

MILES OF MUSIC - The TV Show

By Bob Miles

Since November of 1996 I have had the great honor to host a television show which I have created called the "World of Guitar." Today the same show is now, "Miles of Music" which has my last name tied to it's title. I would like to share some great experiences that I have had with some of the greatest players of our time.

The late Sal Salvador, Bill Neale, Mike Giordano and myself were having dinner the evening before Sal's show. Sal said that Herbie Hancock was a member of Sal's band when Herbie was very young. Sal said that he always kidded with Herbie and they had a close relationship. After leaving Sal's band, Herbie had come across Sal sometime later and said to Sal, "Hey Sal, I wrote a song about you. I called it the "Watermelon Man." So now when I hear "Watermelon Man" I think back to that evening. During the filming, I read a letter that Johnny Smith quoted to me over the phone regarding Sal. As I read the letter I could see Sal's eyes swelling with emotion.

The late Jack Pastorius, the father of Jaco came on the show with Jaco's two cousins. Jack was on film, while the cousins sat off screen. Jack said that Pat Metheny had told him that he had been missing a certain guitar string for awhile in his room and could not understand how it could be missing in such close quarters. After hearing of Jaco's death, Pat was lying down and the string showed up next to Pat's hand as if Jaco had something to do with it's appearance. Pat and Jaco were very close according to Jack.

While interviewing the guitar builder, Bob Benedetto I asked, "So what do you contribute your success to?" Bob replied, "my wife Cindy, of course!" Good answer and if you know Cindy you will know how true that answer was.

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the danger of profoundly developing one side of one's intellect while sacrificing or ignoring other important areas of it as well as the interpersonal and social intelligence skills at large. Just like in real life, in Hesse's novel this leads the players of the Glass Bead Game to psychological instability and propensity towards insanity that could be avoided only by those players who entered a strict regime of a prescribed meditation program and regular physical activity.

I would not be surprised if that may sound familiar to some of you. Mediation, religions, mysticism, Buddhism in particular for its practical applications and spirituality in general have often been the missing safety net for jazz musicians that I was referring to ear-

Pat Martino came on the show with only himself and a few of his Gibson, Pat Martino model guitars. Pat talked about how, prior to a gig, the horn player would play the parts to Pat. Pat would hear them and recite them note-for-note rather than reading a lead sheet during a gig. Pat spoke for over 45 minutes and impressed upon me just how down to earth he is.

Jimmy Bruno, prior to his show, had Bob Benedetto raise his action pretty high. It still wasn't high enough so Bob proceeded to raise it even higher and then still higher. Bob and I just looked at each other. We were both thinking that Jimmy's action is so ridiculously high at this point, how could anyone handle that guitar. Of course it was what Jimmy wanted and he played great. Bob commented "for us mere mortals that would be impossible to pull off."

Les Paul during his show talked about how Leo Fender turned him away with his proto type model guitar. Today, Gibson makes millions of dollars from the Les Paul model. Les talked about how he invented the electric guitar first without sides and only a railroad type body. When he played this guitar people were indifferent and not all that excited. Les added wings or sides to the log and people really responded. Les said that "people hear with their eyes." Les said how they turned away Doris Day as a vocalist since they traveled around in a bus with underwear hanging out the windows to dry.

For studio guitarists, I had Bill Neale as a guest. Bill played with Tommy Tedesco and as was the staff guitarist for the "Gong Show." Bill said that they taped the "Gong Show" on Saturdays one after the other. Bill was playing when Tommy Tedesco appeared, in that infamous episode, when he showed up in a ballet tutu. Jeff Baxter of Steely Dan and Doobie Brothers fame called me at my studio to tell me that Bill helped him immensely and they played the "Gong Show" movie together. To this day Bill is one of my very best friends.

lier in the article. The basic realization being that not even music itself gives fulfillment to a Godless life, no matter how far out in the process you may get. But without getting much further in this particular issue, those musicians who have transcended music as a mean in itself and have embraced it as part of a holistic and spiritual journey seems to be much better equipped and successful in their outcomes and personal equilibrium. In this sense, practicing for the unexpected as previously mentioned, it is not such a contradiction as it may have seemed in a preliminary instance. Nor expecting the unexpected is such a frightening concept anymore because it is all part of a greater realm of opportunities to be seized. The way a person meditates or prays

Jeff Tamalier from Tower of Power said that he plays much differently than when he was with Jefferson Starship. Jeff said that when you play with a rock band like Jefferson Starship you have to play wide. Tower of Power calls for much more closer voicings and fewer notes.

I sat next to Gene Bertoncini prior to his interview. To break the ice I asked Gene if we could just do a couple of practice questions. He said sure. I asked, "so how is everything?" Gene replied, "None of your dam business!" We both broke out laughing. During the show, Gene said that today he tries to hold his notes longer and really make things swing.

Bucky Pizzarelli played his 7-string Benedetto and is a walking history book of swing guitar. He talked about the days with Van Monroe to Rosemary Clooney. Bucky often played studio gigs in the day then followed by jazz gigs in the evenings. Wow...the good old days!

Jackie King was touring with the Willie Nelson band when he came on as a guest. I often play with the guests at the beginning of the shows. We decided to play, "All of Me." Jackie asked what key I wanted it in. His ears are that good. Jackie said that even if you don't like a player's style, or his playing, you can learn from something from them. Jackie has amazing technical facility and like most great players attributes it to a lot of practicing at a very early age.

I have taped over 100 shows to this date. "Miles of Music" airs on Comcast in Southeastern Pennsylvania and New Jersey, Patriot-8, Princeton TV-30, Nashville's Channel #19 and Drexel University Television.

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should really resemble such a way of preparing yourself for the unexpected musical possibilities on stage and be integrated in one's personal music training. This is could be an important realization in the practice room and in a musical life. Together with the rigid technical and theoretical training, a jazz musician is well advised to immediately direct the connection of his developing craft to a mean greater than instrumental proficiency. If jazz stems out of a musical chemistry of its players' extemporary contingence, as I have previously stated, is it is obvious that your way of practicing for that moment cannot only be oriented inwardly at your own technical expansion, because it could make your playing

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