Drop Me Off in Harlem: A Profile of Loren Schoenberg

By Michael P. Zirpolo © 2016

I have always loved autumn in New York. This particular October morning was cool and somewhat overcast. Since I have two adult children living in Manhattan, I visit New York twice a year—in the spring and in the fall. And since they both work during the day, I have taken to setting up appointments and visits with people I have come to know in the music business to occupy my days. Those visits have taken me into many parts of the city that I would not have otherwise visited.

I had made an appointment to visit Loren Schoenberg, creative director of the National Jazz Museum in Harlem at the Museum, which is located at 104 East 126th Street. I had visited Loren at the Museum previously in the spring of 2011, and on that occasion had taken the Lexington Avenue subway north from Grand Central Terminal to East 125th Street. From there it is a short walk to the Museum.

This time, I wanted to approach the Museum from the west, and walk through Harlem a bit. After some high-level subway consultation with my son, who lives on the west side of midtown, I had my subway itinerary organized and set off from a subway station near his apartment to catch a train heading uptown. After one transfer and about twenty minutes, I emerged from the ground at Seventh Avenue and West 126th Street.

I looked at my watch and saw that it was 10:15. My appointment with Loren was at 11:00, so I began to stroll the streets of Harlem. Every way I turned, it seemed that I encountered some street or place that has been a part of the rich history of jazz and Afro-American music. Seventh Avenue in Harlem is also known as Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Boulevard. 125th Street is also known as Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard. Setting on the southwest corner of the intersection of those two streets is a building that once housed Hotel Theresa. It is now occupied by offices. In this beautiful white terra cotta building Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Lena Horne, Dinah Washington, and Ray Charles, among many other notables (including Fidel Castro, who was visited there in 1960 by Nikita Khrushchev), lived or stayed. Malcolm X, who maintained an office in the building in the early 1960s, frequently met Cassius Clay, later Muhammad Ali, there.

From Seventh Avenue, I walked west on the north side of 125th Street. (Although 125th was alive with activity, I did not encounter "The Prophet of 125th Street.") Soon I passed the Apollo Theater, which is between Seventh and Eighth, and still very much in operation. The list of great American musicians who have appeared at the Apollo is both long and illustrious.

I turned left and began walking south on Eighth Avenue, also known as Frederick Douglass Boulevard, and came to St. Nicholas Avenue, a diagonal street running southeast and northwest. I walked down St. Nicholas I soon encountered Lenox Avenue, which lies between Seventh and Fifth, and is also called Malcolm X Boulevard. It was after Lenox Avenue that William Grant Still named an imaginative suite of music in 1937. Its full title is: "Lenox Avenue Suite for Radio Announcer, Chorus and Orchestra." Artie Shaw recorded the blues segment from that suite in 1940, in an arrangement by William Grant Still. I then walked up Lenox to 120th and east a bit to lovely Marcus Garvey Park. When I reached Madison Avenue, I turned left and walked north to 126th Street, and was virtually at the Museum.

My morning constitutional through Harlem had been very interesting. It revealed a vital community renewing itself, and also revealed that Harlemites are both aware and proud of their heritage, something I found stimulating.

The National Jazz Museum in Harlem is housed in a nondescript building on the south side of East 126th Street, just east of the elevated railway tracks at Park Avenue. The offices are located on the second floor, and the small exhibit and reading areas are located on the fourth floor. The exhibit area contains an interactive display dedicated to the Savory Recordings, airchecks of classic jazz performances from the late 1930s acquired for the Museum by Loren Schoenberg a few years ago.

I entered the second floor offices of the Museum, and was greeted by Loren, who is a stocky man of medium height, with thinning hair and glasses. When silent (which he rarely is), he has the air of a college professor who is often deep in thought. But as I knew from my previous visit and from seeing Loren in action over the years, he is passionately expressive when it comes to music in general, and jazz in particular.

Loren Schoenberg was born on July 23, 1958 in Fairlawn, New Jersey, fifteen miles west of the George Washington Bridge. In addition to his parents, Loren's family includes two older brothers. There were a few vintage records in the Schoenberg home, and music was in the house. Both of Loren's brothers played in high school bands, and his father played a musical instrument casually at home. Among the records were a few by Al Jolson, which Loren as a child discovered, and soon began playing. The music on these records directed him to a number of old Hollywood movie musicals that were shown on television from time to time in the early 1970s.

Loren Schoenberg

One film that made a lasting impression on him was *Hollywood Hotel*, the 1937 Warner Brothers musical that included both Benny Goodman's big band and his quartet. Loren was very impressed by the playing of Benny Goodman, of course, but also of Teddy Wilson. He began to look for records by Benny Goodman, and soon discovered at a local library that classic two LP set issued by Columbia that contained

his 1938 Carnegie Hall Concert. Listening to those records was incredibly exciting for him not only because of the music, but because it was recorded live in Carnegie Hall. He knew very little about Carnegie Hall as a child, but after reading the liner notes on that LP set by Irving Kolodin, he came to the conclusion that Carnegie Hall was a sacred place for musicians, and only the greatest musicians in the world were allowed to play there. Those records led directly to him beginning to take piano lessons. They also led directly to his curiosity about the history of jazz, which continues to this day. At about the same time, he got a copy of Russ Connor's book "BG on the Record," and was overwhelmed by the amount of Benny Goodman's music that was documented in that book. He slowly began to buy more Goodman recordings, and some made by the other musicians mentioned in the Connor book. He also began a correspondence with Russ Connor about Benny's music that lasted for many years. Russ was most gracious and always answered his questions. Neither Russ nor he could have imagined where their correspondence would eventually lead.

"One day when I was about twelve years old, as I was looking through the local newspaper, I noticed an ad that caught my attention. It was for an appearance at the Colonial Post Restaurant in Hackensack, New Jersey by *Teddy Wilson*. At first, I couldn't believe that it was the same Teddy Wilson who had played in Carnegie Hall with Benny Goodman, but eventually it dawned on me that this was the same Teddy Wilson, so I resolved to go to the Colonial Post Restaurant and see and hear the great Teddy Wilson." Since he was twelve years old when this happened, it of course involved persuading his parents to take him to this event. "When I first told them about this, they were a bit dubious, even though I don't think they knew who Teddy Wilson was. They were concerned that it might not be a good idea for their young son to begin consorting with jazz musicians. Nevertheless, I continued to ask them until they finally consented to take me."

"When we got there, I couldn't wait to actually see and hear Teddy Wilson play the piano. He came to the piano with absolutely no fanfare, sat down and started playing. I was in awe. His playing was beautiful, immaculate, and inspiring." After the first set, Loren got up the nerve to approach Teddy (with his parents), and introduce himself. "I told Teddy that I was studying piano and was interested in jazz, and soon discovered that he was a most gracious man who was thoughtful, articulate and soft-spoken. If he was bemused by my rather intense interest in him and his playing, Teddy gave no hint of it. He spoke with me as if I were another professional musician, a colleague."

Teddy Wilson

While speaking with Loren, Teddy Wilson mentioned in passing that there was a place in Manhattan he might enjoy visiting called the New York Jazz Museum. In addition to exhibits about jazz, live music was featured there. Immediately, Loren resolved to go there as soon as possible.

In the early 1970s, the New York Jazz Museum was located on West 55th Street in Manhattan. In retrospect, Loren sees it as a place that made it possible for him to meet an incredible number of jazz musicians and others associated with jazz at that time. "Most of the musicians I met there or through connections I made there were older—in their fifties or sixties. The then-current jazz parade had passed them, but they were still able to play well, and wanted to perform. I was very interested in them because I liked the music they played, and was learning about the roles many of them had played in the history of jazz. To me it was amazing that I could meet, talk with, and listen to the music of so many wonderful jazz musicians who in a very real sense were like walking history books." Loren started going to the Museum on Sunday afternoons, and soon became a volunteer there. Within a short time, he met dozens of musicians and others connected with jazz, including Ruby Braff, Hymie Shertzer, Jack Bradley (one of the founders of the Museum along with Howard Fischer), Clarence Armstrong, Dan Morgenstern, and, Count Basie and Benny Goodman.

Loren also continued to maintain contact with Teddy Wilson, attending as many of his gigs as he could. Wilson was always the epitome of graciousness, and patience. "On one gig in 1972, Teddy was playing at The Cookery. It was a club owned by Barney Josephson, who ran the two Café Societys, one uptown and one downtown, in the 1940s. The Cookery was on East 9th Street and University Place in Greenwich Village. Usually Teddy came to work in a business suit. That night he arrived in a tuxedo. (I was still being taken to gigs by my parents, who had been completely won over by Teddy. I was 14 years old.) So I asked Teddy why he was wearing a tux. He explained that he was going to appear later that night at the Waldorf Astoria Hotel with the original Benny Goodman Quartet. Lionel Hampton was to receive the National Urban League humanitarian award. I asked if I could tag along, and he said OK. I began to anticipate what it was going to be like to see and hear the original Benny Goodman Quartet. When we got to the Waldorf, Teddy introduced me to Gene Krupa, Lionel Hampton, and Benny Goodman. As you can imagine, that was an incredible experience for me because by that time, I knew at least something about the careers of these men, and their roles in the history of jazz. But I must say that I was most fascinated by Benny Goodman. It seemed to me that his stature in the world of music was enormous. I was awestruck."

Benny Goodman

Shortly after that, Loren called Goodman's office and asked if he could get an autographed picture of BG. He spoke with Goodman's secretary, Muriel Zuckerman, and arranged to pick up the photo at Benny's office, which was located on the top floor of the Manhattan House, 200 East 66th Street. The office was located on the Second Avenue side of the building. (He was to learn that Benny's residence was in the same building, on the Third Avenue side.) "I picked up the photo, and then some time

passed before I was to encounter Benny Goodman again."

In 1974, the New York Jazz Museum presented an exhibit on Benny Goodman, and Goodman came to see it. Since Loren had continued to volunteer at the Museum, he was there when BG came in. "I reintroduced myself to Benny, but he said that he remembered meeting me that night at the Waldorf. I thought nothing more about this, although I was thrilled to again be in the presence of Benny Goodman"

At about this same time, he began to attend gigs where the pianist Hank Jones was playing. He heard something in Hank's playing that he found very attractive. "As everyone knows, Hank was a wonderful jazz pianist. He was also a wonderful human being. It was through Hank Jones that I got my first recording gig, for Hank O'Neal on his Chiaroscuro label. Hank tutored me informally on piano for a while"

Loren was studying piano all through the mid-1970s with teachers near his home in New Jersey, and still volunteering at the New York Jazz Museum. In due course, some of the musicians who appeared there learned that he was studying piano. One thing led to another, and one day Ruby Braff and Jack Bradley heard him play something and said to him "you have got to study with Sanford Gold." "I said 'Who is Sanford Gold'? They told me that he was a fantastic piano teacher in Manhattan who would unlock some of the mysteries, jazz-wise, of the piano for me. They also told me that Sanford Gold charged $25.00 an hour for lessons. I knew right away that that would be a problem, because my parents were paying my piano teachers in New Jersey something like $5.00 an hour. I told Jack and Ruby that my parents would never go along with $25.00 an hour piano lessons, so the idea dropped at that point. But within the next week or so, when my father came to pick me up at the Museum, they both went out to his car with me and told him that I really needed these lessons. My father made no decision about this then, but finally my parents agreed to allow me to give it a try."

"I must say that everything that I had been told about Sanford Gold was true—he was a superb piano teacher. I studied with him from 1973-1976, and in that time he taught me a lot about the technical issues involved in playing jazz on the piano. He knew a huge amount about the piano. His studio had two rooms, one where the piano was, and another where he would go when I was playing through some exercises or some other training device. One time, he gave me a sequence to play, with very specific fingerings. I began practicing that sequence using the exact fingerings he had specified. Then he went into the other room. After a few minutes, I slightly altered the fingering I was using on the sequence. I was still playing the same notes; I was just using a slightly different fingering to do it. From the other room Sanford Gold shouted at me—'Loren, damn it, *use the right fingering!'* Never again did I deviate from what Sanford Gold told me to do, at least not in his presence." Eventually, the experience he was gaining with Sanford Gold gave him some confidence about playing jazz on the piano, and when he played in front of jazz musicians, they could hear that he was beginning to understand what jazz was about. Their approval was a huge boost to his confidence. Gradually, they began to accept him as a musician.

During this same time, Loren slowly taught himself how to play the tenor saxophone. His inspiration for that was the playing of Lester Young, which also he heard for the first time on those Benny Goodman Carnegie Hall records. "I'm sure you are familiar with Lester's playing on 'Honeysuckle Rose' from that concert. That, to me, was so unbelievably good that I used it as a sort of primer to guide me as I learned the tenor saxophone." (At this point in our conversation, we became involved in a discussion of saxophone mechanics, mouthpieces, and technique, and the respective sounds produced by Coleman Hawkins and Lester Young. We briefly repaired to Loren's office, where he played for me an alternate take of "Oh Lady Be Good" from Lester Young's first recording date that I had not heard before. It is as great as the issued take.)

Loren enrolled in the Manhattan School of Music in September of 1976. It was located at Broadway and 122nd Street, near Grant's Tomb, in the building that had previously housed the Juilliard School of Music before it moved downtown near Lincoln Center. While he was a student there, a series of wonderful coincidences began that were to have a large impact on his future career, and life. He soon discovered a small club nearby, the West End Café, which was located at 112th and Riverside, where jazz was being presented by musicians who were veterans of the swing era, and in some cases, even before the swing era. The leader of the band the first night he went to the West End Café was Eddie Durham. Durham played trombone and "a twelve string guitar that was sort of a cross between a guitar and a bass. It was a very idiosyncratic instrument." Durham was about 70 years old then. Of course he was also a great, pioneering arranger whose charts had a strong positive impact on the Jimmie Lunceford and early Count Basie bands, and soon after that on many white bands. Loren introduced himself to Durham, they talked a bit and Loren told him that he was a neophyte jazz musician who played tenor sax and piano, and who went to the Manhattan School of Music and lived near the West End Café. Loren returned often to the West End Café, was asked to play a bit, and soon began getting calls from Eddie Durham to sub into the band there on either tenor sax or piano. "I loved this, of course, because I was playing with musicians whose work I respected. They included: Eddie Barefield, Jo Jones, Al Casey, Sammy Price, Russell Procope, and Sonny Greer. They in turn respected me as a musician, and I learned a lot from them about jazz and the history of jazz."

Eddie Durham

Durham eventually used him on other gigs, including one that lasted fairly long at the Orange Inn in Goshen, New York. Through Durham, he met many alumni from Count Basie's various bands including Ed Lewis, the lead trumpeter; Buddy Tate, the saxophonist/clarinetist; and Paul Quinichette, the tenor saxophonist whose sound on tenor was so close to Lester Young's that he was called 'the Vice-Pres.'

"I left the Manhattan School of Music in the second semester of my fourth year, in 1980. I was a saxophone performance major, and by then was fairly busy as a working musician. Other things were pulling me away from school. Then, one day, completely out of the blue, I got a call from Benny Goodman. He said he was calling me because Russ Connor recommended me for a special project Benny had asked Russ to work on, but Russ thought I might be a better fit. Benny wanted to donate some of

his arrangements to the New York Public Library, but before they would accept them, he had to submit a provenance to the Library which essentially would explain what the arrangements were, and set them in their proper historical context. So I began to work on this provenance for Benny. This project took several months."

In the process of working on this project, Loren began to get to know Goodman somewhat. Of course, he was still in awe of him, so for quite some time, he addressed him only as "Mr. Goodman." Eventually, they called each other by their first names. While he was working for BG on the provenance, he also kept busy as a working musician. "I worked in some good bands and some that were not so good. In fact, while I was still in school, I had put together a very good band to play a special concert at Carnegie Recital Hall in 1979 called: 'A Tribute to Bird and Pres.' That band included: Howard McGhee and Warren Vache'; Eddie Bert and Dickie Wells; Buddy Anderson; Joe Albany, Peck Morrison, Herb Ellis, and Mel Lewis. The concert was favorably reviewed in *The New York Times* by John S. Wilson. I also had a band at the Red Blazer II on Third Avenue and 88th Street around this time, and worked from time to time with Tommy Flanagan and Roy Eldridge. Benny was aware of my work as a musician. I knew that by the occasional oblique remarks he would make about my work. Yet he never showed the slightest interest in my work—to me. As I was eventually to learn, he was actually quite interested in what I was doing, especially with a certain big band that I had gathered to play the music of the swing era. When I finished the provenance, Benny and I parted on friendly terms."

Later in 1980, Loren got a call from Muriel Zuckerman asking him to help out in the Goodman office. After the death of Benny's wife, Alice (sister of John Hammond), in early 1978, Benny had increased the amount of work he was doing rather substantially. This resulted in an overflow of work for Muriel, who had worked for Benny since the 1940s, and who was not a young woman. Both Benny and Muriel had enjoyed working with Loren on the provenance project, so this seemed like a good solution to Muriel's problem. "At first, I functioned as an assistant to Muriel, but gradually I began to get my own duties, including answering the phone, writing checks, helping with correspondence, and sorting through the offers Benny got for work. At this time, Benny was receiving literally dozens of offers each month for gigs of all sort, almost all of which he turned down. Still, he was very busy, especially considering that he was past 70 and not in the best of health."

As Time went on, it seemed that Benny could not keep up with all of the commitments he had made, and eventually, in the early summer of 1982, on a European tour with a group that included Scott Hamilton and Mel Lewis, he had a meltdown of sorts with cancelled concerts, substandard playing, and exasperated musicians. "He also fired both Muriel Zuckerman and me. I learned later that Benny had cut back dramatically on his work and was having some major health problems."

"The period from late 1982 to mid-1984 was one of great health challenges for Benny. He had an aortic aneurism repaired by surgery, was suffering from arthritis, which affected his ability to finger the clarinet, and had a pacemaker implanted because of cardiac problems. All of this was in addition to a colostomy, which he had had for about twenty years. It appeared that his health problems had ended his career." Then, much to Loren's surprise, Benny called him once again, in the middle of 1984, and asked him to return to work. In the year or so Loren was not working for BG, a very lovely, dynamic, bright lady by the name of Carol Phillips, whom Benny had met a couple of years before, had grown very close to him. It certainly was not a one-way relationship. "In fact, Benny loved her and asked her to marry him. She wisely declined, but then their relationship became even closer. She had a lot to do with helping Benny through his various health problems, and supporting his desire to resume his career. Although Benny seemed to be in good health again, there were still chronic health problems that were never going to resolve, as well as various acute problems that arose from time to time, and occasionally sent him to the hospital. Still, he wanted to perform, and was receiving as many offers as ever. But his confidence had been shaken by his health issues."

The first concert Benny played in about two years was a tribute to his brother-in-law, John Hammond, who was still very much alive, that was held in Avery Fisher Hall in the summer of 1984. "Benny played fairly well that night, and this greatly increased his confidence. Shortly after that, discussions began about him doing a special to be aired on PBS television, that would showcase him playing with small groups, a big band, and various guests, all filmed before a live audience." In his role as Benny's unofficial manager, Loren watched as this project began to take shape. At Goodman's behest, pianist-arranger Dick Hyman was contacted to put together a big band, and he started rounding up some excellent veteran musicians, most of whom had previously worked with Benny. These musicians had gone from their big band experiences to successful careers as freelance studio musicians. They were top-flight players who would be able to play the old Goodman arrangements well after a minimal amount of rehearsal. But as this all developed, Loren noticed that the infamous Goodman ambivalence began to manifest itself. "At first, I thought that it was about him wanting/not wanting to do the show. But then I realized that he was ambivalent about working with a band of veteran musicians, most of whom he thought didn't like him or the methods he used to rehearse a band. He frequently expressed his thoughts about this to me."

"Now we get back to Benny's awareness of what I was doing in my career as a working musician. At the time all of this about the PBS television show was going on, I was leading a very good band that played the music of the swing era. It contained some older musicians, including a few who had worked with Benny, and some younger musicians, guys like Randy Sandke, Ken Peplowski and Chuck Wilson. They were all excellent musicians. We performed publicly from time to time, and recorded an album. We played at the Newport Jazz Festival. I tried repeatedly to get Benny to come and listen to the band, but he never did. I proudly presented him with a copy of the record we made, but he laid it aside. I had no idea if Benny had ever listened to the album until one day when he called me, and I could hear it playing in the background. Then Benny started bemoaning once again the situation he had created by getting Dick Hyman to put together a band for him, etc., etc. I then understood that Benny's ambivalence had now progressed to the point where he and my band were a part of it. Even though, over a period of time, he repeatedly went into his routine, complaining about the band of studio veterans, I was non-committal. Finally, he started making comments about certain performances on my record, and started asking me questions about some of the musicians in my band."

"Days passed, maybe weeks. Then one day, Benny asked me, 'is your band rehearsing?' We weren't at that point, but I told him we would be rehearsing soon, and we could set a date for

him to come and listen, if he wanted to. He said he would 'come by sometime,' and eventually I got him to commit to a date." When Loren told the band about this, the younger guys were incredibly excited. The older guys said Benny probably wouldn't show. As fate would have it, the day before the rehearsal he was supposed to attend was to take place, Goodman was hospitalized for some reason. Loren didn't want to cancel the rehearsal, and didn't want to tell the band that Benny probably would not be there, so he just went ahead and rehearsed. "So there we were, rehearsing, and every five minutes someone would ask, 'where's Benny?' About halfway through the rehearsal, much to my astonishment, he walked in with his clarinet case. We were in the middle of rehearsing 'Down South Camp Meeting.' He put his clarinet together and started playing with us. It is very difficult for me to put into words how I and everybody else in the band felt at that moment. I can say that the instant I heard his clarinet sound with my band was a deeply emotional experience for me."

After that rehearsal, Loren told the band they would continue rehearsing, as long as Goodman continued to show up. He continued to show up, and on one occasion he brought along his antiquated tape recorder, and recorded the band. At the next rehearsal, he played the Schoenberg band's performance of "Don't Be That Way," and then played the version his band played at the 1938 Carnegie Hall concert. He did this to illustrate various differences in the performances. Even though Goodman continued to attend several rehearsals of Loren's band, and play along with them, he said absolutely nothing about why he might be doing this to him or to them. To all outward appearances, he was simply acting as a mentor to them.

"It was summer when all of this was going on. One Friday, Benny asked me to drive him and Carol up to his house in Stamford, Connecticut, where they would spend the weekend. I would then return in the car to New York. He also said 'bring along your swimming trunks and we can have a little swim together.' So I drove us up there, and he was in a very strange non-communicative mood. When we got there, we had an uneasy lunch, at which he said almost nothing to us, but was having a lively, one-sided conversation with his dog, a miniature poodle called Shimu. After that I said I was going to return to town when he said, 'well didn't you bring your swimming trunks?' I said I had, but that I wanted to return to the city. 'Naw, come on.

Benny Goodman and Loren Schoenberg; the guitarist is James Chirillo *(courtesy Ed Berger)*

Let's have a little swim together,' he said. So I went swimming with him. He was swimming around, having a great time, and I was standing in the water at a depth that was about to my neck, when I noticed that he was swimming directly toward me. At the moment just before he was about to collide with me, his head emerged from the water and he said: 'Oh, by the way, I'm going to use your band on that TV show.'"

"I was elated by this. It would be a dream come true for me to work with Benny Goodman in a musical setting."

Once Benny decided to use the Schoenberg band, he began rehearsing them like the Benny Goodman of old. They rehearsed

A smiling Benny Goodman at rehearsal
(courtesy Ed Berger)

Benny Goodman with: L-R: Danny Bank, Ken Peplowski, Chuck Wilson, Jack Stuckey, Loren Schoenberg. The guitarist is James Chirillo and Dick Katz is at the piano
(courtesy Ed Berger)

Benny Goodman conducting: L-R: James Chirillo (guitar); Chuck Wilson, Jack Stuckey, Loren Schoenberg (saxes); the bassist is Arvell Shaw *(courtesy Ed Berger)*

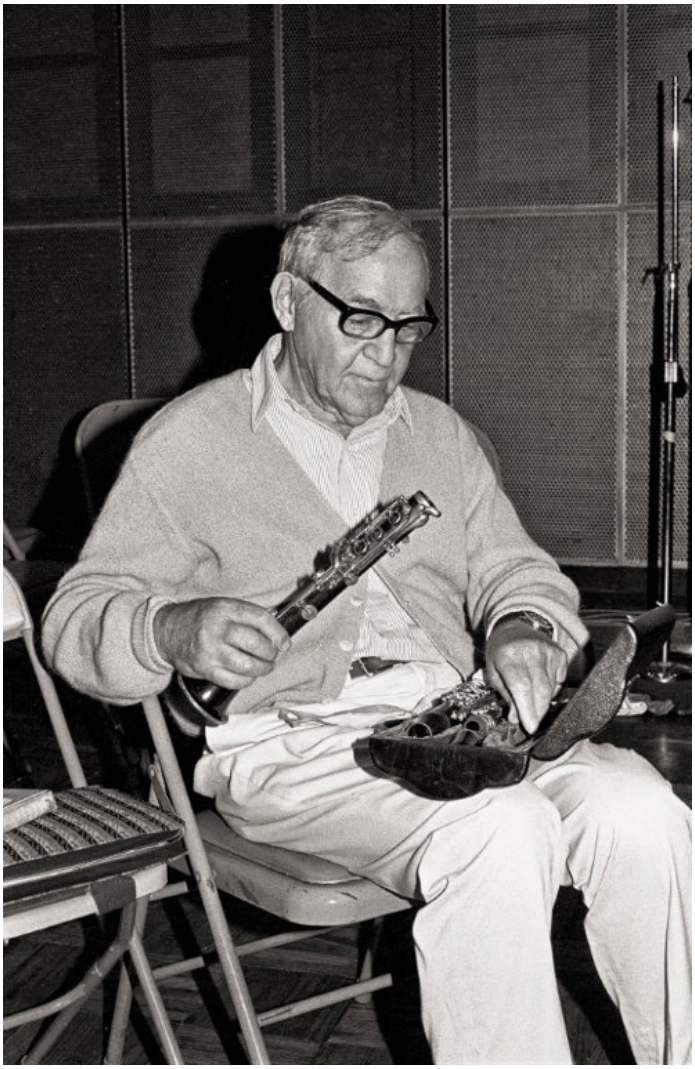
many of the classic Fletcher Henderson arrangements, with a few others, like Edgar Sampson's "Don't Be That Way, and of course "Let's Dance," and "Goodbye." "He knew every note of every part of these arrangements, as well as every other nuance in them. He was obsessively insistent that each arrangement be played in precisely the way he wanted it to be played. No detail was too small to be rehearsed until we were playing it exactly the way he wanted it to be played. For example, there is a little sixteenth note pickup in the introduction to 'Don't Be That Way,' that most people never notice. We spent the better part of one entire rehearsal on that. He made us repeat things over and over, seemingly endlessly." To most of the musicians in the band, it seemed like he was beating the life out of the music, and destroying their enthusiasm and freshness. "I once mentioned this to him, and he looked at me and said blandly, 'well, genius consists of an infinite patience for detail.'" The eventual result of this endless repetition was that every detail of those arrangements was being played by the band exactly the way Goodman wanted it.

At one rehearsal, Goodman was pushing the band hard, and not getting exactly what he wanted. They could see that he was getting frustrated. "When he was frustrated, he began doing strange little things like playing back to you exactly what you had just played, sort of in a mocking way, to show his disapproval." This usually caused the morale of the band to take a nosedive. "But he seemed oblivious to that. He just wanted what he wanted, and on this occasion he was not getting it. Finally, after several minutes of this, he turned an ashen color. We thought he was having a heart attack right there. But he kept on going, and returned to normal, and drove us ever harder."

Finally, they did a break-in concert at Waterloo Village in Stanhope, New Jersey. It was an incredible success in every way. "There was a huge crowd there. They gave Benny many ovations, and he and the band played very well. They did several encores. He was in a buoyant mood before, during, and after the concert. Everyone had smiles on their faces for the whole event. Shortly after that, we did the PBS television show. It was staged at the Mariott Marquis Hotel on Broadway and 45th. Tickets were sold at $1,000.00 apiece, but the place was packed. As wonderful as the Waterloo Village experience had been, this turned out exactly the opposite. Benny was in a bad mood before the concert and refused to see anyone. Then when he walked onstage, he began insulting musicians in the band. Things did not go well with several guests. Musically, we did our best under adverse conditions, but neither we nor Benny played at our best that night."

Shortly after that, Goodman began making plans to use the band on other jobs. He downsized it to the instrumentation of the 1930s Benny Goodman band, three trumpets, two trombones, four saxes, and the normal rhythm section. "Then he fired me from my own band! He replaced me with Ted Nash, an excellent

Loren Schoenberg and Benny Goodman *(courtesy Ed Berger)*



Benny Goodman packing up after rehearsal *(courtesy Ed Berger)*

tenor saxophonist and a friend. Ted and I have laughed about this many times over the last thirty years, but at the time it happened, I was not happy about it. But Benny was Benny, and as many musicians who have worked for him over the years have said, that, at times, could be irritating."

Benny Goodman died on Friday the 13th of June, 1986, six or seven months after all of these events took place. "Since his death, I have often reflected on the time we spent together, and I have arrived at some conclusions: Benny was moody; he had a minor cruel streak. He was fickle. But overshadowing all of this was his huge talent as a musician. He existed on such a rarefied level as a musician that he definitely had difficulty communicating with other musicians about what he wanted musically." In addition, Goodman's entire life, except when he was a small child, was spent either as a youthful clarinet prodigy, whose playing was constantly being praised, or as the 'King of Swing,' a cultural icon who merely had to walk onstage to receive a standing ovation. These life experiences did not equip him to interact with other lesser mortals in a graceful way. Nevertheless, "when one considers the immense amount of his playing that has been recorded, much of which is superlative, and considers that that amount of playing is literally only the tip of the iceberg, Benny's sometimes irritating behavior comes into a clearer perspective."

"I could never get Benny to talk about the old days. He lived in the present. In the years I knew him, despite the fact that his many physical ailments affected him rather negatively, he never complained. I think he really enjoyed working with my band, even though like many things in his life, it was a love-hate relationship. I think he was exhilarated when the band played well, and this inspired him to play well. But the price to be paid for those few moments of exhilaration was high, physically and emotionally, both for him and for us."

After Goodman died, Loren resumed leadership of his band, and continued with it for several years. They made some recordings throughout the 1980s and into the 1990s, and performed classic arrangements from the swing era. At the same time, he began to write liner notes for reissues of recordings from the swing era. (Two of which, one on Louis Armstrong, one on Woody Herman, have won Grammys.) He also began to appear on radio discussing jazz, and began teaching.

As the 1990s progressed, he designed and taught a course called "Form and Structure in Jazz." "I have always thought that the best improvised music sounds composed. There is a logic to a great improvised solo. I taught a course at the Manhattan School of Music called 'Style and Analysis.' I see a huge connection between classical music and jazz. Unfortunately, most musicians in each of these camps do not see this, or if they do, don't often acknowledge its existence. Nevertheless, any jazz musicians throughout the entire history of jazz have used classical music for inspiration, and education." Loren also worked during those years with the American Jazz Orchestra as an assistant conductor. John Lewis, famous as the guiding spirit of the Modern Jazz Quartet, was the conductor. He also worked with Gunther Schuller and the Smithsonian Jazz Orchestra, and several overseas jazz orchestras.

In 1997, a most pleasant association began for him: he began working in a band backing singer/pianist/cabaret doyen Bobby Short at the Carlyle Room on the ground floor of the Carlyle Hotel on Madison and 76th. "It was a nine-piece band, and I played tenor and clarinet and functioned as musical director. We played ten weeks in the spring and ten weeks in the fall—five nights a week. It was a beautiful job and Bobby was wonderful to work with. That lasted for ten years."

"My association with the National Jazz Museum in Harlem predated the existence of the Museum. It began as the result of my meeting Leonard Garment, who grew up in Brooklyn, started out as a jazz musician in the 1940s, became a lawyer, and eventually ended up advising Presidents in Washington D.C. He and others had been nurturing the idea of a jazz museum for some time, but had run into many obstacles in transforming that idea into reality. A turning point came in 2000 when Congress provided $1 million for the development of a jazz museum in Harlem. Leonard was instrumental in making that happen. The money has been disbursed over years only after the Museum met on an ongoing basis standards set by the Small Business Administration. That grant and other continuing efforts have allowed the Museum to operate at its present location for the last twelve years."

Loren's acquisition of the "Savory Recordings" in 2010 after a 30 year quest for the National Jazz Museum in Harlem created something of a sensation. Comprised of over 1,000 recordings taken off the air by legendary sound engineer Bill Savory between 1935 and 1940, and never heard since their initial broadcast, the collection features new music by Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Benny Goodman, Coleman Hawkins, Fats Waller, Billie Holiday, Bunny Berigan, and many more titans of jazz. Below are links to information about the Savory Recordings:

www/jazzmuseuminharlem.org/the-museum/collections/the-savory-collection
www/jazzmuseuminharlem.org
www.nytimes.com/2010/08/17/arts/music/17jazz.html?_r=0
www.abajournal.com/magazine/article/a_trove_of_historic_jazz_recordings_has_found_a_home_in_harlem_but_you_cant

Post Script

For a number of reasons, publication of this Profile of Loren Schoenberg was delayed. I wrote most of it in 2013, and then it was set aside until the summer of 2015. At that time, a chain of events took place that resulted in publication of a number of unique photographs of Benny Goodman rehearsing the Loren Schoenberg big band in 1985, which for three decades were thought unusable or lost. These incredible photos were taken by Ed Berger, who for many years was the Associate Director of the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University.

Upon seeing these photos, I contacted Ed and asked his permission to use some of them to illustrate certain events referred to in this piece. He graciously granted me permission to do that. These marvelous photos that follow greatly enhance this article, and I wish to express my heartfelt thanks to Ed Berger for that. I also asked Ed to write the story of how these photos came to be. Here it is:

Back-story on August 22, 1985 - Benny Goodman Photos

Loren Schoenberg and I have been good friends since 1976, and over the years I had photographed him and his bands regularly. In August of 1985, he asked me if I'd be interested in shooting a rehearsal with his band and Benny Goodman, if he could get Benny's permission. Naturally, I was excited by the prospect, never having had the chance to photograph the legendary BG. Loren called a couple of days later to say that he'd cleared it with Benny, and that the rehearsal was set for August 22, at RCA Studios.

After learning that it would actually happen, my anticipation grew, for not only would I have the chance to photograph Mr. Goodman, but under ideal circumstances: a relatively intimate setting with no other photographers and no audience. As the day approached, I also began to feel some trepidation. I had heard all the tales of Benny's mercurial behavior, and had no idea whether he'd even remember that he'd agreed to have me attend. Loren briefed me, advising discretion. On the appointed day, I arrived with my Canon F-1 loaded with Kodak Tri-X. As I entered, prepared to hide behind a baffle or a cabinet, Loren waved me over to a table where he and Benny were going through some charts. He introduced me, reminding Benny that I was going to take photos. We shook hands, and Benny said he was pleased to meet me. I quickly retreated to the back of the studio, amazed that he hadn't immediately thrown me out.

I decided not to start photographing immediately, but waited until the rehearsal was well underway. Then, I cautiously began shooting from a distance. As things progressed with no negative reaction from Benny, I gradually moved closer. At one point he looked directly at me, smiled, and said, "Time Magazine!" Soon after, he asked if I would mind bringing him an extra chair. In short, he was in a very good mood, and I saw none of the peculiar behavior that had become the stuff of jazz legend. He joked with the musicians, and I even managed to capture a couple of his smiles on film. At the end of the rehearsal, he sat on a chair in a darkened area of the studio and proceeded to disassemble his clarinet. To that point I had been shooting without flash, but I quickly mounted my strobe and snapped one image as he packed up his horn. Even that didn't elicit a reprimand.

Dealing with Mr. Goodman turned out to be the easy part of creating these photographs. The custom lab I was using at the time had a malfunction in their processing tanks, causing the film to be washed at too high a temperature, resulting in reticulation (very small spotting patterns on the emulsion). (It was this disaster that prompted me to eventually return to doing my own darkroom work.) If this wasn't enough bad luck, I had a few prints made by another lab in New York, and later that night, a backpack with some of the Goodman negatives was stolen from my trunk. I made a few attempts at printing some of the remaining negatives myself, but was always frustrated by the reticulation problem, which could be minimized but not eliminated in the darkroom. Having gone digital almost ten years ago, I've been scanning some of my old negatives using a Nikon 9000ED, and have been amazed at the restoration and salvage made possible by Photoshop. I thought the time had come to revisit the Goodman negatives. Though time-consuming, through the use of the clone stamp tool and spot healing brush in Photoshop, and a Noiseware plug-in, I was able to remove most of the effects of the reticulation and finally, after thirty years, to produce a decent representation of these images.

Ed Berger

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