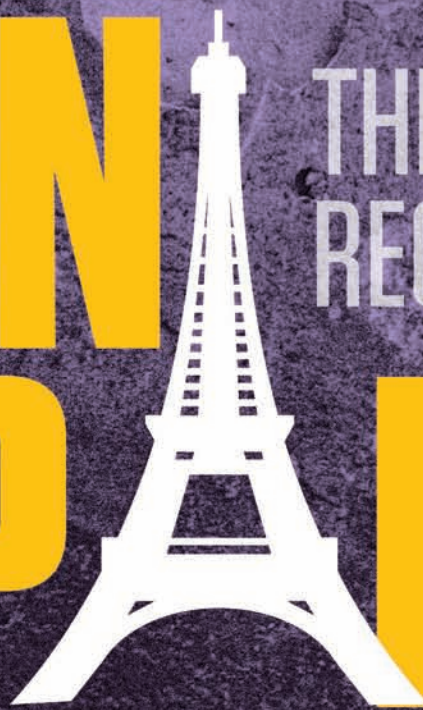


LARRY YOUNG

IN

THE ORTF
RECORDINGS

PARIS



LARRY YOUNG

IN THE ORTF RECORDINGS PARIS



1. TRANE OF THOUGHT 6:46
2. TALKIN' ABOUT J.C. 14:53
3. MEAN TO ME 4:12
4. LA VALSE GRISE 16:09
5. DISCOTHÈQUE 10:43
6. LUNY TUNE 4:36
7. BEYOND ALL LIMITS 7:36
8. BLACK NILE 13:59
9. ZOLTAN 20:31

collective personnel

LARRY YOUNG organ and piano | NATHAN DAVIS tenor saxophone
WOODY SHAW trumpet | BILLY BROOKS drums

JEAN-CLAUDE FOHRENBACH tenor saxophone | SONNY GREY trumpet | JACK DIÉVAL piano
JACQUES B. HESS bass | FRANCO MANZECCHI drums | JACKY BAMBOO conga

Produced by ZEV FELDMAN

Executive Producers: GEORGE KLABIN and MICHAEL CUSCUNA

Associate Producers: LARRY YOUNG III, PASCAL ROZAT and JOHN KOENIG

Original radio broadcast producers: JACK DIÉVAL for *Musique aux Champs Élysées* and
ANDRÉ FRANCIS for *Jazz sur scène*

WOODY LOUIS ARMSTRONG SHAW, III is associate producer on: "Beyond All Limits," "Black Nile,"
"La valse grise," "Talkin' About J.C.," "Trane of Thought" and "Zoltan"

Original recordings made by Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française (ORTF).

Manufactured and distributed under exclusive license from, and all recordings courtesy of,
l'Institut national de l'audiovisuel (INA)

Sound restoration: GEORGE KLABIN and FRAN GALA

2xHD Mastering: RENÉ LAFLAMME Executive producer: ANDRE PERRY

Art direction and design: BURTON YOUNT and GORDON H JEE

Album Package Editor: JOHN KOENIG

Photo research: ZEV FELDMAN

Cover photograph: FRANCIS WOLFF



LARRY YOUNG IN PARIS

1. **Trane of Thought** (6:46) Nathan Davis (SACEM)
The Nathan Davis Quartet: Nathan Davis, tenor saxophone; Woody Shaw, trumpet; Larry Young, organ; Billy Brooks, drums. Recorded at ORTF Studios, Paris, before January 22, 1965.
2. **Talkin' About J.C.** (14:53) Larry Young (Prestige Music Co./BMI)
Jazz aux Champs-Élysées All-Stars: Woody Shaw and Sonny Grey, trumpets; Nathan Davis and Jean-Claude Fohrenbach, tenor saxophones; Larry Young, organ; Jack Diéval, piano; Franco Manzecchi, drums; Jacky Bamboo, conga. Recorded at ORTF Studios, Paris, before December 8, 1964.
3. **Mean to Me** (4:12) F. Ahlert, R. Turk (Azure Pearl Music, Beeping Good Music, Publishing, Cromwell, Music, Inc., David Ahlert Music, Pencil Mark Music, Inc./ASCAP)
Larry Young, organ; Franco Manzecchi, drums; Jacky Bamboo, conga. Recorded at ORTF Studios, Paris, before December 8, 1964.
4. **La valse grise** (16:09) Possibly by Jack Diéval
Jazz aux Champs-Élysées All-Stars: Woody Shaw and Sonny Grey, trumpets; Nathan Davis and Jean-Claude Fohrenbach, tenor saxophones; Larry Young, organ; Jack Diéval, piano; Franco Manzecchi, drums; Jacky Bamboo, conga. Recorded at ORTF Studios, Paris, before December 8, 1964.
5. **Discothèque** (10:43) Possibly by Jack Diéval
Jazz aux Champs-Élysées All-Stars: Woody Shaw and Sonny Grey, trumpets; Nathan Davis and Jean-Claude Fohrenbach, tenor saxophones; Larry Young, organ; Jack Diéval, piano; Franco Manzecchi, drums; Jacky Bamboo, conga. Recorded at ORTF Studios, Paris, before December 8, 1964.

6. **Luny Tune** (4:36) Larry Young (EMI UNART Catalog, Inc./BMI)
Larry Young, organ; Franco Manzecchi, drums; Jacky Bamboo, conga. Recorded at ORTF Studios, Paris, before December 8, 1964.
7. **Beyond All Limits** (7:36) Woody Shaw (EMI UNART Catalog, Inc./BMI)
The Nathan Davis Quartet: Nathan Davis, tenor saxophone; Woody Shaw, trumpet; Larry Young, organ; Billy Brooks, drums. Recorded at ORTF Studios, Paris, before January 22, 1965.

RECORDED LIVE IN PARIS AT LA LOCOMOTIVE, FEBRUARY 9, 1965

8. **BLACK NILE** (13:59) WAYNE SHORTER (MIYAKO MUSIC/BMI)
THE NATHAN DAVIS QUARTET: NATHAN DAVIS, TENOR SAXOPHONE; WOODY SHAW, TRUMPET; LARRY YOUNG, ORGAN; BILLY BROOKS, DRUMS.
9. **ZOLTAN** (20:31) WOODY SHAW (EMI UNART /CATALOG, INC./BMI)
THE NATHAN DAVIS QUARTET: NATHAN DAVIS, TENOR SAXOPHONE; WOODY SHAW, TRUMPET; LARRY YOUNG, ORGAN; BILLY BROOKS, DRUMS.

The precise dates of the ORTF studio recordings are unknown. The only data we have are the editing and broadcast dates, which were, of course, after the recording dates.

ZEV FELDMAN ON HOW THIS ALBUM CAME TO BE

It's an honor and thrill to present newly discovered recordings by one of my heroes, the great organist and pianist, Larry Young. It's been nearly 38 years since there has been a new release under his name. In the case of this album, it's particularly exciting because none of this music has ever been heard before except on its initial broadcast in France five decades ago. I think that's something to celebrate and a call for us all—as we often do with the archival recordings we at Resonance Records uncover—to revisit and discuss this important artist's legacy. Thirty-eight is also, sadly, the short number of years Young was on this earth. This album is a tribute to his memory.

The most obvious difference between Larry and all of the organists who preceded him is his approach to harmony. He was the first modal player on the organ and he built his chords on fourths, rather in the manner of McCoy Tyner. Perhaps also, it was the way he played the draw bars or comped when he played with other musicians that contributed to his unique and recognizable sound and approach. And as you'll note from reading Larry Young, III's and John Koenig's essays in this book, it's remarkable, but Larry Young's first piano teacher, Ms. Olga von Till, was a student of Béla Bartók in Hungary. That must have had an impact on his musical development from a very early age. Larry Young was a pioneer and explorer who transcended genres and audiences. I'm convinced he pushed the boundaries of the keyboard farther than any other organist.

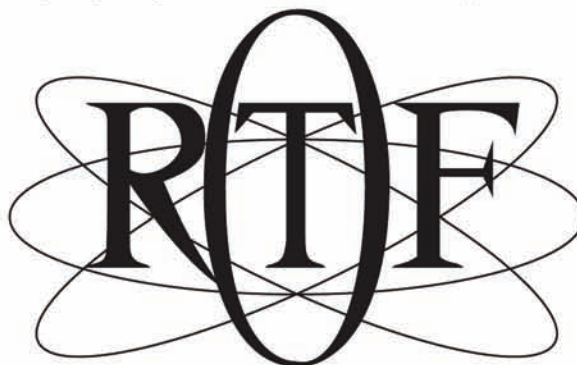
These newly discovered recordings represent Larry Young both as a leader and sideman and constitute a snapshot of a pivotal moment in jazz in a particularly iconic place and time: Paris in the mid-'60s, which turned out to be a crucible for some of the most important figures in progressive jazz:



Eric Dolphy, Woody Shaw and Larry Young. We are fortunate to have here a document of Larry Young's time in Paris, before he returned to New York and recorded a flurry of important Blue Note albums through 1969.

The story of the release of these recordings took me on a journey that took several years to culminate. For me, this project is the stuff dreams are made of. I wanted to pull out all the stops to build something worthy of a giant. I still remember how exciting it was for me when I first discovered Larry's music when I was in my early 20s. The Mosaic release, *The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Larry Young* (1991), was and is a coveted prize in my collection. I spent countless hours listening to it. I had first been turned onto Jimmy Smith and Brother Jack McDuff in my late teens when I started listening to jazz, but when I heard Larry and especially discovered his albums, *Unity* and *Into Somethin'* and Grant Green's organ-trio classic, *Talkin' About!*, I became a Larry Young devotee overnight. Those albums still resonate with me to this day as some of my all-time favorite records.

A couple of years ago, I was able to make contact with representatives of



one of the richest of all the European archives, INA, the Institut national de l'audiovisuel of France, an initiative of the French government, which oversees media vaults including the world-famous RTF (Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française)/ORTF (Office de Radiodiffusion-Télévision Française) archives, which contain a wealth of broadcasting treasures documenting, among other things, the work of some of the greatest American jazz artists who ever traveled to or lived in France. Eventually, we at Resonance submitted to INA a wish list of artists whom we were interested in. We wanted to know if INA had any tapes by these artists in their archives. Of course, because I was aware that he had been in Paris for a time in the mid-'60s, there was one artist I personally was particularly curious about: Larry Young.

As luck would have it, we discovered in INA's archives all of the tracks we've included in this album, tracks featuring Larry as either a leader or, in the case of several of the tracks, Larry as a sideman, both with the great tenor saxophonist, flutist and bandleader, Nathan Davis, and with the *Jazz aux Champs-Élysées* All-Stars under the leadership of French music broadcasting icon Jack Diéval. You can read more in this book of Nathan's accounts of

that special time and his personal recollections of it from his conversation with my co-executive producer Michael Cuscuna.

In January, 2012, I met in Paris with INA's Christiane Lemire, Laure Audinot and Pascal Rozat. I'm very grateful to them for making this release possible. They've also generously provided a wealth of materials for us to include in this book, including newly-published images from INA's vaults and written material, including an essay by Pascal Rozat discussing INA's history. Mr. Rozat also joined me in the spring of 2015 for an interview with the legendary RTF radio producer, André Francis at Mr. Francis's home in Paris. I felt that for this book, it was important that we meet with this gentleman who has long been regarded as a preeminent ambassador for American jazz in France to get his perspective on the importance of our discovery of this Larry Young material.

We've assembled a grand cast of voices to reflect on the life and significance of Larry Young and his music, either via interview or essay. I'd like to thank Michael Cuscuna, Nathan Davis, André Francis, John Koenig, Bill Laswell, John McLaughlin, John Medeski, Pascal Rozat, Dr. Lonnie Smith, Woody Shaw III and Larry Young III for taking part in this project.

I'd also especially like to thank my boss, George Klabin, for making this release possible. I'm very lucky to have been given the opportunity to scour the four corners of the world for important music like this; revelatory recordings that cry out to be released, most often for the first time. George's generosity makes all this possible and to him, on behalf of all of us, I say a resounding, "Thanks!"

ZEV FELDMAN

LARRY YOUNG: THE DUKE OF NEWARK, BY LARRY YOUNG, III

My father, Larry Young, who was also known as Khalid Yasin, was born Larry John McCoy to Agnes McCoy and professional organist Larry Young Sr. in Newark, New Jersey on October 7, 1940. During my dad's childhood, my grandparents' home was always full of music; my grandfather often had rehearsals at home and when musicians weren't playing there, records were usually being played. This music my dad heard from his earliest days made a profound impression on him and led him to express an interest in a wide variety of different musical styles from the time he was a young child.

After some basic tutoring from my grandfather, my father studied classical piano formally with Ms. Olga Von Till, who has been described as the "grand dame of piano teaching in Highland Park [New Jersey]." A formidable figure, Ms. von Till had studied in Hungary with Béla Bartók. Indeed, Bartók had encouraged her own composing efforts, he was so confident of her talent. No doubt her forward-looking approach to music had an impact on forming and encouraging my dad's own adventuresome and probing musical outlook.

In early adolescence, my father's interest in music began to wane, but when he was fourteen, my grandfather opened a Newark nightspot called the Shindig, which had an organ permanently installed on the bandstand. My dad began fooling around on the instrument and was immediately taken with its variety of sounds and musical possibilities. The organ opened up his imagination and became his primary instrument, although he never completely abandoned the piano.

My father attended Arts High School beginning in 1954. While there, he sang bass in a vocal group called the Challengers, he was a member of the Operetta Club and he led his own combo. In high school, he was known by the sobriquet, "Genius of Virtuosity."

The Challengers—my father, David Blocker, Norman Baldwin, Jennifer St. Luscious Brown and Florian "Lucky" Jenkins—sang and played together from 1954 to 1960. In those days, my dad also began to participate in jam sessions at local clubs, despite being underage. In time, to avoid confusion with my grandfather, who was also performing publicly on the organ, my father began using the name Larry Young Jr., as he and my grandfather were performing in different local clubs in the area at the same time.

By 1957, music had become a consuming passion for him and he graduated from jam sessions to working professionally, at first with local R&B bands around Newark and Elizabeth, New Jersey. As a young professional, he honed his Jazz skills with the likes of Lou Donaldson, Kenny Dorham, Jimmy Forrest, Hank Mobley and Tommy Turrentine.

In 1962, my father and Dave Blocker formed a jazz ensemble with fellow Arts High alum Woody Shaw, a trumpet player who would also go on to greatness, and drummer Billy Brooks. Three years later, Larry, Woody and Billy were invited by Nathan Davis to come to Paris, an invitation that led to the recordings you hear in this album.

Meanwhile, my dad had begun working with guitarist Grant Green in 1964. This led directly to my dad's signing with Blue Note Records himself. At Blue Note, he recorded six magnificent albums over the next five years including *Into Somethin'* with Sam Rivers and *Unity* with Woody Shaw, Joe Henderson and Elvin Jones.

In the summer of 1967, my dad joined Lionel Hampton's band as a pianist for a brief period, but after a short stay, he decided to go out again his own. John Spruill who replaced him on piano said, "Larry played the piano like he was Chopin. He was my mentor and a real gentle giant."

In the spring of 1969, my dad recorded a long jam with Jimi Hendrix, bassist Billy Cox and drummer Mitch Mitchell. That track eventually came out as "Young/Hendrix" on Hendrix's album, *Nine to the Universe*, on Reprise Records. On John McLaughlin's U.S. debut album, *Devotion*, on Douglas Records, my dad played both organ and electric piano. In August, he played electric piano (along with Joe Zawinul and Chick Corea) on "Pharaoh's Dance" and "Spanish Key" on Miles Davis's *Bitches Brew*, and also played some other tracks that weren't issued at the time.

Later in 1969, my father became a founding member of the groundbreaking



power trio, the Tony Williams Lifetime, with Williams and John McLaughlin.

After my dad left Lifetime, fellow Lifetime alum John McLaughlin and rock guitarist Carlos Santana, both at the height of their powers commercially and artistically, joined forces to record *Love Devotion Surrender* for Columbia Records and they asked my dad to join them. They followed the release of the album with a tour, on which my dad also joined them.

In the years after the collaborations with McLaughlin and Santana, in addition to performances and recordings on his own, he also recorded and performed with Billy Cobham, Lenny White and others.

My dad signed with Arista Records, and made two albums *Larry Young's Fuel* in 1975 and 1976's *Spaceball*, which did not sell well. The experience of playing before huge audiences on tours compared with the relative obscurity he experienced as he labored in on his own affected him. He could not understand why musicians of far less ability and vision were so successful in the commercial marketplace, while his efforts in the same genre were not. For the rest of his life, my father's personal frustration about this unfairness never abated. He could not accept the economic triumph of lesser music by lesser artists. He knew his worth, his foresight and his innovations and that made his lack of recognition all the more disheartening for him.

He spent much of 1977 working with Houston Person and leading his own group. In November of that year, he made a beautiful duet album

with drummer Joe Chambers, *Double Exposure*, (released in 1978) on which he primarily played organ and Chambers played both drums and piano.

1978 started optimistically for my dad. He was working on his music with renewed enthusiasm, and developing a new group. On March 28, 1978, my dad's new girlfriend gave birth to his second daughter. Right at the time he was becoming a new father again, he began experiencing stomach pains and was admitted to the hospital. He died there two days later on March 30, 1978, while being treated for what is said to have been pneumonia. However, the actual cause of his death is unclear.

My dad is widely regarded as one of the organ's true innovators. He is a member of an elite circle of organ greats, the Hammond Organ Hall of Fame, along with Fats Waller, Jimmy Smith, Shirley Scott, Steve Winwood, Richard "Groove" Holmes, Jimmy McGriff, Billy Preston, Booker T. Jones and a small handful of others.

He's been the recipient of many awards and honors including recognition in numerous critics' polls and other encomiums. In 2006, then-governor of New Jersey, John Corzine, issued a proclamation authorizing a yearly festival in the city of Newark honoring my dad. In the decades since his death, more and more people have discovered the magnitude of his contribution to all of the genres of music in which he was a creative and trailblazing force.

My father truly lit a fire, which is still burning, although he has been gone for almost four decades. His music is still relevant and fresh.

On a personal level, I wish that I had been able to spend more time with him; I wish some of his musical genius would pass on to me. I have always stood in awe of how he played with his eyes closed. I could never figure out how he did that. My dad was known by many of his friends and fans as "The Duke of Newark." This speaks to the magnitude of his personality.

But most people don't know much about his private side: his passion for acquiring knowledge; how well-read he was and that he was a great chess player. John McLaughlin speaks elsewhere in this book about my dad's wicked sense of humor—never exercised in a mean-spirited way—and his uncanny perception of the people and the world around him.

I would give anything to be able to talk with him just one more time. I feel a void, although his spirit is still with me.

LARRY YOUNG, III

THE REMARKABLE OLGA VON TILL

Sometimes you learn something that seems so improbable, it's difficult to reconcile it to the reality you know. Yet when you consider such a discovery without the preconceptions that make it seem unbelievable, its inevitability becomes impossible to deny; it makes utter sense. Olga Von Till's modest, yet to my mind, undeniable role influencing the development of modern jazz in the second half of the twentieth century may just be such a discovery.

It was a surprise when I learned that Larry Young's first formal piano teacher, a remarkable figure active in New Jersey classical music circles for most of the twentieth century, Olga Von Till, had been a student of Béla Bartók in Hungary and, as a student at the Liszt Academy in Budapest, had been exposed to two other important Hungarian composers, Ernő Dohnányi and Zoltán Kodály.

Bartók, Dohnányi and Kodály were pushing the boundaries of harmony in the musical world of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. They broke from tradition by experimenting with harmonies built on fourths, as well as utilizing the pentatonic melodic structures they found rooted in the Hungarian folk tradition, while remaining grounded in Western classical music. These elements came together in their works and represented a vivid new approach to the music of the late romantic era.

Certainly Ms. Von Till would have carried their influence throughout her life as a musician and teacher. And clearly, some of that influence, particularly that of Kodály—through the filter of Ms. Von Till's pedagogy—rubbed off on Larry Young, as Nathan Davis attests in his interview elsewhere in this book. Indeed, one can hear in Larry Young's harmonic approach—in which often the interval of the fourth lies at the foundation of his chord structures—the distinctive echoes of the approaches of Bartók and Kodály.

Equally surprising is that Ms. Von Till was the classical piano teacher of another jazz icon, Bill Evans. Looked at from the perspective of a powerful musical influence from a forward-looking teacher—Ms. Von Till—one can begin to see that Young and Evans really did have a lot in common. And certainly their common musical sensibilities—surely influenced by Ms. Von Till—invoke to some extent the lyricism and harmonic expansions of the Hungarians; in the artistry of both Young and Evans, these characteristics complement and color the deep jazz traditions that both of them had at their core of their art.

What did Larry Young and Bill Evans have in common? Each of them had a lyricism and lightness to his sound that distinguished them from many of their contemporaries. Each had a distinctive legato touch. Each broke new ground musically, particularly in their adventuresome and sophisticated approaches to harmony and their experiments with unusual, expressive voicings. Did these facets of their musical identities come to some extent from Ms. Von Till? It's logical that they would have, given

that Young and Evans had these traits in common and very few, if any, of their contemporaries did¹.

And when one considers the enormous influence Young and Evans had on the work of the disparate yet iconic figures whose ensembles they shaped—Evans with the Miles Davis group that included John Coltrane and Cannonball Adderley; and Young with Tony Williams, John McLaughlin, Jimi Hendrix, Woody Shaw, Carlos Santana, Jack Bruce (and also Miles Davis)—the realization that, by extension, Ms. Von Till had at least some influence on these giants—and on the development of modern jazz and even progressive rock—is inescapable and striking.

Olga Von Till was born in New Jersey in the late 1890s to Hungarian immigrant parents. As a teenager, she was already a talented pianist and worked accompanying silent movies to supplement the family's modest income. At age 17, she was sponsored by a wealthy aunt in Hungary to come to Budapest to study at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music with Bartók and Dohnányi, through whom she had contact with Kodály. When World War I broke out she was stuck in Hungary and had to wait out the war there.

Upon her return to the United States, she reestablished herself as a piano teacher in New Jersey. One of Ms. Von Till's students, Donna Messer, a New Jersey teacher and early music figure described her as the "grand dame of piano teaching in Highland Park," a New Jersey borough twenty miles from Newark, roughly midway between Newark and Princeton. According to Ms. Messer, Ms. Von Till had been championed as a composer by Bartók "because of her creativity in avant-garde composition." She reportedly told Messer that "she expressed her rebelliousness through the way she composed."



Left: Olga Von Till in her studio in New Jersey during the period in which she would have taught Larry Young and Bill Evans. Note her two grand pianos. **Right:** Olga Von Till at age 17 in pre-World War I Budapest, Hungary while she was studying at the Franz Liszt Academy of Music with Bartók.

Another former student, Claire Adas, wrote of her, "She was an intimidating teacher, exacting and persistent. She heard the tone of each note, and she heard the silence between notes, which were as important as the notes themselves, and needed to be given their exact space, their exact weight."

That Ms. Von Till was a serious, thoughtful musician and teacher is verified by these and other accounts by her former students. She was able to impart her musical perspective to students for many years and her influence certainly survives her. Those pianists and organists for whom Larry Young and Bill Evans serve as inspirations may not realize it, but they themselves are no doubt be carrying on, in some measure, the musical legacy of Olga Von Till.

JOHN KOENIG

October 5, 2015

¹ One exception is McCoy Tyner who developed his own groundbreaking harmonic approach. McCoy told me that when he was a teenager, his mother gave him an LP of the Ravel and Debussy String Quartets performed by the Juilliard String Quartet. He told me he was so captivated by the revolutionary harmonies of these two icons of impressionism, he adapted their voicings into his own playing.

INA'S PASCAL ROZAT REFLECTS ON JACK DIÉVAL, MUSIQUE AUX CHAMPS-ÉLYSÉES AND L'ACADÉMIE DU JAZZ

"So, my dear friends . . ." Following a strict ritual, every Sunday night at 11:03 PM, these words opened *Musique aux Champs-Élysées*, a show that was a staple of one of France's national public radio networks, France Inter. Behind the microphone was a man who served not only as the host, but also the show's producer, its regular pianist and even the composer of the music that ran behind the show's opening and closing credits, Jack Diéval.

Born in 1920 in Douai in northern France, this jovial, mustachioed gastronome and unrepentant pipe smoker was also distinguished from other Frenchmen by the anglicized spelling of his first name ("Jack" instead of "Jacques"), a tribute by his parents to the British and American soldiers who liberated his native region during the First World War.

The winner of *Jazz Hot* magazine's 1947 readers' poll, Jack Diéval was accompanist for singer Henri Salvador and violinist Stephane Grappelli before getting his start on radio in 1954 with his signature program, originally titled *Jazz aux Champs-Élysées*¹ before definitively becoming *Musique aux Champs-Élysées* in 1963. With one foot in jazz and the other in popular song (in addition to his taste for classical music) Diéval also enjoyed success as a pop songwriter, notably with "J'ai le mal de toi," which became an international hit for Cher in 1972 as "The Way of Love."

One unusual feature of *Musique aux Champs Élysées* was that Diéval practically never played commercial records on the show. Part of the program was made up of original recordings provided by foreign public radio stations



Nathan Davis, Jack Diéval, and Woody Shaw. © INA/Louis Joyeux

that were part of the European Broadcasting Union (EBU). For the rest, Diéval took it upon himself to produce recordings himself and broadcast them on the show. He made these recordings with an ad hoc studio orchestra under his leadership called the *Jazz aux Champs-Élysées* All-Stars. Although the name may sound immodest, in fact, throughout its history, the rotating personnel of the All-Stars counted among its ranks many of the top Parisian musicians of the day; artists such as guitarist René Thomas, drummer Daniel Humair and violinist Jean-Luc Ponty, just to name a few. And when the opportunity presented itself, he also welcomed American musicians visiting Paris into the mix. Donald Byrd, Lucky Thompson, Sonny Stitt and Sonny Criss, among others, had all participated over the show's run, as had Eric Dolphy, who recorded his swan song with the *JACE* All-Stars in June 1964.

Continually modified according to the availability of musicians, the band's cast of characters temporarily stabilized in the fall of 1964 with an unusual configuration probably more by chance than any artistic intention, two trumpets, two tenor saxophones, a rhythm section of piano, bass and drums and a percussionist. Among these eight musicians, the regular members of Diéval's All-Stars, was his longtime saxophonist Jean-Claude Fohlenbach (as brilliant as he was reserved), who had participated in *Jazz aux Champs-Élysées* from the show's debut in the mid-1950s, later to return in 1963, while bassist Jacques B. Hess (whom we hear here on one track) was a regular beginning in 1958.

The Jamaican trumpeter Sonny Grey and the Italian drummer Franco Manzecchi both joined in 1961. The other members arrived around 1964. Jacky Bamboo, whose real name was Jacques Bourgarel, a percussionist of Guadeloupean descent, was relatively unknown, except as a member of the Jacques Hélian orchestra up to 1953. Finally, there was Nathan Davis, who joined Diéval's group in the summer of 1964 and probably through his

efforts, Woody Shaw. Four Frenchmen, one Guadeloupean, two Americans, a Jamaican and an Italian. The multicultural composition of this "All-Stars" shows how Paris already was, to allude to the title of a television show Jack Diéval hosted, a "crossroads of the world."

It was for this octet that Larry Young, newly arrived in France, was recruited, probably at the suggestion or urging of Nathan Davis. At the time, Young was playing with Davis's regular organ quartet, which performed every night at the club *Le Chat qui pêche* (The Cat who Fishes) in the Latin Quarter. Toward the end of November or early December 1964², the eight musicians gathered in a brand new studio in the new house of the ORTF (now Maison de Radio France), which had been inaugurated a year earlier by General de Gaulle.

Of the three tunes recorded on that occasion, two—"La valse grise," and "Discothèque"—are representative of the spirit of jam sessions typically heard on the program. The music was generally recorded hastily without rehearsals or arrangements. No complexity here, just simple bluesy riffs likely improvised on the spot and, when titled, reported as "compositions" by Jack Diéval (Jack knew all the copyright subtleties, since he ended his career as a high official of the SACEM, the musical performing rights society that is the French equivalent of ASCAP). And there was no way a piece would finish without all the soloists taking some choruses! The decision to record the composition, "Talkin' About J.C." by Larry Young, is far more surprising—and interesting!—and demonstrates Diéval's openness, despite probably never having met the organist before he entered the studio.

It's likely that Larry took advantage of the presence of drummer Manzecchi and percussionist Bamboo to record two titles on the organ, which, as the only melodic and harmonic instrument, allowed him freedom to choose his repertoire without having to accommodate colleagues on the other instruments who would have had to learn complicated parts. The quartet session was probably recorded a few weeks later and is special because it was relatively rare for Diéval to invite an already fully formed group, namely the Nathan Davis Quartet, to the studio to record. Such established, cohesive groups weren't often heard on *Musique aux Champs-Élysées*, sad to say.

As for the piano trio session—again on a blues, the "Esperanto language" of jazzmen—it is the only recording date with bassist Jacques B. Hess.



Franco Manzecchi, Jacky Bamboo and Woody Shaw. © INA/Louis Joyeux

It is surprising that this session only resulted in the recording of a single title.

Overall, it seems that Larry Young recorded three times at the house of ORTF and one can surmise that it was during one of these sessions that Francis Wolff took the legendary photo which became the cover of the album *Into Something*, where the futuristic architecture of the "Round House" is clear in the background.

On February 9th, 1965, Larry Young experienced one of the highlights of his Paris sojourn when he participated in the annual award presentation of the venerable French music association, *l'Académie du jazz*. Young's performance at that event (at which he played Woody Shaw's "Zoltan" and Wayne Shorter's "Black Nile" with the Nathan Davis Quartet, the recordings of which are heard here) was recorded for radio under the leadership of André Francis, who was also the host for the show that evening. The event was held at la Locomotive, a club near the *Moulin Rouge*, under the honorary presidency of classical composers Georges Auric and Henri Sauguet. *L'Académie du jazz*, which had been founded in 1955 under the patronage of Jean Cocteau, welcomed several new members that night including Stéphane Grappelli and television director Jean-Christophe Averty. And *l'Académie* presented the prestigious Django Reinhardt award for best French musician of the year to saxophonist Jean-Louis Chautemps. By coincidence, the year before, that award had gone to an organist, the young and talented Eddy Louiss.

Among other awards, the prize for best jazz record was awarded in absentia to Charles Mingus for *The Black Saint and the Sinner Lady* shoulder to shoulder with *Out to Lunch* by Eric Dolphy and *Live at Birdland* by John Coltrane. Decidedly, *l'Académie* had good taste, and it is therefore not surprising that it invited the Nathan Davis Quartet with Larry Young to animate the evening, along with pianist Jean-Claude Lubin's trio, bluesman Curtis Jones and several representatives of a dynasty of gypsy guitars: Sarane, Matelo and Boulou Ferret.

There is one last bit of extra-musical context that might explain the particular electric nature of the music performed by the Nathan Davis Quartet featuring Larry Young that night. That very evening, Malcolm X had been expected to speak at a Paris meeting of the capital's African American and African communities.³ Unfortunately, Malcolm was intercepted upon landing at Orly Airport and expelled to the United States on the spot by the French authorities. Upon learning of Malcolm's expulsion during the *Académie du jazz* event, Nathan Davis took the microphone and announced the news to the public—evidence that even far from the United States, African American jazz musicians living in Europe always held a keen awareness of the stakes of their people's struggle for civil rights.

PASCAL ROZAT

1 See the CD *Jazz aux Champs-Élysées*, Ina Editions, 2010 (with previously unreleased recordings of Lester Young, Stan Getz, Donald Byrd, Blossom Dearie and others). Note that *Jazz aux Champs-Élysées* and *Musique aux Champs-Élysées* had no special relationship with the famous avenue from which they derived their name.

2 Unfortunately the exact dates of these studio sessions are not known. The only data extant regarding the different recordings that were eventually broadcast piecemeal on *Musique aux Champs-Élysées* are the editing dates and the broadcast dates, which, of course occurred after they were recorded.

3 Of course, there was no way of knowing then that Malcolm would be assassinated less than two weeks later.

ANDRÉ FRANCIS ON LARRY YOUNG'S & NATHAN DAVIS'S PARIS RECORDINGS

ZEV FELDMAN: You were born in Paris in 1925. Can you tell us how you discovered jazz?

ANDRÉ FRANCIS: It was in the early '40s during the German occupation when I was 16 or 17. At the time, I wanted to be a stage or film designer; I had a studio I used for rehearsals and also for parties. One day I needed a record for something I was doing, a somewhat silly song called, "Elle n'a pas très bon caractère" ("She Does Not Have Very Good Character"), recorded by Raymond Legrand's orchestra. (Incidentally, Raymond Legrand was Michel Legrand's father.) It seemed the version I was looking for was not available at the record store, so they sold me a different one by Christian Wagner and his Orchestra, with trumpeter Alex Renard, on Charles Delaunay's Swing label. It was jazz and I liked it! Several of my actor friends had parents who collected jazz records and when my friends discovered I liked jazz, they began to bring me Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington records. After that, in 1943, I bought my first Armstrong record on the Champs-Élysées. It was on the Brunswick label; an imported American record, which had passed through Switzerland.

What is the first jazz concert you attended?

It was also during the occupation. At that time, Parisian movie theaters such as the Normandie, the Olympia or the Moulin Rouge put on a kind of variety show that rotated through each theater for 15 days. Once, Charles Delaunay put together a revue with three orchestras: accordionist Gus Viseur, saxophonist and clarinetist Alix Combelle, and most notably, Django Reinhardt. I had to see the same silly movie six times just to listen to Django, which was probably my first real communion with jazz! But the concert that marked me most deeply early on was the Dizzy Gillespie big band at the Salle Pleyel in 1948.

How did you come to be on the radio?

Originally I got on the radio to do literary programs. The first one they gave me in 1947 was devoted to Martinican poet, Aimé Césaire, the bard of "négritude." To illustrate his texts, I chose music by Duke Ellington. That caught the attention of the director of the *Club d'essai*, a kind of radio creative workshop of the French Broadcasting Network. They asked me if I knew my way around jazz. Quite immodestly, I answered, "Yes," and that's how I started making two alternating jazz programs, one was a commentary on records and the other broadcast concerts I organized for that *Club d'essai*.

During your career you have had the opportunity to present on-stage concerts which became legendary, notably the Jazz Festival of Antibes Juan-les-Pins, which featured among others, Miles Davis in 1963 and John Coltrane in 1965. Were you aware of the historical significance of these moments?

The problem was that I was on the other side of the stage: I had to take care of radio and television recordings, technical problems, the organiza-

tion of the festival, which was pretty rough. I rarely had much information about the artists who were scheduled to play and only discovered their music after having announced them on stage. In addition, the tiny information cards I was given on the artists sometimes contained errors. I once announced "Herbie Hancock" instead of "Herbie Hancock" at the famous Miles Davis concert. Such a shame! However, I am particularly pleased with the announcement that closes the only live performance of "A Love Supreme" by John Coltrane in 1965.¹ The public demanded an encore and I found the right words to explain that they could do no more, having already given their all.

Among the thousands of concerts you produced or recorded, which are you most proud of today?

There have been so many! My greatest pride is still perhaps having put on the first Bill Evans concert in Paris in 1965, despite being told by the directors of the radio station that he was an uninteresting cocktail pianist! Result: the two sold-out concerts at the Maison de Radio France. Subsequently, I recorded him many times, up until his last concert in Paris at the Espace Cardin in 1979, which was released on record. They mistakenly credited my soundman as the producer, but anyway, let's move on!

Do you have memories of when Larry Young first came to Paris?

No. I must confess I don't remember! At that time, two organists already dominated the Paris scene: Lou Bennett and Eddy Louiss. Without a doubt I had not given Larry Young the credit he deserved. In preparing for this interview, I listened to his Blue Note albums, and looking back, I realize that he was a wonderful musician. But you know in those years so much was happening, one could not listen to everything! In addition, the Nathan Davis Quartet, in which Larry played, performed mainly in clubs. I have always preferred jazz in concert halls, where people listen to the music rather than talking, drinking and smoking. And because Larry Young wasn't appearing in concert halls in those days, I didn't hear him very much.

You produced a recording of Nathan Davis Quartet with Larry Young at the annual evening of the Academy of Jazz in 1965. Can you tell us more about this institution?

The Academy was founded in 1955 and therefore has just turned sixty. I am a founding member, along with André Clergeat, André Hodeir, Frank Ténort and Boris Vian. Originally, there were only fifteen members. There are sixty now, mostly critics. The original idea was to draw the attention of the press and media to jazz which was, at the time, regarded as a somewhat marginal area. The Academy was originally under the patronage of the famous poet and artist Jean Cocteau, who was one of the first to write about jazz and had supposedly been a drummer. This gave the Academy immediate visibility in the cultural media. Every year we awarded prizes: first there would be a concert, then a quick announcement of the winners. In 1961, the ceremony was attended by Duke Ellington and Louis Armstrong, who were in town for the filming of the movie *Paris Blues*. Of course their presence attracted a considerable number of journalists.

During his participation in Jack Diéval's broadcasts, Larry Young played with local musicians like Franco Manzecchi and Jean-

Claude Fohrenbach. Can you tell us something about these artists?

Franco Manzecchi was especially in demand at the time, because he was a solid drummer, who knew how to adapt to both traditional and modern jazz bands. Jean-Claude Fohrenbach is a musician unjustly forgotten today, who was one of the most adventurous and cultured French jazzmen before the arrival of Michel Portal.



Top: Jean-Claude Fohrenbach and Nathan Davis.
Bottom: Franco Manzecchi. Photo © INA/Louis Joyeux

We can thank André Francis for the live recordings of Larry Young with the Nathan Davis Quartet, made February 9, 1965, at the annual evening of l'Académie du Jazz; just one session among countless others for this veteran of French public radio, who produced and/or recorded nearly 9,000 jazz concerts during the course of a 49-year career, which spanned from 1947 to 1996.

¹ André Francis's announcement at the end of John Coltrane's concert in Antibes on July 26, 1965, was: "Understand, dear friends, that music is not measured by the clock-especially the musical art of John Coltrane. He has just given us the deepest of himself, let him not have to repeat himself and let him rest well."



NATHAN DAVIS SPEAKS WITH MICHAEL CUSCUNA ABOUT JAZZ IN PARIS IN THE 1960s, THE NATHAN DAVIS QUARTET AND LARRY YOUNG

MICHAEL CUSCUNA: You were born in Kansas City, Kansas in 1937 and were playing professionally with people like Jay McShann at age 18. So when you went to the University of Kansas and got a degree in music education, was that your idea?

NATHAN DAVIS: Yes, that was my idea. I wanted to go to the University of Kansas, because there was a guy there named Dorsey Evans who played great trumpet and was a friend of my family's.

And then you went right into the service after that? There wasn't much choice in those days.

No. When I got drafted, I ended up in Fort Leonard Wood for basic training. Then they found out I was a musician and a college graduate, so then they sent me to the Navy School of Music in Anacostia, Washington D.C. At that time, the Army, the Navy and the Marines each had a college-level music training program. Frank Rosolino went there. Cannonball went there. Trane was there. Chet Baker was there, too. So that's where I went first. Then they shipped me out to West Berlin to join the 298th Army Band, which had the best players from the Army and the Air Force. It was always a showcase band because of the Berlin wall.

In Berlin, I had been playing with Joe Harris—a drummer who used to work with Dizzy—and Benny Bailey, both of whom were in the SFB Radio-Television Big Band. We'd play together in clubs after the band's rehearsals and

performances. So I decided to take an overseas discharge. The night I got discharged, I went to work with Benny Bailey in his quintet at a place called Old Sammy's Saloon in the Kreuzberg section of West Berlin. We worked there four nights a week. I started out working right away.

What attracted you beyond the music and the guys you were working with? What attracted you to stay in West Berlin at that time?

Well, it was a hell of a scene! I mean, there was jazz everywhere. A fantastic city.

And so you were based in the second coolest city in Europe at the time. What brought you to the first coolest city in Europe—Paris?

I was working with Benny Bailey every night. Writer-producer Joachim Berendt and Klook (Kenny Clarke) were tight; basically Berendt had put together this thing called Expatriate Americans in Europe. And one day, one of the tenor players, Lucky Thompson, got into an argument with somebody—he was always arguing with everybody. So he quit. Benny Bailey told Berendt, "I got a guy here who can read and play his ass off, you know, nice cat." And so I got the gig. And the band was like—check this out—Herb Geller was lead alto, Sonny Criss was second alto, Don Byas was lead tenor, I took Lucky's place on second tenor, Sahib Shihab on bari and one hell of a rhythm section with Kenny Clarke, Joe Harris (both of them alternating), Jimmy Woode was the bass player (he was the walkin'-est bass player ever) and Kenny Drew on piano. Sometimes Bud Powell would play, too. And Francy Boland, who did all the charts, sometimes played piano, as well. In the trumpet section they had Benny Bailey, who played lead, Idrees Sulieman, Art Farmer and Ack van Rooyen. Åke Persson was the lead trombonist and Nat Peck was in the section, along with a couple of other guys. After that, Klook came up to me and said "I like you Nat, you're quiet, you play your ass off, I like the way you play, and you don't cause no trouble." He said, "You'll hear from me." And so I went back to Berlin and about three weeks later I got a telegram from Klook that said, "Be in Paris. I'll send you a ticket. We're opening at the Club Saint-Germain-des-Près and you're taking Lucky's place on this, too." So that's how I got to Paris. That had to be '62 or '63.

Once you got to Paris, was it through Klook that you got into all the ORTF activities?

Actually, Jack Diéval got in touch with me through Sonny Grey, the Jamaican trumpet player. Jack was a big deal on radio in France in those days. He was a pianist and an arranger/producer. And he was into pop music, but he was also into jazz. And he was a credible jazz pianist and arranger. He had this long-running monthly radio show called *Jazz aux Champs-Élysées* [which became *Musique aux Champs-Élysées* in 1963]. I recorded some stuff for him and that led to my doing his program on a regular basis. And after a while, Jack started asking me to bring musicians for



Jazz aux Champs-Élysées All-Stars
Photo. © INA/Louis Joyeux

recording sessions because whenever new people came into Paris I always knew them; I was with Klook at the Blue Note and everyone who came into town would come to the club to see the band. So I met them all. And I would bring guys like Leo Wright, Carmell Jones, Sonny Stitt, Don Byas and others over to record with Jack.

Where did the Newark connection come in? Where did you meet Woody Shaw and why did you bring him over?

What happened was, before Eric Dolphy died, the band at Le Chat Qui Pêche [a jazz club in a cellar in the Latin Quarter] was Donald Byrd, Eric Dolphy and me with Jacques Thollot on drums and Luigi Trussardi on bass. Eric took off to go to Berlin. He went there because I had introduced him to Karl Berger, the German jazz pianist, vibraphonist and composer, who had asked me to introduce him to Eric. So I told Eric that I knew Karl and that he was cool, and so Eric went to Berlin to work with Karl. He died there of course; he never actually got started on the gig.

Joyce Mordecai, who was Eric's fiancée, and Madame Ricard from the club came to me and said, "We want to honor Eric in some way. How can we do this?" Madame Ricard said, "Well, Eric wanted to bring his own group." Before he went to Berlin, Eric had asked me to stay on the Paris gig to keep it open for when he came back. Then he wanted to bring in Billy Higgins, Richard Davis and Bobby Hutcherson and then the band would have been Eric, Woody Shaw, Billy Higgins, Richard Davis and Bobby Hutcherson. I wasn't going to be in that band because I was set to go back to the Blue Note with Klook. And Donald Byrd, whose gig it was in the first place, went back to the States.

During the time we played together, Eric had told me, "I got this young trumpet player, Nat, Woody Shaw. I want to bring him in. You'll really love him. You won't believe this guy, this young guy from high school. He came to the club one night and asked me if he could sit in. And I said, 'You want to sit in with me??!!' And he told me he knew all my music by heart. And he did! He'd memorized it all. And I thought, if this guy can play all of my weird music, I gotta love him."

Anyway, after Eric died and Madame Ricard and Joyce were planning this band to honor Eric, Madame Ricard could only afford to bring in one musician and I think Joyce is the one who said, "What about Woody?" Madame Ricard said, "We can bring Woody, but Nat, you gotta stay. The people love you. You've got to be the bandleader because it won't work otherwise." So Madame Ricard and I split the cost of bringing Woody over. That's how he got there. It was Eric's wish. That's how that went down. And when Woody arrived, I got him an apartment; actually, it was Eric's old apartment.

And then Larry, the other Newark component...

Okay, soon Woody and I became real, real tight; I was like his big brother. After maybe a couple of months, he said, "Nat, I gotta go back home. I miss my boys, you know?" He was young; he was just out of high school. And I said, "What? No man, we're doing good." We were working all the time. But he was homesick. He wanted to go back to Newark. Then he said, "Can I bring my boys over?" That was Larry and Billy Brooks. I asked Madame

Ricard and she said, "No. We don't have the money." And we were packing the place anyway, so she wasn't that interested. But I wanted to keep Woody over there because we played great together. And so Woody and I split the cost of bringing Larry and Billy Brooks over. Now when Woody told me about Larry, I wasn't really for it in the beginning. But Woody convinced me, he said "Nat, this cat plays organ like McCoy plays piano." So Larry and Billy joined the group.

A typical day would be like, they'd show up at my apartment at 67 Rue Saint-Jacques, which was right up the street from Le Chat Qui Pêche. So they would come over to my house about 12. My wife, Ursula, would cook for all of us and we'd eat. (Sometimes they'd have dinner with us, too.) Then we'd go, you know, talk some shit, maybe walk around, but then we'd go down to the club, which was a block down the street, and rehearse from maybe three hours or something like that. Then we'd go to dinner—there were a lot of Arab and Greek restaurants down there—and then go play from 10 PM until four in the morning. That's the whole thing too with everybody playing seven nights a week, no night off, the band got real tight. We were always together.

The whole band got a lot of press and my first record, *Happy Girl* for SABA, was listed as the best-selling American jazz import album. It was Woody, me, Larry, Jimmy Woode and Billy Brooks. On the date, we decided that Larry would play piano, and when you listen to that record, he sounds like McCoy Tyner... he had that approach. You can really hear his use of the pentatonic scale and open-fourths harmonies. That's why Woody's tune, "Zoltan," is on that record.

When he came to Paris, Larry wasn't singled out as a soloist by the press. He should have been. It wasn't because he wasn't good. He was. It was because most of the attention was being focused on Lou Bennett, an organist who had developed quite a large following working with Kenny Clarke. Lou had the best foot of any organ player I ever heard and he was extremely popular. Also, among the local press, there was a lot of energy being devoted to promoting Eddy Louiss, the young French organist. So Larry walked into a situation that wasn't terribly congenial to yet another organ player when there were a couple of guys already occupying that role. What made Larry's organ playing so different during that period was his brilliant use of harmonic fourths, and the pentatonic scale, which we all did, coupled with his hip polyrhythmic sense—steeped in the Hungarian Gypsy Folk tradition of Zoltán Kodály. This was perfect for me because both Woody and I, influenced by Eric Dolphy, were both studying composing in the style of Béla Bartók, which was also in the Hungarian Gypsy Folk tradition.

So most of these recordings we're talking about here are from early '65, but by the end of the summer of '65, Larry and Woody were back in New York; Woody was with Horace Silver and Larry was making records for Blue Note. So that European chapter of their lives really closed at that point. Now, Nathan, when you're talking about going to college and then the army and establishing yourself in Paris, there's nothing in the scenario about wanting to get away from America. So is this just where life led you?

Yeah, I mean, that's the truth. Look, you hit it right on the head. There was all that political shit, and when I say political shit, people would try to interview me—I was getting a lot of interviews 'cause my first big record, *Happy Girl*, was out, followed by *The Hip Walk*, and of course, I was working with Klook, too. And they'd try to get me to talk about the race problems and everything. But really I stayed there mainly because I was working seven nights a week playing at the Blue Note with Bud Powell, Dexter Gordon, Johnny Griffin, Donald Byrd, Slide Hampton, Sonny Criss, Kenny Clarke and Arthur Taylor and then I'd get time off from the Blue Note to go on tours, which is how I played with Art Blakey and a lot of other great musicians. And after that I could go right back to the Blue Note. Why would I come back? I was in hog heaven.

September 8, 2015



WOODY SHAW AND LARRY YOUNG IN PARIS IN THE 1960s

by Woody Louis Armstrong Shaw, III

This recording is of particular significance given the deep history that Larry Young and my father shared coming up in Newark, New Jersey. Knowing what we know of Newark as a hotbed of indigenous talent and the incubator of so much musical innovation, having produced artists like Wayne Shorter, Sarah Vaughan, Grachan Moncur III, James Moody and so many others, it is clear that Woody Shaw (1944 – 1989) and Larry Young (1940 – 1978) were destined to achieve something significant by the very shape and fate of their geography.

However, there is more to this than the simple hometown cliché of dreams fulfilled by two young visionaries on the quest for self-realization. This recording is, in fact, the precursor to what we know of as one of Blue Note Records's more eclectic iconographic masterpieces, an album that crosses all seeming boundaries of musical taste and generational identity: *Unity*. And while the CD (or perhaps LP) that you have before you exists in most part due to the towering status of its lead subject, there were in fact a number of other characters who helped orchestrate its existence, and that of its later offshoot.

As legend has it, it was Dr. Nathan Davis who sought out Woody Shaw in 1964 in fulfillment of the echoing last request of the great multireedist and composer Eric Dolphy (1928 – 1964), Nathan's close musical friend and mentor, who had intended to put together an "all-star" band in Europe with a number of U.S. musicians including Woody, Bobby Hutcherson, Richard Davis, and Billy Higgins. Due to Eric's untimely passing, however, this was a dream that remained largely unfulfilled, if only posthumously and partially so following the request of Nathan to bring Woody out to meet Eric's last musical wish.

As Nathan recounted it to me once, Eric told him enthusiastically, "Man, you got to hear this little trumpet player, Nat. He knows all my music. . . And as crazy as my music sounds? You know he must be special to know all my music." It was true, as Woody Shaw often boasted in his interviews, "I memorized all of Eric's tunes. . . Eric's music helped me find my own approach to the trumpet." Woody was 18 years old when he made his first debut on Eric Dolphy's 1963 masterpiece, *Iron Man*. So it was within this context of transition, discovery, and exchange that Woody Shaw arrived in Paris in 1964 at the invitation of Nathan Davis.

Not too long after gigging with European musicians, however, my father apparently "had enough" and soon became musically "homesick," longing for the edification and camaraderie that he shared with musicians that he knew and grew up with. Chief among those musicians was a drummer named Billy Brooks and an organist named Larry Young, Jr. (Woody Shaw was also a "Jr." at the time), both of whom he played with regularly in his hometown of Newark, NJ where all three attended the "infamous" Arts High School.

Woody's insistence that Nathan help bring Billy and Larry to Paris was supported by impassioned references to the uncanny musical mastery of Larry Young and his development of a whole new style of organ playing, one that was both highly personal and unprecedentedly uncharacteristic of the instrument's idiomatic conventions. Yet such was the attitude of these musicians in valuing the cutting edge and in championing each other's courage to venture "outward" towards the musically uncharted. As Nathan stated, Woody told him, "Man, you got to hear this guy, Nat. He plays organ, but it don't sound like organ. . . He plays the organ like a piano player." "I don't know, Woody," said Nathan. "I don't really dig organ, man." Woody then replied, "No, Nat. . . This organist plays like McCoy [Tyner]!" So there you have it ("Trane of the organ").



Woody Shaw and Larry Young. Photo by Jean-Pierre Leloir

The camaraderie built around shared meanings inherent within a sound, a sound lived each day not simply in music, but in the everyday interactions, reactions and impressions of a youthful musical life in Newark, NJ, are what these young men would soon craft together and elaborate on across the stages of Paris, France. These were musicians still freshly under the influence of the climactic apexes of John Coltrane's revolutionary Quintet, particularly in the exploration of new intervallic and harmonic possibilities, stylistic personalization of the "standard repertoire," and the investigation of new altitudinal sounds and expressions that sprang forth from the growing ethos shared among young Black artists in the pursuit of a much broader and more liberating harmonic "existence." And thus, with this growing sound came a broader sense of humanity, one inclusive (think, *Unity*) of sensibilities beyond the aesthetic criteria of America and Europe, and which could be expressed as articulately and individualistically, and with as much beauty, force, and deliberate vengeance, as possible. Suffice it to say, these were not young musicians who simply "played" for fun. These young musicians played as much for the love of the music as they did for the affirmation of pride, respect, and self-empowerment. "*Unity*" meant *Brotherhood*.

As Nathan recalled it, the three Newark natives would often declare to each other as they walked down the streets of Paris, "Straight ahead, Nat. . . Straight ahead, Larry . . . Straight ahead, Woody. . . Straight ahead, Billy . . ." An affirmative mantra and reminder of who they were, where they came from, and where they intended to go. The mindset of musicians so young and yet so eerily on the prodigious verge of self-mastery is something not to be taken lightly. Looking back, Larry Young was but 24 years old during these recordings (possibly 23 on the octet recordings included here). Woody Shaw was only 20 (possibly just 19 on the octet material).

And thus, Newark, once again, being what it was, as one of the more cul-

turally dense and historically tumultuous capitals of African American revolutionary and creative thought, exists as much in this recording in sound, feeling and volition, as it does in its anointed sequel, *Unity*. The orchestrated delivery of juxtaposed attitudes and self-summarized situations, of the natural and narrative shapes, harmonic logic, the vernaculars "spoken" and un-spoken amongst these three men and their honorary elder, Nathan Davis, speak to a certain counterassault to contrivance, pretense, and to the clichés of social indifference and apathy towards injustice, discrimination, and segregation, all of which would have been normal features of any sudden kaleidoscopic snapshot taken during the period in which this recording was made. Just shy of Kennedy's assassination, the Civil Rights Act, and the subsequent assassination of Malcolm X, this recording is as indicative of where jazz was going as it was deadly serious to young Black musicians of a certain radical persuasion, and to the individual formations of identity being experienced across continents of thought and culture by young musicians who unknowingly, or perhaps knowingly, made history that year (1964-1965) in Europe.

Unity is, in fact, the outcome of this extended experimental period, a period in which these musicians took all liberties to broaden their creative and intellectual horizons (studying everything from Eastern philosophy to meditation, yoga, and martial arts, and listening to everything from Indian, African, and Eastern European folk music to 20th century European Classic) while saying as much as could be said about the world in which they lived. As with *Unity*, a number of the compositions included here were written by Woody Shaw, all of them bearing idiosyncrasies of a burgeoning style, a new way of speaking to the tradition of jazz while pushing the limits of the music to new heights, meanwhile establishing a point of departure for new discoveries that would long succeed them. And while the direction in which this music was headed is often overly characterized as avant-garde due to its implicit evasion of categorization (that's kind of the point here, folks), everything about it *is* idiomatic and indigenous to the historical tradition of jazz. A tradition built upon the circumstantial necessities for ingenuity, self-empowerment, and transcendent self-realization of human potential is perhaps most iconized by the expression of those very elements, those very principles that first commanded its existence.

These are the original "Young Lions," forging new ground and taking irredeemable risks, daring to face the consequences of individuality with few ambitions other than those invested in the advancement of the music itself. Such was the badge of courage, integrity, and loyalty that these young men sought, lived and played by, while still barely out of their teens and entering into their twenties.

Fifty or so years after the fact, we have a gem in our possession, and what better time to release a prequel than during the 50th anniversary of its canonical epic (*Unity*, 1965). And as with all great stories and all great works of timeless art—the saga continues. So with that continuum in mind and on behalf of my father, Larry Young, Nathan Davis, and Billy Brooks, I leave you with two words:

Straight Ahead.

"The pressure to be broken by incredible odds, by the poverty, ignorance, violence, indifference, that is one's day to day environment in the town [Newark] is immense. It's like a grey haunting presence one feels pushing against the outside and inside at the same time. But even so, a few fortunate people like Woody Shaw [and Larry Young] who are not stronger or brighter than the struggling masses of the city, but simply more consistently focused in a direction that can provide a shield and exit from the ghetto horror, do manage to make it out. And many times the stories they carry, told through whatever medium or form, are staggering in their brutality and shattering in their beauty!"

—Amiri Baraka (*Woody III*. Columbia Records. 1979.)

WOODY LOUIS ARMSTRONG SHAW, III

September 8, 2015

© 2015 Woody Shaw Legacy LLC, All Rights Reserved



Nathan Davis, Larry Young, Woody Shaw and Billy Brooks.
Photo by Jean-Pierre Leloir

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN REMEMBERS LARRY YOUNG

I first discovered Larry Young in 1966 with the release of his album *Unity*. Having worked consistently throughout the 1960s with the “Hammond Organ trio,” exemplified by the players Jimmy Smith, Richard “Groove” Holmes and Brother Jack McDuff, I was very familiar with Hammond organ players. Larry was playing on a different level than all the others. It was clear he’d become strongly under the influence of John Coltrane and particularly, the playing of McCoy Tyner. As a result, his playing integrated the “quartal” floating harmony of McCoy which allowed the other soloists a degree a harmonic freedom not normally found in the Hammond organ trio. I became his number one fan.

By January ‘69 I found myself playing with Larry in the Tony Williams Lifetime. Tony hadn’t even mentioned to me that Larry would be in the trio, I only found out at the first rehearsal!

By this time he had become Khalid Yaseen; and since I had come strongly under the influence of the Sufi philosophy, we became very close, particularly since on tour we always shared a room together. Khalid was a delightful, extremely funny and profound human being. He was also extremely perceptive. I’ve witnessed on a number of occasions Khalid improvise a song complete with lyrics about a person he had just met, which revealed the little idiosyncrasies of that person, but in such a hilarious way, without a shadow of meanness. He had me in tears more times than I can remember.



Tony Williams Lifetime. L to R Larry Young, Tony Williams and John McLaughlin.
Photo by Sid Maurer.

As a musician he was unique, and just wonderful to play with. There was another aspect to his playing that showed itself mainly in live performance. During the two years I played with Tony and Khalid, in every performance, Khalid had the time to “solo.” That is, Tony and I wouldn’t play. Khalid would then pull sounds out of the Hammond that we’d never heard before. Some nights it worked, and some nights not. There was one night I’ll never forget at the Jazz Workshop in Boston. Khalid got into it from the first moment, and it was so good and fine I started laughing, that’s how good it was, but he didn’t stop. Within a minute I was laughing out of control with tears running down my face, and I had to turn my back to the audience I was so embarrassed. At one point I turned around to see Tony and there he was, out of control with laughter, trying to hide unsuccessfully behind his bass drum!

Nobody ever played like Khalid before, and nobody has played like him since.

He was a brother to me whom I love to this day, and still miss him.

JOHN MCLAUGHLIN

JACK BRUCE ON LARRY YOUNG

“Larry was ... a very amiable and quiet guy. And he was a genius—probably the one musician I have worked with who I could say without a shadow of a doubt was a genius, and I’ve worked with some great musicians. But Larry stands head and shoulders above all of them. He had this ability to make sounds and play notes that were completely unique. We played the Maryland in Glasgow and he played this organ solo where we would all stop and he would make sounds on a C3 using just the drawbars. I saw people crying. That was the power Larry had. It was astounding.”

From Shapiro, Harry. *Jack Bruce Composing Himself: The Authorised Biography*. London: Jawbone Press, 2010

DR. LONNIE SMITH TALKS ABOUT LARRY YOUNG AND THE LIFE OF AN ORGAN PLAYER IN THE 1950s AND ‘60s

ZEVE FELDMAN: You and Larry Young were label mates for a while at Blue Note. What was it like recording for the label, and in particular, what was it like recording at Rudy Van Gelder’s? If I’m not mistaken, there was a house organ there. You and the other organists who recorded at Rudy’s all used the same instrument. Is that right?

DR. LONNIE SMITH: We all used it. Jimmy Smith and I, we all used it. That’s right. Love that organ. It’s still there, as a matter of fact.

Was there anything specific about that organ in particular that stands out for you?

Well, a lot of people think it’s a B-3, which it basically is, but technically, it’s a C-3. It’s similar. It just has a back to it, you know. And of course, Rudy was the chief engineer himself. He’s still the greatest engineer out there. They were doing a documentary at Rudy’s studio and we were talking to Rudy. And when I was out there for that and I saw the gravel on the ground outside, I picked up a piece of the gravel and had it made into a ring, which I carry with me and it keeps the spirit of Rudy Van Gelder with me at all times. But that studio is great. The organ is great. It’s still there and still in immaculate shape. It’s unbelievable—like no one has touched it. The studio is still the same. It’s a beautiful studio. That bass sound, you know.

When I was there, they showed me the organ. They said, “Oh yeah, this is the one everybody played.” I was struck by the fact that while it’s obviously well-maintained—and that’s great—what makes it

historical is that you guys all played that very same instrument.

That’s right. We all played that instrument. That’s the one on all those Blue Note records we did. And you couldn’t find a better instrument. And Rudy knew how to make it sound right, you know. Cause a lot of times you could have a good instrument, but the engineer, if they don’t know what they’re doing, can’t get that sound!

These recordings we have of Larry Young in Paris were done in the same year of your first sideman recording with Red Holloway on *Red Soul* on Prestige in 1965, so you and Larry Young were of the same generation. When did you first hear of, or meet, Larry Young?

Larry ... I heard of Larry in the ‘60s, but I didn’t meet him until later on. When I first heard Larry he was like all of us; when he started, he did like everyone else. He was influenced by Jimmy Smith. So he sounded a lot like that, back in the day. A lot of the time, he didn’t have a guitarist with him, so he had his own way of playing to accompany himself. So the way he played, it was like a spread. A spread. Plus using the fingers at the same time. So he’s using the spread, and then doing that, so it worked in doing triplets and things. So it worked for him. Like even when he got together with Grant Green, cause the way Grant played, he had a big, very, very large amp, and the way Grant comped, it was like, sort of like a muted, with a feeling, like a percussive type of feel. So it worked with Larry. And Larry played pretty smooth. So it really worked. And later on, he’d come upon his style, and it sounded pretty good. It was a lot different from Jimmy. So it worked. Cause everybody else was looking at Jimmy and trying to play what he was playing.

How else would you describe that smoothness, as you put it?

Well, when I say smoothness, it’s like the touch. Everyone has a different touch. So like when he played, it wasn’t as percussive. That’s what I’m trying to say basically. It didn’t have a real heavy percussive sound. ‘Cause his thing wasn’t planted like that. Articulation. So it came out a little different, you know. The smoothness meant it had more of a legato feel than a percussive feel.

Having seen you play a number of times and also thinking about Larry’s unique use of the drawbars, do you think Larry had any influence on you as a peer in terms of exploring the full potential of the beast that is the Hammond B-3?

I don’t know about that, because I did use some sounds. I wasn’t off into it because I just heard something other than that. But no, I think he did his own thing. And that’s what was so beautiful. Everybody had their own style. Isn’t it great? They don’t sound alike. And that’s beautiful. Because you know, when I was with Blue Note, you also had other organists, what was his name Baby ...

“Baby Face” Willette.

Willette, Shirley ... all of ‘em. Everybody was over there. So it was a beautiful thing.

Sure. I mean, there were so many great organists that came on the scene in the ‘60s: yourself, Jimmy, Jimmy McGriff, Jack McDuff, Big John Patton, Groove Holmes.

Yeah, John Patton, Groove Holmes . . .

Did it surprise you to hear that Larry was playing with Jimi Hendrix, Carlos Santana and John McLaughlin, by the late '60s. It's quite a stylistic shift to occur within the same decade.

Yeah, I remember I caught him with McLaughlin. That was a unique sound. It was a different sound. Because see, when you play with average guitar and organ group, it's basically jazz. You know, real jazz. But when they came out, it sort of went a different way. Because the way McLaughlin played, it was slightly different. So the music turned out a little different, which was great. And you had Tony Williams, you know. It was a great sound.

It's interesting that while most organists were playing with other saxophonists and drummers who had real soulful sensibilities, for instance, Stanley Turrentine, Ike Quebec, Hank Crawford, Bernard Purdie, Donald Bailey; Larry was playing with Sam Rivers, Joe Henderson, Elvin Jones and Woody Shaw. And he could've ended up playing with Eric Dolphy in Europe at some point had Dolphy not passed away. What do you think it was about Larry's playing that made him fit into more of the non-soul jazz sound?

Right. I think what it was, basically, is when you're playing you have a tendency to want to try something different, want to try something new. Some people never get out of that. And you can't leave it. You know, what he did, and he could actually do that. And it worked. Do you remember this record that George Benson made with Miles Davis?

***Miles In The Sky* with "Paraphernalia" on it?**

George sounded beautiful with Miles, but Miles was in a different place than where George was when George played with him. See, when you're playing with different people, it normally makes you play different. So when you're playing with Eric Dolphy and people like that, they're not doing, basically, honking, as we call it. Honking or swinging that heavy; strong, heavy bebop. That makes you play different, the fellas that you play with make you play different if you want to make it work. Otherwise, it sounds sort of strange: you're playing Joplin and they're playing Mingus. Different places. Or Trane, and then here you come with Joplin. And that's what happened with Larry; he found fellas who were in the same place he was. It worked for them, what they were trying to do.

So do you remember the first time you heard Larry?

George Benson and I, when we first got together, we were in his mother's basement in Pittsburg. And George says, "Grant Green, Larry Young and Candy Finch are playing tonight in New York." Now, we're in Pittsburg. He says, "If we leave right now we can catch them." So we took off. At that time, we only had two songs together, that was "Secret Lover" and "Clockwise." And we took off to New York. And we got to New York, and they were on stage. Larry Young, Grant Green and Candy Finch. They were playing, and Larry sounded beautiful. So they called us up to play one, so we went on stage, and quite naturally people went crazy as usual, because young guys, you know, they're playing, out of the audience. But that's when I met Larry, like really close and met him. That was in the early '60s.

Grant Green and Larry Young. See you're talking about people who are not just ordinary players. Larry Young and Grant Green were like somebody that left something here for the young people to learn and get together. They left a legacy, which is a beautiful thing. They weren't just regular musicians. You have people that can play, that's a difference. But it doesn't mean how much you play, it's what you say. And that's the key. You can't just think that just because you can play that that's it. No, you have to have something inside of you, and that's what they had. Something inside of them, that calls out to the people. That's what makes them special. Individual cats, they don't understand sometimes, they play and play and play, but they don't really mean it, they're just playing what they play. And they're playing what they learn, and not from what they feel. And see, in playing, you have to play life. Life. You have to play life. Your experiences. Because everyone has something to say. And back then, all of us were like a close-knit family. It was so . . . you should have been there! It was like really close. I mean, you should've been there! I mean, you'd see us on the stage, laughing and talkin', tradin' chords, and laughin' and coming to see each other, inspiring each other. It was a wonderful, wonderful thing to see the love that we have for each other. Jack McDuff and I were playing, we had a group called "Hellfire and Damnation." And McGriff, we had a group together. See that's the whole thing about it, the family. It's the family, and the love which we have for each other. And that's the beauty in it. We were playing at the Key Club out in North Jersey and Lou Donaldson and I were playing, and Larry came in. And Larry had just won the Number One organist with *DownBeat*. He came in and played some with us. And he was happy.

He lived in Newark too. That's where he was from.

That's right. And we all used to play through there, constantly. There were like organ places. Organ clubs we called them. They had pianos too, but most of the places with the organ rooms, you know, they were something. 'Cause with the organ, that's another piece of furniture up on stage. And to handle that organ like that. Everyone can't really handle it. Play it, they play it, but they don't really handle it. Because it's so strong, such a monster of an instrument, to control it you have to be able to control it. Cause it will get away from you. And they're big. We used to travel with them all around the world. We would travel with those big things.

I heard a story that Jimmy Smith used to drive a hearse.

Hearse. And we had trailers, I'm gonna tell you this, but I'm not gonna go to jail for you. They had trailers, and they would take the trailers and paint them, U-Haul trailers, and put them in the trailers and we would get stopped all the time coming through Ohio. We were going to a job and they'd make you pull everything out of there. Could you imagine? And then when you call the place, they're gone. I mean, they got somebody else playing 'cause we can't get there.

That's terrible.

But we had a lot of fun. See, that's why I say you have to play life.

Is there anything in closing that you'd like to say about Larry.

Yeah, I wish he was here. So we could laugh and joke and talk about a lot

of things because see back in the day, you have musicians that love each other, with all of us on the road, so we don't see each other like we want to. And so we see each other in passing. You're coming from that club, I'm going into the club, or you just left last week or a couple of weeks ago. So we don't see each other, because we just keep moving. And that's the hard part. That is the very hard part. So that why I always think about having a retreat. A home where all of the musicians . . . 'cause see musicians can't really buy a home. They can't get a home because they can't prove it. You know, but they work every week, every day, and don't have no insurance. So I'd like to have a place that they can go to like that, and they can have . . . teach there. Even if they can't play as well as they used to, and stuff starts falling down, and you can get your doctors and lawyers and so on, you can get them to help out. And you can teach your students. And you can have a place where we can sit and talk, and still teach. We can see each other. What a lovely way to go. To leave. I wish he was here now, you know.

ZAK SHELBY-SZYSZKO: Yeah, everything we've heard, he sounds like he was kind of like a "gentle giant."

He was. He was just like that. Never heard him argue or anything. I haven't. And the thing about it, we were there! We were there together. And we have hugged, and talked to each other, and all the things . . . that's the beauty in it, you know. And he respected me and I respected him. That was the thing. That was the beauty in it all.

ZAK SHELBY-SZYSZKO: What do you think it is about his playing that people are trying to capture? What do you think they're going after?

I think it was modernized. He played . . . his voicings. His articulation.

ZEV FELDMAN: Do you have any further reflections on Larry you'd like to share?

All those organs that Larry, Jimmy and I used to play on, they're still here. All those organs, they're alive somewhere, still living. I don't know where, but we might run into them one day.



Dr. Lonnie Smith. Photo by Mark Sheldon

Larry Young, Nathan Davis and Woody Shaw.
Photo by Jean-Pierre Leloir



JOHN MEDESKI SPEAKS ABOUT LARRY YOUNG

ZEV FELDMAN: When did you first hear Larry Young and what did you think about him?

JOHN MEDESKI: I heard Larry Young on the Lifetime recordings, when I was about 11 years old. I grew up playing the piano, I started with classical piano, so I used to find arrangements written out of different songs that my parents or grandparents liked. Pianists like Carmen Cavallaro, Peter Nero and Frankie Carle, these kinds of people, not jazz guys. More of the piano pop guys of the '40s and '50s. My neighbor, my best friend growing up's older brother was a drummer. I think I must have been eleven. His name was Rob Schuh, and he called me into his room and started playing records. I hadn't heard Oscar Peterson or Miles. I think we spent hours that afternoon and he was just playing records for me. It changed my life hearing some of these songs that I knew, played in a whole other way—swinging, grooving, you know ... improvised. It blew my head off! And one of the things that he played for me—now this was the first time I ever heard any jazz other than big band music—was Lifetime among all those other things, you know? It was '75 when he played this stuff for me so it blew my head off! Larry Young! It was one of the first real “jazz” records I heard.

Do you remember what the record was?

Emergency! Definitely a mind-blowing experience. We're talking about, Oscar Peterson—live at Montreux [Montreux '77]—the same afternoon,

you know, for the first time, hearing Miles's *Four & More* and Lifetime's *Emergency!* ... Return to Forever, Mahavishnu, Count Basie, and this is all like in one afternoon. It was life-changing. It was like “Holy shit, man!” The problem is, I couldn't really hear everything that was going on. I just felt this music. That's when I started getting into jazz and I started listening to everything. So, for me, it's always been like that. I never had this segregation of jazz music, because I heard it all at the same time in one sort of bag. All this different stuff. Then I started taking lessons. I studied with Lee Shaw and I'd take her records and record them. Straight ahead, be-bop, Cecil Taylor too, and ... Art Ensemble. All this was at the same time. It was amazing. So, Larry Young was one of the first guys I ever heard, in terms of jazz music, but it wasn't *Unity*. I didn't hear *Unity* till many years later. I got into the Lifetime stuff, then I'm sure I heard *Lawrence of Newark* and then I heard the Hendrix bootleg stuff.

I didn't hear *Unity* 'til much later when I really started getting into bebop. I started by getting into piano players. I liked Duke Ellington, Monk, Bud and all that stuff. So Larry Young on the Tony Williams Lifetime's *Emergency!* was definitely one of the first organ players I ever heard, and I'd listened a lot to Larry Young before I even played B-3, which is kind of wild. When I first sat down at the organ, the Hammond, and realized what an incredible instrument it was, I was floored by the sonic possibilities. And somehow, by that time, Larry Young was already deep in my musical subconscious even though I didn't know it. Before that, I played piano, I just gigged as a piano player.

When most people think of jazz organ, some of the guys who come to mind are Jimmy Smith, Jack McDuff, and Jimmy McGriff, Charles Earland. What do you think made Larry Young stand apart from those other guys?

Larry Young had that *something*. He had that thing that Jimi Hendrix had. He had a certain futuristic freedom of mind and spirit. A lot of it was part of the '60s jazz scene. That's what people were doing. That's how they were blowing up the history of jazz and allowing themselves to be influenced by all the music that was happening in the world and trying to integrate this improvisational spirit and groove and swing with everything that was going on in the world at that time. Larry had that open mind; he had that. That's what I hear. I hear this freedom and this fire in addition to the fact that he grooved really hard.

It seems there would be kind of a kinship between both you guys, because you each played in different circles. With Larry, on the one hand, you think of Grant Green and those guys and then you also associate him with Hendrix, Santana and Jack Bruce. In your case, you also played with a lot of jazz guys—Dewey Redman, Billy Higgins, Alan Dawson, Bob Mintzer—but also with artists like Irma Thomas, Iggy Pop and Trey Anastasio. Anything else you could expand on about any parallels between both you guys?

It's hard for me to think about the parallels. It's hard to look at myself from the outside, so I don't know about that. Especially because you get

to hear all of Larry Young's music on these recordings, you see how he connected on the deepest level with the music and the other musicians. You start listening and it instantly goes deep. Whoever he's playing with. I didn't know him ... I got to hear some stories. Jack Bruce revered Larry Young like Bach or Mozart. The way he talks about him I could see that he respected him as a musician of the highest order. You hear that sort of genius in Larry and the ability to play with anybody, but always taking it to the deepest level. Where music comes from. Larry had a universality. You get that universal feeling from his music. It's not jazz, it's not pop, it's not rock, even though when you hear him, it's so rooted in jazz. It's universal, and not all artists, not all musicians have that thing ... he did. It's universal music, whatever style it is. He also sonically explored the organ more than any of the other jazz guys. He treated the instrument orchestrally, he was not afraid of that. You especially hear it with the Lifetime stuff. In general you just hear that his palette on the instrument was the next step. Like Coltrane was the next step. He can really be compared to Hendrix and Coltrane, I think. The next step, with the organ, and unfortunately almost no one has stepped further. I mean, no one's even stepped as far as he did. Lonnie Smith is one of the people I know, where I hear the whole history of the instrument, including that futuristic quality. Plus, Lonnie has that free spirit. He also has that sort of ... I can't put into words ... something that's rooted and yet also open.

Larry Young was not tethered by the history. He wasn't trapped by it, it was just part of him. It's ultimate mastery ... freedom! I mean you have all this material, but you're free. That is what I think of when I think of Larry's playing.

Did anything stand out to you when you were listening to this music about the dynamics between the different band members? Of course we were talking about Larry Young in Tony Williams Lifetime. Is there anything with these guys playing on this music that you can comment on?

Everything about it. One of the things that stood out to me was Larry's groove. We all know the recordings we heard of him playing with people like Tony and Elvin, those guys are some of the greatest drummers in the history of the human race. So it's great to hear him in other settings, playing with other musicians and hear how the feel is just as deep. And his free spirit. I know I keep saying that but that's what's happening in these recordings too. You hear him play with whomever, and it goes there. It doesn't matter who he's playing with, it goes to that place. A lot of it is his groove, his feel, his time, I love that. It's like a river. It's like nature. If we go back in history and listen to jazz, the time was a little more flexible than what it has become. Nature is not like that. It reflects something missing in music now, and a lot of it is this freedom, this fearlessness that he had. That era of the late '50s and '60s, it was happening a lot because that was people were going for. You hear it in that music in general in that time period. You go back and you listen to all this music that happened back then, especially the mid to late '60s and even the early '70s, it has an amazing spirit, it was an amazing time. I miss that now. There's not a lot of people are taking it to the next step from here.

Everything is going backwards, which I guess is because of fear. He was lucky to be around that time when all these things were blowing up and boundaries were being destroyed in music and he's a big part of that in jazz, I think. He could play straight ahead, bebop, and he was good as anybody or better. He represented the most modern jazz on the organ, but then he would also play rock! Fortunately, the rock or the pop music at the time was much more expansive than it is now, so he fit right in.

Let me ask you about his piano playing, which is an interesting parallel because the two of you are both organists and pianists.

I wonder how much he was playing piano on the scene. I know Jimmy Smith was a pianist first, he picked up organ a little later in his life. So did Lonnie Smith. Lonnie Smith was a singer, it's interesting. I don't know a lot about Larry, his history and how he grew up playing music, but I think a lot of people played piano first.

How about Larry's piano playing in comparison to his organ playing and how about switching from piano to organ in general?

The piano and organ have completely different touches. With the piano, the sound that comes from the instrument—from tone, to volume, to dynamics, to color—is all relative to your physical touch and how you hit the instrument. The organ is not at all like that. There are a few very subtle things you can do that can be affected by the touch. But for the most part, everything on the organ is determined by the volume pedal, the percussion settings, and the use of the drawbars. The piano is a different animal, completely. It requires a completely different touch. Were there any other recordings of Larry playing piano out there?

The only ones that come to mind are Nathan Davis's *Happy Girl*, and the two other Nathan Davis albums from the late '60s. There is a piano recording of "Zoltan" that's out there. But I feel like the organ kind of gave him additional wings.

I didn't know Larry, I never hung out with him, so I don't really know. A big part of the instrument is the coloristic possibilities and that has a lot to do with how you voice harmonies. That's a big part of it. With the organ, it's how you use the drawbars and the registers. With the piano, it's how you hit the instrument, how you play the notes, how you hit the keys. With Larry, the organ is like a different type of orchestra. But with him, it's FEELS the same... he's making music on whatever he's got in front of him. His piano playing is great. Again, it's got this groove, you feel his time... he's got a dark sound on the piano. It's really beautiful. You can hear similarities, and it's hard to put into words what they are but in terms of playing piano, what you end up feeling is very similar to what you feel from his organ playing, but they're coming from very different places. It's interesting to hear his left hand, because when he plays organ he's usually playing bass. But to hear how he comps with his left hand is really awesome. The way he fills it out, to hear how he sets everything up rhythmically with his left hand and how he accompanies his lines. Man, it's so beautiful to get to hear the stuff in this recording... to hear "Larry's Blues" is awesome. You know, "La valse gris" or whatever it is, what a cool tune! And his groove on that is amazing! You

don't hear that feel in the jazz waltz very often anymore. The only thing I can think of is some of the Blakey stuff with Bobby Timmons grooving like that.

You've traversed such a wide spectrum of music throughout your career. I was just wondering with the different circles you've been in, if you've had any experiences coming across others that were heavy into Larry's music like you were? I mean you talked about Jack Bruce just a moment ago.

That was interesting. The truth is I was into Larry Young, like I was into everything. I listened to all kinds of music and I grew up listening to all of the later Larry Young, the more rock/experimental stuff. Then I started playing organ. I was really into Jimmy McGriff, Jimmy Smith, Groove Holmes, Wild Bill Davis. That is what I was checking out, that's what I was really listening to—Baby Face Willette, Art Neville with The Meters, Bob Marley's band. But, whenever I'd be playing, even with Mr. Jelly Belly's jazz and blues band, I found myself stretching and looking for other colors. Trying to use the instrument more vocally and like a horn player, or more like classical music with the kind of textures and harmonies you can get. And it wasn't for a few years that I realized Larry Young already did that. It was in my subconscious. It seeped in there because it was part of my early listening, when I was listening to music just for its own sake and I wasn't studying it. Certain musicians can affect you that way. You know, Coltrane, Larry Young, Jimi Hendrix. I mean, I keep pulling these names out, but they're the people who infect you. Without having to analyze and study what they do, you listen to it, and it seeps in, it seeps in deeply. There is something universal about those guys. Larry was like that for me. When I realized that, I went back and started listening to all that stuff again, he was really crushing it.

Playing with Spectrum Road [a quartet with John Medeski, Vernon Reid, Jack Bruce and Cindy Blackman Santana that focused on the music of the Tony Williams Lifetime], I could see the reverence Jack Bruce had for Larry. First of all, Jack was one of the founders of Cream, he wrote "Sunshine of Your Love," he hung out with Hendrix, he knew everybody during that time. People may not know this about Jack, but he was a scholar of classical music. We would talk about the best version of the Chopin Waltzes, Messiaen organ pieces, and all this different music. We would talk about certain performances and certain recording. He would actually fly around Europe to go hear concerts. He knew that music really well and loved it, and Jack revered Larry Young on that level, I could see it. He loved Tony Williams too, but with Larry, I think it was this other level of reverence. He's like "I've never played with anybody like that." It's almost like Larry Young was the greatest musician Jack ever knew.

Wow, that's a huge statement!

It's saying a lot when you consider everyone he knew, Clapton, Hendrix, The Beatles... well of course he's not around now for me to ask him straight-up, but that was the sense that Jack gave me when he talked about him, that Larry was, if not the greatest musician he ever played with, one of them. So yes, that's saying something!

Do you hear his influence today on any other musicians in your field right now?

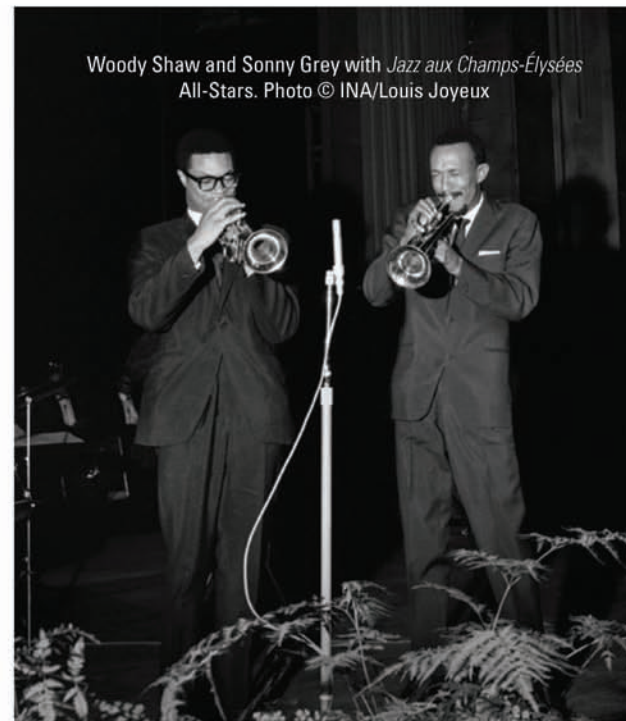
You know, I don't hear Larry's influence enough in the music world today, I can tell you that right now! And I'm not talking about the musical aspects; meaning the notes, the chords, the harmonies, but the spirit. In the end the spirit is everything. The spirit of music, the spirit that's being evoked. There is not enough of his influence out there. So hopefully these recordings will help.

Do you have any final thoughts on Larry and if you were ever putting a *Heaven On Earth* All-Star band led by Larry, who you would put in the group?

You know, he already did it, man. I mean, he did everything! I guess it'd be fun to hear him with Trane... that would have been something.

Larry Young was very important in my development. When the Mosaic box set, *The Complete Blue Note Recordings of Larry Young* came out in 1991, it dawned on me: I was like, "Holy shit man, Larry Young is huge influence on me and I didn't even remember!". That was right when MMW [Medeski Martin & Wood] got together and at that time, I was listening to all sorts of other things. That box set was a wake-up call. I forgot how important this guy was to me. It's so deep in there because it was part of my younger listening years when I wasn't playing organ. That's when it hit me, what a powerful influence Larry Young is.

Woody Shaw and Sonny Grey with *Jazz aux Champs-Élysées* All-Stars. Photo © INA/Louis Joyeux





Larry Young and Woody Shaw. Photo by Jean-Pierre Leloir

BILL LASWELL TALKS WITH ZEV FELDMAN ABOUT LARRY YOUNG

ZEV FELDMAN: Could you tell us about the first time you heard Larry Young, and if you remember what the album was?

BILL LASWELL: Well, first going back, I'm not really an authority on the early Larry Young, and I think probably the first thing I heard was *Lawrence of Newark*.

Sure. On the Perception Record label.

Right. And then, let's see, *Unity*, of course, which I think was Blue Note. And

then I was fortunate with Tony Williams Lifetime, when I was 14 years old, I saw Lifetime with Jack Bruce, and McLaughlin, Tony and Larry Young. That was at Newport Jazz Festival, would be 19... I think 69. His solo records were great, but what was really a shock to me was the work with Lifetime because the organ, he used so much space. More than anyone else, it was like orchestral one moment, and then cosmic the next. It was like putting an organ on LSD or something.

Everyone loves to talk about his use of the drawbar.

Well it's amazing. I don't think anyone's ever quite done that, that I've heard. There was a box set that came out, I think on Blue Note. It was the trio with Elvin and Grant Green. [*Talkin' About!*, which is included in *The Complete*

Blue Note Recordings of Larry Young on Mosaic Records.] I didn't know that trio. In fact, I didn't even know that he had a trio with Elvin Jones. I worked with Elvin around that time and I got that box and realized that they had this organ trio.

Larry started out playing blues and R&B before getting into the whole modal jazz thing and beyond, just like Coltrane started out playing in R&B bands, too. And around Detroit, you grew up listening to a lot of blues and R&B yourself. But then each of you expanded your musical worlds as time went on. Can you talk a little bit about what it's like to have that—for lack of a better word—"blues" base, but be constantly searching for something new musically?

I was lucky to start really young. Young enough to... I couldn't even get into half of the places I was supposed to play. And I lived in Michigan, smaller towns like East Lansing, Ann Arbor, Albion, and then we would go into Detroit to play in clubs, but also there were a lot of colleges, like especially Ann Arbor and East Lansing, where you could pick up work. And in the Detroit area, there were organ trios, I think they probably became popular because it was a small group and they could fit on a small stage. Detroit had a guy, Lyman Woodard, was his name, and he was the Hammond organ player. Shirley Scott played a lot of Hammond organ in Detroit around that time. There were a lot of organ players during that period, like Charles Earland. So you heard a lot of that in clubs. And again they were smaller groups.

Baker's Keyboard Lounge, was that one of the spots?

Baker's was a little bigger. These places were really small—I don't even remember the names of them—but they couldn't hold more than a hundred; two hundred people maximum. I think Baker's Keyboard Lounge was a little bigger.

I see. Versus kinda like the bar area, a bar which might have a B-3 built in, like some of the clubs did.

Well, in some of the Black communities there were a lot of bars like that where you'd walk in and there's a bar on one side, there's seating on the other side, and in the corner there's this little wooden stand, which is a stage that could just barely hold an organ trio. And you'd pass by that on the way to the restroom and stuff. That's when you get a close-up on whoever is playing. And it could've been anybody.

Unfortunately Larry was only with us for 38 years, so we could only imagine whom he would've ended up playing with had he been able to keep going, but while he was here he played and recorded with a host of jazz icons like Miles, Grant Green, Elvin, Woody Shaw, Joe Henderson, Hank Mobley and Lee Morgan, but also rock legends like Jimi Hendrix, Carlos Santana, John McLaughlin. Do you have any insights into what you think it was about Larry that enabled him to fit into just about any musical context?

Again, I think it's being able to create this atmosphere that people could just fall into and be absorbed by. I saw the band with Carlos and John McLaughlin with Larry Young. That would have been early '70s, on [the

Carlos Santana/John McLaughlin album] *Love, Devotion, Surrender*. And there's a lot of organ, you know, spacey organ, on that album and on the live gig. There was quite a bit of organ on the live gig, which was also with Billy Cobham, Armando Peraza, Doug Rauch. And that would have been like '72 or '73, I think. I think he fit well with the rock sound because he wasn't a quiet player, and he took up a lot of space. And he just was able to create atmospheres and environments. Not just a straight... nothing to do with playing jazz to me. It was space music.

I know you've said here and on other interviews that you're not necessarily a "jazz guy," but this particular recording that we're releasing *Larry Young In Paris: The ORTF Recordings*, it is significant because it was recorded in 1965, just a little before the classic album *Unity* came out later on Blue Note with Joe Henderson, Woody and Elvin. Can you talk a little bit more about what *Unity* meant to you?

I think, you know, first hearing it you obviously hear the first song, and there was something about the rhythm ideas in the first song that were unusual. And the voicings of Joe Henderson and Woody Shaw? There was something just different about the voicings of the horns. And something to do with the phrasing of the drums. Which is actually something I'm surprised that people didn't sample those beats a long time ago. So those are the things that I remember. When he signed to Arista, I had a friend who played in his band. He was a drummer from Connecticut. His name was Rob Gottfried. And Fernando Saunders was the bass player. And I think they made two records, one is called *Fuel*, and one is called *Spaceball*. And they're pretty strange records, you know, it's a little bit echoing another record he played on with Tony Williams which was called *Ego*. It's a little bit of an extension of that sort of concept.

We spoke with John Medeski and we had three questions for him that I also wanted to ask you: First, since you've traversed such a wide spectrum of music throughout your career, in and around many different circles, I'm curious if you have any experiences to share of coming across others who were into Larry's music like yourself?

Well, working sort of backwards, I went to Rashied Ali's—he had a club in SoHo—and Larry was playing there and I really wanted to see Larry Young. And it was in a small group, it was Joe Chambers, and maybe just a duet. And I went to the club, it's a really small loft, it's the period of the loft jazz. And I went and we waited, and sat there, and nothing. Nobody came. And then there was a phone call and Rashied came to the mic and said "I have some bad news: Larry Young just died."

Oh, man.

In Newark. And I was waiting there to see him, he was supposed to be playing. So that's working backwards, but before that, this guy, a drummer that I knew, he was always going up, picking up Larry in Newark and taking him to like movies on 42nd. Larry Young, from what he said, would go see "Texas Chainsaw" in 3D and stuff like that. He was pretty out there! But that explains a little bit about the sound and what makes up

the music and why it was different. It was a different head.

He was going in a different direction, he was evolving too, wouldn't you say?

Absolutely.

It's interesting. I gravitate towards a lot of those Blue Note records, and it's quite different, but from the time he joined Lifetime, you can see he's going in a different direction. Those Arista records really capture that.

And to me, you know what you mentioned, Blue Note, those are probably for me the best organ trio records. But I guess for me the all-time organ trio record—and it's really badly recorded; no one seems to care—but is *Emergency!* by Lifetime, which was guitar, organ and drums. It's basically an organ trio, just a little more out there.

I was thinking about Vashkar. There's some incredible stuff on that record. That's a total trio. He's really going far out on that though. *Emergency!* what a great album that was.

And then *Turn It Over*. You know, I owed a couple of records to Polygram, and I went into the vaults with Bob Belden, who was a pretty good architect. And I got the multitracks to *Turn It Over*, and I did a remix, which is out there. The bootleg, never was released by Polygram or Polydor or whoever it was at the time. That's the moment they kinda changed and became more commercial. But it is out there as a bootleg, and it's around. There's some outtakes on that too.

Let me ask you just in closing, about any final thoughts on Larry. And if you were putting together a *Heaven On Earth*-type all-star band led by Larry—with musicians who could be alive or dead—who would you want to be in the band with him?

I think they did that. I thought that Lifetime was the beginning and the end of fusion music. Jazz rock. Everything that came after that was contrived and more based on technique than spiritual music. I think they did it. But music changes. People change. The concept, the perception of what a player does, is different now. It's all different. I think what you just asked was accomplished with Lifetime and a few other things. And then there's people who never really got the right band together. Like Jimi Hendrix never really found a great band. He himself made a statement, but he could have done better playing with others.

Is there anything else you'd like to say about him in closing?

Just that he's out there in space. And he was out there in space when he was here. So he didn't travel too far. He's around.



THE 2xHD MASTERING PROCESS



FOR THE 2xHD TRANSFER OF THIS RECORDING, THE ORIGINAL 1/4", 15 IPS CCIR MASTER TAPE WAS PLAYED ON A NAGRA-T MODIFIED WITH HIGH-END TUBE PLAYBACK ELECTRONICS, WIRED WITH OCC SILVER CABLE FROM THE PLAYBACK HEAD DIRECT TO A TELEFUNKEN EF806 TUBE. THE NAGRA T HAS ONE OF THE BEST TRANSPORTS EVER MADE, HAVING FOUR DIRECT DRIVE MOTORS, TWO PINCH ROLLERS AND A TAPE TENSION HEAD.

WE DID AN ANALOG TRANSFER FOR EACH HIGH-RES SAMPLING AND A & B COMPARISONS WERE MADE WITH THE ORIGINAL LP, USING THE KRONOS TURNTABLE WITH A BLACK BEAUTY TONE ARM.

EACH FORMAT (96kHz, 192kHz, DSD2.8MHz AND DSD5.6MHz) WAS CREATED USING MERGING HORUS/HAPI A/D CONVERTER, CALIBRATED TO THE REQUIRED FORMAT, AND A dCS VIVALDI CLOCK.

2xHD WAS CREATED BY PRODUCER/STUDIO OWNER ANDRÉ PERRY AND AUDIOPHILE SOUND ENGINEER RENÉ LAFLAMME.



PURE EMOTION
www.2xHD.com