find is somebody who has the makings of a future star, but yet needs some polishing, needs some grooming here and there, needs some direction. Hopefully they can come in here with their musical self already pretty well together. And I can kind of put the finishing touches on it and they can go on from here and maybe, get their own band or something.

THAT KIND OF ROLE IS VERY VALUABLE. IT HAS BEEN IN JAZZ. BECAUSE OFTEN THAT'S THE ONLY PLACE THE YOUNGER MUSICIANS HAVE HAD TO BE ABLE TO BE GROOMED. AND TO GET THAT DISCIPLINE. ALOT OF GOOD RECORDS FROM IT TOO.

Right.

IT'S A PLEASURE TO TALK TO YOU. IT'S BEEN AN INCREDIBLE EDUCATION FOR ME. THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME.