

THE VOTES ARE IN: 2020 READERS' AND EXPANDED CRITICS' POLLS

AMERICA'S JAZZ MAGAZINE

# JazzTimes

MARCH 2021

**JAZZ AND GRIEF**  
Surviving a Year of Loss



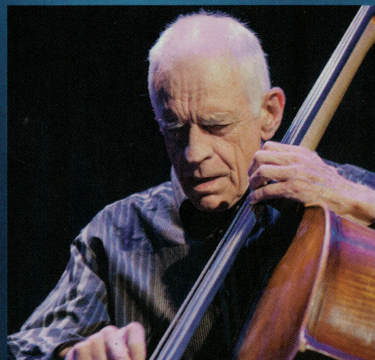
Ethan Iverson on  
**MCCOY TYNER**



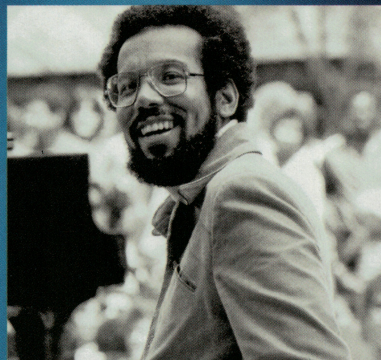
**WALLACE RONEY**  
Unpublished Memories



Lee Konitz by Dan Tepfer



Gary Peacock by Jack DeJohnette



Stanley Cowell by Charles Tolliver



Annie Ross by Sara Gazarek



Jeff Clayton by Terell Stafford

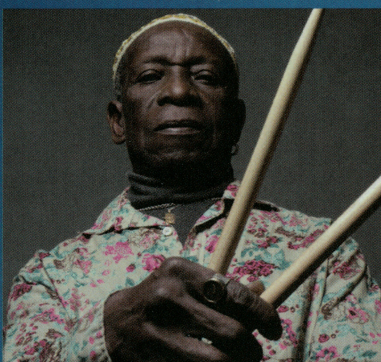
## In Memoriam Tributes to Departed Greats of 2020



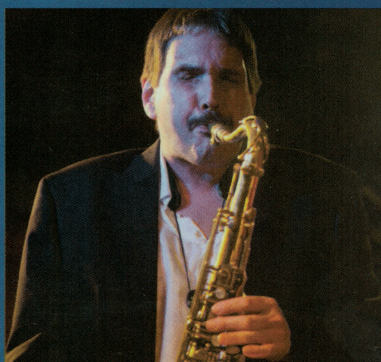
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Phil Woods  
Charles McPherson  
Dafnis Prieto  
Rudy Van Gelder  
Nubian Twist



Phil Woods at the  
Bologna Jazz Festival  
in 1968



## Phil Woods: April in Paris

Memories of another tumultuous time in history, from the great saxophonist's new autobiography

*Before his passing in September 2015, saxophonist/composer Phil Woods collaborated with regular JT contributor Ted Panken on a memoir, which was recently published by Cymbal Press as *Life in E Flat: The Autobiography of Phil Woods*. The following exclusive excerpt takes us to the spring of 1968, when Woods, his wife Chan (Charlie Parker's widow), and their family decided to make an escape from America—but found that America had, in a sense, followed them across the Atlantic.*

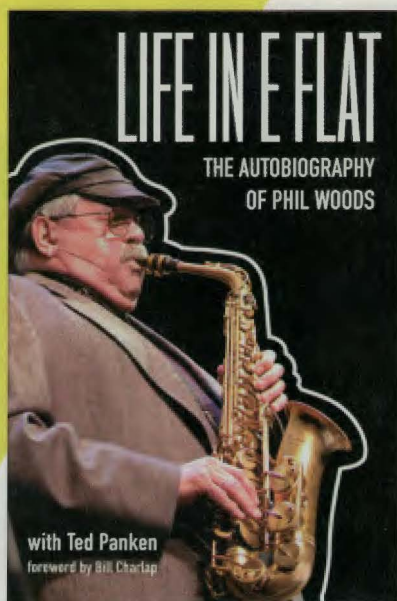
**T**he jazz scene was drying up for me. I started thinking seriously about a major move to Europe. I'd had enough

of life in E-flat in the United States.

Chan was ready to leave too—she hated America with a vitriolic passion. With the assistance of Bobby Colomby, who had managed Monk's 1967 big-band tour, I accessed George Wein's European address book and wrote letters to every jazz connection in Europe. I landed two weeks at Ronnie Scott's club and two jazz workshops in Recklinghausen, Germany for Hans Gertberg.

The family—Chan, Garth, and Aimee (Baird and perhaps Mildred would join us later)—arrived at the newly named John F. Kennedy Airport that March with our matching luggage, 24





cardboard cartons. We only had one-way tickets and the British authorities were concerned about our going on the dole. I had to show the ticket agent my contracts and money proving my value as a bona fide workingman. They wanted to know everything about our movements.

The man from Ronnie Scott's who picked us up from Heathrow Airport didn't know that I was bringing my family for a permanent stay, and showed up with a Mini Cooper, a very tiny vehicle. To add to the merriment, they had booked us at a hotel called the Eros, on Shaftesbury Avenue. This was not exactly a family hotel, but it did have hot and cold running hookers.

One of my clearest memories is the satisfaction I felt on opening night as I boarded the double-decker bus to Piccadilly Circus and told myself, "I'm going to go play jazz for a living again!"

The house trio had pianist Gordon Beck (who would later replace George Gruntz with the European Rhythm Machine), Tony Oxley on drums, and Jeff Kline on bass. They were experienced, affable, knew all the tunes, and could swing the gates off of a fence!

Jean-Louis Ginibre, editor for *Jazz*, the French magazine published by the Filippacci publishing organization, and his wife, Simone, flew over to do a cover story on my move to Europe. Then named Simone Chevalier, she had sung with the Bud Powell trio at the Blue Note, Ben Benjamin's club in Paris, where I had

played with Bud in the *Free and Easy* days. She wanted to get back into the jazz business by opening a booking agency, and eventually became very successful as George Wein's chief European contact. I was her first client.

Originally, Chan and I were headed for Amsterdam. We even bought a Fiat 1500 in the States to be delivered there. However, since Jean-Louis and Simone were sure we could find a few weeks' work in the Paris clubs, we took the train there after the two weeks at Ronnie's. The Ginibres met us and took us to dinner. The food! The wine! We drove around the Arc de Triomphe four or five times, and Amsterdam faded from our plans. The spirit of Paris captivates like no other city in the world. We both felt that this was where we wanted to live. I love Holland, but it does not quite have the panache of France—nor the food or wine.

While we were in London, Martin Luther King was assassinated and the British M.P. Enoch Powell made a vicious racist speech in Parliament. The world was going mad. That France was no exception became apparent a few days later on a sunny morning when we exited the Metro at Boulevard Michelin near the Sorbonne in the students' quarter. As our eyes adjusted to the bright light, we saw thousands of students blocking the street. They were facing hundreds of helmeted riot police, the dreaded Compagnies Républicaines de Sécurité. As we scurried across the street in the neutral zone between the demonstrators and the police, I asked Simone what was going on. She told us that there was no problem and that the police "were very sympathetic to the demands of the students." They were protesting some academic changes, the nuances of which I did not appreciate.

The sympathy of the police did not last through the evening. That night "le manifestation," as it was called, was in full fury. There was rioting, cars were on fire, and the stench of tear gas was everywhere. The students had taken over the university and many other public buildings including the French National Theater, where Jean-Paul Sartre was holding court. Anyone could come there and make a speech, or a plea, or say anything at all. It went on 24 hours a day for weeks.

We had two rooms at a small hotel on Rue St. André des Artes, and during what we thought was a break in the fighting, we went out for ice cream. The kids were almost trampled by the surging mobs of students being chased by the police waving huge truncheons. One CRS man yelled at me in French and pointed to the kids. I didn't understand French, but I got the message, loud and clear: Get your kids out of here NOW ...

After a few more days in the riot zone, Jean-Louis found us a five-room apartment in a large apartment building in Bougival, west of the city by the canal and home to many of the Impressionist painters. From our window, we saw a long line of tanks drive by our apartment building. It seemed that my career move had backfired. I left the States to get the family away from violence and put them in the middle of a war! ...

Our next job went to the Ljubljana Jazz Festival. We were excited as we boarded the flight to Frankfurt, where we were to pick up our connection. As we walked to the plane, an American gentleman asked me if I had heard that Robert Kennedy had been shot. Soon the news became official. We dedicated that evening's performance to Robert Kennedy. We played my new piece (lyrics were later added by Jon Hendricks), "And When We're Young," which was dedicated to Bobby's memory.

The news didn't really hit me the first day. I was still in shock. We went to Belgrade for a broadcast and found candles and photos of Robert Kennedy on every street corner. The streets were quiet and without the usual traffic noise. I walked in the light rain all night, stopping at the various stations of mourning. On all of these street corners our supposedly Communist enemies were weeping for our fallen leader. I remember thinking it was like the Catholic ritual of the Stations of the Cross. It was one of the saddest and most poignant moments of my life. When I finally returned to the hotel, Henri Texier was waiting for me. We were roommates and we talked long into the next morning. I apologized to Tex for my copious tears and he, with typical Breton graciousness, thanked me for sharing with him what he called a most precious gift, another's tears.

**PHIL WOODS**