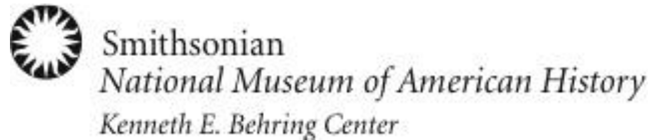

Funding for the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program NEA Jazz Master interview was provided by the National Endowment for the Arts.

HANK JONES
NEA Jazz Master (1989)

Interviewee:	Hank Jones (July 31, 1918 – May 16, 2010)
Interviewer:	Bill Brower
Date:	November 26-27, 2004
Repository:	Archives Center, National Museum of American History
Description:	Transcript, pp. 134

Hank Jones: I was over there for about two and a half weeks doing a promotional tour. I had done a couple of CDs; one was with my brother Elvin and Richard Davis, the bass player. They made – – I think they made two releases from that date. And I did another date with Jack DeJohnette and John Patitucci. But, these two albums were the objects of the promotion. I mean, they promote very, very heavily everyday. I must have had 40 interviews and about 30 record signings at the record shops, plus all of the recording. We did seven concerts and people inevitably want the records, CDs of the concert for us to sign. I have a trio over there, with Jimmy Cobb and John Fink. It was called, "The Great Jazz Trio." It was not my name, but the Japanese have special names for everything, you know? That's only one in a series of tree others which he called the great jazz trio. The first one was Ron Carter, Tony Williams and myself. But, there had been a succession of different changes in personnel. It changed about six times. The current one was Jimmy Cobb and Dave Fink--Oh, the cookies have arrived and not a minute too soon. Oh yeah, by the way if you would like little ice cream to go with that that is also available. No, thank you. I've better not; it interferes with my talking.

Bill Brauer: Shall I I.D? Today is Friday, November 26th in the year 2004. My name is William A. Brauer Junior. I am in the home of Hank Jones, conducting an oral history interview for the Smithsonian's Jazz Oral history project. Following your

curious logic, let's talk about how, since we are there, we are here now… You were talking about your recent China to Japan. When did you exactly go over?

Jones: I went over there the second. I think it was second of November. No, it was the first actually. You know, it takes a day to get over there. But, the day you arrive is awkward. You take a half a day off, and then you work the next day. It started third actually. It went about two weeks, a little over two weeks actually. It was very difficult. There was something going on every day, many, many autographs, many record signings and CD signings, which of course, was the object of the trip because it's a promotional trip to promote CDs or two or more CDs I had done previously. It was very necessary. It seems, the Japanese have the right idea about selling records. The American companies, by and large, always say that they can't make money playing jazz because they don't take the right steps to promote sales. You have to promote, you have to exploit, you have to distribute. The Japanese do all these things so they sell records. And they do very well. The people around Japan, I very jazz conscious. They like all types of music, I think particularly jazz. So, it is very pleasant. There is a lot of work, but it was pleasant.

Brauer: Part of what was released… I guess the – – in 2002, in May, you are in Japan recording with your brother Elvin and with Richard Davis. Out of that came to releases "Autumn Leaves" and "Someday My Prince Will Come."

Jones: Exactly, incidentally, that was then and in New York.

Brauer: That was done in New York, okay.

Jones: It was at Avatar Studios.

Brauer: When did you… You have done a lot with the Japanese, and almost a whole, sort of... In your career which might be related to the great jazz trios and the various incarnations, how did that great – – Where did the idea of The Great Jazz Trio start?

Jones: It started, the idea of the great jazz trio started, with two A&R men who used to work at East Wind Records. They were both with East Wind at the time. Yasahachi Ito, sometimes known as 88 because he used to play piano. And Kyoshi Ito, no relation, who was also a musician but he didn't play piano. They were the ones he came up with the idea, The Great Jazz Trio. It was their appellation, not mine. That would be pretentious if I named my jazz trio The Great Jazz Trio. It had some fine points; I don't know whether it was great. Actually, whether or not it was great, it is someone else's decision to make, not mine. But, they called it The Great Jazz Trio. That consisted of Ron Carter on bass, Tony Williams on drums, and myself. The first recordings took place at the Village Vanguard, downtown in New York. It was recorded live at the Vanguard.

Brauer: Wasn't that Buster on that?

Jones: I'm sorry?

Brauer: Wasn't Buster Williams on that?

Jones: No. Buster was part of a later group called The Great Jazz Trio. Buster was in that along with Grady Tate, as the drummer, I believe if I'm not mistaken. But there were several incarnations of The Great Jazz Trio. The present one, the one that we toured in Japan with was with Jimmy Cobb on drums, David Finck on bass.

Brauer: How do you spell Finck?

Jones: F-i-n-c-k…good bass player. Incidentally David was a school at Eastman School of music in Rochester, New York. I did a clinic up there 17 or 18 years ago. He was a student at the time. I had seen him maybe once since then. I was working on the job out in Long Island with Hal McKusick and David Finck was the bass player. I didn't remember him then, he reminded me that he was a student when I did the clinic.

Brauer: Now, somewhere along the line where you eat you have gone, Tony Williams' name comes up as having to do with the idea for this trio. Is that not accurate?

Jones: It may have been. Certainly, he was a member of that group, but, as far as I know, he wasn't concerned with the actual meaning of the group. That was… That name was presented by the Japanese, or suggested or, you know…He told the two Itos, no relation, it was their idea. Who knows? It may have, from somebody higher and the company as far as I know. They were the two A&R men who actually did the legwork.

Brauer: Was it their idea to assemble that actual trio, Tony and Ron, with you?

Jones: Yes.

Brauer: It doesn't mean it's correct, but the way that the information that I have come about, on that first recording at Vanguard, in fact Ron was not there. Buster was on that recording in 1976. Is that about the time that this all got going?

Jones: Well, I am not sure about the date but I can tell you that Buster did not become a member of the group until much later. Ron Carter and Tony Williams… It is like, that was the time we first played together, it was at the Vanguard. That's where the recording was made.

Brauer: There is another piece of stuff that is floating around then maybe you can clear out. Did the gentleman who had the Vanguard in the light you to sort of come in there to play? Have you been performing?

Jones: Max Gordon?

Brauer: Yes, Max Gordon.

Jones: I had played the Vanguard years before that. When I first came to New York, and what was it? It was late 1945 or 1946. I worked with Page. The first job that I played was at the Onyx club on 52nd street. The next job I played was at the Vanguard with Hot Lips Page. Back in those days, it had to be 1946. Maybe it was 1945? That was the first time I worked there and, of course, these recordings with The Great Jazz Trio took place many years later. I had played at the Vanguard maybe a couple of times prior to the time that I did a recording with the trio. So, the club itself was familiar to me. I was never very happy, I don't know if I should say is not, I was never very happy by the acoustics in there. I don't think a nightclub setting is the ideal place to record, because you can control the sound.

(Something crashes in the background)

You can control the extraneous sounds, like that. I hope those were not the cookies! (Laughs)

Brauer: What's Max Gordon's wife's name?

Jones: Wait a minute. I can't think of it. I have heard her name.

Brauer: She is notorious for patting around in the Vanguard kitchen, so we got a little bit of the same atmosphere.

Jones: I'll probably think of it later. I just can't get it going. I have never dealt her. She is… Well, I will just leave it there.

Brauer: What are the other versions of The Great Jazz Trio? You said they were six or seven. I have Buster Williams and Tony, Eddie Gomez and Al Foster, Eddie Gomez and Jimmy Cobb, Richard Davis and Elvin Jones. Were there some others?

Jones: Maybe I overstated the case. Maybe it just seems like there were more. But I think that is accurate. I can't think of any others. Did you count the present one that is Jimmy Cobb and David Finck? I think that is about it.

Brauer: What brings about the change in personnel? Was it a recording opportunity or something musically?

Jones: I think the change in personnel is due to a couple of factors. One, it may be some of the other members that might have been contemplated to be used when not available at the time. Or, maybe they wanted to change the personnel to change the sound. They wanted a variety of sound. Because everybody can play the same tunes, the same arrangements and they will always sound different if you use different players. To me, that is what the Japanese had in mind. Some of the personnel they probably wanted to use at the time were not available. Did you mention the John Patitucci and Jackie DeJohnette?

Brauer: Is got under the rubric of The Great Jazz Trio as well?

Jones: Yes. That is one of the CDs we got promoted, along with the "Someday My Prince Will Come" and others. So, all these things, you know, the personnel change… Actually, the one constant through the whole thing was a piano player. It was this guy named Joel Homes. He did a lot of work. I picked him up.

Brauer: It's very interesting this idea comes up and become sort of something that you've talked about, and touched upon since the mid-70s repeatedly in this context. In the 50s, he played with a number of rhythm sections that became like the Mil Hinton situation. Hansi Johnson, Barry Galbraith. That was another one that was thought to be the definitive New York rhythm section. You did all the stuff with Wendell Marshall and Kenny Clarke, another definitive rhythm section. What I would ask you to reflect upon is the differences between the way the trio was, as you defined it in the 50s, and the trio as it was and as it has been in The Great Jazz Trio portion of your career. Just talk about the differences in a playing in a trio context, particularly what the drummers do with the bass players. That is really what I am after.

Jones: Well, you know, in the 50s, we did many recordings at Savoy records in Hackensack New Jersey in Rudy Van Gelder's home at that time. We had Wendell Marshall on bass usually. Eddie Jones might have done one or two, Kenny Clark was the drummer on many of them. And, of course I was the pianist. But, those dates were not specifically planned according to the actual personnel. We were sort of like the house rhythm section at Savoy, in a sense. We recorded not only as a trio, but also with other groups as that rhythm section. We recorded with Eddie Bert, a trombonist and some porn players also. I think Cannonball Adderely, Nat Adderely, were two other people we recorded with as well. The difference between, let's say, Kenny Clarke and Jimmy Cobb is the fact that Kenny Clarke was a master of the brush technique. Also he was proficient with sticks as well. But, his work was outstanding with brushes and a lot of drummers find that, let's say, more difficult. He blended perfectly with Wendell Marshall. He was sort of laid back. Wendell, by the way, had played with Duke Ellington. He was the bass player with Duke Ellington for a number of years. He was also perfect for a small combo because he

was very sensitive. You see, with a small combination, a lot depends on the attention you pay to listen to the other players in the group. It's a small group, and everybody has to stand in their own. You complement one another, but if you don't listen to each other you can blend with each other. If you don't know what they are doing, how can you possibly hear them? The advantage of a group like Kenny Clarke and Wendell Marshall is the both were great listeners and they could adapt to my style, which I'm sure is what happened most of the time. It was very easy because things were always very relaxed, there were never any problems period of the shows took a more adjusting. A drummer, let's take another tremor. Let's say Grady Tate and Buster Williams. Grady was a wonderful drummer his brushwork was good, his stick work was outstanding, and I think if you could compare Krupa with him, he was probably more prominent, or use it more in the various situations than he did dresses. Buster Williams was a great soloist who also, I believe, played cello. He worked with Ron Carter's group. Ron Carter played cello and Buster Williams played bass in that group. That was a great group. But, Buster was a fine soloist and a fine bass player. He could a dab to my style and played the things that I like to play with my particular approach. The one constant through all of these groups was all of these players were very adaptable. They could adapt to all of the playing situations that they heard involving me. I have a certain style of playing and they adapted to my style of playing. I think that is a complement to their versatility.

Brauer: In listening to these recordings, and by the way it was a great pleasure to go back and really, I'd would say for the first time, consciously listen to Kenny Clarke in the way that I listened to his recordings. I was much more familiar, for example, with Max Roach's work. It is both described as being the progenitor of modern jazz drumming I often sort of heard people saying, "well let's talk about Krupa" but I want to talk about Max. I went back and listened to those records. I could hear Kenny Clarke. But, if you listen to a Kenny Clarke, or even a Max who was opening a melodically more, then you listen to a Tony Williams who is almost playing harmonic things by the way he is playing the drums. He is creating these overtones.

Jones: You're speaking of Tony Williams.

Brauer: Yes. It's a very different approach. Then you listen to Elvin, and you've got all this polyrhythmic stuff happening. You hear Tony and you have something crazy happening with the sock cymbal, him playing the drums in a very unique way. It's a very unique sound.

Jones: Using a variety of drum sounds. He uses the tom-toms.

Brauer: Yes, his tom-toms, his bass work.

Jones: You almost come to the conclusion and yet that Tony would not be a good small band drummer, small group. But, actually, he adapted very well to it. But, of

course you hear a more of a variety of sounds as you mentioned in Tony's work and you did with Coop, Kenny Clarke. Coop was basically a great rhythm player Tom I great socialist, and they were all very precise soloists from Max roach, to Kenny Clarke, to Tony Williams. They were all very good at that, and Elvin as well. Of course, of them was polyrhythmical, polly-whatever, you name it! Elvin set a style. His style is greatly admired and imitated, and emulated. That is a better word. I think it had a great meaning for many drummers. I enjoyed working with Tony. If you can get used to his approach, which was poly tonal he used a great variety of sounds in his solos tended to be extended more than most drummers. In other words, he treated the drums is another musical instrument. Of course, it is. He almost played melodies with the drums.

Brauer: That's what I hear. You talked about Jack DeJohnette. Now, there's a whole like, you played some with Mickey Rocher, for example, and Jimmy Carter. Those drummers swing, time, play the brakes very precisely, very organized statements but, the DeJohnettes of the world, the Tony Williams of the world, and the Elvin Jones of the world have taken the drums to a—I'm not going to say it's better, but it's radically different.

Jones: Radically, radically.

Brauer: The question I have for you is how did you adapt to that? Was it a problem for you to adapt to that? Did you see that as just another palate to play in, or is the music going a different place?

Jones: Well, I saw these different styles, which were exemplified by these different drummers that you mentioned, as new avenues for me to explore. You know, because every time I would hear a different drum style my musical thinking would change and I would go in a different direction at this far as I could. I tried to adapt to play something it would be compatible with that particular drum style. This happens automatically, I think. When you're playing with various musicians he tried to adapt to what you're hearing. Again, it goes back to what I said about listening to what is happening in a trio. In a trio context, it is imperative that you listen to what is going on. If you don't, it is impossible for you to adapt if you listen, you must adapt or go to selling to playing alone, you know? If you're trying to acquire a trio sound, and you have to listen to what is going on with the drummer and the bass player. It is just that simple. Is not that simple, but that's the only way you can play it.

Brauer: I'll ask you the same question about the bass players. The bass players that you worked with, post-75, let's talk about them. The level of virtuosity, now maybe it is the same virtuosity in the 50s, but it is much more apparent listening to a Ron Carter solo, a John Patitucci solo, a Richard Davis, they are doing a lot more, bringing more sounds out of the instrument, playing a lot easier figures, doing…

Jones: Well, okay, that is true partially. What I like to hear, from a bass player, first of all, is that he plays notes that are compatible with the harmonic pattern that you are playing. If a bass player goes too far away from that, then it detracts from the trio's sound you trying to achieve. Take a Patitucci for instance; he is a fine bass player. He has a world of technique, but he does not use it all the time. Now, when the bass player is soloing, that is a time for a bass player to use all of these different technical excursions and so forth that they use. That is fine, that is appropriate in that setting. But, when a bass player is playing in the background, let's say for a piano, or in trio format, a group sound, a trio sound, then a bass player has to subdue himself and played basic bass. The drummer has to do the same thing. The drummer can't take rhythmic excursions too much. He has to stay, pretty much, within the rhythmic patterns of what you are playing. In other words, you have to suppress the urge, let's say, to go out on a limb, so to speak, when you are playing with the group. When you solo, that is a different ballgame. You are at liberty to do whatever you like as long as you remain… You can tailor your solos to fit within the framework of the tune you are playing, of the solo, of the number of bars you are playing.

Brauer: Or you're taking eights, or fours, of how many choruses it may be.

Jones: You can't take a 10 run into 11 bars, and have it fit the pattern.

Brauer: Maybe this is just a question that a non-musician would ask, but, you don't see a qualitative difference in how drummers and bass players approached what they were doing in that generation, from the generation in the 50s?

Jones: There is a qualitative difference. For instance, you take Max Roach. I know you're familiar with his work. Max, when I first came to New York, was working on 52nd Street with Coleman Hawkins group. There was Charlie Parker with Dizzy Gillespie at the Three Deuces. That was a great crew with Bud Powell, Max Roach, and Gene Ramey on bass, Charlie Parker and Dizzy. It was a great group. But Max played a different style than most drummers. He was more, I'd say, even though he played what is considered to be the be-bop style, his playing was less involved, but will than some of you drummers and came along later. If you compare Max with Elvin, he played a greater volume of drums but their instincts were the same. Max played beautiful solos, very tailored, very precise. But, it was a different style. It wasn't as volume metric, as voluminous as some of the other drummers. It was more compact. Drummers began to play a lot more later, like Jack DeJohnette. By the way, Jack is a fine piano player, as I'm sure you know. Some of the other drummers, they were extensions of Max Roach. Max, I believe, set the style, set the pattern, and they took it from there and took it a step further as I see it.

Brauer: This conversation started off with your recent trip to Japan. On a rough count, how many times have you been to Japan?

Jones: I'd say maybe 15 times.

Brauer: When did you start going, or start touring?

Jones: The first time I went to Japan was with Benny Goodman Orchestra, the large orchestra, in 1956. He was doing a State Department tour in the far east. We did some trade fairs and so forth. But, it was a really State Department sponsored tour. We played countries like Japan, Burma, it has a different name today but at the time it was grandma, we played at Rangoon, we played Singapore, Thailand, we played in wake Island, lots of places. I wrote a tune in Rangoon. We played in thing in Thailand, other of the tunes in Rangoon, Burma. I wrote the tune called "Bangoon." I think Cannonball Adderely recorded it later. But, that was a great tour. You see, Benny used to have a sextet that he used to future out in front of the big band. Used also feature a trio in front big band. I played with the trio and the sextet as well as the big band. He had a varied approach. It was interesting, it was very hot, and Benny was being his usual professional self. He is a great clarinetist. Some people have had a hard time getting along with Benny but, then he was a perfectionist. And you could do the job you are expected to deal and you would not have any trouble with Benny.

Brauer: Who else was in that aggregation?

Jones: Bud Johnson, tenor saxophone. Israel…not Chuck Israel…the bass player was in that band. Israel, that was his last name. Anyways, some of the players, let me think…Peanuts Huckle, clarinetist and saxophone player, Mousey Alexander, drummer. It's hard to think of all these guys, you forget over time. It was a 15-piece band, it was a good band but not like some of the other bands that had… For instance, not like the band that headed Carnegie Hall. We had Gene Krupa.

Brauer: What was the repertoire?

Jones: Goodie-goodie.

Brauer: Was he playing Benny Goodman's greatest hits essentially?

Jones: I think so. Most of the tunes that Benny had become standard with, that had become standard with Benny, he always played tunes that – – he said you have to dance with brought to you. Tunes like, "Goodie-goodie" and "Sing, Sing, Sing" were standard tunes that were associated with Benny that had made him popular, that had made him what he was. He stayed with that.

Brauer: Now, you made mention that Mousey Alexander was the drummer.

Jones: At the time that I was with him.

Brauer: Didn't Elvin have an opportunity with him? What happened? Tell this story.

Jones: Elvin, when Elvin first came to New York, Benny needed a new drummer. I guess the drummer was going to change; he wasn't available. Benny said, "Why don't you come down to one of the rehearsals." Sure enough, the woman said, "why not?" So he came down to one of the rehearsals. Then he was not there by the way but someone else was rehearsing the band. Elvin sat in for a couple tunes and apparently Elvin did not like it very much. That was the end of that. He said, "this is not for me." (Laughs) It did not suit his style.

Brauer: How did the band react to him? How did they react to his style?

Jones: Well, they didn't get to hear very much of it. I think Elvin only played a couple tunes. But, of course, Elvin—Elvin had just gotten out of the Air Force band. He played a lot of music. He traveled all over. He was stationed in Columbus, Ohio at the air base. He played with the Air Force band and was accustomed to playing, accustomed to reading. He was a great leader. The music was simple to read, it was not a case of that. It was just that Elvin could not accommodate that style.

Brauer: Four on the floor?

Jones: Yeah, right. (Laughs)

Brauer: Four on the floor, he didn't want to hear that!

Jones: (Laughs) Elvin was used to a lot of innovations. They would interject his style unto the place. Then he was a nonconformist when he came to playing the style that he thought represented him best. For instance, there was one time where he had a bass player named Whitey Mitchell, who was the brother of Red Mitchell. He came and sat in to play "One O'clock Jump," another one of his tunes. There was a bass solo that was written out. It was a very basic solo (scats solo). Benny wanted to hear that song every single time. So, when Whitey Mitchell took that solo, he played something else. It was like a typical bass solo. Then he came over and looked at him and gave him the axe, he looked at him several times and did not say a word. That is the last time that he worked with Benny. Bob

Brauer: Benny wanted to get a good look at him so if he saw him he would know, "don't get him on the bandstand."

Jones: Benny had a particular way of looking at you. I mean, he used to give you the head to foot look, you know? It was very strange and very funny. He felt the same way about drums. If you did not play a Gene Krupa style, he was not happy about it.

Elvin definitely did not play like Krupa. Even though Benny was not there, the band was sort of oriented towards that style. The arrangements were written. Fletcher Henderson did a lot of the arrangements and wrote them with Gene Krupa and Benny in mind. By the way, Fletcher Henderson—not Fletcher-- Fletcher did many of the arrangements. I am thinking of one of the gentleman wrote (scats melody of the tune)…Anyways; names escape me at the moment. Fletcher wrote the arrangements that he felt suited the personnel in the band. That's what any good arranger would do. If you're writing for a band you write the arrangements that the personnel and the band can play the best, the best that is conceived them. Thus, the band is strong. I think Fletcher did that very well. I think Benny's popularity, in a large extent is due to Fletcher's arrangements in my opinion.

Brauer: We started this explaining how you first got to Japan, which was with Benny Goodman. But, I am interested in when the Japanese became interested in you. When did that happen?

Jones: They became interested in me long after that. Happened, I believe, with The Great Jazz Trio record. The record sold very well in Japan. They are still selling is a matter of fact. That is one reason that I'm still recording for the various Japanese companies like Village Records, and-- well, actually the Village Records, this has come to be what we did with Richard Davis and Elvin.

Brauer: East Wind?

Jones: East Wind was the first one. That was the first company. But it sort of took over. East Wind went out of business. There was one that sort of took over. Alpha was one I also recorded with. There was another trio person out which was – – let me see now, Mads Vinding was the bass player. The drummer… Who was the drummer? I've got to think about that. Oh, the drummer… Who was the drummer? I think it was Grady. I think it was Grady Tate, I believe, I may be mistaken. So, that is another personnel change. That is the fifth or sixth group I was talking about.

Brauer: What I heard in Grady's group with you was really slick cymbal stuff. He is really slick like hi-hats—Like, usually when drummers and bass players do that thing, the drummer is walking the bass player. I'm like, "why doesn't the drummer just stop!" How do you make this interesting? He makes it interesting?

Jones: Yeah, he did it very well that was one of his strong points. He was also very good with sticks. Most drummers do very well with sticks. Some drummers two better with brushes, or their brushwork stands out more than their stick work. Elvin could do both. Some drummers can do both equally well. Every drummer is different and has their strong points and their points that maybe are not equally as strong. They are not weak, but maybe they do not exhibit their – –

Brauer: It's not their forte.

Jones: But, this is true no matter who you are talking about. I played with Joe Jones, Papa Joe Jones. I never worked with him in the trio format, but he is the kind of drummer that could do it because he was versatile from his work with the Count Basie Orchestra. He could do anything. I never worked with Sonny Greer but I have a feeling—Sonny Greer worked with some of the Duke Ellington small groups. Johnny Hodges would form a small group and record and Sonny was always the drummer. He was great with a small group as well as it big band. I was never completely happy with any of the other drummers that worked with Duke's band, except Sonny. There were some good drummers that worked with Duke's band, like David Black, for instance, who used to use two basses. There were some other drummers that worked for them. Sonny always seemed to fit. Certain drummers for some reason always seemed to fit with other groups. They are more adaptable; they have a greater affinity for the style. Nobody knows the reason for that but I guess that is just one of those things.

Brauer: Now, you are going to Cleveland to do a concert, as opposed--

Jones: Believe it or not, I did it. Some guy had written an arrangement as it was called "I Come to Demolish Cleveland." He had all sorts of funny noises and really weird sounds like laughing and stuff. Milt Hinton was on that record. That's just an aside (laughs)

Brauer: I'd like to hear that.

Jones: I'd like to hear that too. I was on the floor laughing when I made it. The funny sounds, you know, it sounded very strange.

Brauer: You go to Cleveland and do an engagement. As opposed to you're going to Tokyo or Osaka to do on the engagement. What is the difference from the point… Talk about the differences in how you were treated.

Jones: You mean how the audience would react?

Brauer: The audience, landing in the country, how you were treated from soup to nuts.

Jones: For one thing, when you're playing in Japan, my experience has been that the Japanese love jazz. The Japanese are more oriented to the sentimental songs. For instance, mine are songs like "Satin Doll," well, they like "Satin Doll" but things like "Autumn Leaves," "My Funny Valentine" those are typical Japanese songs. If you can play "Sakura," you're an instant Japanese hit. (Laughs)

Brauer: Let me stop you. Does that have something to do with how you program the records?

Jones: The reason for the programming on records is really due to the fact that the A&R men, they give you a list of tunes that they think the Japanese audiences will like, and react to most. They usually, tunes like that, you would be amazed at the balance, let's say, between the real involved jazz tunes and the others. They actually really gravitate towards the balance that was the case on his last tour. If you notice, on some of the tunes that we recorded on the thing that I did with Elvin and Richard Davis, some of the ballads and things… We did "Funny Valentine," we did "Someday My Prince Will Come," we also did "Yesterdays," on one of the CDs. We did "Blue Bossa," things like that. Like the minor tunes, for whatever reason I don't know. When you do a recording date, at least my experience has been, they give you a list of with a balance, like a minor balance. Some of the tunes like-- if I had my list in front of me I could make a better… You wouldn't happen to have that list in front of you?

Brauer: We got the point.

Jones: It's obvious to me that they like ballads, and the sentimental tunes. So that's how you program your record dates and that's how you program your concerts. They love it. It is rare that I'll ask for anything other than these tens.

Brauer: Do they want to hear Parker, Thelonious Monk—They want to hear Charlie Parker play a ballad.

Jones: Absolutely, whenever I'm going there I will include one of those stations. They like them, but they will never request them.

Brauer: You don't get that huge…

Jones: Well, you don't get that huge response, but you get a response. They like those tunes, they like music, particularly jazz. They like what you do, but I think their preferences for those other tunes, in my experience. You see, when I was over there as last time, I heard the expression that some Japanese consider me a king of the ballads. I had never heard that before. That was new to me; nobody had ever said that to me before. I seem to gravitate towards ballads myself. I like to play ballads, and apparently some of the Japanese audiences like the way I play ballads. I had never heard that before. I said, "This is strange."

Brauer: Do you feel like you're treated like royalty when you go to Japan?

Jones: Not exactly like royalty. But, you know, with respect. That's all you can expect from any audience, is to treat you with respect that you're due.

Brauer: Is the quality of that respect different than what you are accorded in, I chose Cleveland, but let's say Chicago, or Washington.

Jones: I'll say-- I will put it this way, I would say the Japanese audiences are by and large for attentive. They are more attentive and they seem to have a greater knowledge of what you are doing. For instance, if you play for an audience, and I hope this doesn't bite me in the… But, some audiences that I play for in the US, they are not particularly jazz oriented, I guess it depends on the locality are playing in. If you are playing in Los Angeles, let's say at The Jazz Bakery, yes, they are going to be jazz oriented. If you're going to play at Catalina's they're going to be jazz oriented. But if you're playing at some other obscure place, they may not be. If you're playing in some of the city, they may not be as much as they are ballad oriented or oriented towards a pop tune. Matrix like the hit of the day, whatever that may happen to be. It could be a rock tune; a lot of audiences are oriented towards rock. That is in some ways unfortunate because I feel that it impacts the jazz that I try to play. Let's face it, some audiences are oriented towards rock. Some of them like easy listening music, which is a cross between a little light jazz and rock.

Brauer: How is the compensation in Japan?

Jones: I'd say, on a whole, perhaps about the same messages on the concert level in this country. The concert will in Japan, the compensation is about the same as it is here or in Europe.

Brauer: How about in clubs, do you play in clubs in Japan?

Jones: I played the Bluenote there and I played a couple of other clubs closed. But, the Bluenote club's compensation level is approximately the same that it is here. So, in fact, the Bluenote clubs are connected. There is one in New York, and is one that will open in Paris, there is one in Milan in Italy, and there are four in Japan altogether. Of course, there is one in Boston. There is this club in Boston and it used to be called the Regatta Bar in the Chase Hotel, it's now a Bluenote. There are more Bluenote clubs springing up all over the place, and they are all connected loosely. You know, each has separate management but there is a loose connection between them. Also, there is sort of a loose business connection, I don't know how it works exactly, but they know each other, they talk to each other. Their compensation levels are fairly level, I would say.

Brauer: Let's take a break for a second.

[Recording Stops}

Brauer: …back to the beginning. First of all, Mr. Jones, what is your full name?

Jones: Henry Williams Jones Jr.

Brauer: So, you're named after your father.

Jones: That's right.

Brauer: Would you be so kind as to share with us the name of both of your parents, and all of your siblings?

Jones: Okay, that's a job. My mother's name, her maiden name was Olivia Griffin. My father's name, of course, was Jones. My oldest sister was named Olive. That is a contraction of my mother's name, Olive, Olivia. My next oldest sister's name was Melinda. My next oldest sibling was named Anna Mae. Thad, Thaddeus was just a little bit younger than Anna Mae. Then there was Paul, then Thomas, then and Edith. I said Thomas didn't I? Then Elvin, then—Elvin had a twin brother named Alvin Roy. Elvin's name was Elvin Ray. His twin brother died as an infant. Sometimes I think if they had both lived, they both would have been drummers. For a long time, Elvin, this is sort of an aside, when Elvin was younger; he always used to repeat everything he said. No matter what it was, he went to repeat it. It seemed to me as if he was saying it for his brother. That was strange. I don't know how someone would explain that. As he grew older he stopped doing it.

Brauer: You're telling me "Hello, hello"?

Jones: That's right, that's what he used to do.

Brauer: "Goodbye, goodbye. Yes, yes."

Jones: That's what he did, but he did it in a softer tone of voice the second time. That's strange, that's what he used to do. Maybe that carried over to his playing. Maybe he was playing for his brother too. Maybe that's why he played with such a great volume on the drums. It is conjectured. Did I leave out anybody? I mentioned Paul, didn't I? No, I think that is about it.

Brauer: Now, three of you are well known musicians. Your father, music?

Jones: My father plays guitar. He didn't put the guitar behind his neck like T Bone Walker but he did dabble in it, not professionally though. My mother and also, again, not professionally, but they were both musical. I think a lot of our inspiration came from my parents.

Brauer: Did your father also sing?

Jones: They all sang. All of my brothers and my sister sang. A number of them, my sisters all sang in the church choir. My mother didn't sing in the choir but she did sing. My father sang in the church choir, and he did everything in church. He was a deacon, he was a trustee; he did everything.

Brauer: What was the name of your church?

Jones: Trinity Baptist Church

Brauer: Was it a large church?

Jones: It was a medium-sized church. Well, one time there was a split between the Trinity and another church, which became in the New Bethel Baptist Church. My father was with the split. Eventually, he went back to the new Trinity Baptist Church. That was where he was at the time of his passing.

Brauer: Would you say your father was a pillar?

Jones: Oh, he was definitely a pillar of the community. He was a very religious oriented person. Every day, he would spend some time in the church. On Mondays, there was maybe a trustees meeting. On Tuesdays and was at deacons meeting. On Wednesdays, there was a choir practice. On Thursdays, there was some thing else. Every day of the week he was in church. He was there twice on Sundays.

Brauer: Was the family likewise involved in the church?

Jones: When we were kids, we always went to the church on Sunday. That was a must in this goal; we would stay for the church service, which was at 11 o'clock. Sunday school was at 930. We were there every single Sunday. Sometimes, we would go back for an evening service called a BYPU. After that there was on the evening service called… That was the regular evening service. We were there all day Sunday. That was not counting the time that we come home and have dinner and ice cream, but that was different. My father was highly regarded in the community. He was a very talented man. You know, my father was a carpenter and he could make just about anything you could name. He could make a chair, a table, anything. He actually designed the plans for the church. He wasn't an architect, not college trained, will not formally trained, but he drew the plans. He could do that. He drew the plans for the church. I mean he did that painstakingly. Well, I used to see him at 3 o'clock in the morning, drawing these plans at the dining room table. He was very focused. Besides, if work wasn't good at the factory where he worked, he would take up work filing saws, or taking in work doing carpentry.

Brauer: Now, your father worked for General Motors?

Jones: He worked for General Motors for all of his life. At first the company was called Bodett Brothers, then it was called Fishbodies, then it was called Yellow Truck and Coach, then it was called General Motors. You see, General Motors absorbed all of these other companies. But, he worked there all of his life.

Brauer: Now he came from Vicksburg, Mississippi?

Jones: Vicksburg, Mississippi, that's where I was born.

Brauer: You see, in the various jazz things, some say the Vicksburg and some say Pontiac. But they are wrong?

Jones: Yes.

Brauer: Vicksburg it is! Do you have any recollection?

Jones: Pontiac is a good place to be from… I don't know anything about Vicksburg. It was a southern town. If I had grown up there, I would've been subject all the segregation and all of the discrimination that was rife at the time, and lasted well into the 1940s. As a matter of fact, when I was with JTP, we were discriminated against in Jackson. Not in Jackson, Mississippi, I mean in Jackson, Michigan, at a lunch counter. Now this was in 1947. And lasted long to the 1940s and even the 50s. But, then the civil rights movement came along and a lot of that dissipated. Norman Grantz, I think he had a lot to do with that because Norman always had integrated groups. I think that that a lot two… I'm sorry… To dissipate the segregation that was rife at the time. He insisted that the audience be integrated even in the southern towns. For instance, if an audience was segregated, he would not take the concert, he would not play. This is something that a lot of the Afro-American bandleaders who are very popular at the time, the Duke Ellingtons, the Cab Calloways, the others, did not do. I guess they could not do it. They did not have the power that Norman Grantz had. Norman, of course, was white so he had a little more power to do things like that. But, anyway, I'm sorry to digress.

Brauer: Did you have a relationship with Vicksburg? Once your family got to Michigan, do they go back?

Jones: Not once. One time, we came through there when I was with Hot Lips Page on tour in the South. We were on the three-month tour of one nighters. We went through Vicksburg, it was late at night, so we just went through on the bus I looked out the window and I said, "oh this is Vicksburg," I didn't know anything about the place. Mill Hinton said that--he always used to say that he knew my relatives in Vicksburg. He knew some of my cousins or my uncles on my hands. He had lived in

that area as well. He spent more time there than I had so, I guess he knew more about it.

Brauer: Now, I have heard that your father was a lumber inspector.

Jones: That's right, in the factory. Now, in the days that lumber was being used in cars and trucks, his job was official. He had to grade lumber and inspected and make sure that it was the right grade that would go into these vehicles. That was his job and it was a very important job. Later on, when lumber began to be phased out, he got into other phases of the business, of his work. He always had a job. He had a job for life there; he worked all his life. They found him other work to do. They gave him a foreman position. He was well respected on his job, and highly respected in the social public of Pontiac, Michigan. I mean, you mention the name of Jones and people say, "Oh, yes, Mr. Jones." You never heard a bad word spoken about him.

Brauer: You had a very prideful family.

Jones: Oh, yes.

Brauer: Rightfully so.

Jones: You know, he lived a very clean life. He didn't smoke, eat and drink, he didn't swear, he didn't curse. He didn't allow a deck of cards to be in the house. He didn't believe in playing the numbers. He was the cleanest man I've ever known in my life. He had no vices. I would like to say that I took after him, but unfortunately sometimes I swear. But, not as a habit. If I am unduly provoked, which sometimes happens on extreme occasions, I will utter an epithet that I'm always sorry about later. I ask God to forgive me for that.

Brauer: For that profane utterance.

Jones: (Laughs) exactly. I am always sorry about it. But, I don't do it as a matter of fact. Some people use profanity as a matter of course in that conversation. I don't understand that. It is something that I would only do under extreme provocation, and it's wrong even if you do it then. It's always wrong. That is one thing that--here we go digressing again—that's one thing that I regret about television today. A lot of the programs that are on the hair use of vulgarity as a hallmark. Apparently, they think this is what sells their program. If the vulgarity in the profanity was in on the program, maybe it wouldn't be on the air. It should be just the other way around. It shouldn't be on the air because of the profanity and vulgarity, but it is. I'm sure you have seen that. The swearing and the pornography – – well that's another subject.

Brauer: Tell me something about your mom—your mother.

Jones: My mom? My mother was a very wonderful lady. She was very kind, and a very religious. Of course, very kind and loving. She taught us the difference between right and wrong, those things that she didn't teach my father reinforced. He did that forcibly. But, we got all of the nicer things that I can say that I learned in life came from my mother. My mother, she was the epitome of what is right in the world. I never heard her utter a curse word, I never heard my father utter curse word. She was always gentle and kind and she taught us the difference between right and wrong. She was a hard-working woman because things were not all that great financially with us. You know, when you have eight, and at one time ten, in the family and the income is not that great, sometimes both parents have to go out work. So, my mother used to go out and do day work in families. She used to do washing and ironing, sometimes she would bring it home and we would help do it. I would help take it back to her clients in my little wagon. We used a pile of the stuff in the wagon and take it back to them.

Brauer: Whom was she working for?

Jones: Various people who lived in other parts of the city. They were all wealthy people.

Brauer: White people?

Jones: Essentially.

Brauer: People involved in General Motors, or whatever.

Jones: People who were prominent in town and had incomes a lot larger than my family's.

Brauer: What was Pontiac about?

Jones: Pontiac had always been, and I guess to this day it is a manufacturing town, primarily automobiles. There was a Pontiac plant there, and that was always the General Motors plants. There were foundries there; it was a manufacturing town. Later on, in later years, it became a college town, a university I believe. Oakland University is located in Pontiac believe. It was there when I was there. But, it has always been a manufacturing center or town. 25 miles of Detroit – – right now it's probably just a suburb of Detroit. When I was living there, and as a child growing up, there were open fields between Pontiac and Detroit. Now, there is a sidewalk that runs from Pontiac to Detroit. There is no separation whatsoever. You can't even tell when you're leaving Pontiac and going into Detroit.

Brauer: So, what was it like as a young man, was Detroit like, far away?

Jones: It seemed to me that Detroit was thousands of miles away. Actually, it was only 25 miles. It was a place that we didn't visit that often because we didn't have the means of transportation except for busses. But, one time, the streetcars ran from Detroit to Pontiac. They called it that inter urban. You could get on the streetcar and go all the way to Detroit.

Brauer: What was the racial atmosphere in Pontiac?

Jones: At the time, when I lived there, it was relatively placid. Later, it became polarized. Later meeting after I had left and then to come back. I ran into discrimination and segregation, which I didn't know I was living there. I ran into that on subsequent visits back to Pontiac, which was rather strange.

Brauer: Are we talking 40's or 50's?

Jones: We're talking about when I made trips back to Pontiac in the 40s. Yes the 40s or 50s. That is when the polarization took place.

Brauer: Was this polarization rooted within conflicts within the workforce? Competition for jobs?

Jones: I suspect that that had something to do with it. More and more people would come up from the south looking for work, and maybe the work wasn't as plentiful in those days as it had been earlier. You see, when my father came, he came there as a result of people who had come through the South, or had made inquiries our head made excursions and visits down there to get workers to come north.

Brauer: So, right after World War I, or during World War I in that industrial surge, your father was part of that first wave of migration patterns.

Jones: Exactly, and that continued for 20 years or more. The workers entered a saturation point. It became more workers then there were jobs. I guess I created a lot of tensions. I guess that resulted in the polarization, other factors may have been present. I'm not sure.

Brauer: Let's talk a little bit about that piano in your living room. There was a piano in your living room right?

Jones: Oh, definitely. There was a piano. In fact, it was a player piano. It was always a player piano, until I bought one of my own. All of the pianos that we owned were player pianos. Of course, there was the inevitable role, Which I used to listen to all the time, and I was amazed because I didn't understand it. I would see the keys moving you know, and I could hear the sounds. This intrigued me. That might have had something to do with the fact that I gravitated towards jazz, although, I did not

start out to be a jazz pianist. My mother gave me lessons and I took lessons for about 12 years, but I didn't know anything about jazz. I learned everything about jazz from listen to the records and listening to the player piano roles. Also, I had a teacher was an excellent pianist, and also an excellent singer by the way, Pauline McCann. She was a fantastic pianist, and she was excellent. She was a concert pianist. She had a voice. She later came to New York and had a part in the Carmen Jones, which gives you an idea of how good she was as a singer. But anyway, she was my teacher for the time that I was in Pontiac.

Brauer: I want to clarify this: she's black?

Jones: Yes, she was.

Brauer: Would you have thought of, or would your family have thought of any piano teacher? Was it sort of…

Jones: Well, I think they thought of her, primarily, well, not only because she was available, but also that was her profession. But, she was such a fine artist. Where you find anybody better? There was nobody better than that in Pontiac!

Brauer: So, that piano in your home was in for your mother to play?

Jones: Well, she played it, yes.

Brauer: But, it's sort of like having a stereo in your home today.

Jones: Yes, you see, a player piano can be played manually or with the roles.

Brauer: It was the equivalent of having a home entertainment center.

Jones: One of them, yes. Of course we had the inevitable Victrola. His inevitable voice and the horn… We had that as well. We listen to a lot of records. When my mother used to go out and today work, inevitably, on the way home, she was stopped at the record store or the five and dime and by a couple of records. She would bring them home for us. This was out of her meager pay. It was measured in a few dollars; not tens of dollars, I mean a few dollars.

Brauer: That's when a nickel could buy you some pork chops.

Jones: Well, yes. A nickel when father. In fact, you could buy a pound of loin pork chops for just $.40. You could buy a rib chops for $.20 a pound. There was a big difference. The day… I don't know what loin chops cost today. Maybe they are three or four dollars a pound. In those days, a dollar used to go a lot farther. There's no question about it. But, people didn't make as much in those days. I mean, I

remember – – this is another digression – – I remember going to places like Cincinnati, with a big band, which by the way, Thad was in--

Brauer: What was the band?

Jones: Cornelius Cornell, if you can believe that! Cornelius Cornell, he was a trumpet player from Saginaw, Michigan. Anyway, Jimmy Parker was in the band. Thad and I were in the band. We played The Cotton Club in Cincinnati. You could go to a restaurant, owned by Afro Americans there, to get a complete dinner, including dessert, salad and dessert, for $.40.

Brauer: I was going to say 35.

Jones: Well, that is true. But, $.40 would get you a little extra, an extra nickel. You could do the same thing in Saginaw, Michigan. This was even later, so yes things have changed!

Brauer: Now, did you start to explore the piano before you had lessons?

Jones: Oh, yes. I was intrigued by the notes moving when the player portion of the piano was playing. You know, the roles. I said, "How does this happen?" I said – – somebody had obviously made the recording – – I said, "Well, if they can do it, maybe I can do it." I think it stimulates your thinking. And then, of course, my mother, being able to play the piano as well-- it stimulates from two or three different areas. My mother, my father being musicians, you know, like amateur musicians. The recordings that I listen to, the player piano, you know?

Brauer: How about the radio?

Jones: Well, there was a radio in those days.

Brauer: I read somewhere that there was radio out of Canada that you could get.

Jones: Well, there was a station called CKOK from Canada, and CKOW. They used to put a lot of Fats Waller records on later on, not at that time, but later on. But, that was the only station in the area, aspect of the second or maybe for five stations in Detroit like WJR, WWJ, WWJX Shortwave; they didn't play the type of music. But, the Canadians, they played jazz. But, that was later, that was maybe in the mid-40s. But, at that time, no. We didn't hear them much jazz on the radio. You heard programs like the Eddie Cantor program, not Jack Bennie—Jack came later. But, Eddie Cantor, some other comedians – – but, that is what you heard on radio. And also you heard the inevitable ads and so forth, the Barbosol commercials. It was different. Radio

played a big part in the development, I think, of jazz later when jazz began to be programmed by the programmers. See, jazz had a hard time in those days, and even later, because the conception was that jazz wouldn't sell. The sponsors wouldn't buy the space on radio, or on the time of radio to present jazz because they didn't feel that it would sell the products that they were trying to sell. So, because they did not think that jazz was popular enough to enable people to buy the products of it were advertising.

Brauer: Given how you describe your father's aversion to vice, how did the fact that your mother would bring what some people would call "the devils music" into the house, how did that play into the household dialogue?

Jones: Well, strangely enough, the music my mother used to bring in was jazz oriented. You see, my father, I don't think he objected to jazz per se. What he objected to was jazz played in the church, or jazz played on Sundays. He was bitterly against jazz being played in the church, and bitterly opposed to my playing jazz after 1140, or 12 o'clock on Saturday night, because then it would be Sunday morning. I've had the occasion where he has come to the place that I was working in the hall me off the bandstand because he didn't want me to play on Sunday.

Brauer: Now, how old were you when he would've done that?

Jones: About 13 or 14 years old. I started playing very early.

Brauer: I'm going to try to get this chronology together. Now, the piano is there, it interested you in fingering along to finger rolls. Then, you get your private lessons. Now, when does the private lessons actually start?

Jones: That started when I was about 11 years old. Two years later I was playing in a band.

Brauer: So, I just want to understand this, you had intuitively, through working with your year, gone to a certain point – – so when you started at 11 years old, you were not tablarasa you are already going down a road with this instrument.

Jones: Well, I had been taking lessons from a beat – – it might have started when I was 10. Let's say 10 or 11 and 12, because by 13 I was already working in a small band.

Brauer: What kind of time when you putting into this, to, and three years, to the point where you could actually perform?

Jones: Well, I used to practice, and my mother would insist on my practicing, and getting my lessons because, the teacher would come to my house and first she

would start with my oldest sister. Everything my sister, Olive – – by the way she was very talented. She was much more talented either Melinda or I. So, the piano teacher used to give lessons to Olive, and then it was Melinda then I.

Brauer: How much did lessons cost by the way?

Jones: At that time, about $.75. That's quite a difference. But, $.75 was a lot of money in those days.

Brauer: You could buy a lot of pork chops with that. We already talked about that.

Jones: Of course! (Laughs) So, you know, you could say it had to be a sacrifice based on the relative values of money and…

Brauer: So she's paying $.75 three times? Two dollars and a quarter.

Jones: Sometimes, my mother would make maybe very little more than that for a day's work. It is unbelievable how low the pay was. My mother used to go out and do that work, and sometimes she would bring it home to do.

Brauer: So you better practice.

Jones: Oh yes, she insisted. I would put in enough time that, whatever time it took, it might take, an hour, maybe less, my mother used to get tired of us banging on the piano all afternoon. But she insisted we practice. My father also did it. My father didn't objective music per se, and he didn't object to just be sick. He only objected to playing it on Sundays, and in church because he thought it was the Devil's music. He may have been right (laughs). I think he was right. But, not really, because it was just perception. Because, some of the music, some of the hymns that were used in religious services later on first were performed in pubs. I think it's sort of an evolution. Things evolve. Different perceptions take over at different points in time. Jazz today is widely accepted in church. Duke Ellington did two sacred concerts and they were all jazz. He called them sacred concerts, but basically they were jazz concerts in church.

Brauer: Let's sort of fast forward to the piece you did with Charlie Haden. What was the origin of that?

Jones: We had done a concert in Montréal. I think maybe a couple of months prior to that Jean Filipe Allard, the French A&R man with Verve, or the French version of verve, though that it would be a good idea to do some spirituals, because Charlie's background and my background or similar. We had both done spirituals. Charlie had a very religious background. He had a family band and they performed in churches. I

performed in churches; I did so as a teenager growing up. This was during the time I was taking lessons and even after when I started playing in bands, I was playing in church as well. In fact, I used to play for the church choir during that time. Anyways, so we had similar backgrounds. Jean Filipe Allard said, "You've done bebop and you've done jazz, why not do a combination of jazz and spirituals." We did it on the succeeding concert in Montréal and it went well. So, on the basis of the reception we got from the concert in Montréal in which we did jazz *and* spirituals, we a very good response for each. Allard said, "Well, let's do a recording." So, the recording got a very good response.

Brauer: Did that recording reprieve some of the things that you had played as a young man?

Jones: Oh yes. "Steal Away", "Lord I Want To Be A Christian," all of those things. I grew up listening to spirituals and playing spirituals, you know? We'd even do "Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Son." We should have done that. I think we did that! We did that on the album. Every spiritual you can name. "Swing Low Sweet Chariot," we did all of them. I don't think there's a spiritual that I haven't done in church. We didn't do all of them on the album but we could have done them. I guess that we just didn't have enough time to do all of them.

Brauer: Do you think your experience playing in church, playing in the choirs—what influence did those experiences have on shaping you as an artist.

Jones: Well, I think that all of those—Well, I think playing religious music, particularly spirituals had a great impact on shaping my perspective on what jazz is about. If you listen carefully, in some of the early singers like Sister Rosetta Tharpe, Rosetta Tharpe, anything that she sang could have been transposed and made into a spiritual in church. When she sang, in a nightclub setting, it became blues. But, it's the same style. A lot of the music, when you move it from one venue to another, it takes on a different life, a different meaning, a different sound, you might say. Not a different sound, but it's regarded, it's perceived in a different manner. So, I think that a lot of the music that I heard and played in church had a bearing on the way I interpret blues today. It may have some bearing the way on the way I compose ballads. Some of that is bound to crossover to my present musical thinking. There's no way to discard that thinking, some of that has to permeate my thinking today.

Brauer: Could you identify some specifics that you think crossover? Must we leave it as a generalization?

Jones: A lot of the spirituals, let's say, have 12 bar patterns or 16 bar patterns let's say. Most of the blues, especially the early blues, had 12 bar patterns and sometimes a 12 bar pattern with a 4 bar tag. There's similarity in the construction there. The

actual melodies or the harmonies, that's a different thing because they vary. There are no two alike.

Brauer: What about the rhythmic impulses?

Jones: Well, I think that rhythmically—the basic rhythm is a basic, steady impulse. That's basic and I think that carries over into blues in jazz. In the spirituals, there's nothing as predominant as the rhythm underneath. In some cases like "Steal Away" it's kind of like a more rubato thing, but the feeling is still there. There isn't the same pulse as, let's say, "Standing In The Need of Prayer," there's a definite pulse in that, a rhythmic pulse. You might compare it to the rhythmic pulse of a jazz tune in the same tempo. So, there's a precedent set for it, and the precedent is set by the blues and spirituals which, of course if you go back far enough, came from Africa and the slaves and the work songs, the hollers, the chants, into what then became blues. That's another story, but there's a connection there.

Brauer: The woman who gave you your initial training, her name was again?

Jones: My teacher?

Brauer: Yes.

Jones: Pauline McCann.

Brauer: What type of literature was she working you through?

Jones: All the standard literature, Bach, Beethoven, pieces by lesser composers, but all in the classic vein. I didn't get into jazz until years later.

Brauer: Did you have a particular affinity for any classical composers?

Jones: I like Chopin, and Debussy, and…

Brauer: Ravel?

Jones: Yes, of course, Ravel. That's…To me; I guess you could call them the romanticist. I love Debussy, what's more beautiful then "Clair De Lum?" George Strait used to call it "Clear The Room." (Laughs) George was funny. There's nothing more beautiful than that to me. I like Bach. I like Bach for the precision, the sort of mathematical precision. Those fugues he wrote are incredible. The three part fugues are incredible. When you get into the five part fugues, they're almost impossible. You figure, "How could anybody think like this?" But he did! The work is there to prove it.

Brauer: What about at a technical level?

Jones: Well, I like Bach. There are some technical things with Chopin, with the polonaises and the waltzes. You find technique everywhere. Technique is where you find it. The ability to play those things depends on the degree of technique that you have acquired in your practice in learning, in learning the piano, in learning the keyboard, in your practice routines. You can develop the technique to play those things, but you have to spend many, many hours doing it. If you loose it, it's very hard to get back to it.

Brauer: Did you—Have you—The things that your were developing at the level of etudes, and working on your fingers, on getting over on the keyboards, is that enough to sustain you or to give you the information you need throughout your career.

Jones: Well, I mean--

Brauer: I mean, did you keep building on those things and working on those things?

Jones: Maintaining technique is a daily routine. You can never get away from practicing the basics, I mean scales in all the keys, exercises, special exercises of various difficulties, running through thirds, and the crossing over of the thumb—scales! You'd be surprised that scales and arpeggios are basic. If you don't do those things regularly, you loose a lot of facility. If you don't use that facility, it's like a muscle, if you don't use it you loose it. That goes for the fingers and the muscles in the mind as well, if you don't loose those muscles, you loose them.

Brauer: Does this become part of your daily routine?

Jones: It has to! If I don't practice every day, or every other day, I have to put in two, sometimes three hours, depending on what I want to cover. If I want to cover new material, I have to put in more hours than that. If I want to compose something, or get into something where I'm doing composition, I might spend the whole day at the piano. But, I'd say I have to put in a minimum, a *minimum* of two hours every day. That's the absolute minimum. The more you put in, the more benefit you get. The more you put in, the more you get back from it. There's a different feeling that you have after you practice extensively, that you don't have if you don't practice. Everything becomes foggy and difficult. When you're practicing, everything is very light and effortless and you think quickly. You think effortlessly and your mind thinks faster because there's no difficulty involved in executing what you're thinking.

Brauer: How long did this formal training continue?

Jones: It took me 12 years.

Brauer: From the same lady?

Jones: Yeah. Well, yeah, in Pontiac. Then, when I left Pontiac, I took lessons from a different lady in New York.

Brauer: In what period was this?

Jones: This is when I was working at CBS as a concert pianist.

Brauer: This is in the 70s. This is 30 years later.

Jones: That's right. The lessons never stopped. I took lessons from this guy, Joe Postacoff in the Village for a time. But, Yashir Zady, I studied with him for several years. He knew all of the concert repertoire. He's jazz player, this is classics. But, you see, you have to work on things like—I found that working on classics helped me to play jazz. The techniques involved when playing classical have to help you when you're playing jazz. They help your facility. I think it improves you thinking, you know? It influences your thinking. Whatever degree, or whatever road you take, it influences it. You can think more clearly and more logically I believe.

Brauer: What schools did you go to?

Jones: Well, just Pontiac High School.

Brauer: You went to grade school; what grade school did you go to?

Jones: Bagley Grade School.

Brauer: Was there music there?

Jones: Yes, there was always music. Yes, in the Bagley School, I used to play during the recess, when all the kids would go out to recess, to go march out for recesses, I'd play them marches to come back in. (sings a march tune) This was in grade school. I didn't end junior high school but in grade school I did that.

Brauer: What high school did you go to?

Jones: I went to Washington Junior High School. There was also an Eastern Catholic high school there. When I was Pontiac high school. I didn't go to college.

Brauer: Were there any music teachers along the way, or any people in your music system that were in any way influential to you?

Jones: There was a teacher in high school named Arnold Warziel. I think he inspired me more than any other teacher I've ever had though. He got us to listen. I was taking a music appreciation course and he got us to *listen to the symphonies* and the ballets and identify the instruments and identify the movements and so forth. I had never done that before. I had a greater appreciation for what I was listening to. He was on the install that in us. It was very good at that. It was the only teacher had like that. Maybe he was the only one that was that interested in that, you know? Had a Spanish teacher also was interested in music but we only learned Spanish songs from him. I went to a Spanish club where we could only speak Spanish. We couldn't speak any English in the Spanish club.

Brauer: Did you retain your Spanish?

Jones: Very little of it.

Brauer: Has anything else excited even intellectually as you are going through school? Any other interests other than music that really fed you?

Jones: I had an English teacher that was very tough. She was very demanding. I found that--

Brauer: What was her name?

Jones: I forgot her name. But she was one of the best teachers I've ever had. She made us master everything as we went along, you know? We couldn't skip anything. She insisted that our assignments were turned in and on time and correct. If there were not correct we had to do them over. We had to do books. We had a certain number of books, verbally, as well as writing them out sometimes. She was one of the teachers that I think I learned the most from because she was the most demanding. Teaches that are the most demanding, you learn the most from because you have to do more to meet the requirements of the class.

Brauer: Are you an avid reader? Do you read?

Jones: I have a fan of the books that I read whenever I can. I have a room in there that I am afraid to show you because I have so much other things in there, but all the shelves are lined with books. I love books coming out? I buy too many books. I like reading books. Why? Because, that you acquire knowledge. You can get it from TV anymore. One time, I guess you could. You can't do that anymore. So, this is how you learn. You can get a certain amount of it from the printed press, but that is usually so

slanted and biased that you don't get much knowledge from that. You get the current news, but that's about all of it. Well, that's biased as well.

Brauer: Now, you said at first that you are working at 13. What was that job, what was that like?

Jones: Playing piano. I was working in a small group. We had a guitar player, a drummer, a tuba player who later played bass, and piano. We worked a little job in Pontiac. I did any number of little dances, where we had just kids. My brother, Thad, did some of the dances. A kid named James Murphy, and his brother – – James Murphy was a tenor saxophone player. The group that I did the – – when I was 13, I worked with Bernard Brown, Jimmy Parker, Sam Parr, and myself. It was a fourtet. We later worked with a bass player, Lutellis Pynton. He played bass. I was 13, and I was the youngest member of the band. The saxophone player, James Parker was 15. He was also the arranger, and played every instrument in the band. He played everything, including piano. It was incredible. He was a good arranger. In fact, he was with that band that we went to Cincinnati Ohio and played The Cotton Club with.

Brauer: Now, you said your father would come and get you off the bandstand. Was this just one time or a few times?

Jones: Well, I would never take any jobs that I would have to leave. I didn't want to leave before 12 o'clock. So I learned from that experience, that if I did not do it, he would be there getting me off the bandstand. So I didn't do it, I only did it once.

Brauer: Do you remember the places that you are working?

Jones: This was just a little dance all, not too far from where I lived. I forget the name of it. It was just a little hollow. It didn't amount to much. It was just a local dance. He just didn't approve of it. I respected that. At the time, I didn't understand but I respect it.

Brauer: There is a lot of dust – and just about every biography of you, and some jazz encyclopedias, they talk about your work with territory bands. I want to mention one name, Jimmy Rashell.

Jones: Jimmy Rashell. I never worked with him, but I worked with Benny Carew. By the way, Wardell Grey and Lucky Thompson also worked with that same band.

Brauer: The Carew band or the Rashell band?

Jones: I'm sorry?

Brauer: The Carew band or the Territory Band?

Jones: The Territory Band. Right the Carew band. Benny Carew was also a drummer and a singer. By the way, there was a Carew that worked with the Minneapolis baseball team.

Brauer: Rod Carew?

Jones: Yes, he was a distant relative. They were related. Benny was a good drummer, and also a good singer. He was the flashy type. You know, throwing sticks up in the air and everything. He would bounce his sticks off the floor… Lucky Thompson and Wardell were in that same band. He had a good band. Are you familiar with Wardell and Lucky?

Brauer: Absolutely. We are going to get to them. Now, I have places that you worked. Grand Rapids, Lansing, does the Three Sixes ring a bell for you?

Jones: That was in Detroit. That was in Detroit on Adams Street. Now that was a big band. Glitzy, the leader of it was a saxophone player who is the brother of a pianist. He played block chords. He was the one that originated the block chord structure.

Brauer: Do you mean Milton Buckner?

Jones: His brother – –

Brauer: Teddy?

Jones: Teddy Buckner was the leader of the band. By the way, Frank Foster was in at the end. That was a short duration thing. They had a floorshow, in the usual nightclub thing. It did not last very long. It is amazing that you see certain people – – of all the bands that I worked with, there's someone that is still around that worked in one of those bands. Snookie Russell—Not Snooky. Snooky Young, the trumpet player worked in The Cotton Club. He worked in the house band at The Cotton Club when I was there.

Brauer: Well, he's from Dayton right?

Jones: That's right. If you ask him about it, he brought, but he was with the house band there. We came in from out of town, Cornelius Cornell, we did.

Brauer: What about Sunshine Gardens in Saginaw?

Jones: Well, Sunshine Gardens was one of those little joints. You have to call it a joint because it was. They had a band there; we used to work there occasionally.

When I was there, I worked with a guy named… A saxophone player named Choker. I don't know what his first name was but we used to call him Choker. I think it was Choker Campbell. He was a tenor saxophone player, and Jimmy Parker. They were both in that band. Now, Jimmy is the saxophone player that we had in the small band in Pontiac who played every instrument in the band. We worked in Flint Michigan, and Saginaw – he didn't work with us in Lansing, but he did work with us in Saginaw.

Brauer: We are at the point that we are talking about 1918, 1930. Well, 1918 was when you were born. So I'm trying to get to 1934, 35, 36. Had the depression ended?

Jones: This was 1941, because the war was on at the time. They turned me down because I had flat feet. I wasn't good enough. That was when we worked in Saginaw and Flint.

Brauer: And just put into the record, as many – – you know, people talk about Kansas City and territory bands, Texas territory bands and they can rattle off 100 names. But there obviously was a very active scene in Michigan and Ohio. Could you just kind of fill in – – Well, bands that you know about that you worked with that would be considered territory bands.

Jones: Well, the only band that would actually fit that – – well, I guess you could call hot lips page a territory band. But, Benny Carew was the band I worked with, the only one of consequence. The other bands that I worked with – – well, the ones I went to the cotton club with, with the Cornelius Cornell – – they could be considered territory bands in a loose description. That was the only job that I worked with that band and it had an unfortunate ending as a matter of fact. I told you Thad, my brother, was in the band. That's the only band that I was ever in where it ended in a panic. A panic's when you become stranded in that town several hundred miles from home with no money, and no wait to get home, and no money for food. Fortunately, Thad and I had money for food because we had saved a little money. I was able to save a few dollars. So we were able to eat and get back to Pontiac. All the other guys were stranded there in Cincinnati. That was that Cornelius Cornell band.

Brauer: By the time we get to the late 30s and early 40s, are you more involved with Detroit?

Jones: In the 40s. Well, not the 30s. In the 30s I was still in Pontiac. I don't think I left Pontiac until around 1941, when we went to Flint to work in Saginaw in Flint. We went to Flint first. Flint is only 45 miles from running. But, anyway, in the 40s I began to leave the area. That's when I think I first worked at the Three Sixes in Detroit. I may have worked a few one nighters also around in Detroit, of no consequence. I worked one place with a small group. Well, you've heard of one of the big race riots that you read about in Detroit, I was working at this place called

the Yale Bar on the west side of town. I know, getting home that night, I had to live down in the car. If you were seen riding in the streets, you are at risk physically. By the way, I went out to Pontiac during that riot, and on the bus, I had to lie down on the bus when I got back into the white area of Detroit. You are at risk physically. That Yale Bar was the only other place that I had worked in Detroit in a club. I did work at a club called Woods Dancing Academy. That was one of the worst places that any musician can ever work in life is a dancing school. You play continuously for 45 hours. The only time you leave the bandstand these for maybe three minutes for a bathroom break, every hour. He only gets three minutes every hour. If you can't get it done in three minutes, you're in trouble (Laughs). That was the job – – I think that was the most detestable job. But, it was a means to a living for the time that I had it. It is one of the things that I would like to forget. I would never, ever like to do it again. But, it happened, so what are you going to do? That was for a short period. I went to a place after left the Detroit area, a place to – – I don't know if you want to get into this or not.

Brauer: Well, what I want to ask you, maybe I should for your train of thought – – I couldn't find it. Somewhere, I read it, your home in Pontiac became a place where musicians rehearsed and practiced.

Jones: That happened, but it happened after I left Pontiac.

Brauer: That was part of Elvin's experience.

Jones: That's right. It was with Elvin and Thad. I had left Pontiac may be 10 years prior to them. I was already in. I had already done a tour of one-nighters in the South. I had been to New York working on 52nd.

Brauer: Earl Van Ripper.

Jones: Earl Van Riper? He's a Detroit pianist. I meant Earl early on, and subsequently a couple times after. He passed away, I guess, about eight or 10 years ago, I believe. He was a fine pianist. He was one of a number of fine pianists that were in the Detroit area. Tommy Flanagan was from the Detroit area, Willie Anderson – –

Brauer: I want to go through all these names and ask you about the relationships. Was – – is it Van Riper?

Jones: Van Riper

Brauer: Now, did he precede you?

Jones: Yes. He was a Detroiter. I was not a Detroiter per se. I was from Pontiac.

Brauer: Do you have any connection with him?

Jones: No; not really. I just met him one of the times I was in Detroit. I met Tommy Flanagan there. But, Tommy was a Detroiter. I guess that's where I met him. I didn't meet Barry Harris at that time. But, Barry Harris is Detroiter as well.

Brauer: What about Bess Banye?

Jones: Bess is still there, a blind girl, our wonderful pianist.

Brauer: Did you know her?

Jones: No, I met her on a subsequent visit to Detroit. This was much later. It was 20 years later.

Brauer: I'm going to go through my list and probably at the same answer every time, but I'm going to go through this list. Come back to me; come back to me.

Jones: Computers, I know…

Brauer: Phil Hill?

Jones: Phil Hill? I don't recall that name.

Brauer: He ran The Bluebird Inn. He was a bebop pianist.

Jones: In Detroit?

Brauer: It was probably post-your time.

Jones: I don't recall that name. I think I remember a club called The Bluebird Inn. It was on the east side. I don't recall the name, that's funny of all the names.

Brauer: You know, you mentioned Teddy Buckner.

Jones: Well, Teddy Buckner, of course, was Milt's brother. Milt, I don't know whether you know this, originated that block chord style. He could do it faster than anyone I've ever heard in my life, you know? People like George Shearing picked it up later. I even tried to do it a few times but it's very difficult to do.

Brauer: What's the difficulty in it?

Jones: Well, there is difficulty in playing the right notes. Sometimes you are doubling some of the notes in your right hand, and may be at least two or three notes. But, the rest of the notes – – the difficulty means that if you are playing a passage, let's say, that consists of a group of eighth notes, or a group of -- quarter notes are no problem – – but a group of eighth notes and 16th notes can be a problem. They are much faster. You got to move your hands like this. Instead of moving one hand at a time, or maybe your right hand playing single lines, you're moving both hands at the same time. And you are playing chords, and you must play whatever jazz figures you are playing. You're playing them with both hands. So if you're playing a figure like (scats music). It's a physical difficulty thing. It is very difficult, you know? No Buckner did it easy. I don't know how he did it! I used to watch him play, and he was so short. He was not very tall. But, he was a great pianist.

Brauer: You mentioned Willy Anderson

Jones: Willy Anderson was probably one of the best-unrecognized pianists. Willy had wonderful technique, and he was a great chess player. I guess people in Detroit knew him well, but he was not known well outside Detroit. It is a shame because he was a great player.

Brauer: Nate Woodley.

Jones: I heard the name but I never met him. I think he came later if I'm not mistaken. Some of those names, you know, will not sound familiar to me.

Brauer: What about the McKinney family? Harold McKinney?

Jones: Well, there was a band called the McKinney Cotton Pickers. Is that what you're talking about?

Brauer: No, I'm talking about…

Jones: Oh, James McKinney?

Brauer: Ray, Bernard, and Harold McKinney.

Jones: I didn't know them. There was a James McKinney from Pontiac, a jazz pianist, who later became to be well known in that area. You might not have heard of him. I don't know the ones you are talking about. There was a band called McKinney's Cotton Pickers. They were in Detroit. Don Redman used to arrange for them. He played in that band. You've played with Don. Don used to work with a company called CSAC. They used to make department store music, like muzak, like you hear in elevators or department stores. When you're going to go do a muzak or CSAC date,

you may be record 12 tunes like da, da, da, da- NEXT! This is no improvisation or nothing. You just read the notes. But, and that is the way it used to go.

Brauer: You a couple other people I want to ask you about. From that period, that we are in the territory thing, talk a little bit about Lucky Thompson.

Jones: Lucky Thompson was the greatest musician. He and Wardell Gray went to high school in Detroit. In must've been the equivalent of most music colleges because they turned out so many fine musicians that that's just two of them. The ones that we are talking about, Wardell, and Lucky, they came out better prepared musically from that high school than most musicians are when they go to musical colleges or conservatories. (Inaudible) I gave it to Beebe I wonder what she did with it!

Brauer: Anyways, you were talking about Lucky Thompson.

Jones: Lucky what has to be one of the greatest musicians that I have ever had the good fortune to work with him to know. He is a great human being and a fantastic saxophone player. His idol was Don Byas. But, I think Don Byas-- I think he would've been Don's idol. If Don had known him and heard him play best – he had such a wonderful technique, his ideas, his flow of ideas, his style technique, his facility, his feeling, his sensitivity anything you want to name… Any attribute that would be important to a performer, Lucky had it. I believe he still has it. A couple days ago, a friend of mine told me that he had worked with Lucky out in Seattle where Lucky lives now. He said that he still sounds great. So, that greatness is still there. I tell you, when he and Wardell Gray were both in the same band that I was working with, the Benny Carew band then I was working with up in Lansing-- I don't know, then he probably didn't realize that he had two of the greatest musicians in the world working with him. I'm sure he didn't realize it. But, if he were alive today he would know it.

Brauer: Was that evident to you then? Or is that evident to you now?

Jones: It was evident to me because they were both fantastic musicians. They were both great players. Wardell, I believe later, worked with Basie if I'm not mistaken. Lucky played with some other bands. I think Lucky had a problem. He had two sons and he had something unfortunate happen in his family life that made it necessary for him to raise both the sons and work at the same time. It became very difficult to do. I think it caused a lot of problems with him, not only financially, but also otherwise. He wound up in this place in Seattle, unable to work and in a sad state of affairs. But I don't think it affected his musicianship. I just wish he was playing music sitting here today. You'd hear the greatest saxophone around today. Nobody plays like that today. Nobody has that depth of feeling, that sound, that fluid way of playing. It was a marvel. Like I said, Don Byas was his idol and I think, head Don

heard enough of him, Don would've said the same thing about him. He would've had to.

Brauer: Did Lucky Thompson have—Was he how you got to Hot Lips Page?

Jones: Lucky had worked with Lips before I got there. As a matter of fact, Lucky sent me a letter saying that Lips needed a pianist. He said that he needed a pianist within a certain length of time, let's say a year. So, within that year, I took the time to go to Cleveland to work at a place called Cedar Gardens for a while. After this Cedar Gardens I went to Buffalo to work at a bar. After that bar, I went to New York and joined Lips Page at that Onyx Club. This was after getting permission from the union to work on a steady job, of course. When you came to New York from out of town, you had to put in a transfer of papers. You want a lot to work on a steady job for at least six months, unless the leaders said that he could not do without you. That's how I got a steady job. I was fortunate.

Brauer: What was the situation like in Buffalo?

Jones: It was very good. I worked with a tenor saxophonist named George Clock who had worked with Jimmy Lunceford at one time. Jimmy had a trio at The Anchor Bar. It was a fine Italian restaurant on Main Street in Buffalo. I guess it's still there on Main Street and North Street. Anyway, the trio consisted of tenor saxophone, piano, and bass. Or rather, bass fiddle. It was a rather unusual trio. It had a singer. But, it was well received. It was a small bar, and I guess no job was needed. In fact, a drum might have been out of place there because it might have been overpowering for the room. But, it was nice. I enjoyed it. I enjoyed it for sure. Of time, afterwards I came to New York. That little experience was very good for me because, when you work a job like that you get so you don't depend on the drums. I think when you work in a combination where the drums are predominant, or a bass is predominant, you get to depend on those instruments to the detriment of your left hand. You forget you have a left hand. So you have to work with out the drums sometimes and it helps you to develop your own left hand. But, there is nothing worse than a one-handed piano player. A piano player last two hands, but uses only one like some of the early bebop players. That is another subject. I think it is a good idea to use both hands, let's put it that way.

Brauer: How did you actually get to Buffalo?

Jones: Well… Actually I'm trying to remember exactly how that happened. I know I worked for about six months. No – I worked for about four of five months in Cleveland at this place called Cedar Gardens. By the way, that is where I met Joe Williams, the singer. He was working at a place called the Sky Lounge in another part of town and I want to hear him one night. That is where I met Joe Williams.

Anyway, I went to Buffalo, I think I got a call from George Clark. I wanted to leave Cedar Gardens anyway because that job was – –

Brauer: How did Clark know you? How did you know Clark?

Jones: Well, I guess he had heard of me because he heard that I was working at the Cedar Gardens. Everybody knows everybody in the business, you know? Caesar Dameron was in that band in Cleveland. I think Caesar knew George Clark.

Brauer: What was the rest of that band?

Jones: Well, there was a drummer. What was his name? I don't remember. He was from Dayton. But, anyway, Caesar was alto saxophone player of the band. The trumpet player was leader of the band. I can't remember his name! But, anyway, it was just a little small band, just the – – basically, they were there just to play show music. There were there for the floorshow. They did very little else because it wasn't a very good band. Nothing to write home about. But, it was work. Anyway, I enjoyed the trio without the drums in Buffalo much more than it did the band in Cleveland. So, that gives the idea of what the musical content was. Actually there was more musical variety. Actually, in Buffalo I got a chance to – – whenever Art Tatum would come into town, he completed a place across town. Our last set would and before Art's last set would end. We would build and catch Art Tatum. Art Tatum came into town three times when I was there. I got to listen to a lot of Art Tatum. I use it and lose heart play for hours and hours. After I finish playing at the club where I worked, he would go into a downtown club in Buffalo and play until 11 or 12 o'clock the next day, by himself. We would be sitting there with play with his case of Pabst Blue Ribbon Beer sitting right next to him.

Brauer: Art was from Toledo.

Jones: Art was from Toledo as I understand it. I never knew him there.

Brauer: Were you aware of him in the late 30s?

Jones: Oh, I was aware of him but I never had the chance to hear him. I only heard him on recording. A Detroit radio station – – I think it was WJ or WJR, they were playing a recording of him on hair. To say I was impressed was an understatement because I thought there were like three piano players playing. I thought they were trying to make us believe there was only one piano player playing. I could have sworn that there were three people playing. That was the impression that I had at the time. I cannot wait to hear him in person, and I got this chance in Buffalo.

Brauer: Did you become friends with him or have a personal relationship with him?

Jones: Well, when he came to New York City, he worked at the Three Deuces at one time, and he used to stay at a hotel up on 8th Avenue near 125th St. It was a terrible hotel but it was the only one that he get at the time. Ice to take him down to work in a cab when he had to go to work. I used to meet him and take him down because, as you know, he was legally blind. We developed a friendship. When we would talk I would ask him the usual stupid questions, "how do you play that?" You know, the usual questions. He said, "I just play that because that is how I feel." Because he was a born genius, who can explain genius? No one can explain that! He was born that way! He could not have learned what he learned by studying. Nobody could have taught him what he learned, what he played. It had to be inherent. He was born with that talent.

Brauer: I once talk specifically about early piano influences like Tatum and Heinz. But, since we digress, I don't want to forget about Big Nick Nicholas.

Jones: Right, Big, I met him – – we had a band, it was composed of Howard Brockington, Big Nick, Thad my brother—No, the bass player was Peynton, Lutellis Peynton. He was the one I told you about earlier. Big Nick was, of course, the leader of the band. We, actually didn't work in Grand Rapids. He came down to the Pontiac area. We worked in…let me think…I think we played one job in Grand Rapids because I remember driving from Pontiac in my car, well, in my father's car. We drove back in a horrible snowstorm all the way back from Grand Rapids to Detroit. You couldn't see 50 feet in front of you. That was awful. They had those reflectors. Grand Rapids was the first city—the highway between Grand rapids and Detroit was one of the first highways that had those reflectors that you see on highways sometimes that made it seem like the highway was well lit. It wasn't well lit. But, the reflectors illuminated the highway so you could see. Anyway, that band was short lived. It didn't last long, maybe we played one or two dances together, but that was it. Anyway, Big Nick came to New York and worked in a club at 110th street and 8th avenue or Central Park. You know New York? It's where Central Park begins, there's a little club there where Nick had a band. I saw him there many years later. He did a fair amount of recording, although I never recorded with Big Nick.

Brauer: Was he fully developed at that time? Was that early on like Lucky Thompson?

Jones: I wouldn't say that, no. It was a different timeline. He was a good player in the direction he was going. Lucky was on a different path. I think his background, his training had been much different than Big Nick's. From his training, you could tell that Lucky had a broader training than Big Nick. Their playing was different, although I enjoyed playing with Nick the short time I played with him. He was so much more involved, so much more diverse.

Brauer: He was more of an entertainer.

Jones: Lucky?

Brauer: No, Big Nick.

Jones: He was more of an entertainer, precisely. That's a good way to describe him. I think he worked for a while with that band with Benny Carew, maybe not on a regular basis. We used to do a bunch of dates at Michigan State University, which is in Lansing. That's where Benny Carew lived. We did a couple of dates there and a couple of small dance gigs. Sometimes, Big Nick came down to work some of those gigs. Otherwise, it was Lucky Thompson and Wardell Grey. They were the Awesome Twosome. (Laughs).

Brauer: Do you have any recollection of Edward Bolton?

Jones: Oh, I think that was Sonny Stitt's father if I'm not mistaken. I believe that was Professor Bolton. I've never met him but I've heard Sonny talk about him. I believe that was his name if I'm not mistaken. I'm not sure.

Brauer: Did Stitt go by that name?

Jones: Sonny Stitt is the only name I've heard him go by.

Brauer: Do you have a recollection of him from the period you were doing the territory bands and all that?

Jones: No. Sonny Stitt never worked with us in those bands. When I heard Sonny Stitt, I believe he did one engagement and –

(Recording Stops)

Jones: He did it on tape. He put it on, what do you call it? It was on one of those tapes that could be transferred to a computer. He said, as he put it on paper, "it would be this thick." It was not practical. He sent me one, a while ago, it was this thick. I still have it though.

Brauer: I would love to communicate with him**.** What I found in digging around, I saw that Swinging Joe had done a feature on you. At some point, in the description I had of you, it showed album covers. This was actually in Swing Journal. I tried to track it down, but I could not.

Jones: I just did an interview for them when I was in Japan. It is a slick magazine. It comes out every month and it is a bout that thick. I don't know how they do it.

Brauer: When I worked in retail, I started ordering it in the store just so I could get it every month. So, I have about three years of the Swing Journal. This was for about three years. From a graphic standpoint, it is a fantastic magazine.

Jones: They don't miss a thing.

Brauer: Have you seen it (addressing Ken Kimery). You think the Germans are off the hook, the Japanese are really off the hook. (Laughs). They detail some stuff.

Jones: They promote like it's going out of style. That is why I went over there. That is what the whole trip was about. It was about promotion. We did seven concerts. But, actually, the concerts were incidental because they were promoting the two previous CDs.

Brauer: Now, this is with the band with Jimmy Cobb, and Fink, David Fink.

Jones: David Fink is a good player. Former – – well, he's not a student but he was in one of those classes. And he did a master class at Eastman that I told you about last year. He is a good bass player.

Brauer: Well, Eastman School of Music, he had to have something going on. (Laughs) you know, where we kind of… I think it's interesting – – we asked you yesterday, what prompted you to move here? What prompted you to come to Hartwick, New York?

Jones: On my days off at CBS, which were few and far between, Teddy and I would hop in my car even after we got off the show at night, and go around looking for places. This was just one of the many places that we visited. We visited Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, you name it! We settled on this place because we were attracted by the fact that it was in the saw bank for five years running. That means that the government was paying him at the time to keep this land out of production. It would've meant our production, which would've affected the price if they had done that. It had a bunch of great stuff that made it interesting and it looked like exactly what we were looking for. They had an old, rundown hack across the street, which we later burned down. We built this one. That is what attracted us to this area, not because it was Hartwick, I didn't even know about Cooperstown until I got here. But, it seemed like an attractive place just from the ad. So, we tracked down and sure enough it was veritable. The farmer who owned it said he got at a farming because he couldn't make any money. He got caught in a cost price squeeze.

Brauer: What is the acreage here?

Jones: It's indefinite. They say "it's about…" They say it's about 265 or 70 acres. That's a very small farm as farms go. Even when it was in production, a small farm today is considered to be 600 acres. The large conglomerates have been buying up all the small farms for the last 10 or 15 years. They own most of the smaller ones. A lot of forms the size I still in production, but the ones that are in production of the ones that raise beef cattle. I mean, some raise sheep. In fact, they are right down here on 205. That first pass… The third house, as you are going south on 205, they are currently raising sheep. I saw some sheep had their grazing. You see everything around here.

Brauer: Were you talking in jest last night when you said you would consider being a gentleman farmer?

Jones: Well, when I first moved up here that is what I had in mind. I had that in my mind worked out. I was going to do this, I was going to have a farm here and raise beef cattle. I was going to raise poultry, beef, and products. Then, I was going to open up a restaurant in Atlantic City and supply that restaurant. I was going to supply my own restaurant, you see? I was going to have that going. That was in the back of my mind but they didn't know that.

Brauer: Um, let's um…We'll go back in time. When did you first—How did you get into the studio scene?

Jones: When I first came to New York, the studio scene was considered one of the better jobs. I couldn't have gone to work in the studio immediately because the union had a rule that transferring musicians had to wait six months before they can get a steady job. This was an less the employer said that they must have this man and it is necessary for their business. That job didn't come up till two or three years later. A friend of mine who I had done some recording dates with had been mentioning my name to some of the contractors, those are the guys who call you for record dates. So, they said, "are you free tomorrow night at 10 o'clock?" I said, "No I'm not free but I'm reasonable." It was that kind of thing. Those contractors, those of the guys they call you for the record dates. So he had been mentioning my name to several of the contractors. He was probably overestimating my abilities, so I started getting calls.

Brauer: I wasn't precise in my question. It sounds like you think that I meant recording studios. What I really was talking about is NBC and CBS, that TV stuff. How did you get into that work? I am segueing away from the property issue, because that is sort of part of your period of that life.

Jones: The fact that ABC, CBS, and NBC were not recording studios but they hired musicians. They'll had staffs. When I first came to New York NBC had about 100 people on staff, NBC had 80 or 85. CBS had about 55 or 60 people on staff. So, the

same musicians who do the recording dates, many of them were working at the radio stations and TV stations. So, it was sort of a natural thing. Actually the way that I got into CBS was, I used to do work with Andy Williams. You know Andy Williams, the singer, he used to be one of the four brothers. He was with Kay Thompson and the four Williams brothers. They made a lot of recordings and did a lot of dates. They were a very prominent group. Anyway, I had done his last show, a summer show, a 13-week show that NBC. This was after having done some recording dates with him prior to that. He liked the way I play, and the following year he did the summer replacement show for Pat Boone on ABC. He called me to do that show. The following year, he yet called to be a regular show at CBS starting in September and he called me to you that show. That is how I got the job at CBS.

Brauer: Was the 1959?

Jones: 195—Let's see…I think it was 1958 or 1959. It might have been earlier, around 1956. No, in ' 56 I was on tour. So, yeah, it must have been late 58 really 59.

Brauer: Most of that was with the Ray Block Orchestra?

Jones: He was the conductor when I first got there. Later, we had many other conductors. Actually, Ray Bloch was there and I didn't work with him initially. I worked with another conductor who did today Garry Moore show. But, Ray Bloch was the conductor for the Ed Sullivan show. I guess he did other things like American musical center and so forth, all the shows. The conductor that I worked under it was Erwin Cossel. He was a fine pianist. He later took a show – – I think when the Carol Burnett show moved to California, he went out to California with the show. He may be still out there as a matter of fact. He was a very fun conductor and a very fine pianist.

Brauer: What was your working schedule like? Now, you are CBS staff. This is not a freelance scenario.

Jones: There I was a little time to freelance in between working days. A typical day at CBS started with a rehearsal day. You go into a studio in 57th St. at the production center and rehearse the music that you would be playing on the air, two days later., This is for the Gary Moore show. The rehearsal would last for maybe two or maybe three hours. This is all depending on if everybody got to the rehearsal on time. If Duke Ellington was on the show, the rehearsal is going to start an hour late. They would drag you in one by one. That was the strange thing, they never arrived at a rehearsal date on time; they were always late. A typical rehearsal day would last maybe four hours actually. So then, the day of the taping, which would be maybe Friday, maybe the next day. If the rehearsal was on Wednesday, then the taping would be on Friday. You would go in at 7 o'clock or 8 o'clock in the morning for our run-through, which would take maybe two or three hours, and this was for the

purpose of running through the music and discovering all the mistakes in the music and correcting the mistakes. Inevitably, there was always mistakes, which had to be corrected. That would be done and the next call was for a dress rehearsal, which would be around maybe 6:30. Once the dress rehearsal was over – – maybe 4 o'clock, because I used to come home to New Jersey at the end of the dress rehearsal before the show. The dress rehearsal would last the regular time that the show would last, an hour. When the dress rehearsal was over, you would have maybe an hour or an hour in between. Then, they would go on the air, which would be an hour and a half show. Most of the Garry Moore show was live. Well, I would say about half and half. On the head Sullivan show, most of it was taped. Taping took most of the day. That would be a typical day. So, the day was broken up into segments.

Brauer: As you were involved with this, were you working on multiple shows are we you dedicated to a specific show?

Jones: When I first got there I was working on the Garry Moore show, later on the Jackie Gleason show, and later on the ad Sullivan show. But I did not do all three at the same time. When the Garry Moore show was on I was also doing two radio shows. One was a Dixieland Show. The other show was a so-called Modern Jazz show on radio. The Dixieland show was a lot of fun, well, they all were. The schedule is pretty busy. Besides that – –

Brauer: Let's stop for a second. Talk about the Dixieland Show.

Jones: Well, you know…

Brauer: Who were the musicians?

Jones: We had Pee Wee---not Pee Wee Russell. No, we actually had him. Sonny Ago, was the drummer. He wasn't a Dixieland drummer per se but he was versatile enough to be a little play that style. We had test – what was that guy's name?

Brauer: Peanuts Huckle?

Jones: No, it's not Peanuts Huckle, I know that name. He is a clarinetist. But it was Pee Wee Russell and some of the Dixieland players. Some of the guys were on staff, but they brought some guys into play that show. Jack Teegarden came through and played once– actually, a couple of times.

Brauer: So, was the format of the show that you had a set rhythm section and then some leading players in that style would come in and be the guest?

Jones: Yes, that's right. It was interesting because it's a different style, I different approach. You made adjustments to play that, but it was a lot of fun.

Brauer: Were you acquainted to that style before you played it?

Jones: No.

Brauer: How did you prepare for it?

Jones: Well, you just went in there and played it. The music was there and you just went and read the music. You listen to the style because the players would tell you in the various places on the show-- they were expert players and played it all the time. You tried to imitate the style and imitate the idioms. It was interesting. I enjoyed that and it was a lot of fun.

Brauer: How long was that show?
Jones: That lasted approximately four or five years.

Brauer: And this was a national radio broadcast?

Jones: Well, it was just local. I don't think it was national. I think it was just local, just in the New York area. I don't think anyone got it outside of New York. That applied also to that Modern Jazz show that we did.

Brauer: Talk about that show. Is that what it was called, The Modern Jazz show?

Jones: Well, it wasn't called "Modern Jazz Show" that was the name they used. It wasn't a Dixieland, it was just on the show. We didn't play any Dixieland. They just called it "Modern Jazz," not to be confused with the Modern Jazz Quartet. But, it was straight-line jazz. It was mainline jazz kind of stuff. But, it was not Dixieland. Anyway, some of the same players played on that show. The bass player, Jerry Robert, he also was the bass player on the Dixieland Show. Sonny Agro, he was also the drummer on the Dixieland. It was myself, and I think Hal McKusick, an alto saxophone player. He played on the show occasionally. He was on staff….One of the trumpet players, either Bernier Piven or Jimmy Nottingham—Remember Jimmy Nottingham? Did you know him? Jimmy was on staff. They usually you'd staff players. Once in a while, they would bring somebody from outside.

Brauer: So, the same format: staff is the base of it and then an invited guest.

Jones: Well, the base, they would normally use staff. The straight jazz show, all of the players were staff members. On the Dixieland Show, sometimes they would bring in other people…Cutty Kucksiel, I can't pronounce his name but he's a good

trombone player. As I said, I think it Jack Teegarden played on the show couple times. Jack was a master of that style.

Brauer: Where were these things recorded? Were they recorded in studios?

Jones: They were normally recorded in studios on Madison I think. I think it was Madison Avenue and 52nd St. Because, CBS had several buildings and they had a lot of radio studios there. Most of the shows, in fact all of the shows, where radio. So, all the radio shows for.net building, you know? The TV shows were done, of course, in the production center on 57th St. or in the Ed Sullivan Theater on Broadway.

Brauer: Do you know if tapes exist of those shows?

Jones: I'm sure they exist, but I don't have any.

Brauer: Do you have any fund or humorous memories of either show or something that may have occurred?

Jones: Not precisely. There were incidents here and there but nothing outstanding. Because, what you did was you just went in and played music that was there. Sometimes, there was one show that we didn't always have music for. That was the jazz show. But we had players who knew a lot of the standard charts and we played those, you know? Sometimes we would have charts, sometimes we didn't. But, that is what made it fun, we never knew what to expect.

Brauer: What about the Penny Paige Show?

Jones: I did you do that show. I think she appeared on the Gary Moore show once or twice. But, I think she had her show of her own. I think she was on ABC, or NBC. I'm not sure.

Brauer: What about The Big Record?

Jones: The Big Record? You got me on that one. Would that be with Jackie Gleason?

Brauer: It's just a note that I picked up. But, you mentioned Jackie Gleason. How was he to work with?

Jones: Jackie knew a lot about a lot of different things.

Brauer: Was he a jazz fan? Did he know about jazz?

Jones: He was a jazz fan. He knew a lot about lighting, he knew a lot about sound, about direction, because he was an actor. He was a comedian. He had a lot to say

about the actual production of the show. He was involved in every phase of it, you know? He was very knowledgeable and a very nice guy. He was a nice guy to work with. Also use a very good golfer. We had dinner at a restaurant on 26 Street and he asked me if I played golf. So, I said, not being a real professional, I said, "No, not really." He said – – he invited me to play with him! That was my opportunity to play with Jackie Gleason and I couldn't play golf. I was not that great. I would have been embarrassed. I would have embarrassed him and everybody there, I know I would have endorsed myself. But, he was a great golfer. He was also a great pool player, they say.

Brauer: What about the Today Show?

Jones: That was NBC. I did that as a gas on a small group with Mandel Lowell sometimes. There was also George Duvivier and Dave Garroway. One Dave Garroway used do the show, I did it a couple times. I did it one time after Dave left. But, that was with NBC. That was actually before I started work at CBS.

Unknown: Excuse me, Mr. Jones. I hear an alarm clock or something like that. Do you hear that?

(Recording Stops)

Brauer: It is Saturday, November 27, 2004. My name is William A Brauer Junior. I am at the home of Henry William Jones Junior conducting an interview for the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Project. The engineer is Sven Abu. This is tape number two. I've read 17 years, and 20 years. But, what is the length of time that you were first in the studio, TV, radio, recording world?

Jones: It was less than 20 years because I wanted to join the 20-year club. You had to work there for 20 years to be like Specs Powell. It was just short of 20 years. It was something along the lines of 17 or maybe 19.

Brauer: Okay.

Jones: The whole thing just shut down. CBS… Well, actually ABC, NBC – – they all shut down at the same time. All the shows moved to California at about that time…

Brauer: All the shows with the staff orchestras.

Jones: Right. Well, they discontinued the staffs. The point they made was that staffs were not needed anymore because there was not enough work coming in to justify the use of staff. The demographics showed that, for instance, on that Ed Sullivan show, it showed that the people who watched the Ed Sullivan show were not the

people who bought the products that the sponsors sponsored. That is why the show went off the air.

Brauer: Of this body of musicians that you are working with over this period, was there a relatively stable court musician that you were around? Was it a relatively hard group to get into?

Jones: Well, it was relatively difficult. You know, that is the person that I heard when I got to New York. They said it was one of the choice jobs in town and it was very difficult yet into. It was a small group of musicians. Most of them were also the musicians that also did the books of recording. They did both jazz, and, you know… When you walk into studio recording for singers.

Brauer: Jingles…

Jones: Well, jingles, there were a lot of jingle dates. But, all of these musicians where sort of a select group. A lot of them were on staff at the various studios, besides, they did freelance recording. So, it was a closed group. I would say maybe three or 400 musicians and they did the bulk of all of the work.

Brauer: Of this body of musicians, how many of them were jazz musicians?

Jones: A relatively small number of jazz musicians. I would say less than a third.

Brauer: Can you give us some names of people you worked with during your tenure in that world? Or people who were active and prominent?

Jones: Well, I mentioned some names like Jimmy Nottingham and Joe Waller. Ernie Rall was on staff at ABC. You might know Ernie Rall, his brother worked with Basie's band. Sad and I worked it CBS Specs Powell worked at CBS for eight years. You know, CBS had people on staff like Ben Webster, Teddy Wilson, people like that. They all quit because they could not make enough money on staff. But, long before we started on staff they had been there. But, there were people like that and some other names. Probably, not well known names, but they were there.

Brauer: Well, give us some not well-known names.

Jones: I'm trying to conjure up…

Brauer: They're not well known because I can't remember them! (Laughs.)

Jones: I can't think of a better reason than that! (Laughs)

Brauer: I got the method now. If you know, you're going to tell me. If you don't know, it's not well known (Laughs.) Alright, okay. Now, you mentioned money. During your time, was money good?

Jones: Well, the staff pay was never that good. I think that is why guys like Teddy Wilson, and Ben Webster left. They cannot make a living because the pay was so… I think when I started there, pay with something like… If you worked in a regular week, you wound up with maybe $250 a week. It was something like that. If you worked overtime and did some extra shows, maybe extra shows might add another 50 or $60 to your check. But, most of the guys that I knew to make three times that amount on the road, or in studios, or freelancing, you know? Or they can make that on their own, so they did not want the steady studio job. A lot of studio guys did not want a steady studio job. George Devivier, he could be so much better. He could've worked at any of the studios. But he said he could do so much better without being in the studio's, so why go in there? He was on a lot of the record dates that I did. He was with me with Mill Hinton.

Brauer: What was so desirable about it then? Why was it an elite situation if it was so…?

Jones: That's a good question. I heard much later, after I left the studio, that actually the sponsors paid more for each musician then the studio paid the musicians. So, somebody was taking a big cut out of the money that the sponsors were paying the musicians. That is what really happened you know? That is the untold story about the staffs.

Brauer: That doesn't speak to why it was desirable for musicians to do it. Was it because it was an enclave onto so much other work? Or maybe it was because people didn't want to travel?

Jones: There was the element that the kind of music that they had to play in the Studios was perhaps not the jazz that they thought was creative, exciting, and interesting to play. But, on the other hand it was a steady job and if you got the job, if you got a reasonably good job, you could stay there as long as you wanted to. Eventually, the pay started to increase. The pay scale did increase. But, it was never what it should have been.

Brauer: What about benefits like health, and–

Jones: There were benefits like--

Brauer: …which aren't a part of the feature of the average working jazz musician.

Jones: No, exactly. The fringe benefits, in other words, or desirable. I'm sure that attracted a lot of people. There were a lot of musicians on staff who could not, let's say, they were not top-flight jazz players and that job was a better job for them then a job that may have entailed them going on the road with the band or something like that. They were better off doing that kind of work and going out on the road because not being a top-flight jazz player, they cannot command higher prices. Nobody's going to pay, let's say somebody who is not a top-flight player, the same that they would pay – – they are not going to pay a guy who is like Joe Blow what they pay Wynton Marsalis. There is a differentiation there.

Brauer: But, if a Clark Terry does it…

Jones: By the way, Clark Terry was on staff. He was at NBC.

Brauer: That's what I'm saying. Clark Terry will be all right.

Jones: But, he also did freelance.

Brauer: When I look out at this 6,000 or 7,000 acre gentleman ranch you have, you did alright too!

Jones: Well, that was by careful planning and being rather stingy with the out… You know, I try to always have more coming in them was going out. If you don't do that, you wind up in a tank, you know? But, you know, I started to say something about Clark Terry. Most of the musicians who were on staff, also used to freelance. That is they would take recording dates in their off time, on their off days. That way, they could augment their pay.

Brauer: How active were you during this 17 to 19, 20 year period when you were – – it sounded like a very rigorous schedule. Was it six days a week or five days a week?

Jones: I had three days in the studio including rehearsals – – I used to also do auditions. I forgot to tell you that. I used to work out of TV casting. Being a pianist, I used to have to go and play auditions if I worked out of casting, at the casting office. Singers would come down there to audition for jobs. They were mostly singers, sometimes dog acts, cat acts, elephant acts, and comedians. Anyways, they would come down and I would play for their auditions. They would bring their charts sometimes. Opera singers would come down, you know? That was part of my job and I did that a couple days a week. I did that and sometimes I would go in and rehearse on the Gottfried show, on the Arthur Gottfried show. Sometimes – – I always did their hurdles for the Gary Moore show which was the date show that I was doing, the main show. I had a big week. I think I would work for five days a week. Maybe I worked five days. I like to work. It was not a full day each day. But,

maybe it was four hours one day, one hour the next. If I went in, let's say, to do auditions that would take anywhere from 2 to 3 hours with one right after another because they did not take that long. That would take one day or maybe two days. That is the way it went. I would have to do, sometimes… Like I said… People would come in to do the Gottfried Radio Show. The piano player on the show did not have – – there was so much work there to do that they had someone else come in to help with her. Then they could come in and rehearse with the Gottfried band and I worked with them. They had about five or six pianists on staff. At one time, CBS was very busy. There was a lot of work there, for everybody.

Brauer: I asked either question about this community of these musicians, which you said, was approximately 3 or 400, what we would call jazz musicians of various levels. Some were top-flight, and some were just working men. Within the side of that number, how much of it was African-American?

Jones: The ones that were on staff?

Brauer: Yes.

Jones: Relatively, well, the ones that I mentioned like Joe Waller, Clark Terry, Ernie Royal, Mil Hinton…Um…Thad, Jimmy Nottingham, myself. There were very few. Did I mention Joe Waller.

Brauer: Yes. Let's say, CBS, when you mentioned CBS and you worked with Ray Bloch, how many would there be in that aggregation.

Jones: Well, I mentioned Jimmy Nottingham. There was Powell, Specs Powell and that was it. When I did a show, I was the third one. Thad, my brother, did not do the Bloch show, he didn't do the Sullivan Show. So, as you can see, the numbers were very, very few.

Brauer: I come from a stagehand's background, within the stagehands seeing in, families are very strong. It's nephews, and uncles and, you know people get brought into the business because it is a lucrative business. You can come in with relatively low skill level and you can develop a skill level. But it is about how you know. Did this work the same way?

Jones: No, apparently not because I didn't notice that. There wasn't much nepotism. I didn't notice any and I didn't see any of that. Well, you might say it happened in the case of Thad and myself, but not really because Thad was hired on his own merit. It wasn't because I worked at a different studio.

Brauer: This will be the final question on this, do you think then there was any racial dimension, in terms of the barrier for people to get in?

Jones: I suppose there was a one time. But, you see, as I mentioned before, CBS had broken that barrier several years before. So, it didn't exist in fact, it might have been an imaginary barrier to some people. They didn't see, they worked on the show, and they didn't see… They saw the show being broadcast with African-Americans. Well, that's because maybe African-Americans didn't want again on staff. There is one time at CBS when Charlie Mingus and some other musicians came into the studio came in waving signs….Roland Kirk and some others. Actually, if they had made a determined effort to get on staff, so they could've gotten on. Like I said, most guys did not want to get on staff. They could make more money off of staff.

Brauer: They have some other agenda there.

Jones: They had some other agenda there, I don't know what it was. It made the that they were sincere. I can't say that it wasn't sincere. But, from my experience there, I didn't make any great effort to get on staff. I had no problems. But, of course, I had some people that were vouching for me. It might have been more difficult at that time, but it couldn't have been that difficult. Had it been difficult, guys like Teddy Wilson and Ben Webster and some other guys that I didn't even know had been on staff 10 years before I was on. So, it wasn't that difficult.

Brauer: How were you able to balance this activity over this long curve 17 to 20 years, with your life as a working jazz musician?

Jones: And being a jazz musician? It was difficult, it was not easy. Let's say you get a phone call to do a recording date, you have to schedule it. If you can do it at a time where it did not interfere with your studio work, your staff work, fine! If it did interfere, you couldn't do it. Even if you work it in, maybe you would be so busy that day that you would have maybe three or four hours to sleep that night. You would have to take the work as they came in, if you are free to do it. You did not set your own schedule in other words. If somebody wanted you to work on a recording date, and you are free, you accepted a date. That is all. But, a lot of dates used to come in and I had my hands full during that time. I think, it took a guy like Milt Hinton, Milt – – I don't know have you managed all the dates that he did because he took all the dates Bob Haggard used to have. Bob Haggard just gave him all of his dates, all of his bookings. He said, "Here, you take it!" And Bob was one of the busiest guys around. He wrote, "What's New" and a couple of Dixieland pieces. He was a very busy guy and a good arranger. I guess, at some point, he did not want to work anymore. He gave all of his work to Milt Hinton. But, I should say that there was a lot of work available for certain people. If you fit into a certain category, and they needed to, and you could fill a job, you got the work.

Brauer: Um, I have it that in 1964 you joined the Academy of Television and Radio on the Board of Governors.

Jones: That's right.

Brauer: How did you come to that position?

Jones: I was recommended by one of the owners of a recording studio. He knew that I worked at CBS I guess if he felt that it was a good way for Afro Americans to break into this kind of thing. I was the only one representing musicians on staff there. Well the only one who was a member of that group. What they did, they would listen to radio TV shows and they would try and categorize the shows and rate shows. This was at all the various stations. They would make recommendations, or they would… In other words, it was an attempt to regulate the type of material that went on this. Sometimes, I think they might have gone a little bit too far these they would say, "Well, such and such show is going to win this year." They seemed to know in advance and that didn't seem quite right to me. I asked them, "Well, should it be this way?" It is supposed to be, you know it is not supposed to be that way. It is supposed to be the people's choice.

Brauer: When what? What is at stake here?

Jones: Well, if a show is designated to win, certain benefits would accrue to them. You know, I don't know what the details were but obviously it certainly meant a lot of prestige. Maybe they would have a chance to repeat that show are due to it. You know?

Brauer: Was this a time-consuming activity?

Jones: Well, they met every two weeks. It took some time. It took about three or four hours per meeting.

Brauer: Was there compensation involved or was a volunteer activity?

Jones: Well, it involved all those things. Not so much volunteer activity, but just listening to the shows and discussing various types of shows in the types of shows they should be presented on TV. It was things like that. China set some regulation and getting better working conditions, we do things I got. It was almost like a union.

Brauer: Can you think of anything that occurred during your time there that was significant in terms of the jazz community or jazz, or the music community, or African-American presence within these forms?

Jones: Not really offhand. Sometimes, I get the impression that the meetings were more social than anything else. It seemed to me that very little actual business was being done. But, of course it was a prestigious job and a prestigious kind of thing.

Brauer: Was there a staff supporting this? Was there a staff supporting this kind of group?

Jones: Well, they had a staff. They had a working staff that took care of correspondence and things like that. It was just a nominal staff.

Brauer: Why did you leave in 1971?

Jones: I got to the point where I was having to spend too much time in the meetings. The meetings had accelerated, I think they were doing maybe a meeting once a week, which seem to interfere with my activities. I had to let something go and I thought that it was best that I let that go to time. You know?

Brauer: Okay. Can we stop for a second please?

(Recording stops)

Brauer: So, we are jumping all over the place, but I want to now go back and talk about influences, jazz influences on the piano. What was the influence of Duke Ellington? What was his influence on you? When did you become aware of Ellington and what was his influence on you?

Jones: I guess the first influence of Duke on me was listening to some of his recordings. Because, I think the only Thomas of the band in person was at the Paramount Theater in New York much later. But I heard all of the recordings that they made, all of the stuff. "Tooting Through The Roof" was one of the best ones that I liked. But, there were some other things. Everything he did… He had a singer named Ivy Anderson who worked with the band for a time. She had the recording named, "Watermelon…" It was watermelon something. It was unlike that recording, not the watermelon man that Herbie Hancock did. This was something else. It was something about a watermelon. It was a cool kind of peace. Duke, all of his ballads like, "Satin Doll", "Mood Indigo" all of those things are good. Anything that he recorded I like. I particularly like some of the other things, some of the blues kind of things that he did. Most of the things that Duke did that impressed me the most with the ballads. I loved all the things that he did, his compositions, "Don't Get Around Much Anymore." Everything he did was just a textbook material. You can learn to so much from everything that he did.

Brauer: Well, this is a little bit of a digression, but you were mentioning last night where you went to see big bands last night, in Detroit?

Jones: There was a place called the Greystone Ballroom. There was also a place called Wall Lake Casino. It was about 18 miles outside of Detroit at a lake, Wall Lake.

It was a big dancing casino there. A lot of the big bands played there. Most of the bands played at the Greystone Ballroom. I heard Earl Hines there. I heard Earl Hines in Flint Michigan by the way. Louis Armstrong I heard the Greystone, Count Basie, and let's see, who else? Actually, those with… Lester I didn't hear there. I never saw Lester's band in person, but they made some good records. The Greystone ballroom was the kind of place most of the big bands played.

Brauer: This was in what period? What was in the late 40s or early 50s?

Jones: I would say it was in the late 30s 40s and early 50s. I think it later became something else. They tended in the something else. It lost its status.

Brauer: But you era was late 30s or early 40s?

Jones: I would say that, yes.

Brauer: Now going back to what I was pursuing, when did you become aware of Earl Hines and what was his interest to you as a piano player?

Jones: Well, first of all, through recordings. See, the recordings were really the only means that we had of hearing these big bands because most of them did not come through our area very often. Once in a while they would come, but I heard them many records. I heard Earl on many records. I know he did a blues… He did a tune called something, and the Chama ECL out in the recording, "Play it until 1951!" So, you see, this record must of been made about 10 years before that. I thought it was funny, because every time I would hear that record after that I would say, "That was 20 years ago!" No, he did some good recordings. I saw him in Flint Michigan in person and I was amazed at the way he played. He played ballads beautifully and he played the up things well. You know, a lot of people think that since Earl played that single-line style, a lot of people think that he might have been one of the forerunners of bebop. People who may be – – maybe not bebop per se, but he may have inspired the bebop thinkers to continue along that style of thinking. Those single-line figures-- that was his style.

Brauer: The so-called trumpet style?

Jones: Yes, you'd say that. A lot of the players use that style today. Except, Art Tatum he used the two-handed style. The bebop type players used that single-line style. Two-handed piano players like Fats Waller, Art Tatum, people like that…Even Earl when he first started, they play different style. They play a more pianistic style, employing the use of the left and right hand. Whereas, some of the younger players and the bop players playing with their right hand and they play with their left hand for the base notes, you know? This is depending on the base and the drums. This is not a good idea but that is the way that they can see it.

Brauer: You mentioned Waller, which, in the 70s, became a very prominent player. I look to recordings, and I see when you are growing up and I wish there was a piano here so I could ask you to play the “Bug Waltz.” That's like my favorite tune of all time.

Jones: Yeah! I did a Fats Waller album later on for Verve. That was one of the tunes I did on there.

Brauer: He also recorded that with Abbey Lincoln.

Jones: That's right. I think that was just the two of us.

Brauer: That was wonderful.

Jones: It was a little different.

Brauer: That is a CD I play over and over again.

Jones: Well, Jean Filipe Allard was A&R man representing French Verve. He put that together. By the way, Abbey Lincoln, and she speaks French fluently. I think she did one of the tunes in French.

Brauer: Yes she did. I can hear it now (sings in French).

Jones: She does great lyrics. In fact she writes complete songs. She's very talented woman.

Brauer: How did that record come about?

Jones: Jean Filipe Allard.

Brauer: It was his idea? Did he put the two of you together?

Jones: Yes, he did. Of course he was on the date Charlie Haden and I together to do that CD we did. We had done the concert in Montréal and it seemed to work doing both spirituals and jazz. So he said, "Let's do that on a recording."

Brauer: So, did you… This is really digressing but, have you had a close relationship with him as a producer? Did he bring new project ideas?

Jones: At the time, yes. But, of course, I'm not recording for Verve anymore. I think he is still with the company but I understand he is with a different department

there. We are not in touch. It is a very large company so he's involved in some other kind of work. He might still be interested in doing things with Abbey Lincoln because she was one of his pet projects, you know? She is done a number of things with them.

Brauer: How necessary do you think the relationship is between people like Allard, or maybe Norman Grantz might be in that category, you know producers, they may have some musical training or whatever, but the real function is imagining and conceiving situations.

Jones: I think it's critical. They are like, I guess you can call them idea men. They come up with the ideas that keep the company afloat. If it weren't for people like that, no one would have the various suggestions for putting various artists together are doing a special type of project with a special point of view. I think, yeah, they're very necessary. If they are musical within and know something about music, or they're musicians, of course, that is a plus as they know something. They know something about what they're doing and they can approach it from more of a professional standpoint, you know? They are not guessing they know exactly what they're doing so they work from the standpoint of knowledge of what they're doing which is very important. There are some A&R men who are like pencil pushers who don't know about music. They know how to keep the books but they don't know anything about producing records. They don't know as much on a musical level as people who are more intimately connected with music.

Brauer: How important is it for you that your recording projects have a focus, have an agenda, have a conception behind them?

Jones: Well, it gives you an objective, on the agenda to work forward towards. If not, you're sort of floating. Let's say you go into a recording session that has no central thought or no objective, no point of view. The most successful albums are the one that have a theme, some outstanding theme that everything is oriented towards that particular idea.

Brauer: To what extent have you make career decisions based on, I want to do projects – – and I love the term they use, point of view, I love the term that you use and how essential for you is that? You could do what you want to do. So how is that?

Jones: That is essential. For example there is an album that Allard came up with, the one he ended up doing with Fats Waller. I had done the Broadway show "Aimless Behavior" and he had heard about it. He thought that it would be a good idea for me to work with him since I had always admired Fats Waller's music. He said, "Well, let's do this album." Now, you can imagine – – you can zero in on Facts Waller's compositions or…The things that…He didn't write all the tunes by the way. He played the tunes that other people had written.

Brauer: The inimitable style.

Jones: Yes, he had an inimitable style. Anyway, that is true. So, it was the same idea. He was a great stylist and you could never mistake his style for anybody else's. You can never mistake the Thelonius Monk's style for anybody else's style. That's very important. Point of view is, I think, certainly advantageous if you're doing a recording. It is good for the listener, for the buyer, because the listener does not just want another jazz record. I think the listener or the buyer wants to have something different that's going in this direction, or that direction, a specific direction. They want specific direction that it's going in and they wanted to tell a specific story.

Brauer: Do you-- how often has that initiative or point of view come from you – – How often has it come from you to the producer?

Jones: It usually happens from the producer to me. Usually, the producers have an idea what they want. They have some terms, so to speak. They tell you what they want and what direction they wanted to go in. You have to give them some credit because they are in a position of knowing what the people that by the records like. What they say carries a lot of weight. You have to listen to them. If I went in to do a recording date based on my idea of what it should be, I might be completely wrong because maybe what I would like is not what the people are going to buy at that particular time. Record producers think of records that are being produced at a certain time, or a certain type of music is being, let's say it is popular or getting a certain amount of respect at that time, or seems to be at the top of the music that people like. They base their decisions on that, as well as some other things too. They base on how much it's going to cost them and so forth. That's always the bottom line.

Brauer: Going back to Fats Waller and picking up that thread, what is your first recollection of Fats Waller? How did you come to him? Was that through records?

Jones: It was always, and had always been through records. Never had the opportunity to see these people. Pontiac Michigan is off the beaten track. Very few people used to come through Pontiac. Although, at one time, Nat Cole came to Pontiac and played in our theater working in his brother's band. I went to see him because I didn't know Nat Cole was at the time. I realized later that he was a great star that had been in Pontiac. He was working in his older brothers band and they played a tune called "Sweet Georgia Brown" and he did a little trick with his finger in a rotating motion on the release. That was an occasion or somebody did come through Pontiac. It was rare, but it did happen. I lost track of the question.

Brauer: We were talking about Waller and how you appreciate him because that seems to be a thread in your life.

Jones: See, I never got to see him in person. The only time I got to hear him was on records. By the way, he was a fantastic organist.

Brauer: What did you like about him?

Jones: His sense of rhythm, his happiness. When you heard him, you felt happiness and a sense of joy, you know? Sometimes you heard that with Mel Garner, but more so with Fats. You know, sometimes some of the comments he would make while he was playing—he just exuded happiness. He made you feel good listening, you know? That irresistible rhythm was just contagious. It was that two-handed rhythm.

Brauer: The left hand did it?

Jones: He played with two hands and he was very effective. He was similar to, well, not in the same style, but in the same tradition of Art Tatum, Teddy Wilson, and maybe James P Johnson, even further back. Who knows, maybe even Scott Joplin even further than that. That gets into a different thing though.

Brauer: You mentioned Teddy Wilson.

Jones: Of course, Teddy Wilson was one of my idols. I think he did a fantastic job when he was working with the Benny Goodman trio. He played marvelous things, you know? He had perfect and exciting passes, perfect runs. He had a very smooth style. He was much like Tatum, not in the same category as Tatum, but in a similar feel. He had that confident feel. He was very exciting.

Brauer: Do you think he was as harmonically sophisticated as Tatum?

Jones: No.

Brauer: Was anybody?

Jones: No. That settles that right away! (Laughs) Tatum was in a class all by himself in every way: harmonically, technique, stamina.

Brauer: Did you have a personal relationship with Wilson? Did you come to have one?

Jones: No. Once I did a concert in Canada and the group was under the leadership of Teddy Wilson, a small group. Max Roach was in the group by the way, and J.J. Johnson. It was sort of an all-star group. But, I went up there to play during the intermission while the band was off the stage. So, I can say I played with Teddy Wilson (laughs). That's funny.

Brauer: There is a lot of literature that zeroes in on Teddy Wilson being a big influence on your playing in terms of style and touch, fluidity, fluency…just the way his lines lay and felt. It's almost like you brought a Teddy Wilson sensitivity in to be bop.

Jones: Teddy Wilson's style, he had that beautiful touch that nobody could imitate. The similarity ends there though. Teddy played a much heavier and thicker harmonic style. He played such a great volume of notes. Teddy was so fluent in his style. His style was perfectly suited for the Benny Goodman trio. He sounded wonderful. Art Tatum would have been, let's say overqualified, to play with Benny.

Brauer: Too many notes?

Jones: Benny would have never understood what Art was doing, for one thing. In fact, most people wouldn't have. Art is a pure soloist. Even when he was playing with Stewart and… I liked Art much better as a soloist and when he played with a group. It could hear all of the nuances. He had more freedom to play. You see, when he is playing with a group, there is no possible group that could follow Art Tatum's bass line. They can't think that fast. If they could, they probably couldn't play it anyway because he played temples like this (taps incredibly fast tempo). Anyway, to me, that was the distinction between Teddy Wilson and Art Tatum. They both had an impeccable, delicate touch. I heard Teddy Wilson, I did a concert – – I was with Benny Golson by the way. Teddy was on the same bill. This was after Teddy had left Benny's band. We played this concert in Canada. We were in Toronto. We were in this dressing room listening to Teddy play because he went on first. Every note that Teddy played sounded like a pearl. That is the way that it sounded. It was absolutely perfect; the touch was just impeccable. Well, you get that same feeling from Tatum. Tatum just plays a bigger volume of notes. They were similar in a lot of respects. Teddy was my first title, then came Tatum later. They were both two-handed piano players.

Brauer: Now, you got some transition style players, like Clyde Hart who was described as a bridge between the swing players. I don't know what category you put Tatum in? Tatum is like over everything. I think it is fair to say that Teddy Wilson is a swing player. Then you have people like Clyde Hart, and then you have people like Buddy Powell.

Jones: When you mention Clyde Hart, Clyde Hart was very well known for his harmonic ideas. By the way, Lucky, Lucky Thompson, was a great admirer of Clyde Hart. We once were together in New York. We went to the Savoy Ballroom. Clyde Hart was playing there. He marveled at Clyde's harmonic ideas and the way that he voiced his chords. That is what a lot of people remember about Clyde. I didn't know him personally, I just saw him. He had discrete harmonic sense. I think a lot of

pianists learned from Clyde Hart, including Teddy. Maybe even Art and, maybe also some arrangers, as well. But, Bud Powell was more of a one-handed pianist. Although, I heard Bud play solo once and he did a very good job of using both hands. But, he did not want to play that style. He preferred playing the other style where he did right hand, single line figures, usually with a band of course. You see, when you are playing solo, you cannot use that style. If are playing solo piano, you must use both hands or it sounds a little sparse, a little thin. Bud did a good job as a soloist, I wish he had played more solo piano because he was very good at it. When he was playing solo, he sounded pretty much like, not like Kenny, but more like Teddy Wilson. Any full two-handed style, Teddy was a big proponent of that style.

Brauer: The thing about Bud Powell and the players aware behind him, is that the music was so explosive. It's almost like metrical. It started to introduce more dissonant things, like overtly, to me.

Jones: Perhaps dissonant, but not in the sense of a Theolonius Monk type of dissonance. It was like a close second cousin to dissonance. Bud, I always considered him, harmonically, pretty straightforward. He had a great technique with his right hand, he was very familiar with chords. His harmonic progressions were wonderful. He wrote a couple tunes that I like, one called, "Hallucinations," that was well done. We used to played at the Three Deuces. It was called, "Hallucinations." He wrote some indifferent things, but mostly they were single line figures. I guess, even Tatum, I don't recall Tatum doing much composition. If he did, I am not aware of it, or Teddy for that matter. It seemed that he concentrated all of his efforts and his talents in interpreting others' compositions, other than his. Teddy best – Tatum did a couple of blues. There was something called, "Aunt Hagar's Blues." You probably heard that.

Brauer: It's an interesting name.

Jones: It must have been one of his Aunts.

Brauer: Hagar, huh?

Jones: Anything Tatum did was exciting. He could take a blues and make a symphony out of it.

Brauer: You know, your playing is described as – – I think there would be a consensus if I were to distill all of the different attempts, that I have at least read of describing your style, as a sort of a merging of swing and bebop. I take, and listening to you talk, that a part of that is that you continued the tradition of the two handed pianist into the so-called modern era.

Jones: I tried to do that. I tried to combine… The way I see it, especially if you are playing solo you must do that. There is no other way to do that. If you are playing with a group, you can get away with, let's say the left hand up to a certain point. But, I still play a lot of the harmonies with my left hand even though I am playing with my right hand the single line.

Brauer: But, your single lines have more in common with the way a Teddy Wilson would render a single line. That is in terms of the dynamics and the touch. Although, I have heard you dig into a piano and be very percussive with Tony Williams, and playing with your brother!

Jones: But, there again, you see, it depends on the group that you are working with. With Elvin, with Tony Williams, even with Jimmy Cobb, they give you a different kind of energy and you have to respond to that. You try to match as much as you can. No one can match a drummer's energy, but you try and come as close to it as possible. Excuse me for a second…

(Recording Stops)

Jones: This is true, see, I read, but not enough to hurt my playing (Laughs).

Brauer: We should have—or you should do a book called, "Henry Jones' Jazz Aphorisms." (Laughs) and do all of these little gems, your personal pearls.

Jones: (Laughs) I've heard a lot of them. Maybe, I've done too many floorshows. But, anyway, that is neither here nor there.

Brauer: Well, maybe it is here or there. But…

Jones: It sounds like the two guys that went out – – I can't tell a joke here.

Brauer: Yes, you can.

Jones: I can't resist. You opened the door for me.

Brauer: Go ahead Richard! (Laughs)

Jones: These two fellows had been going to see the same psychiatrist for a few years. So, they met one day at the psychiatrist's office. One said to the other one, "Are you coming, or are you going?" They hadn't met before so he said, "If I knew that, I would not be here." Well, I mean… It is early! (Laughs) Sorry, about that.

Brauer: No, it's okay. That's a pregnant joke!

Jones: Oh!

Brauer: In about nine months it's going to—Ah! (Laughs)

Jones: (Laughs)

Brauer: Now, we were talking about this merging of influences on piano. In that book, "Beyond Motown," that we were looking at, there is a quote. It is talking about Detroit and out, and the quote is, "lyricism, fluid melodic lines, light touch, rhythmic elegance, harmonic sophistication."

Jones: All of those things apply to Tatum in certain instances. But they certainly applied to Teddy Wilson.

Brauer: See, I think they apply to Hank Jones. That was the thrust in, Before Motown," in which they discussed… They are exploring the idea is there a Detroit sound and is there a there Detroit pianist sound?

Jones: I hear this all the time.

Brauer: And let me just say one more thing, and let you respond. You are described as the doyen of the sound. The first of which is you, and coming after you Flanagan Barry Harris, Roland Hana. Then, after them, Hugh Lawson and Kirk.

Jones: Yeah, Kirk and Hanna. Kirk lives in New York now. But, you see, if it is the case, I have never been conscious. I have never been conscious of being an exponent of something called, "the Detroit sound." To me, I don't know what that means. But, you can use almost any description to describe it. You've used nice choice words to describe what you like about it, but whether or not they applied to me is something I'm not sure of. If people want to identify that with my playing, then there is nothing I can do about it. All I can say is, "Thank you." I would be delighted to have any of those attributes that you mentioned in my style. I would be delighted to have that said about my playing, if it is true! I'm not sure it's exactly true, but if it is, many thanks. But, domo origato! (Laughs)

Brauer: That's an incredible… We were talking last night about why I am so personally excited about jazz and I shared with you some personal things. But, one of the things that I find so interesting about this music is the fact that it has afforded so many persons like yourself on the expansive cultural experience. You toss off Japanese. You toss off stories about Turkey, and this and that.

Jones: Well, I think that's true, but that comes with the fact that the life that you live means that you have to travel a lot. You come into contact with a lot of different divergent cultures, and a lot of different languages. You may pick up a phrase here and you may pick up a phrase there. It gives you sort of a man of the world type of atmosphere. I don't like to use that term but it is applicable. You know, you're not limited to this particular… You hear things, and all these different things impact on your consciousness. Sometimes they come out when you don't want them to, perhaps. Maybe they come out of the wrong time, but they are there. They all become a part of your personality, your being. That becomes you. See, a person is the sum total – – any person is the sum total of all their experiences up to date at that certain point in time. If those experiences are good and wholesome, then that person is better for it. If the experiences are bad, then he is worse for it, you know? I think that applies here musical taste as well. My playing style is the sum total of everything that I have absorbed, or haven't absorbed up till now. I have tried to incorporate that into my playing, consciously or unconsciously. I think it happens both ways. I think if there is something that you hear that appears you aesthetically and musically, you automatically try to adapt it to your playing. I don't mean copying it note for note. I would never do that. I think that is a mistake. If you do that, you're not expressing yourself. Above all, every artist should try and be him or herself. They should develop that unique personality that is them, and nobody else. You can't do that by imitating or playing like somebody else. That is what I'm saying. I think that happens as a matter of course. I don't think even planet. Maybe it is in your overall plan because you plan as you go through it, and as you hear various things throughout your life. You say to yourself, "Well, I'm going to try to better myself. I am going to try and do better than my last performance." The only way to do that is to bring yourself to a better level. That is what I consciously tried to do. I consciously try to do that. That is the last see it. I hope I haven't left out anything.

Brauer: Well, that is an interesting point of view. When I was asking you about your education, and we went through – – well, I didn't go to college.

Jones: Well, I didn't go to college. If I had to, I would have gone through the University of Michigan. That is the school that I was most interested in. Last year, I did a seminar and I did about six days there. That was interesting. By the way, I am doing something at Harvard in April, and something it NYU next month. They are similar things but it is a longer period. I like to do those things.

Brauer: Well, it sounds like you have made… You have gotten… Well, it is like, "What is education?" As we sit here, and we talk, the kinds of persons that you've had a chance to interact with and learn from, the kinds of experiences that you've had, you come off and the present yourself as a very erudite gentlemen. You present yourself as a gentleman and an erudite person, a learned person.

Jones: It's not from any formal education. I read, I like to read a lot and I'm sure you can pick up things from your reading that may not be at the college level, or whatever that is. You certainly can improve yourself. I consciously tried to do that, you know? I hope it helps.

Brauer: A lot of it has to do with what kind of engine you are working with. Because, you have a certain capacity for processing and integrating ideas, data, notes, you know, compositions. And you interpret these things an original way. That is something that you either have… Either have the engine to do it, or you don't. I don't think you can learn that**.** You either have that capacity, and what you do with it, how you feed it, how you nurture it is a different thing.

Jones: A lot of it could be desire. Desire for self-improvement, realizing your own limitations and going from there. Who is the actor he said? Clint Eastwood, "A man has to know his limitations." When you know your limitations, then you go from that point and you try to expand. You try to decrease the limitations and increase the unlimited.

Brauer: For your capacity?

Jones: Yes, your capacity. That is what you try to do. And I think you do it on a conscious level and you make progress. You do it from day-to-day. It is a constant thing. You have to sleep sometimes. Maybe it even happens when you're asleep. Who knows?

Brauer: Do you think you're at the point where you have to stop doing that so much and you need someone to get a shovel through the dirt in the hole for you?

Jones: When you stop doing that, I guess it is about that time! I think that process should go on as long as you can stand on your 2 feet and brief, you know? That should be an everyday thing. You should do it as long as you live. That is why we are here on earth I think. I think we are here, we are getting into something else now but, I just think one of the reasons that we are here is to improve. We are here to do that very best we can, to reach the very highest level we can do. That applies to each one's own capacity to reach a certain level. Everybody's level is probably different, of course it is, because everybody's different. If you do that, then you have accomplished everything you can do on earth. Then, of course, in the next life, wherever that is, he will be a better individual. This is having done everything you can do in this life. That would be a credit towards her next life. That is another web. Rightly or wrongly, that is what I believe.

Brauer: Is that religious belief or a philosophical belief?

Jones: I think it's tied with religion because I think Christianity says almost the same thing. You do good, you follow the golden rule, you treat others as you'd like to be treated, you always try to help those who need help, you know? You help the poor, you help the sick, tried to heal the sick. If you are a doctor, you heal the sick. But, you go through life doing good works. That is all tied in with self-improvement as well.

Brauer: Okay, I want to switch gears and I want to go to 52nd street. I want to go to when you arrived in New York. I want you to describe the band that you came into, and the performance circumstance that you came into that was 52nd St. in 1944 or 43.

Jones: It was 1943. And might have been 1946. Because, I saw Jazz with the Philharmonic in 1946. So, prior to that I had worked on the street for some time. When I first arrived in New York, I worked with the Hot Lips Page Group. We had Buford Oliver playing drums. Karl "Flat Top" Wilson playing bass, and of course Hot Lips Page playing trumpet. For a while, there was a guitar player, I don't remember his name. Of course, we played his style. His trumpet style was similar to a Louis Armstrong style. In a way, I think that might have been a negative for him because whenever anybody heard him, they said, "Well, he plays a little bit like Louie." I wish they could have appreciated Hot Lips for what he himself was. Of course, there were some trumpet players that played that same style. King Colax and Frank Humphries and Lips Page all played that similar style to Louis Armstrong. I think it took away some of the appreciation that should've come the way. But anyway, they were all fine musicians. But anyway, in Lips' band it was a predominantly blues band. I hate to say this, but when I first came to New York, he got me playing boogie-woogie. He used to bill me as the kid from the West who played boogie-woogie. I had a spot, he did a little show and I played bogey woogie with the busy left hand, and the busier right hand.

Brauer: Had you done boogie-woogie before? That's like Albert Ammons and that stuff.

Jones: Pete Johnson and Albert Ammons were masters of that style. By the way, his son, Gene Ammons, was a fine saxophonist. I did some recording with him. But, yeah, that style was very popular at that particular time in the 40s. It was in the late 40s or early 50s. I did a lot of it, I wasn't too thrilled about it, but I did a lot of it. I didn't think I did that well.

Brauer: Was this the Onyx Club?

Jones: Yes, that's right on 52nd St. That was right across the street from The Three Deuces. In those days, there are clubs on either side of the street. On one side you had The Spotlight, The famous Door The Onyx Club, Jimmy Ryan's, and a couple of

other places that I don't even remember. They lined the street. That is why it was called Swing Street. Jimmy Ryan's, of course, was Dixieland. There were a bunch of people that came down to listen to Dixieland. A lot of great guys played there. I think Jack Teegarden played there, and Cutty played there. The music was very exciting. You see, I don't but then you down. A lot of people do, but I think Dixieland music has a well-deserved place in the whole panorama of jazz. It is definitely part of the whole picture. It is a certain type of music and it is different from any other type. It is distinctive has a beat. And it has swing and originality, it has melody… it is vital.

Brauer: What was your working day or working night like?

Jones: At the Onyx Club, starting time down there was tween 830 and 9 o'clock. You finished around 130 in the morning. So, you know, you got a good workout during the night.

Brauer: And you did an hour set, 45 minute set?

Jones: We used to play 45 minutes. Sometimes we got encores

Brauer: There his atmosphere of these issues from one club to the other sitting in. It is almost like you're in one big club in a sense.

Jones: Well, 52nd St., people were coming out of clubs on their breaks and go play with other bands on their breaks. As I mentioned, Don Byas used to come over and play with us in Hot Lips Page band. I think I mentioned before he played this one tune, "Sweet Georgia Brown" and he played over 40 courses on that one occasion. He played 40 choruses and each one was better than the last. It was incredible. And you could understand why a guy like Lucky Thompson would like his style. He had that same stamina, inventiveness, and ideas.

Brauer: Do you see Lucky Thompson as connected to like a Sonny Rollins?

Jones: I think Lucky's style, to my way of thinking is let's say…in a sense… I don't like to make comparisons as people sometimes get insulted but, for my taste, my preference would be Lucky Thompson. That is not only for his style, his tone, but for his ideas, his tone, his technique and the general professionalism. I hate to say that because that implies that somebody else does not have these qualities and that's not true. I said that Lucky had them to a greater degree, perhaps than most.

Brauer: What about Andy Kirk?

Jones: Gentlemen. He's the nicest gentlemen I've ever met in this business.

Brauer: What was your musical relationship with him?

Jones: I played in his band. I played with him for a while, long after Mary Williams had left. I enjoyed it. We did some theater dates. We did the Howard Theater in Washington. We did the State Theater in Hartford. There was a theatre in Baltimore.

Brauer: The Royal?

Jones: Yes, we did the Royal Theater in Baltimore. We did a couple of dance dates other than that but, the theater dates were the main things that we did with Andy Kirk. But, he was a gentleman unlike anyone else I had met in the business.

Brauer: What was the lineup in that band?

Jones: I don't recall. We had one fellow named Shirley Green. He was a tenor saxophone player. That's a funny name for a man, right? I don't know how he spelled it, but his name was Shirley Green. He was an excellent tenor saxophone player. He was in that band. I think Jesse Price might have been in not been for a while, the drummer. He used to play with bands out of Kansas City. But, see, I'm trying to think of some of the other people. I'm sure if I thought about it long enough I could probably come up with more names. It wasn't the same band that Kirk had earlier. It was a good band.

Brauer: Did you learn anything from him musically?

Jones: Not so much musically, but, you learn from a man who had such impeccable taste like Andy Kirk. He was also a gentleman. You say, "If this man can be like this, why can't others be like this?" Some of the others were far removed from that kind of persona. But, Andy Kirk was a gentleman. He was, not the only one, but, a gentleman among gentlemen.

Brauer: Your slick, your really slick. You know that. (Laughs) Billy Eckstein Big Band?

Jones: Billy was a fine musician. Everybody knew he was a fine singer. But, he played the valve trombone with the best.

Brauer: Didn't you do a record where he was playing valve trombone? When I scroll through here, I'm going to find it.

Jones: It's possible. I don't recall it. He was great on valve trombone, like Bobby Brookmeyer. He was very inventive, he had great tone, great sound, and a great jazz style. You know, valve trombone has a different sound than regular slide trombone. But, it has a throaty field. But, it's sound is great but, it is just different. But, he did it very well. I thought he should have played more. But, if you wanted to be, let's say, a

trombonist instead of a singer, I think you would have been a great instrumentalist if he wanted to. He probably would not have made as much money but…

Brauer: Now did you tour with that band?

Jones: No, I just did the Cotton Club with them in New York. It was just one engagement. I think Frank Wes was in that band and, of course I mentioned Fats. That was one of the funniest things I have ever seen in my life. It was him falling through the floor.

Brauer: Now, tell that story because I think we were all off and the tape wasn't running when he told that.

Jones: We were at The Cotton Club in Harlem. I think it was at 140th and Lennox Ave. we were sitting on a bench and it was three tiered. The rhythm section was on a lower level with the base. The saxophonists were on the second level in the trumpets in the trombones were on the top level. We are playing a tune called, "The Boy And The Blues." It was a very opportune. It got your heart going. So, Fats Navarro had a solo. In order to take the solo he had to come down from the top of the bandstand to the floor. Because, in those days, they didn't have mics placed all over the area. The only way to get there was to walk down. But, instead of walking down, Fats jumped down. So, he fell through the floor. Everybody fell out; everybody was on the floor. That was including the band.

Brauer: What, did he fall into the basement!? (Laughs)

Jones: Well, he went to the bottom of the stage. He was on the top tier that was maybe three or 4 feet between where he was sitting down to the stage, at floor level. He went through that, right down to the floor level. He didn't stop playing. It was strange. That was very funny. It is lucky that he didn't get hurt.

Brauer: What was your estimation of that band?

Jones: It was a good man but now one of the top dance. For instance one of the times… You had people like Dizzy Gillespie, JJ Johnson, Dexter Gordon in the band. That was the prior band before this band. None of those people were in the span. It was good band but not on that level. It was good, but not very good.

Brauer: And the difference between it and the swing bands was evident? There are not a lot of recordings of that particular band.

Jones: Of that particular band? Not that band? Are we talking about today knows with? I didn't do any recording with them. I can compare them easy because I only

know what they sound like when I was with the band. Perhaps after I left they did some recordings.

Brauer: What about your time with John Kirby?

Jones: Interesting, because he had Bill Beason, Buster Bailey. That took Billy Cobham's place for a while. I was overtime. I played with the band sure maybe a couple of months. But Charlie Shavers used to do a lot of the writing for the band. Of course, you know Charlie, he kept playing higher, and higher, and higher. Ease to play the highest notes on the horn. He was a good player. He was a good arranger. He was a very good arrangement and I enjoyed the band. Kirby used to be the bass player with Fletcher Henderson's band. In fact, when Fletcher Anderson first came to New York Kirby was his bass player. He called his band, "The best little band in the world." He was almost right because the little band had a big sound. Fee arrangements were already really good, very well rehearsed, and the bandages had a really great sound. I enjoyed it.

Brauer: In 1947, how did you get to Jazz at the Philharmonic? How did I come to be?

Jones: You see, I was working on 52nd St. I think with Lips, or at The Spotlight. Norman Grantz had heard about my playing has supposed and he… His piano player was leaving. I forget who it was at the time, but they were leaving the group and he needed somebody to go on tour with him. He was leaving to go on tour in several days. So, that was my first engagement. I went out with him on that tour. Subsequently, I did maybe a Taurus because he used to go on tour twice a year. That was once in the spring and once in the fall. We played it during those stores, most of the largest cities in the country. It was very interesting. I got to play with people that I had admired for years like Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young,, Buddy Rich, Joe Jones, other players that were not as well known. But, it was exciting. Charlie Parker did a couple of the stores. Max Roach was on a few. I think Max Roach I went on the road with us to Europe. Charlie Parker, the funny thing about that was, when Charlie Parker was playing, this great as he was, the audiences did not appreciate Charlie. They did not appreciate him as much as they appreciated let's say, Lester Young, or Hawkins, or Flip Phillips. Because, they do not understand what he was doing. This style was not difficult, but it was complicated. It was certainly a level above what most players were playing at the time. It was several layers above what players were doing the time.

Brauer: You made some recordings with Parker.

Jones: I made one. That is, unless some of the recording so we did on tour were recorded. But, we did, we went into the studio to do this one. Something funny happened. A funny thing happened while doing it. We were doing this recording. Shelley Manne, who was the drummer at the time, had to leave in the middle of the

record to go play with some other band that he was contracted to play with. He had to leave the record date at the very time we are playing, "Cherokee" at this tempo (plays incredibly fast tempo.) So, we did it without the drums. Some very strange things happened during the playing. If you listen to the record, you can probably hear it. I'm not sure they released that side, but anyway, that happened.

Brauer: Who was the bass player?

Jones: The bass player. This was a JTP date—was Ray Brown. Most of the rhythm section was from the Jazz at the Philharmonic. This was Ray Brown, usually it was Buddy Rich also… But, Buddy Rich didn't do this date. Shelley did that date.

Brauer: But, the difference was that this was in the studio, as opposed to being live. I have here a recording you did on September 18th, 1949. The date is called, "Byrd and Prez at Carnegie Hall"

Jones: Oh, that was recorded? See, I didn't know that a lot of this was recorded. A lot of those things were recorded without our knowledge.

Brauer: The band was Eldridge, Tommy Turk, Parker, Flip Phillips, Prez.

Jones: Yeah, Tommy was on that. Was Charlie Shavers on that?

Brauer: No, it was Eldridge, Tommy Turk, Parker, Phillips, Hank Jones, Ray Brown and Buddy Rich.

Jones: Yeah, that was a JPT thing. You see, some of those… Some of those were recorded. I think I have a whole set of them here.

Brauer: And you continued to tour with that band until when? I have here until 1961.

Jones: In to 1951. I started in 1947… Perhaps the end of 1950. It was about four years. I guess it was about four and half years.

Brauer: Was it artistically satisfying? I know you said that you got a chance to play with a lot of people. I don't want to say that it was hokey, but there seem to be a show business piece of it.

Jones: That is the part of it that really turned me off, to use an old time Warner expression. You see, when I joined it, I joined it because I thought it would be a great musical experience, not a circus. When it took on a certain circus complex, I lost interest in. I said that it was time for me to leave. They started playing to the people in the top of the office they were the screeners. If you did something that was visual,

not something you get here… A lot of the things that guys played on the stage were great musically. But, they didn't have the same reaction as when some guy was screaming, or laying a high note on the horn. He was down on the stage flopping like a fish out of water. Is kind of things turned me off. I said, "This is not music. This is not what I joined it for. I'm going to leave."

Brauer: How special was it to be around Charlie Parker and play with him? Did you learn anything from him? What can you tell us about whatever of person he was from your perspective?

Jones: I had the good fortune of playing with Charlie Parker, but never on the road. Except for Jazz at the Philharmonic, I never played within a nightclub setting. But, I was always impressed by his calm approached everything in place. His music was exciting, but he himself was perfectly calm.

Brauer: He looked like a Buddha.

Jones: Exactly, it would just sit there. Everything was in his fingers and in his mind. He would just sit there and be calm. He must've had a very calm mind to play the way he did and play all this wonderful music that he played. He did this without going into all these musical gyrations and histrionics. That is not necessary. If he didn't have to do it, Art Tatum didn't do it either. So, that, to me – – the dividing line between when you stop playing music and start talking to the other stuff, the stage death, the music business stuff, that's where the music. That is when I lose interest. Charlie himself was a very nice person. He was quiet. I don't think I ever heard him raise his voice once, at any time.

Brauer: Did you talk with them much? Do you have a chance to talk with them an awful lot?

Jones: No, once he invited me to join his band. Foolishly, I've probably said… At the time, I figured I wasn't ready musically to play that style. I wasn't fully immersed into the style, having just come to New York with Charlie before that. I thought I need a little more seasoning, let's say. It was not that I wanted to be, like a dyed in the wool author. I want to try to integrate my style into what they are doing and make it sound, you know, tactical and acceptable to what they were playing. That is about the only time that I ever had a conversation with Charlie. But, he was very matter of fact. He was very businesslike and calm.

Brauer: Did the other aspects of his life intrude into your experience that he is famous for?

Jones: No, not at all. I never even knew it. I heard about it, but I never saw any of these things happening. I saw no outward effects of it, no signs of it, you know? But,

whatever. He said it didn't affect his playing. Well, at one time I guess it did because he went into a place called Camarilla in California. It was a rest home or something like that. He stayed for a time. Whether or not his, let's say his destructive habits, had anything to do with it, I don't know.

Brauer: You made a record called "Relaxing at Camarilla"

Jones: Right, exactly. He didn't make it there but, wherever that place was…

Brauer: But, you made an album that is titled that.

Jones: I did. But, Tommy Flanagan was playing that. Everybody did that. It was a typical Charlie Parker. If he played that well when he was sick, you know how good he was when he was well.

Brauer: Your association with Ella Fitzgerald began through JATP?

Jones: Actually, began during a time where JATP was not on tour. And it continued the next tour with JATP. Then, it continued for the next two or three years. But, I worked with Ella often on for about four or 4 1/2 years. That is not an awful long time. Tony when he worked with her for 15 years, which is a long time. But, it was very hard. She was very interesting to work with and very pleasant. She was a wonderful artist. She can do ballads as well as scat. She did a great scat. She was a great scat singer.

Brauer: I thinking over this earlier but, and I'm not sure it was on the tape or not on the tape, but talk about what it was that she wanted from a pianist. What did she want the pianist to supply, what was she looking for, and did that in any way influence your development as a player?

Jones: Well, you know, accompanying Ella was different from, let's say, Sarah Vaughn or Diana Washington. I never played for Diana, but I know from listening to the accompanists that worked for her, what she wanted. Ella, having come from a background of starting out with Chick Webb's big band preferred sort of, the band, chordal accompaniment. She liked the big band. You played orchestral chords, top chords, big full chords. That is the sort of background I played for her. She didn't like particularly single-line fills. Sarah Vaughan liked single line fills. I did a couple of concerts with her. So, she was different in that respect. Ella liked it more support. But, of course, when you are accompanying, that is a different ballgame altogether. You cannot leave the singer, you cannot leave the soloist too far. And, you cannot intrude on the soloist's train of thought. But, you have to be there for support. It is like walking a very thin line. You have to do the right thing at the right time otherwise you interfere with the train of thought of the soloist. You certainly don't want to do that because that destroys their whole thing. So, it was a little different. It

is quite difficult. It is not difficult if you want to do it right, and you listen carefully. I think I hear footprints, (laughs).

Brauer: Do we need to turn the heat off? Is it too hot?

Jones: No, the heat is fine, but sometimes I have these little heat flashes. I have these little heat spells. It's due to the medication I am taking. It makes you perspire.

Brauer: Do you think that… Because, you are often credited with elevating your… You elevated your ability to accompany people above your solo talent. That became one of the reasons why people wanted to. You are so prolific in recording because you are so effective in listening, and accompanying, and supporting artists.

Jones: Well, that is true. That is true, because I think at the time when I was working as an accompanist that also helped my solo work later. When you are accompanying, you learn what not to do. You also learn what to do. There she is…

Brauer: Good morning!

Unknown: We have a beautiful day.

Jones: Yes. But, when you're playing solo, then you remember all the things that he couldn't do when you are accompanying. Now, sometimes you can incorporate some of those things into your playing. Still, you have to learn what not to do. Earl Garner told me something, we were riding downtown on the subway one day. Of course, I used to ask him questions, "How do you play this?" He told me something I have never forgotten. I thought it was particularly relevant coming from him because he plays a great style. He said it took him 20 years to learn what to leave out of his playing. I thought that was significant. Because, even though he had left out some, he still played the essential things that were necessary. That tells me that, yes, you don't have to play every note on the piano every time you sit down. The only play what is effective. Nobody does that better than Basie of course. I thought that was very significant. I thought that meant a lot. I think that sort of altered my thinking, my musical thinking, a lot of that time.

Brauer: Do you think that's a lesson that the current generation of "virtuosos" need to learn?

Jones: I think so, because it's just not necessary to play huge volume of things. Now, that might be contrary to the way Tate someplace. Tatum does play a huge volume of notes. But, every note that he plays is relevant, it means something. I think that applies to the notes that are not relevant to what you're playing. You know, a lot of pianists sit down in a play a lot of stuff that has no relation to the harmony, sometimes not even to the rhythm, or the melodies. It runs contrary to three

elements of music: rhythm, harmony, melody. If he neither one of them are equally represented, you don't have music. Extraneous notes that are being played, whether it is a whole in player, or a pianist, or anybody…

Brauer: So that's noise to you?

Jones: Yes, it's noise to me because it doesn't mean anything.

Brauer: And you think a lot of people can't discern it. It's exciting so they clapped for it, or they applaud it. But, it is not from a discerning sensibility to understand.

Jones: Yes, I think that's it. I think a lot of it is visual as well. If it looks like it is happening, then they perceive it as happening. That is them that is as far as they know. They are not into it as much. Maybe, they haven't thought about it at the correct level. They go to be entertained, not to listen. Entertainment is one thing, and listening and enjoyment is something else. They are two type of things.

Brauer: It's interesting, the point you make about Tatum. I think a similar thing is said about Coltrane. A lot of people try to emulate where he took the saxophone solo. But, there is only one Coltrane, there's only one Art Tatum. There is only one Sarah Vaughan.

Jones: That is very true. You see, some people… If you can make it a liable presentation, or a viable concept, then it is relevant. But, I keep thinking about what Earl Hines did. You have to learn what to leave out. What he meant was, you have to leave that anything that does not contribute to the whole in a meaningful manner. If it does not contribute to the body of the work that you are trying to do, if it has no meaning, what is it doing there?

Brauer: Around this time, it is 1946, you started an association with Savoy Records. I think the first recording is with Stan Getz. I think it was with Stan Getz, Curly Russell, and Max.

Jones: Yes, Max Roach.

Brauer: Then in 1947, Ray Brown and the Be bop boys is what I have. Dizzy, Dave Burns, John Brown, James Moody, Milt Jackson, Hank Jones…

Jones: I don't know how they got all those people in Rudy Van Gelder's studio (laughs).

Brauer: Joe Harris, Gil Fuller.

Jones: That was Dizzy's band!

Brauer: Right. 12/24/1947, JJ Johnson's bebop quintet. These sessions would come with great rapidity. I mean when I would go through, like, one day it is this band, it's Eddie Bird… It is almost like you lived in that Savoy Studio for a bit.

Jones: For quite a while I did. I did a lot of work out there. But, that was in his home, when he lived in Hackensack. He moved into a studio on 9W near Fort Lee. No, it was Inglewood Cliffs rather. That was a much larger studio. But, most of that early stuff, that Savoy stuff took place in Rudy's home in Hackensack. In fact, I don't think we did any Savoy studio records in his studio on 9W. I think, the date that I did with Cannonball Adderley, it might have been with Bluenote. That was something else.

Brauer: Well, that was Bluenote. That was 1958. But, you, early on, did…I think Cannon's first recording with Savoy and Nat's first recording with Savoy. You are on notice. You did some things that he made famous later like, "Spontaneous Combustion," I don't know why I don't have those details. What I'm interested in is, how did you get to Savoy Records? How did that relationship start?

Jones: The very first date I did… I have to think about that. It was so long ago. I think the first date there that I did was – – I know Kenny Clark was on there, I think Wendell Marshall was on that as well. It might have been a quartet date with a horn. The horn might have been… Let me see, this goes way back. You might have it on your database. I can't recall it at the moment.

Brauer: I have a Howard McGee date. Now, the Howard McGee date, I have was on a label called Parrot. Savoy bought that out. That is the date that that Billy Eckstein was on. Do you remember Kenny Man? Ray Brown and J.C. Herd were on that date.

Jones: Of course I remember Ray Brown and J.C. Herd. I don't know if Kenny Man was on that date. I don't remember him. But, I don't remember that very first date. I'm trying to remember. It seems to me though, that the date you just mentioned, was that a Savoy date?

Brauer: The Howard McGee date?

Jones: Well, I think that we did a Howard McGee date in Chicago. That was part of JTP.

Brauer: What I have a say Savoy reissued. It is under Howard McGee's name. Actually, no, I got this out of the Savoy records discography. It is from the discography and they have it as 1948, in February. They do not have a date. It indicates that, although it was issued on Savoy, it was originally done on a label called Parrot. The personnel was McGee, Eckstein, Kenny Man, Hank Jones, Ray Brown, and JC Herd.

Jones: Kenny Man, that name doesn't ring a bell. That is the person that ever her the name, to my knowledge. I wonder if that is accurate. Sometimes, these things kind of get distorted.

Brauer: Yeah. One of the things we want to try and do is identify things that may not be accurate.

Jones: Yeah, of course. You were talking about that earlier. The name just doesn't ring a bell. It is possible he could have been there. Maybe I was not just paying attention.

Brauer: But, what I may just did in his who opened the door at Savoy Records for you?

Jones: Let's see, I know that Ozzy Cadena was the A&R man for them. He was the owner. He didn't have anything to do with setting up the dates; he was just there. It was not Rudy Van Gelder, because he was in his home. Let's see… I did some dates with Ernie Wilkins. I don't think he was on that first one. I'm trying to think the very first date. It seems to me that Kenny Clarke, and Wendell Marshall were on that date.

Brauer: I know that the first recording that Nat and Cannon did, you were on. Wendell Marshal was on those dates. I don't know if that was the first date you did there.

Jones: I'm trying to think of the horn player.

Brauer: You don't think it was the Stan Getz date in 1946?

Jones: '46, that was pretty early. It might have been.

Brauer: I have it as July 31st.

Jones: I remember one date, that might have been with Stan Getz. Stan had written some charts on the way to the date. But, he left the charts in the taxi. When we got the studio, we had no music to play. I remember that. I don't know if it was that date, or a subsequent date.

Brauer: How did you work your way through that?

Jones: Well, with Stan, you did not have to worry about it. He knew so many tunes that we just played something else. When the situation comes like that, you go to Plan B: no charts, head arrangements.

Brauer: What was recording with Van Gelder like? In those Savoy dates, you said it was in his home?

Jones: (Laughs) You don't want to know! Well, Van Gelder was very particular about the piano. I cannot fault him for that because he had one of the greatest recording instruments I have ever heard, or that I was ever fortunate enough to play on. He had a Steinway B in his studio that had no equal. It had the greatest Steinway sound of any piano now that I have ever played on before or since. That piano, I think he still has it. Now, it doesn't have its former sound, but it is still there. At that time, he was so meticulous. He did not allow a pencil to be placed on the piano. And if you put a hot drink…

Brauer: Well, if you couldn't use pencils, what did you use to correct the charts?

Jones: He didn't allow pencils on the piano. You could not put a pencil on the piano. Certainly, no pens. If you tried to put a drink… Sometimes, you would send out for food, like sandwiches and coffee. It was worth your life to come near that piano with anything like that. He protected that piano, literally, with his life. I could understand that, the piano was so unique. I might have felt similar that it had it in my PM. He was so protective about the piano. It was almost paranoid. But, not really. But, it was almost that point. How could anybody be that particular? But, in this particular case, it was justified. It was a great instrument. That is what I remember about him. He was very particular about… He will wasn't as particular about music because he did not know so much about music at that time. He was a great engineer, but he didn't know anything about the actual playing of music itself. He could reproduce it accurately and he was a good technician. He did some great recording, as you know, from the stuff that he produced. He did some wonderful things there. He was probably, and probably still is, and that time, he was a great engineer. Probably, like today, he is probably one of the best engineers in New York, or maybe the country, or, maybe in the world for that matter. When he moved to his larger studio, he did a great volume of single dates, and stuff like that. He did some sweetening dates, where you go and you overdub something. He did hundreds, or thousands, of dates there. Actually, the sounds that he used to get in his home, to me, with a better sounds. Although, the studio sounds were good and he did some great things there, a lot of those tender saxophone records… Some vocal dates were done there as well. But, I think… For some reason, I just like the sounds that he got in his home. Maybe it is because of the piano.

Brauer: You know, I read that comment before. I want to digress and ask you that about pianos. Is there a piano that you favor?

Jones: Well, of course I like the Steinway B's. All of them are of a certain quality. They are a level above most pianos. Nowadays, most pianos are very good. It is just that Steinway is maybe just a step higher, or on a high level. Even the Yamaha is a

good pianist. When they were first brought to this country, the C7's and some of the other smaller ones, to me, did not have the same sound quality as they have today. Now, it is hard to tell the difference between a Yamaha and a Baldwin, or even a Steinway, because they all sound so good. They have improved so much. But, Steinway has always been a good piano. The other ones have come closer to the sound level. That includes the Baldwin's, the Beksteins and all that. But, my preference is still the Steinway. If I have a choice, that is my preference. Sometimes you do not have a choice.

Brauer: What is it about the piano that you like?

Jones: The action, the tone, and usually… They seem to hold a tuning better as well. But, the action primarily is what I like. The Steinway action is different from any other action. Of course, all other actions can be regulated. But, the feel of the notes, pressure that a press note is unique to the Steinway. The pressure and the weight should be 50 g on the down stroke, and 19 on the return. If it has that, then you get a perfect balance between when you depress a sound. Steinway's all seem to have a correct balance. Some other pianos are either too heavy or too late. Most of them are too heavy. They are too difficult press. You have to work on them. You have to work too hard and maybe play for an hour or so before they feel comfortable to play on.

(Recording Stops)

Jones: The one at Lincoln Center, write-off Columbus Circle. I think that is the wanted they are talking about. I think that is the piano that they are talking about. I played that one a couple of months ago. But, it does not have the same feel as a Steinway.

Brauer: Now, I remember people saying that… One thing, Yamaha piano's are even from the lowest notes of the highest note. They tend to give you… Whereas, sometimes the Steinway's are a little thin in the treble, the highest treble. Is that accurate?

Jones: If they are I haven't noticed. I have always felt that Steinway's had the most even sound of all of the pianos. It seems that some of the other pianos, I won't mention any names, but they seemed to lose their tonality in the higher that you get in the higher registers. Sometimes, the lower registers are more full than the higher registers. But, that is true of some others. To me, the Steinway has the most well balanced sound right across the board. At least in my experience. Maybe, there have been some that haven't met that standard. Every piano is different.

Brauer: What about the idea of warmth and body in the note?

Jones: Say it again please.

Brauer: Warmth and body in the note, as opposed to a brittle, or a tin sound?

Jones: Well, that happened in some pianos. I notice that in some of the lesser pianos, I guess I shouldn't mention any names. But, that happens occasionally.

Brauer: Walk up to the line, don't cross it.

Jones: (Laughs) to me, in my experience, I have noticed that the Steinway's have a very warm sound. Also, the Baldwin's have a very warm sound. I have a small Baldwin here. There are no two pianos, to me, that ever sound of same. They are all different. You can have 10,000 pianos, and they will all have a distinctive sound. When John Lewis and I did this duo record that we did several years ago, we went down to the Steinway plant and we tried 50 pianos before we found to that sounded compatible with each other when they were put together. It was John playing one, and the playing other. But, they were all Steinway's.

Brauer: How much time did you spend doing this?

Jones: A good three or four hours. This was at the place where all the Steinway pianos are kept on 52nd St.

Brauer: How did you do it. Did you hit a C and he hits a C?

Jones: But, they're not all the same. Everyone has a different… Is strange. Every piano has a different personality. That is why some concert pianists always have a certain piano selector codon. I used to record at the Capitol Studios on 56th St. There was a concert pianist that had a piano there that only he played on. They kept it locked up and he would play on no other piano except that one when he can record. So, there is a difference in pianos. Some are more different, some are less different, some sound more brittle, a lot of it depends on how they are voiced I suppose. You can only do so much with the blessing. The character of the piano is built into it; it's just there. It's hard to figure out why that is.

Brauer: You can sort of mitigate the forces but you can't fundamentally change it.

Jones: I think that's pretty true.

Brauer: When did the idea of the instrument that you play become so important to you? And has it ever become so important that if you don't have the instrument, you don't play?

Jones: Well, I felt like doing that several times. But, I haven't done that. I know pianists who have done that. You see, when I did the tour with Norman Grantz, Jazz

at the Philharmonic, almost all of the PNS were Steinway's. I guess, maybe, I became attached to Steinway's because of that tour. I did several toys with him. I got used to the Steinway sound in the Steinway action. I think since that time it is a carryover from that. You can't go wrong with Steinway. There are other pianos that are good. Like I said, most of the concert grands, the versions that are called concert grands, the larger ones, they have good sound. Most of them have good sound, and good action because they pay more attention to these pianos. They are more expensive and they are larger because they have a deeper for your sound. Everything is more full. The Yamaha's are good, the Steinway's are of course at the top of the heap. You know, like the Beckstein, and in Germany there is the Busendorfer. I don't particularly care for that because I don't think it rises to the level of the Steinway. But, a lot of pianists swear by it. It is a question of personal taste I guess.

Brauer: What stipulations do you make in your contracts?

Jones: I don't. I say that oh well-tuned piano, tuned to a 440, well regulated and in tune.

(Doorbell Rings)

Jones: Hey! Right on cue.

(Recording Stops)

Brauer: And Dizzy's Two Bass Hit in 1946 and 1947. Ray left the group in 1948 to form his own trio. That was comprised of Hank Jones and Charlie Smith on drums.

Jones: That's right! That was with Charlie Smith the left-handed drummer. He was left-handed.

Brauer: Do you remember that group?

Jones: Oh yeah!

Brauer: Charlie Smith… I think the one clip of Charlie Parker that exists, Charlie Smith is in it. It's on a TV show.

Jones: I have a picture somewhere of Charlie, and Ray and I. Tad Damron is in the picture I think.

Brauer: Do you remember what the occasion was?

Jones: I think it was that Mary Luke Williams apartment when she lived in Harlem. It was either there or backstage at a theater. You cannot tell from the picture.

Brauer: Is this the famous apartment where all those musicians got together?

Jones: There where a lot of musicians. But, I think it was around hundred and 47th or 48th St. It was right in there on St. Nicholas.

Brauer: Did you know her well?

Jones: I didn't know her at all. I went there with a trumpet player. It wasn't Joe Wallace,… He knew very well that I did not know her. She was a very fine pianist. She wrote some great tunes.

Brauer: Were even if one of those famous sessions that she had with musicians?

Jones: No. I would have remembered that. I saw somewhere on TV, late last night, where some woman in Harlem has been having sessions like that for about 10 years or so at her apartment. I think they had it on CBS… No, it wasn't on CBS. It was on Fox. She is not going to catch a cold with being barefoot like that is she?

Unknown: No, I'm okay. Thank you Mr. Jones.

Jones: Okay, because I have the air-conditioning on. Maybe I should turn that off.

Brauer: In picking up in continuing this discussion about Savoy, I hope that is where we left off. What is your impression of Herman Lubinsky? You say it had nothing to do with the music, but did you have much interaction with him?

Jones: Next question.

Brauer: Okay, that's an answer.

Jones: What did you say? (Laughs)

Brauer: I said, that's an answer.

Jones: That about sums it up (Laughs).

Brauer: (Laughs)

Jones: Next!

Brauer: What do you remember about your Cannonball Adderley session?

Jones: Very relaxed. You know, Miles was sort of the unofficial leader of the date. Most of the ideas, the playing ideas, the subtle things, all came from Miles. The whole date was so relaxed. I guess, I would have to say that is the most relaxed date I have ever done. There was Sam Jones, Art Blakey, and Miles, and Cannonball. Everything just fell right into place. There was no stress, no sweat. Everything worked out nice. And the piano, of course, it was Rudy Van Gelder's piano.

Brauer: When you did that date, do you reflect upon the previous recordings you did with him at Savoy?

Jones: You mean, "Spontaneous Combustion," and all that stuff? Well, his brother was on that date. Wasn't that drummer Shadow? I mean Kluk, rather.

Brauer: Yes.

Jones: Well, it must have been Wendell. Well, I think it compared well. It was amazing to me the way that Cannonball played. I hadn't heard anybody play that way since Charlie Parker. Actually, Sonny Stitt was playing that way. Sonny Stitt played alto as well as he played tenor. He sounded very much like Parker. In fact, I think Charlie may have studied with Sonny. I'm not just saying that because…something else. Sonny was something else.

Brauer: How do you mean something else? And don't say next question! (Laughs)

Jones: That's a good question! (Laughs) it is just that he was unusual. That is a better word. Sonny was the, unusual, extremely accurate, and he had all his energy and stamina. You know, it was just amazing. It was amazing to me that anybody could come along after Charlie Parker had been on the scene, and play like that and make you say, "Oh, really?" That was the first time… I had no idea that there was anybody around that could play like that until I heard Sonny. He was fantastic.

Brauer: And Cannonball affected you in the same way?

Jones: Cannonball affected me in a similar way. He had a more earthy impression. His plane was great, but it did not have the same spark to me that Sonny and Charlie had. But, he was good he was a great blues player and so was Charlie. But, they were all great blues players. It was just that little difference. It's probably a personal preference, you know?

Brauer: Does the distinction between bebop and hard bop mean anything to you? Those are terms that are bandied about.

Jones: Well, bebop is a general term. Hardbop is almost the same thing. I don't think there's that much difference. When you hear one, you hear the other. I guess it just

depends on what tune you are playing. You can play a ballad, and be playing bebop. It may be hard to conceive, but it is possible.

Brauer: Well, it's that funky, earthy element. That seems to distinguish hard bop from bebop.

Jones: Maybe it is the tempos they make the distinction. Sometimes the line that is being played, if it is like a discombobulated, jerky line, maybe that is called hard bop. If it is a nice smooth even line, maybe that is bebop. I think it is a minor difference, if any. I may be wrong, but that is my take on it.

Brauer: Did you consider yourself to be the house pianist at Savoy?

Jones: No, not really. I think everything goes in cycles. You know, we did all those dates and back happened to be the cycle that we were in another time. They were doing a lot of recordings. I guess, I was lucky enough to get the call and some of them. I enjoyed working there. I really enjoyed working on that piano in Rudy Van Gelder's home. I enjoyed working at the studio to, but not as much as that. That piano was so rare, and so unusual. It was a joy to work on.

Brauer: Musicians from Detroit were dominating those late 40s, early 50s sessions. That was almost a portal through which we learned about Donald Byrd, all these guys had their debuts. The core of the musicians were seemed to be involved in Detroit. Later on, when Yusef Lateef gets there, he records with Savoy. Kenny Burrell was on Savoy.

Jones: Well, I think Savoy was the meetinghouse. Because of course, at the time, there was Bluenote, there was Prestige… There was Fantasy, I guess. Orrin Keepnews was doing a bit of recording there at the same time. I think most people like the Van Gelder's sound. Van Gelder was the engineer of choice in that time. I think he had a lot to do with it. The word gets around, you know? If there is a particular engineer that is doing a particularly good job, and turning out some particularly good stuff, then that's where everybody gravitates. It is a cycle. Next year, or two years from now, there would be somebody else. But, at that time, it was Van Gelder. Bluenote used to record there. I think Fantasy used to record there. Well, Prestige used to have a base in a little city near there. They had an office there. It was not Fantasy, but Prestige. Fantasy was a single company at that time. Later, they combined with Fantasy.

Brauer: Right, Riverside and Prestige all became Fantasy.

Jones: Yeah, that was all Orrin Keepnews. He used recorded some other studio. But, it was a great studio to record in. Rudy was getting the sound that everybody liked. There may have been other reasons, I don't know.

Brauer: Were you and Wendell Marshall, and Kenny Clarke working outside of the of the recording situations?

Jones: No. I worked with Shadow Wilson at a place up… It was at Mittens. Do you remember Mittens? Mittens head sort of gone down from its previous level but they were still doing things there. I worked there with a group with Jerome Richardson, Wendell Marshall, and Shadow Wilson. It was a good group. I had a lot of fun there.

Brauer: Comment about the personality and the style of Kenny Clarke.

Jones: Kenny was the kind of drummer who can play any style. He could play big band style, there is a difference between big band drumming and small group drumming. Kenny was so versatile that he could play with any small group and he made all those…Most of the small things he did with us at Savoy. He was a great brush man. You could be sitting right in front of him, closer than I am sitting to you, and he would not blast your eardrums out when he was playing with sticks. He had a lighter touch with stakes than most drummers. He was an exquisite brush man. He played brushes great. Elvin would have loved him. I think Elvin didn't like him. As a matter of fact I think you did. He was very, very good at brushes. He was better than most drummers. He would give you a good brush beat that had a lot of movement, they gave you a little impetus of support. He gave you whatever you need it. As a rule, most drummers, I don't think they like to use brushes. They prefer sticks because sticks are easier to use. I think that is the reason. Kenny was a master of both.

Brauer: What about Shadow?

Jones: Shadow was good. He was better with sticks than brushes. But he played with some big bands. I think you worked with… He might have worked with Basie at one time. I'm not sure about that. But, he was a good drummer. He worked with somebody else. I think it was maybe Cab I believe. Do you have that in your data?

Brauer: Yes I do.

Jones: Am I correct about that or am I wrong? I mean, about who he worked with? Shadow?

Brauer: You're correct. Artie Shaw?

Jones: Artie Shaw! I worked with him. I worked with the New Gramercy Five. As opposed to the Old Gramercy Five. We had Ralph Hollow, Joe Rowland, Joe Rowland was the vibes player. We had Tommy Potter playing bass, Kluger on drums. Then there was Artie and myself. We did some recording. The recordings were supposed

to be sold in places like department stores, you know? But not supposed to be sold in record shops, I don't know why. That was the distinction that Artie made. Artie was a very meticulous person. He was a perfectionist. Sometimes, we would do 15, 16, 18 takes on a tune. He would start recording when we got out that night and we would go right to the recording studio and stay there until maybe two or three in the afternoon the next day. All those 18 takes wouldn't be complete takes. They would be stop and start, stop and start.

Brauer: It must have been nerve-racking.

Jones: Well, yes, it was. But, he was that kind of a guy. He was a good player, but he did not have the same type of fire that Benny Goodman had although they were both clarinet players. In fact, they both worked at the same NBC studio orchestra at the same time. I have heard a transcription of them both playing in the same orchestra, both playing solos. They sounded almost alike. After that, they sort of went in different directions. Artie was a great technician. He could play a lot of different type of things. What was that? Was that your phone?

Brauer: It’s so funny. It's got service for a minute. That is why you heard it beep. Then he did not get service, so let's just turn it off. I'm sorry. That's for the historical record.

Jones: (Laughs) Anyways, Artie went into sort of a different direction. Then he actually swung more. People say, "What is the difference between Artie and Benny?" Well, then he was a hard swinger. He played more blues and stuff. Artie was more of a technician. He can play anything written on a piece of paper and had a great time. He had his own style, but it was not that hard swing jazz style. Artie was the more emotionally mature of the two. That is, Artie didn't have all of these little peculiar quirks that Benny had. Like, wearing somebody… We were in Alaska once, and it was about this time of year. It was much colder than this though, because Alaska is way further north. I had just bought a brand-new coat. It was a beautiful trench coat. I was going in for the first time at this concert. We were in the dressing room getting ready to go back to the hotel after the concert and then he walks into the dressing room and says, "Hey, that is some nice material. Can I try that on?" I say, "Sure, Benny. Try it on." He tried my coat on and wore it back to the hotel. I didn't get it the next day until about a half-hour before the plane left. That's Benny Goodman.

Brauer: Did he say anything?

Jones: He just did it!

Brauer: He just did it? Wow.

Jones: There was no explanation or nothing. What do you do with a guy like that?

Brauer: When you were with Shaw who was in the band?

Jones: Tommy Potter on base. It was a small group, I did not play with his big band. Tommy Potter on bass, Eric Kluger on drums. There was Joe Roland on vibes, Tal Fallow on guitar, and I played on piano.

Brauer: That's sort of the band that straddles swing and bebop.

Jones: In a sense. Tommy had recorded with Bud Powell, Charlie Parker, and all those people. He didn't have to play anything unusual. He did not do anything different. Well, anything different than what he played with Byrd. He was always a good soloist. So, he played solos, occasional solos. But, that is all. There wasn't that much of a difference. The style of the music that we played was, of course, different. Now, Artie wrote different type of charts. There were some weird titles like, "The Children Met The Train" and things like that. There were strange titles. The "Back Bay Shuffle" was the big-band tune. We played that with the small band too. He wrote all of his charts and had a distinctive style. They did not swing as hard as Benny's stuff.

Brauer: Did you enjoy it?

Jones: I enjoyed it. It was nice. I used to do a lot of lines, a lot of horizontal lines with Artie. He had this distinction between vertical lines and horizontal lines. He preferred horizontal lines. He had a three-part harmony going. Some of those things were very interesting.

Brauer: So, there were horizontal lines that had a vertical relationship?

Jones: But, I mean, actually, you can't combine the two actually. With a vertical line, everything jumps up and down and up and down. But, no level line… He had one you go (scats melody). But, everything was on the same sort of spatial level. He made that distinction. He could not stand vertical lines. It made him sick.

Brauer: What kind of environment was The Embers to play in?

Jones: It was mostly respectful. Although, opening night… Opening night, there was somebody in the audience who walked up to the bandstand and said, "My name is David O Selznick, and I want to hear you play Stardust." Artie says, "My name is Artie R Shulsky, and I'm not going to play it." (Laughs) I will never forget that. It was just out of a clear blue sky. Sometimes, he was like that. I guess he just didn't like this guy. Sometimes he was like that. The must have known him or something.

Brauer: David O Selznick?

Jones: Yeah he was a film producer or something.

Brauer: Yeah, I've heard a word about Shaw, that he was somewhat of a patrician.

Jones: Yeah, well, he was. Like I said, one thing we can say about him that is actually true, that cannot be contested is that he liked to get married. He was married nine times. I said, "Artie, why do you get married so often?" He said, "Well, I don't run around. I would rather be married nine times then be married once and have nine affairs." That makes sense, right? That is what he said.

Brauer: Did he need to work?

Jones: I think he had to work, not financially, but he needed to work artistically. He had to be doing something. That was his outlet, because I'm sure that he made that money with his big band who he was toying with for the rest of his life. He made a lot of good recordings. Hot Lives Page did a recording with him. Do remember that?

Brauer: No, I don't remember that.

Jones: He did "Saint James Infirmary" with him. But, he was, and away, he was like Benny. He was a perfectionist, maybe more so than Benny. But, it is kind of hard to believe that anybody could be more of a perfectionist than Danny. But, Artie might have been. I think I was on a bona fide record it with Benny. But I don't think he would've done 18 or 15 takes on any tenant. If they got to that point, I think he would've just thrown it in the wastebasket and said, "Let's do something else." Artie had more efficiency than he did.

Brauer: Do you think that the ambience of a place like The Embers influence the repertoire? Did that music, as you describe it, sort of, fit into your atmosphere?

Jones: I doubt it. We used the same library will be played other jobs. I did a couple of other jobs with him. We went to Ohio and we played at someplace. We went to San Francisco to play the same arrangements. I don't think it affected much.

I guess in the same period, you worked with Tyree Glenn?

Well, I worked The Embers with Tyree. I think I was, let me see know, the timeline gets me here. It might have been before Artie's thing. Artie's thing was in 1953 I believe.

Brauer: Well, I have Tyree as being in 1953, but, as I said, these things don't necessarily…

Jones: Well, the reason I say 52 is because I have a gold belt buckle that Artie gave us all for Christmas. It has the year 53 on it. It may have been earlier. We worked with Artie may be in the latter part of 53 around Christmas. But, anyway, I worked there. I also worked with Tyree Glenn at a place two blocks further down… What was it called? It was in the same block.

Brauer: The Roundtable?

Jones: Yes, The Roundtable. Lester Young worked with us there. Also, a drummer named… What is this bongo player who plays drums? Anyway, he used to work with Dizzy Gillespie.

Brauer: Chano?

Jones: No not Chano, it was somebody else. Anyways, I can't think of the guy's name. Joe Jones was the guy working with us. This was at The Roundtable. So, we had this guy up front on bongos, doing a solo. Joe was apparently playing too loud for him, so he stops the music and turns around to Joe and says (imitates a Portuguese accent) "Brushes, man! Use brushes, man!" (Laughs) it was in that accent. It was keep. It was funny.

Brauer: What was the repertoire of Tyree Glenn?

Jones: Tyree was actually a very, very fine trombonist. But, his vibes playing was a little… He was not that bad, but not that great.

Brauer: It sounds like music designed for a supper club.

Jones: That's it. People like Terry for his showmanship. He's a great, great showman. We used to do a lot of parties up in Connecticut. We would do them for various people and play them for very rich and wealthy people. They would always call Tyree and would go to this party and so forth. That was every type of party, birthday parties, Christmas parties, you name it.

Brauer: When I think of jazz parties I think of…Were you involved with Dick Gibson?

Jones: Well, not that elaborate. Gibson's things were more structured. We would do things in people's homes, like in their living room we would play for a few hours and go home. But, Gibson, that was pretty structured. I think Gibson recorded some of that stuff, you know? But, we had a great variety of people, of individuals. He already had always had different groups up there. I did that for several years with him.

Brauer: You made some dates that involve Babs Gonzales.

Jones: Babs, that was years later in Europe. Babs, you know Babs had this style. He had this peculiar way of turning up on jobs that nobody knew he was going to be there. If we were working in Nice, during the Nice Festival doing a concert maybe then involved, let's say, five tenor saxophone players. Suddenly, Babs Gonzales would show up and do his thing. You couldn't turn him down. He just wanted to do it. He wasn't even on the bill, he wasn't even supposed that happened any number of times. Did you see his book by the way?

Brauer: Yes. Well, I have a mimeographed copy actually.

Jones: You can you think what the book. They are not printable. (Laughs) he was something else. There's that term, something else.

Brauer: There's the date you did, I have it as 1953, it's something else with someone named Lenny Hambro.

Jones: Lenny Hambro, no…he's a pianist.

Brauer: He's an alto saxophone.

Jones: Oh, I'm getting confused. Hambro is also a concert pianist. Right, Hambro. I don't remember very much about him. We probably did a date together I guess.

Brauer: Well, I see the Savoy dates.

Jones: Hambro…yeah.

Brauer: He must have been Caucasian, right?

Jones: Yeah.

Brauer: Okay, because I see these dates and I see Clive Lombardi.

Jones: Bass player.

Brauer: Sid Bulkin.

Jones: Sid Bulkin, drummer.

Brauer: Sid Bulkin, drummer, would be on some dates. Then on the other dates it's always Wendell and Clark or, maybe, Osie Johnson or something.

Jones: See, wait a minute… Didn't we do a show album, like a show tune from a Broadway show? Do you have that?

Brauer: I don't have that information. All I have is the date.

Jones: Anyways, it's one of those date. It's probably a forgettable date. I shouldn't have said that.

Brauer: Well just looking at that…Let's just….It's 19…this is 1955.

Jones: 1965?

Brauer: 1955, March 30, Kenny Clarke, Ernie Wilkins, septet date with George Barrow—Detroiter?

Jones: Barrow…

Brauer: Cecil Payne.

Jones: Cecil Payne I know.

Brauer: Wendell, Kenny Clarke. May 31st , an Eddie Bert date with Wendell and Kenny Clarke. Here it is. July 14, "Presenting Cannonball Adderley." That was with Paul Chambers and Kenny Clarke; hat was band. July 26, Nat Adderley with Jerome Richardson and Wendell Marshall and Kenny Clarke in the band. August 2, another Ernie Wilkins and flutes and reeds dates with Wilkins, Jerome Richardson, Frank Wess. August 4th, a trio date with you and Kenny Clarke and Wendell Marshall.

Jones: [It just goes] on and on and on.

Brauer: September 1st, Eddie Bert date. September 29th, Donald Green's debut with Frank Foster, Paul Chambers, and Kenny Clarke

Jones: It's easy to see how someone would think I am the house guy.

Brauer: I mean, this goes on. October 6th and 11th, Al Caiola date. The 28th of October "Opus de Funk" with Milt Jackson.

Jones: That was the thing where we did the blues, one of Horace Silver's tunes, and we played it in four different keys at the same time. It was like if someone would be playing F, everybody else would be playing in D flat, somebody else would be playing in B natural and the others would play in A.

Brauer: Whose idea was that?

Jones: Mine. I came up with these screwy ideas sometimes, you know? The problem was, after you played the opening chorus, no one knew what key you were supposed to be in.

Brauer: Where'd that idea come from?

Jones: Just probably a sleepless night before. I don't know. It just came out. It is just something different to do, you know?

Brauer: So you did a date on November 1, November 3, November 8, November 29, with a singer named Marlene?

Jones: Yes, Marlene Ver Plank.

Brauer: Okay.

Jones: Well, even then…Let's see was it Ver Plank? Yes, she was married to Billy Ver Plank, a pianist and arranger. I was playing a gig with them, I guess a couple years ago.

Brauer: That is a lot of dates

Jones: That was largely fine. That went on for years. It was just date, after date, after date. I did a solo album like that.

Brauer: Yes.

Jones: But… Hey, you know? That piano again!

Brauer: It's all about the piano. That's what you remember out of all that.

Jones: That's right. It was a very unforgettable piano. It was different. And it was completely different from any other piano. You could write a book about that piano, literally.

Brauer: Talk about your relationship with – – because it right around then you started working with Milt Jackson. You did some big band things with him, some small group things with him…

Jones: I didn't do any big band dates with him. I might have done…

Brauer: There's a date that Tad Dameron and Melba Liston were involved with.

Jones: Was it his date? Really?

Brauer: Yes, it was Milt's date.

Jones: Wow. That goes back a ways. I tell you, I couldn't begin to remember all of the dates. I did so many dates. I was just talking to a guy from Japan, a man who has got to be my number one fan. He has got 550 albums that I have made and he said that he could get all of them because they are out-of-print.

Brauer: In his personal collection?

Jones: He called me up the other day and he said, "Akil Condo." So, there are so many dates. I just don't remember all of them. I know I did a couple small band things with Baggs. We called him Baggs. He was a great player from Detroit. He had a brother, Alvin Jackson who played tenor. I don't think he worked with Milt.

Brauer: Was he a bass player or a horn player.

Jones: I think he was a bass player. You are right. He was a bass player. I only met him a couple times and I never worked with him.

Brauer: You know, we talk about the Detroit sound idea. But, you sort of said, "I don't know about that idea." But, what do you think about – –

Jones: About the sort-of distinctive Detroit sound?

Brauer: Yes, what do you think… Why do you think such a volume of musicians from the late 40s into the 50s… Because, if I went through the notes that I have about your recordings with Prestige, or the things that you did with Riverside, it would show the same things.

Jones: I don't know how to get started but the description that you gave earlier on, some writer did that I guess, I don't know. Maybe it, in away, impressed him. Maybe he was just trying to think up some clever thing to say. You know, there are pianists who come from other cities who also play that sound, well more similar style. It better live in Detroit. Maybe they would say he had the Detroit sound. I don't know, I have never been aware of it. Let's put it that way. Obviously, it must exist because a lot of people think it exists or maybe they just saw that first article and kept repeating it.

Brauer: Well, it happens a lot. Putting the idea of a distinct sound behind, I know, at this point, you had left behind the mid-40s, but your brothers were still here and you had a relationship going back and forth. To what do you attribute this volume of musicians who are dominating recording during that period?

Jones: Again, it could have been just pure chance. I hadn't thought of that before. But, I don't know of any special circumstances it would have wanted that type of thing to happen. Maybe, let's see now, was this around 1941? Was it around 1940, or 41, or 42? Was it that general period?

Brauer: No, the. I'm talking about is from the late 40s moving through the 50s. The Tommy Flannagans, the Barry Harriss, the Yussef Latefs, the Herman Wrights, the Donald Byrd. It was just this profusion of players. Then you have some of those people who were honorary Detroiters like Frank Foster. You know--

Jones: Well, Paul Chambers was an honorary Detroiter.

Brauer: Yeah.

Jones: Julius Watkins, wasn't he a Detroiter?

Brauer: French Horn player?

Jones: Yeah, I think he's a French Horn player. Yeah…I don't know! I don't know of any incident or any occurrence that would have, you know, resulted in this outpouring of musical talent from Detroit. Maybe it was something in the water! (Laughs) I wish I knew. I've been thinking about this frequently. I have been thinking, "What is this so-called Detroit?" That's different from the piano sound. We are just talking about the general talent they came from Detroit. Maybe there is some connection there. Who knows?

Brauer: At the time this was happening, the people reflect on it as such?

Jones: Not to my knowledge. I had never heard of that phrase and until I started reading it in New York about the so-called Detroit sound. Some writer put that down and I think other writers started to pick that up. That is what I think. The description that you gave early on is as good as any as it relates to piano players. I don't know, but you would think that if it affected piano players it affected some horn player as well.

Brauer: Let's stop.

(Recording Stops)

Jones: The title of the CD was called "Satin Doll," it was all the Duke Ellington compositions solo.

Brauer: Well, here we go again. It is the evening of November 27 we are now about to start session 3 of the Hank Jones interview for the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program. My name is William A Brauer Jr. the engineer for this session is Sven Abo. I'm interviewing Henry William Jones Junior, and his wife Teddie, if I may call you Teddie.

Jones: It's spelled T-e-d-d-i-e.

Brauer: Jones. Yes, okay. One of the things that goes on in jazz that's not well understood and given proper due is the situation where the musician actually has an organized family life. So much of what we hear about the jazz musician is the idea of it is something else. So, you have to look at the career of someone like Hank Jones and look at the unit. You don't look just at the individual but at the unit. That's the combination of the husband and wife that make this all happen. What's it been like to be the friend and companion and supporter of that ilk?

Jones: ilk! (Laughs)

Brauer: That's a question!

Jones: One of the usual subjects. That's a question though. What has it been like?

Teddie Jones: Shall I tell you? (Laughs)

Jones: She's going to say, "You don't want to know!"

Teddie Jones: It it's been up and down hill as I think every marriage. But, I think it is mostly been up. I'm always there for him. If it is that something's happened I say, "Well, is that so?" He is my husband so I stay protected. Otherwise, I would think he is like a baby and can take care of himself. We all need to have someone that we think about, or that is constantly with us to worry about, or to the rely on. We have to have both sides. We have to love them and hope that everything will go alright.

Brauer: Do you remember the first time you saw this gentlemen?

Teddie Jones: Teddie Jones?

Jones: The first time you saw me. She might not have heard you.

Brauer: Do you remember the first time you saw him?

Teddie Jones: At the Wells' chicken and waffle place. I remember that my boss came in the week before they came in. He said, "My goodness! Didn't you give them enough publicity! You don't know who they are!" I said, "who are they?" (Laughs)

Jones: Thanks a lot (Laughs)!

Teddie Jones: He said, "Oh, you need to know more about your jazz!" I was unaware of who (inaudible) was. I guess it took him by surprise, because he was unaware of who this little Teddie Jones was. So, they opened up this Monday night Wells' Chicken and Waffle and I returned to work. I was the bookkeeper. I was also the housekeeper and I kept track of everybody and everything going. If he made up in his mind that he is going to Florida, (inaudible) then I was to go back in that weekend after I have completed a days work and I would have to settle and put the money and everything away, and whatever needs to be refilled I would do that.

Brauer: You mean all those things like if they needed more flour or more chicken legs?

Teddie Jones: He would ask me if I would like a cup of coffee because the restaurant and the bar, the club part, was like walking from one side straight into the other. I didn't think anyhow, and he didn't. I didn't know he didn't think either. But, he said, "I admire you very much." He was so amazed when I guess I changed from the dirty little bookkeeper and came back in as the manager of the nightclub. I asked him how old he was (laughs) so he told me. I don't know how old he was anyhow. It was a difference of I think eight years. So I said, "No, you are too young for me." He says, "I'm not asking for your age, I'm asking for your hand." So, I said, "In that case, I would be delighted to accompany you." That is how it all started with meeting each other and it has been… I think the marriage has been very bumpy and pleasant. He's an adorable person if you can weather the storm (Laughs).

Brauer: I think you're blushing!

Jones: The Japanese say, "Lily, I think they're be something else in your paycheck this week."

Brauer: Now, what year was this?

Jones: It's hard. It's been about 40 years so it must have been around 1970. No, it was before the show, so it must have been around 1950.

Teddie Jones: No, maybe 1940.

Jones: It was after… It was between… It was about 1954 or 1955. Because I want on the first tour with Benny in 1956. We lived in Crestfield, New Jersey at the time. It was about that time. It was in the mid-50s let's say.

Brauer: See you have been married about 50 years?

Jones: That's correct we will be having our 50th anniversary or there about.

Brauer: What is your anniversary date?

Jones: Actually, the actual date… We know the date. We have it down. It's on the marriage license. I just cannot recall it offhand. You don't get asked these questions every day. Do you recall the date Teddie? Actual date?

Teddie Jones: No.

Jones: It was actually… It was during the summer months. It was June or July. You had a birthday shortly after. He had a birthday on November 3, right?

Teddie Jones: Yes.

Jones: So, it was before that because you had a I you at b**irt**hday party at the club. I came there with my arms full of gifts and my checkbook in hand (Laughs). I know it was either in August or September 1954, right? Wait a minute…

Teddie Jones: Well, it had to be.

Jones: Let's say 1955. That was it.

Brauer: So, I didn't miss the 50th. It's coming up.

Jones: It's coming up shortly now. It's hard to pick the states down. You have to think about it.

Brauer: And from this union, children?

Jones: We have an adopted daughter. She's the one that I referred to the lives in Albany and has a child. That's my grandson there. So, that was it. We don't have children of our own per se. But, we have been doing a good job of raising other people's children throughout the years.

Teddie Jones: We had her since she was three years old. We adopted her. Then, we had two of his family's children.

Jones: We had JoJo and Henry. I just got a call from Henry the other day. I have my sister's two boys, JoJo and Henry. Henry lives in South Carolina and he works at BM, the signing plant. Wait, that's in Nashville. That is one of my nephews. And JoJo there's in Pontiac; he is still there. He is in between Pontiac and Detroit. Henry plays accordion and piano. Jojo plays the saxophone and he is a very good Horn player.

We had a reunion in 1984 here and I had a big tent set up out there in the yard and the band is playing, and all of my nephews played. They all play instruments. One of my nephews is Paul Junior. He plays piano. Of course, Henry plays piano too, but he didn't play at that time because he didn't have his accordion. He didn't want to play the piano because he was a little bashful about it, I guess. But, JoJo played and he is an excellent horn player. I could tell you a lot about my nephews. I got one that lives in Ann Arbor. Well, it is not Ann Arbor, its Lansing. He plays drums and he sent us a tape. He is at a professional level now. If you heard him play, and if you saw his videotape, you would say "Wow!" You would say, "this kid is well advanced." At the time, he was only 15 years old. Now, it is about three years later so I assume that he is playing a lot that

Teddie Jones: Is that Cunningham?

Jones: Yes. That's his father's name. Andre is his name. He's very talented. That talent seems to run in the family with Elvin and Thad. Actually, I had another brother who played piano, Paul. If he just didn't want to go into the rhythms, he didn't want to play professionally because he thought raising a family was more important. He did that very well. Tom actually could have been a very good bass player but he lost interest. He was too flighty and couldn't settle down. I have another nephew named Thad. His name is not Thad Jr, but he is named after my brother Thad who plays bass, and he is a good bass player. So, that is the way it goes.

Brauer: Share with us some of the things that you talked with us about last night period he were talking about the similarities between your two families. You were talking about your dad…

Jones: About the similarities. Remember how there were 10 in your family and they were 10 at one time in my family and so forth? My father's name was Henry William and your father's name was William Henry? Her father's name was Henry. My father's name was Henry William.

Teddie Jones: It coincidence with the William Henry and the Henry William.

Brauer: When you found that out what did that make you think? Did you notice the coincidence at the time?

Teddie Jones: Just recently I noticed the coordination of the names, the Henry Williams and William Henry. I said, "I've never noticed that my father fell into that Henry Williams to." He said, "he is William Henry." I used to call him uncle Bill and he would say, "Well, good night pop." (Inaudible) that I was born in.

Brauer: Where were you born?

Jones: Your birthplace. Tell them your birthplace.

Teddie Jones: My birthplace? I was born…The beginning of it was my grandfather had a whole lot to do with my father settling their because it was bought by a Baptist Minister. It was a funny thing. The whole town was bought. But, they were still the South Carolina that had appointed a different law estate. They would work with the smaller communities. Charleston, I guess you know of Charleston South Carolina?

Brauer: Yes ma'am.

Teddie Jones: This was only 22 miles above Charleston. So, one time they were so upset about my father closing the town hall and not letting the children go to the school library because they had promised him a new school for the last five years. He just closed it up and said that he needed to make them account for the taxes. By the time the next year was over, they had a new school. That was the only way that he could deal with them in Charleston.

Jones: It was by twisting their arm, you know?

Brauer: Yes.

Teddie Jones: (Laughs) that was the method he used. He said, "if you don't get them in a school, then you're not going to get anything here." He said, "You can blame it on me." By that time, they were all throwing daggers at him. Now, they're all throwing kisses at him!

Brauer: How did you come to New York?

Teddie Jones: An older sister. She came first. I'm the ninth child in the family. She was the fifth one.

Jones: Beebe right? It was Beebe?

Teddie Jones: It was Beebe because the fifth was Beebe. Beebe, which is… When you see her, you think she was a member of an Indian child. That is the look that she had. I was her favorite when I was born. She was so little when she used to come and play. They let her carry me around when she was much older than I was. She was married so she came to New York. Then, she came back when I was over 10 years old. She asked my father if she could bring me back to New York with her. They know that she has always been like some my mother. She took the place of my mother because my mother had 10 children, so she took over. Anyone with any kind of help was glued to her. She brought me to New York and it was supposed to be a trial thing for a year or so but the years went by and I stayed with her and I grew up.

I have always felt like she is my mother. My mother never got there that much. She's to come sometime in the summer. I was 18 years old before I returned. She saw the progress of the things that had taken hold after they converted to a city. So, they had things pretty well organized. Later on, I returned to Lincoln with Hank. That was one he did the Festival in Charleston.

Jones: That was for the first time.

Teddie Jones: That was for the first time and that was a beautiful moment.

Jones: That was first time I had ever been to her home. I met some of her relatives that were still alive at the time. Met her aunt and the person who is the mayor at that time. We went to his home, right? Yes, he was the mayor at that time.

Teddie Jones: Yes, I know who you're talking about.

Jones: I forget his name out. Actually, was your brother the mayor at one time?

Teddie Jones: and was my uncle.

Jones: It was sort of a family thing. (Laughs)

Teddie Jones: My father served for 33 years and the reason why they had to take him out is because his term expired. He left for a while, and they elected him right back. That went on for 33 years. I meant to get a folder, but I never did, from Columbia. Columbia was our, sort of, estate. They had the folder out to tell you how long that he served the state. We were treated almost like the state. It wasn't like all the mean things were going on because it was all the Afro ruling. We had to report to the state, or well the capital because Charleston eventually became the regulator.

Jones: Charleston became the county seat.

Teddie Jones: The county seat, that's right. At one time we had to report to Columbia.

Jones: Yes, the capital. Then, they converted the capital to Charleston.

Teddie Jones: Yes, it was quite a journey. I was as surprised as he was to see how well it was. When I left, it was sort of just a village.

Jones: It has grown quite a bit since she last. I guess it is growing all the time because we get reports all the time about new businesses there. The residential areas are becoming bigger in the business area is becoming more compact when the center of that community. She has been approached to buy some of the property

that they still own in that area. Property values have gone up. They have shot up sky high since that period. As time goes on, there is less and less land available so prices spike up. It is a supply and demand thing.

Brauer: You both come from their strong families and were very prominent in their respective communities.

Jones: That's true. It is certainly true in her case against her father was not only the mayor he was the town confidant. Everyone knew him. They came damn with their problems, both official and unofficial.

Brauer: Can you spell that name for us?

Jones: S-e-e-l-e.

Brauer: S-e-e-l-e

Jones: I hope I got that right because if not, she's going to kick me in the shins (laughs).

Brauer: Now, the Wells' is an institution in the Harlem community. Yes?

Jones: It's quite well known right?

Teddie Jones: Yes, it is well known. He used to work for some official from…

Jones: Was it a state official?

Teddie Jones: They always used to call him the king or the prince (laughs). It was some title.

Jones: Yes, it was some unofficial title, actually right? But his employer, was he a state employee? He wasn't a city employee, so he must have been state.

Teddie Jones: Yes, he was something like 60. He worked over there in England or something. That's why…

Jones: Wells didn't work for him but he was more like a confidant. They had a business relationship. I guess he helped him out on certain legal matters or what not.

Teddie Jones: He wanted to depend on Wells brain. Wells… was running a restaurant when he was in his teens. He was that ambitious.

Brauer: Over the course of your husband's career, giving him background in accounting and being in the business and away, have you been able to lend some of that expertise to his career?

Teddie Jones: Well…

Jones: Well, if I could interject, I think she had a lot to do with it. Not only was she Wells' bookkeeper, she started keeping my books as well. She kept everything in order along with an accountant who is a relative. Between Mr. Singleton and her, they kept my books in perfect order for years.

Teddie Jones: When you get older, you start to think just how valuable it was.

Brauer: In talking about the issue of business, one of the things that you mentioned that yesterday was—was it Thank Music?

Jones: Yes, Thank Music.

Brauer: Thank Music Corp, yes. I asked you if GG Grice had any influence on you doing that.

Jones: GG, of course, had a publishing company. I forget the name of it. But, I wrote some original tunes which I recorded with one of his groups, or one of my groups at the time. At the time, my company didn't exist. I put them in his Corporation. Later on, he reassigned my tunes. He gave them back to me and I assigned them to Thank. I thought it was a very nice thing to do because some publishers won't do that. I'm thinking of one in particular that used to be connected with a certain record company. But, sometimes when you ask them to return the compositions from their portfolio to yours, they say no. They do that for no good reason. If the reason was the fact that they say that tunes did not move, that should be an incentive for them to get rid of them. If they did move, then of course you can understand why they would not want to let them go. But, they were not particularly well known at the time, my tunes, so I said, "Why don't you release those tunes back to me?" They would not do it. Now, GG Grice released them back to me on his own. I did not have to ask him.

Brauer: It seems like Grice was a forward thinking musician. He viewed this as a path to empowerment.

Jones: I think GG, from what I know, I know very little about his private life but I understand that he was also a teacher. He did some work as a band coordinator. He did some work colleges and supplied them with music. I'm not sure but I know he eventually gave up the publishing end of the business. He was a very fine player by the way. He was a fine saxophonist. He sounded a bit like Byrd. He was an excellent

arranger, and of course he dabbled in publishing. I think he thought that publishing was just too much of a burden. He had too many things to do and he didn't to do his publishing. He released those tunes back to me. He sent me a letter saying, "Here are the tunes." It was (inaudible) and some other stuff that I wrote. I mean, it was free of his own volition.

Brauer: What is your library like in terms of original compositions?

Jones: Oh, it must be 100 or 150. It is about that many. You see, Thank is a closed corporation. It's a private corporation. We don't issue a lot of shares. It is not a public corporation. It is not a business in the sense that, like I said, we have sold shares and other people participate in it and so forth. It is a closed corporation with a limited number of employees. It is sort of the family corporation. That is what it really amounts to. It is registered in the state of New York. It has been in business since 19…

Teddie Jones: 19…

Jones: Well, my brother Thad was the original member of the Corporation. Then, he got his own Corporation shortly after that and funneled all of his music and that stuff into his own Corporation. So, I don't have any of his stuff in my Corporation. All of the tunes in my company are my tunes. There's one written by Teddie by the way.

Brauer: What is your composition by the way?

Jones: Her tune?

Teddie Jones: My tune?

Jones: "Teddie's Tune"

Teddie Jones: He named it "Teddie's Tune."

Jones: She didn't have a name so I named it "Teddie's Tune."

Teddie Jones: That is a story in itself. He used to come home from work at about 3 o'clock in the morning. I would be sitting at the piano. I was never really writing any music. I did have music earlier, but anyhow I was trying this tune. I kept playing it. He kept coming in the hallway. It was down a distance from the outside door. We were in New York then, in an apartment.

Jones: 105 St. Nicholas Way. I'll never forget that. It was a walk up.

Teddie Jones: So, he would come up and I wouldn't hear him. He would stop and he would stand by the door and he could hear me going over the tune. So, I guess, a couple of nights, I had followed the tunes. I was very good about listening two tunes and telling him about where and when and all of the things that he didn't remember. His brain was overloaded. But, when he thought it was enough, he came in and he put the last note on it. He said, "That is how you do it." But, I knew nothing about the form of music. I have to give him the credit for putting it in order for me.

Jones: The ideas were her's, I just put the notes down on the paper for her. But, it is hurting. We did it on a concert at Lincoln Center about 2 1/2 years ago. It was one of the tunes in the concert, "Teddie's Tune." Of the arrangement was made by a Japanese arranger. He did a great job on the stuff, really. He arranged the tunes beautifully. He had gone to Berkeley. He had studied at Berkeley and he was a wonderful arranger. I had worked with him in Japan and he used to write for the Osaka College of Music orchestra. That's how I first met him. When I saw the quality of his work I said, "Hey, I want to use this fella to do some stuff for me."

Brauer: His name?

Jones: Tanaka. Tanaka is his last name.

Brauer: Was this for Jazz at Lincoln Center? Was it part of one of their programs?

Jones: Well, yes. I was part of their program, yes. It was a big orchestral thing. I don't know if that program exists. I guess it exists, but not on the scale that it used to because they have a different director. But, he was an excellent arranger and did a fine job on her tune. All of the tunes were mine except for that one. We have a tape of it somewhere.

Teddie Jones: That's true.

Brauer: So, they were all your compositions?

Jones: Exactly.

Brauer: Geoff Keezer did a recording of different pianists playing your work.

Jones: That's right. [They were] all playing different compositions of mine. I thought that was a very nice thing for him to do.

Brauer: Did you know Geoff? Had you had a relationship with him, or had you taught him?

Jones: I knew Geoff because he used to be the pianist for the Ray Brown Trio a few years ago. I guess this was maybe eight or nine years ago. When I first met Geoff, it was out at the University of Idaho at one of the Lionel Hampton concerts. It was an annual same. Of course, Ray Brown was a fixture of that concert series. He was there every year until his passing, either alone or with his band. He was there at large. He was always involved with Dr. Skinner in the music program there.

Brauer: You were talking about Geoff Keezer.

Jones: Yes, well Geoff was a fine pianist. Ray Brown liked him. They was very particular about who he used in the group and Geoff met all of his expectations. From what I heard, I never heard that much, but he was perfect for that type of trio. It was a piano bass and drum trio. Jeff Hamilton used to play drums for them occasionally. Jeff is a fine drummer by the way. It was a very musical group. When Ray was a part of any group, Ray Brown dominated that group. He was very forceful, he had a very strong sense of rhythm, and he was a master of harmony and so forth. When I first met array, it was in Buffalo and the work. He was 17 years old and he was working with a band called the Savvy Lewis Band.

Brauer: That's a Boston band.

Jones: Boston, yes. But, he was working with that band when he came to Buffalo. They worked a little club and we would always meet when he got off work and when I got off work. We would go out to the drugstore and get a quart of milk. We would sit down and he would drink it and I would drink it.

Brauer: That's during that period when he came to New York. Was Buffalo… Did it have a jazz scene?

Jones: They had a jazz scene but it was minimal and marginal. There was a union there. You see, one time, in all of the major cities in the country, and I suspect in some of the other smaller cities as well, they had dual unions. They had a colored union and a white union. That happened in New York, Chicago, Buffalo, Los Angeles best – you name it! It happened every place. Eventually, they all merged and became one union. But, when I first joined the union in Detroit, the local five, it was a separate union. But, they were one of the first ones to merge however. When I first went to Buffalo, they had two separate unions. When I first went to Los Angeles, working with Jazz at the Philharmonic with Ella Fitzgerald, there were two separate unions. The same story applied in all of the other major cities. I thought this was rather strange. It took them a long time to get around to merging. I'm glad it happened, but I wonder why it took so long.

Brauer: I was picking up on that thing with GG Grice. That GG Grice, Donald Byrd jazz band, what are your recollections on what that group was about? Was it…

Jones: I don't know that much about it, but their name suggests, at least to me, that they did a bunch of experimental playing. It probably wasn't down the middle, straight-line jazz, but little excursions. It was that kind of stuff. It was something like what they do today that is called avant-garde perhaps. I think in GG's case, GG has always kept 1 foot on the ground. He never got completely off the ground with that off-the-wall type of music that we talked about. He was more of a middle of the roader and he was an experimenter. I think his little jaunt with that group you mentioned, that Lab Group, was just a diversion at the time. His main interest was straight ahead jazz or, it was bebop which he was into.

Brauer: Did it afford you an opportunity to explore composing? Was that encouraged by members in the group?

Jones: I was never a member of that particular group. I was always writing tends. I had always written tunes. I had about six tunes back then. I think, it was at least six, all which GG covered.

Teddie Jones: We did see that you were protected because I had to copyright the whole book. It took you and he, when you were together, in case any of his tunes were in his book, he was going to see that he was protected. In order to prepare…He named it, a tune with Hank and GG Grice. I would say that he made sure that Hank would be protected in case one of his tunes was on his line or what have you.

Jones: In other words, he returned the copyright rights to me. They are now in Thank.

Teddie Jones: He had the copyright himself, and during the book he had the tunes to him and Hank. We still have that copyright.

Brauer: Did you come to the relationship with him through Donald Byrd?

Jones: No. I think I met GG on a recording date that had nothing to do with Donald Byrd. To my knowledge, I don't think I have ever recorded with Donald Byrd. I did one of the Newport Festival things with Donald Byrd. He picked me up at Hotel 5 one day and we drove from there to Newport.

Teddie Jones: You were not feeling well (Laughs). He had a wrath.

Brauer: You're on a recording with…you're on two recordings with GG Grice and that band.

Jones: Yes, with that band. You see, I suspect that at the time of the recording, it wasn't known by that name. I kind of suspect that it was just a bunch of guys they

got together and then they named it after the record came out. I think that is probably happened.

Brauer: Actually, I have one on Verve, one on RCA, and one on Jubilee and they were all made within a month of each other.

Jones: …of each other. At the time they were made, they were made with the same group but not under that name. I think that is what happened. I don’t know. I am just guessing. Many times when you go on a record date, you don't know the whys, or the how’s, for the wherefores. Sometimes, you didn't know who was going to pay you. You hope that you would get paid, and most of the time you did, but you never really knew.

Brauer: So, it’s “Okay, I’m supposed to be at a certain place.”

Jones: Exactly, at a certain time.

Brauer: “Here’s the music.”

Jones: “Play the music, wash your hands and go home!” (Laughs)

Teddie Jones: I think Teddy Reed was one of the first…

Jones: Oh yeah, Teddy Reeds. Did you ever meet him?

Brauer: No, but I think I know that name.

Jones: 500 pounds, maybe less. He was so fat. He was the A&R man at one time for, I think, Riverside. That was before Orrin Keepnews came on. Maybe that was while Orrin Keepnews was there. But, he used to do some work for—What’s that other company?

Teddie Jones: Savoy. Yes, for Savoy.

Jones: Savoy, yes. But, there is also that other company…Okay, so it’s mainly Savoy. But, that was before Ozzie Cadena came along, you know? Teddie has a fantastic memory. She remembers telephone numbers from 1954! (Laughs)

Teddie Jones: It’s a little failing now.

Sven: That’s alright (laughs).

Teddie Jones: He used to rely on me for it. He’d say, “Can you tell me what date this person did that, and they did this?" (Laughs)

Jones: She's like a walking encyclopedia.

Brauer: Now, didn't really shocked me, but you did a recording with Roland Kirk.

Jones: Yes.

Brauer: You did "We Three Kings" and that also had Wendell Marshall on it as well as Charlie Persip.

Jones: And, you know, I was so amazed at him playing three horns at one time that I could hardly concentrate on playing the piano. I couldn't believe what I was seeing. I met a pianist once. His name was Kyle Perkins. He was out in Los Angeles.

Brauer: Right.

Jones: Have you heard of him?

Brauer: Of course.

Jones: Then you know about him playing with his elbow. He played the bass notes with his elbow. Then, he played chords similar to Garner, Earl Garner. With his right hand, he actually sounded similar to Earl Garner. He actually played the bass notes with his elbow. I watched him do it and I said, "This is not possible. This is not happening." But, it was and I watched him do it.

Brauer: So, he's got--

Jones: He did it. It's the most amazing thing I've seen. I've seen it, but I cannot tell you how he did it.

Brauer: Well, now most people play with their elbows and their fists (Laughs).

Jones: I guess you are right, but they do it unintentionally (laughs). Kyle did it intentionally.

Brauer: There seem to be a grouping of musicians, sorry if I'm beating a dead horse here, because some of the same musicians that were recording these things like Grice…There seemed to be a group of musicians that were involved with…Well, there was a circle of musicians.

Jones: Right, exactly. They did most of the recording with various groups.

Brauer: Yes and they seem to overlap with Oscar Pettiford.

Jones: Well, Oscar was involved with a lot of it. Oscar did a lot of dates his own group as well. Oscar was always in demand to play with other groups. He was such a fantastic bass player. He was always, like I said, and demand. If you could get Oscar, you were really ahead of the game. He was always busy. I did a couple of things with him. He also recorded with strings at Birdland. But, I'm getting away from GG Grice thing.

Brauer: It seems that this was a… First of all, a lot of this music is almost forgotten.

Jones: That's true.

Brauer: People don't talk about Oscar Pettiford anymore, or GG Grice. When you go back and listen to those records, as you said, they weren't avant-garde as we think of it as a grading, or just kind of a wild expression. They were exploring new directions.

Jones: At the time, you see? It was at that time. Things change. What was avant-garde, might be considered base. Fringe avant-garde at that time, is now maybe considered to be standard. Now what is considered to be avant-garde may be, twenty years from today, more or less standard. It is evolving; maybe not in huge leaps and bounds, but, gradually. It evolves over the years. So, that group, that Lab group that you mentioned earlier, they may have thought they were doing something way outside of the box. Whereas today, it seems to be very much inside the box.

Brauer: Did you feel any community of interest with this group of musicians?

Jones: Not at all; not really. You see, I was still an outsider in a sense because I hadn't had the experience of working with groups like that. I had heard groups like that, but I was not what you would call an insider musically. I always felt like I was an outsider banging on the door saying, "Let me in." (Laughs) That was musically speaking.

Teddie Jones: But, musically, in a way, you were inside of a special group that did more recording. I said, "sometimes he was recording in his sleep."

Jones: That was most of the time (Laughs).

Teddie Jones: It could be! (Laughs)

Jones: There was a period of time there was so much recording going on that the days and nights seemed to run together more or less. I was freelancing and that's what happens. I'd take a lot of dates and sometimes they almost overlap. You are

going from one to another. You are going from one studio to another studio. If you do that at the same time that you are working at CBS, it can be a very long day. The days and nights really ran together.

Teddie Jones: Yeah. They would call me to get him off when he was finished at this date, they would call me because he has to get to this date. He knew nothing about it coming home. They would call me to put him on another recording date since it was close by. They always kept track of him and "Where is he?" He left home at about 7 o'clock and he would probably get home at around 3 o'clock in the morning. That happened so many times. They said, "Do you know where he is now?" I said, "Well, yes." He would always tell me where he was going from one studio to another.

Jones: The A&R men, they would call.

Teddie Jones: They'd say, "Well, if you get in touch with him, tell him to call me!" The next thing I know he would call me and say, "I'm leaving here to go to another gig." I would say, "I'm sorry I gave him your telephone number." (Laughs)

Jones: That might have been Julie Held, or Max Zeppos. These are contractors. They are the ones that call you for recording dates because they work for the record companies. So, they'd say, the A&R man would say, "Get me so and so for this date." Then, they'd start making calls. Must be the worst job in the world. I would hate to be a contractor because many times, musicians that you called would accept the date. Then, they would call back an hour later and say, "I'm sorry, I can't do that." Then, the contractor has to call somebody else at the last minute. They did very well. They have nerves of steel.

Teddie Jones: Like the wife of a piano player.

Jones: Yep! (Laughs) Teddie did her part. She worked as hard as I did. That is rough trying to keep my schedule.

Brauer: We look at the…You did…How many dates did you do with the Jones brothers?

Jones: Not very many, unfortunately. I know we did one that involved Charlie Mingus. We did another one. I think there were only two altogether. That is ridiculous because I think we should have done 50 or 60. We were all going divergent ways. Everyone was going this way, I was going that way, and they were going this way.

Brauer: The Mingus date, was it Thad's date on Debut.

Jones: That was Thad's date. I believe it was the first date he did when he came to New York. Elvin was working with Charlie Mingus. Charlie Mingus set it up. I am not sure if it was his date was Thad's date. I suspect it was Mingus' date.

Brauer: Well, it was for Debut, which is his label.

Jones: It was for his label, right?

Brauer: Right.

Jones: That may have been Thad. I am not sure. It might indicate that on the recording, which I don't have. I wish I had that.

Brauer: Do you remember the recording at all?

Jones: [I remember] something. Thad had a several originals on the date, of course, as only Thad could write them. He had things that were so melodic, and rhythmical, and innovative. He was a great writer. These were small band things. Later on, he began to write the same types of things but for larger big-band ensembles. For instance, the Thad Jones and Mel Lewis band.

Brauer: Now, one of the interesting dates was that Jones Brothers date called, "Keeping Up With The Joneses" on Metro Jazz. That was a date that I guess you did all music by Thad and Isham Jones.

Jones: Isham Jones.

Brauer: How did that come about? Who thought that up?

Jones: I think Leonard Feather might have had a hand in that if I'm not mistaken. But, Isham Jones was a very popular songwriter at the time. He had written a lot of pop hits so they said, "Isham Jones, okay, that's a Jones so let's put him with Thad and so forth." I see what they were doing from a marketing perspective.

Brauer: Did Leonard Feather have a heavy hand in these things?

Jones: He may have had something to do with that, if I recall. I am certain that is how it was set up. You know, we posed for a picture at Thad's apartment. Thad was living on the upper West side at 85th St. It was in that area east of Broadway. I guess you could call it the east side. But, there was a picture taken which is on the album cover in fact. It is our picture, the three of us. It's Thad, Elvin and I, and two of Thad's kids. Bruce and Thadia. They were very small at the time. Now Thadia is a pediatrician and Bruce is working in California. He is a record consultant. Time flies.

Brauer: Yes and then there was another date that was just called, "Elvin."

Jones: Right, that was done with a larger ensemble. I think Frank Wes and Frank Foster were both on that. Art Davies was the bass player and some guy named Elvin Jones was the drummer. That was on the date. Oliver Nelson wrote a tune called, "six and four." It was a blues that was in both six and four. You go from 6/4 to 4/4. It was interesting. He wrote it, as I recall, Oliver Nelson wrote that a half-hour before the date started. In fact, he was still writing it when we began. We recorded it that same day, you know? (Scats) it was a very, very fast tune. Oliver Nelson was one of the best innovative writers of that entire period. Also, he was a fantastic player. He was more known and arranger, but he was a fine player. He played alto saxophone and tenor.

Brauer: Do you remember the date you did with him called "Main Stem" on Prestige?

Jones: Oliver Nelson?

Brauer: With Joe Newman and George Devivier?

Jones: Yes. He was probably done at Rudy Van Gelder's studio at his studio on 9W.

Brauer: Well, I don't know what studio. This was in 1961.

Jones: '61? Well, it might have been in Hackensack.

Brauer: Well, you did that Elvin Jones date on the Riverside that same year. You had Frank and Frank.

Jones: Right, that was with Elvin. Thad wrote some of the arrangements. I think both Franks wrote on arrangement. Art Davis was the bass player. He was a very sure-footed bass player. He reminded me a lot of George Devivier. He played excellent, solid base notes. He wasn't as well known as a soloist as he was as a good ensemble player. He teaches now at college in California. I think it is San Diego.

Brauer: Isn't he a psychologist? Doesn't he have a PhD in something that's not music?

Jones: I think you're right. But, he teaches at some school out in San Diego. It might be UCSD I believe. Kenny Burrell also teaches out there.

Brauer: Yeah, he was at UCLA, I believe.

Jones: Yes, perhaps.

Brauer: You seem to have a special relationship over the years with the two Franks.

Jones: Yes, that's quite true. I mentioned earlier, Frank Foster was a member of that band at the Three Sixes in Detroit on Adam's street. I didn't see him much from that period until he became a member of the Count Basie band along with Wes. The two Franks were in Basie's band together along with Thad and Graham or Leonard—some other arrangers. Also, Ernie Wilkins. It was a band full of arrangers.

Brauer: Ernie Wilkins is another name that keeps popping up in your career.

Jones: Ernie did a lot dates for Savoy at Rudy Van Gelder's out in Hackensack.

Brauer: He was another Detroiter.

Jones: Yes, but I did not know that at the time. There again, there's that Detroit school.

Brauer: There it is! Over and over again.

Jones: He probably went to CasTech along with some of those other guys.

Brauer: Was the different recording… Because we get into the 60s, the late 50s and 60s, and you are doing a lot of dates with Prestige. There was a Savoy period then there is a Prestige period, then there is a Riverside period.

Jones: Sometimes they were intertwined. At the same time that we were doing the Savoy dates, some of the Riverside things, and some of the Prestige things came up. It was all down at Rudy Van Gelder's anyway.

Brauer: Were there differences in how--

Jones: Also, Bluenote. I'm sorry.

Brauer: --Were there differences in how, Will when you're working for these different companies, even though it is at Rudy's place, whether differences in how either the business happened and when the recording happened? Could you kind of compare a Savoy, with a prestige, with a Riverside?

Jones: Of course, each one of those companies that you mentioned had an A&R man that works specifically for that company. The musical approach was always different. The business was usually handled approximately same way. Sometimes, you are paid by check on the date, sometimes you are paid a week or two later. It

didn't matter. The business was always done correctly. You always got paid for the dates. Sometimes it was on the spot and sometimes it was later.

Brauer: Was it mostly scale?

Jones: Yeah, it was always scale at that time. The scale was fairly low. You would go how to Rudy Van Gelder's and do a complete CD, or a complete album. You do a complete LP in that day. He would start maybe a 10 o'clock in the morning and it would be 3 o'clock or 4 o'clock in the afternoon and you'd be completely finished. That was it. That doesn't happen much more. You did a large volume of music because everything was pretty well prepared. He had a pretty good idea of what everyone was supposed to do, and what they are supposed to. The charts were usually made. Sometimes, there were no charts. Even in the case where there were no charts, everyone knew the arrangements because they were what we call head arrangements. It was not written down on paper. Everything went very smoothly. That is why you were able to do a complete date on one day. If it didn't happen on one day, it was finished by the next day, early. Most of those complete albums were done in one day. I suppose that saved the record company a lot of money, I'm sure.

Brauer: Of the recording companies that you worked for, which one…, Which did you feel provided the best artistic possibility for you or a situation you are performing in?

Jones: I will say that Ozzy Cadena was the one who was…I think… You work tomorrow closely with him. He seemed to have a greater affinity for the music. Although, he himself was not a musician, he seems to know what he wanted. Teddy Reid was also very good at that. Teddy Reid was an A&R man for, I think it was Riverside.

Teddie Jones: Yes, it was Riverside.

Jones: I'm trying to think of this other company he is with.

Brauer: Well, I know he did things with Savoy.

Jones: Savoy, at Savoy he did a good job as an A&R man. Also, the A&R man who used to own ABC Paramount. What is his name? I used to do some sweetening dates with him. Somebody would do a recording and maybe something was missing on the panel. Maybe they wanted to change something. I would go in and I would play that one chord. I would put headphones on and it would punch it in. Rudy Van Gelder was a master of doing this. He had done quite a bit of recording. I know you have seen him. What was his name? It is on the tip of my tongue. Anyway, he was the chief A&R man at ABC Paramount for Jazz. We did a number of dates for him at Rudy Van Gelder's. In fact all of the dates I did for him were out there.

Brauer: When you would do things for Prestige, was there a lot of rehearsal involved, or would you hit it and quit it?

Jones: Never a rehearsal. Everyone showed up ready to play and if you could read that was a big help. That is why the dates went so fast. Everybody who was on the date… The material that was written wasn't that involved, you know? Usually, even now, some of the arrangements were written completely out. There were portions of that arrangement that may have been thought of or invented on the date itself. Everything wasn't written down in all cases. Sometimes they were, sometimes they weren't

Brauer: What about Orrin Keepnews, you've mentioned him a few times.

Jones: He was also good as an A&R man, but at a different level. To my recollection, I don't think he recorded the type of jazz we are talking about with Prestige, Bluenote, and Savoy in those days. He was active but on a different level. Later, he became a chief executive officer of I guess prestige/fantasy. That was a combination of the record labels prestige and fantasy. I guess they moved out to Berkeley or something. I did some things with Orrin Keepnews at studio on the east side of New York.

Brauer: These were the Galaxy things?

Jones: That was done in California. I finished a date that Tommy Flanagan had contracted for Prestige/Fantasy. He had one album to do and I was out there with Ella Fitzgerald at the time. He said, "Let's get into the studio and do this." So, I got into the studio and did it in one day. Tommy was a very, very fine pianist.

Brauer: Are you talking about the duet?

Jones: Yes, and I did a solo album out there as well.

Brauer: Are you talking about "Our Delights"?

Jones: That was on the duo thing. The solo thing I did, I did some spirituals. That was a Galaxy record. It was solo.

Teddie Jones: Would you say that they did a complete story on jazz? They didn't go far back enough I thought. Nothing was mentioned about the Lafayette.

Jones: Oh, you're talking about the Ken Burns thing.

Teddie Jones: All the famous bands used to come in for at least a week or two. There was Duke Ellington, Cab Calloway. It was like a show downtown when they

didn't have a spotlighted act coming in. I knew I could get a slot. These were all famous musicians there were in the shows. I thought that they should go back as they became famous. This was like, Benny Carter.

Jones: Ken Burns covered that but he didn't go into depth. He left out some of the most important things that happened there.

Brauer: Right. Were you consulted on that at all?

Jones: No. I got a cameo mention in it by the way. I thought to say, "Thanks a lot Ken."

Brauer: I think the recording you are mentioning was called, "Tip Toe Tap Dance," that is the solo recording.

Jones: Right that's the solo recording.

Brauer: How about the sessions you did with John Lewis?

Jones: They were done in New York. That is the one where we went to the Steinway factory and picked out meticulously, the pianos we wanted to use on the date.

Brauer: Whose idea was that?

Jones: Let's see, I think it was…who was the A&R man that used to work with John Lewis? What was his name? Names are escaping me right now. I need another night's sleep. Anyway, the idea came from on high let's say. John and I had known each other for some time and I think the date, musically, came together pretty well. Our ideas were different but they blended well. The one thing you have to remember when you are doing a duo piano player with another pianist is that at times you must be accompanist. You cannot solo 100% of the time. You solo when it is your turn to solo. Then, the other piano player becomes the accompanist. If you both try to solo at the same time, it results in what we know in the business as a train wreck.

Brauer: How did you prepare for those duet dates? I mean, you talked about finding the pianos and so forth, but how did you decide that you were going to do this piece or that piece? Did a lot rehearsal go into it?

Jones: We had minimal rehearsal. You know,… Actually, in the case of John and I, as opposed to the case of Tommy and I… I have done a couple of duos. I have also done quartet. I have done a couple of quartet piano things. In most cases, if you are doing a piano duo thing, if things are really written now, if the arrangement is really written out in every pianist has a part to play, then things are a little more

organized. Actually, they are a lot more organized and it sounds that way. Therefore, you don't have the harmonic problems that you would have if you were doing it just off the top of your head. John was very meticulous. In addition to being a good band arranger, he is also a good arranger for two pianos too. The date we did, many of the things were written out. I think I may have only been one or two things we did not have music for. It was highly organized and that showed.

Brauer: Well written out but leaving some space for improvisation.

Jones: Well, of course when one pianist would be the accompanist, we would be playing comp below them. Then, the other player is playing the solo as part of the arrangement. John left room for each of us to play as much solo as we wanted to.

Brauer: It seems like you're about to say that there is a difference between the two sessions. By that I mean between the Flanagan and the Lewis. How are they different?

Jones: They were different in this aspect: with Tommy, there were no charts. They were all head arrangements. He rehearsed the arrangements and it was up to you to remember what you rehearsed, otherwise, you had to improvise and sometimes the improvisation might not be exactly appropriate at that time. If you knew what you are doing, it wasn't a prerequisite that you have charts. But, sometimes it helps. That is, especially if you haven't played together a lot. If you have played together a lot prior to the date, that is on jobs, on engagements, on concerts, is not as important. You know what each other are going to do anyway. It is always safer to have charts. That was the difference. With John Lewis, everything you did was on a chart. You are reading music as you play. So, there was no guesswork.

Brauer: Talk about the four piano scenario.

Jones: I did a date like that and I think Roland Hanna was involved. Patty Bowen, Dick Hymen, and myself. Yes. I did a couple of those. One of them was with John Costa – – Eddie Costa, a pianist from Canada. I have done three of those things, you know? I don't remember who the third person was on the other one. None of them made that much noise anyway.

Brauer: Were you pleased with them musically?

Jones: Not particularly. The one that I was most pleased with was the one with John Lewis. Also there was the one…Tommy and I did two together. Those were a pleasure. I enjoyed those. One was done in Germany, and the other was done in California. That was in Berkeley.

Brauer: You know, just jumping around, a date that really intrigued me, and I don't have the recording, but it is a recording that you did with some African musicians.

Jones: "Sarala," that was the title of the album. The leader's name was Cheick-Tidiane Seck. He was from Mali, most of the musicians were from Mali. I just Mali was a French possession at one time. But, most of the recording artists were living in Paris at the time it was reported. We recorded it in Paris. The music was all written and conceived by the leader, Cheick-Tidiane. There is a lot of variety there. There are some ballads, but most of them involved many types of drums. Don't ask me to name the types of drums. There were several kinds. We also had guitars, and we even had a flute player in there at one point. He wrote some very interesting things. It was all strange and new to me because I didn't know anything about it. What I did, they played whatever they're doing, whenever they had been playing together as a unit. This band had been playing together in Paris for, I guess, a few years in Paris before I came on the scene. So, what I did was superimpose what I was doing over and above what they were doing. Some of it seemed to fit pretty well. I tried to think in the same idiom as the music I was listening to. It is difficult because if you are not the music you're listening to, how can you fit into that idiom? I came as close to it as I could.

Brauer: What was your preparation for it?

Jones: None. [There was] no preparation.

Brauer: You just walked into the studio?

Jones: That's right.

Brauer: Where did that idea come from?

Jones: That came from Jean Filipe Allard. That was his idea. It was done sometime right after, or maybe prior to that Fats Waller album I did in New Jersey at Rudy Van Genders. Allard, at the time, was very active in the chest section of the French Verve. This was one of his projects. He always will. It was a good idea. The record did very well. In fact, they wanted to do another one but the problem was that it was very hard. There were about 18 musicians. It represented quite a financial problem to finance a project like that. It was also very hard for that group to find work because many places are there we can play with an 18-piece orchestra or, anything near that like a 15 piece orchestra? It was a thing. It was a financial problem but the music was well received.

Brauer: Were you pleased with it?

Jones: I was, yeah. I liked it. I wasn't completely satisfied with what I did on it. I thought I could do much better with a little more time may be listening to what they were doing for a longer period of time. I would be able to integrate what I was doing more successfully into the fabric of what they were doing. It was completely different to me. The difference was like night and day. It was nothing like American Jazz.

Brauer: Were you personally excited to be working with African musicians?

Jones: There was a degree of excitement. But, there wasn't much time to be excited because I was trying to listen to what they were doing. I was trying with what they were doing. It was a case of me making the adjustments what they were doing and it wasn't that easy really. But, like I said, I came as close as I could to it. How close that is, or how close that was, is a matter for conjecture.

Brauer: Another record I found interesting for whatever reason as a record you did with a gentleman named Dargy.

Jones: Dargy. Oh…next!

Brauer: (Laughs) That's like the Herman Lubinsky thing.

Jones: Right, even more so, or less so. That is beyond discussion.

Brauer: I went to the internet to find out about this guy. I knew he was some kind of a mystic.

Jones: A nut!

Brauer: A mystic nut! (Laughs)

Jones: Don't quote me. (Laughs) I mean…Next! The only good thing about that date was that the checks came in on time. I'll say no more. . So that's why I don't want to say anything. I don't want to say anything that would impact on somebody's credibility. That is why don't want to comment on it.

Brauer: You still had some great musicians on that date, Rodney Jones, Ricky Gask and Mickey Roker. Next question. Next issue.

Jones: Hit the machine please.

(Recording Stops. Question is not heard)

Jones: …In sort of a musical way. I never knew much about his personal life.

Brauer: You worked with him?

Jones: Yes, I worked with him in Tyree Glen's band at the Roundtable. He did practically all of the JATP concerts. He was a great player. He was one of the most, perhaps the most original person I have ever met. Everything he did was completely original, with Lester Young. The way he talked, the way he walked, the way he wore his clothes, the way he played, his whole manner was original. It was everything he did. He wore that porkpie hat must the time. I can see that image now. I can see him with a black pork pie hat on. Nobody played like him. Other players emulated him, some imitated him. He was a great influence on the tennis saxophone players. He did admire Lester Young and love Charlie Parker and Coleman Hawkins at the same time. He was individual. Hidden individual style completely different from everybody else. He was individual all the way. He was unique.

Brauer: People talk about how he was the king of slang, or, not slang but hipster talk or whatever. Did his conversations make sense to you?

Jones: No, but I heard a conversation once between him, Norman Grantz, Joe Jones, and Lester Young and I couldn't understand word they were saying. I understood the words that they were saying, but I didn't know what they meant. They had the special way of talking, you know? You had to be aware of what these words in these clichés at the used man. Norman Grantz was very good at that. Norman wasn't a player. I don't think he was a musician at all, but he and Lester were on the same level as far as understanding that language. Joe was a close third. Not Philly Joe, Papa Joe. Philly Joe is the drummer.

Brauer: I have an impression, forgive me if I'm using this phrase, but would you call Lester Young a space cadet? Was see on another plane? Like, we are sitting in this room and he is sitting in this room but he is on another plane?

Jones: I think you would have to call them that. I mean, maybe not seriously but, the way he carried himself, the way he talked, certainly his style of playing put him on another level, certainly. So, that was the difference. It wasn't exactly here. He was, sort of, in between. Definitely. I left his playing. I can't wait to tell you about this one incident that happened. We were on a bus during J A T P. We had gone from one town to the other on a bus, instead of our regular mode of transportation. After the concert, I think it was one of the colleges in Texas, where loading into the bus after the concert. Charlie Shavers and Roy Eldridge we're very mischievous kind of guys. They liked creating trouble. They knew that Lester Young drank gin, Gordon's gin, particularly Gordon's gin. What they did was, they found where he had his little stash of gin and they hid it. When he came back out to get on the bus to go to the next town, he couldn't find his liquor. He came back to the bus. He looked all over the bus, so he went to the head of the bus and sit up and said, this is what he

sounded like with his bad English, "Whoever taken my whiskey, I'm their mother's very best man." You know what that meant?

Brauer: You played the dozens.

Jones: That's right.

Brauer: I felt like a lot of the times what he would say would be a delayed reaction. Like, he would say something and then you would get it may be, next week. Or, maybe it was the next day.

(Recording Stops)

Jones: (in Portuguese accent) "Brushes man!"

Brauer: (in Portuguese accent) "Brushes man! Brushes! Brushes, man!"

Jones: He didn't want Jo Jones to overshadow his solo.

Brauer: Did you observe Jo Jones and Lester interact? Because they have a lot of history together

Jones: Yeah, they had sort of a natural affinity. They fit together like hand in glove. Jo could play with anybody and then Lester was at his greatest with that Basie band. Of course, when Jo Jones was the drummer, he said…Jo Jones it but have been for think about 13 years. He didn't mind telling you about his 13 1/2 years with Basie.

Brauer: Would you describe him as arrogant?

Jones: Jo Jones?

Brauer: Yeah.

Jones: Not at all. He was sincere, dedicated, honest, but not arrogant. He was one of these kind of drummers who could adjust. He had several different levels of performance which most drivers don't have. He could play any style you wanted to hear. He could play style that used every four beats on the bass drum, which almost nobody uses anymore. He could play that if you wanted to hear it. He could play the other style where he played sparsely on the bass drum, and mostly with his snare. He was a great brush man. He was great for shows. He could catch anything. If somebody sneezed, he could catch that. If someone dropped a hat, he could catch that. He was like Specks Powell, the drummer at CBS. He was a great show drummer.

Brauer: I was going to say that, show drummer.

Jones: He could play Broadway shows. That is a term that they give. They are versatile but they have a special knack for being able to play Broadway shows. Broadway shows was mostly this kind of stuff, the two beat stuff. Usually show music was the "la-di-da" type of stuff. But, in order to be of play that you had to have a very strong beat. You had to hold everything together, you know?

Brauer: You also had to define the arrangement.

Jones: Yes.

Brauer: You defined all the changes. He had to play something different behind…

Jones: … The different performers who had different styles and different interpretations. They had different interpretations of socks. They were adaptable, highly adaptable. Jo was like that. I don't think he ever played any Broadway shows. You got the impression that he could have though. Who else? There were some other Germans were very good at that. I can't think offhand who they were. Almost any of the drummers who played for Bud, like Specks Powell was excellent at that because he works for CBS. He had to play for all types of acts on any day, on any week. He was playing for dog acts, elephant acts, comedian's falls, he could pick all of that up with an accent. That's what a good show drummer can do.

Brauer: Speaking of Broadway, how did you become involved with Ain't Misbehavin?

Jones: Well, that is a good question too. Who was the writer, think it was the arranger that used to arrange for Duke Ellington. He just passed away recently. He is a very fine arranger. I think he was on the called me. Anyway, they had been doing this off Broadway show, Ain't Misbehaving, at one of the theatres off Broadway. That's where they broke the show in, Ain't Misbehavin'. The show came to Broadway. Luther Henderson is the name I was trying to think. Luther called me and said, "Would you like to do this Broadway show? It's opening on so and so, rehearsal is going to start on so and so." I was working in Canada at the time with a small group. When the rehearsals started, I came and did some of the rehearsals. Luther was playing the show when it opened on Broadway. She did about three or four weeks and after that I took over. I played on the stage with a little band and conducted from the piano. I had to have funny little line at the end. It was that funny little on at the end of the show. It was interesting. I liked it. Mostly, Fats Waller's music, but not that many instrumental tunes. It was a vocal show. They had five members of the cast they were all singers in the each sang a featured number in the show. That is what the show is all about, singers. Fats Waller used to sing, but he

also used to play a lot. They didn't feature the music, the instrumental music as much as they featured the singers because that is what the Broadway show is all about.

Brauer: Did they know about your affinity for Fats Waller when they recruited you to do this?

Jones: Well, they might have. That was prior to the time I had done the Fats Waller album. Everybody I knew who played piano liked Fats Waller. They could've picked any number of 100 different players. I didn't look anything like Fats. That is for certain. I don't know why they called me. I guess Luther called me because he knew of my work. He knew I had been working at CBS at the time. I had some experience with that type of stuff so he felt that I would be a good fit for the show. I liked it. The rehearsals were very tedious and time-consuming. But, every other day there was a change in the music, there was a change in the arrangement, something was different every day. You had to make constant adjustments all the time. Even in the show on Broadway, he was constantly making those adjustments. And you had to play everything exactly the way that you rehearsed it. You could not change one single note. If you changed one note in the arrangement, you would get a note from the director saying, "Mr. Jones, you played on A or in A-flat where you should have played a B-flat. A natural? Why did you do this?" It was that kind of thing. I had to call it nitpicking that went on. They wanted everything to remain exactly the same, which was the thing they used to get on my nerves: doing things the exact same way day in and day out, week in and week out, month in and month out. That's what got under my skin.

Brauer: How long did it take you to decide, "I've had enough of this?"

Jones: About a year and a half. Actually, about two years. I had had enough. I told them, their nose used to get out of joint when you had to leave the show. I told them when I joined the show, "I have to do this tour in Japan. I have to go to Europe. I have to do such and such date." They said, "okay, we don't mind." Then, when it became time for me to go out and do that, they objected.

Brauer: Who subbed for you when you did that?

Jones: Leonard something…I forget his last name.

Brauer: So they found you a sub.

Jones: Yes, they found one. In fact, at one point found a girl to sub in for me. But, she could not play stride. She played fake stride. When I was doing the show, I played authentic stride on piano. You had to do it. Sometimes, one of those things was a

handful of keys. It was a tempo about here (taps very fast tempo). You had to play that kind of stride. It got easier as it went on.

Brauer: Did doing that show sort of revive your interest in Fats Waller?

Jones: Well, in a sense yes because I always had a very high interest in him. It didn't do very much towards that. You weren't playing instrumental music. You were playing background music for singers. All of the singers sung music written by Fats Waller. So, You played a lot of his music. It was just a reactionary thing to do.

Brauer: Well, it didn't reflect itself necessarily in what you did for the show, but it did reflect itself in your subsequent recording.

Jones: I think so. That was the idea behind the recording, actually. Allard knew that I had done the show and he said that this might be a good way to perpetuate this music. He knew I liked Fats' music. So, that is why he picked me to do it.

Brauer: On subsequent other recordings, Fats Waller tunes come up.

Jones: That is true. We didn't do all of Fats Waller's compositions. There is a limit to what you can do in a 1 1/2 or two-hour show. There was a lot of dancing and singing, and some semi acting. It was not as much acting as it was singing in the show. It was primarily a revue type show. It was not a play.

Brauer: I found that interesting, and I wonder how you're able to organize you mind. In the same year, '78, that you started Ain't Misbehavin, you also did the I'm Old Fashioned date with Watanabe.

Jones: Sadio Watanabe

Brauer: You did the Tip Toe Tapdance. You did a Grooving High date for Muse. That had Charlie Raus and Thad on it.

Jones: Yeah, that had some Monk things on it.

Brauer: On 21 January, you did a solo album. On 25 January, which was for Galaxy, on the 25th you did Grooving High for Muse. Then, on the 28th you did the Our Delights with Tommy Flanagan.

Jones: Yeah, that was the two piano thing out in California.

Brauer: And were you out there for a week? You must have done the solo thing in California.

Jones: That was done in California. I don't know if it was done at the same time, or a different time frame.

Brauer: A week between.

Jones: Yes, you see, what they were doing in these days when I was recording with Ella… Ella was working at a club in San Francisco. I think these dates were done on the off day. Ella, I think she was there for two or three weeks. That is why I was able to do those dates. But, you know when you are doing these different dates, you are just there when you get to the studio. You make the adjustment mentally. It is very easy to do really. It was easy for me. I didn't have any problem playing different styles, or maybe the different type of music that I would be playing. It was just a matter of reading the music, or just thinking about what I had to do. It really is not that difficult. It sounds difficult, but it is not.

Brauer: I see you did two… You did that recording for Verve. But, you also did a recording for Galaxy called Ain't Misbehavin' with Roy Haynes and Richard Davis. It was that same year.

Jones: I think that was done in California.

Brauer: That was a Galaxy date too. That was in '78.

Jones: On the cover there was a hat, a "W" for Fats Waller. I remember that. That's funny. That was nice. That is the way goes. You do them as they come in, and you make a mental adjustment when you receive the date and you know what the date is all about. That is when the adjustment starts in your mind. When you get to the date, you are already prepared for it.

Brauer: Who initiated the [thing] with Watanabe?

Jones: I think it was the A&R man who worked for Eastwind at the time.

Brauer: Was that 88?

Jones: Yeah,88. It was Kyoshi Ito. I mean Yasahachi Ito and Kyoshi Ito. They both worked for Eastwind Records. They did a lot of stuff. That was the first company, the Japanese, that was the first Japanese company I had recorded for. It was Eastwind. Subsequently, I did some recordings for some lesser-known companies. Things like Afro , and a couple others that I don't recall the names of.

Brauer: I hear Watanabe trying to be Charlie Parker.

Jones: He was influenced by Parker to a very large degree. You could say that he was influenced by Sonny Stitt. Maybe it was a combination of both of them? He played, sort of a style that was heavily reminiscent of Charlie Parker and of Stitt. Sonny was right on Charlie's heels. He played a style that was a lot like Charlie Parker. He was stepping on Charlie's heels. He was establishing himself as a real recording musician. He was fantastic. You know, Watanabe and some other players, lesser-known players, when trying to follow in the footsteps of Charlie Parker. They are not bad footsteps to be in by the way, you know? Most players though, don't have the facility where the ideas, or the thought patterns that Charlie had. That is what made Charlie such a unique, you not only have to have – – and most of them did not have the tone that Charlie had. People forget that not only did Charlie have this great facility for playing these figures and things that he did. But, he had a beautiful tone along with it. Most alto saxophone players don't have that. Even the ones that emulate him do not have that same type of tone. That is the big difference right there. It is very difficult. Sonny Stitt came the closest to anyone I had heard. Cannonball was in the running. He didn't have that same kind of a tone either. His tone was good, but it was a more forceful tone. It was harder. Charlie's tone floated. If I can use that expression to describe it, that is what it did. But, there is definitely a difference.

Brauer: Did you feel that Watanabe was successful?

Jones: I don't know how many records he sold if that is what you're asking, if he was commercially successful.

Brauer: I mean artistically.

Jones: Artistically, I thought he did a very good job. I was kind of amazed because best – I should not have been amazed because there are many Japanese musicians who emulate certain American musicians. You can find people in Japan who play like Louie Armstrong, maybe you can find people who play similar to Coleman Hawkins. Most of the drummers emulate either Max or Elvin or – – mostly Elvin now. But, for the time it was Max Roach. You see, Max was a style setter. He influenced drummers all over the world. Most of the American soloists influenced players all over the world, particularly Japan.

Brauer: What goes through your mind when you are on a date? You have worked with some of these artists at the height of their creative powers and then you find yourself working with someone who is effectively trying to channel something that has already been done. How do you engage that?

Jones: You mean as far as somebody else's style is concerned?

Brauer: We were talking about Watanabe. He's channeling something that has already been done.

Jones: Okay, the way I feel about that is, I would play in the style that I would've accompanied Charlie Parker and to see if I could help them along. Maybe, I would say on the same page as him, musically speaking. Because, this requires a minor adjustment. You don't think of it as, "Well, here is somebody that is trying to imitate Charlie Parker." You think of it as somebody who is making the attempt to play in that idiom, so you help as much as you can in that aspect. It is the kind of thing where you help if you can. If you can't help, don't hurt. It was one of those type of things.

Brauer: In 1980 you took up what has been described as a residency at the Café Ziegfeld.

Jones: Ziegfeld. Yes, it was right across the street from the theater were redoing the show. When I got off of work from the show, I went right across the street and started playing another three hours until closing time.

Brauer: 'Till your fingers fell off.

Jones: Well, actually I felt better because I was more active. You see, the more active you are the better you can play. It is when you become an active, that is when you're playing suffers. They always talk about—I think Paderewski said, " If I missed two days practice, I know it. If I miss four days practice, my wife knows it. If I miss six days practice, everybody knows it." (Laughs) that thinking, that line of thinking got me.

Brauer: So, in a way, that residency provided you the outlet the show didn't provide?

Jones: Yes. It did. There was a greater variety of things she could do it. There was no leeway at all for improvisation and beyond in the parameters of Waller's arrangements that we are doing. There was very very little, minimal room. So, he gave me an outlet.

Brauer: Was this solo?

Jones: Yes, this was solo. Although, there were so many singers became in there and want you to play for them as they sang for you. They thought they were doing me a favor I suppose. A lot of that happened. I relished the time where I could play by myself.

Brauer: Were they, in effect, trying to audition?

Jones: I think some of that happened. At any given time, there are always a lot of young singers. By the way, most of the waiters who worked in the café were singers, or dancers, or people who were working in the café because this was a downtime for them in their chosen profession. So, they took waiters jobs to make ends meet. From time to time, they would want to sing with me, you know? People would come in from outside, singers who were working on Broadway and would want to sing with me. This happened almost every night. One time, Lionel Hamilton came down and played. He sat in with me. They wanted him to come back the following weekend and play, so they advertise that he was going to be there. He calls me up and he says, "Get me a drummer." I said, "A drummer? Where am I going to get a drummer?" I couldn't get the drummer that was working with us at the show because he was busy. So, I finally got him a drummer and he came and played and he did a great job. The crowd loved it. Lionel loved it. Lionel Hamilton, I was working at the show once and a guy comes down. I was on the fourth floor. My dressing room was on the fourth floor. Baby I told you to see other day, I don't know? The doorman comes up and he says, "There is a fellow downstairs. He wants to talk to you." I said, "Well, what is his name?" He said, "Well, his name is Hamilton." Right away, I thought it was Roy Hamilton. So, I said, "Well, send him up." Then, when he came up I said, "What is his first name?" This is before he came up. He said, "Lionel!" I said, "What!" He got the name wrong. Strange things have happened in the theater.

Brauer: Now, we are kind of in the mid-80s. You make a rash of great jazz trio recordings. A lot of them involve Nancy Wilson. I think it must have been a festival date. Benny Golson is on it.

Jones: It might have been a concert. It sounds like it might have been in California. I am not sure.

Brauer: No, this happened in Japan.

Jones: Then it must have been a concert tour. I did a concert. I did two concerts and two tours in Japan with her. She was a… One was for an all art promotion, that was the name of the company. Sazuka was the name of the promoter. The other one was somebody else I can't remember. Maybe it was Alpha or something. It was some other company. Anyway, there were two tors.

Brauer: Once again, with those situations artistic choices? Was this one of these situations where whoever was putting together festivals said, "we want a jazz trio, but we want you to do this thing."

Jones: I think they put that together as a package. I think they thought that some of the great Jazz Trio records were doing fairly well. I think they thought that… Well, Nancy was sort of an icon over there. She used to do some of her tunes in Japanese.

She used to do some Japanese tunes and this always goes over big with the Japanese audiences. They recognize that you are singing something that relates to them and they can appreciate it.

Brauer: I think this was "What's New" with Eddie Gomez and Jimmy Cobb. It was that version.

Jones: That was the great jazz trio of that. Eddie Gomez… Once I made the mistake of announcing Eddie Gomez as Eddie Lopez. He gave me one of the dirtiest looks I have ever seen. (Laughs) it was a mistake. I did it inadvertently. I said Eddie Lopez. He said, "What!" I don't think he ever forgave me for that. It is such a minor thing, but to him it was major.

Brauer: Then you do a recording, I think it was called—It's called "Club New Yorker." You used a violin player named…

Jones: Oh, that violin player. I had done some dates with this violinist, some recording dates. He seemed to be very fluent. He was a good player. Most of violinists are not great jazz players whether you are talking about Shep Smith, or… Who is the other great jazz violinist? There are not too many.

Brauer: Grapelli?

Jones: Well, Steven…There aren't too many. He didn't have as much jazz has… He was just fluent. Smith was probably the greatest jazz pianist that I worked with. This guy played good. I felt that he had the technique to play whatever things that I wrote. He did well. But, he was not a jazz player. Harry Lacoviski was a fine violinist, but he didn't think jazz. We wrote out his solos for him to play. He did them on a couple of record dates that we had. He worked quite a lot with Quincy Jones at one point.

Brauer: This gentlemen?

Jones: Harry Lacovski.

Brauer: Oh, this gentleman's name was Louis Eeley.

Jones: Louis, Louis Eeley.

Brauer: Whatever happened to him?

Jones: He was a fairly young man. He did not appear till to me. But, that was many years after the recording date had been done. I read that he had passed in one of the musical… In one of the official 802 magazine. I was really surprised. But…hey.

Brauer: That passages in 1986. What kind of impact did that have on you?

Jones: Well, of course it was a great loss. You had an immediate sense of loss. And lasted even until today. Something happened with Elvin, that was an even greater loss. Elvin was the youngest member of the family, the immediate family. Thad, of course, was a genius just because of his body of work. He was recognized I'm glad, for one thing. During his lifetime, he was recognized for being an arranger, which he was, and a composer. Because most of the things that he arranged, he also composed. His work was widely accepted. At least he had the pleasure of knowing that he was well recognized during his life I think that was good for him. It was a great loss to me and a great loss to the family. We feel that to this day.

Brauer: In '93 you do "Upon Reflection: The Music Of Thad Jones" for Verve.

Jones: Oh, "Upon Reflection."

Brauer: Yeah, with George Miraz, and Elvin Jones for Verve.

Jones: Jean Fillipe Allard was the A&R man on that. George Miraz and Elvin were on it. We did one thing that Thad and Abbey Lincoln had done together. It was called, "Summary." You might have heard it. It is on the album. It was a nice date. It was interesting because we did a version of, "A Child Is Born." That was one of his compositions. It was sort of a rubato arrangement where we didn't play any melody until the very last eight bars. So, if you did not know what we were playing it might have been difficult to understand. We tried to stay away from the melody just so we could play just notes. Elvin played some rhythmic things. George would play some bass, and I would play something that I thought work. That was sort of an experimental kind of thing. Are you familiar with that record?

Brauer: Yes, I have it.

Jones: Are you familiar with that particular tune?

Brauer: Yes.

Jones: You'll notice we did not play any melody until the last eight or 16 bars.

Brauer: I have to go back and listen to it. I will be honest. It is one of those things that was in my ears when I was riding up the road to get here.

Jones: It was very interesting.

Brauer: Did doing that date provide, I don't think the word closure is probably the right word, but did it give you any sort of peace with it? With Thad's passing?

Jones: As far Thad was concerned?

Brauer: Yeah, I mean, to make the tribute musically?

Jones: I mean…not really. You never forget the passing of a close relative, especially like Thad. No matter how many times I play his music, it always brings back memories of him as a person, as an individual, as a family member, as a brother, and as a musician. It evokes memories that you never forget. There is no closure. There never will be. As long as he is in your memory, there cannot be closure. You grieve, maybe not overtly, but internally you are always grieving.

Brauer: Recently, there was a concert in Chicago the were advertised as… The Chicago Jazz Festival was this year. It was a reunion of John Faddis, a reunion of the big band. Someone send me a program about it, but then I got the review, and you were not there.

Jones: Right, you know there was a very, very bad mix up. The booking agent was responsible. You see, I never got an itinerary. I never got any tickets. I never got a phone call saying that you have to be at a certain place at a certain time. I don't know why the assumption was that I knew about it because I had no way of knowing about it. That is how it happened. Not only did I have to miss that date, but I had to miss also a date in San Francisco which followed that date. The next day, I believe it was. The two were tied together. It was a very, very bad clerical error. Whatever those errors our caused in booking, that is what happened. You know, if you are not a mind reader, if you are not psychic, you don't know these things and less somebody says, "Well, here it is." They say, "here it is in black and white. You are here at such and such a time and here at such and such a place. Here is your ticket." You have to have that. That is one of the prerequisites of travel.

Brauer: You recently did a recording with Joe Lovano. That was called, "I am all for you."

Jones: Which is a--

Brauer: --a ballad songbook. Were you pleased with that effort?

Jones: Yes, because we had a very good rhythm section. George Miraz was the bass player. I think Paul, his drummer was – –

Brauer: Paul Motian?

Jones: Yes. Paula had been working off and on with him for many years so he knew Paul's work. He was confident and comfortable with Paul. It was nice. I enjoyed it. We just did another one about a month and a half ago. Guess that will be released sometime this winter, or may be the first of next year. I enjoy working with Joe. I have done several concerts with him and I did a European tour with him back in July. That was this year. He is a fine player and he loved Thad's music. In fact, he worked with Thad's band for a little while. We played several of Thad's compositions during his concerts.

Brauer: What's on the docket for you at this point? I imagine you can do what you want to do, and what you don't want to do?

Jones: Do you mean what's the itinerary?

Brauer: Yeah, what projects you have in mind recording wise or performance wise?

Jones: Of course, I always do tours. I will do Japanese tours and a European tour. Usually one follows the other. Maybe it will be six months apart or something like that. Then, I also plan to do some recording of my own with various different instrumental compositions. Maybe it will be with the trio. Maybe it will be with a couple of horns. I have several projects like that planned. I am also doing some college seminars, clinics, master classes. I did one at the University of Michigan late last year. I have done them the University of Idaho. I am doing one at NYU. I am doing one at Harvard next year. All of those things are in the works.

Brauer: Is it hard, I know you've had some health challenges recently. How do you sustain your energy? What do you do to, you know, not overtax yourself?

Jones: First of all, I think you try and live a very sedate and well ordered, restricted life. You can't run around all day, and then work all night. You can't burn the candle at both ends. You can't drink or smoke. I never drank or smoked. I tried to eat correctly, tried to get enough sleep. I tried to eat the right foods. I take my medication. That is what keeps you going. It is a challenge. It is not that easy to do, but it is doable. It requires an effort which I am willing to put forth. I want to be able to play. I want to be able to perform. I want to be able to create and put Florida creativity and use my creativity. In order to do that you need to be healthy. In order to be healthy, you have to do these things. That means that I am very careful about everything I do. I am particularly careful about the foods I eat and getting enough sleep at night. That is difficult on the road, but it is doable. That means that you don't go to a lot of after our jam sessions like I used to do when I was a lot younger. You go back to the hotel and you get your sleep so you are ready to go the next day. You have to be more particular on the road than at home. I find that finding good food to eat on the road is more difficult than finding it at home. At home, it is a lot easier. Teddie takes care of that. She sees that I eat the right food. So, on the road it

is more difficult. You have to be careful out there. It is just paying constant attention to your health. You have to do all the things that will result in good health if you follow the right rules.

Brauer: If you had to characterize what music has been for you, has it been a vocation or a calling?

Jones: Perhaps it started out as a vocation, and then perhaps a default into a calling. Perhaps that happened inevitably or evolutionarily. If a vocation becomes something that you must do, then it becomes a calling. Right now, it is something that I must do because it is my vocation. I have no other vocation. That is my prime objective. So, that is what I tried to do. I keep myself in condition to do that, to fulfill whatever that is. My ambition, my goal, is to always improve on my last performance. I want to do better than I did the last time. I want to use whatever creativity I have to reach those ends. That is my overall objective.

Brauer: Do you have a view as to the state of jazz at this time? Are you encouraged, discouraged?

Jones: I would say, overall, I am encouraged. I'm encouraged by the fact that all of these young people are interested in jazz more so than they were 15 or 20 years ago when they were all attracted to rock 'n roll. I have seen more young people now genuinely interested in jazz. Whether that is mainstream jazz, or whatever form of jazz it is that interests them, at least they are interested. At least they are going in the direction of jazz, and not any other direction. It is disappointing in the sense that sometimes you hear music that is not particularly forward-looking. It's advertised as being forward looking but, in effect it does not equate to music as we know it. If you go back to the fundamental definition of music, it can be defined as melody, rhythm, and harmony. If it does not have those three aspects, how can you call it music? To me, it has to have all those three conditions. Those three conditions have to exist before you can call it music. Now, if any style utilizes all three of those three conditions, and then it turns out to be pleasurable to listen to and pleasing, then I classify that as music. That is encouraging to me. But, sometimes that does not happen. There are some instances, which I will not go into, of that… I think young musicians should always strive to make what is a viable music, rather than just noise. Noise does not prove anything. Anybody can just drop a pan on the floor and produce noise. If you drop several pans of different sizes on the floor, you can produce different sounds. But, that is not music. Just producing sound that are different, are not necessarily music. That is in my estimation. I do not want to sound dogmatic about this. That is the way I feel about this. I could be wrong. I probably am, but that is the way I feel about it.

Brauer: If you are able to initiate five things… If you had the power to do five things that you felt would advance the music, what would they be?

Jones: Well, the first one would be by setting an example of the work that I do. I include that in my body of work. Another would be maybe teaching youngsters my approach to music. Another would be to encourage people to listen more to jazz. In order to appreciate it, you have to listen to it. You have to find out what is being played. To give lip service to jazz, that is another one. Many people who profess to be jazz enthusiasts or jazz lovers, don't actively promoted. By giving lip service – – that means by promoting it by going to concerts, buying jazz records, going to live concerts. The fifth thing would be, I think jazz promoters, I can't do this personally but I can advocate it. The programmers on TV stations and radio stations, and producers and programmers in general could include more jazz in their presentations. Sometimes, the presentations don't include jazz. Something is left out. The audience doesn't have a chance to like it or dislike it. At least, it should be presented for the audience to make up their own minds about whether they can accept it or not. I don't think it is being presented on an equal basis with some of the other forms of music. That is one of my pet peeves. Those five things are what I would advocate. I am sure there are more.

Brauer: Well, do you have any… Do you have any final stories, jokes, or advice?

Jones: (Laughs) Well, I guess my comments would mostly be for advice. I would advise,… You see I think the future of our music, jazz, it belongs to the younger people who are entering the field, or who are contemplating entering the field. I would advise them, first of all, to be proficient on their instruments. Learn music theory, if possible, study composition in harmony. A lot of that becomes intuitive as you progress in time. I advise younger people to, first of all, stay away from narcotics, stay away from drugs of all types. Stay away from liquor. Stay away from smoking. In general, take care of their physical beings. Unless you have a body that is able to perform, no matter what kind of music you play, whatever you want to do, you can't do it in less you are healthy. You must remain healthy. There are some things that you cannot avoid. There are some things that are inherited that I don't know much about. But, you can at least do things that are conducive to the best health that you could possibly have. This is what I would advise younger people. I'm speaking particularly to the younger persons because I think that is the future of music. This applies to everybody, of course, in general. But, this particularly applies to the younger person. Fine?

(END OF INTERVIEW)