SOCIAL MUSIC IS JAZZ EVOLVED AND RE-DISCOVERED: AN INTROSPECTIVE ANALYSIS OF JON BATISTE AND STAY HUMAN

by

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ABSTRACT OF THE THESIS

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Being twofold, the purpose of this thesis is (1) to determine if and how Social Music may be an evolution of jazz music, while simultaneously being a re-discovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, especially from a social perspective, and (2) to divulge how Jon Batiste and Stay Human expressively use Social Music to deliver concepts of love, believe, hope, determination, encouragement, and joy to a world that synchronously experiences devastation, tumult, beauty, and promise. An introspective analysis of Jon Batiste and Stay Human will serve as the explanatory vehicle to ascertain the aforementioned. Additional introspective analyses of Jon Batiste and Stay Human are included and strongly considered.

As jazz is known as being birthed in New Orleans, Louisiana, and Jonathan Batiste was reared in Kenner, Louisiana – a suburb outside of New Orleans, there is a discussion of Batiste's thoughts of Congo Square and early jazz in New Orleans, thereby yielding further clarification of my inquiry as to how Social Music may be a re-discovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be. The introspective analysis includes a brief musical biographical sketch of (a) Jonathan Batiste in New Orleans, Louisiana, (b) Jonathan

Batiste and his Trio in New York, (c) Jon Batiste and Stay Human in New York alongside national and global tours, and (d) Jon Batiste and Stay Human as the Bandleader and House Band of CBS's syndicated *The Late Show With Stephen Colbert*. This introspective analysis entails a discussion of my documentation of diverse musical experiences with Jon Batiste and Stay Human. To capture the inclusiveness of community, there are additional introspective analyses of musical experiences with Jon Batiste and Stay Human, including members from the Stay Human band as well as members from the audience.

There is a discussion of how Jon Batiste and Stay Human have revolutionized the music and social climate of jazz. As Jon Batiste ultimately seeks to bring people together, there is a discussion of how social music (a) brings people of diverse demographic and socio-economic class together and (b) makes jazz more accessible to the masses, ultimately linking the common thread of humanity.

Preface

Hip Hop is Jazz Evolved. No. Rock is Jazz Evolved. No. Rhythm & Blues is Jazz Evolved. No. Funk is Jazz Evolved. No. Country is Jazz Evolved. No. Wait a minute. All of these are Jazz Evolved. All of these are in Social Music. Ah, Social Music is Jazz Evolved. That's not all. Social Music is also a re-discovery of Jazz – Jazz as it was initially intended to be. Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Re-discovered.

I remember how I felt during the years that I began listening to jazz – I mean "really listening", not just hear, but listen to jazz at around eight years of age. I remember that at the tender age of eight, I would slightly nod my head up and down to the beat, as I felt that Jazz understood me. Could you imagine, an eight-year old saying with an earnest passion, "Yes, I feel like it (Jazz) understands me; it understands my pain." When I would hear Jazz – the saxophone, the rhythm of the drum, it so definitely spoke to my heart. I felt like it understood my pain. It understood me.

Fast forward the track some twenty years, I felt the same about Jon Batiste and Stay Human, and what Jon dubbed Social Music – when I first heard, saw and experienced them in-person, via online footage, and then live at the Newport Jazz Festival 2014 (60th Anniversary). While working as Accountant for a prominent jazz organization in Saint Louis, Missouri, I was reintroduced to Jon Batiste in 2014, through the efforts of a dear sponsor of the organization who co-chaired, oversaw preparation, and championed for the organization's 2015 Gala to feature Jon Batiste and Stay Human.

So, what exactly is Social Music? To answer this question, or at least be in the vicinity of answering this question, let's delve into the perspectives of those who've

coined and or are heralds of such idea – Social Music. Jon Batiste and Stay Human, being the most prominent vehicle of Social Music, the following chapters analyze musical biographical sketches and interviews of the core members of Stay Human – including Jon Batiste, Joe Saylor, Eddie Barbash, and Ibanda Ruhumbika.

As I have found the subject matter of Social Music by Jon Batiste and Stay Human to be rather new in the scope of jazz, this thesis primarily contains research of unchartered ground. Therefore, the bulk of my research is from interviews that I have conducted with band members as well as audience members, in addition to recent, available interviews with Jon Batiste. As Social Music can be characterized by truly extending inclusiveness of participants from the stage to the audience, my introspective analysis of each interview and personal experience with Jon Batiste and Stay Human will be shared.

Acknowledgments

I'd like to thank My Lord and Savior Christ Jesus who's Spirit has truly shown me, exemplifying the true meaning of faithfulness, grace, and mercy in unconditional, unending Love. Mommy (Denise Brunson Harris) – my dear mother who has prayed for me, and with me, so many times – thank you for your love, my precious mother. I love you! Dad (Dr. Wesley Harris, Jr.) – for your encouragement – thank you! Grandmother (Rita Brunson), Granddaddy (Warren Brunson), Uncle Adon (Adon Brunson) – you're the true one with knowledge of History – thank you, as I tribute this thesis to you, too! My Humphrey Family (Aunt Mary, Michelle, Fleurelle, Adam, Cherie, Michael, Derek, Charlotte, AJ), My Harris Family (Grandma Myrtle, Aunt Zelda, Grandpa Wes, Uncle Bill and family – all my dear siblings and cousins. Cousin Delores and The Hudson/Scott families.

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Jon Batiste, Joe Saylor, Eddie Barbash, Ibanda Ruhumbika, Marcia Salter, Becca Pulliam, Quincy Troupe, Ms. Etta and Mr. Bernard Dove, Leo Sidran of The Third Story, Walter Isaacson of The Aspen Institute, Mark Ruffin of *BUILD* Series, *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, Michelle Miller of CBS Sunday Morning*.

This thesis is especially dedicated to Grandmother, Granddaddy, and all my loved ones who have passed, fighting the good fight of faith. I'm truly thankful for the forward ways they paved for me. Amen. As my mother brought home a Sarah Vaughan CD when I was eleven years of age, it fueled a lit fire in my heart that was already there for jazz. I've been singing jazz ever since hearing Sarah, and so, I consider this thesis a tribute to you too, Mommy!

As those mentioned here are only a small number of all the dear people I wish to acknowledge from my heart, Thank you everyone! Even if your name isn't mentioned here, and you know you're dear to me, please forgive me and accept my sincerest apology, and look for the next one. This is my first writing of this magnitude, and I strive to continually improve. Thank you, and Love!

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Chapter 1

The Four Core – Music Biographical Sketches of Jon Batiste and Stay Human Band

Jonathan Batiste

Early musical life as a child

Jonathan Batiste is the primary visionary and leader of Stay Human and Social Music. From Kenner, Louisiana, a suburb fifteen minutes west of New Orleans, Louisiana, he was born on November 11, 1986 into one of the largest musical families of New Orleans – The Batiste Family of Louisiana. As Jonathan explains in an interview with Mark Ruffin of BUILD Series,

> The idea of New Orleans and what that spirit is, will always be in my heart...Well New Orleans has a ton of musical families because the culture is so musical that you're given an instrument almost at birth, and it's not the kind of thing where you're learning how to play to become a musician, it's just a part of the culture, just like the food is a part of the culture, and the architecture, so that, that kind of thing is not abnormal. The Batiste Family, however, is one of the largest families because there are three branches of Batistes. You have Batiste, which is my family, my Dad, who has seven brothers and they had a band together – the Batiste Brothers Band and I have over thirty cousins from my seven uncles that play, but then I have an extended family of Batiste, Alvin Batiste and they're from Baton Rouge and Northern Louisiana, and then there's the Batiste family with two 'T's – B-a-t-t-i-s-t-e, and there's a ton of musicians in that family, and you have, you know, Uncle Lionel Batiste with the Treme Brass Band. I

> mean, Milton Battiste – Olympia Brass. It makes no sense, but that's what the reality is.[1]

Jonathan Batiste is from a three or four generation music family of New Orleans, and The Batiste, The Neville, and The Marsalis family are from the same neighborhood and taught each other how to play.[2]

From an early age, his parents were his strongest musical influences, as his father, bassist and singer Michael Batiste of the Batiste Brothers Band, spontaneously motioned, in keeping with the musical culture of New Orleans, for his eight-year old son to play the drums while on stage with the family Batiste Brothers Band.[3, 4] Jon explains,

> It's kind of like folk music. Family band, everybody's playing, and you're up there, and you're a kid, and they're like, here hit on this. Play. Go. Solo, and you'll be in front of a crowd of people. I guess it was, really for me, I didn't think about professional music at all. Just kind of like, okay, yeah. Dad says hit the drums, so here I go.[5]

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[1] Jon Batiste, "Jon Batiste Discusses His Holiday Album, *Christmas with Jon Batiste,"* interview by Mark Ruffin, *BUILD Series*, 07 November 2016b, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sd7wGNIhL5E. (Batiste 2016b)

[2] Jon Batiste, "A Conversation with Jon Batiste: The History & Future of American Music," interview by Walter Isaacson, *The Aspen Institute*, 02 July 2014a, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5EQFPLcD_w. (Batiste 2014a)

[3] Alexandra Wolfe, "Jon Batiste: Jazz for a New Generation," *The Wall Street Journal*, 25 October 2013, https://www.wsj.com/articles/jon-batiste-jazz-for-a-new-generation-1382751377.

[4] Jon Batiste, "Episode 18: Jon Batiste," interview by Leo Sidran, *The Third Story*, 29 October 2014b, http://www.thirdstory.com/listen/2014/10/28/episode-18-jon-batiste.

[5] (Batiste 2014b)

Jon vicariously learned with no direct instruction. He continues, "It was more a show, so when it's your turn, I want you to give it all you got."[6] Acknowledging that his early encounter with the Batiste Brothers Band helped light the path for him as a musician and performer, even into adulthood,

> Yes, I think that it's a transition from, this kind of communal, folk element in music, where they would play the New Orleans culture music, their own music they would write, funk and R&B music, which is what they grew up with. I learned all those traditional songs from New Orleans and all the stuff they played and stuff like that. Then I would perform in front of people in the community and on stage.[7]

Then about three years later his mother intuitively recognized that Jonathan should play the piano, and he did. Jon states in an interview with Leo Sidran,

> When I was younger, I had this dichotomy, if you will, of living in Kenner, in the suburbs and doing regular kid stuff like basketball, playing chess, or riding bikes and going around the neighborhood, doing stuff that a lot of times that you're not supposed to do. Just having a good time. Then, at night, going into the city with my Dad, my uncles, my cousins, all musicians and seeing the scene, and I always had a love for music, but it steadily grew as I got older, and it was very interesting how it kind of started from being in my family and being around me to kind of taking over. It happened when I went to the piano.[8]

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[6] (Batiste 2014b)
[7] (Batiste 2014b)
[8] (Batiste 2014b)

Fondly remembering his mother say, "Piano. No, not these drums, get on that piano," Jonathan switched from drums to piano at eleven-years old, and then began piano lessons.[9] He first had private classical piano lessons with Ms. Shirley as well as every Sunday with Ms. Clara, a lady who played piano at his church.[10, 11] Private classical lessons with Ms. Clara were at her home, using her upright piano. Alongside classical study, Jonathan had a band with two cousins that were slightly older. One played bass, one played drums, and Jonathan played the keyboard. He was learning and writing music with his cousins very early. They learned video game music, and play in their band. Jon explains, "We were really moved more than anything in that band by video game music."[12] They would transcribe note for note and play video game music – *Street Fighter Alpha* and *Sonic the Hitch Hog*. Though they privately played *Final Fantasy 7* as inspiration, *Street Fighter Alpha* and *Sonic the Hitch Hog* were shared at public events. Acknowledging that he, like many other musicians came into music through transcription – just a more unusual transcription, "That was how I came into it, through the classical, and through the video games."[13]

Their band would also play songs written by his uncle, and they wrote, played and sang songs for special occasions, like "Kids" for the yearly appearance at The Children's Museum. Every now and then, they would play "Oh, When the Saints Go Marching In" and traditional New Orleans music, but their band was more of a funk and soul band.

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[9] (Batiste 2014b)
[10] Jan. 03, 2016 FaceBook post, facebook.com/jonbatistemusic
[11] (Batiste 2014b)
[12] (Batiste 2014b)
[13] (Batiste 2014b)

Jonathan really enjoyed playing keyboards as a child, and he would make music on the keyboards, like tracking. He'd make a lot of beats – he and his band would take the keyboard sounds, and create their own library of sounds. He considers his earliest composition and arranging experience as taking the keyboard and multi-tracking different parts and finding what he liked, what I wanted to change or add. Though he never really wrote it out, it was more about tracking it, and hearing what it would sound like if a band really were to play it live. Jonathan also continued to sing, from the age of eight-years, in his family band with his dad and uncles, as he symbolically represented the young Michael Jackson.[14]

Jon reflects on the early beginnings of his life in music,

> "It's fascinating Leo, because I think my experience with music came from first seeing what it meant to be a musician before picking up an instrument. I lived in the house with one, and I saw the reality of what that is. Nine times out of ten, if you don't come from a musical family, you don't really know the pros and cons of deciding to be a professional musician. So, I saw that, and then I also saw from all of the different perspectives around me – my uncles, my cousins who were much older than me, and then my cousins who were close to my age, all of the different versions of that decision [lightly laughs], and then that coupled with the ideas that started to grow before I found my main instrument, just from being around my cousins when we were putting music together, and being around all of that energy in New Orleans, I had an idea of what music could be before I even could play the piano. So, that to me is actually one of the

[14] (Batiste 2014b)

main things that when I started to play piano, a lot of people think that, oh, you must've been like a prodigy to start so late. It really wasn't that. It was more that I had more of a fully formed musical concept before I had an instrument.[15]

High School – St. Augustine and New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA)

As Jonathan reflects on his upbringing in Kenner as being completely separate from his astonishingly New Orleans musical experiences and touring around (Interview with Leo Sidran), he began performing at nightclubs in the city at age thirteen. While playing an average of four gigs a week as a teenager, Jonathan attended the all-boys private school St. Augustine for the first half of the day and then studied music for the second. Gigs would start around 9 p.m., and his father drove him to most of them.[16, 17]

Jonathan studied music at the New Orleans Center for Creative Arts (NOCCA), and he remembers his experience at NOCCA as being incredible. NOCCA was his first realization that there were other talented students with similar goals and aspirations, and they were intensely working to achieve such goals, doing things that he didn't know were possible at that time. He had first encountered some of those students, like Trombone Shorty, trumpeter Christian Scott, and pianist Sullivan Fortner, at the Louis Satchmo Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp before starting high school at the age of fourteen. Jonathan explains,

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[15] (Batiste 2014b)
[16] (Batiste 2014b)
[17] Wolfe, A.

> Sullivan Fortner, he's an amazing piano player. We used to practice together for hours and hours at a time, and I would just be amazed at some of the stuff he could do. You know, there's many, many great young musicians I ran across.[18]
>
> Jonathan and Trombone Shorty had a band together at the age of fourteen, and they actually kept playing together until Jonathan graduated high school, and that band continued to be Trombone Shorty's current band.[19]

Jonathan recognizes Alvin Batiste as being his greatest mentor in his development as a jazz musician (Interview with BUILD Series), while studying music at NOCCA (Interview with Leo Sidran).[20, 21] Alvin Batiste was an instructor of the lineage of notable New Orleans musicians from the 1960s up until 2007. Though Jonathan first met clarinetist and educator Alvin Batiste at the age of twelve years (Interview with Build Series), he recognizes the ground-breaking, pivotal moment in his musical development under the instruction of Alvin Batiste at age fifteen to sixteen years-old.[22] "I would study with the great Alvin Batiste, who opened my ears to my whole understanding, and my ears for originality comes from his conception, playing with him and Donald Harrison." Jonathan continues to explain Alvin Batiste's conception, "Be you. Be you, even if it's the weirdest, most obtuse, out of the box thing, do that, rather than imitate something else, and it's not shunning what came before, or shunning anything that you can learn from someone else, even if it's your peers, but it's at the end of the day, the underlying principle is to express yourself, truly and authentically, you have to figure out something

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[18] (Batiste 2014b)
[19] (Batiste 2014b)
[20] (Batiste 2016b)
[21] (Batiste 2014b)
[22] (Batiste 2016b)

that you've never heard before, and that as a fifteen-year old, sixteen, finding that, and starting to search for that was the thing that really made everything that I'm doing now come into being. Everything makes sense because of that." (Interview with Leo Sidran)

Alongside studying with the great Alvin Batiste, Jon acknowledges that New Orleans was a grounds for experimentation and musical discovery. He would play Salsa gigs. As bands from Cuba came into town, he would end up playing with them somehow. He continually played Funk, R&B, Soul, and New Orleans music with his family. They even played Zydeco and Cajun music because his grandfather was Cajun and Creole. When he really started getting into jazz, he played many jazz gigs.[23]

By the time he was seventeen, Jonathan had already produced his first CD as a bandleader, called *Times in New Orleans*, with the help of his family and friends.[24, 25] He had also performed with the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra.[26] His performance and live recording with the New Orleans Jazz Orchestra is on the album *Strange Fruit*, Irvin Mayfield with The New Orleans Jazz Orchestra and The Dillard University Choir, recorded live March 19-20, 2004, released March 15, 2005.[27, 28] The album *Times in New Orleans*, Jonathan Batiste was released June 28, 2005.[29]

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[23] (Batiste 2014b)
[24] Regatta Bar, "Jonathan Batiste Trio with special guest, Jennifer Sanon," in Regatta Bar [Web site] (RegattaBar, 08 March 2011); available from <http://www.getshowtix.com/regattabar/moreinfo.cgi?id=2280>; accessed 01 June 2016.
[25] Wolfe, A.
[26] Regatta Bar, "Jonathan Batiste Trio with special guest, Jennifer Sanon," in Regatta Bar [Web site] (RegattaBar, 08 March 2011); available from <http://www.getshowtix.com/regattabar/moreinfo.cgi?id=2280>; accessed 01 June 2016.

[27] https://itunes.apple.com/nz/album/strange-fruit/265041440
[28] https://www.discogs.com/Irvin-Mayfield-With-The-New-Orleans-Jazz-Orchestra-And-The-Dillard-University-Choir-Strange-Fruit/release/5390082
[29] https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/times-in-new-orleans/211530424

Jonathan explains,

> I think that the New Orleans music scene is super supportive. I think it's inclusive, and at the same time, I think there's something specific about the scene that for better or for worse, stops it from changing, and for me, the scene is what it is, and you take from the scene what value you can, and you move to somewhere else, if you want. You can take it to some other place, if you want, and for me, that's what I did… I think I learned a lot from it, and I think at a certain point, moving to New York was a decision both to study, and also to experience new things.[30]

Juilliard and New York [age 17 (2004 in September) – 24 (2011 in May)]

Jonathan was seventeen when he came to New York in 2004 (Interview with Leo Sidran) (Interview with Mark Ruffin-BUILD Series Interview) (Interview with Walter Isaacson), and he went on to the Juilliard School in New York, where he formed what would become his band with fellow students Philip Kuehn and Joe Saylor. By 2005, they were playing at small New York venues. "Every gig had an average of 1.5 people," says Mr. Batiste, shaking his head. They also made recordings of their music.[31]

Upon arriving to New York City, Jonathan immediately embarked upon an intense, challenging, yet successful and rewarding academic and music career. In reflecting on the transitioning from New Orleans, he acknowledges,

> I think a lot of the musical dogma, if you will, didn't infiltrate my development, and I didn't even become aware of it until I was in my late teens. My family's

[30] (Batiste 2014b)
[31] Wolfe, A.

band, they didn't really think about what they were playing, what they called it all – ever. My cousins, we didn't think about that. I got with Alvin Batiste and all the different musicians that I played with around New Orleans, who maybe they thought of it like that, but for me, it was me going into different situations every night [lightly laughs], and figuring out all of this music, and then you know, my peers, we grew up with this wide variety of music and access that only kept growing as the years went on." Explaining the concept of his friends like Trombone Shorty, "But his whole concept, and all of my other peers was coming from the same mentality from teachers that we had – from Alvin Batiste, Klyde Kerr, Kid Jordan, Ellis Marsalis a little bit but not as much, just all of those guys taught us – you know, just do your thing. When I got into this musical dogma of you have to do this, you have to be this, you have to figure that out, it was confusing but at the same time, I had this really strong root. So, I sorted that out with a lot of tumult, but I was very, very, very fortunate, because a lot of people I think start in music like that. They have to figure out later. I mean, trust me, there's a lot that can be learned from both, but at the end of the day, I'd rather be on this side of the fence… Then I would transition into this more high-art world later, where it's like studying jazz and classical music, and the intense vibration of Juilliard and all of the conservatory atmosphere, and then I think putting those two together, and now coming into the commerce side of things, which is popular music and making those three things collide – art, the high art world, the folk music and that upbringing, and popular music (Interview with Leo Sidran).

While simultaneously managing two facets of his life: (1) academic student at Juilliard and (2) pursuit of developing a career as a professional musician, he explains the challenge he experienced in finding his place. "Yeah, you know, there was a lot that happened when I moved to New York. I'm seventeen. I come from Kenner. I haven't really toured too many places around the world. My first European tour was the summer before I went to New York. I'd been to New York maybe once before. That tour was me and a jazz trio going to a small school in Spain to play, and then do like a master class, and Marc Cary was the guy who led the trio. He's a great pianist. He lives in Harlem. He's amazing. He was one of the first people who really kind of looked out for me, like super cool and understanding of the fact that I wanted to do something kind of different. He was in that same boat, kind of a kindred spirit, really awesome guy too, like super cool to hang out with, and he exposed me to the New York scene in a lot of ways. Going up to his house at midnight, when I first moved here, and we'd play the piano until like 6AM, you know, like that kind of a thing for me was – Golden, when I first moved here. So, there were guys like him, but, for the most part, my early experience was really rough, in, it was rough in finding my place. I think that dogma is a strong term, but it feels that way when you're young."

In addition to jazz piano studies at Juilliard, Jonathan also acknowledges the benefits of his classical study of piano at Juilliard. In an interview with Leo Sidran, he explains that classical musicians of the highest order understand the elements of form and melodic development, more so than any other form of music. The way classical musicians developed musical ideas throughout the entire structure of a piece of music is the epitome of what they did in music. Jon continues, "I feel like they created that, and if

you take that sophistication of form and development, and apply it to any style of music, it raises the sophistication of whatever you're playing. You have guys that have done things like that in jazz, like John Lewis and The Modern Jazz Quartet, and all of this is applicable to jazz and any style of music, but just understanding that was the first thing that I got from studying classical music." In addition to John Lewis and The Modern Jazz Quartet, Jon gives other examples of his classical influence in regards to form and melodic development, such as listening to Brahms and Charles Ives. "Brahms, for instance, the way that he would develop things and bring things back in his orchestrations and the way that his music would be so potent and emotional, but still super sophisticated and have this intellectual quality. Or, then listen to somebody like Charles Ives, when I was studying his life, and seeing how he didn't have any recognition of how until the end of his life, and he was doing what he wanted to do until the end of his life, regardless of anything that people would say about him. You know, he would have these performances of his own music that he would have to pay for, and he would have all of these people who he would get to copy his music and write it out that would try to correct it because they thought it was wrong. Just like the idea that you could push into music that is so dense and sophisticated, and you know in jazz, I learned that in a different way, of course, but classical music, is kind of like, let's pull out the score [laughs]."

Jonathan continues to acknowledge how everything in classical music is super intentional, and he had a great, incredible piano teacher at Juilliard – William Doglian from Brazil, who showed him technical aspects of playing the music. He studied with Doglian the last few years of his bachelor's degree as well as going into his master's degree study there. "At one point, I took a piano lesson every single day, seven days a

week, for maybe six months, was basically living at his house, and he helped me to really hook up some technical pianistic things, that before then, I'd heard them and understood them when other people did them, but I didn't know how to do them myself, and he gave me just the tools to figure that out."

While Jonathan sorted out his true aspirations regarding what he embraced from his jazz and classical academic study at Juilliard, he simultaneously embraced what he truly wanted to do in music. One way he did this was by working as a sideman and leading his own trio while a student at Juilliard.

Jonathan as a sideman in New York and Globally, and how being a sideman influenced him as a bandleader.

When he was seventeen, Jonathan played with Abbey Lincoln's band for a year, which was the beginning of playing as a sideman for many notable jazz artists while in New York. Though Jonathan remembers meeting Wynton Marsalis for the first time at the age of fourteen in a game of basketball, being shocked that the 'old guy' Wynton won the game (Interview with Walter Isaacson), he would later be scouted by Wynton while studying at Juilliard. In his second year at Juilliard, Jonathan caught the attention of Wynton Marsalis, the musician and Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, who heard Jonathan's music playing on *XM Radio* while walking down the hall near his office. *XM Radio* was on the same floor as Jazz at Lincoln Center, so Mr. Marsalis walked into the studio to ask what was playing. Soon after, Mr. Batiste started playing the piano in Mr. Marsalis's band, and Jazz at Lincoln Center selected Mr. Batiste for the

"Movado Future Legends Award," and he received such award in.[32] Wynton became a mentor to Jonathan. Upon moving to New York, Jonathan and Wynton became very close, as Jonathan acknowledges, "he's really been very helpful in helping me to construct my vision in terms of the music education side of things, and also jazz in the twenty-first century (Batiste 2014a)."

In addition to being a sideman in Abbey Lincoln's band for a year, Jonathan acknowledges,

> I learned a ton about the business and about being a bandleader from all the different people I played with. I had the good fortune of playing with many of the bands that you probably read about or heard about for a number of years at a time (Batiste 2014b).

As Jonathan played the piano with three of Roy Hargrove's different bands for three and a half years, Cassandra Wilson's band for four years, and Wynton Marsalis for a number of years, and currently continues to have different music collaborations with Marsalis at Jazz at Lincoln Center, Jonathan notes, "The things that I learned I kind of take and compile my own identity as a bandleader from the different experiences, in particular, from Roy, Cassandra, and Wynton, who are very different people, three very different musical personalities, and three very different bandleaders (Batiste 2014b)."

About Wynton's band Jon explains,

[32] Wolfe, A.

Wynton's band, he has a very specific way that he has the musicians play. He has a very specific concept, and it's very meticulous and it's driven towards creating his vision of jazz, has freedom within it, and it has a lot of freedom once you understand the lay of the land, I learned a lot from that as well, because figuring out how to speak in that language, and how to be a part of his concept, and build it up and have my own voice within that concept versus the freedom of going to create whatever I want based upon minimal instruction. He would always refer to members of the band who definitely got his concept and did it in their own way, and he would show them to me as examples of how to approach the concept, but not of what to play. Marcus Roberts who really being one of the pianists who, you know, actually Marcus Roberts is, was somebody that I would talk to and check in with many times throughout my development. So, Marcus was one of those guys. It's a concept, and it's amazing how formed and specific his vision is. He knows exactly what he's trying to do, and knows how it operates and can basically tell each musician what they're roll is within it (Batiste 2014b).

About Roy Hargrove's band, Jonathan explains,

"Roy Hargrove was one of those guys who taught me the concept of trust within individuality. Trusting in the individuality of your bandmates, because he would give zero instruction. There would be no discussion of the music, but he resonates on a certain vibration that everyone around him feels. He trusts in his individuality, and trust that the vibration of what he's doing will connect with the vibration of the audience and the musicians, and if it doesn't, then he just has the wrong guy [laughs], so, I learned ultimately that you gotta just trust. You can think about it a

> lot, but you gotta just trust that your vibration will attract, you will attract the right environment, and it's up to you to fix things when that environment around you isn't accommodating (2014b)."

In 2007, Batiste began an ongoing collaboration with vocalist Cassandra Wilson.[33] Jonathan explains,

> Cassandra Wilson is extremely free. Doesn't like to give the band members any instruction about what to play, and it's very, I guess you could say drawn to creating an image and an atmosphere for the listener. And, that creates a very particular sound with a band, depending on who you pick and how you put them together. It's a really amazing thing. The band was full of people I thought were amazing, and I'd admired for a long time before – Herlin Riley was the drummer, Reginald Veal was the bassist, Marvin Sewell was the guitarist. So, there were a lot of guys there with creative power. So, for me, it was more trying to keep up with the level of creativity that was going on. It was fun and exploratory for me, and it was tough, but not in a way where when I played with Wynton's band (2014b).

The Jonathan Batiste Trio

All the while playing as sideman and completing his academic study at Juilliard, Jonathan continued developing the band he had formed in 2005 with Joe Saylor and Phil Kuehn. As they had officially become The Jonathan Batiste Trio, he released his second CD as a bandleader entitled *Live in New York: At the Rubin Museum of Art*, The Jonathan

[33] http://www.getshowtix.com/regattabar/moreinfo.cgi?id=2280

Batiste Trio w/ Phil Kuehn & Joe Saylor, released May 26, 2006..[34] Reflecting on pertinent insight from his work as a sideman, in regard to his development as a bandleader,

> "One of the things that I took was a concept is a powerful thing. The other thing I took is who you pick determines how the music will come across, and that will also determine the level of freedom within the concept you can give them. Ultimately I thought about what you're trying to achieve musically is very much driven by who you are and who you choose to be your counterpart on the bandstand. And, what I mean by that is you have this vision of what you're doing, but you can't do anything by yourself. So, your vision ultimately comes out and you're trying to find faithful stewards to the vision because you're playing with other people [laughs], so as much of a concept that you come up with, you put that out there, and what they do with it is what they do with it (Batiste 2014b)."

As Jon is an intuitive kind of person like his mother, he found Joe and Phil to be the right stewards who could help him fulfill the vision for his band.

> "When I first got to New York, I knew that nothing on the scene excited me as much as what was in my mind, even though it wasn't fully formed, and I knew that to create what it is that I was thinking about, I had to make it myself., and I knew that I would have to be a talent scout in a lot of ways and recruit people who I thought could live up to the challenge of trying to create a new thing, kind of forge their own path alongside me, and Joe, ah man, Joe and Phil, two guys who I, I mean,

[34] http://www.getshowtix.com/regattabar/moreinfo.cgi?id=2280

> they kind of like brothers more than bandmates, because we grew up from young men to now grown men together in New York. You know, Joe, we came to New York together at the same time ten years ago, and we've been playing together ever since, just because I could see that he had something about his playing that was different, and he was trying to figure out something else too. Yeah, he always had an interest in New Orleans music. He always had an instrument from those drummers, from what Herlin Riley, Shannon Powell, and, um, all of the great drummers in New Orleans of our generation and the generation before us. He would study those guys. Me, being from New Orleans, I showed him a lot of things that I knew as well, and the band, the sound of it had an influence, especially when I was first moving, when I first moved here from New Orleans, and I was coming up to New York with this kind of sensibility of a New Orleans guy, in a lot of ways, that sound was one of the bedrocks of our music. So, he's always fit in terms of not being a New Orleans drummer, but having that interest of being around me and the band and the sound that I was creating. He just kind of fit right in. It was perfect (Batiste 2014b)."

Around this time, in addition to playing piano in his trio, Jonathan also had a new found instrumental friend – the melodica, or 'harmonaboard,' as he calls it. Practicing and developing his skill on the melodica, he would even play it while commuting through school. "At Juilliard, he was surrounded by musicians as talented as he was. He took up the melodica — which many of his teachers did not consider to be an instrument worthy

of those hallowed halls."[35] Jonathan draws a distinction between playing the keyboard with his cousins when he was younger, about eleven or twelve years of age, and playing the piano. He identifies how that difference helped prepare him to think and play his harmonaboard (melodica) as a serious instrument.

> It's like, to me the keyboard is not meant to be played like a piano because of its sound that you get from a keyboard cuts at a different frequency. That's the main underlying character of it, that I find it different. Keyboard isn't percussion, whereas the piano, by the nature of the hammers hitting the strings, it resonates in the air differently, and it affects the band differently. Yeah, and that's a really insightful point Leo, because that's exactly how I feel about the melodica, and also how I feel when I think back on what did I do to incorporate the melodica, when I think back on that, it was about not looking at it like a piano. That was actually the first step, before anything. It was this is not a piano. That's very insightful, man. Even the piano sound on the keyboard is not, to me, to be played in the same way you'd play a piano, because it's all about frequency, man. What does it vibrate in the air? How does it hit you as a listener? (Batiste 2014b)

Becoming more known as Jon or J Bat within closer music circles, Jon explains what it was like to fuel the standing of his performance career.

> Plus, you're going out there. You're trying to work, you're trying to get your stuff together, you're putting yourself out there, you're building a career, and I was doing

[35] Keith Spera, "From the 'Late Show With Stephen Colbert' to The New Orleans Jazz Fest, Jon Batiste Comes Home" *The New Orleans Advocate*, 01 May 2016, http://www.theadvocate.com/new_orleans/news/article_15b93ad9-56a9-5f6b-a32a-97e62dab8645.html.

> that intensely. I like to call it making a gig. Like, if you don't have a gig, make a gig [Leo laughs] if you don't have a place that wants to book you, find some space and book it yourself, put chairs up and get people to come. If you don't have any music to play that, but you want to make a record, write a whole tons of music. Develop it. Play it for people. Get it right, and then record the record. I was pushing myself forward in that way, and then by that point, I'd already built this following in this career. I remember that in 2008, I had really come a long way. Moved to New York in 2004, by 2008 I had really established my presence as one of the guys on the scene. I was playing, and a lot of people had bands that I was playing in, and I had my own band that I would play regularly around the city. I remember we were appearing in the *New York Times* like once every week for a month in 2008, and I was like, man, huh, I'm actually like, out here [slight laugh]. So, that was happening, and I'm also trying to figure out who am I musically, 'cause now I have this attention and people are looking to see what am I gonna do next, and people are saying, you're this guy. No, I thought you're this guy. You're this guy, and you're still very young, by this time I'm probably twenty-one or twenty-two, and people are saying this or that, you're this or you're the next, or you're trying to do this, right? Or, you're from New Orleans. I'm still trying to figure out what's true (Batiste 2014b).

The Amazing Jon Batiste (EP) was then released June 08 & 22, 2009.[36] This EP includes a debut feature of Jon on melodica. As Jon starts singing on *The Amazing Jon Batiste (EP)* recording, the lyrics are darker than on his later albums which he would

[36] https://itunes.apple.com/us/album/the-amazing-jon-batiste-ep/321547582

sing. (Interview with Leo Sidran) Jon explains how in the very beginning, as a child he would sing with The Family Band, then during his time in high school, and especially Juilliard, he was more focused on being the best jazz pianist he could be, then he later decided to bring the singing again in *The Amazing Jon Batise (EP)*. During this time of intense jazz piano study, he also credits Thelonious Monk.

> In the earlier years, I was very, very focused on becoming the best jazz piano player that I could possibly be. I listened to Thelonious Monk for a year, almost exclusively, and this is when I was nineteen, and you can hear evidence of that on the *Live at the Rubin Museum*. The trio album that we did back then, in 2006. he was like discovering a hidden treasure. I was into the idea of percussive, angular, kind of piano playing, with a sound that was very charismatic, almost like a cartoon character kind of a sound, that kind of charismatic, just over the top, super dense, and, um, how do you say, tense harmonies that released themselves into very open, block sounding bell tones [making ringing sound] *BLING BONG, BONG, GONG,* like the piano is singing, and I was going towards that concept early in my development as a pianist, and then I heard Monk who unbeknownst to me had done this years before I was even born. [laughter by Jon and Leo] No, people talked about Monk, but in the tradition of being a young student, I heard what they were saying, but I didn't really understand it. I had to come across it in my own way, walking down my path, and I, I, I loved it. I loved it because of the moment that I found it in my life, at that time. It was appropriate, and that transitioned from *Live at the Rubin* to *The Amazing Jon Batiste EP* was the transition of me coming out of that early phase of focusing on the piano and then going more into what I had been

> doing when I was a kid, except now I'm twenty, twenty-one, and I'm trying to explore how to make that sound come into being in my young adult life with a band and my own thing, not my cousins, it's my thing, and really trying to figure out, how do I reconcile this impulse with this last three or four years of intense studying jazz music, and I'm still at Juilliard, studying this jazz and classical music intensely, but something in me switched. So, it was like many wheels turned at the same time. (Batiste 2014b)

Around the time of The Amazing Jon Batiste EP, Jonathan Batiste became active in the National Jazz Museum in Harlem's programming and growth since 2009.[37] (jazzmuseuminharlem.org website). He was named Artistic Director at Large in 2012 (Wall Street 10.25.2013 Interview w/Alexandra Wolfe), and he is currently [2016] a Co-Artistic Director of the museum, alongside world-renown bassist Christian McBride being the other Co-Artistic Director. At the National Jazz Museum in Harlem, Jon developed the *Jazz Is Now* programming. Jonathan graduated from Juilliard in 2011 - B.M. 2008, M.M. 2011, jazz studies.[38] Upon his graduations, he was respectively twenty-one and twenty-five years of age.

New York and Jon's Vision of Social Music

Jon explains a prompting he had toward his vision of Social Music.

> Well, that's the thing, I'd never seen a second line in New Orleans growing up, and I took the concept of moving and being mobile not from the New Orleans tradition,

[37] jazzmuseuminharlem.org
[38] The Juilliard Journal

but more from a creative impulse that I had from seeing concerts in New York. I thought every concert that I saw in New York left something to be desired on the end of interactivity and on the end of audience engagement. I started to think about, what is it that would make these performances more engaging? Then I started to see other things around our touring circuit that made me realize that this is just something in live music that I feel like is not really happening at a high level. It's a separation. It's an audience, and there's a stage where the and is performing and the artist is there, and it's separated, and you buy a ticket and you come, sometimes you dance, sometimes you sit, sometimes you clap in between songs, sometimes you just hang out and drink, but there's no real engagement beyond that. Then I started to think, well I don't like that when I go to it [Laughter from Jon and Leo]. As a musician and as a live performer, I like it when I feel like I'm a part of it, but I've never really felt that accept for when I'm playing and I think that a lot of people like that, rather they know it or not. The idea of being mobile came from well what is it that we can do to bring this element of community and this folk element to music again, because I think it changed from the folk element when the American capitalist system came into play, and we started to think about how could commodify music and sell it. So, that made everything more separate, more distant, everyone stop being around the campfire, or passing around the guitar, passing around the violin in Appalachia, the Africans and the Drum Circle, or all of these different traditions of Folk Music that you think, that was the most engaging live performance. So, New Orleans is just one example of that Folk element in music, that community vibration that you get when you have a guy with an instrument or

> a band of guys with people and they're performing or sharing this experience together, and I intuitively was moving towards that, not thinking of New Orleans second-line in particular, but more the over-arching principle of engagement and live performance being more interactive (Batiste 2014b).

Jon continues his explanation of making music in extreme circumstances, as he expounds on his vison of Social Music.

> Extreme meaning to take it from the polished and very accommodating atmosphere of a venue where everything is set-up to go and have a very pleasant and um, exhilarating musical experience to making it be in life, like, the music is in life. We getting it in life. Like you're walking down the street, and it's snowing, and all of a sudden it's this experience that evolves around you, and you get wrapped up in it, and you'll have this experience with music that's in your life, and you'll never forget it, that's what the subway concept came from. Peole are sittin on the subway, they're unsuspecting, not trying to hear music, maybe they're having a great day, maybe they're having a terrible day, might've just proposed to his girl just now, you know, he might've just got an 'F' on a test and he's like, man, going home to study o something, you know, life, life is just happening, cat just bought a can of sardines or something and he's on the train, we're playing, I just love that because I think ultimately that is just how what we do gonna impact people in the most positive way, and I think that's what music, in it's most pure form before the selling and the genre labelling and all of that stuff, before that came into play, music at it's purest form was in life.

I look at the turn of the century New Orleans, you have all of these elements coming together, the biggest port city in the world, in America, newly formed where English and French colonization is happening where they're bringing all these elements. The Native Americans have all of these elements that they've brought from their culture of who knows where. Then, you have the Caribbean and then trading through the port, all of these influences from Haiti, Cuba, all of these Caribbean sounds, Jamaica of the Irish and Anglo-Saxton tradition coming to New Orleans. You have also, the Spanish, which Columbus, you know, the Spanish influence that is, uh, a big sound of New Orleans, even today. All of this is happening, and then you have the Africans, and the slavery of the African-American tradition that is basically in New Orleans found it's way to express this celebratory sentiment of African culture of the drum circle and the community community coming together in this ritualistic, communal sort of way, places like Congo Square, where they would play the drums, and that wasn't something that was allowed in slavery anywhere else.

So, what you have is this confluence of cultures in events in the world history. This new country that this guy has found. You know, all of this stuff is happening, and what ends up coming to a head at the turn of the century in New Orleans, in this great port city, is the confluence of this early capitalism of America, which is the beginning of this commercial pop music sort of landscape that we see now. You have the high art from

all these influences that we see from the European music, to what you consider to be, uh, the American classical music of jazz and all these different things that were rooted in blues, and gospel, negro spirituals and coming together, and that's both the folk element, and the high art element, because the sophistication of all of those things coming together to a new form of music is jazz, that's how I theorized that jazz was born. You know, you have these people coming together, you know, what are you gonna play for them. There are cultures and experiences that has never come together like this before. So, jazz comes out of New Orleans because it had the perfect environment to incubate all of these things that never happened in the history of the world before.

Diverse collection of people, and now we have this capitalist mentality that is really coming to full fore and develop 1900s, and we have this new form of music that is taking the world by storm, because they've never heard anything like it, and then, through all of this stuff, a guy like Louis Armstrong pops out, and um, it makes perfect sense if you look at that historically. That's the kind of environment necessary to breed a guy like a Louis Armstrong in New Orleans. So, I feel like that was the first time in history that you had, you know, high art, folk music, and popular culture colliding. There was no popular culture before then. The high art music was always separate from the music that was the folk music, and whenever it came together, again there was no culture to make it something that you can buy, and sell, and market, you know, and all of

this stuff and define, like a genre, all of this, all this stuff, you know, didn't exist.

So, for me Social Music over a hundred years later is the natural progression of what jazz is. It's experienced, and now in 2014, the world is more connected now than it's ever been, and it's connected in an even more intense way than what was happening in early America, in what New Orleans kind of confluence to a certain degree, the world is now in a similar point.

And, it's deep because the ideas are flowing at such a rapid pace, and there's so much flexibility and the young people are so checked in. The technology is advanced and evolved to a point where it's so integrated into their lifestyle. Some people have grown up and known what it was like to be without The Internet

So, I'm a part of that bridge generation where we grew up just early enough to live when were kids without having a cell phone all of the time, or without being on the computer all of the time, and then to grow up now, and it's everywhere, we'll text it, but we still have an attention span to read it long form, or a book or something like that. I think that it's a turning point

Right now, and what it is that I want to do with music is to simply pin point this moment in time and a way that brings everybody into the same room, around an experience, every generation, every race, everybody into the same room. I just want to get everybody into the same room, and the

> experience that Social Music brings, allows everybody to come in to the same room, and then from there because it feels so good what happens I think will really change the world, because this kind of collaboration, the same way that it happened in New Orleans is going to create something that we can't conceive.
>
> People will understand each other better, just by that because music is a much more empathetic and congenial way of getting people together in the same room, especially if they have conflict or misunderstanding than sitting at a table or trying to argue it out, legislation or government even, if I can say that, I mean, I think that an experience like the Social Music experience in the way that I envision it can really galvanize all of this.
>
> Yeah, I think that Social Music isn't a genre of music more than it's an approach and an evolution of to what I think all of the music that people will be dealing with, will kind of fall into, simply because this is where we are. It's not something I've actually constructed. It's not something that I'm taking elements of things and putting together to make happen. I feel like this is where we are.
>
> So, in other words, I'm basically articulating what I think everybody feels anyway. In my own way, I'm putting to the sentiment of how I feel the artistic community is, feeling, and if that is right or wrong, we'll see with time [slight laughter], but that's kind of where I am (Batiste 2014b).

Jon went on to complete the My N.Y., Jonathan Batiste & The Stay Human Band, released October 28, 2011, and the *Jazz is Now*, The Jonathan Batiste Trio w/Phil Kuehn

and Joe Saylor, released in 2013. Jon Batiste and Stay Human's debut album "Social Music", released October 15, 2013, over a month atop the both Billboard jazz charts and iTunes jazz charts as the #1 jazz album in the world. Forbes Magazine 30 under 30 in Music for 2016.[39] Music Director and Bandleader of The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. The Late Show EP | Jon Batiste & Stay Human, released February 05, 2016.

Also since being the Bandleader of The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, receiving numerous awards and honors, Jon Batiste was placed on the cover of April 2017 *Downbeat Jazz, Blues, and Beyond Since 1934* Magazine.[40] Honored alongside George Wein of Newport Jazz Festival, Dr. Jon Batiste also gave the sixty-seventh commencement address and received an honorary Doctorate degree from Salve Regina Univesity in Newrt, Rhode Island in May of 2017.[41]

Joe Saylor

Joe Saylor, the second of the four core members of Stay Human was born and reared in the small town of Indiana, Pennsylvania (with a population of merely 14,000 – Modern Drummer), about fifty-eight miles outside of Pittsburg, Pennsylvania. He actually could be considered

His parents were two of his strongest musical influences, as his father was a jazz musician (trumpeter – Modern Drummer), and his mother was a musician (flautist – Modern Drummer) as well. His parents were music educators in the public school system, and their local church, House of Yahweh Full Gospel Church, was a musical

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[40] http://downbeat.com/magazine/2017-04
[41] http://www.salve.edu/news/musician-educator-and-tv-personality-jon-batiste-present-commencement-address

nucleus for the entire family. Saylor's mother was the choir director, while his father played in the band. As Joe's rhythmic musical talent was being revealed at home, banging on pots and pans during his early childhood, every Sunday his dad would let him sit next to the drummer at church. Joe was fascinated watching the drummer that would let him sit in from time to time. When Joe wasn't playing the drums, he would play percussion, tambourine, woodblock, or shakers, just wanting to be involved. Joe's father then purchased three-year old son a toy drum set, and at age eight, Joe began lessons with local college students. Within four years, Joe's quick advancement inspired his father to seek out the best pro guidance available. (Modern Drummer) Joe credits his father for truly making it happen, stating, " I'm out here playing because of him, you know… he was a good father because he recognized a love and a passion for something in his son, and he made it a point to cultivate that." Joe grew up playing music in church and playing with his Dad. He had loved music in general his whole life, listening to jazz, Christian, rock, and some classical music. When I asked him when he fell in love with jazz, he, taking a deep breath and exhale, explained, "The night that I fell in love with jazz was on a Tuesday night, it was a school night, I was twelve years old, and my dad had been wanting to give me a drum teacher." Joe continues to explain how his father would drive to Pittsburgh, about an hour and a half away from Indiana, Pennsylvania, on the weekends to watch different drummers play and scout a suitable teacher for him. Upon the search, Joe's father found one gentleman named Roger Humphreys. Roger Humphreys, one of the greatest drummers of the world, had started playing professionally in the early sixties with Horace Silver, Joe Henderson, and Stanley Turrentine, and toured with Ray Charles before retiring from the road and setting in his hometown of Pittsburgh,

Pennsylvania. He cultivated an amazing jazz scene in Pittsburgh, being a great teacher as the head of the music department at Pittsburgh Center of Creative and Performing Arts (CAPA). Upon finding Roger Humphreys, Joe's dad asked Roger if he would be willing to teach his twelve-year old son that was pretty good. Roger replied by explaining that he had a jam session at the James Street Tavern every Tuesday night, and suggested that Joe's dad bring Joe to sit-in so that he could hear Joe play. So, Joe's dad drove Joe to Pittsburgh, on a Tuesday school night. It was that Tuesday night that really changed Joe's life. Joe describes,

> "That was the first time where I was actually in the intimate presence of real jazz, you know, and uh, and I'll never forget, even like walking in the door, and like, it's like it all hit me at once, like, the music, the vibe, the smells, you know, the cigars, you know, the whole thing just hit me, and I walked out of there, and I said this is what I want to do (lightly laughs), and that's, that's the night I really fell in love with jazz (Saylor 2016)."

Joe continued lessons with his new found mentor, Roger Humphries. His father would drive him to Pittsburgh every Saturday to Roger's house. Though Joe took lessons, it was more about spending time with Roger and watching him play. Humphries also initiated Saylor into another facet of jazz, exposing him to bop, especially hard bop artists like Art Blakey, Freddie Hubbard, Max Roach, Clifford Brown, Coltrane, and Miles Davis. Joe being so inspired, recruited two of his best friends, pianist Angelo Versace and bassist Philip Kuehn to begin lessons with other jazz musican/teacher pros connected to Humphries, and Joe thereby formed his own trio called paj3 [pronounced 'page 3'] – the initials of Phil, Angelo, and Joe's names. After significant improvement in playing

together, they picked up local gigs during high school, played more substantial dates in Pittsburgh, and rubbed elbows with legends when his father, as the high school band director, brought guest artists like Jon Faddis and Slide Hampton to play with the band. His father also would set up gigs for paj3 to play with these artists outside of the high school in local clubs as well as clubs in Pittsburgh. Paj3 would be the trio to accompany various artists, and they also performed with Ellis Marsalis when he came to town to teach a master class. Joe explains, "That's how I learned how to play with people. The practice room is different, especially in jazz music. The place you really learn how to play is on the bandstand, and it helps learning with people who can really play." After studying with Humphries for six years, Joe advanced to the level of subbing for Humphries on certain gigs. By the time Joe was seventeen-years old and covering dates with Humphries's band, he realized he could do this professionally. "You can get it somewhat from listening to recordings. But there's a difference between listening to a recording and actually being with the spirit of those people in person," Joe's advice to younger players.

Upon approaching high school graduation in 2004, Joe later met Jonathan Batiste in New Orleans by what seems to have been a moment of predestination. Joe was there to weigh his options of moving to New Orleans or New York to continue his studies in music. As he was walking rather aimlessly at one point to determine where he was in the city, he saw Jon Batiste standing on a street corner, and Jonathan seeing that Joe had his stick bag let Joe know that he played the piano and asked Joe if he'd like to go play. Joe followed Jon into a building that happened to be Jon's high school (NOCCA), and that was the first time they played together. They exchanged phone numbers, and a few months later

they moved to New York. Jon and Joe, friends-at-first-sight clicked on multiple levels. Having a musical and spiritual connection, Jon's favorite drummers at that time were the same drummers Joe had been listening to very heavily – Jason Marsalis, Adonis Rose, and Shannon Powell. They were New Orleans drummers that Jon had played with a lot while in high school. Joe had the opportunity to play and hang with Ellis Marsalis at the age of fifteen and Ellis was also one of Jon's teachers and influences. Even though Joe and Jon grew up in completely different parts of the country, in completely different cultures, they were listening to a lot of the same music. Jon was from New Orleans and therefore was in it, and Joe had the records from it. (Modern Drummer) Joe explains, "I was this kid from Pennsylvania who was given the opportunity to hang out with Roger Humphries every Saturday and play in this church band. My parents loved Harry Connick, Jr. when I was really little. So I listened to Harry Connick. Harry had a lot of New Orleans musicians in his band. So I heard a lot of New Orleans music when I was a kid, and I didn't really think anything of it." (Interview with Cherise Harris)

Saylor packed his bags for New York City to attend the Manhattan School of Music, where he studied closely with John Riley and Justin DiCioccio. Subsequently, he earned his master's at the Juilliard School under the guidance of jazz greats Carl Allen and Kenny Washington. Once engaged in their conservatory studies, Saylor and Batiste gathered freelance gigs, and Batiste recruited Saylor to form a trio. Rounding out the unit with Saylor's longtime bassist friend, Kuehn, The Jonathan Batiste Trio gigged regionally for several years and in 2006 released the independent CD Live in New York: At the Rubin Museum of Art. When Kuehn left town for a summer, the band found itself adrift. But the temporary setback turned out to be a serendipitous open door. "We were

left with no bass player and no gigs," Saylor recalls. Tuba player Ibanda Ruhumbika stepped in to fill the gap, along with saxophonist Eddie Barbash. The new unit set upon a grassroots strategy – or perhaps a pavement strategy – that would change its future. "It's wild how it all happened," Saylor says. "We really wanted to bring the music to the people in a different way. So we racked our brains, saying, 'How can we play for people if we don't have any gigs? We could play on the subway cars? But not like typical buskers. Let's literally play a concert on the subway car for the whole ride.' So we'd set up in the subway car and play for an hour, the whole way from uptown to downtown. We did that every single night for an entire summer. We ended up getting so many fans, and we eventually realized that this is how we could build a fan base." The commuter concerts caused normally blasé New York straphangers to drop their defenses, clapping, cheering, and even boogieing on the swaying and literally rocking subway dance floor. Saylor often grooved the crowd with only his lone tambourine at hand. "When we started getting gigs," he says, "all these people would show up there. Our fan base just grew and grew. We became known for doing this kind of mobile concert, and that mobile band became known as Jon Batiste and Stay Human." (Modern Drummer magazine)

Eddie Barbash

As I was familiar with Eddie's soulful, powerfully vibrant performances from live concert experiences with Jon Batiste and Stay Human, it was an exquisite experience to realize how much I appreciate his sound on the alto saxophone. His timbre is so warm and full, just exquisite, hearing him play more up close and personal, in venues like the

National Jazz Museum in Harlem for a Jazz is Now session with Jon Batiste and Stay Human, and definitely, when I heard him play ballads at The Roxy with his orchestra – Eddie Barbash and His Orchestra. When I shared this with him in our in-person interview, Eddie agrees that many people don't hear how much work he puts into developing his sound, or his timbre. It's the most important part of playing for him. He admits that he spends a lot of time working on the sound coming from his saxophone, and it usually is not noticed due to microphones that hide the pure tone of the timbre he produces on the alto saxophone.

Eddie Barbash, grew up in an artist family, the son of a writer (father) and photographer (mother), was born in New York, lived in Oaxaco, Mexico until the age of two years, then grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and completed high school at the University of North Carolina of the Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. His parents were working on a nonfictional book during his tender beginning years in Oaxaco, Mexico.

He studied three years at Juilliard, beginning his Freshmen year in 2008, then transferred to complete two years at The New School.

Meeting drummer Chico Hamilton at the end of his first year at Juilliard, Eddie explains, "At the end of my first year there, we played a concert at Dizzy's and the music of Duke Ellington, and I played a solo on "Starcrossed Lovers" with Johnny Hodges solo, from the Shakespeare Suite, and Chico was in the audience, and then, he came back stage and wanted my number because he liked the way I sounded on the ballad, and that's when I ended up playing with him." Jose James was also in that band Eddie would play with Chico. Then, Eddie also started a group The Amigos.

Eddie started playing with Jon immediately upon entering Juilliard his freshman year of 2017. As he describes it, "I actually started playing with Jon before both those bands. I started playing with Jon almost immediately when I got to Juilliard, 'cause we just hit it off right away." Eddie started playing gigs for free with Jon for about a year and a half, as he wasn't really in the band, just yet. Then, he describes his experience with Chico, "It was during that time that I was starting to play with Jon that the other bands started coming together. Um, but I mean Chico is a valuable experience because that's the only experience that I had playing with an older legend. Playing in the band of an older legend. So, I feel like, it's just kind of like, even if you don't understand what you're getting from it at the time, I think that's a valuable experience, 'cause you, you're getting a glimpse into the past." (Interview with Cherise Harris)

Eddie's bio as listed on his website (http://eddiebarbash.com/)

Eddie Barbash plays American roots music on alto saxophone. He is a founding member of Jon Batiste Stay Human, the house band for The Late Show with Stephen Colbert. He has performed with stars in almost every genre: jazz with Wynton Marsalis, classical with Yo-Yo Ma, rock with Lenny Kravitz, country with Vince Gill, funk with Parliament. He brings his horn and sensibility to Texas and Appalachian fiddle tunes, bluegrass, old time, R&B, soul, and classic New Orleans. He has performed at major festivals worldwide. He debuted at Carnegie Zankel Hall with Stay Human in 2013. His portrait graced the t-shirt for the Newport Jazz Festival two years later. In New York City he has led residencies at Dizzy's Club Coca-Cola, the Django, and the Manderley Bar in Chelsea. He has taught master classes at Carnegie Hall. His luminous sound and creative vitality first caught the attention of legendary drummer Chico Hamilton, who

invited him to join his sextet when he was 19 (70 years younger than Chico) and a freshman at The Juilliard School. He began playing with Batiste the same year (2008). New York Times critic Ben Ratliff in a review of a performance at the Rubin Museum that fall described him as "gifted, young and driven." He was raised in Oaxaca, Mexico Atlanta, Georgia and Winston-Salem, North Carolina. He is 28 and lives in Brooklyn.

Ibanda Ruhumbika

Ibanda Ruhumbika – holding down the bass with that tuba! What a wonderful NeOrleans tradition. When I asked my grandfather to accompany, as an early gift for his birthday, me to my debut visit to Newport Jazz Festival – Sixtieth year Celebration, he was so surprised to see the guy come out on stage with the huge tuba in Jon Batiste and Stay Human's jazz band. Ibanda's presence on stage has had the same intriguing effect on many. Even those who are familiar with jazz and music from the New Orleans area, it remains to be unexpected to see the huge tuba played in a quartet, rather than a marching band, or maybe an orchestra. Ibanda was an eighteen-year old senior at Cedar Shoals High School in Athens, Georgia, studying tuba with teacher David Serkal, when he found himself living his dream of being featured on the show, *From the Top!* In the Season 2: Episode 6 – Style and Substance of the show, he is listed as, "passionate about sharing music with kids and is a member of the prestigious Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra. He dreams of playing in a major orchestra like the New York Philharmonic one day, and is joined onstage at Carnegie Hall by members of the Phil's brass section for a performance of 'That's a Plenty' by Lew Pollack (arr. Steve Cooper) to conclude the

episode."[42]

By the time Ibanda was nineteen, he had mastered the art of being on *From the Top*, as he had appeared on the show three times, once with the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra, and twice as a soloist (Article – Audition Stories: Ibanda Ruhumbika). He was adept at accomplishing the music responsibilities set before him – hiding behind the 120 members of his youth orchestra, talking about music with other admiring students at an all-girls school, and shining in front of a camera while the New York Philharmonic brass section strolled in as his surprise collaborators (Article – Audition Stories: Ibanda Ruhumbika)." Quite impressive. However, before getting to that place, Ibanda was a disciplined student of music with persistence to be on *From the Top*, as he had auditioned three times before being selected. He fought against pneumonia after being selected, as he had listened and been a fan of the show since he was in the eighth grade. He sent a tape in the tenth grade, before sending another tape before the Atlanta taping, and then finally was invited for a live audition. During this time Ibanda went to Interlochen in the summer as well(Article – Audition Stories: Ibanda Ruhumbika).

In From the Top with host Christopher O'Riley, there's an article further describing Ibanda's musical development as a teenager. "A Tuba players have to wait so long for the parts sometimes, that it's no wonder Ibanda Ruhumbika goofs off during band rehearsal. "I'll realize I don't have to play something for 100 measures, and it's kind of hard just waiting around doing nothing," he says. Ibanda has spent the lag time reading, listening to music, playing pranks his fellow tubists, or just falling asleep. Once, during rehearsal, when Ibanda realized he had about seven minutes before his part came in, he

[42] http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/fromthetop/video/season-2/206.php

ran out and bought cinnamon rolls for the entire low brass section. "We ate them and still made it in time for our entrance!" he laughs. It's understandable that Ibanda would use that time to get some food because combating hunger is essential to his playing "I can't play on an empty stomach," he explains. Actually, besides playing music, there's really nothing Ibanda enjoys doing more than eating. "I like watching moves and I enjoy soccer," he says, "but mainly I just like to eat! Luckily my mom cooks a lot." Ibanda is a senior in high school and is facing the question that so many other teenage musicians struggle with -- whether or not to pursue a life in music. "I've wanted to be a doctor since I was around three years old," he says, "but I've become so involved with music that even if it kills me I'm going to try to do both!" (InstantEncore.com Magazine)

Of his From the Top experience, Ibanda acknowledges, “I was learning so much, focusing on one thing all day and getting it perfect,” he said. “I think you go through the most growth when you’re preparing for something.”

Upon beginning his studies at Juilliard in 2008, he completed his Bachelor's degree in Music at The Juilliard School in 2012 (LinkedIn). During such pivotal time for his career in music, he became a member of Jon Batiste’s Stay Human Band. “Batiste began performing in New York City in 2005 with Saylor and Kuehn as a trio with Kuehn on bass and Saylor on drums. They were joined by two more musicians: Eddie Barbash on alto saxophone and Ibanda Ruhumbika on tuba. They then became known as Stay

Human. In 2013, they released their first full-length album, *Social Music*, through Razor & Tie along with the single "Express Yourself(wikipedia)"

It was around this time, due to Ibanda's relation to From the Top, the show came and did a video of Jon Batiste and Stay Human in Boston, Massachusetts. Jon wrote a song titled, "From the Top," in which the band performed in Copley Square. It was a milder Love Riot that became a most holy spiritual moment, as a lady on the park bench became happy with praise to God, and Jon and Stay Human joined her in a serenade of praise and exaltation to the Lord (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VcfvHtzZiKM).

On June 4, 2015, Stephen Colbert announced on his YouTube channel that Stay Human and its bandleader will be the house band for *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. Batiste and Stay Human's "stirring" performance of "Express Yourself" on Colbert's previous TV show *The Colbert Report* in 2014 was connected with Colbert's decision to name Batiste as the bandleader on *The Late Show*.

Chapter 2

What is Social Music?

What is Social Music?

"The world is connected more than it has ever been. The means by which we can connect with each other, share ideas, and collaborate seem endless and ever growing. The Internet and social media enable people across the globe to communicate as if they were in the same room. Information is readily available, and because of this, musical traditions (or genres, as they are called) have blended together in unprecedented ways.

Music always reflects the culture it comes from. In such a globally connected world, musicians now have the unique opportunity to express all of the cultural 'mash ups' we are experiencing these days. Akin to the blend of cultures that occurred in early-20th-century New Orleans that led to the birth of jazz, I believe that the world has reached a similar cultural turning point.

When I grew up in the 90's, genres were becoming less and less defined. With the advent of the iPod, YouTube, and Spotify most people are genre-hopping constantly when listening to music. Things are shifting fast, and the artists feel it just as much as the listeners do. For most artists of this generation, describing their own musical style has become a labeling nightmare. In interviews you start to hear stuff like 'SwingingDub-StepJazzPopElectronica' or 'ElectroCountryReggaeFolkHouse' and what have you.

Genres are based on musical traditions. The genre system has simplified these traditions for the purpose of creating distinct categories that can be easily marketed to the consumer. Although it doesn't fully do the music justice to categorize it this way, I think it's helpful. Categories help us to organize and identify things. Upon trying to conceive

of a way to describe our music I decided to coin a new term: Social Music. We are in a technological age and Social Music aims to reflect that spirit of advancement, collaboration and connectivity while still remaining ‘human’.

Although heavily rooted in jazz, Social Music is not about any particular musical tradition more than it is about the intent of the music itself. Within Social Music hopefully there will be something for you to connect to. The purpose of this music is to bring people together from all walks of life by creating a montage of many different music traditions and playing it with the spirit of inclusiveness.” – Jon Batiste (Batiste 2013)

Jon Batiste was playing to a full house at Carnegie Hall in New York on a recent Saturday night. But instead of starting the main show on stage, he popped up in the audience. He was so close to one man that Mr. Batiste's "harmonabord" (a kind of harmonica and keyboard) was almost tickling his ear. Initially surprised, the man quickly joined the communal clap as the rest of the band appeared in other seats and along the aisles. In a dark-blue sequined jacket, Mr. Batiste was performing what he calls "social music" with his band, Stay Human. (It's also the title of his new album.) "Social music is not about the particular genre itself. It's more about the intent of the music," he says. With elements of jazz, funk, classical music and pop, its aim is to "bring people together from all walks of life." And calling it "social music" seemed preferable to "some super-hyphenated name like jazz-pop-rock-electronica," he says, laughing.
(The Wall Street Journal 10.25.2013 article by Alexandra Wolfe)

In my in-person interview with Joe Saylor, his view of Social Music as expressed in the Modern Drummer magazine was relayed. "For me, I play music because I believe that the spirit of the music is more important than the music itself, and I believe that music is a tool, just as a hammer is a tool, you can either break something down or you can build something up. What I want to do is build up and uplift music. We in Stay Human tend to not necessarily endorse or embrace a genre as much as to embrace the intention of the music. That's why we call our music Social Music, it's not about rather we're playing jazz or blues or rock, whatever it is, it's about the intent, the spirit of the music, it's social music, music for and with people…Joe expounds, I think the Stay Human Band, you know, many of us, or at least the original members of us are originally jazz musicians first, you know. Our musical foundation from when we were very young comes from jazz. So, I think a lot of the spirit that we play, no matter what it is, it comes from jazz, and I think that's important because, you now, the overall spirit in jazz music is hope, you know, which comes from blues music too. It's struggle, but with hope, you know, and faith, you know, and that's why, that's why blues music is very much connected to gospel music, because it has that spirit of you now, the great story, you know of Jesus. But, as far as social music, you know when we came to New York, one thing that we recognized was a lot of the jazz musicians in our peer group and a little bit older than us, they were playing this unbelievably amazing music, but it tended to, a lot of it tended to alienate people because they couldn't understand it or they couldn't get into it, so we tried to figure out ways to rather than push people out to bring people in, you know, which is why it's called social music." (Interview with Joe Saylor)

Jazz Evolved? Jazz Re-discovered? Or, both?

Throughout my research process about Social Music, one question became definitely apparent to me. So apparent, that I indeed made it my hypothesis, which in turn is the title of my thesis – *Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Re-Discovered: An Introspective Analysis of Jon Batiste and Stay Human*. Is Social Music an evolution of jazz, a re-discovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, or both? Now, how did I come to have this overarching question? After experiencing Jon Batiste and Stay Human live concert experiences, and hearing two interviews that I've transcribed, and are found here, in Chapter 4 of my thesis, as Jon Batiste's Introspective Analyses. The two interview conversations are Jon Batiste Interview with Leo Sidran, and Jon Batiste Interview with Walter Isaacson.

In the interviews with Leo Sidran and Walter Isaacson, Jon mentions Congo Square and how music that came to be called Jazz was birthed out of the New Orleans port city during the nineteenth century and at the turn of the twentieth century, and beyond.

Here's what Jon say's to Leo Sidran, "So, for me Social Music over a hundred years later is the natural progression of what jazz is. It's experienced, and now in 2014, the world is more connected now than it's ever been, and it's connected in an even more intense way than what was happening in early America, in what New Orleans kind of confluence to a certain degree, the world is now in a similar point. I look at the turn of the century New Orleans, you have all of these elements coming together, the biggest port city in the world, in America, newly formed where English and French colonization is happening where they're bringing all these elements. The Native Americans have all

of these elements that they've brought from their culture of who knows where. Then, you have the Caribbean and then trading through the port, all of these influences from Haiti, Cuba, all of these Caribbean sounds, Jamaica of the Irish and Anglo-Saxton tradition coming to New Orleans. You have also, the Spanish, which Columbus, you know, the Spanish influence that is, uh, a big sound of New Orleans, even today. All of this is happening, and then you have the Africans, and the slavery of the African-American tradition that is basically in New Orleans found its way to express this celebratory sentiment of African culture of the drum circle and the community coming together in this ritualistic, communal sort of way, places like Congo Square, where they would play the drums, and that wasn't something that was allowed in slavery anywhere else. Right now, and what it is that I want to do with music is to simply pin point this moment in time and a way that brings everybody into the same room, around an experience, every generation, every race, everybody into the same room. I just want to get everybody into the same room, and the experience that Social Music brings, allows everybody to come in to the same room, and then from there because it feels so good what happens I think will really change the world, because this kind of collaboration, the same way that it happened in New Orleans is going to create something that we can't conceive. People will understand each other better, just by that because music is a much more empathetic and congenial way of getting people together in the same room, especially if they have conflict or misunderstanding than sitting at a table or trying to argue it out, legislation or government even, if I can say that, I mean, I think that an experience like the Social Music experience in the way that I envision it can really galvanize all of this."

Here's what Jon say's to Walter Isaacson, "You have to start from somewhere. So, you know, the beauty of jazz is that it can accommodate all styles of music. You can take jazz, and you can put rock in it, and it's still jazz. Or, you can take jazz and you can put blues in it, it's jazz. You can take jazz and put any style of music into it, and it keeps it's integrity. But, if you take another style of music, and you put jazz into that style, it turns into something else. So, something about jazz is magical in that way." Walter asks, "Does that come from the roots of jazz, around 1900, when so much is flowing in?" Jon happily responds, "Well New Orleans, my hometown, is a big part of that change in America, because you have all of these people coming together, and say you have a party, right? And you go to the party, what do the people at the party dance to? What music do you play, if you have the French there, and the Spanish, and the Irish, the Africans there and they have the drums, and then you have all of these people that they have their own folk music, but they've never been together, especially in a social context like that. Walter interjects, "Well wait, let's list all the things that come together in the 1880s to 1900 in New Orleans. As you said there's Congo Square, with the drums and the Africans." Walter mentions freed slaves, and Jon continues, "Well, when you have people who are slaves, but they also have their culture that they brought with them, and then they have this new culture, they're figuring out a way to acclimate to this new environment, that's what Congo Square was. In Africa they would play the drums all the time as a religious expression, and Sunday was the day that they gave their worship. This is your day to have your culture and continue that tradition. So Congo Square became one of those places where people, especially the freed slaves could go and express this, I guess at that point it was a rebellion, but it was a silent rebellion. So what ends up happening with that is slowly more people figure out, oh man, this is where we go to get free, this is where we go to do our thing. So then, people started to like it, and once people started to like it, it became a part of the popular culture."

Hearing those interviews, alongside my personal experience at Jon Batiste and Stay Human concert experiences, spurred what I assert to be the definitive question and hypothesis of my thesis. As many questions are answered via observations made from interviewing members of the Stay Human band alongside members from the audience, I will compare the answers given me from the following question, I personally asked each interviewee – "Would you say Social Music is an evolution of jazz, a rediscovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, or both?" As my hypothesis ultimately is 'both,' as divulged by the title of this thesis, most of the responses coincide with my hypothesis, and responses given by Joe Saylor, Eddie Barbash, Marcia Salter, Becca Pulliam, Etta Dixon, and Bernard Dove will be highlighted in this section.

When Joe Saylor was asked this question, he responded, "I don't know if it's so much a re-discovery, but I think it's an evolution in the sense that it's gonna be, it's gonna be different than what anybody has ever played before just by the fact that we're twenty year olds, twenty something year olds living in 2016, and we are informed by a lot more music, a lot, a lot of stuff has happened in the world, and a lot more music has happened since the early twentieth century, you know, so, just by that fact alone, what we do is going to be an evolution , you know, and I think, I think as far as people following it, you know, people, humans have, humans have a built in need, you know, they have a need, and they have, they want to be a part of something, you know, and I think that if you present something to people that they feel comfortable and they can be a part of, that is good, and that's good. You know. Because there's a lot of stuff that people can feel drawn to and be a part of, because they have that emptiness or need that is not good, you

know, so, I think if you can present to them something that is good, then that's good [hearty laugh from Joe and Cherise]"

When Eddie Barbash was asked this question, he responded, "Well, Social Music doesn't have to be jazz. But I think in some ways it's a re-discovery because I think the beginnings of jazz, it wasn't jazz yet at the beginning, it was people from different backgrounds with different musical ideas collaborating with each other and creating music with the common intent. You know, 'cause Congo Square, that was, we weren't, there was no, in Congo Square, it wasn't about the style of music they were playing as much as it was about we're here gathering to create this feeling together and have this experience. It was very much the opposite of the Wynton Marsalis definition of jazz, which is upholding, uh, tradition, it was much more just about the feeling to be created in the moment , and then under the intent of group of people, and I think in that way Social Music is sort of a re-discovery because it's back to the root of what, because I think that when any new style of music is discovered it's not an intentional process in a laboratory combing influences, or like combining different elements of forms of music. It's just a thing that happened based on a group of people that get together and have different influences and bringing their different influences to the table, but enjoy time together because they're all trying to accomplish the same goal, which is to create, you know, in some senses it could be to create a joyous feeling, it could be to create, you know, like in the bebop era, it was to bring a level of sophistication and intricacies to make sure to push musical boundaries and exploring new harmonies, and new rhythm. It was a more exploratory thing in the bebop era, and when jazz was created, it was people in New Orleans expressing themselves, trying to make sense of an environment, you know, and

trying to. I think, I don't know if that answers your question, I went a lot of places." After explaining that he did very much so answer my question, I acknowledged that he addressed it from more of a philosophical perspective, and he agreed, "philosophical."

When Marcia Salter was asked this question, she responded, "I think it's probably both, because as David from Jelly Roll Productions said that dancers and the music were one, and when people don't realize that jazz music was not something where people went to sit and just watch like we like go to a concert now, there was that participation between the dancers, and if they really like you, then they would stop dancing and just look at you in the highest form of a compliment, like, you know, we're vibing, you got us mesmerized here. So, I would say that it's they're putting their own spin on what was, taking from the elders, and the ancestors what is come before and putting that Jazz Is Now spin on it, and then as jazz has always done, welcomed anyone into this house, this is for anyone who wants to enjoy and it would be kind of hard to go to a Stay Human concert and not feel welcomed."

When Becca Pulliam was asked this question, she responded, "Both. Both, I think that the re-discovery of the social element and the dance and the social functions, the association of Sunday, the day of not working, um, also the association with, as I understand communication among slaves who were not able to, who used the drums, and this probably extends to other instruments to signify something that it, might be punished for knowing, or punished for communicating, so did it become an underground language, maybe? But then I also think evolution because Jon is the latest in a wonderful continuum of piano players, and in the social arena, or pre night club, I wonder rather you find the piano yet? It might be that the piano has to signify that the music has gone

indoors. I'm not sure, but, you know I think the original brass bands and such, you know, were in motion. The piano is not generally able to do that, unless, it's on a cart. However, something you might find sometime is a movie from the seventies, or eighties probably, called *Piano Players Rarely Play Together*, and it was, um, three New Orleans pianists, I'm gonna say, Tuffs Washington, Professor Longhair, and Allen Toussaint, and I might be wrong, but the premise of the movie is if you play piano, you're not in a section. If you play trumpet, in a, there might be another trumpeter or a couple of drummers or something, but the piano, so the pianist, so they're very present in the music, don't have the pleasure of being next to another pianist very often. So, that was a good movie, and a lot of playing in it, and three important people, and the other person that's not in the movie that I remember is James Booker. He's a New Orleans pianist, legendary, legendary New Orleans pianist, with some recordings, and was active when I was. So he goes into the seventies at least. He must, I don't believe he lived a completely long life, um, and I don't think Jonathan would've overlapped with him, but these are people that came before, and he's, who made the piano. I mean everybody thinks of Fats Domino, and he's wonderful too, piano and Rock 'n Roll, and a part of New Orleans music. Yeah, and so I would say that Jon, Jon is doing the next of that chain of choosing that instrument." Then I mentioned how Jon mentions Jelly Roll Morton as a major influence from New Orleans. Becca agrees, "Yes, yes, good Lord, right. The original one." I also explained how Jon translates from the piano to a merged keyboard and harmonica that he calls a harmonaboard, and is a melodica, as they are a mobile band. Becca responds, "That allows him to be on his feet."

When Etta and Bernard were asked this question, they responded, Etta-"That's mine. That's mine. What you said, that last one." I said a confirming, "both?" Etta responds, "You played it," and Bernard chimed in with his confirmatory response, " Yeah, both. Yeah." Etta then added, "And, when I look at the picture, I see them dancing. I don't even see the music, just when you say that."

Social Dance

At a Jon Batiste and Stay Human experience, I am always compelled to get up and move! I, along with most to all others in attendance want to dance. It's very difficult for one to just sit still. When they start their music, we have to get up! This is another reason Love Riots are brewed! Jon even leads the audience into exercise movements. He'll say something like, 'dip down low,' and the entire audience works to dip down low with him. It's so much fun! Kind of like a Jon says experience, rather than Simon Says, many people have a certain pride or sense of accomplishment when they can do what Jon does, or 'keep up' with him on the stage! Jon and Stay Human also dance on the stage, just for pure enjoyment of the music. However, there is always a sense of ultimate purpose in uniting the people, bringing the crowd of all involved closer together. From personally experiencing the importance of dance at a Jon Batiste and Stay Human concert, I've clearly experienced, in many instances, the dance to be just as important as the music. Therefore, my research of dance throughout jazz's journey was inevitable. Upon visiting the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington, D.C., I was extremely delighted to unexpectedly come upon information pertaining to Social Dance! As relayed in the exhibit, "SOCIAL DANCE: Most African Americans learn to dance in everyday spaces: at parties, on sidewalks and front porches,

in living rooms, and at clubs and dances. New dances are born anywhere groups of African Americans gather to have a good time. Each dancer improvises steps, inviting in history and the dancer's personality. Over time, African American social dance became the dance of mainstream America – a vital way Americans express and entertain themselves. Dance moves reflect change and echo an African past." The exhibit continues, "MOVEMENT GESTURE AND SOCIAL DANCE: Many African Americans stand, walk, dance, and communicate in gestures that set them apart. Some of these movements express the marks of blackness – liberation, creativity, improvisation, and self-determination – from the time of slavery to now. African American gestures can be quiet and illusive, or vibrant and confident. The body is used to carry important messages – in a complex and powerful language."

In my most valuable interview with Swing Jazz dancers, Ms. Etta Dixon and Mr. Bernard Dove, we delve into their more than fifty years combined of dance experience, and thereby, the crucial importance of Social Dance in relation to Social Music is further discussed and revealed.

Jon Batiste and Stay Human

The summer after graduating from Juilliard, Jon explains,

> The fact that one summer our bass player, Phillip, decide that he wanted to leave, take a break from music for a minute, you know, we loved him, and we basically made the music fit around him, and that was one of those things where we didn't want to get another bass player, nor could we find someone to fill his shoes, because

> he was so great. We wanted to find another way to explore the music, and at the time, Ibanda Ruhumbika, the tuba player in the band, he was just starting at Juilliard, in the classical division. I asked him one time, do you play jazz? So, I asked him to play a show with us, and he got to and the show, and even though he said he played jazz, he didn't play jazz [sniffly laughs by Jon Leo]. He was a classical musician, and he learned how to play all of those different styles and different things that we do in the band as a part of being in the band, and Joe was learning the tambourine, so it could be mobile, but he also was learning at the time doing the washboard, but eventually he decided to stick with the tambourine more, and that kind of evolved into Stay Human, not necessarily thinking at any point about the parallels to New Orleans culture (Batiste 2014b).

When I first heard Jon Batiste play the piano in the jam session of Cleopatra's Needle in New York City between 2006 and 2009, I truly appreciated how great he was on the piano and though I was a vocalist who sang in the session, I would enjoy just sitting and hearing him play. His personality was very distinctive, many would say eccentric. He always reminded me of one of my favorite pianists – Thelonious Monk, in his approach to the keys. I would sit back and silently think to myself 'he's like a Contemporary Monk,' and that was how I referred to him in my mind – Contemporary Monk. At this time, I never saw him play a melodica, or what he deemed, 'harmonaboard.' Once, when I was called to come to the stage and sing, Jon was playing. I called for a standard with a second-line groove, because I would call for that groove many times in my arrangements, just because I really liked that groove! So, when I realized Jon was from New Orleans, I definitely wanted to utilize one of my

arrangements with him and the drummer playing with him at that session. It was a very enjoyable experience, and a lady came up to me after I'd sat down and said, 'they're talking about you up there. They said you're hot.' I knew that Jon liked hearing me sing at that time. Forward the track some years, there's Jon in St. Louis, playing for our Jazz St. Louis Gala, and at one of our Co-Chair's home, Jon and I spoke, and, I asked him if he remembered me from Cleo's, and he did. He generously asked me if I wanted to sing, and so, I did, and I called for 'Peace' by Horace Silver in Bb Major.

Revolutionary

Now, after researching and transcribing his interview with Leo Sidran, I realize why he reminded me of Thelonious Monk so much! That was indeed the time that he was studying Monk fervently. As for me Jon Batiste is revolutionary in the music with Stay Human, just as Thelonious Monk was revolutionary in the music. I could compare Jon to many other greats like Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, and go on, and on, and on, but I'm focusing on Thelonious Monk, right now – because I remember referring to Jon as Contemporary Monk, and both he and Monk exude the sensibility of being free – Freedom! I mention this freedom in some of my in-person interviews, reading a passage from pages 2 to 3 in Robin D.G Kelley's book, *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original*. Thelonious Monk's music is about freedom. And, so is Jon Batiste and Stay Human's music!

Chapter 3: What is Stay Human?

Love Riots!

"A Love Riot is a street parade that can happen anywhere." ~Jon Batiste

Jon explains his definition of a Love Riot on an episode of *CBS Sunday Morning* with hosts Michelle Miller, titled, "Jon Batiste: Making a joyful noise." He continues, "They may not have had the ability to see us at Carnegie Hall or something like that. So we bring the music to them." Michelle responds, "I see what you're doing for everyone else. What does that do for you?" Jon says, "I like bringing people together. I like making people who wouldn't normally relate to one another, find something in common through live music experience and the genuine human exchange of that performance."

In my in-person interviews, I asked everyone, rather they had fully experienced a true Jon Batiste and Stay Human Love Riot or not, "what is love to you?" I asked this because the bedrock of Jon Batiste and Stay Human's definition of Social Music pertains to Love! And, I know that love can mean something different to different people. As expected, I received varied responses. The one of which I most personally identified was Joe Saylor's response. Joe and I had a blessed, insightful talk about Love and Love Riots. I asked Joe two questions pertaining directly to Love, and the following are his responses.

Question One: "What's your take on Love Riots, which love riot may have been your favorite or most memorable moment, what 's your memorable experience with a Love Riot, what is it to you?"

Joe's amazing response was, "My most memorable moment in a love riot was, it might have been the first or second love riot that we ever did, and we started doing love

riots in the summer of 2011, and that's when we started playing on the subway, and we would go out literally every single night, 10pm, 11pm, play on the streets in the subway 'til 3 or 4 in the morning, and then go have dinner or breakfast, but the most memorable moment was when we were on the Lower East Side, actually right around the corner from Rockwood Music hall. We weren't playing at Rockwood Music Hall, but right around the corner, and it was the four of us – me, Jon, Eddie, and Ibanda, and we were playing. There were a few two or three people standing, kind of smoking outside of this bar, and we went and we started to play for them. Five minutes later, maybe ten or fifteen people are there. We keep playing – literally, about two hundred people gathered on the street coming from all different directions, and this was the first time that this ever happened, so we were like, what? [hearty laughs from Joe and Cherise] Cool! And, the reason it was memorable is because, after playing for about twenty minutes, police in a horseback came and they tried to break it up, and they did break it up, and we ran! [hearty laugh] We stopped playing, and we bolted cause we didn't know what was going to happen. We ran around like two blocks, and [laugh] I think we ended up running into Katz's Deli and hiding [hearty laughs], but that's, that's probably my most memorable experience, because it was one of the very first big, big Love Riots, and the horses came. It was like, we can do this. Yes, yeah, that was a good one. That was a good night."

Question Two: "Pertaining to certain messages emoted like *Love* and *Believe* through Stay Human during concerts/outreach events, such as Newport Jazz Festival, which I was there 2014, but I really saw Believe shirts, I think at 2015, and the week long residency at Nomad's Hotel presented by Chase, what is Love to you? How do you

define Love? How do you define Believe? What do you hope the public perceives from emoting such terms and messages?"

Joe's heartfelt response was, "I think Love is the greatest force in the Universe, you know. It's the original force, you know, and I think it's the most important, and I think Love is selfless. I was gonna get deep, but, as far as believe, I think you should talk to Mr. Batiste about that. But yeah, love is laying down your life for your friend. That's love. I hope that they feel that love is real. You know, I think a lot of people – well, love is a word that gets tossed around, and I really hope that they actually feel and see the reality of what it is."

As I truly appreciate Joe Saylor's answer in regards to Love, I notice how it ties into my spirituality and what he said about Social Music – "It's struggle, but with hope, you know, and faith, you know, and that's why blues music is very much connected to gospel music, because it has that spirit of, you know, the great story of Jesus." For me, yes, I know. Holding fast to a message taught by my Pastor and another minister at our church, it was a series about Love. We studied how there are four kinds of Love in the Greek – *Agápe* (ἀγάπη *agápē*), *Éros* (ἔρως *érōs*), *Philía* or Phileo, and *Storgē.* Of the four, two are actually translated, and can be directly found in the Bible, using a Concordance. Those two are Agápē and Phileo. Agápē is the God kind of Love that is unconditional, because God doesn't just have Love, but God is Love. It's that love that embraces everyone unconditionally. Phileo is that friendship kind of love. Éros is the romantic type of love, like between a husband and wife. And, Storgē is the love of basic affection. In my personal study of scriptures in the Holy Bible, using a Strong's Concordance, I understand God is a spirit, and so, the Spirit of Love is so great, so

powerfully vast and yet, so presently personal. In my personal walk with the Lord Jesus, the true Spirit of Love is always with me – that, it is my new recreated spirit, by grace and mercy. Not by me or my good works, but by believing in that Spirit. As one of the scriptures goes – "If thou shalt confess with thy mouth the Lord Jesus, and shalt believe in thine heart that God hath raised him from the dead, thou shalt be saved. For with the heart man believeth unto righteousness; and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation." – Romans 10:9-10

Jon Batiste's response to Walter Isaacson was most welcoming as well, for me. Before sharing his song, "Believe in Love," in an interview with Walter Isaacson of The Aspen Institute, Jon shares the importance of daily meditation in his life. "I got to get calibrated," Jon responds (Batiste 2017). He begins every day with prayer and scripture reading. He explains the importance of calibrating oneself for what's ahead, because there's a lot of things that will knock one off balance. In addition to eating healthy, if one is off balance, one can't get to the heart of the matter. Prayer is the number one element that keeps Jon in balance. Spirituality gives context and meaning – fortitude within the chaos. Jon explains how having fortitude within the chaos allows one to create, give, and love better, because then one isn't worried about what's next. Whatever comes next, it's going to be all right.

> Love is the greatest form of service, because love isn't something that gives and then asks in return. True love is when you give of yourself, from your soul, from the depths of your soul, and [slightly lifting hands, sitting back in chair] whatever happens – happens. And, to be okay with that, you have to be a certain place as

> a human being. It doesn't matter how much money you have or where you're from, or what you've done in life. You've got to be in a place where you can say, 'I'm gonna give because I want to show love. I choose love.' And, whatever else happens, let the chips fall where they may (Batiste 2017).

Love is the one true and living Holy Spirit that suffers long.

Love is patient. Love is kind. Love does not envy, it does not boast, it is not proud. It does not dishonor others, it is not self-seeking, it is not easily angered, it keeps no record of wrongs. Love does not delight in evil but rejoices with the truth. It always protects, always trusts, always hopes, always perseveres. Love never fails. – 1 Corinthians 13:4-8

At a Jon Batiste and Stay Human concert experience, love is exhibited by all, especially in the Love Riot! This is why I so definitely remember thinking that we needed a Love Riot in St. Louis, during the time the riots broke out. .

Ferguson. When I woke up the Sunday morning of August 10, 2014 to learn of the Riot taking place in Ferguson – Ferguson, Missouri – a suburban, metropolitan area of St. Louis, not far from the suburban area of St. Louis I grew up, University City, Missouri, I was stunned and in shock, in a most saddened and aggrieved way. Why? Because I knew that area. I had family and friends of family from that area. Growing up throughout the years, my mother, grandmother, uncle, and grandfather would drive through that area to visit our dearly loved Aunt Mary and extended family. I knew that street – West Florissant, where the peaceful protests that turned into violent riots took place. I had driven on that street countless, many times through the years. It was home. Home – in a way I'd never seen before, and we were on the world stage. Why?

Ultimately because of centuries of heinous acts of terror against a group of people categorized as "Black" in the United States of America, from Slavery through the present day. Michael Brown became another one of thousands products of that hate, in the form of police brutality by Officer Darren Wilson and the Ferguson Police Department who allowed Mike Brown to bleed out on the street for hours on Saturday, August 09, 2014. I was so compelled to participate in peaceful protests, and contribute music from a song I had written three years prior. Changing the title from "Fire" to "Fire to True Justice," and placing the lyric in an inclusive voice, rather than first person.

Like Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. said in an interview with Mike Wallace of *CBS*'s 60 Minutes, three years after his 1963 "I Have a Dream" speech at The March on Washington – a riot is the language of the unheard.[43] I've also heard it said slightly differently, which I also find most effective – a riot is the voice of the unheard. Giving voice to a people whose voice has been continually suppressed.

In my own experience, as stated in my interview with Eddie Barbash, I've lived in different cities, and I've experienced or seen racism everywhere. Based on my experience, racism is a thread in the American fabric. The roots are too deep. As I've come across racism everywhere I've lived, I find it to manifest itself in different ways in different areas. For example, a place like New York is more diverse.

Malcolm X (El-Hajj Malik El-Shabazz) taught us in the 1964

[43] https://www.cbsnews.com/news/mlk-a-riot-is-the-language-of-the-unheard/

speech "The Ballot or the Bullet": "I don't see any American dream; I see an American nightmare."[44]

When I met and briefly spoke with Dr. Angela Davis earlier this year on Reverend Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s commemorative birthday in tribute to Geri Allen, I knew that moment was truly an honor. While speaking with her, I kept remembering how I saw a documentary of her life, and she explained how she was friends with those Four Girls of Alabama in the 16th Street Baptist Church bombing. One of those girls was her friend. Concerning my view on racism being a thread in the American fabric that is so deeply rooted, what stands out most in mind is a quote of which Dr. Angela Y. Davis is known,

> "Radical simply means 'grasping things at the root.'"[45]

In pursuing more clarification about Race in the United States of America, particularly as a person in the 'jazz' field, I decided to get approval to take a course outside of our required coursework – *Readings in African American History*. In that course, we were assigned a term paper to complete a twenty page historiographical essay from four histories, on a topic of our choice. I selected as my topic – 'Race' as a Social Construct in the United States of America. I wanted and did research how the term, 'race,' is actually a social construct ultimately used to categorize and keep certain groups of people in certain socioeconomic categories, and the like. The four histories I selected to write about were *The Origins of American Slavery and Racism* by Donald L. Noel, *Race* by Marc Aronson, *Race and Revolution* by Gary B. Nash, and *White Over Black* by

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[44] https://www.theroot.com/dr-martin-luther-king-jr-my-dream-has-turned-into-a-1791257458

[45] https://www.thoughtco.com/angela-davis-biography-3528285

Winthrop D. Jordan. I walked away ultimately feeling, in addition to just disgusted by it all, if people could consider the problems and struggles of others who are not like themselves, then, maybe we could truly be quicker to consider someone else's struggle, in addition to our own. Just maybe, then, true Love could honestly breathe. In my experience with Jon Batiste and Stay Human's *'Love Riots'* concerts, I, along with others I don't know, get a glimpse of that love.

Believe!

Love is a noun as well as an action word, like – Believe! Believe is more than just 'Belief.' Believe is an action term that accentuates the power of believing in someone or something! Jon Batiste and Stay Human would wear black T-Shirts with BELIEVE written in bold white letters on the front. They did this to make a crucial point. In one of Jon's songs, "Believe in Love," the lyric goes –

> Here's a story, on such an early morning. We were yawn'in.
>
> Yeah, we were tired and hungry.
>
> And people stairing, they said that we wouldn't make it.
>
> Instead of sharing, they came along to take it.
>
> So we started singing, and then the ground start shaking.
>
> So fascinating, how many people waiting.
>
> And, when you're feeling lonely, and your down and out, just play this song.

Just play this song.

We were standing with our backs against the wall.

And, now we're standing hand in hand. We've got it all.

And, all I know is that we must believe in love.

You got to believe in love. Do you believe in love?

You got to believe in love.

Oh, you got to believe, baby.

You got to believe, baby!

Oh, you got to believe, baby! Do you hear what we're saying?

You got to believe, baby.

You got to believe in love.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gwg8jwST1go

This song was also shared in South Africa, where children are singing it. One town uses music to fight Fetal Alcohol Syndrome and HIV/AIDS.

Taking Social Music to TV

In "Jon Batiste: Making a joyful noise," host Michelle Martin of CBS Sunday Morning, also asked Stephen Colbert his thoughts of Jon's addition as bandleader to the new show, *Late Night with Stephen Colbert*. I was so excited to hear Colbert's response – "Well, I mean, in some ways he's something new, and a throwback at the same time. I

mean, there hasn't been, like, a big jazz sound on one of these shows in a long time." In the moment of hearing him say that, I realized he verbalized one of the crucial points I'm making in my thesis. 'Something new and a throwback at the same time' – that's what captured me! Because, that's what I'm saying when I say Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Re-discovered. Jazz evolved is 'something new,' and Jazz Re-discovered is 'a throwback' at the same time.

When I visited a live taping of the show, I saw firsthand how they brought Love Riots to the show by going into the audience during commercial breaks. They would go as far as marching from the stage up to the balcony! In the beginning shows, they would even stand in the foyer area outside of the theater studio and play as the audience crowd exited the Ed Sullivan Theater. With Jon's influence as bandleader, he was able to feature notable jazz artists, such as Arturo Sandoval, The Heath Brothers, Roy Haynes, and Wayne Shorter in a segment of the show called "Batiste Sessions." They would also be featured playing with Jon and Stay Human that night of the show, and Colbert would announce that Jon had a special guest playing in the band. Cameras fully on that special guest.

Also, I found it so ironic and metaphorical when Jon played and sang solo on a Beatles' song – "Blackbird." He did this in *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert's* 52nd Anniversary Celebration of The Beatles' U.S. television debut as the Fab Four performed at NYC's Ed Sullivan Theater for *The Ed Sullivan Show* on February 09, 1964. (https://www.jambase.com/article/jon-batiste-celebrates-beatles-anniversary-with-gorgeous-blackbird)

I mean, here was this young guy categorized as 'black' in the United States of America, playing a composition of a group from Liverpool, England. It was once

believed by some jazz greats, like the late vocalist and composer Abbey Lincoln expressed that this group was used to ‘steal’ or take ‘jazz’ completely away from American pop culture in the 1960s. They were used to totally obliterate jazz, and here was Jon, totally bringing jazz back to the American mainstream with the very music of said group that was used to take it away. Wow.

Chapter 4: Introspective Analyses – Interviews from the Stage

Jon Batiste

Jon Batiste Interview with Leo Sidran

The Third Story Conversations Episode 18 – Leo Sidran with Jon Batiste

http://www.thirdstory.com/listen/2014/10/28/episode-18-jon-batiste

Leo Sidran

Leo Sidran, a multi-instrumentalist, composer, performer, and producer whose credits include co-producing the Oscar-winning song "Al Otro Lado Del Rio" for the soundtrack to the movie *The Motorcycle Diaries*. Sidran began his career in music early, growing up in Madison, Wisconsin. His father, Ben Sidran, is an American jazz and rock pianist, organist, vocalist, writer, producer and historian (bensidran.com), and his mother is a weaver. Having learned to play the drums from funk-jazz percussionist Clyde Stubblefield (who played with James Brown for years and is often called “the world’s most sampled drummer”), he also spent summers tagging along with his father, who toured with the veteran rock star Steve Miller Band. Miller encouraged the younger Sidran to play guitar and even took him to the famed (and now defunct) Manny’s Music in New York to buy him an electric guitar. Then Miller showed Leo how to play “Rock N’ Me” and told him to “write me some hits”. Leo started writing songs and sending them to Steve, and when he was 15, Miller recorded 12 of Leo’s originals. From those sessions, four of his songs made it onto Steve’s Wide River. Leo attended the University of Wisconsin, graduating in 1999 with a degree in history and integrated liberal studies. While still in high school, he developed a fascination with Spain and the Spanish language, and moved to Seville for a year in college. He relocated from Madison to

Brooklyn, New York in 2005 and has lived there since, currently with his wife, daughter, and poodle (www.leosidran.com, wikipedia).

As Leo produces a podcast segment on varied artist of the music scene titled "The Third Story", I am thankfully elated to have discovered in my research Leo's interview with Jonathan Batiste. The interview provides an in depth, insightful discussion that allows Jonathan to share intricate, biographical details of his upbringing in Kenner and New Orleans, Louisiana on through to the formation of Jon's vision and philosophy of Stay Human and Social Music in New York City and the world.

Transcribed by Cherise Harris

Leo: Jon Batiste, man, thank you so much for coming out and joining me today.

Jon: Man, thank you for having me. Thank you for getting me this wonderful tea that I'm consuming at the moment, and letting me play on the whirly and the Rhodes and everything man, this is great already.

Leo: I love watching you come in the room and kind of light up when you see the instruments, almost like you have no choice in the matter. You just have to sit down and start to play. It makes me wonder if that's kind of how you were coming up as well, when it came to music.

Jon: You know, when I was younger, I was in Kenner, Louisiana, in a suburb, outside of New Orleans, and, uh, my family is The Batiste Family of Louisiana. There's a big musical lineage, musical families are a very big part of the culture, and I had this dichotomy, if you will, of living in Kenner, in the suburbs and doing regular kid stuff like

basketball, playing chess, or riding bikes and going around the neighborhood, doing stuff that a lot of times that you're not supposed to do

Leo: Um, hm.

Jon: Just having a good time,

Leo: yeah,

Jon: man. Then, at night, going into the city with my Dad, my uncles, my cousins, all musicians and seeing the scene, and I always had a love for music, but it steadily grew as I got older, and it was very interesting how it kind of started from being in my family and being around me to kind of taking over.

Leo: Um, hm.

Jon: Very, very interesting process.

Leo: Did that process happen when you were still playing drums, or was, did it happen when you found the piano?

Jon: It happened when I went to the piano.

Leo: I've heard you talk about how your mother suggested that you make the change from drums to piano, and just that story alone kind of opens up a whole world of questions for me. You know, the first one has to do, I guess, with your mother's role in the family, because it seems to suggest to me that she really had her eyes on the whole picture, and sort of understood the world of music and also maybe where you would fit in, in that way.

Jon: You know, your parents they know you in a way that's so intimate because they've seen the beginning, from the very beginning. So, I think more than anything, there's an intuitive connection with something that is, it comes from you, like if you were to have a kid, that's actually a part of you.

Leo: Yeah.

Jon: So, there was a beautiful, intuitive vibration that she, think, felt from the time that I started playing the piano that was telling her I guess, you know, this is the right move for you. I think you should move in that direction. I feel something about that. Maybe she didn't see the whole picture, but it was more, it was more ordained,

Leo: um, hm,

Jon: than anything. Piano. No, not these drums, get on that piano [light laughter]

Leo: Before you found the piano and you were playing drums, and I understand that was before music kind of consumed you, but, how did that come to pass, that you were playing drums.

Jon: It's kind of like folk music. Family band, everybody's playing, and you're up there, and you're a kid, and they're like, here

Leo: Hit this

Jon: Hit on this. Play. Go. Solo, and you'll be in front of a crowd of people, and for me that never was how I thought I would end up as a professional musician or anything like that. I guess it was, really for me, I didn't think about professional music at all. Just kind of like, okay, yeah. Dad says hit the drums, so here I go.

Leo: Did anybody show you anything?

Jon: Vicariously you learn, but not direct instruction, or someone saying you should really study these recordings, or you should listen to this guy and hear how he approaches accompaniment.

Leo: Um, hm.

Jon: It was more like, you see the people out there, we're doing a show, so when it's your turn, I want you to give it all you got.

[Both laugh]

Leo: Maybe though, that was the best place you could've come from, because then as you approached more and more sophisticated music, you always had that, that kind of lit the path for you, right? Understanding that whatever you play, you know, you have to bring everything you have, and try to turn people on with it.

Jon: Yes, I think that it's a transition from, this kind of communal, folk element in music, where they would play the New Orleans culture music, their own music they would write, funk and R&B music, which is what they grew up with.

Leo: This is The Batiste Band.

Jon: Yap, and um, I learned all those traditional songs from New Orleans and all the stuff they played and stuff like that. Then I would perform in front of people in the community and on stage, and then I would transition into this more high art world later, where it's like studying jazz and classical music, and the intense vibration of Juilliard and all of the conservatory atmosphere, and then I think putting those two together, and now

coming into the commerce side of things, which is popular music and making those three things collide – art, the high art world, the folk music and that upbringing, and popular music.

Leo: Um, hm.

Jon: It's kind of where I'm at now.

Leo: Hm, yeah, well let's talk about how you got there. You made the switch to piano, how old were you?

Jon: I was eleven, eleven years old, I switched to piano, and that was about the time that I also started studying.

Leo: And so, what did that entail?

Jon: It was a classical piano lesson every Sunday, it was like, um, one of those things where there was a private teacher named Ms. Clara

[affectionate laugh from both Jon and Leo]

Jon: who, uh, she taught piano lessons on an upright piano in her house, in her living room.

Leo: Um, hm.

Jon: And she was also the piano player in the church. So, they were like, can you teach Jon the piano; he's starting to play? And, I would study classical piano lessons with Ms. Clara every Sunday, and then, I had a band with my cousins, who, they were older than me, um, they at the time were both drummers, and I was also just starting to play piano,

and uh, they were super talented, so one of my cousins decides, well, if we're gonna start a band, I should learn something else. So he learns the bass. He's playing the bass. I'm playing piano, and my other cousin is playing drums, and that was the band. So, I was learning music, writing music with them very early, and we learned video game music and play in that band.

Leo: um, hm, Super Mario?

Jon: Even later, like, uhm, Street Fighter

[laughs]

Jon: Street Fighter Alpha. You remember how, uh, there was a series Street Fighter 2, and then Cap Com kept putting it out until PlayStation came out, and then it turned to Street Fighter Alpha,

Leo: um, hm,

Jon: and we really loved the music from Street Fighter Alpha and Sonic the Hitch Hog, 'cause that was when Sega Genesis had just come out.

Leo: So, that's what you were really digging, that's the music that was hitting you?

Jon: We were really moved more than anything in that band by video game music, and Sonic the Hitch Hog and Street Fighter were the two top choices, that must've taken sixty percent of our repertoire or more was video game music.

Leo: And, would you transcribe it?

Jon: We would transcribe it note for note.

Leo: So, like a lot of people talk about coming into music through transcription. You did too, it's just the music that you were transcribing was a little bit unusual.

Jon: Oh yeah, I'm even thinking back to um, our favorite game was Final Fantasy 7 [Leo laughs], and we played the music from that as kind of inspiration. We never played those songs on live shows for some reason. It was only the Street Fighter music, live! [light laugh] But, uh, that was how I came into it, through the classical, and through the video games.

Leo: Were you singing in that band?

Jon: No, not all. I sung with my family's band because I was the youngest at that time, and since the time I was eight or nine, they would have me come up and sing, as kind of the young Michael Jackson lineage, you know, they came from that era.

Leo: Yeah, right.

Jon: So, it was a thing, that is what I did. I would sing the song, and be like the kid that they featured.

Leo: um, hm

Jon: The family. But in the band with my cousins, it was all music, everything was instrumental.

Leo: Did you start to bring in some, some other music as well, if it wasn't video game music? What else were you playing?

Jon: Most of it was that, and the other music that we brought in was like songs that my uncle would write. There were a lot of songs that we would write for special occasions – our yearly appearance at The Children's Museum being one of them. You know, we, we played, uh, what's the song called, I'm trying to remember- "Kids". You know, it's like [begins singing the lyric] *We're kids, we want to have fun. Just kids, come on and join us [stops singing lyric with light laughter]*, and then we sung that, and we played, um, Welcome to the Children's Museum, a song that he wrote for the museum. We would play, "Oh, When the Saints Go Marching in," New Orleans traditional music like that every now and then, but not really, it was more of a funk soul band and um,

Leo: Are you in high school yet, or are you

Jon: No, oh no

Leo: So this was before high school?

Jon: Yeah, before high school, like I was still eleven or twelve, and even younger when I was playing the drums, and you know I didn't play piano then. I was a keyboard player. It was no piano. I didn't own a piano in, uh, my house until I was in high school, like eleventh grade or something like that.

Leo: So how do you draw the distinction between being a keyboard player and a piano player? What's the difference?

Jon: It's extremely different. Keyboard is another instrument to me. It's like, to me the keyboard is not meant to be played like a piano because of it's sound that you get from a keyboard cuts at a different frequency, and it has so many different variables in terms of

touch, and in terms of, not only the frequency of the sound but the choice of sounds, that changes the frequency, but just being electric, it makes it sit in the music in a really different way. It's not a percussion instrument. That's the main underlying character of it, that I find it different. Keyboard isn't percussion, whereas the piano, by the nature of the hammers hitting the strings, it resonates in the air differently, and it affects the band differently.

Leo: That makes me wonder if later on, when you sort of discovered the melodica, maybe part of what allowed you to have a deeper understanding of the fact that it's a real instrument, a lot of people don't think that it's a real serious instrument, was that you kind of understood that it's not a piano, and it's not supposed to be a piano, and it has it's own function.

Jon: Yeah, and that's a really insightful point Leo, because that's exactly how I feel about the melodica, and also how I feel when I think back on what did I do to incorporate the melodica, when I think back on that, it was about not looking at it like a piano. That was actually the first step, before anything.

Leo: uhm, hm

Jon: It was this is not a piano. That's very insightful, man.

Leo: You set up the distinction. These are different. They have keys, but they're not the same. You know you can't think of them as the same.

Jon: Right.

Leo: I think with the keyboard it's harder because you can play a, quote piano sound, on the keyboard.

Jon: Even the piano sound on the keyboard is not, to me, to be played in the same way you'd play a piano, because it's all about frequency, man. What does it vibrate in the air? How does it hit you as a listener? And that sound of that electric piano, like sometimes you'll hear that in House Music

Leo: Hm, yeah.

Jon: That piano sound is perfect in that context. You don't want a real piano in the instance. That frequency that you want, is that electric, kind of

Leo: Smaller, sharper

Jon: Yeah, that, it's another thing, man. I really enjoyed playing keyboards when I was a kid, and I would make music on the keyboards, like tracking. I'd make a lot of beats. I'd do a lot of things where we would take the keyboard sounds, and create our own library of sounds. Like, I guess, um, for me, my earliest composition, and, um, arranging experience would be taking the keyboard and multi-tracking different parts and finding what I liked, what I wanted to change or add. I never really wrote it out. It was more about tracking it, and hearing what it would sound like if a band really were to play it live.

Leo: So, eventually I know you went to this arts high school. It's a great music and arts program in New Orleans.

Jon: Yeah, that was an incredible experience because it was my first realization that there were other people out there who were try'na push it as hard as I wanted to push it, and were my age and were talented, and inspiring to me because they were doing things that, at the time, I didn't know were possible.

Leo: You were still living in the suburbs, also.

Jon: Yeah, I was in the suburbs. My whole upbringing in Kenner was, um, completely separate than my New Orleans musical experiences and touring around later, which you know, it blows your mind, you know, coming from Kenner it's like, wow! So, I, when I went to NOCCA, it was a continuation of the Louis Satchmo Armstrong Summer Jazz Camp. So, that was when I was about fourteen, when I really thought about music as a serious thing, and I'd been going to the camp. But, the camp was the first place that I encountered these young people who later would go to NOCCA, you know people like Trombone Shorty, uhm, Christian Scott, the trumpet player. Uhm, Sullivan Fortner, he's an amazing piano player: we used to practice together for hours and hours at a time, and I would just be amazed at some of the stuff he could do. Uhm, you know, there's many, many great young musicians I ran across.

Leo: I've heard people talk about how the New Orleans community is really actually very supportive and inclusive scene. Was that your experience?

Jon: I think that the New Orleans music scene is super supportive. I think it's inclusive and, at the same time, I think there's something specific about the scene that for better or for worse, stops it from changing. You could say that hey, man, the scene is stagnant, there's not any development. There's one thing, and that's it. Or, you could say, this is

the only place in the world where you can experience this. It's authentic, and it's real. And, young people are coming up in it in every generation, and they're coming out with their own thing, and for me, the scene is what it is, and you take from the scene what value you can, and you move to somewhere else, if you want. You can take it to some other place, if you want, and for me, that's what I did.

Leo: Yeah.

Jon: I think I learned a lot from it, and I think at a certain point, moving to New York was a decision both to study, and also to experience new things.

Leo: What were you into before you moved to New York? Where had you arrived musically? You know, what were you thinking about and listening to?

Jon: So many things had happened up until that point. I feel like New Orleans for me, when you talk about being inclusive, was a grounds for experimentation and musical discovery. I would play Salsa gigs. Bands from Cuba would come into town. I would end up playing with them somehow. I would play with my family of course, which is like funk, R&B, and Soul music, just New Orleans, even Zydeco and Cajun music, cause my grandfather – he was Cajun and Creole. I would play all of these jazz gigs, when I started really getting into jazz, and then I would study with the great Alvin Batiste, who opened my ears to my whole understanding and my ears for originality comes from his conception, playing with him and Donald Harrison.

Leo: Um, hm, and what was that conception? What exactly was it that opened you up?

Jon: Be you. Be you, even if it's the weirdest, most obtuse, out of the box thing, do that, rather than imitate something else. And, it's not shunning what came before, or shunning anything that you can learn from someone else, even if it's your peers, but it's at the end of the day, the underlying principle is to express yourself, truly and authentically, you have to figure out something that you've never head before, and that as a fifteen-year old, sixteen, finding that, and starting to search for that was the thing that really made everything that I'm doing now come into being. Everything makes sense because of that.

Leo: Uh, hm. So many people when they become musicians, they find their instruments, and then they have to figure out what music they want to make with that instrument, and then they discover the context around the music.

Jon: uhm, hm.

Leo: You actually saw the context first,

Jon: Um, hm.

Leo: And as you started playing piano, you already had ideas about the music that you could make with it. You got to learn how to play the instrument, already very familiar with the music that you might be able to make with it.

Jon: It's fascinating Leo, because I think my experience with music came from first seeing what it meant to be a musician before picking up an instrument. I lived in the house with one, and I saw the reality of what that is. Nine times out of ten, if you don't come from a musical family, you don't really know the pros and cons

Leo: Yeah, right.

Jon: of deciding to be a professional musician. So, I saw that, and then I also saw from all of the different perspectives around me – my uncles, my cousins who were much older than me, and then my cousins who were close to my age, all of the different versions of that decision [lightly laughs], and then that coupled with the ideas that started to grow before I found my main instrument, just from being around my cousins when we were putting music together, and being around all of that energy in New Orleans, I had an idea of what music could be before I even could play the piano. So, that to me is actually one of the main things that when I started to play piano, a lot of people think that, oh, you must've been like a prodigy to

Leo: Yeah

Jon: start so late. It really wasn't that. It was more that I had more of a fully formed musical concept before I had an instrument.

Leo: Yeah, I hear that. You know, our mutual friend, Michael Thurber [quick, shout laugh by Jon] and I talked about the idea that in your generation, we're about ten years apart, a big part of the contribution I think a lot of players in their twenties and freedom that you guys feel is to mix it up and to throw in, like different spices, like cooking, whatever you grew up with and you liked, it's all valid. It's not like this is the Jazz music, and this is the R&B music, and this is the Pop music I make. It's like, no. It's all the same, and I can make it all in the same way, and that a big part of the contribution seems to be in allowing yourself to, you say, be you, that means be all of you, right? That means whatever you dig, that goes in the pot.

Jon: Uhm, hm.

Leo: And, it's not so separated. So that, that sound that you hear might come from the notes you play, and the way you phrase but it also might come from the tunes that you choose and the way that you choose to, to arrange or put the band together. That's my, my perception of it.

Jon: I think a lot of the musical dogma, if you will, didn't infiltrate my development, and I didn't even become aware of it until I was in my late teens, and,

Leo: You didn't become aware of the musical dogma until you were already in your late teens.

Jon: Yeah, and which to me was a huge blessing. Like, my family's band they didn't really think about what they were playing, what they called it all – ever. My cousins, we didn't think about that. I got with Alvin Batiste and all the different musicians that I played with around New Orleans, who maybe they thought of it like that, but for me, it was me going into different situations every night [lightly laughs], and figuring out all of this music, and then you know, my peers, we grew up with this wide variety of music and access that only kept growing as the years went on. You know, Trombone Shorty and I, um, Troy, we had a band together when we were fourteen, that, um, we actually kept playing together until I graduated high school, and that band continued on, and that's what he's doing now. But his whole concept, and all of my other peers was, uhm, coming from the same mentality from teachers that we had – from Alvin Batiste, Klyde Kerr, Kid Jordan, Ellis Marsalis a little bit but not as much, just all of those guys taught us – you know, just do your thing. When I got into this musical dogma of you have to do this, you have to be this, you have to figure that out, it was confusing but at the same

time, I had this really strong root. So, I sorted that out with, um, a lot of tumult, but I was very, very, very fortunate, because a lot of people I think start in music like that,

Leo: with the dogma,

Jon: Yeah.

Leo: and, then they have to figure out later on,

Jon: They have to figure out later. I mean, trust me, there's a lot that can be learned from both, but at the end of the day, I'd rather be on this side of the fence.

Leo: Yeah, so, I get the feeling that you're kind of referring to what happened when you moved to New York. Is that what's happening here? 'Cause eventually you came to New York, and you went to Juilliard.

Jon: Yeah, you know, there was a lot that happened when I moved to New York. I'm seventeen. I come from Kenner. I haven't really toured too many places around the world. My first European tour was the summer before I went to New York. I'd been to New York maybe once before.

Leo: And, what was that tour?

Jon: Uh, that tour was me and a jazz trio going to a small school in Spain to play, and then do like a master class, and Marc Cary was the guy who, uh, led the trio. He's a great pianist. He lives in Harlem. He's amazing. He was one of the first people who really kind of looked out for me, like super cool and understanding of the fact that I wanted to do something kind of different. He was in that same boat, kind of a kindred spirit, really awesome guy too, like super cool to hang out with, and he exposed me to the New York

scene in a lot of ways, uh, going up to his house at midnight, when I first moved here, and we'd play the piano until like 6AM, you know, like that kind of a thing for me was – Golden, when I first moved here. So, there were guys like him, but, for the most part, my early experience was really rough, in, it was rough in finding my place,

Leo: Yeah.

Jon: So, I think, that's what you were alluding to.

Leo: Well you just, you know, when you said that you became aware of the musical dogma, uh, especially the dogma within jazz,

Jon: Uhm.

Leo: uh, in your late teens, I just had the sense that maybe it was when you came to Juilliard that you started to feel like, oh, maybe there's an expectation that I'm supposed to be playing this way, or studying this way, or listening this way, or, I don't know.

Jon: I think that dogma is a strong term, but it feels that way when you're young.

Leo: Yeah.

Jon: It's more about everyone has a concept. Everyone has a view. Their point of view is valid, just like yours is. To say one is more valid is where it comes into play, you have this early experience of learning from a lot of really talented and great musical voices who have a strong perspective on things, and you are a young talent, and your perspective isn't defined at all yet, or it's in flux. Every week you change what you think about music, and how you want to approach it. So, what ends up happening is you start to think that your point of view in it's undeveloped infancy is not as valid as what maybe this guy

is telling you who is great and has respect, or this guy is telling you who is your instructor and you really want to listen to it because he's your instructor, and I think that over time you realize that people have their own human stuff too that they'er dealing with, their own baggage, if you will, and that kind of stuff, sometimes, is with the influence of their, their perspective is coming from more so than purely musical intent. When you're younger, you're actually coming at it from this – wide-eyed, I want to learn music, I want to get better.

Leo: Yeah

Jon: So, It's tricky.

Leo: Yeah, so you say that you kind of struggled at first just to find your place, one thing I've noticed is that you've had like a really long standing relationship with people like Joe Saylor, and some other musicians, that seems like you found pretty soon after you moved here. How long did it take you to kind of find your scene, or your community?

Jon: I'm a intuitive kind of person, just like my mother, I like to, you know I think I take that from her. I like to feel things out, even if I'm not sure yet, what it is that I want to do, because most of the time, it's the right decision when I follow that, and I've learned that the instinct is something that is real, even though it may not be as tangible in, um, in the reality of trying to explain that to someone. They're like, what are you talking about? I'm like, no I feel it man, really [laughter from both Leo and Jon] there's something to it. When I first got to New York, I knew that nothing on the scene excited me as much as what was in my mind, even though it wasn't fully formed, and I knew that to create what it is that I was thinking about, I had to make it myself., and I knew that I would have to

be a talent scout in a lot of ways and recruit people who I thought could live up to the challenge of trying to create a new thing, kind of forge their own path alongside me, and Joe, ah man, Joe and Phil, two guys who I, I mean, they kind of like brothers more than bandmates, because we grew up from young men to now grown men together in New York. You know, Joe, we came to New York together at the same time ten years ago, and we've been playing together ever since, just because I could see that he had something about his playing that was different, and he was trying to figure out something else too, and that's what you really have to do, man. You gotta, you gotta know, okay, even if I'm not sure about this, I know there's something to it. Let me explore this, let me just step out. I don't want to just talke the same path of what I see in front of me, if I now none of it feels right.

Leo: And, was he playing all that tambourine at that point?

Jon: No.

Leo: Or, was that part of what emerged out of the project, was he became that great tambourine player that he is.

Jon: Yeah, he always had an interest in New Orleans music. He always had an instrument from those drummers, from what Herlin Riley, Shannon Powell, and, um, all of the great drummers in New Orleans of our generation and the generation before us. He would study those guys. Me, being from New Orleans, I showed him a lot of things that I knew as well, and the band, the sound of it had an influence, especially when I was first moving, when I first moved here from New Orleans, and I was coming up to New York with this kind of sensibility of a New Orleans guy, in a lot of ways, that sound was

one of the bedrocks of our music. So, he's always fit in terms of not being a New Orleans drummer, but having that interest of being around me and the band and the sound that I was creating. He just kind of fit right in. It was perfect.

Leo: There's a real New Orleans perception, especially in the band that I think in the last couple of years, and even, like I was looking on line at the record that you made on the subway, and I saw these comments where people say, Oh, I love that New Orleans music, I love hat New Orleans music. And, I was thinking to myself, well, but is this New Orleans music? I mean, yes and no. There's something in the format and in the conception that resonates on that level, I mean you have a tuba and you have, you know this tambourine, and there's a lot of things about it that I guess people relate and associate with New Orleans, but then if you listen to the actual content of the music, it's not the expected thing from New Orleans. There are pieces of it that are very traditional and then there are other pieces of it that are kind of to me, playing something knew. So, when you say, like Joe's interested in that music, but he's not a traditionalist in that sense, it makes sense.

Jon: Yeah, you know, I think people by and large don't really understand or conceive of music in a very nuaunced way, and I think the visuals of music, and the visual culture that we live in informs what it is they conclude something to be more than the actual music itself.

Leo: What they see, is what they hear.

Jon: Right. What they see is what they hear. They see a tuba. They see a tambourine. They see a guy from New Orleans, and his name is Batiste, and that's New Orleans

music, and they see a good time. They see a marching ensemble, and that celebratory atmosphere, and that marching reminds them of second-line, or something that they would see in Mardi Gras, or some celebratory parade that you may see during Carnival season. I think that all of those elements are there in some degree or another, and all of those conclusions are well-founded, but also they couldn't be further away from the truth. [Leo laughs] And, in conceiving the music, I never actually thought about any of that [Jon laughs]. It was more circumstance that led it there.

Leo: Um, hm.

Jon: The fact that one summer our bass player, Phillip, decide that he wanted to leave, take a break from music for a minute, who, um, you know, we, we, we loved him, and we basically made the music fit around him, and, um, that was one of those things where we didn't want to get another bass player, nor could we find someone to fill his shoes, because he was so great, we wanted to find another way to explore the music, and at the time, Ibanda Ruhumbika, the tuba player in the band, he was just starting at Juilliard, in the classical division. I asked him one time, do you play jazz? So, I asked him to play a show with us, and he got to and the show, and even though he said he played jazz, he didn't play jazz [Sniffly laughs by Jon Leo]. He was a classical musician, and he learned how to play all of those different styles and different things that we do in the band as a part of being in the band, and Joe was learning the tambourine, so it could be mobile, but he also was learning at the time doing the washboard, but eventually he decided to stick with the tambourine more, and that kind of evolved into Stay Human, not necessarily thinking at any point about the parallels to New Orleans culture.

Leo: The one thing that is a clear parallel like you said, is that it's a walking ensemble.

Jon: Yes.

Leo: That is such a fundamental identifier in the band, and when you did Colbert, you made a real effort, I think to drive that point home, and I've seen the video of you guys out on the street and down in the subway and doing that, and there's something about walking with a band that you just don't see, and we, of course we associate that with New Orleans, but it's a very powerful statement, and I, and it does seem to me that is something that you took from, rather or not it was conscious, from your early days seeing it in New Orleans.

Jon: Well, that's the thing, I'd never seen a second line in New Orleans growing up, and I took the concept of moving and being mobile not from the New Orleans tradition, but more from a creative impulse that I had from seeing concerts in New York.

Leo: Hm.

Jon: I thought every concert that I saw in New York left something to be desired on the end of interactivity and on the end of audience engagement. I started to think about, what is it that would make these performances more engaging? Then I started to see other things around our touring circuit that made me realize that this is just something in live music that I feel like is not really happening at a high level. It's a separation. It's an audience, and there's a stage where the and is performing and the artist is there, and it's separated, and you buy a ticket and you come, sometimes you dance, sometimes you sit, sometimes you clap in between songs, sometimes you just hang out and drink, but there's no real engagement beyond that.

Leo: Um, hm.

Jon: Then I started to think, well I don't like that when I go to it [Laughter from Jon and Leo]. As a musician and as a live performer, I like it when I feel like I'm a part of it, but I've never really felt that accept for when I'm playing and I think that a lot of people like that, rather they know it or not. The idea of being mobile came from well what is it that we can do to bring this element of community and this folk element to music again, because I think it changed from the folk element when the American capitalist system came into play, and we started to think about how could commodify music and sell it. So, that made everything more separate, more distant, everyone stop being around the campfire,

Leo: Uhm, hm.

Jon: or passing around the guitar, passing around the violin in Appalachia, the Africans and the Drum Circle, or all of these different traditions of Folk Music that you think, that was the most engaging live performance. So, New Orleans is just one example of that Folk element in music, that community vibration that you get when you have a guy with an instrument or a band of guys with people and they're performing or sharing this experience together, and I intuitively was moving towards that, not thinking of New Orleans second-line in particular, but more the over-arching principle of engagement and live performance being more interactive.

Leo: Um, hm. I've noticed just in listening to your records under your own name that when you made that switch and brought in that amount of freedom, you start singing. That's when you started singing. What happened exactly, that you started to sing?

Jon: In the earlier years, I was very, very focused on becoming the best jazz piano player that I could possibly be. I listened to Thelonious Monk for a year, almost exclusively, and this is when I was nineteen, and you can hear evidence of that on the Live at the Rubin Museum.

Leo: Absolutely.

Jon: The trio album that we did back then, in 2006.

Leo: And now, almost every one of your instrumental records, you did at least one Monk tune.

Jon: Yap, he was, um, like discovering a hidden treasure.

[Jon and Leo laugh]

Jon: I was into the idea of percussive, angular, kind of piano playing, with a sound that was very charismatic, almost like a cartoon character kind of a sound, that kind of charismatic, just over the top, super dense, and, uh, um, how do you say, tense harmonies that released themselves into very open, block sounding bell tones [making ringing sound] *BLING BONG, BONG, GONG,* like the piano is singing, and I was going towards that concept early in my development as a pianist, and then I heard Monk who unbeknownst to me had done this years before I was even born.

[laughter by Jon and Leo]

Leo: Yeah, right. So you were thinking about that same kind of playing, and then you heard Monk.

Jon: Right, yeah [laugh], and it hit me so hard. It hit me like a ton of bricks, man. It was unbelievable when I heard it, and I was like, this guy, man, okay, I get it.

Leo: So people weren't necessarily talking about Monk when you were

Jon: No

Leo: starting to play the piano in New Orleans?

Jon: No, people talked about Monk, but in the tradition of being a young student, I heard what they were saying, but I didn't really understand it. I had to come across it in my own way, walking down my path, and I, I, I loved it. I loved it because of the moment that I found it in my life, at that time.

Leo: because you didn't mention it with Monk, but when you see videos of Monk, he doesn't look like it was funny, but I think it was a lot of humor in his playing.

Jon: Oh, yeah,

Leo: And, I hear it in your playing too.

Jon: Logic, in a lot of ways, is humorous, especially musical logic, you have this call and response, and it's what you'd expect, but it's not quite how you'd expect it. Timing is right, boom, in the middle, and it hits you. So, I take a lot of that from Monk. It was appropriate, and that transitioned from Live at the Rubin to The Amazing Jon Batiste EP was the transition of me coming out of that early phase of focusing on the piano and then going more into what I had been doing when I was a kid, except now I'm twenty, twenty-one, and I'm trying to explore how to make that sound come into being in my young

adult life with a band and my own thing, not my cousins, it's my thing, and really trying to figure out, how do I reconcile this impulse with this last three or four years of intense studying jazz music, and I'm still at Juilliard, studying this jazz and classical music intensely, but something in me switched. So, it was like many wheels turned at the same time.

Leo: Yeah. What was the affect of studying classical music on your playing?

Jon: Well classical musicians of the highest order understand the elements of form and the elements of melodic development, more so, I think, than any other form of music. The forms that they came up with, and the way that they would develop things throughout the structure, it is the epitome of what that is. I feel like they created that, and if you take that sophistication of form and development, and apply it to any style of music, it raises the sophistication of whatever you're playing. You have guys that have done things like that in jazz, like John Lewis and The Modern Jazz Quartet, and all of this is applicable to jazz and any style of music, but just understanding that was the first thing that I got from studying classical music. Brahms, for instance, the way that he would develop things and bring things back in his orchestrations and the way that his music would so potent and emotional but still super sophisticated and have this intellectual quality, or then listen to somebody like Charles Ives, when I was studying his life, and seeing how he didn't have any recognition of how until the end of his life, and he was doing what he wanted to do until the end of his life, regardless of anything that people would say about him. You know, he would have these performances of his own music that he would have to pay for, and he would have all of these people who he would get to copy his music and write it out that would try to correct it because they thought it was

wrong. Just like the idea that you could push into music that is so dense and sophisticated, and you know in jazz, I learned that in a different way, of course, but classical music, is kind of like, let's pull out the score. [laughs]

Leo: Uhm, hm, and this is what it is, you can look at it, and it was all on the page.

Jon: Yeah, right. Everything is super intentional, and also the technical aspects of it later, I had a great, incredible piano teacher – William Doglian, who, uh, is from Brazil, and he was my piano instructor in I guess you can say, the last few years of my study at Juilliard, and then going into my master's degree study there, I studied with him. At one point, I took a piano lesson every single day, seven days a week, for maybe six months, I did a piano lesson every single day, was basically living at his house, and he helped me to really hook up some technical pianonistic things, that, uh, before then I'd heard them and understood them when other people did them, but I didn't know how to do them myself, and, um, he gave me just the tools to figure that out.

Leo: There's a challenge, I would imagine, at that point, to simplify, and say, okay, but the fact that I can do this doesn't mean that I'm going to do this, or that it's appropriate in every scenario. I imagine that it would be a challenge to figure out what to get rid of and ignore, to a certain degree, while you're putting your own project together.

Jon: Plus, you're going out there. You're trying to work, you're trying to get your stuff together, you're putting yourself out there, you're building a career, and I was doing that intensely. I like to call it making a gig. Like, if you don't have a gig, make a gig [Leo laughs] if you don't have a place that wants to book you, find some space and book it yourself, put chairs up and get people to come. If you don't have any music to play that,

but you want to make a record, write a whole tons of music. Develop it. Play it for people. Get it right, and then record the record. I was pushing myself forward in that way, and then by that point, I'd already built this following in this career. I remember that in 2008, I had really come a long way. Moved to New York in 2004, by 2008 I had really established my presence as one of the guys on the scene. I was playing, and a lot of people had bands that I was playing in, and I had my own band that I would play regularly around the city. I remember we were appearing in the *New York Times* like once every week for a month in 2008, and I was like, man, huh, I'm actually like, out here [slight laugh]. So, that was happening, and I'm also trying to figure out who am I musically, 'cause now I have this attention and people are looking to see what am I gonna do next, and people are saying, you're this guy. No, I thought you're this guy. You're this guy, and you're still very young, by this time I'm probably twenty-one or twenty-two, and people are saying this or that, you're this or you're the next, or you're trying to do this, right? Or, you're from New Orleans. I'm still trying to figure out what's true.

Leo: You know, you mentioned that you were working in other bands, too, and I noticed you worked as a side man with a lot of really wonderful, established artists. How did those experiences, how do they still continue to affect your thinking about putting together your own project, and just what it means to be a musician?

Jon: I learned a ton about the business and about being a bandleader from all the different people I played with. I had the good fortune of playing with many of the bands that you probably read about or heard about for a number of years at a time. Roy Hargrove band, I played with him in three of his different bands for four years straight, uh, three and a half years of playing with Roy, and four years I played in Cassandra

Wilson's bands. I played with Wynton Marsalis for a number of years and still have different collaborations with him at Jazz at Lincoln Center, and I played in Abbey Lincoln's band for a year, when I was seventeen, which was the beginning of that, which led to many of the other sideman things that I did over the years in the jazz world. The things that I learned I kind of take and compile my own identity as a bandleader from the different experiences, in particular, from Roy, Cassandra, and Wynton, who are very different people, three very different musical personalities, and three very different bandleaders.

Leo: Um, hm, what are some of the distinctions between the way they lead bands.

Jon: Cassandra Wilson is extremely free. Doesn't like to give the band members any instruction about what to play, and its very, I guess you could say drawn to creating an image and an atmosphere for the listener. So, she'll say this is like the harvest moon, or this is like running water, or we want the spirits to be evoked through this song, many amazing things that she gives you to kind of run with.

Leo: Uhm, hm.

Jon: And, that creates a very particular sound with a band, depending on who you pick and how you put them together. It's a really amazing thing.

Leo: Was that a challenge for you, at first, when she would give you that kind of instruction, or that kind of direction?

Jon: The band was full of people I thought were amazing, and I'd admired for a long time before, uh, Herlin Riley was the drummer, Reginald Veal was the bassist, Marvin

Sewell was the guitarist. So, there were a lot of guys there with creative power. So, for me, it was more trying to keep up with the level of creativity that was going on. It was fun and exploratory for me, and it was tough, but not in a way where when I played with Wynton's band, for instance, it was a much different experience, because he has a very specific way that he has the musicians play. He has a very specific concept, and it's very meticulous and it's driven towards creating his vision of jazz, which, um, has freedom within it, and it has a lot of freedom once you understand the lay of the land, so to speak. I learned a lot from that as well, because figuring out how to speak in that language, and how to be a part of his concept, and build it up and have my own voice within that concept versus the freedom of going to create whatever I want based upon minimal instruction.

Leo: Yeah, would Wynton give you specific records to listen to or cats to check out?

Jon: Yes, definitely. He would always refer to members of the band who definitely got his concept and did it in their own way, and he would show them to me as examples of how to approach the concept, but not of what to play.

Leo: Right, say this is an example of somebody who is absolutely on board with what we are doing, but found a way to stay true to themselves at the same time.

Jon: Yap, exactly. Marcus Roberts who really being one of the pianists who, you know, actually Marcus Roberts is, was somebody that I would talk to and check in with many times throughout my development. So, Marcus was one of those guys.

Leo: I met Dan Nimmer right before he moved out here. He's from Wisconsin, I'm from Wisconsin and so is he, and I heard him play in Madison, Wisconsin which is where I'm

from, and six months later he was out here, man, and it was interesting to see that, and how he was actually somebody that understood that concept, and how to integrate into that concept.

Jon: Right, right, exactly! It's a concept, and it's amazing how formed and specific his vision is.

Leo: Yeah.

Jon: He knows exactly what he's trying to do, and knows how it operates and can basically tell each musician what they're roll is within it.

Leo: So, with that, what did you take when you put your own band together then?

Jon: One of the things that I took was a concept is a powerful thing. The other thing I took is who you pick determines how the music will come across, and that will also determine the level of freedom within the concept you can give them. Ultimately I thought about what you're trying to achieve musically is very much driven by who you are and who you choose to be your counterpart on the bandstand. And, what I mean by that is you have this vision of what you're doing, but you can't do anything by yourself. So, your vision ultimately comes out and you're trying to find faithful stewards to the vision because you're playing with other people [laughs], so as much of a concept that you come up with, you put that out there, and what they do with it is what they do with it.

Leo: So, there's trust also. There's an enormous amount of trust.

Jon: So must trust, and Roy, Roy Hargrove was one of those guys who taught me the concept of trust within individuality. Trusting in the individuality of your bandmates,

because he would give zero instruction. There would be no discussion of the music, but he resonates on a certain vibration that everyone around him feels. He trusts in his individuality, and trust that the vibration of what he's doing will connect with the vibration of the audience and the musicians, and if it doesn't, then he just has the wrong guy [laughs],

Leo: [laughs] Yeah, man,

Jon: so, I learned ultimately that you gotta just trust, you can think about it a lot, but you gotta just trust that your vibration will attract,

Leo: Yeah.

Jon: you will attract the right environment, and it's up to you to fix things when that environment around you isn't accommodating

Leo: Yeah,

Jon: of the art.

Leo: it's so interesting that you say that because I have heard other people say that in the past as well that you know if they get hired for a gig and then there's a lot of explanation that's going on, that at a certain point, you just realize that the person who's been hired, or the person that's doing the hiring, that maybe it's just the wrong guy. Maybe it's just the wrong mix. You know, if you have to do too much talking, maybe it's the wrong mix.

Jon: And, some guys function better with a lot of talking, and that's how you are, then that's the kind of guy that you gotta go get.

Leo: Hm [laughs by both Leo and Jon], yeah!

Jon: But, it, it's really, it really comes down to, [laughs from both Jon and Leo] you got to figure all that stuff out

Leo: Yeah

Jon: within yourself.

Leo: Man, I saw a video with you playing with the Roy Hargrove Big Band in Spain,

Jon: Yeah.

Leo: And, one of the things that I felt watching one of the tunes that I saw was how much of a sense of humor you were allowed to play with, and it's almost like you, like the whole band fell out on one of these tunes, like it just cuts over and the whole band is digging you so hard, and just laughing, just having such a ball hearing you play, and you really got the sense that it was fresh, and that you were not playing the same thing over every time, and they were literally listening and you got to be real free about it, and funny, and think that's where some of the Monk comes in too, because you didn't mention it with Monk, but when you see videos of Monk, he doesn't look like it was funny, but I think it was a lot of humor in his playing.

Jon: Oh, yeah,

Leo: And, I hear it in your playing too.

Jon: Logic, in a lot of ways, is humorous, especially musical logic, you have this call and response, and it's what you'd expect, but it's not quite how you'd expect it. Timing is

right, boom, in the middle, and it hits you. So, I take a lot of that from Monk, and of course my personality, I'm a very universal type of guy. I want to be understood. I want to be felt. I want the music to hit you, and I want you to feel like I'm right there with you. I, I get it, you know?

Leo: I know in your first EP, when you started singing, your lyrics are a little darker in some cases, but then, more recently, I think you have been making an effort to be positive and universal about the kinds of things that you sing, yeah, right?

Jon: Mm, hm.

Leo: Express Yourself, Let God Lead. You know, all this positivity, that everything, from the message to the music, to the musical message is gonna be in the service of positivity.

Jon: Hmm.

Leo: Is that something you think about in the music in write?

Jon: I think when I'm writing I feel life and I feel the energy around me, and I want to capture that. Write now, the energy around me is telling me to do Social Music. It's telling me to put forth an effort to create a sound that is universal and will bring people into an understanding of themselves and of other people, through performances, but also through education, through humanitarianism, and to find out how to do that, the narrative becomes more and more defined when I'm in the studio and when I write songs. So, you could say that I'm making an effort to be positive, but I say that it's more that I'm taping into the vibration that's around me. It's more that I'm being led to that, than that I'm

being dictated to that. You can ask why, or how, or [slight laughter] that's again, I'm not really the expert on that, I just know what I feel, and know what has been put in me to, uh, to do.

Leo: Hm.

Jon: So, that's kind of how I operate. I really don't know, I just [slight laugh], I go, I go with that. It seems to have been the best thing for me to go with so far. We'll see where it takes me?

Leo: The other thing that it reminds me of is that you are a very stylish person, and that your outward style is a lot of what people talk about, I mean in a lot of the press, when they talk about you, they talk about how you are a real sharp dresser, and that you are kind of a fashion-forward kind of a guy. That's a big part of your image.

Jon: Well, I'm just into a lot of stuff, man. I'm into fashion. I'm into reading about people and their life. When you read about someone and their life, you find that a lot of people express themselves in their life in a direct connection to how they express themselves through their vocation. So, for me, one of those things is fashion, and that directly connects to my vocation as a musician, and, um, a performer, artist, educator, however you want to call it, because I present to people. I present myself. I present my music, my art, my concept, my vision, my energy. I present. So, when you think about that, a lot of times you, you, you are seen and there's an idea of what you're going to present based upon the visuals. So, I'm thinking about presentation all of the time. Naturally, fashion becomes a part of that, and it kind of has just expanded from kind of just being a vocational thing to every single day I live it. I don't, it's not like I can just

turn it on and off. It's ultimately why you see that connection in a lot of people's lives. You can't really turn it off when you're in something in a deep way. You're deep in it, you know?

Leo: You told me that right now, that you feel that you want to be making Social Music, which is funny because you know to you that's a very clear thing, but you've had to kind of explain what that means to other people, uh, I've read and seen some other interviews where you talk about it. One of the things that I kind of latched on to was the idea of changing the circumstances in which we hear music, and you've brought it up a little bit as well. As a matter of fact, I heard you say, extreme circumstances. I believe in making music in extreme circumstances, can you talk a little bit about what that means?

Jon: Extreme meaning to take it from the polished and very accommodating atmosphere of a venue where everything is set-up to go and have a very pleasant and um, exhilarating musical experience to making it be in life, like, the music is in life. We getting it in life. Like you're walking down the street, and it's snowing, and all of a sudden it's this experience that evolves around you, and you get wrapped up in it, and you'll have this experience with music that's in your life, and you'll never forget it, that's what the subway concept came from. Peole are sittin on the subway, they're unsuspecting, not trying to hear music, maybe they're having a great day, maybe they're having a terrible day, might've just proposed to his girl just now, you know, he might've just got an 'F' on a test and he's like, man, going home to study o something, you know, life, life is just happening, cat just bought a can of sardines or something and he's on the train, we're playing, I just love that because I think ultimately that is just how what we do gonna impact people in the most positive way, and I think that's what music, in it's most pure

form before the selling and the genre labelling and all of that stuff, before that came into play, music at it's purest form was in life.

Leo: You started out by saying where you are today is trying to find the high art, the folk art, and the commercial aspect of it, and find out where do they meet and how do you bring them together. So, what are you thinking about doing now?

Jon: I look at the turn of the century New Orleans, you have all of these elements coming together, the biggest port city in the world, in America, newly formed where English and French colonization is happening where they're bringing all these elements. The Native Americans have all of these elements that they've brought from their culture of who knows where. Then, you have the Caribbean and then trading through the port, all of these influences from Haiti, Cuba, all of these Caribbean sounds, Jamaica of the Irish and Anglo-Saxton tradition coming to New Orleans. You have also, the Spanish, which Columbus, you know, the Spanish influence that is, uh, a big sound of New Orleans, even today. All of this is happening, and then you have the Africans, and the slavery of the African-American tradition that is basically in New Orleans found it's way to express this celebratory sentiment of African culture of the drum circle and the community community coming together in this ritualistic, communal sort of way, places like Congo Square, where they would play the drums, and that wasn't something that was allowed in slavery anywhere else.

Leo: Yeah.

Jon: So, what you have is this confluence of cultures in events in the world history. This new country that this guy has found. You know, all of this stuff is happening, and what

ends up coming to a head at the turn of the century in New Orleans, in this great port city, is the confluence of this early capitalism of America, which is the beginning of this commercial pop music sort of landscape that we see now. You have the high art from all these influences that we see from the European music, to what you consider to be, uh, the American classical music of jazz and all these different things that were rooted in blues, and gospel, negro spirituals and coming together, and that's both the folk element, and the high art element, because the sophistication of all of those things coming together to a new form of music is jazz, that's how I theorized that jazz was born. You know, you have these people coming together, you know, what are you gonna play for them. There are cultures and experiences that has never come together like this before. So, jazz comes out of New Orleans because it had the perfect environment to incubate all of these things that never happened in the history of the world before.

Leo: What I'm hearing you say, is that, it's not just the combination of those people making the music, it was the fact that, that was the audience.

Jon: Yap, right.

Leo: What's gonna satisfy this collection of people, this diverse collection of people.

Jon: Diverse collection of people, and now we have this capitalist mentality that is really coming to full fore and develop 1900s, and we have this new form of music that is taking the world by storm, because they've never heard anything like it, and then, through all of this stuff, a guy like Louis Armstrong pops out, and um, it makes perfect sense if you look at that historically. That's the kind of environment necessary to breed a guy like a Louis

Armstrong in New Orleans. SO, I feel like that was the first time in history that you had, you know, high art, folk music, and popular culture colliding. There was no popular culture before then. The high art music was always separate from the music that was the folk music, and whenever it came together, again there was no culture to make it something that you can buy, and sell, and market, you know, and all of this stuff

Leo: And, define.

Jon: Yeah, and define, like a genre, all of this, all this stuff, you know, didn't exist. So, for me Social Music over a hundred years later is the natural progression of what jazz is. It's experienced, and now in 2014, the world is more connected now than it's ever been, and it's connected in an even more intense way than what was happening in early America, in what New Orleans kind of confluence to a certain degree, the world is now in a similar point.

Leo: The connected world today, is sort of like the community of New Orleans years ago.

Jon: And, it's deep because the ideas are flowing at such a rapid pace, and there's so much flexibility and the young people are so checked in. The technology is adanced and evolved to a point where it's so integrated into their lifestyle. Some people have grown up and known what it was like to be without The Internet

Leo: Sure.

Jon: So, I'm a part of that bridge generation where we grew up just early enough to live when were kids without having a cell phone all of the time, or without being on the

computer all of the time, and then to grow up now, and it's everywhere, we'll text it, but we still have an attention span to read it long form, or a book or something like that. I think that it's a turning point

Leo: Right now.

Jon: Right now, and what it is that I want to do with music is to simply pin point this moment in time and a way that brings everybody into the same room, around an experience, every generation, every race, everybody into the same room. I just want to get everybody into the same room, and the experience that Social Music brings, allows everybody to come in to the same room, and then from there because it feels so good what happens I think will really change the world, because this kind of collaboration, the same way that it happened in New Orleans is going to create something that we can't conceive.

Leo: Mm, hm.

Jon: People will understand each other better, just by that because music is a much more empathetic and congenial way of getting people together in the same room, especially if they have conflict or misunderstanding than sitting at a table or trying to argue it out, legislation or government even, if I can say that, I mean, I think that an experience like the Social Music experience in the way that I envision it can really galvanize all of this.

Leo: Is this an idea that you think can grow beyond Stay Human, I mean is this something that you think can grow into it's own kind of universal thing that you find other kinds of Social Music things and projects and practitioners all over the world?

Jon: Yeah, I think that Social Music isn't a genre of music more than it's an approach and an evolution of to what I think all of the music that people will be dealing with, will kind of fall into, simply because this is where we are. It's not something I've actually constructed. It's not something that I'm taking elements of things and putting together to make happen. I feel like this is where we are. So,

Leo: This is just a fact.

Jon: words I'm basically articulating what I think everybody feels anyway. In my own way, I'm putting to the sentiment of how I feel the artistic community is, um, feeling, and if that is right or wrong, we'll see with time [slight laughter], but that's kind of where I'm at.

Leo: Jon Batiste, man, thank you so much for taking time and sharing all, all of your insights with me, I thank you so much, it's been a pleasure.

Jon: Yeah, man, for sure, you a bad cat, woahh, shucks, Ha!

Jon Batiste Interview with Walter Isaacson

"A Conversation with Jon Batiste: The History & Future of American Music" with Walter Isaacson at Aspen Ideas, The Aspen Institute, Summer/July of 2014

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T5EQFPLcD_w

Walter Isaacson

Walter Isaacson, Fellow of the Royal Society for the encouragement of Arts, Manufacturers, and Commerce (FRSA), an American writer and journalist, is the President and CEO of the Aspen Institute – a nonpartisan educational and policy studies organization based in Washington, D.C. He was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, the son of Irwin and Betty Lee (Seff) Isaacson. His father, Irwin, was a "kindly Jewish distracted humanist engineer with a reverence for science" and his mother, Betsy, was a real estate broker. Isaacson attended New Orleans' Isidore Newman School, where he was student body president. He attended Deep Springs College for the Telluride Association Summer Program (TASP) before graduating from Harvard College in 1974, where he earned a A.B. cum laude in history and literature as well as Pembroke College of Oxford University, where he was a Rhodes Scholar. He began his career at The Sunday Times of London and then the New Orleans Times-Picayune. He joined TIME in 1978 and served as a political correspondent, national editor, and editor of digital media before becoming the magazine's 14th editor in 1996. Isaacson's most recent book, *The Innovators: How a Group of Hackers, Geniuses, and Geeks Created the Digital Revolution* (2014), is a biographical tale of the people who invented the computer, Internet and the other great innovations of the digital age. He is the author of *Steve Jobs* (2011), *Einstein: His Life and Universe* (2007), *Benjamin Franklin: An American Life* (2003), and *Kissinger: A*

Biography (1992), and coauthor of *The Wise Men: Six Friends and the World They Made* (1986). As he was born in New Orleans, Louisiana, and has also pursued an exhaustive research of Louis Armstrong, there's a certain comradarie amongst he and Jon's conversation of The History of Jazz that includes such luminaries as Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll Morton. They delve into the early roots of jazz in New Orleans on to Jon's vision and philosophy of Stay Human and Social Music. This interview is extremely educational while personally reflective of their New Orleans roots. I am greatly appreciative and invigorated by discovering such interview in research for my thesis – Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Rediscovered: An Introspective Analysis of Jon Batiste and Stay Human. In fact, this is one of the interviews that triggered such idea about the Social Music of Jon Batiste and Stay Human possibly being a rediscovery of jazz – as it was initially intended to be.

Transcribed by Cherise Harris

Walter: Jon Batiste, as you know from his last name, is part of a three or four generation family in my hometown of New Orleans. I've known and admired the Batiste Family all the way through. I think the The Batistes, The Nevilles, and, uh, Marsalises are from the same neighborhood, and all taught each other how to play, and I think, uh, is it true that Wynton has sort of been a mentor of yours, Wynton Marsalis?

Jon: That's right, uh, I remember I was fourteen when I met Wynton for the first time, and we played basketball, and then he won, and I was like, man, how did this old guy win? But then after that, we became very close when I moved to New York. I went to Juilliard, and I got there when I was seventeen, so that was a few years later, and he's the Artistic Director of Jazz at Lincoln Center, and over the years, I've been doing stuff with them. Lucky enough to get a few awards

from there and play with his band, and he's really been very helpful in helping me to construct my vision in terms of the music education side of things, and also jazz in the twenty-first century."

Walter: Yeah, uh, I mean one of the things you and Wynton both do, and you in particular now, is take jazz, but also make it for a millennial generation.

Jon: [smiling and nodding head to say yes] That's right.

Walter: Your also able to make it into social music, make it into something new, but still keeping the roots, right, I mean, is that your goal?

Jon: "You have to start from somewhere. So, you know, the beauty of jazz is that it can accommodate all styles of music. You can take jazz, and you can put rock in it, and it's still jazz. Or, you can take jazz and you can put blues in it, it's jazz. You can take jazz and put any style of music into it, and it keeps it's integrity. But, if you take another style of music, and you put jazz into that style, it turns into something else. So, something about jazz is, um, is magical in that way.

Walter: Does that come from the roots of jazz, around 1900, when so much is flowing in?

Jon: Well New Orleans, my hometown, is a big part of that change in America, because you have all of these people coming together, and say you have a party, right?

Walter: Yeah.

Jon: And you go to the party, what do the people at the party dance to? What music do you play, if you have the French there, and the Spanish, and the Irish, the Africans there and they have the drums, and then you have all of these people that they have their own folk music, but they've never been together, especially in a social context like that.

Walter: Well wait, let's list all the things that come together in the 1880s to 1900 in New Orleans. As you said there's Congo Square, with the drums and the Africans,

Jon: Oh my goodness

Walter: freed slaves, ?***Jon DeCoulour?*** You want to explain what those are?

Jon: Well, when you have people who are slaves, but they also have their culture that they brought with them, and then they have this new culture, they're figuring out a way to acclimate to this new environment, that's what Congo Square was. In Africa they would play the drums all the time as a religious expression, and Sunday was the day that they gave their ?. This is your day to have your culture and continue that tradition. So Congo Square became one of those places where people, especially the freed slaves could go and express this, I guess at that point it was a rebellion, but it was a silent rebellion. So what ends up happening with that is slowly more people figure out, oh man, this is where we go to get free, this is where we go to do our thing. So then, people started to like it, and once people started to like it, it became a part of the popular culture.

Walter: So then you also have the creole orchestras.

Jon: That's right, that's where Jelly Roll Martin and figures like that come from. Where you have

Walter: I've often thought of you as a cross between Stevie Wonder and Jelly Roll Morton.

Jon: Whewwhhh

[crowd laughs]

Walter: On the keyboards.

Jon: [laughing] I love that. You know, Jelly Roll is one of my bigger influences because he's one of the first guys to take the musical form that they created and all of this stuff that was

happening, Gottschalk was as well, and write it down and put it into a context where you could give it to any musician of any style, a classical musician who didn't improvise, or you could give it to a guy that didn't even read music, and they could come together and play on the same bandstand.

Walter Isaacson: Do you have anything that you want to show us on the Jelly Roll style?

Jon: Oh man,

Walter: What, that's too easy of a question?

Jon: No I love that. So Jelly Roll, he's got so many different elements in his music. You hear his music, and you have the high part which is the clarinet all in the piano. He'll take all of these different sections, so you have the high section, which is [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration], and that's the clarinet taking, I guess the obligati, it's like a bird flying in the sky [makes humming sound], and then in the middle you got the trumpets, and that's the melody [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration], then at the bottom you have the trombones, and the trombones are kind of, what they call, tailgating, following behind and laying a foundation for the trumpet, and then you still got the clarinet just flying on the top, so the trombone is [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration], and that's also what the tuba is doing at the bottom, doing the bass line. Unfortunately, I don't have enough keys [of the harmonaboard] to do that part, but you can imagine.

Walter: Now wait, take that melody, that Jelly Roll melody, and let's get non-chronological for a moment, how does that melody, like, reflect itself now?

Jon: Well, if you take something that is [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration] pentatonic, five note scale [Jon plays one octave of the major pentatonic scale upward and then downward on harmonaboard as demonstration] yeah, that's the basis of all pop music right now, in terms of the

harmonies, in terms of the melodies, all of it is pentatonics. So you take a song like, um, [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration] 'Royals' by Lorde, [lightly singing] *there will never be royals*. It's all pentatonic, Jelly Roll was doing that way back then.

Walter: [lightly laughs] And so, you have Jelly Roll, and he's sort of a honky-tonk piano player, creole to some extent. What other influences are coming in at that time?

Jon: You have the European classical music influence coming in.

Walter: And, like fox trot orchestras.

Jon: Yes, you have the marching ensembles, John Philip Souza.

Walter: And that's coming like the Spanish-American War is over, and they're all honkin their trumpets and clarinets down in New Orleans, right, on Dryades Street.

Jon: Well, the thing about Dryades, and if you look at the history of it, Dryades all the way down to um, the Treme, well now you see the whole culture of the second-line and the Mardis Gras Indians still alive. That's the first time that people could actually see the music in the street, and see the transformation of it from the first time the bass drum was very straight, and you have marching bands

Walter: Wait, wait, wait, that bass drum that we still have comes from the Spanish-American War marches?

Jon: Exactly.

Walter: Cool.

Jon: So, if you take the way that they played the bass drum, that's the more straight *boom, boom, boom, boom* [light vocal demonstration in 4/4 time]

Walter: And the tuba is,

Jon: The tubas is mimicking it.

Walter: Got you.

Jon: So, it's kind of like walking in step, you know you see them people walking and they feet be going all the way out. It's like they walking in step, and the tuba is on the other side [immediately mimics the bass drum after each beat], and then in New Orleans during that time when so much stuff was coming in, the Africans took that rhythm, and then the creoles took that rhythm, and they had different ways of playing it.

Walter: Show me.

Jon: Well, first the creoles [Jon hand claps a syncopated rhythm as demonstration].

Walter: So, they have a back-beat.

Jon: So they put a little bit more of this kind of funky thing on it.

Walter: Well, explain what a creole is.

Jon: Well creole is when you have the Spanish and the Africans, and they mix. In New Orleans it's a special kind of a – there's the Cajun creole, which is in Lafayette, Louisiana, which is where my grandfather is from

Walter: yeah, that's what I was about to say

Jon: Yeah, Lafayette. And then you have the creoles that came into New Orleans in Congo Square, and Jelly Roll Morton was really a part of that. Sidney Bechet was also a part of that, and you see that culture still now.

Walter: But, even with Batiste, Marsalis, Neville, Bechet – somewhat European names, African-American, European

Jon: Barbarin.

Walter: Barbarin is the, Oscar Barbarin was the one you knew, right?

"Oscar, yep."

Walter: So, show me how that comes together.

[Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration]

Walter: Wow, could that work with a tuba and bass drum?

Jon: Oh, yes, the tuba and the bass drum would add the funk to it. You heard how it kind of had the parlor music vibration, which is the French thing, and then you also have the blues into it, which is the folk music of the African-American.

Walter: But where did the blues come from – it's the same period, 1880 to 1900?

Jon: Well, the blues came from two different strains. First the blues came from the gospel tradition, and the spirituals, and this is when you start to get, you talk about the Spanish, the Spanish also brought the guitars over. So, when you get the guitar in the hands of somebody like Robert Johnson, he doesn't know the Spanish tradition, so he comes up with his own way of playing.

Walter: So Robert Johnson is basically a blues player, right?

Jon: Right.

Walter: So, show me something that he would've done.

Jon: Whewhhh [Jon plays harmonaboard and sings a blues as demonstration and sings] *Oh, in the evening, in the evening when the sun goes down/ oh, in the evening, in the evening when the sun goes down/ oh, ain't it lonesome sometimes, when your lover ain't around, yeah, yeah.*

[audience claps]

Walter: Okay, so, that's the blues stream, we're making a jambalaya, right?

Jon: Yeah, it's a whole lot, like Wynton say, it's a gumbo.

Walter: So, we're making a gumbo, and you got the blues, and that comes in, maybe from the Mississippi Delta and the plantations, right?

Jon: Yeah, but then you have Appalachian folk music, and then if you go to the mountains, they got fiddles, and then you got stuff like 'Bowl them Cabbage Down', and different folk songs that are also part of the blues. That's the thing about America, man, there was so much stuff going on at the same time, and when you put it together, jazz kind of captured it, and funneled it into one art form that's developed over a hundred years.

Walter Isaacson: Yeah, by the way, we keep leaping forward, so let's do it again, you have Robert Johnson, you have all of this coming together. Show me how that's reflected in maybe the twenty-first century?

Jon: Oh yeah, so take something like, [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration] so, that's Jimi Hendrix's 'Voodoo Child' [Jon lightly hums and sings lyric as demonstration] *I'm a voodoo child, Lord knows, I'm a voodoo child, oh, yeah.* So Jimmy, he's basically a blues musician, then you take Jimi and how he influenced all the rock and roll, and you take that idea all the way to now, you got people like Gary Clarke, Jr. playing blues and stuff like that.

Walter: But, if that's because you got the guitar coming in. How did the guitar come in? You said partly Appalachain?

Jon: No, no, no, that's the fiddles.

Walter: Okay, I got you.

Jon: The fiddle is, is like uh, when you have folk songs, I can play an example of it, it ain't gonna sound like a fiddle [pointing to his harmonaboard with a smile], but [light laughter from audience]

Walter: It's okay, we've got good ears.

[Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration of the fiddles, and audience claps]

Walter: But I didn't really know, did the fiddle really became part, an ingredient in the gumbo of jazz?

Jon: The fiddle became an ingredient because when you listen to the fiddle music that is now like folk music, and, uh, I guess you could say, like bluegrass music, that continued in a different strain and created it's own thing, similar to jazz, and there's a repertoire for that, but if you play with those musicians, and you play with jazz musicians, I feel like it's almost the easiest conversation musically to have. It's like cousins. We can play a blues; they have blues that they play too. We can play something that's like, um, based on a rhythm changes for them.

Walter: Sort of like that scene in Deliverance; it's a musical conversation.

Jon: Exactly, right. It's a musical conversation.

Walter: And, uh, going back to the blues, you mentioned the spirituals and the, I would say sanctified church, is that right?

Jon: Uhm, hm.

Walter: Are those very similar, or is that two different strands, sort of the spirituals of the church music?

Jon: Well, the spirituals and gospel music are different. Spirituals were more by the, um, slaves and that was what transitioned into gospel music which is when you have the church, and that's like, um, the difference between gospel and blues, when you ask that question is secular and non-secular. The blues was basically the secular version of what gospel music was, and it still is.

Walter: But do they have a similar melodic or back-beat, or tempo strands?

Jon: It's similar, but over time it changed because the instrumentation changed. At the beginning it was the same, you just had hand-claps and voices.

Walter: Give me an example.

Jon: It's like, uh, [Jon hand-claps and sings "This Little Light of Mine" for gospel]

Walter: So, that's gospel, show me how it'd be done in the blues?

Jon: The blues is still the same, right, here [Jon hand-claps at the same tempo clapped for "This Little Light of Mine" and then sings "Oh----Margie, Won't You Leave Me Alone? Oh, Margie, won't you go back home. I say, Oh, Margie, girl won't you leave me alone, wooh, I said, oh, Margie, oh, won't you go back home" for secular as demonstration] [audience claps with laughter] You dig?

Walter: I get it now! [smiling]

Jon: It's the same, the rhythm, you know.

Walter: So, we're hitting 1901, let us say, what happens then –the man?

Jon: Oh, uh, oh, uh, oh, uh, oh, well, Louis Armstrong is born August, in August, you know, he used to say it was July 04th.

Walter: Yeah, we're almost at his birthday that he celebrated.

Jon: Right.

Walter: Cause for his whole life, he said he was born July 04, 1900.

Jon: Right.

Walter: Why'd he say that, if it wasn't? He wanted; I think it was partly he wanted maybe to enlist, because he was in the Waif's Home.

Jon: Right.

Walter: He was in a foster home, or, uh, an orphanage home, uh,nd he had to lie about his age,

Jon: uhm, hm

Walter: Or is it just Louis Armstrong being Louis Armstrong?

Jon: I think it's both, man. [light laughter form both] Because he's an enigma, even if you go to his museum, which was his house, and you gotta guy who's, um,

Walter: Corona, Queens.

Jon: Corona, Queens, and he's world famous, and he's living in this very humble house, and you see him. People that I know that have met him would talk about seeing him in a bar, and he's sitting down, and you go talk to him and it's like – It's Louis Armstrong! Where you at Pops?! And, then Pops would just sit down, and have an hour long conversation with him. It's very, but with that kind of figure, it's like, I think you can't really know what's going on in his head

because on the outside, he has this very humble disposition, but then he's also one of the greatest geniuses of all time. So, it's like what's going on there?

Walter: I want to add one personal thing, for about six years I worked on the biography of Louis Armstrong, over the time,

Jon: Hm.

Walter: and by the end, I knew every single thing about Louis Armstrong, except for who he was.

Jon: That's what I'm saying. [lightly laughs]

Walter: I couldn't figure out why he was smiling. I didn't know rather he was happy. I didn't know rather he liked white folks. I didn't know nothing about him, and I gave it up, because I couldn't crack the code. So, help me crack the code.

Jon: Man, Pops! Well, the first thing about Pops that you have to realize is, he came from the lowest, possible situation at the time. I mean, he was in a single parent home. He was young with no money, unto the point where they said, ok, you got to go and live in the home, and that's when he went to the waif's home, and then when he was living there, he was getting in trouble, until somebody gave him the trumpet, and they were like, man, well, what do you think you can do with this? And I think, I have a theory that he was like one of those people where you give him the instrument, and the first time they play it, you hear something about them that's like, aw, man, that sounds incredible! You should take that up. So, I think the trumpet kind of saved him, and also changed American music at the same time. That was a great moment.

Walter: Give me an example of early Louis Armstrong. I guess it's, King Oliver or Kidd Ory's Band, what's he playing then, back then?

Jon: [Grabbing his harmonabord] Let's see

Walter: West End Blues, you want to do that?

Jon: Yeah, that's uh, that's a little, I 'm going to play something a little earlier than that. Like Um, he said [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration].

Walter: That's on his horn. [Jon nods in yes motion] Tell us about that.

Jon: It's his rhythm. That's what changed everything. Before him, it was just kind of like, [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration], more or less very straight, and then he took that same melody, and would say, okay, now check this out – [Jon plays harmonaboard as demonstration, then Jon starts moving his hand around to denote a change that he played in the rhythm]

Walter: So, what's that called, when you take the rhythm, and you move just what, a quarter beat?

Jon: Yeah, it's little shifts every now, here and there.

Walter: Yeah, so what's that called?

Jon: Soul.

[Everyone laughs.]

Jon: It's, it's like, that's not the kind of thing that you can teach, or it's not the kind of thing that you can actually say – okay, this is how you do it, so now you know how to do it. It's like he was born with some kind of divine insight, if you will.

Walter: Have you ever heard Wynton tell the story of when he was your, [motioning to Jon] you first did a record, maybe about sixteen or seventeen, right?

[Jon nods his head to communicate yes]

Walter: Wynton's about fifteen, sixteen, his father Ellis Marsalis, who you know well, piano player and teacher of music in New Orleans, uh, do you know his story about his Dad giving him Louis Armstrong?

Jon: No, what's that?

Walter: Okay, real quickly, uh, Wynton say's, uh, he's sixteen, fifteen, doesn't like Louis Armstrong, you know waving the handkerchief [Jon lightly laughs], you know, forget it. So Ellis say's, here, play this, it's Jubilee, I think, and Wynton's kind of cocky, and he starts playing [motions with right hand as if one playing the trumpet] he stays up all night, and by the next morning, and he realized that he can't do that rhythm he heard.

Jon: I heard that one, and he

Walter: Yeah, and he say's okay, I get it, the guy's a genius.

Jon: But, most people wouldn't think he was a genius, even to today. That's because his whole persona didn't have that kind of look like, uh, if you see Beethoven, or you see pictures of all the other older musicians, and you see them, and you hear, and you read stories about them, and everything looks so serious, like Beethoven seem like he never smiled for a picture – ever. He's like [serious frown-like expression and Walter and audience lightly laugh]. Chopin, be like [serious frown-like expression and Walter and audience lightly laugh], and you wonder like, man.

Walter: And, Louis Armstrong.

Jon: Louis Armstrong's like, [happy funny-like expression while waving hand], so it's like, is that guy really the genius? So, there's that that's going on, and then he made decisions throughout his whole thing, because he didn't really care about all that kind of thing. He wanted to be an ambassador to bring people together, and bring people from all different cultures who

may be into jazz, may be not be into jazz, different backgrounds into it, he wasn't, um, he didn't think of himself in that kind of regard.

Walter: uhm, hm, now, So what goes into making a Louis Armstrong, cause I know he's, his mother who is a prostitute, and sort of leaves him after a while, but, has him baptized in the Mississippi River, if I remember correctly,

Jon: uhm, hm [nodding yes]

Walter: So very much part of the sanctified church. He's there every day almost. I think Perdido Street where's he's growing up, what else is there, he's? Marching bands in The Quarter?

Jon: Marching bands in The Quarter, something that's not documented as much, but um he, he said it a few time, where he would be listening to opera on the streets of New Orleans from the outside of the Opera House, 'cause people went to operas back then. So, he'd be checking that out, even though he didn't have the money to check that out, he was in the neighborhood, and he would here all of these people playing, and, um, he said later, I mean not a lot of people have checked it out, but you can actually here it in his trumpet playing, the operatic sort of sentiment where he's playing through his horn, but he's singing, and a singer that he was really into was, uh, Maria ?Tettrezini?

Walter: So this was the old French Opera House.

Jon: Yeah, and he, he would listen to her. He would actually wait to see when she would play and go outside of the opera house and listen through the door, and he says, um, at one point, when he was thinking about playing, a melody or anything, just play it from the heart, and sing it, as if he was an opera singer.

Walter: Show me.

Jon: Ooh [Jon plays Amazing Grace on harmonaboard] [audience claps]

Walter: So, that's the grandest, oldest spiritual we have, right, Amazing Grace, with The French Opera House involved.

Jon: Uhm, hm.

Walter: Cool. So, you have, uh, he, explain a little bit to me even, though I grew up with it, where'd you grow up?

Jon: I grew up in Kenner, Louisiana.

Walter: Uh, oh, I'm sorry to hear that [Jon hangs head down in laughter]. But, uh, what was I, so, I was gonna say I grew up near where Louis Armstrong grew up, in Broadmore Central City, right in the heart of town, Perdido Street, and what is interesting is that it's a grand mix of people, but you even have the French Opera House as close to what was then Black Storyville, meaning, you know, sort of prostitution district, and he could go to the French Opera House, but he could also go hear the honky-tonk players at the Storyville and other houses of prostitution.

Jon: Well, there were, there are legends of that, and, uh, he talks about that, the idea that when he was in that area, you'd hear some of the greatest trumpets player alive.

Walter: Who –name the greatest alive? [smiling]

Jon: [with light laughter] Well, at that time, the greatest alive unanimously was Buddy Bolden.

Walter: And, Buddy Bolden left us almost no recordings, right?

Jon: None, none. There's just something that, uhm, I believe it was Bunk Johnson, another great trumpet player.

Walter: He played under Buddy, right?

Jon: Right, he was like, um, you know if there were like four great ones, he was one of the four that Louis Armstrong looked up to.

Walter: So, Buddy, "I thought I Heard Buddy Bolden Say". Give me some of that. Tell me about Buddy Bolden.

Jon: [Jon plays his harmonaboard and then sings the melody in 4/4 time as demonstration, and audience claps] It's like, you heard the march in there?

Walter: I was 'bout to say, we got the marching music back in, and that is people like Bunk Johnson saying, I thought I hear Buddy Bolden Say, trying to transmit to us something that's never been recorded, never written down, but the greatest trumpet player of the time

Joh: uhm, hm.

Walter: Who dies in an insane asylum, right?

Jon: He dies in an insane asylum, to, um, the point where he dies in obscurity –no, he disappears for a while, nobody where he is, and there's just a legend that's left. No recordings.

Walter: Did Louis Armstrong hear Buddy Bolden?

Jon: He claimed to have heard him. [light laughter from Jon and Walter]

Walter: I know.

Jon: He claimed that his sound was so big that you could hear it across the river. So, he would blow, and he was like, man, you know it's Buddy Bolden playing when you can hear it just as clear as day, and it's miles away.

Walter: So Louis Armstrong, uh, let's talk about race a little bit, as you say he's from the poorest black part of town, but there's also the creole orchestras playing further downtown. That's a

more higher society, creole, black culture. He's not allowed to play in those orchestras right away, right? There's some tension between the two black races.

Jon: Right, well, it's almost, um, the time made it seem like the lighter skinned, the better. Even if you were still black, if you were lighter-skinned, which was the Creoles, then they had more of, I guess you could say, easier time acclimating to that society, whereas Louis Armstrong, he was a genius but nobody knew it yet, so to them it's like, oh yeah, he's just another black trumpet player.

Walter: So what are the creole orchestras bringing into this mix?

Jon: They bring that classical influence, like Jelly Roll, he wrote the music down, he rehearsed the music in a way that was very similar to like an orchestral rehearsal, but then he would bring the soul of it into it, so at the end of the day, they wanted the fine players who played in a legit way and in a not so legit way.

Walter: So, they finally mix it up

Jon: They mix it up.

Walter: Show me.

Jon: Whewwh [Jon plays "St. Louis Blues" on his harmonaboard as demonstration, beginning with an introduction that leads into the straight melody and rhythm, then leading into a more dissonant melody improvisation, syncopated rhythm, and audience claps loudly] Yeah, yeah, the beginning is.

Walter: Woah, everything is coming together then, right, am I missing, I've got the fillet, the okra, I've got the shrimps, anything I'm missing in this gumbo?

Jon: No, we've covered it.

Walter: We covered it?

Jon: It's all there, and over time, it just, it stayed there and transformed into what we have now, and I think, uhm, you know, that's, somebody like me, I feel like that's what I really draw from, the idea of taking all of that stuff that was kind of, just by chance, and came together at the turn of the century, and you take that with all the stuff that's happened over the years, and what's happening now with The Internet and everybody being more connected than ever. The world is just so much more diverse and global now, 'cause everybody is kind of, you can talk to somebody in Japan at the touch of a button."

Walter Isaacson: So, it becomes what you sometimes call Social Music?

Jon: "Yeah!"

Walter: Explain that.

Jon: Social Music is really about the idea of taking this foundation of jazz, but it's not really about the genre of music, you draw from all different styles, and you take that as a means of bringing different people together, who may never have had a live music experience or never really think that, you know, this is something that could change their life. And, uhm.

Walter: So, it's almost draws on the philosophical and ideological roots of jazz, not just the musical roots.

Jon: Exactly. Everybody's welcome. And, that kind of idea really needs to be exemplified in all levels from the performance to, you know, the philosophical level, which we're talking about, to the idea of going into schools, music education, community centers, juvenile detention centers. All levels of people, from that to the exclusive level of people, where, you know, they have an integration with somebody from a world that they may never interface with. So, I think that's beautiful.

Walter: Did you coin the term Social Music for what you do?

Jon: Yeah, I like that. I call it Social Music.

Walter: And, give me an example of that, and of how you bring things together and make it social music. Is that the name of your latest album, is that right?

Jon: Yeah, that's right,

Walter: Okay, good, good, good.

Jon: Social Music. Um, actually we have a video.

Walter: Video! Let's go to the video.

Jon: I forgot about the video, thank you.

Walter: You're welcome.

[Video plays]

"People feel the music, and they feel the community, and it brings us together. It brings the world together." – Jon Batiste

We begin to succeed when the cares of our lives begin and end with the hurt of others. We begin to breathe when the wounds of others become relieved with the love of others. He who looks around to find who's in need has made the best investment in his legacy. I say that love will never force. Love will never quit. Love ain't never lose. Love ain't never miss. God is love. Let love lead. I said God, Let Love Lead. Let God Lead. – Lyrice to "Let God Lead" on the Social Music debut album of Jon Batiste & Stay Human

"As it was with Louis Armstrong…it's almost impossible to hear Batiste and not smile." – New

York Daily News

"Only starting to show his potential to shape the development of popular music for generations to come." – OkayPlayer

"Coming from Kenner, Louisiana, which is right near New Orleans and my family being a staple in New Orleans culture, I always had rhythm around me. Rhythm and Blues. I heard it all the time. Everybody played, and my mother telling me at eleven years old – you should switch to the piano. Boy, that was the end of it. It's a way of life, and me, being the way that I am, really fuels my music, the concept of Social Music, the concept of what Stay Human is, and it will help us to understand each other better, to understand ourselves, and it also will help us to have a good time." – Jon Batiste

The lyric of Jon & Stay Human's song, "Express Yourself" plays – Express yourself today, oh yeah, 'cause it's the only way. Express yourself today, oh yeah, 'cause it's the only way, oh yeah.

[Video ends]

Walter: Woah, yeah you're right.

Jon: Well, all right.

[audience claps loudly]

Walter: Do we have the album here in the bookstore, or something; I hope so, let's find out if we have the album, and I'm gonna go buy one.

[Jon and Walter smile]

Walter: Two things in there, I noticed. First, the second-line. Explain that.

Jon: The second-line. It's a concept in New Orleans, if you don't know the second-line, where somebody dies, first there's music for everything in New Orleans. So, somebody dies, they perform, and the music first-line is the family going in the church. It's mournful, it's a dirge, you know, something very sad, and then they come out, and it's the celebration after the service.

Walter: So, it's like "Closer Walk". Show me.

Jon: Yes, [lightly laughs], and [Jon plays "Just a Closer Walk With Thee" on his harmonaboard as demonstration]

Walter: You want to sing it.

Jon: Oh, yeah, [Jon claps and sings as demonstration] *Just the closer walk with thee* [clapping his hands to the beat] Y'all can clap[spoken to audience to encourage them to hand-clap to the beat with him] granted Jesus is my plea. Daily walking close to thee, oh, let it be, dear Lord, let it be."

Walter: Want to round it out now, you want to take us back to the cemetery now.

[Jon plays "Just a Closer Walk" rhythmically, but slower on his harmonaboard as demonstration]

[audience claps]

Walter: One other element I noticed in your Social Music in your video is tambourine.

Jon: Yeah

Walter: Where did that come from?

Jon: [Jon lightly laugh] Tambourine is, you know it's a part of the Mardi Gras Indian tradition, the church tradition also, the sanctified church, and, um, even in Indian music, there's the tambourine, and also in Brazilian music, which is um, you know, you have the samba, which is also street music

Walter: You might want to explain what the Mardi Gras Indians are.

Jon: Yeah the Mardi Gras Indians are when you have the Native Americans, and also the Africans, and they, there's that confluence in New Orleans, similar to Creoles, but it's more of um, a social gathering where they have these ritualistic things that kind of tie into voodoo and that tradition in New Orleans, but they meet and they get around drums, similar to Congo Square, and they create this, it's basically a raucous, and what happens is, that tradition is passed on, it's an oral tradition in New Orleans where the Mardi Gras Indians have their own kind of second-line. They have their own dress where they create and basically compete, and they're different tribes, and the different tribes compete on who has the most flamboyant and beautiful suit.

Walter: And, they march.

Jon: And, they march, and the tambourine

Walter: Ico, Ico?

Jon: Yeah, 50 tambourines playing in Ico, Ico

Walter: 50 tambourines in Ico, Ico.

[Jon claps the rhythm with his hands] "Kind of the tambourine groove" [then Jon sings the tune while clapping] Ico, [Walter joins in singing the song] Oh, yeah, go ahead Walter.

Walter: Ico. Ico, Ico, I may – you take it.

[audience light laughter]

Jon: [Jon continuously claps the rhythm with his hands] Jamo fino ah na ney, say jamo fina ney, ico, ico, ico, ico, one nay, jamo fino I na nay, ma jamo fina ney, my grandma and your grandma was sittin by the fire. My grandma told your grandma I'm gonna set your flag on fire, talkin bout ico

Walter: Ico

Jon: Ico

Walter: Ico

Jon: Ico, ico, ico, I may, jamo fino I na ney, say jamo fina ney [claps out]

[audience claps]

[Jon moves in his seat and makes vocal gestures in the rhythmic patter of the song]

Walter: Okay, take me to the twentieth century, how do we get the millennials involved with jazz?

Jon: You know, we got this thing, uhm, where we take all of those street traditions, and we do what we call a , where it's um, it's like a riot because it's crazy. You get all of these people, and sometimes you tell them, sometimes you don't. You go to a place where there's not usually music, like a restaurant, or subway, street corner, you know, we've done it on the slopes in Utah, literally anywhere, and we just start playing, and we create this energy, and you just get all these people from all over the place, just coming into it, joining up. Sometimes, we'll put it on, you know, like, uh, Facebook or Twitter that we're gonna be a t a place, don't tell everybody the details, and they come, and then what happens is, all kinds of craziness happens, to the point that even at our shows, we'll play, and at the end of the show, you know, the people will be there and they'll be expecting us to love riot. So they'll wait at the end, and they're like 'are you gonna do it this time?', and we'll march with a whole crowd from the show, I'll never forget, man, we played at Carnegie in New York, and that's very straight, they don't have that kind of stuff. People standing on top of the seats. The next thing you know, it's like the energy can happen anywhere basically.

Walter: We might have to end this with a love riot.

Jon: ahhw, man.

[laughs from crowd]

Walter: But you need social media for that, right?

Jon: Well, not

Walter: We'll get to the end in a minute [Isaacson says toward audience]
Before we get to the end, tell me how social media plays into that.

Jon: Well, it's more about the interactivity, it can be through social media or it can be in person, it's just really about the idea of the audience having an experience and it's an interactive experience with music. It's not about, I don't know about this style or that style, but it's, you can be a part of this experience by joining us, and when you come out, that's what makes the experience social, you can share it. You can dance to it. You can cry to it. You can laugh to it. It's open.

Walter: Uhm, hm. How do you get more millennials to connect with jazz and the jazz tradition?

Jon: It's got to be an experience. It can't be something that's like a museum piece or something that is

Walter: Preservation Hall, no?

Jon: Ah, I like them, yeah, that's my boys.

Walter: Preservation Hall is a more museum piece approach.

Jon: Yeah, it's got to be like, imagine if you grew up, and you had the iPhone in your hand all the time, and people were constantly trying to sell you stuff, and everything is basically about the

exploitation of your youthful ignorance. [light laughter from audience] So, you take that concept of existence, and then you also take the concept of the arts and music education being cut in schools, and everything just being kind of upside down, in terms of, in the popular culture, you'll never see anything that's remotely related to jazz or an instrument, except maybe, like, in an elevator or something like that. So, then you have that whole thing that's happening. Which makes it actually the perfect timing for you to bring this kind of music, and this kind of experience to people because it's completely brand new to them. To them, it's like, wow. This is brand new! I've never seen anything like this before.

Walter: You mean, real music.

Jon: Right, but the idea is actually, it's old. It's just not around. So, it has to be something that's unbelievable, like you feel it. It's not just you're sitting there and watching it. It's like, you're a part of it.

Walter: Can you give me an example of how you'd do that?

Jon: Oh, well, aw man, you got to come to a show. [lightly laugh with smile] I mean, it's kind of, one example of what you could do, is, uh, you just don't stay on the stage. The stage is everywhere. [Jon jumps off the stage into the audience and plays his harmonaboard, and gets close to some people with the music, like close to their face] "It's conversational, you know, I'm talking with my instrument. It's a voice [Jon sings a phrase and points to audience to repeat what he sang, and they repeat – call and response; He claps and they clap.]

[He plays the harmonaboard and breaks to clap to encourage audience to also clap, and they clap along with him as he continues playing]

[many loud claps and a hug at the end]

Joe Saylor

Joe Saylor Interview with Cherise Harris, Thursday, April 14, 2016 at Smokey Burger, near Birdland in Midtown Manhattan, New York

Transcribed by Cherise Harris

Cherise: Okay, so, this is Cherise Harris also known as Rise La Day, and I'm here right now with the wonderful, stupendous guest – Joe Saylor.

Joe: Good Afternoon, I'm feeling a little under the weather, so excuse my sniffles.

Cherise: Yes, which makes him even more remarkable, that he, would be so generous enough to take time to come and have this interview with me today, even when he's not feeling well. Thank you.

Joe: Yes indeed.

Cherise: Thank you so much

Joe: Thank you.

Cherise: So, this is centered around my thesis that I'm doing for Rutgers University, and I feel like it's a hypothesis that I have, and so this hypothesis has the title Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Rediscovered: An Introspective Analysis of Jon Batiste and Stay Human.

Joe: Yeah.

Cherise: So, there's really questions in there. That's just kind of like my hypothesis, so the interview will function around the questions.

Joe: Mm, hm

Cherise: Okay

Joe: Okay

Cherise: So, as one of my favorite questions from the movie "Brown Sugar" with Sanaa Lathan

Joe: Yes

Cherise: and Taye Diggs is – 'When did you fall in love with Hip Hop?' So, I'm gonna put my spin on it,

Joe: Mm, hm.

Cherise: and I'd like to know – When did you fall in love with jazz?

Joe: (lightly exhales) Wow, okay, well, (lightly exhales) I, my Dad was a jazz musician, and I grew up playing music in church, and I grew up playing with my Dad, and I had, I had loved music my whole life, and, but I had loved I guess just music in general my whole life, and I had listened to jazz. I'd listened to Christian music, and some Rock music, and some Classical music. But, the night that I fell in love with jazz was on a Tuesday night, it was a school night, and (clears throat) my, I was twelve years old, and my dad had been wanting to give me a drum teacher, and I'm from the small town of Pennsylvania called Indiana,

Cherise: yes,

Joe: and, there was really nobody in town that he thought was suitable for teaching me. So, he would drive to Pittsburgh on the weekends, which was about an hour and a half away,

Cherise: okay,

Joe: and he would watch different drummers play and scout teachers for me,

Cherise: um, hm,

Joe: and, he found this one gentleman named Roger Humphreys. Now Roger, um, is one of the greatest drummers of the world, and he got his start playing, he got his professional start playing in the early 60s with Horace Silver and Joe Henderson, and Stanley Turrentine, and then he went on to play with and tour with Ray Charles and some other people before he actually kind of retired from the road and came back and decided to stay in Pittsburgh when he was around thirty years old. So, he only had about a ten year span when he was out touring. So, he didn't become as well-known as other drummers of his generation because he chose to stay home. But he had kind of cultivated this amazing jazz scene, um, in Pittsburgh, and also was a great teacher. He was the head of the music department at CAPA, which is the Pittsburgh Center of Creative and Performing Arts.

Cherise: okay

Joe: Um, so anyway, my Dad found Roger, and he took me down on a Tuesday night, oh, well, we'll back up – my Dad asked Roger, my Dad said 'I have a twelve year old son that's pretty good; would you be willing to teach him?', and Roger said 'well, bring him down to the James Street Tavern; I do a jam session every Tuesday night, bring him

down on a Tuesday , he can sit-in and I'll, let me hear him'. So he, so we drove down on a Tuesday night, and I'll never forget it. That night really changed my life. And, that was, that was the first time where I was actually in the intimate presence of, of real jazz, you know, and uh, and I'll never forget, even like walking in the door, and like, it's like it all hit me at once, like, the music, the vibe, the smells, you know, the cigars, you know, the whole thing just hit me, and I walked out of there, and I said this is what I want to do (lightly laughs), and that's, that's the night I really fell in love with jazz.

Cherise: Not bad for a twelve year old

Joe: Yeah (laughs), exactly

Cherise: Roger Humphreys

Joe: Roger Humphreys.

Cherise: at twelve

Joe: yep

Cherise: accessible to you

Joe: yes, yes

Cherise: and your Dad really helped to make sure

Joe: My Dad made it happen, you know. I'm out here playing because of him, you know.

Cherise: Oh, that's wonderful.

Joe: He, um, you know, he was a good father because he recognized a love and a passion for something in his son.

Cherise: yes

Joe: and, he made it a point to cultivate that the best that,

Cherise: and make it happen

Joe: and make it happen, yeah.

Cherise: wonderful. (lightly shouting aloud) Thanks Joe's dad!

Joe: (laughs)

Cherise: And, I read too, in the wonderful article on you in Modern Drummer that your mother is also a musician.

Joe: Oh, yeah, my mother is a musician too.

Cherise: So,

Joe: I don't want to give all the credit to my Dad.

Cherise: Oh, well, right, I know, I'm just adding why we're so thankful, thank God for your parents

Joe: oh, yeah, both of them

Cherise: Their input in, um, helping you, like you said, realize the gift that was, that's in you,

Joe: yes,

Cherise: and help you bring it out and develop it.

Joe: Yes.

Cherise: Um, wonderful, thank you. So,

Slight pause.

Cherise: What is social music to you, and what does social music mean to you? I did read your answer, which I loved, in the Modern Drummer, this is an excellent article.

Joe: What did I say in there?

Slight chuckles from Joe and Cherise.

Cherise: Yes

Joe: Remind me of what I said

Cherise: You said, um, 'For me, I play music because I believe that the spirit of the music is more important than the music itself, and I believe that music is a tool,'

Joe: um

Cherise: 'just as a hammer is a tool, you can either break something down or you can build something up. What I want to do is build up and uplift music.' And I just loved reading that.

Joe: Oh, yeah.

Cherise: That registered so with me, and, I think in particularly, for Social Music, you said, 'We in Stay Human tend to not necessarily endorse or embrace a genre as much as to embrace the intention of the music' – Saylor explains.

Joe: hm

Cherise: 'that's why we call our music Social Music, it's not about rather we're playing jazz or blues or rock, whatever it is it's about the intent, the spirit of the music, it's social music, music for and with people'.

Joe: Yeah, there's your answer.

[Hearty laughs from Joe and Cherise]

Cherise: Right ,yes, right, so that is my answer, and I appreciate this answer, there are so many answers are already in here.

Joe: Oh, yeah

Cherise: That being said, would you like to expound even more?

Joe: Um, yeah, well, I think, I think the Stay human band, you know, many of us, or at least the original members of us are originally jazz musicians first, you know. Our musical foundation from when we were very young comes from jazz. So, I think a lot of the spirit that we play no matter what it is, it comes from jazz, and I think that's important because, you now, the overall spirit in jazz music is you know it's hope.

Cherise: yes

Joe: you know, which comes from blues music too, it's struggle, but with hope, you know, and faith, you know, and that's why, that's why blues music is very much connected to gospel music, because it has that spirit of, you now, the great story, you know of Jesus, and um, so, yeah.

Cherise: wow, thank you so much for that answer, thank you.

Joe: But, as far as social music, um, you know when we came to New York, one thing that we recognized was a lot of the jazz musicians in our peer group and a little bit older than us, they were playing this unbelievably amazing music, but it tended to, a lot of it tended to alienate people because they couldn't understand it or they couldn't get into it, um, so we tried to figure out ways to rather than push people out to bring people in, you know, which is why it's called social music.

[Laughs from both]

Cherise: Okay, thank you.

[Brief silent pause.]

Cherise: From your perspective, what is meant by Stay Human?

Joe: Hm. This, this, this is, this has been a discussion we've had for many years, um, I think,

Cherise: and excuse me, I just want to also insert, just to note that on one of, we're gonna address The Late Show EP, so I do have, yes, I supported, it's wonderful, wonderful EP, extended play, the format is more contemporary now, instead of the LP. So one of the tunes is "Humanism, and so, um, Merriam-Webster defines humanism as a

system of values and beliefs that is based on the idea that people are basically good, and that problems can be solved using reason instead of religion, and so, in asking you your perspective of Stay Human, I'm also I'm searching for , uh, is Stay Human 's perspective of humanism one and the same with Merriam-Webster's dictionary's definition?

Joe: No

Cherise: Okay, or, okay, is Stephen Colbert's definition of Humanism, cause I know he said he's a, I think he said he's a Christian Humanist.

Joe: Yes, humanist.

Cherise: Does his definition line up with the Merriam-Webster's dictionary, and does Stay Human ally with Colbert's definition, and if not, what is it too you, and specifically you personally too.

Joe: Well, I think that Stay Human means we, we chose that name because we wanted to have an intimate human experience through what we do with people. Uh, that definition of humanism is not really in line with my belief of what stay human is all about. Colbert may have a different view on it, but you should ask him about that.

Cherise: Okay, that makes sense, thank you.

[pause]

Cherise: Okay, so, would you say Social Music is an evolution of jazz, a re-discovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, or both? And, I came to that question, because I listened to an interview with Jon Batiste with Leo Sidran, very good interview, and he, Leo Sidran said, he [speaking of Jon] doesn't define it as jazz and certainly not as New

Orleans music as such, but he does see a direct connection between why he's doing today, excuse me, between what he's doing today, and the music that developed in New Orleans in the early twentieth century, so he say's quote, Jon says, 'I think that Social Music isn't a genre, it is an approach and an evolution of music, this is where we are, it's not something I constructed, I'm basically articulating what I think everybody feels already' and it was something about hearing when Jon say that, that made me, it took me on a path of thinking, okay, so is it really like a re-discovery of what jazz was really meant to be in the beginning in the early twentieth century, you know, cause I've heard him speak of dance, dancing, dance music, and just having, like you said the social element, and so, that's why that's a question that I have.

Joe: um, I don't know if it's so much a re-discovery, but um, maybe it's a [pause]

Cherise: because I also feel that it's an evolution of the music because, well, I know when I first heard Jon and met him at the Cleopatra's Needle, wonderful pianist, and I always loved to hear him play and everything, and I know you say that you were there too, and I would ask for maybe a second-line groove line or something, but later, while I was in St. Louis and I saw footage of you guys in the streets of New York City, you know, and you're doing the Love Riot, which I'll address a little later, but I was like, wow, what wowed me was the fact that you had a crowd of New Yorkers following you. It's one thing, cause see with me being a New Yorker, I'm from St Louis but I consider myself a New Yorker. It's one thing to hear music. To hear musicians playing on the subway, playing on the street, and they're good, you enjoy them, but it's another thing, it's another element for a crowd, crowds to follow you [lightly laugh], that just does not happen in New York. I know it, because I lived here.

Joe: And, and, I hear you.

Cherise: And, so, that's when I said wow, you know, this is revolutionary, so that's why I consider, I do consider it an evolution of the music, but then when I hear Jon speak of the early twentieth century and what not, I said, well, is it both, is it a re-discovery as well?

Joe: I think it's an evolution in the sense that it's gonna be, it's gonna be different than what anybody has ever played before just by the fact that we're twenty year-olds, twenty something year-olds living in 2016, and we are informed by a lot more music, a lot of stuff has happened in the world, and a lot more music has happened since the early twentieth century, you know, so, just by that fact alone, what we do is going to be an evolution , you know, and I think as far as people following it, you know, people, humans have, humans have a built in need, you know, they have a need, and they have, they want to be a part of something, you now, and I think that if you present something to people that they feel comfortable and they can be a part of, that is good, and that's good. You know. Because there's a lot of stuff that people can feel drawn to and be a part of, because they have that emptiness or need that is not good, you know,

Cherise: Mm

Joe: so, I think if you can present to them something that is good, then that's good [hearty laugh from Joe and Cherise]

Joe: You know, [light laugh]

Cherise: Yes, I know, thank you, thank you so much.

Brief Pause

Cherise: And, I'd also like to note that we're in a wonderful restaurant, and there's some customers that came in, and we're not far from the famous Birdland, so, this is, this is just awesome.

Joe: Oh yeah.

Cherise: Okay, so, now

Joe: Yes

Cherise: What's your take on Love Riots, which love riot may have been your favorite or most memorable moment, what 's your memorable experience with a Love Riot, what is it to you?

Joe: My most memorable moment in a love riot was it might have been the first or second love riot that we ever did. And we, we started doing love riots in the summer of 2011.

Cherise: okay

Joe: and that's when we started playing on the subway, and we would go out literally every single night, 10pm, 11pm, play on the streets in the subway til 3 or 4 in the morning, and then go have dinner or breakfast, but the most memorable moment was we were on the Lower East Side, actually right around the corner from Rockwood Music Hall, we weren't playing at Rockwood Music Hall, but right around the corner, and it was the four of us, me, Jon, Eddie, and Ibanda, and we were playing. There were a few, there were two or three people standing, kind of smoking outside of this bar, and we went, and

we started to play for them. Five minutes later, maybe ten or fifteen people are there, we keep playing, literally, about two hundred people gathered on the street coming from all different directions, and this was the first time that this ever happened, so we were like, what? [hearty laughs from Joe and Cherise] cool! And the reason it was memorable is because, after playing for about twenty minutes, police in a horseback came and they tried to break it up, and they did break it up, and we ran! [hearty laugh] We stopped playing, and we bolted cause we didn't know what was going to happen. We ran around like two blocks, and [laugh] I think we ended up running into Katz's Deli and hiding [hearty laughs] but that's, that's probably my most memorable experience, because it was one of the very first big, big love riots, and the horses came,

Cherise: and, it was your real experience,

Joe: of like,

Cherise: with the reaction,

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: of what you were doing.

Joe: it was like, we can do this.

Cherise: You realized what you did.

Joe: yes, yeah

Cherise: wow,

Joe: that, that was a good one, that was,

Cherise: that's amazing,

Joe: that was a good night.

Cherise: okay [Joe lightly laughs]

Cherise: and when you say 2011, I just missed you, and that's my frustration.

Joe: You had left by then.

Cherise: Yes, I left March of 20 – 2010 is when I left New York.

Joe: oh

Cherise: So, if you started in 2011, I just missed, I just missed it, and I was like oh wow, but I'm sure it was just an organic experience, must've been, you know,

Joe: It was super organic.

Cherise: and I wish I could turn the time and have been there and experienced it, but I'm thankful for the footage, and thankful to speak with you, and for you to tell me, to share that.

Joe: They have some good footage of that somewhere on You Tube, they have several , several, ah, many videos on You Tube of the summer of 2011.

Cherise: okay, well then that's probably what I've seen,

[heartly laughs from Joe and Cherise]

Cherise: and, I think I'm going to mention it later, okay, okay, thank you.

So, um, right. So, pertaining to certain messages emoted like *Love* and *Believe* through Stay Human during concerts, outreach events such as Newport Jazz Festival, which I was there 2014, but I really saw *Believe* T-shirts, I think at 2015, and the week long residency at Nomad's Hotel presented by Chase, ah, what is Love to you, and how do you define Love, and how do you define Believe, you know, what do you hope the public perceives from emoting such terms and messages?

Joe: um, I think, I think Love is the greatest force in the universe, you know. It's, it's the original force, you know, um, and ah, I think it's the most important, and I think Love is selfless, you know, um, I was, yeah, I was gonna get deep, but, as far as believe, I think you should talk to Mr. Batiste about that.

Cherise: oh, okay,

Joe: yeah

Cherise: okay

Joe: but yeah, love, yeah love is laying down your life for your friend, that's love.

Cherise: Thank you , thank you so much for sharing.

[pause]

Cherise: Oh, yes ,and what do you hope the public perceives when you're speaking of *Love* and the *Love Riots*, *Believe*, and what do you hope they get from that?

Joe: I hope that they feel that love is real. You know, I think a lot of people are – love is a word that gets tossed around. And, um, I really hope that they actually feel and see the reality of what it is.

Cherise: That's wonderful,

Joe: yeah

Cherise: and I have to say that, slide this in there too, that you are showing an act of love in even being here, you talked about selfless, because you're not feeling well,

Joe: oh, yeah

Cherise: so, thank you

Joe: yeah

[pause]

Cherise: About outreach with children, events with children as well as adults, educational workshops, thank you [to waitress bringing Joe warm tea], um, hospitals, prisons, um, the residency at the Nomad, what would you say is the true intent of such events, especially going into the prisons and the hospitals?

Joe: I think people are severely deprived out here, and they're hurting, and that's due to a lot of things, you know, that have happened, but uh, it all comes down to what I was saying about, you know, it's a way of loving people, you know, uh, there's a certain power in music that kids don't even know about, and they'r not exposed to it. So, if you can go and give them an experience and they can feel it, you know, that's why we go to

schools, prisons – same thing. We go to juvenile, we went to a few juvenile centers – teenagers, you know, a lot of these kids have no hope, you know, they have a kind of deep, deep sadness, and hopelessness in their – you can see it in their eyes, and so, you know, we try to bring that to them, and hospitals, same thing, you know, it's all these places, you know, but especially to the schools, because young kids are very, it's a very special time, when kids are young, cause they can soak things in, soak things up so easily,

Cherise: and so impressionable

Joe: so impressionable, you know, so you want to give them something good [laugh], you know, you want to give them something good early.

Cherise: Yes, great, great. Is there a particular event that you remember the most that you felt you made the greatest impact on the group, whatever it may have been, or maybe a great impact was made on you?

Joe: Yeah, there have been several times. We went to this juvenile prison, and uh – where were we? Shreveport, Louisiana, maybe it was Baton Rouge, and uh, these young people, some of them looked like they wanted to kill you, but after thirty minutes of playing for them, we had them playing with us, you know, so that was a memorable experience. Another memorable experience we had was a fan of ours who had bought tickets to one of our concerts in – I can't even remember, somewhere in the Midwest.

Cherise: Okay, maybe it was St. Louis?

Joe: Maybe it was St. Louis. Let's say it was St. Louis [Cherise laughing], and he got in a really bad motorcycle accident, and he uh, was in the hospital, and he couldn't come to the concert, and we went and played a little concert for him in the hospital.

Cherise: Wow,

Joe: and that was nice, well you know, the thing is all this stuff is when you love people, and you give to people, you get back in return, you know, that's how it works, you know, when you bless people, you are blessed.

Cherise: Yes.

Joe: You don't do it to be blessed, but that's what happens.

Cherise: Part of the great story is, it say's – being blessed to be a blessing.

Joe: Exactly.

Cherise: In Deuteronomy.

Joe: Exactly, um, we've had lots of uh, we've had lots of nice things like that. When I was in college, this was not with Stay Human, but when I went to Manhattan School of Music, they would send us down every Friday to play in this home for people with mental challenges, and uh, these people, they would get up and dance like you've never seen people dance before,

Cherise: oh, yeah,

Joe: and, it's like, music, something really powerful in music, you know.

Cherise: music, music, it's the music,

Joe: yeah

Cherise: yes

Joe: so, I really, I really am a strong believer in the power, there's a healing power in music,

Cherise: yes,

Joe: and like I said, it's not really the music itself, it's the spirit,

Cherise: behind it

Joe: within the music, because there's a lot of music out here that, it'll do the opposite of heal you. It's some dark stuff out here.

Cherise: Right, it can put one in

Joe: Yes,

Cherise: that mental home.

Joe: Yes, [light laughs by Joe and Cherise], exactly.

Cherise: Yeah, okay, thank you.

[pause]

Cherise: Yes, so part of the reason we're having this wonderful interview is Joe is on break! [laughs]

Joe: oh yeah,

Cherise: And, cause, we've tried to work something out with his demanding schedule, and so it's another reason it's so wonderful for him to be right here in front of me like this, so, um, how do you maintain your stamina as the drummer of Stay Human, especially as being a mobile drummer with the tambourines, as Jon mobilizes his piano effect or keyboard with his harmonaboard which is greatly known as the melodica, how do you do it? How do you maintain the physical part, your stamina?

Joe: um, its, its,

Cherise: Do you feel you get enough rest?

Joe: [hearty laugh] No, no, well, no. I don't get enough rest. Um, but, um, it's the stamina has been developed through years of doing it, you know.

Cherise: Like developing a muscle.

Joe: Yes, it's like developing a muscle.

Cherise: Okay

Joe: Like a literal, a literal physical muscle actually.

Cherise: Right, yes,

Joe: When we first started playing on the Subway in 2011, I had played the tambourine, like as a kid at church, but not for long periods of time.

Cherise: right

Joe: We would play one song, and I would have to take a break, you know, cause uh, it really works this forearm muscle, and uh, people don't realize the tambourine is a very difficult, uh, very physical instrument, you know, ask the other members of the band. They, they pick it up, but after sixty seconds, they're like, nahh, [laughs] but a couple of of them have gotten – Iband has gotten good at tambourine lately. He plays a lot of them on the show too. Jon plays a tambourine.

Cherise: I noticed him playing the trumpet one night.

Joe: Ibanda.

Cherise: I think Wynton Marsalis was on there.

Joe: Yeah, yeah, yeah.

Cherise: I said, 'oh, he's playing the trumpet.'

Joe: Yeah he's been playing the trumpet too.

Cherise: okay

Joe: Ibanda has been learning a lot of instruments. He's very natural, naturally talented guy.

Cherise: okay

Joe: but anyway, the stamina I just worked on it because we do it every night, and also I try to do cardio.

Cherise: Mm, hm.

Joe: I try to run and swim if I can get to a lake, or a pool or something,

Cherise: oh, okay

Joe: and, I try to lift weights here and there.

Cherise: yes

Joe: [joe laughs] Yeah, but, I mean percussion, playing percussion is physical, you know,

Cherise: yes,

Joe: so, but like I said I've been doing it. I've been playing drums my whole life, and I've been playing everything else for many years. It's just something that you kind of develop, especially on a week off like this, I try to, I'm not really playing any, I had one gig this week, but You know I try to keep it up, try to practice, keep my physical stuff happening [laughs]

Cherise: going, going, going

Joe: yeah

Cherise: I know me myself, I really appreciate the drums, and the drummer. When I was studying music at Berklee College of Music, I took a course on,

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: um, drums,

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: and how to notate for drums,

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: and, I mean [lightly laughs], it was then that I really, I realized more so, had more of a perspective of what you do, and it's just like amazing, so, it requires so much brilliance because for one thing you're doing all these, you have your,

Joe: You're doing a million things at the same time

Cherise: bass going, your hi-hat,

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: your snare,

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: your toms, and [Joe laughs] it's like you're doing all this at one time

Joe: Everything's going at once.

Cherise: right,

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: and, so, I mean, do you need massages?

Joe: Oh, I need massages all the time [stretch]

Cherise: Do they have that at..?

Joe: [gets close to speak into recorder's mic] I just want to let people know that I need massages all the time! [hearty laughs from Joe and Cherise] If you see me, just give me a nice touch [laughs] my shoulders, and my upper back,

Cherise: right,

Joe: Yeah, all of, yeah

Cherise: That's why, I think that's why he mentioned, when in the restroom, that it was like a sauna [light laugh]

Joe: yeah, it was nice, [Joe and Cherise laugh] it felt good for a second, but yeah, that's important – massages and stretches.

Cherise: okay, wonderful. Based on a recording of the Jonathan Batiste Trio with you and Phil,

Joe: yeah

Cherise: is his last name Keen [last name is Kuehn, pronounced Keen],

Joe: Kuehn, yap,

Cherise: it is!

Joe: Yap, yap,

Cherise: Excellent,

Joe: yap,

Cherise: okay, with you and Phil Kuehn,

Joe: uh, hm, that's my man, we grew up together.

Cherise: I know, yes, yes, um, titled Jazz Is Now in 2013, would you say that Paj 3, which is you, he – they grew up together. They formed a group called Paj 3.

Joe: Mm, hm.

Cherise: Your high school group formed the Phil Kuehn and Angelo Versace [pronounced like the clothing designer]

Joe: Versace [pronounced like Versosh]

Cherise: Versace [pronounced like Versosh], okay, and therefore, the *Jazz Is Now* series at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem was a predecessor of sorts to Stay Human? Would you say that, uh, because Phil Kuehn,

Joe: ah, huh

Cherise: and Joe are both on the Jazz Is Now,

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: here, which is a wonderful recording, wonderful album, so, sense you already kind of had the group with Phil

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: and Angelo,

Joe: yeah

Cherise: you think that was sort of a predecessor?

Joe: It definitely contributed to the sound in a major way, I mean I was really blessed, because like I said I fell in love with jazz when I was really young, and I was very fortunate to have a bass player and a piano player that were not only, you know, my age, like we're the same age, but we're also best friends with each other. We hung out together, we listened to music together, we played together, and we kind of grew musically together, and then, you know, me and Phil established such a musical rapport with each other,

Cherise: yes,

Joe: I think also, um, Jon recognized that when we came to New York, and he brought us into his band, you know as a team, cause the drummer and bass player in jazz, they're a unit, you know. So, he got a team that had been playing together for years, you know.

Cherise: Mm, hm. Smart move.

Joe: So, it definitely contributed to, um, to the sound of the Jon Batiste Trio, and then of course, Jon, you know, had all this other stuff that he had figured out and combined, you know his thing that me and Phil had, it became the sound that we created, and then Angelo, he moved to New Jersey, and he went to William Patterson, and then he later went to the University of Miami. So, he went to a different path.

Cherise Yes, that's a good music program,

Joe: They have a great music program,

Cherise: the University of Miami

Joe: yeah,

Cherise: right, okay

Joe: Yeah, so that's how that happened.

Cherise: Thank you.

Joe: yeah

[pause]

Cherise: So, the whole *Jazz Is Now*, how do you, how would you explain the *Jazz Is Now*?

Joe: Well, I think it's another, um, it's another branch of Social Music, you know, social music is our thing, but also we put out this as kind of like a side album, side project of just, actually at this point, at that point the band had already developed to the Stay Human Band with the saxophone, and the tuba, and tambourine and melodica. Stay Human Band sound and concept with Social Music was already happening, but you know, this is how we started as playing jazz trio.

Cherise: Like you said, you, the fundamental part of you, you are jazz musicians.

Joe: Yes!

Cherise: Which I love, I love that.

Joe: Yeah [smiles, light laugh] So, I think this is just, it was just like a side project that we put out and the message is social music is happening now, but jazz is now too, jazz will always be now.

Cherise: ah—okay!

Joe: Great jazz will always be of the present because it will always happen, because it's always created in the present,

Cherise: ah,

Joe: So, jazz is now, jazz was then, jazz is now, jazz will be

Cherise: all right, all right now!

Joe: [lightly laughs] Yeah, and we'll put out another trio jazz record at some point.

Cherise: yes

Joe: you know, I can say, evolution, you know,

Cherise: I welcome that.

Joe: yeah

Cherise: As they say in the church, I felt that in the city of my soul.

Joe: [Joe laughs] that's right.

Cherise: Okay, so [light laugh] um, so I think you pretty much addressed this, there's video footage of Stay Hum, of what may have been the first Love Riot at the first show at Webster hall in Union square, was that the first Love riot?

Joe: That wasn't the first love riot, but that was a big one, that was the big one, that was a big one.

Cherise: Yeah, cause I remember that video footage that I saw.

Joe: Yeah, that was a big one

Cherise: [lightly laughs] What do you remember about that night?

Joe: Well, that one, that was after our first concert that we played at Webster Hall, and we brought, we probably brought a good third to half of the audience out to the street with us, and we marched all the way to the Union square subway station, and we took hundreds of people down into the subway station with us, and got on the train, right from the last song at Webster Hall, that's how that happened, that was a nice one too!

Cherise: Wow.

Joe: yeah

Cherise: And, who, who's video-taping this?

Joe: You know, at that point, we had had a lot of people video-taping, we had a few professional videographers I think that came to the show, and then, of course, many people on the cell phones.

Cherise: Right, right, like me.

[Hearty laughs]

Cherise: okay, got it. Um, as Jon explains there were different iterations of Stay Human. I remember hearing an NPR segment of the Big Band,

Joe: oh, wow,

Cherise: playing at The Kennedy Center.

Joe: yes,

Cherise: and Jennifer Sanon, I remember she's a wonderful vocalist.

Joe: Oh, she's incredible.

Cherise: Right, and she was in the group, so, uh, do you feel the more the merrier, such as the wonderful additions to the Late Show like Grace Kelly,

Joe: uh, huh,

Cherise: Louis Cato [pronounced like a cat 'o']

Joe: Cato [pronounced like Kay toe]

Cherise: Cato [pronounced like Kay toe], Louis Cato, Michael Thurber

Joe: Yes

Cherise: Jon Lampley

Joe: Oh, yeah!

Cherise: um, or do you feel let's cap the members of Stay Human? [Joe exhales, huh] I mean, I mean how, I mean when is it maybe too much, too many people?

Joe: Welll, I think,

Cherise: Or, it will never be too much?

Joe: Well, I don't really think it's the more the merrier, I think it's, um, what's the right combination of people, you know, it could be eleven, it could be seven, it could be four, I think it depends on the person, depends on the people, the chemistry, and people being of the same belief, I mean , uh, people having the same intentions and goals, you know, and so, I don't think it really has to do with the number of people. What we've – like you just said, we've done trio, we've done quartet, we've done big band, we've had several, we have like six to eight people now kind of rotating on the Late Show, so you know, Stay Human is, is, it's a family, it's a family, you know, people come and go, but they can always,

Cherise: come.

Joe: come.

Cherise: They're always welcomed.

Joe: Yeah, [pause] but

Cherise: 'Cause, like Jamison Ross.

Joe: Jamison Ross

Cherise: I've seen him, he was there at the very first time you came to Jazz St. Louis gala.

Joe: yes, he was, and he's great.

Cherise: Yes, he is, and he sings as well.

Joe: Jamison is one of our favorite musicians. He's a great, great musician, he's an incredible drummer

Cherise: the Thelonious Monk

Joe: An amazing singer

Cherise: Right, ah, ha

Joe: He won the Thelonious Monk Competition. Now, he's out touring with his own band. You know, but he went out on the road with us for, almost a year and a half, you know, he was with us, the other great bass player, Barry Stephenson, you know Barry?

Cherise: Yes, yes, I know about him too.

Joe: He was with us about the same time as Jamison was.

Cherise: I saw a recording of him with you, you were in Spain, I think it was the San Javier

Joe: yes

Cherise: Festival

Joe: yeah

Cherise: and Barry Stephenson

Joe: Yes, Barry was on that, [lightly laughing] you're bringing back all these nice memories

[Joe and Cherise Laugh]

Cherise: Okay, wonderful, and, also, I didn't mention Michela Lerman, she's a tap dancer, she joins you too sometimes.

Joe: Oh yeah, she came out to St. Louis.

Cherise: right, the dynamics, great,

Joe: oh yeah

Cherise: great, um, so as we've mention, as you are one of the core four members of Stay Human, cause it's you, I think you were the first one that Jon brought, well the story of the two of you meeting in this article,

Joe: oh, yes,

Cherise: in the Modern Drummer is just so amazing

Joe: oh, yeah,

Cherise: I'm – it's like, really?

Joe: It's a true story.

Cherise: if ever one had a question, or about divine intervention, does God have steps for us, ordering our steps, it's this story right here, I mean I just love reading it, how,

Joe: yeah, it's a good one

Cherise: here you were coming to New Orleans to look for schools, and

Joe: ran into each other on the street

Cherise: You ran into him right there

Joe: on the street

Cherise: and, then you've had your relationship through the music and everything ever since

Joe: yap

Cherise: just keeps growing

Joe: yap

Cherise: um, so as you're one of the four core members, um, what do you feel you bring to the group as the drummer that no other drummer could've brought, because there's only one Joe Saylor.

Joe: Well, I think the combination of where I come from , my life and musical experiences, and also the things that God has given me personally, cause God gives us all unique things, that's the beauty of being human, everybody's different, and everybody's given different things, and so, um, you know, I was given a love for this music, and I came from a place where the music didn't live and thrive, you know, but I also came from a unique musical situation, like I grew up playing in a very unique church.

Cherise: The Assembly

Joe: Actually it's not correct in there. The church was called House of Yahweh Full Gospel Church, but any way, I was this kid from Pennsylvania who was given the opportunity to hang out with Roger Humphreys every Saturday and play in this church

band. My parents loved Harry Connick, Jr. when I was really little. So I listened to Harry Connick. Harry had a lot of New Orleans musicians in his band. So I heard a lot of New Orleans music when I was a kid, and I didn't really think anything of it. So I think all these, um, combinations of things made me who I am, and you know, everybody has that, everybody has a unique story.

Cherise: Hmm.

Joe: Like Eddie Barbash,

Cherise: So,

Joe: Oh, sorry

Cherise: No, that's fine.

Joe: He's another, if you interview him, he has a very unique story, he's a saxophone player who, his first musical love is country and bluegrass music, where saxophone isn't even present in that music, you know, so he's just unique in that, you know, that he, he has been able to mesh the sounds of country music and bluegrass, and early jazz and his love for Johnny Hodges on the alto saxophone, and that made him his unique self, you know, so, yeah.

Cherise: And, I do definitely want to interview Eddie Barbash.

Joe: Yeah, interview everybody.

Cherise: yeah, uh, because I believe you, it's in the order of who's been in the group the longest, the core four, it's let's see, Jon, you, Eddie Barbash, and then, Ibanda Ruhumbika, right,

Joe: Yes

Cherise: and the four of you are Juilliard grads, and you are Manhattan School of Music as well

Joe: yes

Cherise: your undergrad, your master's at Juilliard, excellent

Joe: Can I use the restroom real fast, and then, I'll be back.

Cherise: Oh, yes, please do.

[AFTER BREAK]

Cherise: Ah, what was the process for recording the Stay Human debut album *Social Music*, and, um, how did you personally prepare for the recording as the drummer?

Joe: I didn't really prepare because it was music that we had been playing for a long time, you know? And, the way that we recorded it was that, that record actually came from probably three or four different recording sessions. We recorded it in probably three or four different places, and just took what we liked from all of them. And, one, at least a couple, yeah, a couple of tracks on there were recorded with a live audience in the recording studio, probably like thirty people in there, and I can't remember, I don't think

you can hear them, but, they were just there. We just wanted them there for like, their energy (laughing).

Cherise: Because, you know, that's interesting you say that, because here again, you're about bringing people together.

Joe: Yeah

Cherise: The social music; it's more than just a performance for you.

Joe: Right

Cherise: So that's interesting,

Joe: Yeah,

Cherise: to me. You needed, you wanted to have,

Joe: oh, yeah,

Cherise: an audience there

Joe: yeah

Cherise: Okay, excellent. Um, how about the *My N.Y.* album, was that one done on the subway?

Joe: The subway 2011, on the subway. We had been playing on the subway for probably two months and Jon wanted to document it, you know. Document the sound that we were getting. So, we had, uh, one of our friends come and follow us one night, and we

recorded on the subway car and the street corners and made a record out of it. [lightly laugh]

Cherise: Okay, kind of the same idea, okay, uh, oh yes, and how about the *Live in New York at the Rubin Museum of Art*, again with Phil Keuhn, that was in 2006,

Joe: That was my favorite.

Cherise: twenty 6 – 2006.

Joe: I think we recorded it in 2005 but it came out in 2006.

Cherise: Okay, it was released in

Joe: yeah, that was the *Rubin Museum in Art*, which is this, have you been there?

Cherise: Yes, I have. They had a segment there once called the "Himalayan?"

Joe: Yeah,

Cherise: and, I went

Joe: "The Himalayan"

Cherise: So, and that's what this was, The Himalayan?

Joe: Yeah

Cherise: Oh, wow, okay, um

Joe: And, they had just started, um, having jazz performances in there little concert hall, you know, there recital hall, and so, they were being organized by The Jazz Museum in Harlem.

Cherise: Oh, wow

Joe: Yeah, with Loren Schoenberg, Loren was there that night, I remember Loren was there that night, and so, we decided to record it.

Cherise: Beautiful, okay.

Joe: One set of music, and put it out. [hearty laughs]

Cherise: And, how about the most recent, *The Late Show EP*, released this year February 05, 2016

Joe: Well, a lot of our fans had been wanting full versions of the Late Show theme song, and the song that we play at the beginning when Stephen walks out, and so we basically wanted to give them a full version of both those songs, and then few of the other songs that we regularly play during commercial break. Yeah, we were hearing.

Cherise: Yes, that's my only gripe, I think that's what is for me – I just need to see a show of just y'all. I think then I would be totally good.

Joe: So, yeah, that's when we went into the studio, and we just recorded all of those.

Cherise: Okay, yes, if any, what have you found to be the most obscure or exotic place for a love riot, because I know you've been all over the globe?

Joe: Um, we had a great love riot in Ankara, Turkey.

Cherise: hmm

Joe: That was really nice, it lasted a long time, and it was a lot of people, it was the same kind of thing as Webster Hall, where we kind of marched out of the theater where we were playing, and the entire crowd followed us, and we, we marched on this kind of board walk near the water, yeah, that was nice. Yeah, I'm trying to, if you interview the other guys, maybe they'll remember some cool stuff. That's what sticks out in my mind, because Turkey is one of my favorite places to go as well.

Cherise: Okay, um, so as mentioned in Lewis Porter's, he has a *Jazz: A Century of Change: Readings and New Essays*, uh, about Wynton Marsalis on traditionalism, also known as Purism, you could say, the June 17, 1984 *Times* magazine, *New York Times* magazine, uh, there's an article by John Parelis, titled, Jazz Swings Back to Tradition.

Joe: Ah, huh

Cherise: He cites Wynton, quote, Wynton says, "the old stuff has not been absorbed yet, Duke Ellington was writing hip arrangements in 1938, and they're still hip. The key is in the rhythm. It's not in harmony or melody. The next innovation is going to be when somebody does something in the rhythm." So, um, as we spoke briefly at the last gala, you know that I'm also interested in bebop, as a drummer, and you're the bearer of the rhythm, such a crucial part, what are your thought on Wynton's comment as it relates to Hip Hop, as it relates to Social Music?

Joe: Yeah, I definitely agree with that; I mean, you know, if you think about all the different, uh, innovations and eras of jazz, um, it all has to do with the way we've changed the rhythm, you know, some of the early jazz and then swing era, it was because

of the swing rhythm, the drummer, the drums, the bass, the horn players were phrasing and the way the orchestrations, um, and the bebop it was all rhythm, you know it was all changes and new innovation in the rhythm, and then, there've definitely been some great innovation in rhythm post, when was that, post 1984?

Cherise: Yes.

Joe: In Hip Hop music. You had um, you had, um, J Dilla. You know J Dilla?

Cherise: Yes, I've heard of him, especially with Robert Glasper.

Joe: Yeah, yeah, he did some great things with the rhythm. So, rhythm, uh, Rhythm is King [very hearty laughs]

Cherise: Okay, king. [laugh]. Yes, yes, it truly is, cause that's what gets us moving, yes! Okay, uh, oh yes, name some of the rhythmic patterns and/or grooves used in Social Media. I mean I have mine that I think, but I want to hear from you, I mean the list is just…

Joe: We use a lot of, you know we play a lot of swing, we play a lot of conga beats, we play a lot of second-line beats, parades of New Orleans, um, we play a lot of Latin rhythms, um , we play marches, um, we play uh, jungle rhythms, you know, uh, we play uh, clave from the Latin America, yeah, yeah

Cherise: Right, it's so much. Thank you. [pause] I'm just gonna kind of skip down a bit. I'm gonna skip down to this one.

Joe: Okay

Cherise: If we have time, I'll go back

Joe: Okay

Cherise: So I attended the New York Film Festival of Don Cheadle's *Miles Ahead*.

Joe: Oh, wow, how was it?

Cherise: this past October. Oh, it was wonderful, I found, I discovered some things about Miles that I didn't know.

Joe: Yeah,

Cherise: I mean, I knew Miles was tough, but, but then I think the film is a bit of an infatuation, too, of what really happened, and so, when I realized that, I said, okay, cause I was like – Miles taking a 357 magnum, he's taking a gun in Columbia for his masters, but I don't know, so that's a question – did that happen?

Joe: You never know, you never know.

Cherise: But, anyway, um [laughs], at the end of the film was a pleasant surprise for me, um, there was a shout out, a nod to Social Music that included artists like Esperanza Spalding, and so, in a Bryant Gumble interview with Miles Davis in 1982, Gumbel explains that Miles Davis tempered bop's turbulence to form the cool school of jazz, right cause he played with Bird and everything.

Joe: Mm, hmm.

Cherise: In the interview Miles explains, quote, "We got so that we wouldn't play clichés, you know that was over." Bryant Gumbel, "but for the most part jazz has over

the years avoided the mainstream of American music," and Miles say's, quote "I don't like that word jazz Bryant" [Joe joins me and speaks this quote from Miles aloud with me.]

Joe: yeah

Cherise: I don't like that word jazz Bryant [speaking with a voice that imitates the sound of Miles voice.]

[both Joe and Cherise laugh]

Joe: Social Music

Cherise: yes!

Joe: I know that interview.

Cherise: Okay, so you

[laugh]

Joe: Yeah

Cherise: Because, when I saw the film give the nod to Social Music, I was so excited.

Joe: Yeah

Cherise: and so that made me want to look further into that, and so, um, right, and how would you define it ? He [Miles] said, "I think Social Music, all the social melodies in the air, it's not jazz anymore," and Bryant Gumbel, "How would you define all the popular music today?" Miles – "That's the Social Music, take out what you want, and

leave what you don't like." So, as you Joe, um, were introduced to Miles Davis by your Pittsburgh mentor, Roger Humphries, um, and of course , we know Jon Batiste knows about Miles Davis and everything, and appreciates him and everything, um, would you say that Stay Human's Social Music is deliberately an acknowledgement of Miles Davis's mention of Social Music in the eighties, or is it a genuine coincidence?"

Joe: Um, I , I would tend to say that Stay Human's view on Social Music is similar to Miles's view.

Cherise: Oh, thank you, okay.

Joe: Um, like I said earlier, we're not married to the genre of jazz, or you know, uh, a certain subset of the music, you know, there's the music that we play, just like Miles said, we draw from all kind of social melodies and rhythms that are in the air., and like I said before it's only natural because we have so much to draw from. If you ignore, it's almost like, if you ignore what has come before you, then you're missing out, you know. There's so much music that has happened. We can draw from Classical music, Western Classical music. We can draw from Indian classical music. We can draw from Rock Music, From Hip Hop music, from Country music, from Bluegrass music, Duke Ellington's music, Charlie Parker's music, Louis Armstrong music, and then, at the end of the day, what is it – it's Social Music.

Cherise: Ah

Joe: You know, that's all it is. So, I, I see what Miles – where Miles is coming from, um, but, I still like the word jazz [hearty laugh],

Cherise: Okay, because even Charlie Parker, once, he, there was a time in his life too, where he didn't like the term jazz, and a lot of the great musicians of jazz at that time, they thought, they didn't, they thought the term jazz had a negative connotation,

Joe: Yeah,

Cherise: and they didn't like, they felt it was too, box, box, box you in. So,

Joe: And, I, I, I see that, you know. I definitely see how, how, how the word jazz had some negative connotations to it, but at this point in time, the way I look at it is what, what jazz was, and what jazz is, and the people that created jazz, they really brought something great, great into the world.

Cherise: Yes, they did.

Joe: And, the world called it jazz, you know.

Cherise: Right

Joe: And, it's just a name, you know? That's what the world called it – Jazz

Cherise: Okay, thank you. So, so then Miles Davis was not at the forefront of the mind when saying Social Music?

Joe: He wasn't at the forefront of the mind, but,

Cherise: it just so happens,

Joe: I definitely know that interview though [hearty laugh]

Cherise: okay, excellent

Joe: Bryant Gumble [light laugh]

Cherise: Cause see this is a wonderful continuum, you know as uh, as Miles felt that way, and then you are truly implementing it.

Joe: was that the same interview, say's ah, Bryan say's, would you say you're the best, or would you say that you're one of the best, and Miles say's

Cherise: right

Joe: Uh, Dizzy would say I'm one of the best [spoken in the tone of Miles Davis's voice] [lightly laugh]

Cherise: That is it.

Joe; That's the same one.

Cherise: right, cause he talks about how he had a little difficulty playing , keeping up with Bird

Joe: Um, hm

Cherise: right, that's the one

Joe: That's a good one.

Cherise: Um, so, oh yes, do you feel the Love Riots have been slightly placed on hold due to the current notoriety of the group since The Late Show had begun, these intermittent private public appearances, like at the McKittrick Hotel and Rockwood

Music Hall, are they intended to be an outlet for bringing the Social Music, particularly the Love Riot aspect beyond the Colbert Show?

Joe: Yeah

Cherise: To the masses?

Joe: Yes, yes, um, I would say the Love Riots are definitely still happehning.

Cherise: Oh, wonderful

Joe: We're definitely still having them. We created a nice love riot at our last Rockwood show

Cherise: Oh

Joe: We didn't take it outside to the street, but we came into the audience and sat down on the floor, and we came,

Cherise: Yes, I have experienced that, and it's wonderful, cause, and again, as far as going out into the street, like you mentioned earlier about the police –

Joe: yeah

Cherise: and how the crowd gets into such a frenzy, though it's good energy, but they, the law, they have to

Joe: Yeah, the law. [laughs from both] The Law.

Cherise: Okay, so, you have to sort of curtail it a little bit, okay, um What do you see, or would like to see in Stay Human's future?

Joe: Oh, ah, Well, I would like us to, to keep doing what we've been doing. To bring it to more people, you know.

Cherise: Excellent, thank you, um, have you noticed a difference between perceptions of social music in countries outside the U.S., versus in the U.S., and if so, if you noticed a vast difference, how so?

Joe: it's the same everywhere.

Cherise: Ah, okay!

Joe: People, people are the same everywhere.

Cherise: Beautiful

Joe: People are the same. Human beings are the same, you know.

Cherise: I hear, I hear you, there's all kinds, everywhere.

Joe: Yes

Cherise: Describe your fashion sense, why the cowboy hat, you are the jazz cowboy, and how important is fashion in social music?

Joe: Well, I think fashion is important because what you wear represents you in a certain way, you know. People will hear you, but they also see you, you know. Um, the cowboy hat. A friend of mine gave me the cowboy hat before a gig one day, so I put it on, and I wore it for the gig and got a lot of positive feedback. And so, the next gig I wore the Cowboy Hat again. I got more positive feedback. So, then I said to myself, 'you know what, I'm gonna keep on wearing this cowboy hat',

[laughs]

Cherise: Cowboy hat, okay.

Joe: and now, I still wear it. [hearty laughs] It doesn't go any deeper than that. [laugh]

Cherise: Okay, cause when I saw you with that, I said 'I wonder is he really into, like, did you have a dream one day, even as a child, wanted to ride and shoot and kill cowboys.'

Joe: No, not really, I did, my parents owned uh, a big piece of land, kind of a farmland. We did have a few horses. But, I was there. So, there's something there.

Cherise: Yes, okay, it's in there.

Joe: It's in there.

Cherise: Maybe lying a little dormant.

Joe: It's a little dormant, yeah.

Cherise: At Manhattan School of Music and Juilliard, were you also trained in classical drums, percussion such as timpani, um, if so, how may that style be implemented in your drum work for Stay Human?

Joe: I, I wasn't, however, I was very blessed to be able to play with this band called The Nighthawks, which is a band that plays, yeah, it was in the article, they played strictly music from the 1920s and 30s, and their original jazz drummers played very, uh, large drum set that included classical percussion like timpani, xylophone and bells, and stuff like that, so I played that stuff when I played with Vince. Yeah, I definitely would say

that has had an influence in how I approach the drum set. I mean, the drum set, all it is, is a, it's a multiple percussion instrument [spoken with very serious manner in a jokingly way].

Cherise: Right, okay.

Joe: You just take multiple percussion instruments – cymbals, bass drums, snare drums, Chinese tom toms, African tom toms, cowbells, tambourines, and then you put them together.

Cherise: Okay

Joe: Multiple percussion instruments.

Cherise: Yeah, because there was one night in, you were playing, it was at the McKittrick, and you had all these different rhythms, and it was like a rhythm fest. I mean, I was just hearing all these great rhythms, and I was just like, what are they?

Joe: Yeah

Cherise: It was like a samba, everything was in there, it was great.

[pause]

Cherise: How are you taking social music to the late show with Stephen Colbert?

Joe: Well, we um, we're given the opportunity to play a little five to ten minute performance every night before Stephen comes out, and we go out there and we get the audience involved, kind of create a little mini love riot before Stephen comes out, and sometimes after the show, we go into the lobby, and we play as people leave, and we

engage them. So we definitely are bringing social music and the love riots to the Late Show every night. [laughs]

Cherise: Oh, wow, yay, that's wonderful.

Joe: Yeah

Cherise: Wonderful, um, What is it like working with each person in the group, and, because you've been there the longest, right next to Jon, do you consider yourself second in charge, like if you have to handle anything, or, you're a leader, stewardship?

Joe: In a sense I lead in a certain way, I think not just because of who I am, but also the nature of the instrument that I play. I feel the drums naturally lead a band, you know, and it's the loudest instrument, and it's the instrument that provides the most, um, dominant and aggressive rhythmic statements. So, especially in a gig like this TV show, um, I tend to take a secondary kind of leadership role, um, just by the nature of my instrument. Um, but, you know Jon is of course, um the music director, and uh, Eddie, Eddie is very serious. Eddie is a very serious musician, he's always practicing. He comes to the theater, he takes his horn out, he's practicing all day. When the show is done, he goes to the dressing room, he's practicing. Eddie is very serious.

Cherise: oh, okay,

Joe: Ibanda is very talented, you know. Ibanda has an amazing ear, he picks things up very quickly, um he can play multiple brass instruments, Michael Thurber is creative, and he knows a lot of music, he went to Juilliard for classical bass, and then he dropped out and came back to Juilliard for jazz bass, but he also plays, funk music and rock music,

and he's an amazing composer, he composes music for Broadway shows, um, Lewis Cato is, Lewis Cato plays every single instrument under the sun, very well, you know, he's an amazing drummer, an amazing bass player, and guitar player, singer.

Cherise: Not a jack of all trades, master of none.

Joe: Not a jack of all trades, master of none. He's master of all. Uh, he's also , he's one of those people that you just want around, you know. Like when he's not around, you want him around, you know, he's a really beautiful person.

Cherise: That's beautiful,

Joe: yeah, yeah

Cherise: to hear the camaraderie.

[pause]

Cherise: Outside of what is considered jazz, what is your favorite genre or genres of music?

Joe: Outside of jazz?

Cherise: Outside of jazz, yes.

Joe: Oh, boy, um, I love blues music. I love old, like old gospel music, like 1930s gospel music.

Cherise: Okay – Mahalia Jackson.

Joe: Oh, yeah, I like Beethoven. I like Stravinsky. I like Bach. I like all of that, so Classical music, um, oh, I like music from South America, Brazilian music, um, I like West African music. I like Fela Kuti.

Cherise: How do you spell that?

Joe: F-E-L-A-K-U-T-I

Cherise: okay

Joe: I like a lot of stuff. [laughs]

Cherise: Yeah, and it shows, I mean it comes through, it really comes through, all of it, okay.

[pause]

Joe: To be a great drummer, you can't have an allegiance to one type of music, because the drums are woven throughout all musics. Drums are the – the voice of course is the first instrument, the drums is the second instrument, you know?

Cherise: Yes, like you mentioned in your interview. So many of my questions were answered in this wonderful article.

Joe: Yeah

Cherise: I know you mentioned starting as a child just banging on whatever you could.

Joe: Yeah, drums.

Cherise: Well, um, I will end with this question: How did you like acting in *Bloodhounds of Broadway*, did you act in that or you played?

Joe: I didn't, no, I didn't do anything in that.

Cherise: *Bloodhounds of Broadway*?

Joe: No, where did you find that?

Cherise: It was online…You had no association with *Bloodhounds of Broadway*?

Joe: No, I've never heard of *Bloodhounds of Broadway*.

Cherise: [laughs] Okay, well, excuse me.

Joe: Oh, that's okay, I did a bit of acting in, what was the show called, it was on HBO

Cherise: Were you in – Treme [Treme spoken aloud simultaneously by Cherise and Joe]

Joe: Yeah ,I mean it was a very small part, but

Cherise: Well, how did you like that,

Joe: [hearty laugh]

Cherise: talk about improvisation [light laughter], how did you like that, and do, you, is acting a part of your career you'd like to continue at some point?

Joe: It is a part of my career I'd like to continue at some point. You know why? Because in music is also acting.

Cherise: Oh! Okay, I hear you.

Joe: Playing music, you know why it's also acting, because you go into different characters, but,

Cherise: and your interpretation.

Joe: It's your interpretation of those characters.

Cherise: That's right.

Joe: So, it's acting, but it's real and yourself at the same time, you know, so yeah. So, yes, I would.

Cherise: Okay, well, this has been an amazing interview.

Joe: Those were amazing questions.

Cherise: Oh, thank you.

Joe: Wow.

Cherise: [laughing] Except at the end.

Joe: [laugh]

Cherise: But then, I put that little jazz improv there and said, okay, well how was that?

Joe: yeah

Cherise: No, but that question was listed on Wikipedia.

Joe: Really

Cherise: Yeah, they have you listed there, so it needs to be changed.

Joe: Yeah, maybe I did act in it, and I didn't know.

Cherise: [laughing] Really?

Joe: Maybe they took something I did and put it in there, and I didn't know. Do you know what *Bloodhounds of Broadway* is?

Cherise: No, I don't.

Joe: well, I don't know what it is either?

Cherise: It seemed liked it had something to do with acting.

Joe: Okay.

Cherise: I can look more into that…Okay, Joe.

Joe: Thank you very much. I'm sorry that I have to go.

Cherise: No, no problem, you've given me a wealth of your time.

Joe: Thank you so much.

Eddie Barbash

Eddie Barbash Interview with Cherise Harris, Wednesday, October 26, 2016 at Pret A Manger near The Late Show with Stephen Colbert, The Ed Sullivan Theater, Midtown Manhattan, New York

Transcribed by Cherise Harris

Cherise: Okay, hello, hello. Um, I'm hear with the great, super, super Eddie Barbash, and there's so many things that he does, but I'm here specifically to speak with him about my thesis at Rutgers University. So, it's called Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Re-discovered: An Introspective Analysis of Jon Batiste and Stay Human. So, of course that is my hypothesis. So, it's listed like a statement, but it's really a question, and every question that I ask involves that. So, today is October 26, 2016, and we're hear at Pret A Manger [Eddie lightly laughs], and so this is my first time actually coming inside.

Eddie: Well, all right.

Cherise: I've walked by these, and it's a nice French café place. This is great, um, so, uh, as one of my favorite questions from the movie Brown Sugar starring Sanaa Lathan and Taye Diggs is – When did you fall in love with Hip Hop? I'm gonna put my spin on it, and I'd like to know – When did you fall in love with jazz?

Eddie: Well, I've always been in love with music,

Cherise: Okay.

Eddie: from a very young age. I didn't discover jazz until I started playing saxophone. I guess I was sort of naturally talented at the saxophone, and in the school system in the United States, when you're good at the saxophone, they make you play jazz.

Cherise: [light laughter] Right, okay.

Eddie: Kind of like, uh, the advanced band is the jazz band. So, that's how I found out about jazz, and to be honest, I didn't immediately fall in love with it. Um, the first recordings I really enjoyed were early Ray Charles recordings,

Cherise: Oh, okay.

Eddie: like from the forties, before he was on Atlantic, um,

Cherise: Okay.

Eddie: when he was sounding kind of like Nat King Cole and other blues musicians.

Cherise: Yes, he was a crooner. He was croonin.

Eddie: Yeah, when he was crooning, [light laughter by Cherise] that and also some Stephane Grappelli and Django Reinhardt. I really liked those guys.

Cherise: Yes, yes.

Eddie: But then I kind of spent a lot of years studying jazz and sort of trying to make myself like it, and then only later, when I was, when I moved to New York did I realize that there was a lot of stuff that I had been told that I should like that I didn't like, and I gradually widdled my way through the music I had been listening to and discovered what I really did like, and at that point and still now, I realized that the jazz that I really love is mostly the early stuff, that's more rooted in the Blues, and more rooted in the American popular song.

Cherise: Yes.

Eddie: Like, jazz from the thirties and forties. I love Duke Ellington. I love Louis Armstrong is probably my favorite jazz musician of all time, um, yeah, that's sort of my journey with jazz in a nutshell.

Cherise: Great. Thank you. Uh, so, did you grow up in a military family, [Eddie motions his head to demonstrate 'no'] 'cause like, I'm looking at your bio, and what not, and I see that you were born in New York, you lived in Oaxaco, Mexico,

Eddie: Oaxaco, yeah,

Cherise: until you were like two, and then you grew up in Atlanta, Georgia, and you did high school in the University of North Carolina of the Arts in Winston-Salem, North Carolina. So, you travelled a lot, so you're not in a military family.

Eddie: No, an artist family, actually.

Cherise: Oh,

Eddie: I, uh, my Dad's a writer, and my mom's a photographer.

Cherise: Wow.

Eddie: And, they were working on a book in Mexico.

Cherise: Oh, excellent.

Eddie: Yeah.

Cherise: Was it fiction, non-fiction?

Eddie: Uh, non-fiction.

Cherise: Wow, that's excellent. Okay, so all of those artistic genes just,

Eddie: I supposed so, yeah [light laughter].

Cherise: passed right on to their son, okay. Um, prior to graduating from Juilliard, you went to The New School? right?

Eddie: Um, hm.

Cherise: Yeah, 'cause I went to The New School actually, I was there 2005 and 2006, so we sort of missed each other,

Eddie: Uhm, hm.

Cherise: 'cause you were there in 2008?

Eddie: I was there, no, it was later than that. Let's see, I was there like the fall of 2010,

Cherise: Oh

Eddie: 'cause I did,

Cherise: So, you started Juilliard first in 2008?

Eddie: Yeah, I did three years first of Juilliard, and then I transferred to The New School, and I did two years at The New School.

Cherise: Oh, all right. Is that where you met Chico Hamilton and Jose James, but Jose may have been gone by then?

Eddie: I actually met Chico when, uh, when I was a freshman at Juilliard

Cherise: Oh!

Eddie: At the end of my first year there, we played a concert at Dizzy's and the music of Duke Ellington, and I played a solo on Starcrossed Lovers with Johnny Hodges solo, from the Shakespeare Suite, and Chico was in the audience, and then, he came back stage and wanted my number because he liked the way I sounded on the ballad,

Cherise: Yes, yes.

Eddie: and that's when I ended up playing with him.

Cherise: Wonderful, great, thank you. So, in playing with Chico Hamilton, Jose was in that band, 'cause I was at The New School when Jose was there,

Eddie: Uhm, hm.

Cherise: but, um, and you started a group called The Amigos.

Eddie: Um, hm.

Cherise: How was playing in those bands, in particular, how did that prepare you for Stay Human, or what you offered to the formation of Stay Human and the Social Music?

Eddie: Well, um, I was playing with Jon, I actually started playing with Jon before both those bands. I started playing with Jon almost immediately when I got to Juilliard, 'cause we just hit it off right away.

Cherise: In 2008

Eddie: Yeah, no, in 2007,

Cherise: 2007, okay.

Eddie: and, I played, um, like for a year and a half, I just sort of played gigs for free for him and wasn't really in the band,

Cherise: Right.

Eddie: but was just hanging out, and it was during that time that I was starting to play with Jon that the other bands started coming together. Um, but I mean Chico is a valuable experience because that's the only experience that I had playing with an older legend.

Cherise: Right.

Eddie: Playing in the band of an older legend. So, I feel like, it's just kind of like, even if you don't understand what you're getting from it at the time, I think that's a valuable experience, 'cause you, you're getting a glimpse into the past.

Cherise: It's interesting, because you actually met Jon before Chico. In some of the reading, it looks the other way around, but thank you

Eddie: That's right.

Cherise: for that clarification. So, um, what is Social Music to you, and what does Social Music mean to you?

Eddie: Um, I think Social Music, what makes it unique is that it's not a style of music. I think Social Music is defined by its intent.

Cherise: Okay.

Eddie: So, I think the intent of Social Music, would define Social Music as it's music, no matter what style it is it has the intent of bringing joy to people and bringing people together that may not normally be brought together. So, when you play a concert of Social Music, the goal is to uplift the spirit of the room, and make everybody have a, bring the spirit of togetherness to the room.

Cherise: Yes, yes you do.

Eddie: So, it could really be any style of music, and I think that's why Social Music, that's why jazz is sort of a good place to start with Social Music because jazz is one of the most collaborative styles of music. Jazz is able to put the improvisational nature of it, is able to incorporate styles from anything. So, since Social Music isn't defined by a style, it really ends up being an amalgamation of the kind of music that everybody playing it likes. So, Joe, for example, loves straight-ahead jazz

Cherise: Yes.

Eddie: from like Bebop onward. That's maybe his favorite. So, like Art Blakey is probably one of his favorite drummers. My favorite music is like whole romantic, 1930s, 40s.

Cherise: You're a ballader. I like ballads too.

Eddie: Yeah, I like, you know, I like a lot of old, white pop music, like European music.

Cherise: Yes.

Eddie: Jon loves blues,

Cherise: Hm, mm.

Eddie: you know. So, he actually has

Cherise: You didn't mention Ibanda, is he?

Eddie: Ibanda, he

Cherise: Because he wasn't a jazz musician, in the beginning, right?

Eddie: He wasn't. Ibanda – he's the youngest member of the band. He actually, we, Joe and Jon and I played together for probably three years before, three or four years before Ibanda started playing with us.

Cherise: Okay.

Eddie: Ibanda kind of, Ibanda brings us to the, has less of an influence on the sound of the band based on his musical preference, and more an influence based on the fact that he played such an unique instrument and that he plays the tuba, and that he kind of learned how to play, you know, until playing with us, he'd only played classical. So, all the stuff that he does with us, he learned how to do on the job, doing it with us. So, it ended up being a very unique sound and its really still for the band. So, it was created by.

Cherise: Tailor-made.

Eddie: Yeah, so it was created by the band, by being in the band.

Cherise: Okay, excellent, wow.

Eddie: But, uh, yeah, so that's, the interesting thing about this band and Social Music is that we all like fairly different music, you know, we are, if you ask each of us to put on our favorite song on

Cherise: Um, hm.

Eddie: It would sound completely different probably, I mean, you know, there's probably some common ground obviously, but a lot of it would sound very, very, very different, and that's why jazz is a good medium for us because we can throw all of that in there.

Cherise: Right. From you r perspective, what is meant by Stay Human?

Eddie: Hm [light laughter]. Um, remember other people, in everything you do, maybe. To, um, remember that we're humans. Everybody else that we interact with is a human.

Cherise: Yes

Eddie: We're all equal.

Cherise: Um, hm.

Eddie: You know.

Cherise: Thank you. So, would you say Social Music is an evolution of jazz, a rediscovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, like in the early days of the jazz that speaks more to your heart, and even before then, like even going back to Congo Square. There's an interview or you could say, conversation with Jon and Isaac, Walter Isaacson at the Aspen Ideas, and they're talking about the history of jazz, and, um, there's a very

good commentary on Louis Armstrong, your favorite, and everything, and so, Jon mentions dancing and social music, how important dance is and the Congo Square, which is the French Quarter today, so in light of all of that, would you say that jazz is that social Music is jazz evolved, a re-discovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, maybe, or both?

Eddie: Um, well, Social Music doesn't have to be jazz.

Cherise: Right.

Eddie: But, I think

Cherise: Just like you said

Eddie: But I think

Cherise: Yes

Eddie: in some ways it's a re-discovery because I think the beginnings of jazz, it wasn't jazz yet at the beginning, it was people from different backgrounds with different musical ideas collaborating with each other and creating music with the common intent. You know, 'cause Congo Square, that was, we weren't, there was no, in Congo Square, it wasn't about the style of music they were playing as much as it was about we're here gathering to create this feeling together and have this experience. It was very much the opposite of the Wynton Marsalis definition of jazz, which is upholding, uh, tradition, it was much more just about the feeling to be created in the moment , and then under the intent of group of people, and I think in that way Social Music is sort of a re-discovery because it's back to the root of what, because I think that when any new style of music is

discovered it's not an intentional process in a laboratory combing influences, or like combining different elements of forms of music. It's just a thing that happened based on a group of people that get together and have different influences and bringing their different influences to the table, but enjoy time together because they're all trying to accomplish the same goal, which is to create, you know, in some senses it could be to create a joyous feeling, it could be to create, you know, like in the bebop era, it was to bring a level of sophistication and intricacies to make sure to push musical boundaries and exploring new harmonies, and new rhythm. It was a more exploratory thing in the bebop era, and when jazz was created, it was people in New Orleans expressing themselves, trying to make sense of an environment, you know, and trying to. I think, I don't know if that answers your question, I went a lot of places.

Cherise: It does. It does. It sounds like its more, idealogical, philoso, philos

Eddie: philosophical

Cherise: Philosophical [light laugh], philosophical point of view more so than music theoretical, right. Okay, thank you. Um, what is your take on love riots, and which love riot had been your favorite or most memorable one?

Eddie: The best love riot we ever did was the very first one, because

Cherise: Okay, Joe said the same.

Eddie: we didn't know it was going to happen. It wasn't on purpose. We spent in this phase where, this was when Ibanda sort of cut his teeth, and learning when to play jazz or

play whatever it is that we do, and we were playing on the subway every night, almost every night

Cherise: Which train was it?

Eddie: It was usually the 1,2,3, or the A.

Cherise: Really

Eddie: Yeah

Cherise: So, it wasn't the green line. It was always the, you were always on the seventh avenue or eighth avenue

Eddie: Yeah, we were always

Cherise: Okay, thank you.

Eddie: Just because that's where we all lived.

Cherise: Okay

Eddie: We all lived in Washington Heights or Harlem, or something like that

Cherise: Hm.

Eddie: but, uh, and Ibanda was probably in the dorms at Juilliard then, but, man, yeah, that was an amazing time because we were playing in the subway, every night, all night, I mean we would get together probably around ten, or nine or ten at night, and we would play until two or three in the morning. We did it every night, for months.

Cherise: Wow, for a whole summer.

Eddie: Yeah, yeah. So, during one of those nights, we got out of the train on the lower east side, and we just walked around the lower east side just playing, we went into Ray's pizza and played. We went into Katz's deli and played, just like

Cherise: Oh, you played inside the deli

Eddie: Yeah, we like ran inside and played in there, doing all kinds of stuff like that, and then it was sort of this magic moment because I think it must've been about four in the morning and it was about right when the bars were closing, before we were gonna go home, or there was like no where else to go, and we were on the street, I think we were on , uh, man, I think we were on Ludlow. Think we were on Ludlow, we were like right around the corner from Katz's deli

Cherise: Okay, in the village

Eddie: we were like, I think we were on the same street that like Pianos is on, where the Living Room used to be, and all

Cherise: See, once you start talking village, then, I'm, I'm a little more discombobulated.

Eddie: Oh, yeah.

Cherise: I'm a numbers

Eddie: We were down at this street where there's tons of music clubs. It was four in the morning al the clubs were starting to let out. We didn't know that. We were just kind of nearing the end of our night. Kind of like, oh, maybe it's time to go home, and there

were some young women on the street, and they were like, “play you guys, play you guys”,

Cherise: [light laugh] uh, hum

Eddie: So, we started playing something, I think maybe we started playing, “Isn’t She Lovely,”

Cherise: Oh, yes, Stevie.

Eddie: and before the end of the song, there was like maybe twenty people there, and it went from like, four girls to twenty people,, and then people were attempting to , well, no at that point, we realized there were so many people that, so we just played another song, and then we played another song, there were like fifty people, maybe more, and it was starting to block up the street, and then it got to the point where we, you know, we stopped and then there’s this whole crowd of fifty or more people. So then we keep playing, and it goes to this part where the whole street is blocked off and probably a hundred people, and then this cop car shows up, with a megaphone and the siren on yeah yelling at us to disperse, and then a cop, two cops come up on a horseback, and so at that point, we were like, Oh, shit, and so, we ran away, and we ran around the block to ditch the whole crowd and everything, and we escaped and

Cherise: So that was right before people actually started following you. That usually would kind of like happen after a concert when you would come out. That is what was, and is so amazing to me

Eddie: Yeah, well all the other love riots, kind of, that was when we discovered that this thing, that we could do this thing, and it really, it literally just happened. None of us knew, it was – Crazy. I mean, it was literally a span of like, in less than ten minutes, much less than ten minutes, in like six minutes or something, it went from a crowd of , it went from four girls to a crowd of over a hundred people walking the streets,

Cherise: Wow, that's amazing.

Eddie: and then we realized that oh, this is like a thing that we can do, and we just started doing it, we started doing it more and more and also we call this instrumentation [pointing to the Social Music album brought to the interview by Cherise] the subway band instrumentation, and because we developed that, it was so much of what we were doing, we started doing it for our gigs, and we were just standing in front of the stage and do it, and then Jon would actually walk off the stage, and we'd follow him, and it just, that's how that thing came to be.

Cherise: Wow.

Eddie: Yeah.

Cherise: So, pertaining to certain messages like love, believe through Stay Human during concerts or outreach events like at the Newport Jazz Festival 2014, I was there, and, um, at your week long residencey at The Nomad here in Manhattan, I wasn't there, but I know about that one, and um, presented by Chase, with those messages that are emitted by Stay Human, what is love to you, and, um, how do you define love, how do you define believe, and what do you hope the public perceives from emoting such terms as messages?

Eddie: Uh, I don't have a, I don't have any fancy philosophical definition for love or believe, but I think its as simple as what you would look up in the dictionary, but it's a hard thing to do.

Cherise: Yes.

Eddie: Um, I think, uh, you know, if when we play, people are inspired to be kinder to each other,

Cherise: Yes.

Eddie: that's an accomplishment, I don't know, it's hard to, it's hard to be happy, and it's hard to be genuinely happy, and, um, be mean to someone at the same time, you know?

Cherise: Right. Oxy-moron, or

Eddie: So, When you're really feeling your happiest, you're kind to other people. So,

Cherise: Yeah, it's kind of like, if you don't have it to give, you can't give. You can't give it.

Eddie: So, yeah, I'd like it if our concerts and our music, just made people feel happy and you know, ready to love each other all right, you know, it doesn't have to, you know, I'm not talking about Jesus level, unconditional love.

Cherise: Uh, hum

Eddie: But like, just to be kind to each other, and be more tolerant of each other and allowing

Cherise: Well, they do, they certainly do, from my audience perspective, and interactivity, so thank you. Uh, so as you said ballads are your favorite,

Eddie: Um, hm.

Cherise: Same or me, I love a good ballad, you know, and, um, will you discuss your lyrical approach because when I, I, it was an aha moment for me at the *Jazz Is Now* this series this past June, and you were playing, and, um, I always enjoy hearing you play, I do, it was something about there, then, I , I really could appreciate your tone, like just your sound

Eddie: Mm, hm.

Cherise: and, I said, well, go ahead Eddie, the sound of your horn, the sound that you get out of it, and, um, I know you're lyrical, and so, uh, and it was like you were playing on a Night in Tunisia, so everybody, you took your turns of kind of doing your improv, slight soloing, and everyone was kind of a faster rhythm, but when they got to you, you slowed it down a bit and took your time with it, and I said – oh, wo-oh! You know, that really got me, and so I was really able to kind of get more of an insight to your style, what you bring, and um, of course, um Lester Young is known for , uh, his lyricism in his playing and he's known for acknowledging you need to know the lyric to songs, I've also heard you sing, like as a background on records and in, on stage , and um, I think you have a good voice. I haven't heard you sing a full song, but, um, it's nice. So, I know you appreciate singing, and um, when I heard you and you orchestra at The Roxy Hotel, and so, you had one of your originals, um, Mariache, and so you said you were focusing on theme and then variations of that theme, and I think there was about three variations, and

in studying about even Charlie Parker, right, and how he, is known for doing that and how brilliant his phrasing was, and even though he played so fast with all the bop, he , uh, too or he definitely used some of the lyricism from Lester Young, so, with you being such a brilliant lyrical player and everything, um, how would you say your lyrical approach could translate , um, to the innovation in music, like even into, uh a musical innovation like Hip Hop, you know how does your lyrical style do that, just like Bird innovated jazz with the bebop?

Eddie: Yeah, yeah, well I think there are , uh, three main elements to music, there's rhythm, melody, and harmony, that's essentially what all music is made up if you put it in those , it can be broken down into those three things. Well, I guess rhythm, melody, harmony and timbre

Cherise: Hm, yes, timbre.

Eddie: But I think the two most prima elements of music that people react to first before anything else are rhythm and timbre. So, you mentioned my sound.

Cherise: Yes, you're exquisite sound.

Eddie: My favorite thing about working on music and playing music, the only thing I care about most is my sound. I just love

Cherise: Yes

Eddie: working on my sound, and that's, um, honestly one of the only frustrations, one of the biggest frustrations of being in a band as successful as Stay Human is that you rarely get to play in small acoustic environments where you can actually hear my sound

and appreciate what I built, well you know, what I've developed. So much of the time we're playing on the big stage, and it's got to go through the microphone, and the mic totally distorts everything and nothing sounds.

Cherise: Maybe that's why it became so apparent to me at *Jazz Is Now*.

Eddie: Yeah, that's why, because that was probably the first time you heard us in an environment when I didn't have a microphone, and I was right there.

Cherise: Yeah, 'cause I was like, ooh, his sound.

Eddie: Yeah, I know. So, that's why I feel like a lot of the time

Cherise: Okay, thank you.

Eddie: Yeah, I feel like a lot of the time when I play performances, if I play a performance on a big stage, and everything it's like fifty percent of my sound is not translated, just 'cause, you know, a microphone can only capture so much, and I

Cherise: Right, because I asked if you were amplified when I heard you at The Roxy, but, but I knew that even with amplification

Eddie: Ever so slightly.

Cherise: its more to it than that, what I'm hearing

Eddie: Yeah

Cherise: from you, and I know Joe let me know how you like , uh, Johnny Hodges, and you just confirmed that earlier.

Eddie: Yeah, but, uh, so, and then, so you mentioned Hip Hop, that's music that's based almost entirely on rhythm.

Cherise: Yes.

Eddie: It has very little melody most of the time, and rhythm is, rhythm is king, you know.

Cherise: Yes, it is.

Eddie: Rhythm is, aside from sound, it's the first thing people react to. It's the most like, basic, easy thing to understand, for primal element of music, um, and then I would say third on the list is melody. Melody is slightly harder to grasp, and maybe more cerebral than rhythm and timbre, ,but I think melody, to me, that's one of my favorite elements of music, which I think where the lyricism is coming from. So, I think pop culture today is so much of the music that people listen to is rhythm and timbre driven, 'cause its all based on a lot of what people are dawn to , and pop songs are the beat and then the production , all these digital sounds that have been created, and that's all timbre. That's all these new world of timbre that , um, so, I feel like the skill I have with melody is one that's not terribly , not at the forefront of what's happening right now, so it certainly could be what happens

Cherise: It could be.

Eddie: So, there's a lot of space for it to be added to what's going now in the moment because there's less of it there than what used to be.

Cherise: Um, hm. All right, thank you. So, I'd like to juxtapose, three of my observations. So, one being , we kind of touched on it, I'm just gonna read this kind of quickly, this is something that Joe said, so Joe said, speaking of you – he's another , if you interview him, he has a very unique story, he talked about your uniqueness, he's a saxophone who his first musical love is country and bluegrass music, where saxophone isn't even present in that music, he's just unique in that, he has been able to mesh the sounds of country music, and bluegrass and early jazz in his love of Johnny Hodges from the alto saxophone and that made him unique as well. So that's, keep that in mind. Two, um touch on Jon's comment in his conversation with Walter Isaacson about Social Music and the roots of jazz and the amalgamation of diverse kinds of music that formed early jazz and very streams that flow out of it, and also have been developed alongside it, and he talked about how blues is an important element, within that amalgamation and how , uh, we could go a step further and say, how the Spanish, they also brought the guitar, we have Robert Johnson who was basically a blues player, so he got hold of the guitar and did his thing with that and everything, on down to like you know Jimi Hendrix, he has influenced the rock and rollers and I know, in your exquisite, just a, such a splendid blend of sound, your orchestra, Eddie Barbash and His Orchestra, and again, I'm such a ballade, but also, you know, how you infused , like your country, your blue grass which you touched on in the beginning of your conversation and how that involves , it's like you have your own string quartet within your orchestra within your orchestra, 'cause you have the violin, you have the viola, you have a fiddle, you have, um, the cello, and you have the guitar, Okay, so that piggy backs to like, with Jon and Walter Isaacson are talking about, so, keeping all of that in mind and then of course I just mentioned how I

heard you playing all of that, and it was just wonderful, so, my question is as I'm juxtaposing these things, do you agree with Joe and Jon's comments? First of all, um,

Eddie: About?

Cherise: Would you say that you came to jazz by way of recognizing it as a musical conversation, because, I didn't really express that properly, Jon also explained how, um, bluegrass and the blues is an African-American folk tradition, so then , whereas as you like country and bluegrass more, coming from the folk, 'cause kind of like another stream, um walter Isaacson asked well, how did the fiddles fit into jazz, where did they come from? How did the fiddles and the guitar and everything and so, uhm, of course I thought of and your string instruments, and Jon basically explains that it's a musical conversation, like because jazz is such that you can put any kind of music in jazz, it's still jazz, but then if you , um, take jazz and put it inside another music, then it becomes something , it's a different sound, it becomes something different. So, um, how would you say, since you had such a love of blue grass, and country, and that type of strain, and I no you didn't , you weren't that excited about jazz initially, right

Eddie: No.

Cherise: Okay, and that's fine. Okay, so, but you came into it,

Eddie: Yes

Cherise: and, what I'm wondering is in these three ideas that I just spoke about, these three observations that I made, would you say that you kind of came into jazz by, through the musical conversation, like you kind of noticed that there are blueses that is played in ,

uh, bluegrass or country just like the blues is in jazz. So if you get on a jam, if you get like in a jam session, you could communicate, did you find that to kind of be the case for you, that you were?

Eddie: Well, I knew jazz, I knew about jazz before I knew about bluegrass. I actually didn't discover bluegrass until later in life. I only,

Cherise: Okay

Eddie: I grew up with when I was very young, there was some, a fair amount of country around the house, and my Mom listened to Patsy Kline, and Hank Williams and, uh, Riders in the sky and groups like that, so , I had some of that at a very early age, where it was probably seeping in , but I probably didn't know it, but as far as my musical studies and really being , uh, an avid music listener, jazz was first for me

Cherise: 'cause you were around eight years old, I think I read

Eddie: something like that, third grade whenever that is, um, and I really started listening to jazz probably when I was in the fifth or sixth grade, sixth grade maybe. Uhm, but one of the things that I loved about, about, uh, mixing these styles of music or knowing about all these styles of music is that particularly with the American, all the American styles of music, they really are, like parallel streams that come from the same source and just broke off at a very early spot, like in the eary 1900s and went different directions because there are a lot of songs that have appeared between the country tradition and the jazz tradition, like, uh, Trouble in mind is a song that jazz musicians played all of the time as do country musicians. Um, there's blues forms in both styles of music, uhm, so, I think you see a lot of similarities, like when I got to know the bluegrass community here in

New York, and started playing with them, I realized in a lot of ways, I mean it was very different than what the jazz community does, but in a lot of ways, it was pretty similar in terms of the improvisation and the melody solo structure of songs, and, uh, yeah, it's amazin to see how they are parallet streams it's, and that's part of what I like so much about it. There are very few people, I think realize how similar they are, and they have the same starting point, and they just coming, it's sort of the same starting point, and then , uh, two different cultures took the, started at the same point, and then went two different directions. So, it's like the southern, white appalachain culturestarted here and went that way, and then southern black New Orleans, uh, delta, you knkow river delta culture took it and went this direction, but, they really did start in the same place. Actually, I found out that, I was doing research for another project and found out that , uhm, before brass bands became a thing in New Orleans, and like the early, early nineteen hundreds and the late eighteen hundreds, string bands were more, were the most popular form of bands in social party music in New Orleans, and they were playing the same songs that later the brass bands played. So, there were these string bands that were made up of basically dobero, mandalin, fiddl, guitar and banjo, which is essentially the bluegrass instrumentation that were playing songs like High Society and , uh, what, uh, you know all these rags, piano rags and things that the brass band, uh, they really were the same thing initially, and on the, on some of the first bluegrass records, ,Joman Rhodes, considered to be the father of the Bluegrass, on one of his first recordings, he plays when the Saints Go Marching In.

Cherise: So then, would you say that since you came to jazz first actually, and then later the Bluegrass, once you came to bluegrass have a more of an appreciation or kind of like jazz more?

Eddie: A little bit, ‘cause when I, the first thing that I realized when I moved to New York, and started musically finding myself was that what, the styles of jazz that I actually, honestly love are the older styles, and then when I discovered bluegrass, it was sort of like, it was sor to of like, I discovered the style of music that I wish I had come to first because it’s almost like, I like the starting point, and then if I had been back in time, back in that starting point, I probably would’ve gone on this path as opposed to this path, you know, this path being jazz and this path being more country, Americana , roots, bluegrass

Cherise: I see, you would’ve started Country, Bluegrass, Americana

Eddie: But, I would, if, uh, you know, If I was living in the early nineteen hundreds, I would have probably gone in that direction, with my discovered musical development and with the time, exposed to jazz lineage and to bebop and what not, um, but it’s kind of , yeah, I feel like I discovered the parallel stream that actually makes sense to me, uh, but, since they started at the same place, the early jazz, I still really love, because that’s when it was in that it’s got this essence that I’m really drawn to, I don’t know, does that make sense?

Cherise: Yes, it does make sense. Thank you. Uhm, Oh, yes, my time, um, I’ll jump to this one, but,

Eddie: We still have time; it’s all right.

Cherise: How do you maintain your stamina, because I've seen you, um, I think the Late Show on television in the beginning, this was maybe last year, not so much this year – recently, but you were kind of standing up on the rafters, kind of on the balcony and you're playing, you know. [light laughter by Eddie] And, all of that, and I saw you on the bar top in footage of the residency, and another lady, I also interview people from the audience because as we discussed Social Music is so inclusive, for everybody, so one lady, her name is Marcia, and, uh, she, I asked her what was her perception of you guys and everything, and so she said, she thought she saw you, it was either The Cutting Room or Rockwood in new York, she wasn't quite sure of the place, but she said "Eddie Barbash played his version of St. James Infirmary," and she said, "where he fell [Eddie laughs] into Jon's arms," and she, and I said, "Oh, what!?" and then she said, "because he played that thing so hard [Eddie laughs]," and she said, "he just went like that [Cherise motions limping back in the chair]," you know, and, um, she says, "I have a picture of it – Jon holding him up. They really put, put, put it all out there, and so when somebody does that and you're in the presence of that it has to be that they, they have high level of talent how could you not be affected by that and all the energy that goes into it, the energy plus the hard work, all the studying they did, repetition they did, meeting different people, playing with different people, you can see they're doing it. I could see them just playing and playing for fun." So, um, how do you, like, maintain this stamina or have the stamina to do all these things, and do you remember that? Do you remember?

Eddie: I don't remember that, [Eddie laughs]

Cherise: Oh, you don't?

Eddie: but I believe it.

Cherise: well, it was at, okay, cause I know I've seen pictures, maybe sometime on Facebook and there's a picture, and Jon is really playing, I think, I don't know, maybe it was St. James Infirmary,

Eddie: that's another

Cherise: but I know that I've heard you playing, I was at the Brooklyn, the BRIC festival, wow, you guys really, that was another level

Eddie: Yeah, we don't play that one, that was, that used to be, like, one of our hits. We don't play that very often anymore, but we played that song, probably a thousand times.

Cherise: Okay,

Eddie: But when we did, that was one that we played for a lot of years, and it was literally, Jon would always push me to play it, you know, longer and more intense and harder and put more to it, so

Cherise: You don't remember, kind of, just playing so hard

Eddie: Not that specific instance, but I remember playing it manytimes.

Cherise: Oh, okay.

Eddie: Playing it, and holding the last note so long, then I thought I was gonna throw-up afterwards

Cherise: Wow.

Eddie: ‘Cause it is like running a sprint a little bit, that’s all. Um, you know

Cherise: And, I saw you, this is my own, at th BRIC festival, you were playing so, I don’t remember the exact song, but you, I mean , basically you ended up on your knees on the foor of the stage, and you were just

Eddie: wailing, I mean, so. Well, I think in terms of maintaining our energy, I don’t know if , um, [Eddie’s phone rings] oh, man , let me just, I’m sorry, it’s a guy who’s playing in my band next weekend

Cherise: Oh, okay, great, great

[Pause – Eddie takes the call, explaining he can’t really talk for long at this moment.] 54:14mn

Eddie: He wants me to come record, on his album! There’s so much going on [Eddie shaking head in his hands], oh my God [Cherise laughs], oh, speaking of energy, I’ve got a show, I’ve got two shows on Saturday, one with my band, one with my friends band, I’ve got to learn all the music with my friend’s band. I’ve gotta finish arranging the music for my band, and also, we’re gonna have a rehearsal Friday night, and I have to make sure that they can lean, like twelve tunes in one rehearsal.

Cherise: For your band

Eddie: For my band.

Cherise: This is at The Roxy?

Eddie: No, no, this is another show. It's the Brooklyn Botanic Garden, it's my bluegrass band.

Cherise: Oh, you have a bluegrass band

Eddie: Yeah, but then, tonight I'm supposed to meet up with the arranger who arranges the orchestra stuff for me for The Roxy, and we're supposed to work on new arrangements for next week at The Roxy, but then he just called me, like, this is the only night I could have you come play on my record, can you come and crank some color on it.

Cherise: Tonight!?

Eddie: I know, and I'm like, but oh, this is the night I'm supposed to meet the arranger. Aagh!

Cherise: After working.

Eddie: Yeah, after leaving work here.

Cherise: Oh, the Late Show.

Eddie: Uhm, but I think, as far as keeping up energy, and I'm sure you've found this as well, that the more energy you give to something, the easier it is to stay energized, and at the end, it's only when, it's like inertia, you know, it's only when you stop and slow down that you get tired. So, actually, if you're really tired, the best way to get energized is to play a show in front of a bunch of people and put enough energy into it, because it's like it lifts you up, and you kind of just keep going. If you stay, if you keep putting

energy into it, you can keep going. It's only when you stop and let yourself slowdown that you get really tired.

Cherise: Okay, thank you.

Eddie: The momentum.

Cherise: Okay, this will be the last question. So, about outreach, with, working with children and even adult educational workshops, you know, going to hospitals, prisons okay, what would you say is the true intent of such events and what is a particular one that you most remember, that you feel you had the greatest impact, or maybe the greatest impact was made upon you?

Eddie: Uh, it's hard to gage what our impact is, so I can't really, I hope we've had an impact in doing some of this stuff, but I don't really know if we ever had. It's hard to say, for me, it's hard to say. So, I really don't know. But two times that really stick out in my mind as being, where I saw another side of human experience and life hat I'd never seen before first hand. Like, once we went to a detention, juvenile detention center in, uh, in Baton Rouge, and we played for some kids that were, you know, wearing the orange jumpsuits. And, some of them had their feet shackled, and these are kids that are younger than us , and just to like , it just is, that was eye opening just to be around, be interacting, directly interacting with people that had such uh, radically different life experience than I did, and it was almost like, even though we're both human beings, and both Americans, it's just like, almost like trying to communicate with somebody from another planet, because they're coming from such a different set of experiences and emotional head space, that particularly for me, these were all African-American kids that

grew up more, and, and in really bad neighborhoods and what not, and I mean I've had like, the most charmed life ever, I've had an incredibly different experience than that, so there was a feeling like, God, what can I possibly do here, what can I, I don't even know how to begin to communicate with you, like trying to get them to crack a smile, even or to entertain them in any kind of way was, I just thank God that I had Jon there, he could really, he could relate a little better and also a few of the other guys in the band – Barry Stephenson and Jamison Ross. If it hadn't of been for them, I wouldn't of known how to, so I follow them in that situation, and we did manage to get through at a certain point and get the kids to participate with us, and make beats with us, and they wrote a song with us.

Cherise: Yeah, that's wonderful, that's good

Eddie: And, I think they had a good time, it seemed like it, you know they were smiling , and certainly the energy changed from when they got there to when they left. Um, you know, I don't know that we changed any lives or anything like that, but I think we probably uplifted their mood for a moment. But, it was just crazy to see, to be in a situation where I was interacting with people who were so, so different than me. Um,

Cherise: But, here, you could communicate through the music.

Eddie: Kind of, I mean, I really think.

Cherise: and, a seed was sown.

Eddie: Yeah, a seed was sown, it's just um, if I had been there by myself, trying to communicate with music, I think it would've been a total failure. I don't think I would've been able to do it without Jon, Jamison Ross and Barry, who were able to

understand where they were coming from a little bit better than where I was coming from. ‘Cause those kids, I don’t know if they had even ever seen a saxophone before, and the kinds of music that I like, that I’m drawing from, they’ve never heard it, where they’ve never listened to a love song from the 1930s or 40s, or any of that, so what I can actually communicate to them musically, was also as much of a foreign language as , you know,, anything else So , that’s what was like, just, that was my opening experience for me.

Cherise: Yes, I hear you.

Eddie: Uh, just to be taken out of my world. Um, another time that was moving was we went and played and sort of talked with kids in a community center in Liberty City, Florida, in Miami, which is a notoriously bad neighborhood in Florida, and, um, that was, I learned a lot in that because it, to see, sort of the level of hopelessness that people can get to, and to try to pull them out of that, like we were talking, we did this thing with the kids where were having them sort of talk about their goals, and I don’t know, a lot of them even the concept of goals was foreign, but to try to get them to a place where they were thinking about how to better their situation, and, and like where can I go, what can I do to make my life better, and what do I want to do, and one of the things, I don’t know, I’ m sure he was wanting to be serious but also trying to be cool, and he was like, I’m trying to get money or something like that, and then Jon, but then Jon took him seriously and said, well, okay, you know what you should do, you should study people who have money and figure out how they have money, and then he started talking with the kid about Warren Buffet, and how Warren Buffet made, you know, made his way, and how Warren Buffet started out poor, and blah, blah, blah.

Cherise: Excellent

Eddie: And, then, but then this was the moment that was so eye-opening for me and shocking, was the kid started to get hopeful, and you could see him turning hopeful and like see his gears turning, and then, but then he asked Jon – is he white? And,

Cherise: Oh

Eddie: Jon said yes, and then he was like

Cherise: Ohhh! Hm, my Lord.

Eddie: And, I, I've heard of that, but, you know, I've heard people talk about that, but that's like a real thing, sort of like, the condition of being African American in this country and, what that, without the right mindset, what that can do to your hopefulness, and

Cherise: your psyche

Eddie: your psyche, but I never seen it like that, I mean it was just, it was crazy, just the way the kid's face changed instantly, like he was actually excited hearing about this guy, and then the moment that he discovered that he was white, he lost all hope and went back, exactly back , and it, and it, we had to be like, it was like, I mean we ended up, I think we ended up staying in touch with the kid, like, briefly, I don't know if anything impressed him, but you know we gave him a lot of, Jon gave him a lot of things to check out, and think probably gave him his phone number, and the kid sort of ended in a hopeful place which was great.

Cherise: About how old was this, how old was he?

Eddie: Maybe like thirteen,

Cherise: Thirteen.

Eddie: or twelve, or something, very young, and it was just, it was so crazy to me, and then to top it all off, at the end when we were leaving, his uncle, uh, or somebody in his family came to pick him up, and was being so mean and nasty to him, and, and the kid, like, there was really no sort of kid friend away, we were leaving at the same time as we saw this kid getting picked up, and there was sort of like a fight between the two of them, and it was just like whoever this person was with the kid being picked up was just so, so , I think what happened was, the kid was staying a little bit longer, maybe to ask us a question, and this adult was impatient and started yelling at him, and then finally when the kid went over there, he was like, you know roughing him up, and dragging him, and putting him in the car, and it's just like, God, it's like you're trying to like, you're trying to like give this kid a direction and, like, some, a way to be hopeful and something to work on, and you actually, it's hard, but you get him to a place to be kind of excited about something, and he's feeling motivated, and he actually wants to ask you other questions, but going from a place of being totally checked out to a place where he's like trying to ask you extra questions, and then immediately you see what his home experience is like, and his life outside of that moment that you provided for him, and it's awful, it's this adult being incredibly rude to him and not understanding, and being sort of physically abusive, just like God, how are you supposed to , how is he supposed to persevere through that, and then also the mental block that he has about being black, and it's like , oh, I can't be this , I can't aspire to be this wealthy person because he's white and I'm black. I can't do it, like that was crazy , to see all that . So, I don't know. Who

knows if we had a positive impact, and I think temporarily we may have had a positive impact on him, but, when you're just going in for a few hours to talk to somebody, you know, it's like what, there's only so much you can do.

Cherise: Right, because he didn't come to be that way in just a few hours.

Eddie: No. Yeah.

Cherise: So, um, but at least you gave him something to start, to think about,

Eddie: One hopes

Cherise: to remember,

Eddie: yeah

Cherise: you know, and,

Eddie: who knows, I mean

Cherise: Yeah, but obviously there's further work that needs to happen

Eddie: That each moment of inspiration can be

Cherise: So, this was not a detention center, because he was coming and leaving.

Eddie: No, this was a community center

Cherise: This was a community center, and the youth was just there, just kind of

Eddie: Yeah, this was like an after school community center type of deal, like in a really terrible neighborhood.

Cherise: Well, I see.

Eddie: It was crazy, that's like, you know, I grew up so far away from that experience that, that was my first time seeing anything like that firsthand, so it was just, so the Warren Buffett thing was really the most eye-opening thing for me, to see just how real that is

Cherise: Oh, yeah, it's real.

Eddie: How real that psychological thing is

Cherise: Mm, hm. Yeah

Eddie: For some people.

Cherise: Right. 'Cause I know, even for me, I've, I've been exposed to, like, the extremes, and the in between, you now, and so, um, and my, you know, been around wealthy people, but then I also know people that are like really low.

Eddie: Yeah.

Cherise: You know, and all of this

Eddie: And, it's mental slavery.

Cherise: And, it is, yeah. So, you know, I know I've seen, and just from my own experience, and uh, people I've been around, I know, it's like, it really comes down too, to like, who one is, how we're wired, 'cause everybody is so different. Because like some people will go through these hardships, and they will just really go through it, but they'll take that, and it makes them want to push to do more, to be, to do better, and then

there‘s some people that have that hardship, and it’s like, they’re just wired, they self-destruct.

Eddie: Yeah, I mean do you think that people are, you think that people are really the wiring thing with the way you’re born, or do you think it has to do with, for the people who push, they had just one little thing in their experience was different enough that it gave them that spark, you know, like they had maybe one person in their life, one good influence, or something?

Cherise: I think it’s a mix of both.

Eddie: A mix of both.

Cherise: I think it’s a mixture of both, and, um, because just like you said this young guy, thirteen-year old boy

Eddie: Maybe even younger.

Cherise: Even younger than that, okay, so, he was feeling Jon on the Warren Buffet, he was there, his eyes kind of lighting up,

Eddie: Yeah

Cherise: but then, when he asked Jon – but, is he white? And, Jon said “yes,” so then, so this little guy, he’s like that’s it.

Eddie: Yeah, it was crazy, so crazy.

Cherise: That's it. Now, maybe someone else, someone else actually could have thought, hm, well, that's not gonna stop me, or he's like, I'm gonna show, I'm gonna show, I'm gonna, hm, hm, hm, hm, you know, so it just depends, but it's not to

Eddie: Yeah, that's true.

Cherise: uh, put the little boy down or anything, and that's why I'm just saying that some people are just wired differently, and I think, me, I tend to be more the wiring of I'm gonna fight, I'm gonna keep pushin, I'm more tenacious in that sense but that doesn't mean that I'm any better than someone that's more like, just kind of self-destruct. I can't, you know, and that's why we have to be there for each other and try to stick in there with people.

Eddie: Yeah, and that's the feeling I had at Baton Rouge detention center, where it's like, it was this overwhelming feeling of being white and not being able to be as helpful because I'm white, you know what I mean, cause it was like, it was like, I was the Warren Buffett in the situation. It was like agh [Eddie felt by the youth in detention center]. It's like what am I going to get from this kid, you know, he's nothing like me, and it's

Cherise: That is so unfortunate.

Eddie: I know, you know obviously there are things that I can do and everybody can do, but I do feel like, there's only so much , you can only help in certain ways, you know, with the right person, you can only help in certain ways because it's like my girlfriend is a pre-school teacher, and she's a white woman, and she says that there's this statistic that the highest rate of expulsion is for black boys under the age of like six, and you know

why, the theory is that is, well, her theory is that it's because, or maybe she read this, another static is that the majority, by a vast majority um, a majority of teachers in public and private institutions are white women, so, the furthest culturally you can be removed from a white woman is a black man. So, being a black boy, it's so much harder to relate to your white female teacher, and, I mean we're talking about five year olds, four year olds being expelled in the kindergarten and the pre-school and it's like your screwed , or your given, it's that much harder for you from that early of an age, just because your would be role models are so different from you, and there's this psychological thing, like you say, the boy had with the Warren Buffet situation, well, like, you know, not only are you white, but you're also a woman, and I'm a man, and, you know, you're so different from me, and it's, it's just that same thing, like. It's only, you can only help in certain ways, and it makes you, I don't know, you, you hear what I'm saying?

Cherise: I do. I hear what you're saying, and I think, um, I said it's so unfortunate because as we know this whole idea, because we're talking about this wonderful idea of Social Music, philosophy of Social Music, with that being said, there's also the idea of race in our dear country, America, and when we talk about roots, and uh, like the jazz going back to uh the late eighteen hundreds, the early nineteen hundreds, um, well obviously you see me, I'm black [laughter by Cherise], so, um, I've lived, you know, I've lived in Boston, I'm from St. Louis, which is where I first met you in person through Jazz St. Louis gala, and, uh, right, I've, let's see Boston and here in New York, okay, so, in living in these places, I've experienced, I've seen racism, however I've noticed that it manifest itself differently, in different places, New York is more diverse, so I just say that to say that, for me, based on my experience and what I've seen other people in my

family, friends and what I've experienced, it's like it's a thread in the fabric, it's like it's so deeply rooted, it goes back so deep. We're talking about, not just decades – centuries!

Eddie: Yeah.

Cherise: So, yes, I can definitely identify this guy, this thirteen year old, and I don't know all his experiences , but I know what I experience with something, and I know a family member or friend, and I also think there can be reverse, what I call reverse racism, you know, a black person could be racist against someone white, either way, you know it could be either way, or even someone that looks just like you can be have an issue with you racist against you. So, oh my God, this is another thesis, Eddie.

Eddie: [laughs] But, we got here because of Social Music. [Cherise laughs]

Cherise: So, yes, um, so that's why it is it's so unfortunate that , that even had to be an issue, but I said all of that just to say that, yeah, that's why it's such an issue, and that's another reason why I do, so, one of many reasons why I appreciate what , um, you do in Social Music, what all of you are doing because rather you realize it or feel like it is sometime or not, you're making an impact. You are, um, breaking through these doors; you're nudging and cutting on that thread that I'm talking about – that thread in our American fabric.

Eddie: Ah, it's a hard thing to do.

Cherise: It is. It is. You know, but at least, but if nobody does something, if you don't do anything, you do 'no thing' – I like to say 'no thing', like if you do 'no thing', but you're doing something. You, we have to do something, however minute it may seem,

and I just appreciate that so, and that's why I asked you about the children. Those are the stories that I

Eddie: Did Joe tell you any stories about?

Cherise: Joe actually told me about the first one in Baton Rouge.

Eddie: What was his? What did he say about that?

Cherise: Well, he said that there was this one guy, guy and I'm assuming, we're never to make assumptions, but I assumed that these were black children, and you've confirmed, yeah, so he was a black guy, so Joe was saying that, um, he saw the little guy, and he said he was looking so rough, like so hard, like and he will just tear us up, you know ,and Joe said, but by the time that he started playing, all of you started playing with him, then they were , their countenance changed and they were doing music with you, and so that was Joe's perspective.

Eddie: I think Joe probably had a very different experience from me in that, uh, in that also simply because of the nature of his instrument, because he plays the tambourine, and rhythm is king, and it's the easiest thing to understand. So, when he's up there, I think anybody could relate to that , but then I get up there, and I'm like [singing voice]too-da-loo-da-loo on my horn, and it's like, what the fuck is this, you know.

Cherise: Okay, okay, okay.

Eddie: So I think it was, I don't know, it's for me the most memorable thing about that for me was I have, it was, I was confronted with my uselessness. I've never felt more

useless, ‘cause it was just like, [lightly laughs] am I just, that’s why I just rode on the other five guys that were with us. I just rode on their energy, and, um

Cherise: And, that’s why there’s strength in numbers.

Eddie: Exactly.

Cherise: There’s definitely strength in numbers, and so when all of you played collectively, and you were playing, that worked.

Eddie: Yeah, and it certainly, I think, probably brought the energy to a new high, when I was able to come in wailing at the right moment.

Cherise: Right.

Eddie: But, by myself, it was like, oh my God, I am utterly useless in this situation.

Cherise: Right.

Eddie: It was insane, yeah.

Cherise: And, that’s another reason why I asked you the question about lyric, your lyricism, and your thoughts on that being translated to, uh, more modern music, like even Hip Hop.

Eddie: No, we’re not living in an age of lyricism, that’s for sure.

Cherise: Right.

Eddie: Which means there’s an opportunity there.

Cherise: Right, that’s, yes, there’s an opportunity there.

Eddie: But it also means that it's a challenge.

Cherise: Um, hm.

Eddie: And you're a bit of an outcast.

Cherise: Well, um,

Eddie: Anyway, we got into a lot.

Cherise: Yes, we did. Thank you so much.

Eddie: Sorry about that.

Cherise: No, that's a tangent I hadn't planned to really go there

Eddie: Yeah, I know, well

Cherise: in the thesis, but, um, that's fine.

Eddie: I don't shy away from very many topics.

Cherise: But that's a subject that's dear to my heart too. So, that's an area I have a lot of different interest, and different streams of research.

Eddie: Yeah.

Cherise: This is one that I hold very dearly, so, and I have other questions, but I know you have to go.

Eddie: Yeah, I have to go. I gotta go to work.

Cherise: So, thank you, um, so much for what you did.

Eddie: Thank you. Thanks for breakfast.

Cherise: Oh, yes, you are so very welcome, my pleasure to do that, okay.

Eddie: This was fun.

Cherise: Yes, another question I had for you is, why the red shoes? [Eddie laughs.] Is it, does that symbolize anything, a deeper meaning, um?

Eddie: Sadly no. [Cherise laughs.] Just a brand.

Cherise: You just like red.

Eddie: It's just a brand. I don't know. I like red. It's a brand. I started doing it, and just for that

Cherise: Yes, you have them on now.

Eddie: Yep.

Cherise: Oh, and look at those socks.

Eddie: Oh, yeah, my Mom got me these socks [laughs],

Cherise: Yes, okay, so fashion is important.

Eddie: Just, just, just stuck with it. It's good to have a signature.

Cherise: Yes, it is.

Eddie: It's funny though, I go back, when I look at, um, baby photos, my Mom will like post baby photos on Facebook.

Cherise: Yes.

Eddie: And, I'm always wearing something red, and that was before I was doing it on purpose. So, I think it's just kind of been a thing.

Cherise: Okay.

Chapter 5: Introspective Analyses – Interviews from the Audience

Marcia Salter

Marcia Salter Interview with Cherise Harris, Thursday, October 20, 2016 at Amy Ruth's Restaurant in Harlem, New York

Marcia Salter

Marcia Salter, a producer, interviewer, photographer, writer, broadcaster, go-to girl, licensed acupuncturist (affectionately known as the Jazz Acupuncturist), has coordinated and promoted the eighty-sixth through ninety-first birthday parties for legendary record producer George Avakian (produced Louis Armstrong and Miles Davis at Columbia Records), featuring David Ostwald's Gully Low Jazz Band (also known as The Louis Armstrong Centennial Band) at Birdland in New York City. In her myriad of treasured media expertise, Salter has been an ABC News Radio Network Correspondent and has worked at ABC Radio News Productions in New York as researcher, interviewer, writer and narrator of two half hour retrospectives on the life and legacy of American music pioneer Louis Armstrong – featuring among many others, Quincy Jones, Mercedes Ellington, producer George Avakian, filmmaker Ken Burns, New Orleans musician and educator Dr. Michael White, Wynton Marsalis, and Ellis Marsalis. With a love of diverse music, such as jazz, classical, and world, she has also interviewed such artists as Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman, and South African entertainers Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela (Marcia Salter Resume). As I am extremely pleased and thankful to have met Ms Salter at the relaunch of one of Jonathan Batiste's *Jazz is Now* series at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem this past summer of 2016, it is truly an honor to have her share her perspective from the point of view as being an audience member of Jon Batiste and

Stay Human and Social Music. She has followed them from early beginnings of the Jonathan Batiste Trio in New York and witnessed the Trio develop into Stay Human with their Social Music. She even offered me her expertise as Jazz Acupuncturist via the telephone with crucial healing instructions to treat pain that she helped me identify as being plantar-fasciitis, when I called to postpone our initially scheduled interview!

Transcribed by Cherise Harris

Cherise: Okay, great, great, great. Hello!

Marcia: Hello, hello.

Cherise: We are here; I am with the wonderful Marcia Salter, and

Marcia: Thank you. This is great.

Cherise: Yes, she is, and we're going to get into all of her wonderfulness too, so, and this is Cherise Harris also known as Rise La Day, but this is pertaining to my thesis at Rutgers on *Social Music Is Jazz Evolved and Rediscovered: An Introspective Analysis of Jon Batiste and Stay Human*, and Ms. Salter is, is, uh, blessing, is just gracing my thesis with her perspective. So, she, her introspective analysis is in this too. So she, um, is representing the side of the audience, and what we feel and what we experienced about them. So, thank you so much.

Marcia: Oh, thank you for having me.

Cherise: I'm so excited.

Marcia: Oh, is your tape, is today the twentieth of October? In case you ever look for the date on this. Yes, it is

Cherise: Yes, yes, this is the twentieth, Thursday, the twentieth of October. So, to start, as one of my favorite questions from, there's a movie called *Brown Sugar*, and it's starring Sanaa Lathan and Taye Diggs, and it starts of she asks the question, "when did you fall in love with Hip Hop," so, I'm putting my spin on it, and I'd like to know when did you fall in love with jazz?

Marcia: Probably, I was about thirteen or fifteen years old, and my friends and I from high school, we use to listen to Coltrane, and a Love Supreme, and Miles, and then things just kind of evolved from there, Duke Ellington I saw when I was still in high school in a concert, and when I went to school in Washington, D.C. in Howard, a lot of jazz stuff, jazz musicians came to campus, and then there were clubs in town. So, like I saw Miles Davis when I was at Howard, who else? It's always been there as like a background music.

Cherise: Okay, thank you. Um, I think you are from Connecticut?

Marcia: Um hm.

Cherise: and, then went to Howard. Wonderful, um, so, how long have you known about Jon Batiste, or did you know him when he was Jonathan, still widely known as Jonathan Batiste?

Marcia: I'm trying to remember when was the first time that I saw him?

Cherise: And when did you first hear him , or have your first experience with Jon and Stay Human?

Marcia: Maybe at the Jazz Museum? And ,as my friend say's you could see him for free, and there would be fifteen people sitting in the room, and now you can't get a ticket, so whenever he started doing those Jazz Is Now, those programs.

Cherise: So, the Jazz Is Now

Marcia: uhm, hm.

Cherise: so, at that time, it wasn't the whole Stay Human crew

Marcia: No, it was him

Cherise: It was just Jon, but Joe Saylor was there?

Marcia: Some of them, and

Cherise: Yeah

Marcia: And, now, I guess, you know what? It started out being Jon doing solo stuff I think,

Cherise: Oh,

Marcia: and then the band came in right, I'm not exactly sure, I have to ask a friend of mine, because she was around for that, cause she was always telling people, come see this, come see this, it's free, it's free, and now it's not free anymore.

Cherise: No, it's not. [laugh] Sometime it is affordable, but…So, um, what about your first experience with Jon and Stay Human? So, at The National Jazz Museum in Harlem was your first experience with Jon for the most part – solo, but what about he and Stay Human?

Marcia: Oh, well that's where I saw them too, at the jazz museum, just later on

Cherise: Okay, okay, so that was recently

Marcia: Not this year, but several years ago.

Cherise: Oh, so Stay Human came.

Marcia: Yep, you know, I think they always were performing together but they weren't necessarily called anything, right?

Cherise: Right

Marcia: So, that I would have to check out or find out, cause I know I could look at photographs, or say, here's Jon, but I don't know if this was Stay Human at this time, or when they actually became Stay Human, or it's been several, several years

Cherise: Okay, cause I know, Marcia and I met at a Jazz Is Now concert which was recently this June. I think we met at the second one, um, around June 15th or something, yes, and it was just wonderful, and they were relaunching the Jazz Is Now Series

Marcia: yes, and it was the other location, the other venue, where

Cherise: yes

Marcia: where I first met them,

Cherise: and so that's where we met. So when you so I know Stay Human, the really full group came to the third show, the last show, June 29th or something, right, around June 29th, but you're saying, when you saw Stay Human, even before then

Marcia: Oh, yeah, over in the other venue, I have to see if I can get some dates

Cherise: So, didn't you mention once that, uh, before their notable, before they became so notable, you told Joe something like "Don't be a stranger, or did you say something to Joe like, to let him iknow to always, um, come to you or to recognize you"

Marcia: I don't think that was me, and I met him with Wycliffe Gordon and the red hot holiday , and I need to go back and find the photograph, so I can tell you what date that was, and then I met him again at the Jazz Museum when I started seeing them perform there, but I encouraged him to speak out, that he had something to say.

Cherise: Yes, yes, well, I mentioned that because , um, what I though you said, it basically it had to do with you letting Joe know that they were getting, they youy noticed that they were going to

Marcia: blow up

Cherise: blow up, and you were telling him something just to denote, to really make that point to him that you recognized, okay, you're getting ready to blow up

Marcia: I'm trying to remember

Cherise: but I obviously don't remember the exact wording, but that was basically um, the just of it. So, I mentioned that because, um., I've been looking at your wonderful resume

Marcia: Oh, well thank you.

Cherise: and, it really is, and so I am honored to have you hear.

Marcia: oh, please.

Cherise: really

Marcia: I'm honored to be sitting here involved in your great project, it's wonderful.

Cherise: Thank you, so, um, like when I looked at your Special Events, your Producer, and co-ordinating, promoting 86th through 91st birthday parties for George Avakian who happened to produce a lot of producing efforts for Miles Davis, the great Miles Davis, and you coordinating his birthdays, and I;'m only poinhing out a few things, I mean this resume

Marcia: oh, well who knew

Cherise: is just full of so much, the ABC Network news correspondent, and ABC Radio news production, researching the interviews of two and a half hour on the legacy of American pioneer Lousi Armstrong, and I know just from speaking with you, how much Louis Armstrong meand to you, and you know that Louis Armstrong means to our immediate American culture, and beyond – the World. So, um, David Ostwald was in this

Marcia: well, that was what I was telling you, that was the Birdland gig every Wednesday

Cherise: yes, and Qunicy Jones, Mercedes Ellington, George Avakian, Ken Burns, New Orleans musician and educator, Dr. Michael White, Wynton Marsalis, Ellis Marsalis, and um, you were you also was part of the production for the middle of the second-line parade celebrating Louis Armstrong

Marcia: um, that was remote, live shot of New Orleand to New York,a nd they renamed the airport for Louis, was that 2001 , maybe, whenever that was, and there was just party after party after party, and one of the groups was a second-line parade where we went from I guess the men;s and then over to congo square, and then the statur over the and we stopped by to pay respect to Pops over there and that's when I

Cherise: And, of course that involved The Marsalis family, Harry Connick . You did fundraisers for musicians in need at the Apollo Theater, the great Clark Terry, Jimmy Heath, Jon Faddis, Antonio Hart, um, Carnegie Hall Jazz Band, interviews with Jon Faddis, George Wein, my goodness the promoter, the great George Wein

Marcia: Yeah, these are all for ABC news.

Cherise: Yes

Marcia: short pieces for the newscast

Cherise: and, Wycliffe Gordon, Anderson and of course the South African Entertainers, Miriam Makeba and Hugh Masekela, um, oh, and one is Andrea Bocelli, Sarah Brightman,

Marcia: Oh, that was fun

Cherise: and maestro . So, um, and you, you are very world, you have a world view

Marcia: I think of it as a neighborhood.

Cherise: Yes, truly, a citizen of the world. Um, freelance, some of your freelance work in editing, translation of the Spanish narration of film documentary on San Juan, Puerto Rico, and all of this is in addition to her currently being an acupuncturist, um, and she is known, she's called, she is the Jazz Accupuncturist, okay, for working with great jazz musicians, and being there in times of need, stepping on the side, even at Jazz at Lincoln Center, helping to get things together. So, I really wanted to strees just a few of your qualities,

Marcia: Oh, you're so sweet.

Cherise: just to say with all of your wide viewpoint, your experience, what was it about Joe Saylor, Jon Batiste that made you realize earlier on that they had something that, that you knew they were really gonna be notable, even aside from just their talent? So, cause you may feel like, well, of course, that's not a difficult answer, they're so talented and wonderful people, which they are, I'm just wondering, was there something else that you saw in them or experienced that made you, whatever it was that you said to Joe, you know.

Marcia: They have useful energy and passion to recall the talent and it's attracting to people of all ages because when you go to one of their shows you'll be standing next to somebody who's in their twenties, there's people in their thirties, forties, fifties, sixties,

across the board. So, it's a community experience, and everyone whose there, it, what they're doing, because it's so authentic, and they're truly being themselves, and as you say, the level of talent that they bring to the table, that authenticity resonates and then because they ask us to participate, and not everything is a participatory experience, but maybe for most people being a witness is the form of participation. Here, they ask you to witness, slash participate, and even during the show, they'll ask you to clap or sing a certain part, or give them some sort of feedback, and then they come out into the audience, and they expect you to respond as because not all people realize for example, if you see certain, uh, bands that are New Orleans bands, and they're doing the second-line thing at the Apollo, when after Katrina, they brought in these musicians from New Orleans, and Trombon Shorty was there. They had some Zulus. Some of the people from the Association of the Pleasure Club. Now, had that been New Orleans, the whole audience would've gotten up and followed them. But, if you're not familiar with that tradition, then you think that's a show, but it's not a show, it's come join this when, when the second-line comes to your neighborhood as Louis would say, you join in, and you follow the parade. Other people sit and just say, oh, this is just a show, but no it isn't. It's for you to become involved as well. So, that you have that back and forth relationship with the music and the dancers are actually one entity.

Cherise: Excellent. Thank you, thank you so much.

Marcia: It's so true.

Cherise: That is so true, the authenticity, like you said. Uh, so, I consider you a Louis Armstrong aficionada

Marcia: I just love him

Cherise: To a certain extent, but I know, I know you just love him, and, but you're definitely in that family of one, and you're constantly um, researching and wanting to know more.

Marcia: Oh, there is so much to know about him, it's so, it's amazing. Someone described him as a fertile seed that just keeps growing and it's so true.

Cherise: Yes

Marcia: And, there are seeds that are being planted now by people that will never see the garden bloom, but they're planting the seeds anyway because that's art of the legacy, and so think of the seeds that Louis planted that enabled, now young people to be exposed to jazz and have lessons or have instruments and have experiences that he didn't personally, he just set up the situation for things to happen, and now people are able to do things because of him. It's just that generous spirit that just keeps going.

Cherise: Keeps giving. So, um in light of all that you just said and, how would you compare and contrast, um, how would you compare and contrast Jon Batiste to Louis Armstrong?

Marcia: I think they both have that, that showmanship, and that urge to entertain, and give 150% whenee they step on stage. They both have that, that, um, virtuoso talent which gives them the platform to communicate with so many people. I mean, how is it that louis Armstrong stopped a war in the Congo. They stopped fighting so he could give them a concert in the 1950s. That type of power is just staggering., and I think that's

what Jon is bringing forward too, bringing people together, and so they have that in common, and then being from the same area of the country, and then ending up all around the world where people recognize this feels great. So, they have that in common and you just never know but the sky is the limit, and of course their personalities, where they're folk that are very open, and Louis would just sit for hours and sign autographs and meet his public, and Jon is the same way in the way he greets people – "Hey!!!", and then he'll laugh so they have that same generous spirit, and of course the dedication to their craft.

Cherise: So, is there, would you say there's any contrast, or none that is at the forefront of your mind at this time.

Marcia: Between the two

Cherise: Yes.

Marcia: See, I never met Louis personally, so,

Cherise: But, just of what you know of him.

Marcia: No

Cherise: And, if not, that's fine too, I mean.

Marcia: At this point, it's hard to say, only because when I met Louis he's so much older, well, not really met him, but. And, Jon is so young now, and I see that he has this tremendous potential, and then you wonder did success spoil Louis Armstrong? No, it didn't. People thought he was being a egomaniac because he would record his shows and

then listen to them, but he's looking fo ways to improve them, and sense Jon is so young, that's a question that you would ask, Will success spoil Jon Batiste? But, he said no.

Cherise: Yes, on the CBS Sunday morning,

Marcia: That's right,

Cherise: he said, "I'm me".

Marcia: That's right., and I can not see him being any different musically and as a person, but I don't see him just becoming somebody so completely different, unless something really bad happens that would make you shut down.

Cherise: Right, okay, thank you.

Marcia: But they're both ambassadors.

Cherise: Yes, they are. So, um, what is social music to you? And, what does social music mean to you? How would you describe it?

Marcia: That interaction between the audience and the musicians. This young many named David DaKoby used to give these parties as part of Jelly Rol Production, and I used to cover some of them, and I remember him saying we want to make it like it was back in the day, when the dancers and the music were one, and so, this social music and stay human gives it to us. It's a return to that where not the dancers necessarily although you certainly could dance, but the audience and the music are one, and it's what Joe Ascione, the great drummer used to say, I used to thank him for all the expeiences I had with the band that he was playing in, and he would say well we couldn't do it without you, you're giving us the feedback that we need that motivates us, and the harder they

played, the more we respond and it becomes one of those infinity groups, and I think that's they have done with that that where something resonates, and it touches something in you , and it changes your molecular structure, and it lifts you up, and to me that's what social music is, where I feel connected to this person, and this person, and the one in front of me, and all of us in this room having this experience. The musicians are triggering it, but we're feeding them with our response, and

Cherise: Rather or not you know this person, or that person around you or not, these people around you, you still feel

Marcia: And, you feel as though, um, wow, for those few minutes that we really all are together, and we went to see Allen Toussaint at the Preservation hall Jazz band, was it a couple of years ago, maybe, and we were singing "The City of New Orleans", and he was conducting us.

Cherise: Oh, wow.

Marcia: I couldn't sing. I just stopped singing, because I wanted to hear the audience sing along, and he said to us oh, yes, yes, and that community singing,

Cherise: yes,

Marcia: which they do very often, Stay Human does, okay we're gonna sing this, or people will just start singing along automatically because they know the words, but I like that. That to me is Social Music, and it reminds me of my grandfather with his nine sisters,

Cherise: Oh, wow,

Marcia: and when we were small they used to sit around and they would sing, just, were gonna sing this song now, and my aunts and my grandfather, their husbands, we would all start singing, because that was just a normal thing in people's homes. People would sing back in the day.

Cherise: wow, yes

Marcia: So, thinking of bringing this back in a different way, in more like the town square, like the party that Spike Lee gave on Prince's birthday where everyone was singing the lyrics to Prince's songs, so I like that community, the sing-along.

Cherise: Yes, thank you, I do too. From your perspective, what is meant by Stay Human?

Marcia: Oh, gosh, there's a word in African language and I could never pronounce it properly, but the definition of this word, in this dialect means – what it means to be human.

Cherise: hm

Marcia: And, not every language has a word that embodies that, so,

Cherise: philosophy

Marcia: what does it mean to be human, to be flawed, to be capable of the most extraordinary things, or some of the worst things, or mediocrity, everything in between, what I think about, when I think of these guys is that feeling of connection that you get, and to me that connection through our shared humanity is what I think of when I think of Stay, Stay Human that is don't lose your connection to other people, the empathy,

imaginative empathy, you have never been in a war zone, you don't know what it's like to have a gun drawn to your head, but do you really need to have that experience to know that it's not something you would want or you would wish on another person, and to be able to imagine why these people have this response to x situation when it's not the response that you would have, that's where your imaginative empathy comes in handy, and if you don't have that, you're cut off from everybody else who just doesn't think and feel what you think and feel, and that's a very narrow way of going through the world,

Cherise: Yes, narrow, cold.

Marcia: Even if, and you may not even realize

Cherise: right

Marcia: you know, that's what you're doing. So, you try to challenge yourself, try to stay open, try to, see I think of the world as a neighborhood, and if I can dance my way through, and eat my way through with the neighbors, cause see I don't need language to do that, cause if anyone will bring you their great musicians and show you the dance music of their culture, and if you can count to two, you can usually dance with almost anybody, and when people want to feed you, then they'll bring you food and offer it to you, and you can tell they want you to have this. I've had people speak to me in languages that I don't understand, and they know I don't understand, but they want to communicate, so I think that other impulse of, to Stay Human, is to, as they say to – Express Yourself.

Cherise: Yes, yes, that's one of their top hit, one of their songs in the beginning of the group, "Express Yourself" [lightly singing], okay, um, would you say Social Music is an evolution of jazz, a rediscovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, or both?

Marcia: I think it's probably both, because as David DuCovy from Jelly Roll Productions said that dancers and the music were one, and when people don't realize that jazz music was not something where people went to sit and just watch like we like go to a concert now, there was that participation between the dancers, and if they really like you, then they would stop dancing and just look at you in the highest form of a compliment, like, you know, we're vibing, you got us mesmerized here. So, I would say that it's they're putting their own spin on what was, taking from the elders, and the ancestors what is come before and putting that Jazz Is Now spin on it, and then as jazz has always done, welcomed anyone into this house, this is for anyone who wants to enjoy and it would be kind of hard to go to a Stay Human concert and not feel welcomed.

Cherise: Right, because, when I went to their recent one at, uh, the BRIC Brooklyn Jazz Festival,

Marcia: Oh, right, right,

Cherise: and everyone was sitting down, you know, and I'm sitting there, and I told the lady next to me, I said, we had started a little conversation, and I said, excuse me, I'm gonna have to get up, I can't just stay seated, I'm gonna have to get up.

Marcia: Did you start something in that little section?

Cherise: Well, sure enough, it just so happened that after I got up, Jon shouted from the stage – *in New Orleans ladies and gentleman, when we play this kind of music, we don't just sit down,*

Marcia: That's right.

Cherise: *so get up right now, get up out your seat. Get your tail up out your seat right now.* And, I just said, wow, because I just told the lady that I couldn't just sit; I had to get up.

Marcia: Yeah, so you're just responding to that clarion call.

Cherise: Yes, that you just described, it's so true.

Marcia: Yes, it's an occasion, it's not where you just sit and watch us. You participate with us.

Cherise: Yes, thank you. Um, oh yes, what's your take on love riots?

Marcia: Oh, those are the best. They combine, um, it's, it's a New Orleans thing transplanted to and the people respond to it, I mean, where were we, at the Rockwood Music Hall, and they left the stage and that whole audience just picked up and followed them. Now, I don't know if every single person in the whole room knew that this is what was happening, but I did, it reminded of that Louis Armstrong story where he said, they were great musicians and they were little kids, they would just fall in line behind the band and then look up, and then go, well, where are we, because they had forgotten where they were for listening to the music, so I always have to be careful, because those love riots are like, uh, they're mesmerizing, and they have a gravitational pull, and one time at the

Rockwood place, it was like, where are we going, cause my car, and we're going away from my car and we could end up being miles away. I didn't know if there was an after party somewhere? Then that singer, Alexa was there, and by this time I was her friend on Facebook, and I was asking her – what happened, and she said, oh, they're still partying and they went over to some place, and I didn't even know where that was.

Cherise: Wow

Marcia: So, those love riots are, I think they just give everybody a chance to come together around that music and it's positive energy

Cherise: Yes, so, my next question is what is your favorite, most memorable love riot, is it the Rockwood, is that

Marcia: It was one of them, and I think I can remember, the Rockwood, the Cutting Room, it seems like maybe there were more but I can't remember exactly to me they all have a different flavor, but the same basic ingredients of that high energy and great music and enthusiasm, so I I'm done for anyone.

Cherise: Okay, so is there one that was your favorite?

Marcia: The one from the Cutting Room, that was fun, and that's one where they got to the subway, well, where ae they going, my car is over here somewhere and I didn't know if they were going some place and not coming back, so I'm always the one that's going – Bye! But, it's amazing, there's a gravitational pull that causes you to just go along with it

Cherise: Yes, thank you. So, [ertaining to certain messages emoted from Jon Batiste and Stay Human, message like love, believe, um, during certain concerts and outreach

events, um, particular, like at one Newport Jazz Festival, Believe in Love, and , uh, what is Love to you, and um, how would you define love and uh, and how would you define believe, and then particularly, uh has your perception of love and believe altered since your experience with Jon Batiste and Stay Human, is there a difference before Jon and Stay Human and then afterwards, or?

Marcia: I think they just validated that you have more power together than in separate parts, and I think that Love is the process that makes for good in the world, and that whatever that is, is Love, rather it's justice, peace, kindness, humility, that imaginative empathy, all of those things make up Love, and if this music has anything to do with making people and more of any of those things, it's a public service.

Cherise: Great, thank you. What's you, uh, favorite song, do you have any of their albums, your favorite song?

Marcia: I, I like Killing Me Softly and I like um, what was that song? Uh , Why You Gotta be Like that?

Cherise: Yes, he said that's about courtship.

Marcia: And uh, it's that groove, you know, it's got that, as Jelly Roll Morton would say, it's got that latin tinge thing going, and it's so funky, I love those two, and I like the , um, well, they both make you want to sing along

Cherise: Yes, thank you. Um, oh, yes, as your expertise is in healing, um, health field, how would you relate Jon batiste and Stay Human to health and healing?

Marcia: Oh, cause music is like acupuncture and yoga in that they help the body to auto regulate, and if you play a certain type of music, you know you can stimulate, you can hum, you can just get neutral and this music, again it's that word cohesion, how it brings us together, and I think it's because they come out into the audience, and there, they're a part of us, but they're leading us, but they're also following us, and because we're all following this vision created by the music, so they're like us in a way, even though the music comes through them, and those moments where everyone comes together, those are so profound, and it ca n change how you feel about like, especially when you hear a lot of negative things but then you refer back to those moments when we were all enjoying the same thing and that, that vibe can, can happen again, it probably will happen again.

Cherise: Yes, it will. Thank you. Um, So, as you just spoke about how they come into the audience, or they give an instruction to the audience, saying do this with us, how low can you go?

Marcia: yep

Cherise: So, how is your stamina with Jon leads the audience through knee-bending o anything or any kind of movements.

Marcia: Oh, that's like my arms up, or my arms down.

Cherise: Okay, so that's as far as you're going

Marcia: Yeah, ‘cause you know that’s what Lena Horne said during her one woman show, that she would get down low, and then she said this is not the hard part, it’s getting back up again.

Cherise: Um, okay, okay. But even in your waving hands, whatever movement, it’s exhilarating.

Marcia: Yes, oh it is. And it’s exciting to see the expressions of the people around you

Cherise: Yeah

Marcia: And, that’s why, like I said I like sometimes I get so overwhelmed and so filled with emotion that I couldn’t sing, even if I wanted to sing, so I just end up listening, and being a part of it in that way, just very grateful and appreciative to be in the moment where everyone is hanging together, at least that short time.

Cherise: yes, thank you, yes. Okay, so, I believe we already addressed thisk because you gave your thoughts on Jazz Is Now,

Marcia: Oh,

Cherise: do you want to expound on that, give your thoughts on Jazz Is Now at The National Jazz Museum in Harlem

Marcia: and all their other friends because they’re constantly adding different elements, different instruments to the focus on the moment

Cherise: Yes

Marcia: and, I think they want us to understand that jazz is not something that you take out and dust off, that it has an application that is very relevant, and very immediate and that it's not historical research, it's the present moment

Cherise: It's alive.

Marcia: Yes, exactly, and will be giving birth to more things as new people come and offer their take borrowed from what came before them and then add new thing.

Cherise: It's like it's constantly giving birth.

Marcia: Yep

Cherise: So I know that Jon mentioned once about he's a part of a continuum.

Marcia: Exactly. And, we all are.

Cherise: Yes

Marcia: and, it becomes exciting, it's like Rubin Blade said that, it's like a train and he said at a certain point he would get off, but there would be people that would stay on the train and do even better work than he thought that he could do, because there's a popular need and support of what is these, the energy, and because of that it's unstoppable.

Cherise: yes, yes, indeed, thank you. Right, so ofcourse you've already addressed this, as far a feeling to people around you that you don't know, you feel that closeness.

Marcia: Yeah, well, most people that come to these events, most times are pretty friendly anyway, that's my experience.

Cherise: Yes, they want to have a good time, anyway

Marcia: and, outgoing, a lot of outgoing, friendly people that are happy to be there to share the experience

Cherise: And, definitely a greater sense of community and humanity.

Marcia: Right.

Cherise: Oh yes, what is your thought of each musician within the scope of Social Music? So, each one that you know, or maybe you don't really know, but you have a certain perception of this person?

Marcia: I think of them, in a visible way, as the strength of the collective, and as Joe say's he's the one who's determining how fast they go, and they can either not go at his rate cause he's setting the speed, or they can be off, off-centered.

Cherise: Yes

Marcia: They all have such different personalities, but they're all so dedicated and they're such great craftsmen, and the way they play at, uh, The Cutting Room, no, Rockwood in New York, was another place where they were, I can't remember? Eddie Barbash played a version of St. James Infirmary,

Cherise: umh

Marcia: where he fell into Jon's arms,

Cherise: Oh!

Marcia: after,

Cherise: What!?

Marcia: Because he played that thing so hard,

Cherise: Wow!

Marcia: that he just went, like this [makes a movement of collapsing backward]. I have a picture of it, Jon holding him up, they really put it all out there.

Cherise: Yes, they give their all!

Marcia: And, so, when somebody does that, and you're in the presence of that, it, it has to be, and they have that high level of talent to offer, how can you not be affected by that, and all the energy that goes into it, the physical energy plus the hard work , all the studying they did, and all the repetition playing, again and again, meeting different people, playing with different people, you can see that they're doing it – I could see them just playing and playing for fun.

Cherise: Right, yes, they do, I'm sure. So, again, you mentioned when you first saw Jon or heard them, do you remember about the year, that was probably?

Marcia: I don't. I'd have to ask someone, um, 'cause it had to be

Cherise: But, it was at The Jazz Is Now

Marcia: Let's see, let me look and see, see what the earliest pictures that I have are, cause now everything is just running together, and see at the first pictures, okayh, that's the last one is the tribute to. Where is this, oh, it was Webster Hall

Cherise: Oh

Marcia: that's where

Cherise: that's where you first saw them?

Marcia: No, that's where I last saw them actually , in October a year ago.

Cherise: Oh, yes, I was at that one [Marcia shows photos on your cell phone] Yes, yes, yes, I remember that, oh, that was…okay

Marcia: I'll see if I can find, cause she's better at dates and she was the one saying, I kept telling you people to come and see him. There's nobody in here. The chairs are empty. It's free.

Cherise: Okay, right, cause the Jazz Is Now, they had started, I don't know, maybe about 2012?

Marcia: maybe

Cherise: Somewhere around in there

Marcia: Okay,

Cherise: But again, like you said, it was the Jazz Is Now series. So, since you have seen them and known about them for that length of time, what was it like, and this will be our final question, um, what was like for you to see Jon Batiste and Stay Hum,an on the nightly television show, the Late Show With Stephen Colbert, as the music director, band leader, um, and Stay Human and they're the house band, you know, what was that like for you?

Marcia: Oh, it was thrilling. Because just for them personally to be elevated that way, but they elevated jazz

Cherise: Yes!

Marcia: that , which of course was a big part of , you kinow, like Johnny Carson's Orchestra, he had a huge orchestra, with great jazz musicians, Clark Terry came through the Tonight Show band, the drummer, Rosenbe, and of course Doc Severnson, um Tommy Newsone, and al, those old people, and so now it's like , uh, oh, we're revisiting, rediscovering, and with a new generation, and so it's very exciting for all of us, because, and then knowing them, and knowing how hard they work, and it was just, it's exhilarating.

Cherise: Thank you so much [clapping with smile]

Marcia: You're welcome, and if you any other questions that you need answered that I can answer, let me know.

Cherise: Yes, do you have any other thoughts or any other comment that you really want to make?

Marcia: Just that, we hope these things never end, that new generations will come, and add to the story, and add to the legacy, and always remember what came before.

Cherise: Yes, yeah, so just want to add, that we are in the wonderful place called, historic place called Amy Ruth's, it's a African American cultured place in Harlem on 116th Street, and yes, the historical art of luminary figutrs on the wall.

Marcia: And, those eyes just look like he's looking at whatever is looking at him.

Cherise: And, we're looking right at Louis Armstrong.

Marcia: [lightly laughing] He's looking right at us,

Cherise: Right, he's looking at us,

Marcia: as always

Cherise: Yes, so the children, have you seen Jon work with children?

Marcia: No, I haven't.

Cherise: Okay, but we know about that definitely, okay, all right, wonderful, thank you so much [clapping]

Marcia: You're quite welcome, quite welcome.

Cherise: I so appreciate it.

Additional Comments (via text message and email) by Marcia: From your line of questioning, I understand more about what you are aiming for. I believe that another reason people find stay humans social music so attractive is the intense rhythmic component. Also observing improvisation is freeing and inspirational. Jon always talks about "getting free". About the composition to him and Louis – by the time Louis was 29, he already had established himself as the first great soloist and improviser in jazz with his seminal recordings with the hot 5 and hot 7. If he had done nothing more he would have secured his place in jazz history but of course there is so much more. I think Louis stands head and shoulders above all for his pure genius. His virtuosity and influence

cannot be understated. As you noted Jon and all jazz musicians owe a debt to Pops and they are part of a continuum. As Mercedes Ellington noted-musicians like Louis and her grandfather, Duke created a tradition that is a gift to people all over the world. I believe stay human builds on that tradition and shows how jazz is fun and exciting of this moment. We will have to wait another 40 years to see how Jon will continue to contribute to this great art form. He surely is off to a great start.

Cherise: Have you experienced the social media communication aspect from Jon to come and meet them for a spur of the moment musical meeting/love riot? If so, how was that? What are your thoughts of that approach as relating to Social Music?

Marcia: My friend got a text and hours later joined the band for a music filled subway ride to their show at Carnegie Hall. She loved it. It's a great idea to communicate with fans as much as possible.

Becca Pulliam

Becca Pulliam Interview with Cherise Harris, Thursday, October 27, 2016 at Café Du Soleil in Upper Westside Manhattan, New York

Becca Pulliam

Becca Pulliam, a radio producer and writer, has produced twenty-three seasons of the weekly series *WBGO JazzSet from NPR Music*, hosted by Dee Dee Bridgewater and Branford Marsalis. She has also produced twenty-eight consecutive live, all-night, coast-to-coast *Toast of the Nation* specials, live on *New Year's Eve from NPR and WBGO Jazz 88* in Newark, New Jersey (www.thejazzdramaprogram.org/about-us/board/). As Pulliam has produced shows involving the music of Jonathan Batiste, such as the Jonathan Batiste Band at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C. on *JazzSet from NPR* in 2010, I am extremely pleased and thankful to have met Ms. Pulliam at the relaunch of one of Jonathan Batiste's *Jazz is Now* series at the National Jazz Museum in Harlem this past summer of 2016. It is an honor to delve into her expertise of media and perspective of Jon Batiste and Stay Human, particularly from her view as an audience member, as she has produced some of his musical efforts from his earlier years as a graduating high school student of New Orleans Creative Center of the Arts (NOCCA) to his beginning years in New York as a Juilliard student, and she continues to follow his work in the present.

Transcribed by Cherise Harris

Cherise: Okay, hello, this is Cherise Harris, also known as Rise La Day, and I am here right now with a fabulous lady, who I'm very honored that she's here to join me for an interview. Today is Thursday, October 27th, and we're at a wonderful French-cuisine

Café Du Soleil, and we're having a great time. So, her name is Becca Pulliam, and Becca is has been a producer for the *WBGO JazzSet* series, and she actually covered a fantastic story on Jon, he was known as Jonathan Batiste Band at that time, and they were at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C.. So, we're gonna touch on that as well. So, it's just great to have you hear Becca. Thank you, thank you, thank you so much.

Becca: Thank you Cherise.

Cherise: Okay, so, this is pertaining to my thesis at Rutgers University, and I've titled it "Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Re-discovered: An Introspective Analysis of Jon Batiste and Stay Human." So, though that's a statement, it's actually a question. That's my hypothesis, so all the questions that I'm going to ask you are pertaining to the larger question. Okay, so, we'll get started.

Becca: Okay.

Cherise: Okay, so, as one of my favorite questions from the movie, it was a movie *Brown Sugar* starring Sanaa Lathan and Taye Diggs is "When did you fall in love with Hip Hop?" So, I'm going to put my spin on it, and I'd like to know, when did you fall in love with Jazz?

Becca: Okay, it probably started in high school, and it came from playing in a, what we called at the time, a stage band, sort of a dance band that was part of the school, community school, public school that I was going to,

Cherise: Excellent.

Becca: and they were charts, it was probably music from the forties, fifties, but I was going to high school in the sixties, so,

Cherise: Right, okay.

Becca: and, it was, I would say it was my parents' music that we were playing, because when I was, my music was The Beatles and Motown,

Cherise: Hm

Becca: and it came to me through music class, and I also had taken piano lessons and a lot of classical, and I just wanted to sort of iron, play something more modern, probably more American though, I probably wouldn't have put it that way at the time, and so through the couple of teachers that were influential, and when I got to college, I found a jazz piano teacher.

Cherise: Mm, hm, wonderful. Those are great.

Becca: Yeah.

Cherise: Okay, all right, thank you, and yes, also, Ms. Pulliam, Becca is a pianist, and graduate of Manhattan School of Music. So did you, were you first classically trained, and then you got into jazz?

Becca: Yes.

Cherise: Okay, excellent. Thank you.

Becca: And at Manhattan, we were the first Master's, the first year of their jazz master program, which has gotten much bigger and better known.

Cherise: Right, okay, all right. So, about how long have you known about Jonathan Batiste, and when did you have your first musical experience with Jon Batiste and Stay Human?

Becca: I'm so glad that you mentioned something earlier, and I maybe remember that I have to write and tell you about after this interview. I, with an engineer who had been an intern at *WBGO*, we went to Jazz Aspen in July of maybe 2004, 2005, and we recorded a concert of students who had, who were completing a couple weeks of education there, and Jon was one of them.

Cherise: Oh!

Becca: He was one of them, and I didn't remember that until twenty minutes ago, but I do clearly remember he was tall, he was from New Orleans, and he was fabulous,

Cherise: [light laughter] yes.

Becca: and that's the first time. We took a song from everybody, including him, into a *JazzSet*.

Cherise: And this was, you said in Aspen, not in Newark.

Becca: In Aspen.

Cherise: In Colorado.

Becca: In Colorado.

Cherise: Okay.

Becca: So, it was sort of exciting to be way out there and then discover him and some other, you know there was a group from England, they were young, very talented kids that I thought of as being, uh, early twenties, very young, or maybe he was a little older.

Cherise: I think he had just probably come to New York around that time, maybe, or

Becca: Perhaps the next time I heard of him was to learn that he was studying at Juilliard.

Cherise: Wow, excellent. Okay, thank you.

Becca: And you know that tape exists, that Aspen tape exists at *WBGO*.

Cherise: Okay, hm, so, what is Social Music to you? Describe Social Music, and just, what does it mean to you?

Becca: So, maybe a year later Jon was playing at the Jazz Standard, here in New York, with a trio, and we had a nice, but short relationship with the Jazz Standard to record music there, and so, we recorded him again with

Cherise: Oh, wow.

Becca: Joe,

Cherise: Yes!

Becca: I believe and the bassist

Cherise: Phil Kuehn?

Becca: I think so, this is why I'm so impressed that the same personnel stayed together for a decade, and early in the career, not late in the career when that usually does happen,

and it wasn't called Social Music. That's why I'm trying to. So, um, I like Social Music. I think, I think it reveals a bit of the New Orleans sensibility in at least Jon as the leader of this, because social and pleasure club is sort of a New Orleans term for bands, Mardi Gras, that's where I place the word Social, in, um, in my first experience of it in jazz would be New Orleans.

Cherise: Yes, New Orleans, which of course is the birthplace of Jazz, right?

Becca: Mm, hm.

Cherise: Okay, thank you.

Becca: So, to me, that sends a signal. He might be from New Orleans, and he is! And, that's all good because when you go to New Orleans, the New Orleans music is far more permeated, pervasive, and it's straight in the schools.

Cherise: It's everywhere.

Becca: It's in the air.

Cherise: It's in the air, ooh! Thank you! In the air, yes, okay. Um, so, from your perspective, what is meant by Stay Human?

Becca: That is a question that I don't, I don't know. Stay Human, I think the first time I encountered that was when we recorded him or the *NPR* crew, which I was somewhat working with, um, at Newport, and then on the web.

Cherise: Yeah, that was at the 2014 Newport. I was actually there with my grandfather. I was at that one. That was the first, they were celebrating sixty years, and that was the

first time I had ever gone to Newport, and I, I haven't been since, that was two years ago. Yes, um, yes, so you were there as part of that crew. So, you recorded them at the end of their show, and they walked, I think at the back of the Fort.

Becca: We recorded the whole show, but the part that I chose was the closing when they walked off stage, and that's very social, that's very social. So, it doesn't quite tell me what Stay Human means, but, it points out again what makes the band, you know, work with the word Social,

Cherise: Yes, and when they come out into the audience.

Becca: Yes, coming through, what other bands might consider a boundary, you know.

Cherise: That's right.

Becca: And, even at The Jazz Standard, in making their entrance at that club, he played the melodica and came out of the dressing room playing. So, Stay Human, I'm just able to say it seems like a message of perhaps, in some ways, don't hide inside your technology.

Cherise: Hm, yes, ooh!

Becca: And, I don't know what, I don't have the, that's an opinion.

Cherise: And that's, that's wonderful. That's what this is about, it's about your perspective. I'm writing an introspective analysis of Jon Batiste and Stay Human, and that's why I value other perspectives as well. Your introspection, because we're all, it's such a group effort when we go and experience them. It's more than just a concert.

Becca: Yeah, and Stay Human is addressing the audience. It's telling the audience to do something which will make the audience and the musicians equal, more equal.

Cherise: Mm, hmm, yes.

Becca: We're all human.

Cherise: Great, amen. Thank you, okay. So, oh just want to piggy back, at the *NPR* event, they recorded, it was the song "Believe in Love," you gotta Believe, um, and Love.

Becca: That's at Newport?

Cherise: Yes, excuse me, did I say *NPR*?

Becca: It's on the *NPR* website.

Cherise: *NPR* recorded this, but it was at the Newport.

Becca: Okay, and *WBGO* was part of. You know when *NPR* goes out to do things, often *WBGO* is the team, yeah.

Cherise: Okay, but what I'm hearing is what you edited, that was actually after their concert at Newport, and they came into the audience. Okay, I have not seen that. I need to see that.

Becca: The audio.

Cherise: Okay, the audio. Oh! Okay, I've heard that, I've heard that wonderful audio. Thank you.

Becca: Mm, hm.

Cherise: That's why this is an honor that you're sitting here, and to speak to you like this, is amazing, thank you. Yes 'cause I've heard all the segments, and then in addition to that, they did something else, like, it was like back stage, and it was just the group, and Jon

Becca: A short piece?

Cherise: Yes, it was a short piece. It was a piece that they did. It was "Believe in Love," and, so, uh,

Becca: Does he talk?

Cherise: He speaks a little, [singing beginning of song] *Here's a story*, um, with Jamison Ross is playing.

Becca: Oh, my. I must find that, and watch that.

Cherise: Yes! And, then, they kind of walk off. Okay, thank you, so, um, would you say Social Music is an evolution of jazz, a re-discovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, or both? And, I will preface that by saying I came to think of it as a re-discovery of jazz from listening to some interviews with Jon and Leo Sidran, whom you know and everything, but also there was an interview, it was a conversation with Jon and Walter Isaacson. And, in both interviews Jon mentions the importance of dance in Social Music, and then particularly in his conversation with Walter Isaacson, he speaks of Congo Square enters the equation, because they're talking about the history of jazz and they speak of the importance of Louis Armstrong, and even going back to the beginnings, like in the late eighteen hundreds, early nineteen hundreds, um, and Congo square, and what

that meant, and how that was a time for the slaves and some freed slaves to be free on Sunday, and so, when they had their drums and rhythms, that musical element going and dancing. So, um, that's what made me think, well, wow, this is so ingenious, what they're doing because I see it, I can see it as an evolution, but I also see it as like a re-discovery at the same time. So, with you being a musician, and you knowing about jazz and the history and what not, what's your take on that? What do you think? Do you think it is an evolution, a rediscovery, or both?

Becca: Both. Both, I think that, um, the rediscovery of the social element and the dance and the social functions, the association of Sunday, the day of not working, um, also the association with, as I understand communication among slaves who were not able to, who used the drums, and this probably extends to other instruments to signify something that it, might be punished for knowing, or punished for communicating, so

Cherise: 'Cause he mentioned that it was something like a rebellion. How it was rebellion at that time.

Becca: Did it become an underground language, maybe? But then, but then I also think evolution because Jon is the latest in a wonderful continuum of piano players, and in the social arena, or pre night club, I wonder rather you find the piano yet? It might be that the piano has to signify that the music has gone indoors.

Cherise: Hmm.

Becca: I'm not sure, but, you know I think the original brass bands and such, you know, were in motion. The piano is not generally able to do that, unless, it's on a cart. However, something you might find sometime is a movie from the seventies, or eighties

probably, called *Piano Players Rarely Play Together*, and it was, um, three New Orleans pianists, I'm gonna say, Tuffs Washington, Professor Longhair, and Allen Toussaint, and I might be wrong, but the premise of the movie is if you play piano, you're not in a section. If you play trumpet, in a, there might be another trumpeter or a couple of drummers or something, but the piano, so the pianist, so they're very present in the music, don't have the pleasure of being next to another pianist very often. So, that was a good movie, and a lot of playing in it, and three important people, and the other person that's not in the movie that I remember is James Booker. He's a New Orleans pianist, legendary, legendary New Orleans pianist, with some recordings, and was active when I was. So he goes into the seventies at least. He must, I don't believe he lived a completely long life, um, and I don't think Jonathan would've overlapped with him, but these are people that came before, and he's, who made the piano. I mean everybody thinks of Fats Domino, and he's wonderful too, piano and Rock 'n Roll, and a part of New Orleans music. Yeah, and so I would say that Jon, Jon is doing the next

Cherise: through the piano.

Becca: Yes, of that chain of choosing that instrument.

Cherise: Okay, thank you, yes, and I know he mentions Jelly Roll Morton

Becca: Yes, good Lord,

Cherise: definitely as

Becca: Right.

Cherise: his

Becca: the original one.

Cherise: Yes, so thank you for bringing that out, and we know that's true, and then he even translates it to another instrument with a keyboard. It's not a piano, but it's what is widely known as the melodica.

Becca: That allows him to be on his feet.

Cherise: Yes, that's right, because they are a mobile group. So, have you actually experienced, um, well, that leads me right into the next question, what's your take on love riots? Have you actually experienced the Love Riot? [Becca looks slightly questionable about love riot] Okay, the Love Riot, that's where they would, they go into the street, they're in the street of here, New York City, and they attract.

Becca: There was one at Union Square.

Cherise: Yes! Yes, yes, so they attract this large audience of people, and, they're just playing. They start just playing for maybe a few people, and then some other people come along, and then they're playing and throwing down, getting down, and then these crowds of people are drawn to them, okay, so, um, it's just so amazing, and then I saw footage of, like after a concert, they would, um. Thank you, they would leave the concert and the audience was following them out of the concert, and they continued to follow them into the streets of New York, and maybe even into the subway. So, as we, we've spoken before we started recording a bit, um, you know that I've lived here before, and I'm here now, and I consider, I'm from St. Louis, so I do, I also consider myself a New Yorker, I mean, I've been here, so, when I saw that footage I was like, what!? That's not, that's not New Yorkers, we don't, we don't follow people. I mean we hear great people

playing and you think and you're drawn and you'll listen, but when you start following them, that's a whole other element, and that's another reason that I thought, this is an evolution. This is like a revolution. It's revolutionary what they're doing, you know, and in a sense, that just doesn't happen here. So,

Becca: It's social, and in a physical way, and also, they're not some student band, or they're not, they're so creative. I've seen the same band so, so united on stage. They're strong enough to carry that off stage, and they're very, very good individually, and then by being the same group for a while, they know each other.

Cherise: Yes, they have that cohesiveness.

Becca: Yeah, we're so fortunate to, you know, be able to see them once and a while, very hard to find each part of this, and then they have it in one group, and one would think that Jon is the one who's advanced the group, it's quite remarkable.

Cherise: Yes, it is. So, did you kind of see something about a love riot, or?

Becca: Yes, I think so.

Cherise: Did you have a better idea as to what the love riot is, or?

Becca: A video, it must be online somewhere.

Cherise: Okay, and so what was your experience, when you saw it, or do you have any, do you have any thoughts about it?

Becca: Um, to me it brings New Orleans to New York. Um, maybe in a dream everyone in New Orleans is that good, um, New Orleans is a warmer city, so it's likely to be

outside more than here, and there's a tradition playing music outside for all sorts of occasions. So, that's how I feel – It brings New Orleans to New York. And, New Orleans is a symbol of a whole Caribbean, faith, which could include Cuba and lots of islands and it's rhythmic, where you can make music and dance outside. With the African lineage and instruments

Cherise: Yeah, excuse me, I just can't help it, but as you're speaking – the music they just started playing **Becca:** Good.

Cherise: kind of makes me, puts me in the mind of New Orleans, it's so interesting.

Becca: I so much want to compare Jonathan's music with Professor Longhair.

Cherise: Okay, and you know, this is amazing, you know,

Becca: This is what I want to do. I want you to do it [Becca laughs]

Cherise: this is interesting because my next question I'm so serious, my next question for you was how would you, 'cause I am comparing and contrasting Jon to certain revolutionary figures in jazz and, um, of course I had Louis Armstrong, um, Duke Ellington, um, Miles Davis because there's a lot about Miles in Social Music, actually, but my question for you is of the figures I named, and even Charlie Parker was another one that revolutionized obviously the jazz, but, do you have any thoughts, and can you compare or contrast Jon with any of those figures, or maybe one that I did not name. So, you just did, you said Professor Longhair.

Becca: Yeah, who, uh, just off the top of my head, I feel has calypso in his beat, and, um, so, you know like it maybe something like listen to Professor Longhair, and listen to

some Jonathan. I wonder, I wonder what I would find that I think, oh wait, if something persists. I don't have the conclusion; I would want to try it.

Cherise: Oh, I see.

Becca: I would want to try it, and I think there would be a relationship,

Cherise: between those two.

Becca: Yes, and who and now that Jon lives in New York and has this fine, fine band and this place in the media, there's this Duke Ellington.

Cherise: That's why I mentioned Duke Ellington.

Becca: and that he's doing it at the piano,

Cherise: oh listen to this music that they're playing, it's wonderful.

Becca: Yeah, it makes the heat go up a little bit, and there's Louis. Does Jon sing?

Cherise: Oh, yes, Jon sings, um, yes, he

Becca: I'm not hearing his voice right now, and I'm, I don't know that I've ever seen him sing.

Cherise: Well, there's a segment of him on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert, and he did, um, "Blackbird" – The Beatles! He did his version of it, and it was just he and the piano,

Becca: Oh, I know that's a nice version of that. I should collect versions of "Blackbird". Thank you.

Cherise: and it was just wonderful.

Becca: Another good idea.

Cherise: So, that's online. Yeah, okay, so, Professor Longhair, you mentioned Duke Ellington, you mentioned a comparison there.

Becca: And, then, another one, Allen Toussaint, I would want to, at this point, revisit Toussaint, whom Jon must know in some way, through growing up there.

Cherise: Yeah, he did, he did, and when he passed, back when Toussaint passed, Jon gave a tribute to him.

Becca: Where?

Cherise: I don't know the name of the place. I want to say it was downtown somewhere, um, like that

Becca: I just throw out that sometimes when you want to interview somebody, and then you say, well, I really want to get you talking about, and that turns the key.

Cherise: Okay, so, um, pertaining to certain messages emoted like Love, Believe through Stay Human – they are excellent at saying Love and Believe during concerts and different outreach events, like the *Jazz Is Now*. They also had something at um, the NoMad Theater, sponsored by Chase Bank, um, what is love to you?

Becca: [light laughter] Oh, it's a change in the way I feel from being around people who are maybe, some are maybe, uh, like the dog up the street. It's like life to life connection.

Cherise: Yes, and how would you define believe, because these are messages that are emoted from their presentation?

Becca: Well, that's a good question. I don't think I remember how Jonathan, Jon, he uses believe.

Cherise: Well, I know he'll say – You gotta believe! Believe!

Becca: Well you know that's a phrase that comes from a base, from being the fan of a losing baseball team.

Cherise: Oh. [Cherise laughs]

Becca: You got to believe in the Mets. Many years of bad baseball.

Cherise: Wow. [Becca laughs]

Becca: Although they're better now.

Cherise: Yes, they are. Okay, so, um,

Becca: So maybe that's, maybe that's,

Cherise: He talks about believe and love. They have a song "Believe in Love."

Becca: It's a, that fabulous message, and many messages in music. It's not, we can't take for granted that all musicians believe in love. There's just a lot of different messages, and that's not to take for granted, it's a choice he's making, and it makes the music warmer, and it's more human, right? 'Cause some of the messages in music are mechanized music, and that's okay too, but that's not what Jon is doing.

Cherise: Yes, that's right, so, um, has your perception of Love and Believe altered since your experience with Jon and Stay Human?

Becca: Well, I say he gives a dose. He gives a shot of it. Just from being at The Jazz Museum this summer.

Cherise: Yes, because I know you were at Part 3, which was the last one, and that was more representative of the whole Stay Human Crew, because, like, all of those horn players on the side, like Eddie Barbash was there, of course Joe was there.

Becca: And, that player from the band on The Tonight Show.

Cherise: The only one that wasn't there, was Ibanda. He wasn't there that night, but, so

Becca: The tuba player. He was down on that Newport recording. He was on the Newport recording. That's pretty New Orleans, the tuba.

Cherise: So, um, would you expound on your view of love, believe, and humanity before and after your Social Music experience with Jon Batiste and Stay Human?

Becca: [Lightly laughs] Well, before, okay I'm just gonna remember that concert, before that concert, there was a, a sort of a

Cherise: At Newport.

Becca: No, at The Museum. There was a first act in a way. There was a, you could call the jazz drama program, the teenagers, uh, singing music from some musical plays and they were having it for the event for the current.

Cherise: Oh, okay, that was before Jon came.

Becca: Yeah, it was a very nice event, and they were teenagers, and um, it was, you know, I could jazz, kids, new songs that belong in a stage play, and then Jon's band came and just lifted, lifted that message, and amplified it, and focused it, and , um, powerful fun. [Becca laughs.]

Cherise: Yes, thank you.

Becca: And, I was hoping that the kids could stay, and see Jon, but I'm not sure there was room. Jon was pretty much sold out the room.

Cherise: Oh, it was. Yes, it was, because many who weren't at the first, I see, you weren't there, there was a long line outside waiting to get in, and in many cases, it was standing room only. I just happened to be at the front of the line.

Becca: Yeah, cause you're writing this thesis [lightly laughs].

Cherise: So, um, what was it like for you to see Jon Batiste and Stay Human on the nightly television as Music Director, Bandleader and House Band of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*?

Becca: Well, I do not have a television.

Cherise: Oh, okay, okay, so, have you seen the show at all?

Becca: [Becca motions her head to communicate 'no']

Cherise: Well, though you may have not seen the show, but you know that he's the bandleader

Becca: Yes, I do.

Cherise: and the music director and they are the House Band now, so

Becca: That is fantastic!

Cherise: So, how does that make you feel?

Becca: I thought it was the greatest choice in the world. It's, it's bringing, I mean, to bring a jazz band which takes it to the people and TV, takes it to an unlimited, practically unlimited audience. So, it's ideal. It's a perfect match. I hope the show will be successful. I know friends of mine say, oh *Colbert*, he hasn't found his way with his show, and I really haven't seen ten seconds of it, but, uh, Jon, and, but when I did see, um, the *Letterman* show with Paul Schaffer in the theater, I realized how much music the TV cuts away from.

Cherise: Yes, it does, truly.

Becca: So, this, so, I imagine *Colbert* features the band sometimes, and there are guests, maybe stand up do their thing with the band, but I, I lament that the cut aways, all the ads are cut aways from the probably, probably the best music in New York, and they tape in the late afternoon every day. They tape in the late afternoon, I suppose.

Cherise: Yes, I tell you,

Becca: And then I don't know if the band feels trapped in a contract. I hope not, but that can happen too, and the band can, you know. There's a lot of stuff that's out of their hands, rather the show is going to be successful.

Cherise: I believe it's a four-year contract.

Becca: It's either like the greatest security to become who you want to be, or it's the biggest, thing holding you back, because you're stuck. So, I hope they like it.

Cherise: Right, right. Thank you. Um, so, do you have any of their albums, or, what's your favorite song or memorable moment/experience with Jon Batiste and Stay Human?

Becca: Well, you know, when I was producing *JazzSet*, I would go crazy for each one of those tapes from Aspen to Jazz Standard to Newport, and I think you're reminding me he was in one of the Roy Hargrove recordings we made, possibly. Was he playing in that band?

Cherise: Yes, he was in Roy Hargrove's band.

Becca: Rather that was a recording, or I just saw it, I'm not sure, and The Kennedy Center which was the most exposure. Two full sets on one night, and they had driven down from New York in some sort of a blizzard, and there was a woman who did the driving,

Cherise: Wow.

Becca: and sang. That was nice.

Cherise: Oh, the woman that sang, drove?

Becca: Yes, that's what I remember.

Cherise: Well, that's Jennifer Sanon.

Becca: That's what I think.

Cherise: Really!?

Becca: That's what I think, you know, I sure do believe that, that was what I was told, and she, she drove the whole thing, and then about

Cherise: I think that sounds familiar to me as well.

Becca: Saylor, is she married to Saylor?

Cherise: No, Sanon. Okay, Jennifer Sanon, wonderful vocalist, exquisite. Okay.

Becca: So those were two sets. He could only make a one-hour show run. So, my job was to listen and chose, and that's a great job to have.

Cherise: Yes, it is. Wow.

Becca: So, um,

Cherise: Okay, so, this is excellent because we're just flowing right here, yeah, so,

Becca: I'm not sure that answers the question, in fact, I don't think that it does, so It's not gonna be from an album, it's gonna be from one of these recordings, and I could just remember how much I loved every run of them, and the one from the Jazz Standard, which was the trio, not him, these two and the bass, he sang.

Cherise: Joe, Jon, and Phil Kuehn, mm, hm.

Becca: He played and not sang a song that was, my engineer, he comes from Korea, and had been an intern on *JazzSet*, and then he came, anyway, she identified that, and said I

know that song. That's a song from somewhere else, and she went digging, and digging, and digging, and she found it as a Brazilian song, and I think, Yvonne Lyn,

Cherise: Oh, wow.

Becca: which shows you that Jon has very good taste, and he's picking stuff from all over, and that was a beautiful song, that's so New Orleans, but bossa.

Cherise: Yes, they do so many grooves, and they cover everything, they really do, so you would say that was your memorable

Becca: I fell in love with those. I sang those songs all the way home from work, every night. I loved that song, and I don't really remember what it was.

Cherise: Oh, okay, you don't remember the name? Oh, okay, but it was a bossa.

Becca: Well, if Yvonne Lyn is a Brazilian singer, it's in that bag. It might be strictly a bossa, but it's in that bag.

Cherise: Okay, excellent, thank you. Yes,

Becca: It was something else he did that night, too.

Cherise: But definitely the segments that you were involved, producing.

Becca: Yes, yes.

Cherise: You, you, kept those in heavy rotation.

Becca: Very much.

Cherise: I understand. I do. Same here, I've had this *Jazz Is Now* in heavy rotation, so yes, I, I understand.

Becca: He knows how to choose, apparently, music that people will like, but he makes something happen with it, that you can't do, if you're an average musician.

Cherise: Right, excellent point.

Becca: He raises,

Cherise: That's right, because they're showing, yeah, how they are so accomplished, excellent in their talent, they've developed to the point they're so accomplished, however with that being said, they still want to bring it to all levels, they want all level s of people, you know, so they'll even go on the subway. They go on the street. They'll go anywhere.

Becca: Yes, yes, nobody else does this. It's [Becca laughs], I mean many people do a park event, there are some very good musicians in the subway.

Cherise: So, with your expertise in the media/journalism, as the producer of *WBGO JazzSet*

Becca: From *NPR*.

Cherise: Yes, From *NPR*, um, that series, and like we've discussed, you've covered the Jonathan Batiste Band at The Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., um, I think we said that was around 2010?

Becca: Yes.

Cherise: Okay, 2010, if you, you may have mentioned it, but how was that, like actually being a part of that, and just spearheading that, you were the producer?

Becca: Well, we always had to have, I mean I was just, it was a small team, and um, so I always, I had to always find something to put on it, and I wanted it to be good, and I didn't want it to be like we had last month or last week, and I didn't want it to be the same artists too often, although I've listened a few different times, and we had Jon Batiste, he was knew then, and so it would be a little bit of him from Aspen, and then a little more from The Jazz Standard, and that happened in the show for Newport and the full show from The Kennedy Center, you know, and also, I didn't want to find the same songs, and he didn't repeat himself too much, you know, I'm sure there was a look, but I was able to look around, and he just sort of was rising, so, there was no sense of, I mean, it's really a gift when you had an artist that's there becoming more and more of a force and a performer. So, this was just a wonderful little, I mean *JazzSet* was constant talent scouting, and he delivers, so I'm very thankful, yeah.

Cherise: Because you orchestrated everything, and when you asked him to,

Becca: Yes, he was also approachable. I did ask him. There was a manager at some point, but at first I just asked him.

Cherise: And was hat at the Jazz Standard, or, when did you?

Becca: I think I asked him at Aspen, and I think I asked him at the Jazz Standard, and by the time he got to the Kennedy Center and Newport, of course, I was able to be part of their ask,

Cherise: Oh, I see.

Becca: but, he was very lovely in remembering me for that moment when I would

Cherise: Yes, wonderful.

Becca: hand them the check after the show, and their small payments, and he, these artist, would get a small payment, but then in terms of what has gone on sense, it's amazing we paid them what we did.

Cherise: That you did. So, thank you, thank you so much. Did you notice something special about them then, and what I mean is, um, maybe something beyond their talent, their magnificent talent, something that revealed earlier on what and how they've come to be known today? Like, all of this with the Social Music, Stay Human, was there something, is there something indicative of their specialness for you, then? Like, you've spoken about how they were rising.

Becca: By the time they got to The Kennedy Center, it was proving to be a bigger band, at first it was Jon alone at Aspen, but other students were there, but he stood out. Then, it was a trio at The Jazz Standard, then *NPR* hired him for the party, which was part of a recording with his father and The Batiste Band, and I realized, wow, he's a second generation, and then at The Kennedy Center, and finally at Newport the band got bigger and he was not with his Dad, he was – it was his band.

Cherise: Right.

Becca: So, there's a progression, and the band at The Kennedy Center, had the singer Jennifer who you mentioned, and you know, that always worries a producer because

we're like, oh boy, who's this singer, because we didn't know there'd be a singer, and what's she gonna sing, and do we want to – she's very good. She was very, very good!

Cherise: Yes, she is.

Becca: And why I would think he would bring some second grade singer, I'd no idea. He didn't.

Cherise: Right. [laughs from Cherise and Becca.]

Becca: And, then I learned she drove the band, so [laughter], woah!

Cherise: Wow, that's amazing. Okay, do you know anything, or have you heard anything about his, um, their work, the groups work with children and doing outreach events?

Becca: Oh great, they are like Pied Pipers.

Cherise: Yeah, they are, truly.

Becca: Well, great.

Cherise: Right, so, I know we've touched on this, would you please give your thoughts on *Jazz Is Now* series, just at The National Jazz Museum in Harlem, just your overall thought, 'cause that definitely has an educational component.

Becca: So, is that the name for the three concerts that he gave?

Cherise: Oh, yes, yes, yes, *Jazz Is Now* was actually a series that Jon and his trio with Joe Saylor, Phil Keuhn, who you saw at the Jazz Standard, they had, um, they were doing the *Jazz Is Now* Series at The National Jazz Museum in Harlem.

Becca: I wish I would've seen.

Cherise: And, so, this summer, this past June, that was the relaunch.

Becca: Oh, okay.

Cherise: That was the relaunch of what they did before. So, when you experienced part 3, and you saw how Jon did the educational component, how was that?

Becca: But, not too much, I mean, he didn't over charge, and he did what he did through the music and the sounds, just like with my *JazzSet*, experience the band's groove and size, see, so that the band I saw, the last *Jazz Is Now* was three horns, if not four, and then that rhythm section that's so close because they played together so much, and, it's just what you dream of in jazz, you know, that there will be enough opportunity to play together, yet a really tight center and it's a dream, and if you're not good, that will not come to you, and if you're good, sometimes that doesn't come either.

Cherise: Right.

Becca: and maybe that's where believe, maybe that's where his believe,

Cherise: Yes, thank you, yes, so, would you say that you feel closer around other people, or around people that are around you that you may not even know at the *Jazz Is Now* series, at a Jon Batiste and Stay Human event, do you have more of a greater sense of community?

Becca: Yes! That's the Social, and that is successful, because you've enjoyed something together.

Cherise: Rather you know the person next to you, or not.

Becca: Right, right.

Cherise: What are your thoughts of each musician that you've seen, rather you really know them or not, but each one of them that you kind of know, even if it's just a quick word.

Becca: I can't speak of each of them, but throughout this whole progression, I always loved Barbash.

Cherise: Oh, yes.

Becca: He's a wonderful melody spinner. He's a wonderful, I'd have to say that's, I should, um, I'm gonna just stick with Barbash.

Cherise: Yes, thank you, and so this will be the last question.

Becca: So, you know something.

Cherise: What's that.

Becca: You know Gregory Porter.

Cherise: Oh, yes, I know his drummer, Emanuel; he's from St. Louis.

Becca: Oh, okay. So, he has an alto player that he brings.

Cherise: Oh, yes, an Asian guy

Becca: Yes, and it's the same sense that I'm like, wow, he's such a great player.

Cherise: Yes, and an alto. Yes, because when I spoke with Eddie, and I shared with him that I had my aha moment with him, actually at that *Jazz Is Now Part 3*, that you were at, I heard him, and I always enjoyed him, but it was something about that moment, I said, 'oh my God,' I could, I said, 'his tone,' I could really hear, I said – 'his tone!' I said, 'Eddie your tone that comes out of the horn; it's just so exquisite, that sound.

Becca: So, have you watched the video of that I bet you'll know exactly when you felt that, and you'll feel it again.

Cherise: Yes, I do, and to hear him at The Roxy it just comes through, and I'm just saying this to you because you mentioned him and how you appreciate his melodic, his melodicism, his lyricism. We spoke about that, too. He shared that he appreciates that comment because he realized that a lot of people don't recognize, in the grand of being a part of such a successful group, you may not realize how much he works on just that, his tone, his sound. So, he would appreciate that you recognize that as well,

Becca: I do.

Cherise: in *Jazz Is Now*.

Becca: And, I believe that this experience is much stronger for me when I am at a live performance. That was the premise of *JazzSet* – something happens when it's live.

Cherise: Yes, it does, when it's live. Thank you so much.

Becca: Thank you, I've enjoyed it.

Cherise: So, have you experienced the Social Media communication?

Becca: Actually, no.

Cherise: Okay, ‘cause that’s another facet of what they do.

Becca: And, that’s probably where the word Social more directly comes from, because Social Music starts with,

Cherise: Well, I know, right? So, I think the Social Media is more of a vehicle for them to communicate their happenings, but from what I’ve found in the research, speaking with them, it’s more about the intent of Social Music, not so much,

Becca: Well, it makes the title connect even more with what’s going on now, and maybe they have somebody else doing their posting. I mean if they’re doing their own social media post, then they don’t have time to do their practicing and rehearsing, maybe they feel like, oh, we’ll hire that out, and musicians shouldn’t have to do everything.

Cherise: Yes, and this is off the topic, but I was researching Ron Carter, and he, he mentioned that about how it’s not in him to do everything, publishing, and everything, it’s a matter of doing what is enough for you.

Becca: You know, when I was working full-time, at the computer all the time, and then I would look over at the piano, and I couldn’t do it. I’d think ‘a’ was a key on the keyboard. [Cherise gives hearty laugh] So I like musicians to have real lives, and be a musician, but I don’t want them to have to run their careers from the bottom up. There’s only so much time.

Cherise: That's so funny when you mentioned the keyboard, I just have to add, immediately I thought of how I was really practicing at one time, and I was looking over my chords, and um, I went to a vending machine, you know, the label [Becca gives hearty laugh.] will say 'A6' or 'C7,' I'd literally think of the chords. So, I know what you mean, you know, it's,

Becca: That's good, that's another good one, too.

Cherise: Well, you just can't do anything but laugh.

Becca: Yeah, right, we didn't invent all these things, and it's funny.

Cherise: Yes, keep us on our Ps and Qs, well, thank you so very much.

Becca: Thank you Cherise, this has been so much fun to talk.

Cherise: Oh, yes,

Becca: I hope that if you hear something, you'll let me get a look at it.

Cherise: Oh, definitely, I want all of you, anyone that I speak, I want you to see the final, what I'm doing

Becca: Because I'd like to be able to say, no, I don't think that quote is what I'm trying to say.

Cherise: I totally understand, because you are producer, editor, extraordinaire [Becca laughs], I understand, and I would love your insight too, your experience, and you did this for years, wow, thank you.

Becca: Thank you.

Chapter 6: Miles Davis's Social Music?

As stated and discussed in all of my in-person interviews, I explain how I learned about Miles Davis in relation to Social Music. My discovery occurred at the viewing of Don Cheadle's world premiere of *Miles Ahead*, at the New York Film Festival in New York City. At the end of the film was a major nod to SOCIAL MUSIC. At that time, I was just beginning my graduate studies and had just decided to pursue the subject of Social Music in relation to Jon Batiste and Stay Human as the subject of my thesis. However, upon seeing the nod to Social Music at the end of the film, I was compelled to further research why Social Music was mentioned at the end of the film. I didn't know Miles had something to do with Social Music! What did Miles Davis have to do with Social Music? Through further research after the film, I surprisingly discovered a 1982 interview with Miles Davis and Bryant Gumbel, and a-ha! There was the answer to my question about Miles in relation to Social Music! Eager to ask others about such discovery in our interviews, I completed a mild transcription of the interview I heard with Miles and Bryant Gumbel. Then, my transcription was utilized in seeking further answers from the in-person interviews conducted. For this chapter, I will hone in on two of those in-person interviews – Joe Saylor's and Quincy Troupe's responses about Miles's Social Music. This chapter includes my brief transcription of Miles Davis's Interview with Bryant Gumbel, the question I asked Joe Saylor regarding the transcription, along with his response. Also included is an interview between Quincy Troupe

(co-writer of *Miles: The Autobiography*) and myself at his home in Harlem, along with further insight into Miles's Social Music.

Miles Davis and Bryant Gumbel 1982 Interview

In a Bryant Gumbel interview with Miles Davis in 1982, Gumbel explains that Miles Davis tempered bop's turbulence to form the cool school of jazz. In the interview, Miles explains, "We got so that we wouldn't play clichés. You know that was over."

[BG] But for the most part, jazz has over the years avoided mainstream of American music…

[MD] "I don't like that word jazz Bryant."

[BG] You don't? What would you call it?

[MD] "I think Social Music, all the social melodies out in the air. It's not jazz anymore."

[BG] I'm curious. What do you think of most Popular music, or what passes for Popular music today?

[MD] "That's the social music I'm talking about."

[BG] You think it's good.

[MD] "Yeah. You take out what you want, and leave what you don't like. You know, like food."

[mild laughter from Miles and Bryant Gumbel]

https://youtu.be/IHeYG9SNaS0

When asking Joe his thoughts about Miles's mention of Social Music in the interview with Bryant Gumbel, the following was ascertained from the Jon Batiste and Stay Human perspective. Up until seeing the significant nod to SOCIAL MUSIC at the end of *Miles Ahead*, I thought Jon Batiste was the first and only one to have coined such idea as Social Music. Joe gave me a clearer understanding as to how Jon Batiste and Stay Human came to come about and publicize their Social Music.

When asking Quincy Troupe his thoughts about Miles's mention of Social Music in the interview with Bryant Gumbel, more insight was given concerning why Miles didn't like the term jazz, and ultimately, at the time of the 1982 interview, called the music he played Social Music, rather than Jazz. Let's delve into my interview with Quincy Troupe. Following our interview will be a brief discussion of why Miles told Bryant Gumbel he didn't like the term Jazz, and some overall thoughts as to why Miles called what he played Social Music.

Quincy Troupe Interview with Cherise Harris, Thursday, November 10, 2016 at The Troupes' home in Harlem, New York

Quincy Troupe

Upon unexpectedly meeting Mr. Troupe in my hometown of Saint Louis, on the very street of which I grew up, he and his wife, Margaret, were visiting a neighbor of many years from across the street. As my mother and I usually spoke to our neighbor upon seeing them outside – that day, we were introduced to Quincy and Margaret along their road travel. As Quincy is a native Saint Louisan as well, upon learning my interest in Miles Davis and jazz history, he was generous to share his card for further information or questions I might have in the future, concerning my endeavor. In the course of our interview, I became aware that Quincy, a great basketball athlete, poet, and Margaret had developed a true loving friendship with Miles, after various encounters through the years. Beyond co-writing *Miles: The Autobiography,* it was important for me to discuss Miles's point of view concerning Social Music with his friend, Quincy. As Miles asked Quincy to co-write the autobiography, they formed a dear bond through the course of co-writing the book.

Born July 22, 1939 in St. Louis, Missouri, **Quincy Troupe** is an awarding-winning author of ten volumes of poetry, three children's books, and six non-fiction works; ***Earl the Pearl: My Story***, a memoir of legendary NY Knicks basketball star, Earl Monroe, (Rodale, April 2013) is Troupe's newest non-fiction work. In 2010 Troupe received the American Book Award for Lifetime Literary Achievement. Among Troupe's best-selling works are ***Miles: The Autobiography of Miles Davis*** and his memoir, ***Miles & Me*** soon to become a major motion picture.

Other notable works are ***The Pursuit of Happyness***, an autobiography with written with Chris Gardner that became a major motion picture and that was a *New York Times* bestseller for over 40 weeks; ***The Architecture of Language***, a book of poems, that won the 2007 Paterson Award for Sustained Literary Achievement, and ***Transcircularities: New and Selected Poems,*** which won the 2003 Milt Kessler Poetry Award and was selected by Publishers Weekly as one of the ten best books of poetry in 2002.

Errançities is his most recent book of poetry. A new children's book, ***Hallelujah: The Story of Ray Charles*** with illustrations by Brian Pinkney, will be published by Disney/Hyperion.

Quincy Troupe is professor emeritus of the University of California, San Diego, and editor of ***Black Renaissance Noire***, a literary journal of the Institute of Africana Studies at New York University.

Transcribed by Cherise Harris

Cherise: So, I went to the film festival, the New York Film Festival's showing of Don Cheadle's Miles Ahead, the *****biopic of Miles Davis, and so in the film was a pleasant surprise for me, there was a shout out, or like a nod to Social Music, and it included artists like Esperanza Spalding, and I think even Herbie Hancock was playing.

[doorbell rings]

[BREAK]

Cherise: So, at the end of the film they showed Herbie Hancock,

Quincy: Herbie Hancock

Cherise: Esperanza Spalding, and they were doing like a nod to Social Music,

Quincy: Um, hm,

Cherise: and I was like, what!? You know, I said, wow, and that just surprised me, and I got so excited because that's what I've been working on, my thesis is Jon Batiste and Stay Human, and Social Music, but that was the first time I had ever seen any association of Social Music with Miles, and it was at the end of the film

Quincy: Um, hm, um, hm

Cherise: So I looked into it. I went online, googling Miles Davis and Social Music and what not, and I came across some interviews of Miles – love looking at these interviews, right? There's one with Bryant Gumbel in 1982, and Gumbel explains that Miles Davis tempered bop's turbulence

Quincy: What was that?

Cherise: Bryant Gumbel explained that Miles Davis tempered bop's turbulence to form the cool school of jazz, and in the interview, Miles explains [Cherise is trying to sound like Miles] "We got so," I can't really imitate him, but Miles said, [Cherise is quoting Miles using her regular voice] "We got so that we wouldn't play clichés. You know, that was over." Then Bryant Gumbel said, "For the most part, jazz has over the years avoided mainstream of American music," and Miles said, "I don't like that word jazz Bryant," You know he said, "I don't like that word jazz Bryant" and then Bryant Gumbel said, "What would you call it?" And, Miles said, "I think Social Music. All the social melodies out in the air. It's not jazz anymore." Bryant Gumbel say's "How would you define all the popular music today?" And, Miles said, "that's the Social Music – take out what you want, and leave out what you don't like."
So, that was just my bit of transcription from that interview,

Quincy: Mm, hm,

Cherise: and so, my question is in working with him in the way that you did and the bond that you formed,

Quincy: Mm, hmm,

Cherise: did you ever have a conversation with Miles about his thoughts of Social Music or what did he say about Social Music, if you did, and what do you think Miles's thoughts were about Social Music?

Quincy: Well, I think that, um, and that's a wonderful question, and that's a wonderful quote. I think that, hm, Miles, see Miles was always into re-defining whatever had gone in the – before.

Cherise: Yes

Quincy: You know, so, when I was dealing with Miles, he had left, I had read some of that too, but he had left the term Social Music and was just calling it Music.

Cherise: Ohh.

Quincy: He was calling it, just music. I remember asking him, definitely, how would you define what you do?

Cherise: Okay

Quincy: How would you define, 'cause, for that reason, 'cause I saw some of that too, jazz, social music, and all of that, and he said – Music. He would say, I play music. It's all music. He said, he said so called classical music, bebop, everything is just, the way I think about it is just music. It's just music. Whatever, that's what he said to me. Now, you asked me what he said to me, 'cause I started interviewing him in '85.

Cherise: And this interview was in '82.

Quincy: Yeah, so that's, so that's what I said, he had, it's not that he had anything against Social Music, that definition, I don't think, but he had also just redefined it down to just Music. Now, I don't know why, but he said I just play music. I play, I play music. He said, people always want to pigeon hole you,

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: see he had a thing about being pigeon-holed. You know, so I think if you say Social Music, that's pigeon-hole him.

Cherise: Even though he was saying that Social Music is the Popular music,

Quincy: That's right.

Cherise: and the melodies in the air is music

Quincy: Right.

Cherise: He recognized. I'm asking you, are you saying that you recognized that he recognized that even his own saying Social Music was still pigeon-holing?

Quincy: Yes

Cherise: It was still pigeon-holing of a term; it was still, uh, limiting him, put him in the box.

Quincy: 'Cause he didn't, he never said anything derogatory about Social Music,

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: but he did say something derogatory about Jazz. 'Cause his whole thing about jazz was that it was – that definition came from white people.

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: That they were the ones that defined it as jazz. They're the ones that said that what you are playing is jazz, is this, and he was running away from all definitions of Europeans, he called them Europeans, put on him about what he was doing. He, he, he,

Miles Davis was abhorrent to being defined. I mean it was abhorrent to him to be defined by white folks. He said, what they know about anything?

Cherise: Okay

Quincy: You know what I mean, you know, I'm not saying that they don't play great music or nothing like that, but what they know about what I do, you know, and so he got to the point where he was just saying it was music. You know, he had gotten to the purest kind of essence, you know, the purest essence. 'Cause I said to him one day, isn't that sound, isn't that just sound? He said music is organized sound.

Cherise: Hm, mm, hm.

Quincy: He said, great music is organized sound. Organized, you know, some people might think it ain't, it's not organized, but it is.

Cherise: It sure is.

Quincy: He said, great music is organized sound. You organize it. 'Cause then he showed me, he said [Quincy hits fist on table top] If you listen to a car accident, I remember him telling me that.

Cherise: Okay.

Quincy: If you listen to a car accident, and we were on Fifth Avenue, if you listen to a car accident out there, he said if two cars hit each other – BOOM! He said, 'in the 1950s it would be like metal. You'd hear metal hitting [making groggly sound imitating Miles making groggly noise],' and he made all this sound, with his mouth [groogly sound], metal all tearing apart. He said, now, when these cars hit, it's like – Boop! He said,

‘because it’s made of composite, all kinds of plastics and hard, you know. It’s not metal only. You know, it’s like all of them combined, and it’s not the same sound. He said, so, it’s about sound. He said, ‘but, that sound, that could be anything. People screaming is sound. Music is organized. The organization of sound.

Cherise: Wow.

[Quincy smiles with a laugh]

Cherise: Mm!

Quincy: He said, ‘the organization of it,’ and I had never heard nobody say that. I said, ‘wo-ah, that’s so heavy.’ You know what I mean, because he said, I think maybe, he never said anything about it. Though he never said anything derogatory about Social Music, but he say’s, ‘I don’t want to be no white boy,’ and he said, he said, ‘no white boy.’

Cherise: Oh, he doesn’t want to be no white boy.

Quincy: No, he said, he don’t want a white boy defining what he does. You know, he does not want that.

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: You know, music. You can say, music goes back to time in memorial.

Cherise: Hmm.

Quincy: It’s a time in memorial, and then it goes forward. All the way back to cave people, they made music. You know what I mean?

Cherise: Mm, hm.

Quincy: So, that's what I heard him say.

Cherise: Okay, thank you.

Quincy: And, he talked about it as if as music. That's where he was, and he would argue with you about it. You know, and people would say. He would correct people. They would say, 'Classical Music.' He would say, 'no such name as Classical Music. What's Classical Music?'

Cherise: Ohh.

Quincy: What, that's supposed to be European? That was folk music before it came to the United States. He said, 'that's the way they separate black people,' you know. He say, 'you play this Rhythm & Blues.' He said, 'that's music.'

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: Music. That was his whole. He refused to put it into categories. And, for me, that was remarkable, you know?

Cherise: It is.

Quincy: It's just kind of remarkable clarity, you know what I mean?

Cherise: Right. 'Cause it shows his genius as far as thinking of things from a Physics point of view, when you mentioned the two different kinds of material the cars are made of and what not, and how that affects the sound.

Quincy: Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah.

Cherise: And, then, of course, sociological view,

Quincy: Yeah.

Cherise: and ideological, in thinking of these constructs here, that have been developed,

Quincy: Yeah, but his whole thing was that,

Cherise: to commodify music, the whole music industry.

Quincy: His whole thing was there's always some kind of organizational rubric established by white folks. To put you in little categories. [laughter from Quincy]

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: You know, like, you play this. And, I remember, he was talking to this white guy, and the guy was saying something – 'well, Miles, you're very,' and Miles say, 'no, no, I ain't nowhere. I'm with music. What you talkin 'bout is bullshit.' He said, 'you know.' That's what he told him. 'What you talkin about is bullshit, and it ain't got nothing to do with music.' You know, 'It's got something to do with you trying to define me.'

Cherise: Yeah, right, because it comes down to, I'm always saying, it comes down to the bottom line. To the money.

Quincy: That's what it comes down to.

Cherise: So.

Quincy: Pop music. Okay, Pop music is supposed to make money. Okay, Pop music is supposed to make Madonna, or Beyoncé, you know?

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: They would put Beyoncé in Rhythm & Blues, and blah, blah, blah, and some kind of stuff, you know, but, no, no, no, no, he would argue, somebody was talking to him one day about Michael Jackson. Miles say, 'Michael Jackson. What you talking 'bout Michael Jackson does Pop music. He just does music. Why you trying to put him in Pop music? What? Or, you Rock'n Roll. What's that mean? What does Rock'n Roll mean? Rock'n Roll ain't nothing but.' He had this whole thing about, 'Blues, Blues electrified on a big level, with big drums, everybody with fifteen drums,'

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: He said, 'It ain't nothing but the blues. Blues are what black people did.' He said, 'you just trying to take it away from what we do.' You know, the guy was like, he was like [Quincy laughs],

Cherise: Okay.

Quincy: stunned. But, Miles Davis was, like you said, you used the right term. He was an absolute genius.

Cherise: Yes, mm, hm.

Quincy: I mean, absolute. You know, and I mean he didn't suffer fools lightly.

[Cherise gives light laughter]

Quincy: I mean, if you said something that he did not like, you knew it immediately. Immediately. Not tomorrow, not next. Not in an hour. Right then. [Quincy laughs] And, if he didn't like you?

Cherise: Hm.

Quincy: He didn't speak to you. I don't care if you was in a room with him. He didn't speak to you.

Cherise: Right.

Quincy: Like he told me, 'I ain't got to speak to you every time I see you.' And, I never forgot that.

Cherise: Right.

[Quincy and Cherise give hearty laughter]

Quincy: 'I reserve the right to speak to you, if I want to.'

Cherise: Exactly.

Quincy: He ain't go on no kind of protocol.

Cherise: Mm, hm. Wow, okay. Thank you so much. So, he did not really speak Social Music to you, but you did hear him mention that kind of – before.

Quincy: Well, he talked about it as a concept.

Cherise: But, he changed, when he realized.

Quincy: He was always changing. That's what a lot of people didn't understand.

Cherise: Right, in like three years.

Quincy: He was always changing. That's what I always loved about Miles. He was always changing. He changed his style, the way he dressed.

Cherise: Mm, hm.

Quincy: Everything. You know, he changed everything. The way he dressed, his music, to not introducing people, I mean, from when he first used to introduce people to his band, to not. Then, he would say nothing. He would just walk out on the stage, and just start playing.

Cherise: Right, hm, mm. [Quincy lightly laughs]

Quincy: They hit, '1-2-3-4,' they hit.

Cherise: Mm, hm, right.

Quincy: You know, without no program, you didn't have knowledge of what he was gonna play. You know [lauhs]. 'Cause I saw him too many times, and Margaret, my wife, did too. You, he didn't ever tell you, 'well, I'm playing this,' but then, towards the end he started introducing the band.

Cherise: Yeah.

Quincy: And, um, I asked him one day, 'why you introducing the band, now?' 'I don't know, man,' he said. 'Man, I just feel like I want to introduce them. They deserve to be introduced. Plus, I'm having fun.' [Cherise and Quincy laugh]

Cherise: This was in the '90s?

Quincy: Yeah, right before he died. He started to get really melancholy.

[Break]

Cherise: So, you're saying, that this [Cherise holding and showing Quincy a printed copy of a Social Music album with Miles Davis] looks legitimate?

Quincy: Yeah, it could've been.

Cherise: Like, this was a real album called *Social Music*?

Quincy: It could've, but yeah, see, it was a live concert. It was live, and they did it.

Cherise: Ohhh. Okay.

Quincy: See, it was live at Beacon Theatre.

Cherise: Yess!

Quincy: '86. Um, 'cause, I met him in '85 – really. So, that group was the group, and Vince was with him. Yeah, see, he's got these songs,

Cherise: Okay.

Quincy: "Phone Call," "Speak,"

Cherise: Yeah, and "Human Nature."

Quincy: "Splatch." 'Cause all this was all the people he was playing, yeah. I don't know why they named it *Social Music*, and when did it come out?

Cherise: It say's, well recorded April 06, 1986.

Quincy: Yeah, recorded.

Cherise: When was it released? [looking at printed copy of album]

Quincy: Have you ever heard it?

Cherise: No, I haven't.

Quincy: I haven't heard it. I'm gonna go out, and go get that. [Quincy standing to walk over to his Miles Davis albums] I have most of his albums, right here.

*****Note: Though the film *Miles Ahead* was indeed a film about Miles Davis, it was not a biopic.

Jazz

After seeing the interview with Miles Davis and Bryant Gumbel, it was clear that Miles did not like the word Jazz. In response to Gumbel, Miles preferred to refer to his music as being Social Music, all the social melodies out in the air. Miles continued to explain that what he did was not Jazz anymore. In fact, the Social Music that he spoke about was indeed all of the Popular music of the day. To Miles, the popular music was good, and one could take out what one wanted or leave what one didn't like from the music, kind of like food.

Now, I wanted to know more about why Miles didn't like the word Jazz, and who could possibly give more insight as to why he called his music Social Music. After asking other musicians and folk in the field, Quincy Troupe yielded some keynote answers, during our interview conversation.

After reading my transcription snippet from Miles Davis's interview with Bryant Gumbel, I asked Quincy, 'in working with him [Miles] in the way that you did and the bond you formed, did you ever have a conversation with Miles about his thoughts of Social Music or what did he say about Social Music, if you did, and what do you think Miles's thoughts were about Social Music?' Quincy explained that as he thought the quote from the interview and my question were wonderful, 'Miles was always into re-defining whatever had gone in the – before.' Therefore, by the time he began interviewing Miles in 1985, Miles had left the term Social Music and was just calling it Music. He remembered Miles telling him, 'It's all music – so called classical music, bebop, everything is just, the way I think about it, is just music. It's just music.' Miles had just re-defined it down to Music, as he didn't like being pigeon-holed by people. Quincy felt that Miles, in 1983, felt Social Music was pigeon-holing him in some way. It was amazing for me to hear this, as that meant that Miles realized his own calling his music Social Music in the 1982 interview with Bryant Gumbel, was pigeon-holing himself, and therefore just began to call it Music.

As Quincy didn't remember Miles having anything against or saying anything derogatory about Social Music, he did remember Miles say something derogatory about Jazz. Miles didn't like the word jazz because it was a definition that came from white people. They were the ones that defined it as jazz, and Miles was running away from all definitions and categories of 'Europeans,' as Miles referred to white people, put on him about what he was doing. Miles Davis was abhorrent to being defined, especially by white folk, and therefore, he got to the point, where he was just saying it was Music.

Chapter 7: Introspective Analyses – Interviews from the Stage *plus more*

Ms. Etta Dixon and Mr. Bernard Dove

Ms. Etta Dixon and Mr. Bernard Dove Interview with Cherise Harris, Thursday, September 28, 2017 at The Fuel Juice Bar in Bedford-Stuyesant, Brooklyn, New York

Ms. Etta Dixon and Mr. Bernard Dove

Ms. Etta Dixon and Mr. Bernard Dove are New York City beloved Jazz Swing Dancers, and they have been dancing together since 2011 – wowing crowds for over thirty years, a culmination of both of their individual dance careers!!!! Upon unexpectedly meeting and seeing, for the first time, Etta and Bernard swing dance at the July 2017 Lincoln Center's Midsummer Night Swing, they had all the fabulous moves. I thought they must have been Lindy Hoppers from back in the day. Approaching them for congratulatory conversation, after the end of Midsummer Night Swing, Ms. Etta kindly schooled me, saying, "Oh no, I'm not a Lindy Hopper. I'm a Swing Dancer." Then, I learned their ages – Eighty-three and Seventy-six, respectively. Amen!

"Etta Dixon, a Scorpio, born October 30, 1933 in Brooklyn, NY during the Depression. Dance became popular for me during the Forties, since there were no Television, Nintendo, no VCR, we devised the Swing. Young people had to create their very own entertainment. Also, a time when the Savoy Ballroom was a tremendous inspiration for young people to do this dance. Big Band music initiated our dance steps. When Big Band music faded, it came back strong during the nineties. My first dance partner, Clement Poussaint taught me everything I know. He was my attendant at Ballroom Dance School, and I learned twenty-nine dances. My vision is when St. Peter

called. I will say dancing is in my bones, and no way I'm going with St. Peter. I'm going to dance with Bernard.

Bernard Dove, a Leo, born August 06, 1940 in Brooklyn, New York. Bernard went to Ned Williams Dance School in 1960, and has danced at the New York Apollo Theater, New York Palladium, Madison Square Garden, and produced and directed his own Fashion and Dance Shows. He is a Line Dance Instructor and teaches Jazz Line Dance at the Education Alliance and different Senior Centers. In November of 2009, the New York Times came to the Educational Alliance, and did an interview, and wrote an article about his accomplishments. This article was in the November 24th issue. He knew Etta Dixon since 1962, but they have only been dancing for three years, at the date of this article." – Biography Compliments of Etta Dixon, Bernard Dove, and Mature Magic

Transcribed by Cherise Harris

Cherise: Hello, hello, hello!

Etta & Bernard: Hello.

Cherise: I'm here with the fabulous, amazing Ms. Etta Dixon and Mr. Bernard Dove, and I discovered them at Lincoln Center's Midsummer Night Swing. One night after church with my friend, and it was so wonderful to just happen upon them. Bernard did like a dip, and I saw you, and I said – Wow! And, it just fits so with my thesis about Social Music. And, I'd already finished quite a few interviews, but I said – 'I need to interview them!' Wondered if they would do it, and you were so gracious to do it. Thank you, so we'll get started, get right into it.

So, I start every interview with one of my favorite questions from the movie *Brown Sugar* with Sanaa Lathan and Taye Diggs, which is 'When did you fall in love with Hip Hop?' Now, I'm gonna put my spin on it, and I'd like to know, When did you fall in love with jazz?

Etta: Who's gonna answer first, me or Bernard?

Cherise: Um, you may answer first.

Etta: Well, I fell in love with the idea of it. Not so much the sound, but the idea. From when I was in my mother's womb, when I did that kick, it was my DNA, or my healing of movement. Moving the body. I always wanted to be moving the body, and I was doing that before I was born. From then on, I haven't stopped.

Cherise: Wow, since before you were born – beautiful. Thank you.

Etta: Mm, hm. Oh yes.

Cherise: And you, Bernard?

Bernard: Well, this was something that I wanted to do at an early age – tap dance. But, I never got the opportunity to go to school for tap dance. But later on, I got the opportunity to go to dance school. When I made up my mind to say, 'I want to know what this is about. Why I like to move, and the curiosity for everybody telling me, 'Go to dance school. You should be dancing.' So, I went to Ned Williams Dance School, 14th Street and 6th Avenue in Manhattan, and that's when I studied. He no longer has the studio there, now. But, I studied African Dancing, Ballet, Jazz, Samba, Rhumba, and I fell in love with it all. I love all the styles of dancing, and, I'm still doing it today.

Cherise: Yes, yes you are. Marvelous. Thank you.

So, Ms. Etta, that night when I first saw you at the Lincoln Center Midsummer Night Swing, cause you know that's a spin-off of Shakespeare's Midsummer Night Dream.

Etta: That's true.

Cherise: [mild laughter] I love it, and so, I remembered thinking these are some Lindy Hoppers. They must be Lindy Hoppers from back in the day, and, I remember when I told you that

Etta: Hm, mm. [gentle smile]

Cherise: – you politely schooled me, and you said, 'No, I'm not a Lindy Hopper. I'm a Swing Dancer.' And, you said the Swing came before the Lindy Hoppers. So, would you please expound on that?

Etta: The fact that the Savoy is popular, is famous all over the world, and this initiated that feeling of Swing at the Savoy. Because they had two bands. They had people that would dance with you. They would pay them to dance with you.

Cherise: Oh, wow.

Etta: Oh yes, they had. It was like inter-racial, becoming very much inter-racial, or integration you'd say, because the white people loved it, and they came up to Harlem, to the Savoy. It was open seven nights a week, and it was going to be a smooth integration connection. Everyone would – but they made them close the place, so they wouldn't have the integration, and that would've been smooth, but, the fact that they closed it, we had a battle for integration. And, I basically was in Brooklyn, so I didn't get the full

impact of this Swing, but I got enough of it to carry it on for the rest of my life. I was Brooklyn-bound, but I was. We were called Country [Cherise laughs], and I wanted to be with the hip cats in Manhattan and Harlem, oh yes. It was a mecca.

Cherise: And, this was in the 1930s, 'cause that's the Big Band Era?

Etta: This was in the Big Band Era, in the thirties, but I got there, well I was about six years old. You know, I was old enough to be movin, to know I wanted to move, but the fact that I couldn't get up to the Savoy, even when I was fourteen and fifteen, I couldn't do it. 'Cause we were watched, you know, back in the day, wasn't allowed out of the house.

[slight laughter by Cherise]

Cherise: And, that's something else that I want to add to both of you being so amazing, Etta you are eighty-four?

Etta: Yes, next month.

Cherise: Next month.

Etta: October. I was born in 1933.

Cherise: That's beautiful, just beautiful.

Etta: Yes, during the depression. All mother had to eat was a bowl of soup, and she had to wait on line for that. That's what she had for the whole day, and guess how much I got?

Cherise: How much?

Etta: About one drop of this soup. So, when I was born, she couldn't feed me. I was making up for lost time. I ate from the beginning to the end to the top. I am still an eater today.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: Yes, I will not 'not eat.' And, I look at frail.

Cherise: And especially for you to be so slim and trim, and fit.

Etta: Wait a minute. Feel it. [holds up arm for Cherise to feel muscle in arm]

Cherise: Ooh!

Etta: All the way through. [Etta pats different parts of her body.] All the way through.

Cherise: I know, you have it [smiling],

Etta: Okay,

Cherise: I love it. I love it.

Etta: hm, mm.

Cherise: Thank you, so much inspiration.

And, you [looking at Bernard] are seventy-eight?

Bernard: I'm seventy-seven. I was born in 1940. My next birthday, I'll be seventy-eight.

Cherise: Okay, and, when will that be?

Bernard: August, the sixth.

Cherise: August, the sixth.

Bernard: Oh, I just turned seventy-seven.

Cherise: Wonderful. Two sevens. Seven is a great number.

Bernard: Yes.

Etta: And, I was seven years old when he was born.

Cherise: Oh, wow.

Bernard: Yeah, now at the time, I feel grateful that it started at the Apollo Theater in 1964, 65. It was the show with James Brown. And, this was James Brown on the headline. We didn't dance with James Brown, but I danced with Tommy Johnson, and he had a great group. The Tommy Johnson Dancers, and it was three ladies and three men, and we performed Latin Jazz, and some Disco.

Cherise: Oh, wow.

Bernard: And, from there, it was the Palladium, down at Fifty-third and Broadway, where I did a lot of, now they call it, Salsa. But, then it was like Mambo, Cha-cha, Meringue. Tito Puente, Eddie Palmieri, Joe Cuba, and another main event was Madison Square Garden where the seniors danced at the half-time show for the ladies basketball team.

Cherise: Oh, beautiful.

Bernard: So, I consider myself a performer.

Cherise: Yes, you are. Both of you are so smooth. I mean, it's just fabulous.

Etta: That's why it's not Lindy Hop.

Cherise: Okay, [light laughter from Cherise]

Etta: 'Cause the Swing was smooth. We do it the same way they did it at that time – high energy.

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: Oh, wow. Okay, so the Swing, when he slid you down that night, when I saw that, that's what made me think you were Lindy Hoppers. Though, he did not pick you up and throw you, but it was when he slid you down, I said, 'Oh, wow they must've been Lindy Hoppers.' But, the Swing, you're saying, it just kind of slightly preceded the moment of when the dancers were throwing each other.

Bernard: Right.

Cherise: And, it was smoother.

Bernard: Right.

Cherise: So, you sort of touched on this already, but you can finish. When did you begin dancing, and when and how did you start Swing Dancing? I know you mentioned when you were in your mother's womb, but the actual start of Swing, the official Swing.

Etta: Can I explain it this way. When I was born, and I was in the crib or wherever we would lay, and I would be moving. Like, my arms and my legs would be going, and my mother would look, and say, 'you are so fidgety,' and she just carried on that way, and we were not supposed to be like that. Evidently, we were supposed to be nice and calm, and they would move us. So, then later on, as I got to walk around as a toddler, I'd be doing my step, and I'd be working it and everything, and my mother said, 'you got ants in your pants.'

Bernard: Yeah, I heard that before too.

Etta: All of that, and, it just went on my back. I was a mover. I was working it, and you create the dance, as you go along and dance with a party. Couldn't wait to dance for a party, and a group of girls would dance with each other, and we'd do these moves, and we'd come in the day, and we'd practice it, and say, 'I got this new,' and all this was building and building.

Cherise: And, you would say the same Bernard, that it was when you were a baby?

Bernard: Yes, I was brought into the living room with all.

Etta: Entertainment for the family.

Bernard: I was brought into the living room, and put in the middle of the floor, and so everybody could sit back and it was a good feeling.

Etta: They'd say, 'isn't he cute.'

Bernard: And, it's amazing that I'm still doing it now.

Cherise: So, is there one definitive time when you'd say you started Swing Dancing?

Bernard: I knew Etta in 1962, but I didn't think that from my wildest dreams that we would be dancing, but that maybe we eventually got together and started dancing. Now, I would say it's about the chemistry, and that's why we're still doing it now, and she had danced with a lot of different men, and I'd dance with a lot of different ladies. But, we just felt we could do more together, and I think that's why we're still doing it today.

Cherise: You have a trust amongst each other.

Bernard: Oh, yeah, see, what I do, she has the trust.

Etta: The feeling, because when he danced with another lady, he said, 'wow, it's not the same.' And, when I danced with other men, it's not the same.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: Because they have a different beat to their drum.

[Slight laughter]

Etta: But, our beat is the same beat, or drum.

Cherise: Yes, okay. So, this summer, I went with a group and visited the National Museum of African American History & Culture at the Smithsonian in D.C. that just opened, and they had a lot of pictures. I'm so glad I went upstairs, because it starts with the bottom ground in the basement with Slavery, and as you go up the levels, at the top is Hip Hop. [light chuckles] So, it's like, from Slavery to Hip Hop, and I'm so glad, because

there's a break, and I was able to go on to the fourth floor. And, they had this section on Social Dance, and I said, 'whaaat!' [smiling].

Etta: Goes with your Social Music. That's what we do [looking at Bernard].

Cherise: Right. So, I took some pictures, and if you want to look through these, here. It's very nice.

[Cherise passes around copies of color photos of the Social Music exhibit from the Smithsonian's National Museum of African American History & Culture]

Etta and Bernard: Oooh [with bright smiles]

Cherise: Yes, the Social Dance, and of course, I thought of the two of you, because I had met you before going to the museum.

[Etta and Bernard perusing and lightly speaking aloud the names of some dances and literature displayed in the photos.]

Etta: This is what we brought back from Africa, but they couldn't break us from this.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: In other words, this the American part of African, and that's what I love doing. Like when they do that African.

Bernard: Yes, fantastic. They say 'the body is used to carry important messages – in a complex and powerful language.'(footnote fn from museum)
Okay, I just want to say, a lot times with my dance on the saxophone or with the drums, I add a lot of African movements with the head and the shoulders.

Cherise: Oh, wow, yes.

Bernard: And, I do a lot of that, and yes, it's that African background of dancing I add to my swing too. So, I try to blend it in with a lot of different – Jazz, African influenced with it, and even the Latin Jazz flows. So, it's a lot of different movements when we do a Swing.

Cherise: Yes, excellent.

Etta: Amazing. These are names of all the dances.

Cherise: Yes, that's why I showed you this.

Etta: That's right.

Cherise: I was so excited to see all of this, and I had to take the time to show you all the pictures.

Etta: I can't believe this. I hadn't seen it either.

Cherise: You have to go.

Etta: The Watusi, oh.

Cherise: Yes, because they talk about from the 1900s - The Cakewalk,

Etta: Hm, mm

Cherise: Lindy Hop.

Etta: Right. Right.

Cherise: 1930s, 1940s, they say Lindy Hop, Charleston

Etta: The Charleston

Cherise: The Jitterbug

Etta: The Jitterbug

Cherise: The Black Bottom.

Etta: Hm, mm,

Cherise: 1950s, they say The Stroll, The Hucklebuck

Etta: Oh, do the Hucklebuck.

Bernard: Yeah, remember the Hucklebuck? The Stroll?

Etta: Do I?

Cherise: And, then, the 1960s, The Monkey, The Twist, The Bop, The Watusi, The Mashed Potato,

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: Yeah.

Cherise: The Chicago Walk, The Jerk

Etta: Yes.

Bernard: I think Smokey Robinson came with the The Monkey.

Etta: Yes, the Boogaloo

Bernard: Smokey Robi, do the Monkey.

Etta: And, the washin hand dance

Cherise: The washin and hand dance.

Etta: The washin and hand dance. Remember they came

Cherise: When was that? That was in the ?

Etta: Honey

Bernard: I think they had every animal. They had the Penguin. The Chicken.

[mild laughter from Cherise]

Bernard: The walking Dog

Etta: The Camel Walk. Remember The Camel Walk?

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: Oh, wow.

Etta: Oh, it's so many. It's probably

Cherise: You said, the Camel Wall?

Etta and Bernard: No, the Camel Walk – W-a-l-k

Bernard: Yeah, James Brown did that a lot. James Brown did the Camel Walk a lot. He slide, and then walk back, do the camel walk.

Cherise: Ohh, okay!

And, then, they had 1960s – The Chicago Walk, The Jerk. 1970s – Popping and Locking, The Robot. I remember my mother and uncle doing The Robot on Jackson Fives's "Dancin Machine." [lightly singing 'Dancin, Dancin'], and, then, the Electric Slide. That kind of surprised me, because I think I remember that in the nineties. Maybe that was recycled. A lot of things are recycled, and they come back.

Etta: Sure. They're hits.

Cherise: And, then they have the 1980s and 90s –

Etta: Michael did the Camel Walk.

Cherise: Michael did the Camel Walk, too?!

Etta: I mean the Moon Walk.

Bernard: Yeah, but he took the Camel Walk too.

Etta: I'm sure.

Cherise: That's right, because like he said, he was so influenced by James Brown.

And then, in the 1980s and 90s – Breakdancing, Jacking, The Wave, The Boogaloo, Voguing

Bernard: Voguing is like what Madonna may have, like strike a pose.

Cherise: Yes, pose, pose, pose. [light laughter]

And, then Krumping in the 2000s, and I know I've heard of the Crimp Walking, and The Harlem Shake, and Twerkin. [laugh]

Bernard: Yeah, and twerkin.

Cherise: That's where we are. That's what it's come down to.

Etta: Yes, and it's called Social. Social Dance.

Cherise: Yes, and that's the question. So, under the umbrella of the term 'Jazz,' there have been various types of jazz to emerge.

Etta: Jazz music.

Cherise: Jazz music to emerge throughout the years. How would you compare this sentiment to dance, like these different genres and these different eras of dance that we've seen, and how have you found dance to change since the 1930 Swing Era?

Etta: We got to do this dance because we turned on the radio, and waited for the Big Bands to play, and that was how we devised this dance as our entertainment. So, we got to do this. We matched the music with the movement. Matched the music with the dance, and we would hear that beat. And, once you hear that beat, you couldn't stop. He starts to dance as soon as he hears the beat. I'm like, oh my God. But, back in the day that's how we were, and that's why the parents couldn't take it. They couldn't take us. It was to much for them. They felt like it was too much, and that's why it became a Jitterbug. You're a jitter. You're jittery.

Cherise: Ohh, you're too jittery. Like, calm down.

Etta: Yes, calm on down, because they were calm.—

Cherise: That's why the jitterbug. Like the Jitterbug Waltz [lightly singing melody of the tune "Jitterbug Waltz"]

Etta: Yes, because we were children. We were looking for something to get into and be safe. It was safe. It was a therapy.

Bernard: It was a therapy.

Etta: It was therapeutic because the man would lead. The woman would follow. So, that went right along with that, you know, 'you're a second-class citizen female,' and we were glad to let them lead. That's why our femininity was so important. This was all we had was femininity. Don't throw it away. Fight for your femininity.

Cherise: Yes, thank you!

Etta: Honey, we never wore pants. We were not allowed to wear them. Not at church. Not at work. Not at anything family. We would wear them to the playground. Sneakers, and nothing else was worn outside.

Cherise: Only sneakers and pants to the playground.

Etta: That's right. That's the only time we wore them. We were a lady at all times. You never smoked in the street. You never used profanity. You never could go out at night. You had to wait until you got married to get out of the household. All of it, it was so much, but dance was freedom, honey. And, even though the man would lead, it was wonderful. It gave us a nice protocol for when we get together later on, and have our family, they would lead, and we would follow, and basically, what happened is that, this was a therapy.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: You could never get away from it. In other words, I would dance with Bernard, and he would take and twirl me all around,

Cherise: Hm, mm.

Etta: and then, when I get out of the twirl, I would look for his hand to steady me. So, I needed him.

Cherise: Oh, yes.

Etta: Cause women out here. I asked one girl to 'come on and go dance with me. We'll have fun, and the man will lead you, and you'll have fun.' And, you know what she said to me?

Cherise: What?

Etta: 'Ain't no man gonna lead me!' I got the message. I got the lesson.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: I thought I was helping to give out a little lesson, because I'm a little older, and I said to the girl, and the girl said to me, this is another time, another place, she said, 'I want to be like you. Dance like you.' I said, 'you know, what you wear is part of the dance,' and you know what she said to me?

Cherise: What:

Etta: 'You mean I got to go out, and buy a dress.'

Bernard: [light laughter]

Cherise: Oh

Etta: I got the lesson again. I couldn't give them. I was always learning a lesson.

Bernard: You can imagine how that looks. If someone is always saying, 'I don't want a man to lead me. I just want to do what I want.' So, where is the connection when you dance?

Etta: This is damaging. This a down backwardness that we have to clear up in our young people. And, there not dancing really – our people. The Spanish people dance. All the other groups dance. All of them, but our group does not take on the dance.

Cherise: Right, even in this present day.

Etta: No. In this present day, I have to fight for the men to get up and lead the ladies.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: They have no inkling of anything of what they're supposed to do for a lady.

Bernard: Not like it was before.

Etta: Now, as females, we're supposed to do everything for a man. The laundary. The dinner. The food. The shopping. Endless, and then here we come. All we want is one little thing, 'please dance with us.' And, it's not being done. Not in our group. Not in the Black group, and the men are dying earlier because they're not exercising that heart, it's a muscle, it needs that movement. So, we women, we do the best we can. We have the children. We're the whole foundation of the whole family.

Bernard: No matter where you go now, it seems like, there's always three to four or five women to the man.

Etta: And, you know what?

Bernard: And, even when we go out. There's about five to six ladies that come over and say, 'will you come to my table? Will you dance with me?'

Etta: What about the husband, that goes over to you, and says, 'will you dance with my wife?'

Cherise: Oh, no.

Bernard: And Etta will say, 'what's wrong with you?'

Etta: I would tell them, because they're not doing themselves any justice. If they would satisfy her in that way, he would get goo-globs back from her.

Cherise: Thank you, yeah.

Etta: Hm, mm, and this has to be re-. There's just so much that's lost. The men would live longer. The women would be a little more satisfied. Men always go around, 'you can't never satisfy a woman.' And, I say, 'wow, is that all they've learned all these years?' It doesn't make – We need more common sense. Common sense is not common, and if we could get more of the common sense in. I'm trying to write my book, put in 'Mother Wit' statements, and I'm gonna have all the statements that nobody else has written down. Those statement that your mother would say…So, this 'Mother's Wit' thing has got to go. Got to get it back in.

Cherise: Yes.

Cherise: So, for my thesis about Social Music and Jon Batiste and Stay Human, since they coined this term – Social Music, they're known for this song called "I'm From Kenner," that Jon wrote. And it goes, [Cherise begins singing and clapping the melody of song] "I feel good. I feel free. I feel fine just being me. I feel good today. Oh, so good, today."

Etta: Uh, oh.

Cherise: It's so nice, right.

Etta: It perks you up. Happy.

Cherise: So, they would play and sing that tune at concerts; This is before Colbert. They would do that, and.

Etta: Colbert is this year, isn't it?

Cherise: Well, this is their second year.

Etta: The second year. Okay, so two years.

Bernard: Mm, hm.

Cherise: This is their second year leading on the Late Show with Stephen Colbert. Um, but before then, they would go out and have their concerts, and singing a song like that, and it would filter out into the city, into the street.

Etta: They got happy.

Bernard: Mm, hm.

Cherise: People would go out in the street, and follow them, and it would be like crowds of people on the street of New York City.

[Etta and Bernard give happy laughs.]

Cherise: In Manhattan. They've done it here in Brooklyn.

Etta: Oh, really?

Cherise: They've done it all over in different exotic places

Etta: They're needed.

Cherise: Throughout the world. They've done this, and people would just follow them. Now, me? I know I'm born and raised in St. Louis, I'm also a New Yorker. I consider myself a New Yorker, too. And, I know that in New York, most of the time, you're busy, one is busy trying to not be followed. You don't just go

Etta: We don't know our next door neighbor.

Cherise: Yeah, right. [light laughter]

Bernard: Mm, hm.

Cherise: You don't just go and start following people doing some music. I mean, you go up to someone, and you listen, and you may give something, but then you keep it moving. They drew crowds of people,

Bernard: Mm, hm.

Cherise: like a parade.

Bernard: Hm!

Cherise: And, Jon called it, he coined it a 'Love Riot.'

Etta: [pointing to *Social Music* album cover] Which one is him?

Cherise: This is Jon. [pointing to Jon Batiste on *Social Music* album cover]

Etta: He looks like the lead.

Bernard: Mm, hm.

Cherise: This is the drummer, Joe Saylor.

Etta: Yeah.

Cherise: That's Eddie Barbash, the saxophonist, alto saxophonist.

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: And, then, Ibanda Ruhumbika

Bernard: A tuba!?

Cherise: Yes. Tuba, and they're. He's [Jon] from New Orleans.

Etta: No wonder. 'Cause, that's what they do. They parade in New Orleans,

Bernard: Oh, yeah.

Etta: and at the funerals, they will make it a big happy family.

Cherise: That's right, and that Second Line groove.

Etta: No wonder, that's why.

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: He brought it to New York, but I've seen other interviews with him, and he doesn't directly characterize it to New Orleans, like directly, so to speak, but anyway, my point right now is

Etta: Social Music is Social Dances

Cherise: right, so, having attended the concerts. I've been to some of their concerts, and I, along with the rest of the crowd, am compelled to get up and move. You know, to dance!

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: To jump! And, shout! One doesn't just sit with stillness at a Jon Batiste and Stay Human show. You just don't. It just doesn't happen. You're gonna move. One night, I danced all the way home, and I'm not exaggerating. I mean, I was on the subway going home, and I was still moving, really, it's like that.

Etta: It woke you up. [mild laughter from Cherise] The awakening.

Cherise: And, so I call it an experience. It's more than just a concert. It's an experience, and they even do this – I did go to the show once, and they did bring the Love Riot, and you don't see it on TV, but during the commercial break, they'll come out into the audience, and they go upstairs, and they do that.

Etta: You know what I call it?

Cherise: What?

Etta: I call it, when we were dancing, and people were reacting, I said 'they are starved.'

Cherise: Thank you, yes, and that is exactly what I wanted to hear because

Etta: The starvation of this – it was the first time they've ever seen a dance.

Cherise: Because I call it an experience, and I wanted to know, did you find this similar experience to be true when you started Swing Dancing, like in the 1930s, and you mentioned the sixties, and will you expound on how your dancing experience may correlate to what I've described about Jon Batiste and Stay Human?

Etta: Exactly.

Cherise: And, you just said starved. How does that correlate with what they're doing, because when I saw the two of you dance,

Etta: Ah, ha, it correlated.

Cherise: I know in my writing of the thesis, the music, and I get it from them, from going to their concert, the music and the dance

Etta: Connected.

Cherise: are so connected. You can't have one without the other, and you truly experience that with them, and even into the streets of Manhattan, people are following them, and then in the subway.

Bernard: My!

Etta: We danced in the subway.

Cherise: There's footage of people in the subway following them, so how would you say what you do relates to them?

Etta: The people. The people are starved, and they don't even know it. They don't even know how starved they are. They don't even know that they have melanin rhythm, DNA.

Cherise: Yes

Etta: They don't even know, and our children, the first time they've seen it in their life.

Cherise: Wow

Etta: And, that's the sad part.

Cherise: It is.

Bernard: And, you've got to add to that sometimes they've seen swing,

Cherise: Right

Bernard: but they haven't seen the way we do it.

Cherise: Right, oh, okay.

Bernard: And, I think a lot of people come up to us and say, 'I haven't seen nobody dance like that.' And, so, men have told me, 'you'll find me brother. I'm gonna get out there now, brother. Now, that I've seen what you did?' And, I feel so good when they tell me that.

Cherise: Yes

Etta: And, he's older than a lot of them. He's older. That man at Marcus Garvey Park the other night, last night, he said he was seventy-eight, but he was one year older than me; he said he couldn't believe it, but now he's going to make it an effort. Yes, make the effort!

Bernard: Yeah, most of a lot of places, the men said, 'yeah, I want to dance now' because they see that chemistry, how we move, and how we dance, and now, 'I want to dance like that. I want to dance.'

Cherise: Thank you, so much, 'cause I really appreciate how you said they're starved, because I agree.

Etta: I can pick it up, that they're starved, and the starvation, it's like there's a missing thing in their life. They don't know what they want to satisfy that missing thing in their life. They need to satisfy that missing part, and if they don't know what it is, how can they do that?

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: And, then, when they find out, then it's like, you know, they see us dancing, and they find out a little bit more, not completely, but a little more, and then they don't know where to go to get it, they don't know how to get it, they don't know what – will you teach me? Will you teach me? Are you teaching it? I said 'yeah, right now.'

Cherise: Yes, you told me that, that night.

Etta: Thank you.

Bernard: Yeah, she does that. [light laughter]

Cherise: Because, I asked you about your dancing, and you [turning to Bernard] showed me. That eight-step.

Bernard: I like to do that.

Etta: We can't wear him out; that's the problem.

Cherise: Yeah, you did that, that night.

Etta: Right now, you're going to learn it.

Cherise: And, he did; He showed me.

Etta: How many steps is it? Just the basic is the form you need to know, and then you improvise, and that's what he needs to explain.

Cherise: Yes, see I like to dance. That's why I appreciate what they do so, because I like to dance.

Etta: But, they do too.

Cherise: After hearing about the Social Music with Jon Batiste and Stay Human, I went to a film at the *New York Film Festival* – Don Cheadle's film on Miles Davis. [Etta's cute, light, laughter] So, I went to that, especially with me being from St. Louis, and I know about Miles.

Etta: Yeah, 'cause you're from that place.

Cherise: Miles is the one that got me on the horn.

Etta: Mm, hm, mm, hm.

Cherise: When I would hear that horn, because at first, saxophone was always my favorite, since I was about eight, but when I went to this film at the end they had this nod, this huge nod to Social Music.

Etta: Live.

Cherise: Yes! No, it was in the film.

Etta: Oh, it was in the film.

Cherise: And, I said, oh, my, what is this? What is this about Miles and Social Music? So, I did some research, and I found this interview, a 1982 interview with Miles and Bryant Gumbel, and Bryant Gumbel is asking him about his jazz and everything, and Miles is basically saying that he doesn't like the term Jazz. He say's, 'I don't like that word, Bryant,' and so Bryant say's it seems to hide itself from the mainstream, and so, if you don't like jazz, what would you call it?

Etta: What is he going to replace it with?

Cherise: Right, and so, Miles says, 'I would call it Social Music.'

Etta: Hmmm. [with pleasant smile]

Cherise: Ahh!

Bernard: Hmm.

Etta: Social Music.

Cherise: So, I said get out of here. So, Miles is the –

Etta: The Father of it.

Cherise: he mentioned Social Music back in 1982.

Bernard: Wow, that's,

Etta: But, it was in his mind all along, before then.

Cherise: Right, and in this interview he continues to explain Social Music. He talks about the melodies in the air, and Bryant Gumbel mentions the Popular Music – 'What do you think about the Popular Music?' And, Miles basically say's that's the Social Music. That's what I'm talking about.

Etta: Yes, yes. Popular.

Bernard: Hmm.

Etta: That's what President Trump said he didn't get. He didn't get the Popular vote.

Cherise: No, he didn't.

Etta: And, he was upset.

Cherise: No, he didn't. Hillary did get the Popular vote.

Etta: Yes, she did, and the popular vote is very macho, I guess.

Bernard: No, he didn't get it, that's for sure.

Etta: And, it upset him.

Bernard: Mm, hm.

Cherise: So,

Etta: So, there's Social Dancing.

Cherise: Yes, that's right, with the Social Dance, and so as dancers, with you being the dancers you are, how would you explain the importance of the music?

Etta: Therapy. Therapy. Therapy. I can't say it enough.

Cherise: Okay, of the actual music, though.

Etta: The connection is the beat. Like they said in Africa, they had the drum that was the communication, and the women, or the people would dance to the drum.

Cherise: Yes

Etta: The beat of the drum,

Bernard: Mm, hm.

Etta: and that was the whole thing. That's what's in our heads. When I hear that drum, I say [vocalizes an abrupt POW sound while pounding hand on table] right with it.

Bernard: Mm, hm. You said that right.

Cherise: And so, what would you call – how would you define Social Music?

Etta: It's something that

Cherise: Social Music

Etta: Well, I'm a dancer, so I would get it from that end. That end, that edge, dancing, 'cause it's from Africa. I define it as African – one thing that we were able to keep from Africa, that they could not [spoken louder] BREAK us.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: They could never break us from it.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: And, this is how I define it. It's so strong. It's so strong with me. 'Till, they broke us from everything.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: Everything. We had no culture, but music and dance is the culture.

Bernard: The drums.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: Even the drums communicating. They used that to communicate in some areas, and everything got funneled down

Bernard: Yeah, the drums. Just like a telephone.

Etta: Yes, honey, tell him.

Bernard: Just like a telephone.

Etta: And we are connecting that way, though we're trying to lose it, not do it. That's why I can't understand it, they say, 'I don't want to dance. Oh, I got two left feet.' I say, well, oh, please.

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: So, dance with your two left feet. Who cares?

[Slight laughter from Cherise, then everybody]

Bernard: Just dance.

Cherise: Right, something. Move your arm, come on, now. Do something.

Etta: I said, you know, you don't dance, stay stiff. You're gonna be stiff – that's it. So, they change after I talk to them.

Bernard: Yeah, but you're right. I like what you said about the drums.

Etta: Thank you so much. Thank you so much for that.

Bernard: The drum. It's all in the drums.

Etta: That's the dance.

Bernard: The drums that's the bottom thing.

Etta: That's what they did. I went to Africa. You all go to Africa? You ever go to Africa? You ever go to Africa?

Cherise: No, which part?

Etta: I went to Ghana,

Cherise: Ghana.

Etta: I was with a club, and we came in with a club, and girl when you go to the tribal, they give you those tribal tools, and they be drummin that drum, and that people be dancing to it, it's like, thank you, I could see all of them again. You come here, and nobody dances. There, everybody dances, even the drummer.

[Laughter by Cherise]

Bernard: One time, I saw a concert with ladies from Ghana,

Etta: Mm, hm.

Bernard: Or, even Senegal,

Etta: Dance.

Bernard: and they were doing, like ballet movements so naturally,

Etta: Hmm!

Bernard: so that people were paying to do this,

Etta: Because they have the bodies.

Bernard: and I was saying, 'I never known no ballet school for that.'

[Cherise lightly laughs]

Bernard: You know what I mean? And, these women were just so fluid.

Etta: And, it's also called the belly dance.

Cherise: Oh, yes. I like the belly dance.

[Etta makes rhythmic, vocal iteration of belly dance movement]

Etta: And, they go all around, and you say Belly Dance – ooh!

Bernard: They was movin so, and It was almost like, I don't know if anybody saw *King Solomon's Mines*, where they did the Watusi.

Etta: Yeah, the Watusi

Bernard: The natural with their head movement, and with the true sticks, is what they were doing, and they were pulling and moving.

Etta: We are naturally gifted, born for that. We have the best bodies,

Bernard: DNA

Etta: but we are the most abused, so we don't keep it. And, that's the part that I refuse to allow. Keep it going. Keep it going. 'Cause this is the therapy that our children are missing.

Cherise: You just made an excellent point right there, 'but, we are abused,' and that's it.

Etta: Our bodies are the best for that.

Cherise: Thank you, because that's a point that I'm making in the thesis.

Etta: Yes, you could be healthy. You can be healthy.

Cherise: Jon explained in a conversation with Walter Isaacson, so to get to your point of everything, because I have these questions, and you are so wonderful and on it, both of you two, you've already answered so many.

Etta: Is it too much.

Cherise: No, so, Jon, in a conversation with Walter Isaacson, he told him how the slaves, or newly freed slaves would go to Congo Square in New Orleans on Sundays to be free, saying 'okay, this is our time to get free.'

Etta: Yeah.

Cherise: It was like a silent rebellion. Of course, they would play their rhythms, music, the drums.

[Etta pats on the table]

Cherise: Conga. The drums, and there was dancing. That was their time

Etta: You hear the beat of the drum?

Cherise: to be free. And, it was when I heard that part in his conversation, that's what made me begin to think about, 'oh, what they're doing,' I say that Social Music, it is an evolution of jazz, but it's also like a re-discovery of what jazz may have initially

Etta: Contributed.

Cherise: intended to be. When he talked about Congo Square, and you so eloquently just explained it and furthered that.

Etta: I just want to put in here, we dance every year for that, what you just said, about that freedom.

Cherise: Being free.

Etta: We danced every year, and it's called Juneteenth.

Cherise: Yes! Yes, thank you,

Etta: You're welcome, honey.

Cherise: and I so appreciate everything you're saying.

Etta: That remembering. Like you said, remembering, and this is the remembering, because the children don't know – 'what is that?' Okay, we can tell you. Now, we know we were free. We don't have a date, but we know it was June, within Juneteenth. The communication wasn't as it is today on the radio, and you hear everything on TV and everything. It had to get there to the places by word of mouth. And, like you said, they would gather, but when we got the freedom. When we were free from Slavery, the white people watched us, we looked like we were being very "dotty," or whatever we were doing, the movement that we gave them, but we were looking for our relatives, and we were going to find such and so, can you tell me where? Where is so and so? Can you tell me where? And, it was so vivid for me. I said, my God, it's right there. I'd be looking for my relative too, but, we didn't concentrate on, how are we gonna have a roof over our head? We had to go into the other Slavery, which was the land, and how we had to till the land to be able to have a place and all of that, and given the money.

Cherise: Yeah, yes.

Bernard: Yeah, yeah.

Etta: There's so much with us. So much.

Bernard: You know, even the plantation was communication when they were singing.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: You know, there was a rhythm that we used to pick cotton. So, we could pick it for a long time without being tired.

Bernard: Yeah, and didn't even know it.

Etta: That's how we dance. We have a rhythm, so we that's how we are. It's just amazing, because you don't think about it. You just do it.

Cherise: And, what you're saying is dancing is what allows one to do the work that's got to be done.

Bernard: Hm, mm.

Cherise: When I heard Jon some years ago, he was still a student at Juilliard, but he was leading in the jam sessions of Cleopatra's Needle on Broadway and 96th Street, and his whole personality and approach on the piano reminded me of Thelonious Monk.

Etta: Wow.

Cherise: Even, back then.

Bernard: Wow.

Cherise: I would sit there, and you know I'm a singer. So, I sung with him, and

Etta: He lives again. Um, hm. They come back.

Cherise: Yes, but I remember thinking he's eccentric, and I remember referring to him as 'Contemporary Monk.' That's what I called him in my mind – Contemporary Monk. So, in the event of all the discrimination and racism becoming more overt in today's social climate, like police brutality and retaliation to that brutality and what not.

Etta: But, you know what?

Cherise: What?

Etta: When they went to foreign countries. When they went to France, and all these other places, there was no discrimination. You know who lives in France now?

Cherise: Who?

Etta: Um, it went right past me. The one that June did [looking at Bernard], you know, she did that impersonation of the singer.

Bernard: Oh, Eartha Kitt.

Etta: No, the other one. You know this. [lightly laughs]

Cherise: I know Tina Turner is in Switzerland.

Etta: Tina Turner. That's it.

Bernard: Oh, yes, Tina Turner.

Etta: Tina Turner is in France.

Cherise: Oh, okay, she must've moved.

Etta: Maybe she's in – well, they speak French in Switzerland. So, it could be. She may be in Switzerland.

Cherise: Yes, Tina Turner in Switzerland, and I know that because Tina came up through St. Louis, and there's another one, the opera singer – Grace Bumbry, and my grandfather actually taught her Math,

Etta: Wow.

Cherise: and she is in Switzerland. Wonderful opera singer. Grace Bumbry,

Etta: Okay, so they go over.

Cherise: and that's one reason I want to go to Switzerland. I want to visit.

Etta: Yeah, that's right, because there's no discrimination. I went to Switzerland.

Cherise: Okay [with smiles].

Bernard: Yeah, a lot of them went to Switzerland.

Etta: Yes, a lot of them went over there.

Bernard: The jazz. Jazz musicians.

Etta: They want to be there.

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: Even to this day, the great jazz musicians have to go. Always have to go to Europe.

Etta: To be successful.

Cherise: Everybody does that. To this day, they have to go to Europe, even if it's to circumvent back to The States.

Bernard: Josephine Baker.

Etta: Yes, Josephine Baker.

Cherise: Yes, that's St. Louis. She knew my great-grandmother.

Etta: Yes, Josephine Baker. She loved it over there.

Cherise: So, I like the passage from *Thelonious Monk: The Life and Times of an American Original*,

Bernard: Mm, hm.

Cherise: by Robin D. G. Kelley, that describes Monk. He was born in 1917, and his view on Freedom, and I just want to share.

Etta: Who was born in 1917?

Cherise: Thelonious Monk. This is his centennial. On October tenth, he would've been one-hundred.

Etta: My grandfather was born 1879. So, you know his parents were slaves.

Cherise: Yes, and that's one reason that I appreciate this book and this author. The way he does the breadth

Etta: Hmm.

Cherise: of his history and he says, it says "For any Southern black person living between 1865 and 1900, freedom wasn't a word taken for granted or used abstractly. As Thelonious's parents in turn passed to him, freedom meant more than breaking the 'rules' of musical harmony or bending tempos. His grandparents were part of freedom's first generation of African-Americans, a generation that could dream of a good life under a hopeful democracy. Yet his parents watched that democracy – and their freedom – burn, sometimes literally,"

Etta: Hmm.

Cherise: "under assault by white supremacist as Jim Crow laws descended across the South. The disfranchisement of black folk and the restoration of power to the old planter class was rapid and violent. Like many families, the Monks never lost their memory of post-Civil War freedom, or their determination to possess it once again. Thelonious Monk's music is essentially about freedom."

[Etta lightly laughs – happily]

Cherise: "He inherited much from those who came before him: not least a deeply felt understanding of freedom. His story begins with their song."

Etta: Hmm [with a smile]

Cherise: And, I just love it!!! I appreciate that so, and then to hear how Jon sings the song, [Cherise singing the melody] "I feel good. I feel free. I feel find just being me. I feel good today. Oh, so good today." And then, talking about going back to the Cong Square, and how they got 'free' then, and in consideration of Monk's freedom and Jon

Batiste and Stay Human's song about feeling free and fine just being me, how do you explain freedom, and any freedom you have in dancing, what is it to you?

Etta: My grandfather. He raised us. So he said. Constantly he was saying, 'I was born in 1879. Then he said, the Ku Klux Clan,' this is his claim to fame by coming to New Jersey first, then he went to Brooklyn, that was his claim to fame of feeling free [pounces fist on table]. He felt freer than he ever felt in his life. Because he got as far away from the Ku Klux Clan as he could get.

Cherise: Oh, he got them far away from him.

Etta: Oh, yes he did, because when he left, he was born in North Carolina, and when he left North Carolina, he came up here; he didn't have to deal with the Ku Klux Clan.

Cherise: I see.

Etta: And, the feeling of freedom, I felt his feeling of freedom. I felt his claim to fame. I felt it a lot in reference to him saying that to me. My sisters didn't seem to hear it, but I did. I'd hear it. And, now I can develop on it. It's a wonderful feeling to have that feeling that he felt. Feeling free. Coming through, leaving North Carolina, and he never went back.

Cherise: Yes, yes.

Etta: He was one of nine children. One of ten children. He said 'you go to school. I couldn't go, because I had to do the land.'

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: For the harvest, and they had children just to have harvesters, and he was one of them. It was just something to be under that era.

Cherise: Yes. Thank you. And, you Bernard, and freedom in your dancing too?

Bernard: My freedom is the dance, and I quit school in the fifties, and I had all kinds of jobs, and I mean all kinds of jobs, and I always felt really depressed because there was something that I always wanted to do. I didn't know it was dance, but I didn't want to do what I was doing. So, I was always paying a price for when I quit school. Now to bring it up to the future, now that I'm doing what I love to do, this is my freedom that I found what I love to do, and I hold on to it with all costs.

Cherise: Yes, Mm, hmm.

Bernard: And every time I got knocked down, I got right back up,

Cherise: Hm, mm.

Bernard: and said you know what, life is too short not to be doing what you love to do.

Cherise: Hm, mm.

Etta: What class were in when you dropped out of school? What was the grade?

Bernard: I was in one year of high school.

Cherise: Oh, okay.

Etta: That's ninth grade.

Cherise: That's ninth grade.

Bernard: Now, my school, PS-129 on Gates Avenue in Brooklyn was the last public school to go to the eighth grade, and from then you went to the ninth grade. So that was quite some time. That was in 1956 or 55. It was 55, when I went to high school,

Cherise: Okay.

Bernard: and, there were some problems at home, and I had problem with a lot of homework I was supposed to do, and math and everything, and I really didn't have nobody to sit down at that time to say, 'what's the problem with History or , Biology or whatever it was. There wasn't.'

Cherise: Yes.

Bernard: So, I got caught up in the streets fooling around, and since I lost the interest in school, I quit. And, I just start working low-scale jobs, any jobs I could get, I start working. I had tons of jobs of stock, Western Union, this, you name it, and it was amazing to go through all that.

Cherise: Right.

Bernard: Up until the day in the sixties, I went into printing. I found a place where somebody could learn me how to do the printing, and once I learned that, I went to job, to job, to job.

Cherise: You went into printing?

Bernard: Yeah, I could do business cards, envelopes, letterheads and all of that.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: You printed those pictures. He printed those pictures. He did. I have them here. You saw them, but I have them [pointing to photos of she and Bernard dancing].

Cherise: Oh, yes!

Bernard: That was the computer, but I just do it on the machine. Same thing.

Cherise: Beautiful, so, you printed those yourself!?

Bernard: Yeah, so, when I got to the point where I got freedom, it was just air, and I feel now that it was all worth it to go through all what I did to get to the point where I'm at now.

Etta: So, getting back to school. In my last two years of high school, I worked after school.

Cherise: Oh, wow.

Etta: Just go to school, and go to work, too.

Cherise: Mm, hmm.

Etta: My first job was dressing an old lady in a nursing home, and I would wash her up, dress her, have her ready, comb her hair, and have her ready for her family to come and visit her. And, I went to that job seven days a week.

Cherise: Wow.

Etta: Take two busses to get there and all that.

Cherise: Was she in Manhattan?

Etta: No, all of this was in Brooklyn. All was in Brooklyn. I worked from that time on. I never stopped. I'm still working. But, this is what prepared me. I think I started working when I was twelve years old. Scrubbing floor and stuff like that.

Cherise: Thank you.

Etta: Mm, hmm. When I graduated and got my degree at seventy-five years of age,

Cherise: That's right!

Etta: I got my BA degree.

Cherise: We talked about that on the phone!

Etta: Mm, hmm, 'cause I kept going to school. I kept going to work. I kept doing all of this. I kept doing multi, multi, multi everything!

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: Multi, just keep on muti-*ing*. Just don't stop. I bought my building when I was thirty.

Cherise: Oh, you bought your building?

Etta: I bought my building when I was thirty, and let me tell you honey,

Cherise: and, this is where you live now?

Etta: That's where I live now.

Cherise: Good for you!

Etta: Been there for over fifty years.

Cherise: My maternal grandparents, my grandmother was born in 1927, grandfather born 1918, so one year after Monk – Thelonious Monk [Cherise smiles]. I noticed how it seems, to me, in their day – in the forties they were working in the forties and thirties. They worked since they were young as well.

Etta: Yeah, that's what it was for us.

Cherise: It seems to me, in their day, the black community was stronger within itself

Etta: It was cohesive.

Cherise: Right, more cohesive amongst itself than it is now. Even though discrimination and racism was more overt, it seems like couples were more likely to commit and marry because there seems to have been more of a need to help each other through the tough times. There was more camaraderie . I also notice a similar affect in the dancing. The dancing that I saw the pair of you do at Lincoln Center's *Midsummer Night Swing* truly required both of you. It requires both of you , and you you needed each other to be strong for that dance.

Etta: Strength in numbers.

Cherise: Yes, and Swing dancing was more prominently [slight break]

Etta: There was no TV and no computers.

Cherise: Yes, excuse me. Swing dancing was more prominently displayed in the Big Band era of the 1930s; How have you noticed a change in dancing from then to today?

How do you think it represents the inter-relational aspect and the strength of our communities?

Etta: You want to answer that one [looking at Bernard]?

Bernard: No, go head.

Etta: I talk too much. Listen, I notice it so very, very very much. It's just like, okay, I have two dancers. They didn't dance. He had a son; he doesn't dance. He had a brother; he didn't dance. What is wrong with them? They were seeking. We have a lot of distractions that doesn't contribute to the dance at all. We're distracted by the computers. We're distracted by the fact that we want to get the latest phone, wait online all night, but it distracted. So, we don't get on to our culture. We don't have a culture.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: Like, I go to a Korean spa, I want to give you a brochure to that spa, and they have that as a culture. Where is our culture? We did everything. We know everything, but we don't have that commitment. When you have a culture, you're committed.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: So, the culture is missing, and the fact that we are gifted – is missing. We don't acknowledge it or recognize the gifts that are given to us from The Creator. He gives us – every one of us have gifts!

Cherise: Yes, we do.

Etta: Every one of us, but we are searching and searching. Just like my ex-husband, he was searching and searching. He married me, then he married this other person – searching and searching, and everything was right there at home. We don't recognize. We don't have that. We have to listen: we don't have listening skills. Our listening skills – you tell somebody something in the ear, and they go all around the room and come by completely opposite. If you ask somebody what did I say just now to them, they won't even know. I can go on, but go on. [acknowledging Bernard's motion to speak]

Bernard: I just want to say one thing about that.

Cherise: And, this is about the dance.

Bernard: In the time, far as I'm concerned in my opinion, like what Etta was just saying about the technology, there are different things now that people are doing. The time of The Savoy, like the TVs and we didn't have this. When you have three hundred or more people at a club doing Lindy Hop and Swing, it was more people that went out just to dance and socialize.

Cherise: Right, okay.

Bernard: And like, what she was saying now, we're deviating with a lot of technology, there's a lot of different things coming in, like Freestyle, Hip Hop,

Cherise: Yes.

Bernard: different styles of dancing, people just gonna do where you'll say, 'what style of dance is this? What style of dance is this? What style of dance is that?' We got away from the connection.

Cherise: And, it can be done alone. You don't have to have a partner, necessarily.

Bernard: And, we got in the way from what we used to do at the time of The Savoy. There was always partners. If it was Mambo, you danced together. If it was Cha-cha, you danced together. Ballroom, you're dancing together. Swing, it was part of the dancing, basically on that. But now, it's just like

Etta: You kill it.

Bernard: Yeah, it goes in a lot of different directions. You got a lot of freestyles, a lot of different things, like you said [motioning to Etta] with the technology. Distractions.

Cherise: Distractions.

Bernard: Distractions from them.

Cherise: And, that distraction causes the lack of cohesiveness, and the lack of wanting to dance together, and being that strong couple in dance.

Etta: We're working against. Everything's going towards us going apart.

Cherise: Right, we used to be closer. Do you agree with that?

Etta: I definitely agree.

Cherise: It really seem like that, even though there was more of a struggle – and I mean, the struggle is still the struggle, but I think it was just so much more overt, but seem like to me there was still a stronger bond, a connection, and now, it just seems like.

Bernard: Yeah, I do feel there was a stronger bond then.

Cherise: Pertaining to certain messages emoted like *Love*, *Believe* through Stay Human. They're very big on that, you know. 'You got to Love,' and 'BELIEVE!' – during concerts/outreach events such as the Newport Jazz Festival. They had a week-long residency at Manhattan's NoMad Hotel presented by Chase Sapphire Preferred. They've had T-Shirts that said, 'BELIEVE!' on it, and like I was telling you about how Jon calls the parade a – Love Riot! So, what is love to you? How do you define Love? How do you define believe?

Bernard: I'll let Etta go first.

[Huge laughs from Etta and Bernard.]

Etta: I've been going first the whole time, yeah.

Bernard: "Cause she's the one who talks a lot.

Etta: Yeah, I do. I talk a lot.

Cherise: But then, [looking at Bernard] you're next.

Etta: Let him go first this time, because this is for the man's point of view. We're women.

Bernard: Okay, simple word to me is happiness. It's happiness. I know she probably has a lot more, [Bernard and Cherise lightly laugh] but I said let her go. It's happiness, and I found out, and I think it's for all people, when you say the word Love, it's not for everybody because it's all different to everybody.

Cherise: Hmm.

Bernard: How we experience it.

Cherise: Mm, hmm/

Bernard: And, I think to say she's in love with her husband when she got married, if she married me and was in love with me, it's a different love, but it's still love, but it's different. I don't think nothing just follows the same thing. Does that make sense?

Etta: Yes, that's a different view.

Bernard: Yeah, I think it's still love. You still love people that's different, but it's never the same. It's almost like two wives or two husbands. It's completely different.

Cherise: Like eros.

Bernard: Yeah, and I think the love is different with them, and how you define it.

Cherise: Okay, thank you. And, what about believe? How would you define that in this setting of Social Music and Social Dance?

Bernard: Well, I tell you, believe is like with the dance that I wanted to do, or I felt, I believed that I could do that. I never wanted to have any doubts with it. Like I said, I didn't want to pick up the word – can't.

Cherise: Right.

Bernard: I wanted to do it. And, I remember my teacher telling me one thing, and it stayed with me, because I was skeptical about the criticism of the students and the class looking at me, an said, 'Bernard. Don't worry about them, because they're learning just like you.' He said, 'whatever it is, let it go.'

Cherise: Mm.

Bernard: He said, 'there's gonna be people that like you and don't like you, no matter how good you are,'

Cherise: That's right.

Bernard: 'but, that's not your problem.' He said, 'be you all the time, and if you're performing, if it's a hundred people in the audience or a thousand, still be you.'

Cherise: Yes.

Bernard: And, I still feel that, and that's why, when I get up there, I just let it go.

Cherise: Yes, sir [with hand clap]. .

Bernard: A performer. That's how I feel, I'm a performer.

Cherise: Thank you [to Bernard]. And you, Ms. Etta?

Etta: Okay, Love is care. It's caring. This is the only way you can do this.

Cherise: Love is caring.

Etta: Caring. Everybody will say, if you're leaving, 'take care, take care,' and I said if you give it, I'll take it, you know [Cherise and Etta lightly laugh], but the thing of it is, this is what's being perpetrated. Taking, taking, 'take care,' – Take, take, take! When do we give?

Cherise: Mm!

Etta: Oh, my God, if we could just give,

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: and give, and give and give, and give. Where? Let it be real, genuine, and honest. We tend to not really care for ourselves. We could all, you know, children tend to get first, so what about self-preservation? Preservation is the first Law of Nature. I say, if we're gonna, like my sister, she had to go on Dialysis, but she wouldn't go, that's suicide. We do suicide all the time. We do it. We don't even realize it. I was talking to my son – 'do nothing that hurts you, and do everything that helps you.'

Cherise: Mm!

Etta: Do everything that helps you. Everything that helps you. Nothing that hurts you. He, a year later, he told me that he had to adhere to that, because he was going to do something that he knew would hurt him. He didn't do it, and he said, 'where did you get it from?' I said, 'you don't think I can't think of something on my own.' Anyway, so getting back to the caring.

Cherise: and love, that's love.

Etta: If we could just understand, that it's not love. It's care. We could love on, 'oh, I love you.' Don't? What is that? How do you love somebody? You know, like Whitney when she was being buried and carried through the street – 'I love you, Whitney! I love you! Or, I love you, Michael!' It's care. We want care forever. Babies want care. Adults want care. Older people want care. If we don't give care to ourselves, we're suicide. If the person is not given care, give you the wrong food or something, that's homicide. Then, there's genocide. I want us to be gold inside! We're gonna be the golden guides! Let me go on, because I go on and on and on.

Cherise: Mm, hmm.

Etta: I'm just giving you a little. Let's, get back to the belief. I'm just giving you a bit of the belief.

Cherise: Thank you.

Etta: Belief is more of therapy, like I was saying about the dance.

Cherise: Mm, hmm.

Etta: We don't realize 'belief.' We don't have realization of it, because we're not doing what belief is. We're not doing dancing. Like, Bernard does not only dance well, he does great things well.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: He does so many things well!

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: It's not just a dance. That's all that 'you still dancing!' [Bernard laughs.] No, no, no. Well, I'm doing so many other things as well as dance.

Cherise: Yes.

Bernard: Mm, hmm.

Etta: And, you are good at it. That's the part, and you made seventy-seven. You're the only person in your family to have made seventy-seven.

Bernard: Yeah, whatever you do, try to be the best at what you do.

Etta: Seventy-seven!? That's tremendous for a man.

Cherise: Yes, it is.

Etta: But, they only give you seventy.

Bernard: Yeah, right, for men.

Etta: For men! For black men.

Bernard: That's right.

Etta: Forget it.

Bernard: That's why, everybody always look at me.

Cherise: Get you seventy years.

Etta: If you can believe you'll make your seventy years, believe you can make eighty, ninety, and a hundred. Make that centurion. Get your social security. That's your reparation. That's your reparation. Don't get me started, 'cause I don't stop.

[Everybody laughs – Etta, Bernard, and Cherise]

Bernard: And, that's what a lot of men always say to me when they find out my age – 'What!' – because you drop on your knees,

Cherise: I know.

Bernard: and you move around so fast, they say, 'What!' when I say how old I am, and they say, 'I'm sixty, or I'm sixty-one,' and I look at them like okay.

Etta: So, I tell them. Yeah, they're younger. They're so much younger. They have that. See they fall into the trap. See, it's a trap there. 'Oh, you're in your sixties. You're supposed to not be able to do anything.' You know, see this is how we work it – 'C-A-N-'-T' – get that word out of your vocabulary. You're given it too much power.

Cherise: It's a mind, a mind thing.

Etta: You know what my thing is, I call it my prescription. Take this prescription. You know what my prescription is? Want to hear it?

Cherise: Yes, please.

Etta: Train, grain, and dealing with healing prevention is the intention.

Cherise: Ohhhh! [lightly laughs with agreeableness] Thank you.

Etta: You want to hear my shorter one? I got a shorter one.

Bernard: Hm.

Cherise: Yes, I do.

Etta: Get out the disease jail, and get on that health trail.

Cherise: Ohh, 'Get out of the disease hell?'

Etta: Jail.

Cherise: Jail, okay.

Etta: Get on that health trail! [Cherise lightly speaking along with Etta]

You want to hear my other one?

[Bernard laughs heartily, then Cherise joins him]

Bernard: Yeah [laughing]

Etta: I've got a zillion of them. They give you the French fry, you have everywhere you go French fry, French fry. I said, my God, that's the worse, they have the fried chicken, then fish fry. I said, 'Grease, Grease, Grease! Hurry up, and get the Health Police.'

Cherise: The Health Police. [laughing]

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: Wait, I got another one. One more. I'm gonna give you one more, and I'm not gonna give you anymore.

Cherise: Right, but that's true.

Etta: 'The smaller the meal; the greater the deal that help you fee, a wellness appeal.'

Cherise: Woahh! Hallelujah.

Etta: Hallelujah. [Cherise gives pleasant laugh] Oh, it's on honey, I'm writing that book.

Cherise: That's right!

Etta: I'm putting it all in the book. I'm a wellness witness. Oh, it's on.

Bernard: That's the power. The power.

Etta: That's the name of the book – "I'm a Wellness Witness."

Cherise: So, I know we kind of touched on this, but as mentioned in Lewis Porter's *Jazz: A Century of Change – Readings and New Essays*, about Wynton Marsalis on traditionalism (aka "purism"), the June 17, 1984 New York Times Magazine article by Jon Pareles titled "Jazz Swings Back to Tradition" cites Wynton – "The old stuff has not been absorbed yet. Duke Ellington was writing hip arrangements in 1938, and they're still hip. The key is in the rhythm. It's not in harmony or melody. The next innovation is going to be where somebody does something in the rhythm." As swing dancers and seeing how music and dance has changed through the years, would you say the rhythm in music changed the dance, or dancers helped to change the music? Especially, as it relates to what we've been talking about – Social Music.

Etta: As we are talking here today, things are changing right now.

Cherise: That's right.

Etta: They are changing, and this is always gonna be. We resist change.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: I've been doing it all these years. I ain't gonna stop now or something. [mild laughter by **Cherise:** We have a way of resisting change, and this is not. That's why I'm a rebel;

Cherise: Right.

Etta: 'Cause, I'm not gonna go with the trap, the T-R-A-P. They say, 'oh well, you're old now, so you got to have this for your high blood pressure.' Ahn, uh, I refuse. And, I will not do that. I will take no medicine. I will not do it, because it does not help.

Cherise: Right, okay.

Etta: Herbs is the way to go. The situation is that change is inevitable. Change is inevitable. It will be forever, from the beginning of time till the end of time. Change. Ongoing

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: Absolutely, when we were babies, they had to move us, 'Oh, it's time to move the baby. Time to move the baby.' Today, these babies, they move themselves. They don't need to be moved. You gotta watch them. A boy yesterday ran out in front of a truck, and got hit. You heard about it – oh! You know, everybody wants to be freed, even babies.

Bernard: Well.

Cherise: And, what would you say, Bernard in relation to the rhythm in the music?

Bernard: Well, I don't think the dance changed the music. I think the music – we change with the music. That's what I think.

Cherise: Oh, okay, so you think that the rhythm in the music changes the dance that you do.

Bernard: Yeah, the rhythm in the music, and the different style, we adjust to that, and we'll dance to that.

Etta: I like that word – adjust. Adjust. Because we don't adjust.

Bernard: Yeah, because if it's a beat, even the young kids now, you see them doing popping, it's the music. Now, they do popping, locking, like you said. It's just I don't do them dances, but I know what they are. I've seen them.

Etta: You can do anything.

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: He just does it, but he doesn't want to.

Etta: He doesn't need to. He doesn't need all of that.

Bernard: So, I think it's that music. The music is different. It's not like what it used to be, and people just adjust

Etta: Adjustment is the word.

Bernard: That's what they hear. The same if I went on the floor, and I hear something different in Swing, I dance to what I hear. I adjust to what it is, not like I would dance off of "Satin Doll" or "Moten Swing" by Count Basie. I would do it.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: And, that's original. That's the history. Basie, that's the classic.

Bernard: Yeah! Yeah, that's right, and Duke.

Etta: It's classic. It's a classic. We're under the heading of classic. It lasted seventy years. They thought it was going to last three years? No, it lasted over seventy years.

So, we're under – they added us under the heading of Ballroom dancing, but as a classic, we are Swing dancers. We're classic. Now.

Bernard: Yeah, that's right.

Etta: People have learned all those old dances as Classic. It's classic, all them old dances is class – The Fox Trott, The Waltz. All those old dances, they all learn them. They keep it going down the history. Why can't they keep ours going down?

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: 'Cause we need to get them to understand that. The classic is what you learn. It's what you're gonna do, and then you jump to other stuff. Variations, and then, it's an adjustment.

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: Then you can sort of like live with it.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: You know, you're going to live with all these adjustments longer than you would if you don't adjust. You say, 'No one stays right here in a strait jacket. In a strait jacket. Sitting right here, in a strait jacket. Ohh [makes sound of a mild holler]'

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: Right, so the dance is adjusted by the change, the adjustment in music is what causes the dance to adjust.

Bernard: Yeah. Right, the adjustments.

Etta: And, we contribute our piece. We contribute the Swing. We made our contribution.

Cherise: Yes, thank you.

Bernard: It's a sound that I might hear in the music when I'm dancing, and sometimes I might tell Etta, do a double four.

Etta: Yeah, I like that

[Slight, cute laughter from Bernard]

Cherise: Oh, yes. Okay.

Bernard: She fall and get up, spin around, and fall back again.

Etta: See, he knows that choreography.

Bernard: Because something I hear in the music, that tells me that's what she should do. Or, off of that, at the spare of the moment.

Cherise: Wow.

Bernard: And so, that's how I hear the music.

Etta: And, so, I have to jump to that.

[Cherise admiringly laughs]

Bernard: Yeah, and she does.

Etta: I tell this man keep us jumping. Keep us women jumping. We be jumping here, and jumping there.

Bernard: Then there's a lot of things I tell Etta, I don't remember. [Bernard laughing] I tell Etta, 'don't you forget this.'

Etta: That's right. He tells me not to forget it.

Bernard: Yeah [laughing]

Etta: I be waiting for him to tell me, to do what he say. I say's, 'well, what do I do?'

[Cherise laughing]

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: But, I can't make any complaint, you know, I'm a woman.

Bernard: But, I think that's fantastic how you can adjust.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: We as women, yes.

Bernard: At the spare of the moment, while you're dancing without changing.

Etta: Women are flexible.

Cherise: Yes, we are. [light laughter]

Etta: We're made that way for the babies, so we can have the children.

Bernard: Oh, yeah.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: Because the children are challenged, they're very much, we're taught by babies, if we're around them. So, when we get to be around adults, you know, it's a good thing. 'Cause men don't have that problem. Mend don't have that problem. We have them. We have to be flexible. We live longer.

Bernard: I don't know if this is going to fit into that too, but I just have to say this. Since I'm a performer, like at the Apollo, 'cause the Apollo on the stage, you gotta dance, or they come up here and take you off the stage.

Cherise: Huh [with laughter], that's right, Sam Man, or whoever it is now.

Etta: Right.

Bernard: Right, now, when I dance with Etta, we have places, the more the crowd, the more I perform

Cherise: So, based on what you know now about Jon Batiste and Stay Human, and the bit, I know you haven't seen them fully and don't know everything, but of what you do know from how I've described them, what is Social Music to you, and how would you describe it? Your thought of Social Music or what is means to you, particularly in relation to your dancing?

Etta: I consider it as culture. We had a culture when we were in Africa before we became slaves.

Cherise: Mm, hm.

Etta: So, our culture should always be in tact. There should be some tact with it, and we are to pursue that – it's like our heritage too, in a way,

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: that we can send it down to following generations after us, because why is it that we have this talent? Why do we, how were we? We're the ones, the vehicle. We're the vehicle that The Creator is using to get it to these people. Wake 'em up!

Cherise: Thank you. And, you, Bernard?

Bernard: Yeah, and I pick that back up. She's right.

Etta: Mm, hmm.

Bernard: And, that's why we like to go to many places as we can to set example of that, and not only that, but to show that because of our age,

Etta: It can still be done!

Bernard: it's not over, until we say so.

Etta: It can still be done!

Cherise: That's right.

Etta: Talkin 'bout, 'I'm too old.'

Bernard: And, I feel, as far as like Brooklyn, and people that's dancing, well, we're The Last of the Mohicans.

Etta: ha, Ha!

Bernard: That's what I said, we're The Last of the Mohicans, and that's the reason why we go. We know a lot of Swing places to go, but nobody our age, and no man is sliding on their knees across the floor, or spinning around.

Cherise: I know! So, based on all that we've discussed,

Bernard: Do you Swing dance? [motioning to Cherise]

[Cherise has slight, endearing laughter]

Etta: She did it with these guys [pointing to Jon Batiste and Stay Human album] when she was on the train and popping.

Bernard: Aw, okay, she was doing freelance

Cherise: No, right! [giggling]

Etta: Yeah, she was doing freelance.

Cherise: Right, freelance. [slight laughter]

Bernard: Freelance

Etta: She's in that age group.

Cherise: But really, I'm really a singer, though. I'm a vocalist.

[Everyone smiles]

Cherise: Okay, so would you say Social Music is an evolution of Jazz, a rediscovery of jazz as it was initially intended to be, like we kind of talked about with Congo Square, or both?

Etta: That's mine. That's mine. What you said, that last one.

Cherise: Both?

Etta: You played it.

Cherise: Okay, thank you.

Bernard: Yeah, both. Yeah.

Cherise: Okay, I ask everyone this that I've interviewed because my thesis started off as a hypothesis, my question, this question right here.

Etta: Yeah, that one.

Cherise: But, my hypothesis is that Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Re-Discovered. So, I think it's both.

Etta: And, when I look at the picture, I see them dancing. I don't even see the music, just when you say that.

Cherise: See, he has his tambourine. He throws [with abruptness] DOWN on that tambourine. He's really playing that tambourine.

Etta: Okay, so it's here, but he's more visible, his whole body, and he looks like he's got his arms up, like he's gonna maybe do the dance? But, this guy is dancing right there. He's dancing right there.

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: That's what I see – Dance! Dance!

Bernard: I say both

Cherise: You say both, too? Okay.

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: Because it enhances each other. It's an enhancement, and when they enhance, it makes it greater!

Cherise: Yes!

Etta: Because I like to do food enhancement, and it makes it greater, when you're eating things.

Cherise: Yes!

Etta: So, it's an enhancement, and it's something that they have in their mother's womb. They don't have the instruments, but that movement is in the mother's womb. So, when you come out, you come out with it – the movement. So I think of dance with really, really, really everything! 'Cause you get the instruments later.

Cherise: Thank you.

Cherise: So, how do you maintain your stamina as Swing Dancers? I mean you are, I've said this, you are so amazing at what you do, what the two of you do, especially at eighty-three and seventy-seven

Bernard: Mm, hmmm.

Cherise: years of age.

Etta: So, you're going first [looking at Bernard], or you want me to go first?

Bernard: Yeah, I want to say something.

Etta: Okay, go, go.

Cherise: I feel like you must have more energy than me, so what do you do?

Etta: Youth is in your favor, I just want to say that, but he's gonna answer you.

Bernard: Well, both of us are into nutrition,

Cherise: Yes.

Bernard: and I pamper myself, you know. Like, if there's some salt laying there and the heat come on it's like a sauna, and the sweat

Cherise: Mm, hm.

Bernard: The food that I eat, and also I do exercise all during the week of teaching, but I have noticed that people came up to me and asked, 'Don't y'all get tired?' And, me and Etta say, 'well, I don't even think about that.' We would get up and we dance, if there's something we like to dance, because we got that stamina and the energy to do it, and we go on and we're driven by that music. We feel that music we go on. We don't think about, 'oh, let's rest.' Unless, it's "Jumpin at the Woodside." [Bernard laughs] A fast one like that.

Etta: I see white people do it.

Bernard: But, otherwise, we're in good condition. I probably said that. We're in very good condition, for our age, and what we do on the floor, and how we dance. People just look and say, 'wow, y'all back on the floor and dancing.'

Cherise: So, you accredit it to, 'cause you you've been doing it, so you just make yourself do it. You keep doing it, and that's what helps you have the stamina, and of course, nutrition.

Bernard: Well, there's a lot of parts. We have a love for dance, and a love for music, and we enjoy dancing together. It's something that we love automatically. We don't even think about it being hard. I be so high, and she fall, and people be, 'look at them.'

Etta: [laughing] They're tired just looking.

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: [laughing] They look at us, and they want to fall out – ohhh.

Bernard: One lady had a blanket and a pillow, just lookin.

[Burst of laughter from Etta]

Cherise: ??? around 03:01:20

Etta: Let me tell you a story.

Cherise: Yes, thank you.

Etta: Let me tell you a story about when we were dancing at Swing 46, and this white girl, you know, nice Caucasian, she said to me, 'are you ready for this?'

Cherise: Mm, hmm.

Etta: Well get ready, she said, 'how do you dance in heels?'

Cherise: What!?

Etta: That's right. But, she had her facts. You know, most of the young people, they have on flats. But, this is what they conquer up. This is how there read. How they mental read these things. You see they use the word C-a-n-'-t. [spoken in All Mighty Powerful tone] I do not use it.

[Cherise laughs]

Etta: Do you understand. I said, take it out of your vocabulary. Do not use that word, and you will be able to do it. And, I talked to them, and I tell them because I don't mind talking to them, because they look at me like Mother, you know, Elder, Mother?

Cherise: Yes!

Etta: Yes, and this is my title anyway, because we have this sacred, you know, where all things are centered. The thing is there is such a thing that is called, Bernard didn't use it; I'm gonna use it.

Cherise: Mm, hm.

Etta: Breath Control.

Cherise: Ohh!

Etta: And, honey!? First of all, when we learned this dance, it required high energy. The dance, that's what it was. Swing was high energy.

Cherise: Yes

Etta: So, why would we do it any different, from when we learned it?

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: Real high energy learners.

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: Yes.

Bernard: Lindy

Etta: That's right, and we are doing it, and doing it, so, we have to have breath control, and you hold your breath, and then you move.

Cherise: Wow.

Etta: Take you breath with me. Hold it, and then, exhale, and on the exhale you move, because the heart is the hardest working part of the body, the heart does not need any extra work to do. So, when you exhale, you move the body, and that takes the strain off the heart.

Cherise: Oh!

Bernard: And, a lot of people don't know that, how dance is.

Etta: I tell them

Bernard: Breathe.

Etta: I tell them. I tell them.

Cherise: By taking a good breath.

Etta: Take your hands, and you're gonna pull in the air, pull in the breath, hold it, and now, let it out. Then, move, and let it go right out. Go up at the same time.

Cherise: Oh, I see.

03:04:14mn

Etta: Your body moves! Your body goes. I tell some old people, and they just sitting and they say, [making painful sound] 'ahh, ahh, ahh,' trying to get up,

Cherise: Oh, okay.

Etta: and I'm saying, just take a breath, you'll go up!

Cherise: Right.

Etta: And, they do it, and they say, 'oh!' Nobody told them. I see them trying to get up the steps, in the subway, I'm taking the subway, I'm on the subway all the time, and the lady's there, and she can't get up the stairs. I said, 'take a breath,' and 'take it with me,' and the lady went right up the steps.

Cherise: Wow.

Etta: It's not anything that you can't do. You can do it, but if you say C-A-N-'-T, then that kills it, right there. You're given that other thing too much power. So, with

breathing, I want them to all know, it's like doing yoga, but this is where I learned, but I probably did it before I even learned it.

Cherise: Mm, hm.

Etta: 'Cause I was born to dance. But when you're breathing, you have to use that breathing, just like you're taking oxygen

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: We're oxygen fed people.

Cherise: Yes, Ma'am.

Etta: You're pullin, and pull it in, and pull it in, and pull until you will be able to move and dance, and you will not have any problem. Your heart is a muscle, and it needs that. And, that muscle works, and it gets better and stronger, a guy said, he took my heart, and he said – 'ooh, it's strong. It's strong!' [Etta laughing]

Bernard: Yeah, and plus that makes it extraordinary because we're older. That's why people really look like - it's got them to dance.

Etta: That's the t-r-a-p. You're old, you're supposed to be that. They say, 'oh, you don't act like you're eighty-four years old.' I says, 'well, this is what it is. So, we are supposed to be.' [Etta laughing]

Cherise: Right.

Etta: We're supposed to be good 'till we're ninety, 'till one hundred, 'till it's. We're not supposed to have Alzheimer's. These people getting them young as they get. Back in the day, people didn't have Alzheimer's as they have today.

Bernard: Well, back in the day, the girls was out jumpin rope, they were more conditioned. They had the technology. They were playing punch ball, hopscotch. The guys at school did skates, and all that.

Etta: Yeah, everything that didn't cost them money.

Bernard: We got exercise, and we burned off calories.

Etta: Yeah, everything that didn't cost money, we were doing it. If it cost money, we didn't do it. Forget it.

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: Right.

Bernard: Now, people sit in McDonald's doing this [imitating one using Internet or text message on cell phone]

Etta: Oh – Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord, Lord! Too much.

Cherise: People can barely walk because they're doing this. They're texting. I mean, you know how you say, 'don't drink and drive?'

Bernard: Yeah.

Cherise: I'm like,

Etta: Don't text and walk.

Cherise: Yeah, don't text and walk. I'm walking, and – okay.

Etta: They bump into you. When I'm driving, they bump into my car.

Bernard: And, they get mad at you. And, sometimes you can see somebody come out of McDonald's, and the got that big, and they have a big bag of French fries, I want to grab it, and say – 'Give me that!' [Bernard laughing] But, you can't do that.

Etta: No, I just tell them – 'If you ain't gonna burn it, do eat it.'

Bernard: They don't need it.

Etta: If you can't burn it, don't eat it. They know they're not burning it.

Bernard: No – that's what it is, they're not burning it.

Cherise: I like that. 'If you don't burn it. Don't eat it.' That's what I've been doing. I do so much walking; I think that's how I lost so much weight.

Etta: And my other partner, Clem, use to say to me, 'when you are no longer hungry, stop eating.' [Etta gives good hearty laugh]

Cherise: Oh, my goodness. [pleasant laughter]

Cherise: So, I just want to make sure that I have this clear about the transition, when you said you were Swing, you were predecessors to Lindy Hoppers, how exactly did the Lindy Hoppers come about? How did that happen?

Etta: When the guy flew over the, flying that first plane? They asked, 'what do you call that dance?' They said, 'Oh, Lindy Hoppin. Lindy Hop. The Lindy.'

Cherise: Charles Lindbergh.

Etta: Charles Lindbergh flew that plane.

Bernard: Charles Lindbergh flew that plane. That's where it came from.

Etta: That's where it came from.

Bernard: That's where it came from.

Cherise: Really!?

Bernard: Yep!

Etta: They said, 'what do you call that dance?' They said, 'Lindy Hop!' [Laughter from Etta]

Bernard: Yeah, when they flew that plane over, that's where it came from.

Etta: Yeah, that's where it came from, 'cause we were Swinging. We did the Swing. That Swing was with us black people.

Cherise: But, you're saying that what you do is Swing, it's not Lindy Hop.

Etta: What we do is smooth. Lindy Hop is jumpy. That's how they get The Jitterbug.

Cherise: So, is the Lindy Hop?

Bernard: The Hop is in it.

Etta: They kick! We don't kick!

Cherise: So, The Lindy Hop is basically, it's the smooth Swing with hopping and the kicking and throwing.

Etta: Yeah, it's like Swing, yeah. It's similar to that.

Cherise: It is Swing, but it has the Hop in it. Okay.

Etta: and the girl said to him [looking at Bernard], she asked him, 'oh, do you Lindy Hop?' He said, 'No!' And then, she saw us dancing, and she said, 'I thought you said, you didn't Lindy Hop,' and she was so angry. [Etta laughs]

Bernard: Yeah, because I can do the Lindy Hop step moves. But, when you see the old films at The Savoy – through the legs and jumpin those legs,

Cherise: Right.

Bernard: That's Lindy Hoppin.

Cherise: That's Lindy Hop.

Bernard: I look at them legs, and I say, 'how in the hell can they hail – in the air?! It's acrobat!'

Etta: Because they weren't doing anything else.

Bernard: They were so natural!

Etta: They didn't have these distractions.

Bernard: Natural! The way they move – swinging through the legs, through the side.

Cherise: So basically, the Swing

Etta: They were areoles.

Bernard: Yeah, they were areoles!

Cherise: The Liny Hop was Swing with the extra movements.

Etta: Yeah, it's just like,

Bernard: Yeah, right, right, right.

Etta: They were jumping so much, that they called them Jitterbugs. Just like after that, they called them Jitterbug.

Cherise: After Lindy Hop. Okay.

Etta: After the Lindy Hop, and then they were calling it The Jive. Remember they did The Jive on *Dancing with the Stars*. Yeah.

Bernard: Yeah, The Jive and Bebop. Some called it Be-bop.

Etta: Yeah, Bebop. Yeah.

Bernard: The Jive.

Etta: But, it's all Swing first.

Bernard: But, the Savoy took it to another level, and now, all the way through school. There are more schools that's opening up that's actually teaching Lind Hop.

Cherise: Right.

Bernard: No matter where. People are on Facebook, you see all these lined up.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: But the Swing, you improvise as you do this dance. So, it gets to be a variety of movements.

Cherise: Right.

Etta: and, we improvised, we always improvised so it gets more and more and more. The Lindy Hop stays the same.

Cherise: So, it's just like the Jazz and with Social Music. Okay, wow, that is wonderful.

Etta: But, we do smooth Swing. I love that smooooth. I come in there smooth – wooh!

Bernard: Yeah, because you can get into other, and execute the feeling of it, how you move, when you do the Swing Jazz. Then, you just jumping and throwing the lady out and bringing her back. People like that seeing! But when you're doing the Jazz, and they see the technique and the style, they say, 'Ooh! That looks good.'

Cherise: Yeah. It's quite harsh to see the man pick the woman up, and just throw her, and then somebody catches her, and she falls, and it's just like, it's too much!

Etta: No, no, she jumps up! Hey, she jumps up. He ain't picking, she jumping up. They make sure she jumps!

Cherise: Oh, okay, yeah, it looks harsh, though. I mean it's – wow! But,

Etta: Tell 'em Bernard. Isn't that right? We jump. We do a jump, and then we go.

Bernard: Yeah, it's just like a jazz, like you do the ballet, if you plea, like a French thing.

Cherise: Yes, yes. I took ballet.

Bernard: Then, they spring up, and you can take them when they spring up and make it look like.

Etta: Just make it look like you're picking her up.

Bernard: It's almost, when the first time I did The Slide with Etta? I slid her down, she jumped up, and she jumped up and just looked at me, I said, 'damn!' [Hearty laughter from Etta, then Bernard joins]

Bernard: She just looks. [Cherise laughs]

Etta: Said, 'What next? What next? He thrown me up, now. Which way he gonna throw me, now?'

Bernard: And, she did it with such ease, and I didn't know I was gonna do that! I just felt the pulse to do it, and look like I just did it.

Etta: Yeah, and I could feel his impulse.

Bernard: And, people just screamed! I said, okay, we're gonna continue.

Etta: And, then, too, that's our chemistry together. That's the chemistry.

Cherise: Chemistry, oh.

Bernard: And, nobody do that.

Etta: Nobody does that.

Bernard: Cause they don't want to do it, if we do it. See, people don't want to do something that somebody else is doing, they say, 'well, that's Bernard and Etta. They do that,' so a lot of people stay away from that.

Cherise: It's your signature.

Bernard: That we know of.

Etta: But, you know, the other one is our signature. The one we always do. You see us all in that hold. You know that one. When you take me. You dip me.

Bernard: Oh, yeah, yeah.

Etta: Yeah, you know that one?

Bernard: You got it on the picture!

Etta: Yeah, you got it in the picture. Yeah, the picture, I got it right here.

Bernard: 'Cause we go down so low.

Cherise: So, Etta and Bernard, how would you define Jazz – past, today, and future? What would you say about that?

Bernard: Well, when I was listening to jazz, all through the fifties, all the great, like John Coltrane and so forth that I mentioned before. People were more listening than to the dancing. Unless, it was choreographed to a show or something.

Cherise: So, people weren't dancing.

Bernard: Yes, most of the places we went to, it was listening. People would go and sit and listen. Even Basis Street East. That's where you go, and so many people down there, and just smoke.

Etta: Oh, God.

Bernard: And, people would wear the sunglasses, and you would sit there, and you would here Art Blakey, and

Etta: I didn't do that. He did it. I didn't do it. I wanted to dance.

Bernard: Clifford Brown, and all them. Until later, the music, like Herbie Hancock start changing and everything, you know,

Cherise: Right.

Bernard: and then people start dancing more to jazz, because it became more dancing instead of just listening. But to be honest, people would get high. They'll get high, and go down and sit and put their sunglasses on, and just into a groove.

Etta: You actually sat there, and just listened to that jazz. You did that?

Bernard: Yeah, we'd sit there and listen to the jazz, 'cause that's what everybody else was doing.

Etta: You did that!? [with laughter]

Bernard: Then, they used to do concerts with Tito Puente, and that was bad. 'Cause I was just moving around in the seat, and he's playing the congas and timbales, and I said, 'oh, hell no.' You gonna sit here for two hours, and here a Latin Jazz concert. And,

that's why now so many different seasons. Everybody supported jazz. Jazz was the club and vocalists, and everything was hot at the time. That's why they still trying to keep it going, because they lost a lot of clientele, because of the different venues that's out and everything else. They want to keep this jazz traditionally, and I think they should. I think we should support the jazz, and I think the young ladies coming up, instead of thinking about maybe Rap and Rhythm & Blues sometime, you know you can do Classics

Cherise: Mm, hm.

Bernard: and Opera. There's a lot of venues to try different things instead of thinking that you just have to do Rhythm & Blues, or you have to be a Rapper, and all that, as a young boy – Basketball, Football. You might be great at other things, and don't have to do that. So, you don't really have to do that.

Cherise: Thank you.

Cherise: Is there a favorite groove you prefer to dance within the Swing idiom?

Etta: I love I lost. "The Love We Lost." We go crazy over that, by Teddy Pendergrass. Teddy Pendergrass, "The Love I Lost."

Bernard: And, I say it's Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes.

Etta: Oh, that's right, Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes.

Cherise: But, that's considered R&B, right?

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: Yeah.

Cherise: So, that's your favorite groove is R&B – Rhythm and Blues.

Bernard: Yeah, yeah.

Cherise: Okay, wow.

Bernard: And, the reason why is the music. It's always in the music. Like, early when you come out hitting the drums?

Cherise: Yes! That beat.

Bernard: It's that beat!

Etta: The beat.

Bernard: "The Love I Lost," and you just hear it, and 'ohhh.'

Etta: Once you hear that beat, you can't – Look at him, he wants to dance.

Cherise: "The Love I Lost."

Etta and Bernard: "The Love I Lost."

Cherise: Teddy Pendergrass.

Etta: Teddy Pendergrass

Bernard: Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes.

Cherise: Harold Melvin and the Blue Notes.

Etta: ‘Cause he joined them as Harold – Harold died early, so they included him and kept the name.

Bernard: “The Love I Lost.”

Cherise: And then, will you describe, and this is our last, our final question, thank you so much.

Etta: We gonna take the picture, and we’re gonna go.

Cherise: Yes. Describe your fashion sense. How important is fashion in dancing,

Etta: Very much so.

Cherise: Swing Dance, Social Music?

Etta: Very much so. We both have a lot to say about that.

Bernard: Yeah,

Cherise: Yeah, ‘cause y’all are together. Y’all are very – tight!

Bernard: Yeah

Etta: When we make the record happen. We make it happen.

Cherise: You’re clean. You’re always so clean.

Etta: We make an effort. We make an effort.

Bernard: When the Harlem Swing Dance Society book us, they never worry about me and Etta. They worry about the other people, because they have to call them and find out what they're wearing.

Etta: They're young.

Bernard: Because they don't know what they might do. I just have to call Etta and say, 'red, blue, black, brown?'

Etta: Yeah, whatever! [fun laughs by Etta and Bernard]

Bernard: That's all!

Etta: And, if he doesn't call me, I know we're gonna wear black.

Bernard: That's our basic,

Cherise: Okay

Bernard: and she say, 'white?' But, we have it that way, and we're fortunate to have it. And, she might say, 'red.' And, I say okay, I'm coming in red and white shoes, or red head band, or red bow tie, you know, a red tie.

Etta: He's a fashion plate.

Bernard: Or, a red belt!

Etta: He's a fashion plate.

Bernard: Yeah, we come.

Cherise: I know this. You are, too! You're a fashion – Both of you!

Bernard: Yeah.

Etta: But see, he doesn't go to the Goodwill. He don't go there.

Cherise: Oh.

Etta: He's going to – where you get your things from? What store you go to?

Bernard: Well, I go on Amazon.

Etta: Oh, exuse me.

Bernard: .com on the web.

Etta: But see, that's expensive.

Bernard: Yeah, and, I've got every color Spectator shoe

Cherise: Well, y'all are sharp – Shaaarp.

Bernard: Like this here. Those are Spectators.

[Etta showing a photo of she and Bernard dressed to dance]

Cherise: Yes, yes. So, what are these shoes? What are these called again?

Etta: Spectators.

Cherise: Spectators. Okay.

Etta: Look at him in all his – look at this.

Cherise: Yes. I see jewelry – yes!

Etta: He's more fashion plate than I am. I'm not fashion plate like that.

Cherise: Wow.

Bernard: Well, I came up that way. People like at me walk, and they say, 'oh, I love it.'

Etta: But Sam,

Cherise: Your hat. Look at you. [acknowledging Bernard]

Etta: Sam say, 'you see what Etta wore?' Sam, you remember Sam?

Bernard: What is Etta wearing?

Etta: But, it's from the way back. You see the Goodwill, they're made shorter,

Bernard: Yeah, yeah, right.

Etta: for shorter people. See, like, I'm short, and I can't buy those other things in the store.

Bernard: And, as far as I'm concerned, all the fashion show is

Etta: This is second-go-round, look. See [pointing to her clothing], they don't use that much material today.

Cherise: Oh, okay.

Etta: See, they don't use that much material today.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: You can't get any material in your dress today, and I need material, because when he swings me around, I want to have a little something – femininity.

Cherise: Yes.

Etta: This is buttoned at the shoulder. So, I just slip it on, and button at the shoulder. You see how it does that, and it's all – see whow the sleeve, it's like a cappy. You know, we don't get that anymore. It's a lot of femininity qualities of the dress that's left out today, and I've heard women say, 'I don't have a dress in my wardrobe.'

Cherise: Oh?

Etta: And, I'm saying, 'I don't have pants in my wardrobe,' [Cherise snickers] but, I do. [Etta laughs].

Cherise: I like dresses and skirts, though, I do – I'm a girly girl type.

Etta: It's against the law for a man to wear a dress. Did you know that?

Cherise: Know, I didn't know that, is it really?

Bernard: It is?

Cherise: It's against the law?

Etta: Yes, it's against the law for men to go around wearing dresses.

Bernard: Boom.

Etta: Well, they don't enforce it. Especially, not on him.

Cherise: Wow, I didn't that.

Etta: Yeah, I wanted you to know that.

Cherise: ‘Cause I’ve seen some transvestites. You see these guys.

Etta: You would see them more, if it wasn’t against the law, but it is against the law. A man cannot do that.

Bernard: Yeah, and I think for my day, if a person dance on the stage, it’s important to look good.

Cherise: Yes.

Bernard: It’s important to look good, and if anybody watch International dancing, when those ladies come out with those splits, and the hairdos, and the make-up and all, they look so good before they even start dancing.

Etta: But, this is like something that elderly people get, sort of get away from – looking good?

Cherise: Mm, hmm.

Etta: They sort of just put on anything, and come out in it. Elderly people do that, but we’re elderly, and we’re not prone to do that. You know, we want to have a little look. You know, some type of a look, so that even though we’re elderly, we can make an impression, you, and people are really impressed.

Bernard: Well, they know when we’re coming.

Cherise: Well, you certainly have done that, and you do that. Thank you.

Etta: Yeah, because of the fact that we have that about us. It's just a part of us, now. We want to look a certain way. We may not look that way all the time. I fall apart. I fall down sometimes. He doesn't, but I do. But that's okay with me. I'm older, so I can get away with it.

Cherise: Well, I just again, say, thank you, thank you so much for sharing your wealth of experience.

Etta: Mm, hmm, and we're just scratching the surface.

Cherise: I know you are!

Chapter 8: Musical Analysis and Conclusion

Music Analysis

As this composition, "Let God Lead" by Jon Batiste and Jennifer Sanon is particularly written in the style of the Mardi Gras Indian New Orleans Tradition, it has an instrumentation expressly catered for Jon Batiste and Stay Human's marching band – Harmonaboard, Voice, Alto Sax, Tuba, and Tambourine. The form comprises two sections that repeat, a chorus, and a verse. The key is Bb major, it starts on the fourth, Eb Major 7th and ends on the fifth, F Major. "Although danceable and engaging, the Indian chants have significant meaning beyond their entertainment value."

Conclusion

So, what is Social Music?

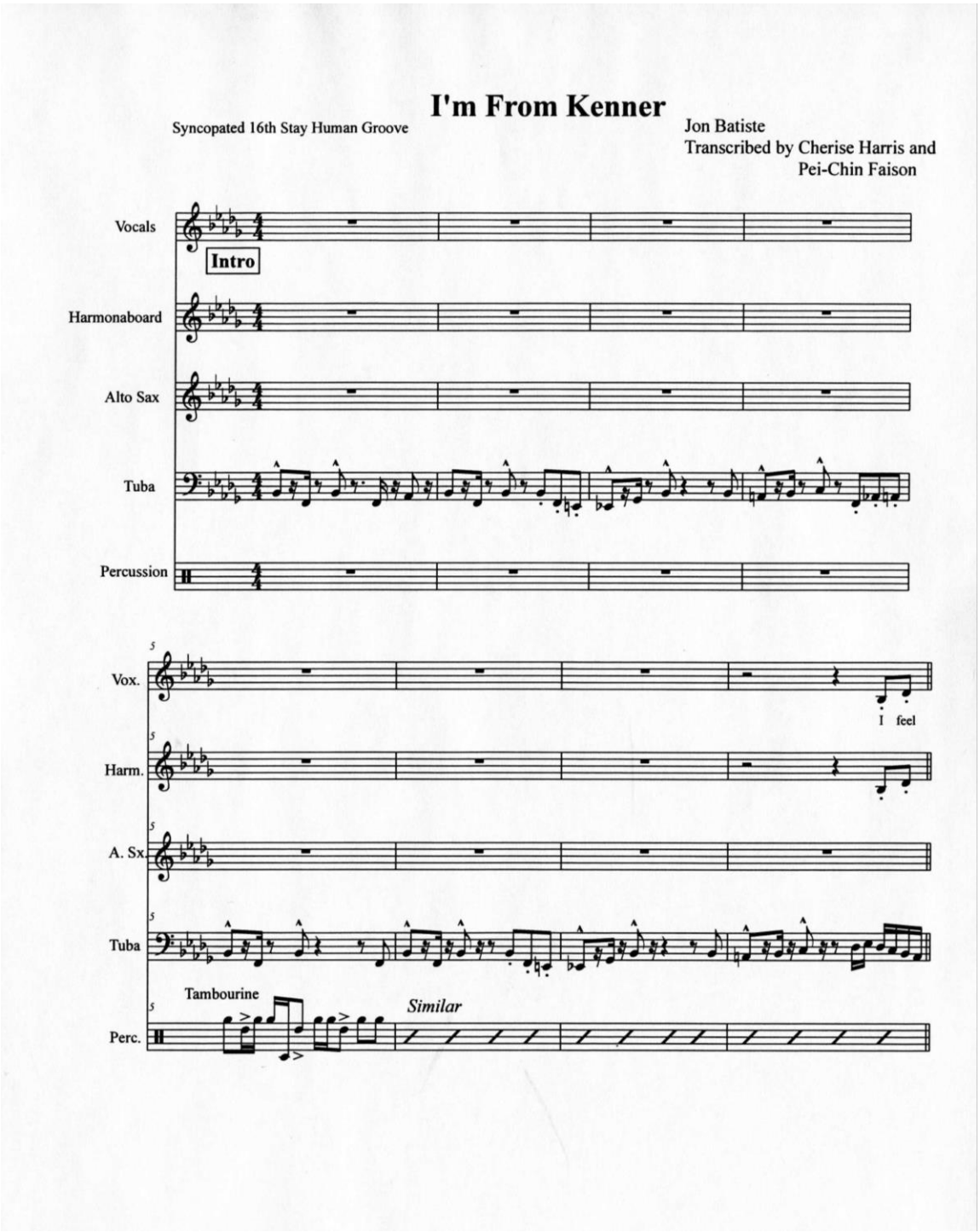
See the relation between Jon Batiste and Stay Human's Social Music and Miles Davis's Social Music. In a way, Social Music theoretically means the same from both sides. All the different genres. But, they are different in the sense of the reason why Miles didn't like the term Jazz. Reminds me of the racism in the United States of America that came about in my interview with Eddie Barbash. I also see and feel in their concert experience how Jon Batiste and Stay Human have the motive of closing the divide among races through music. The various kinds of music that is called Social Music. I like how Eddie's answer that "Social Music doesn't have to be jazz," coincides with Miles Davis's point of view on Social Music.

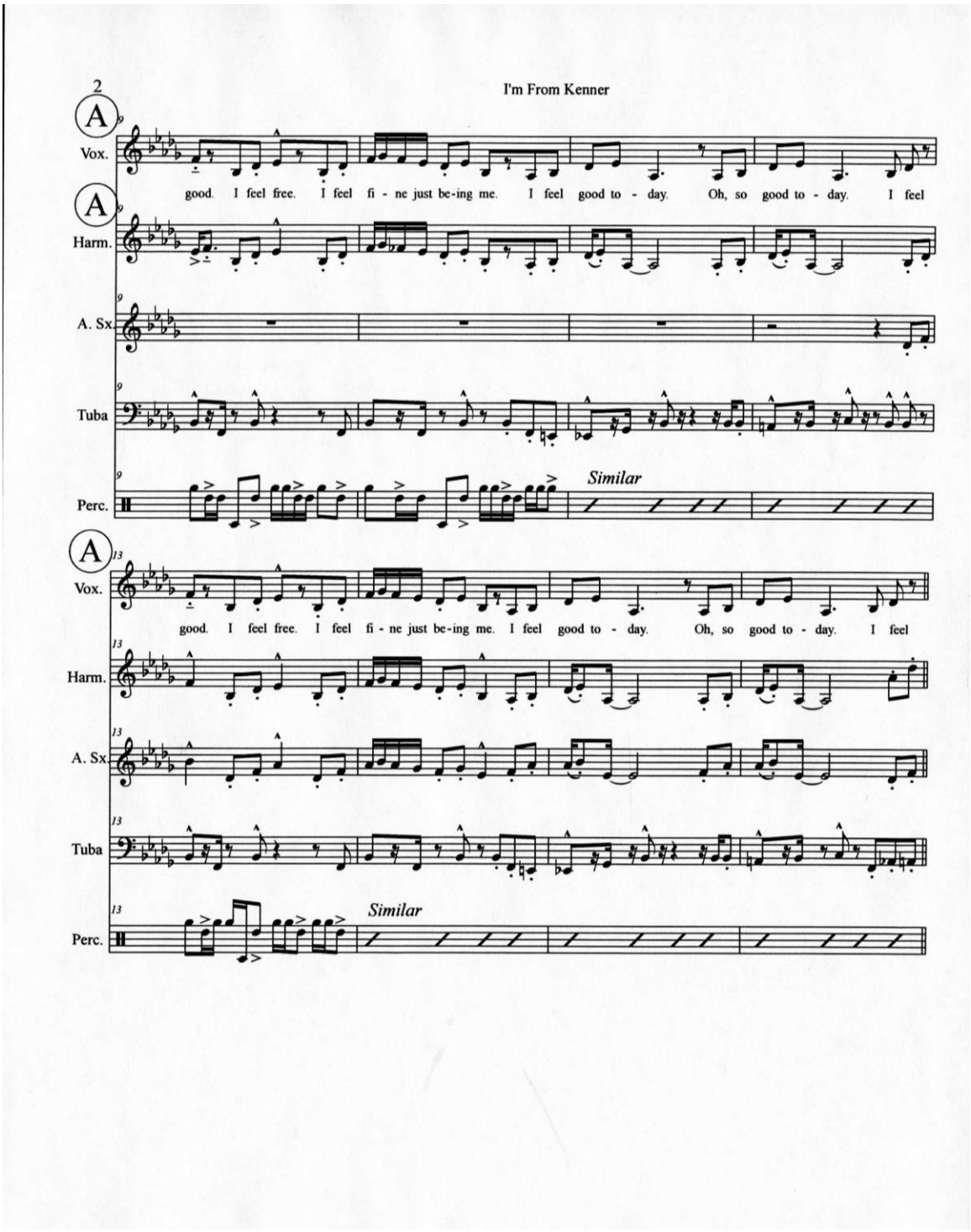
I once told Jon, "I'm sure a lot of people have told you this or something, but I just want you to know that what you are doing is Revolutionary." This was one night, after our

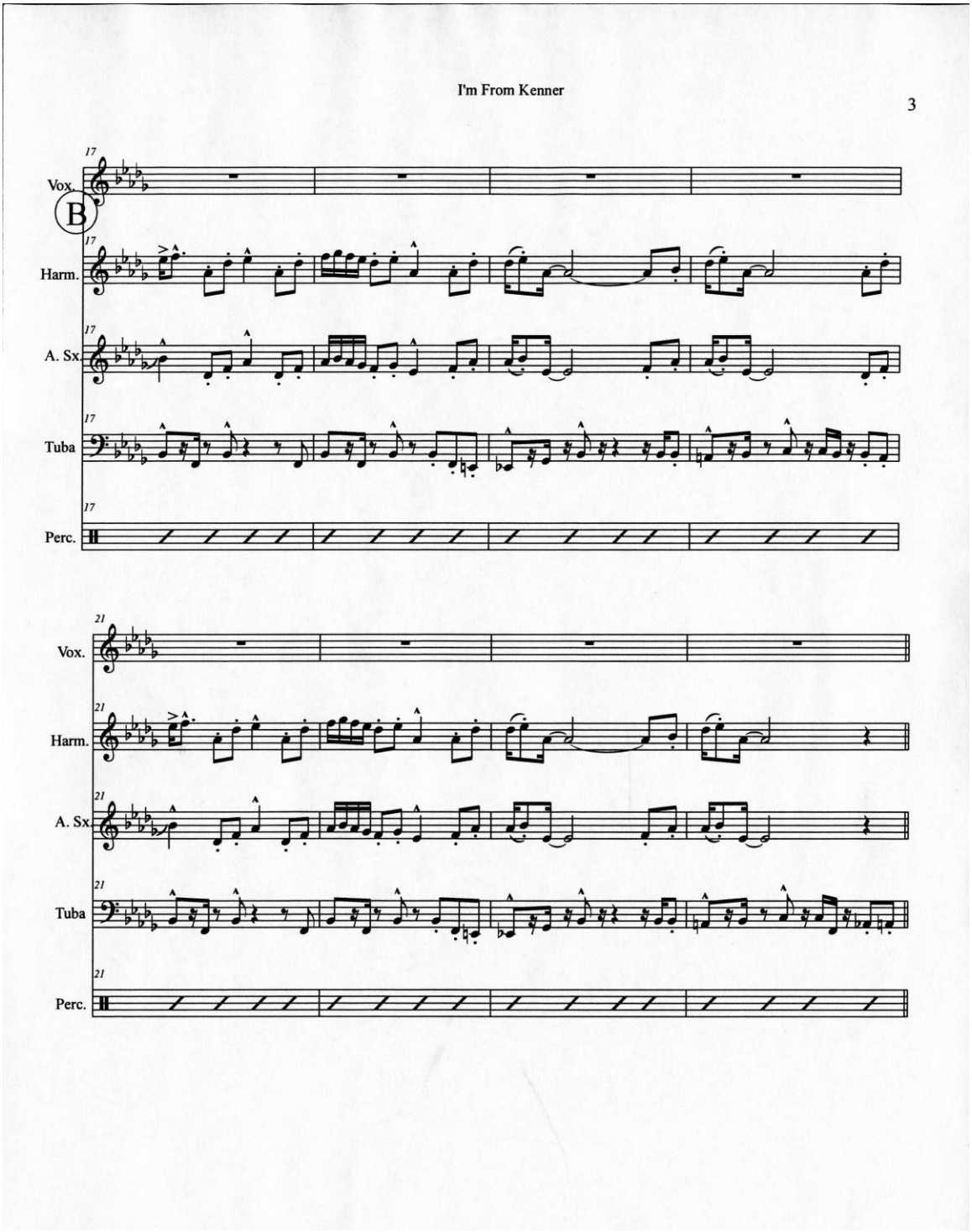
Jazz St. Louis Gala, before all the notable stature of *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert*. We didn't know that he had spoken with Colbert while in St. Louis, headlining the Gala. I didn't know that I was speaking to the next bandleader of CBS's newly revamped Late Night Show, to air in place of David Letterman's show. I knew I was talking to super cool, hip, and fresh Jon from Cleo's (J Bat) that had accomplished so much to the point of truly finding and being in his niche with his band - Jon Batiste and Stay Human. When I told him I thought what he was doing was Revolutionary, and I'd like to be a part of helping his efforts from a business perspective, he emailed me later that night, and called me a few weeks later. We spoke about my qualifications and what not, but what I remember the most from our conversation was a question Jon asked me. He asked, "What is your ideal?" I told him that I wanted to share the love of Christ with as many people as possible, globally, through my music, and my Rise La Day vision. He listened intently. It was some time after our conversation, even to this very point, right now, after writing my thesis, Social Music is Jazz Evolved and Re-discovered: An Introspective of Jon Batiste and Stay Human, that I realize how important having an 'ideal' is to Jon. It's important to him that not only he has a strong ideal, but for everyone to have his or her own ideal. It's evident in the way he plays, and in his whole ideal and concept of Social Music and Staying Human. He understands the ideal of America. That's how he could play the "Star Spangled Banner" in the way he did on his *Social Music* album. He knows the gross darkness of America that doesn't live up to the 'ideal' of America, while ultimately he chooses to believe in his ideal more than the grossly dark activity around him in this world. Not just ignore it, but acknowledge it, and still Believe! And, not just believe, but Believe in Love!

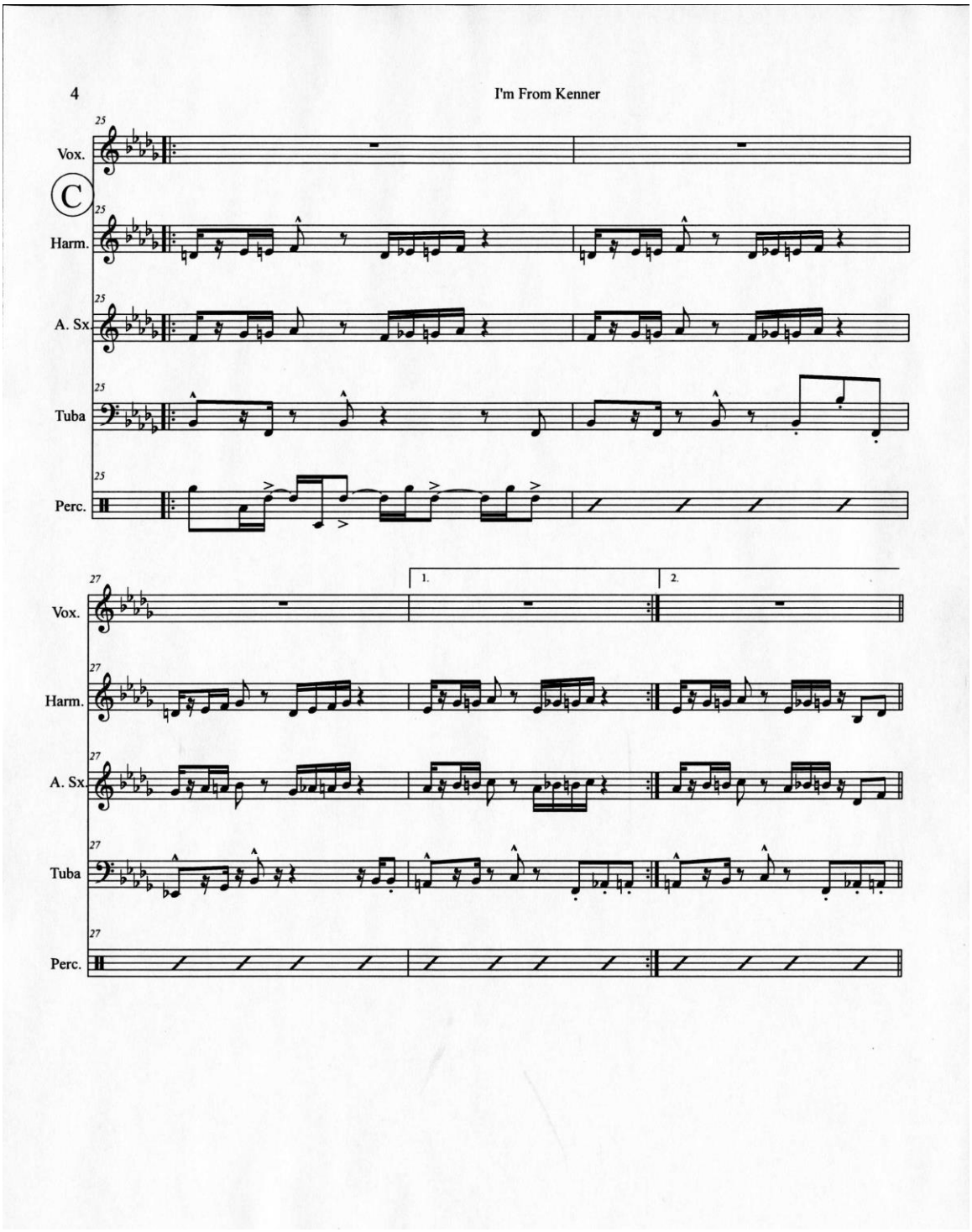
APPENDICES

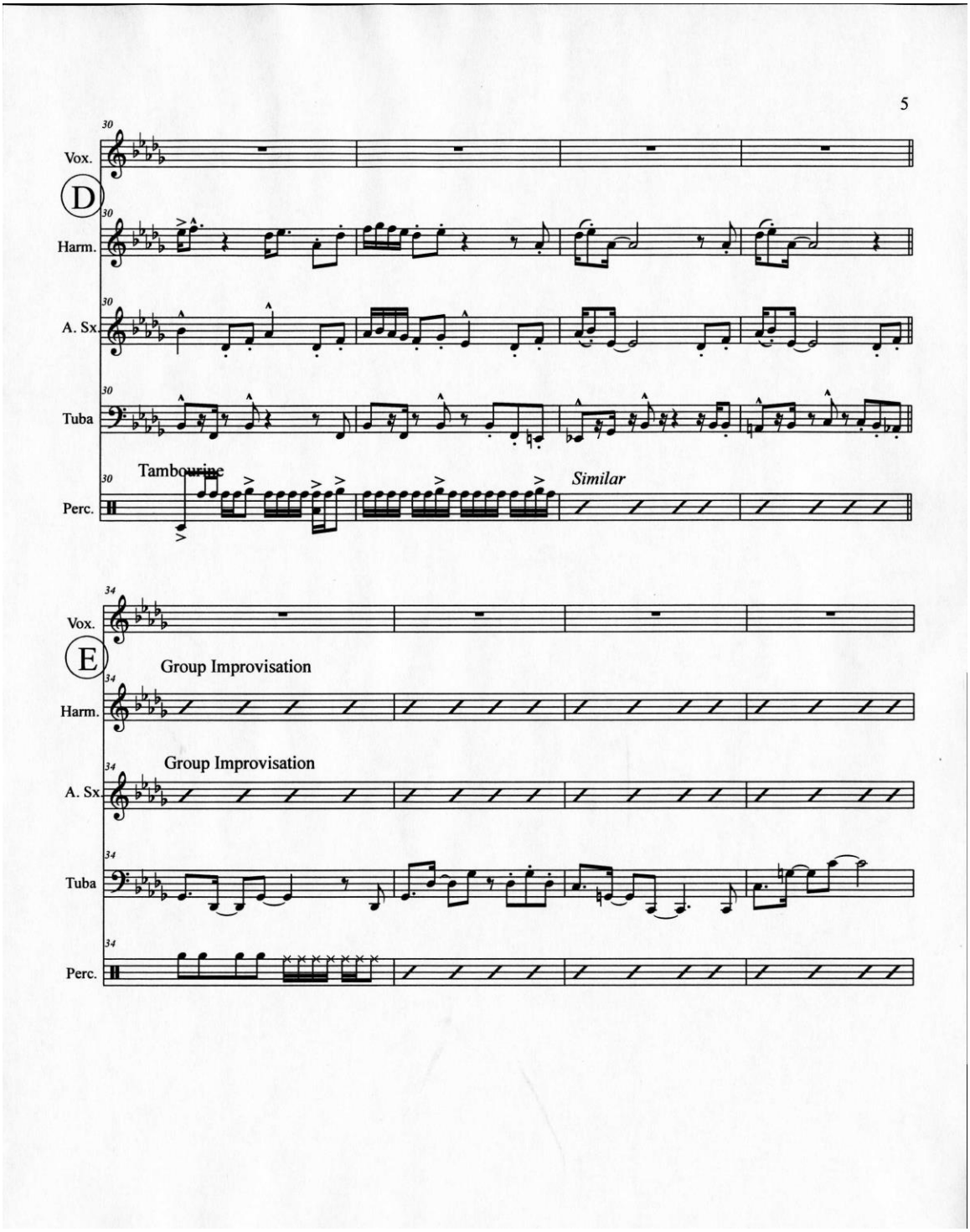
Appendix A: "I'm From Kenner," *MY N.Y.* Album

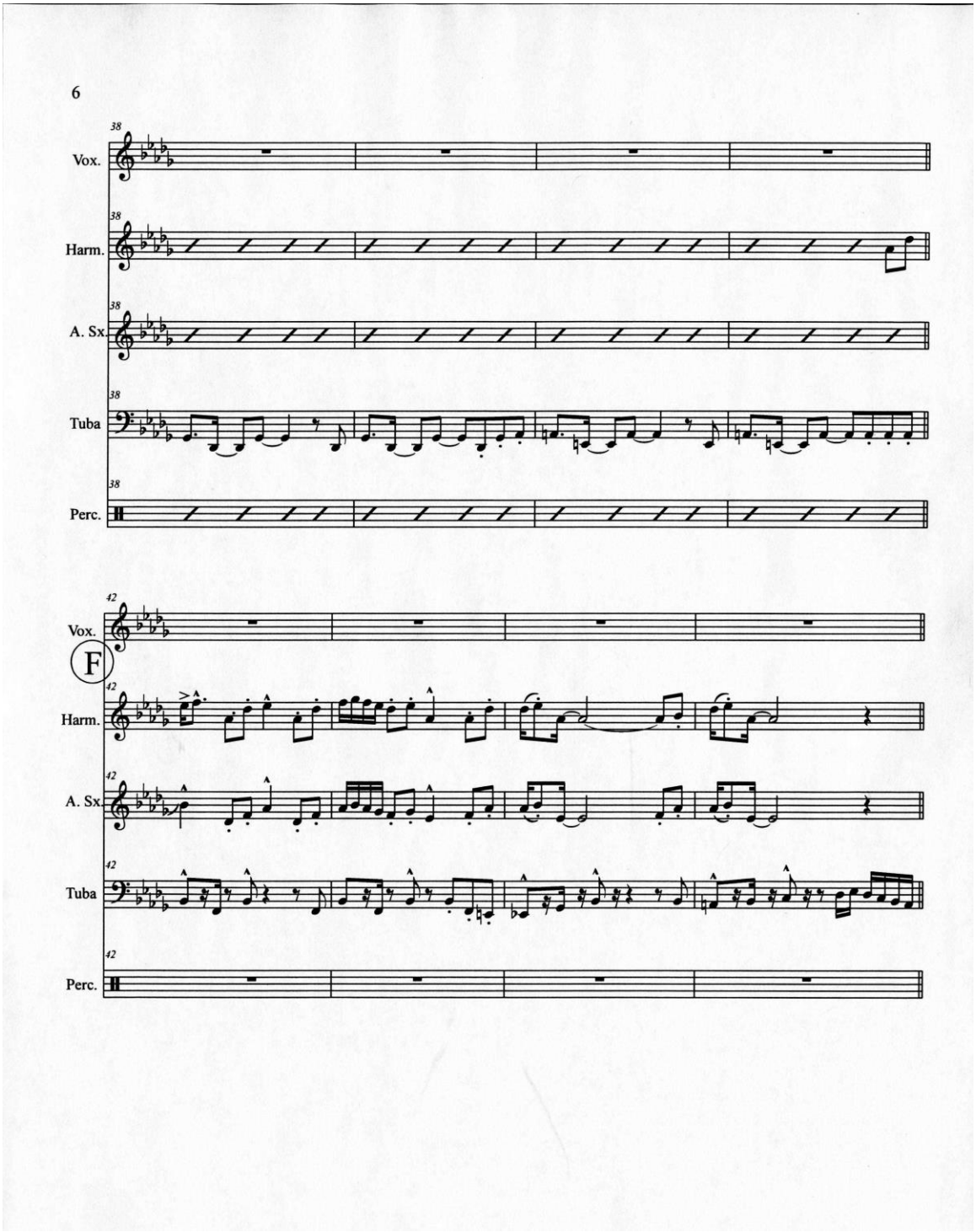


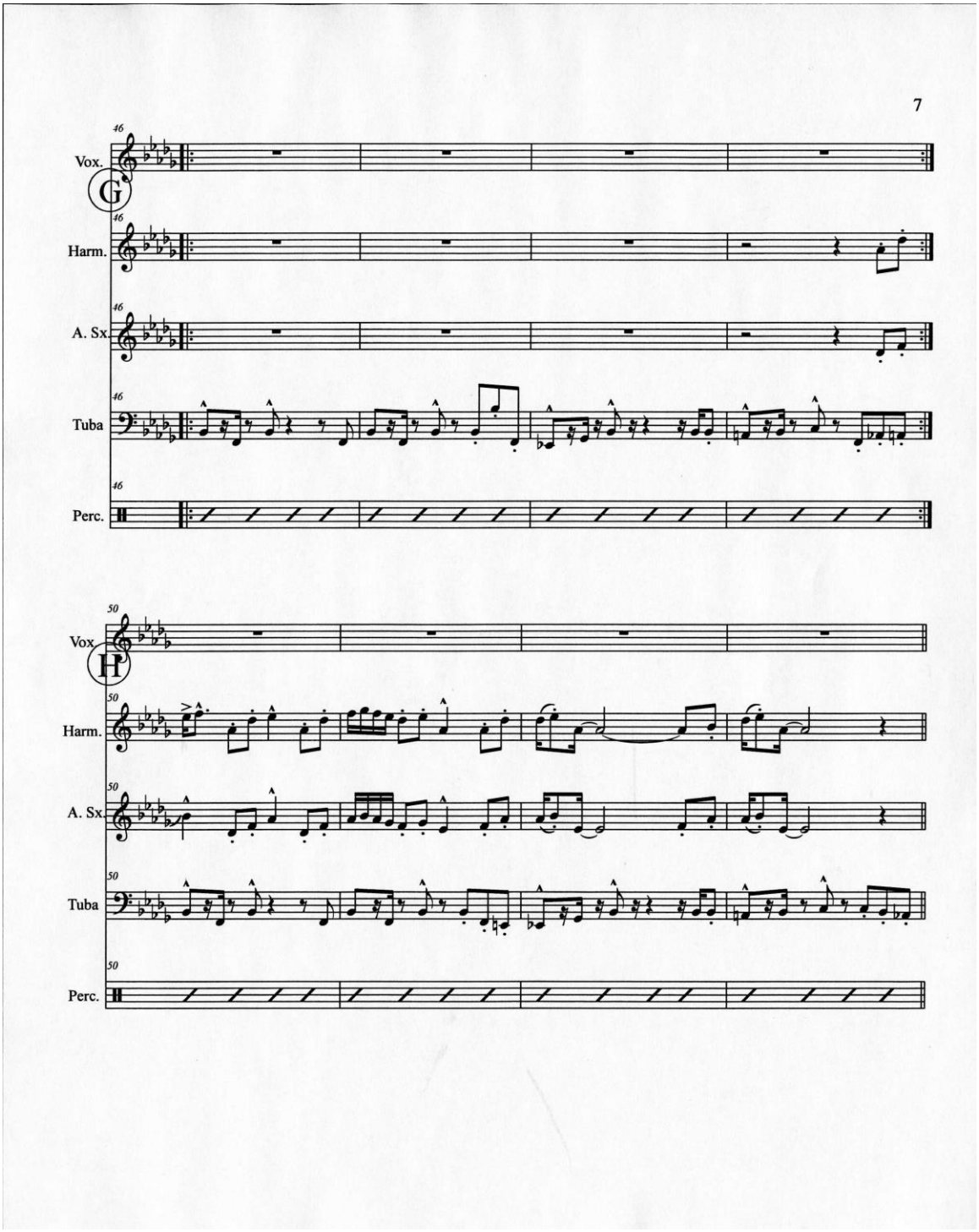

2
I'm From Kenner
A
Vox.
good. I feel free. I feel fi - ne just be-ing me. I feel good to - day. Oh, so good to - day. I feel
Harm.
A. Sx.
Tuba
Perc.
Similar
A
Vox.
good. I feel free. I feel fi - ne just be-ing me. I feel good to - day. Oh, so good to - day. I feel
Harm.
A. Sx.
Tuba
Perc.
Similar


I'm From Kenner
3
17
Vox.
B
Harm.
A. Sx
Tuba
Perc.
21
Vox.
Harm.
A. Sx
Tuba
Perc.

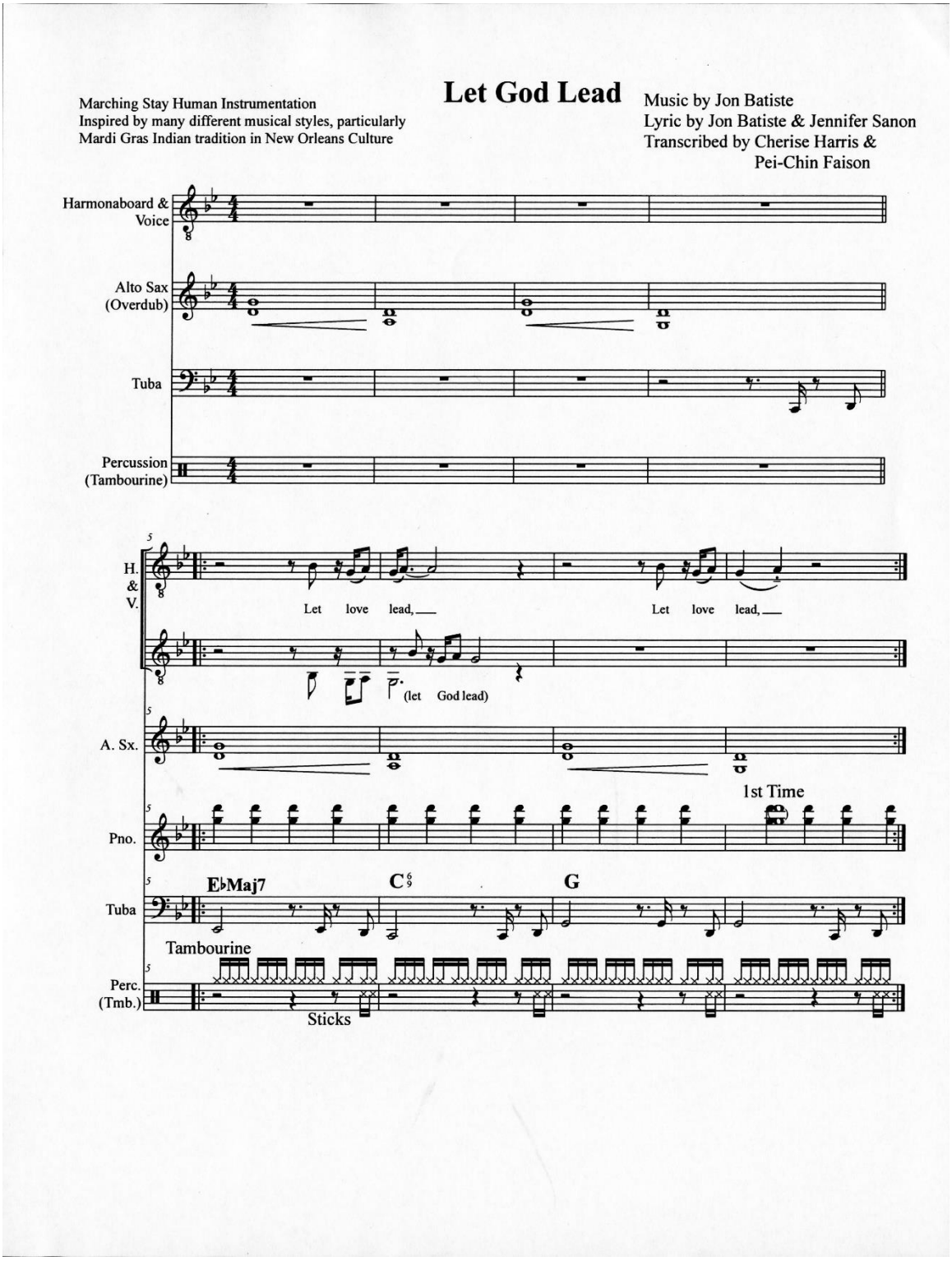

4
I'm From Kenner
Vox.
C
Harm.
A. Sx.
Tuba
Perc.
1.
2.

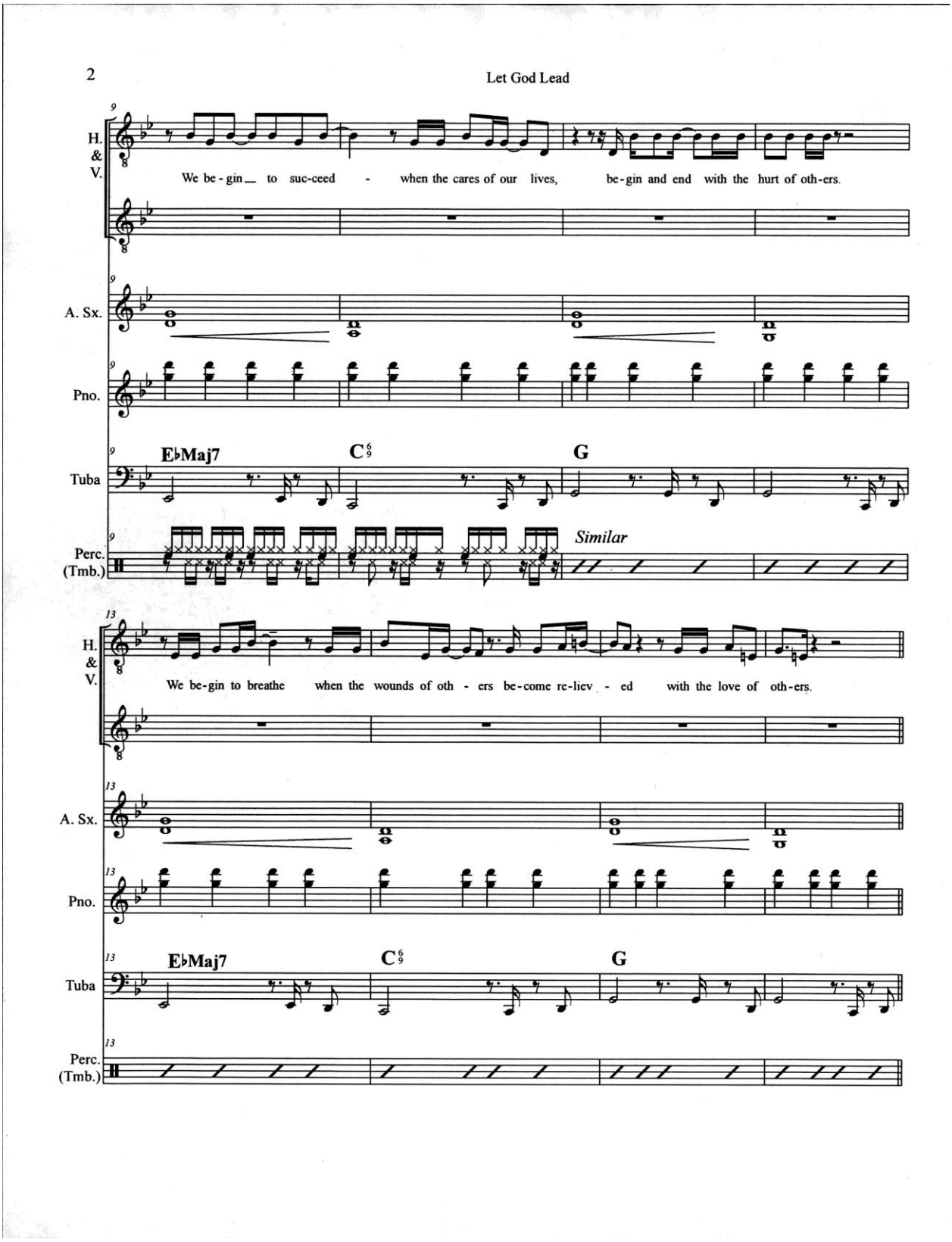

5
30
Vox.
D
Harm.
A. Sx.
Tuba
Tambourine
Similar
Perc.
34
Vox.
E
Group Improvisation
Harm.
Group Improvisation
A. Sx.
Tuba
Perc.

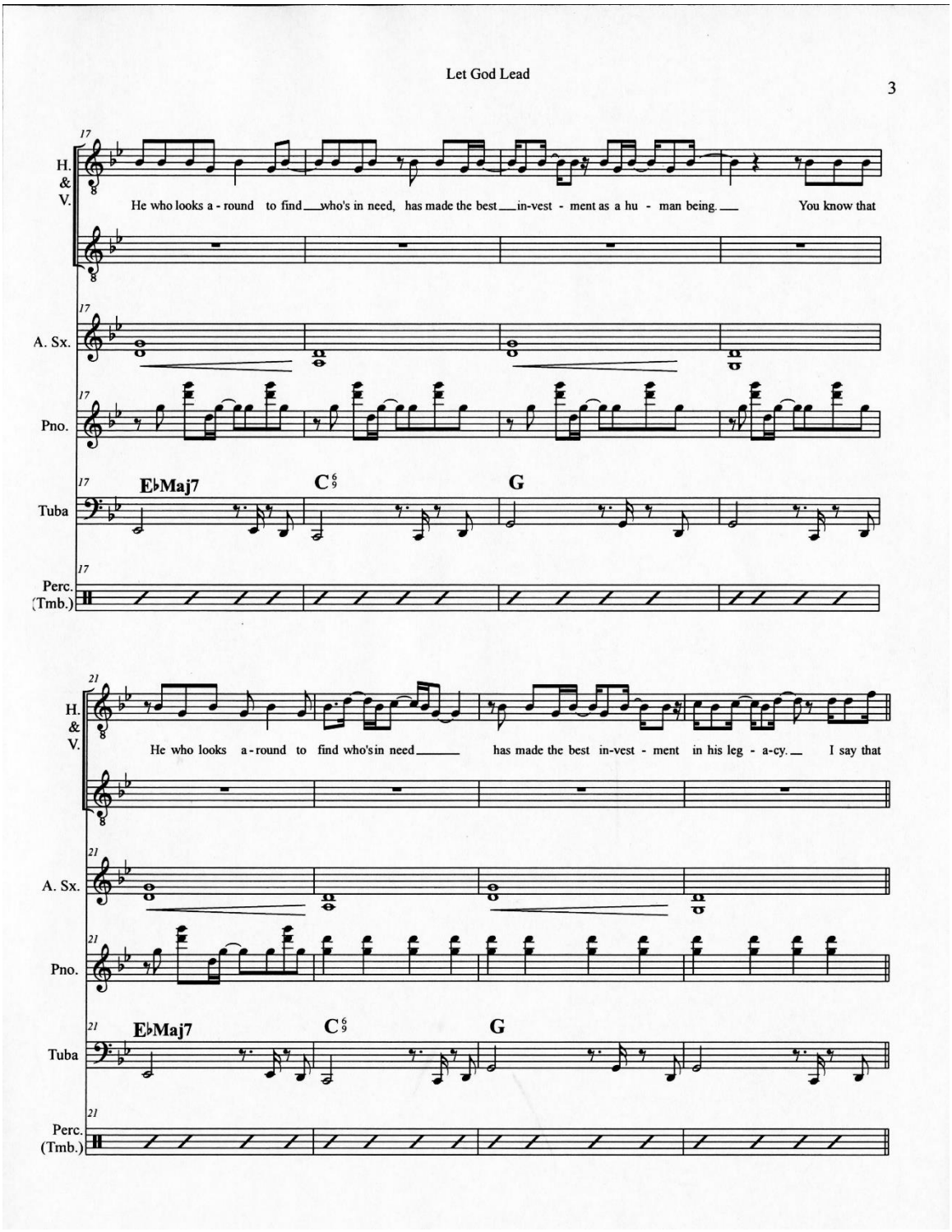

6
38
Vox.
Harm.
A. Sx.
Tuba
Perc.
42
Vox.
F
Harm.
A. Sx.
Tuba
Perc.

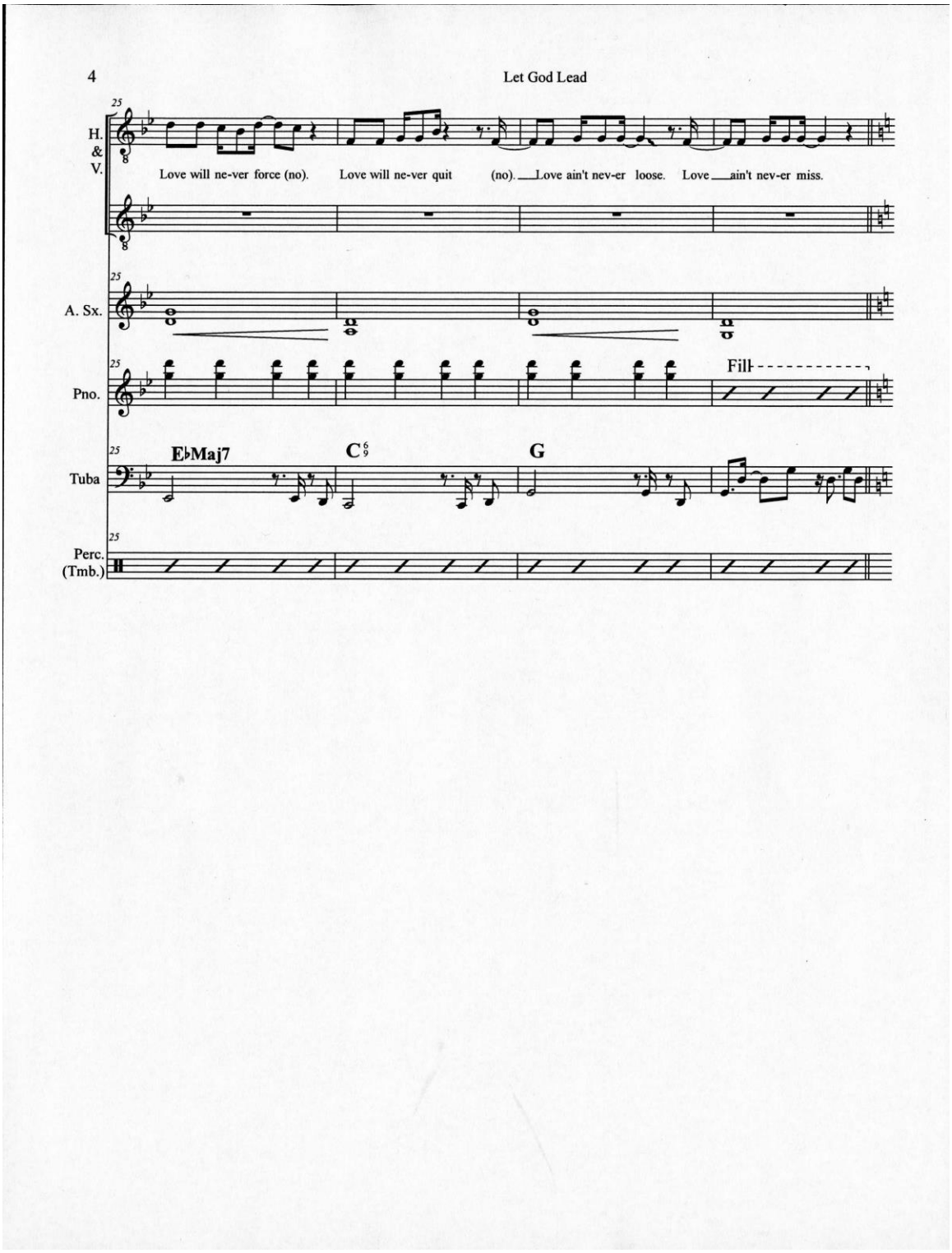

7
46
Vox.
G
Harm.
A. Sx.
Tuba
Perc.
50
Vox.
H
Harm.
A. Sx.
Tuba
Perc.

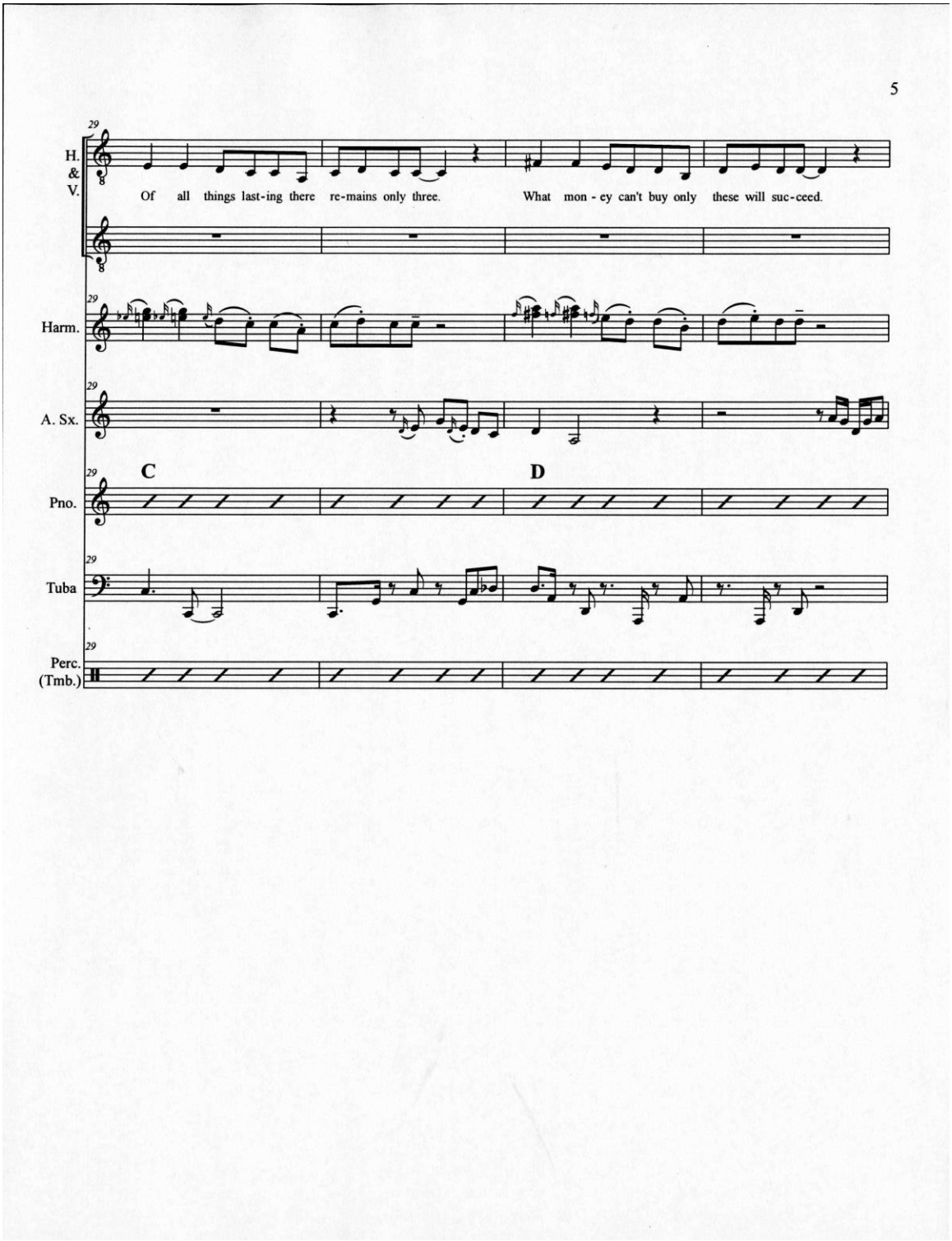
Appendix B: "Let God Lead," *Social Music* Album

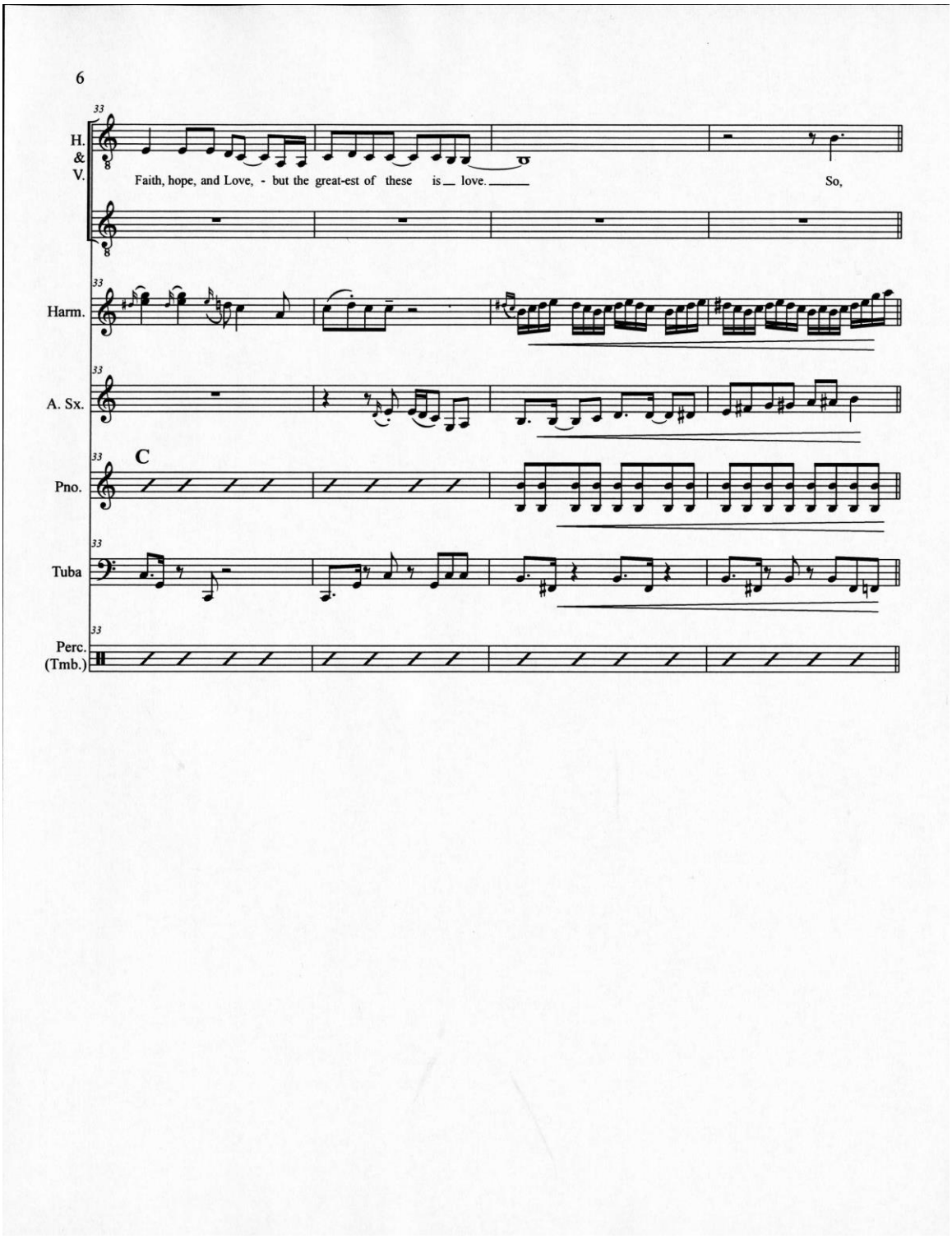


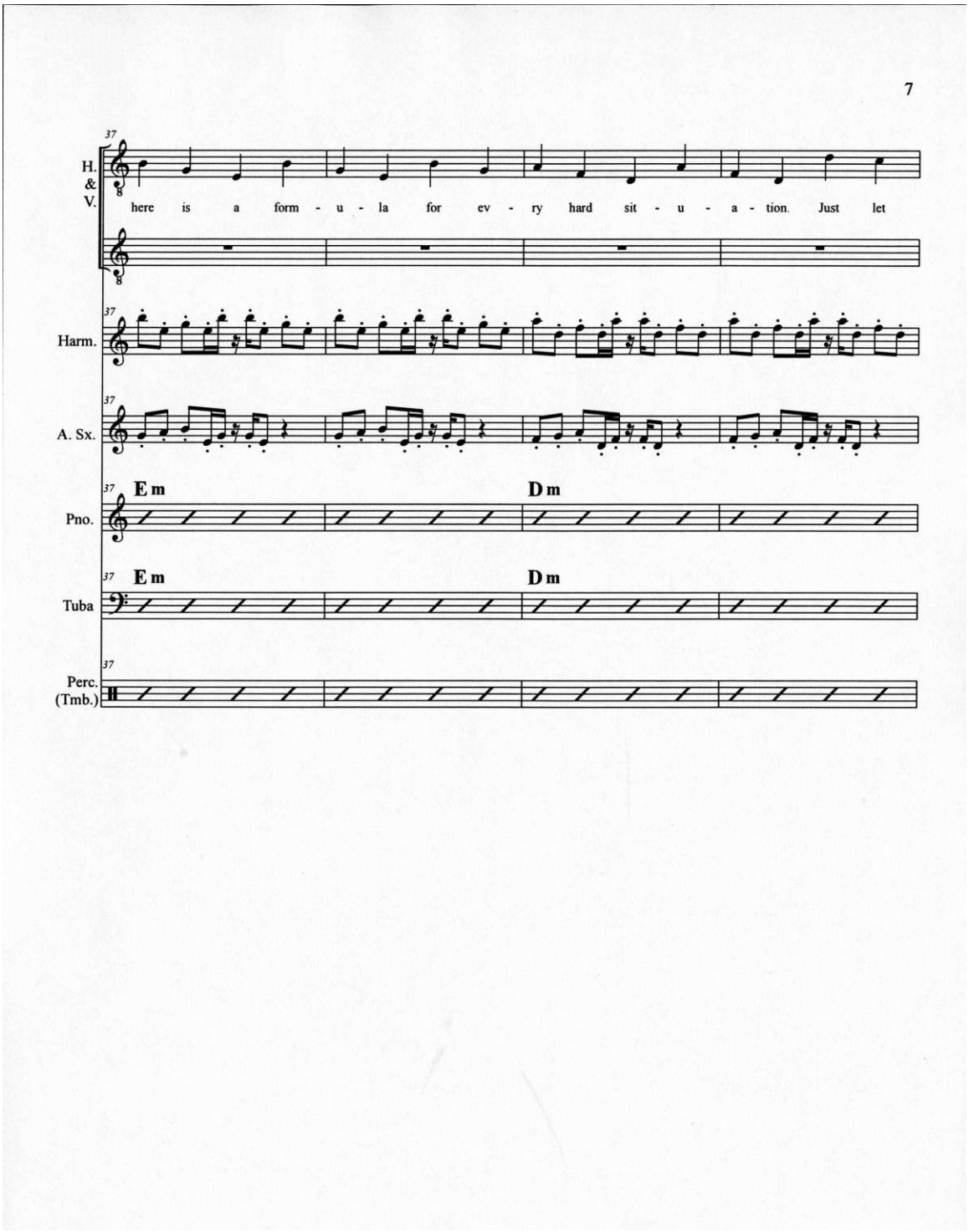

2
Let God Lead
H. & V.
We be - gin to suc-ceed - when the cares of our lives, be-gin and end with the hurt of oth-ers.
A. Sx.
Pno.
Tuba
E♭Maj7
C6/9
G
Perc. (Tmb.)
Similar
We be-gin to breathe when the wounds of oth - ers be-come re-liev - ed with the love of oth-ers.

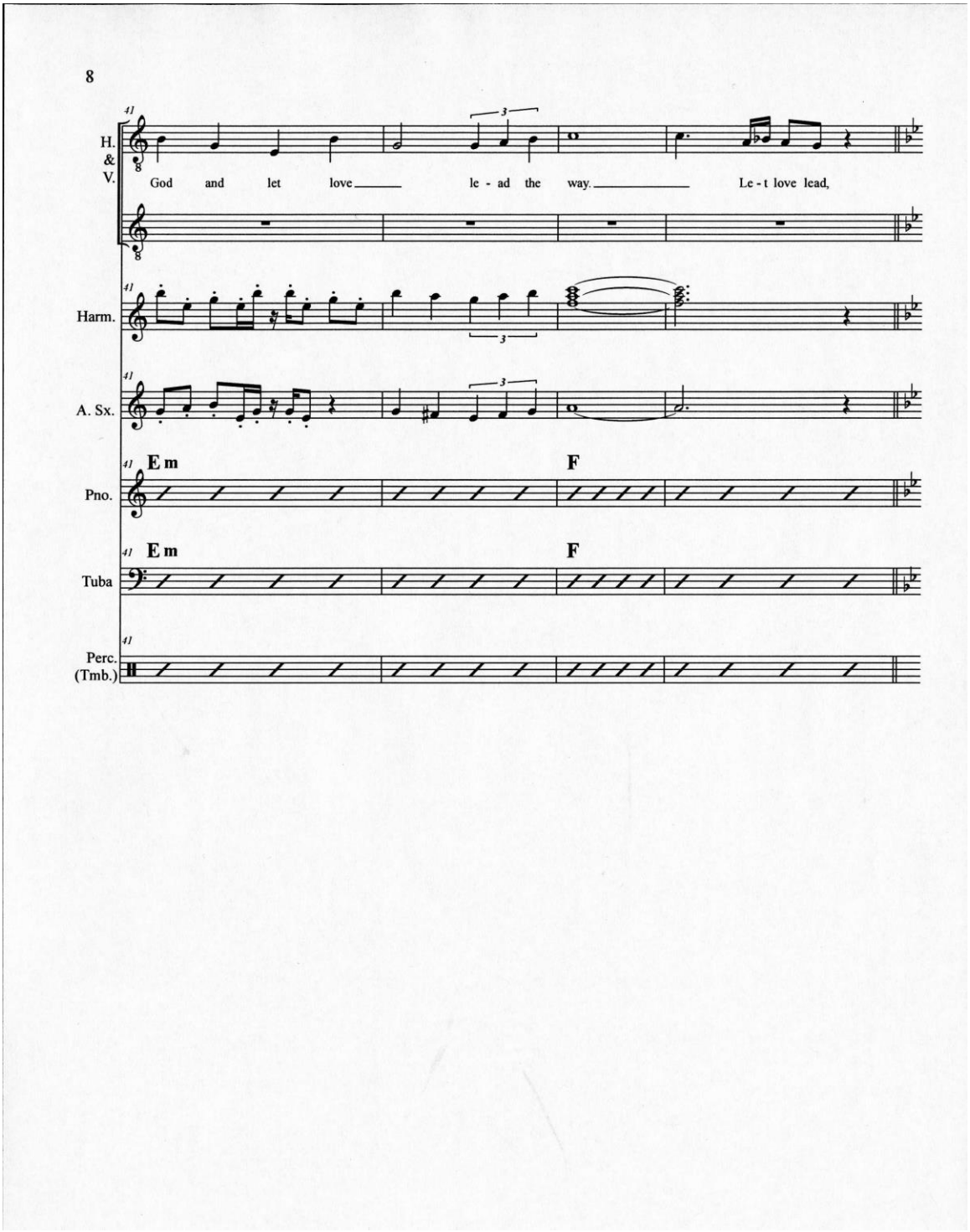

Let God Lead
3
H. & V.
He who looks a - round to find who's in need, has made the best in-vest - ment as a hu - man being. You know that
A. Sx.
Pno.
Tuba
E♭Maj7
C6/9
G
Perc. (Tmb.)
He who looks a - round to find who's in need has made the best in-vest - ment in his leg - a-cy. I say that

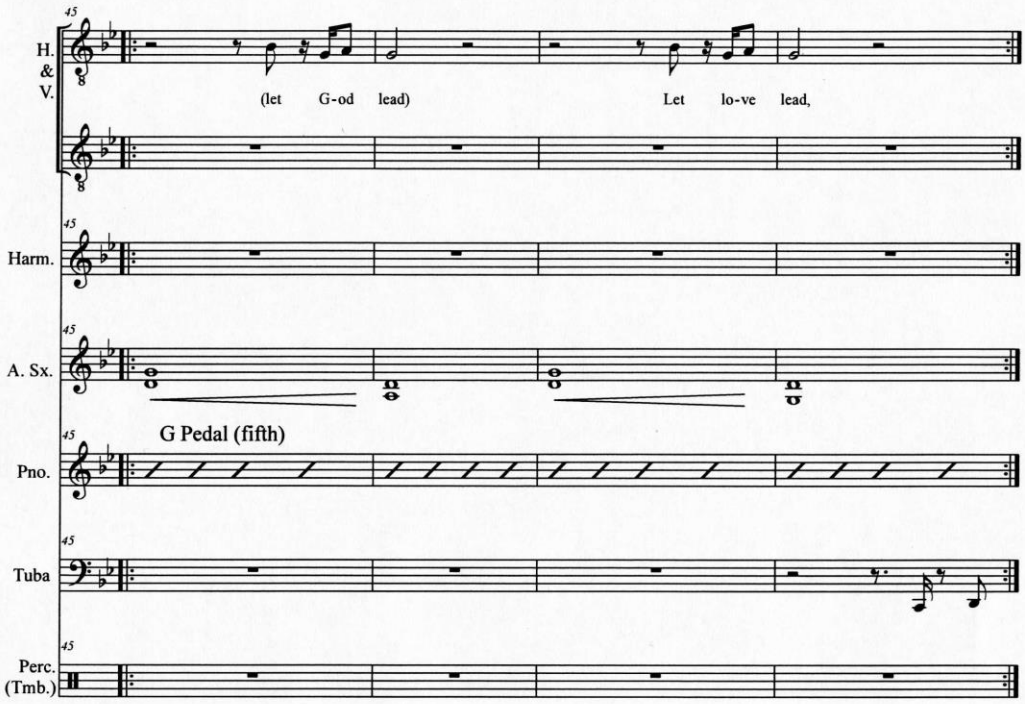

4
Let God Lead
25
H. & V.
Love will ne-ver force (no). Love will ne-ver quit (no). Love ain't nev-er loose. Love ain't nev-er miss.
A. Sx.
Pno.
Fill
Tuba
E♭Maj7
C 6/9
G
Perc. (Tmb.)


5
29
H. & V.
Of all things last-ing there re-mains only three.
What mon - ey can't buy only these will suc-ceed.
Harm.
A. Sx.
C
D
Pno.
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)


6
33
H. & V.
Faith, hope, and Love, - but the great-est of these is__ love.
So,
Harm.
A. Sx.
C
Pno.
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)


7
37
H. & V.
here is a form - u - la for ev - ry hard sit - u - a - tion. Just let
Harm.
A. Sx.
Em
Dm
Pno.
Em
Dm
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)


8
H. & V.
God and let love le - ad the way. Le - t love lead,
Harm.
A. Sx.
Em
F
Pno.
Em
F
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)


9
45
H. & V.
(let G-od lead)
Let lo-ve lead,
Harm.
A. Sx.
G Pedal (fifth)
Pno.
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)

10

H. & V.

Can love strut? (no way) Can love de-stroy?(no way) Does love be-lit-tle? Oh no nah way no nah

Harm.

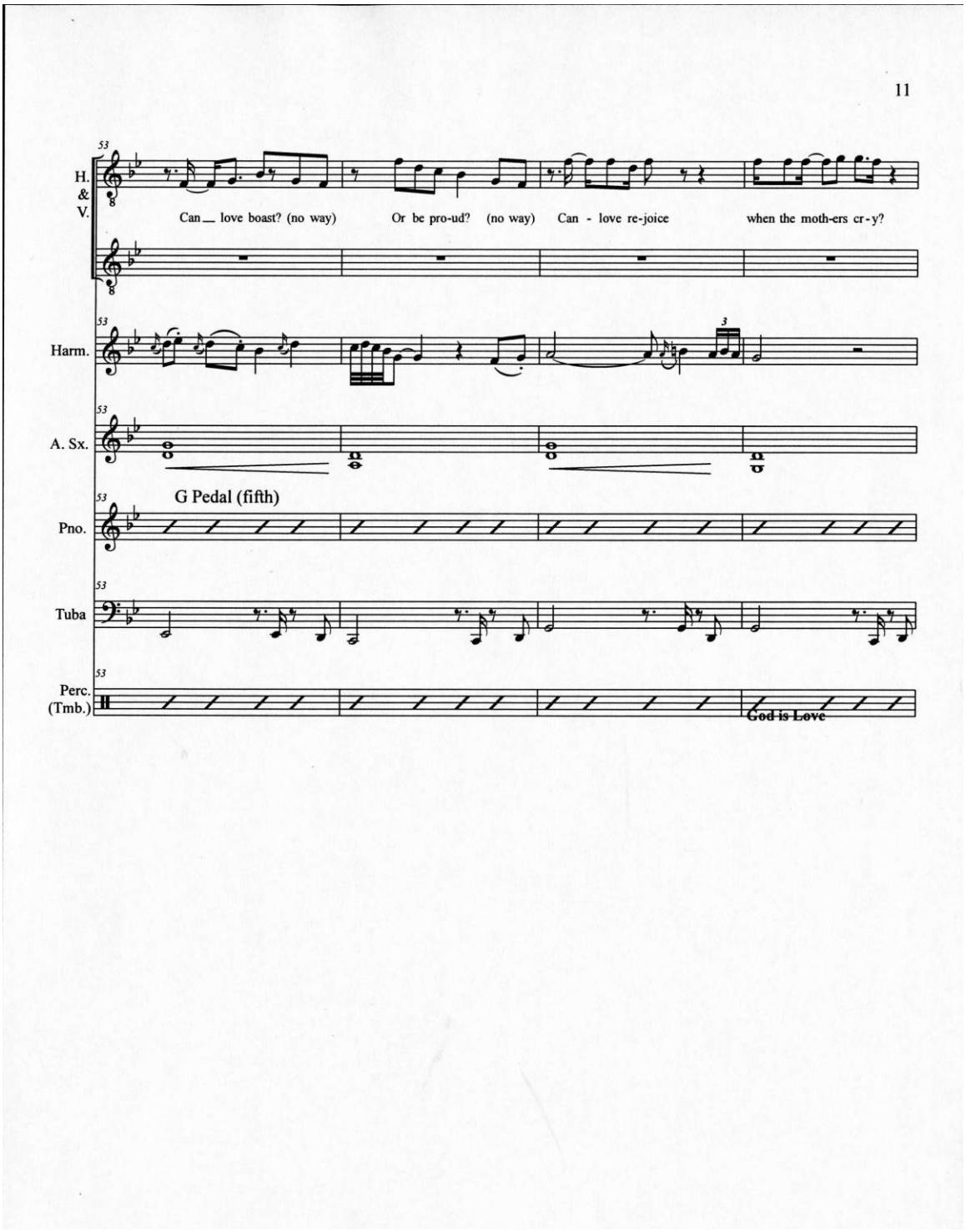
A. Sx.

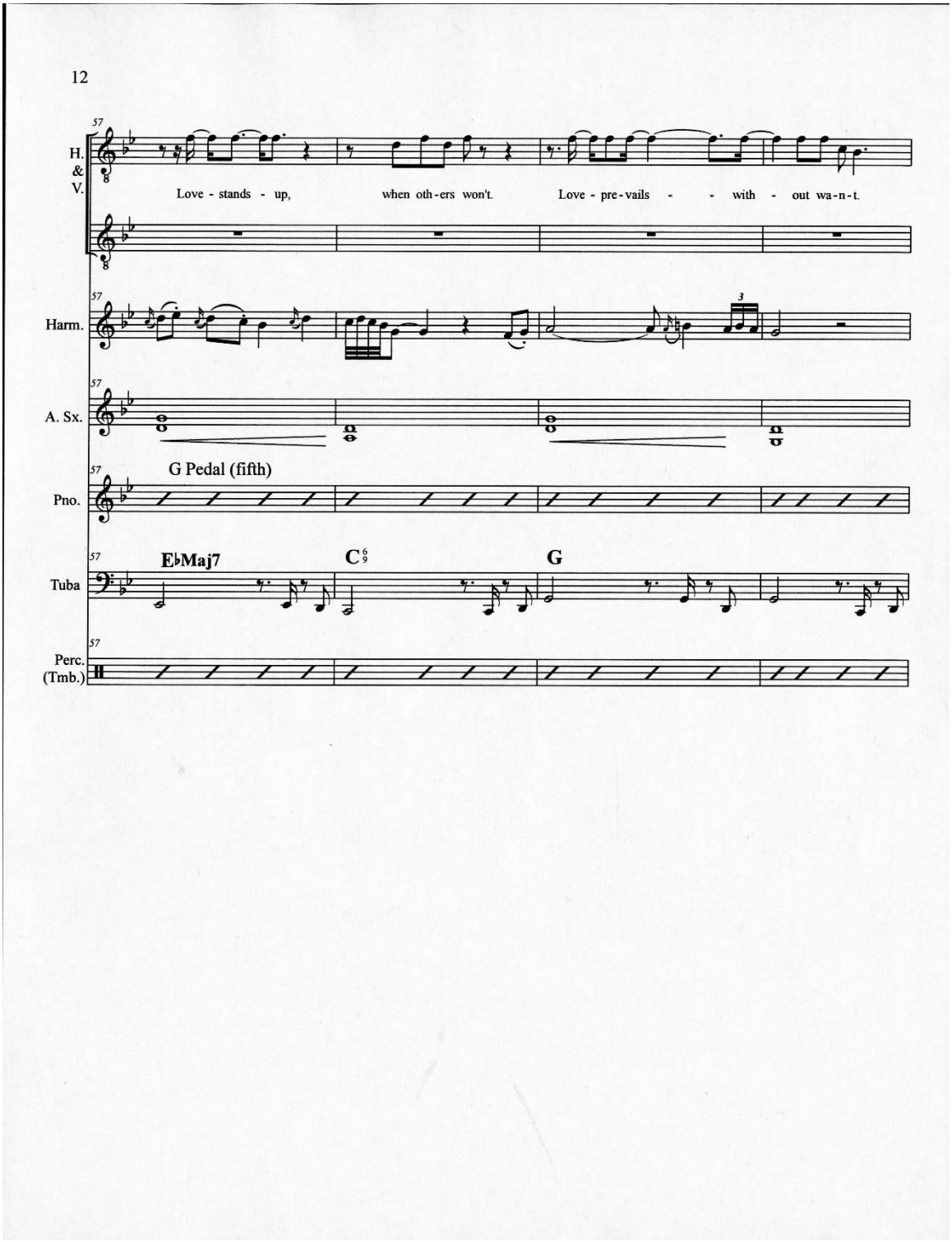
G Pedal (fifth)

Pno.

Tuba

Perc. (Tmb.)


11
H. & V.
Can__ love boast? (no way)
Or be pro-ud? (no way)
Can - love re-joice
when the moth-ers cr-y?
Harm.
A. Sx.
G Pedal (fifth)
Pno.
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)
God is Love


12
H. & V.
Love - stands - up, when oth-ers won't. Love - pre-vails - - with - out wa-n-t.
Harm.
A. Sx.
G Pedal (fifth)
Pno.
E♭Maj7
C6/9
G
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)

H. & V.

Love - puts - up - - - with an - y - thing Cause, God is love, and Love ___ is God. Of

Harm.

A. Sx.

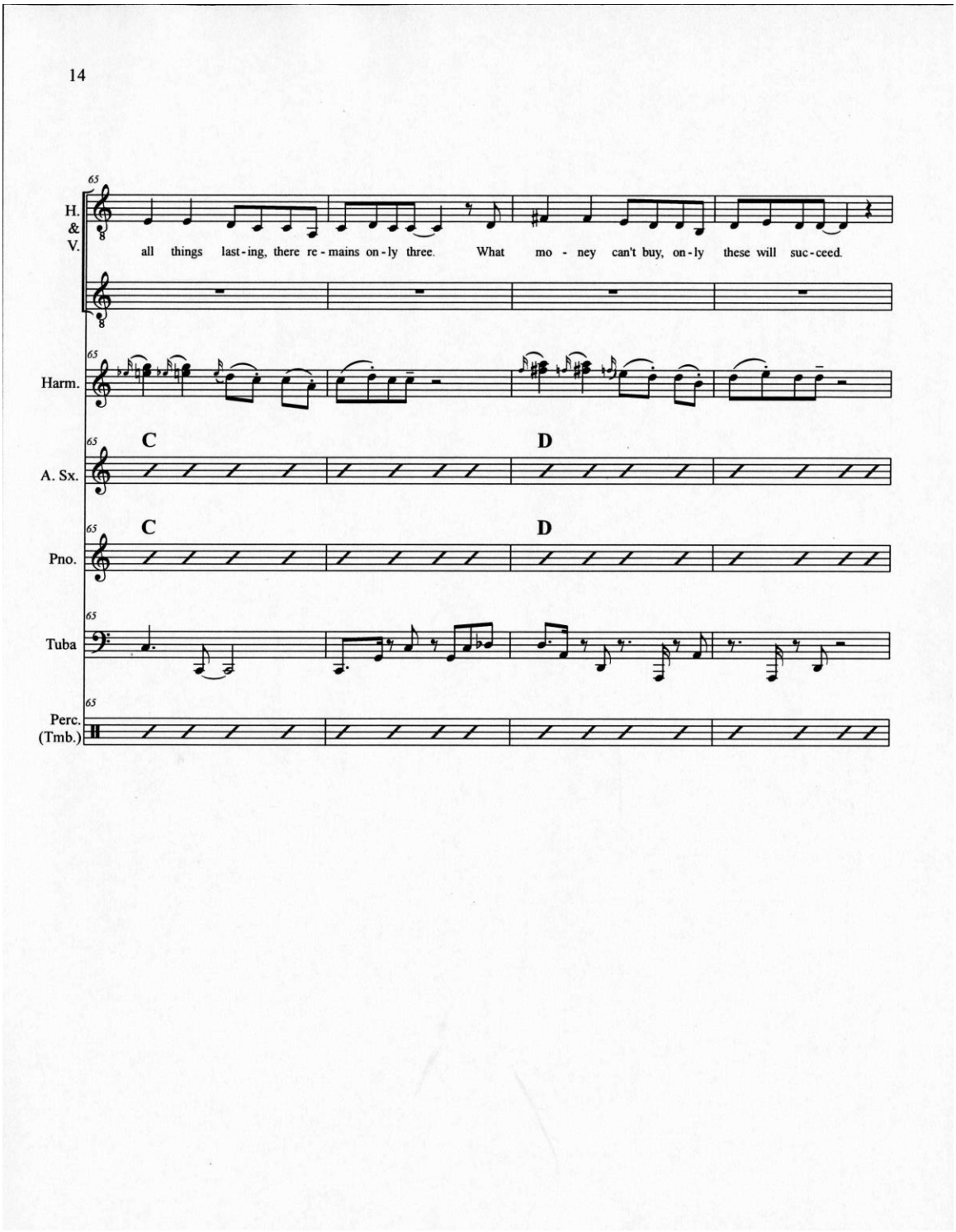
G Pedal (fifth)

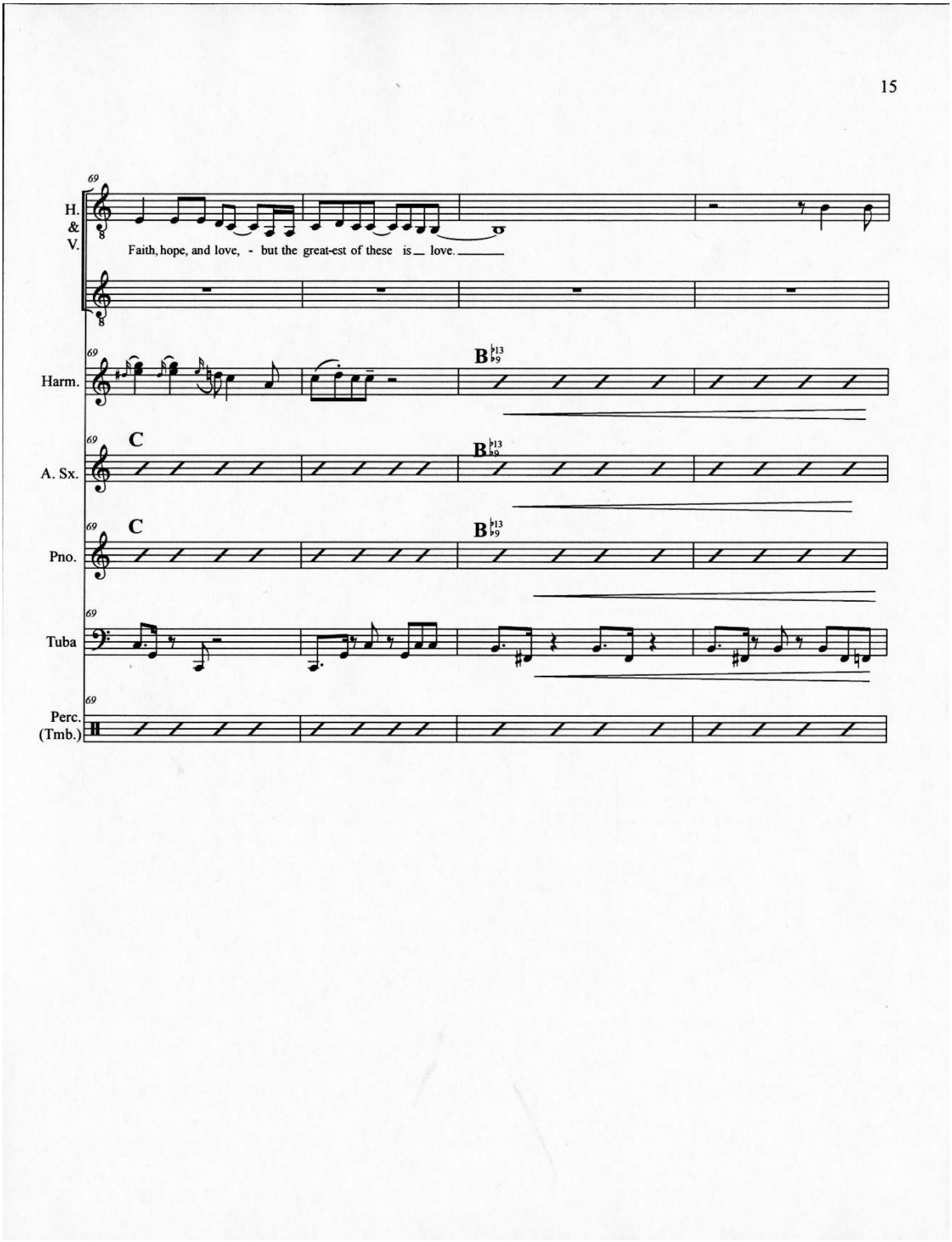
Pno.

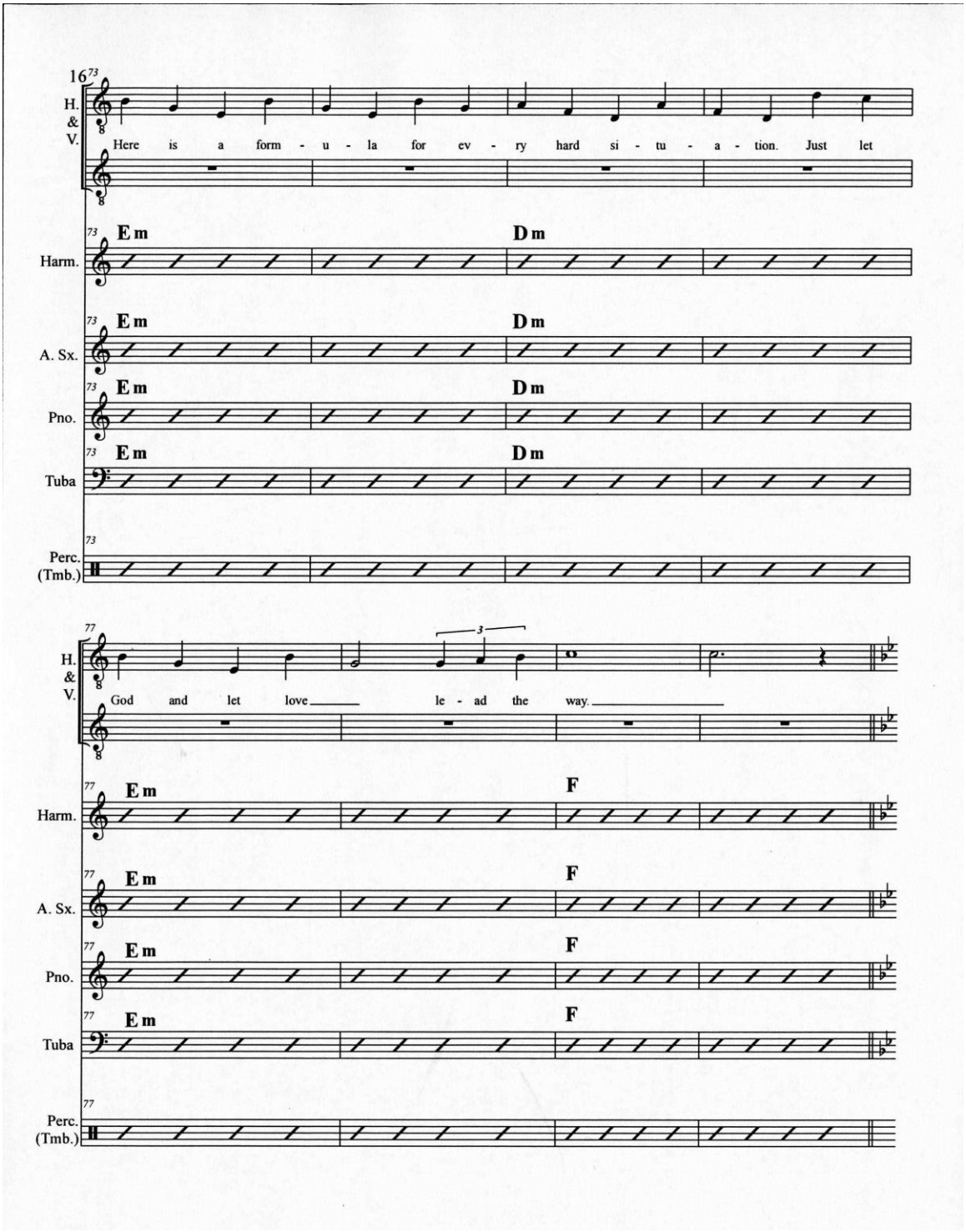
E♭Maj7 C$^{6}_{9}$ G

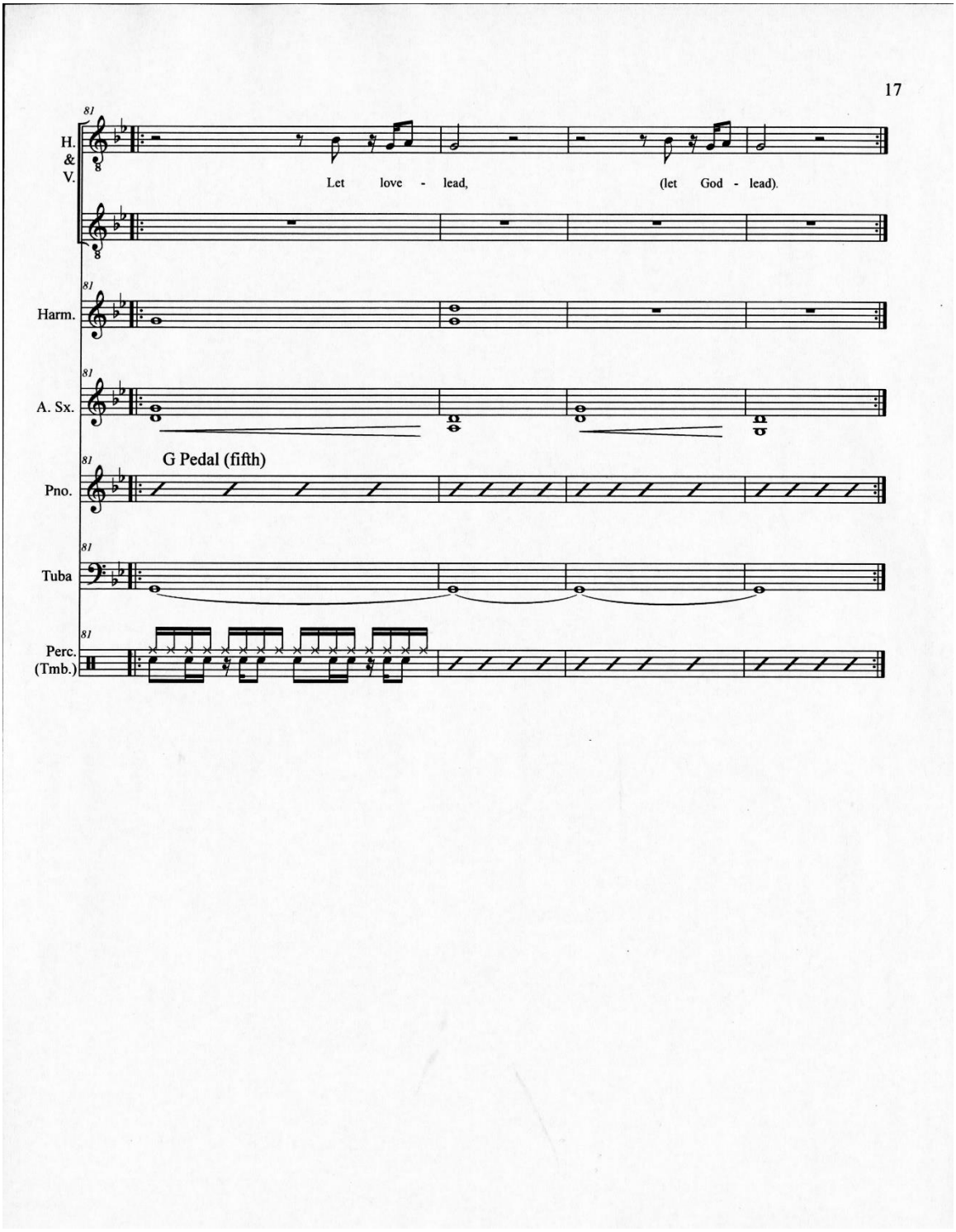
Tuba

Perc. (Tmb.)

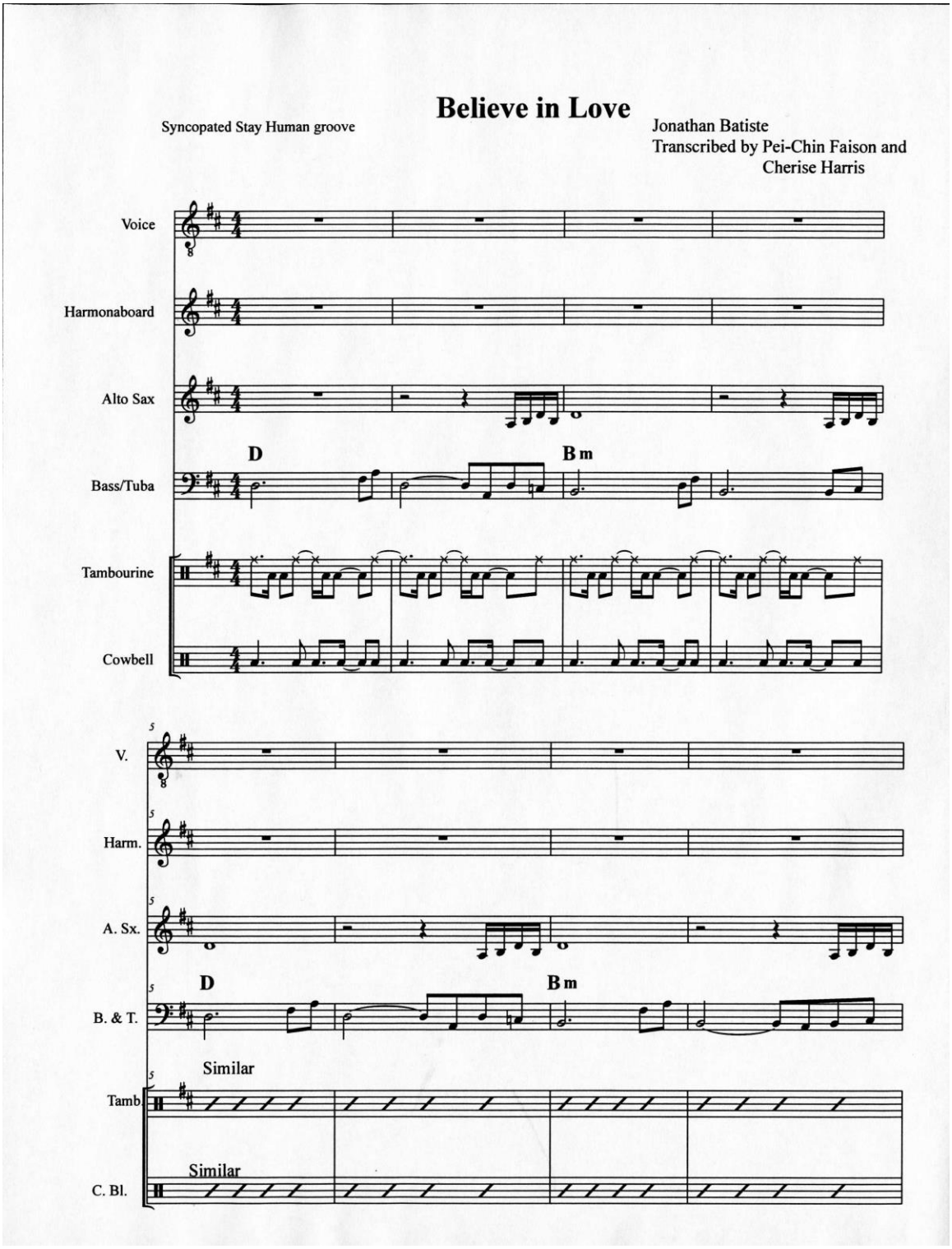

14
65
H. & V.
all things last-ing, there re-mains on-ly three. What mo - ney can't buy, on-ly these will suc-ceed.
Harm.
A. Sx.
C
D
Pno.
C
D
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)

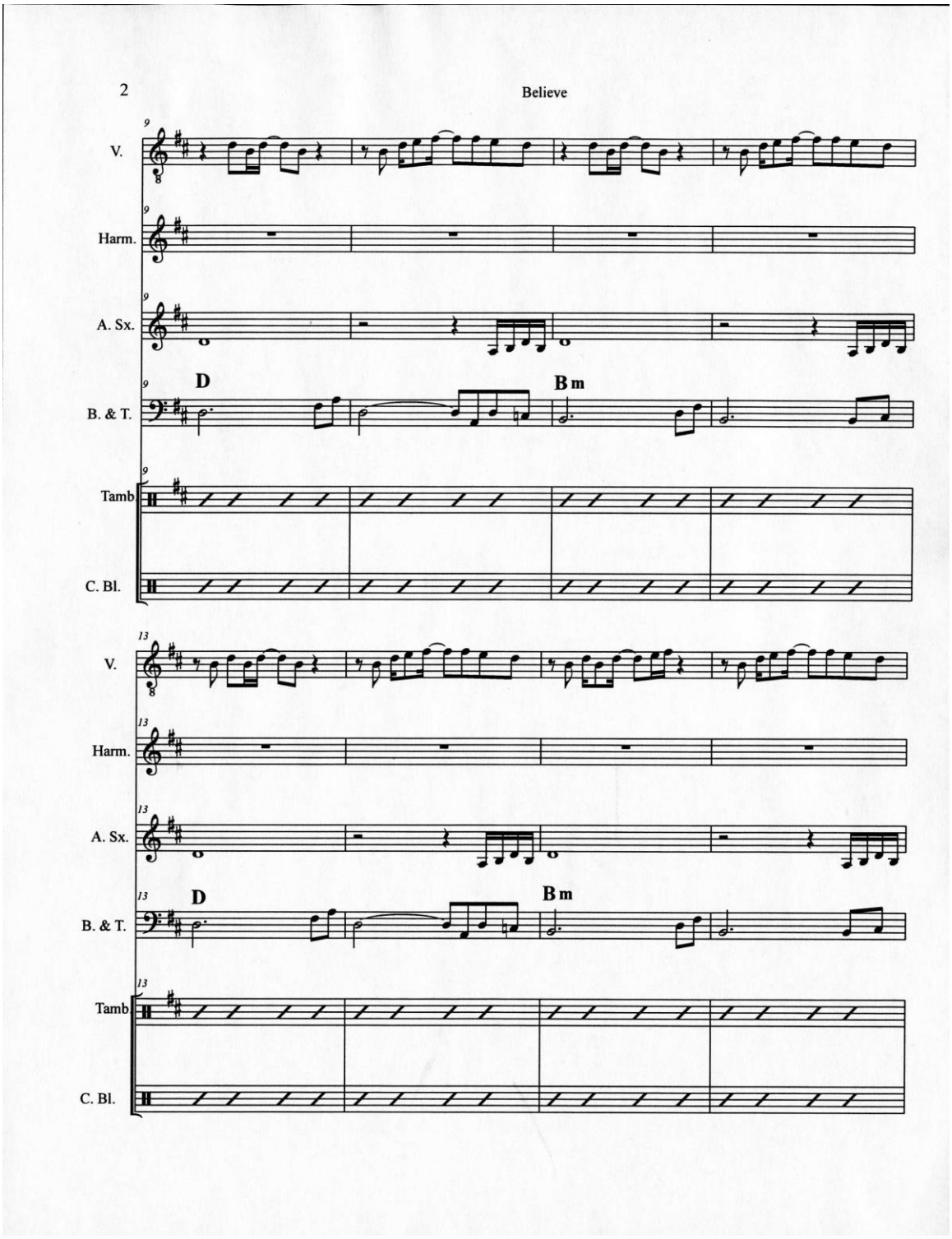

15
69
H. & V.
Faith, hope, and love, - but the great-est of these is love.
Harm.
A. Sx.
Pno.
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)
C
B♭13♭9

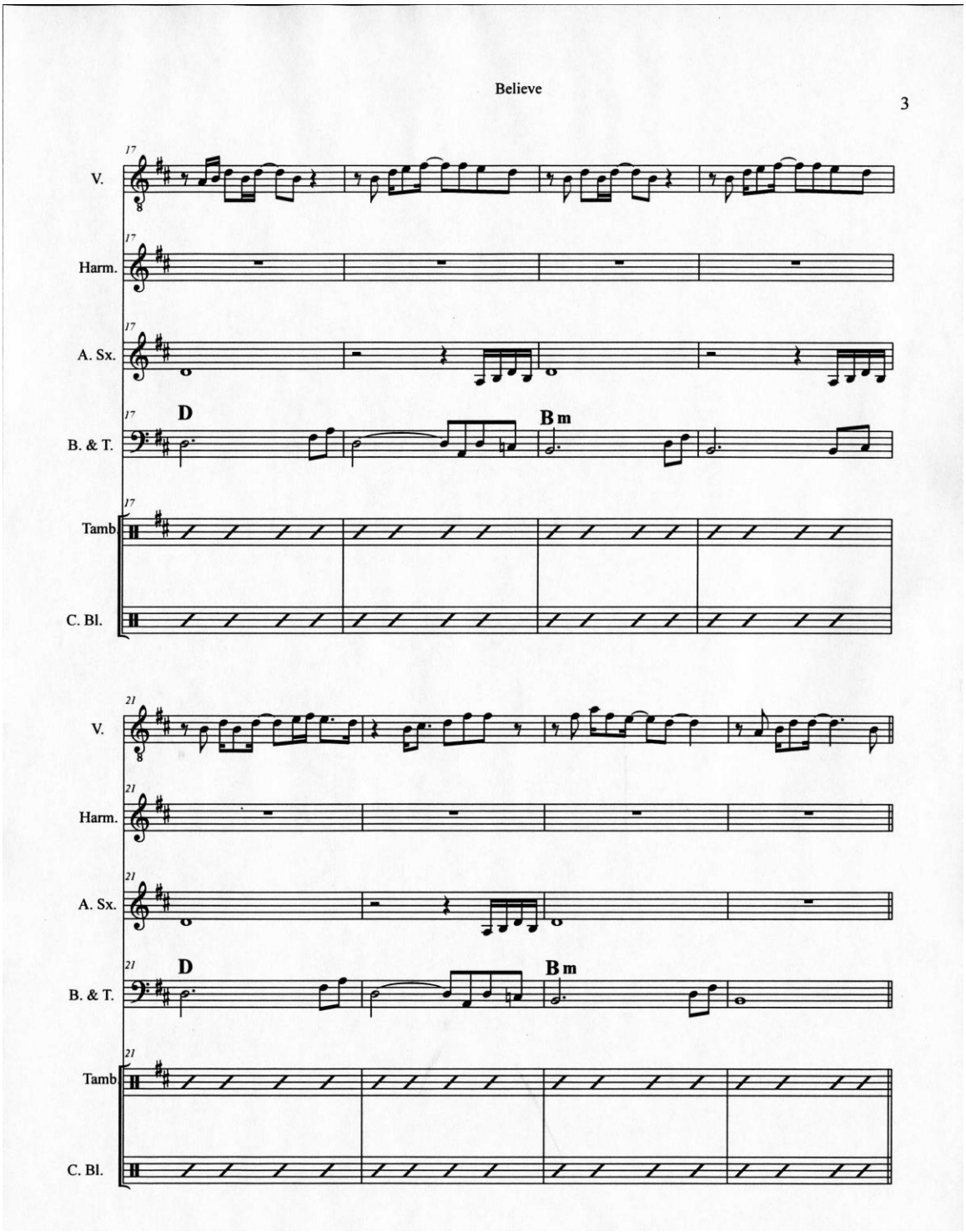

16
H. & V.
Here is a form - u - la for ev - ry hard si - tu - a - tion. Just let
Harm.
Em
Dm
A. Sx.
Pno.
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)
God and let love le - ad the way.
F

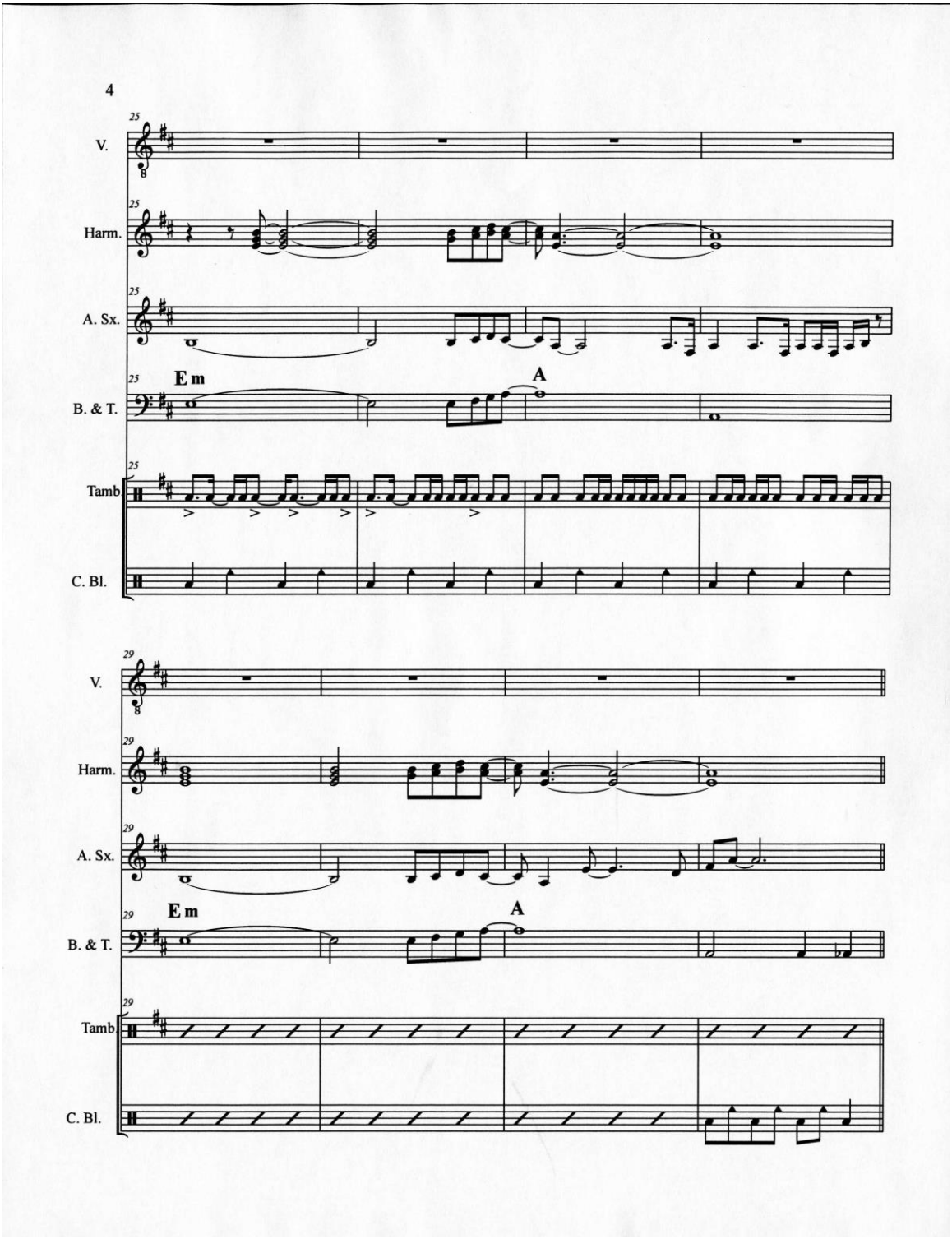

17
81
H. & V.
Let love - lead, (let God - lead).
Harm.
A. Sx.
G Pedal (fifth)
Pno.
Tuba
Perc. (Tmb.)

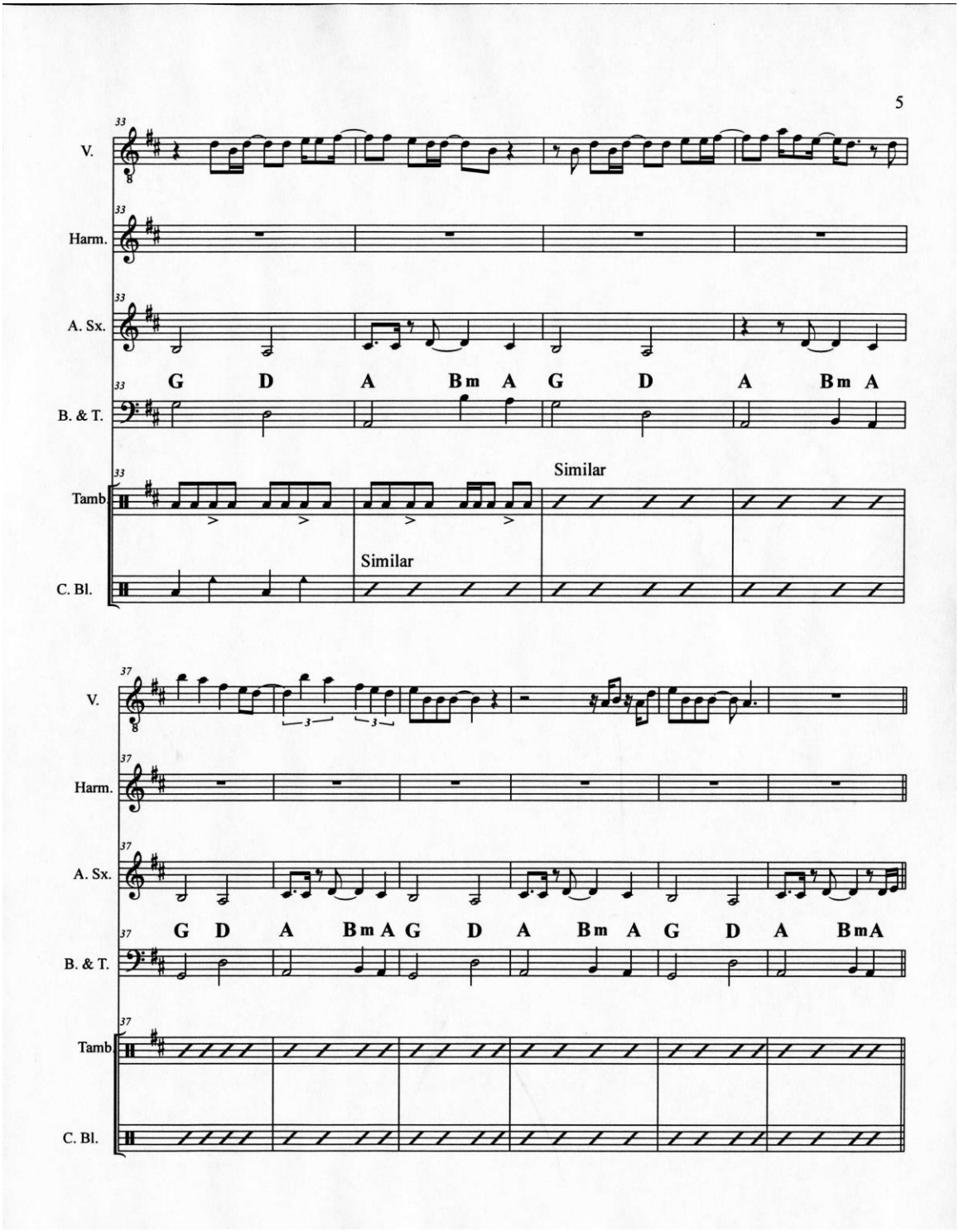
Appendix C: "Believe," *Believe* Single

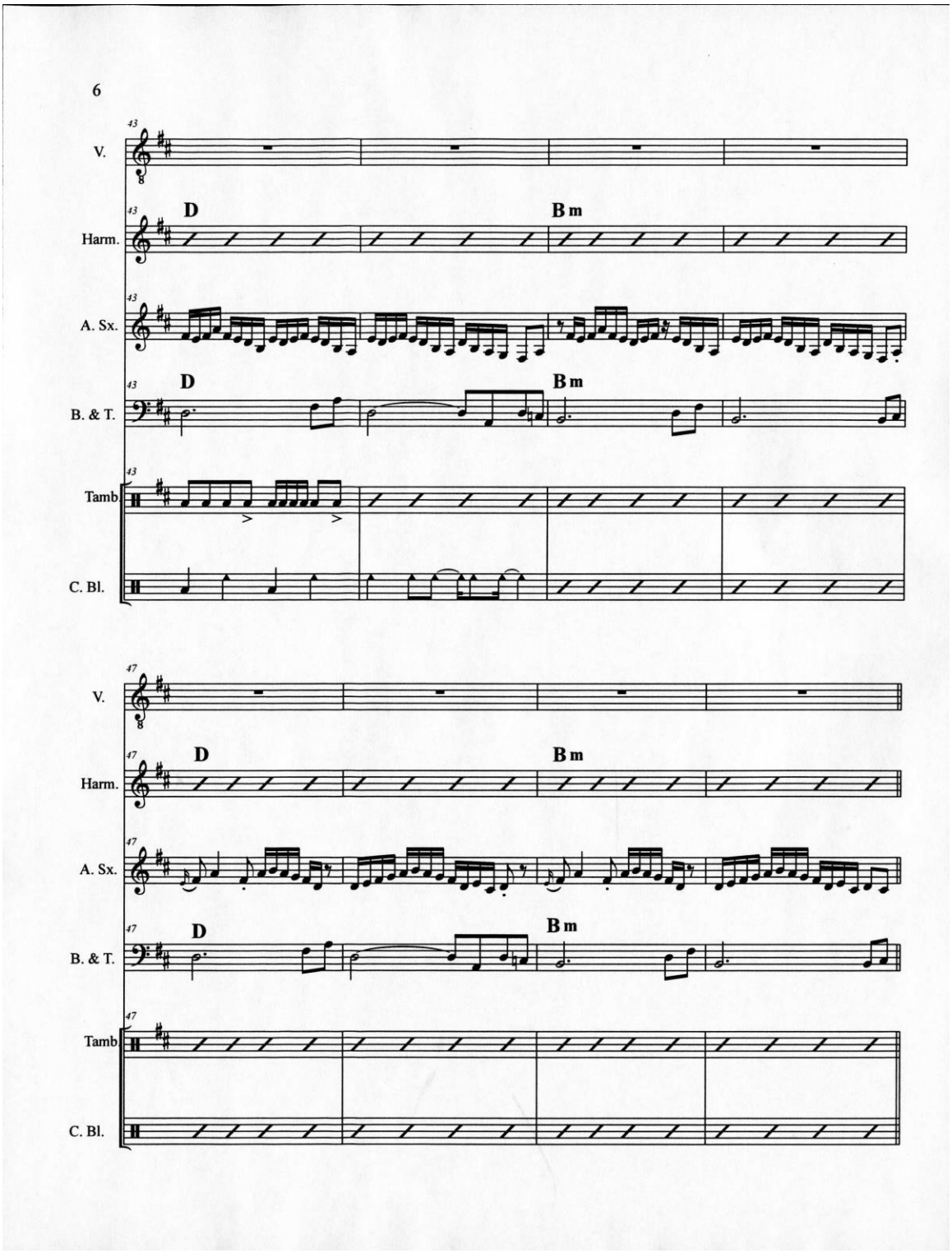


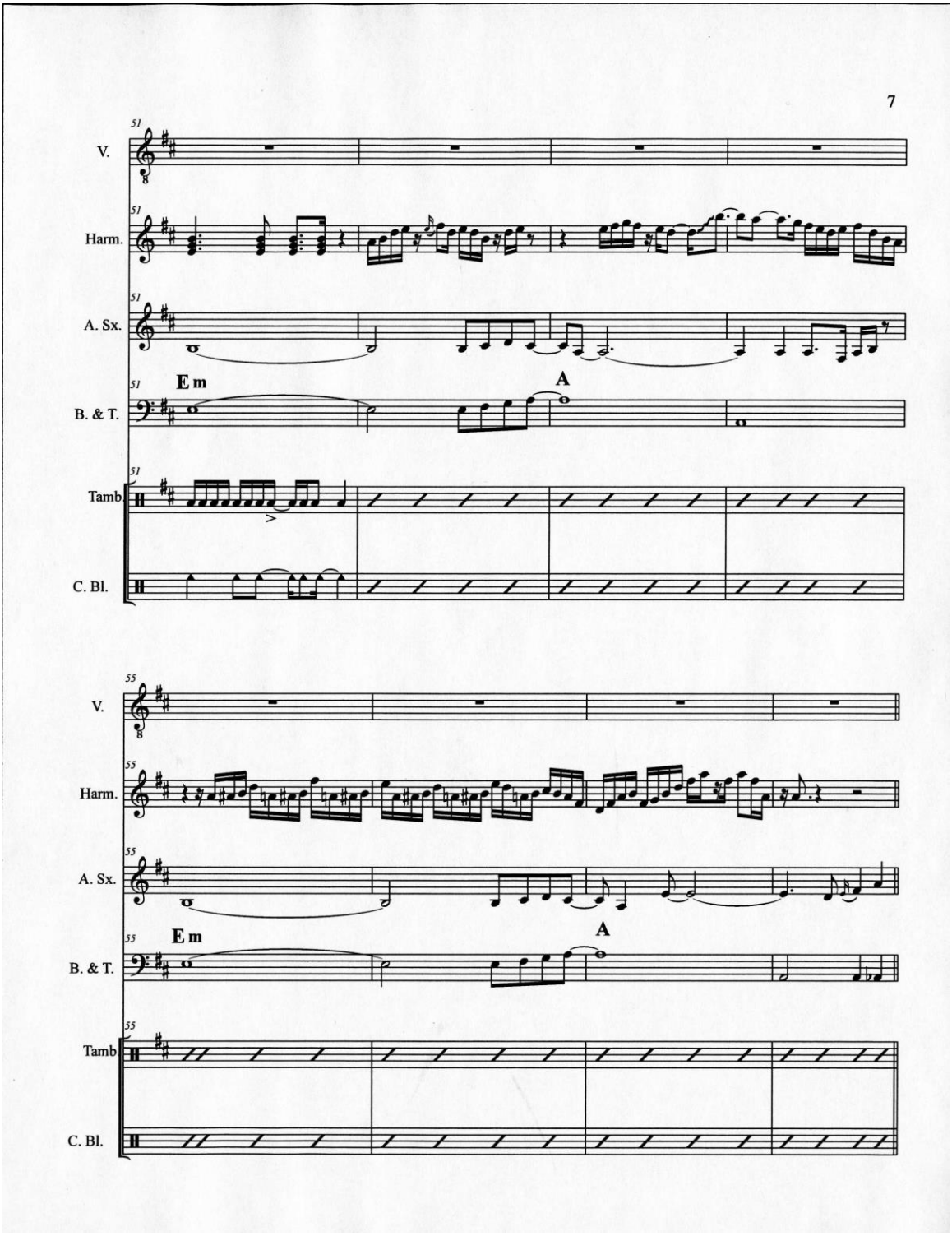

2
Believe
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
B. & T.
Tamb
C. Bl.
D
B m

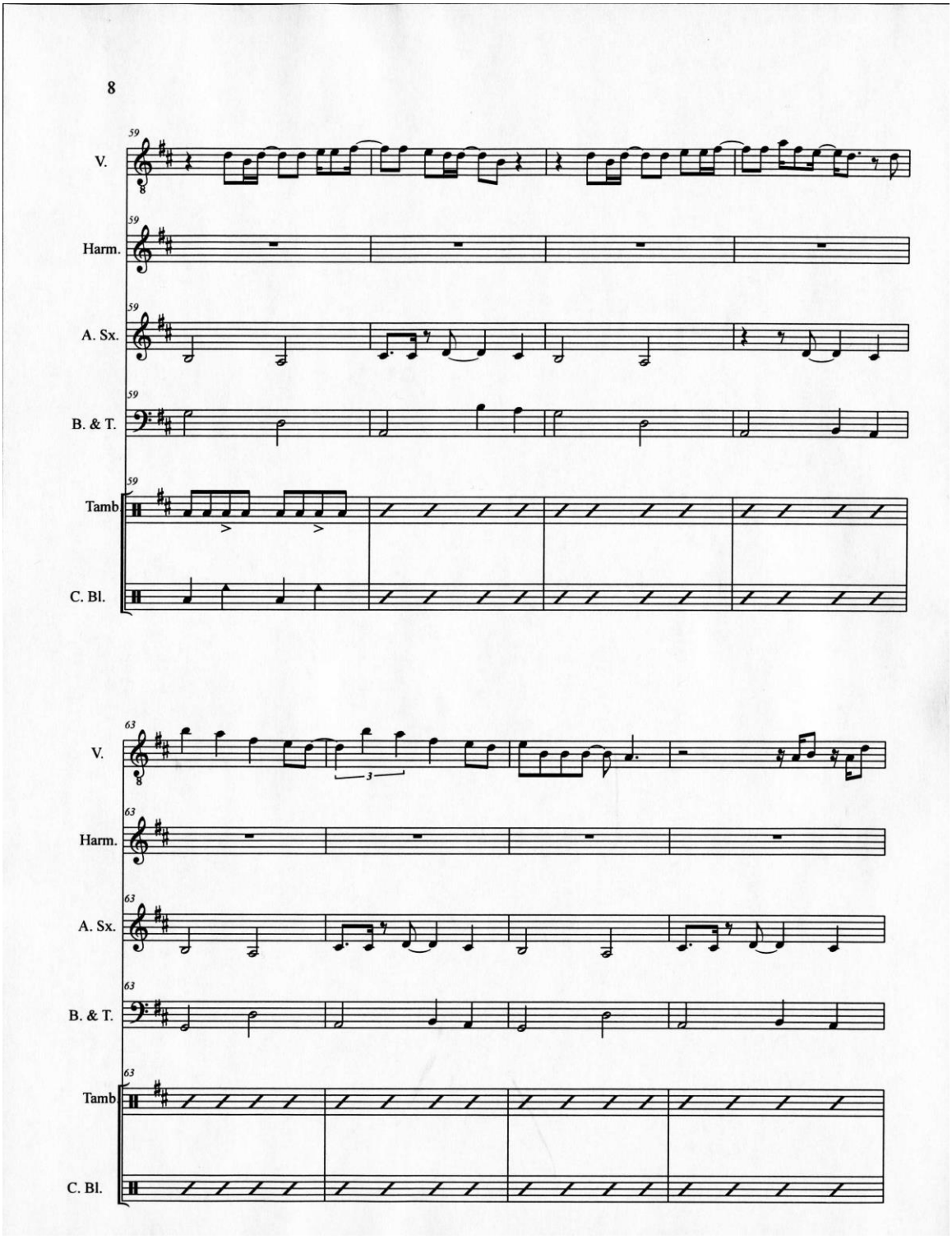

Believe
3
17
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
B. & T.
D
Bm
Tamb
C. Bl.
21
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
B. & T.
D
Bm
Tamb
C. Bl.

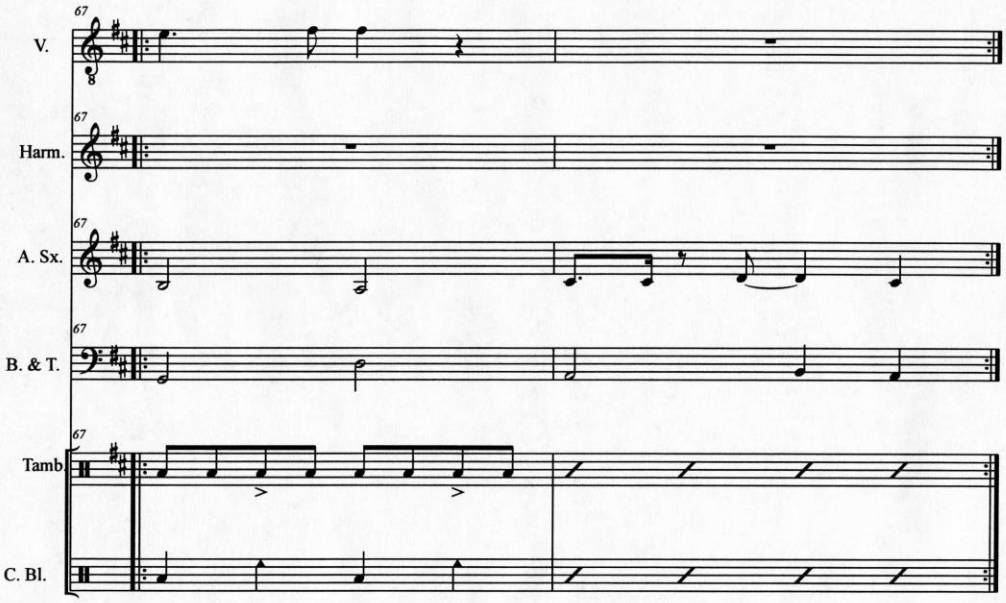

4
25
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
Em
A
B. & T.
Tamb.
C. Bl.
29
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
Em
A
B. & T.
Tamb.
C. Bl.


5
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
G D A Bm A G D A Bm A
B. & T.
Tamb
Similar
C. Bl.
Similar
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
G D A BmA G D A Bm A G D A BmA
B. & T.
Tamb
C. Bl.


6
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
B. & T.
Tamb
C. Bl.
D
Bm
43
47


7
51
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
Em
A
B. & T.
Tamb
C. Bl.
55
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
Em
A
B. & T.
Tamb
C. Bl.


8
59
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
B. & T.
Tamb
C. Bl.
63
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
B. & T.
Tamb
C. Bl.


67
V.
Harm.
A. Sx.
B. & T.
Tamb
C. Bl.

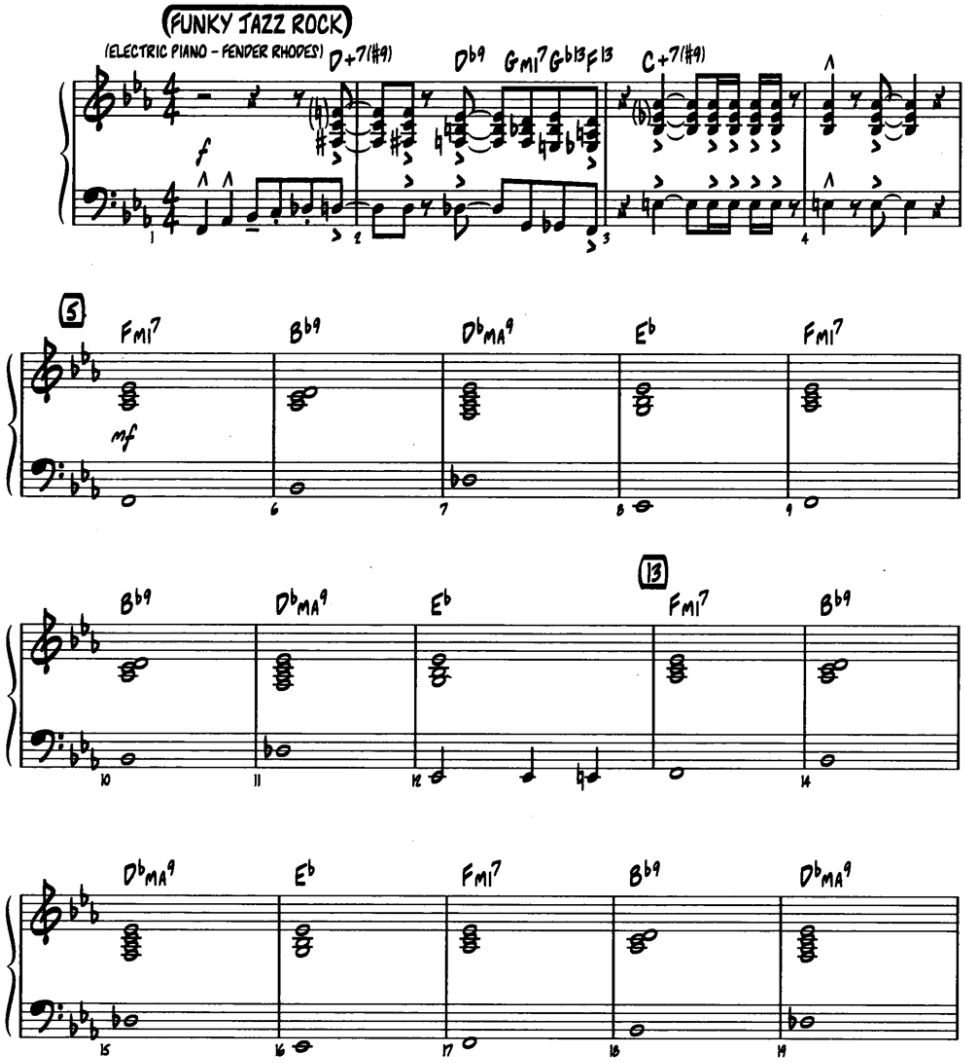
Appendix D: "Humanism," *The Late Show with Stephen Colbert* EP

From the Television Series THE LATE SHOW WITH STEPHEN COLBERT

HUMANISM

PIANO

By JONATHAN M. BATISTE
Arranged by PAUL MURTHA



PIANO

21 𝄋

Eb | Cmi7/F | F13 | Fmi7/Bb | Bb9

(Bb9) | Bbmi7/Eb | Eb13 | Gmi7 | C+7(#9)

29

Fmi7 | Bb9 | Dbma9 | Eb

Fmi7 | Bb9 | Dbma9 | Eb | TO CODA ⊕

D+7(#9) | Db9 | Gmi7 Gb13 F13 | C+7(#9)

41 OPEN FOR SOLOS

COMP - SAMPLE VOICINGS

PIANO

Fmi7 B♭9 D♭MA9 E♭ Fmi7 B♭9

mf

42 43 44 45 46

49

D♭MA9 E♭ Fmi7 B♭9 D♭MA9 E♭

47 48 50 51 52

Fmi7 B♭9 D♭MA9 E♭ D♭MA9 E♭

REPEAT FOR MORE CHORUSES

TO CONTINUE

D.S. AL CODA

53 54 55 56 57 58

CODA

Fmi7 B♭9 D♭MA9 E♭ Fmi7 B♭9

59 60 61 62 63 64

D♭MA9 E♭ D+7(♯9) D♭9 Gmi7 G♭13 F13 F13(♯11)

65 66 67 68 69

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(p) Phil Kuehn (b) Joe Saylor (d)

Live "Rubin Museum Of Art", New York, c. 2006

Sumayra (No Label or #) [CD]

Kindergarten

Virupa (The ugly one) : Movement 1

Moon river

Jen's blues

Red beans

Green chimneys

[C10723.10] Sebastian Cruz

The Cheap Landscape Trio : Sebastian Cruz (g) Ruben Samama (b) Joe Saylor (d)

c. 2008

Preludio empanado (no label or #) [CD]

Caranga

Tantas flores y no hay jardin

Recuerdo muerte

El abrelatas

Mi esquinita

Cheap landscape

Paradis quarter

Cometa de plumas

Graffiti

El birimbi

El sol de adentro

Eddie Barbash

[H896.140] Chico Hamilton

Twelve Tones of Love : George Bohanon (tb) Evan Schwam (fl,sop,ts) Eddie Barbash (fl,sop,as) Ian Young (as1) Jack Kelso (as2) Cary DeNigris (g) Paul Ramsey (elb) Chico Hamilton (d,vcl) Jeremy Carlstedt (perc) Jose James (vcl)

New York, January, October & November, 2008

A piece of music Joyous Shout! JS10012 [CD]

Happiness prevails

George

Nonchalant

Lazy afternoon

Charlie Parker suite

Penthouse A (1)

On the trail

Broadway

If you can't beat 'em, fight 'em

Really makes my day

First light

Raul

Steinway

I don't know why (I just do)

Lonely woman

Brother Bob (2)

The alto of Kelso (2)

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JON
BATISTE
AND STAY HUMAN
SOCIAL MUSIC

BELIEVE in Love Riots!!!

Jon Batiste and Stay Human

Jon Batiste and Cherise Harris after playing piano and singing, respectively, “Peace,” by Horace Silver. St. Louis, MO, Jazz St. Louis Gala Kick-off Party at The Donald’s residence.

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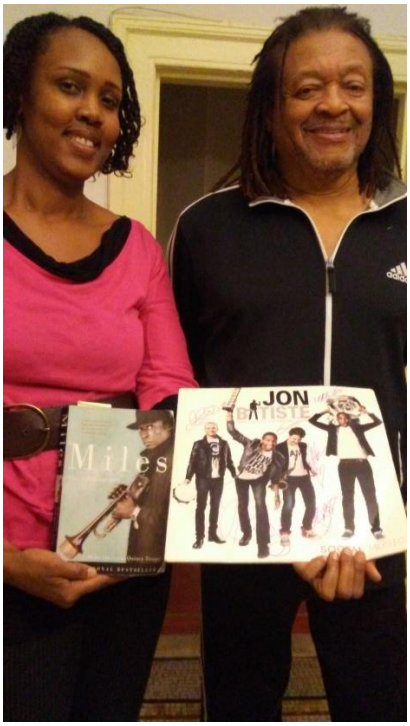
Eddie Barbash and His Orchestra, The Roxy Hotel, NYC, October 15, 2016

Marcia Salter Interview with Cherise Harris, Amy Ruth’s, Harlem, New York; October 20, 2016; with Louis Armstrong blowing in Marcia’s ear, and *Social Music* and *Jazz Is Now* albums on the table.



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Social Dance!

Ms. Etta Dixon and Mr. Bernard Dove Interview with Cherise Harris, Fuel Juice Bar, Brooklyn, New York, September 28, 2017

Jonathan Batiste with his parents, Michael and Katherine Batiste; *Jazz is Now* CD dedicated to his parents; Reminiscent of Monk, The Jonathan Batiste Trio days.

Art, Compliments of Ms. Della Moses Walker


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