

Dan Morgenstern on arriving in the U.S

Now, A Jazz Moment...

MUSIC: "Moose the Moochie" CD: Yarbaird Suite, Rhino RZ 72260 (disk 1, cut 10)

Dan Morgenstern: When I first came to New York, unlike most people who wanted to see the Empire State Building or something like that, I wanted to see 52nd Street.

Writer Dan Morgenstern -- recipient of the NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy -- came from Copenhagen to New York City in 1947. An avid fan of American jazz, he immersed himself in that legendary scene that today's young musicians only dream about.

I spent most of my money, what little money I was making, on records and on hanging out in jazz clubs, which you could do then for relatively little money if you learned how to nurse a beer (laughs) and I got to know quite a few musicians. And you know we'd go to Harlem and that's got the after-hours scene. And then there was downtown in the Village, there was a lot of jazz. And of course there was 52nd street. That was my night school was that hanging out.

MUSIC: up and fades

... nightschool on 52nd Street with writer and historian Dan Morgenstern. This Jazz Moment was created by the National Endowment for the Arts.