

**RALPH ROSEN:** ...Here and there, and just ask a question or something like that. It'll be more you than me, 'cause you know the story, you know. So it'll be pretty easy.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Or wherever you wanted to go.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, I might want you to do a little bit of detail on your experience with Woody and Tristano and Mingus, and as a teacher. I might ask you a question like, you told me once, John, that when you improvise, and you're really having a good time, you feel like a little kid, and that when you teach your students, you want them to kind of feel that way, and you say, "Feel like a little kid as you're playing"...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, I didn't use that expression. "Feel like someone that's watching someone else play."

**RALPH ROSEN:** Oh, yeah...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And my subconscious is really doing it, and I'm just kind of watching it.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Other people like Kenny Werner...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Gary Burton's talked about that. Well, Kenny Werner, he's saying the same thing.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, yeah. And it's a good thing to elaborate on, and you know, the business of trying to get that across to young students who are learning that stuff, because they're so involved with the formalized aspect of it. Learning their scales, learning how to play their instrument, and so forth. And then there's this other thing that kicks in after you get some of that internalized, and that's something that you can, you know, talk about in terms of, you know...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah they're two different things. One doesn't happen because the other one has been worked on.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah. True.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** They're kinda separate.

**RALPH ROSEN:** You're talking about the technical aspect--learning intellectually...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah. Get into it a little.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, yeah. We'll... okay. Okay, well, you know what I'm gonna do is get a little glass of water. Would you like one?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Okay. [gets water] Well, John LaPorta, I'd like to welcome you to the friends' lounge. It's really a thrill to do this first interview with you, as someone who grew up in the bebop era, and recorded and performed with some of the real key figures of it and then became a very committed educator, doing a lot of education even before you started working at Berklee, which I guess was 1962, is that when you started?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I started here at 1962. I started teaching fairly full-time in 1948.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow. Where was that?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** In New York. Started in a place called Parkway Music Institute. In Brownsville.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Well, your whole take on what music means to you and what your experiences and how you communicate to that to students over the years is something I'd love to get into, and I'd also love to kind of take it from the top as far as how you got interested in music originally growing up in... Philly?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, Philadelphia. I started playing clarinet when I was eight-and-a-half years old. My father always wanted to take up an instrument and couldn't handle work, you know. Took up the guitar as a barber, and then figured he'd practice when there was no customers in there, and the boss soon put a stop to that.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Haha, he played a guitar, was it? What did he play?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** He was trying to, but he never had a chance to. So he asked me if I was interested in it, and I said I'd take a crack at it. That was the start of it, you know. So I studied clarinet for a while, and then I started picking up the saxophone when I was eleven or twelve. And I was playing in a German concert band, small concert band, and like summer picnics. In those days, it was like a German band, about twenty-eight, thirty pieces. And we'd play a concert about an hour, especially summertime, you know, parks and stuff like that.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Sure.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And after the concert, they would clear the chairs away, and then the band would play dance music, which was German waltzes and polkas and stuff like that.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Thirty guys. Thirty musicians. It's like a double big band.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, well, you know, I'm talking about 1930-1931.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So, they...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Charts? Were there things to read?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh yeah. Yeah, there was no... that group there was no faking, no improvising.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Except when a person got lost and had to find themselves.

**RALPH ROSEN:** [Laughs]

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So I did a bunch of studying with different teachers and that kind of thing and wound up in a very good... I transferred from high school to a place called Mastbaum Vocational School, which turned out to be the best place in the public school system in Philadelphia for musicians. The two best music teachers in the whole system. So it seemed like everyone found out about it almost at the same time, like Buddy DeFranco went there, and Red Rodney, people like that. And some great classical players. Arnold Jacobs, I don't know whether you know that name, considered for many years the greatest tuba player in the world.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow, before Harvey Phillips came along.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Violinist and everything else. Harvey may have studied with him. He's a great teacher also.

**RALPH ROSEN:** That's the guy when I think of classical tuba I tend to... that's about as far as I go back.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** He's the guy from the Chicago Symphony. He was with the Chicago Symphony for years.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Arnold?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, really, okay.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And I wound up going on the road with small groups for about three years or so, and then I wound up with... well, I played Buddy Williams, which is a big band from Philadelphia that I had. Bill Harris was in it. Irv Kluger, I don't know if you know that name.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Drummer? Sure.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So and then from there, I went to Bob Chester's, and Woody Herman.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Now Bob Chester was in the early forties, right?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, I was with him late 1941. I was with him for a couple years.

**RALPH ROSEN:** How would that've compared to Woody's band that you got into a few years later?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, Bob Chester along with several other bands, Hal McIntyre and bands like that, were sort of like grade B bands, you know. And they were a feeder band for the real top bands. As a matter of fact, Benny Goodman came along and took the whole trombone section like Bill Harris and a fellow by the name of Al Mastren, a wonderful trombone player.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Hm.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So the band would be very good at times, and then, you know, they'd raid the band and they would have to get other young players.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** But it was a very good training experience.

**RALPH ROSEN:** It was swing-type music.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, yeah. It was a good band. And we did two or three of the Coca-Cola shows with Bob...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Bob Chester Van Damme.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Oh, great.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Unfortunately, I was playing with a band during an almost two-year interim when there was a record strike, so... no recordings of the band.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Oh, that's too bad. And then Woody's band, was that in the mid-forties?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, I was with the band from September '44 to when it broke up just before Christmas in '46.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And then he broke up to go home and mend some fences, you know. He was on the road so much, and he needed to get his family straight. And the business was changing then. Several bands, times had changed. Record business was really starting to take off. There wasn't the incentive--and then television was starting--there wasn't the incentive to drive a hundred miles to see a live band, you know, that sort of thing. And quite a few bands broke up around that time. He broke up for family reasons, whereas the band was still doing well. But it was really the end of the period for...

**RALPH ROSEN:** The real raging big band period.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah. And vocalists were taking over.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And then TV made it very comfortable for people to stay home, you know. Should not have to go out. That sort of thing.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Just like renting videos does that today. It keeps people from the movie theaters, you know. I believe Basie... did he do something like that? Around that time, did he kind of go to a seven-piece band or something like that?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Woody did. Woody had a small band for a whole year, and then he started up the Four Brothers band, and then either in November or December of '47. He had that band for about a year. Jimmy Dorsey and Tommy Dorsey's band both broke up then. A whole bunch of bands.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Late forties or early fifties, kind of in that period?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, no, right at the end of '46, the beginning of '47. There was a... I forget what, a cold strike, there was a lot of problems. And there was a real change then. It was really the end of an era, you know, where the bands were the new thing. Prior to that time, the singers were part of the band scene. The instrumental thing was a big thing, and then the singers became a dominant force in the entertainment business.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And also, the music was changing. You know, jazz was starting to separate itself and become a real art form. Separated from...

**RALPH ROSEN:** With the bebop...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** ...from where people could dance, you know. Benny Goodman, they could still dance to the music.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So, there was that kind of compatibility.

**RALPH ROSEN:** People didn't dance to the small group stuff that Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie and Thelonious Monk were...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** No, no. Changed.

**RALPH ROSEN:** ...giving birth to. Yeah, that stuff was...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So there were a whole bunch of factors that came in. The recordings, you know. TV. The times themselves.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And the changing... also the changing characteristics of the times. It was very close to the time when... it wasn't too much later than that till the Beatles came in the picture.

**RALPH ROSEN:** The Beatles, would... well, let's see. Beatles started in the sixties. The Beatles really came in in like '63, '64.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Really? I thought they were sooner than that.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, the Beatles were definitely sixties. They kind of really set the stage for what popular music in the sixties was gonna be with these small rock bands...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well the other thing is, there was a big change in what happened in society, because of the Second World War. The Second World War had opened up avenues that were not available to them. I know we played in a place in Dayton, Ohio--Lance's Merry-Go-Ground Bar. That place was packed! Most of them were sailors and stuff like that... and girls...

**RALPH ROSEN:** With Woody?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** No. With Buddy...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Buddy Williams?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Buddy Williams, yeah. Before the Woody years.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Oh, yeah. Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Woody was at the tail end of the war, when I was with him.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And prior to that time, people... women didn't go into bars. The only time they went any place other than when they went to very good hotels if they had the money... or they went to church affairs, church dances, that kind of thing, you see. So it was really a very closed-type society. But after this time, or during the war, at the very end of it--I can't remember the fellow's name in Philadelphia--his family had a wine company close to Atlantic City, New Jersey. I can't think of his name right now... he actually invented the lounge. He created the lounge. The lounge made it more sensible for women to come in, men to come in, and so forth.

**RALPH ROSEN:** A woman could come by herself.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And he had a whole bunch of them in Philadelphia. As a matter of fact, I played in a place for about three or four months, called the Twentieth Century Lounge. And they had continuous music there, and they had blue laws there, but he seemed to be able to circumvent them, and have music going on till two, three in the morning, you know...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Live music.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Live music. Continuous.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow. That's great.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And I was there with Dennis Sandole, who was a great musician who taught Coltrane and Art Farmer and people like that. Brecker Brothers. And, when we got off the stand, the Nat King Cole Trio came on, see, and this was before Nat was a serious singer. He was doing novelty songs, singing, you know. But they had a very good trio.

**RALPH ROSEN:** So you got to hear that trio.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow, I'm jealous [laughs]. That's something I'd love to hear, 'cause he was really playing.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I'm even more, you know, feel even greater about the fact that I had a chance to play with Dennis Sandole for a few months, you know. Because he was way ahead of his time.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah. And then when did you settle in New York, originally?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, while I was with Woody's band, after we left Bob Chester's band, my wife married me shortly before I left Chester's band. We settled in New York. We got an apartment there. In east New York, actually. And we had it all the time. We were on the road, so when the band was heading in town part of the time, would stay home, you know. There was our home base. So when Woody's band broke up, I put my card into New York and stayed there. And in 1947 I didn't play much, but I did a lot of practicing, and I was studying with Lennie Tristano. And toward the end of that year did a recording with him on Keynote. Harry Lim, I think, was there. Name of the producer, the guy who owned the company.

**RALPH ROSEN:** We gotta see if we can find that.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I think they're around

**RALPH ROSEN:** Your work with Tristano that you recorded.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, and I think we did three or four pieces.

**RALPH ROSEN:** What instruments did you play on...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Just clarinet.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Just clarinet.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** No, I don't think there were any drums. I think it was just bass, guitar, piano, and clarinet.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Tristano, at least to me, when I hear him play and I hear the records that he did with guys like Lee Konitz and Warne Marsh, and so forth, I relate that music to coming out of that time period and sounding at least more like bebop than any other type of thing. Especially Tristano's piano playing. As he was obviously considered a real legendary teacher of how to improvise, and it just knocks me out that you're one of the people that performed with him and studied with him. Can you give us some sense of his, Tristano's, what he had to teach. What made him kind of distinctive as a conceiver of jazz improvisation?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I met Lennie in Chicago. He came down to one of those rare rehearsals that Woody's band had, shortly before we broke up, actually. And he brought a piece of music there. And, I guess Chubby had brought him.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Jackson?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** To the band. They had met and...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right. From Woody's band.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** He brought him there. And Lennie wanted to know who the third alto player was because the band wasn't known to be great readers, and he knew I was reading. Of course, you know Lennie is blind, so he depends upon his ear and he kinda had a fabulous memory.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah. Must've.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Tremendous memory. So he was really taken with my playing, so he wanted to meet me, and we got to know each other. And he moved to New York shortly after that, and then of course I was in New York, so we got to meet and we were friends. And when I studied with him, I was supposed to be pretty much a peer. I was older than him, and I had much more experience. But he was very strong and a very charismatic man. I know that some of the Lennie students probably may take outrage at what I'm saying, but it was very cultish-like in its quality. People very rarely left that. It didn't need to be, but it's a funny thing about cliques and cults like that. There's a charismatic person, and people who don't feel comfortable trying to find their own way look for this umbrella protection, and it isn't that.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, right. It wasn't meant to be that.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Pseudo... it's a pseudo thing. And then they give up all responsibility of their own particular creative soul, and the problem is it becomes a dance where the guru does the dance to please them, so nobody's really... everybody becomes a prisoner.

**RALPH ROSEN:** They're not really developing their own individual ways of looking at it. They're just kind of following.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And what he was--well, first of all, as a teacher he was totally negative, you know, in terms of... He'd come in, write something, bring it in, and couldn't play it, you know. And then of course he was blind, and hear you mess it up, and then he would make these pontifical statements about what was going on when he hadn't really heard it.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** See, so I didn't feel... I didn't, well, it was a great experience for me, because I went through being really torn up and bugged with it, but it was good for me to learn, you know. Like, Lee asked me, a whole bunch later...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Konitz.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah. In 1958, I was at Newport with the International Youth Band, and Herb Pomeroy's band was playing there, and I flipped out when I heard the band. I thought it was the best thing there those four days. So I went down, and I didn't know Herb, and that was my first time meeting him. I went backstage and wanted to meet him and Lee Konitz was back there. So I got to talk and I said, "How you doin', Lee?" and he said, "Oh, well, I'm studying with Lennie," and I said, "Still? How long has it been?" "Well fourteen years," I said, "Well, do you still need to study with him?" He said, "Well, you learned a lot from him." I said, "Yeah, I learned never to be bugged by anybody."

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs]

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Not in my life, that was a big thing for me. You know, see, this was the kind of thing that was going on. He had a great deal of talent. He didn't want people to be... He didn't want them to listen to older music, he disassociated himself from bebop music.

**RALPH ROSEN:** From the bebop music?!

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, he did! Very successfully.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Did he put down the bebop music?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, he wanted to find his own voice.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And the bebop music was made principally by Black musicians.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Afro-Americans. And he disassociated with it, in terms of the rhythm section. He got into long lines, melodic lines, which is not what bebop is, I mean sometimes the lines are long, but the discursive, they're like boxers. I mean Bird is like a boxer, a great featherweight boxer who can throw punches from all directions all over the place, all kind of odd times and everything else, you know. This is what makes the music so vital, and you don't hear that in Lennie's music. I mean, it was a product of that time, but it disassociated itself from that.

**RALPH ROSEN:** It's interesting, because...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And my feeling of it was that it was like building a house on sand, 'cause you gotta have roots. And he did have roots, you know, I mean, his...

**RALPH ROSEN:** To me his roots were the forties!

**JOHN LAPORTA:** His main influence was the great Black pianist, the blind pianist...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, like Tatum, I would think...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Tatum! Tatum. Art Tatum. Oh, he could play verbatim, Tatum's solos.



**RALPH ROSEN:** Well, he had tremendous technique, Tristano, just unbelievable. But I didn't realize that he was trying to disassociate himself from bebop, because what I've heard him play I thought was very... wasn't exactly like bebop, but was taking quite a bit from it, just in terms of how he phrased, and the kind of tunes that he would play. I know that he was playing obviously much longer lines than you would hear from a bebop guy...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I don't get that. In terms of--I mean, he was into like five-beat phrases and stuff like that, which was not... He was into much more--the music sounds a lot more White-oriented to me.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Mmhmm. Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And he couldn't stand for any drummer to play.

**RALPH ROSEN:** This I've heard many times, yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah. I mean the drummers had to really play a minor role, and that's not true in bebop. The drummer became a dominant force. Max Roach, you know, changed radically the way drummers played, you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Sure. Dropping bombs, and using...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And not playing using the foot on one and three, this kind of thing, you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, right. I'm surprised that some of the Tristano recordings that I've seen actually have Roy Haynes playing on some of it. 'Cause he's such a powerful...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, but they tried to get him down as much as possible.

**RALPH ROSEN:** He must have told Roy to do that.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh yeah, I know. And Lee actually doesn't like to play out. He loves to practice. He was here one time doing a clinic, and I caught him at the end of it, and he says, "Can we play some place?" I said, "Well, I've got a class. Come on in, we'll play there." Because he had to leave, I said, "Well, I can play with you afterward," but he had to make a flight out of town, so I said, "Well, come to the class, and we'll play there." We did, and there was Danny, a wonderful alto player in the school then, I can't think of his last name...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Danny Walsh?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Danny Walsh.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, I remember Danny, sure.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And I collected him and the three of us played. Two altos and clarinet.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Whew!

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Two hours. And Danny was... Danny could have played so great, but he was so in awe of Lee that he pulled his horns, and you know, couldn't play anywhere near like he could. But we had a ball, and at the end of it, Lee said, "This was fun!" He said, "Man, this is what I like." He says, "I hate going out and playing with rhythm sections." I know why! You see, that's a problem that you can get into because I did one summer. Practiced five hours a day and hadn't played with any rhythm section, and I was in great shape on the clarinet, probably the best ever. And then I went out to play on a session, figuring I'm gonna really smoke, and I was completely out of sync! But having had the experiences that I had, I realized what it was. It wasn't them, it was me. I had bit my own time. If you play by yourself, you get into your time, and when you play with other people, nobody owns the time. There's a kind of consensual agreement as to where the time is.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Exactly.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And the time is somewhere between you, and you all without saying a word agree that that's where it's going to be. If you don't, you can't work together. Lee didn't like George Mraz, and I can't believe that. George is the greatest player I've ever played with.

**RALPH ROSEN:** I know they recorded together.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And George told me that Lee didn't like him either.

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs]

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So I heard it from both ends, you know. And that's incredible, because I don't know what...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Since then he's gone on to record with--Konitz has recorded with rhythm sections a number of times, and it sounds great.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh yeah, well he does it because, you know, making a living makes it necessary, you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** We have a video of Lee...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** But see he's a practice-o-phile. I don't know whether that word ever existed before...

**RALPH ROSEN:** [Laughs] It does now.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** He'd practice six or eight hours a day. I remember in Levittown when he was quite young and had just moved to New York. We were the next town there, and the postman came by and he says, "Do you know this man?" Now he had three or four kids by his first wife, and he says, "He's standing there practicing all day, and the kids are playing all over the place." He says, "The house is a shambles, and he's practicing." And I knew who he was talking about. He was talking about Lee Konitz.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, sure. We have a video of Lee, and it's not anything that he did here. We have that too, we have a clinic that he did a few years ago, this is probably when you were talking to him that time. But we have a video of Lee. It's called Portrait of the Artist [as a] Saxophonist, I think is the name of the video. And when he does--he does a little bit of explaining. It's a film of him doing a performance and a clinic, and it's just him and Harold Danko on piano. Just the two of them. No rhythm section, and that seems to be indicative of some of the settings that he would prefer.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh yeah.

**RALPH ROSEN:** I know that he's recorded things with bass and piano and him and no drums.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** About three years ago, I went out to the West Coast and did a big band thing and one of the special projects they had was to do some of Lennie's music and transcriptions of Lee's solos for a thirteen-piece band.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Now that was somethin' else, because it did something for the music. Great players, you had to be. I'm telling you I got into some heavy practicing for it because the heads were really quite difficult, technically. I mean, Warne Marsh was the person I was subbing for, which was something else because I thought, in my mind, he was probably the most underrated tenor player in the country, you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Very individual voice.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And really, like Bach, he could improvise and just go and go and go, you know. And I think Lennie did him a disservice. He really treated him very poorly. I think he was afraid of him.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Really? Wow.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Just too much...

**RALPH ROSEN:** You're shedding a very interesting light on Tristano and his relationship with the people that were close to him and so forth, and some of his philosophies, negative or positive.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** See, Lee needed Lennie. Lee was not as talented as Warne, you know, in terms of innate creative ability. Didn't have the ear. I mean, we did a demo with Lennie when the two of them came to town, and they were both really around sixteen, seventeen years old at the time. We went into a recording studio and he had us all write heads on standard tune changes. And, well, when Lee read, he read okay, but he didn't play in sync like Warne did. When Warne played my head, it was like Warne and I had been playing together all our lifetime, you know. And his solo playing was that way, too. There were two people I didn't like following, and they were both on the same Metronome All-Star record, and that was Lester Young and Warne Marsh.

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs]

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I was on the thing and I said, "Well I don't wanna follow Warne after that." He played a chorus--it was like Bach, really--just went and went, you know like one of the fugues, it just keeps going like a water fountain.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah. And idea after idea.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh, just flow, you know, incredible.

**RALPH ROSEN:** No repeating. Well, that's really... you're shedding some really interesting light, like I say, on that whole school of thought.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, it's my impression, you know. And I went through several scenes with Lennie. Warne and I, we used to talk. He said, "Well, he's changed. You gotta see him." I said, "Well, I've got to see him." He goes, "I left him, and I need closure." So I did say we had a wonderful afternoon, two or three hours we talked, and then he finally says, "I don't know why you left. Why did you leave?" I said, "Well, I felt like you were playing God. You were always right. You were never wrong. Even about my instrument, that sort of thing." He said, "Well, John, you're very strong." I said, "Thank you for the compliment. I think I am, too, but I've been known to admit to being wrong. I don't like to admit to being wrong, but I've been known to do so." I said, "I've never heard you do that." And he said, "Well, I guess we better go our own individual ways." So that was closure for me.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, yeah. Wow. So when did you meet Mingus? Or how did that happen?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, Bill Coss, who was at school here for about three or four years. was the other real...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Student?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh, no. He worked under Alma Berk.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Oh, wow.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, he was editor for Metronome Jazz. Metronome was like DownBeat, a jazz magazine. And he got this idea for creating a jazz composers' workshop, and Mingus lived across the hall from him, and so he called me up, and they got a nucleus of people together, and we started working with that combination. It was in 1952, somewhere like that. We did three concerts that were about eighteen months' time. I think Mingus missed one. He went down to Miami and played with Art Tatum for a while, so he missed one of the concerts.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow. I didn't know he played with Tatum.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** But, I was the musical director of it, and it was just such a burden.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Really.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I found myself not being able to spend the time to play the music because I was so busy taking care of everybody else's music, you know, that sort of thing. So after the third one... the unfortunate thing is the last concert, I think Bill had talked to Savoy Records about recording it, and they came down to record it, but the union came down at the end of it and insisted that the musicians who had to get recording scale for the entire concert, which would have been prohibitive amount of money. It was still, you know--stereo wasn't available, they didn't have multi-track recording, so there was always a good possibility that the records wouldn't be good enough to come out. So they backed off, so unfortunately, there was no record in existence of this group outside of about three writeups, you know. And all the elite in New York came to the concerts. Contemporary classical composers, Henry Brant, people like that. So they were really very successful in that light. And they were great for me because we tried everything, you know, and some things worked, some things didn't. It was a great experimental and great learning period for me. It was an opportunity to develop confidence in trying things out, not being afraid of the consequences.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Both as composers and arrangers and as improvisers.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Composer-players, they were made of them.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Composer-players.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Practically all composer-players with the exception of Lou Nocci. And after the third one, I said, "Look, I've had it. If somebody else wants to be the musical director, that's fine with me." Because nobody wanted to be, it was a hectic job getting these different characters...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, together. Under the same roof.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Ted, the vibe player, Ted...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Cohen? Teddy Charles?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Teddy Charles would have a desk on the stage and was still writing his music while we were performing. To give you an idea of the kinds of things that were going on. So a month later, Mingus called me and said, "Look, I've got a record date for Savoy. Would you like to make it?" I said, "Sure." I went there and the nucleus of the jazz composers' workshop was there. That was the records that we made called the Charles Mingus Jazz Workshop. Recordings that became really quite famous.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Who was on that? Teo?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Teo Macero...

**RALPH ROSEN:** On tenor.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Myself. Thad Jones was on one of them, I think--I'm not sure whether...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Even Clem De Rosa, did Clem De Rosa play on...?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Clem was on the second one.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Drums?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I can't remember who the drummer was on the first one.

**RALPH ROSEN:** And was Eddie Bert the trombonist on some of that? Any of that?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I don't think so. I think he was on a thing we did later.

**RALPH ROSEN:** I know he played some of Mingus' music somewhere along the line. I thought he might have--

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh, I gotta tell you a story about Mingus. Eddie Burton was there. This was a Monday night at Birdland, and Mingus had gotten a group together, and I was the alto player. I was playing alto then. And Eddie Burton was the trombone player. And the rhythm section was made up of Mingus, Kenny Clarke on drums, and Kenny Drew, Sr.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Not bad.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh, the first set was out of sight. Whew! And Mingus was so high, after the set he said, "We gotta keep this group together!" And he says, "Can you imagine if it sounds good after one set, how would it sound a year after playing together?!" And Eddie Burton, his New York style and out of the side of his mouth says, "We'll see," you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs]

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So the second set was quite a change.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Oh, really?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** During that time, in the fifties, it became fashionable for drummers to play--to start occasionally and enter at a fast tune and set the tempo at really breakneck speed.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And then laugh at the bass player because he couldn't make it, you know. This was a game that the rhythm sections were playing, see. So Mingus had practiced at home with a metronome so that he could play at any tempo conceivable. And Kenny Clarke never liked to play fast. Kenny owned down tempos. I don't know of anyone that played down tempos any better than Kenny did. I mean, you could throw the key away. Ten hours later, it's still swinging, you know...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right where it was when it started.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Right where it was, you know. But he didn't like getting into those very way-up tempos. So Mingus says, "Look, I'll take the intro." And he went, "ding ding ding ding ding ding ding ding!" [gestures] Like this, like a machine gun, you know. And Kenny Clarke whipped around, "Oh, yeah?" You know, so he turned his drumsticks around so he's playing with the heads of his drumsticks, you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Uh oh.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And Mingus turned around and heard that, and he turns his amp up, see. So by the end of the night, the thing is like reverberating the place, you know...

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs]

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And Eddie Burton turns around and he says, "Yeah, can you imagine if we played together for a whole year?"

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs] Oh, wow. So how long were you involved with him, with Mingus?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Off and on for eight years.

**RALPH ROSEN:** No kidding? Wow.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Teo broke a lot of.--Teo was into atonal writing. He had studied with Henry Braham and stuff, and he was doing all kinds of experimental writing. And he had a lot of connections--we were playing art museums. Baltimore, we played the Fine Arts, in fact. I think they had a Henry Brock showing there. It was all this contemporary art there. We were playing and people were walking in. One of the first times I think they ever had any jazz in there. Mingus and me and Teo. So we were doing these kind of things off and on, and various things Mingus did, too, you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** So when you played with Mingus, the music that you played, was it mainly things that he wrote, or were there other things that other people were contributing at that point?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, I wrote some of the music. Two or three of the things on that album was an arrangement on "Stormy Weather" I had written for Lou Mucci. As I had a group together and I was rehearsing all the time. And Thad wound up recording it on there. And then there were two pieces, one was called "The Spur of the Moment." This was on the second date. We had run out of material and they needed another piece. I just wrote the line real quick on the date. As a matter of fact, Thad had to go on another record date, and you don't hear him at the end of the piece. You only hear him play the head at the beginning, and then he plays a solo, and he's gone.

**RALPH ROSEN:** As you're recording it, he's leaving. [laughs]

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So, and for years I never got credit for them, but they finally sprang that up.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Is all that stuff available commercially? The work that you did with Mingus?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yeah, Fantasy has the whole debut.

**RALPH ROSEN:** That's right! We have that whole debut thing.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And I recorded... I recorded--Mingus had me record my quintet for his company. On their first album, which was a very experimental one. Quite a successful one.

**RALPH ROSEN:** We have that debut thing.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** "Fluid Drive" on there. "The Old Man's Touch" is a slow piece for a friend of mine. His wife had had a child die at childbirth, so it's about that.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Wow. Well, we have in the Media Center that whole debut. They put out a huge box set, like the complete debut recordings.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** On CDs?

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah. So this makes me wanna go down and check out the stuff that he did with--

**JOHN LAPORTA:** How many CD's are there?

**RALPH ROSEN:** I can't remember exactly how many, but it's about maybe eight or nine...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I figured it'd be eight or nine.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, I mean it includes--

**JOHN LAPORTA:** But I don't think it has all the takes on it, because they called me on that, and I think "Fluid Drive" is on there, and--

**RALPH ROSEN:** That's a piece that you wrote that you did with--

**JOHN LAPORTA:** That's off my quintet album. And that album got five stars and an "A" rating from Metronome and was picked as one of the ten best records of the year. The only problem is Mingus only produced 1300 records, so it became a collector's item.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Do you have it at home?

**JOHN LAPORTA:**No.

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs] Somebody's got the master tapes.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**I know some student came around about eight or ten years ago, and he had bought the record in one of the used stores, you know. And I think he paid seventy-five bucks for it then.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Whew. And the name of the record?

**JOHN LAPORTA:**The John LaPorta Quintet.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Well, we'll have to see what was put on that debut box set downstairs.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**And also he had something else that's come out with... one of my duets is on there, "Chance Acquaintance," and two other pieces. Someone told me--that's where I was going to go when you called me, but I missed it because I haven't had a chance all summer to go over to Tower Music and check it out.

**RALPH ROSEN:** You don't know what the name of the record or the recording is that your piece is on now that was--now that it's been...

**JOHN LAPORTA:**I don't know whether that's on a--I don't know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah. We'll have to get a hold of that and get it in the collection down in the Media Center. In case it's not in the debut box set. So you were with Mingus eight years...

**JOHN LAPORTA:**It'd be good for you to let me know what is there, you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Well, I'll do that today. That's no problem. That's easy. 'Cause that debut thing has Paul Bley's first album on it, you know, because he was interested in...

**JOHN LAPORTA:**Spaulding Givens. I don't know whether you remember that...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Pianists. Yeah, worked with--did they have a group, him and Mingus? Spaulding Givens and Mingus worked together, they had a group called the something Strings or something like that?

**JOHN LAPORTA:**Yeah.

**RALPH ROSEN:** It was like a drummerless group, I think. It was the two of them and maybe one other person.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**Yeah, there were all different kinds of combinations. There was also a young composer and he wrote ballet music with cello and that kind of thing.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**And I had that at home. I don't know whether--there's no improvising on it. It's all written. It's a jazz-oriented piece.

**RALPH ROSEN:** That's really something. So, when you were with Mingus, you had already done some teaching. 'Cause you started teaching in 1948, am I right?

**JOHN LAPORTA:**Yup.



**RALPH ROSEN:** So, what kind of teaching were you doing in the fifties in New York while you were busy playing with Mingus and doing other things?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, I was at this institute for, well, till about '51, I was there.

**RALPH ROSEN:** What's the name of this institute?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Oh, I can't think of it now.

**RALPH ROSEN:** In New York.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Parkway Institute.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Parkway Institute.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** In Brownsville. East New York. And the G.I. Bill had happened, and a lot of people that had been in the service were going back to schools to kind of get their chops together and everything else. So I did a lot of experimenting, and I got a lot of teaching experience, which came in handy when I came up here. 'Cause I was teaching classes there and really enjoying that. Outside of that I was teaching privately in New York at my own private teaching scene going on. But I did a lot of experimenting like new ear training classes and stuff like that, you know.

**RALPH ROSEN:** So that really, by the time you started--how did you hook up with Berklee? You started here in '62...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, in early '62, the summer of '62. No, I started in the summer of '62. Summer of '61, Bob Share was at the jazz camps. Stan Kenton jazz camps. And I was getting disenchanted with teaching privately. I felt like a musical psychiatrist. And I had done it for quite a few years by then, and I was really interested in--and also I felt, in terms of what was going on in New York, what I was doing was spending more and more time teaching to keep my family going, and then had less and less time to do these creative things I wanted to do and felt like it was shrinking, in terms of what I could do. Possibilities for me. So I wanted to get away from there and into more of a group, or into a college-level type teaching situation. So, I was talking with Bob Share and mentioned it, and he says, "Are you interested?" He said, "Look, we'll give you a call. I'll talk to Larry Berk and give you a call about it." And so, he did that fall, and he asked me to come up, and I met Larry, and we signed a contract. So I was actually the first full-time teacher of the school, 'cause I couldn't be anything else but in order to move to New York.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, certainly.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Everybody else was working on an hourly basis at that time. There were 140 students at the school.

**RALPH ROSEN:** In total. The whole thing.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Total. And there was about forty students getting a real good taste from Herb and Ray, and one hundred students wondering what to do. So I addressed the one hundred.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, you had the one hundred.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** 'Cause I figured there was no point in duplicating what Herb and everybody else was doing and picking all these good sayings that they were creating, you know. Which was fine, but enough already, you know, 'cause I was always interested in trying to help the hidden talents.

**RALPH ROSEN:** You know I was reading in the fiftieth anniversary Berklee book, and it has a page with some great pictures of you while you're teaching, and it has a little blurb and it talks about you as a teacher looking for the hidden talents, getting someone to play their best, finding out what naturally they know how to do, and getting them to celebrate that or use that, you know. Teaching someone how to put their best foot forward, musically speaking.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I feel that's what a teacher's role is. It's not for me to decide what a student should learn. Of course, you know, given a course outline, he's gonna be learning certain technical things. But my job is to find out what he needs to develop, and to trigger that. And it takes a little while to do that, you know. And it takes some heavy listening. Judging the talent, I mean it's obvious, like a Makoto Ozone, or someone like that. You don't have to be a musician to know that he's talented. Anyone, everybody in the world would know as soon as they hear him play. It's self-evident, I mean he's already arrived... he isn't potential, he's an actual at that point. He has potentiality for further development--I don't mean that he doesn't have that. But he's a pro, you know. He was a pro when he came to this school.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** So there's no big deal, and this is what too many conservatories get involved with. They wanna pick the people that are going to make the school look good, you know. And this is one thing that was always in agreement with Larry about, you know, that "Give me your tired"

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs] Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** ...and so forth, and let's see what you have there, we'll give you a year to find yourself. And I don't know whether they have talent or not, I don't even know whether they're gonna be musicians. But because I'm a musician and I'm dealing with them through music, I'm gonna try to help them grow up one way or the other.

**RALPH ROSEN:** There you go.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I'm not gonna make decisions. It's not for me to make a decision that they don't have talent or anything like that. That would be like playing God.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** But I want them to realize, and I want them to make the decision that "Well, this is what the music business is about, and I've gotta put this kind of energy and time into it, and I really wanna do it," or "I don't think this is for me." Fine, I don't think that we failed in that situation. I think the person in the process has learned major things in terms of being successful in anything they do, regardless of whether it's music or something else.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right before we turned on the tape here, you and I talked briefly about what it feels like when you are improvising, and how it feels, and I've heard other people I've heard Kenny Werner talk about this--it feels as though when you're playing and it's really happening, it's as if you, the improviser, is almost watching this thing happen, watching someone else play.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, I think time and rhythm is the essence of what goes on in the world, goes on in life. And I think it's like the ebb and flow of the sea, menstrual periods, spring, summer, fall, winter, seasons, that sort of thing. They all have this changing flux that goes on. And the same thing is true in terms of creativity. I think that you prepare--you've gotta spend the time in preparation, technically, to practice and everything else. But it's not in order to be able to play that way, it's in preparation for allowing this magical something that will happen, if you allow it to happen. But in order to allow it to happen, you've gotta let the conscious mind, the one that does all the technical practice, take a holiday, and say, "Okay, take a rest, now we're gonna just suggest to our unconscious mind, to our imagination, point of departure, and then trust it."

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And you must trust it. And if you have any fear at all, it will not happen. It will not appear. And the conscious mind and the unconscious mind will not sit at the table at the same time, because the conscious mind loves the power of dictating how things are, and making value judgments, because that's what it's done all your lifetime. Throughout your public education. For the majority of times, and it's a very necessary for you to know. But, after you've done it--so you can listen to it on tape, and then make value judgments as to what is good about it and what you need to improve at, and that sort of thing, but not while it's happening. For instance, students will ask, "What did you do there?" You know, in the third or fourth measure of a solo. Well, being a musician, I will think about what I did there, and then I'll analyze it and tell them. Say, "Well, I use such-and-such scale." But it's the wrong question! They should have asked me what was I going to do there. And my answer would have been, "Well, I really don't know what I was going to do there." If I'm really on. If I'm not on, well then of course I know because I've done all this practicing just in case I'm not on, see. And what happens is when it's really happening, it's like a flood that comes out. And Gary Burton has mentioned this, too, he said when he's really on, it's like he's watching this wondrous person pop out, and he's not doing it. This other being is really doing it. We don't know each other, ourselves, real well. Even after a lifetime, we don't know ourselves completely. Other people have insights about us we don't have. And because we don't do enough of this kind of thing, this is the hidden self, the entity, that you want to come out. Because we wear personas much of the time, dealing with all kinds of situations and everything else. And often times, the entity, the creative entity, is hidden.

**RALPH ROSEN:** It's that basic concept that you're talking about, of being in a sense unconscious, so you can let the subconscious mind take over when you're creating something.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I occasionally do a thing, and it's gotta be on something that's not a complicated tune, where I do a conversation between a guy and a girl, you know. And if I can get into it, within four measures everybody in the place was breaking up, 'cause they know. Of course I can do it on a clarinet because of the fairly extensive range, you know. I get down in the low register it's like [imitates clarinet] "dah dah dah, doo doo doo"

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs]

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And I can't worry about changes when I'm doing that. I gotta get into this story that I wanna portray musically. And if I worry about where I am, I will instantly get lost. I'll find myself completely hung up. If I don't worry, nine times out of ten when I stop playing, I'll be at the end of the chorus. If you told me did I know that I was going to be there, no.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah. Because you're really doing real spontaneous...

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Because I'm into this thing and doing it by sense.

**RALPH ROSEN:** I know that Bird was--Charlie Parker was quoted as saying something like that. Something like, "First you learn all the rules. Then you forget about everything and just play." And it seems like he was referring to what you're talking about.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Well, my idea of that--I mean I like that up to a point. The problem with the rules is that they're a usually theoretical analysis of a music that has occurred at a certain point in time before where you are.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** And what they are, the rules are a study of the commonplace occurrences in that music at that point in time. So if you study the rules, you will not be able to create. This is an illusion that many teachers try to create. Oftentimes because they're not creative themselves. I know I went through this when I studied harmony and everything else. I was told I needed to write this way, and boy, they put me in a box. Ernst Tag cleared me on that, you know. But in the sense this is what he thought. See, the essence of his creativity was always there, and at some point in time, he just broke out with it, and did away from these rules that were a part of another time, really.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Right? This is what I see occurring. But see, if you wanna hear Mozart, and you hear Haydn, the commonplace theoretical rules applied to them. But if you wanna know the difference between them, you gotta listen to the music. Then you hear the uniqueness that's there. Uniqueness is not in the analysis. That's the unfortunate thing about it, so this is a problem with the theory. It's like examining a coin on one side and assuming that that's what the coin is. Or examining a human being like you come back, you come from another planet, and you get this dead human being and you see a skull and crossbones there and so many bones there, and then you make these assumptions as to what a human being was.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** I mean we all have these two eyes, two ears, two hands, two legs, and all that, but isn't it amazing? There's four of us here, and we all look different and we all act different.

**RALPH ROSEN:** We have different aptitudes.

**JOHN LAPORTA:** That's the thing that's unique. The other thing is the commonplace. It's like the chords, you know. Kids are practicing chords all the time, trying to be different, but they're practicing the commonplace.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Commonplace. Sure. But doesn't it seem that perhaps in order to create in a spontaneous way, in an unconscious way, something, you have to prepare yourself for that moment?

**JOHN LAPORTA:** Yes, but if you prepare yourself technically, and you leave out your imagination, you are not developing your imagination. When you examine six-year-olds that play, that's imagination run rampant. If you see a kid on the curb not doing anything, you worry about it. You say, "What's wrong with that kid?" Then you have twelve years of school, come to Berklee, and I can't believe how little imagination eighteen and nineteen-year-olds have. You know, they should be full of imagination. Then it's difficult for them to get started. It's like a rusty wheel, you see.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**What you have to do is practice both at the same time. It seems like it's slower, but it's not, really. You see, you just practice technique, you'll get that faster, but technique to me is the lowermost rung of the ladder of your development towards becoming a musician.

**RALPH ROSEN:** I can see how someone could get hung up in all the commonplaces.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**So what I espouse always, I say look, practice something you know. You know, you take a hot lick off of--you like Lester Young or something? You know, take those things off, but not to be like him, but to use as a means to an end. You're learning how to speak as a jazz musician through the tradition that he represents. Then take that lick, and then do things with it that's different. Start it, and then go this way--I give them suggestions for ways of doing things with it. You know, play part of it, and then go halfway, just let it go any place it wants to go. Use it as a springboard to give you new ideas.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Right, exactly.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**But every time you practice anything, practice that some, and then find a way of using it so you're practicing using your imagination.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Yeah, that's the key thing. I'm glad we got those comments of yours on tape. How we doin' on time? I think you...

**JOHN LAPORTA:**I think you got a lot on there, huh?

**RALPH ROSEN:** We got a darn good interview here, yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**For a first one, I think you did well.

**RALPH ROSEN:** Well, thank you [laughs]. I thought you were great.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**You've got a natural way about you, so keep it up, that's good.

**RALPH ROSEN:** [laughs] This is the first one! For the next one, I hope it's gonna be Dean Earl.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**You dig it, though?

**RALPH ROSEN:** Oh yeah.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**You'll have to work a little harder I think with Dean. Dean says I'm never at a loss for words, he used to say to my wife, "John's never at a loss for words."

**RALPH ROSEN:** I'm really looking forward to doing Dean.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**But Dean would say, like, "You dig?" and then play the chord...

**RALPH ROSEN:** Oh, I wanna get that on there if I could, I'd love that.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**Yeah, well you gotta get a piano up if you do that.

**RALPH ROSEN:** I think he's got some kind of electric keyboard or something he's got at home.

**JOHN LAPORTA:**He got rid of his piano, though, but I think he has...