

The Music Magic Podcast with Chick Corea

Episode 7

Gary Burton: New York Stories

Chick Corea: Okay 1,2,3, we're going. So we're here. Gary and I are here in Tokyo at the Tokyo Park Hotel, and I just finished a few solo concerts. We're about to dive into four shows with the Harlem String Quartet.

Gary Burton: Yes, here in Tokyo.

CC: Yeah, it's their first time to Japan.

GB: I wondered about that.

CC: They are all excited.

GB: I imagine so.

CC: I can't wait to have the Japanese audience hear what we have going with the sextet.

GB: They're going to love it. We're rehearsing today and dive into the concert starting tomorrow.

CC: So yeah. I have no plan for—I didn't make any notes. This is not a seminar, we're not trying to teach anything. Gary and I have known each other since the late '60s. And, in fact, every time we talk about when we first met, we have two different versions going on. I can't really remember some of the incidents that you remember. I played in Gary's band for a little bit. That was after the Stan Getz experience.

GB: That's right.

CC: But our connection goes back to the Stan Getz Quartet, which Gary was a member of for 3 years?

GB: '64, 5 and 6. Then you came in right after me. How long were you with Stan?

CC: A good year or two years.

GB: We were coming to see you guys at a club in Boston. Stanley was playing bass.

CC: That was the second iteration. The first time was when Steve Swallow called me up. And Roy was still in the band. Roy Haynes and Stan. We went to Europe, we went to

Mexico City, I remember. We played around the US. We played at the Village Vanguard in New York. We did a bunch of gigs with Roy and Steve. Then we did the recording *Sweet Rain*. Which was without Roy and Steve, which was with Grady Tate and Ron Carter.

GB: Should we tell the interesting story about that? Do you remember this?

CC: I remember what happened on my end. Were you connected with that?

GB: Well Steve told me Stan had first recorded the same music with the group with Roy and Steve.

CC: We went in the studio—see, we were on the road and we had a repertoire. We went into the studio. The traveling quartet was Steve Swallow, Roy Haynes, Stan and myself. We went into the studio to record our repertoire and Stan wasn't feeling so good and was kind of teeter-tottering.

GB: I heard Creed Taylor was unhappy with it. That he was unhappy with Roy. He thought he played too busy. So he asked Stan to come back and record the thing, with Steve and you and everybody again without telling Roy that he'd been replaced. Stan wasn't too comfortable with that and Steve refused to do it.

CC: I was about to refuse to do it when I heard.

GB: Creed had a real love affair going with Grady Tate and Ron Carter. He used them on many records. He was convinced this was the better combination with Stan so it did get re-made but not without some typical Getz political fuss that often happens.

CC: My remembrance of the date was that Stan was tipsy he wasn't on the ball.

GB: He frequently had bad days.

CC: It was a bad day for Stan. And Roy just tipping along there. Roy plays some beautiful subtle rhythm. Stan just kept losing the beat. Then what I got was that Stan then said, "Oh well, Roy is screwing up." And I never heard—that's the first I heard that Creed Taylor had anything to do with this.

GB: This is what Steve told me which I heard a year later, after Steve had joined my band and I happened to come upon that story. The minute I heard it I said, "Classic Stan. Some complication that happens with his projects in his life."

CC: I was really disappointed because I was loving the quartet as it existed with Steve and Roy.

GB: That's a dream band.

CC: Exactly. That was my first contact with Roy. I had already played with Steve a little bit. It was a perfect rhythm section. I just loved it and I was so disappointed that I was ready to pull out. And say, "If Roy's not going to be there and Steve's not going to do it I don't want to do it." But Steve as a good friend encouraged me to do the date because Stan was going to record some of my songs. He said it would be good for you to do the date. I did the date and I'm glad I did.

GB: That leads me to ask you, I've always been curious, I mentioned earlier that I saw you playing with Stan, and later on with Stanley Clarke and Tony Williams.

CC: And actually Airto.

GB: Airto playing percussion. How did that come about?

CC: What happened was, my stint with the quartet with Roy and Steve lasted a year and a half or so and then I got called to play with Sara Vaughan. And then I went and I took the gig with Sara Vaughan. And Stan didn't have too many gigs anyway so I stopped working with Stan there for a while and then I was also working with—now wait a minute, hold on. Here's the chronology. I got it now. While I was with Sarah, I got the call from Tony Williams to come and play with Miles. That was 1968, I spent 1968 and 1969 and part of 1970 with Miles. Then, during that period I began to experiment—after Miles then there was Circle for a year with Dave Holland. Me and Dave. Then after that, that's when I formed Return to Forever. In '71.

GB: That was with Stanley.

CC: That was with Stanley Clarke and then Airto and Flora Purim and Joe Farrell. And we started working and the band was really cooking and the band was doing very, very well. Like your band was doing during that period. It was a heyday of new music.

Then what happened, Return to Forever had several months with no gigs. Then I heard, I forget how I heard, I heard that Stan had a tour booked but didn't have a rhythm section. I thought, "Gee, I need some work. I have an idea that would be fun." I called Stan up and I said, "Stan, pay me a little bit more money than the last time you paid me and I'll be musical director and I'll bring you a band with Tony Williams and Stanley Clarke and Airto." And he said, "Great!"

So we went up to his house to rehearse. That's how that section started. As a matter of fact, the first gig was a week at the Rainbow Grill in New York with Joao Gilberto. That's when I met Joao. So we rehearsed up at Stan's estate and I met Joao. That whole thing lasted for 6-8 months, that tour. Stanley stayed on after that. But then we went back to Return to Forever.

GB: I was lucky, I happened to see you guys play then.

CC: Where?

GB: It was in Boston at Lenny's on the turnpike. And of course I was living in Boston then. I saw that you were going to be there and I went up to check it out. It was the first time I had seen Stan play with a more modern rhythm section. He was evolving as a player and he wasn't playing mostly standards anymore or Bossa Novas by that time. He was playing your tunes. Was that around the time you made "Captain Marvel"?

CC: Yeah, because I brought, as musical director, I brought a bunch of songs. We recorded "Captain Marvel", "La Fiesta". A bunch of my songs, that Stan really liked. When you heard us at Lenny's, was I playing electric piano?

GB: No, it was acoustic.

CC: I added the Rhodes after that. That was our first connection. The Stan Getz Quartet produced all of that. You know, one of my interests, a question—not a question, just an interest of mine, because I haven't read your whole book yet, it's really great. I love the anecdotes, the way you tell what your experiences were.

I'm interested in the period where, first of all—well, let me get one thing at a time, going back this way. I'm interested in the period where you made the connection doing concerts together with Duke Ellington. You talk about Duke a little bit. You were on the road with the promoter, the great promoter's name from Boston.

GB: George Wein. He was the connecting factor.

CC: What year are we talking about?

GB: I got to know George while I was with Stan. Because as you know from that era, Stan had a terrible alcohol problem and it was kind of necessary for somebody on the scene to kind of take care of some business stuff with the club owners or the concert promoters when Stan was out of it some days. That became my role and as such and I got to know a lot of the club owners and promoters around the country. Because they

actually liked me a lot because they felt like I had saved the gig, with Stan, from being a disaster.

CC: You were actually tour manager for the band.

GB: I was, because Stan was so inept at it that I volunteered to do it just so we would have hotel reservations when we got to cities and things like that. It turned out to be a great connection for me because I met these industry people, which a side player usually doesn't deal with. And George Wein booked several tours with Stan. And the last tour I did, with Stan, was in Europe and there was a big blow up with Stan and Astrud Gilberto and all sorts of things went on. And George said to me, at the end of it, he said, "You know you don't need Stan anymore. Why don't you come to see me when you get back to New York?" That was the end of '66, the beginning of '67. George said he was really convinced I was going to do well in the business and wanted to do what he could to help me out. So I formed a band and in the next few months he came to hear us play at a club in New York.

CC: Who was in that first band? Steve?

GB: No, that's a surprising thing. It was Larry Coryell on guitar. But it was Bill Evans' rhythm section. It was Eddy Gomez and Joe Hunt. Bill was on one of his occasional long vacations and they were like you described earlier. They were sitting around with nothing to do.

CC: Joe's from Indianapolis. From your territory.

GB: We knew each other from years back. He had been the first drummer with Stan Getz. First year it was Joe. So needing a rhythm section quickly, I hired the two of them for the first few months. And it was after they went back to playing with Bill, that I managed to lure Steve away from Stan's band.

The connection with Duke Ellington, and quite a few other established players was because of George. He told me, after he heard the band the first time, he said, "This is great. I love it when somebody's doing some new stuff. I'm going to put you on all my concerts, all my tours and festivals for this year." That ended up being for two years actually. That was like half my work schedule was taken care of right there.

CC: '67 and '68.

GB: Every year we would go to Europe for a few weeks. He did summer festivals, he did Newport, he did Japan tours and so on.

CC: What was the billing for the shows, what was the program?

GB: Typical jazz festivals. He started out as most people know, doing the famous Newport Jazz Festival, which this year will be celebrating its 60th year. He sort of recreated that in other places. In New Orleans, which has now become this huge jazz and heritage festival. He did festival concerts here in Japan, all over Europe every year. He just put on these festivals.

CC: Was it always the same group of musicians traveling around?

GB: A lot of them were. Miles was on a lot of them during those years.

CC: What was the show that Duke Ellington was on?

GB: George was the sole booking agent for Duke's band, for the last decade, that he was in the business. He ended up just saying, "Look George, you just take charge of it and I'll just work with you." Of course, to George, that was a great honor, being a musician himself, having Duke as a hero all those years. So he worked like crazy to send Duke on tours all over the world. To the far east. State Department tours and all that sort of thing. George would not only book the dates, but he would send his own people along to be the tour managers and so on. Since I was doing a lot of George's festivals and tours, I ended up seeing Duke constantly.

CC: What was the show? Just you and Duke? Or other bands?

GB: Some nights it might be. But usually it was a typical festival night. There'd be four or five bands.

CC: Different bands each time?

GB: Different band each time.

CC: I thought the same group of bands used to travel.

GB: No. There was one long summer tour with the same bands. Thelonious Monk and his quartet, my band, Cannonball Adderley's band, Gerry Mulligan and Dionne Warwick.

CC: All in one night?

GB: All in one long afternoon-night.

CC: With Duke?

GB: No, not with Duke. That was the only George Wein tour I did where everything was exactly the same five bands for the whole summer. Through that one I got to spend quite a bit of time with both Cannonball and with Monk. Which was both great experiences getting to know the band members.

CC: Did you chat with Monk?

GB: You couldn't chat with Monk so much as you sort of have a conversation. But his responses were always mysterious words—sentences that you weren't sure what he meant. He liked our songs a lot. He would comment about the songs. He would say, "Oh that song, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah." Then he would look at me and say, "Wrong is right." So we called the song that.

CC: That was one of his things wasn't it?

GB: That was one of Larry Coryell's tunes. There's a good title for it right there.

CC: He's got a bunch of tunes, that have titles that I imagine was him walking into the control room after laying the track down and the producer asking him, "What's the name of that, Thelonious?" And he'd say things like, "Think of one." For instance, was one of the names or another one is, "Ask me now."

GB: With Duke, the first time I met him, I was still with Stan. We were at a festival and we finished our set and Duke's band was going to be on later. He walked up to me as I was packing up my vibraphone and started talking to me. I had played a solo piece, an unaccompanied solo on the vibraphone. He said he hadn't heard anyone do that before.

CC: It's still pretty unusual.

GB: He said he really liked it when somebody found a new way to use an instrument.

CC: He said that, huh?

GB: Yeah. That's exactly how he ran his band. Anytime he found somebody who could double on violin, or play a little bit of this or a little bit of that, he'd write them into the charts. So he talked to me for about 15-20 minutes that night. Every time I saw him after that, he was the most gracious. He would come charging across a crowded room to shake my hand and say, "Hi."

He had these great, flattering lines that he was famous for. He'd walk over and say, "I can see this is a classy affair, I see you're here." That kind of stuff. I got friendly with him and some of his band members. Not the real famous older guys, who I didn't even have the

nerve to talk to, but a few of the—the bass player I remember saying “hi” to and talking to. The highlight of my Duke experience was when he invited me to one of his record sessions in New York.

CC: What was the session?

GB: The recording was *The Far East Suite*. Which was maybe considered by many people to be his best record ever. We were both on RCA. That was another reason I saw a lot of him. We were on the same label those years and often the record company would have us sitting together at the Grammys or at publicity events and that sort of thing.

He said, “The band’s going to be recording next week. Are you in town? Come on by.” I thought, “Wow! What a fantastic thing.” He said, “We started around 9 o’clock at night and go on.” I pictured this RCA studio, which I was familiar with, the band out in the studio playing and I’m in the booth with the engineer and maybe a couple other people.

CC: Where was this?

GB: In downtown New York on 23rd St.

CC: ’68? Or ’69?

GB: What year?

CC: Yeah.

GB: ’67. ’67 or 8 around in there I guess. So, as I came around the corner from the subway stop and saw the front of the building. Normally, at that time of night, it was all industrial buildings it would’ve been dark, no people around. There was this big line of limousines in front of the studio. And I thought, “Well, that’s interesting.” I walked in and there must have been 100 people in that studio, dressed in tuxedos and gowns and furs. It was like a Harlem ballroom event had moved downtown to the studio. The booth was totally full of people and it spilled out into the studio with the musicians. They had set up folding chairs like a little audience in front of the band. Just listening to them.

CC: It was a pretty big room?

GB: Big room. So I found a chair and sat there and didn’t know a soul except for a couple of the band members and Duke. And watched him work through this chaos of people talking and hanging out. Like a party going on. And they’re reading down this music they had been rehearsing and he was—

CC: So they were reading music. So they hadn't performed that suite.

GB: I suppose they would have rehearsed it some. He was famous for rehearsing after they finished gigs. He would then stay on and rehearse until two or three in the morning, working on new music with the band. Pretty sure they had played it before.

I remember one piece he started playing and about 10-15 seconds into it, he said, "Wait a minute. Something's wrong." I figured out that one of the sax players was still playing the previous song. And he said, "Well, nobody told me we were changing." Another whole take was Johnny Hodges had gone to the bathroom and he hadn't come back and they counted off and played and did a whole take and he wasn't even on it.

CC: He plays lead alto.

GB: Before anybody noticed. It was kind of a loose thing. And a bunch of cynical old guys, to whom this is just another gig to them of the thousands they played with Duke over the years.

CC: Was Billy Strayhorn there?

GB: He was there. I didn't know him because he wasn't out on the road with the band and I didn't see him. I knew who he was. I only found out afterwards that he was there. He was already ill with cancer at that point and he only lived another 6 or 8 months after that. But I found out through reading about the dates that he was there.

CC: Did he arrange *The Far East Suite*?

GB: He and Duke co-wrote it. Certain pieces are attributed to Billy. "Isfahan," for instance. A beautiful ballad that features Johnny Hodges. I just heard one day. I'm sure they recorded 2 or 3 days. I probably heard 2 or 3 pieces that went down. At the time I didn't know how great the music was. I was so overwhelmed with the scene that was going on. But then the record came out and I got it and was just amazed.

CC: I've got to catch up on *The Far East Suite*. I listened quite a bit to the *Nutcracker Suite*.

GB: I like that one too.

CC: It's also a fabulous recording. The recording of it. There's the *Thursday Suite* that is also beautiful. Those are like, in the day, were like the influence of classical music and orchestration. The guts and beauty of jazz and rhythm. Merged together.

GB: I read this recent, wonderful biography of Duke Ellington by Terry Teachout, the writer for the *Wall Street Journal*.

CC: How do you spell the second name?

GB: Just how it sounds. T-E-A-C-H-O-U-T. Teachout. He's a terrific jazz writer as well as theater reviewer and he wrote this classic biography about Louis Armstrong, about five years ago called *Pops* that was a bestseller. Now he's done the other father of jazz figure, Duke. It's a terrific book. I learned so much from it, reading the details. And it talks about Duke's desire to bring in classical influences in the writing and also to get recognition from the musical community.

Nowadays that would be an easy thing—easy sell. But at the time, Duke came up as a dance band playing in clubs in Harlem. It was a struggle. His agent for many years was Irving Mills and that was part of the sales pitch for Duke's band was that they were a higher class musical group than the typical dance band.

CC: I think his first band in Washington was 1929, wasn't it?

GB: Probably would've been around that time. He was born in 1899-1900. In fact, Duke's sister told me once that she viewed Duke as growing up with the century. He was in his '20s when it was the 1920s, he was in his '30s when it was the '30s. The idea was he always—his music represented each decade's social climate.

CC: An amazing touchstone of music for the beginning of jazz. I have only one experience meeting Duke unfortunately. I heard the band several times play. I was rehearsing for—on and off over this year, I was invited to come and accompany at a rehearsal a singer named Esther Marrow who sang with—who eventually sang with Duke. She had a patron who lived on Central Park West that invited me and I'd meet Esther up there. I got paid like 25 bucks for a couple of hours. I read down some charts. Esther had an amazing, amazing gospel kind of voice.

So I did that for a while and then one morning I was asked to come down—that we were going to go and take what we were rehearsing to audition for Duke. So we went over to Duke's apartment and I played and Esther sang and I got to shake the man's hand and just say a polite hello. Never got to really know him. And Esther Marrow actually recorded. She got the job. We accomplished that. Those early days are something else. My other interest about you, you mentioned it to me once as we were traveling was, I mean you're Indianapolis—what's your hometown?

GB: I'm from Indiana.

CC: Not Indianapolis.

GB: No. The nearest big town to where I lived was Evansville, which was in the very bottom of the state. Almost on the Kentucky border. So I grew up in a little farm town actually.

CC: So I know you started early with your family playing the vibes. My interest is how did you connect with the jazz world.

GB: It's kind of an interesting story because I discovered jazz as a listener. As a lot of musicians do. Wherever you live, you eventually find a record somehow that crosses your path, that grabs your attention and you say, "What the heck is this?" For me, it was a Benny Goodman record. I have no idea how I came across it. But I put it on my little record player and I couldn't get over how complex and how exciting and the energy and this improvising that was going on.

CC: Did it have Hamp on it?

GB: No this was not his original band it was sort of a big band. It was not one of the famous records from the 1930s. This would've been recorded recently at that time in the '50s.

CC: Was Sid Caesar playing tenor?

GB: I remember the song I identified with was "After You've Gone." A nice up-tempo version of that, which is one of Benny's regular repertoire tunes and that got me searching for more jazz records. I found a record store in Evansville. It was like an hour drive from where I was living.

Every Saturday, my father would drive me down to Evansville and I'd look through to see what new records might've arrived. Art Blakey's band was a favorite of mine at the time. Dave Brubeck. Horace Silver, Charlie Mingus. *Blues and Truth* and so on. Those were the records that were current in the '50s while I was in high school.

CC: Did you find any Miles?

GB: All the *Relaxin'* and *Walkin'* and *Cookin'*.

CC: *Steamin'*.

GB: Those were favorites of mine as well. Occasionally I would find some more obscure jazz records that weren't just the famous people. The only vibes player I ever heard on

record, in those days, was Milt Jackson because of the modern jazz quartet being popular. I knew the names of some of the other players but I never saw their records out in Indiana.

CC: So when did you first hear of jazz vibraphonist?

GB: Well, let me just think for a second. I think it was after I had moved to Boston to go to school. I'm pretty sure I had heard people on record up to that point but I hadn't seen anybody in person.

CC: That's what I meant, on record. Who was the first guy?

GB: The first vibes player I heard on record was Milt Jackson. The first thing I looked for was where are some vibraphone players and the only records that were readily available were Modern Jazz Quartet.

CC: Also he recorded some nice stuff with Miles.

GB: I only had one of those and I only found it later on. So there I was, a kid in a small town in Indiana mostly playing by myself at home, listening to records and trying to copy what I was hearing and I found a piano player in Evansville who gave lessons and talked him into taking me as a student cause I wanted to learn what to call these chords. I could hear the sounds and imitate them and it sounded pretty like jazz playing but I didn't know what to call anything. I didn't know why the G7 chord is followed by the C chord.

CC: How old were you, at that point?

GB: I wasn't driving yet. I was maybe 14-15. Dad was still taking me. And I started at that point, I started sitting in in Evansville at local clubs when local musicians would have a jazz gig. I'd get invited to sit in. My father would drive me there and sit in the back of the club all night waiting for me to finish and drive me back home again.

CC: Good, caring parents. I have one story, I want to interject because it's kind of cute. When I was—how old was I? It must have been not more than 8 or 9 years old. Something like that. I was just playing the piano a bit and I was studying with this—my dad showed me a bunch of stuff when I was real young and then when I was 8, I went to one teacher, Armando Catella. I didn't like him too much then I found Salvatore Sullo, a classical pianist who was a friend of the family and I studied for a while. But I liked to play what I was hearing on my dad's 78s, which was Charlie Parker, Miles, Art Blakey with the Billy Eckstine band. And then, later on Horace Silver's music. But this was before Horace Silver. I was a little kid.

There was a bar room a couple of blocks away where my uncles used to go. So my dad and my mother, Anna, they knew the people in the bar. It was just a bar. I can't remember the name but it was on Everett's Square. But they had a piano there. My mother thought it was a good idea for me to go and play a little bit. So she would accompany me in the early evening, like after dinner. And I'd sit down and play and she'd sit right next to me like a security guard, make sure I was cool. Play a couple tunes. Being that young, I'd get some attention and so forth. She'd walk me home. So we had caring parents that—

GB: I know, I've met your parents. They loved everything you did. Well, my plan was to finish high school and go to Berklee, to go to Boston to find the jazz world. I took an interesting side trip, through Nashville, through the country center of the country. Because one of the leading guitar players in Nashville named Hank Garland had become a pretty strong jazz player. He discovered it and even though he was making his living recording in the studios playing country music, on the side he was playing jazz.

CC: I've heard that name. He's a guitarist.

GB: Yes, and he convinced his record label, which was Columbia at the time, to let him make a jazz record for a change. He had this idea that he wanted vibes and guitar to be the sound. But there were no vibe players in Nashville. He heard about me from another musician who was from Indiana and had come across me in Evansville. "Well there's this kid in Indiana you might want to check out."

So a few weeks later, I rode down to Nashville with this other guy who was going down for a studio session and played a couple of tunes with Hank. Very impromptu at the beginning of some record date. He said, "Well, what are you planning to do?" I said, "I'm going to finish high school in a few weeks then, next fall, I'm going to Boston to school." So he suggested that I moved to Nashville for the summer and that we would play weekends at a club and we would make this record, which is what I did.

At the end of the summer, not only had I made this record, which got a lot of notice when it came out, but Chet Atkins, who ran the RCA division in Nashville at the time, had become quite a fan. He came to this club we played almost every weekend to hear us play. So at the end of this summer, they offered me my own record contract. I went off to Berklee at 17 years old with a recording contract already. Already set to take the music business by storm.

CC: That was your early start. That's how you got firing up. Because I'm older than you. But you were on the scene a little bit before.

GB: Part of it is being a vibes player. There's very little competition. So you get noticed earlier. If I were for instance a piano player, I would've been competing with you and Herbie and Keith Jarrett and a dozen other strong players. It takes a while to work your way up in visibility and get noticed by other people. But as a vibes player, even when I moved to New York, in '62 there was no one else in town that played the vibes much. There was Milt Jackson who was out on the road with the MJQ but it wasn't like there was a lot of vibes players on the scene at the time.

CC: That's very, very modest. If your playing sounded like elevator bells you probably wouldn't have gotten the gig.

GB: I've been accused of that a couple of times, on a couple occasions. So I took a funny route to get there.

CC: How fortunate.

GB: My first band was George Shearing who was one of the few groups that used vibraphone as a regular instrument.

CC: He had already been using vibraphone for his arrangements.

GB: There were two bands that used vibraphone as a regular part of the band. Herbie Mann at that time. Dave Pike was his player.

CC: I spent a year with Herbie.

GB: Oh you did?

CC: I played in Herbie's band.

GB: Herbie hired me but then didn't follow through. He called me up, had heard about me, said, "Come down and check out the band, we're playing at Basin Street East and see what you think." So I did. Dave Pike was in the band. I guess he and Herbie were having some kind of falling out at the time, so Herbie was thinking to change. But Dave got all upset and threw kind of a scene when I showed up, even though I hoped not to be noticed by him. But he recognized me although we'd never met.

CC: A little friendly competition early on.

GB: He said, "Did Herbie ask you to come down?" I said, "Yes, he did." He said, "Oh man." So I figured, well, that'll be the end of that. Herbie came over and said, "We're good to go. I'll call you in a week or two about the next tour, which starts in a few weeks."

Look forward to playing with you.” I waited and waited and the phone never rang. Finally I decided I gotta find out if this is happening or not, and called his manager Monte Kay, who said, “I haven’t heard anything about this at all. I’ll mention it to Herbie.” Who then finally called me to say, “Dave and I kind of worked out our thing. So thanks anyway.”

CC: That must have been around the time I played with Herbie. Herbie actually gave me my first recording. Herbie Mann. I guess around that time he was given some funding by Atlantic Records to form Vortex Records.

GB: Yes, I remember that.

CC: He asked me to make a Latin record and I refused because I had some other music I had written. He asked me a couple more times and kept wanting me to put timbales or conga in or something. I said, “No, I got this music with Herbie all ready to go.” Finally he relented and let me go in the studio and do whatever I wanted to do. And that was *Tones for Joan’s Bones*.

GB: No kidding. I remember that one.

CC: Yeah, that was my first recording.

GB: I didn’t realize that was your first.

CC: Yeah. First under my name. And it was with Steve. Steve Swallow. Joe Chambers, Woody Shaw and Joe Farrell. Yeah. So, wow, we got New York. I just got an email from Marcus Gilmore, my young drummer. Roy’s grandson. He’s in town with Vijay Iyer.

GB: He’s in Japan?

CC: No, he’s in Japan. They’re playing at the Coconut?

GB: Another one of the clubs.

CC: Yeah. Another one of the clubs. When I wrote him back, reason why I thought of Marcus was because, when I wrote him back I said, “Welcome to my favorite city in the world, after New York.” And he laughed because he’s a New Yorker, too. All of early exciting stories all seem to revolve around New York City. That’s where they all were.

In fact when I was doing my solo concerts these past months, the audience was enjoying hearing me talk about my first decade in New York and how I was anxious to get out of high school and move right out of Boston down to New York City. Cause all those guys

that you were talking about: Duke and Monk and Miles. They were all there in the '60s. It was a great era.

GB: One of the things that I kind of figured out when I was working on my book was that the people who invented jazz in the '20s, '30s, '40s into the '50s, we were on the scene soon enough to get to know a handful of them at least and meet them, hear them in person.

CC: And work with some of them.

GB: And work with some of them and we've carried on the tradition. Now there's no one younger than us who can reach back and actually had real-time contact with that first generation. We're the generation that actually spans so far the whole history of jazz. We knew the guys first-hand who had invented it. It's been our job to continue on with it.

CC: Monk and Bud are like legends. Miles and Duke are larger than life.

GB: And you worked with Miles for several years. And Stan, another legendary name, and when you think about all the people that we've crossed paths with. Did you see Bud in person at all?

CC: I saw Bud once. My hero. I saw him once. During the '60s I moved to New York, '59, then I was in New York all of the '60s. Bud was mostly in Europe at that point. He was doing pretty well in Europe, but then when he hit New York City in '65, I heard that he had a trio gig at the—he played his trio at Birdland. I went down and for a couple of nights, I heard him play. He had J.C. Moses on drums and John Ore on the bass.

You know, he was in a strange state of mind but when he put his hands on the piano there was Bud with all of his great rhythm and all his great songs. I was reviewing some of his songs. That one I played for you the other night. "Celia," the one he wrote for his daughter. You mentioned another one, "Whale." Bud's compositions and his melodic improvisations are some of the most lyrical in Bebop. They're Beboppy but they're so singable. He was one of my favorites. I got to see him that one night. It was truly amazing.

GB: There's only a few people that I missed that I would've loved to have seen once. Billie Holiday, Charlie Parker.

CC: Yeah I didn't see Bird either.

GB: They were gone before we got to the city. Louis Armstrong, I never saw him either. I would've liked to for the one time—touchstone. He was one of the founding guys. But if you make a list of most of the legendary guys, we've crossed paths with them.

CC: I was fortunate. I feel happy about that. We're going to take what we've learned and throw it into a kind of a new formation with this string quartet music that we've gotten.

GB: I love the fact that jazz and classical music have somewhat found each other these days. 50 years ago when we were starting out the line between the two things was pretty clear-cut.

CC: Not anymore.

GB: Not anymore. You've been one of the people that have contributed to breaking it down and making it work. We started with the string quartet thing literally 25 years ago more or less.

CC: In the '80s right?

GB: In the '80s. Mid '80s. It's long been one of my favorite projects that we did. The record called *Lyric Suite for Sextet*. And here we are with frankly the most, for me the best string quartet for playing jazz music that I could imagine. The Harlem String Quartet phrases beautifully and they really seem to get into the music very effectively. We had strong players back then too, but still this group has been marvelous. And here we are with another real run of concerts here with them. I'm really looking forward to it.

CC: The show that we're putting on, we start with a duet and we do everything from something early like "Can't We Be Friends" and some of Jobim's music and "Hot House" which goes back to the '40s all the way through the *Lyric Suite* music.

GB: And you've got a nice tribute to Monk in your new arrangement "Round Midnight" that's part of the repertoire now.

CC: I better practice for our rehearsal.

GB: Me, too.

CC: We'll meet in an hour or so and get it all going.

GB: Get it all organized.

CC: Well, thanks man. That was a lot of fun. I think the listeners are going to enjoy us talking about New York.

GB: I hope so. We'll do it again sometime.

CC: Yeah. Sure. Okay Gary. See you in a bit.