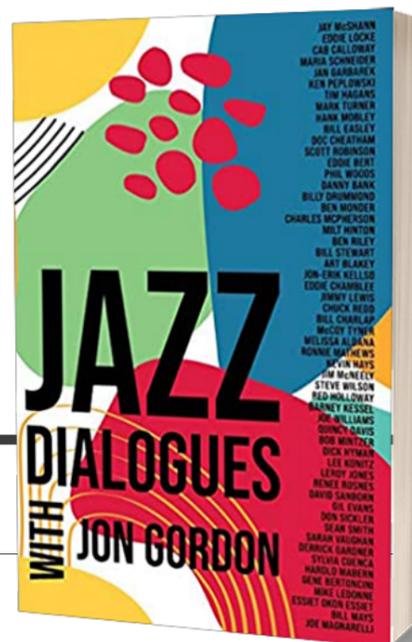


# Jazz Dialogues

by Jon Gordon

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BY JOE LANG



**J**azz *Dialogues* is a series of interviews by saxophonist Jon Gordon with an eclectic cast of his peers, with many appropriate anecdotal interludes dispersed among the interviews.

Gordon is a jazz musician of note who adds a dimension to his interviews that a non-musician interviewer would lack. His pieces are more like conversations between friends and/or colleagues than formal interviews. Since Gordon and his subjects share their mutual understanding of jazz, the discussions flow with an ease and naturalness that is infectious. Gordon knows what questions

to ask to draw out his subjects on the topics that he deems pertinent, and often interjects his own perspectives, creating many fascinating exchanges.

One thing that makes the conversations between Gordon and his subjects particularly special is the familiarity that Gordon has with such a wide variety of jazz genres, and particularly his knowledge of the recordings of his subjects. Whether speaking with trumpeter Jon Erik-Kellso, primarily a player in the trad/swing tradition, or Scott Robinson, an eclectic player for both the range of instruments he plays and the diversity of the styles within his com-

fort zone, Gordon is knowledgeable about their artistry and recordings.

Gordon covers more than 50 individuals, either anecdotally or through the interviews; and they include performers from a wide variety of jazz styles. Most are players with whom Gordon has performed. They include his earliest jazz acquaintance, pianist Bill Charlap, whom he met at the age of 13 when both were students at the High School for Performing Arts in New York City, and several musicians whom Gordon considers among his most significant mentors such as drummer Edie Locke, and saxophonists Charles McPherson and Phil Woods. One exchange that deserves special attention is his interview with trumpeter Don Sickler, a man who has had vast experience as a performer, music publisher, arranger and producer.

When it comes to what Gordon refers to as story chapters, he relates

personal exchanges and interactions that he has had with a diverse cast of musicians. Particularly diverting is a brief chapter in which he describes a day subbing for Charlap as an instructor at William Paterson University where he had extended visits with pianist Harold Mabern on the trip from New York City by bus to WPU, and the trip back in a car with guitarist Gene Bertoncini. The way in which Gordon related his interactions with these two jazz giants made you wish that you had been a fly on the wall.

*Jazz Dialogues* is a treasure trove of delights. The overriding element that comes through on each page is the intelligence that Gordon possesses and his ability to express himself in ways that are consistently engaging and informative, making this one of those books that is hard to put down until there is nothing unread left to enjoy. [cymbalpress.com](http://cymbalpress.com)