

FRED BOUCHARD: We're talking with Herb Pomeroy, folks. This is the ninth in a series of video interviews for the Berklee Library archives. We've sort of been building up to get Herb here all summer. Herb is a distinguished faculty member for forty-plus years and is still working part-time here. He's a professor emeritus, but I looked that up and it says, "someone who's done his time." You're still doing your time!

HERB POMEROY: [LAUGHS] I am.

FRED BOUCHARD: And doing it very gracefully and graciously, and it's really a pleasure to sit down with you and have a one-on-one, talking about your about your double career as a Berklee teacher and an active, lively, creative musician on the Boston scene from 1946 or of '47, when you joined the union, up till the present. So, Herb Pomeroy, welcome to the hot seat.

HERB POMEROY: It's nice to be here.

FRED BOUCHARD: We've already talked a lot before we got 'em rolling today. We came to the conclusion that it would be best to show this balance between your teaching career and your playing career. Maybe we can start with your first gigs as a high school student.

HERB POMEROY: Okay. Those are easy to remember. Long term memory serves us well as we get older, and short term memory gets a little troublesome. High school was in Gloucester, Massachusetts. And as a person in my middle teens, I was fortunate, in a sense, I got to work a lot with professional adult level players because of World War II taking a lot of pro musicians in their twenties and thirties into the service--so the older musicians and the real young high-school-aged people got to work them. So I began gigging, as we put it, around 1944, 1945, and did not really become involved with the Boston scene until the one year I went to Harvard, was was in the 1949-50 school year; and that's when I really took an interest in what was going on in the jazz scene in the Boston area--and was probably part of the reason I stayed in Harvard only one year. I got really involved in the music scene and made the decision to become a jazz musician rather than the dentist that my family had in mind for me when I was going to Harvard. That gets us up to about 1950, and at the end of that school year, '49-'50, when I was a freshman at Harvard, I made the decision to leave there and come as a student to what was then Schillinger House School of Music, which is now Berklee, and did so. In the fall of '50 came here as a full-time student. I had been taking lessons privately in the summer of '48. I would come in one day a week and take a piano or trumpet and arranging lesson with Harry Smith, the piano teacher--and he was at that point a partner of Larry Berk's in the school. Fred Berman was my trumpet teacher; his claim to fame was he played lead trumpet with the Paul Whiteman Band, a gentleman named Rick Coleman who I studied arranging with. That was my first contact with Berklee. In the fall of '50 coming here full-time and getting totally immersed in being a music student here and striving to become a professional jazz player on the Boston scene.

FRED BOUCHARD: Is that when you had your first contact with Joe Viola in the classroom?

HERB POMEROY: It was. I had Joe as an ensemble instructor. I was here for five semesters, five consecutive semesters including summer. I had Joe probably at least one ensemble each of those semesters. I developed great respect for his musicianship, his way with people, his gentlemanliness, all of the little things he would say to us as student players. I was making a mental scrapbook up here. He had so many--he would always say in a very laid back relaxed way, it was not a high-powered manner of rehearsing that Joe had. I learned a great deal about the positive things you would do when rehearsing a band. I felt like I got a great deal out of him. Some of the other teachers at the time: Bob Share, the fellow who was the provost here until he passed away in the eighties--he had started teaching here. He may have been one of Larry Berk's first private students and then Larry brought him onto the faculty of the school. And then the dean, then, in the fall of '50, was a fellow by the name of Richard Bobbitt--we called him Dick Bobbitt, a very fine teacher. And I thought Bob Share and Dick Bobbitt in the classroom situation were the two strongest teachers that I had when I was a student here. I got a lot from both of them as far as arranging and writing for band.

FRED BOUCHARD: Wonderful. And then after five semesters, the call of the road was strong.

HERB POMEROY: I was young and thought the road would be glamorous and romantic and thrilling. It took two years to find out I was wrong. I went with Lionel Hampton's band in the late fall of '53; he was forming a new band at the time. Prior to this period leading up to when I joined the band, he had broken his band up for a few months, and the band that he broke up was the one that had a wonderful European tour--Clifford Brown, Art Farmer, Quincy Jones, Alan Dawson and ever so many great players in that band. So Hampton was forming a new band and came to Boston to hear some new players. The way we auditioned for Hampton's band was going to a jam session and playing a couple choruses of blues, which isn't much of a way to audition, but I got the gig that way. There were five musicians from Boston who went with Hamp's band in December of '53. I went on the road for the first time. I learned a great deal about why I didn't want to continue to do that for a long time. The lifestyle, the eating habits, the sleeping habits, the hygiene habits. I discovered that so many of the younger musicians, or middle-aged musicians, on the road at that time were people who were running from something. I don't say that in any way critically of them, but they were running from--whether it be an alcohol problem, or a drug problem, or a bad marriage, or running from themselves--and I just felt that this was not a good environment to spend a large part of my life. So, I spent six months with the band, learned a lot about the business, did not enjoy the lifestyle: the bus, the 700-mile trips, the three or four nights before you check into a hotel where you would be dirty and be hungry. a pretty slovenly lifestyle, really.

FRED BOUCHARD: And you take that bad baggage with you, you don't leave it at home.

HERB POMEROY: [sighs] Uh-uh. So I did that and really, at the end of that six months of playing with Lionel Hampton, I decided that I was not--it had discouraged me to the point that I was not going to continue in music, and I actually got my books out from my one year at Harvard and started to go back into calculus and philosophy and things. Prior to having gone on the road with Lionel Hampton, I had done some work with Boots Mussulli, who's from Milford, who was in the Stan Kenton Band, and he recommended me to Stan Kenton in the summer of '54 after I had been home for a few months from the Lionel Hampton episode. I said, "Well, I'll give it one more chance," and I went with Stan's band for about six months. I'm not a fan of his music, necessarily, but I learned a lot about how to handle people, how to program. I learned some valuable things from Stan, even though they weren't specifically exactly my style of music. The lifestyle was much better. We would never go for more than 400 miles on the bus, but Stan would fly us from city to city. The money was much better, the hotels were better, the food was better. So it gave me a little encouragement; maybe I'll stick with this music that I wanted to stick with, but the Hampton experience had been sort of negative. I stayed with that for about six months, then Stan broke that band up and I came back to Boston. It was at that point that I started working at the Jazz Workshop, the original Jazz Workshop with Varty Haroutunian, Ray Santisi, John Neves, and Jimmy Zitano. Through this couple of years, I had not been in school and had not done any teaching. I was enjoying very much being a jazz musician not on the road, but in one place. We used to rehearse with a quintet from the Workshop, every morning from nine to twelve, like a day gig: from Monday through Friday we would go in and build a repertoire of tunes. It was a very productive period, and the fellows I was playing with were very excellent players.

FRED BOUCHARD: Were there any Berklee connections at this point?

HERB POMEROY: At this point, not really. This was a two or two-and-a-half year period where I was not involved in Berklee at all. I'd done my five semesters, had not graduated, and then did my road and started playing regularly at the Jazz Workshop.

FRED BOUCHARD: Did you have any particularly riveting memories or anecdotes either from the Hamp or Kenton period, or could you review some of the band members that were either from Boston or that you were friendly with?

HERB POMEROY: Yeah, well with the Lionel Hampton band, when he came here to form--no, he didn't come to form the band but came to Boston to search out players for the band, five of us went with Hamp's band. Dick Twardzik, legendary piano player, who was not a student at Berklee at the time but was very much part of the Boston jazz scene. Al Greenstein, a bass player who was a student at Berklee. Jack Crown, a trombonist, and I were all Berklee or just recently been at Berklee. And Floyd "Floggie" Williams was a student, a drummer. So there were five people that went from Boston. Then when I was with the Kenton Band, [Henry] "Boots" Mussulli, who's a Boston area musician coming from Milford, who was [unintelligible]. And Charlie Mariano was with the band at the time. So with both bands I had a little core of Boston experienced players.

FRED BOUCHARD: Charlie had been at Berklee or ?

HERB POMEROY: Charlie had been at Berklee as a student, and then he had gone on the road prior to my going with the Kenton band. I think he may have been there eight months or so before I joined the band. He and I were roommates with the Kenton band for the six months when I joined the band. I could tell all sorts of anecdotal stories but we wouldn't want them for pleasant company. [both laugh]

FRED BOUCHARD: ... that transitional period when you were working with the quintet at The Stable, were there other peripheral gigs or musical interests for you at that time? And how did that develop into maybe a different ensemble?

HERB POMEROY: I had formed a twelve-piece band that was a precursor of the band that started in late '55 and became the band that I had for many decades. And I stopped having the band when I was on the road. I wrote about thirty or forty arrangements for a twelve-piece jazz band. Many of people in the band were Berklee-oriented or Schillinger House people. Ray was playing piano in that band. But once I started working at the Workshop, it was very full time. I think we worked six nights a week. Pretty much for that period of time, until I went on the road with Serge Chaloff's sextet, those months--from getting off of the road with Kenton and working in the Workshop--it took all of our time. We really devoted a great deal of time. But then Serge [Chaloff] had come back to Boston after getting himself healthy, because he had serious narcotic problems. He rehabbed and he was in good shape, and he came back to Boston and formed this sextet, and had a contract with Capitol Records. So Boots Mussilli, Serge, and I were the horns and Ray was the piano player, and Jimmy Zitano the drummer, and a bass player by the name of Everett Evans. We did an album for Capitol Records. It was called Boston Blow Up! and it was Serge's group. I left the Workshop and went with Serge's group in the late spring of '55, and we traveled around. It was an altogether different experience road-wise both from the Hampton and the Kenton bands, which was mostly one-nighters except the occasional weekend of theatre. This would be one or two weeks in a jazz club; we would play in Baltimore, or in Detroit, or Washington, different cities, and we would sit in one city. That's so much more productive musically than when you're on the bus, and you get on the bus, sleep if you're lucky, get to the gig, and play the gig and then check in or go back to the bus to sleep. Both of the big bands that I went with, Hampton and Kenton, they were forming new additions of the band and the best of the bands ever founded were in eight to ten days of rehearsal before you'd going on the road. The psychological and physical aspect of being on the road, as opposed to beginning of a new band, the enthusiasm of new music and bringing new people together, both bands would get kind of tedious. Whereas a small group, it was not that way. For a week or two you'd be in one city, and you'd get a chance to rest and take care of yourself and so when you went to work at night you felt good about things.

FRED BOUCHARD: Yes, there seem to be a lot of dynamics at play there: the groundedness of being in a single place, the interaction with four or five guys, reviewing charts, and having plenty of solo space, which you didn't get with the big bands.

HERB POMEROY: No, no

FRED BOUCHARD: It wasn't just rote, it was always creative and interactive.

HERB POMEROY: With the Kenton band, we would do mostly concerts and it would be pretty much the same program night in and night out, and you'd get maybe two or three solo spots on the same tune. You'd find yourself, hear yourself Given the shape of the arrangements and the shape of the backgrounds, you'd almost find yourself playing the same solo every night. I used to dislike this as a young musician in my late teens and early twenties--when I'd heard some of the older musicians, I'd go to hear them and they would play, almost like a solo that had come not that they worked out previously, but that through playing the tune a certain number of times in a certain context they would always have this sort of set solo. And I was always looking at the young person to hear them play them differently and creatively. And I was discovering when I'd travel with these bands how it was easy to all of a sudden find yourself two or three weeks into a tour playing pretty much the same solo every night. You'd find out the good licks that fit the shape, that fit the mood, that would fit the backgrounds that you heard behind you and you sort of weave them out, and all of a sudden you had this solo that was pretty much in place as it was. That was so much different from playing in a quintet.

FRED BOUCHARD: Probably the time factor was also at play there, the fact that you've only got sixteen bars in the middle of two ensembles, vis a vis, you know, jamming with a rhythm section and trading fours with the guys. That's a very different situation.

HERB POMEROY: On the other side of that, some of the great old players could make such statements in just eight bars because of the limitations of this three-minute recording--some of Lester Young's eight- and sixteen-bar solos with the Basie band are gems of melodic creativity. So that restriction, in a way, cause you to really--when you got your moment, you really had to say something, you didn't get two or three choruses to say it in. Now the recordings have gone from the three-minute to the LP to whatever we have now, and a lot of people seem to take advantage of that clock time and take a long time to make their statement--if they ever do. I say that with love. [Both laugh]

FRED BOUCHARD: So, who was in Serge's sextet?

HERB POMEROY: Serge's sextet: naturally, Serge, who was the leader and the dynamic force playing baritone; Boots Mussulli, the alto saxophonist from Milford, MA, whom I played with in the Kenton band; and I was playing trumpet, so we were the three horns. Ray Santisi played piano, Jimmy Zitano played drums, and Everett Evans played bass. That was the group that recorded, that rehearsed here in Boston and recorded. Then when we went on the road, I left the Jazz Workshop gig to go on the road but Ray decided to that he was going to stay. He liked playing each night at this Workshop, which was great. So Dick Twardzik went on the road with us. And an interesting drum situation: Jimmy, who was also working at the Workshop, decided to stay, so Serge had known Gus Johnson the old--I shouldn't say old--the Kansas City drummer who was with Basie for a while. Serge had played with Basie in the early fifties--when Basie broke up his big band and had a sextet with Clark Terry and Wardell Grey and Serge; and Gus Johnson, who had been with the band, was the drummer in this small group. Now Gus was definitely not a bebop drummer; he was an old Kansas City swing drummer. So when Zitano decided not to go on the road with the sextet, Johnson came on the road with us. It was an interesting interplay between Dick Twardzik, who was very creative and avant garde for the period, and Gus who was very straight ahead, sizzle cymbal, lay down the time--great time player. That was the personnel in Serge's group.

FRED BOUCHARD: How did Serge's personality affect the group as a leader, and how was the dynamic there?

HERB That's a great question. It was a dynamic, that's for sure. He was very, very dominant, rehearsed strenuously.
POMEROY: We would just rehearse and rehearse. He wanted things exactly right, claiming he got that from Woody. I talked to Woody Herman about that later and Woody said, "I never rehearsed that way." And I said, "That's what I heard. Everyone told me you were loose about things, but Serge said you did this" But anyways, Serge was very dominant, both in his playing and what he demanded from everyone in the group. It was a great experience. His ballad playing was just superb. The Boston Blow Up! recording we did for Capitol--he solos on "Body and Soul," it's one of the great recording things that I've ever heard. So, very forceful. Health-wise, he was okay then. He had recovered from his heroin problem, but he then became ill with cancer, and died within two years of when we were on the road with that, in his mid-thirties. He had a very short life, a tragic life, a brilliantly expressive creative. He was really the only--in my opinion, the only great bebop baritone player. There were a few others like the fellow who played with Dizzy, no, Pepper was later on there was Leo Parker, who wasn't that great of a player, well, I can't think of his name, doesn't matter. Serge was really a great bebop baritone player of that era.

FRED When Serge's health failed, the band broke up and he
BOUCHARD:

HERB Well, no, he kept the band going for a while longer. I left the band, and that's where my real strong Berklee
POMEROY: association began. In the summer of '55, while I was on the road with Serge's sextet, Larry Berk called me and asked me if I'd like to join the faculty. Joe Viola had recommended me for the faculty. And at the time I was married and had two children and the inconsistency of road life--you work for a while and then you don't work for a while, and the being away from home--I decided to go back to Boston and I would take this job at Berklee.

FRED Now Joe knew you as a student, did he also know you as a professional musician?
BOUCHARD:

HERB I think he knew me as a professional musician, too, yeah, he did. 'Cause, when we used to work at the Workshop,
POMEROY: Joe use to come in, in his white tux jacket after playing at the Copley Plaza with the Ruby Newman Band, or something. Even though people didn't know Joe as a jazz player--because he never publicly played jazz music--he could play jazz. He would come in, pleasantly having had a few drinks, his gig was over, and we'd get him to sit in. And he'd sit in on Varty Haroutunian's tenor and sound like Lester [Young]. Later on in life, he denied ever doing these things, which is kinda cute, really. [both laugh] But those of us who were there witnessed it...

FRED You blew his cover.
BOUCHARD:

HERB Oh, did we ever. He was a very private guy about if I was contracting an orchestra behind Steven Eady, and I
POMEROY: needed a saxophone player who doubled on oboe, I'd always ask Joe, and I'd have to pry him to get him to come out and work. And those saxophone quartets that he had with John LaPorta and different people were superb classical saxophone quartets. And John LaPorta over the years would say about how you just couldn't push Joe to take these quartets out beyond an occasional concert here at Berklee or maybe some other music hall in someone's home. Joe was not one to get out there in the arena, I don't think.

FRED Alright, let me ask you this, now: other than stroking his ego by letting him sit in on Varty's horn at your jams at
BOUCHARD: the club, what qualities do you think Joe Viola spotted in you that made him think you were faculty material?

HERB POMEROY: Well, I didn't take dope, I didn't drink. I think he heard that I can verbalize what I was thinking--and that sounds like I'm saying other jazz musicians couldn't, and that's not a nice way to put it. But a lot of the guys that I associated with in my early years, when I was in my twenties, a student here at Berklee, and in those years between being a student and my coming to teach here years, there were guys who had so immersed themselves in the music that they had not developed verbally the ability to express what they were thinking and feeling about the music. John Neves was a marvelous example of that. And I, either because I was windy or I had the opportunity of having gone to college before I came to Berklee, even if only one year--I had the ability to say something and put the words together in such a way, and maybe he heard that I could do that in a teaching situation.

FRED BOUCHARD: I think some people on an emotional, visceral level, really involved in their music, I think John was that way.

HERB POMEROY: No question

FRED BOUCHARD: But you and others, like Gary Burton, were able to take it--step outside of the music, and look at it from a big picture point of view and rationalize it, intellectualize about something which is a creative process, which isn't easy to do.

HERB POMEROY: No, it isn't. I agree totally with what you're saying, but I'm saying--that thing that I said a moment ago, I hope any of the people who are still living who grew up with me in that period don't think I'm coming in on a white horse here; I don't mean that at all. Under the circumstances, I was fortunate to do that, to be able to do that. You usually have the guys who can teach it or the guys who could play it, but you don't usually have a lot of people who can do both, I guess.

FRED BOUCHARD: This was your trump card as an incoming Berklee faculty member. You were out there playing at night and you were able to bring some aspect of it-- communicable, expressible, to the classroom the following morning.

HERB POMEROY: John LaPorta was marvelous at that too. He came here in 1962 and had already done a lot of teaching, but he was just a great player, and also had a marvelous ability with words, could express what he was feeling, and very direct, too. Much more direct than I--I would go around the corner, and John would be--zing!

FRED BOUCHARD: And he also made some terrific albums, too, with Louie Mucci, Woody Herman, Charles Mingus, all those workshop things.

HERB POMEROY: So that brings us up chronologically to 1955 when Larry offered the teaching gig. And I took it, thinking it was a temporary thing that I would do. Maybe get a little financial stability, spend some time at home And all of a sudden, it was 1995 and I was retiring. [Both laugh] Forty years went by so fast! Teaching full time The first thirty-one years that I taught here, I taught the summer, so I taught how'd that add up ninety-three consecutive semesters! And finally in my thirty-second year, I decided to take summers off. I look back on it and--while I was teaching here I was also teaching part-time at MIT, I did that for twenty-two years. I had my own band, and I was also holding down the second trumpet chair at the Colonial Theatre for twenty-two years. I look back on it I think about some of those days where I would come here and teach from ten to one, I'd take the subway down to the Colonial and play a matinee, then take the subway back to MIT and from five-thirty to seven-thirty, I'd rehearse my MIT band; my wife would meet me outside of Kresge Auditorium with a sandwich, with my dinner; I'd go back to the Colonial, play an evening show, and I'd get home around eleven o'clock and I'd have contracts and phone calls to make for the bands--the bands were doing forty-five to fifty gigs a year back then--and also correct any exams when I got home at the end of those days! And I think of how I feel now at seventy-five! I'd nap every afternoon, compared to the energy it took. But the thing is, being in music is a glorious life because the relationships with the people that you have and the relationship with the music--it's just mind-boggling to look back on that and think of the richness that I've been fortunate enough to experience. The students from other countries that I have learned from, the students who I first started to teach, who are older than I and professional people--you know, people who were on the GI Bill of rights from World War II? I'd have people in my classes--I was twenty-five when I started teaching--who were in their twenties and in their thirties. And the rich people that people experience and the glory of the music is what keeps you going until you finally get to the point where your body tells you, "Hey, you got to back off." Like I let go of MIT when I was fifty-five and I let go of this when I was sixty-five and

FRED BOUCHARD: There were a couple of years where the New England Conservatory was in there, as well.

HERB POMEROY: Well, that was never in there when I was here. One-day-a-week things I do now, and only in the fall, are the only time--I do two hours at New England and four hours here is on Thursdays in the fall. It's very easy to teach one day a week only in the fall. [Laughs] When I first started teaching here, I taught forty hours here. I couldn't believe it. I'd do eighteen to twenty hours of ensembles. The amount of music that has gone into these ears it's scary, it's a wonder these ears didn't say, "We don't want to hear anything else." I have to be careful now. I mean, we jumped from '55 to now very simply, I'm trying to act like those 40 years never happened. We can go back and talk about them, but I have to kind of be careful now, 'cause I'm kind of up to here with all the music that I've heard. It's easy for me to get over. I still I love the music, I love to hear it, I love to play it, but I have to be very careful

FRED BOUCHARD: To get jaded.

HERB POMEROY: Jaded is part of it, but just to get overloaded, having heard too much. Another interesting part of it, as I examine myself and look at myself is: when you've heard this much music you start to become very impatient with anything that isn't very, very good. It doesn't mean I deserve to be the only one in the world to only hear good music or anything like that, but my patience with not-good playing, not-good writing, has become not-too-good. My patience is not too good.

FRED BOUCHARD: This is what makes us older guys called curmudgeons, because you stamp your foot and say, "Damn it! This isn't the way it should be."

HERB POMEROY: I understand that, yeah.

FRED BOUCHARD: Well, perhaps we could back up to your early years, if this is possible: take the pedagogical long view of what was going on at Berklee in terms of academics. Who were the incoming kids? Who were they? What were they looking for in a musical world?

HERB POMEROY: Well, if I relate it, which is the best way to, to when I first started teaching here, the people in the student body--which was small, I would say maybe 200 people at the most in fall and spring terms--were a combination of people right out of high school. They were a combination of people who played in the dance band era at the high-level you know, named bands, semi-named bands---or just local dance band hometown era. It was not as jazz-oriented as history seems to say that it was in the beginning. When I first started here as a full time student, the jazz musicians well, Charlie Mariano was here as a student and he was by far the best jazz musician here, but there weren't many others. Ray Santisi and I both started in the same class in the fall of '50, and Bob Winter was with us and we were among the more jazz-oriented people. It was more of a hip dance band training, as far as the writing went and the ensembles went. The ensembles were not playing much Duke, much Dizzy big-band bebop era; occasionally you would play some Woody [Herman] band stuff, but it was more the dance bands.

FRED BOUCHARD: Munsford? Basie?

HERB POMEROY: Well, not even as much that. I'm going back to the

FRED BOUCHARD: Glenn Miller?

HERB POMEROY: Well, let's not go quite that far back. In between you have Artie Shaws, the Dorseys, the Harry James--the good, the jazz-oriented dance bands. I think there is a somewhat false picture that in the very early years of the school, that it was a jazz school--and it was not, at all. There was a jazz underlying--it was almost the underground. If you heard guys playing in a session, it was unusual.

FRED BOUCHARD: Were some of your colleagues of the faculty graduates of these bands? The Dorseys, the Artie Shaws?

HERB POMEROY: Well, I'm starting this around '55 now, I meant to, at least. And I don't think there was anybody in the faculty who were graduates of the band. Joe Viola had been on a few bands but not many. There were GIs returning. Especially you'd get the older student, somebody who'd been in the service in World War II or immediately after World War II, who were married, have children. They could go to school and if they were in school they would get money towards the support of their family, that sort of fellow. I think for most of those people if my memory is correct, they didn't really follow through with music. They tried that because they loved the music, but they'd go off into something else. And we didn't have--the first foreign student was Toshiko [Akiyoshi]. I remember she came here my second semester of teaching here, the winter of '56. She was the first from-a-foreign-land student to come here. So we didn't have many other country people like we have this glorious forty percent or whatever it is now.

FRED BOUCHARD:

HERB POMEROY: Yeah. That's one of the richest parts of my teaching here--I'm jumping ahead for a second--is the contact with the students. And then, seeds that I was sewing back then that I didn't realize--after I retired here, for the past ten years, I'd spent a lot of time in other countries, and most of it had been the results from making contact with the students. To go back to your question about the nature of the students and the faculty, it was not so jazzy. It started to become that. I think Ray Santisi and myself and Alan Dawson, who taught here for a while, and then Charlie came back and taught here for a while--although teaching was not Charlie Mariano's main love, he loved to play. I think there's a funny chronological thing with Charlie and teaching which I need to go into the archives if someone hasn't already put it there. Let's say three times Charlie came back to teach--this is after I started teaching in '55--because he had his mother and his sister and he had daughters from previous marriages, and he would like to come back to Boston for a period of time to spend with them. And Larry Berk and Bob Share loved Charlie, always, both musically and personally. So they made it pretty obvious to him directly: "Anytime you want a job teaching here, just let us know a little in advance so we can put a schedule." Charlie would call him, "I'd like to come back," "Okay, next fall, you come back." And he'd teach for a year, maybe fall and spring. And all the time he'd say to all of us, "I don't like to teach, I don't like to teach. [grumbles]" Then he'd leave for the arrangement that he made with them. Then a couple years later he'd call him again and say, "I'd like to come back." My numbers, the intervals between his coming and going, I'm not sure and how long he stayed, I'm not sure, but the picture, I have an idea of the picture. So he'd come back and tell him he'd stay maybe for two semesters, but by the end of the fall semester he couldn't make it, he could not make it. So, he'd leave. The final time was delightful. Charlie came back, they set up his schedule for him, and two hours into the first day he was here, he went up to Larry's office and said, "I can't do it, I can't do it, I'm sorry!" [Laughs] It was lovely. The spirit with which he did it--somebody who did that you could get mad at them. Larry and Bob just said, "Okay."

FRED BOUCHARD:

You tried.

HERB POMEROY: Yeah. He was part of the post-'55 jazz core faculty like Alan and Ray and myself, and I hope I'm not leaving some person out, that started to make it more jazz-oriented, and the arranging courses started to become more directed to jazz band or jazz small groups, that sort of thing. And we began then have jazz workshop classes. All the four of us used to do a lot. I'm sure there was more than four of us and I'm sorry that I'm not thinking of it. This is the period post-'55 and pre-John LaPorta, because John's coming here in '62 was a major happening at this school. I don't think the world realizes, the internal world even realizes

FRED BOUCHARD: As apologia for Charlie, there are some people who are

HERB POMEROY: What does apologia mean?

FRED BOUCHARD: Kinda like an excuse. He was always seeking for something new, he'd go to Germany; he's still going to India.

HERB POMEROY: He's still doing it, really.

FRED BOUCHARD: And you can either take people along on those journeys with you--in this case a classroom full of kids---or you have to just spout it out later, and he couldn't do both.

HERB POMEROY: No, he couldn't. And the player he became--or was, continued to develop, and still developing--is one of the great jazz players.

FRED BOUCHARD: Shakuhachi, nagaswaram, alto saxophone--whatever you put in front of him, he's gonna speak on it.

HERB POMEROY: Great, great player. Yeah, great player. And then when John came--see, my feeling had been once I had been here for the seven years that I was here before John came, I began to develop the feeling that the school is too inbred. That the faculty was too much coming out of the student body. We would be criticized by outsiders that--to a point, they were accurate. You'd be playing in a band with someone and you'd play an arrangement, and they'd say "Oh! Berklee!" And when you'd look who's name was on it, it would be almost like a formula thing. It was not good. But when John came here, he brought a breath of fresh air, whether everybody agreed with the breath of fresh air or not, he brought a glorious breath of fresh air with him. And then he in turn was responsible for bringing some of the other teachers who were breaths of fresh air: Jack Petersen the guitar player, Wes Hensel trumpet player, Lou Mucci [trumpeter], these were musical acquaintances and friends of John's that he would have contact with in other situations and recommended they come to Boston to teach here. And this kind of teacher--not now, as the college has such breadth and variety, but back then when the breadth was not there, when the variety wasn't there--these teachers were the first infusion of real good outside blood, because the school was quite inbred in my opinion.

FRED BOUCHARD: How did this condition of Berklee-itis, of the "chord factory" syndrome, kick in?

HERB
POMEROY: One way we would make a joke about it, but it was really a fact that on the first day of the new fall semester, Bob Share--and I can say this about Bob Share because he's a dear friend of mine, and I love him dearly--would be in his office thumbing through the Boston Musician's Union phonebook, looking for names of people he might call to become teachers to come in, because the student body was larger in number than they had anticipated. And that will give you an idea of the mechanics of numbers.

FRED
BOUCHARD: They were probably graduates.

HERB
POMEROY: You know, eleven o'clock on the first morning of registration of the fall: "Oh, look we have forty more people than we thought we were gonna have, let's just go to the union book." Whereas they began to reach outside when they went to John; I'm sure there were some people of lesser impact prior to John, and I feel bad for not thinking of who they were, but John became a major impact player.

FRED
BOUCHARD: Did he influence you?

HERB POMEROY: Yes he did, he did. He caused me to examine what I was saying to people. And I realized that some of the things I was saying were not the best things I could say. He influenced me all along when we played together a great deal and then he wrote for my band some marvelous music. He was very direct, very outspoken, didn't mince words. I would like to put this on an archival record here. I mentioned this--they had a party for John when John retired here, and I mentioned this, and it needs to be mentioned again. We--meaning John and Charlie Mariano, Ray Santisi, Alan, all Berklee people, and then other teachers from around the country, used to take part in what has since become the Jamey Aebersold Jazz Camp, but used to be the National Stage Band. I hate that phrase "stage band camps" run by a man named Ken Morris. This was in the late fifties and into the sixties. And Stan Kenton was involved, and his band would come and be in residence for a few days. But a number of us--like I mentioned, John Laporta, Charlie Mariano, Ray Santisi, Alan, myself, Lennie Johnson--would be a part of this touring faculty, a week at a time on a college campus all over the country. As many sometimes as six weeks in the summer. The way these camps were run, they were week-long affairs: On Sunday, all the students would show up, and we would--the various teachers--go to rooms and audition the various instrumental categories. I and maybe Marvin Stamm, a very fine trumpet player, would audition all the trumpets, and LaPorta and Mariano would audition all the saxophones and so forth. Then you'd sit in a big room about this size with a big table and about ten teachers sitting around it who'd done with the auditioning, and you'd make up bands for the five days of rehearsal with a concert on Friday night before you get in a bus and go to another campus. So we'd sit around there, all of us with hip arrangements with us, hoping we could get some half-decent students who would bolster our own ego. I think of that because of myself and Phil [Wilson], who was on the faculty--Phil was there, and he and I are both matured. So, we'd sit there and you'd try and make the bands. It would be the good bands and the not so good bands. You didn't put the fifteen best kids in one band and then on down to the fifteen worst, you'd try to put some spacing of decent quality. But, there was clearly a first band, a second band, down to the tenth band. So we'd get done and it'd be about one o'clock in the morning, and we'd all be dead from auditioning and making up these bands. John would have sat there for hours sort of just off to the side at this table. And we'd get to the end and whoever was in charge would say, "Well, we made up ten bands and we got twelve people left here." Nobody wanted it. And they'd be like three banjos and a swinette and a tenor cymbal or something like that. [both laugh] Just ludicrous instrumentation and ludicrous abilities. John would say, "I'll take 'em." Which he would. He would get together with them Monday, the first day of the five rehearsals with the concert on Friday night. And he would have each kid play for him to see what they could do--what their strengths, what their weaknesses, if they were capable of anything. He would go home at night--and I know this because we were rooming together summer after summer--and he would stay up until three or four in the morning and write music that fit the abilities, what little they may have had, their strengths. Friday night at the concert, week after week after week after week, year after year, the best band at the concert would be these dregs that nobody wanted with no sense of balance of instrumentation. The rest of us would just sit there. I mean you'd get used to it and say, "Well, he's done it again!" [Laughs]

FRED BOUCHARD: What kind of magic does he bring to this?

HERB POMEROY: He danced a lot in front of the band. He'd have these kids playing--one set of them doing 4/4 and another gang doing 6/8, and half of his body would be dancing in four and the other half in six. He inspired them! He brought them outside of themselves, instead of the rest of us who went with our hip arrangements, which were a little too difficult for the kids, and we pounded them all week so we would look good playing the hip stuff.

FRED So he made it an organic thing

BOUCHARD:

HERB Oh, did he ever.

POMEROY:

FRED and he'd personalize it like Duke did with his musicians, he wrote for Hodges; he wrote for Carney. He was doing
BOUCHARD: that on the spot for these know-nothing simpleton kids. Extraordinary!

HERB He really was. The world doesn't know how extraordinary he is. He didn't get--there were times when he was here
POMEROY: that there were conflicts between John and the administration, and he put in many years of his life writing books and writing teaching plans. He was pretty hurt when that was just wiped off the books and they went in a different direction. And I'm not making a judgment on which part was right or wrong, or if there was a right or wrong, even. But to be fair on his behalf, he devoted a great deal of time and energy. In that period of time, between when he came here in 1962 and 1980 maybe, he was a prime moving force in this school.

FRED So, to bring it to your classroom, his example would make you look at the kids in front of you and maybe try to
BOUCHARD: personalize the arrangements or the direction to the kids as much as you could.

HERB No question. As I would present in my Jazz Composition class the materials, I would work very strongly to make
POMEROY: sure we didn't have the cookie-cutter effect come out of these people. That we would draw out of them what was in them rather than try to stuff something into them that they would spit back to you. And it took a while to learn how to do that. I know from personal experience that the first few years that I taught, I was getting the cookie-cutter thing coming back at me. But then gradually I was able to

FRED I think maybe John may have presaged a trend in education in general, where you address the person, not the
BOUCHARD: material.

HERB And you have to be able to have taken part in the jazz music yourself to a point that you've fulfilled yourself--not
POMEROY: totally, but you have fulfilled yourself some--because I've watched some other jazz-oriented teachers who never had the good fortune to have a professional jazz life like John did have, and that I was lucky enough to have, who were sort of using the students--that's kind of a strong word but I'll use it for lack of a better one--were sort of using the students to satisfy their own what they wanted to do with music rather than go to the students and bring out of them what they were. I've judged a lot of college- and high school-level band situations where I've been very put off by the fact that I felt that the person in charge was not going to where the young players would like to be able to go. They were going to where they would have liked to have been as a younger person, never got to go and so: "I'll think I'll use this opportunity as an educator to try and go there."

FRED So it's ego versus empathy.

BOUCHARD:

HERB POMEROY: Yes, very definitely. You have to--a jazz musician, you'll be a sideman in a small group or a leader of a group, whatever, you have to have some kind of ego. I'm not saying that we can remove this ego, we all have to have it. But you have to have it in control. I think a glorious example of this now is--who we have live and still active--is Paul Schmeling, who's been chairman of the Piano department for years and who has been my own personal piano player, because I love the way he plays, for decades. Paul seems like such an easygoing person and he plays so brilliantly, but underneath the easygoing there's a strong ego there, but to find it you have to get by a lot of layers of things, which I have done over the years. But you can't play that well without having that kind of ego, but it's having it in its proper place.

FRED BOUCHARD: Better on the bandstand than in the classroom. Up to a point.

HERB POMEROY: Yeah.

FRED BOUCHARD: This is interesting. We've gone off in a direction.

HERB POMEROY: We did.

FRED BOUCHARD: We've opened a few different doors. Let's go back to your career paralleling your teaching years and talk about how you developed your big bands.

HERB POMEROY: Well, I became the band leader out of default, kind of. I knew how to arrange. I knew how to rehearse. I didn't drink or get high, so I could be depended upon. I was punctual. As we said before, I could verbalize what I was thinking. Because of all those things--I hadn't any great band leader abilities, I was the guy that got stuck in front of the band.

FRED BOUCHARD: They nailed you.

HERB POMEROY: Yeah, they kind of nailed me. And the way the band I had from '55 until '93 came to be was just a case of serendipitous events. You could never sit down and write a lesson plan this way. I was working at the Jazz Workshop, and we had a quintet with Varty Haroutunian, Ray Santisi, John Neves, Jimmy Zitano, and myself. Then we expanded into a sextet, and I won't go into all the details, but we had two trumpets, Joe Gordon and myself and Varty. At the same time Jaki Byard was playing intermission piano, and Jaki Byard also played tenor saxophone. Before I did my road years I had formed a band. It worked a few gigs, but it was primarily a rehearsal band, a twelve-piece band. I had written most of the music. So I said to the guys in the sextet and to Jaki who played tenor, "You know, we ought to get my book out and rehearse once in a while. We only have to get five other players 'cause we got seven guys here, counting Jaki as a tenor player." So we did that, we had a few rehearsals, and got some players like Dave Chapman to lead alto player and Serge played baritone. Everett Longstreth played trumpet, Bill Berry played trumpet. And we got a twelve-piece band rehearsing. So, the fellow that ran the Workshop said, "Oh, you guys sound pretty good." We rehearsed at the Workshop. So he said, "Why don't you, why don't we have the band come in and work here one night a week on Tuesday nights?" So seven of us are already employed, so it wasn't going to be a large financial net, so we agreed that the other guys would work for ten dollars a night, fifty bucks more for the extra players. So it would cost them fifty bucks more than what it usually costs to have a twelve-piece band. So we started working in November of '55 with this twelve-piece band, and it immediately became very popular. Business was great. So we said, "Let's do it two nights a week." So we started doing the band Tuesdays and Thursdays. And I had to go out of the trumpet section and become the leader now; we couldn't function with me just sitting up playing Serge's trumpet so we got another trumpet player.

FRED Lennie Johnson?

BOUCHARD:

HERB POMEROY: Well, Lennie took Joe's place. When Joe went with Dizzy, Lennie came in and then took Joe's place. I guess it was Lennie. Oh, it was Nick Capezuto. We decided--we only had two trombones in the first band, Gene DiStasio and Joe Ciavardone. We decided that we should really have three; now that we had four trumpets we needed three trombones. Once we got the three trombones, we decided we needed five saxes instead of four. So the standard big band thing of five saxes, three trombones, four trumpets, and myself up front as leader as a fifth trumpet--we got it to be a sixteen-piece band over the course of let's say a year's time. It began--it was almost an ideal situation: playing together twice a week on a gig and rehearsing once a week. You're playing three times a week, enough to really get the music tight, but not getting bored like a road band would get. So, Symphony Sid was in town then. He'd got kicked out of New York, literally kicked out on a story that we won't tell, but it had to do with stealing about \$18,000 from Fats Navarro's widow. He was in town, and he would come in all the time and hang out. He was a plus to the Boston scene then. He would come in town and hang out, to our club and hang out with us. He knew Morris Levy. Morris Levy was one of the seven Morrises in New York. They owned Birdland, they owned Roulette Records, they owned a lot of vending companies, they owned a lot of laundry machines, and all that stuff. Big-time underground boys. So, he brought Morris Levy to the Workshop, and Morris Levy heard the band and liked the band. He said, "I'll put you in Birdland and we'll sign you to Roulette Records." There we are, just a little local boys in cow country, so we said "Great!" So we went to New York and we played two weeks in Birdland and we recorded for three or four days at Roulette. He had Basie and Maynard [Ferguson] and our band all signed up at Roulette at the same time.

FRED Oh my, that was a hell of a label then.

BOUCHARD:

HERB It was. It was strong.

POMEROY:

FRED Sarah recorded for them?

BOUCHARD:

HERB I think she did, yeah. So we were doing very well. At this point Boots was in the band, had a club in Milford. We'd work every Sunday night in Milford, Tuesday and Thursdays at the Workshop, and averaged another day outside. So, we're playing four times a week. Nothing had ever been planned that this would happen. Just step by step from the Workshop and adding people. Then we played at Newport, we went to the Apollo, we had really a nice period of time.

FRED Life Is A Many-Splendored Gig got a great rating in Downbeat.

BOUCHARD:

HERB It got five stars. It got up to be They used to have a box in DownBeat--DownBeat was every other week then--that would rate, DownBeat would call record stores around the country and they find about sales and they would rate the best selling jazz records. That record got up to around the fifth best selling record for a number of periods of two weeks. It was Errol Garner's Concert by the Sea or something. Shelly Manne and Andre Previn's My Fair Lady We were up there with that album!

FRED '57?

BOUCHARD:

HERB '57, '58. A number of disc jockeys across the country were using tunes off our record as the theme tune to their shows!

FRED Excellent, yeah.

BOUCHARD:

HERB POMEROY: So, we had a period of time there for about two years with this band. The guys were very loyal. The personnel stayed constant which allowed the band to get better, sacrificing a lot of other gigs they could be doing that would have paid more. What else did we do? In '59, the club started to do less business and the guys in the band, some of the younger guys, started going on the road with bands. We kept that band together for about a year until early '60. By the way, we should mention where this is a Berklee [unintelligible]. The band would have never existed without Berklee. The musicians that came into town were faculty members or professional-level students who became part of my band. The rehearsal facilities that Larry and Bob had provided me--all sorts of assistance I would get--the school had a great deal to do with it. Never would the personnel of the band have been able to be as strong as it was without some of the faculty members who came here. So, we kept the band together. About early '60, the handwriting was on the wall: the life of this band was about over. The real nail in the coffin was when Lennie Johnson left. Quincy came to town, 'cause Quincy and I had gone to school together here in '51, we were friends. We'd hang out together in New York when I was on the road with Hamp. He came to town, called me and said, "Herb, I'd like to take you out to dinner." He's not Quincy Jones then like he is now; he was just a kid then. I said, "Sure." So, he took me out to dinner and he said, "I'm forming a band." And the moment he said that, I knew why he had come to Boston, why he had taken me out to dinner.

FRED BOUCHARD: He was raiding you.

HERB POMEROY: He was. He said, "I appointed Clark Terry straw-boss to hire the band, and Clark says, 'If you want a jazz band, you got to have Lennie Johnson playing lead trumpet.'" And it was like my wife had just said "I want to divorce you" or something, I felt this knot here. [points to stomach] Lennie in our band was called "the king," it was a nickname. The lead trumpet player is like the concertmaster in the symphony orchestra; his time, his sound, his concept is what sets the way everybody plays. So, we kept the band for maybe six months after he left and it was never the same. I decided the only way to keep this thing going was to break this band up, write a whole new book--smaller band because business was down by then in 1960, so we formed a thirteen-piece band. And eventually Lennie came back off the road and played with that band. We kept that until '62, when the Jazz Workshop got knocked down; we used to go out when the ball hit the wall, where the Westin Hotel is is where the Workshop was. They extended the Mass Turnpike--the Turnpike used to end at 128, and the extension they started working on in '62, when they came downtown and knocked the building down. So, the band we formed in '60, the smaller band, we kept together for a few months after the Workshop closed. But once a band has known a regular two-night-a-week gig like that, you can't do two gigs a month and keep the spirit up. That was the period that Sam Rivers was with us. So in '63 we broke it up. That was that period's history of the band; I'm sorry it took so long.

FRED BOUCHARD: I remember the octet, too, that was another.

HERB POMEROY: Oh that was a wonderful: Wednesday nights. We would have the band on Tuesdays and Thursdays, the octet on Wednesdays, the quintet Friday, Saturday, and Sunday. And then Gene DiStasio and Sam Rivers had a quintet, and they'd do the off night, they'd work Monday. So there was a wonderful variety of music going on.

FRED BOUCHARD: You had a separate kind of, like a chamber book for the octet?

HERB Yeah, it was a different book, exactly.

POMEROY:

FRED You had a French horn in there?

BOUCHARD:

HERB No, we had trumpet, trombone, alto, tenor, and baritone. That was the Birth of the Cool band sort of thing, which
POMEROY: had a French horn, but we didn't have a French horn or a tuba. It was a good period, it really was. But you could see the handwriting on the wall then. In the fifties, the last half of the fifties, when we were in the Workshop and had the band going successfully, jazz music was the popular music of the day.

FRED True.

BOUCHARD:

HERB But you could begin to see in the first two or three years of the sixties, the downhill slide of the crowds coming
POMEROY: out to hear--the college guys and girls on their dates on the weekend aren't coming out to hear jazz, you know. Then we when get into all the other things that happened--the Beatles

FRED The rock 'n' roll emergence and all that. So, while all this was going on what was happening at Berklee in terms
BOUCHARD: of academics? Was the sociology of the time reflecting itself in the classroom?

HERB I don't know about the sociological part. But I do know that what Berklee became for a lot of us in Boston was a
POMEROY: place that we could hide out and we still do our music like we had been doing professionally in the fifties and early sixties. I used to call it "protected by the halls of education." I would say to the students that were writing these arrangements--that we would record with the Jazz in the Classroom albums--I'd say, "If we were out in the professional world, you could not write music like this. Nobody would pay you for it, nobody would take the time to record it."

FRED But the ball didn't hit this wall.

BOUCHARD:

HERB The ball kept growing around here.

POMEROY:

FRED It snowballed.

BOUCHARD:

HERB Yes, it really did. So, for a lot of us who were on the faculty, this is where we were able to keep our musical
POMEROY: principles active. We would still play in small group situations--the new Jazz Workshop, we'd play a week at a time. Charlie and I and Ray would have a quintet; we'd work for a week at a time. But there was no steady work like there was at the original Jazz Workshop.

FRED The downside of this is that it becomes institutionalized and ossified.

BOUCHARD:

HERB POMEROY: No question, it is a downside. But by that point, for myself, I was so deeply involved here and had built a lifestyle around income that a school like this could provide. It's very difficult in Boston to make a living as a musician unless you really teach and play--both. Maybe a member of the Symphony or a very, very active freelancer. If you're going to send your kids to college and have a decent home for your family, you've got to do both.

FRED BOUCHARD: At the Newport Jazz Festival last weekend, the honoree of the weekend was Roy Haynes, who's been celebrating his eightieth birthday around the world for the last six months. He started at Scullers, which I wrote about for DownBeat, and then he's continued internationally. He had a special little gig, which was enhanced by the surprise presence of Pat Metheny, who is a dear colleague of his, who loves to play, who happened to be nearby. So he and other former colleagues--Gary Burton, Christian McBride, and Chick Corea were all on the bandstand together. Backstage, I told Gary that we're going to be having this interview, and was there a question that he might ask you in retrospect. And he, as ever, speaking in complete paragraphs, said that--I'll try to summarize this as best as I can--that when he was a student of yours in 1959-60, he was impressed with your ability to direct and lead and teach principles of music, line-writing or whatever you were teaching at that time. But what really impressed him was your ability to verbalize the principles behind successful improvisation. And he said that you enumerated, or constantly reminded them, of things that would help their ability to jump off the music and go into private areas of their psyche and music. He said you were able to do this better than anybody he knew and that he was really thrilled--that was one of those things that he walked away from the classroom with that was strongest in his recollection. I didn't ask him if he could enumerate these things, although he might have been able to. But I'm asking you to try to recall what might have been on your mind.

HERB POMEROY: I cannot remember. I remember Gary vividly, he's a dear friend and associate and has been ever since the first day I ever met him. I remember that period when he was in school, I remember the classes he took with me and music he wrote for us, which is all extraordinary. I don't remember what I did say to him, it was this sort of magical word that he said that I said. I will direct an answer to what you're asking; it seems like it isn't direct but I think it is. The last few years that I taught here at Berklee full-time, the class--I just had one a week--I enjoyed most was a quintet, a small jazz quintet with two horns and three rhythm, the Jazz Workshop class. I enjoyed that more than the arranging classes I taught and more than the band rehearsals, because I felt somehow from all the years of teaching I've learned how Now I'm talking about the 1990s, whereas Gary was talking about the thirty years before that. I felt that in the 1990s that I had learned how to talk to people about the playing of jazz, not in a classroom approach at all. That's one of the things that got me back into this little bit of teaching that I'm doing now. I teach two hours at New England and four here, and it is small group jazz--a quintet--at each school that I do. I enjoy talking to people about the music of what they're playing--not just specifics, not the right notes and the wrong notes and "you're out of tune." I don't bring in any heads; we don't read anything. I will put a tune on the blackboard. I still, old-fashioned, chalk a tune on the board. They will all copy it and transpose it for their instrument. And some people will say, "Well, how come you don't bring it in on a printed sheet of music?" Because they're of the present time and I'm of the past time. And I'll say, "Because I think that we learn something about a tune while we are actually writing it with our own hand." I'll say things like that. But I comment upon the person's voice, as being a vitally important thing, I comment upon the curve of the melodic lines that they just played, the ups and the downs. I talk about a solo having a construction to it, whether there is a primary point of climax and the secondary points of climax. I talk about the drama of playing, I talk about the space between phrases. I tell them to listen to Miles recording of Funny Valentine, and I talk about how Miles will leave you for bars with nothing so you get so excited about "What's he gonna do when he comes in?" rather than just Coltrane-forever-type playing

FRED BOUCHARD: It's the notes you leave out.

HERB POMEROY: It's the notes you don't play that matter. Your spontaneous ability to edit while crossing the stream, and these kind of things. I don't talk about: "That was supposed to be an F-sharp, you're too loud, you're too flat," you get that in other places, I hope.

FRED BOUCHARD: Maybe that's what Gary was talking about.

HERB POMEROY: OK, well, if this is what Gary was talking about, well, then I'm still doing the same stuff. I must say I will have students at both schools say to me, "Nobody has talked to me like this. A lot of the teachers just bring me all their hot new tunes and show me their hot licks." And I ain't out there to teach people my hot licks, 'cause they aren't very hot anymore.

FRED BOUCHARD: Well, maybe it needs to be said again, Herb.

HERB POMEROY: If that's what I said to Gary thirty-five or forty-five years ago Gary who?

FRED BOUCHARD: I've just been reading Lush Life, the Billy Strayhorn biography. I'm intrigued by the dynamic between Strayhorn and Ellington when they would have their writing sessions.

HERB POMEROY: Oh, yeah, by phone across the country!

FRED BOUCHARD: However they did it. How did you manage to parse Ellington's book and come up with your Ellington class? Why did you do it? Why is he so important?

HERB POMEROY: Well, he's so important because I still don't know what he's doing. Most all other big band writing-- after I taught here twenty years and had my own band for twenty years, if my hand was fast enough I could write down what they were doing in the writing. I still don't know a lot of Duke's things. The way the course came to be: he won a DownBeat award. In the lobby of the old Newbury Street school, they used to have a little trophy case where the winner of each year's DownBeat musician of the year award would be placed. Louis Armstrong won it one year, Billie Holiday; well, the year that Duke Ellington won it, they wanted to present it to Duke here. He came to Boston, so Larry Berk said, "Let's play some Ellington music downstairs in the ensemble room for him." So I said, "Okay." In the weeks leading up to it, I got my student arrangers and said, "What we're gonna do, we're not going to play 'Take the A Train,' we're not going to play 'Mood Indigo.' We're gonna write original music in the style of Duke. I think that will show more respect to him than if we just play an arranged rewrite of his tune. We're gonna write original music in the style of the Ellington music. So we had four or five students write four or five tunes. We played them and he loved it. And he loved the idea that we didn't play "Take the A Train" and "Sophisticated Lady." Larry Berk said, this is about '57 or so, "Create a course and teach that." So, the students and I together learned about Duke from a lot of record listening and this course I had. I had a lot of help from Tom Whaley. Do you know who Tom Whaley is? He's the man that copied all. I picture him as a little guy in the back room chained to a table. Strayhorn and Duke would bring their scores to him and he would copy the individual parts. But legend has it that often Strayhorn and Duke would come in with only lead lines, and he would do all the up and down vertical scoring! So, he helped me. I came to know him and I would write to him: "Can you help me? I can't figure this [unintelligible] out." And he'd scribble little things for me. So, he was very helpful. And that's how it came to be, because we did this little mini concert for Duke.

FRED BOUCHARD: Wow. While we've still got a minute or two left, how else--and that was a great example--did Larry Berk impact the soul and direction of this school?

HERB POMEROY: His vision, his willingness to put a second mortgage on his home to meet faculty payroll. Bob Share borrowed two thousand dollars from his mother one summer to meet the faculty payroll, the last payrolls before the tuition came in. I mean, imagine that! I told Roger that one, he loved that, Roger Brown. His vision-- John LaPorta had a marvelous way of putting it. This is not meant as a criticism of Lee, because I think Lee did a glorious job here. John said, you go into Larry Berk's office and you need something, you want something to do with the school--not something as selfish as a raise, something for the school. And Larry says, "Come in, I'm gonna show you the blueprints." And Larry shows him the blueprints of his vision. You'd leave the room not having got what you want but feeling marvelous. You'd go in to see Lee, and you want something, and Lee would give it to you, and you'd leave the room and you'd have what you want but you'd feel terrible. Now that's not a criticism--Lee was marvelous. Larry and Lee were both right for their time. Larry would say, "I'll lock the door, I'll put a padlock on the door before I let them unionize the faculty." Lee was younger and of a different time and saw that it had to be, things of that nature. Their family and Alma, too; they were marvelous--as evidenced by what they have created here.

FRED BOUCHARD: Sure. Let's take a forward look. You talked about the importance of the international world community. Jazz has trickled down from America all through the world. Now it's coming back to us in waves. What does this say about the future of jazz?

HERB POMEROY: Ooh, I'm gonna strike out, I think, on this one. I'm worried about the future. But I'm not gonna blame it on people from other countries or our musicians. I think it's just music will never, never die; it's too beautiful. But the world's appreciation and acceptance of it is[Gestures downward]

FRED BOUCHARD: I think it's mutated and that it's evolving still.

HERB POMEROY: Oh it is. I hope so.

FRED BOUCHARD: It's what Gunther Schuller called world music. The "third stream" is now a tidal wave.

HERB POMEROY: Very good. But, speaking of the other countries, you hear some magnificent jazz. My last ten years, I go into Europe a lot and the players are superb. They weren't fifty, sixty years ago. They were copies of what went on here. There's some marvelous playing.

FRED BOUCHARD: They've changed it for their own national purposes.

HERB POMEROY: It's great.

FRED BOUCHARD: Italy's the best example for me. Herb thanks so much. Let's do volume two

HERB POMEROY: Volume two, after another forty years of teaching here.

FRED No, no, we'll do it next year. Thanks a lot, this is great.

BOUCHARD:

HERB My pleasure Fred, I enjoyed it.

POMEROY: