



Participants in the 1992 Bebop symposium panel discussion, posing with symposium speaker José Hosiasson: from left to right, Thomas Owens, Red Rodney, Hosiasson, Gary Giddins, Dan Morgenstern, and Carl Woidek.

Bebop in the 1990s: A Panel Discussion

Moderator: We have a fantastic group of musical minds here: Dan Morgenstern, Thomas Owens, Gary Giddins, Red Rodney, and as a kind of “traffic cop,” I’m Carl Woidek. The topic I thought we would start off with, that’s not to say we won’t depart from, is “Bebop in the ’90s—A Vital Form or a Museum Piece?” And I’d like to begin by asking Red, How’s the state of health of Bebop right now? How’s the patient? What’s the state of Bebop in 1992?

Red Rodney: Well, there aren’t many of the original group left. There are very few of us left. But there are a lot of *younger* players who have grown up with this music. They have *developed* it and modernized it; made a little more of a melodic bed to it; added all of the condiments of the ’60s, ’70s, and ’80s. And I think there are some bands like mine, which you may have heard last night, and there are some others, that are playing Bebop of the ’90s. Now, of course, the young men in the quintet, some of them weren’t even born. Most of them weren’t at that period. And they came up with more modern forms. But they quickly learned the roots and traditions of the Bebop form and [what came] before, which is very important to make a complete, well-rounded player. We were very lucky because I was able to give them roots, traditions, and a little discipline of the original Bebop, and they were able to bring to me all of the nuances of the new. And if you’re wise enough to listen to the youngsters and learn from them, then you’re going to get better, as I’ve gotten better because of that. And, so, there are other groups like this today; even the young ones like the Harper Brothers, maybe now they’re starting to play more modern. When they first came out they were playing the ’40s Bebop and most of us would say, “Well, they do it but they don’t do it as well as we did it.” Well, how could they? We didn’t give them a chance. Now I think they’re just starting to come up with their own version of Bebop. I think this music is going to continue growing and growing and adding all new forms, because Bebop is still the most intellectual, the most difficult idiom of jazz to play. More than

the modal thing was, more than the free thing was, but put all together, it's magnificent! That's how I feel about it.

CW: I'd like to ask the same question of Dan Morgenstern in terms of music that is Bebop derived, swinging chord-change music. How healthy is that scene today?

Dan Morgenstern: Well, I think part of the answer is what we heard last night, which certainly was healthy indeed. But I think in a way what we heard last night may not be, unfortunately, a common denominator. Because what we have here is Red, who is a veteran, and we have the young musicians. Most of the groups now playing in a Bebop tradition lack what I think is very important, which is a generational meld. Because they're all young guys playing together, what they do is very interesting, but it doesn't have that guidance, maybe, or that mix, which is very creative, of not really the old and the new but of the generational thing which always was the case in this music. And so we miss Art Blakey, who was like a whole university producing all these people. The only thing we can wait for now is for some of the young guys to get a little older and hire younger people. In a way we have that with Wynton, who I believe is already going to hit 30 this year.

RR: He's 30!

DM: There was a time when you wouldn't have been able to trust him anymore (laughs). But obviously what has happened is something quite remarkable, which *is* that the music called Bebop, because everybody calls it that, it made such a strong comeback, which is to say that the tradition, which is infused with new blood and so on, has made a return after a prolonged absence. We had a lot of very interesting and sometimes very weird and also sometimes very boring things going on. We had the freedom and so on, and we had fusion, which I think still exists and has produced some things of interest, but basically, I mean to me at least, it was pretty boring. Now it's very interesting to see what these young musicians can do with the tradition and, as Red pointed out, Bebop in itself, in its pure form, is one of the most difficult jazz disciplines. It's awfully hard to play, I mean, it was hard even for Bird and Diz. Right? So, maybe what we call contemporary Bebop may not be quite as rigorous, and it has new elements in it—it has to have, because a lot of things happened. Sometimes it also is looking back beyond Bebop—we are seeing a little bit of this—but not necessarily in this very sort of academic repertory form, but reaching back to role models like Johnny Hodges, and Benny Carter, who's still very much with us, and Coleman Hawkins, Art Tatum, and

Ellington, which is, I kind of think, some of the seminal stuff that went into making Bebop. But whatever is happening now, it's fascinating, it's something that is entirely unpredictable. You don't want to stick your neck out, but sometimes you're asked to forecast what's going to happen in the next decade. I wrote something awful for *Downbeat*, at the end of the '70s, I think. They asked me to say something about the '80s. I haven't dared to look at it. I'm sure it's pretty awful. Anyway, I don't think that you can ever predict what's going to happen in a living art form and I think the most important thing is that jazz is *very* much alive and the Bebop tradition is certainly a very important part of that life.

CW: I have a question for Thomas Owens, which is, the music that we heard last night with Red's group, I guess the age range, not counting you [Red], is 21 to 40-ish or so?

RR: [Gary?] Dial [the pianist] is 38. . . .

RR: But he came to me when he was 22 or 23!

CW: Is the music heard last night, if not a carbon copy, if not identical, is it consistent with Bebop, the music of Parker and Gillespie?

Tom Owens: Oh yeah. . . . Well, that brings up an interesting point. I think that there have been implied, during the last couple of days, different points of view about just *what* is Bebop. There are people who would say that Bebop basically was the style defined by Parker and Gillespie in the '40s and early '50s. Then you have to add different labels for whatever came after, and I think that's an awfully narrow point of view. And, maybe, is almost belittling to what we know as that music, because it says that it's very limited and doesn't have room for expansion. But I think we've seen *in* [Red's] band there are three generations of beboppers represented. And they're, as you say, bringing in the younger ones, bringing new points of view, adding elements. . . . Coltrane *lived* and all those who come along after Coltrane, if they're saxophonists, probably have Coltrane in them. Well, was Coltrane a bebopper? *I* think so. He brought in some new elements to the language. Now, the young guys are building upon that and adding to the vocabulary. Just as English is the living, growing language, there are living, growing musical languages too. There's another band that represents the same sort of thing that is not a working band like [Red's] is. I live in the Los Angeles area, and once a year a band assembles at Catalina Bar and Grill in LA. It's a quartet. The leader is Milt Jackson. Cedar Walton and Billy Higgins and John Clayton complete the group, and when

they can, they just come together, they block out that time, so they can be together for that week. I don't think that band has ever played in New York City, because three of those guys live on the West Coast, so it's easier for Milt to come out to them. And when that band gets together, it is pure joy and pure love on both sides of the bandstand. And it occurred to me the first time I heard them, which was four years ago I guess when they started doing this, that here again is just about three generations of Bebop. There's Milt from Red's generation carrying on the tradition, then a second generation represented by Cedar Walton and Billy Higgins, and John, almost literally young enough to be a grandson of Milt Jackson, holding up the bass and quite nicely, thank you, and the music that those guys play together is just phenomenal. Cedar Walton and Billy Higgins have a communication that is *unearthly*. You wonder, how can those two guys, how can Billy Higgins read Cedar Walton's mind like he does? And the joy that's in everybody's eyes as it's happening, certainly when that band plays in town, Bebop lives in a brilliant way, and I think it lived on this stage last night in a brilliant way too. I guess I've kind of gotten off the track, but yeah, I think that Bebop is a much bigger language, musical language, than it was in the '40s, but it's still, given the fact that it's a lousy word that many musicians really kind of cringe at, and some really hated to use, but we're stuck with probably forever, by whatever you call it . . .

Gary Giddins: Jazz itself!

TO: That's true, but whatever you call it, it's alive and well and flourishing.

CW: In my Jazz History Class, toward the end I've played most recently some comparisons between some very young artists and some earlier, more established artists, for example, Ralph Moore and John Coltrane, or Vincent Herring and Cannonball Adderley, Bennie Green and Bobby Timmons, Marcus Roberts and a particular Thelonious Monk cut, a particular Branford Marsalis and Ben Webster at one point. What I'd like to ask Gary Giddins is, in the '70s it was often said that the musicians who were drawn into fusion were not very aware of the roots of jazz, that many of the youngest fusion artists have not really studied where the music came from, and I'm wondering if you think that could be the opposite problem in today's young Bebop-derived music, that the musicians have gone to the opposite end of the pendulum swing and are doing justice to the roots, are showing respect, homage to the roots, but then are not looking beyond, or at least at this stage of their career, don't show signs of moving ahead. Could we have gone to the opposite extreme of showing roots and not showing as much individuality?

GG: I think there's a useful analogy in what's happened to jazz over the last 25 years and the history of modern painting. We got to a point where it became so abstract that there were black on black canvases, white on white canvas, I mean you have a canvas that is completely covered with black paint or white paint. It's almost an invitation to go back to the *beginning* and do some kind of a representational painting, which is exactly what happened—we got the pop art, the op art, and the same thing is happening in classical music now, a return to David Del Tredici and other composers in that idiom. I think what we're seeing in jazz is a response to the fact that it went all the way out. We had the black on black canvas. We had musicians standing on a stage and playing without—attempting to play without—bar lines, trying to defy the tempered scale without chords. . . . Booker Ervin, for whom Dan and I share a great admiration, was playing during the late '60s in a club called the La Boheme with Ted Curson and I was asking Booker at intermission about some of the players, about these techniques, and he said, "Anybody could do that. You know how they do that?" And I'm thinking about harmonics and all this stuff I've read and he said, "You bite on the reed!" (Laughter), and he bit on the reed and he squealed sitting at the table in the club. So we're seeing a response that I think is very healthy. Tom said he wondered how Cedar Walton and Billy Higgins read each other's minds. . . . The answer, of course, is that they've played together for twenty years. Why did the band sound so great last night? Because that's a band, there's just no substitute for that, there's no replacement for that. And I think that one of the most exciting things going on in jazz is that there's an attempt to have bands. When you go to see Tommy Flanagan's trio, it's a trio. Not just Tommy Flanagan and a couple of guys. There's no replacement for that. I've been involved with a group called the American Jazz Orchestra, and the first time we played I was just very proud of the way the band was sounding until I heard the tape and I heard all these clams, and John Lewis, who was the conductor, said, "Don't ever think about this sounding like a real band for two or three years," and, of course, he was exactly right and all of a sudden it started to sound like a band. And it's the magic of musicians playing with each other, understanding each other, reading each other's minds, figuring out how they think. And a lot of the musicians who are coming up now can play with each other. In the avant-garde period of the '60s, nobody played with each other. Ornette Coleman and Cecil Taylor played together *once* and they've never allowed the tape to be released, and I'm sure there's a good reason for that. There was the Coltrane school, there was the Ornette school, the Cecil school. Now you have a whole generation of musicians who can get on a bandstand—they know the tunes, they know the rules, they have a whole history of the music to draw on, and they're going to be inventive in the amazing way that, say, Chris Potter is, or

a bass player in New York named Chris McBride, who is something! Unbelievable! He's also 20, 21.

DM: 19 . . . he's not 20 yet.

GG: 19, and everybody wants to work with him! Because he's just got it all! The timbre and the sound, the strength, the brains, and he just has a tremendous feeling for the music. When Wynton first came up, [Carl Woidek's] question was much argued about because of the feeling among a lot of people that he didn't have anything of his own. And I think it's taken Wynton ten years to figure out where he's going. You know, some of the recent things, there's definitely more Ellington in there than there is Miles, and a lot of the younger players who have come up since Wynton are not satisfied with just reading the licks off of records. It's an educational process. [Red's] band last night, what really amazed me was that one would say, "It's a bop band, in the bop tradition," yet it sounded very contemporary—very vital. I don't know if there's something about the rhythm section, but it just had a radiance about it and it just really illustrated to me how *totally* contemporary that bebop is when it is played by musicians who are *thinking* together. Gary Dial's piece was wonderful!

TO: Who was it who said, "Bebop is the music of the future?"

RR: Joe Segal! Joe Segal, I'll answer that! How it's done. I'm a romantic at heart and I'm a melody man. And Dial, of course, has been writing for us for thirteen years, and Chris brought some things in, and *other* writers. Bob Belden comes to mind, because he brings *a lot* to us. And he's our producer, for this next date and our last one. But in the final analysis, the final arrangement is *mine*. I tell them, "You can go as far out as you want," because youth will have their way, they will go out, and this is fine, but I say, "I want the melodic *beat*, no matter how far you go," so, what you heard last night, some of those things, were *very* far out, they were quite modern, they were very difficult for me to play, but there was that melodic beat in there. *That* is *my* doing, the rest of it is theirs. So it's a good match. That's the reason for that!

CW: Just as a kind of follow-up, and I certainly don't want to belabor this point, do you feel that the young artists that you're hearing in New York are not only paying homage to the masters and exploring roots, but also have a feeling for individuality, exploration?



Above: Red Rodney and his band during their concert at The University of Texas at Austin for the 1992 Bebop symposium; below: Red Rodney conducting a master class in the University's Department of Music.

GG: Yes, it seems to me that one quality that really good young musicians have—tell me, [Red], if you disagree with this—is a feeling that they know what they're doing and that they have something to say. And as you get older and wiser I think that it may become a little bit modified. But I look for that, I want to see that in young musicians; I want to feel that they're showing off and that they've got something to say. And I see a lot of that. McBride has it. He loves to do little flourishes to show you his dexterity and a number of the younger piano players. There's a very good piano player—he's not that young anymore, but . . . John Campbell.

RR: John Campbell?

GG: Yeah.

RR: Oh, yeah! He's wonderful!

GG: He's all over the keyboard. David Murray is somebody who's become more and more involved with his roots, but he's also gone through the whole history of it, of the modern period. He's trying everything. He's got a big band. He just did a quartet—it's a blues album with Don Pullen on organ. And in fact there was a cutting contest which I regret that I wasn't there for. Albert Murray, the writer, had a party and I guess it was in November or early December, and there was a jam session and it got to a real old-fashioned cutting contest between Wynton and David. Wynton's always putting David down, and apparently David just blew him off the stage and totally won the whole audience there. So, you know, I think that there are a lot of surprises. I'd like to see more of that. I'd like to see more of this kind of jamming and trading ideas on the stage, and not just a kind of this is my school, this is their school. And I think when you have musicians who are studied, who know the rules and the fundamentals of the music, then you have that possibility, you can actually stage a jam session and have people come by and intermingle. Red has participated in a party that goes on at the end of every year. It's a sixty position Gibson Jazz party, and they're all musicians of a couple of generations who can get up on the bandstand and call a tune and play it. We haven't really seen that kind of situation with younger players in a while, but I think in this generation you *could* do something like that because, I remember in the early '70s I was doing a piece for *Esquire* on young players and I went to a loft where there was a jam session going on and there was a guitar player from Japan named Rio Kawaski, and he said, "Let's play 'Body and Soul.'" They didn't know the changes. They were trying to hear it. I thought, Wow! how are they going to communicate on this music. That's not true anymore!

RR: No more.

DM: I think things have come to a pretty pass when a tenor player can cut a trumpet player! (laughter) But aside from that, I think that one really fundamental difference, which has happened gradually, is the attitude of musicians toward music itself, or tradition. There was a time we went through, which maybe was a necessary time, when the music was so overlaid with political and social issues and agendas that a lot of things were lost in the shuffle. One of the most important things that has happened in terms of jazz is that it has now become a music that can be seen whole and that is something that should always have been the case, but for various reasons it couldn't be. Now it seems perfectly natural, and [GG] mentioned Marcus Roberts, a pianist who's interested in the music of Jelly Roll Morton, in James P. Johnson, in Monk, and yet he plays like himself. A drummer like Harlan Rowley plays with those New Orleans re-creations and plays wonderful press rolls, and he's also a great modern jazz drummer. [GG] mentioned Chris McBride. He seems to be one of these people who's especially gifted, who can step into any musical situation. I mean, he listens to records and stuff, but he hasn't listened to everything. He isn't old enough! My God, there's hundreds and hundreds and hundreds of hours. But he can step into almost anything and do right by it. And the idea that a jazz musician today should be familiar with and able to play in all of these different, but related languages, it's probably something that has to do with the maturity of an art form. It also has some dangers and some people have raised that point. Some say that you should be a complete musician and acquainted with the tradition, you should be able to play all kinds of styles, but doesn't that mean losing your own identity? I don't think that that is necessarily the case. But I do think that we have to look at jazz in a slightly different way than we've looked at it before. And that is, that we are probably going to get musicians now who are similar to classical players, and there's never really been that much difference. I mean the idea that some jazz-oriented people have, that classical music is reading music off a sheet of paper, I think we need to dispense with that, for there are so many different interpretations of that paper. If you are a pianist there are so many ways of playing Chopin, so many ways of playing Debussy. And what about the interpretations of conductors! So I think what we might get for the first time is jazz musicians who are conversant with a lot of different styles but may prefer a certain one to play in. I mean, we have guys like this now in New York, somebody like Dan Barrett, who's an excellent trombonist, but who prefers to play in a certain mainstream group. And I think that's fine. I think everybody now also feels that everybody else has the right to exist. It's no longer a matter of questioning whether some form of music has a right to be

there or whether it should lay down and die or whatever. And there were times when people were insisting that that was the case. You know, "Get out of the way!" But, getting back to the issue, which is Bebop, Bebop today, of course, can't be the Bebop of 1945, because of all the things that have happened since then, but this afternoon, when Red's rhythm section was doing a clinic, Gary Dial said something that interested me. When he was demonstrating, he was talking about the Bebop scale—he demonstrated Bebop scales. He said, when we play Bebop, that's what we use, but you wouldn't use that when you're playing something that's more modal oriented. So, the fact is you can go in and out. You have different vocabularies and you can use them. Sometimes you can use them at the same time. It's just simply becoming a more varied and more mature musical language and some of it is going to be alike. You know, you don't have to be an innovator in order to be a respectable player.

GG: I was just reminded of an anecdote in Bill Crow's endlessly useful book. He tells the story about a musician, I can't remember who it is, but he's on stage, and he plays in the Lester Young style and he walks off the bandstand and some guy says, "Hey man! All you're doing is playing Lester Young!" And the guy hands him his saxophone and says, "Here, you play Lester Young!" (Laughter) Now, that's ok, but I remember a time when somebody came along and he was playing some Bud Powell and it was like oh (shruggingly), you know, like that didn't count for anything.

CW: I wanted to pick up on something Dan said and probably on something that Gary touched on. Not everyone has felt this way, but I think that among some critics, some musicians, there was a feeling that each successive generation of musicians has made the preceding generation obsolete. Of course, there are many, many exceptions among musicians who are innovative and yet have had respect for what has come before. But a lot of people seem to organize jazz in the sense that we were improving the breed, that harmonically, melodically, rhythmically the music would become more sophisticated. What Dan is suggesting is a view that integrates all the areas of jazz, all the styles of jazz, where a musician would be conversant, as he said, with the various styles. And what I noticed—Gary was talking about the David Murray album—where they're playing enriched gut-bucket music with Don Pullen on organ. How much of the integration that you see on the scene today looks back to Bebop and even the Swing Era and yet bypasses the explorations of the '60s, and do you feel that there is a meaningful integration that can happen, that would not ignore the explorations of the '60s, but integrate them into an even wider palette?

GG: They're not ignoring it as much as people think. Wynton, for example, is a great admirer of Ornette. He doesn't have use for a lot of other people in the avant-garde, but he quotes from Ornette. I think if Tom were to do one of his analyses of Wynton, or you [Carl], you'd keep finding Ornette phrases that he steals. Sometimes he writes them into the heads. I'm trying to think, George Lewis, well he's kind of an avant-garde figure, and he's also associated with the classics. I remember being with him in Europe and he had nothing but Coltrane tapes. He listened to them over and over, the same two or three records. I think most of the musicians that have been coming up in the last fifteen to twenty years have some idea of the major figures of that period and of the Bop period. What they probably don't know, and I don't know that this is a bad thing, are the musicians who kind of fall by the wayside because they haven't ultimately stood the test of time. I mean, Coltrane's place in this music is . . . Mount Rushmore. You can't get around it. But there are a lot of other figures that *we* remember who were playing that, it could be debated that, people in fact aren't listening to anymore. They simply have not necessarily enriched the vocabulary, but that doesn't mean that their music was worthless.

CW: Vocabulary, does this mean that you're not doing a discography of Giuseppe Logan? (Laughter)

GG: It's interesting that you mention that, because I like Giuseppe Logan's records because Don Pullen is on them and I think Eddie Gomez was the bass player and there are actually some interesting sounds there. But I would say, however, that when you listen to Giuseppe Logan, that his music is dated in a way that ultimately you listen to it and say, "Ah yes, the '60s, my youth!" You don't listen to it with the same kind of attention that you're going to listen to Coltrane's *Alabama* or something which is this incredible, emotional, overwhelming force.

DM: There is, you know, a place where this *tradition* of the '60s, for lack of a better word, is still alive, for instance, in what Richard Abrams is doing. Mostly what he has done on records now has been Big Band. I think the third Big Band CD has just been released, and there are also ways of incorporating that. I mean, there are things that were played on this bandstand last night that couldn't have happened if the '60s hadn't taken place, but they're in a different context. There was one alto thing when there was just rhythm behind it. That was out, but you can go out and still be *in*. I think much of that music of the '60s was so oriented toward protest that even people get tired of playing it. And some of the key figures, of course, died. Who knows what Albert Ayler would play like today if he had lived! Don Cherry is still around . . .



Charlie Parker (far left) and Red Rodney (second from right), after a jam session in Kansas City, 1951.
HRHRC Ross Russell Collection.

GG: That raises a question that I want to ask Red. What would Charlie Parker be doing if he were here?

RR: You know, a lot of people have asked me that. I firmly believe that he was put here for that little ten-year period, or twelve-year period, to give us what he did, the legacy that he left, the music that he influenced everybody to play. I mean he was the creator and the progenitor of the Bebop style. But I was with him toward the end of his life also, and there was nothing new, everything was repetitive. He recorded the same things over and over; he just played his things so well that he was able to do it. That was unique, because that was a ten-, eleven-year period. On the other hand, Miles had many, many years as a great innovator, throughout the modal period, throughout the avant-garde period. The only period that I personally didn't like was his rock-and-roll period. But sometimes you take away that rhythm section, and you still heard Miles Davis playing Miles Davis. So, Bird I don't think would have done anything different. I think that he would have stayed the same. And that leads me to answer one more question. Many of my great heroes, my idols, and my dear friends stayed in their comfort zone because they were great all their lives in that comfort zone, and that's fine. That's fine. However, jazz doesn't belong in that comfort zone. We need to grow, we need to take chances. I don't care if I made thirty mistakes on that bandstand. If I tried something new and it worked, it was Great! If it didn't work, then next time we'll get it! I think it's incumbent upon us to keep growing and developing and taking all the newer forms and putting them in with your own specific style. My dear friends who remain in their comfort zone, I don't like to play with them anymore! I feel like I've had "yesterday's warmed over mashed potatoes" playing 1940s and '50s Bebop. And I came from that era. I think that we should all *continue growing*. That's my own personal observation and my own personal feeling, but some of those people who played *beautifully* sound *tired* because they won't try to make anything else. And the new guy that comes along, "Ah, man, he don't make any sense!" How can you say that if you don't listen to him? That's my one beef. On the other hand, I think we have better circumstances now for jazz coming ahead in the next generation than we ever did before, because there're jazz societies coming up all over the country. And we're not going to have to play—I won't see it perhaps, but the younger ones will—we're not going to have to play in the clubs, sit in smoke-filled rooms, start at 10 o'clock at night, and all to sell whiskey. That's the criterion. The more whiskey you can sell the better. We're gonna play in auditoriums like this. Two hundred-, three hundred-seat auditoriums. Like Kleinsinger has—whatever we think of Kleinsinger he's got the formula! Sell subscription concerts. Now, these Jazz Societies are springing up in every city. Willie Jenkins is trying very hard to put

them all together and have block booking. So, I think the next decade, the next generation, we're going to have much more employment, more dignified employment, and jazz is going to benefit from it. The music itself will benefit.

CW: One of the things I heard [Red] saying is that for you, exploration is important, that exploration is not inconsistent with staying true to yourself, that one does not have to be complacent in order to be true to yourself, but instead, you can be true to yourself by seeking new sounds that are, as I said, consistent with your values.

RR: I believe that, I firmly believe that! When Don Cherry first came along, all the trumpet players said, "Hey man, what's he doing!" I thought it was great! I became the Jewish Don Cherry! (Laughter) I thought it was great! Other guys come along and they're not playing traditional forms that we know or the Bebop forms that we know. That's wonderful, but you have to learn to take this and use it for your *own* particular style. That's growing!

DM: For those of you who are not from New York, which is a number of you I think, that Kleinsinger is Jack Kleinsinger, who is a New York City jazz concert producer who has been presenting a series of monthly concerts now for what, about twenty years?

RR: Twenty years!

DM: Yeah, an interesting footnote.

TO: One thing that I would like to follow up on is what [Red] said earlier about the musician wanting to explore the tradition. Maybe more at least in the early years in their lives, than carving their own individualist niche. And I wonder if it doesn't follow from that, that those of us who write about the music have an obligation to be guided by that attitude. That is, the books that say first there was New Orleans, then there was Swing, then there was Bebop, then there was Cool, and then there was Funky—implicit in all this is that there is always change, always change, always change. . . . Of course, the labels didn't come from musicians most of the time. They came from the writers. Maybe it's time for the writers to kind of listen to the musicians and look at their attitudes and say, "Okay, we don't need change every ten years." Let's just take Wynton Marsalis as a . . . Oh, let's not try to find a pigeon hole for him. Let's just say that he's a great trumpeter and that he's doing this and doing that, and that's the same with Chris Potter and so on. And maybe we don't have a *label* for these guys. Maybe we don't need one.

DM: This word “eclectic.” Wynton seems to be an eclectic, and there’s room for that, and Gary pointed to the other arts. We don’t have the dominant style or any real innovation in *any* art form today, since the great innovators of the first three or four decades, the first half of this century. No Picassos, not even any Jackson Pollacks. There are no George Bernard Shaws or even Samuel Becketts. Who is the great living poet? I mean, there’s nice work being done, everywhere, in a multitude of styles. But the tremendous thrust of innovation and upheaval, that went hand in hand with all of the things that happened historically in our time, it seems to have abated, and maybe that’s a good thing too, because it gives us a chance to look back at all the things that *were* done, and sort of sort things out and say, “Hey, this was great, and this fell by the wayside.” And also as a listener—I came to this music as a listener—I never had any plans to become, you know, a “jazz critic.” What the hell was that? Besides, you can’t make a living (laughs), and so, it’s not something that you plan to do. You know, we’ve managed, but we do a lot of different things. What drew me to this music was that I loved the way it sounded. I’ll be damned if I can’t try to enjoy Sidney Bechet and Louis Armstrong, and I can enjoy Duke Ellington and I can enjoy Charlie Parker and I can enjoy Ornette Coleman. What I’m saying, you know, is not very popular these days, but take your pick! There was a time when you could do that without being accused of being politically incorrect. Thank God, let’s not have any political correctness in jazz, please. (Laughter)

RR: Um-hmm. Very good!

CW: Maybe that would be a good note on which to conclude, the spirit of integration. I’d like to thank Red Rodney . . .

RR: Thank you!

CW: Gary Giddins, Thomas Owens, Dan Morgenstern, and I’d like to thank everyone in the audience.

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