

Lou Bennett and the Jazz Organ Scene in Europe

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE DISSERTATION

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This thesis is about African American jazz organist Lou Bennett, born in Philadelphia on May 18, 1926. At the beginning of his musical career, he left the United States with his Hammond organ, bound for France, and took Paris by storm, becoming an overnight star on the jazz scene there. In a 1961 poll, he was voted number 1 organist over Jimmy Smith and Wild Bill Davis, and his overall popularity in France was superior to that of Count Basie, Miles Davis, and other American jazz stars.

Bennett never succeeded in confirming his success, because of his quasi-obsession with the electronic parts of his organ. He was continually striving to find the perfect sound, and to find as many sounds as he could in order to better express himself. A part of his obsession concerned the bass played with his feet on the pedalboard. Having an astonishing bass-playing technique, he continually searched for ways to better its sound as if to suggest an additional member of the rhythm section. The common practice was for organists to play the bass with their left hand and to move their left foot along with the rhythm of the tune. Bennett was very

outspoken about bass-playing, saying that an organist who didn't play bass with his feet was no organist, but an "organ-player."

However, many of Bennett's opportunities were ruined because of faulty wiring and breakdowns of his "Bennett Machine" that he had created. Bennett had little interest in financial gain or publicity. He would accept low-paying contracts for as little as a meal and traveling expenses. Often he would repair his organ on stage, interrupting his concert to do so.

Having performed all over Europe, he met with a great deal of success in Spain, and built a house there with room for his electronic experiments. His music took priority over his marriage, although he and his wife remained together up until the time of his death.

Bennett died on February 10, 1997, leaving a host of admirers, having inspired European organists during his lifetime and is still influencing the art of bass-playing with feet today.

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¹ Pastor : Rev. Vernon Peters

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Introduction

Lou Bennett (1926-1997) was an African American jazz organist born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania who, on the threshold of his career, left the United States—perhaps moved to do so by the popularity of organist Jimmy Smith—and with his organ, went to France and became a big star. Raised by his grandparents in Baltimore, Maryland, he started out in life learning music in a Baptist church in Baltimore where his grandfather was pastor. By the age of twelve, he was directing the choir and helping them to learn songs while, at the same time, he was learning the trade of shoe repair. During his military service (1944–1947), he was issued a tuba, and for four years practiced playing tuba in the marching band. After the army, Bennett formed a piano trio in the style of Nat King Cole whom he admired greatly, but as he said, “I quit piano because in that domain, in order to succeed you’ve got to be better than thousands of others who play well. At the time, I knew I was a better shoe repairman than pianist, so I bought an organ. It was the first to be heard in Baltimore, and I became professional.”¹

Bennett became particularly known for his fantastic pedal solos while traveling the East Coast with his trio, having developed a technique for playing

¹ Serge Loupien in the French newspaper « Libération », February 13, 1997.

the bass pedals instead of relying on his left hand as many of his contemporaries did. As a result, he committed himself to finding the best possible sound for his bass/pedal notes, but was not satisfied with the sound of his Hammond organ. While the synthesizer was being discovered, Bennett was learning about electronics through a trial and error system, connecting and disconnecting wires and electric circuits. His passion for playing the organ and improving its sound preoccupied him almost to the point of forgetting all else. That was perhaps the reason for his failure to cement the relative celebrity that he had achieved on the European jazz scene. Along with his unquestionable talent and his unequaled prowess on the pedals, he brought the Hammond organ to the French and European public and inspired many musicians in jazz. Bennett had something of the inventor in him; he also had the “soul of an organ builder.”² Success for him would have been to be able to create a Hammond organ to his own specifications, for he was not equipped to assume unassisted the disadvantages of his instrument: the weight, the volume, and the logistics involved with playing such a cumbersome material.³ In his efforts to find the sound he wanted at his fingertips at all times, he faced difficulties impossible to manage alone. For this reason, he created the “Bennett Machine” in his villa in Spain, where he came to be much loved and respected. In an interview with a Spanish journalist,

² See interview with Thierry Tréguel, p. 7.

³ A Hammond B-3 with pedal board and bench weighs over 400 pounds. A Leslie speaker weighs approximately 140 pounds.

Madeleine Munera,⁴ when she asked how he had arrived at being the artist that he had become, he answered:

LB: I had music in my blood.

MM: When did jazz become so important in your life?

LB: When I was 19, during my military service.

MM: And since then?

LB: Since then? I play jazz...the thing that's difficult, it's not to express myself; it's to make myself understood. So I close my eyes and I play for myself. If I'm playing good, I'm happy; if I manage to play better, I'm even happier.

MM: Have you noticed any difference between the American public and the European public?

LB: Me, I prefer to play with my eyes closed, like that I don't see the public.

MM: Are you afraid?

LB: No, I'm indifferent. What's important in jazz, is above all the communion with the musicians, yes, that's very rewarding... For me, playing [jazz] is not a job nor a way to earn a living.

MM: What is it?

LB: It's my way of life.

In order to understand this gifted artist, several questions need to be asked: what is this instrument that he toiled over, and that he loved, and where did it come from? Who inspired him to play the Hammond organ? How did

⁴ Interview with Bennett published in French in Barcelona, entire interview at Appendix, p. 176.

Bennett's life experience influence his thinking and his style of playing jazz? How did he live out his passion? The answers to these questions will be developed in the following chapters.

Chapter I

History of the Organ

The first organ was invented in ancient Greece in the year 3 B.C. by an Alexandrian engineer, Ksetibios. It was a pipe organ and included a keyboard. The air was pushed through the pipes by using the energy of water, such as a waterfall or a hand pump.

Example 1. Water organ invented by Ksetibios,
photo http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Water_organ.



It is interesting to note that Ksetibios was also the inventor of a water clock which is said to have been extremely accurate, and was used in particular for determining the time at night when sun dials could not be used. Time was measured by the rate in which water would fill or empty the designated area, and float valves were employed in order to control the flow of water. Later on, in the 6th century A.D., pipe organs still functioned by the air going into the pipes, but

instead of water, bellows were used in order to send the air to the pipes. To obtain sound when playing the pipe organ, an organist needed an important wind pressure entering the pipes, and it was necessary to have an assistant who untiringly worked the bellows so that the organist could play music. In the last half of the 19th century, bellows were replaced by electrically run hydraulic wind motors. This was an important improvement, since it became much easier to practice, for example, and rendered the organist independent. Pipe organs were built in churches, and were very expensive, because no two organs are ever alike. The number of pipes, pedals, and manuals vary according to the available budget and also the architecture of the edifice. Towards the end of the 19th century, organs were being constructed in concert halls as well, in order to permit the performance of a growing classical organ repertory.

In 1934 another inventor, Laurens Hammond, a mechanical engineer, invented an organ that he hoped would replace the pipe organ because of its smaller size and lower cost. This new invention depended on electricity, not wind; electro-magnetic tone wheels produced the sound, and were to become the elements most Hammond “purists” regretted when they became obsolete in the present digital age, as organs began to be manufactured with digitalized “virtual” tone wheels. Surprisingly, Laurens Hammond, like Ksetibios, also invented a clock. His was an electric clock that made no sound at all, but whose synchronous motor inspired him to create an organ. It is interesting that the two inventors each created an organ and a clock. Both are key mechanical marvels of the age.

Thierry Tréguel is a French amateur organist who is passionate about the Hammond organ. He says,

For me, the Hammond organ is the masterpiece of the 20th century; it's the instrument-masterpiece, because the 20th century is the century of electricity, "the electricity fairy,"¹ and for me the Hammond organ has all the know-how of electricity, the electricity fairy is backing the knowledge. It has a sound that is both natural and supernatural. I've worked in electricity, making transformers and when I think about it, the Hammond organ is really the masterpiece of electromechanics, it's the little condensers, the little bobbins and spools, but with soul, like Laurens Hammond must have had, almost the soul of an organ builder, but with electricity.²

The new Hammond organ was a big success: Henry Ford bought six organs, George Gershwin bought one, and in Chicago, the first black churches began buying Hammond organs,³ finally finding, as the inventor had predicted, an alternative to the costly pipe organs. Without going into great detail about the building of an organ, or overly investigating the technical details of the production of sound in a Hammond organ, it is important to understand the passion that lies in the minds and hearts of so many Hammond organists and to understand their motivations.

¹ *La fée électricité (the electricity fairy)* is a painting by Raoul Dufy which was commissioned by the Parisian Company of Electric Distribution for the Exposition Universelle, 1937. It is now in the Museum of Modern Art, Paris.

² This interview with the author took place on January 2, 2012 at the « Sunset » Jazz Club in Paris, France.

³ Hammond 's invention took place in Evanston, Illinois, a town on the border of Chicago.

Example 2 Laurens Hammond and his invention, 1935, author's collection.



Example 3 The Hammond organ model B-3, author's collection.



It will be seen that the pedals come into question often, as is normal, because they do make up a big part of the difference between piano and organ. The organ is not a piano; it is as different as the difference between a clarinet and a tenor saxophone. The sequence of black and white notes is the same, but the fingering is often different, as well as the touch. The organ note will sound for as long as its key is pressed. For example, one of the first exercises for a new organ student is to play a legato C major scale with the thumb only. The piano, a percussion instrument, will sound a note when the hammer hits the string and then the sound will decay or fade. By flexibility, the thumb can play the scale legato, because the student can keep the note sounding until the first or second thumb articulation is placed on the following note. The organ can find the eighty-eight notes on the piano keyboard and then some, but it is necessary to know where to find them, since the Hammond keyboard manuals have fifty-five notes each, and twenty-five pedal notes. Another exercise is to find the note corresponding to middle C on the piano. It can be almost anywhere, since the Hammond organ is based on the same principle as the pipe organ, an 8-foot pipe will sound the fundamental note, and the 16-foot pipe will sound an octave lower. Rather than pipes, however, the Hammond organ registration is based on harmonics, and uses this system of harmonics in order to permit managing the sound. The corresponding drawbars will produce the following (there are nine drawbars for each manual):

1st drawbar (16') C2 (sub fundamental)

2nd drawbar (5 $\frac{1}{3}$ ') G2 (sub fundamental)

3 rd drawbar (8')	C3 (fundamental)
4 th drawbar (4')	C4 (2 nd harmonic)
5 th drawbar (2 $\frac{2}{3}$ ')	G4 (3 rd harmonic)
6 th drawbar (2')	C5 (4 th harmonic)
7 th drawbar (1 $\frac{3}{5}$ ')	E5 (5 th harmonic)
8 th drawbar (1 $\frac{1}{3}$ ')	G5 (6 th harmonic)
9 th drawbar (1')	C6 (8 th harmonic) ⁴

For the pedals, there are two drawbars: 16' and 8'.

As Steve Lodder explains in his book, "Classic Hammond Organ",

The Hammond is not a weighted keyboard like the piano, having an action more like that of a modern synthesizer...When an instrument does not permit you to vary volume by touch you have to shape lines and phrases through note duration...You can't bash the keys harder for expression, so you have to sculpt the length of the notes instead. Short notes are less important than long ones.⁵

Concerning the pedals, there appeared a system called "string bass" soon after the organ was invented. It was the Krueger string bass attachment, made by a Californian company,⁶ and it produced a string bass sound on the pedals. However the system was limited, and did not cover the twenty-five pedal notes but only thirteen or eighteen. Their brochure promised "Deep, round bass quality, with a percussive attack and gradual decay. Unmistakably a plucked string bass!" The system is now obsolete; the best —and probably only—solution

⁴ « Classic Hammond Organ », Steve Lodder, Backbeat Books, New York, 2008

⁵ *ibid.*

⁶ Maas-Rowe Carillons brochure, publication KSB101.

is a system named the Trek II string bass,⁷ which covers the entire pedal board and has a sound that can be more effective in a recording studio, unlike the normal Hammond pedal sound. There is, nevertheless, the solution of converting the entire B-3 organ, or only the pedal board to the MIDI system⁸ that permits the instrument to control synthesizers connected to it and gives access to multiple sounds. This solution has its advantages and disadvantages.

Bennett, in his experiments, kept tweaking his pedalboard connections until he found what he wanted. Unfortunately, as has already been implied, the connections he made were fragile and suffered from the moving of the instrument. As a result, Bennett would always need his soldering iron in order to reconnect wires at crucial moments. He would certainly be satisfied to see that playing the pedals is a development slowly becoming an accepted part of being an organist.

Organist Moe Denham⁹ says,

You can tell the difference between left-hand bass and pedal bass in the tone. The pedal bass is a deeper tone, but the left-hand bass sounds a little smoother...If you're going to play pedal bass with a drummer, it's important that your drummer be accustomed to playing with foot-played bass lines and understand that there's a difference between an organist playing bass lines and a bass player.¹⁰

⁷ The Trek II String Bass Unit was invented by Michael Smokowicz. His company, Trek II Products is located in New Brunswick, New Jersey.

⁸ Musical Instrument Digital Interface

⁹ Nashville-based organist who has played with Count Basie and Clarence « Gatemouth » Brown, among others.

¹⁰ « « The Hammond Organ : Beauty in the B », Mark Vail, Backbeat Books, New York, 1997

Effectively, instead of the rhythm section “trinity” of piano, bass and drums, there is a “binity” consisting of the organist and drummer. When three musicians make up the rhythm section, there is a triangular control, or pull, where the three musicians working together can hook into a groove, whereas in a dual system, one or the other player may struggle to lead the music into a groove of instruments—bass and piano—there is only the drummer to counter-balance the organist’s tendency to rush or pull back. Most drummers readily acknowledge the challenge. This will be discussed more specifically in Chapter IV.

Chapter II

Hammond Organ: from the Church to the Jazz Club

In 1964, Bennett recorded an LP entitled “Echoes and Rhythms of My Church,”¹ with the participation of Donald Byrd, Memphis Slim, and a Gospel choir directed by Dean Cooper. The album included several original compositions. In the liner notes that he wrote, Bennett said,

For a long time now, I’ve wanted to make a record devoted to the religious music of the black American. But do it, how? The expression of our faith is so varied. It changes according to the many Protestant sects ((Methodists, Baptists, Sanctified Church, etc...there are more than 100.) Finally, I had the idea that the best solution would be to do a panorama ranging from the traditional Negro Spiritual to Gospel (the modern, more rhythmical, more joyful, version of our faith.)...Here are some echoes and rhythms of the music that permeated all my youth, and that is always reflected in my playing even until today.

As has been indicated, Bennett was raised by his grandfather, pastor in a Baptist church, and by his grandmother who taught him music. The church experience permitted him to develop his musical talent by putting it to use in the different circumstances a young musician might encounter being active in this environment, such as accompanying the choir, soloists, improvising music during the church service, during prayer, etc.

Many Hammond organists have a particular style that can be linked to the ring shout of the time of slavery, for they have inherited the emotional tradition of the black church. Understanding this can explain several traits or characteristics found in the styles of those who are playing the Gospel blues. It has been said

¹ Bel Air, (411052 S) with Donald Byrd, Kenny Clarke, and Memphis Slim, 1964.

that the only difference between Gospel and the blues is that the Gospel songs are good news, and blues are bad news. Author Ethan Goffman puts it differently: "The struggle between the 'calling' of the blues and the calling of gospel is frequently understood as the struggle for the souls of individuals; gospel artists get filled with the Holy Spirit in church, while blues artists make deals with the devil at desolate crossroads."²

Both gospel and blues come from the same beginnings, the ring shout. During the time of slavery, there existed a slave ritual called the ring shout. It was religious in nature, and disapproved by the slave-owners. In Sterling Stuckey's "Slave Culture: Nationalist Theory and the foundations of Black America" (1987), it is described like this:

The shout was an early Negro "holy dance" in which "the circling about in a circle is the prime essential" (Gordon 1981, 447.) From contemporaneous descriptions of the shout we learn that the participants stood in a ring and began to walk around it in a shuffle, with the feet keeping in contact with or close proximity to the floor, and that there were "jerking," "hitching" motions, particularly in the shoulders. These movements were usually accompanied by a spiritual, sung by lead singers, "based" by others in the group (probably with some kind of responsorial device and by hand-clapping and knee-slapping). The "thud" of the basic rhythm was continuous, without pause or hesitation. And the singing that took place in the shout made use of interjections of various kinds, elisions, blue notes, and call-and-response devices, with the sound of the feet against the floor serving as an accompanying device.³

Many historians see the ring shout as the origin of all the music that came afterwards: Spirituals, Blues, Gospel, Jazz, etc. The question is, how did the ring

² From the Blues to Hip-Hop: How African American Music Changed U.S. Culture and Moved the World, by Ethan Goffman, ProQuest Discovery Guides, released November 2010

³ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uxPU5517u8c> (The typical clave rhythm is heard after the first song, which is hand clapped in 4/4. (Accessed on October 23, 2013))

shout evolve in different branches of the African American churches over time, and how did the Hammond organ become an essential part of that tradition?

Among the principal groups of African American Christians, there is the African Methodist Episcopal (A.M.E.) Church, which was founded in 1816 by Richard Allen, who was born a slave, but was able to buy his freedom. He and other freed ex-slaves were worshipping in a (white) Methodist church in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, but they were not allowed in the congregation, and had to sit apart in the balcony. During their prayers, they became too enthusiastic (noisy?) and were called to order systematically. Finally Richard Allen walked out of the church and led the other African Americans with him to a rented blacksmith shop, and they began having church there, before buying a plot of land in Philadelphia and establishing the first African American church, now a historical monument.⁴ This began the African Methodist Episcopal Church, the oldest independent African American denomination in the United States. Having asserted the right to worship in the way they pleased, the church membership has grown to more than 2.5 million.

The oldest black Baptist church in Kentucky, and third oldest in the United States, was founded about 1790 by the slave Peter Durrett. Baptist church members were also determined to create their worship service in their own manner, and their churches developed nationally to become the largest African American denomination in the United States, with a 2010 membership of

⁴ Mother Bethel A.M.E. Church – 419 S. 6th St. Philadelphia, PA 19147

5,197,512. The African American branch is the National Baptist Convention, USA, Inc.

The Church of God in Christ (COGIC)—referred to by Bennett as the “sanctified” church—has shown the most growth in membership since 1950, arriving now at over 5 million members, and still growing. The Church of God in Christ, also called “Holiness” Churches, or “Pentecostal” Churches were known for their very rhythmic music, and while Gospel was developing, the COGIC had singers playing cymbals and tambourines, and they would remain in service long after other churches had finished and their members had gone home. The music would still be going strong. Its members have kept more closely to the tradition of ring shouts. The examples given in footnote 17, p. 19 show the modern-day “shouting”, or “getting happy.”

In more recent years, many African Americans have become affiliated with the Seventh-day Adventist denomination, known for its observance of Saturday as the Sabbath. The Seventh-day Adventist denomination has grappled with the problem of racism and of separation of races within their conferences. There are about 15,769,000 Adventists worldwide.⁵

There are many other African American denominations, and independent churches in the United States, however the afore-mentioned have a significant importance to the musical tradition stemming from the ring shout, and the other denominations have more or less followed suit. African Americans who are Protestant have a tendency to change their church affiliations without distinction,

⁵ The Seventh-day Adventists now have a very good reputation for excellent Gospel music. The well-known *a capella* group « Take 6 » is Seventh-day Adventist.

often going to “where the music is good,” or where the preacher is the most charismatic, and delivers the best sermons. Music has always been an important part of the worship service in black Protestant churches, second in importance only to the preaching, almost on an equal plane. The singing was at first a *cappella*, with rhythmical hand-clapping and foot-stomping. In the example of the ring shout (see example 3), the rhythm is based on a 2/4 clave, one measure that repeats, established by a man with a stick who beats it on a piece of wood on the floor, and the hand-clapping joins in with the clave rhythm.

Example 4 Clave rhythm of the ring shout.

CLAVE 2/4



African American churches soon adopted the 4/4 rhythm, clapping on the 2nd and 4th beats. The Negro Spiritual was undoubtedly the first music sung, along with phrases invented by the lead singer, or preacher, which gave way to a response by the congregation. It is important to realize that the shout was not at all a vocal manifestation, but a dance with a sometimes-vocal punctuation, as in call and response. The dance could go on for hours, and the participants could continue until exhaustion or ecstasy overtook them, and others replaced them. The ecstasy was manifested by “shouting,” which included body movements; jerking

shoulders, shuffling feet and swaying members.⁶ In their book *The Black Church in African American Experience*, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya quote musicologist and author Eileen Southern who writes:

While white observers admitted the strange attraction of the shout, they generally disapproved of it, regarding the holy dance as barbaric and even lascivious. Knowing nothing of African traditions, the observers failed to appreciate the two most important elements of the shout:

1. Shouters used dance as a means of communication with God in the same way that song and prayer are used, and
 2. Shouters reached the highest level of worship when the Holy Spirit entered their bodies and took possession of their souls.
- Nowhere in the history of the black experience in the United States was the clash of cultures—the African versus the European more obvious than in the differing attitudes taken towards ritual dancing and spirit possession.⁷

These shouts were often decried by African Americans themselves, who thought they were remnants of the past and should no longer be practiced. They wanted to forget their slave years, and move on to other more dignified worship. The Negro Spirituals were then rendered more “dignified” by Professor John Wesley Work for the Fisk Jubilee Singers, who sang his arrangements on international tours to great acclaim. During that time, middle-class and educated African Americans chose to sing hymns that were sung in the white churches: Since the lyrics were from the dominant white culture and slaves were now free, the impulse for imitation was natural and understandable, religiously and otherwise. Given the association that the spirituals had with the slave experience and the quest for expanding the Black people’s religious life and expression, the

⁶ For an example of modern-day « shouting », see the examples listed in the footnotes on p. 23.

⁷ *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, C. Eric Lincoln and Lawrence Mamiya, Durham, Duke University Press 1990, p. 353

structured hymns [meter music] found fertile ground for development and use immediately following the freeing of the slaves.⁸

Just as they wanted to imitate the white Christian music, the African American churches were desirous of imitating the instrumentation in white churches also. Some churches acquired harmoniums, or “pump organs,” and in order to generate sound, it was necessary to pump air into a flexible bag, using the “pedals” for pumping. The harmonium was less expensive, of course, than a pipe organ, but it was very limited as to sound and expressivity. Pianos, more available and practical, also were found to be present in some churches. Both instruments were useful for accompanying hymns. Ancient harmoniums can sometimes still be found in churches for historical illustrations.

The invention of the Hammond organ by Laurens Hammond in 1934 replaced the harmonium. The Hammond organ could imitate the tonal quality and range of a pipe organ while still keeping the compact dimensions and cost-effectiveness of the harmonium as well as reducing maintenance needs and allowing a greater number of stops and other features. Harmoniums had become too complex in their mechanisms and too complicated in their upkeep. The first Hammond Organ, “Serial One,” was sold to the Paseo Methodist Church in Kansas City, and churches, particularly smaller churches, became important Hammond customers and are still faithful Hammond customers.

In the 1900s there was a black Methodist minister, Charles A. Tindley, who composed his own expression of beautiful hymn-type songs. These songs

⁸ Wyatt Tee Walker, black pastor and historian, quoted in *The Black Church in the African American Experience*, p. 356.

were not yet called Gospels, but in the 1930s, a pianist called “Georgia Tom,” who learned his music in the church but who now played blues, composed some religious songs. His name was Thomas A. Dorsey. One of his compositions was “Precious Lord, Take My Hand,” and while promoting his music, he referred to this music as “Gospel” music. He subsequently hired the great singer Mahalia Jackson to sing his songs so that he could sell the sheet music to church choirs and soloists, etc. Mahalia Jackson went on to international renown, and in so doing, created the style of organ and piano together for her accompaniment. Heretofore, soloists had been mostly accompanied by piano, and hymns in the church by organ, if there was one available. Jackson and Dorsey (who is called the father of Gospel) were both Baptists, and the Baptist church soared ahead in reputation for good music, followed by all other churches; the AME churches had a tendency to favor music more in the classical vein, such as anthems, etc. The Baptists were really considered the best churches to go to for music, and many began to have Hammond organs. Musicians who played piano began to experiment on the organ, and to learn how to use it and how to respond to the “emotional immediacy” so necessary to the African American congregation.

In several decades, the Church of God in Christ acquired the reputation of having the best Gospel music, thanks to their emphasis on the music. Receptive to new ideas, they began allowing other musical instruments into the church: saxophones, drums, trumpets, guitars, bass, but the basis of the music became and remains the Hammond organ. It is not easy to explain the role of the Hammond in church. It serves to accompany prayer, but also the songs, and

even the preacher. When 2012 presidential candidate Mitt Romney visited a black church during his campaign, invited by the NAACP, the use (or non-use) of the organist was evident: since Romney was not stirring up the audience, the organist could do nothing for him. A good example of how the organ worked (or actually didn't work) for Romney can be found on YouTube,⁹

Many wonderful and accomplished musicians and composers have come from the COGIC church as well as from the Baptist and Methodist churches; the organ is an important participant in all this music. It is only normal to see accomplished organists in demand for all types of music, and this is true since the beginning of the "Gospel" era. With the presence of instruments in the choir loft, all musicians are sought after, but mainly drummers and organists. A drummer can be paid as much as \$150 for a church service, and a good organist up to \$500 (except for those who donate their services, obviously.) Musicians acquire greater proficiency while playing weekly in a church service, and it is understandable that secular music attracts them also. So many musicians have developed their talent in the black church that the list is like a who's who in jazz and popular music: John Coltrane, Max Roach,¹⁰ and Lou Bennett, whose grandfather was a Baptist minister, and who played in church at a very young age. Like the great organist Jimmy Smith, Bennett was very much influenced by Gospel and Blues, Jimmy McGriff also. Dr. Lonnie Smith, another wonderful organist, heard Gospel and Blues during his childhood, an influence that came from his mother. Fats Waller's father was a minister, and his musical experience

⁹ <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PI0xQ18cvy0>, (accessed on Feb. 25, 2014.)

¹⁰ Both of the musicians' mothers were Gospel singers.

began in church. The organ's bluesy sound from the church became identified as the way the organ should sound. Billy Preston (1946–2006), a child prodigy, spent his childhood accompanying Gospel groups on organ before his famous collaborations with the Beatles, Little Richard, Sam Cooke, Ray Charles and others. Amiri Baraka pointed out that,

The Negro Church has always been a “church of emotion”...this heritage of emotional religion was one of the strongest contributions that the African culture made to the Afro-American...and always music was an important part of the total emotional configuration of the Negro church, acting in most cases as the catalyst for those worshipers who would suddenly “feel the spirit.”¹¹

‘The Spirit will not descend without song.’(Old African dictum quoted by Baraka.)

¹² The Hammond organ's role in the Black churches is just that: to help the Spirit to descend. In the jazz club it has kept its initial role, in a manner of speaking. The organ is possibly stylistically misunderstood by some jazz critics. However the black audiences respond instinctively to the emotion, the blues that they're waiting to hear.

There are of course quite a few organists who do not come from the church at all, and who have never experienced the African American church tradition. These musicians have responded to the Hammond sound, which has resonated in their hearts, and they have felt the urge to master the sound and the style, often with great success.

The future will be exciting for the Hammond organ. It has an almost exclusive place in worship services, with better and better musicians. The style is

¹¹ “Blues People”, LeRoi Jones (Amiri Baraka), Quill, William Morrow, New York, 1963, p. 41

¹² *ibid.*

becoming even more flamboyant and dramatic, because of the shouts. More organists are in demand in churches and the musicians formed in these situations will still be coming out of the praise breaks¹³ to experience other horizons, bringing their styles and absorbing the rules of jazz just as they have done in the past. Organists have always communicated their ecclesiastical sounds to secular music, but also taken the various jazz characteristics back into the church. At present, good church organists are very savvy as to modern jazz harmonies, and have incorporated them into their music. It will be interesting to see the development of both styles as music continues to go back and forth on the organ. According to Gary Giddins and Scott DeVeaux, coauthors of the 2009 book "Jazz," organ jazz "helped to sustain a strong popular audience for jazz in black communities of the 1950s and 1960s . . . The music was brash, bluesy, lean, and rocking, and it became ubiquitous in urban bars around the country, whether it was live or on jukeboxes."¹⁴ The organ's "brash" and bluesy sound came from the church, but in addition to "lean" and "rocking", the Hammond organ sound can also be tender, smooth, and heartbreakingly beautiful.

¹³ Typical COGIC shouts (called "Praise Breaks") can be experienced at the following sites: (accessed Nov. 21, 2013.)

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Z3NuGb-DfXw>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=endscreen&NR=1&v=o7eg106bzik>

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vNu5Si9W-GY>

¹⁴ Jazz, Gary Giddins and Scott DeVeaux, W.W. Norton & Co., New York, 2009.

Just as Jimmy Smith's titles in his albums: *The Sermon, Prayer Meetin'*, "emphasized the gospel origins of his music,"¹⁵ so did Bennett record such titles as *That Preachin' Man, Amen*, and *Pentacostal Feeling*, titles that underline his connection to the gospel tradition.

¹⁵ Jazz, The First 100 Years, Henry Martin & Keith Waters, Second Edition, Thomson Schirmer, Belmont, CA, 2006, p. 318.

Chapter III

Organists Who Influenced Lou Bennett

Example 5. Fats Waller at the Hammond organ.



From the time of its invention in 1934, the Hammond organ has had many illustrious representatives, in many different styles. The first recognized jazz organist was Thomas “Fats” Waller (1904–1943) as seen in example 5. Waller learned to play the pipe organ in church, and later found a job playing theater organ in Harlem, New York at the Lincoln and the Lafayette theaters, accompanying the silent movies and playing during the intermissions. Waller had

studied with famous stride pianist and composer James P. Johnson, and became a very popular stride pianist and composer in his own right, having written such songs as *Ain't Misbehavin*, and *Honeysuckle Rose*. Waller's son, Maurice, in his book "Fats Waller,"¹ says that during a trip to Europe, his father played a concert of Spirituals on the Hammond organ in London,² then continued to France, and while there he was invited to play the pipe organ at the Paris cathedral Notre Dame, where he was undoubtedly the first jazz musician to have been allowed to play there. Waller always declared that the organ was his favorite instrument, because it gave him so many possibilities of interpretation with the use of registration (sounds) and ambience. Waller easily adapted his stride style to the organ, using the pedals to emphasize the rhythm on the strong beats, for example on beats 1 and 3, and using his left hand to play chords on the weak beats (see Example 5).

¹ FATS WALLER by Maurice Waller and Anthony Calabrese, Schirmer books New York 1977

² The organ was a Compton theater organ that Waller played. His son, in this case, uses the name « Hammond » as a generic term for organ.

Example 6 Left-hand chords on weak beats.

WAITING AT THE END OF THE ROAD

Irving Berlin

The musical score is for the organ accompaniment of the song 'Waiting at the End of the Road' by Irving Berlin. It is written in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The score is divided into two systems. The first system contains measures 1 through 5. The right hand plays a melodic line with eighth and sixteenth notes, while the left hand provides harmonic support with chords on the second and fourth beats of each measure. The second system contains measures 6 through 8. Measure 6 features a sustained chord in the right hand and a moving bass line in the left hand. Measure 7 has a sustained chord in the right hand and a moving bass line. Measure 8 concludes with a sustained chord in the right hand and a final bass note. The word 'Organ' is written to the left of the first system.

At times he would play staccato chords on each beat with the left hand, the right hand used for the melody or improvisation thereof (see example 6).³

³ Waller transcriptions by Paul S. Machlin, « Performances in Transcription 1927–1942, A–R Editions, Middleton, Wisconsin, 2001.

Example 7. Bass and left hand on every beat.

WAITING AT THE END OF THE ROAD

Irving Berlin

The image shows a musical score for the organ part of the song 'Waiting at the End of the Road' by Irving Berlin. The score is written in 4/4 time and features a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The organ part is divided into three staves: a right-hand staff (treble clef), a middle staff (alto clef), and a left-hand staff (bass clef). The right-hand staff contains the melody, which is marked with fingerings 2, 3, 4, and 5. The middle and left-hand staves contain a rhythmic accompaniment consisting of chords and single notes, with the left hand playing a steady bass line on every beat.

These techniques imitate the stride style on piano and were Waller's own solution for finding the rhythm he wanted. His bass technique on the organ shows the independence of his feet. It will be noted that later organists didn't consider it necessary to play the pedals, having found a register for playing the bass with the left hand, thereby losing the left-hand accompaniment possibilities.

In his later years, Waller recorded some of his compositions on the Hammond organ, such as his well-known *Jitterbug Waltz* (1942), which is still a favorite with many musicians.⁴ One jazz club in Switzerland compiled a CD of 13 different well-known artists playing *Jitterbug Waltz* arrangements! (See Jacques Rohner interview, p. 76.) Waller did not have the opportunity to record very much

⁴ One can hear Eric Dolphy playing the tune at :

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=L9Z0wMAF1Dw> (accessed on February 25, 2014.)

Chick Corea <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7Yok2QR7IDU> (accessed on February 25, 2014,) Jimmy Smith <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EwLvqhBYSOY> (accessed February 25, 2014.)

on the Hammond organ, because it was new, and also because his training and experience had been on the pipe organ, which he loved above all.

The organist who was an even greater influence on Bennett was “Wild” Bill Davis (1918-1995.) Born in Glasgow, Missouri, Davis played piano with Louis Jordan and his Tympany Five, for whom he also wrote arrangements. When he discovered the Hammond organ, he was immediately captured by the possibility he had to play his arrangements on this instrument. Thereafter, Davis thought of the organ as his own big band. He left Louis Jordan’s group in order to play organ and was replaced by another pianist, Bill Doggett, who, when seeing what Davis was doing with the organ, and the money he was earning, also switched to organ, and had a hit record in the Rhythm and Blues category, *Honky Tonk* (1956.) Davis returned to play organ with and write arrangements for Jordan, and for two years the Tympany Five set the standard for small groups all over the United States. In 1949, Davis met Duke Ellington and wrote some arrangements for him. About his first opportunities to record with Ellington, Davis said, “It didn’t turn out as successfully as we hoped, because the organ is pretty hard to record, and in those days they didn’t have the recording techniques and equipment they have today. In fact, the organist had to be almost as much of a technician as the engineer himself, and in addition he had to play the music.”⁵ Speaking of further difficulties he encountered with the organ, he went on to say,

⁵ “The World of Duke Ellington”, Stanley Dance, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 235-243

I'd still rather work clubs [than one-nighters]. You have to carry the organ around with you, as well as the rest of the group, and there is never enough money to ship it by rail. I can get a trio in a station wagon, but not a quartet. A trailer not only slows you up but costs extra money in tolls, plus inconvenience. If you're traveling five or six hundred miles with a single car and a few pieces, you can do it so much better.⁶

Davis, who was a licensed pilot, also said that he would have liked to be an engineer. "I wish I had an engineering degree," he said, "I love anything to do with electronics and engineering." Subsequent chapters will show that Lou Bennett was also extremely interested in electronics.

Although Davis was quite successful at what he did, he didn't immediately take to the organ. As he tells it:

Originally, I didn't like organ, period. Most of the people who played it were church people and they played basic harmony and church music. It's wonderful in church, but outside it's a different thing; who wants a church organist in a nightclub? It was a challenge to me to play it differently, but some people still won't accept it. Generally, the organ has not been accepted by the white audience as it has been by the Negro, but I always felt that if I could get it in a place with a certain category of class of people, as on the East Side, they would say "This is it!"⁷

Davis was the inspiration for Jimmy Smith, Bill Doggett, Jackie Davis, and Lou Bennett and certainly other organists who took to the instrument following Davis's example. His style is multi-dimensional, he often plays his phrases in block chords, in a hard-hitting style; in listening to him, it is obvious that he thought "big band," as he himself indicated.

Davis toured extensively in Europe with the Duke Ellington Orchestra arranging and playing organ, though at times as second pianist. He also

⁶ *ibid.*

⁷ "The World of Duke Ellington", Stanley Dance, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, pp. 234–243.

recorded a series of albums with alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges. Drummer Sam Woodyard ⁸ (1925–1988) played with organist Milt Buckner (1915–1977,) another pioneer organist, for two years, and he said that playing with an organist was like playing with a big band. He gives us a rare insight about organists from a drummer's point of view:

Some organists play horn style, but Milt played locked-hands style and as many instruments as he could get going. When I went to Atlantic City with him, Wild Bill Davis used to be around the corner and he had Chris Columbus on drums. Chris took me under his wing. We used to get off at four, but they often played much later. Between sets, I'd go round and listen to him, and maybe sit around in his dressing room, and sometimes he'd come around on my job and sit at the drums. He's forgotten more than most drummers will ever know and he showed me so many things, especially about playing with an organ. You have to listen to the sounds as they come back, because it's an electronic thing. When the organist is playing the bass, you hear the sound of his foot hitting the pedals, so that you more or less have to get in between the beats. Then you have to be steady, because his leg will tire after an hour or so and the tempo may begin to fall back a bit.

Playing with an organ is really something on its own, and a lot of drummers find it impossible.⁹ Some organists get around one difficulty by recording with a bass player, because the organ bass is hard to pick up properly. From what Wild Bill Davis, Bill Doggett, and Milt told me, the closest you can get to the real bass sound is by playing the same notes in the left hand as with the left foot. You couldn't use a bass player in person, because you'd never hear him. I broke more bass drum heads in the time I was with Milt than in all the time I've been with Duke Ellington, because you have to play with such power with an organ. They have that volume pedal on it and when they get halfway happy you see the toe go down—and you can wait for it to come up! And they have those speakers all around the joint, and the sound always goes up around one or two in the

⁸ Woodyard, was drummer in the Duke Ellington orchestra 1955-1966.

⁹ Many drummers confirm what Woodyard is saying. Cecil Brooks III, who was the drummer for the Bill Cosby Show sitcom on CBS, said in an interview with journalist Bill Milkowski : « Every drummer can't play with an organ ...because you have the organ player playing bass lines with his left hand but he's soloing with the right hand, so from time to time his ideas will either push him forward or push him backwards. He himself understands where the groove is at, so the organ drummer has to develop this thing to keep you locked in but stay flexible. "(Cecil Brooks III in liner notes by Bill Milkowski for the album *Double Exposure* with organist Gene Ludwig (1937–2010)

morning, and you've got to go along strong with the man. In some of those intimate rooms, you can see the bottles and glasses shaking on the shelves. The people absorb some of the sound when the room gets crowded, but open the door and you can be heard a block away.¹⁰

Example 8. Wild Bill Davis at the Hammond organ, Bennett collection.



In his later years, Davis played frequently in Paris at the Caveau de la Huchette, notably with French vibraphonist Dany Doriz, with whom he recorded several times, as did Lou Bennett also. It is to be noted that Davis was the author of the arrangement of Count Basie's recording of "April in Paris" (1956,) which was a big hit, although unfortunately Davis was not able to play on the record date as scheduled.

¹⁰ The World of Ellington by Stanley Dance, Da Capo Press, Cambridge, MA, pp 192-193

Example 9. Jimmy Smith at the Hammond organ, author's collection.



Jimmy Smith (1928–2005) was born in Norristown, PA, and was initially a pianist, but after hearing “Wild” Bill Davis, he switched to organ. When Smith acquired an organ of his own, he took time out to practice on the instrument, acquainting himself with the organ, and deciding what he wanted to do with it. He finally emerged with his own style, which incorporated blues and bebop, and his first LPs created a sensation in the United States jazz community as well as those in most parts of the world. His creativity and technique were amazing, and his sound was new. He played in trio, using guitar and drums as accompaniment. For organists, this formation became, over time, the standard, although at times a saxophonist was added to the group in addition to or in replacement of the guitar. Smith was a pioneer in the “soul jazz” category, and was without a doubt

an influence for all future organists, whether or not they adopted his style. Just as there are now many clones of the Hammond Organ, Smith's success produced many Jimmy Smith clones.

As Woodyard commented, the organ bass was very difficult to play in order to have the right sound, and so organists devised a way of playing the bass notes with the left hand and doubling the same notes with the left foot. This precluded any other use of the left hand, which is why the presence of a guitarist was so important. The guitar played the accompaniment (chords) while the organist played the melody or the solo with the right hand. The following page shows a brief example of the two different approaches (examples 9 and 10.)¹¹ Each example shows the first same four bars of a blues in F. The right hand would play on the upper manual, for example, and the left hand would play on the lower manual.¹²

Many organists, some of the best, opted to simply tap on any pedal note in order to have the rhythmic impact, without worrying about doubling the left hand. This is still the general situation, although sometimes without the foot at all, and at times, even without the pedal board. The bass line will be a constant preoccupation for Lou Bennett as will be seen in later chapters.

¹¹ These examples are composed by the author.

¹² The pedal notes in examples 9 and 10 would be played staccato, as is indicated.

Example 10 Bass and left hand doubled.

Example 10 is a musical score in 4/4 time, featuring three staves: Right hand, Left hand, and Pedals. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Right hand part consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with some chords. The Left hand and Pedals parts are identical, consisting of a steady eighth-note bass line. The Pedals part includes a dotted line under the final note of the first measure, indicating a sustained pedal point.

Example 11 Pedal bass independent.

Example 11 is a musical score in 4/4 time, featuring three staves: Right hand, Left hand, and Pedals. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The Right hand part is identical to Example 10. The Left hand part consists of chords, with some notes marked with a flat (B-flat). The Pedals part is identical to Example 10, featuring a steady eighth-note bass line with a dotted line under the final note of the first measure.

The organists' family tree leads from Fats Waller to "Wild" Bill Davis to Jimmy Smith and finally to Lou Bennett. Of course, there were many other offspring organists who were popular during the golden age of the Hammond organ, who were playing on the "Chitlin Circuit,"¹³ when many of the clubs owned an organ, the bands were hired on a weekly basis, and the question was always "Who's on organ?" People had their favorites, and the biggest draws were certain to find work 52 weeks in the year if they so desired. The public was made up of many of the same people who heard the Hammond organ every Sunday in their church, and were happy to continue the music of what Paul Machlin calls "emotional immediacy"¹⁴ in the neighborhood clubs. The connection between the Hammond and the church has been discussed, and one could say that the blues are the result of this connection. Bennett also recorded an album entitled *Blue Lou's Blues*.¹⁵ The title tune is a Bennett composition and represents his characteristic phrasing of the blues idiom.

¹³ Name of an unofficial network of clubs basically in the inner city where African American groups were booked through the 1960s for mostly African American audiences.

¹⁴ Stride, *The Music of Fats Waller*, Paul S. Machlin,

¹⁵ 1984 – re-released on CD in 1993 : *Swingland*, Vol. XIII.

Example 12 "Blue Lou's Blues" album cover.



Chapter IV

The Life of Lou Bennett

Lou Bennett was born Louis John Benoit in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, on May 18, 1926. His father, from the French-Caribbean island of Martinique, left after Bennett's birth, and Bennett was sent to live with his grandparents in Baltimore, Maryland. Lou's birthplace (Philadelphia) was to become the birthplace for many other organists. In the same city, there was Trudy Pitts, Jimmy Smith, Jimmy McGriff, Shirley Scott, Richard "Groove" Holmes, (born just across the bridge in Camden, New Jersey), John DeFrancesco, and later the birth of his son Joey DeFrancesco.

In Baltimore, Bennett's grandfather was a pastor in a Baptist church, and his grandmother taught him to accompany the choir on the piano and the organ. Bennett was gifted musically and very early on was directing the choir and accompanying church services. In addition to his musical education, Bennett learned the trade of shoemaker, or shoe repairman, and worked at that job while playing music as an amateur. Bennett served in the armed forces from 1943 to 1946 and played tuba in the marching band. At the end of his military service, he resumed his job in shoe repair, but decided to try to become a professional musician. Because of his admiration for Nat "King" Cole, he formed a trio, patterned after that of Cole, with piano, bass, and drums, and began playing around Baltimore, continuing his steady job in shoe repair until the moment he heard "Wild" Bill Davis on the organ. He immediately responded to the sound of this instrument and the way Davis was playing it, bought an organ in 1956, and

began his career as organist. At first, he kept his day job, and would often sleep in his car after returning from a club where he had played, to make sure he would be on time for work in the morning. Soon he found he was getting enough work, and decided to quit his job and be an organist.

Example 13 Lou Bennett at the Hammond organ, Bennett's archives.



Bennett played the “Chitlin’ Circuit” along the East Coast, carrying his organ from place to place. He had, by then, discovered Jimmy Smith and was under the influence of the great organist. He played in New York at Small’s Paradise and at Minton’s, in the era of bop, and he happened to meet Babs Gonzales. Newark-born Gonzales was a bebop singer, author, and professional bopper, who was a precursor in vocalese and a world traveler. He introduced

Bennett to Daniel Filipacchi, a Frenchman who was powerful and influential in the French media: television, radio, and written press alike. After hearing Bennett play, he suggested to Lou that he come to France, with the encouragement that he would be greatly appreciated there. When Filipacchi offered to pay for his crossing by ship, enabling Bennett to bring his organ with him, the answer was immediately yes. Was it because he felt as if he were too much in the shadow of Jimmy Smith? Some organ experts have that theory. Pete Fallico is the founder of the Jazz Organ Fellowship,¹ and a key figure in the world of Hammond-organ players, producing organ meetings and concerts for many west coast festivals. He created the Hammond Hall of Fame and the idea has multiplied to inspire others to do the same. Here's what he said when asked, "In an article about Lou Bennett, you expressed the opinion that Bennett went to Europe because there wasn't room for the two organists in the US. Could you explain what you meant?" He answered,

At that time, 1959, the many disciples of Jimmy Smith were, reportedly, doing whatever they could to distance themselves from Jimmy's overwhelming influence. I liken this to the influence Louis Armstrong had over just about everyone who picked up a trumpet after he created a new and innovative soloing style. Jimmy's contemporaries and those just a few years younger than him needed to develop their own identities as organists. Lou (also born in Philadelphia but raised in Baltimore) probably felt that relocating to the European continent would be a sure-fire way to escape the comparisons with Jimmy Smith. Plus, Lou was already establishing a trademark in his own playing that included fast and furious bass pedal solos. When I began my studies of jazz organ and those who developed this music, I quickly came to the realization that this was a powerful position: to be seated at the console of a Hammond organ. One had tremendous power at one's fingertips and booming bass energy

¹ Jazz Organ Fellowship is a non-profit 501c3 organization founded by Fallico with the purpose of promoting jazz organ education.

on the heel and toe. Ego-boosting also played an important role in the development of this music. This was, after all, nicknamed “The King of Musical Instruments” and those who played it were tested on the bandstand in many different ways. The theatrics of playing a Hammond B3 were also a big part of any show, i.e. moving to the floor and playing the foot pedals with the hands, walking around the organ while a match stick was pressed in between two keys to sustain a note, shaking the organ on its four legs as if to give it another life form, playing the manuals with the chin or feet, or even turning around and playing the manuals from behind—these were just a few of the tricks and crowd-pleasing maneuvers an organist would attempt to compete with another or maintain this aura of power.² For the purpose of that story, I imagined Lou competing with Jimmy Smith for attention as did Jack McDuff and Johnny “Hammond” Smith and Winston Walls and so many others.”³

As it happened, Bennett did not escape from the comparison with Smith, but this became apparent only after he had achieved a stature equal to Smith’s in Europe, at least for a while.

² In Philadelphia and in Newark, there was effectively a tradition of the « Battles of the Organ », where as many as four organists would be pitted against each other, on the same organ, and the crowd would designate its favorite, or the winner, by the amount of applause obtained. These « battles » were all in fun, and great crowd-pleasers.

³ Interview with Fallico conducted in writing by electronic mail on March 7, 2013.

Chapter V

Interview Yves Merle

The following interview will serve to better portray Bennett as a person and musician. Yves Merle is French and lived in an apartment on the same floor as Bennett did, in Le Chesnay,¹ France, from the age of 17. They became very close friends, and when Bennett, suffering from emphysema, became too tired to drive, Merle accompanied him to his concerts as his driver, assisting him with his bottles of oxygen, and was with him at the end. Merle provided many of the personal photos of Bennett and friends for this thesis, and documents from Bennett's archives, and arranged Bennett's funeral service.

RS: I'm speaking with Yves Merle,² who was one of Lou Bennett's best friends. Best friend?

YM: One of his best friends. I wouldn't pretend to be his best friend, but one of his good friends, surely.

RS: You knew him during how many years?

YM: During how many years? Well, from memory, I must have been about 17 years old, and being 57 now, that makes 40 years. Yes, not far from 40 years.

RS: You were living...

YM: We lived on the same floor. Fate was kind. We were on the same floor, and I didn't know that Lou Bennett was a star, and just back from Africa, I found myself once again with people of color, which was not at all disagreeable for me, since

¹ A city about 13 miles to the west of Paris, in the department of *Les Yvelines*.

² Conducted in French at the Petit Journal Montparnasse in Paris. (Author's translation)

among Lou's friends there were Kenny Clarke, Miles Davis, a certain Rhoda Scott also. I didn't see it at the time, but let's say that at the age of 20, when one is a fan of Johnny Hallyday and Sardou,³ Lou Bennett is of little importance, Kenny Clarke, little importance, Memphis Slim as well, and then as months go by, one realizes that these people are personalities, and as we say today, "stars" or "people."

RS: Did you know Miles Davis thanks to Lou Bennett?

YM: Thanks to Lou Bennett, yes. When he would invite friends, acquaintances, musicians, what do I know? I got to see all these top people, one of which was Miles Davis, with whom I had the privilege one day of drinking a whiskey, with some chips. This is unforgettable when one is 20 years old.

RS: What did you and Lou talk about?

YM: I would tend to say about everything and nothing, a lot about girls and women.

RS: He liked girls and women.

YM: He liked girls. He liked women. He had an official woman and maybe some unofficial ones.

RS: Did the two of you talk about musicians also?

YM: Musicians. Of course. The musicians were everything for him. As soon as he got up—he didn't have the same schedule, since like all artists, he would get up at around one or two o'clock in the afternoon—he spoke a lot about musicians, that goes without saying, musicians who played regularly with him.

³ Two popular French singers of the *Salut les Copains* era who are still popular.

I'm thinking about Kenny, Jimmy Gourley, Al Levitt...but also other musicians with whom he enjoyed excellent relations, I think of Memphis, I think of Rhoda, but there are many others.

RS: Did he talk about the Bennett Machine? Did you know him when he made it?

YM: Yes indeed. I discovered the Bennett Machine in Cambrils.

RS: His house in Spain?

YM: His house in Spain where he had a garage, which was only a garage by the name he gave it. Inside it was everything except automobile parts, but a lot of parts for organ, keyboards, microphones, speakers, old cars for transporting this material that never worked very well, and this is where the Bennett Machine was born: an organ that Lou continuously tried to improve upon, day by day, to give it new sounds, adding, in that day of electronics, circuits that would give him whatever synthesizers of the day. As a result, every day, every day that God sent, after having practiced on his mute keyboard on the terrace, he would shut himself up in the garage, and he would solder and solder, unsolder and re-solder.

RS: But how did he know electronics. Did he study or what?

YM: Not at all. At least I don't think so; I have no information that would indicate this. I think it's in the area of self-teaching, do-it-yourself, and he managed to know that, from the color of a wire, that either the wire A went from one place to go to B, and maybe there might be a connection between the A and the B, so he would un-solder the A point to hook it up with... I think it was more intuitive than actual knowledge.

RS: And once he had his Bennett Machine, he could transport it.

YM: With difficulty.

RS: Still?

YM: Still with difficulty, since initially, compared to the Hammond organ, he wanted to create his Bennett Machine, thinking it was going to be much lighter. It was certainly lighter, that's undeniable, nevertheless the difficulties came from the volume, it took almost as much room as his regular organ, but certainly lighter.

RS: And more interesting for him, since it permitted him to do what he wanted to do.

YM: That's right. He got sounds out of the Bennett Machine that, it seems, even the best of Hammonds couldn't get.

RS: One has the image of him when he was playing a concert, and he would hear something that wasn't right, he would get up and get his soldering iron and lie on his back under the organ in order to fix it.

YM: Yes, I even have an anecdote from a concert that took place in Rocquencourt,⁴ at the head office of Mercedes Benz, where Lou was playing in duo with Kenny Clarke. They had started since hardly ten minutes, then I heard Lou call, "Yves!" So I rushed to the organ, near the pedals exactly. Lou directed me, and I fooled around with a wire that I managed to connect with another, and the sound finally reappeared. Lou was very happy, he even had me applauded by the one hundred fifty invited guests who were present in this small club.

RS: You talked to me about Benny Goodman also.

⁴ Rocquencourt, 13 miles west of Paris, in the same department as Le Chesnay, *Les Yvelines*.

YM: Yes, and Benny Goodman was part of...

RS: This same concert?

YM: Exactly, of this same concert. He played also; he played with Claude Bolling, if I remember correctly.

RS: And everybody was on the same...

YM: Everybody. They played in duos. Afterwards, they played in quartet, and that wound up in a frenzy, with a jam session. It was marvelous. And speaking of the Bennett Machine, I remember also a TV program on channel TF1, a program presented by Michel Drucker,⁵ and everyone knows about the professionalism of Michel Drucker. I don't know the name of the show, but the same thing happened: Kenny and Lou, a technical problem, and I will always hear Michel Drucker looking at me in the wings and saying: "This is the last time that I invite, live, any jazzmen on television."

YM: Same anecdote with Jean-Claude Bourret, a show that was called "Télé-Matin", I think, or "Matin-Bonheur", or the same thing. A live show. Lou starts playing with Kenny, and maybe five minutes after: interruption of the sound... Jean-Claude Bourret and Jean Offredo, unfortunately deceased now, said, "Drucker was right. No more jazzmen on French television." At least not live.

RS: Because the sound stopped?

YM: It wasn't even the sound that stopped. It was that the sound became dreadful; it was a cracking, horrible noise. The sound coming out of the organ

⁵ Michel Drucker (1942–) is an extremely popular French journalist and TV host.

was really excruciating. It was unbearable to listen to. So the sound engineer had to lower the sound.

RS: That's too bad.

YM: Yes, that's the least one can say.

RS: I know you gave me a list with all the musicians that Lou played with, but there are so many of them, do you know with whom he actually preferred to play?

YM: He had really appreciated a concert; I think it was in Belgium, with Johnny Griffin.

RS: Yes?

YM: And then there was someone whom he appreciated over and above all else, it was an organist who also came to Europe, whose first name I believe was Rhoda and whose last name was Scott. He spoke very, very often about Rhoda Scott.

RS: But finally, Lou was the first to come to France with an organ, right?

YM: Yes, that's right, and I think it is Rhoda who followed in his footsteps.

RS: He paved the way for many organists who then could follow. Do you have any details about his arrival in France? He arrived by ship?

YM: He arrived by ship, by request of what I would call the Filipacchi team, and I remember, I think Lou gave me this detail, that the ticket had been paid for by Filipacchi: "I'll always owe him that ticket," he said, but I think Filipacchi must have gotten back fourfold.

RS: Ah yes, and he became well-known with the TV show ...

YM: With the show “Salut les Copains.”

RS: By Filipacchi.

YM: Yes, as a matter a fact, by Filipacchi. It turned out to be an outstanding success, which made Lou, Kenny, and Jimmy Gourley THE famous trio, and after the success of this famous tune “Amen” that everyone knows, of course.

RS: It was “Amen” that took him to the top?

YM: Yes, “Amen,” one can say that it’s “Amen” that made Lou known in the whole world and especially in Europe.

RS: Then in France, and maybe Europe in general, he was better known than Jimmy Smith, finally.

YM: Much better known than Jimmy Smith, and there was a little battle between Jimmy Smith and Lou, actually a friendly battle. Lou appreciated Jimmy very little, let’s say. He thought that his music was much too commercial, and I remember that several times Lou said to me about Jimmy, that his music was more supermarket music than anything else.

RS: Really?

YM: Meaning by that: commercial. With “Amen” he maybe changed his mind because “Amen” is pretty swinging, and he saw that with good music the general public appreciates it, and the general public loved “Amen” without being specialists or jazzmen.

RS: And perhaps he had something to say about Jimmy Smith’s pedal work?

YM: Yes, since Jimmy Smith didn’t play much pedals. He only admitted Rhoda Scott the quality of being a good “pedaler.”

RS: He was a shoemaker.

YM: He was a shoemaker, and he had a certain pride about having been a, in the sense of modesty meaning that he had arrived—it is I who use this term—he had arrived at the top, but he had come from very, very low beginnings, proving that it's possible to start low and get to the top.

RS: He liked shoes a lot.

YM: He liked shoes, he was crazy about shoes, I wouldn't say he was a 'footist,' to use a term from a Coluche sketch, but he really had a thing about shoes, and I think he spent important sums of money buying pairs of shoes, whether in lizard, in crocodile, or in simple leather, and he always had marvelous shoes, whether on stage or off. There was only one place in the world where I saw Lou wearing vulgar rope-soled sandals, or vulgar thongs, with holes in them, it was in the morning in Cambrils, when he would just be getting up, when he hadn't slept well, and he was getting up to practice on his mute keyboard, he had an old pair of worn-out espadrilles, holes in them, but other than that, he always wore beautiful shoes, well- shined, well taken care of, and after his death I saw in his closet where he kept his shoes, and the number of pairs of shoes was impressive.

RS: How many?

YM: If I didn't see sixty pairs of shoes that I would call stage shoes, I didn't see one.

RS: But he had nice feet, also.

YM: He had nice feet. Unlike Rhoda, he didn't play barefoot, but in his socks from time to time. So I saw his feet, but, well, I'm not a feet fan, but he did have nice feet.

RS: At least, in his shoes, it looked like he had nice feet.

YM: That's true.

RS: I know that Lou had a great sense of humor...

YM: He had a lot of humor, a very fine mind, a sharp mind, and he could juggle with several languages.

RS: He spoke French?

YM: He spoke French, he spoke English, of course, he spoke German, and he spoke Spanish fluently.

RS: German too?

YM: German too. I saw him speaking Russian with the Ambassador of Russia in France, in Paris, during a reception, I don't remember where, it was in a radio station, Europe, or RTL. The then Russian Ambassador was present and I saw Lou converse during ten minutes with the ambassador in Russian, probably with difficulties, but he managed easily to make himself understood. A few words in Swedish, I think Scandinavian or something, and he spoke some Bambara.

RS: What is that?

YM: A dialect from Mali.

RS: Really?

YM: I know that language, having lived in Mali for several years, and we spoke a few minutes in Bambara, since I had a few souvenirs of this dialect.

RS: So, he had a gift for languages.

YM: Gifted for languages, and again a fine mind, making puns one after the other, humor after humor, appreciating the humorists of the moment: the Coluches,⁶ the Popecks,⁷ the political analysts, the politologists, etc., etc., taking the theses and the antitheses in an impressive way for someone who didn't have a degree from a university or a "*grande école*".⁸

RS: But was he discriminating enough with the people who hired him? For example, Eddy Delhayé, who was his manager in Belgium, it seems, found that someone would offer him a job for very little money, and Delhayé refusait, but Lou would say "Oh no, come on! Let's do it anyway even if he doesn't have very much money." Because he wanted to play.

YM: That's true. The essential for Lou, it seems to me, having known him for close to forty years, was to play for the pleasure of playing. I have several anecdotes that confirm this: I think the most important is very personal: that of the christening of our eldest son, Mathieu. Lou had a concert in Rome, planned since six months before, and we didn't know about it. When he learned that Matthieu's christening would take place on the same date as his concert, four months beforehand he canceled the concert.

RS: Wow!

YM: Proof of friendship, no doubt.

⁶ Coluche (1944–1986) was a popular comedian who since his untimely and accidental death has become a cult figure.

⁷ Popeck (1936–) is a comedian who is known for the character he has created and his Yiddish accent.

⁸ One of the prestigious universities in France.

RS: Yes, without a doubt.

YM: But an indifference as to finances, because, a concert in Rome, I imagine, that one negotiates it in a profitable way, but he preferred to be at the christening of little Matthieu Merle rather than be in a concert hall in Rome. I don't know which hall, but it doesn't matter.

RS: No.

YM: Another anecdote in that sense: I found a few concerts for him to play for a public that was crazy about jazz, connoisseurs who didn't have important sums of money to pay, and I won't even tell you the amount that he asked for the concert, just enough to reimburse his tolls and gas, it was three hundred kilometers, simply to be able to spend an evening with people who appreciated his music. So that's a perfect lack of materialism.

RS: For the joy of playing.

YM: That's it. Also for one of my friends who was starting a discothèque in Paris, he came and played for nothing, and two or three cases in Spain, in Barcelona and Madrid, where people who were opening clubs hired Lou for two weeks just for a modest meal at night, and once again, his gas and tolls paid.

RS: But he was much loved in Spain, no?

YM: Very much appreciated in Spain. I would venture to say much more appreciated in Spain than in France. Why? Probably because he had a home there, he was there often, and he was playing there a lot.

RS: He had had a problem with arthritis in his hands.

YM: A problem with arthritis in his fingers, which meant that every day, before even beginning to practice, he had to warm up his fingers on something, anything, a table, a pillow, in the train, in the plane, on the steering wheel, he was continually moving his fingers non-stop. I found this atrocious, but it must have been funny for the other drivers to see him tapping on his steering wheel or on the dashboard.

RS: He found a treatment?

YM: He found a treatment from a doctor in Parly II,⁹ in France, who put him on what one calls alternative medicine, a combination of artichoke hearts and I don't know what, but that did manage to calm him for a while, but later he had painful moments again.

RS: Tell me about his illness that carried him away.

YM: Illness, if we can call it an illness. I would almost say that it was fate, because Lou was a heavy smoker, and it's true that he didn't only smoke Gitanes, which didn't help any, but with a lung problem...

YM: But he wasn't addicted.

YM: Oh, no, not at all. Let's just say that from time to time he—and when I say from time to time, I'm being nice—it was pretty regular that he and his good friend, Kenny...but his respiratory problems towards the end were such that he had to travel with a bottle of oxygen, a small model at first, and a bigger model afterwards. I saw him, I think it was five months before his death, playing at the

⁹ Parly II is a commercial center very close to Le Chesnay where Bennett lived with his wife, Sonia

Latitudes¹⁰ in Paris, with a bottle of oxygen in his car and a bottle of oxygen behind the stage. He would play a set, and rapidly he would go in the back to get some oxygen for twenty minutes, and the public didn't realize anything, except that after the concert he would be so tired that he couldn't drive, so I was his driver and I would drive him home, with his little bottle of oxygen, all the while hoping that he had another bottle to replace the one at his apartment. This was not always the case, of course, and we would stop at the hospital Mignot at three o'clock in the morning, where he ultimately died, to get another little bottle of oxygen. Fortunately, we knew the nurses and doctors who cooperated very kindly. So Lou departed from this life peacefully. Finally, the Professor Guérard in emergency finally tried a tracheotomy that for Lou was the only means of saving him, but he didn't withstand the operation, and he passed away.

RS: During the operation or after it?

YM: Following the operation.

RS: He had emphysema, right?

YM: Yes, he had emphysema.

RS: That worsened...

YM: Exact, and very rapidly.

RS: Very rapid?

YM: Very rapid. In hardly two weeks time.

RS: He was seventy when he died.

YM: True, they say that's the golden age.

¹⁰ The « Latitudes » was a jazz club situated on the Left Bank at Saint-Germain-des-Prés in Paris. It no longer exists.

RS: Maybe...afterwards, there were tributes from all the musicians who realized that he was somebody...

YM: Was there a moment of realization afterwards? Objectively, I think so, since we had an evening in his memory, there were quite a number of musicians effectively, and perhaps people realized that the world of jazz had lost a figure and a legend at the level of Miles Davis or Jimmy Smith, etc. Yes, probably a moment of truth after his departure. He left a void, but I think that every time a musical giant disappears, it leaves an emptiness and we feel more or less like orphans, whether we belong to their world or not, we lose a friend, or a buddy, and the musicians lose a colleague, and we all lose a musician, and good musicians are not all that many.

RS: That's true. And everyone who played with Lou became attached to him, didn't they?

YM: Lou was, I think, an endearing person, whether one had played with him or not, he was a very charming and lovable person. There are so many examples of friends who met Lou and who still talk about him twenty-five, thirty years later, as if they had known him for ten years, but in reality they met Lou during an evening, which lasted four or five hours. He would leave such a mark of sympathy, of affability, of gentleness, and cheerfulness, and sincerity, well probably I'm lacking in objectivity, but this is what I feel from a great deal of friends who met him for a short time and who, twenty years later, talk about their meeting as if it were yesterday. An unlimited admiration.

RS: Did he ever talk to you about the United States?

YM: Very little. He didn't like the United States too much. He had good memories, especially of the time when he was shoemaker. He spoke often about his father, his family, even though they were ill-assorted, but he didn't much like the United States. The mentality, the frame of mind, the importance of showing off, the social climbing, is it an accident that he stayed in Europe? I don't think so. He found a little piece of paradise near Paris—twenty kilometers from Paris—a place in Spain, concerts, recognition, all this made him happy. He remained in France, although he could have returned to the United States probably. How would he have done professionally? I can't say, but I do know that he didn't appreciate the United States very much.

RS: He preferred Europe?

YM: The simplicity of Europe.

RS: But his father had disappeared before or just after his birth.

YM: His father had disappeared very early; I believe Lou must have been about twelve. Ten or twelve, from my memory, when his father disappeared. I remember that Lou, several times, said to me, "Me either, I didn't know my father, but it's not going to kill me." But one heard nonetheless in his voice a little regret about not having known him, not having known a father's affection, but was it a lack of affection, a lack of love on the side of the father? I don't know. Is it because he never had a child?

RS: He didn't want children.

YM: It's not that he didn't want children, I think it's life that decided that he didn't have children. Had he found the right future mother, the right wife... I don't know,

but he never had a child of which he was the father, in any case, but he knew so much how to look after others that...

RS: He loved children.

YM: Yes, he loved children.

RS: He loved your children.

YM: That's very true. I can still see him at the Béclère Hospital when my eldest whose christening I just spoke of, had to be admitted in intensive care, where he had wires and tubes coming out from all over him, I will always see Lou taking him nevertheless in his arms in spite of the plastic bag and the wires, and saying, "He's like my own son." These are very emotional moments, humanly speaking, and no comments necessary. And one can share these moments with special people that one likes, the moment to speak of this presented itself, so I speak of it. If not, it's kept here.

RS: In your heart.

YM: Yes.

RS: And what's left of Lou Bennett?

YM: What's left of Lou Bennett? A lot of things are left of Lou Bennett. A first name and a family name, already. The background of an artist, who leaves behind him an important discography, whether it be old vinyls, which have been perhaps re-mastered on CDs, videos, amateur films that I'm trying to collect and regroup on a site on Facebook, and there is left, especially for me, I'm not a musician, the image of an exceptional human being, with almost too many qualities.

RS: Too many qualities?

YM: Other than the music.

RS: Yes, I understand.

YM: Too many humane qualities, not wanting anyone to suffer, not anyone, whether it's his wife, even if...but he paid the price. And immediately, I have an example. We're driving through Paris, we stop for a red light, even at that time, there were people begging at red lights; I have never seen Lou, not once in my life, not give money to someone who's holding out his or her hand at a red light or on a sidewalk.

RS: Really?

YM: Never, never, never. Moreover, not far from here, one of the last times.

Which denotes something of a man not interested in money. And a friend.

RS: Yes

YM: (silence)

YM: A friend who is present almost every day.

RS: I don't know what else we can say, because it's true, I knew him too, he was a wonderful person.

YM: Not taking himself seriously, but taking others seriously, but not taking himself seriously. If we look at the series of musicians I talked about earlier, for Lou, these musicians had a lot of talent, himself, he merely played organ.

RS: (laughs)

YM: He used to repeat a proverb, I don't know where it came from, that says that Europeans know what time it is, but Africans have the time. And Lou would say,

“I feel more African than European, because Europeans know the time but Africans have the time.” And he would tell me that often because I had been almost fifteen years in Africa, and I would tell him, laughing, “Me too, I’m more African than European because Europeans know the time and Africans have the time.”

RS: He said a lot of things like that, and now it’s difficult to remember everything he said.

YM: Yes. We should have written everything down, and that’s where we realize the importance of people that we’re with on a daily basis.

RS: Exactly.

YM: And what they say, and we don’t save all these things, and some people consider archives as secondary, the photos, the words spoken, etc. and one realizes more and more that it’s awfully important in this era of Internet where you can just push two or three buttons in order to be in contact with the entire world. We have even forgotten the advice of our grandmothers, or of the family.

RS: As a matter of fact, I would like to thank you for all the archives that you have accepted to give me, because...

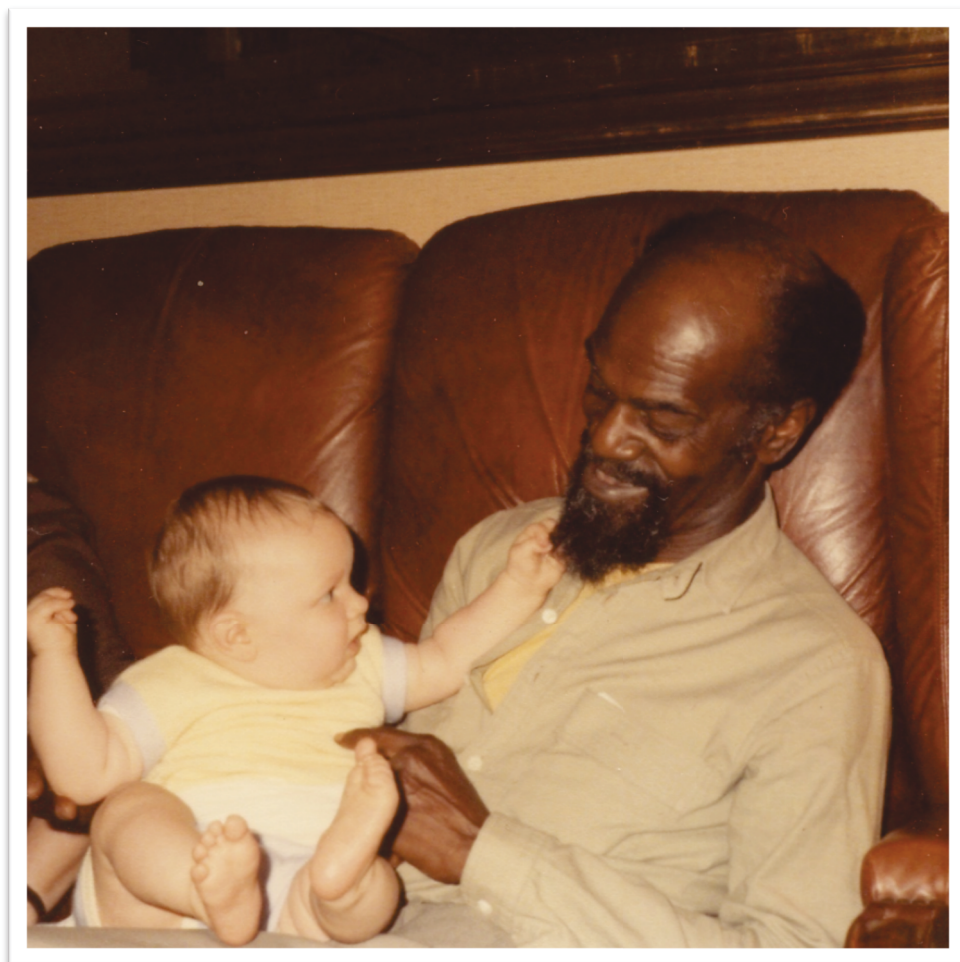
YM: It’s willingly, from the heart.

RE: I myself have come to appreciate archives more and more since I’ve been in the program Jazz History and I see all the importance of archives in order to reconstruct, to render life to a musician, an artist.

YM: It’s fundamental.

RS: Fundamental.

Example 14. Bennett with Matthieu Merle, photo Yves Merle.



Chapter VI

Interview Eddy Delhayé – Part I

This interview follows that of Yves Merle, to show the single-mindedness of Bennett's dedication to his music, and his lack of attraction to his home life. Delhayé is a semi-professional organist who has sustained his interest in the Hammond organ and Hammond organists by staying up-to-date about everything happening in the organ world. He was Bennett's manager/agent for almost 15 years, and developed a close relationship with him. Delhayé also provided recordings and documents from his collection.

RS: Eddy Delhayé, you knew Lou Bennett very well. Had you already heard about him, did you know who he was before going to hear him play?

ED: Of course.

RS: How?

YM: How did I know about him? Because I have a passion for Hammond organ, and I always listen to everything that exists about the Hammond organ. I knew about the existence of Lou Bennett almost as soon as he arrived in France, because there were several news flashes about him on French television. And also, of course, I knew about him because he had written the theme song for the TV show "*Salut les Copains*" that I used to look at, at that same time. So I started knowing about him then.

RS: *Salut les Copains* was on TV?

ED: It was on TV, on the channel RTF, the ancestor of ORTF. At that time, it was RTF.

RS: OK.

ED: Afterwards, I had never had the opportunity to go see him in Belgium until 1984.

RS: What did you think of him the first time?

ED: Oh, it was a big event for me, because I had already seen you several times in concert, and I would always go each time a well-known organist would be playing somewhere, then when I heard that Lou was coming to Luc Lambert's Piano Bar in Namur, I said to my wife at that time, "Let's go!" So we arrived, it's a small club, you know it, and he was playing with Hervé Capelle on drums, two musicians, and already on the Bennett Machine, of course.

RS: Already?

ED: Yes, it was comprised of a Hammond keyboard on top, a synthesizer that could play the sound of choirs, and harmonies on the bottom, and of course he had his complete pedal board with the Wersi¹¹ synthesizer. He chose the Wersi synthesizer. However, when his concert began, I could see that he had a strange look on his face, and he was continually turning his head towards one side of the bar, because there was someone who was filming his concert without having asked him for permission. But he continued his first set without saying anything. Then, at a certain moment, he had an intermission between the two sets, and he went to find Lambert and told him that he didn't like being filmed. When he began his second set the man had tried to hide, but kept on filming. Lou saw that anyway. As a result, in order to underline his disapproval, he suddenly stopped

¹¹ A German company specializing in musical electronics. Completely do-it-yourself, it is necessary to know electronics in order to even choose the module.

the concert before the end. He had nonetheless played three quarters of his concert, and played more than two hours. So that's how I came to know him. Then something really extraordinary happened, something that sealed my friendship with him, can I continue?

RS: By all means.

ED: Well, after the concert, my wife and I were seated at a table, drinking a couple of beers, and as luck would have it, Lou was sitting next to us. As alcohol sometimes has a liberating effect, I said to him, "Mister Bennett, I have a phantasm". He answered, "Ah, you also, you have phantasms? What is your phantasm?" I said, "It's that you come to play for my birthday, especially for me." He took out his little agenda, and said, "When is your birthday?" "September 13th." So he made a face like this, and, "Yes, I think I can, but could I stay at your place for two weeks? Because I don't want to go back to France, and like that..." Because he had to play in Holland afterwards, I forget where. I told him, "No problem," but afterwards, going back home, I said to myself, "This is not possible, he won't come." And in the month of May, my phone rings: "Hello, Eddy? Lou Bennett speaking." I said, "No! I must be dreaming." He said, "Ah no, I promised you, I will be there." So, September 13th, preparation for combat: I had an exhibit hall of 400 square meters, because I was in the sailboard business. I had everything emptied out, I sent for a sound technician, a light technician. I hired someone to build a podium, with draperies, in order to transform the place into a concert hall, with a bar, of course. There were other jazz groups, since I was already into jazz, they were playing before, and time was passing, then at 10

p.m., no Lou Bennett. At eleven at night, my wife comes to me and says, "The State Police want to talk to you on the phone." "What's going on?" "Mister Delhayé, there is a Negro whose car broke down on the turnpike, and he wants you to come get him." "Yes, OK, I know who the 'Negro' is," I tell him. (I hadn't appreciated, you can imagine.) And I ask, "Where is he?" So I go to the microphone and announce: "We need help. Lou Bennett's car has broken down on the turnpike." So we left in 4 or 5 cars to get him. He had an old station wagon, a Citroën DS, and I remember he had an extra car door on the roof. The suspension was shot, the car was just about on the ground, and so we brought the DS back to my place, because just across the street there was a Citroën garage. Lou played the concert at almost one o'clock in the morning. It was absolutely awesome! He played in trio formation, with Hervé Capelle on drums, his regular drummer when in Belgium, and a trumpet player, Richard Rousselet. The concert was really magic. I took a lot of photos, that I can show you if you like. And effectively, he stayed with me for two weeks. We talked a lot, we ate, and he played a lot of music. I told him, "Lou, it's unbelievable, you almost never come to Belgium." "No, it's the first time." "Because," he continued, "I don't have a good manager." "You have one now." "You?" "Yes, me." "Ah", he said, "and how much do you get?" "Nothing at all. You'll pay me in trade." "Oh, no!" (laughs) But actually, he really did pay me in trade, because he taught me an enormous amount of things about the Hammond organ, and he is someone who is very generous, very loyal in friendship, and the same for me, since I was his agent, his manager, in Belgium up until his death.

RS: And you have the film that was made...

ED: Exact, I have the film because Lou Bennett confiscated it, and he gave me a copy. It was in VHS, I had it transformed to DVD. I'll make you a copy, but the quality is not really very good. So, I became his agent for Belgium, and all of the concerts that I organized, almost without exception, were in Belgium. I would always try to group at least two or three concerts together.

RS: These concerts, were they generally in clubs or in concert halls?

ED: There was only one concert, it was the biggest concert, and it was on the Grand-Place in Brussels.

RS: That is very prestigious.

ED: Yes, on the Grand-Place in Brussels, for the Brussels Jazz Marathon. But before, it wasn't called that, it was "Brussels in Jazz". As a matter of fact, an event that I had started to create. I was calling it "Jazz Rallies," and Brussels took the idea, it wasn't I who ran it. So, all the other concerts were in clubs.

RS: Did he ever talk to you about his arrival in France?

ED: Of course, that's evident. He told me how it was Daniel Filipacchi who brought him to France, and who helped him to be on French television right away, and he said it was like a dream because all of the doors opened for him, and he discovered some fantastic clubs in Paris, etc. He began his career, actually, in the club called the Blue Note. After a while he was less enthused, but he starts off playing with Kenny Clarke on drums, and most of the time René Thomas¹² on guitar. That was the group he began with. And there was more and

¹² René Thomas (1927–1975) was a fine Belgian guitarist who had played with Sonny Rollins, Stan Getz, Miles Davis, Toshiko Akiyoshi, and Jackie McLean.

more pressure from the musicians' union to get him to use French musicians. And he was of the opinion, "I have my musicians, I'm used to them," and he didn't appreciate anyone trying to impose anything. This is why, not immediately, but essentially, this is the reason why, one day, he met the owner of the Jamboree in Barcelona, it was when he married Sonia Borel. This encounter led to his decision to go live in Spain. It was the time when there were still important real estate possibilities, and he was able to buy land with a private beach, almost five acres, and he built a very lovely villa there.

RS: He was formed as a shoemaker, his trade...

ED: Yes, he did that for a while.

RS: In the United States.

ED: Yes, in the United States. And afterwards, he started playing piano at first, then organ, but his career really began in France. He was not very well known in the United States. He admired Jimmy Smith a lot, he listened to Jimmy Smith quite a lot.

RS: Did he talk about him sometimes?

ED: Yes, of course.

RS: Because it seems to me that people tried to establish a certain competition between Jimmy Smith and Lou Bennett.

ED: Exact! But that was when he started to become known. Before that, it wasn't important. Evidently, Lou cooperated, since he used to say as he said on the subject of many others, "He's not an organist, he's an organ player."

CHAPTER VII

Bennett's Career In France

LOU BENNETT, ORGANISTE DE BALTIMORE À PARIS (JUILLET 1960)¹

Example 15. Lou Bennett, organist de Baltimore à Paris, Jazz Magazine.



En juillet 1960, prenant la relève d'un Bud Powell en vacances, l'organiste Lou Bennett, accompagné par Kenny Clarke et le guitariste Jimmy Gourley, fait courir chaque soir au Blue Note les amateurs éclairés. Lou Bennett est à cette époque un musicien de choc et son jeu à l'orgue Hammond un modèle d'intelligence et d'inventivité. Résolument, il a cherché sa voie, a osé traiter son instrument comme un ensemble polyphonique dont il dégagait les accords les plus secrets. Le jeu au pédalier était devenu pour lui un moyen d'expression égal à celui d'une contrebasse: il y trace d'étourdissantes

¹ J.R. Masson "Un organist de Baltimore", Jazz Magazine, #61, July/August (1960) p.15.

*improvisations, en même temps qu'au clavier son phrasé se déploie, haletant et passionné. Le talent de Lou Bennett, musicien moderne – il aime Miles Davis, Monk – est plus qu'un phénomène technique: c'est un art qui s'incarne visiblement en un homme à mesure qu'il se crée. Le voir jouer, c'est devenir soi-même complice de cette création.*²

When Bennett began playing at the Blue Note, he met Sonia Borel, who was working there in the capacity of hat-check girl. She says that Bennett said to her, "I'm looking for a place to stay," and she said, "I know a place." Bennett asked, "Where is it?" and Sonia answered, "My place."³ Sonia and Bennett eventually married and remained so up until Bennett's death (see example 16.)

Bennett arrived in France on June 21, 1960. With the help of Filipacchi, he was immediately accepted in all the most exclusive places and met all the important people. He began working at a jazz club, the Blue Note,⁴ where previously many famous jazz artists had appeared, some of whom were Bud Powell, Lester Young, Chet Baker, Zoot Sims, Stan Getz, Don Byas, Charlie Byrd, Donald Byrd, Sonny Criss, Sonny Stitt, Sarah Vaughan, Jimmy

² In July 1960, taking over for Bud Powell, on vacation, organist Lou Bennett, accompanied by Kenny Clarke and guitarist Jimmy Gourley, has all enlightened fans rushing every evening to the Blue Note. Lou Bennett is at this moment a stupefying musician and his playing on the Hammond organ a model of intelligence and creativity. Resolutely, he has tried to find his way and has dared to treat his instrument like a polyphonic ensemble from which he would liberate the most secret harmonies. His playing on the pedals became for him equal to that of the string bass; he performs stunning improvisations and at the same time, on the keyboards, his phrasing is passionate and leaves one breathless. The talent of Bennett, modern musician—he likes Miles Davis, Monk—is more than a phenomenal technique; it's an art that is visually embodied in the man while he creates. To see him play is to become oneself an accomplice to this creation. (author's translation)

³ Personal conversation between Bennett's widow—now aged 92— and the author in Le Chesnay, France, March 13, 2012.

⁴ The Blue Note was recreated for the film « Round Midnight » that was directed by Bertrand Tavernier, 1986.

Giuffre, Gerry Mulligan, Art Farmer, Dexter Gordon, J.J. Johnson, Jean-Luc Ponty, Elvin Jones, Lee Konitz, Sonny Rollins, Sahib Shihab, Lucky Thompson, Nathan Davis, Andy Bey, Mal Waldron, and Ben Webster.

Bennett was finally in the eyes (and ears) of the public, with Kenny Clarke on drums and Jimmy Gourley on guitar. Bennett was an overnight sensation, after taking place in line with all the artists who had preceded him. He was immediately sought after by recording companies. His first LP was released in 1960—the same year as his arrival in France—by RCA Victor. The album was entitled *Amen*, and included the tunes “Amen,” the title tune written by Donald Byrd, “Sister Sadie” (Horace Silver,) “So What” (Miles Davis,) “Jubilation” (Junior Mance,) “Green Dolphin Street” (Bronislau Kaper,) and a composition of Bennett’s, “Brother Daniel,” written in honor of Daniel Filipacchi, who had brought Bennett to France. Bennett’s repertory is indicative of the style in which he was playing upon his arrival.

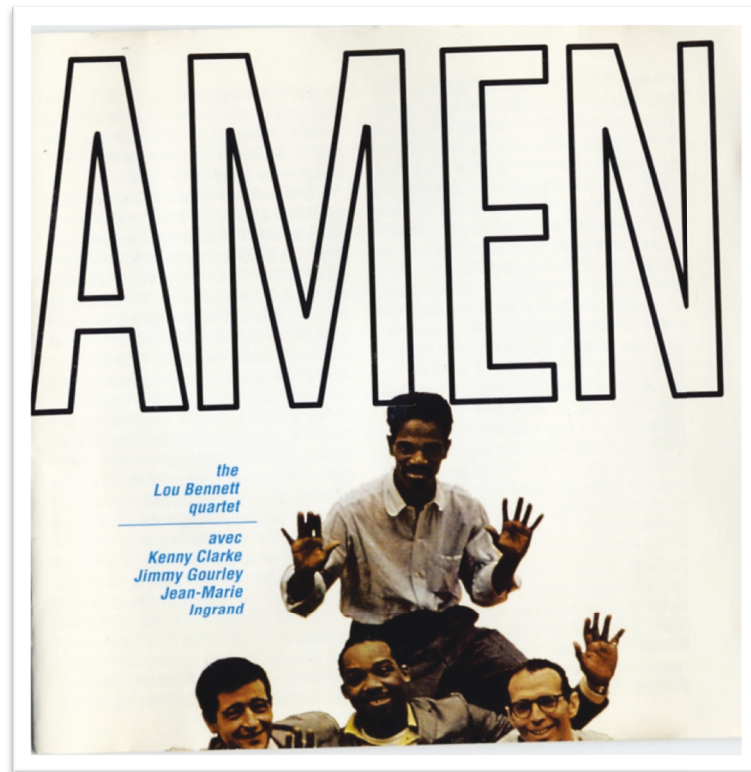
The liner notes of *Amen* are interesting to read:

Jazz lovers, who generally only admit with extreme circumspection the use of the organ in jazz music, didn’t know, perhaps, how much at this time this instrument enjoys excellent defenders across the Atlantic. One has not forgotten with what pleasure Fats Waller and more recently Count Basie looked for different sounds from what is often called, “the greatest voice of music.” One also knows that in Harlem today there is a faithful and passionate audience for great organists: Shirley Scott at Basie’s Bar, by the regular renewal of her contract and the intense animation of her music crystalizes this defense and illustration of the contemporary organ. The Bill Doggett tours, the Jimmy Smith concerts, impose also more and more an instrument that was only lacking, finally, a sufficient number of great masters. Europe, at its turn, knows the organ. Better yet, Europe accepts it.⁵

⁵ The original liner notes were written in French by Raymond Mouly, author’s translation.

Upon his arrival in Le Havre, Bennett had some difficulties with the customs officers, who were completely ignorant about a Hammond organ; however he was able to get to Paris that same night. A new problem awaited him: since the organ was made in America, it was built to operate on an electricity using 60 cycles and in Europe, the electricity used 50 cycles, which meant that the organ functioned but out of tune. At first Jimmy Gourley had to transpose the tunes on his guitar in order to be in tune with the organ.

In spite of Bennett's spectacular use of the pedals, a French bass player was hired for this first record date, Jean-Marie Ingrand, who had also collaborated with Sidney Bechet, Bud Powell, and Bobby Jaspar. As has been pointed out earlier, the Hammond organ bass was very difficult to record. It was also good politics to include a French musician in the recording, because of the latent protectionism of Parisian musicians. Lou, in the meantime, resolved the electricity problem, and the recording took place on a brand new Hammond organ, although Bennett had somewhat modified the equipment, just as Jimmy Smith, it was said, modified his own. With the problems that Bennett had experienced with electricity, and the modifications he effected on the studio organ, the bass was still not to his satisfaction on the recording and it was frustrating for him to have a bassist doing what he would prefer to do.



Example 16. Album cover of "Amen".

The record was a huge success. Part of the success was due to Bennett's tune "Brother Daniel" having been chosen by Filipacchi as the theme song of his radio show "Salut Les Copains" on the station Europe 1.⁶ The show was extremely popular, with a huge listening audience, and was broadcast 5 days per week. With very generous airplay, Bennett's interpretation of "Amen" became a bestseller and he literally catapulted to fame (see example 15). From playing the "Chitlin' Circuit" to being the toast of the town in Paris, France, was quite a leap for the shoe repairman from Baltimore.

⁶ The first theme song was Count Basie's « Rat Race. »

example 17 Sonia and Lou's wedding day.



Attending Bennett's wedding was a Spaniard who owned several clubs in his country (Joan Rosselló, the owner of the Jamboree Club in Barcelona), and who extended to Bennett an invitation to play there. This would be the beginning of Bennett's long association with the country of Spain. However, still in France at that time, Bennett was very much in demand. His album *Amen* was so popular that many venues wanted to hire him. Known for never refusing a gig, Bennett was traveling quite a bit with his trio, and began re-discovering the hardships of taking an organ on the road. Legend has it that in order to carry the instrument in his station wagon, he sawed off a length of the legs of his Hammond B-3 in order to fit it into the back area of his station wagon, a sort of trunk, or baggage compartment. He was, however, still not satisfied with the pedal board which came with the B-3. The sound of the bass (pedal) notes did not carry, but

Bennett was exerting an inordinate amount of energy to play them. He attached great importance to his pedal playing, as well he might. He had adopted the classical pedal technique of heel and toe playing, but with a speed unheard of in the jazz organ world.

In a 1961 referendum, organized by the radio station “Europe 1” and Jazz Magazine, Bennett triumphed over some of the most-known artists of the era. He was voted best organist over Jimmy Smith and Wild Bill Davis, who were respectively second and third, but the overall vote is astonishing, and shows to what heights Bennett had climbed:

1. Ella Fitzgerald	36,424
2. Ray Charles	35,582
3. John Coltrane	33,402
4. Gerry Mulligan	32,421
5. J.J. Johnson	32,236
6. Lou Bennett	31,463
7. Cannonball Adderley	31,219
8. Count Basie	31,185
9. Ray Brown	30,423
10. Miles Davis	30,015
11. Stéphane Grappelli	28,453
12. Wes Montgomery	27,182

Jazz Magazine remarked that only Grappelli had found favor in the votes of the public; no other French musicians were in the top twelve. As Bennett was named the top organist, Jazz Magazine said that Bennett, “The American from Paris,” benefitted from a “love factor” that none of his other “rivals” could pretend to enjoy. The magazine went on to say that Jimmy Smith’s defeat was not fair to the “Pope of the organ.”⁷

⁷ Jazz Magazine, #76, November, 1961

Critics were calling Bennett “The Johann Sebastian Bach of Jazz,” the “witch doctor of the organ,” and other superlatives.

example 18.. From Bennett's personal archives.



Bennett admitted that his success was unexpected and unhoped for, but he still wasn't happy with the sound of his pedals. He dreamed of being able to sound like a bass player. He continued to try to improve on the sound of the Hammond, learning by trial and error. At times he would play concerts with the soldering iron at his side, not knowing whether a connection would hold or not. Sometimes it wouldn't, and he would take time out to repair his organ within the set. He would leave the back of the organ open, wires in view, so that he could get to the problem more rapidly, so as not to have to unscrew the back cover (see example 18.)

example 19. Bennett and his organ, photo Yves Merle.



His organ began to look “tired” from all the experiments. Bennett was indifferent to the looks of his organ, and sometimes to his own looks; the important thing for him was the sound coming out of his organ.

When Bennett went to play in Spain, he was very successful there also. Spain was not yet in the European Union, and was known to have much more reasonable prices than in France, as well as beautiful weather. Lou, who had become friends with Joan Rosselló, the owner of the Jamboree clubs, was working quite a bit in Barcelona and Madrid and he had the idea to buy some land there. As a result he built a villa that became his little piece of paradise. He

would say proudly, “When I get up in the morning, I go outside in my garden and pick my oranges off a tree, and make my own orange juice.”

The villa was in Cambrils, Spain about 100 kilometers (62 miles) from Barcelona. (See example 20.) There he had room to experiment with his instrument, (example 19) and with the dawning of the age of synthesizers, Bennett was excited about the possibilities of perfecting his organ and especially the sound of the bass. He would spend hours in his garage, which had become his workshop, experimenting on the prototype he was creating.

Example 20. Bennett working on his organ, photo Yves Merle.



Example 21. Bennett's villa in Cambrils, Spain, photo Yves Merle.



André Damon, owner of the "Petit Journal Montparnasse," a well-known jazz club in the heart of Paris, has programmed most of the top jazz artists present in France, including, of course, Bennett. He says the following:

André Damon: I hired Lou Bennett in the seventies at Saint-Michel⁸ and a bit here. Here we opened in 1985 with you. So Lou probably came in during the first six months.

RS: OK.

AD: And I think he even did a duo with Eddy, Eddy Louiss once. But he would always have mechanical problems with his organ. Then he would ask for coasters, you know, the little things in cardboard so that beer won't spill all over, you see? Then he would put coasters in the...he needed at least three hours to

⁸ Damon also had a club in the Latin Quarter, named « Petit Journal Saint-Michel. »

prepare his organ, there was always something that didn't work, and with pieces of string, cardboard, finally the concert would take place. Ah, It was...

RS: Sometimes he would stop during the concert, and start fixing it flat on his back...

AD: Yes, yes, here, but his organ never did work. I think we had Wild Bill Davis here one time also.⁹

Another organ fan, Belgian, Gino, tells how he went to a Bennett concert in Brussels, and Bennett had to work on his organ for several hours in preparation of the concert, and afterwards, "He didn't even change his clothes, but played as he was."

Organ enthusiasts thought that Bennett was forsaking the organ, and selling out to synthesizers. However his mind-blowing solos on the pedals defended his status as a "real" organist, and his accompaniments, harmonies and soloing showed his musicality and his musical creativity.

When he was stricken with arthritis in his hands, Bennett personally told the author, "I now think of myself as a bass player, and my hands as accompanying the bass soloist." When asked if he could not find a remedy to the pain, he answered, "I don't care about the pain, I would just like to be able to use my fingers and play!" Obviously, Bennett was not concerned about venues, big or small, or about headlines or the absence thereof. He continued to accept playing

⁹ This brief interview-conversation was recorded at the Petit Journal Montparnasse in Paris on June 10, 2013 in French. (Author's translation.)

concerts very often for very little money, and once was spotted playing in a "club"—more precisely, a bar—on the French Riviera where his Bennett Machine was relegated to a dark corner of the room, from where he played. One could hardly see him. When it was pointed out to him that he was playing in the dark, no lighting on him, and that his concert was not being correctly promoted, he answered, "I don't care, as long as I'm playing, I'm satisfied." And he was.

Bennett did go to the United States once to play at the Newport Jazz Festival, in 1964 but Jimmy Smith, who was programmed there the day after Bennett's performance, undoubtedly got all the attention. Jazz Magazine gave him the cover of their issue, and the journalist covering the festival in Newport reported that:

Lou Bennett, not yet very well known here, dispensed a music without problems—that is to say, efficient under the circumstances—to the degree of inspiring comments praising him in the NEW YORK HERALD TRIBUNE: 'Lou Bennett swings hard and plays on the instrument's dynamic qualities with skill,' wrote George Simon.¹⁰

¹⁰ "Jazz Magazine," p. 27 n° 111, Oct. 1964 (Bennett photo front page cover)

Chapter VIII

Analysis

Bennett was extremely militant about the use of the pedals on the organ. He composed the theme of “Lefty Foot” (Lefty Foot ex. 1) to be played on the pedals as an indication of their importance to him on a CD entitled “Now Hear My Meaning”.¹¹ The theme is 16 measures long and is in AB form. At the end of the sixteenth measure, the theme, which is in E^b, ends with a half cadence—with the 7th of the V7 chord in the bass, —the following measures being a repetition of the theme and finishing on a I chord, completing the *Urlinie* $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ (see Lefty Foot ex. 2, 3, and 4.) and the I chord gives way to the right-hand improvisation following it. Lefty Foot ex. 5 shows the improvised solo in the right hand, which follows the pedal theme exposition. It would be tempting to consider the right-hand solo as the principal theme, however Bennett obviously conceived the pedal solo as the principal theme, naming the tune “Lefty Foot” as he did. Moreover, the end of the tune “Lefty Foot” repeats the theme’s melody as it appears in measures 24 to 32, Lefty Foot ex. 1, confirming the pedal solo as the tune’s theme. In order to better compare the pedal theme with the right-hand solo, both of them are juxtaposed in Lefty Foot ex. 9. A look at the contours of the melody shows that the pedal theme (Lefty Foot ex.1) is written according to

¹¹ Recorded live in Barcelona, Spain for Mas Records in 1993, with Lou Bennett on organ, Idris Muhammad on frums, Abdu Salim, tenor sax, and Ximo Tébar, guitar.

the possibilities of the pedal board, which spans two octaves from C to C.¹² The initial theme contains more ascending phrases, while the right-hand solo shown in Lefty Foot ex. 5 consists of mostly descending phrases. In both examples, the phrases are rather short, leaving space for accompaniment, (guitar.) The music is tonal, the chords conventional for jazz. Both themes are mainly composed of close intervals, seconds, thirds, and fourths, with many arpeggiations. Although the right-hand or upper manual contains 55 notes, the span of the right-hand phrases is fairly limited to the 25-note pedal possibilities; which suggests that Bennett actually thought in terms of the pedals. The right-hand solo (ex. 5) coincides with the end of the pedal theme; this tends to reinforce the idea of two separate musicians, for example a bassist and a keyboard player. The pedal theme begins with a three-beat pick-up, while the right-hand theme has simply in anticipation an 8th note preceding the first measure.¹³ The pedal theme begins on the 2nd beat of its first measure, while the right-hand theme has simply an 8th-note anticipation preceding the 1st measure. However, the pedal theme finishes with a coda-like segment based on the tonic E^b, which makes it 1 measure longer than the right-hand theme. This is logical, because the theme finishes on an F, an interval of a ninth from the tonic chord, E^b (see measures 31, 32, 33, Lefty Foot ex.1) whereas the right-hand solo ends with a defining three measures based on the tonic E^b (see measures 30-32 of the right-hand solo, Lefty Foot ex. 5.) In measure 4 the same notes occur between the pedals and the right hand,

¹² There are 25 available notes on the Hammond pedalboard, spanning from C2 to C4, using the 8-foot deawbar.

¹³ As Bennett often plays in anticipating the beat, the rhythm can be challenging and at times ambiguous as to his intentions.

and in measure 11 there is also an augmentation in the right hand of the notes to be played in the bass pedal theme (Lefty Foot ex. 9). Also noticeable is the difference of phrasing between the two; the “breathing” spaces do not particularly coincide, which shows Bennett’s manner of considering the bass as a separate instrument.

At first glance, the pedal theme looks as if it will be resistant to any type of Schenkerian perspective, because of the sevenths and ninths in the melody (see the A^b in measure 15, Lefty Foot ex. 3) over a B^b7 chord, or the afore-mentioned F in measure 30 (Lefty Foot ex. 4 melody.) over a E^b tonic chord. However, they are supported by these implied harmonies, and at times the guitarist does indicate harmonization. The beginning of the theme in the pedals, where an E^b chord is indicated (tonic I in the key) doesn’t contain the E^b at all, but is justified by the movement of the assumed harmonies, which move up in half-steps: E^b to E diminished up to F minor. The harmony that follows make a classic II-V-I chord sequence in a tonicization of the IV chord, G.

In measure 6, the F^b is logically an unintentional note. The F^b (E) pedal being only a half step from the F, it is easy to understand why this note might be played instead of the next,¹⁴ since it is feet playing, and not fingers.¹⁵

The B^b in the first measure can be considered the *Kopfton* and four preceding notes G-Ab-A-Bb the initial ascent, or *Anstieg*. Moreover, in the A part

¹⁴ Another unintentional note takes place in measure 12 and is also an F^b instead of an F.

¹⁵ Bennett played the bass pedals at times with his two feet, inspired by the pedal technique of classical organists who use both feet and alternate the heel and toe. Most jazz organists, if they play pedals at all, only use the left foot, which doesn’t particularly guarantee greater accuracy.

of the theme, the melody centers around B \flat , very present throughout. The *Urlinie* is interrupted by the half cadence with the A \flat , supported by the V7 chord (B \flat ⁷.) The B \flat *Kopfton* reappears in the second part of the theme and announces the *Urlinie* $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$. The F in the melody of measure 28-29 is obviously over a I chord, but even if this should not be convincing enough, the melody does make its way to the final E \flat which is $\hat{1}$ (ec. 2, 3, And 4.)

The right-hand solo (Lefty Foot ex. 6) begins on a D, an interval of a seventh over the E \flat tonic chord. As noted previously, the phrases in the right-hand solo have a downward tendency, and the beginning phrase is a good example. Arguably, the descent leads to the *Kopfton* G ($\hat{3}$) in measure three, but is also supported by the G in measure two belonging to the E \flat tonic chord. Strictly speaking, the linear progression to the *Kopfton* should be ascending, so perhaps it should not be called the *Anstieg*, but since it does lead to the G, it could be called an “initial descent,” not to be confused with the fundamental descent (*Urlinie*). As Henry Martin pointed out in his book « Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation, » Schenker « did not apply his techniques to jazz. »¹⁶ However, from a voice-leading analysis, inspired by Schenkerian methods, it is possible to appreciate the musicianship of Bennett’s composition and his improvising.

Quite possibly, Bennett instinctively wanted to differentiate the approach of the right hand coming down to join the pedals, whereas the pedal notes ascend to meet the hand register. This seems understandable. In measure 17 there is an F approached from a G \flat that renders the F ($\hat{2}$) stronger. In measure 32, the E \flat is itself supported by the I chord, after appearing in measures 30 and

¹⁶ Henry Martin, « Charlie Parker and Thematic Improvisation, » The Scarecrow Press, Inc., Lanham, Maryland and London, 2001, p. 4

31; this gives the *Urlinie* of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}\ \hat{1}$. In measures 30 and 31, the F note is implied because of the F minor chord in measure 30, and the V9 chord in measure 31.¹⁷

The implied F is surrounded by E^b as neighboring tone and the ear integrates an F between the two E^bs quite naturally. The pedal notes that accompany the right-hand solo are transcribed in Lefty Foot ex. 6, 7, and 8, and the chords indicated, in order to better define the harmonies that are basically the same in all choruses, as is typical in jazz tunes (see the bottom stave in Lefty Foot ex. 6, 7, and 8.) In conclusion, there is a voice-leading of $\hat{5}-\hat{4}-\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ in the composed theme played on the pedals, and a voice-leading of $\hat{3}-\hat{2}-\hat{1}$ in the right-hand improvisation corresponding to the theme “Lefty Foot”.

¹⁷ It might have been possible to find an *Urlinie* of 3-2-1 in the pedal solo also, but the ascent to the first B^b is too strong to be ignored.

Lefty Foot ex. 1. Pedal theme

Lou Bennett

Lefty Foot

Theme

Pedals

A

extension of theme A

Theme arpeggiated B

H.C.

Cadence

5

11

17

22

27

32

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

Ped.

F

B \flat 7(b5)

E \flat

E \flat

E \dim

F m

F $\sharp\dim$

G m

A \flat 13₇

G m

C117

F m

B \flat 7

E \flat

G7

C m

C7

F m

F $\sharp\dim$

G m

A \flat 13₇

G m

C7

F m

A \flat m7

E \flat

C7

F m

F m

B \flat 7

E \flat

G \flat

Lefty Foot ex. 2. Analysis of pedal theme.

Lou Bennett

1 5 4

2 3 p 3

Pedals

3 3

3

4

3

(b)

F[#]dim Gm A^b7 Gm

8 2

arp.

C7 Fm B^b7 E^b

(b)

Lefty Foot ex. 3. Analysis of pedal theme, continued.

2

12 *half cadence*

arp. *p*

G7 Cm C7 Fm B^b7

16 *arp.* *p*

3 3

E^b E dim Fm

20 *p* *p* *p*

F[#]dim E^b A^b7 Gm

The musical score is written for three staves in bass clef with a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat). The first system (measures 12-15) features a half cadence on a whole note chord in the top staff, while the middle and bottom staves play a descending eighth-note arpeggiated pattern. The second system (measures 16-19) continues the arpeggiated pattern with triplets in the middle and bottom staves, and a descending eighth-note line in the top staff. The third system (measures 20-23) shows a more complex arpeggiated pattern in the middle staff with triplets and a descending eighth-note line in the bottom staff, while the top staff has a descending eighth-note line. Chord symbols are placed below the bottom staff: G7, Cm, C7, Fm, B^b7, E^b, E dim, Fm, F[#]dim, E^b, A^b7, and Gm. Performance markings include 'half cadence', 'arp.', 'p' (piano), and triplet markings.

Lefty Foot ex. 4. Analysis of Pedal theme, continued.

24

5

8

arp

8

28

4

displacement

displacement octave

3

32

2

1

C7

Fm

A^bm7

E^b

C7

3

Fm

Fm

B^b7

E^b

G^b

F

B^b7(^b5)

E^b

The musical score is written for piano and includes a left hand (L.) part. It is divided into three systems of staves. The first system (measures 24-27) features a right hand with a melodic line containing a quintuplet of eighth notes and a left hand with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (measures 28-31) shows the right hand with a melodic line that includes a 'displacement' and a 'displacement octave' marked with dashed lines. The left hand continues with eighth notes, including a triplet. The third system (measures 32-34) shows the right hand with a melodic line that includes a '2' and a '1' marking, and the left hand with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. Chord symbols are provided below the left hand staff for each measure.

Lefty Foot ex. 5. Right-hand impro.

Solo R.H. Lefty Foot

Lou Bennett

Chord progression and melodic notation for 'Solo R.H. Lefty Foot' by Lou Bennett. The score is in 4/4 time and B-flat major. The notation includes various chords and melodic lines, with some measures containing triplets and slurs.

Chords and notes shown in the score:

- Staff 1: E^b , $E \dim$, $F m$, $F^{\#} \dim$, $G m$, A^b_{13}
- Staff 2: $G m$, $C7$, $F m$, B^b7 , E^b
- Staff 3: $G7$, $C m$, $C7$, $F m$, B^b7 , E^b
- Staff 4: $E \dim$, $F m$, $F^{\#} \dim$, $G m$, A^b , $G \dim$
- Staff 5: $C7$, $F m$, $A^b m7$, E^b , $C7$, $F m$
- Staff 6: $F m$, B^b7 , $E B$, G^b , F , $B^b7(b5)$, E^b

Lefty Foot ex. 6. Analysis right-hand impro.

Lefty Foot

Lou Bennett

R.H. SOLO

PEDAL BASS

R.H.

R.H.

The musical score is written for a right-hand solo and a pedal bass. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The time signature is 4/4. The score is divided into three systems. The first system shows the right-hand solo and pedal bass. The second system shows the right-hand solo and pedal bass. The third system shows the right-hand solo and pedal bass. The right-hand solo part features various musical notations including triplets, slurs, and ties. The pedal bass part features various chords and musical notations including triplets, slurs, and ties. The chords are labeled as E dim, C7, Fm, F#dim, Gm, Ab13 7, Gm, C7, Fm, and Bb7.

E dim C7 Fm F#dim

Gm Ab¹³₇ Gm C7 Fm B^b7

Lefty Foot ex. 7. Analysis R.H. impro,

Lefty Foot

12

R.H.

12

12

E \flat

G

Cm

C7

16

R.H.

16

16

Fm

B \flat 7

E \flat

Edim

C

Fm

21

R.H.

21

21

F \sharp dim

E \flat

A \flat

Gm

C7

Lefty Foot ex. 8. Analysis R.H. impro.

Lefty Foot

26

The musical score is written for a right-hand improvisation. It consists of two systems of staves. The first system has three staves: a grand staff (treble and bass clef) and a single treble staff. The second system also has three staves: a grand staff and a single treble staff. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The first system starts at measure 26. The grand staff has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3). The single treble staff has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4). The second system starts at measure 31. The grand staff has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4) and a bass line with a triplet of eighth notes (F3, G3, A3). The single treble staff has a melodic line with a triplet of eighth notes (G4, A4, B4). The score ends with a double bar line.

R.H.

26

26

Fm7

A^bm

E^b

C7

Fm

31

31

31

B^b

b^b7

E^b

g^b

F7

E^b

Lefty Foot ex. 9. Juxtaposition of Pedal theme and right-hand improvisation.

LEFTY FOOT

pedals and RH. Juxtaposition

Lou Bennett

Right-hand solo

Pedal theme

6

R.H.

Ped.

12

R.H.

Ped.

18

R.H.

Ped.

24

R.H.

Ped.

29

R.H.

Ped.

Chords: E^b, E dim, C7, Fm, F[#], Gm, A^b13₇, Gm, c7, Fm, b^b7, E^b, g7, Cm, C7, Fm, B^b7, E^b, Edim, Fm, F dim, Gm, A^b7, G dim, C7, Fm, A^bm7, E^b, C7, Fm, Fm, B^b7, E^b, G^b, F, B^b7(5).

Chapter IX

Two Concert Reviews in Jazz Magazine

These selected reviews give a good idea of Bennett's musical vocabulary, and show how he was perceived in France.

bennett/levitt

Lou Bennett (org), Al Levitt (dm). Paris, Petit Opportun, 30 janvier.

EN écoutant Lou Bennett, je pensais à Jean-Sébastien Bach. Deux virtuoses de l'orgue, avec une prédilection pour les soli au pédalier, une volonté polyphonique et, encore plus profondément, se moquant de la mode musicale.

Bach, on s'en souvient, n'était qu'une « vieille-perruque » pour ses fils et les autres qui le considéraient comme dépassé stylistiquement. On a entendu les mêmes choses à propos de Bennett. Il y a aussi chez ce dernier une altitude d'artisan : il parle avec fierté des « 7 000 petites soudures » qu'il a dû faire pour réaliser sa « Bennett machine ». En partant d'un clavier il a en effet créé son propre instrument aux possibilités infinies. « Un de ces jours, je saurai enfin jouer de cet engin », dit-il ; en attendant, il se débrouille bien.

Ce soir-là, le trio — Al Levitt à la batterie, Bennett à l'orgue et son pied gauche à la basse — a d'abord interprété *Alone together* sur un tempo bop rapide. Bennett, penché sur l'orgue, chantant ou criant les notes en même temps qu'elles sortent de la « machine », Levitt dispensant un swing parfait, harcelant à propos, et le pied, qui prit le premier de ses soli ahurissants. Un *Lil' Darlin'* relax, presque une ballade, gospelisant. Puis les racines, l'église et le blues ; *What is this thing called love* enchaîné avec *Hot House* (les deux thèmes ont le même schéma harmonique). Encore du bop. Levitt possède cette agressivité relax caractéristique des grands batteurs bebop : l'art de jouer l'inattendu sans se disperser, ou de rompre le « groove ». Il y a une communication intense et souriante entre les deux musiciens. Suit la ballade *Over the Rainbow* : solo au pédalier — qui sonne comme une flûte. Peu d'organistes peuvent se permettre des soli au pied, mais ceux-ci sont d'un intérêt surprenant et soutenu. Enfin, *Insensatez* de Jobim — une bossa bluesy. Bennett et Levitt : deux musiciens de grande classe et inclassables... — Jeff Gardner.

bennett/levitt

Lou Bennett (org), Al Levitt (dm) Paris, Petit Opportun, 30 january.

While listening to Lou Bennett, I was thinking about Johann Sebastian Bach. Two organ virtuosos with a speciality of pedal solos, polyphony, and more deeply, not caring about current musical styles.

Bach, we remember, was only an "old wig" for his sons and others who considered him stylistically outmoded. One hears the same thing about Bennett. There is also with Bennett a craftsman altitude: he speaks proudly about the "7000 little weldings that he had to make in order to create his "Bennett Machine". Starting with a keyboard, he has effectively created his own instrument with infinite possibilities. "One of these days, I'll finally know how to play this engine," he says: in the meantime, he manages pretty well.

On this particular evening, the trio—Al Levitt on drums, Bennett on organ, and his left foot on bass—started off with *Alone Together* at a fast bop tempo. Bennett, leaning on the organ, singing or yelling the notes at the same time they were coming out of the "machine," Levitt serving a perfect swing, pushing appropriately, and the foot, which took the first of its stupefying solos, a *Li'l Darlin'* very relaxed, almost a ballad, gospelizing. Then roots, church, and blues: *What is this Thing Called Love* followed by *Hot House* (the two themes have the same harmonic grill.) More bop. Levitt has the relaxed aggressiveness characteristic of the great bebop drummers: the art of playing the unexpected, or of breaking the "groove." There is an intense and smiling communication between the two artists. Next is the ballad *Over the Rainbow*: pedal solo that sounds like a flute. Few organists can permit themselves to play solos with their feet, but this one is of a surprising interest and strong and steady. Lastly, *Insensatez* by Jobim—a bluesy bossa. Bennett and Levitt: two musicians with grand class and unclassable... —Jeff Gardner

Lou Bennett¹

¹ Jazz Magazine, #285, (Apr. 1980), author's translation.

lou bennett

Bennett (org), Francis Serrier (dm).
Metz, Caveau des Trinitaires,
30 avril.

Il y a bien des choses remarquables chez Lou Bennett : le voir jouer est déjà un spectacle en soi, tant il vit sa musique dans sa moindre note et de tout son être. Ses dons d'improvisateur sont plus qu'étonnants, et son discours possède une fluidité mélodique que beaucoup d'organistes pourraient lui envier : pas de riffs à ou trance, ni de tics fatigants... Enfin : son jeu de pédalier est sidérant d'aisance et de ce qu'il faut bien appeler virtuosité ; le pied gauche prend des chorus stupéfiants, parcourt l'étendue du clavier de bois à la façon dont un caillou plat ricoche sur l'eau, avec une énergie et une vitesse diaboliques (à ce compte-là, l'expression « jouer comme un pied » devient un compliment). Le discours est composé de trois chants, trois voix parlant en même temps, se complétant, se répondant l'une à l'autre ; les deux mains dialoguent, la basse souligne et complète... La main gauche répond à la droite, assurant une toile de fond ou même une réponse mélodique. On a beau dire que personne n'a joué de l'orgue de façon plus orchestrale que Milt Buckner, on peut trouver la façon de Bennett tout aussi (sinon plus) intéressante que celle de l'inventeur du style « locked hands » ; on peut juger son choix des sonorités et du matériel (orgue Hammond et cabine Leslie) bien plus intelligent, et, quant à l'avant-gardisme de sa musique, estimer que cette orientation-là est plus louable, que celle, par exemple, de Larry Young (devenu Khalid Yasin). On a plaisir à re-découvrir que la musique noire est celle du corps.

Ce concert, long et agréable, a été davantage une performance en « solo accompagné » qu'un vrai duo : l'organiste, outrepassant son rôle de leader, a donné libre cours à sa fantaisie pour rejouer et se jouer de standards célèbres (*Round Midnight*, méconnaissable ; *Yesterdays*, des Beatles, a succédé sans crier gare à celui de Jerome Kern ; *Georgia on my mind*, joué au début avec un sublime feeling, s'est achevé sur un rythme de valse lourd et caricatural ; *One note samba* bâclé deux fois trop vite...), trichant parfois avec les mesures et imposant bien des épreuves et des surprises à l'excellent batteur messin Francis Serrier, qui en a été réduit à jouer parfois conventionnellement à

concurrencer dans le mauvais sens celle de son leader. — Claude Baro.

Lou Bennett

Bennett (org., Francis Serrier (dm.), Metz, Caveau des Trinitaires, 30 avril.

There are many remarkable things about Lou Bennett: to see him play is already a show in itself, so much he *lives* his music in its least note and with his whole being. His improvisational gifts are more than astounding, and his discourse has a melodic fluidity that many organists could envy: no riffs to outrage, nor tiresome tics...finally, his pedal playing is mind boggling and what must be called pure virtuosity: his left foot takes stupefying choruses, running over the entire pedal board the way a stone ricochets over water (to this degree, the expression "play like a foot" becomes a compliment.) The musical discourse comprises 3 voices speaking at the same time, complementing each other, answering one another. The two hands dialog, the bass underlines and completes...the left hand answers the right, assuring a background or even a melodic reply. No matter that one may think that no one ever played the organ any more masterfully than Milt Buckner, one finds Bennett's way of playing just as—or perhaps more—interesting as that of the inventor of the "locked hands" style; one can judge his choice of sounds and material (Hammond organ and Leslie speaker) much more intelligent, and, as for the avant-gardism of his music, find his orientations more praiseworthy than that of Larry Young (now known as Khalid Yasin). It is very pleasing to rediscover that black music is music of the body.

This concert, long and enjoyable, was more of a performance as an "accompanied solo" than a real duo: the organist, going way beyond his role as leader, gave free rein to his fantasy, playing and playing with well-known standards (*Round Midnight*, unrecognizable; *Yesterdays*, from the Beatles, followed without warning the one by Jerome Kern; *Georgia on my Mind*, first played with a sublime feeling, ended in a heavy and caricatural waltz rhythm; *One-Note Samba*, rushed two times too fast,) sometimes cheating with the measures and imposing many trials and surprises on the excellent drummer from Metz, Francis Serrier, who at times had to play in a conventional manner to rival in the bad sense that of his leader.—Claude Baro²

² Jazz Magazine, #255 (Jun 1977) author's translation.

Chapter X

The Organ Jazz Scene in France and Europe

In the beginning of the 1960s, more and more organists were emerging. The most prominent in France was Eddy Louiss (1941–) Born on the French island of Martinique, he is a gifted multi-instrumental musician, who, when Bennett arrived in France, was playing piano and singing with the vocal group "The Double Six."¹ He switched to organ—after having obtained advice about the instrument from Bennett—and began playing in trio formation, actually using the same trio as had Bennett. At that moment it was Kenny Clarke on drums and René Thomas on guitar, but Louiss has also played with Johnny Griffin, Art Taylor, Dizzy Gillespie and Stan Getz. Louiss (example 20) has recently had health problems and has had to have his left leg amputated. Since then, he has made an amazing comeback, after a long silence. He says: "But since they cut off my left leg at the knee, I don't have such pain anymore, everything's OK. In any case, I didn't use the pedals too much anymore, so I don't feel as if I'm too disadvantaged."²

¹ The Double Six singing group was inspired by Lambert, Hendricks and Ross, and sang vocalese also. There were six vocalists, but they re-recorded their voices to make twelve voices, or « double six ».

² *"Mais depuis qu'on m'a coupé la jambe gauche au niveau du genou je n'ai plus de telles douleurs, ça va plutôt bien. De toute façon, je n'utiliserai plus trop les pédales de mes claviers. Je ne me sens pas tant privé".*
<http://www.lejdd.fr/Culture/Musique/Actualite/Orleans-celebre-le-retour-d-Eddy-Louiss-200622>, accessed on November 14, 2013.

Example 22. Eddy Louiss, photo *Journal du Dimanche*.



In Germany there emerged a young woman who had studied organ since she was very young, and who had developed an extraordinary pedal technique. Barbara Dennerlein (1964–),³ an admirer of Jimmy Smith, concentrates her talent on her own compositions, and like Lou Bennett, usually has a special pedalboard with a bass sound, sometimes sounding like an electric bass, sometimes like an acoustic bass. Dennerlein (example 21) also plays jazz on the pipe organ, and has become an undisputed master of the genre.

³ Dennerlein, like Bennett, uses modern electronic technology to obtain her pedal sound, and not the Hammond pedal sound.

Example 23. Barbara Dennerlein at her Hammond organ, photo Wikimedia.org.



She doesn't play bass with her left hand at all, but with her left foot, and very often plays with both feet with astonishing technique and precision.

In Holland there were already many Hammond players upon Bennett's arrival. There exists a very active Hammond Organ Club, moreover the European main office for the Hammond Company is in the Netherlands, in Vianen.⁴ One of the well-known young Dutch organists is Carlo de Wijs (1963– (see example 23.) He plays funky hard bop, and has a rhythmic feel that is an influence from Jimmy Smith and also from Dr. Lonnie Smith.

⁴ The Hammond organ company now belongs to a Japanese firm: Hammond–Suzuki, and the world headquarters are in Hamamatsu, Japan.

Example 24. Carlo de Wijs at the organ, photo <http://www.gelre.fm/nieuwsberichten>.



Other than the Hammond Jazz Club in Holland, there are many associations in European countries dedicated to the Hammond, such as the German site IAJO (The International Archives for the Jazz Organ).⁵ The site's creator is Jürgen Wolf, who explains his motivation:

It was in the 70's that I started to collect jazz organ music: It was the result of my deep interest in the organ combined with my love for jazz. As a student I had lessons in church organ playing, but soon detected that a pipe organ can produce wonderful jazz - if you play it the "right" way. That was the point to listen to Fats Waller and his excellent playing of church and Wurlitzer organs. But I followed him to what was later his favorite instrument: the one and only HAMMOND ORGAN.

I began to listen to all these guys who detected the Hammond as to be their main instrument, above all—of course—Jimmy Smith who lit my jazz organ fire in such

⁵ <http://www.iajo.org/iajofram.htm>, accessed October 29, 2013

a way that till today I have still not lost my love for both the **JAZZ** and the **ORGAN**.

As I mentioned I collected these hot discs of Jimmy The Big, "Brother" Jack, Shirley The Gentle Lady, Larry etc. And the more I got of these LPs the more I found missing in my collection. Today I keep a list of LPs and CDs that I am steadily looking for. As time went by my collection grew to more than 10,000 titles of organ jazz music. I have however to point out that not only star musicians can be found but also those side men who do a rather good job on the organ and sometimes can be heard as one of many only. Also typical piano players who only occasionally play the organ found entrance into my collection.

And what about the organ itself: Most of the music is made on the legendary HAMMOND, but of course other keyboard instruments as "electric organ" or "Wurlitzer organ" are considered. A special place is given to the pipe or church organ: A relatively small range of players, especially in Belgium, Germany, Norway and Sweden, have shown that excellent jazz can be made on such instruments - mostly a totally different kind of jazz compared with the funky, impulsive way of "Hammond jazz", more contemplative and sensitive, a kind of its own, worth listening to.⁶

As a base for such a comprehensive collection I decided to found The International Archives For The Jazz Organ. Their aims are defined as follows:

- complete collection of jazz organ music
- cataloguing the contents
- providing information about both the records and the musicians

His site includes an impressive array of countries and a listing and brief description of organists in each country cited. Those countries where we find jazz organists are: Argentina, Australia, Austria, Belgium, Brazil, Canada, Czech Republic, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Great Britain, Greece, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Lithuania, The Netherlands, New Caledonia, New Zealand, Norway, Paraguay, Poland, Russia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, and Thailand. Not

⁶ Quoted by permission from Jürgen Wolf October 25,2013

surprisingly, there are proportionally many more organists listed in the United States, including Puerto Rico, than in any other country.

Organist Stefan Patry is the president of the French association named “Tribute to Hammond,” and in that capacity had invited Bennett several times; he knew him well, helped him out frequently and is friends with Sonia, Bennett’s widow. Patry plays his bass on the pedals at times, and with the left hand at times. He can do both. He recently recorded a CD in tribute to Lou Bennett, including on the CD such tunes as “Amen” and “Pentatitus” that are found in Bennett’s recorded works, along with several original tunes composed in Bennett’s memory.⁷

Example 25 Patry CD cover tribute to Bennett



Interview with Stefan Patry, November 25, 2011 at the “New Morning”⁸ in Paris:

⁷ Stefan PATRY “Mythic” Trio, MuSt Records, MR6224-2, released on March 14, 2014. 2014, Stefan Patry Hammond organ, Christian Brun – guitar, Richard Portier –drums

⁸ The « New Morning » in Paris, programs all sorts of musical styles, and many organists. This interview took place in English.

RS: Stefan, you knew Lou Bennett very well, yes?

SP: Yes, I knew Lou very well, but a few months before his death. It's a shame, but it's like this. I spoke a lot with him about organ, and Jimmy Smith. He loved really, really Jimmy Smith.

RS: Did he feel like he was in competition with Jimmy Smith, do you think?

SP: I don't think so. I think that he was really admiring (sic) of him, of his swing, he was very admiring, but no competition.

RS: And he was happy in Europe, Lou.



Example 26. Stefan Patry

SP: Yeah, he was happy in Europe, especially in Spain. He had a little shame with France, because he thought that he wasn't enough accepted, not enough respected.

RS: Why?

SP: Perhaps not enough work, and when he bought a house in Spain, he found a lot of people who wanted to discover him, and a lot of young people who really adored him, yes a lot, and go to his concerts. He was very famous, very, very famous in Spain.

RS: Do you think in Spain they love organs more than they do in France?

SP: No, I don't think so. I don't know why. Perhaps in France, people thought that he was always tinkering with, he would always try to change the sound of his organ, and to find new sounds for the bass, and a lot of time the organ was out, and so a lot of people said that it's a shame Lou Bennett had problems with the organ, and it's not a real B-3. So it was that, you know, the problem, I think. But me, for example, and a lot of people like me, loved Lou very much because he was so unique with his way of playing bass with his pedals, it was unique, it was fabulous: bass solos, and really a melody with pedals, it was very, very great to see him. He had so great a personality, it was very funny to see him playing, he made a lot of faces, he was really a very, very unique person.

RS: You went to see him when he was in the hospital at the end.

SP: Yeah, I visited him in the hospital a few weeks before he died, and he was always humorous, always, always he was funny, and he was very happy to meet

me because I played pedals too. And he wanted that organists play pedals. It was very important for him.

RS: Since you're the president of "Tribute to Hammond," how do you think the organ is perceived in France?

SP: What do you mean?

RS: How do you think people feel about organ here in France?

SP: A lot of musicians, pianists, want to play organ. Some of them are really organists, and some of them just use the organ like a keyboard, but now when they see people like you, Rhoda, or Lou, when he was alive, or me, for example, they realize the great possibilities of playing pedals, and add that to the way of playing. Now, Emmanuel Bex⁹ who is a great organist in France, before he didn't use the pedals and now he has bought a pedalboard, and he plays pedals. The young organists begin to play pedals.

RS: How many organists are there in France?

SP: Professional, perhaps, I would say ten or twenty. And a lot of fans have organs, perhaps 200 yes, a lot.

RS: What do you like best about the organ in your mind?

SP: In my opinion, because it's like a big band, an orchestra, we can arrange all the sounds like we want, we are masters, you know? When we play, we can decide what we want and we are like the chief, you know? The boss, because we decide how the song will be, and give all the intentions, and give a lot of energy to the other musicians.

⁹ Emmanuel Bex, (1959–) one of the well-known Hammond organists in France, also a gifted composer, who has a unique and personal style.

RS: Do you think organists are control freaks?

SP: Freaks, what's freaks?

RS: Crazy people who want to control everything.

SP: Yes, perhaps, yes. We are all crazy, yes.

RS: From what you're saying, because you say we can control everything, we can know how the song can go, and everything. It means like organists like to control?

SP: Ah, yes, but sometimes the organ controls us.

RS: Thank you very much, Stefan Patry,

Patry plays his bass on the pedals at times, and with the left hand at times. He can do both. He recently recorded a CD in tribute to Lou Bennett, including on the CD such tunes as "Amen" and "Pentatitus" that are found in Bennett's recorded works, along with several original tunes composed in Bennett's memory. Patry remembers when he and a fellow organist, Alain Mangelot, created the association on December 26, 1995 at a club where they had installed an organ.¹⁰ Bennett showed up with Raymond Delage, a French friend and fellow organist, and his wife Sonia. He had just arrived from Spain, and was to go take tests in the morning concerning the emphysema with which the doctors had just diagnosed him. Very tired, and with difficulty breathing, he announced that he wouldn't stay long, and that he just wanted to encourage the

¹⁰ "L'Arganier », in the Montparnasse section of Paris.

new association. Finally, spontaneously, he came up to the stage to play, and he seemed to be revived by the music, playing several tunes.

After playing a bass solo as only he could do, he made a little speech admonishing organists to play the pedals, saying, “If Stefan can do it, if Rhoda can do it, if I can do it, everyone can.” Bennett later accepted to give several master classes for the association, and organists came from all over Europe to be present. Bennett spoke about harmony and voicing, and...playing the pedals. Patry had originally bought the Bennett Machine after Bennett’s death, but never could get it to work, and after several unsuccessful attempts to get it fixed, he donated it to a museum specializing in organs,¹¹ particularly Hammond organs

¹¹ Musée Benoît Castagnérol in Bars (Dordogne, France). The Bennett Machine is on display with the pedalboard that Bennett hooked to a synthesizer to have the string bass. Bennett’s first Leslie speaker is also there, a model 31H.

Example 27 Bennett at the “Arganier,” Dec. 26, 1995, spontaneously coming to play the organ.

Photo Stefan Patry.



There is a Hammond organ museum in Unterenstringen,¹² Switzerland, called the “Orgelsurium.” Created by organist Jacky Rubi, one can see on display every type of Hammond organ that Laurens Hammond ever made, and all playable. There are also several clocks, now collector items, made by Hammond before he invented the organ. Rubi organizes organ concerts with “name” organists, such as Joey DeFrancesco and Barbara Dennerlein in the larger room, and the smaller studios are devoted to organ lessons, which are very popular.

¹² Unterengstringen is a municipality in the district of Dietikon in the canton of Zürich in Switzerland, located in the Limmat Valley. (<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Unterengstringen>)

Example 28. Jacky Rubi, photo Jacky Rubi collection.



In the United States, the association “Jazz Organ Fellowship,” created by Pete Fallico, has already been mentioned, although the motivation for its creation has not yet been discussed. Fallico is a key figure in the Hammond organ world, and produces many West Coast events featuring Hammond organists. He also created the Organists’ Hall of Fame .

RS: What gave you the idea of creating the Jazz Organ Fellowship, and what is its purpose?

PF: I began this organization to fill what I thought was a void in the music industry and to raise the awareness levels of the public regarding jazz organists; their recordings; and the manner in which their music has been delivered since its inception. It had become increasingly evident to me that the attention being

paid to piano trios and other jazz ensembles was far greater than that being paid to jazz organists and their combos... and yet my better judgment told me that the lineage of jazz organists was as important to the *gestalt* as the lineage of jazz guitarists or jazz trumpeters or even jazz drummers.

For whatever reasons, those who chose to express themselves solely on the organ were not taken as seriously as those who chose the piano or bass or saxophone. There was something fundamentally wrong with this and I knew it. Jazz organ was the “feel good” music of the fifties and sixties that the working class folks would enjoy in small, cozy venues called “organ rooms.” It was the “people’s music,” if you will, and yet it had been subjugated to the lower ranks of modern jazz. It needed to be showcased and the proponents of jazz organ needed to be recognized for their contributions to the American Classic Music movement.

The Jazz Organ Fellowship’s purpose would then be to introduce and educate the public by providing a historical perspective and revealing a legacy equally as significant as that which has been presented by jazz critics and writers for all other genres.

RS: For you, is the Jazz Organ primarily about the Hammond Organ, and if so, why? What do you like about the organ?

PF: Simply stated, it has been the sound of the Hammond organ—ultimately matched with the Leslie tone cabinet—that has caught the ear (and dare I say heart) of the jazz musician. Almost akin to the matching of Lester Young’s tenor saxophone with the voice of Billie Holiday: one might say, the standard was set.

Not only has this Hammond/Leslie sound found its way into the jazz world but (because of) its preferences in the Black Baptist churches and Blues clubs, it has gained justifiable credence and historical significance. Other organ manufacturers tried to capture the attention of jazz musicians but none toppled the purveyors of tone-wheel technology. Several musicians have tried to record and perform on other brands of organs but few have truly been accepted. Les Strand (1925–2002) recorded on both the Baldwin and the Yamaha with some degree of success but the levels of jazz organ legitimacy were long since set and the Hammond/Leslie combination was widely thought of as the benchmark. Today, we have the many, so-called “clones of the Hammond sound” which offer lightweight alternatives and imaginative imitations in the world of digital technology... leaving the old “war horse” behind the curtains once again.

RS: How many jazz organists do you know personally?

PF: Honestly speaking, I thought that if I wanted to know more about the subject of jazz organ I would need to travel to the east coast and meet those pioneers of jazz organ who were still alive. Once I realized that the literature on jazz organ and those who played jazz organ was hit-and-miss, I felt that I needed to validate my knowledge by actually “getting the story from the horse’s mouth.” I met and spoke with Wild Bill Davis, Bill Doggett, Jackie Davis, Austin Mitchell, Sarah McLawler and a few of the other jazz organists who preceded Jimmy Smith. Then I began to meet and socialize with those, considered to be, disciples of Jimmy. Needless to say, meeting Jimmy Smith and getting to know him personally was a gratifying step in my education of this music. At one point, I

listed over 300 jazz organists who I felt were contributors to the culture. Hank Marr,¹³ a jazz organist from Columbus, Ohio, thought that was such a noble effort that he took my list and lectured to an audience at one of the first IAJE¹⁴ conferences, basing his presentation on my research. I suppose I have met my share of jazz organists but what truly stands out in my mind are those players who I was not able to meet or even hear in person.

RS: What attracted you to the organ?

PF: The sustaining sound of an organ is the premier attraction. Secondly, for me, it has been the jazz organ soloing registrations and their resemblance to the human voice. And thirdly, it is the coordination of organ bass tones and soloing styles, which distinguishes jazz organ from more classical forms of organ playing. It can be said that jazz organ is a bastardization of more formal organ techniques and yet when one is situated in the back of a room where jazz organ is being played, one can literally witness heads bobbing up and down and bodies moving in sensual ways. No other music enhances the human experience more so than jazz being played on a Hammond organ, in my humble opinion.

RS: Do you consider the organ as a true jazz instrument? Do you think it is accepted as such by jazz critics and writers?

PF: Depending upon how one defines jazz and how liberal one is in the categorization of jazz instruments (for example, the bag pipes, harp, and bassoon have each been played and recorded in the jazz environment), the

¹³ Hank Marr (1927–2004)

¹⁴ International Association of Jazz Educators.

Hammond organ and Leslie tone cabinet have long since paid the dues necessary to be considered true jazz instruments. There still are, however, jazz critics and writers who have limited knowledge in jazz organ studies but the acquisition of this knowledge is growing and more and more writers are appreciating this music and what future directions it might take. New jazz organists surface each day from all around the world; some are mere keyboard players who have a fascination with the vintage Hammond organ experience while others seek to follow the traditions set forth by Jimmy Smith and try their best to add their own interpretation.

RS: Do you think the arrival of Joey DeFrancesco¹⁵ on the organ changed something for organists?

PF: I believe that Joey De Francesco played an important role in resurrecting the Hammond organ as a legitimate vehicle with which to play jazz music. Although most of the prominent jazz organists were still playing the vintage organ in the recording studio and at some bigger concerts, the organ was, for all intents and purposes, in a state of hibernation. In the mid-eighties, a young German organist named Barbara Dennerlein was doing a similar thing by playing and recording Hammond jazz organ. A young pianist named Larry Goldings was also switching over to the Hammond organ during this period of time. None of this takes away from Joey's timely efforts, necessarily, but it does suggest to us that the renaissance of jazz organ was going to happen regardless of who stepped forward. Joey was the more powerful and more connected young player with the

¹⁵ Joey DeFrancesco (1971–), selected top organist every year in Downbeat from 2003 to 2009.

more significant jazz organ sensibilities. He also helped individual players get back on their feet both figuratively and literally.

RS: In your opinion, what is the future of jazz organ?

PF: I think that the future of jazz organ is bright. It may not be aligned with the traditions and standards set forth by Jimmy Smith but it will move forward with intensity and it will bring more and more young players to the forefront. The vintage Hammond organs cannot stay in working condition forever. They will attenuate and become more and more difficult to find. The good news is that the digital clones will prevail and their sonic possibilities will expand, preserving the standardized jazz organ registrations as well as possessing newer and more contemporary sounds. Just as the trumpet has taken on newer and more futuristic shapes while maintaining its sonic qualities, the organs of tomorrow will take on newer and more innovative shapes but still allow jazz organists the latitude they will need to express and create this unique form of jazz.

A special mention should be made of a wonderful organist who made an impact on organists all over the world: Larry Young (1940–1978). Young's recording, *Unity* with Tony Williams and John McLaughlin has become a cult record, and can be found in the most selective of record collections. Even though Young didn't play pedals, he created a style and made an impact on organists all over the world: Even though Young didn't play pedals, his phrasing, inspired by John Coltrane was unlike any organist's style at the time. Many organists base their playing style on that of Young's, and try to copy his manner

of playing. His untimely death left the organ community wondering where he would have gone, stylistically, had he had a normal life span.

example 29 Larry Young (1940-1978) Photo <http://www.progarchives.com>.



Since the beginning of jazz, musicians like Bennett have traveled around the world taking their music to different countries. They have usually taught local musicians, performed, and spread the “good news” as jazz messengers. In every country, on every continent, one can trace the development of jazz by following the often—but-not-always African American musicians exiling themselves, founding families and homes, giving lessons, and playing concerts. The list is long. The presence of these musicians complemented the passion that

recordings were inspiring in amateurs of jazz. The following interview was conducted with Jacques Rohner, one of the founding members of the association Swiss Jazzorama.¹⁶

This conversation is an example of the beginnings of a group of jazz enthusiasts, and the influence wielded by the presence of African American musicians in so many European countries, just as Bennett did. Their experiences could have taken place anywhere, in any country, and probably did. Although many years later than the groups interested in jazz at its very beginnings, the pattern is seen of their coming together in order to better serve and know jazz:

RS: Let's talk about Jazz in Europe and the difference of its reception in Europe: you were, you are involved in the "Swiss Jazz Archives..."

Jacques Rohner: I've been for 10 years or so now, yes.

RS: And what are your archives?

JR: The way that was set up, it started sometime in the 80s, 1985, maybe. Some individual called Otto Flidkicher had connections to all kinds of collectors of jazz records. The thing was collecting records, because the records were not sold, there were no record stores around here. Somebody had to import these things from the States. And later on, when everyone had his collection, they started getting together and organizing record sessions and playing, "I've got this new, I've got this new Charlie Parker, listen to this," "I've got this new Louis

¹⁶ This conversation was conducted on June 27, 2012, in English, at the Ascona Jazz Festival Switzerland.

Armstrong,” and then little committees would then get together and start building up a nice collection. One guy had the idea, said, “This can’t go on like this, we have to put these things together and start publicizing, writing what we like, what we dislike,” and stories about musicians and stories about tours of American musicians after war, coming into Europe or staying in Europe. And some of the persons that stayed in Switzerland, for about, one of the almost founding fathers of Americans in Europe, especially Americans in Switzerland, was Joe Turner,¹⁷ a stride pianist. He was married to a Hungarian lady who he met during the war, and had a daughter, think so, and coming by Switzerland, he met this man Johnny Simmen who was part of those collectors and knowledgeable people about jazz, and Johnny said to Joe Turner, “You better stay here,” and then offered him all kinds of gigs and set him up and got him started, and Joe said, “Why go back to the States? I’m OK here.”

And he was a gambling man like Joe Turner was. Gambling was prohibited in Switzerland, but Zurich is close to Konstanz, which is in Germany and so he had everything that he wanted. And he started teaching, stride piano to Swiss people, piano players. Many of those fellows who are now in in the 80s, or so, slowly dying away, were students, private students of Joe Turner.

RS: Were there other Americans who came over?

JR: Then later on, of course, Louis Armstrong came, Count Basie came, with his big band, there’s a whole catalogue of famous people who found out, after

¹⁷ Turner (1907–1990) eventually settled in France, and played at « La Calavados » in Paris for many years until his death.

having been, I just heard today: First, one of the first destinations in Europe was Russia, Russia for jazz.

RS: Russia?

JR: YES! Before World War II, many, many American musicians recorded in Russia. Russia and Paris; Moscow, to be precise. Moscow and Paris.

RS: in Paris...

JR: Paris, we know about, more, but Moscow was destroyed by the Communists later on, or prohibited, it's not the same thing. I went to Moscow in '64, ['6]3 maybe, on that almost illegal exchange, I always like to do things like that. And there, I went through three days of indoctrination, and of showing me revolutionary monuments, all kinds of things, on the 3rd day of my stay, this one guy pulls me by the sleeve and said, "Hey, after this is finished, we'll go to a jazz club, alright?" 1964! Where did they get that? They were listening to American Forces Network, Voice of America, and at that time, there was Willis Conover, making these radio shows in special English, to people who were not so fluent and that is probably one of the guys who would merit a big, big medal.

RS: In Switzerland, did you have any policies, for example, which jazz you liked?

I mean, was there a feeling that American jazz or Black American jazz was...

JR: Favored.

RS: Yes, favored.

JR: I think that, there was, I remember having read the critics of one of the more intellectual newspapers, a very high-brow society newspaper, make an absolutely horrible write-up of the first concert Louis Armstrong gave at the

Congress Hall. He said, telling things were getting out of hand, 300 educated white men would scream of enthusiasm and things like that. A real racist way of looking at the thing: he said this is the end of European culture, and stuff like that. That, thank God, was about the last one that came out that way. But the resistance was there.

And the golden 20s, I never lived through that, but my dad did. And my dad had a very special biography also, being a Swiss citizen, pacifist, compulsory military training at age 20, he said, "If you guys will not even provide a job for me," educated banker is what he was, bank clerk, let's put it that way, "I will leave this country." And he went off to Paris, met my mother, stayed there 15 years, 1924 plus 15 is...1939, what happened then? World War II. That's the reason I was born in Switzerland, 1940, because my dad had refused to go to the army, and they kept him here. And he just happened to be on vacation in Switzerland.

RS: Oh, he was on vacation...did your dad like jazz?

JR: My dad had no particular likes. He listened a lot to classical music, my mother was a pianist, liked Chopin, and when she was playing music I knew Mom is feeling OK. But, and they never, they never said anything against our music, but It was my elder brother, who was born in France, five years older, who initiated me. He gave me the bug, he was listening to more modern stuff, I got stuck with Louis Armstrong, Hot Five, Hot Seven, that was my thing, and he was already biking from our home place 40 miles on the bike to go and listen to Lionel Hampton Big Band, with Clark Terry, Art Farmer, Quincy Jones, in the trumpet section, that far back.

RS: Do you think that now there is a European Jazz and an American jazz?

JR: I see that, there are, some people who really want to have strictly-labeled music, at 10 to 5, to categorize and to define things in such categories, being American, being, European, and also being so-called Ethnic music, and all kinds of labels and to me don't mean anything. But it keeps going on. And it keeps going on seems to help some scientists, some people who analyze, and to do the type of, you know, the brainy approach to music. It will necessarily go about coining terms and then add some examples to it. Does that help to understand? Does it enhance the experience? I doubt it.

RS: What's important about jazz?

JR: I will tell you what's important for me: this music, first of all, it has a solid, earthy, to-the-ground feel by the rhythm. Rhythm, some people talk about swing, but they can't explain it anyway, but that's the rhythmic part, it's gotta be there, for me. And the second thing is harmony, I don't know, melody comes almost simultaneous, when you just hear a repetitive harmonic pattern and a steady 4/4 beat and it can also be modified in a way to create tension and relaxation and to grab you. But melody comes in, and then really lifts you up. I don't know, it's useless to say gold medal, bronze medal, it's all one thing. It's freedom, the improvisation.

RS: Can you remember the first time you heard an organist play a concert? Or can you remember some concerts from organists that you've heard?

JR: Yes, I can definitely remember the recordings of Jimmy Smith. He was the first, for me, Jimmy Smith was for me the first identifiable organ player. And then

later on, I heard recordings of Fats Waller at the organ, I said, “Hey, that’s different.” And slowly things become more clear and it was to me as a trumpet player into brass and stuff, this was just another world, sound-wise, and then being raised as a Catholic, I went to Mass and I heard the organ in the church and I would sit after Mass and listen to the organist because that’s, it’s probably not just an accident that it’s called the queen of the instruments, the organ.

RS: It didn’t shock you that they were playing a different music?

JR: Jazz? No, no, not really. Again it was this free opening up the horizon. Organ music to me is not just strictly religious music, it has this dimension definitely has and I like that, very much so, but then it becomes a different emotion when it moves out of church organ.

RS: Did you ever hear Lou Bennett?

JR: Lou Bennett? Yes, I’ve heard Lou Bennett, because as I told you I’m related, my mother being French, we had French radio running all the time, and the language tolerated at home was one: that was French. The rest of the world speaks some *Schwyzerdütsch*, which is a Swiss version of German, which she tolerated also. But never would she tolerate a word of real German. The written German to her was the language of Hitler and the...that’s the set of mind and we were brought up that way. So I listened to Europe N° 1, Daniel Filipacchi and friends, “*Salut les Copains*,” and jazz shows on that radio regularly, late at night also, when I was supposed to sleep.

RS: And you heard Lou Bennett on the radio...

JR: Yes, on the radio, he was, I don't think he was, I could go check out when he first came to Switzerland but that takes some time.

RS: But he did come to play in Switzerland?

JR: I do think so, yes. If you would like to have more details on that, you know, I could...do some research for you.

RS: I would be very interested in knowing.

JR: OK. Lou Bennett. And Eddie Louiss, what about him?

RS: Talk to me about him.

JR: Hah, Eddie Louiss. This man, I never met, never saw, never heard, yes, I heard, many times, I got to know people who played with him in Paris, and they had some critical stories to tell about him. I think it was Jimmy Gourley, the guitar player. Jimmy Gourley came to Zurich one time, and then I said, "Hey, you played with Eddie Louiss?" I heard some five-letter words I said, "What's wrong?" He said, "He still owes me money."

RS: That's jazz.

JR: Yes.

RS: Now with Swiss Jazzorama, you published, probably privately, a record with Fats Waller with I forget how many interpretations of "Jitterbug Waltz." How did you happen to do that?

JR I wondered what the idea was behind that. I think, yes, now I remember exactly. The first exhibit we did here was dedicated to the centenary of Fats Waller, of Coleman Hawkins and Count Basie. All three of them were born in 1904, just like my dad. Yeah, that's why I remember, of course. And these three

were to be illustrated here, in a show just like you saw, so we said, hey, what do we do? So we said, what's the music we have, on record? And somebody said, well typical "Jitterbug Waltz," and it's played by these, and this guy plays it on so- and so, and totally different setting, so we came up with 13 versions. No tune presented so much interest, of course we could have probably compiled 50 versions of "Honeysuckle Rose," or "Ain't Misbehaving" or something, but "Jitterbug Waltz" was maybe the one that struck us most.

RS: And nobody objected?

JR: Afterwards, I must admit that we had some serious doubts about it. If I remember correctly I have explained to you that I could not sell this record to you unless you would become a member of the association, and...

RS: And I did.

JR: Yes, you did and we were very thankful, everyone, we said you know, Rhoda became a famous member, the first great member of our association. We checked out our legal counsel who said, yeah, It's a limited case, but if you produce a compilation like this, and give it away as a gift to a limited number of people who are practically your friends, an extended idea of one family and everyone of these people that you have close contacts with, commit themselves not to produce copies and to make business out of it, then we'd probably be safe.

RS: But there was no objection because you were doing an organ record, or a record around an organist.

JR: No, none whatsoever.

RS: Do you know people who don't like the organ?

JR: As a matter of fact, good question, that's a good question. Yeah, an "almost" father-in-law who keeps asking me, "When will you bring about some sextet or quintet, I need some brass, I wanna hear at least two saxophones, and a trombone and a trumpet, or two trumpets." I said, "Ok, you can have this with one instrument: it's the organ." He said, "No, no, not the organ, I want the real thing." That's about the only one who gave me this kind of answer.

RS: Do you think the organists are well represented in the festivals, jazz festivals?

JR: Under.

RS: Under-represented?

JR: Yes, and I'll tell you why: most of the festival organizers have difficulties to bring an instrument to the place. You have to run all over the place to find an organ, and sometimes the instruments are not really up to what they're supposed to be. Vito Di Modugno came from Italy, maybe you know him, a younger organist, played at "Locarno-On-Ice," this is when they make a skating rink on the piazza from the 20th of December to the 1st of January and they also have jazz musicians to come and play. Gigs. And Carole Sudhalter, who you certainly remember, came with two Italian musicians and a singer. That organ was also very critical. Modugno said, "What is this? This is not an organ."

RS: Do you know that at the festival in Ascona, the organizer, Nicolas Gilliet, he bought an organ. The organ I played, he bought. He bought it because of the difficulty of finding one that, you know, that he could use and that would be

acceptable. So maybe this will happen, although I played a jazz festival in Jakarta, and he bought 2 organs, which is not bad.

JR: Yeah, that's good. What comes to my mind I thought about the youngsters that I closely follow. I'm a friend of two guys who founded a new jazz club about 8 years ago in my home town in Winterthur, where all the young students, from the jazz school in Zürich, jazz school Luzern, and Basel and around, they all come here in some kind of rehearsal stage where people try stuff out. And it's beautiful to see young kids, you know, doing their thing. And there's more and more organ players coming, young cats.

RS: You think so?

JR: Yes! Yes! I can tell you three names that come to mind spontaneously.

RS: Please do.

JR: Young cats, between 30 and 40 maximum.

RS: What are their names?

JR: There's Roland Koeppel who plays with a guitar, he plays with Oliver Keller, fine guitarist, he's the guitar player, and then they got quite a edgy-type, funky-type drummer with them, I like that. They call their trio "Greasy" and the other one is Lechtner, Martin Lechtner who was on the nominee list for the Swiss jazz awards. He didn't make it, because he wasn't a girl, right? But Martin Lechtner, also very good, and the third name that comes to mind, the third guy who plays organ like a master who you'd like, you know, he does stuff that he's heard you play, and Stephan Strei, a pianist originally, but he goes to the trouble and brings his own organ in a truck, or in a van.

RS: He almost has to if he wants a good instrument every time, right? That's interesting.

JR: And maybe if I start asking my friends at the Zurich jazz school, they would probably point out 2 or 3 other people that I just haven't heard yet. Still young.

RS: I think it's interesting to know that there are young people coming up to play the organ.

JR: I think that they have another approach; they come from the synthesizer. They use "synthies" and they experiment with electronic stuff, and then somehow they slowly discover that there is something more substantial for jazz, a huge tradition, a fantastic history that the instrument the organ has, right?

RS: So you consider the organ as a real jazz instrument...

JR: Whoever plays it makes the jazz instrument of the organ. It's the person that's using it. That makes the music and uses it to express his musical message in a jazz approach way.

RS: Thank you very much, I've got plenty to work with.

JR: I talked a lot; did I answer your questions?

RS: You answered my questions and you gave me information that I can definitely use for my, for my paper.

JR: Glad I could, and Rhoda, you're invited to write me and ask me questions. I have all these records; I have access to the archives that go into more depth. And research persons, especially contemporary...

RS: But I looked to see in the vinyl records if there was a record by Lou Bennett, but there doesn't seem to be any.

JR: Here.

RS: Here.

JR: Maybe not, but you know, these are the records that are extra.

RS: Oh, they're extra ones?

JR: Yes, we would never sell if we had the only copy of a record that we have in the archives. We keep them.

RS: How many records do you have in the archives?

JR: In the archives, we're now up to 40,000, it's not that huge, but then there are so many bankers, and rich people, and Switzerland has a couple of rich people around, right? And I know that people have invested a lot of money into their record collections, and they're all thinking of reaching age 80 and they come and see us, and say "Hey could you guys, can you recommend, or would you take them into your archives?" And we start being flooded by collections that nobody cares about. The young people that inherit, the heirs, "les héritiers," in French, some of them just don't care, and we will not let jazz record collections go to the incineration plant.

RS: Bra-vo!

JR: No, never! But then that's connected with a lot of work, and problems. Year by year you get these collections, year by year you get the same records again, because everybody has his Armstrong, everybody has his Charlie Parker. And then you have to sort this out and, see in what shape are they? Are they dirty? Are they scratched? We clean them all and we compare the quality and keep one, maybe two copies, and the others we sell at a secondhand price.

RS: How many members in Swiss Jazzorama?

JR: We're now up to 450 we're not quite up to 500, we're striving for 500.

RS: That's great! Switzerland is a small country. What's the population of Switzerland?

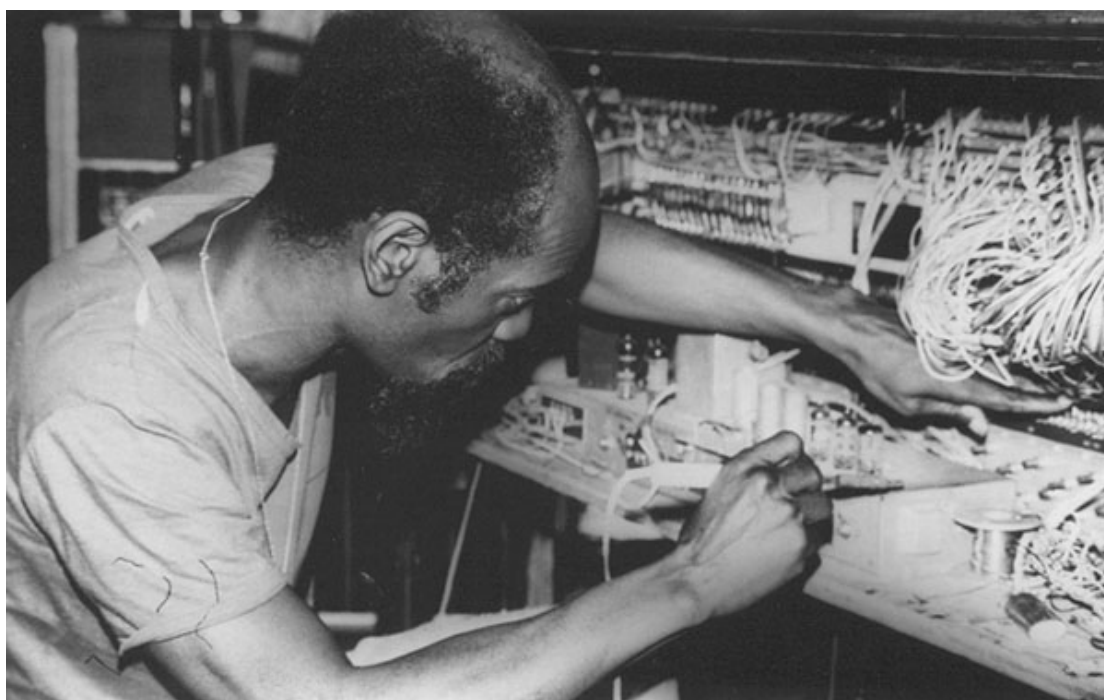
JR: Now that there's been a lot of immigration, we're up to about eight million, between eight or nine, maybe.

The above conversation shows the appearance of young organists on the scene, but also highlights the difficulties facing them in the event they should continue playing the organ. The problems are identical whatever the country:

- The cost: A new Hammond B-3 costs approximately \$26,995; a vintage (older) organ B-3 sells for \$8,000 to \$10,000 without the Leslie speaker.
- The organ is heavy and bulky; it takes up a lot of room. It's necessary to have arrangements for traveling with it, and help for carrying it.
- If the organ is a rental, it's doubtful as to the condition in which the organ is delivered, and extremely rarely equipped with a string bass for the growing minority of organists who play bass with the left foot.
- Continued difficulty in recording the full spectrum of sound of the organ.

Thanks to younger U.S., European, and Asian organists who have triggered a new interest in organ, and associations who are promoting the instrument, the Hammond company is unveiling new models such as the less-costly mini B-3. If Bennett were still alive, he could possibly confer with the manufacturers of the Hammond and—who knows?—realize his dream of finding the sounds he wanted to hear.

Example 30. Bennett working on his organ. Photo Yves Merle.



Chapter XI

Interview Delhay-Part 2/André Condouant

Example 31. Delhay and Bennett¹



RS: What impact did Lou Bennett have in Europe, what influence?

ED: I think that concerning the general public, people continued to talk about Jimmy Smith a lot. Concerning organists, or people who were Hammond organ fans, and more informed, Lou Bennett largely surpassed everyone, that's for sure; especially on the level of his bass on the pedals, because he was really a precursor. Everyone who was interested in Hammond organ, at that time, was

¹ This interview took place on August 6, 2013 in Narbonne, France and in French. (author's translation)

talking about him only. In Belgium, I mean, in my country. But unfortunately, he was never around. But one spoke only of two people, and then you a little later. From the end of the 60s, beginning of the 70s, there were three organists, and not four: there were Rhoda Scott, Lou Bennett, and Jimmy Smith, known to the public.

RS: But all the recordings that Lou Bennett made, they helped to make him known, no?

ED: Yes, of course.

RS: He wrote music for films?

ED: Yes, a “Glaive”² something, it’s on his web site.³

RS: And it seems to me he wrote music for a Spanish film.

ED: Exact.

RS: Where he had the first role?

ED: Exact, exact.

RS: Can one find this film?

ED: I have no idea. I cannot answer you, I don’t know whether it’s possible to find it or not.⁴

RS: What legacy does he leave?

² “Le Glaive et la Balance”, 1962, (“Two Are Guilty”) a film by director André Cayatte, starring Anthony Perkins, Jean-Claude Brial, and Renato Salvatori.

³ “Glaive » is a two-edged sword, and « balance » is the scales used to weigh.

⁴ In August 1968 Lou composed and recorded the film soundtrack for “La Vil Seducción” in Spain, re-issued in 1997 by Fonomusic with André Condouant (guitar) and Peer Wyboris (drums). Another movie came out in 1969, the Gonzalo Suárez film “Ditirambo.” Bennett starred in the film and also recorded the soundtrack.

ED: That depends for whom. In any case, for me, I lost a very close friend. If you like, I'll tell you later how it was, the organization of his concerts and all. For me, he was like a brother, a big brother. And when he was in Belgium, we were inseparable. I did everything for him, I was his guardian angel, I was his manager, I was...

RS: His roadie?

ED: His roadie, absolutely. When he came here, he could arrive his hands in his pockets, because I would put everything on stage. I have to specify one important thing: that is that the first year when he came to my house, I had a Hammond B-200, which is a Hammond electronic keyboard, but Lou came with the complete pedal board and the Wersi synthesizer. For the following year, since he had accepted me as his agent, I bought a C-3...

RS: Which is like a B-3...

ED: It's the same thing. And I announced this to Lou; he said to me, "You shouldn't have." But I told him, "Yes, I had to." Then he told me, "OK, I'm going to order the Wersi Lou Bennett synthesizer for bass, I'll have it sent to you, and you'll have to find an electrician to hook it up." I said, "No problem." So I received the Wersi bass synthesizer, and he was very happy, because he didn't want the Hammond bass sound; he wanted his own bass. I had a trailer to transport all of this—I still have it—and when there was a concert, I had everything I needed for setting up the organ, except if there were stairs, then I would have to ask for help. When Lou got there, the organ was ready, the drums were set up, I would have done the sound-check myself, and after that, OK, he can play.... and

concerning our relation, I'm telling you, because I'm of a passionate nature, sentimentally also, and Lou, I was like my devoted dog that I have now: I never slept, I was always there to see if everything was OK, if he had everything he needed, and he was enchanted to come to my house. He always told me, "If all the concerts were like the ones you organize, it's a dream come true!"

RS: And his feelings about France?

ED: That is rather particular because he had had so much pressure on him, from the musicians' union, also from the French tax system, that when he left to go live in Spain, in Cambrils, I still saw him of course, he told me, "You know, Eddy, I like France a lot, especially when I'm flying over it in a plane."

RS: He liked Spain a lot too.

ED: Very much, enormously. I've never lived in Spain, but the media covered him a lot. I believe he was better known in Spain than in France.

RS: You think so?

ED: I believe so. It's possible, because he was someone who would go towards the others; he was extremely generous, you know? He never thought of himself as a star. This sometimes resulted in bad surprises, actually.

RS: How so?

ED: Because he trusted people and afterwards he found out differently. And then he was someone who wasn't interested in money. I was "fighting" with him, telling him, "Lou, that's not enough, it's not paid enough." "No, it's OK, it's a real little club," he would answer. I would say, "Yes, but we could ask for more, and then I could negotiate. It's me who should do that, not you." The best example is,

towards the last years, we had four concerts... three concerts, and the last one was at the Farm of the Madelone, near where René Thomas's wife lived, and it was a concert that Lou was doing as a tribute to René, and René's wife was at the concert. In fact, it was one of the venues where I had the most problems getting the organ to the stage, because to get there, I had to cross through a garden with a lot of stairs. At the beginning of our tour, I receive a call from the manager of the Sheraton Hotel in Zaventem, he used to organize a jazz brunch on Sundays.

RS: Zaventem is Brussels Airport.

ED: Yes, near the airport. And the guy, very pretentious, says to me, "OK, I know that Lou Bennett is in Belgium, and you are his agent," I say, "Yes." Then, "Well, I'm inviting him to play in duo. 15,000 francs."

RS: Belgian francs.

ED: 15,000 Belgian francs. Evidently it was before the Euro at that time. But 15,000 Belgian francs are about 400 Euros.⁵ So I tell him, "It's not possible, sir." "But you know, it's good for his reputation to have played here." I say, "Sir, that's a lot of blah-blah, it's not for you to decide. I will talk to Mister Bennett, though, but I think it's not possible." So I talk to Lou, and he says, "Why did you say no?" I answer, "Lou, you don't realize, it's Lou Bennett who plays, it's not Eddy Delhaye or somebody like that, you see?" Lou says, "But you should have accepted. Listen, you know what you can do? Since we're going to be coming back from the Ardennes late at night, tell him we want three suites, one for me,

⁵ 400 Euros = \$551.48

one for you, and one for the drummer. And like that your pride will be saved.” So I call the man and say, “To my regret, Mister Bennett accepts. But we will be arriving late at night, at whatever time, and we want three suites.” He says, “OK.” “With breakfast included, everything.” And he says “No problem.”

So we arrive late at night, after the concert in Ardennes. Lou goes to bed, Hervé Capelle also, and me, like my dog here, I go park the trailer with the organ in a safe place and then I had very little sleep because in the morning, what was important for me was to get the organ on stage, and the brunch was on the third floor and the organ had to go up in the elevator in the kitchens. So I get the organ on stage, I check the sound with the drummer, as always, I let Lou sleep, he’s the star. And when everything is ready, he can start to play. He starts his concert, then a half-hour later, a maître d’ hotel comes to say, “Sir, could you ask Mister Bennett to play more softly? Because we have a customer who comes every Sunday, but he doesn’t like jazz, he comes to eat.” So I tell him, “Listen, Sir, there are two solutions: either you tell this gentleman to go eat elsewhere or to put plugs in his ears, or we stop the concert.” He then left, and I don’t know how it turned out, but I was very, very professional in order to protect Lou.

RS: Bravo. What are some of the events that marked his life?

ED: I think that the biggest event was meeting the owner of the Jamboree, who became one of Lou’s best friends. He had a club in Madrid and two in Barcelona. Every month, Lou would be playing in one of the three clubs. And the man had a lot of contacts, so Lou would find work, concerts in Spain. And he was really very well known and very appreciated, both as a musician, and as a person.

RS: And he spoke Spanish?

ED: Absolutely. Not in the beginning, but after...

RS: He learned?

ED: He learned very fast. He spoke Spanish very well.

RS: As well as he spoke French?

ED: Yes, I think so.

RS: Fluently?

ED: Yes.

RS: Did he speak French fluently?

ED: Very. We used to talk about philosophy; we would re-invent the world, if you know what I mean. I was living alone during most of the time that I was with him, we would sit in the kitchen, drink one or two whiskies, smoke so much we would have to open the window, cigarettes, and he would talk to me a lot, a lot about himself, about his personal life, about Sonia who was kind of an accident...

RS: An accident, Sonia? She was his wife!

ED: Yes.

RS: And this was not a major event in his life?

ED: I'm going to tell you the truth.

RS: Yes.

ED: No, she was not a major event.

RS: Why was she an accident?

ED: First of all, she was an accident because when Lou Bennett arrived at the Blue Note, Sonia served at the hatcheck, and Sonia was Kenny Clarke's

mistress. And Lou realized that Sonia was coming on to him, she kept looking at him. And Lou, always loyal in friendship, goes to Klook and tells him, "Klook, listen, I have a problem because your woman keeps looking at me." And Klook answered him, "Please, take her. Take her, but don't give her back, you keep her. This is a one-way ticket."

And also, there is the fact that, and all this is true, I'm not inventing it, because it's Lou who told me, when things were not going well financially, Sonia is someone who is from a rich Brussels family, so she was pretty rich; afterwards, perhaps less, I don't know. I don't want to say that he didn't have any feelings for her, but she is an infernal woman, with an impossible personality. So when he could be in my house, for him it was a vacation. Also, he went to live in Madrid with a younger woman for about a year and a half.

RS: That's all?

ED: As far as I know. But he had, it's like sailors, he has...

RS: One in every port?

ED: In every port, yes.

RS: What about drugs?

ED: To my knowledge, he never smoked anything but cannabis; I don't think he ever took anything else.

RS: What else can you tell me about him?

ED: That my biggest regret was that at his death, and especially at his funeral, I couldn't be there because it was the day I had to sign for the purchase of my

property here in France. Moreover, on Lou's organ, there's a photo with his hat, a big photo, and it's a photo that I had taken of him in the Lou Bennett Jazz Club.

RS: He had a jazz club?

ED: I had a friend who had a jazz club near where I lived.

RS: Near where?

ED: La Louvière.

RS: Is it near Liège?

ED: No, La Louvière is between Mons and Charleroi, near Bintje. And at my friend's club, I brought him Philippe Catherine, Jack Van Poll and Lou Bennett also. And my friend was so astonished to see that so great a musician as Lou Bennett would come to play in his club, he asked if Lou would accept that his club be called the Lou Bennett Jazz Club. Lou said yes right away, no problem. He wanted a great photo of Lou, so I made some enlargements. There was one in the Lou Bennett Jazz Club, the other one I gave to Lou, and it was placed on his coffin the day of his funeral.

RS: Let's talk about the musicians who played with Lou. Philippe Catherine was one of his close collaborators?

ED: Philippe Catherine played often with Lou. I found on YouTube an excerpt of a TV program and I immediately called Philippe to ask him the name of the drummer, and where this took place. He was very surprised that it was on YouTube. I put it on the Lou Bennett web site.⁶

RS: And drummers? You mentioned Hervé Capelle....

⁶ <http://www.lou-bennett.org/> accessed October 28, 2013.

ED: He too would have sold his soul to the devil rather than betray Lou. He was not an exceptional drummer. Among other things, he was incapable of keeping time with the Charleston, you see. However this is elementary for a drummer. He wasn't very good, though he didn't play like a beginner... and Lou accepted him, perhaps he wasn't difficult enough about the musicians who accompanied him sometimes.

RS: Kenny Clarke was his first drummer.

ED: His first, and his favorite drummer, of course.

RS: And with whom did he record as sideman?

ED: With Dany Doriz, and with the Spanish guitarist...

RS: Ximo Tébar?⁷

ED: Ximo Tébar, and with a Spanish singer,⁸ those are the three people that he recorded with as sideman. But he deserved better than that.

RS: Yes, without a doubt. But why is it that he didn't...well, you were his manager for the Benelux?

ED: Yes.

RS: Belgium, Luxembourg and Holland?

ED: Essentially Belgium. We did only two concerts in Holland.

RS: Because in the beginning, he took off like an arrow, he was a big star thanks to Daniel Filipacchi, right?

ED: Yes.

⁷ Ximo Tébar (1963–)

⁸ Núria Feliù, (1941–) Catalan singer and actress (See example 30.)

RS: What happened that he didn't maintain his status or become even bigger?

ED: First, because he left and went to Spain. There were very good drummers in Spain who played with him, I don't remember their names. But there is a musician, I think he is Swiss. If I had the CDs here, I could tell you his name, who played with him most of the time when he was in Belgium.

RS: Billy Brooks.

ED: Billy Brooks, that's it. He's American, exiled in Switzerland.

RS: Yes, another American. From Newark.

ED: From Newark? Have you already played with him?

RS: Yes, in Switzerland, in Geneva.

ED: He's great, he's really good.

RS: Yes, a very good drummer.

One of the musicians who often played with Bennett is guitarist André Condouant. From the French West Indian island of Guadeloupe, Condouant has played with many great artists, such as Leo Wright, Josephine Baker, Memphis Slim, and Slide Hampton. He speaks of his experience playing with Bennett:

RS: How was it to play with Lou? Was he rather authoritative or rather easy-going, diplomatic?

Andé Condouant: I spent a good number of years with Lou, he was a marvelous musician, very cool, very funny, liked to joke, not at all quick-tempered, very accommodating; I learned a lot with him.

RS: What type of music did he prefer to play? Ballads, bebop, Latin?

AC: He liked to play everything. From what I could see, he derived a lot of pleasure from playing all styles.

RE: How did you decide which chords to play, between the guitar and the organ?

AC: At one time, before I met him personally, I used to go quite often to listen to him at the Blue Note, rue d'Artois,⁹ when René Thomas and Kenny Clarke were in the trio, and like that, I learned by ear the whole repertory that they were playing then. So for the first time, when he asked me to work with him—it was in Stockholm, Sweden—I didn't have any problem playing the tunes, I followed him quite naturally.

RS: How long did you work with Lou? The first time was in Sweden, and then?

AC: He had found out that I was in Stockholm, I don't know how he knew, but he called me and said he had work for me. I worked with him at the Golden Circle. Leo Wright (1933-1991)¹⁰ came to play too. I became part of Wright's group for a while and he offered me a contract for a tour with his quintet in Czechoslovakia, and East Berlin. At the time, I was living in West Berlin, the wall was still there, and afterwards each time that Lou would come to Germany, I would do the tour with him. There was a German drummer named Joe Nay.¹¹ After that, we would go to Spain for the three months in summer. The three of us traveled in Lou's car

⁹ Paris.

¹⁰ Alto sax, flute, clarinet, played with Charles Mingus and Dizzy Gillespie.

¹¹ Joe Nay (1934–1990) German drummer from Berlin who also played with Dexter Gordon, Johnny Griffin, and Randy Brecker.

with the organ and the drums. He had changed drummers afterwards and had hired a drummer named Billy Brooks.¹² During all those years we were the trio.

RS: Was Lou already playing pedal solos or did he begin that later on?

AC: I always saw him playing bass pedal solos even during the Blue Note period.

RS: How would you judge Lou as a musician? As a person?

AC: He was self-taught, with an exceptionally good ear, for me that made him one of the best. He often said that Jimmy Smith couldn't touch him because he didn't know how to play heel and toe technique. That made us laugh, because we know that one can't compare.

Example 32 André Condouant



¹² Brooks is from Newark, NJ, lives in Switzerland, and is now a long-time teacher at the Swiss Jazz School in Berne. He was a contemporary of Larry Young and Woody Shaw and played with them.

Example 33 record cover Bennett and Feliù, Bennett archives.



Example 34. Bennett and wife Sonia, photo Bennett's archives.



example 35. Lou and Sonia in later years, photo Yves Merle



Example 36. Lou and Sonia: their marriage lasted throughout. Photo Yves Merle.





Example 37. Bennett with Steve Phillips, a Newark, N.J. drummer (deceased 2012.) They often played together. (photo Bennett archives.)

Example 38. The trio: Jimmy Gourley, Kenny Clarke and Bennett arriving in Cameroon, Africa (photo Bennett archives)





**example 39. Bennett with popular Parisian personality Raoul Saint-Yves,
photo Bennett archives.**

Example40. Benoit and Filipacchi exchanging T-shirts. Photo Bennett



Conclusion

In spite of the different perceptions of Bennett's friends, though they were close to him, it is not at all certain that Bennett disliked the U.S.A. He did go back to the U.S. in 1964 to play at the Newport Jazz Festival, but it has often been the case of musicians going to live in various countries, often in Europe, that they seem to fall from the radar in their own country. Bennett had been mentioned in a few U.S. publications in the sixties, such as "The Encyclopedia of Jazz in the Sixties" by Leonard Feather¹³ and a very respectable mention from Lawrence McClellan, Jr. in his book "The Later Swing Era"¹⁴ which says:

Bennett, Jean-Louis "Lou" (b. 1926) A pianist–organist–composer, Bennett began leading his own piano trio in Baltimore during the late forties before switching to organ in 1956 and touring with his trio. He later worked with Kenny Clarke, Jimmy Gourley, René Thomas, and Donald Byrd in Paris and Europe in the sixties. Bennett has continued to perform as a sideman and lead his own groups mostly in Europe. He has appeared in many movies and television shows, and recorded with Clarke in *Americans in Europe*.

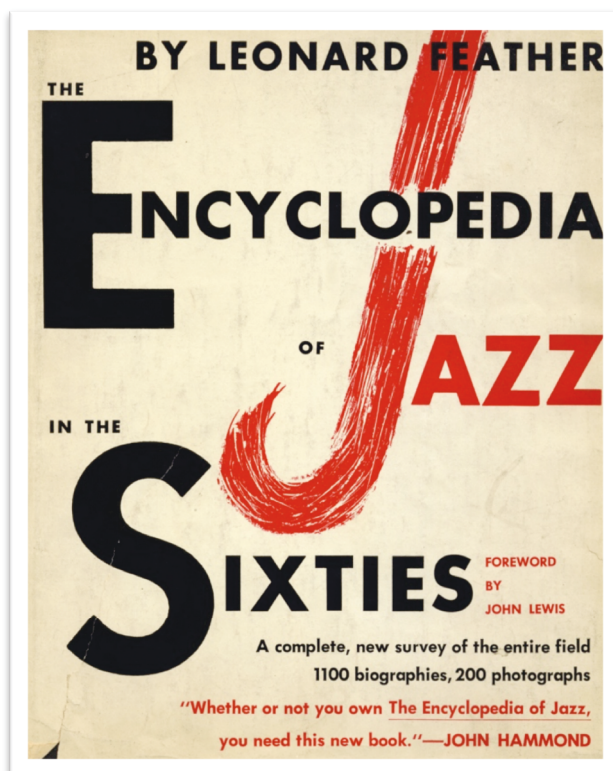
This mention would certainly have made Bennett happy, for after his death, it was discovered that he carried with him a photo of the cover of Leonard

¹³ Originally published in 1966, Horizon Press, New York.

¹⁴ Greenwood Press, Connecticut, 2004.

Feather's "Encyclopedia of Jazz in the Sixties". He also kept his U.S. citizenship, carefully renewing his passport before the expiration date.

**Example 41.. Bennett carried this picture with his passport and driver's license,
photo Bennett archives..**



Feather's entry reads:

Bennett, Lou (Louis Benoît), *organ, composer*, b. Philadelphia, Pa, 5/18/26. Stud. piano w. mother, aunt. After army service, gigged in Baltimore w. own King Cole style trio. Worked as shoemaker for several years. Bought organ, '56; became full-time musician, on road w. trio '57, playing the so-called "organ circuit" clubs in East and Midwest. To Paris, 1960; since then, except for brief return to play

NJF '64, has stayed in Europe, pl. all leading festivals and working in several films. Tour of East Europe countries fall '66 incl. Prague JF. Favs: Wild Bill Davis, Jackie Davis,¹⁵ Jimmy Smith. LPs for French RCA, Philips, Bel-Air and commercial 45s for French market. One track w. K. Clarke on *Americans in Europe*, Vol. I (Impulse). Addr: 2 rue Darwin, Paris 18, France.

It is significant that Bennett kept with him a reminder of Feather's entry, and shows that it meant quite a lot to him. It was for him proof that he still existed in the United States and made his presence in Europe all the more real, all the more authentic. With this thesis, he returns home to his country, hopefully with all the honors due him, a man, a musician with the goal to persuade his instrument to give out the sounds that he heard in his head, and a single-minded purpose to better the quality of his sound.

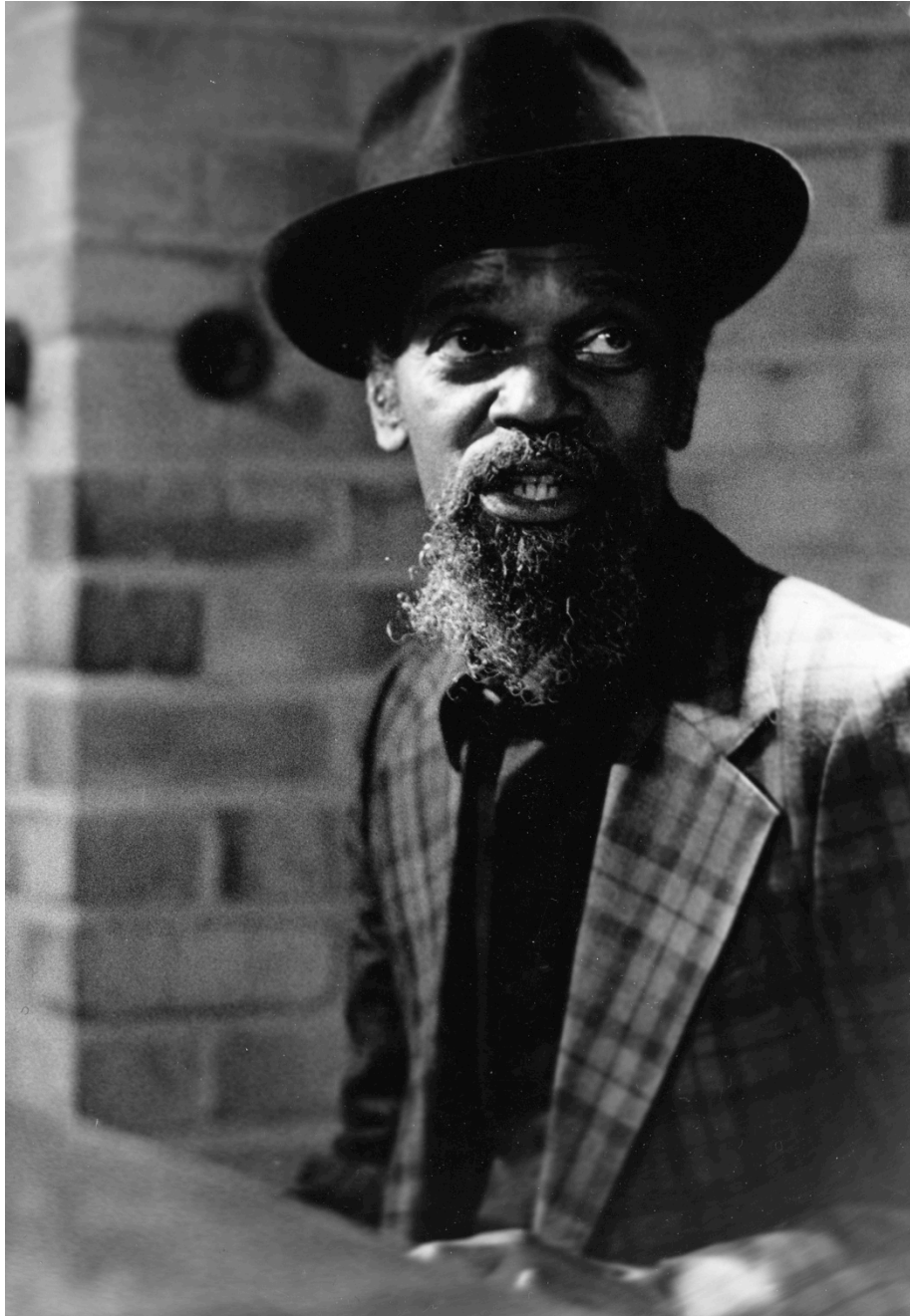
Bennett, as a jazz organist, leaves behind him an example of sincerity, humility, immense talent and an ideology of an organist who insisted on simplicity but also on complete mastery of one's instrument, a desire for maximum achievement as an artist.

Strangely, there was no one at Bennett's funeral from America, other than fellow African American musicians, such as Johnny Griffin, Hal Singer, Liz McComb, Jimmy Woode, and the author. European personalities who attended were Belgian guitarist Philippe Catherine, French organists Stefan Patry and Emmanuel Bex, French journalist and jazz personality Maurice Cullaz, and,

¹⁵ Jackie Davis (1920–1999) organist known for his knowledge of registration on the Hammond and his beautiful sounds, succeeded Bill Doggett as Louis Jordan's organist.

Parisian singer and actor Raoul Saint-Yves. Usually one sees some of the distant family or perhaps old friends who have made the trip in order to be present at the celebration of the life of an African American artist and friend. Neither his wife Sonia nor his friend Yves Merle, who organized Bennett's funeral, had even an idea of who could be informed stateside. Up to the last moment, Bennett never deviated from his chosen path. May he rest in peace.

Example 42. Lou Bennett. Photo Eddy Delhaye.



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Tom Lord Discography

B3734 New York 1957–1958

Lou Bennett (org), Glenn Brooks (g), Phil Harris (b), Unknown (d)

R1479

If I Had You

Apollo 810

Moon Dog

-

Googa Mooga

Dawn 234

Diggin' Gene

B3735 Paris July, 1960

RCA (F) 430050

Lou Bennett (org) Jimmy Gourley (g) Kenny Clarke (d) Jean-Marie Ingrand (b)

Sister Sadie

So What

Jubilation (Jean-Marie Ingrand out)

Brother Daniel

Green Dolphin Street

Amen

B3736 Paris, 1960

RCA (F) 430051

Lou Bennett (org) Elek Bacsik (g) Daniel Humair (d)

Moins Que Rien

Les Enfants Du Pirée

Tendrement

Clémentine

Blues Valse

Les Voiliers

Polka Dots and Moonbeams

Soleil a Minuit

Verte Campagne

Le Vrai Blues

O Sole Mio

B3737 Köln, October 7, 1960

Lou Bennett (org) Kenny Clarke (d) Jean-Marie Ingrand (b)

Satin Doll

What a Difference a Day Makes

B3738 Paris, October 8 and 9, 1961

RCA (F) 76513

Lou Bennett (org) Philippe Catherine (g) Larry Ritchie (d)

Last Night

OR61M456

Salut Les Copains

OR61M457

Après l'Heure

B3739 Paris, 1961

RCA (F) 76534

Lou Bennett (org)

Hit The Road, Jack

One Mint Julep

What'd I Say

Georgia On My Mind

- B3740 EUROPA JAZZ, Italie, 1962 EJ1042
 Lou Bennett (org) René Nan(d)
 Stella By Starlight
 Something By John
 Brother Daniel
 (Note: Rest of the LP by others.)
- B3741 Koblenz, January, 1963 IMP A (S)36
 Lou Bennett (org) Jimmy Gourley (g) Kenny Clarke (d)
 No Smokin'
 Low Life
- B3742 Paris, March 1963 RCA (F) 430115
 Lou Bennett (org) René Thomas (g) Gilbert Rovère (b) Charles Bellonzi (d)
 Moment's Notice I Remember Sonny
 Loin Du Brésil Indicatif
 Jane Enfin
 J.J. Indicatif
- B3743 Bel Air (F) 411052
 Memphis slim (p, vcl) Unknown p-2) Lou Bennett (org) René Thomas (g) (1 only)
 Unknown (b) On some sides Kenny Clarke (d) Charles Big Jones, Vin Morris, Swingle
 Singers) 3 only (choir)
 That Preaching Man
 Glory Glory Hallelujah
 Jjericho (Vin Morris vcl)
 Echoes
 Elijah
 Sauveur, Ayez Pitié de Nous
 Nobody Knows The Trouble I See
 This Train (Memphis Slim p solo)
 Que Feras-Tu? (Charles Big Jones solo)
- B3744 Paris, January 1966 PHILIPS (F) 70325
 Lou Bennett (org) René Thomas (g) Kenny Clarke (b)
 Pieter's Waltz
 Repetition
 Meeting
- B3745 Paris, March 1966 PHILIPS (F) 70325
 Donald Byrd (tp) added, and the Paris Jazz All-Stars added
 Pentacostal Feeling
 Echoes
 That Preachin' Man
 Easy Living
- B3746 *Echoes and Rhythms of my Church*, Paris, 1969 Bel Air (F) 30PA7024
 Lou Bennett (org) Art Simmons (p) René Thomas (g) Gilbert Rovère (b) Kenny Clarke (d)
 The Dean Sisters, Charles Big Jones (vcl) Vin Morris (vcl group) Dean Cooper (arr. dir.)

That Preachin' Man
Jericho
Elijah

B3747 Paris, 1969 Bel Air (F) 30PA7024
Art Simmons (out)

Sauveur, Ayez Pitié de Nous (vcl solo by Jones)
Nobody Knows the Trouble I See (vcl solo by Morris)
Que Feras-Tu? (vcl solo by Cooper)

B3748 Paris, 1969 Bel Air (F) 30PA7024
The Dean Sisters, Charles Big Jones, Vin Morris out, Memphis Slim (vcl) added.

Glory Glory Hallelujah
Echoes
This Train

B3749 *Lou Bennett Plays For Clem* Heidelberg, January 19, 1971 CLEM30001
Lou Bennett (org) Ira Criss (g) Joe Hackbarth(d)

Li'l Darlin'
Out of Nowhere
Poema
Over The Rainbow
Enfin
The Shadow of Your Smile
Georgia On My Mind

B3750 Paris, June 1980 *Live At Club St. Germain* Vogue (F) 502609
Lou Bennett (org) André Condouant (g) Billy Brooks (d)

Arrival
Lament
Not So Softly
Pentatitus
Yearning
State Side Thing

State Side of Thing
 L'Amour Est Une Drole de Chose
 The Pitch-Tree Thing

As Sideman:

Jack Sels JAZZ September 1961 Delahay (Belgium) DEP 14028
 Jack Sels (tp, comp. arr.) Lou Bennett (org) Philip Catherine (g) Oliver Jackson (d)

Blues 100
 Bay's Way
 Blues for a Blonde
 On Stage
 Black Velvet
 African Dance
 Hittin' The Road

Núria Feliú Lou Bennett / *ELS SEUS AMICS* Barcelona, 1966

Georgia, Georgia
 Encara No
 D'Aquí A L'Eternitat
 T'he Mirat
 Nina De Seda
 Ni Saps La Feresa D'Amor
 Ningú No Ho Podrà Saber Corn Jo
 Aquell Infant
 Cèntims Del Cel
 Te'n Va Anar

Johnny Griffin Quartet: Body And Soul Paris, 1967 Moon Records (I) MCD004–2
 Johnny Griffin (ts) Lou Bennett (org) André Condouant (g) Joe Nay (d)

Body and Soul
 Leave Me Alone Blues
 The Man I Love

Lou Bennett & Dany Doriz Jazz à la Huchette Paris, 1977 Jazz Time 41
 Dany Doriz (v) Lou Bennett (org) Unknown (d)

I'll Remember April
 Be-Bop Stars
 Bluesette
 Tenderly
 Love For Sale
 Improvisation
 Willow Weep For Me

Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis "That's All" Paris, 1983 Jazz Club/EMI
 Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (ts) Lou Bennett (org) Teddy Martin (vln) George Collier (d)

Exactly Like You
 L'Amour Est Une Drole de Chose
 The Pitch-Tree Thing
 Out of Nowhere
 That's All
 George
 Satin Doll
 The Chef
 Secret Love

Music For Film:

Le Glaive et La Balance ("Uno, due, tre") France/Italie, released: 1963
 Gaumont International Pathé Marconi EG 620
 André Cayatte (director) Lou Bennett (org) Kenny Clarke (d)

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 Francesco Rosi (dr)

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[A] = analytical remarks

[B] = extensive book review

[BT] = blindfold test

[C] = concert review

[D] = discography

[F] = feature article

[I] = interview

["I"] = article written by the respective musician himself

[O] = obituary

[R] = extensive record review

[T] = transcription

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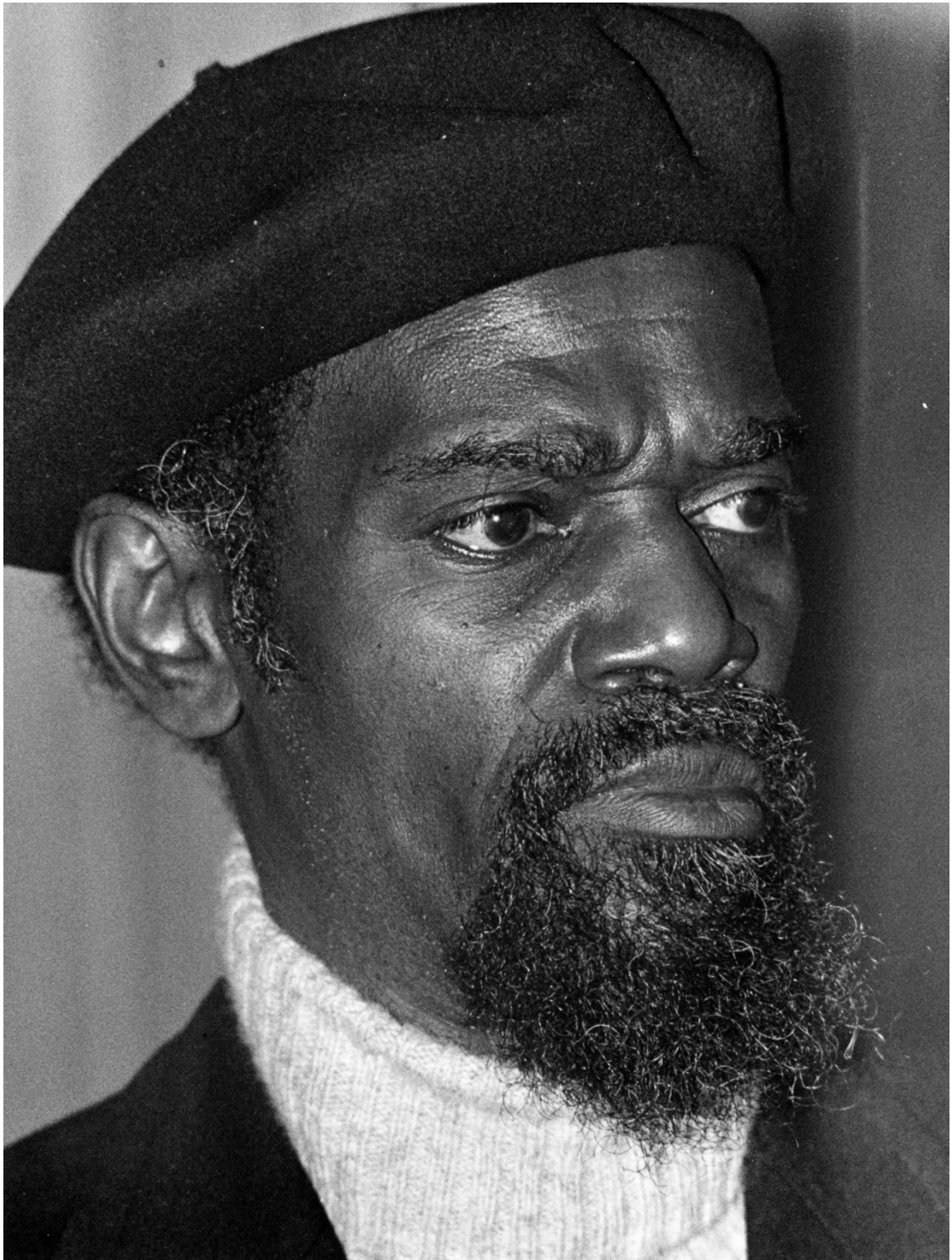
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Example 43. Lou Bennett in his French beret, photo Yves Merle.



Example 44. Lou Bennett, Bennett archives.



APPENDIX

Interview Madeline Munera/Lou Bennett

INTERVIEW :**Quelques instants avec LOU BENNET**

Le typique Plaza Real recèle à l'ombre de ses vieilles arcades de curieux spectacles qui attirent, chaque soir, de nombreux noctambules. Parfois une simple porte invite à y entrer. N'hésitez pas, vous découvrirez un couloir étroit qui tourne à angle droit un escalier qui se divise pour pénétrer un décor insolite de voûtes décrépies, de murs peinturlurés où des bouteilles de scotch en rubannées de bougies fondues et coiffées d'ampoules rouges diffusent une lumière tamisée, une petite estrade sans prétention, où trône un orgue électrique, et un petit homme qui fait courir avec dextérité ses doigts sur un immense clavier. Nous sommes au JAMBOREE JAZZ CAVE, et le petit homme n'est autre que le grand LOU BENNET.

On ne présente pas Lou Bennett, on l'écoute pendant des heures en oubliant de siroter l'Alexander qui est sur la table; on l'écoute et on se laisse prendre par le rythme, par l'agilité du pied gauche qui court



LOU BENNET au CLAVIER
de son orgue électrique

sur les longues lattes de bois en un "solo" dont Lou a le secret. Au passage, on reconnaît les classiques: "Laura", "Round the corner", etc... Les longs doigts sensibles se posent avec délicatesse et légèreté sur les touches blanches et noires. On dirait un aveugle devant son livre Braille. Que cherche-t-il donc à déchiffrer dans son écriture secrète?

—Lou Bennet, comment en êtes-vous arrivé à ce que vous êtes aujourd'hui?

—La musique, j'avais ça dans le sang.

—Quand le jazz est-il vraiment devenu important dans votre vie?

—A 19 ans, pendant mon service militaire.

—Et depuis?

—Depuis? Je joue!

Quand Lou joue, il ne le fait pas pour vous, mais pour lui.

—Ce qui est difficile, dit-il, ce n'est pas de s'exprimer, c'est de se faire comprendre. Alors, je ferme les yeux et je joue pour moi. Si je joue bien, je suis heureux; si j'arrive à jouer mieux, je suis encore plus heureux.

—Où êtes-vous né?

—A Philadelphie.

—Avez-vous noté une différence entre le public américain et le public européen?

—Moi, je préfère jouer les yeux fermés, ainsi je ne vois pas le public.

—Vous le craignez?

—Non, il m'indiffère. Ce qui est important dans le jazz, c'est surtout la communion entre les musiciens; ça, oui, ça apporte beaucoup.

—Vous êtes marié?

—Oui.

—Père de famille?

—Je suis même Grand-Père!

Cela paraît incroyable, il a l'air si jeune, si plein de fougue et de vie devant les touches de son clavier...

—Arrivez-vous à concilier votre vie de famille et le jazz?

—Pas toujours; alors, parfois... ça boîte...

Lou n'aime pas parler de sa vie privée.

—Vous êtes ici depuis un mois, quand repartez-vous?

—Fin Juillet.

—Pour aller où?

—En vacances, comme tous les ans.

—Alors, fini le travail?

—Je ferai quelques galas, juste de quoi payer mes vacances. De toute manière, pour moi, jouer n'est pas un travail ni une manière de gagner ma vie.

—C'est quoi?

—Ma façon de VIVRE.

Madeline MUNERA

A Few Moments With Lou Bennett—Translation

The typical *Plaza Real*, under the shadow of its old arcades, hides some curious shows that, every night, attract many night birds. Sometimes a simple door invites you to enter. Don't hesitate, you'll find a narrow alley, which turns at a right angle, a stairway that divides in order to penetrate a strange decor with decrepit vaults, garishly painted walls, where scotch bottles trimmed with ribbons of melted candles and dressed with red bulbs spread a filtered light, a small unpretentious stage, where in the place of honor, there is an electric organ, and a little man who runs his fingers with dexterity over an enormous keyboard. We are in the Jamboree Jazz Cave, and the little man is none other than the great LOU BENNETT.

One doesn't present Lou Bennett, one listens to him for hours, forgetting to sip the Alexander on the table; one listens to him and gets caught up in the rhythm, in the gracefulness of his left foot that runs across long wooden laths in a solo of which only Lou has the secret. In passing, one recognizes the classics: "Laura," "Round the Corner (sic)," *etcetera*... His long sensitive fingers lightly touch the black and white keys with finesse, like a blind man with his book in Braille. What is he trying to decipher in his secretive writing?

MM: Lou Bennett, how did you come to be who you are today?

LB: Music, I had it in my blood.

MM: When did jazz become important in your life?

LB: When I was nineteen, during my military service.

MM: And since then?

LB: Since then? I play.

When Lou plays, he doesn't do it for you, but for himself.

LB: The thing that's difficult is not so much to express oneself, it's to make oneself understood. So, I close my eyes and I play for myself. If I play well, I'm happy; if I manage to play better, I'm even happier.

MM: Where were you born?

LB: In Philadelphia.

MM: Have you noticed a difference between the American public and the European public?

LB: Me, I prefer to play with my eyes closed, like that I don't see the public.

MM: Are you afraid?

LB: No, I'm indifferent. What's important in jazz above all is the communion between the musicians, yes, that's very rewarding.

MM: Are you married?

LB: Yes.

MM: Father?

LB: I'm even a grandfather!

It seems unbelievable; he looks so young, so full of life and enthusiasm before the keyboard...

MM: Do you succeed in reconciling your family life with jazz?

LB: Not always; sometimes...it falters...

Lou doesn't like to talk about his personal life.

MM: You've been here for one month, when do you leave?

LB: The end of July.

MM: To go where?

LB: On vacation, as I do every year.

MM: So, the work will be finished?

LB: I'll do some gigs, just enough to pay for my vacation. In any case, for me, playing is not a job, nor a way to earn a living.

MM: What is it?

LB: My way of life.

(Madeleine MUNERA)¹

¹ Author's translation.

Curriculum Vitae

Rhoda Scott Sampognaro

Date of Birth: July 3, 1938 in Dorothy, New Jersey

Education:

Rutgers-Newark: Master of Arts in Jazz History and Research, 2014

Manhattan School of Music, New York, Master of Music in Music Theory, 1967

Manhattan School of Music, New York, Bachelor of Music in Music Theory, 1966

Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York, Jazz Studies Program:

Synthesizers, Samplers and MIDI System in Contemporary Music Applications
(Summer 1988)

Alliance Française, Paris, France, *Brevet d'aptitude à l'Enseignement du Français*,
1977

Kodaly School, Esztergom, Hungary, diploma, Summer 1975

Ecole des Beaux Arts, Fontainebleau, France, studies with Nadia Boulanger,
1967,

Westminster Choir College, Princeton, New Jersey

- Member, Symphonic Choir (Performances under Herbert Von Karajan and
Leonard Bernstein)

- Associate Alumnus (1955-1958)

Professional Experience: 1966-2011

More than 40 albums (vinyl) recorded as leader

More than 15 CDs and DVDs under own name and/or co-leader

Concerts, TV and Radio appearances in most European countries: Russia,
Hungary, Germany, Switzerland, Belgium, Italy, Portugal, Sweden, France, etc.

Gospel workshops in Germany, Switzerland and France

Liner notes for CDs for French Artists: *Take 3, Gilda Solve, Aurore Voilque, Dany
Doriz Big Band, Glück.*

Awards and Honors:

New Jersey Lay Organization of the AME Church Dedicated Service Award,
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Shirley Chisholm Arts and Entertainment Award, New Jersey, 2013

Milt Gabler Scholarship, Rutgers-Newark, 2011

NAACP Arts and Entertainment Award, 2010

Django d'Or, France, 2009, 2010

Officier des Arts et des Lettres, France, 2008

Grand Prix Audiovisuel de l'Europe 1985

Borden Award for Academic Excellence, Manhattan School of Music, 1966