AL COHN MEMORIAL JAZZ COLLECTION at EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY OF PENNSYLVANIA

The NOTE

SUMMER/
FALL 2022

PHIL WOODS
ON JAZZ EDUCATION

WILLIE MAIDEN

EDDIE DANIELS
INTERVIEW

ESU
EAST STROUDSBURG UNIVERSITY

The NOTE

VOL. 32 - NO. 1

ISSUE 77

SUMMER/FALL 2022

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The Note contains some content that may be considered offensive.

Authors' past recollections reflect attitudes of the times and remain uncensored.

FROM THE COLLECTION

Cover Photo:
Eddie Daniels at
The Five Spot NYC 1967
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Back Cover:
Zoot Sims
- February 24, 1955
Photo by William "PoPsie" Randolph

Centerfold:
Phil Woods (alto), Hal Galper (piano), and Tom Harrell (trumpet) at the Starlite Club, Massachusetts on September 14, 1985.
Photo by Nick Puopolo/ Cliff Malloy Archive

The Note is published by the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection, East Stroudsburg University of Pennsylvania, as part of its educational outreach program.

AL COHN (1925-1988)
The Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection was founded in 1988 by Flo Cohn, Ralph Hughes, Phil Woods, Dr. Larry Fisher, ESU Vice President for Development & Advancement Larry Naftulin, and ESU President Dr. James Gilbert.

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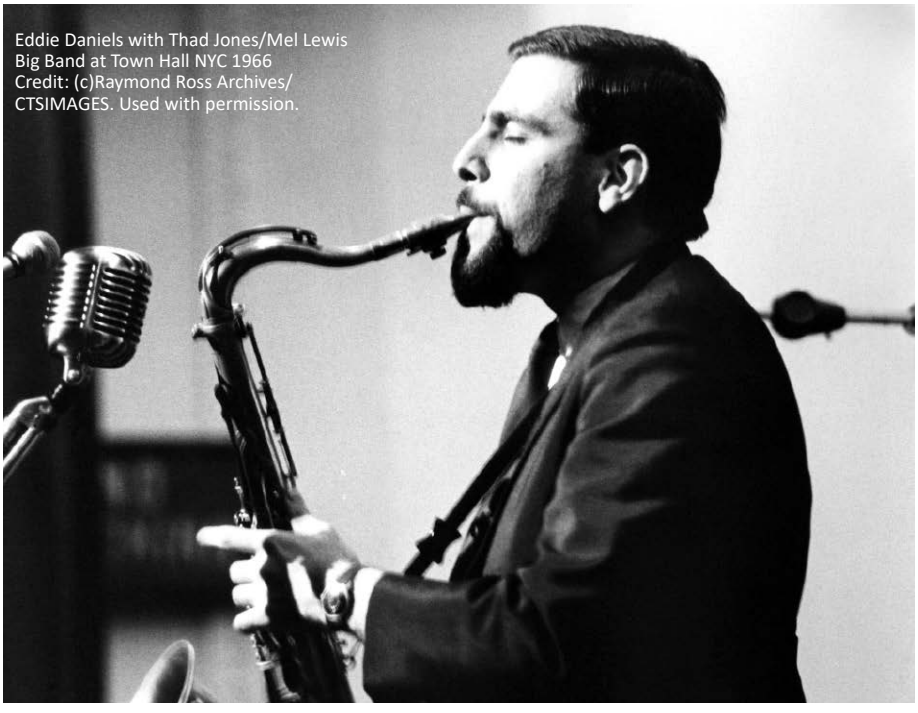
The mission of the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection is to stimulate, enrich, and support research, teaching, learning, and appreciation of all forms of jazz, particularly those connected to the Pocono area of Pennsylvania. The ACMJC is a distinctive archive built upon a unique and symbiotic relationship between the Pocono Mountains jazz community and East Stroudsburg University.

With the support of a world-wide network of jazz advocates, the ACMJC seeks to promote the local and global history of jazz by making its resources available and useful to students, researchers, educators, musicians, historians, journalists and jazz enthusiasts of all kinds, and to preserve its holdings for future generations.

A CONVERSATION WITH: EDDIE DANIELS

The Self-Proclaimed Former "Little Pisher" Speaks About Al Cohn, Bill Evans, Zoot Sims, Thad & Mel et al., as His Illustrious Career Continues



Eddie Daniels with Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Big Band at Town Hall NYC 1966
Credit: (c)Raymond Ross Archives/ CTSIMAGES. Used with permission.

[***Editor's note:*** *Deep thanks to Marvin Stamm for connecting the interviewers with Eddie. Marvin is a seminal friend of the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection and one of THE greatest trumpet performers of both centuries, still performing a couple of Sunday afternoons each year at the Deer Head Inn.*]

Patrick Dorian: Hello Eddie! I'm here with Matt Vashlishan, how are you?

Eddie Daniels: Pat and Matt, in the Delaware Water Gap! I love that area.

PD: Home of the Deer Head Inn. Did you ever play at the Deer Head?

ED: No, but I spent a whole summer at Tamiment Resort [15 miles north of the Deer Head, it operated from 1921-2005 and included the remarkable Tamiment Playhouse, a training ground for many legendary Broadway writers and performers].

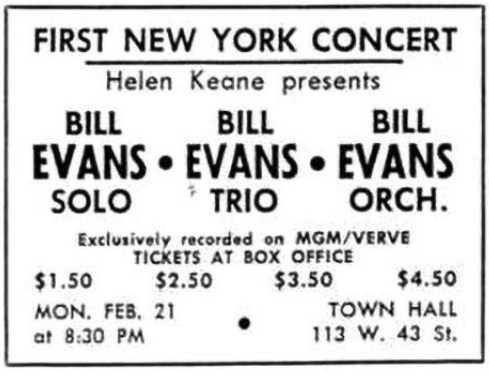
PD: Oh! We have to talk about that at some point.

ED: Yeah, it was a whole thing, a lot of stuff was happening up there.

PD: It's a real honor and a privilege to be speaking with you! It's August 6th, 2021, and Patrick Dorian and Matt Vashlishan are speaking with the great Eddie Daniels who is at his home in the American Southwest. We wanted to ask you first about the Bill Evans [age 36] and Al Cohn [age 40] collaboration of four Bill Evans pieces for big band [in one long work] that Al arranged for the Bill Evans Town Hall concert on Monday, February 21, 1966. [On the front page of the written score, Al Cohn used the working title of "Bill Evans . . . Concert Medley."] You were on that date; do you have any memories of that night in Town Hall?

ED: Well, I don't have a great memory of it because it was a long, long time ago. The only memory I have is of the guys in the band, particularly Clark Terry. I remember Ernie Royal in the trumpet section, and I was like a scared kid, like, who am I? I was still the youngest guy in the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis band that had just started up.

PD: It started that month! [The inaugural Monday night of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis big band at the Village Vanguard was 14 days previous, on February 7, 1966.]



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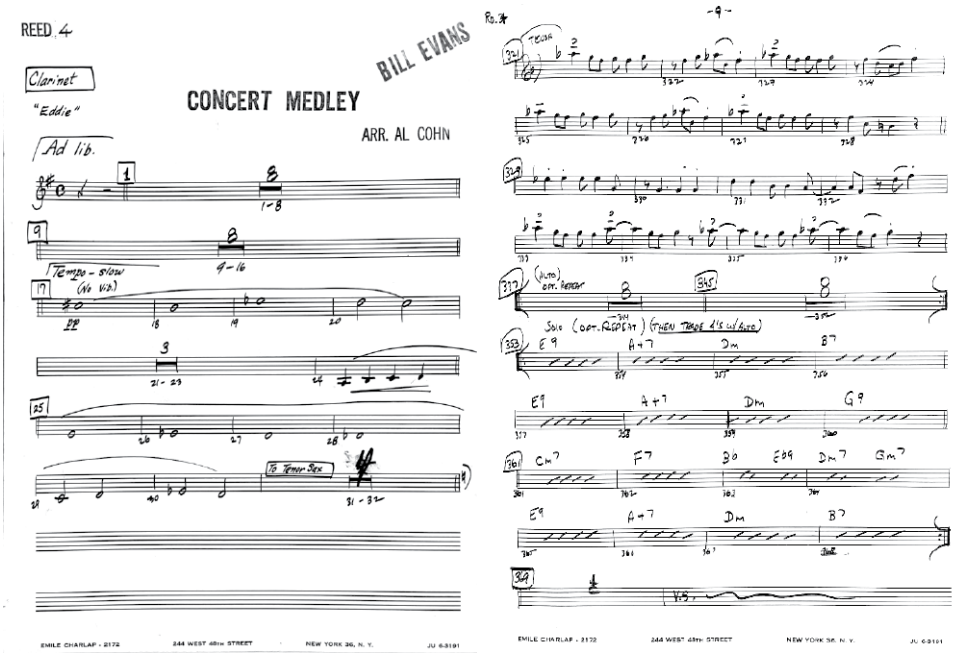
ED: Yes, and I was the youngest, and so I was a novice and was thrilled to be in Thad and Mel's band, and I guess because I was in their band, I started getting calls for other gigs like this Town Hall concert. I knew Clark from doing various dates, and I knew most of the guys, but I was still the young "pisher," you know? . . . I as a young little "pisher." The only other memory I have about the concert is having gotten up to play a solo and having Clark, right after the solo ended, shouting, "Yeah, Lucky!" And I thought, what a nice compliment. He must have been thinking or feeling that it was such a good solo that I was lucky at that moment, so I took it as a compliment. [Eddie's tenor saxophone improvisation immediately followed Jerry Dodgion's alto saxophone solo, toward the end of the "Funkallero" segment of the big band medley.]



The original manuscript of the Reed 4 part for the Town Hall concert. Note that Al Cohn wrote "Eddie" on it.

PD: That's one more example of Clark embracing a young player.

ED: Yes, he called me Lucky when he saw me for the next few years. It was like a new stamp on me, and I was thrilled with it. It was just wonderful being around all those great players, especially Jerry Dodgion in the reed section…

PD: If you don't mind, I'll take a moment and tell you everyone who was there.

ED: Yes, of course.

PD: [The brass section was] Ernie Royal, Clark Terry, Bill Berry, Bob Brookmeyer, Quentin "Butter" Jackson, and Bill Watrous. Al wrote a French horn part for this, performed by Bob Northern . . .

ED: Oh, wow!

PD: Yes, and the sax section was Jerry Dodgion, George Marge, Eddie Daniels, Frank Perowski, Marv Holladay, and the rhythm section was Bill Evans, Chuck Israels [bassist with the Bill Evans trio], and Grady Tate, who was brought in to play drums on the big band segment, which was the final segment of the concert that night. As you know, the first segment was released as the iconic *Bill Evans at Town Hall, Volume One* [Verve V6-8683] with Chuck Israels on bass and Arnold Wise on drums in the trio. Bill also played a solo segment in memory of his recently departed father, and then this big band was budgeted and funded so there would be a second album . . . it never came out. The big band medley is, "Willow Weep for Me," "What Kind of Fool am I?," "Funkallero," and "Waltz for Debby." [The LP's title suggested that a Volume Two would follow, consisting mostly of Al Cohn's big band medley, but this never materialized.]

ED: Did you ever hear it?

PD: No, the lack of a released recording is a long story, but it would be worth it to finally figure it out; I never knew that Bill Evans' manager and musical partner Helen Keane had two sons, and they are out in Portland, Oregon 10 or 15 years. I contacted one of them [Christopher] and said that we have been looking for ten or fifteen years for Al's arrangement. I used my lighthearted remark that Al Cohn, Johann Sebastian Bach, Bill Holman, Johnny Mandel, and Beethoven never wrote a bad chart and that we are interested in seeing what this might be. He said to me, "My brother just saw that music two months ago in the attic. What should we do with it?" So, we arranged to have it sent to the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection, which is just incredible! There's Al's 77-page score and parts, all done by hand, of course.

ED: But they didn't send a recording?

PD: They have a recording, but they said the recording is very difficult to listen to.

ED: Why? What's difficult about it?

MV: That's the question!

PD: We don't know if it is a technical issue, and of course this would be one of your first recorded solos and a great piece of history. So, we don't know if it's listenable or what the issue might be.

ED: I read the two reviews that you sent me from that date in *DownBeat* and *The New York Times.* I forgot which one it was, but even in both Bill was highly praised for how sensitive and how beautiful he played even though the big band overpowered him. They mentioned he still had the beauty and subtlety to his playing, even in that context. So they marveled at how Bill, in the midst of the hustle and bustle of the big band around him, could still be beautiful and sensitive. It was a more sensitive review. And of course, now you have the family saying it's not presentable, but you also have this review saying it was interesting and speaking to its beauty.

PD: And we may find out it was a technical issue of balance due to microphone placement, and furthermore [in his career], Bill didn't really do much in terms of being featured with a big band. For example, with Thad and Mel's band, how was Roland Hanna featured?

ED: Well Roland was a different kind of player; he could really dig down into the piano. Bill was about flying in the clouds and the subtlety, and he never hammered the piano. Perhaps in his later years when his whole physiology changed, he was a little more energetic. Guys that played with him every night might notice the difference. But Roland Hanna was a genius choice for Thad and Mel, as was Hank Jones. But Roland could dig deep with his body into the piano, and he was used to doing that. But Bill was Bill. I'm thrilled that I got a chance to play with him a bunch of times. When I was doing a bunch of club dates in New York, he was playing at the [Village] Vanguard and I got invited down to come sit in with him. And again, I was the little "pisher"! And I loved

Eddie Daniels at The Five Spot NYC 1967
Credit: (c)Raymond Ross Archives/CTSIMAGES. Used with permission.

playing with him. One time I was invited up to his house to play duets with him in his own living room.

PD: This month of February 1966--as you know, February 7th was the very first performance at the Vanguard by Thad and Mel, so this is your month! I did some discographic research on you, and Resonance Records released the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis 50th Anniversary in 2016, and it says that the February 7 date in 1966 was your very first recording. So, you probably played the Vanguard on February 7th, and again on the 14th, and this concert at Town Hall was the 3rd Monday in February 1966. [Baritone saxophonist and original member of the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra] Marv "Doc" Holladay lives in Ecuador now, and he told me tongue-in-cheek that to perform the Town Hall concert that night, he subbed out the Vanguard gig and an additional performance opportunity, losing money that night by playing with the great Bill Evans. But getting back to the band, when you had these heavy hitters like Ernie Royal and Clark Terry and that sax section, when all of you let loose volume-wise, where Al had written to do so, that could have very well put Bill in the distance.

ED: Well, I'm sure Al must have been conducting.

PD: That's one question--do you remember him standing in front of you?

ED: No, I remember him on a lot of other gigs. Like with Elliot Lawrence and doing the Tony Awards and commercial things like that. I used to sit in with him and Zoot at the Half Note. We would be playing there with three tenors.

PD: That must have been remarkable.

ED: It was great; I loved them both. How could you not? And again, they were very gracious to let me come and play with them.

PD: And you had the camaraderie there of Zoot's West Coast Irish humor and Al's Brooklyn Jewish humor.

ED: Right, right! I wish I could remember more, it's too bad… You know, with the technical stuff we have today, you would think if the problem [with the Town Hall recording] was technical that they could probably fix it so at least some of it could be available. How did the solo and trio parts of that evening sound? Was that a beautiful record? I don't know . . .

PD: Well that recording has been out there now for 55 years, and many say they revere that recording much like they do his *Live at the Village Vanguard* sets from June 1961. So, this is right up there with his other cherished live recordings.

ED: So, it's not like he had a bad night. If he had a good first half of the night, he probably played his ass off on the second half, too.

PD: You know, you could be right, as the family is logically very guarded with this recording and we broached that issue. They said, "Well, if it ends up in some archive, then it might end up being bootlegged out there." They are also in touch with [Zev Feldman at] Resonance Records.

ED: He loves putting out albums like that.

PD: I think they are guarded in the respect that they may eventually do something or maybe not, but they don't want it out of their control. But we hope at some point they will let us at least hear it over the phone from a distance or something like that because ultimately, we want to perform it and understand Bill and Al's tempos and other things that night, and gosh, now to hear your solo . . . that adds another aspect to hearing it!

ED: Yes, my first solo coming fresh off my bar mitzvah!

PD: Do you remember what years you played with Al and Zoot? Would that be a little past this? 1967 or 1968?

ED: Yeah, it was a little bit later, but probably close to that time. That's actually how I got the gig with Thad and Mel, because I was playing at the Half Note, where my very first jazz gig in life was with Tony Scott, believe it or not.

PD: Oh, maybe late 1965 [as that was when Thad & Mel started rehearsing their big band]?

ED: Yeah, it might have even been before. So, I was playing at the Half Note, I had one gig with

Tony Scott, and Jon Mayer played piano and Frank Gant played drums . . . somehow Thad and Mel came in to see us, they were scouting young players for their band. A week after they came in, I got a call. It was just the luck of the draw. [In a remarkable coincidence for our readers, Jon Mayer has posted online that he replaced Bill Evans in the Tony Scott Quartet!]

PD: So, you were 24 years old. Were you born in 1941?

ED: Yes, October 19.

PD: What great timing with everything going on. And you were ready and qualified. Can we move on to Freddie Hubbard?

ED: Of course!

PD: I was fortunate in the '90s when I was directing the student jazz ensemble at East Stroudsburg University, I would bring in many of my heroes, and I got Freddie to come in to be our guest soloist with the jazz ensemble. It was April 13th, 1992, and we always asked our guests to do a lecture with Q&A. We called it "My Life in Music," and Freddie was very nervous. He said, "I don't do much of this, but I'll do it for you." Dave Liebman came by in the afternoon for the lecture; he lived here at that point and wanted to see him. Even though Freddie said he was nervous, it turned out wonderfully. We were able to transcribe it and publish it in the Winter/Spring 2012 issue of The Note. There's a great line that I think you'll really enjoy where Freddie talks about you. So, if you just bear with me, I think my reading this to you will bring back some memories and I would love to get your thoughts on it:

> At the end we had a question-and-answer session with the great Freddie Hubbard and an audience member said, "My favorite album of yours is The Hub of Hubbard. I get the impression from that album that with the songs you chose to play that you were having a good ol' time on it. Could you please tell us a little about what was involved with that session?" And here's Freddie's response:
>
> "Yeah! We were up in the Black Forest in Germany at a place called Villingen [recorded at MPS Studios owned by Hans Georg Brunner-Schwer on December 9, 1969]. We had been riding for four hours from the airport to the studio. This guy had a great studio in the house where he lived. It was incredible. We went out there and by the time we got there we hadn't had anything to eat, so we had cold chicken and beer (Freddie laughs). The guys drank all this beer, so when it came time to record we said, 'Man, we're gonna get this over with!' You know, get back to the big city! (enthusiastic audience laughter). So we were way out in the middle of the Black Forest . . . it was WAY out there. There was snow and it was cold. I had never played [tempos] that fast in my life! I thought that when we got through it wasn't good, but Hans said in a German accent, 'Ahh, Freddie, all same speed!' But like I said, everybody wanted to get out of there. Eddie Daniels kept up! I didn't think Eddie was gonna keep up, but he was *BAD*! We were trying to get on with it, so it was kind of a hurried session."

ED: I like that quote, it's great. I mean I still was the little "pisher"! I'm still the little "pisher" right now, too! I'm picking up the tenor to play with Bob James. I have a quartet with Bob and we are going to play the Detroit festival [on Labor Day, September 6, 2021], so I'm just getting my chops on the tenor. I've been playing the clarinet and flute and practicing a lot. But you know, I'm sitting here like, "Shit! I have to get into this," with the same attitude that I've always had all my life. I have to reach up to get what I want. And Freddie, I had heard him at the Village Vanguard a couple of months before that session to just say hi and meet him. Not that I knew I was even going to be on that session, I didn't know any of that, but I went to the Vanguard and heard him play "Just One of Those Things" just as fast as the stuff on the session. He was full of bull! He played fast; he played that tune ridiculously fast all the time. That's the one on the album where the guys came out after they drank their beer and they had a nap or something. First Roland, then Louis Hayes and Richard, and then Freddie came out. There was no small talk. You know, I'm sitting there waiting. Of course, I didn't have beer, so I was awake. So they come out and Freddie counts off "Just One of Those Things." There's no like, "Hey guys, I think we're gonna play 'Just One of Those Things' now." No, not at all. He goes, "One! Two! Ah Ah Ah Ah!" and that was it! And that was the recording. So while that was happening, you know, my solo comes and I realize to myself, it would have been nice to have had five minutes to go through the tune or something! I would have liked to have at least reviewed it before finding out that it was something that was going to be on a record! It wasn't a tune I played every day, but I didn't have the chance [to study it], so I was wandering through my solo, and I found my way as it went along and it was OK, but the level of Freddie's playing on that tune . . . he could just do it so great.

PD: But you were qualified [at age 28]. It proves that here we were in 1992 and Freddie talks about that session and just says about you that "man, you were BAD!."

ED: It's funny because I got on the phone with Freddie, and who's the young saxophone player that plays with him a lot? He plays like Joe Henderson a little bit, I can't think of his name . . .

PD: Javon Jackson?

ED: Yeah! Javon Jackson. So I'm in L.A. doing this big music convention [NAMM] that happens once a year and I bump into Javon and he's so sweet and says, "Oh Eddie it's so great to see you!" and then he said, "You know, Freddie just loves you." So I said, "Oh I would love to talk to Freddie . . ." So he dials Freddie right there in the middle of the convention center. He says, "Freddie! Eddie's here! Say hi to Eddie!" And you know I hadn't talked to Freddie probably

since that recording in Germany. So he gets on and he's just so sweet. And I told him that I was just so thrilled to be on that record with him and he said, "You played your ass off and you amazed me." And of course coming from Freddie it was just great. I really appreciate that he said that to me because I think now that I know where the bridge of "Just One of Those Things" goes, I would have been a little more prepared for that session!

PD: These stories pop up all the time, like when John Coltrane suddenly pulled out "Giant Steps" [in the middle of the iconic May 5, 1959 recording session], and the story about Tommy Flanagan [piano], who was thinking, "Whoa! What am I going to do with this!?!?" And Tommy played "Giant Steps" multiple times every year for the rest of his life so that he could prove to the world that he could play it.

ED: It's funny . . . I had a gig with Tommy. At some point I was hired to get a jazz quartet for a gig and I hired Tommy Flanagan. I realized that because I was in Thad's band I had a little bit of credence so I called Tommy Flanagan and he took the gig.

PD: He was another Detroit person, am I right?

ED: Yes. So of course, I said the same thing to him: "how was it to play 'Giant Steps?'" But he sounded fine! Part of what I heard in the story about 'Trane is that he would go to people's houses for dinner with his family and he would take his tenor and go into their bedroom and practice! So he was prepared, as was Freddie for playing "Just One of Those Things." I mean 'Trane was practicing "Giant Steps" and practicing the tenor every single chance he could. He couldn't take the horn out of his mouth. There's that famous story about Miles, where 'Trane said to Miles, "you know, I get into a solo and I can't stop playing." And Miles said, "Take the horn out of your mouth!"

PD: Yes, that's great. And while we're talking about this, it's always great to inject a little humor for the humanity of everything . . . Do you know Al Cohn's joke about what he would say when someone asked him if he played "Giant Steps"?

ED: No . . .

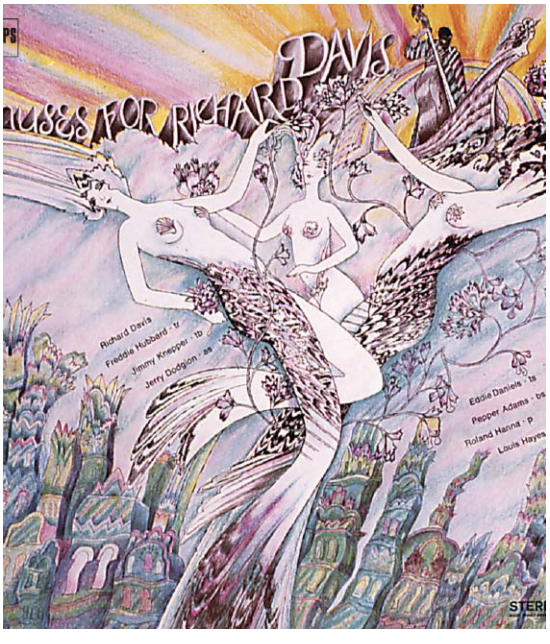
PD: Al said, "I do, but I use my own changes!"

ED: [Laughs] That's cute.

PD: Isn't that the best? That's Al! How many years ago do you think that NAMM show phone call with Freddie Hubbard was?

ED: Maybe 15?

PD: Well, it's been 13 years since we lost Freddie in December 2008. December 1969 is an interesting Eddie Daniels discography study because you were with Thad and Mel over in Germany in the Congress Hall in Frankfurt two days before your Black Forest date with Freddie.



ED: It was all part of the same tour.

PD: Then there's you on a Richard Davis session the same date as the Freddie session?

ED: It's the same session, but this LP was called *Muses for Richard Davis*.

PD: Yes, and I see [songs] "Milktrain" and "Toe Tail Moon," where they added Jimmy Knepper, Pepper Adams, Jerry Dodgion, you, and then Louis Hayes, Richard Davis and Roland Hanna.

ED: I don't think I even played any solos. You know I'm looking up at my book case where I have the vinyl LP up on the very top shelf.

PD: The next day on the 10th after your session with Freddie, you did a concert in Ulm, Germany and they added Jimmy McGriff, Kenny Burrell . . .

ED: Yeah, that was the tour with Kenny Burrell and McGriff, but I should mention to you why I ended up on that date with Freddie . . . It was because Joe Henderson didn't want to do it.

PD: Oh!

ED: Either the money wasn't enough, or there was some issue. But he was supposed to be on that session and he didn't want to do it so it fell to me and I was thrilled. I think it paid about $150 extra and he felt like he was in another realm, but he should have been paid more. It was ridiculous.

PD: Well with a four hour ride each way in the snow to eat cold chicken and drink beer, he probably had nice room service staying put wherever he was and he gave you a wonderful opportunity. And you know what's wonderful about this entire time frame? A month and eleven days later, you would all go in and record Thad & Mel's *Consummation* album . . . you're just a few weeks before that. When you got back from Germany, you had the holidays or whatever and then on January 20, 1970, you recorded *Consummation*.

ED: Wow. You know I think I had a little consommé the day of *Consummation* . . . a little chicken and matzah ball soup . . . [laughs]

PD: If that's your secret we won't let that out! Do you have any more memories of Al Cohn?

ED: Well I loved and LOVED his playing! I ended up giving some lessons to his son Joe who was a very good guitar player, who at that time was transcribing some of my solos from my records. He was playing them on the guitar and playing them quite well, so he came and took a few lessons.

PD: That was very smart, maybe on Al's advice to Joe, to tell young musicians that even while they're enamored with their heroes on their own instrument, they need to cross over the technique and transcribe other instruments to get fluid. But how wonderful if we could tell the students in all these jazz programs to get past their own instrument, it's all music.

ED: Well, I can support that in one way in that when I first heard Buddy DeFranco, and I was a clarinetist, I thought, "I want to be able to do what he's doing and develop it." Listening to Buddy playing bebop on the clarinet kind of inspired me to play those kind of notes, which were more saxophone kind of bebop notes, so that's why you're actually right. Buddy was listening to Bird [Charlie Parker] and playing Bird on the clarinet.

PD: There it is.

ED: Of course he was Buddy and played his own stuff, but he was highly inspired by Bird and he loved Artie Shaw too, oddly enough.

PD: So when you're crossing over instruments and you find something that doesn't lay well on your instrument, if you're naïve enough to say, "Oh, let me learn to play that," you're really jumping up technically instead of staying where things feel good on your own instrument.

ED: Well Buddy was playing stuff from Bird that didn't lay well on the clarinet, so he was doing that. Buddy was listening to Bird, as everybody was back then, playing those kind of licks on different instruments and Bird in a sense helped a lot of people develop new techniques on instruments that would not normally play those types of licks.

PD: That's right.

ED: Guitar, clarinet, who would play like that on clarinet??

PD: Any more Al or even Zoot memories? Zoot's widow Louise Sims has been very kind to the Al Cohn Memorial Jazz Collection, sharing so many Zoot materials.

ED: I know this common story about somebody saying to Zoot, "You know you drink a lot. How do you play so well when you've had so many drinks?" And Zoot said, "I practice drunk!"

PD: Ah, thank you for reminding me about that story! It's one more hysterical off-the-cuff Zoot line that everybody knows. It comes out of left field. It's been told many times and it's appropriate that you bring it up here, because it's Al and Zoot's humor that really spoke to people.

ED: Yes, and they made fun of themselves! The fact that Zoot could laugh at himself and say that, you know. And to play like he did, you would have to be used to consuming alcohol and playing. I, on the other hand, never had any alcohol during that whole period. I was not a drinking person. I was not a smoking dope person. I was once again like the little "pisher!"

PD: You had your goals, you were with your heroes and said, "Somehow I'm gonna get there" and you didn't have that in your way.

ED: The first night of the first recording of Thad & Mel's band, not the Live at the Vanguard LP, but our first studio recording on Solid State [record label], that was before our opening night, I'm not sure . . .

PD: Well the first one is *Presenting Thad Jones/ Mel Lewis & "The Jazz Orchestra"* [Solid State SS18003].

ED: Right, with a white cover?

PD: Recorded May 4, 5, and 6, 1966, only three months after the first performance. It contains "ABC Blues," "Kids Are Pretty People…"

ED: Yeah that's a studio recording, and the story about that is that it was the night of a Seder . . . I went to a Seder of my family during Passover. So I'm at the Seder around seven o'clock and my family are all fighting with each other, as Jewish families do. My uncle is screaming at my grandmother and all this and I'm just depressed about this whole thing. But the good news was, in an hour I was out of there and on my way to New York to record Thad Jones and Mel Lewis's first album. My first recorded solo [in a studio] was on that record, on "Mean What You Say." So having been in a funk from coming from this Seder and driving into New York and to the studio - on 48th St, between 6th and 7th Avenue, I was coming from hot and heavy people screaming and then I had to play that solo. A year later Michael Brecker walks into the [Village] Vanguard having transcribed that

solo and hands it to me [Mike Brecker was probably 18 years of age and early in his journey to saxophone greatness].

PD: Whoa, what a great thing. What a great piece of history and respect.

ED: Yes, but just the family arguing with each other brought me to a place of slight funk, and then when my solo came, it was my way of freeing myself from that.

PD: Yes! Your emotional content and your ability to get that sound on your instrument from what's going on in your brain, every person's emotions are different and yours came out like that.

ED: Some of us were lucky enough to have parents that gave us music lessons. And for a lot of us, I would say that most of the really good player's [involvement in] music saved their lives. There's conflict, and with people like Bill Evans, who was in a drug life like he was, that must mean there was trouble somewhere when he was growing up. It's not just an accident when somebody gives you some drug and you're hooked for the rest of your life. I had many opportunities being in studios and sessions being offered drugs all the time. I still didn't have the best family life, but I'm saying people who are deep and troubled, having music as an outlet is such a gift.

PD: It's almost like you're presenting this the way a rabbi would, in terms of analyzing why people are who they are and what they do and to understand people.

ED: Yes, and what a gift. If I didn't have music I might have become an accountant, or who knows? Maybe I would have gotten into drugs. But the deeper part of being involved in music and the background of having fairly straight parents prevented me from even moving in that direction. The most I ever had was I smoked a little pot but never loved it, I had a few drinks.

PD: You always wanted to be in control of your faculties because you never knew what was coming next.

ED: Absolutely!

PD: Dave Liebman, when he's dealing with younger musicians in his masterclasses over the last 30 years, he says that they are so bright and so goal oriented, and if they didn't have music you have to wonder if they would go into something experimental or get themselves in trouble? It was always an observation that was very interesting. You, obviously being very intelligent and goal oriented, can wonder, "where would people have been without this music thing that became their whole life?"

ED: Absolutely.

PD: Do you have anything more about Al and Zoot? Or maybe something about a gentleman we lost about two weeks ago, Elliot Lawrence?

ED: Well Elliot was one of my dear friends. One of the best leaders that you would work for. Just a sweetheart.

PD: When you say, "great leader" that's always good to define.

ED: Well not only technically a good conductor, but a sweet person. There's one story about Alan Rubin, the trumpet player, on one of the recording dates. Alan was always the comedian in the group that always had to say something that would shock the whole orchestra, when there was a moment of silence. He said to Elliot in a moment of silence, "Hey Elliot! How much are you making on this?" And Elliot loved him up until then, but that was his last date with that band!

PD: He got into Elliot's business, OK.

ED: And it was just not a nice thing to say. One interesting story of Elliot and me is that we had a project we were going to do. We were both producing *The King of Swing* on Broadway, a musical about Benny Goodman. I was going to be on Broadway playing clarinet with a big band. Elliot and I had many meetings, all the money was set up, and Al Cohn probably would have written the charts for that. But what happened was we had a huge depression happen, the stock market hit bottom and all the money from Japan pulled out.

PD: What would the year of that be?

ED: It was around my birthday, October, but I forget the year. The year the stock market crashed. It was 30 or 35 years ago. [It was probably "Black Monday" – October 19, 1987, 16 months after Goodman's death]

PD: Everyone speaks so highly of Elliot. And Al Cohn would have been playing with you in the section?

ED: He never played in the section on Elliot's gigs, only wrote the charts.

PD: So those [television] gigs would have been the Miss America Pageant, the Tony Awards. . .

ED: Yes, and the Miss Universe Pageant. Al was so terrific, just amazing. And another sweetheart of a person. Humility, humility, humility.

PD: Humility, and the great Lou Marini story is when he got to know Al in the '70s and '80s, they would see each other on 48th street and would chat for a while. Al always ended the conversation with, "Lou, good luck with your music."

ED: [Laughs]

PD: You're laughing because Lou thought about Al's sense of humor, but over the years of them speaking, after the fifth time or so, Lou said, "Oh, he means it!" It was such an "Al thing," and we think about humor first, but you said humility, and there was such depth, that he cared and meant it. That was the type of person he was around the people he respected.

ED: Yes, it's both ways, it's funny, it's a jab, it's a father talking to his son, it's everything.

PD: Can I ask you about trumpeter Marvin Stamm? We want to thank Marvin for contacting you and reconnecting with you and saying the Pat and Matt show will be contacting you, and you've been so kind. Marvin and you kind of exploded together because you first recorded in February 1966 with the aforementioned Bill Evans at Town Hall and Thad & Mel. Marvin hits New York eight months later in November of 1966 and both of you seem to have had a parallel ascent into playing with great musicians and the various studio work you did to make a living.

ED: Yeah, we were on a similar track and both about the same age. I thought Marvin was fabulous. His playing was phenomenal, and I heard lately that he's even better. Lawrence

Feldman told me, "You've got to hear Marvin, he's even better and he has grown immensely." He was great back then too.

PD: It's interesting you say that since he played recently at the Deer Head Inn which was the last live music my wife and I heard before the pandemic. It was January 2020, and he came in with a quartet including [drummer] Dennis Mackrel and Mike Holober on piano. They had just finished Mike's large jazz ensemble project ["Hiding Out" on the Zoho record label]. Marvin played flugel horn the whole evening and it was very special. He'll be back on Sunday, October 10, 2021.

ED: And October 16th, which is three days before my 80th birthday, I am doing a performance at the Santa Fe School of Cooking that has become a jazz venue partially because I used to teach the husband of the owner. That will be my 80th birthday party celebration.

PD: And Marvin just turned 82 in May.

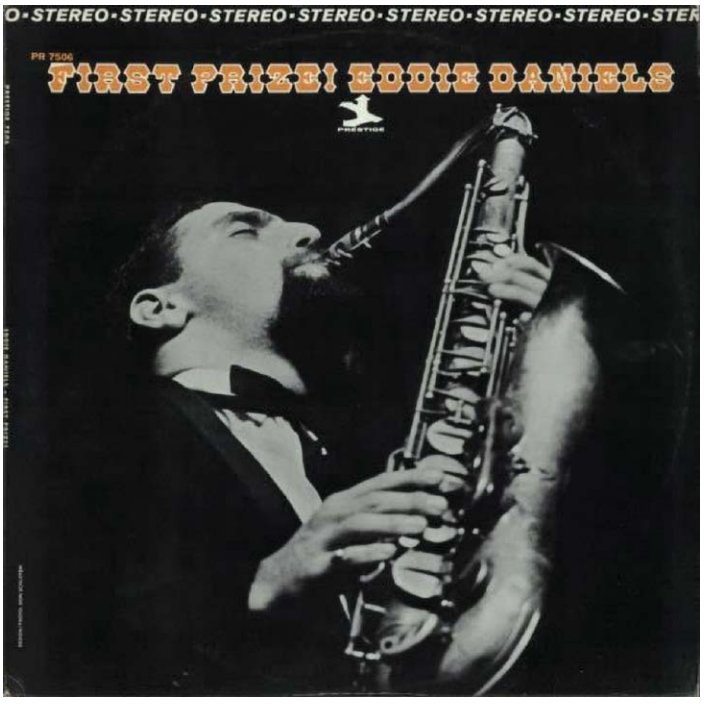
ED: We're all in the same ballpark.

PD: You both still have remarkable facial setups [embouchures] as you become octogenarians.

ED: We look good for our age! We're lucky, and again music! Without music we would be done. You don't get old if you play music that is continually evolving.

PD: Marvin has also always taken very good care of himself, as it sounds like you have. You "live to tell," as they say.

ED: Yes!



Eddie's first feature quartet LP, "First Prize! Eddie Daniels," recorded September 8 & 12, 1966 with his colleagues from Thad & Mel's big band: Sir Roland Hanna, Richard Davis, and Mel Lewis.

PD: I would like to take a moment and thank you so much for your energy here. Matt has a few topics to ask you about. He's a young guy, not even 40 yet and aligned with Phil Woods.

MV: I'll make this quick since I know you have things to do. To go a completely different route for our readers, I'm curious if you could talk about your history with the clarinet versus tenor saxophone? Maybe how it changed over the years?

ED: Well the tenor was first . . . actually the alto was first. I was in the Marshall Brown Youth Band playing second alto. I moved to the tenor as it was more my "voice" as a solo instrument. Eventually I was lucky enough to have Thad & Mel hear me that night at the Half Note. I was studying clarinet around the time I made my first record and going to The Juilliard School. I thought there was so many great tenor players – I was OK, but there were so many. From listening to Buddy DeFranco, I felt that I could add another voice to the clarinet that would be a little more special. If you had ten people that played great tenor, maybe you have one that plays great clarinet. I thought there might be a smaller field, and more of an opportunity to make an impact with my music. So I started to think, "What if I played everything I can play on tenor on the clarinet?" So that's what I started doing.

MV: Did you major in clarinet at Juilliard?

ED: Yes. I was getting a master's degree in clarinet. I got my undergraduate from Brooklyn College.

MV: So when you decided this path for the clarinet, did you give up working on the tenor?

ED: No! Not at all. I never actually practiced saxophone. I played it on gigs, but when the clarinet came along, that's a discipline instrument. Not that saxophone isn't, it could be. But for me it wasn't an instrument to practice every day and learn licks. I never liked practicing jazz licks, and stuff like that. But the clarinet is different. It's more of an instrument that I can learn classical music and get the technique down.

MV: How did you think about performing classical versus jazz on clarinet? There aren't a ton of people that do that. There are a couple people, maybe Keith Jarrett, maybe Branford Marsalis a little bit. You are one of the few people that tackled both.

ED: I felt it was difficult but having been to Juilliard, I liked the discipline and I liked the music. There is some really great music for the clarinet such as Brahms and Mozart, but there isn't enough great music for it. Since I was in Juilliard, I felt like it was part of the path I was on even though I would play at the Village Vanguard on Monday nights.

MV: Did you find yourself referencing other classical clarinetists when you played classical? Or did you try to ignore that and make it your own thing? Did you want to purely be you or did you want to fit into a classical stereotype that came before you?

ED: No, there were no classical clarinetists that knocked me out. Not that there weren't very fine ones, there were very good ones. But none of them touched me. I always felt that the jazz background that I have equips me even more for playing classical music. You have a different reference to harmony and rhythm. There is a different kind of approach than classical players. They've gotten looser nowadays, but I felt like jazz equipped me with another view of music.

MV: Yes, that's what stood out to me listening to you. Your sound was so refreshing in that environment. It was not like the other people. It's still clarinet and it's still the music, but your sound adds a whole other element to it.

PD: Eddie, it sounds like you're one of those improvisers we marvel at. We have a short list of people who may not have concentrated on jazz phraseology and learning as you say, "licks, licks, licks" and plug them in. When you say you didn't learn licks that's a very interesting line for the end result that you have always had in your improvisations.

ED: I'll say the deepest part of that came from studying composition at Juilliard and at Brooklyn College. I had a professor at Brooklyn College, Robert L. Sanders, and you had to learn four-part harmony and writing fugues. I also had to learn how to develop a melody. That's what I feel jazz should be, for me. It should be that you play a note, and that note has to have a reason to go to the next note. Not just because it's a flat 5th on a C chord and followed by a flat 13 or a sharp 9. I can do all that and I have practiced a little of that. But as far as improvising, I look at it more linearly.

PD: You then wired your brain to make that great statement, "improvisation is composition slowed down," or "composition is improvisation written down," etc. It certainly served you well. Improvisation for you became almost academic, not in stiffness, but you had your right and left brain balancing each other and you came up with astonishing results.

ED: Well, look at some of these great melodies. I was working with a student this morning and we were looking at "The Shadow of Your Smile" by Johnny Mandel. He was a great melody writer. [sings melody] The melody has a way of evolving itself. If it didn't do that, it wouldn't have become one of these great songs that people sing and remember forever! There's something inherent in the art of writing a melody that grabs you and the melody has a life of its own. It wants to go places. So that's what I feel about improvisation. If I let myself be relaxed enough, the improvisation will go where it wants to go.

PD: Johnny Mandel was one of our great friends of the ACMJC and he and Al grew up together. They were born one day apart. Earlier this year, Scranton-native and everybody's favorite jazz performer/comedian Pete Barbutti told me a true story about when renowned arranger/composers Johnny Mandel, Bill Conti, and Pete Myers went to have dinner together at a classy restaurant. There was a piano player playing Johnny's "The Shadow of Your Smile." The melody was recognizable, but most of the chords were flat-out wrong! Johnny said, "guys, I'm just going to step out for a minute, be a gentleman, and go to the men's room." So while Johnny was gone, Bill and Pete went to the piano player and gave him $20 to keep playing the tune when Johnny came back!

ED: [laughs] That's great!

PD: I just had to say that because you brought up the great Johnny Mandel and it makes you wonder, where did he get that mystical, magical ability to compose like that?

ED: He had been threatening to write a piece for me. Every time I played in L.A, he would attend. I loved his writing. We had a little time to hang out. We were at a party with Dave Grusin and I remember Johnny was at the piano and my wife sang, "Close Enough for Love." He was so open; he was like a normal guy.

PD: When you entered that inner circle, all of you could bounce off each other. It's just great. What type of things are on your horizon?

ED: Aside from my birthday gig, I'll be playing the Detroit Jazz Festival with Bob James. We have a quartet together. Bob is known more for his own music, soft jazz, etc. But he is an amazing improviser. He can swing his ass off and play "in" and "out" better than anyone. We've played together a lot and we're looking forward to having this gig on September 6th.

PD: From the 1970s through his death in 2003, we had a wonderful fusion bassist, Gary King, living in our area. He played with Bob James for many years.

ED: He was an electric player, right?

PD: Yes.

ED: Yes! I used to play with him in the studios all the time.

PD: Before we end, do you have any memories of Tamiment?

ED: Oh. . . It was fun for me. Tamiment in the "Pick Your Nose" [Poconos], as they would say. I was in the band, and I was *really* a young "pisher" in that band. I remember practicing scales that summer [probably late 1950s or early 1960s].

PD: Do you remember any of your colleagues?

ED: No, it was a club date band, none of them were jazz people. That was really a summer to practice. I remember listening to Coltrane. There was a 'Trane record with Milt Jackson I listened to that summer and I played club dates at night.

PD: I played there quite a bit in the '80s when they needed a "last trumpet," and Al Cohn and Urbie Green would also be there once in a while. Tamiment had a culture that respected music. Wayne Newton bought it in 1982 because he thought that gambling was coming to the Poconos. [Newton sold it in 1987 as the gambling possibility was put on hold.] Gambling never materialized until about 15 years ago. Now the property is mostly timeshare condos.

ED: Yeah, I don't remember anything but club dates. I didn't meet any jazz people, and I think I was the only jazz player there.

PD: You were making money and practicing.

ED: Yes, and I played the melodies on those dance gigs!

PD: Eddie, we are profoundly appreciative of your time. We had fun and hope you did.

ED: I did and I loved hearing that Freddie Hubbard thought that I was OK!

PD: Yes, and he said you were "***B-A-D!***" and that will be printed with bold, italics, and an exclamation point because that's how he said it!

ED: After all these years, ***now*** I feel like I'm ready for it! ■