

Skain's Domain

Episode 2 – March 30, 2020

0:00:00 Moderator: Wynton, are you ready?

0:00:01 Wynton Marsalis: I'm ready.

0:00:02 Moderator: Okay. With that, I'll turn it over to you.

0:00:05 WM: Alright, I wanna welcome y'all to our second Skain's Domain where we discuss issues, significant and trivial, with the same type of feeling. We're gonna talk tonight of something called "Jazz Stories". I grew up... My father's a jazz musician and I would always notice, the mysterious thing about them was how they would listen to recordings and know who was playing by their sound. And they would start talking about, "Oh man, that must be Frog." "No man, that's not Frog, that's Jug." And everybody always had a hip nickname and they would start questioning who was who, and then when the disk jockey would come on and say, "That was Gene Ammons." "I knew that was Jug." But I also noticed that they used stories to teach you lessons. There were always stories about fantastic musicians, things that they did, occurrences. They taught you history, they taught you how to feel about life.

0:00:51 WM: And later when I was older, we would have fantastic hangs at the North Sea Jazz Festival, the Montreal Jazz Festival, Vienne Jazz Festival. All the musicians of all the generations would be together and we could sit up and listen to musicians tell stories. I'll never forget one night when I was 18, I was with Art Blakey on a tour of Europe, and all of the greatest drummers in the world were there playing some type of festival. There was Max Roach, there was Elvin Jones, there was Buddy Rich, there was Art Blakey, Dannie Richmond. Great after great. I sat up all night listening to them tell fantastic stories.

0:01:25 WM: So I'm gonna start us off tonight with a couple of stories. I'm gonna start with a story about the great Sweets Edison. I met him when I was 14 years old, and I used to go to the gigs. It was only gigs for, what I thought at that time, for old folks, but Sweets was one of the most colorful characters. And when I met him, he had been a member of the legendary Count Basie Orchestra that swung the country into better health during the Great Depression and right on into the swing era. Matter of fact in the 1950s, on those Columbia sides, Frank Sinatra wouldn't even record without Sweets. He was funny, he was full of down home wit, and Sweets was a great mentor. His nickname for me was "Baby Boy", and he would say it in a very country, "Well, Baby Boy, it don't sound like you playing too much to me tonight." And he had a way of talking around your deficiencies. For

example, he was known for playing just a few notes and getting the most meaning out of them, but I will play a million notes. So he would tell me after I played a solo, he said, "Well damn, boy. You just played more notes that I played in my entire damn career." And the implication was, "And didn't play nothing." He thought I sounded too much like Freddie Hubbard and Miles. So he would say, "Of course, back then you couldn't imitate people because they might just walk in and catch you stealing their stuff."

0:02:40 WM: One time, he actually sent me a brand new trumpet, a Selmer. It wasn't a new trumpet, but it was trumpet that he had had, a trumpet that he had not played that much, a Selmer K Modified. And there was a note on the trumpet and it said, "Maybe this will put some weight on your sound 'cause those long tones don't seem to be working." I once asked, Sweets, "Man, how do you start off your solos with such urgency and just go deeper from there?" He said, "After you make up your mind Baby Boy, there ain't but one way to play. Ain't but one way." So Sweets was a fount of so much information, and we would always go to the same restaurant in Los Angeles called Maurice's Snack 'n' Chat, and he would eat grits and brains, and I was like, "Man, I don't wanna have nothing to do with any type of organ. Even though you know I'm from the south, I can't handle no brains."

0:03:30 WM: And he always had a white Seville or Biarritz Cadillac. He would come pick me up in that Cadillac, and one time, I'm gonna tell you a real extremely soulful story. We were rehearsing with the septet, fantastic septet I had, were great musicians, we were rehearsing in the hotel in Los Angeles. Sweets called me in the morning. I said, "Man, we're having a rehearsal." He said "How many of y'all they got in there?" I said, "There's like seven, eight of us with our sound, man." Sweets showed up 45 minutes later with eight breakfasts for all of us. We sat down and ate with him. Tell you another great story about a trumpet player I knew. His name was Cyril. He's a New Orleans trumpeter. We used to play in a big band that would rehearse at the Musician's Union Building on a Sunday, and I always hated going to these rehearsals because it meant I had to miss football.

0:04:17 WM: But I was in high school and he called me once, Cyril called me to play a parade. He said, "You gotta come meet me on French Street at 1 o'clock. We gonna do this parade." So I went to do the parade, and when you're playing the parade in New Orleans, look, you get tired because you're playing constantly and you're outside, the sound never comes back to you. So when we got out in the parade, I didn't know all the songs, so I would ask Cyril, "What key is this in, Cyril?" And he would just press his fingers down, always, trumpet players will know, with an alternate fingering. So if it was the key of G, you would press one and three. If it was something else so I figure out, scramble to see what was going on, but as the parade went on, Cyril stopped playing, and he was just being fabulous through the parade, blowing kisses at the people, talking and all. People loved him.

0:05:05 WM: And in these parades, we would stop at different bars and different places. The people had food for us, like a shrimp po' boy sandwich or something. Cyril had the best food, and he had the people treating him so good, and he would say all the time, "They don't do this in New York! They don't do this in Detroit! They don't do this in Los Angeles!" So the whole parade instead

of playing, he was talking about, "They don't do this in..." And this was in the period in the '70s when there was always some type of shooting in a parade. And in this parade, sure enough, people start shooting. Boy we start scrambling down the street, and Cyril was kinda heavy. So he was trying to keep his belt and his pants and everything on, and we were running down the street looking at each other. We started laughing, he looked at me and said, "They don't do this in New York! They don't do this in Los Angeles!"

0:05:49 WM: So, you have colorful things. I'm gonna tell y'all one more story, and I got some special guest storytellers, and this one is about the great Sarah Vaughan. When I was 21, I had the opportunity to play with her at Boston Symphony Hall. We exchanged pleasantries and salutations in one of the backstage rooms, and I thought I would impress her by playing an obscure Duke Ellington song called "Tonight I Shall Sleep With a Smile Upon my Face". And there was a beat-up old piano, and the piece is very sophisticated and has an involved melody and very advanced harmonies. I done knew that there was probably not a 21 year old on the planet who knew this song, and I assumed that that ignorance applied to all. So I asked her, "Miss Vaughan, do you know this song?" I played it through with very rudimentary piano skills and a few incorrect harmonies on the coda. At that time, of course, I didn't know that she had grown up playing organ in her mother's church, played second piano and organ in Earl Hines' orchestra, had played second piano in Billy Eckstine's orchestra, same one that featured Dizzy Gillespie, Dexter Gordon, Charlie Parker, Gene Ammons, Art Blakey.

0:06:58 WM: And, she could accompany herself singing, very well. She said, "Wow, that's a great song. Duke. But you played some wrong changes on the coda, baby." Then she sat down and played the complete coda flawlessly and with so much technique I thought, "Damn. She plays the piano like that but has chosen to sing?" And she looked to me and said, "Look, if you wanna learn something, you have to learn it all. You learn tunes, figure out how the melody is constructed, then learn the logic and the supporting harmonies. That way you'll never forget the song. You understand the what and the why." She finished making her point by playing the entire song with all kinds of alternate harmonies and elegant improvisational responses to the melody, and she concluded and looked at me and said, "You see, baby?" I said, "Yes ma'am, I see." And she nodded and smiled. So that's my three stories I wanted to start off y'all with, and we got some special guests on the line. We have great Mr. Christian McBride.

0:08:04 WM: And I know he's in the rhythm section. I first met Mr. McBride when he was 14. The song he asked me to play, he was playing on the piano, was called Skain's Domain. I didn't know anybody knew that song, he could play it on the piano. And I've loved him for such a long time. We had a high school orchestra with him in it, he was great then. So I'm so happy to have him join us and he's just flowered in this time, and I love him and have such a feeling of pride when I see him. So, Mr. Christian McBride.

0:08:35 Christian McBride: Well, big brother, it is an honor to be a part of your party this evening. I have loved you from the day I first heard you and it's hard to believe it's been... I know, right? [laughter] There's a three in the front of that number, that's tripping. Whooo. But again, thanks for having me, and it's great to be with all of you this evening. I wanted to tell the story that... Wynton,

you were actually there when this happened, you weren't there in the actual place this happened, but you were in the the building. In the fall of 1991, we were quite honored to record an album with the late great Joe Henderson. It was called, "Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn" and Wynton played trumpet, Steven Scott played piano and Greg Hutchinson played drums. And a great story from that session. I remember we recorded on Tuesday, Wednesday and Friday, and on our Thursday off Joe Henderson booked a gig in Philly, we played at the Painted Bride in Philadelphia. And he used Greg and myself and a pianist named Junko Onishi, and on our off day, we went to Philly and we played this gig at the Painted Bride and after the gig was over, Joe said, "McBride, I'll pay you for the gig tomorrow afternoon once we get to the studio."

0:10:11 CM: "Cool, no problem." And so Greg and I hung out after the gig, we almost got into a major, major car accident on the way back to New York. Because Greg said, "Hey man, you got to take me to where they have the ultimate cheesesteak." And so we went and ate cheesesteaks at like 1 o'clock in the morning, and you know when you eat something that heavy that late at night you get sleepy, you're not supposed to be making a two-hour drive after you do that. But we were young and dumb, thank God we made it. Anyway, we get to the studio the next day, and we get halfway through the session and I said, "Hey Joe, is it cool if I get that bread from you, from the gig last night?" In order to imitate Joe Henderson, you must do this cause Joe Henderson always wore glasses and he was constantly pushing his glasses up. I said, "Joe, can I get that bread from you, from last night?" He's like, "Yeah, let's go in the parking lot." So we go out in the parking lot and I said, "Joe, I'm sorry, I forgot to ask you, but how much did the gig pay?"

0:11:18 CM: Joe said, "Well, how much you want?" I said, "Well, how much you offering?" He said, "Well, I can give you \$200, I can give you \$250, I can give you \$300." I said, "Well, I think I'd be remiss not to take the bigger numbers. So, give me \$300." He said "\$300? Alright, cool." Reaches in his pocket, pulls out a huge wad of \$20 bills, and he starts counting literally like this. 20. "How old are you again, McBride?" I said, "I'm 19."

0:11:53 CM: He says, "19. Huh. You know how old I was before I made \$300 on my first gig? Man, I don't think I was, I probably wasn't, man, I don't think I was until my mid-30s. I got... " 40. "And I think back when I was playing with Horace Silver we were probably making \$300 a week, and we had to take our own hotels," 60. "And one of these days, McBride, you're gonna be a band leader and you're gonna understand that you're gonna have all kinds of responsibility not just for music, but you're gonna have to deal with the finances, you're gonna have to deal with all this kinda... " 80. "And in fact, now that I think of it, in 1975, I think I got paid... Yeah, that's when I made my first \$300." And 100. So, the long and the short of the story was, it took Joe Henderson one hour and five minutes to count up to \$300. [laughter] Now, I'm convinced that he wanted me to give up and be like. "Look, Joe, just give me the two, just give me the \$250, I'm cool." But I went toe-to-toe with Joe Henderson, and I won, I got my \$300 and I wound up making two more albums with him and a lot more gigs, so it worked out perfectly. But every time I think of Joe Henderson I remember him counting out that \$300 in 65 minutes, that was deep. [laughter]

0:13:29 CM: May Joe Henderson rest in peace.

0:13:32 WM: Yes, may he. I was on a tour with Joe, with Herbie, Ron and Tony. At the end of the gig, they would play "On Broadway". George Benson was on the gig. So then I was maybe 19, but when they would play "On Broadway", I would leave. So every night I would walk off the bandstand and Joe, he did not tell me one word for the whole tour. The last gig we played was in Houston. And he looked over at me and he didn't like the way George was introducing him. 'Cause George would introduce him as "the very quiet, but powerful Mr. Joe Henderson." So he's looking at me, this is a whole tour now we play, he looked at me said, "Why does he keep introducing me like that?" [laughter] I was so shocked he told me something 'cause we normally would just stand in the back. I was like, "Ahh... " [chuckle]

0:14:18 WM: And then when we got the near "On Broadway", he looked at me and said, "Are you gonna space tonight?" I said, "Yeah, I'm spacing." He said, "I'll space if you space." [laughter] So we both spaced. [laughter]

0:14:29 CM: Joe Hen. One of a kind.

0:14:32 WM: Yeah, Joe Hen was something, man. Just his playing, his sophistication, Lord.

0:14:36 CM: I'm telling you, I'm telling you.

0:14:37 WM: You know them arpeggios Joe always be practicing?

0:14:43 CM: Absolutely.

0:14:44 WM: He was practicing arpeggios up on harmonics and stuff all the time, then he'd play a solo, and man it would be all harmonic, sophistication and...

0:14:52 CM: Man listen, that performance of him playing "Lush Life" with solo tenor, that's one of the greatest examples of pure virtuosity and imagination and skill and emotion. Everything he played on that performance, particularly, because that's a very deep song as we all know. And the fact that he chose to play that song unaccompanied saxophone and just absolutely killed it, that's a testament to his greatness.

0:15:29 WM: Oh yeah, he's great. He's great, very concentrated when he plays too. [chuckle] I'd gone on the road before I played with Joe played on a recording with me in 1987 or '88, one of those years before I'd gone on the road with Charlie Rouse. And Charlie Rouse was afraid of flying. At that time I was not afraid of flying, so I'd be, "Man, you gonna drive all over the place in the car?" And we'd be teasing him. But he told us one night we were playing, we'd play all the kinda wild stuff with Knozz-Moe-King and all of that. He says, "Man, I hear all that stuff y'all playing, but you ever think that maybe the new thing is in your sound?" And I thought, "Wow." And to me that's how Joe... His sound was evocative of so much, it had such a timeless quality to it.

0:16:10 CM: That's right, that's right. And it's really hard to say that... A lot of people too easily assert things like, "Joe Henderson was a Coltrane clone, or a lot of his ideas came from Coltrane."

Skain's Domain - Episode 2

While that may be true to a large extent, I can think of no other person that has a sound like Joe Henderson. That really is such a singular sound. Nobody else has a sound like that.

0:16:39 WM: Right. Yeah, and that was one of Sweets' things that he would always say too. "If I can't tell you by your sound, you're not playing nothing baby. Your sound is your business card."

0:16:50 CM: [chuckle] There you go.

0:16:51 WM: "And I'm tryna figure out who you are, I don't really know who you are, you gotta let me hear you."

0:16:55 CM: [chuckle] Sweets!

0:16:56 WM: Thank you, man. Thank you for coming in, Chris. If you don't have nowhere to go, hang with us man in case we get to something, but if you got to go you know I love you.

0:17:05 CM: I ain't going nowhere. I'll be right here.

0:17:07 WM: Oh man, great.

0:17:08 CM: I'm chillin.

0:17:09 WM: Veronica is a great... Veronica Swift is here, she's the daughter of a jazz musician, so she knows... I'm gonna just turn it over to her and let her break stuff down, she has some great stories to tell.

0:17:18 Veronica Swift: Hi, well I don't have... For me, my stories most of them happened... I'm actually making new stories now for myself in my early 20s as a lot of the crazy stories happen in those years. Like you and Christian, y'all been playing with such amazing musicians and legendary musicians in your 20s. And for me, a lot of my stories that I have to share are actually from my childhood, because that's more so when I was on the road with Mom and Dad. For those of you who don't know, Mom and Dad, my mom is Stephanie Nakasian, my father Hod O'Brien, great late, in that order. They took me on the road with them when I was a kid and that's how I grew up with this music. I have a lot of cool stories. One of them actually was with you, Wynton. I was hoping you would remember and then we went on the holiday tour, and I said... Do you remember when you said to me, "Spitting rice?"

[chuckle]

0:18:14 VS: I was blown away in that moment 'cause I didn't think you'd remember and then I knew, "Wow, this guy remembers everything. I better be careful." When I was nine, I went to Dizzy's for the first time, and that was when I was playing trumpet, I thought I was gonna be a trumpet player before any of the singing. I wanted so badly to meet Wynton and I forget how I got to meet you. I got to meet him and he sat me down for a couple minutes and we were talking about

embouchure and, "You gotta pretend like you're spitting rice." And we were doing a couple of pfft, pfft, pfft in the back of Dizzy's. And when I go there now it's so nice to remember that moment, so thank you for that, Wynton.

0:19:04 WM: Thank you.

0:19:07 VS: And I have a... Actually when I was growing up, Mom, when I knew I was gonna be doing this, I guess... Jazz singing, it started making its way into my life professionally when I was around the ages... Technically I was nine, but really 13 was when I started singing really deep into the repertoire. And Mom, since she was with Jon Hendricks on the road for a good number of years in the '80s she had a lot of access to know bootleg recordings and stuff like old cassettes and stuff. She'd show me and I'd learn a lot of the old vocally stuff that hasn't been recorded, like "Room 608", a lot of other stuff. And I just loved Annie Ross as a kid and now... She's always been a hero of mine. 'Cause back then, a lot of the bebop singers were mostly male, it was a male dominated style of singing. And Annie Ross, LaVon, there were very few females that did that. And so I loved Annie, how she sounded like a trumpet. And when I was 12, I went to go see Annie at, I think, it was the Metropolitan Room. And Jim Coleman, my good buddy, he took me and Mom and Dad to the Metropolitan Room.

0:20:24 VS: And she was playing with Warren Vaché, who had been on the road with my parents for a bit. So he was always around. And I don't know how it happened, but Annie invited me to come up and sing on her set. This little 12-year-old kid. That was one of the very scariest moments of my life but I guess when you're that young it's scary, but you don't really know the weight of the situation. So you're kinda just, "I'll do it. What the hell?" And I just go up and I went to the band. I said, "Thank you Annie, I'm a big fan." And then I said to the band, I said, "Do you guys know Twisted?" Of course, Twisted was one of Annie's most famous lyrics, vocalese lyrics, of course they knew Twisted. What was I thinking? So I sang Twisted at Annie Ross's show, and I was 12, and we basically hung out the rest of the night. She sat down and we were having... Of course, I had my Shirley Temple and she had her whatever.

0:21:21 VS: That was probably one of my most amazing moments for me. It was my first time legitimized with some of my heroes, and we've been friends ever since. She called me one time, she found my number I guess through Jim. And she called me and she left a message. So I get home from a trip, and I hear on the voicemail, "Hi, this is Annie, Annie Ross." And she gave me her number, and then she said, "I wanna talk about what gowns you have." I was 13. I got no gowns. What are you... That was pretty funny. And Paquito's here. Paquito, I have a funny story with you. See, most of my stories are with you guys 'cause I'm 25, I have yet to have some really big, big moments, but there has been some really amazing moments for me. And one of them I remember, I was maybe 16, Paquito, I don't know if you remember this, but that was my first time meeting you. We were at The Telluride Jazz Festival, which I had been there every year since I was 10 years old.

0:22:34 VS: And Paquito was doing... He was the guest of honor that year, and I was part of the Telluride Jazz All-Stars, which was a youth group, a lot of young jazz musicians come up through that group. And I don't know how Paquito, I guess he heard me at the jam session or something. I

was 16, and he heard me scatting and he was like, "Well, I would love to have you come up and scat on some tunes," and he had us up on the big stage, and "Paquito D'Rivera, oh my God." So I went up there with my friend Ben Cruz, a guitar player and Paquito called "All the Things You Are." I was like, "Okay yeah, I know those changes," and I was scatting, singing the melody and scatted on them, and then the halfway through my second chorus, I think Paquito changed the key and I was like, "Oh, he's messing with me, I gotta keep my ears open." Of course, we're not gonna go through "All the Things You Are" in the same key and the same time in [0:23:29] _____, not 4/4, for so he went to different time signatures and he'd changed the key signature a bunch, and I had to keep following him.

0:23:41 VS: That was a great learning experience for me, and I guess I hung with it enough that I was in good with Paquito. And I just remember him sticking his tongue out on me on stage, [laughter], and that was really fun. As I tell a lot of my vocalist students and friends, "Always keep your ears open. Just 'cause you're singing the song, doesn't mean someone isn't gonna throw something at you." That was a lot of good experiences that taught me a lot, and I was reminded that, yeah, I'm on the right track, I'm in with the right people.

0:24:26 WM: Well, one thing we got to get used to when we're doing the stories on the telephone. We don't have nobody co-signing us. They're not, "Mm-hmm." You need those little co-signs 'cause you feel like you're talking into empty space, but we hear you, we hear what you're saying.

0:24:44 VS: Thank you.

0:24:46 WM: I noticed one thing, that you were talking about Paquito. I don't know where we are on time, so I wanna bring him in there, and we all love him so much. He's a man with so much integrity and musical ability. I'm gonna let him, if he's on here... Whatever he says is valuable and worth hearing. He has some of the greatest stories you've ever heard. What you talking about, Pac-man?

0:25:11 Moderator: Wynton, we're trying to get Paquito in right now.

0:25:15 WM: Okay.

0:25:16 Moderator: Yeah, let's give him another 10 seconds or so. And if not, let's go to Jeff, and then we can come back to him.

0:25:22 WM: Okay. Well, we're having trouble getting Paquito on, but I could ask Veronica one more thing. I noticed we went on tour with her, she sing songs absolutely differently every night, and she has an unbelievable type of a variety. And we had also gone on tour with Jon Hendricks years ago. He was in his 70s and he went out and played football with us on a Saturday afternoon, two hours he was playing ball. So I just wanna ask you, Veronica, about your approach to how differently you do things, and what is your attitude about being in the moment and going for your thing?

0:25:58 VS: Well, you can understand it's something that... It's not like a technique or an exercise you can practice really, it's just going out and doing it as much as you can all the time and throwing yourself into those situations where you have to do something differently. I will constantly sing or pick a tune and say, "Let's do it in a different key tonight, let's do it and try to throw it..." If I'm at a jam session, I'll completely, "Let's do this a fourth away from the key I usually do it." Back when I was going to jam sessions more often, I would do that to try to see if I would sing it differently. But also just emotionally your life changes. And I had a lot of things happen to me even in just the past eight years that have really changed my perspective on tunes, and I sing tunes differently because I would think about the different times I would sing them differently, whether I was... "You Don't Know What Love Is", I used to sing it all spiteful and angry and fast. And now I'm like, "Well, I've gone through something else. I might sing it slower." Messing with back phrasing and front phrasing that it will evoke a different emotion.

0:27:19 VS: Or just looking at... I had gone through a whole... I had a house actually. I had lost a house to a fire right when I went to college. And that piano in the house was my mom's piano my grandfather gave to her. And it was a Steinway B Grand from 1962, very special piano. And they saved it, and once that happened the concept of home changed. And there are different things: Love, home, family, all this stuff changes throughout your life. And you have to constantly go back to all these tunes you've been playing for, for some people, decades, I guess. And what do I know? I'm only 25. But even now, I'm seeing changes so, there have been moments like that, yeah.

0:28:09 WM: Yeah, and that's especially good for right now, because we're all in situations we're not normally in, even with our families. So, we discover a lot of new things. Well, somebody who knows about that is Paquito. Because he left where he grew up and he came here. Do we have Paquito now? Are we able to hear him?

0:28:31 Moderator: I don't think he's in yet, but let me try one more time.

0:28:35 WM: Okay. Well, you know what? We have another person who's gonna come in here, and this is one of the funniest people in the world. I have the honor of sitting next to him when we judged the Essentially Ellington Jazz Band Festival and Competition. He is a font of knowledge. He's one of the most generous, open-hearted, kindest people, and an absolute pleasure to be around and a fantastic musician. Let's hear it for Jeff Hamilton.

0:29:00 Jeff Hamilton: Hey, so you think I'm funny, do you? [chuckle]

0:29:03 WM: Yeah man, you're funny. You're the hammer man. C'mon.

0:29:07 JH: It's nice to be here. I'm sorry it took me a minute to figure this out. I am a Zoom rookie if you will. So I apologize for that. But I'm glad to be on and hi, Veronica, nice to hear your stories as well. Hi, I missed the Christian story that says... I'm probably better off 'cause I know he was talking about me like a dog, so I'll catch up about him later on. But I did hear your story about Sweets Edison and his white Cadillac. And the color white struck me funny in a different way, because as we know, Sweets had all of these great sayings that have lived on in all of our hearts, of

all of us who knew him. And on his 80th birthday in Paris, we were with the Philip Morris Superband with Gene Harris, and James Moody, and Ray Brown, the great band, all-star band. And on his birthday, he had a white suit on and was dapper as always, as you remember. And Jeff Clayton who had been taking a lot of teasing... We should keep Jeff in our thoughts also for better health. And he was being funny, acting nervous trying to get the first piece of birthday cake that Sweets was cutting for himself.

0:30:23 VS: So we're all lined up after the rehearsal and sound check. And it was a surprise. And Sweets takes the knife, and he cuts this beautiful piece of cake and he gets it over and Jeff Clayton is shaking with the plate in front of Sweets like this, like, "Hurry, I'm hungry." And Sweets puts the cake on the plate, and the plate falls face down on Sweets white pants of his suit. [laughter] And you could hear a pin drop in that room. The air went out of the room, and all of a sudden you hear Sweets say, "I was gonna give you the first piece of cake, but you was standing there shaking like a dog trying to pass a peach pit." [laughter] So the white Cadillac, the white suit, they all go together.

0:31:10 WM: Right. Man, c'mon you got so many of them...

0:31:16 JH: Alright, some more Sweets... Well, Sweets was...

0:31:19 WM: It don't have to be Sweets. You can give us whatever, you've got plenty of 'em.

0:31:24 JH: Alright. I think one of my fondest memories... As you know, food is very important to many musicians on the road and where you're going to eat is usually the first knowledgeable part of the itinerary. You have your restaurants where you're going, and, "Where are you guys playing tonight?" "Well, I'm not sure, but I know where we're eating after the gig." This was true also with Oscar Peterson's group, when I was in the band from '90 to '95 with Ray Brown and Herbie Ellis. And my first dinner was quite an ordeal. Here I am with these guys, this is unbelievable. And I wasn't a kid, but I was in my early 30s, and still I'm in the presence of greatness. So we get to the private dining room where Oscar had been told by Norman Granz gourmet restaurant. We show up, and we're in our tuxedos from the limo, from the concert hall to the private dining room. And Oscar is sitting across from me, and Ray is to Oscar's right, and then I'm next and the Herbie is next to me. The waiter says, "Dr. Peterson, what may I get you?" This in France. He says, "And what may I get you?"

0:32:34 VS: He says, "I'd like the 24 ounce bone-in steak with the... I'll start with the full Caesar Salad and I'll have the Potatoes Lyonnaise. I'll start with the French Onion Soup, let's do that. And the Potatoes Lyonnaise and a side of asparagus. And I see it takes 20 minutes for the Chocolate Souffle. So, I'll have the Chocolate Souffle. And I had just dropped about 25 pounds playing tennis and working out and trying to get healthy. And he goes to Ray and the waiter says, "And you, sir?" "Yeah, I'll have the French Onion Soup too and the Caesar Salad and I'll have the double-cut pork chops, and I'll have the asparagus and I'll have one of those souffles too. That sounds good." Waiter comes around to me and says, "And you, sir?" I said, "I would like the Chicken Caesar Salad, please." And Oscar leans over to Ray and he says, "I guess your boy doesn't wanna be in the band too much longer, does he?" [laughter] And I said, "And I'd like the 24 ounce bone-in steak, please."

Skain's Domain - Episode 2

So these are just some of the things that happened on the road that, as you know, get into the music as well. You get on the bandstand and you see these little grins and raises of people's eyebrows, and they're remembering these stories, as you know.

0:33:52 WM: Right.

0:33:54 CM: Hey, Hammer.

0:33:54 JH: Hey, how you doing? I'm sorry I missed you.

0:33:55 CM: What's up, man?

0:34:00 JH: Did you tell the story that I might was gonna tell too about us playing together?

0:34:02 CM: Well, I was gonna suggest that you tell them that story, our German saga.

[laughter]

0:34:08 JH: I'll let you finish it. We were both asked to be in Berlin for Alan Bergman. Alan and Marilyn Bergman, the great lyricists. And Alan was going to sing a whole LP of their songs that they had written lyrics to. And so they flew Christian McBride and I over from the United States to be in the rhythm section, it was an all-German orchestra, excellent orchestra. Young Ted Bruner was on that. Do you remember, Christian?

0:34:37 CM: Yeah.

0:34:38 JH: And we played, what was it, three days of ballads?

0:34:43 CM: That's right.

[laughter]

0:34:44 JH: "Windmills of Your Mind", and all these lovely songs, and we're going, "Man, this is beautiful, but can we get a coffee?" It was just one after the other. And so Christian had to get back to the United States on the fourth day, so he splits, and they bring in a very talented German bass player, he's still one of my favorite bass players. But the first tempo they counted off was "Let's Take It Nice and Easy." And I looked at him like, "Why didn't you do this when McBride was here?"

[laughter]

0:35:16 JH: And every time that we played together, we did one hit with Diana Krall, and it was mostly a ballad night, and we just kept looking at each other like...

0:35:25 CM: We're cursed!

0:35:26 JH: "Are we doing something wrong, man?"

[laughter]

0:35:29 JH: Now, fast forward to the recent jazz cruise, and I'll let you take over, Christian.

0:35:33 CM: Oh hey man, look, my suit now just got dry after all that sweating we did on that cruise, we were playing hard, man.

[laughter]

0:35:42 CM: We had so much fun, man. I don't think we played any ballads on the cruise, did we? We wanted to make sure we buried that curse.

0:35:48 JH: No. That's right, neither one of us would have let that happen.

0:35:54 CM: That's right.

0:35:57 VS: I remember there's this interview with Miles. I don't know if it's on YouTube or not, but it was in the '70s, so he wasn't doing a lot of ballads and swing stuff. But I remember, I forget where I saw this, but someone asked Miles, "Miles, why don't you play ballads anymore?" And Miles goes, "'Cause I like playing ballads too much."

0:36:20 CM: Right.

0:36:20 JH: Yeah.

0:36:22 VS: [chuckle] That was something crazy. Wow, I've never thought of it that way.

0:36:25 CM: We always loved playing ballads, but not for three straight days.

[laughter]

0:36:30 VS: I always have to have a little variety in my...

0:36:34 JH: Yeah, I'm telling you, Joey DeFrancesco wanted to do a trio set with Christian and with me on the cruise. And we said, "Yeah." I thought, "Well, that's weird 'cause Joey playing the Hammond B3, why does he wanna use a bass player? Even if it is Christian." I said, "Okay, well, let's do that." So the day before, it's like, "Oh no, I'm gonna play piano, I'm not gonna play organ." So we said, "Well, okay." And boy, did Joey stomp all over it, didn't he, Christian? It was just great.

0:37:01 CM: Oh, he killed it. Well, as Wynton knows, he was there, that's how most of us came to

know Joey in the early days, was as a pianist.

0:37:12 WM: That's right.

0:37:13 VS: He was an organist too, right, when he was a teenager?

0:37:16 CM: I knew he played the organ, but obviously, I don't think there's any public high school in the world that has a Hammond B3 in their music room.

[laughter]

0:37:25 CM: But Joey's always been that freaky talented guy. It was great to hear him playing piano again.

0:37:35 VS: If he would have called a ballad that night on the cruise, it would have been "Man Overboard".

[laughter]

0:37:39 CM: That's right. That's right.

0:37:44 Moderator: Alright guys, I've got Paquito here, so let's add him into the mix.

0:37:46 JH: Alright.

0:37:48 VS: Hi, Paquito.

0:37:50 WM: Pac-man.

0:37:52 Moderator: Let's see, I see him.

0:38:00 JH: Paquito had a great cruise event too. We hit some pretty heavy water one year and he was on the stage, and I don't know if he'll tell that story or not, but the audience was in stitches when that happened. If he's around.

0:38:11 VS: I don't wanna think about it.

0:38:13 WM: We got him?

0:38:14 Moderator: Well, I thought we did.

0:38:17 WM: Okay, what we gonna do is we gonna tell another story. I'll tell another story. Thank you, Hammer. Thank you, Christian. Thank you, Veronica. And then we're gonna open it up for you all if you have questions or you wanna hear a story. If you have a good story, you can briefly tell,

Skain's Domain - Episode 2

I'm gonna conclude talking about... How you doing? I can see you now, Paquito. Can you be heard?

0:38:43 Paquito D'Rivera: One, two, three. Can you hear me there? Can you hear me?

[laughter]

0:38:47 WM: Great. We got you.

0:38:48 PD: Maybe, the machine needs to start speaking in Spanish or something.

[laughter]

0:38:55 PD: Can you hear me there?

0:38:58 WM: Yes.

0:38:58 VS: Yes.

[music]

0:39:06 PD: Can you hear me there?

0:39:08 VS: Yes.

0:39:10 PD: Very good. You said something about Telluride, I love that place.

0:39:13 VS: It's fun, right? Beautiful.

0:39:16 PD: It's a little too high for my taste. It's a very high altitude, so I have to breath two or three times to play a phrase. It's a little uncomfortable, but it's a nice place to play.

0:39:32 WM: So what good story you got for us, Paquito?

0:39:36 PD: Huh?

0:39:36 WM: What good story? You got plenty of stories, man. Every time I see you, you're telling good ones. Give us a good story.

0:39:43 PD: You know that I give a story.

[laughter]

[speaking spanish]

0:39:58 PD: I hear you, like you are playing a piano in my story...

0:40:06 WM: Right.

0:40:07 PD: I can hear very badly.

0:40:11 WM: Well, just tell us the story. You don't have to hear us. We can hear you.

[speaking spanish]

0:40:19 PD: Oh, can you hear me there?

0:40:19 WM: Yes, we can hear you.

[chuckle]

0:40:23 PD: Okay, you want to hear a story? I was playing very many years ago with a friend of mine who played the bass. I was supposed to do a duet with him. His name is Bobby Carcassés, probably you met him in Cuba. He's a singer and dancer and do other type of things, he's a painter also. And then, almost ready to leave to the venue, a friend of ours came with a tenor saxophone, and he said, "I was given this saxophone." We said, "Oh, I didn't know you play the saxophone." And he said, "Well, I will try, can I go with you?" "Yeah, of course." "Where you going?" "We're going to this school really close to the Tropicana. It's a school that they are celebrating something there." So we went there, Bobby came with the bass and I have my alto and all that, and there was a guy who approached us. Bobby played a couple of things and this guy came to us and say, "Can you play 'And I Love Her'?" This song by the Beatles. "And I Love Her" Right? Everybody knows that song. And Bobby said, "Yeah, I know. I remember that the bass goes like... "

[vocalization]

0:42:08 PD: Then Anselmo was the friend with the saxophone, he was struggling putting together the saxophone because he never put it together the saxophone before in his life. So, finally he put the reed and everything. And then Bobby did...

[vocalization]

0:42:24 PD: And Anselmo started playing something like...

[vocalization]

0:42:37 PD: Ten minutes of that [0:42:40] _____. And then at the end of the song...

[pause]

0:42:51 WM: Uh-oh.

0:42:54 Moderator: Uh-oh, I think we lost him for a second.

[pause]

0:43:02 Moderator: Let's give him a minute to reset here.

0:43:05 CM: It was going good to that point.

[laughter]

0:43:10 CM: I wanna hear the end of it now.

0:43:10 PD: Mira, mira. Now it froze.

0:43:14 CM: Okay, you're on. Go ahead.

0:43:20 PD: Very good. Technology for me is something terrible.

[chuckle]

0:43:24 WM: No, it's good. So, Paquito, tell us, he was playing.

[vocalization]

0:43:26 WM: And then Bobby said... What happened?

0:43:33 PD: The guy didn't know how to play the saxophone, but he was trying to do some type of free jazz or something, I don't know. But...

[vocalization]

0:43:41 PD: He played all that for ten minutes. And then, probably the guy was waiting for the melody and then when we stopped playing, the guy came again and said, "Can you play now, 'And I Love Her'?"

[laughter]

0:44:04 PD: Those are the things that happened to us during this crazy business of ours.

0:44:11 WM: Thank you, Paquito. We're gonna get you back, we're gonna have our technology hooked up a little better. Thank you very much.

Skain's Domain - Episode 2

0:44:18 PD: It's terrible. Tell Christian that we have to compose a piece together for the Vienna Symphony. We have to talk about that, Chris.

0:44:28 CM: That's correct.

0:44:31 PD: It's going to be a lot of fun. That guy's a monster of a horn player.

0:44:36 CM: Yes, he is. Let's get together and work that out, man.

0:44:39 PD: Very good, let's get in touch to see what are you writing in order to do some type of contracts. I am writing a section called "Dali in the Tropics", so let's talk about it.

0:44:52 CM: Okay.

[laughter]

0:44:53 PD: Alright.

0:44:56 CM: Alright, sounds good my brother.

0:44:57 WM: Y'all gotta lot of time, that's one thing for sure.

0:45:00 CM: Exactly.

[laughter]

0:45:00 PD: Tell me about it.

0:45:02 WM: We got a lotta time out here.

[music]

[laughter]

0:45:10 WM: I'm gonna end with one quick story about my father. He was a high-school teacher, so the first day of class, he would get four kids to stand up and stand in the middle of the room and we would all stand back to back. And then he would say, "Describe what you're seeing." So each person, the person facing the window would say, "Well, I see windows." Another person say, "I see a clock and I see a..." "

[pause]

0:45:56 JH: "If we put everything that y'all see together, there's still a lot more in this room that none of y'all saw. So I want you to open your understanding up." And he used to always say that he

believes in everybody's right to choose and he celebrates the courage required to actually make the choice. He'd say, "Talking about something is different from choosing it. Once you choose it, you get everything that comes with it, and a lot of that everything only shows up after you've chosen." The other one was, "Are you talking, are you're talking about doing, or are you doing?" And he really hated critical talk. If your only authority was your mouth, if you're too hard on a ball player or something or even on a meal, he would say, "Son, the best form of criticism is demonstration. I've seen you play ball," or, "What have you ever cooked?"

[laughter]

0:46:46 WM: So I wanna shout him out and I always gotta recognize and remember the first time I heard about Paquito was from my father in the early '70s listening to Irakeretalking about how great the band was when nobody... We weren't aware of that kind of music at all. So I wanna thank y'all for checking out our stories and all our special guest musicians, fantastic. Hammer, thank you. Christian, Veronica, Paquito, thank you so much. And now we're gonna go over to Adam and we're gonna... If y'all have any questions or... I don't know much time we have, but...

0:47:21 Moderator: Yeah, we've got another 20, 25 minutes, something like that. So let's start taking some questions.

0:47:26 WM: Great.

0:47:27 VS: Hope I get to see everyone before the end of the year at least.

0:47:33 CM: Have mercy, let's pray.

0:47:37 Moderator: Alright, first question is from Hugo Dart. Hugo, you're ready to go.

0:47:45 Hugo Dart: Yes sir. Thank you very much it's an honor to be here, Wynton, with you and of your amazing guests and it's wonderful to see you again. The first time I saw you was in 2002, and I can prove it.

[laughter]

0:48:04 WM: Don't show that to the Hammer, man. I'm not gonna live that down.

0:48:09 HD: Well, there you go.

0:48:09 JH: Wait, where are my glasses? Where are my glasses?

[laughter]

0:48:15 HD: And you had just given a talk about Art Blakey. It was amazing. And then there was concert of the orchestra the next day, and it was fantastic and I'm so grateful that I got to see you,

and I got to see Branford here. I'm in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Last year I got to see Branford here. A few years ago I got to see Delfeayo here, and six years ago I got to see Jason and your father at the Snug Harbor. I'm a big fan of the whole family. And what I'd like to say is towards the end of the first session of these conversations you had about a week ago, one of the last questions was about your role as an educator. And I always admired you enormously as of course a musician. You've been my favorite musician for as long as I can remember, but your role as an educator and I know that a lot of people say that about you and highlight your role as a music educator. But I'm an English teacher here in Brazil, and I don't know how aware you are of what a big influence you are in education as a whole.

0:49:24 HD: In 2012, I heard you talking to the... It was your speech at the Band Director Academy, and you were talking about the 12 principles of jazz. And I was so amazed by that. I actually created the talk that I delivered at a conference of English teachers relating the 12 principles of jazz to the principles of language teaching. And I've been doing that and I've been following you ever since, and always quoting you. Something that I'll never forget and I often quote, is when you say, "We all want to embrace one another, and we just don't know how. And the answer is not more education, but more substantive and more culturally-based education." So something that was said about a week ago is how wonderful it would be if we could somehow collect these lectures, these talks that you have given. Because you actually have so much to say, not only in terms of musical education, but education as a whole. And I'm so indebted to you, as I'm sure many, many people are for your role as an educator. Again, not only related to music, and I'm deeply, deeply thankful to you for that. Now, I know should ask a question, so here it is. Considering the different times that we're living in and how so much of education is now moving online forcefully because of the situation, I'm now starting to teaching classes online full-time tomorrow, as many people are because of the pandemic.

0:50:57 HD: Do you think that that's gonna have a more profound impact in the role of music, as well? As all of you are also having to communicate and collaborate so much online, and from a distance at least at some point. Will that have a big effect, do you think, in the world of music as well?

0:51:20 WM: Okay, I'm gonna give a brief answer. And if Hammer, Christian, or Veronica, anybody who wants to talk, Paquito... I think it's gonna have a big impact for the betterment. I think that we realized something about the world, how close we are. We're musicians, so we have a chance to be in Rio, and to be all over the world and meet people. Even though I'm inept with technology, I embrace the technology, I think it's made the world a better place. We can come closer together. The question is not the technology, it's just a tool. It's, "How do we use it?" So, I'm glad to have the opportunity to talk to you online with everybody else. We're all listening and talking. I'm glad to see Paquito. I'm glad to see Christian.

0:52:00 WM: And even though we've known each other for many years, we don't have video calls. And this situation has forced us to embrace each other with another type of depth. I think this is a tremendous tool for education. And if we think about all the scientists that are working on solving the problem with this virus, think about how they're using technology to come together. And how

we're stretching across borders, so that when there's finally a solution to it, this technology is gonna make it much more possible. And I think we should not confuse the abuse of a tool with the tool itself. When people first started taking photographs, every photograph they saw was of somebody new. So people's conclusion was, "Photography is not good." It's just how it was being used. So I love this as a tool and it's great for education.

0:52:52 PD: I think so too. I think it's important to use what we have in order to educate people. And I remember once talking about the correct use of things, the correct use of advance. Once you say, "Afraid that it stayed with me today," when you say, "Microphones are created to embellish the music, not to cover it."

0:53:23 WM: Right.

0:53:29 PD: I wrote an article about the excess volume recently, two or three of them I write, because the microphone was a great invention the same way that technology is a great invention, but you have to use it wisely. Because if not, technology will absorb yourself and you spend too much time on it. You want to use it in a way that it can be helpful for you and for the education of others. It's what I think is important to have in mind. Like everything in life [0:54:05] _____, to use it with moderation and in the correct way.

0:54:10 JH: I agree. And I also think that we have to look at it as a way of exposure perhaps to the education of the music student, or the music listener. But the serious musician, or the serious music student to me still has to sit next to a master and see them in action, and know how they change from sticks to brushes subtly, to see how the drums are tuned. To see the ins and outs of learning right there on the job, to see how to do it, instead of... A lot of times you can't get that just from watching a screen. So I think it's good to a certain point, but if you're gonna be serious about it, I think you have to be sitting next to a mentor at some point.

0:54:55 WM: Six feet distance.

0:54:57 VS: That's right.

0:54:57 CM: Right, right.

[laughter]

0:55:03 VS: True.

0:55:03 Moderator: Alright. Thank you, Hugo, for your question.

0:55:06 HD: Thank you.

0:55:10 Moderator: Alright, let's see. Next up we've got Andrew Tillman. Andrew, go ahead.

0:55:18 Andrew Tillman: Thanks for having me, Wynton. It's great getting to hear your guys' stories and everything y'all have to say. But I have two questions, gonna try to kill two birds with one stone here. I've been trained as a jazz musician. I'm only in high school, I'm only 17. I've never played classical. Do you need to play classical to be a really good jazz musician? 'Cause that's the vibe I'm getting down here. I'm from Alabama. And I don't know if that's right or not, but I'd love to hear your take on that.

0:56:02 WM: You don't need to do another thing to learn how to do the thing that you're trying to do. It helps the more things you know. I had a great teacher who lived in Alabama, the great "Big John" McIlroy, in high school, so I wanna shout him out in Alabama, in Birmingham. When I was in high school, he was my teacher. If you wanna learn how to do something, study that thing, but it never hurts to have more education. And don't feel like you need to make a choice. Human beings, we add knowledge. And there's things that we all learn from each other. And the more you know, the more you know. But to be good at a thing, you need to know how to do that thing. And I think the Hammer pointed out when he talked about how you have to be next to it, and close to it, and look at, and see it. And you have to love it.

0:56:47 WM: And like people, all music is connected, it's just a matter of you learning enough to start connecting those dots. But I don't want you to feel any negative about learning stuff, there's no negative about learning. Even stuff you don't like, if you learn about it, you can make a more intelligent decision. And that's really how my daddy was with teaching, too. He hated you to call any group of people "They". If you'd start saying "they" too much he'd say, "Hey man, who is they? Do you know them? Have you met them? Who are they?" So I encourage you to study it. But Christian, he could answer that. I met him, he was playing all kind of music. He went to Juilliard. What you think, Christian?

0:57:31 CM: Well I was just gonna jump in and say that if the word "classical" itself means timeless and will always be valid no matter what timeframe we're in, then jazz is classical. Always remember that Thelonious Monk's music is going to be great 100 years from now. It's classical music, you know what I mean? Now, I think that what that question usually means is, "Does one need to be trained in symphonic, or European symphony music to be a better jazz musician?" Just like Wynton said, it certainly won't harm you, but I surely don't think that that is a prerequisite on becoming a better jazz musician.

0:58:16 JH: Right. I was at Indiana University and a percussion major, and was studying timpani with the great George Gabor. And I wanted to play drum set. And I was ready to get on the road, and I left after two years. And my first night on the new Tommy Dorsey band, I'm playing "Opus One", and I'm looking over at the ride cymbal on Swing, and I said, "Yeah, that's enough of school and the classical education and all that. Man, I'm swinging." And I kept looking at my right hand and I said, "And this is the timpani grip that Dr. Gabor showed me, how to play timpani."

[laughter]

0:58:52 JH: So it's all connected. Whether we're aware of it or not, it's all connected and it can be

helpful for you.

0:59:00 VS: From a vocalist's perspective too. Well, the technicalities of the instrument, a lot of questions I get when I'm with schools and whatnot, they say, "How do you have such pitch precision when you jump intervals? And I say, "For me, that was when I was a kid, I was obsessed with Bobby McFerrin. What did he do? He would sing these Bach preludes." And I was like, "How do you sing that?" And so just singing that stuff. When I was playing on piano and I would then sing it, I was able to apply that to my jazz education. And also I'm obsessed with opera, I sang opera for many years. For vocalists out there listening, I was obsessed with the stories that were in these operas, such intricacies and drama that I was then able to apply to jazz. And they're constantly informing each other.

0:59:51 WM: And Bobby's daddy was an opera singer. And Bobby, like Joe Henderson... When you'd be around Bobby, because we're real good friends from when we were young in the 20s, he would be...

[vocalization]

1:00:02 WM: He'd be practicing these intervals constantly. And you'd be like, "Man, what are you working on?" [chuckle] So then, after some years passed, you realized what he was doing. But yeah, I gotta go with the Hammer. Another thing is I'm not a fan of all this wanting to denigrate the classical music. And you gotta realize that the composers like Shostakovich, and Beethoven, Stravinsky, Schoenberg the level of sacrifice that they had for music... And they also did not say, "We want to take our music to elevate a group over other people." That wasn't their philosophy. The music cost them too much. And if they were here and you could meet them and talk with them, they'd be just as soulful as the Hammer and Veronica and Christian. We're talking about Paquito, and Paquito plays fantastic any style of music. So in this era we really don't have to discriminate, but it's hard to learn now. I'm gonna just tell you this, when you get to these difficult forms of music...

1:00:08 PD: Learning is always great, learning is very important all the time. Always I say that there is a division between what they call the jazz education and the classical music education. We ignore each sides. And that's a mistake because, for example, classical musicians are missing the freshness, the youth of jazz music. On the other side, jazz people that don't want to listen to the other side, they are missing centuries of music education, composer, intonation...

[laughter]

1:01:40 AT: Like as a saxophone player. Yeah.

1:01:44 PD: Exaggerate the volume and staccato. I just wrote a book about articulation. In jazz music, too many people try to ignore... And I mentioned Wynton in this conversation the other day. I said, "I love the way that people like Claudio Roditi, or Wynton Marsalis, or Woody Shaw played, because I can hear the articulation in the playing. Too many jazz players, they used to play

everything legato and sound like...

[vocalization]

1:02:25 PD: What about...

[vocalization]

1:02:28 PD: What about some staccato? The other day I went with a big band, a guy who played beautiful in the style of Ben Webster sings like that. And then I wrote a tango. I wrote an arrangement like Taylor Geraldo wrote an arrangement of the famous Libertango by Astor Piazzolla. Then the saxophones have this figure...

[vocalization]

1:02:56 PD: And the guys that play...

[vocalization]

1:03:00 PD: "No, no, no, no, no, no, no, no."

[vocalization]

1:03:05 PD: Staccato. Well, there was no way that the guy played like that. Why? Because they have been ignoring the staccato that you learn in the book by [1:03:17] ____ Cavallini. I think it's important to know different styles of music. And on the other side, sometimes you go to a symphony orchestra and they play Stravinsky with so much ease. And then when you write a syncopation like...

[vocalization]

1:03:39 PD: You're gonna spend the entire morning trying to do that. So what I mean is that it's important to know a whole spectrum of different styles of music in order to be a better musician, a better artist, to learn from each other. That's what I have been doing all my life.

1:04:00 WM: Right. You definitely are an example of it in the unbelievable range and clarity of your playing. But, also, I wanna say that the modern symphonic musicians don't have any of this prejudice like what it was years ago.

1:04:16 CM: It's not what it was, that's right.

1:04:16 WM: They are unbelievably belief. I've worked with symphonic orchestras, St. Louis Symphony, Philadelphia Orchestra, I just loved them. And the orchestras are just as beautiful and filled with people who wanna know about music, and study, and play and they are unbelievably

Skain's Domain - Episode 2

serious about being for real. We still have a ways to go, but if I was you, you're 17, learn how to play all the stuff, but whatever you like to play, play that. If you wanna play jazz, play that. If you like to play classical music, play it. If you don't like to play it, don't play it.

1:04:45 AT: Mm-hmm. And I think a lot of it is I need to find a little more of a balance 'cause I've only ever played jazz. So maybe throw in some elements of classical so you can get more of that intonation and control.

1:05:00 CM: Get your Arban's book out. Get your Arban's book out and do those 150 art of phrasing. I gotta quote my brother Ryan Kaiser. He always says, "Less Facebook and more Arban's book."

[laughter]

1:05:14 Moderator: All right. Thanks Andrew, for your question.

1:05:18 AT: Yep. Thank you.

1:05:18 WM: Yeah, thank you.

1:05:20 AT: Great hearing from you all.

1:05:22 WM: Yeah, you right. Alabama.

1:05:23 Moderator: All right guys, we've got time for just one more. Before I get to that, I wanna remind everybody that we've got a pretty amazing line-up of live events that we'll be hosting throughout the coming days and weeks. We'll have question and answer sessions with Wynton and special guests, masterclasses, and conversations with members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, live performances, free education classes, so keep an eye out for all that. Our last question will be coming from Yuni Mohica. Yuni, you're unmuted. Go ahead.

1:05:57 WM: That's a good name.

1:06:00 CM: What up Yuni?

1:06:03 PD: Yuni Mohica.

1:06:03 Moderator: Yuni can you hear us?

1:06:04 WM: Don't waste that good name, Yuni. Come on.

1:06:09 Moderator: I can see her here. Hold on. Let's try this one more time. Well, we're having... Oh wait...

1:06:25 Yuni Mohica: Okay. Can you hear me?

1:06:28 HD: You there, Yuni? Okay, great.

1:06:29 YM: Hey.

1:06:30 Moderator: All right. Go ahead Yuni, you're here.

1:06:34 YM: Okay. Hey everyone, thanks for taking the time.

1:06:37 VS: Hello, Yuni.

1:06:39 YM: I'm making my question pretty brief. One thing that I really love about the music is how it's included multi-disciplines between dancers, and comedians, and poets and things like that. And I'd love to hear your guys' stories that you've experienced with people from other artists from other disciplines, and how they have changed or affected your playing and your writing and things of that nature.

1:07:07 JH: Well, I'm gonna make Wynton laugh on this one, being a drummer. And if you've seen what I look like, especially, you'll find this humorous. I was asked several times until about, I don't know, five or six years ago, if I ever danced professionally, that I looked like I could be a ballet dancer.

[laughter]

1:07:35 JH: Okay, our time is up, Yuni, so thank you for calling.

[laughter]

1:07:41 JH: The graceful motions of the brushes and the lateral motions from the cymbals and around the drum set, the flow of what I do is what prompted those kind of questions. But I did get asked that quite often, especially in earlier years. But again, it's all connected, it's all rhythm. The dancers, of course, with time. Carl Sandburg was just celebrated by Matt Wilson's group, Poetry. It's all creative and I think we're all connected somehow. But usually the rhythm, I think, is usually the connector.

1:08:19 CM: Amen.

1:08:21 WM: Right.

1:08:24 PD: Yes, sir.

1:08:25 CM: Yuni, I wanted to say that I think there have been so many great artists from across so many different disciplines, and Jeff is absolutely right, it's the rhythm that connects all of us

together. Be it a poet, be it a dancer, be it a comedian. There's a rhythm, there's a timing, that I think has deeply influenced all of us on the Zoom tonight. I gotta tell you, for my entire childhood, for every third or fourth record in the house, we had two R&B records, a jazz album and then a comedy album. So, my whole life was James Brown, Coltrane, and Flip Wilson. So, all three of those people have played a major part in my upbringing. And then later on, when I got to start playing with people like Amiri Baraka and the great Sonia Sanchez who is on my new CD, to hear how they put those things together, their words and their rhythm and how they create their poetry, it's a direct influence.

1:09:40 VS: And not just the rhythm. For me, it's rhythm in the storytelling, just like right here, what are we doing? We're telling stories. As a musician, whether you're a musician, or an actor, or a filmmaker, photographer, you're trying to convey a story. And it's the marriage between those two that connect all of these different mediums. Before I was even singing, I remember I was always writing novels and scripts. Right now I'm working on a film and I think that a lot of musicians and artists feel pressured if you're doing one thing, "That's what you do." And if that's all you want to do, that's fine.

1:10:27 VS: But if you feel like you are being limited and you want to do other things, you shouldn't feel limited and you shouldn't always feel like you can't express yourself in these different mediums. I think a lot of... Because of the... It's important to brand yourself and all that stuff too. But one thing I remember, Wynton, we had talked that one time about, you were encouraging me to write. "Do you write articles? Do you write..." And I was able to then reconnect with my childhood again. Like, "Oh, maybe I should write more." I think it's important to all collaborate with other types of artists and not just musicians, 'cause you'll be inspired to tap into that.

1:11:12 WM: Right.

1:11:15 PD: In my case, it's very inspiring. When I have to write something, if somebody gives me lyrics, the pen goes faster. A good poem inspire me to write the melody immediately, otherwise I have to think about what I am going to write. When I have the lyrics, the half of the melody or whatever, the half of the music is written already. It's very inspiring. The same thing happened with dancers. Improvising with dancers. People that can dance to your sometimes even solo. People that can improvise while you're playing, while you improvise on the steps they do. Since I was a little kid, I think that all arts are interrelated. It's what you call a cross pollination. You see, I learned a new word in English.

[laughter]

1:12:15 PD: Maybe they don't deport me now.

1:12:18 WM: I've been lucky in my time out here playing. First, I was mentored by a lot of artists. Romare Bearden, unbelievable artist. When I first him, I didn't know anything about it, he told me to learn mythology. Ralph Ellison, going up to his house and he's just a fountain of information, fantastic. August Wilson and I, once we walked all the way from the village, all the way up into the

heart of Harlem talking the entire time about art and Shakespeare and plays. Garth Fagan, I did ballets with him. He's an unbelievable teacher and educator, showed me so much stuff. Albert Elia, I had the opportunity to be around him and see what he was talking about. Did a piece with Maya Angelou. Once again, all kinds of education. I love William Butler Yeats, the Irish poet, and Matisse, the french artist.

1:13:06 WM: I'm gonna end by telling y'all the story about Richard Pryor. In 1985, I was called to write music for the semi-autobiographical Richard Pryor movie called "Jo Jo Dancer, Your Life Is Calling". Back then I'd never written music for a movie and I wasn't even known as a composer. So I thought, "Why was he calling me?" But because it was Richard and I'd grew up loving him, I said I would try. The movie was complicated when I saw it. It had all kind of flashbacks, different scenarios. It required deep knowledge and a broad range of understanding of American music. It was beyond what I knew at that time, and scoring a movie was gonna require a skillset far beyond my ability. Considering that this was also Richard's debut as a director, there was no way in the world I could agree to mess up this man's movie with an inappropriate score.

1:13:51 WM: So, I went out to Los Angeles to meet him. Now, his house was set back behind a huge gate with lights all around it. And in the foyer, he had a white piano and a piece of classical music displayed on a piano stand. It looked like nobody had ever played it. We sat down and talked about music and his love for jazz, he said he'd opened for Miles back in the day and actually lived in Miles's brownstone for a while. So he talked about all the comedians and how jazz musicians share the same fundamental values of improvisation, in-the-moment timing, and making stark realities and plain truths digestible. One thing I wanna say about him was how intelligent he was.

1:14:28 WM: And what I always notice about jazz musicians since I was a kid, just the depth of the intelligence of Dizzy or Miles. So Richard Pryor was exactly like that. Talking about history and what he needed to know. Now, after some conversation about New Orleans and how wild the population was, we got down to talking about the movie. I told him, "Man, I don't think I know enough to do a credible job of this." So, I started to explain it and he listened to me and he said, "How old are you?" I said, "24." He looked at me with a straight face to said, "Man, when I was 24 I wasn't turning down shit."

[laughter]

1:14:58 WM: We laughed and that was basically it. The music came out later, I think Herbie wrote the music for it, but I'll never forget how he told me. He was very patient. We wanna thank y'all for tuning in to Skain's Domain. We gonna be back and we discuss significant and trivial things with gusto. Everybody who came with us, thank you for staying with us. And to all my special guests, I love every one of y'all. You're some of the greatest musicians in the world and human beings. 'Till we meet again.

1:15:28 VS: Thank you, Wynton.

1:15:32 JH: Thank you, Wynton.

1:15:37 WM: The Hammer, Christian, Veronica, Pac-man.