

## A University Masterclass with Dave Liebman

Transcribed by Dr. Michael J. Rossi

author's note - In addition to hearing Dave Liebman perform live on numerous occasions in the 1980s, I took a number of lessons and also attended masterclasses by "Lieb". These were all truly inspiring experiences and moments! Even to this day; for bursts of musical and personal inspiration, I would pull-out-the-tapes from my sessions with Dave. I decided to transcribe one of these tapes for all to be hopefully become inspired!

\*Dave Liebman's biography : <http://www.daveliebman.com/home.php>

The following has been transcribed from a Masterclass with Dave Liebman held at the University of Miami. This paper is divided up into the following topics as discussed and presented by Mr. Liebman. The author attempted to keep the frankness and speech patterns/nuances of Mr. Liebman throughout the transcription.

- Role of the Pianist in the Rhythm Section
- Playing with Energy and Conviction
- What is a "Good" or "Bad" performance in a young ensemble
- Composition
- Learning Repertoire
- Career Choices – Artistic and Practical
- Practicing
- Cultural Pursuits
- Listening to Music
- Eclecticism
- Personal College Education Experiences

The role of the pianist in the rhythm section and the rhythm section It's very important in how a piano player thinks about the overall mood of what is going to happen. It's no more vital than in a duo where the pianist is almost entirely responsible for the mood and feel of the performance. The pianist has to think about what's going to be happening in the fifth chorus down the line, where's he going, when is he going to stop, in fact is he going to stop, what's the mood? He has to think of a lot more than just taking care of the customary business of chords, voicings and rhythm. It goes further in the trio situation, where the chord instrument is the leader of the rhythm section and has to take charge. You just can't be thinking of only what's going on in the moment. The soloist should be doing that. He can get away with it because he has a long space of not playing before he comes in again. But if you are the chord instrument, you have to think about for example if we "burn" now, what's going to happen later? If we fall asleep now, will it be too late to get it on up (later)? I'm just talking about energy. If the saxophone solos first, would I like to change my basic voicing texture for the next solo? I mean we could sit here for an hour and talk

about the possible things that could be coming up in your mind besides the correct chord changes to “All the Things You Are” or whatever tune it is, so that’s a real important thing. It’s an attitude on the part of the pianist or guitarist – more than any specific musical element. It’s rhythmical leadership; it’s the certain ability to have a certain amount of voicings together so you can change textures – you got to be able to make colours on your instrument. But I think more that it’s an attitude of like “I’m the helmsman at the rhythm section”. Now, that doesn’t mean the drummer has to take orders, you dig? Or the bass player is subjugated to background (playing) boom, boom, boom etc...and nobody’s paying attention to him, cause we all know that’s not the name of the game and in fact, in the rhythm section the bass is THE man – the bass is the BASS. In general; the basic (musician) that the people hear is the soloist. But the chord guy, because he’s got rhythm and chords, he just wins the game by default. A horn – what do we have? Melody-right? I don’t care if you have a big old tuba; it’s still melody, one note at a time. Drums have no pitch really; the bass player does not have chords outside of Jaco and those guys. A pianist and guitarist really got to be very on the case about overall thinking. That’s the biggest fault I find when I play with people who are not experienced. It doesn’t have to do with music; it has to do with experience. Musicians that are not experienced and are in that kind of role, particularly a duo, it could be a disaster. But in a rhythm section it won’t be too disastrous, if the guy can kind of play at all. What is usually missing in experience is the *confidence* to say this is what’s happening. For example, “We’re taking it, I’m taking it, or I going to leave it for a minute, or I’m just going to throw it out there – I’m not going to wait for you, I’m not going to wait for someone else to do my dirty work, I’m in charge because I got the most power”. Now I think that’s a very important attitude. You don’t get that by learning just chords, you get that based on experience and knowing your good because you have done it enough. I don’t think about “Oh, the guy is playing a dominant or augmented chord, or his voicings are this kind of way when he voices, etc; I don’t even think that way when he voices. Or like what kind of texture is he going to create for me? Colour, Texture, Atmosphere, Environment; all can be placed under the category of Colour. As far as I’m concerned the elements of music are Melody, Harmony, Rhythm, Form and Colour. For me this is colour. Colour is nuance, the way you slide a note on the piano, hopefully you don’t do it like anybody else; you do it your own way. Those are called nuances and expressive devices – bends, the way you attack a note, articulation, and dynamics. I use that quite a bit I believe to my advantage. This is what I learned from Miles. Playing with Energy and Conviction You can get away with murder if you play it with a lot of feeling. As simple as that sounds, I don’t mean murder that you’re jiving’, but if you say it with conviction – I used to have a friend named Lonnie who was a drummer when I was about 18 or 19 and I was just starting out. He would say: “Straight ahead with a big tone”. And I would ask: “What do you mean?” He said: “You’re not sure what you’re doing, you kind of play soft, try to blend in, and you don’t want to be too loud you know?” I didn’t understand what he meant. What he meant was, that whatever you’re trying to say, say it with confidence, say it with feeling and say it with your soul and your heart behind it, which means put some energy into it; that’s what it really means. Musicality is a matter of degrees and experienced learning and so forth, but the energy is your own responsibility. That’s the thing, when I hear guys play, some places you go you know they know what’s going on, but boy they play like it’s sleep time. It used to make me feel just kind of apathetic and I would not say much about it, but now the first thing I pin anybody on is lack of energy no matter what level they’re on. Wrong notes – cool, loosing the place – no problem, lack of energy – It doesn’t matter how much music you learn, the thing you have to develop is “being there”. That’s the thing about improvisation, it’s present time. That’s the biggest thing about it psychologically- you’re there! You think about the implications of that; there’s no future, there’s no past. I mean you may be thinking of the fifth chorus; that’s music, but you’re in that little spectrum of the world improvising on these chords or whatever it is, this cycle, this feeling, then it’s over. You might go away and think about the next tune, or think about what

you just did, or think about what the pianist is doing; but basically it's over. There's nothing you can do about it. That present time thing, I think it's a matter of having energy at the moment, you get into to something. When you want to lay back, you use that kind of energy. So that's an important thing to notice in who you play with, who you play with when you have a choice; I'm not talking about assigned classes or anything like that. I say when you can pick anybody. People ask me, I guess because I recommended (saxophonist) Bill Evans to Miles and because I know a lot of those generation of players, what do you look for in a player, what do you like and so forth. Definitely the thing to look for, and I didn't know this when I was young, is to look for energy, I mean commitment to it at the moment. Now a guy maybe getting high off in the corner the rest of the day, you understand? But when they're there, they give it. That's the game, the rest is personal. What is a "Good" or "Bad" Performance in a young ensemble What I consider a good or bad performance is playing the form of the tune, that we keep it together. That the rhythm section, the time, what I call time feel, feels good. That it has an energy about it and that the soloists sound satisfactory in the sense that they tell some kind of story. They sound like they're really playing from the heart. When a player really plays from his soul with passion like some of the great players that we know from the recordings, then that really inspires others to want to play music.

Composition It's very important for me that in the learning stages you compose. I mean you can start with making a melody in C Major which you can teach an eight year old kid. Say "write a melody for two bars in C". The thing about writing is, outside of the practical thing of playing your own material, the fun of that and the glory and great pride you have in hearing your own piece, is that when you write you are making the kind of decisions that you make when you play, except you're doing them at a much slower rate compared to when you are actually playing. You have so much time to say, "should I go to B or Bb?" "Shall I put a  $\frac{3}{4}$  bar here for fun?" All those things that don't sound like they're really big deals when you play "All the Things You Are" or playing a blues or anything. It makes your mind clearer. The clearer your mind gets, the more you can be there, you dig what I'm saying? It's the decisions that you make along the way, some of them which I'm describing – it's those decisions along the way that make your mind more insightful in the moment. So I feel that when you compose, you're forced to do that slowly and after a while it gets better and better. It's about anything; the more you do it, eventually you're going to come up with something; you just keep on doing it. You know guys who composed, Mahler, Beethoven... that's all they did. Some of them went out jammed and played a little bit. Those guys were bad players, you know Beethoven, and Bach was the 'baddest' organ player of his time. But the main reason they were able to do this was that they got the king to give them bread and they laid back. That's what we do. The king here is the University of Miami or whatever universities– that's a form of patronage, except of course you are paying for it!! I really started composing even before I really cared about it. I could just see that there was something important. After awhile you get a little deeper into it and you start studying composition. You study the guys, the Romantic and Classical Literature, Baroque -you go all the way through the history. You study the 20th Century guys especially if you want to write modern music and you really see what is going on. I use composition as a tool for me to improve my improvisational skills. This tune we are about to play (A Moody Time), I'll tell you how I got it. I think I heard a Billy Cobham record, one of those 'Fusak' records, right? And one of those things was when the drums are playing over a kind of vamp that was in different meters, you know that vibe; those groups where they get that one vamp over and over again and cats burn out on it - like  $\frac{5}{4}$  or  $\frac{7}{4}$ . That was intriguing to me, I've never done that. That's how I heard this particular piece (A Moody Time) like  $\frac{3}{8}$  to  $\frac{2}{4}$  or  $\frac{4}{4}$ . The other thing was that it was a melody in the bass, which happened to work out great for this because that means the baritone sax (sax quartet piece), starts the melody. This was definitely a fusion type tune in my

original composition book. I write several categories of tunes. Fusion tunes mean electric bass and eighth or sixteenth note oriented. One of the advantages of the colour in an electric bass is that you can really get a melody out of it. The other thing was that I was interested in this particular scale which is Major Phrygian. Same scale as the Phrygian mode, but with a major third. The vamp at the end is based on that scale along with a 15/8 thing – 7 and 8. So that's what this is about, otherwise compositionally it's basically one or two different themes with a little break in between. Now the way it came about laws like this. A guy came up to me who had heard some of my string quartets, and he asked me to write a piece for him. I wrote a woodwind quartet with trombone lead, since that is what he played but any lead player can do the part. Then he said that he plays in a group with cello, bass trombone, French horn and tuba. He asked would you write a piece for us, so I wrote this for them and nearly killed myself, slaving with the different registers – tuba – come on! I took it on because that's how you learn, right? I took out the Stravinsky scores and I went through the whole thing. French horn – which has an amazing transposition up a 5th, down a 4th – man I don't know, some weird transposition, everything was out. Tuba, the range is like here (gesticulating) and I really didn't have anybody high up, French horn really doesn't get up there, cello doesn't get up there – high C around there for a real melody, so I said what instrument would work? So what I do is I look through my material, I make up an assignment like that. What would be suitable for this instrumentation? This is how this piece came about - - - Now these cats couldn't play shit out of it, wasted my time and then thankfully I met some guys up in Buffalo called the Amherst Saxophone Quartet through my mother. They performed at this place and she went behind stage and she's says "you know Dave Liebman?" So the guy goes "yeah!" Tell him to write something for us. Perfecto! I already did it for four instruments so I transposed it and here it is! Learning Repertoire There are only 12 notes and they belong to the world. You learn the language and you personalise it, but you also do original material at the same time because that means that you can get probably a little closer to where you are in the history of what's going on. It's like a two pronged approach, its real hard school; I mean there is only so much you can do. When you get on your own and you're practising, you should be trying to learn the standards well, not necessarily a lot of them. I don't believe in that stuff unless you're going to do club dates, but that's a different story. I'm talking about the art form meaning learning a few tunes real well, like "All the Things You Are". You can do anything on that tune. It's the art form that's important; it's not the numbers game. Learning tunes well is what's important. At the same time trying to write and get your own little tunes going even if it's a copy of All the Things You Are. Questions from the audience: Student: What can you do in the music business? There are a lot of guys here that are young, there's so many directions, so many things to do; which way to point their energies. Liebman: I'm going to ask you a question. I'm going to take my own poll because this is a very representative school. How many of you would really like to be jazz soloists, burn and play? Tell me the truth? How many of you are just interested in jazz, but getting a good overall musical training? About half-and-half. Great! Now let me talk to the first ones first-the dreamers – it's going to be hard, it's almost impossible, that's all I can tell you. Jazz soloist with whom? Jazz soloist where you take a solo and it's up to you to say how long you play? One out of thousands –it's rough out there for that kind of work-being at the Village Vanguard or next to Miles, alright? And that's not what it used to be. Here's the thing about that. First of all, I would say "go for the gold". At this age in your life you have nothing to lose. So your friends that you grew up with have a few years on you and have a little bit of security. You all are special already; that's why you are here. You're already not like everybody else you grew up with or who you know. You got to have something different about you if you like this weird music. You are maybe 26 or 27 years old and it's not happening, ok? So you start to get down, you teach, you do something else. I never had any problem with people that learn this music and go on to do other things. If they're going to go that far to be a jazz soloist and really want to be serious and learn this music, they're very bright,

they're very together, they're going to care of business, so I say what do you have to lose? And what you have to gain is that it can happen and let me tell you man, it's a great life. Let me tell you getting up there and playing are the best moments of my life- no question about it. Sometimes it's better than others, sometimes it's a place I'd rather not be; an environment that's not so hip etc. and people I may not like to play with. All that, is a bunch of bullshit because in the end, I'm playing and I really like that. So, that goal, if your going to go for gold you have to take chances and that means you're going to not have the same considerations that the other people have, it doesn't make you superior to others, it doesn't make you worse, it's apples and oranges, period. More specific about that, I going to have to tell you that in the end you're going to have to go to New York because that's where there are more players per square inch. Now if I talk to a younger group of kids I don't paint a dark picture because that's not my job, you're not supposed to do that. What I say to them is that way before jazz was an art form, when you went to music school, what did you get? You got the 3 "B"s; the classical repertoire. Beethoven, Brahms, Bach, whomever you like, put anybody in there – it's all those guys. It's that four hundred year history of how the major works were conceived – Composition! I feel that that jazz is the 3 "B"s of the 20th Century, it's the exact equivalent. It's pop music, no question about it...its contemporary classical – it's Bartok, Takamitsu, its Schoenberg, it's Stravinsky, it's the crazy avant classical stuff- Boulez, Varese and all those guys. Jazz is also blues and everything put together in a pop song form, which is very 20th Century. The Pop song – Gershwin, Jerome Kern up to Stevie Wonder. And even a basic understanding of improvising in the world music tradition is included. I feel that's what you're getting is a full musical education. If you know how to think bass lines, chords, riffs, and the rhythm in jazz which is so sophisticated, you are way advanced. Rhythm is the one that is written about the least; you probably have the least training in rhythm than anything you have here in the sense of study compared to harmony, it doesn't even compare. It's not written down yet, but it's happening. It's coming to the fore and drummers know about this. Basically you're getting training in the kind of music that is played this past century so you are equipped to be teachers, arrangers, film composers, commercial music; anything to do with the production of music. Those are the two main areas that you can do with music. You're either going to be the player, artist, composer or you're going to be very practical from the start and go into the music business which I think that's a very open field. There are more people like you than when I was coming up. More talented people, but there's also much more opportunity. There's cable, there's video, you know what's going on. You know how many people are working now, that wouldn't have worked before. Every video you see has 35 grips and camera men, sound directors, guys that move microphones, props, costumes, lighting, you know that's spin off business. What I'm saying there's a lot of work and there's lots of opportunity. So most important about following your career is where you go after college; crucial, those are the years, crucial, crucial. Of course some people wind up beginning right away at eighteen years old playing in New York and maybe they're ahead of the star soloist game. But they don't have what you have, they can't come in and write a score or transpose to 15 keys; they've done it another way. So you are in a way at a little bit of a disadvantage, when you get to 23 years of age, assuming that you have a B. A. You start out somewhere and you are at the bottom of the ladder. I don't care where you go in this world to start a business; it takes 3 to 5 years to get the facts. You can't even start to draw the bottom line until the 3rd or 4th year. You have to go to an environment where other people are doing what you are doing, that's the biggest thing of all, the biggest practical thing I can tell you. Don't waste your time in Tulsa, don't waste you time in a place like Laramie. I'm being very practical; if you have any inclination to do anything in the music business, you got to go somewhere where there are more people doing what you do. You can learn from being out there, you've been in school so you've been isolated. You learned a lot, you're really equipped but you don't have that thing called experience. You got to have it... a jazz player or writing a film score, you got to get next to

somebody that does it. You got to see how they do it, you got to see how they live, it's a whole thing, it's a way of being, and you just don't become something by turning a switch on. So you have to go where that is. As far as jazz goes in my opinion New York is the place. If you have kind of interest in doing anything in the Pop side of things, writing, TV, Cable, Video the whole scene, don't waste your time in New York. Go immediately to L.A. After graduation is the time to check it out. You get a little room, sleep on the floor, eat at Mickey D's, whatever. All I'm saying is to pursue it, if you know what you want to do, go to that right away. Remember; be aware that there are two sides, one called the artistic side and one called the commercial side. You're going to have to take sides at some point which one are you going to go to. Guys complain to me, "there's no gigs here, I can't get going, I can't do it", then they shouldn't be there, they should be where there's more gigs. If there are more gigs, which there aren't much of, they have to accept playing jazz and maybe getting a job in the Post Office or teach, do something else. That's what I did. I didn't want to do that commercial stuff. I taught in the school system in New York, substitute teaching. You know what that is? And I was a taxi driver for a minute, a couple of weeks, just to do it cause I needed some money – I didn't want play commercial music anymore, that was my decision. I knew I never would get it if I had kept having to phrase one way every night to fit into a commercial situation, it wasn't going to work that way for me. It's a decision I made and I didn't know I was right for a long time. I really didn't know I tell you the truth, I saw my friends getting it – "he got a gig – oh he was here sooner", he started before me. This guy already making 20,000 a year, I don't know if I'm going to make 6000. You have to be clear about the economic and popularity thing. Practicing I really don't have time to practice when I'm travelling. Sometimes I don't play for a week. I do believe in a certain amount of callisthenics on your instrument depending what your instrument is. Trumpet is no question about it. Drums, you got to be strong. There are certain instruments that demand a certain amount of maintenance, just like a good car. Saxophone is not that kind of instrument. Once you learn a saxophone you can get on up and play, you may sound a little tight but you're going to get it, but trumpet - you're dead! Miles had to practice. Believe me; he had to practice when he came back. We used to lay off for maybe a month when I worked with him in 1973-74. When he came back in '81 after five years, he was practising everyday, long tones, Arban – whatever they do, whatever you maniacs that play trumpet have to do. You guys are madmen. Even Miles, who I know doesn't like to practice. So I really don't have a routine, that's the thing. I did have a routine, which involved instrumental practice, learning jazz and learning life. There are 3 different elements to being what you are going to be. But most important you have to know your axes, period! That's like classical training on your instrument. Also the ability to read and get around in the music. Cultural pursuits Building up your reservoir of knowledge of about other things, about life in general, about other art forms is something that you have to do on your own. And how you do that is you go to the people you respect, you go to your elders, you go to your teachers, you go to the guys that you know and you say "which books, which records, which movies, which artists, etc. The cat will stand there and give you 15 names; there you go-done, do it! Listening to music In general I am not commissioned or hired to do things. I have to find these things to do so I can keep growing and evolving. Playing is always there and I enjoy that and I work on that when I'm doing it. But writing is something that I am going to do when I have time at home. Am I going to practice? It's not going to do any good for me to practice for a week. I'll spend that week at the piano 3 or 4 hours a day if I can and I'll get something out of it. So I have to set up projects that are going to make me grow. If I just keep on doing the same thing again over and over, it's not going anywhere. So a kind of instrumentation maybe: strings, woodwinds, brass, whatever and what kind of material – classical thing, ethnic thing, fusion? So I set up a project for myself for a period. That means I research it for a certain amount of time and that will be my listening for listening sake. You know I always say this: once you're in the situation that we are all in this room, no matter you we are, listening is no

longer fun. It's not like the guy down the street (who) turns on the radio. You can't listen to music for fun anymore, everything you listen to, even the worst "gar" in the world, you're going to try and say "what is it and why is it so bad, or why is it so good, why is this so, how did he do that? I can't listen to music without trying to figure it out. I can't listen to music when I go to sleep. I don't know how anybody could do that. I can't cause then I can't go to sleep. I mean I'm thinking about it and of course I can't listen to music when I'm not in the mood for it, that's very important. I just can't put on Coltrane, Bartok, (well maybe some Coltrane – maybe "Ballads", something beautiful like that), but in general I can't put something on without sitting there and getting into it. So I have to have the time to get into it. What I'm saying is that when you're at the point you're at, you have to make listening a priority like practising. I don't mean listening like most people listen. A guy say's "have you heard the latest... record? And I say "no" and the guy puts it on in the car, talking with the window up, on the freeway. So I'm supposed to make my judgement listening like that? I don't have time and I'm just as guilty of this as anybody. What I'm saying to you is when you listen, try to listen, you know what I mean? Over and over, one side of a record, a whole CD is really in a way out of the question. Twenty minutes of music. Listen to only a few tunes of for example, "Miles Smiles" – that's all. Don't worry about the 89 other albums yet. Listen to a concentrated sampling and get inside it. Learn that stuff so you can sing every part of it. As far as learning it, you will get much more out of it. I have always found this to be true and I'm always amazed when it happens, that when I listen to something the 4th or 5th time I hear it and I go "yeah" with recognition of something new. It takes time so what you have to do is clear time during the day to listen. That should be part of your practice, and in fact should be at the end I think. You're relaxed and you have done your work and you can kind of physically relax and put the headphones on. Just put it on and listen to it deeply. What's going on? What's happening? Just listen to the saxophone player; let's say it's with Miles. Listen to Wayne's solo over and over again. Next day, just listen to what the bass is doing – the same tune. Listen to what the piano is doing. Listen to the stuff that you're always not listening for – instead of the lead guy (for example). Listen below the surface, the background, the accompaniment, and the things that are going on. We are supposed to know about the details because we're the scientists of this music. How many people get time every day to listen? What do you listen to; do you listen to the same things? Somebody talk out there, Shit! What do you listen to? Student – Well I'm a trumpet player; I like to listen to a lot of ECM albums. My trumpet teacher turned me on to a lot of old stuff I didn't know about. I didn't know about Monk and Lee Morgan, Kenny Dorham. Liebman– In this time do you think you're listening has been more concentrated to one or two things? Let's take Coltrane for example. How many people like late Coltrane? How many people like Coltrane better from before that? It's usually more, quite a bit more that like the other thing because the late Coltrane, people still don't know what's going on. Now if a guy would explore that direction he would understand it and maybe say something like: Well, it's not really 'new' since John has been alluding to it for several years on a few records". In this case of late Trane it's like taking the droppings of the cigarette's ash and making it back into a cigarette. You know what I mean? Take Trane's pinky toe and just explore that and you got a lifetime of work, the stuff he only did for a minute. A genius, a heavy cat does a lot of things, he does one thing really amazing... then he did all these other things and that can become a direction for another guy. Maybe a player goes into late Coltrane and makes that his own, coming up with something different. Student: Do you think audiences are going to keep up? I mean 20th Century classical music, orchestras rarely play that, they're into Mozart, Beethoven still because that's what people pay for. Liebman: It's like late Trane and early Trane. That's what I mean, they can't listen to Schoenberg because that's late Trane. I don't think audiences will ever get much farther in general. There will be more and more numbers, you are used to more certain dissonances than I was when I was growing up depending on the period, what was around you for the most part. Mostly you still hear middle of the road "C"

chords and the music that is popular, jazz and pop – I don't hear Stravinsky on the radio. I don't hear anybody trying even for 4 bars to take the music out of the box. It is about intellectual level as well as getting used to it. For example, I might play something dissonant for an audience that knows Benny Goodman and they may react against it, but I don't know if a younger audience wouldn't have the same reaction except they're more used to it. But how deeply have you felt it? How deeply have you done it? I think that's a different story. I don't think that's going to change. I don't think the audience that we try to address will get anymore used to late Trane or Stravinsky or Schoenberg than they are. They're still going to play Brahms, that's my opinion. Eclecticism It's had both positive and negative effects on my artistic life. It's really a split coin in a way.

Eclecticism is a style. I mean you used to say: "He's avant garde, he's Dixieland, he's eclectic." It is something that started in the '60's for the most part, at least for my generation. The Renaissance man was the proto-typical eclectic man in history, right? The Renaissance man did everything, he painted, drew, sculpted, Michelangelo, right? In this period eclecticism is from the 60's, you know why? Because we had the Beatles, Jimmy Hendrix and you had Trane. You couldn't deny it. Sorry, you couldn't say, "No, I don't want to hear it". Man, the Beatles were talking about the shit. When "Sergeant Pepper" came out, that album spoke to me. Jazz or no Jazz-it didn't matter. It was no big deal at the age of 18, 19, and 20. This was something I could relate to like also Vietnam; it was a social thing, you know what I mean. So eclecticism was a thing that my generation got with. We had to hear rock and roll, because of exposure, because of media. The obvious benefits is that you're diverse, varied and you have a lot to say about a lot of things, you can say it in your music or your art form, you can experience things and know how to handle yourself in different situations, it's a life thing also cause you're able to deal with different kinds of people etc. The disadvantage is that you're like a jack of all trades, master of none. A lot of the guys went in this direction and what do you have? You've got watered down music. That is the problem. That's the thing you have to be careful about in being varied and what you think is being really hip. The disadvantage is that you don't go far enough into one area. If you don't go far enough in one, you got a lot of little things to say and nothing really heavy which people are going to notice. And I'll tell you something in this day and age, because you're so used to being bombarded by so many things and it's hard to get people's attention – the 3-minute attention span, etc. I grew up with TV, but you guys really grew up with TV all the time. The 3 minute attention span is People magazine, USA Today and so on: "Oh in Lebanon, they just killed 3 guys"... you know what happens after a while? We all get numb....it's Novocain. So that's what happens with trying a lot of different things. You try a lot of things and you don't do something that makes people say ... "I have to hear that, I have to listen to this guy because he's got something to say to me. Instead of: "He's one of the crowd, one of the masses". The media makes everybody a star in five minutes! I think it's a double edged sword and something you're going to have to deal with throughout your artistic life, in fact probably throughout your normal everyday life. Too many choices, which one to do? I stopped playing tenor because of that, it was too much. Personal College Education Experiences I have a degree, a B.S. in American History. I liked history and I was good in it even though I started out as a music major because I was going for the teaching thing. First I went to Queens College which had an excellent music department, known and reputed. It was in New York and I didn't want to leave New York - I knew that at that time; 17 or 18 years old. I was into enough jazz to realise that this was where it was at and I wasn't going to leave where it was at. I went there (Queens) and the first day they handed me a list; a four year listening list. It was from Palestrina up Boulez or whomever. I didn't know any of these guys. I knew classical music from Music Appreciation in 4th Grade and whatever I played for piano lessons. I tried. I spent six months in the music library listening to Monteverdi and Palestrina – listening and trying to learn it without any kind of feeling for it and decided this is not the name of the game. I wanted to be taking Miles and Trane off and checking it that out; that's what I wanted to be doing with the time I have. But I did



realise I have to go to school because of what it gives you. I decided to major in something that I liked and basically wouldn't be too time demanding. So I graduated in History with a minor in Sociology, but I also got enough credits to be a substitute teacher. I knew that when I got out school I lost the advantage that a couple of my contemporaries had; they came to New York at 19 or 20 years old, they had whatever the gig was, they were doing it, they were playing it, they were involved. I was in school, living a double life but I wasn't immersed in the music. So I said "I'm going to get out of school and I'm not going to be ready to hit? I didn't know what I was going to do, but I got a degree and this teaching thing so I could go ahead and substitute. My thing was to look for a practical way of making a living so I could get the music together. Now what is a practical way? It means part-time. You can be a waiter; just as good. It means that you work when you want – kind of. It means you don't go nine to five everyday because you can forget about anything else; you're too tired. So I got that degree and then after a year or two I started the music thing and was a musician full-time playing what I wanted to. But I definitely got the degree and I'm very glad. However at the time I was saying I should have been playing, I could have been in the scene when I was 20 or 21 like some of the other cats. I know I got something that so and so doesn't have which is some kind of intellectual understanding of what is going on in the world. I don't remember biology and chemistry – I don't remember what I had to take in college, but I know that I learned how to learn which is the key to lifelong success. I learned how to be an intelligent and cultured person who can observe life and bring back reflections to deepen my art.