

1 **A.A. Interview**

2 **Place: Cumberland Hotel, London.**

3 **Date: 18.11.13**

4 **Transcription begins: 00:00:21**

5 **Transcription ends: 01:12:17**

6 **Recording ends: 01:13:30**

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9 **TA-AA-1 FAMILY & MUSICAL BACKGROUND**

10 **INTERVIEWER**

11

12 *00:00:21 B.B. Why drums? [...] How come not bass guitar? [laughs] (Due to my father...) [...] It's really*  
13 *a family thing?*

14 **A.A.**

15

16 *00:00:32 A.A. It's a family thing for me, yeah. [...] I was five or six, started ... (yeah)...Dad's a*  
17 *drummer... kit around the house.*

18 **INTERVIEWER**

19

20 *00:00:40 B.B. Simple as that really? All three of you did the same thing. Isn't that amazing? Because,*  
21 *you know, it's unusual.*

22 **A.A.**

23

24 *00:00:44 A.A. Yeah. One brother plays bass. [...] We all played two instruments when we grew up.*  
25 *Dad wanted us to play melodic instruments as well, so I played violin.*

26 **INTERVIEWER**

27

28 *00:00:57 B.B. Oh, that's really interesting, I like that. You played violin?*

29 **A.A.**

30

31 *00:01:01 A.A. I did, poorly. (Yeah). I studied it through elementary school, through high school (how*  
32 *interesting). I played a bit of viola in high school because I wasn't really strong (sure) but I learnt a lot*  
33 *of theory from it (yeah) and phrasing and ... I think it helps in the long run.*

34 **INTERVIEWER**

35

36 *00:01:20 B.B. Your Dad was supportive, your Mum was supportive?*

37 **A.A.**

38

39 00:01:23 A.A. Completely. One hundred percent; we were very ... different.

40 **INTERVIEWER**

41

42 00:01:27 B.B. *Nobody talked about earning a living with this drumming thing? Nobody saw it as a*  
43 *career, or...? Your Dad had done OK as a musician...*

44 **A.A.**

45

46 00:01:36 A.A. Dad was a music teacher.

47 **INTERVIEWER**

48

49 00:01:39 B.B. *Music teacher? OK, so that would have been in the frame.*

50 **A.A.**

51

52 00:01:41 A.A. Yeah, he taught ... uhm ... he was the first person in Southern California to have a jazz  
53 band in elementary school. Third grade through eighth grade, so, you know, up to eleven years old.  
54 So he was a bit of er, you know, maverick, I guess, in jazz and children. *(Yeah. How interesting).* I  
55 remember our first jazz festival we went to; the judges were Frank Costelino, Sonny Stitt, Clark Terry  
56 and Lanny Morgan! [both laugh]...completely heavyweight! And they only wrote a couple of  
57 comments.

58 **INTERVIEWER**

59

60 00:02:21 B.B. *Oh yeah? Sure. And you enjoyed it? You remember enjoying the concert?*

61 **A.A.**

62

63 00:02:25 A.A. Oh yeah. It was...

64 **INTERVIEWER**

65

66 00:02:29 B.B. *Are you brothers very competitive? I mean, you were all practising at the same time?*  
67 *You know, on practice pads? You've got your bedroom down there and you're doing stuff...*

68 **A.A.**

69

70 00:02:40 A.A. Yeah, eventually they made the garage into bit of a soundproof space, but [...] by the  
71 time I was in high school. There is a 17 year age gap between me and [...] so I was kind of out of the  
72 house *(yeah)* by the time he was 2 or 3.

73 **INTERVIEWER**

74

75 00:02:56 B.B. *You didn't give [...] lessons, did you?*

76 A.A.  
77

78 00:03:00 A.A. No, we took them from the same teacher though. We all took from Murray Spivak. My  
79 Dad took Murray Spivak (*beautiful*) with me. We used to go to him; he'd have an hour lesson, I'd  
80 have an hour lesson, back to back (*beautiful*). We also studied from Chuck Flores. (*Yeah*). Chuck was  
81 kind of a big band drummer, you know .... So it was unusual.

82 INTERVIEWER  
83

84 00:03:21 B.B. *That's an A-list education. That's terrific. I mean, in comparison to how the British guys*  
85 *were bumbling along at the same time, vaguely picking it up by watching some guy on TV, having*  
86 *Spivak is amazing.*

87 A.A.  
88

89 00:03:36 A.A. When I was 11 there were Stan Kenton clinics - did you know them? They were  
90 summer camps, two or three weeks (*Erskine did those, didn't he?*) Yeah, that's where we met Peter;  
91 he was 18 playing with the band, I was 14, but they were for high school and college kids (*yeah*) but I  
92 did a tape audition and they said it's okay you can come, so Dad just dropped me off at this  
93 University and he was working in Las Vegas, anyway... but it was ...

94 INTERVIEWER  
95

96 00:04:09 B.B. *Have you ... I'm sure you have ... this thing this guy Gladwell invented called the 10,000*  
97 *hour rule (I've heard of it, yeah) which roughly says if you want domain competence in anything -*  
98 *French, tennis, drinking coffee - [...] it's kind of 10,000 hours, roughly 10 years, you know. So you still*  
99 *study, so you would have put in your 10,000 hours for sure?*

100 A.A.  
101

102 00:04:34 A.A. Oh yeah, sure, (*yeah*), sure.

103 INTERVIEWER  
104

105 00:04:38 B.B. *Was it fun studying? Easy to do? Did you like it, or was it a chore?*

106 A.A.  
107

108 00:04:43 A.A. I loved it. (*mmm*). I loved it, and especially when I (*interesting*) ... especially with the  
109 private teachers (*yeah*), it was so focused and so methodical, and...

110 INTERVIEWER  
111

112 00:05:00 B.B. *Drumming is highly organised isn't it?*

113 A.A.  
114

115 00:05:02 A.A. If you're interested in the Murray Spivak system I actually did like a 30 episode master  
116 class on Drum Channel (*did you? Oh yeah, and Terry gave me access to Drum Channel*) yeah, you can  
117 see it and it's very slow, it's very methodical but he had a way of teaching ... in a nutshell he would

118 teach you one or two things and as you're playing them he would have you modify something ... So  
119 you modify it and he says "oh by the way you are playing this other rudiment now", and then he  
120 modifies something else, and "now you're playing this other one", so you would learn all this stuff  
121 through body motion (*through body motion?*) rather than ... say a five-stroke roll as a triplet and  
122 seven-stroke roll as a 16<sup>th</sup> rhythm? It was all based on body motion. And the roll strokes were based  
123 on time signatures. So when I was a kid I was 13 I think when I studied with him and he had this  
124 concept of you learn your roll strokes and just the time signature increases, the tempo stays the  
125 same. So if you're playing a five-stroke roll you're in 3/8 (*sure*) but he would put the click into 2/4  
126 (*great*) so you'd hear cross rhythms (*terrific, yeah*) so then a seven-stroke roll would be a 4/8, the  
127 nine stroke-roll would be a 5/8 but you're doing this over 2/4 because the click's in 2, duple time, so  
128 you're kind of memorising these polyrhythms without knowing it (*very good training*) and he had a  
129 lot of things like that, where you wouldn't realise what you were learning, (*yeah*) and he didn't feel  
130 it necessary to tell you. He said "I'll give you a little bit of information and you use your brain to  
131 figure it out", so... But it was very much dealing with economy of motion and (*yeah*)...

132 **INTERVIEWER**

133

134 00:06:50 B.B. *At the full set all the time, or primarily snare drum?*

135 **A.A.**

136

137 00:06:53 A.A. No sets, no style, no drum set, only practice pad (*only practice pad?*) And the last few  
138 months of lessons were just orchestral snare drum playing (*yeah*) so, erm ... (*gosh*) and he was really  
139 tough he was very old school (*right*) but he was Louis Bellson's teacher. Joe Morello studied from  
140 him.

141 **INTERVIEWER**

142

143 00:07:17 B.B. *So when you say tough he ... he expressed displeasure?*

144 **A.A.**

145

146 00:07:23 A.A. Um .... He had a good sense of humour but he was a very serious guy; he was a little  
147 like [...] (*uh-huh*) .... He had a big waiting list of students to get in with him and it was a methodical  
148 course almost and so after you'd done so many years you kind of graduated from it (*mmm*) so when  
149 my Dad called ... he first called Louis Bellson to see if he would teach us and he said "No, but you  
150 should go to my teacher Murray Spivak for hands" so he did and he said "Look, I'm booked for the  
151 next six months but, you know, I'll give you a call when there's an opening in six months", and sure  
152 enough six months later he calls, and .... the overall ... I think there was one lesson where I didn't  
153 practice enough, like you had to do a minimum of two hours a day and he taught once every two  
154 weeks.

155 **INTERVIEWER**

156

157 00:08:18 B.B. *On top of your schoolwork?*

158 **A.A.**

159

160 00:08:20 A.A. Yeah, but... (*two hours a day on top of your schoolwork?*) Yeah, you did an hour in the  
161 morning before school and an hour after - it's not that much (*okay*). So one lesson I came in and I

162 didn't do enough and he could tell right away (*mmm*) then the conversation was like "so why are  
163 you wasting my time" and then he offered to fire me as a student, so....

164 **INTERVIEWER**

165

166 00:08:46 B.B. *That's so different to over here.*

167 **A.A.**

168

169 00:08:47 A.A. But also ... if you put in the work, you saw the results really quickly ... and all of a  
170 sudden music became easy. And he had this whole system of the faster you play the more relaxed  
171 you need to be. He wouldn't let you increase the speed until you were relaxed. If you had any  
172 tension he'd back off the metronome ... he was an amazing teacher. Chuck Flores, my other teacher,  
173 had also taken from him, so there was no ... and Chuck taught style (*yeah*) he taught big band  
174 reading (*sure*) tons of independence things like (*mmm*) taking a simple book and putting the snare  
175 drum part with the hi hat foot, things like that. That was (*very modern concept*) early 70s.

176 **INTERVIEWER**

177

178 00:09:37 B.B. *Yeah, that's already 40 years ago, 50 years ago. Long time.*

179 **A.A.**

180

181 00:09:42 A.A. I was really fortunate to have a Dad that was so supportive and a Mother who was so  
182 supportive

183 **INTERVIEWER**

184

185 00:09:46 B.B. *Yeah, and it's unusual. I think it's unusual you know.*

186 **A.A.**

187

188 00:09:49 A.A. It's unusual, Dad also, and being a parent now I kind of understand this, because as  
189 Dad was getting older because there's a ... [...] took from the same teachers. We were saying "Dad,  
190 [...] has friends; he could have friends drive him out" because it was an hour drive (*yeah*) to get up to  
191 L.A. from where we lived and Dad said "No, but you don't understand, that's our time together" so  
192 that's like regular time together (*yeah, that's nice*) father and son, each way, you know, you've got a  
193 lot to talk about.

194 **INTERVIEWER**

195

196 00:10:19 B.B. *That's a hell of a Dad you've got. Is he still with us?*

197 **A.A.**

198

199 00:10:22 A.A. Yeah he's 83. He is still teaching [*laughs*]. He's teaching middle school so it's sixth  
200 seventh and eighth graders (*yeah*). They win most jazz festivals (*sure*) he does about 10 jazz festivals  
201 a year (*sure*) and he hires pros to come in and do section rehearsals, like great jazz players, and he  
202 hires a couple of arrangers to do original charts every year, and um ... (*beautiful*). He's a big part of  
203 the community.

204 **TA-AA-2 CHOICE AND CONTROL**

205

206 **INTERVIEWER**

207

208 *00:10:51 B.B. So, um, how best to go about this ... Some of the questions will be about decision-*  
209 *making and control and how much do you ... how do you decide what to play?*

210 **A.A.**

211

212 *00:11:09 A.A. Well that's the creative part isn't it? (both laugh). That's the fun part! And erm ...*

213 **INTERVIEWER**

214

215 *00:11:15 B.B. Sometimes people tell you what to play, is that right? Or not at all any more ... almost*  
216 *never now?*

217 **A.A.**

218

219 *00:11:21 A.A. No, depends on the person (yeah) .... The first time I subbed for [...] it was a Pops*  
220 *concert with [...] and [...] flew me in to [...]’s last gig so I could hear (right) ... hear the gig, meet [...],*  
221 *talk to him about if there’s any details (right), which was ... I was in Heaven, number one, (mmm)*  
222 *and one of the first things he said to me was “Well, do you get nervous when you work with a new*  
223 *leader?” Well, sure. He said “You know I get really nervous. I wanna ... ([...] said this?) Yeah, and I’m*  
224 *immediately thinking “You’re [...], why in the world would you..?” He said “I really want to give them*  
225 *whatever it is that they need and what’s important; to make them feel comfortable.*

226 **INTERVIEWER**

227

228 *00:12:14 B.B. Right ... it’s a great way to go. And this is a very clear concept of ‘leader’ there that he’s*  
229 *talking about. Again in the UK we don’t have that so much. I think in the States there is a more*  
230 *honourable tradition of ... the drummer serving the leader, whereas here we just hack around, you*  
231 *know; if you’ve got bigger biceps than the other guy then you win, you know! (laughs).*

232 **A.A.**

233

234 *00:12:39 A.A. So there’s that concept but then (there is) the first gig I did, the keyboard player said*  
235 *to me “The sound check went really well”. We’re playing with an orchestra; the drum set is right in*  
236 *front of the conductor, you know, the first violins are to my right, seconds and violas are behind me,*  
237 *I’m playing really quiet (yeah, with sticks?) Some; a lot of brushes. But [...] the keyboard player was*  
238 *saying “You know, basically you have to realise ... I know you’ve just started, but we’re all following*  
239 *you, you’ve got to be the leader. Even though there’s a conductor” he said “Look, actually [...] hired*  
240 *the conductor to follow the rhythm section, so that’s how it’s working (how interesting) because he*  
241 *wanted it to feel the way he’s used to having it feel.*

242 **INTERVIEWER**

243

244 *00:13:26 B.B. That’s an interesting take, isn’t it? The conductor follows the drummer, wow. [...] Much*  
245 *better way! I got to say!*

246 A.A.  
247

248 00:13:33 A.A. It is, once I realised the conductor is waiting for me to hit the cymbal to tell the  
249 orchestra where the downbeat is (*uh-huh*).

250 INTERVIEWER  
251

252 00:13:42 B.B. Does it make any difference to you whether you are playing completely, or more or less  
253 completely, under somebody's instruction or devising your own part? Do you see any inherent  
254 creativity one way or the other, applying to any of that?

255 A.A.  
256

257 00:13:57 A.A. I guess in most of the situations it's only brought up if the leader is uncomfortable. [...]   
258 For instance I thought that the [...] gig would be very pattern-based, very structured, and [...] does  
259 not approach it that way at all. He changes it up constantly (*does he?*). He'll change up the feel of  
260 the tunes on stage night to night. Not radically, but sometimes (*right*) sometimes he'll... It might be a  
261 very straight simple even eighth note and the next night he'll play it New Orleans bent eight notes  
262 [sings to demonstrate], super 'lopey,' and (*yeah*) everybody's great with it. [*laughs*] (*Lovely. That's*  
263 *creative in there, in that pocket, yeah*) Yeah. The other thing ... I was just listening to the tape [...] He  
264 plays really quirky. [...] I had no idea how quirky he plays - on a lot of tunes he'll reverse the kick and  
265 hi hat, (*uh-huh*) put the hi-hat on one, bass drum on two (*this is quirky*) yeah, because you would  
266 think it would be the straightest (*yes*) simplest (*you would, wouldn't you?*) folk-rock kinda pop gig...

267 INTERVIEWER  
268

269 00:15:22 B.B. On one level it could be approached like that, but you and [...] are on a different  
270 stratospheric level here, and it seems to me that partly your conception - you and [...] both - would be  
271 to bring to it something fresh, to create with it and intuitively a good leader would like that ...

272 A.A.  
273

274 00:15:38 A.A. And James likes that. He likes that (*exactly*)... another personality type would not like  
275 that at all.

276 INTERVIEWER  
277

278 00:15:43 B.B. *Uh-huh. Have you played with one of those people? Another personality type? How's*  
279 *[...] for example?*

280 A.A.  
281

282 00:15:50 A.A. [...] 's very structured in his thinking, but the drums ... most of the guys in the band are  
283 playing parts (*yeah*) and I have to play certain beats and parts that he wants to hear; he wrote them  
284 and ... he's not comfortable with anything else, so (*uh-hum*) I'm fine with that; he wrote it, he's the  
285 composer (*right*) and there are parts [...] would write drum-wise (*yeah*) which ... He worked it out  
286 and I was happy to do that and they were usually quirky anyway [...] But it's funny to me because  
287 some of the things that are really important to [...] would be like one tiny fill that [...] used to play,  
288 32<sup>nd</sup> notes, into one chorus, just like for an 8<sup>th</sup> note [sings to demonstrate] he needs to hear that;  
289 that's important to him, [...] not any other fill (*right*). To me, picking out this one nano ... (*Nano*

290 *second of nothing, but he wants it and you can provide it, yeah*). He kind of writes in blocks and it  
291 took me a minute to get my head around this concept, because usually as drummers - as leaders -  
292 we're always shaping the dynamics of the band and the transition points to the second verse, the  
293 chorus, the bridge. We are the ones who are building it or making it go dynamically. There is a  
294 certain [indecipherable] weight or density you get by playing sparse to dense, making it more  
295 exciting, obviously, or do the reverse, bring the band down (*yeah*) with the nano notes with the  
296 transitions (*uh-huh*). Steve doesn't want to really hear a transition (*okay*), he just wants the band to  
297 be here and then he wants it to be instantly here like it was an edit (*right, okay*) so it took me a  
298 minute to like ... It's really different for me. In a way, it's somebody who has probably grown up with  
299 the computer (*oh, that's interesting yeah*), has done a lot of cut and pasting; also he's younger than I  
300 am, so he's probably... [...] A lot of the grunge bands used to do the very very quiet to the very very  
301 loud but without any transition (*yeah*); very black-and-white.

302 **INTERVIEWER**

303

304 *00:18:06 B.B. As a result of any automation and kind of music technology have you ever been asked*  
305 *to play stuff that is physically impossible to play? [...]*

306 **A.A.**

307

308 *00:18:18 A.A. In the 80s sometimes it was ... [...] just uncomfortable. If you were dealing with a*  
309 *producer who was a programmer, who came from a programming mind, and he thought of*  
310 *drumming as just levels (*yeah*), he thought of a bass drum part, a snare drum part (*yeah, yeah*), a hi*  
311 *hat part, and he didn't see the thing (*the big picture*) as a whole. That would be sometimes odd.*  
312 *(Yeah). I could usually kind of figure it out but the whole goal for me was always to make it feel like*  
313 *music and not like mechanical patterns. (Right).*

314 **INTERVIEWER**

315

316 *00:18:49 B.B. Sure. [...] I don't want to put words in your mouth (no, please) but trying to summarise*  
317 *what you're saying: your creativity derives from sailing round these constraints; doesn't matter how*  
318 *big the constraint is or how little it is (no, it doesn't bother me) the important thing is to find*  
319 *something in the area in which you're working. To contribute to it ... in some way to make it more*  
320 *musical than if you weren't there. Perhaps.*

321 **A.A.**

322

323 *00:19:17 A.A. Yes, that's very well put.*

324 **INTERVIEWER**

325

326 *00:19:19 B.B. Something like that.*

327 **A.A.**

328

329 *00:19:21 A.A. And I like creative drummers, I like ... all the drummers that ...*

330 **TA-AA-6 CONSIDERATION OF CREATIVITY IN WORK OF OTHERS**

331



332 **INTERVIEWER**

333

334 00:19:26 B.B. *And who are these creative drummers you're talking about?*

335 **A.A.**

336

337 00:19:29 A.A. Jim Keltner (*oh yeah*), you, Terry Bozzio, Vinnie, Steve Jordan...

338 **INTERVIEWER**

339

340 00:19:36 B.B. *Why do you say they're creative?*

341 **A.A.**

342

343 00:19:39 A.A. They always come up with something (*laughs*) I wouldn't have thought of, but that  
344 always works (*That's a good definition!*) ... that always works musically. Because you can be clever  
345 (*mmm*) but it won't help the music necessarily. To me that's ... I have a tough time with that (*uh-*  
346 *huh*). I hear a lot of clever young drummers these days who have way more chops than I do and can  
347 play like multiple layers of counterpoints (*yeah*) you know, but to me it doesn't ... (*What are they*  
348 *going to do with that?*) It doesn't hit me (*uh-huh*) ... It doesn't hit me at all, and I don't ...

349 **INTERVIEWER**

350

351 00:20:24 B.B. *It's funny. [...] Popular music seems to be unable to contain drummers like that, and*  
352 *they've gone off into a little kind of ballpark arena of their own (yeah, doing clinics ...) developing*  
353 *kind of... Like a hothouse plant that's been given too much heat ... it's developed tentacles where it*  
354 *should not necessarily have normally developed them. You know, the popular music instrumentalist*  
355 *should probably be playing in, or accommodated in and accommodating to, popular music, you*  
356 *would imagine.*

357 **A.A.**

358

359 00:20:53 A.A. Music has to be number one.

360 **INTERVIEWER**

361

362 00:20:56 B.B. *Music has to be number one. It's got to communicate.*

363 **A.A.**

364

365 00:21:58 A.A. It does. As soon as something sounds ... if the drummer sounds like he's playing an  
366 exercise, I have no interest (*uh-huh*), it ... to me he's not contributing (*fascinating, isn't it?*). Because  
367 you can be very clever... I think there's almost [...] a new school of players that's very athletic, and  
368 are able to do these amazing things (*yeah*) that honestly I can't do but I don't have much interest in  
369 (*yeah*) doing them because I don't hear them working in a band.

370 **TA-AA-3A CREATIVITY AND SELF**

371

372 **INTERVIEWER**

373

374 *00:22:35 B.B. Yeah. There are other areas that the drummer... we'll come back to this in a minute*  
375 *actually ... about timbre and sound and stuff. If you're not prodigiously gifted, erm, technically, that is*  
376 *to say the disposition of the notes in the measure (uh-huh), you know a lot of people go for timbre*  
377 *and sound as their way of contributing to the music which can be fantastic too. Maybe we'll get back*  
378 *to that in the second. I just wanted to see if... (Sorry I'm going off on a tangent) no no [...] the*  
379 *tangents are great, and often that's where the good stuff is, but I also have to steer you very gently*  
380 *around (please do) to some points that I need. And in your own professional life have there been bits*  
381 *where you've seen yourself, or imagined yourself, or assumed yourself to be more... more creative*  
382 *than other times? Have there been one or two moments where you go "[...]; this is great!" you know,*  
383 *(No) bits where you've thought "I don't know what this is". Sometimes you talk to guys and they say*  
384 *"I'm playing something and I don't know where this came from, it's absolutely great, I couldn't have*  
385 *planned this, I couldn't have written it; I'm just here doing this now and I don't think I've ever played*  
386 *this before and it's great". Have you found [...] or do you see yourself as more of a flat highly*  
387 *consistent creative player?*

388 *00:22:53 A.A. [laughs] I don't think I'd give myself such a compliment...*

389 **INTERVIEWER**

390

391 *00:22:56 B.B. You know, some guys are up and down a lot, I think, in their (right) ability to be*  
392 *creative.*

393 **A.A.**

394

395 *00:23:07 A.A. .... Okay. That's fair.... I think it's easier to look back than to be in the ...*

396 **TA-AA-5 CONSIDERATION OF CREATIVITY IN OWN WORK**

397

398 **INTERVIEWER**

399

400 *00:23:17 B.B. I am asking you to look back (yeah) to see if there were some notable moments on a CD*  
401 *or er...*

402 **A.A.**

403

404 *00:23:23 A.A. And sometimes there's things I don't even realise; like there's one piece, it's a live*  
405 *track with [...] and myself; there's a (yeah) tricky vamp and a tricky melody (already tricky!), yes,*  
406 *[laughs] it's a piece [...] wrote, no guitar solo, it's got a bass solo and a drum solo in it. Most of it's in*  
407 *four but the syncopation and the melody... [...] and I are playing that together; there's a bass solo*  
408 *and then the bass and the guitar play this long phrase (yeah) and it has an open drum solo, it*  
409 *can go round as many times, and I found out they're using ... one of the teachers at Berklee School of*  
410 *Music is using this one recording as a (beautiful) in a class every year, so something like that? [...]*  
411 *And it does sound really different and it doesn't sound like anybody else and I thought I'm proud*  
412 *that it doesn't sound like anybody else. (Isn't that lovely? That's really good, really good).*

413 **INTERVIEWER**

414

415 *00:24:27 B.B. Tell me what the track is if you can.*

416 A.A.  
417

418 00:24:29 A.A. The tune is called [...]. It's a live album called [...]. [...].

## 419 TA-AA-3B CREATIVITY AND SELF 420

421  
422

### 423 INTERVIEWER 424

425 00:24:51 B.B. Another guy I was talking to described, you know, creativity blockers which could often  
426 be domestic problems ... you know, could be health, could be anything, when for a period of time (or  
427 that can make you go the other way) or it could make you go the other way. In this character's case  
428 you know for a couple of years he was just in married life hell. It wasn't working at all; they split;  
429 *whoosh* you know (laughs) two albums of hot blazing (both laugh)...you know what I mean? (Brand  
430 new original stuff) which is perfectly acceptable, you know. I think we maybe spend too much time  
431 'decontextualising', as they say, you know, just talking about drums, like we are doing a lot, but they  
432 are in the context of your life as a person and everything around you is going to contribute, or fail to  
433 contribute, to your creativity.[...].

434 A.A.  
435

436 00:25:43 A.A. I think that's more of an influence than (*almost anything else*) anything else.  
437 (*Absolutely*) ... I remember Peter Erskine playing with Weather Report, lots of great Joe Zawinul  
438 stories, but at one point he said: "You can't play music until you have children!" [Both laugh] (*Joe*  
439 *said that? That's great!*) You're not even playing music yet! [Both laugh].

### 440 INTERVIEWER 441

442 00:26:17 B.B. Yeah, until you've had a life - that's kind of what he's getting at - so there's something  
443 to play about, you know. That's what's so lovely about seeing the older guys, you know, and less  
444 attractive about the 20-year-olds with the hyper-chops that you're talking about. What's so  
445 wonderful about the older guys is that there's something there - they are connected - and the music  
446 is coming from somewhere. [...].

447 A.A.  
448

449 00:26:36 A.A. That's also key, that it's coming from somewhere, because some people don't go very  
450 far back. Like a friend of mine said if you want be a funk drummer and you entered music at 'Tower  
451 of Power', you haven't heard James Brown (*yeah yeah*) and you haven't gone back to R&B or even  
452 Robert Johnson blues; you just start at ... or today if you start at 'Dream Theatre' or you start at  
453 'Rush' you have ... (*you've got a way to go*). Well you're kind of starting at a funny point I think...  
454 Steve Smith says if you start at that point there is no swing in anything (*right*) [*laughs*], there's no  
455 jazz (*no jazz*), there's no lope (*no*). It's all very strict (*very interesting*) and mechanical (*how*  
456 *interesting*) and accurate.

### 457 INTERVIEWER 458

459 00:27:29 B.B. *Accurate as heck (uh-huh) .... inorganic, in a weird way too, but then maybe*  
460 *'inorganic'... is for those guys, you know, who like free-trade coffee, you know, the hippies; maybe*  
461 *'inorganic' is for an older generation that understood what that word meant, and for the average 20-*  
462 *year-old these days brought up on social media and so forth it's kind of an entirely meaningless*  
463 *concept, perhaps. But we're drifting a bit ... [...] Does any of this influence what you're actually going*  
464 *to play on the gig? Are you playing thinking ... how much in the foreground of your mind is the word*  
465 *'creativity' when you're playing; do you think this is not very interesting what I'm doing, this could be*  
466 *better? Are you self-critical while you're playing? You see what I mean?*

467 **A.A.**  
468

469 00:28:39 A.A. When I was young I got to go to a lot of drum clinics as well and Jake Hanna – you  
470 know the jazz drummer, Jake Hanna? (*yeah*) - he didn't give many clinics but gave this one and  
471 somebody asked him what perfect coordination was, and he said "it's when you think it and you play  
472 it at the exact same moment" (*mmm*) and ever since then I've been trying to be exactly in the  
473 moment (*very good*) and not having these kind of demons that say I'm not playing creative, or I  
474 missed that one, or...

475 **INTERVIEWER**  
476

477 00:29:08 B.B. *Yeah. Have you ever felt like that? The other bit ... with the demons? Have you ever felt*  
478 *like that?*

479 **A.A.**  
480

481 00:29:14 A.A. I can kind of write them off, you know, every once ... (*or you've learned to keep them*  
482 *out?*) I just laugh at myself where you drop a stick or do something really stupid (*yeah*). That  
483 happens to everybody, but it's not going to bother me, (*no...right*). So, when I'm on stage I'm really  
484 trying to be completely in the moment and my main focus is really listening, and I've been lucky to  
485 play with creative bands like [...] and [...] and even though [...] had a lot of composed stuff, you know  
486 at least 60% of the show is guitar solos (*mmm, mmm*); long, long improvised sections and you had to  
487 come up with something.

488 **INTERVIEWER**  
489

490 00:30:00 B.B. *'In the moment'. I suppose the opposite to that phrase is 'in the past' and if you talk*  
491 *about living in the past then in a way you're recreating licks, perhaps; if you're syphoning and*  
492 *accessing musical thoughts from your past that you have already lived, then to a degree you are*  
493 *living not in the moment but living in the past and recreating, more or less effectively, for the music,*  
494 *it may or may not be effective, but it's not in the moment, it's not something which you've never*  
495 *played before, or quite that way before.*

496 **A.A.**  
497

498 00:30:34 A.A. Right. So the things you can draw on, to me, to get out of playing licks, is to be much  
499 more listening, like kind of taking ideas not from drummers but from other instruments - guitar  
500 players - (*yeah*) and taking things from keyboard players and bass players because they all play  
501 rhythm, they all play scales, and they can link into that and it'll never sound like them (*yeah*) [laughs]  
502 [...]. What I try to do, and I don't know how successful it is, but really play completely in the moment  
503 and I'm talking about like a solo or a guitar solo or a part of the show, even on this, where you have  
504 a lot of freedom (*mmm, mmm*), a situation where you can be creative, not just play a pattern ... then

505 I'm trying to change it up every night, and just play ... (*à la Gadd*) yeah, (*or anybody*) or Elvin or Tony,  
506 just trying to be brave (*that's terrific*) and just get inspired by what somebody is doing. So what I'm  
507 thinking about is, I guess, the choices I have at that moment. So if the guitar player plays something,  
508 do I want to reinforce that or do I want to give him a bed of something so he stands out, or do I want  
509 to play some flurry when he stops (*mmm, mmm*) or stop? (*mmm*)... All the tons and tons of choices  
510 you have as a spontaneous composer (*yeah, of course*) and try to be in that head space.

511 **INTERVIEWER**

512

513 *00:32:13 B.B. Is there a delicate relationship between you and the leader, whereby you're trying to,*  
514 *on the one hand, provide what the leader wants, but of course the leader may not know what he*  
515 *wants, and you're trying to lead him - lead the leader - to a degree, to almost a better rhythmic place*  
516 *some times? Is there that sense of providing what he wants but also showing him what he could*  
517 *have?*

518 **A.A.**

519

520 *00:32:32 A.A. Yeah, all the time. (It's constant). Yeah, all the time. And I think that's why they hire us.*

521 **INTERVIEWER**

522

523 *00:32:38 B.B. Absolutely, yeah, because they expect us to be razor hot and, as you said, make them*  
524 *sound good. (mmm). [...]*

525 **A.A.**

526

527 *00:32:48 A.A. You're right, we're hired by the leader, they have the final say on things (yeah) but it's*  
528 *our band. It's the drummer's band, always.*

529 **INTERVIEWER**

530

531 *00:32:55 B.B. How about the sort of [...] of things? The individual voice, you know, the Miles sound,*  
532 *the personal sound. How do you fashion a personal sound, or avoid sounding like other guys? [...]*

533 **A.A.**

534

535 *00:33:15 A.A. It's touch. (Yeah, that's the key word). More than licks or anything ... because there's a*  
536 *1000 variables. Where you going to hit the snare drum? With the tip, rimshot, half rimshot... Is it*  
537 *going to be a quiet rimshot? [...] They all create a different timbre. The cymbal, there's a 1000 ways...*  
538 *So I think it starts with touch, and I hear that with... every other musician has a signature sound, that*  
539 *you can go ... that's Jim Keltner. You can tell within two bars.*

540 **INTERVIEWER**

541

542 *00:33:51 B.B. But perhaps less now, is that right? Are we still getting Jim Keltners or..? [...] Are we*  
543 *getting a new crop? Or is this something about the demands on the drummer which means that new*  
544 *Jim Keltners are not being developed, are not being brought on, not being allowed to have a voice?*

545 **A.A.**

546

547 00:34:10 A.A [...] That's a big question, and I don't know if I'm in the loop enough to know who the  
548 creative guys are. I mean there are some guys in L.A. who I really love who are not as known (*right*)  
549 who have their own touch, their own sound, their own voice. [...]

550 **INTERVIEWER**  
551

552 00:35:23 B.B. *Finding the [...] thing or the Bruford thing is partly about the way you go about doing*  
553 *things, isn't it? It's when you play the crash; it's where you place the beat (absolutely) the funniest*  
554 *series of options that you make.*

555 **A.A.**  
556

557 00:35:40 A.A. I don't think style matters. I think you can have a creative head space and it can fit into  
558 any genre; I really do. For example, and to bring it back to [...] again, I know I keep on harping on  
559 him, but they sent me some live tapes of him and he's playing [...], the [...] song, simple as can be  
560 eighth notes [sings to demonstrate] (*don't tell me what he is doing on this*) [both laugh] (*what's he*  
561 *doing?*) There's like three levels of ... he's playing the bass drum one, two and three, accenting  
562 heavily, one, two and three! ... And the thing feels like a million bucks. [...] I can't believe he's doing  
563 that! (*mmm, terrific*). It's odd; it's so odd! I would never think of that. I wouldn't have the bravery!  
564 But you listen to it and it's ... poised. [...]. So you can do that in reggae, you can do that in country  
565 music, you can do it in...

566 **INTERVIEWER**  
567

568 00:37:46 B.B. *Were you very young when you understood the idea of a musician having a voice?*

569 **A.A.**  
570

571 00:37:50 A.A. Oh yeah, absolutely. (*Well you got that real quick!*) Really quick. I knew ... (*You were*  
572 *very precocious as a kid! You were way too fast!*) [Both laugh]. [...]

573 **A.A.**  
574

575 00:38:01 A.A. I realised Louis Bellson ... nobody sounded like Louis Bellson except for Louis.

576 **INTERVIEWER**  
577

578 00:38:05 B.B. *Yeah, I think I got it pretty soon to. I couldn't understand how Art Blakey could sound*  
579 *like that. Terrific sound.*

580 **A.A.**  
581

582 00:38:13 A.A.. All of them, all my heroes. Everybody's got a voice (*yeah*). Huge, huge personality.  
583

584 **TA-AA-7 REFLECTION ON THE CHANGING ENVIRONMENT IN WHICH TO**  
585 **ENACT CREATIVITY**  
586

587 **INTERVIEWER**

588

589 00:38:21 B.B. *It's so hard now though, isn't it ... Is it not harder now for a 20-year-old to devise a*  
590 *voice?*

591 **A.A.**

592

593 00:38:27 A.A. My daughter is 14 so she's my pop culture monitor (*very good to have one of those*)  
594 and pop music today doesn't seem to have ... a) it doesn't have guitar, b) it doesn't have drums. (*oh*  
595 *it doesn't have guitar any more?*) No, it's synths. It's all very, very (*okay that's like the '80s*) well kind  
596 of... (*the '80s was all synths*) but it's a little bit more techno and there is, you know, sampled bass  
597 drum and no snare (*right*). There's no backbeat, it's just doof doof doof doof [sings to demonstrate].

598 **INTERVIEWER**

599

600 00:39:02 B.B. *Even [...] would find that hard.*

601 **A.A.**

602

603 00:39:05 A.A. It's a separate world. (*It is*). I think we're less involved in that world now. I don't think  
604 there is a drum sound as such...

605 **TA-AA-3C CREATIVITY AND SELF**

606

607 **INTERVIEWER**

608

609 00:39:12 B.B. *There is [...] an overarching thing going on in the music industry here which would*  
610 *definitely make it harder for you to be [...] if you were now 20. (Yeah). Or there would be a smaller*  
611 *audience for you to be [...] to. I think it's a little harder. How important to you is it - just turning to*  
612 *you as a person for a minute - to think of yourself as creative? Is it something you think of? (No). You*  
613 *never even really think about it?*

614 **A.A.**

615

616 00:39:45 A.A. I don't think about it probably because the gigs I'm doing, it feels like they have room  
617 to be creative.

618 **INTERVIEWER**

619

620 00:39:51 B.B. *Sure, sure. So it comes with the water? (Yeah). It comes with the territory. Yeah. Is it*  
621 *important ...*

622 **A.A.**

623

624 00:39:58 A.A. Well I've played with [...] since '82, that's a long time (*long time*) and then [...] maybe  
625 from '81 through '88 (*yeah*) and then people I guess after that ... they'd like to hire me allowing me  
626 to be me (*sure*) which is lucky, very very lucky. Not all the time; I mean sometimes it's a complete  
627 sideman, I'm paying the rent (*yeah*) you know ... and happy to do so.

628 **INTERVIEWER**

629

630 00:40:24 B.B. *It's perfectly understandable [...]. How important is it for you that others consider you*  
631 *to be creative?*

632 **A.A.**

633

634 00:40:33 A.A. ... I don't care (*doesn't care either. Right*) it's not up to me. (*It's not; that's true*). I can't  
635 control it if it's not up to me. When [...] and I, we did I think four tours together, double-drum show  
636 (*right, I remember [...]*) he used to say "Look, we're were just doing this improvising for, you know,  
637 45 minutes, taking a break, and doing another 45 minute improvisation, duet, and we're throwing it  
638 out there; after that it's up to them. We've done our bit. You know, you can't dwell on it (*yeah*) I  
639 think if you did. It'd drive you crazy (*sure*).

640 **TA-AA-4 CREATIVITY AND COLLABORATION**

641

642 **INTERVIEWER**

643

644 00:41:18 B.B. *There is another strand to the conversation, which is something about collaboration*  
645 *and individuality. The old paradigm sees creativity as 'within you'; as something you have that you*  
646 *give to others (okay) or as that which you enact within yourself. The new paradigm says that, in a*  
647 *way, creativity is enabled by you working with somebody else. Almost everything human beings do is*  
648 *creative, and it's always in connection with somebody else, one way or another. When you work with*  
649 *others 'creatively'... [...] How much is creativity collaborative from your perspective?*

650 **A.A.**

651

652 00:42:03 A.A. .... That's a really good question, Bill [laughs]. [...] How much of it is collaborative?  
653 (*yeah*). Every situation's different. Thinking of bands now, too...with [...] and myself we're wide open,  
654 it's a blank canvas, we're very patient, you know...

655 **INTERVIEWER**

656

657 00:42:32 B.B. [...] *Let's hypothesise the alternative... If you were Buddy Rich [laughs] (okay) it might*  
658 *not be considered so collaborative. He might think "I'm this guy, I have it right here. Mister, I am the*  
659 *band!" you know (laughs). [...]*

660 **A.A.**

661

662 00:43:12 A.A. There are so many people working alone these days, too. (*Working alone?*) Yeah, I  
663 think the computer has isolated people (*absolutely, hasn't it just?*). It used to be so much fun going  
664 to the studio with four or five of us and (*yeah*) working out arrangements in a matter of 10 or 15  
665 minutes and all the decisions were made and then we recorded and you were going for performance  
666 and if the performance is bad you could play it again (*that's it*). Because the computer ... I'm sending  
667 a lot of files to people's ... I'm working alone in my studio, so there's less collaboration than there  
668 used to be for sure (*ah, that's interesting*). Much much less.

669 **INTERVIEWER**

670



671 00:43:51 B.B. *Because collaboration is expensive; getting two guys to agree to go to a room together*  
672 *and turn on a tape machine is more expensive (Right. So I don't think it's a healthy thing). Have you*  
673 *ever been persuaded by any of those albums that get sent around in the mail - file sharing - where*  
674 *you add your drums and the guy adds his flute and the guy adds his ... (right). I have never really been*  
675 *persuaded by (it's weird) those albums yet.*

676 **A.A.**  
677

678 00:44:14 A.A. *Because you're working alone and in that situation you do start to question things*  
679 *"Well, if this sounds good to me..." and of course as soon as you put the drums on any track that's*  
680 *had a drum machine or a loop or something, it makes it completely different ... The dynamics of the*  
681 *band sound different, because the way we play makes them sound like they're playing quieter or*  
682 *louder or more intense or more laid back, and of course there are so many ways to shape this tune I*  
683 *wonder if the guy's going to like it? I wonder if he has any idea (what he wants [...]). So I'm playing*  
684 *and I'm kind of in essence producing it by the way I'm approaching the tune, because it's very cold*  
685 *sounding when I get it. And often they'll put their solos on later (yeah) so you're playing 'pretend*  
686 *there's a solo going on' ('pretend solo' gig) so you just hear the chords or ... (oh God, I hate that) but*  
687 *it's being an actor. The question was to do with collaboration ...*

688 **INTERVIEWER**  
689

690 00:45:23 B.B. *...To what extent does the collaborative give meaning to the individual? You know,*  
691 *you're individually [...], but you become enacted through collaboration with others, I think; your*  
692 *'[...]ness' comes out in connection with others [...].*

693 **A.A.**  
694

695 00:45:39 A.A. *At the best. At the best situations, yeah.*  
696

697 **TA-AA-3D CREATIVITY AND SELF**  
698

699 **INTERVIEWER**  
700

701 00:45:42 B.B. *But you seem to make them pretty good, most of them. You're being pretty ' [...] ' with*  
702 *[...], you're being yourself...*

703 **A.A.**  
704

705 00:45:48 A.A. *Yeah, I'm being myself with [...] even. I'm not trying to play like [...]. I can't.*

706 **INTERVIEWER**  
707

708 00:45:53 B.B. *So you have a well-developed sense of self (yeah) which I think is fine. It's absolutely*  
709 *right, and that self is what you bring to the gig and what you hope people are hiring you for (right).*

710 **A.A.**  
711

712 00:46:03 A.A. And I'm up for a challenge, too (*yeah, sure*) ... but that's a really tricky question ... [...]
713 And like [...], he does these very fleshed out demos, and we hear the demos and it's like "We'll put
714 drums on top of this and I'll take my programming away" and then he'll take it and because he
715 thinks of music as blocks he'll rearrange the blocks, again (*yeah*) and then he'll come up with this ...
716 (*yeah*) ...

717 INTERVIEWER

718

719 00:46:30 B.B. *Makes it tough for a drummer (it does) ... very hard to stand by the end product. Like*
720 *where the guitar solo is dubbed on top of your drums ...*

721 A.A.

722

723 00:46:39 A.A. And a lot of people work that way these days (*I'll bet*). Probably most people work that
724 way these days (*mmm*). [...]

725 A.A.

726

727 00:47:42 A.A. The power we have as drummers is that people will listen (*yeah*). As you know, in any
728 gig, there's a bass solo, people are always talking right through it (laughs)... as soon as there is a
729 drum solo, people will put their drink down and they will listen to it. For some reason, maybe it's a
730 primitive tribal thing or something, but they will pay attention.

731 INTERVIEWER

732

733 00:48:01 B.B. *Tell me a little bit about writing music (okay) and why you decided to do that.*

734 A.A.

735

736 00:48:07 A.A. It was always a dream ... I always wanted to ...

737 INTERVIEWER

738

739 00:48:14 B.B. *When did you start? When did you first give a tune to some guys ... get them in a room*
740 *and give a tune to some guys and say let's play this, kind of ...*

741 A.A.

742

743 00:48:24 A.A. During the Stan Kenton clinics I did a couple of arranging classes (*oh*) and I did a big
744 band arrangement, and the deal was you had a week, and at the end of the week you had to copy
745 out your own charts [...]. At the end of the week the Kenton band was going to play your
746 arrangement (*yeah*) so you had a week to do this thing (*that's great*). First thing I did was a ballad ...
747 It was a great challenge (*yeah*) and I just ... (*and you wrote the tune as well?*) No, I did an
748 arrangement of a Satie piece - a waltz - as a ballad... and the second time I did the Billy Cobham
749 piece called Crosswinds, but a big band arrangement of that (*yeah*), and it wasn't a full arrangement
750 - about 48 bars or so ...

751 INTERVIEWER

752

753 00:49:30 B.B. *Was there a time that you became in your mind a drummer-writer? Or a drummer*  
754 *bandleader? Did you associate writing with being able to put musicians ... being able to run a band?*

755 A.A.

756

757 00:49:43 A.A. Being able to run a band is a whole different ball of wax, but I wanted to do recordings  
758 *(you wanted to make recordings?)* Yeah. I wanted to be a composer. I really, really wanted to be a  
759 composer. I tried to gather as much information from [...], and from [...]. Especially [...].

760 INTERVIEWER

761

762 00:49:59 B.B. *Does that imply some sort of insufficiency about playing drums as an instrument, that*  
763 *wasn't somehow enough?*

764 A.A.

765

766 00:50:07 A.A. Well, I'd sort of played violin at third grade so I had that, and at University I'd had to  
767 play mallets for two years because I was in a percussion department; couldn't play drum set. *(What*  
768 *was the University again?)* Long Beach. Cal State University, Long Beach. I was only there for two  
769 years, then I started working, so... And I knew I didn't want to be a mallet player in the orchestra;  
770 that was not anything I wanted to pursue ... *(sure, sure)*. Anyway ... so I guess the first tune I actually  
771 wrote for a band was a tune called [...] and [...] made a demo of it with my brother playing bass and I  
772 sequenced the keyboard parts, and I gave it to [...] and he loved it and he said we'll put it on my new  
773 record, so it's on [...].

774 INTERVIEWER

775

776 00:50:53 B.B. *Terrific. You must be thrilled with that.* (I was thrilled, yeah). *It's a lovely feeling hearing*  
777 *some melody that you've written come to life, and isn't it always the way that when you give it to*  
778 *guys to play they make it sound better!* (They certainly do). *They make it sound really good!* (It does).  
779 *Especially if you've done a crap demo like I have [...] ... it's a lovely feeling.* (It's a thrill. I was stuck  
780 then, okay, I wanted to do more of that)...

781 INTERVIEWER

782

783 00:51:21 B.B. *Because, you know, from the outside there's a thing about drummers and musicians*  
784 *and they're not quite the same thing; and somewhere at the bottom of this thinking is the idea that*  
785 *somehow you became a musician when you could write music - you see what I mean? To you and I,*  
786 *of course, we don't think like that (no) but some others do.*

787 A.A.

788

789 00:51:40 A.A. But then I think some drummers have been the best producers, because of all the  
790 decisions we make spontaneously in the band, by shaping music *(interesting idea)*. That's what a  
791 producer often does, or an arranger, and I think it's a natural transition to do that, to learn your  
792 theory and get into composition *(interesting)* because we're already thinking big picture whereas the  
793 guitar player may not be thinking big picture; he may be thinking a very ...you know, blinders on, just  
794 thinking about his part, not really... *(yeah, yeah)* because he has less power to change things in the  
795 band, spontaneously.

796 **INTERVIEWER**

797

798 00:52:16 B.B. *And when you compose do you come at it from all kinds of different ways?*

799 **A.A.**

800

801 00:52:20 A.A. Keyboard; I always start with the keyboard. I have never started with a drum beat,  
802 ever.

803 **INTERVIEWER**

804

805 00:52:26 B.B. *Do you have a sufficient keyboard facility (no) to play ... (I don't have any chops). [...]*  
806 *You know enough theory? ... [...]* (I do it slow). *Yeah, like me.*

807 **A.A.**

808

809 00:52:41 A.A. And I learnt from [...] he said that if you like the sound of a voicing of a chord, he said  
810 spell it out (*mmm*) ... [...]. So on my last record there are four or five pieces that are improvisations  
811 (*mmm*), and they're completely done without ... except for one had ... a tiny bit of ... It had a count  
812 off [...]. I decided I wanted to play something 'New Orleansy' but really aggressive, and I didn't even  
813 say aggressive and [...] came up with this kind of double stop (*you didn't discuss this in advance?...*)  
814 Jimmy just came up with this little riff (*great*) and I said great let's do that, let's count it off - roll  
815 tape, count it off - and it turned into something I've never heard anybody do before (*terrific*)  
816 because we're all ... It's on the latest record [...]. It all happened and then it was over and it was like  
817 ... oh ... no one else would ...

818 **INTERVIEWER**

819

820 00:55:20 B.B. *Right, and you can't recreate it [...]* (No ... we played the general feel live) *right, right;*  
821 *and got something else which is lovely. So you're moving more in that direction? Clearly you always*  
822 *want, it seems to me, want to be creative and you want to be [...]* *in the music, but in your own music*  
823 *you're moving to a looser direction all the time. Why would that be?*

824 **A.A.**

825

826 00:55:42 A.A. Well, the other half of the record is composed.

827 **TA-AA-8 PERFORMING IN PUBLIC**

828

829 **INTERVIEWER**

830

831 00:55:44 B.B. *Okay, alright, so you're playing both sides of the fence (laughs). (Yeah, which I like) [...]*  
832 *Tell me a little bit about what you think about audiences, you know, and how your music is received.*  
833 *Do you care how many people buy an album ... (oh, I prefer a lot of people bought it ...). Do you see,*  
834 *when you're playing live, perhaps under your own direction on one of your own gigs, is the audience*  
835 *a help, a hindrance?*

836 **A.A.**

837

838 00:56:20 A.A. I always think, hey, I'm happy if they show up ... *(yeah)*. I think they're a help, yeah,  
839 sure.

840 **INTERVIEWER**

841

842 00:56:25 B.B. *Do they affect what you do?*

843 **A.A.**

844

845 00:56:27 A.A. No ... no, never.

846 **INTERVIEWER**

847

848 00:56:30 B.B. *You've come to present something; you present it; and during the course of that*  
849 *presentation is there anything they can do that would make you change the rest of the presentation?*

850 **A.A.**

851

852 00:56:39. A.A. No *(okay)*. No *(yeah, I think that would be the same with me)*. No, and you and I both  
853 know what would get them on their feet *(yeah, pretty much)* quickly, you know, and I often don't  
854 want to do that *(right)* because that's being cheap *(sure, sure)*.

855 **INTERVIEWER**

856

857 00:56:56 B.B. *It's interesting isn't it, the way audiences ... Because some people see them as an*  
858 *essential partner in a co-creative exercise between you ... I think Peter Gabriel would probably think*  
859 *his audience was extremely important, in the way he's working with them, I suspect ... takes them*  
860 *very much into consideration, whereas I, a bit like you, I've done a lot of thinking and a lot of ... here*  
861 *it is (yeah) here it is. [...]*

862 **A.A.**

863

864 00:57:50 A.A. I've heard jazz musicians even say I'm trying to figure out what in my music the  
865 audience likes and do more of that *(you've heard guys say that?)* [...] told me that one day. We were  
866 on tour years ago [...], he had the [...] band and said "I'm really trying to figure out what it is *(yeah)*  
867 and I was thinking, boy, if anybody ... they are going to show up anyway *(yeah)* you know *(right)*."

868 **INTERVIEWER**

869

870 00:58:17 B.B. *I think he's grown through that (I think he has, too) ... that little weird moment [...].*  
871 *Maybe you have, in a way, named some or any drummers living or dead who you consider creative,*  
872 *and why you would consider them creative, or is that just too long a list really?*

873 **A.A.**

874

875 00:58:43 A.A. Well, [...] comes to mind right away because you never know ... people who work with  
876 him never know what he's going to show up with. I think I told you, years ago a buddy of mine had a  
877 Coca-Cola commercial, you know, recording a jingle and [...] was on it and he showed up without any  
878 cymbals! *(yeah)* ... Just different sized tambourines ... and it's a Coca-Cola commercial *(that's risky!)*  
879 and everybody's fine with it because ... *(because it's [...] doing it?)* yeah ... you hire him because he's

880 going to bring something to the party that nobody else is and it's going to still have the right spirit  
881 and vibe (*yeah*).

882 **INTERVIEWER**

883

884 *00:59:18 B.B. It's a kind of a template for creativity, isn't it? (It's pretty brave). Yeah it is, it really is.*

885 **INTERVIEWER**

886

887 *00:59:25 B.B. Did you ever get into Max Roach?*

888 **A.A.**

889

890 *00:59:29 A.A. Yeah ... the old Clifford Brown ... (yeah) and his soloing especially just killed me.*

891 **INTERVIEWER**

892

893 *00:59:39 B.B. He was kind of the first guy not to rattle round the drum kit, aimlessly (but play obvious*  
894 *themes) yeah, he played fairly obvious little tunes and things, which was a lovely way of looking at it.*  
895 *He connected with the with the African-American thing a lot, the way you speak on an instrument is*  
896 *incredibly interesting, beautiful ... he was kind of the first, I suppose, and is in a way emblematic of*  
897 *creativity ever since, you know. Max is kind of that guy up there who got the MacArthur Foundation*  
898 *[Award], you know, quite a guy. I think I might use him as emblematic of creativity in this work that*  
899 *I'm doing. (Great choice).*

900 **INTERVIEWER**

901

902 *01:00:18 B.B. What would you say motivates you to be creative? What's driving you here?*

903 **A.A.**

904

905 *01:00:29 A.A. I never think about it (uh-huh) ... why would you not? (Why would you not be creative*  
906 *if you're on a musical instrument?) Yeah (It's what you do, right? It's not even thought about). I mean*  
907 *I know people who are pattern players and they like to play what they know, and they sound good*  
908 *and they're comfortable, but that's not me at all. (It's not). I can, but...*

909 **INTERVIEWER**

910

911 *01:00:54 B.B. You are not, I think, in a majority; you are in a minority. (Probably. Yeah, yeah, I guess*  
912 *so).*

913 **INTERVIEWER**

914

915 *01:01:01 B.B. If you're going from week to week without even questioning any of this because it's so*  
916 *built into your very steady kind of self-contained approach, then great, you consider yourself really*  
917 *lucky (I am lucky) because a lot of guys, you know, send themselves to hell and back thinking about*  
918 *this stuff at 4 o'clock in the morning. [...].*

919 **A.A.**

920

921 01:01:40 A.A. I was so lucky to play with [...]. I was playing with him before I played with [...]. [...].

922 A.A.

923

924 01:02:16 A.A. I think playing with [...] was sink or swim (*yeah*). To be honest, he gave me so much  
925 confidence (*yeah*). For the first gig I was a nervous wreck, I thought “oh, shit there’s like ...” (*well, I’m*  
926 *pleased to hear you were a nervous wreck on something!*) [both laugh]. No, I was but, as soon as he  
927 walked on stage we played a little reggae vamp, he walks on stage, he is smoking his cigarette, he  
928 just looks over like this is no big deal, and then ... His playing was so strong during that first show I  
929 thought this is going to be fine, this is absolutely going to be fine. I’m looking over at the band;  
930 they’re not nervous, and I’m thinking, well okay, we’ve rehearsed for three months, we’ve rehearsed  
931 all these funny visual cues, how he’s going to change stuff so I kind of know what to expect ... so I’m  
932 just going to try to have a good time (*yeah*).

933 INTERVIEWER

934

935 01:03:16 B.B. So you’ve done more thinking about creativity in the last hour and a quarter [laughs]  
936 than you have in the previous ten years right? (Yes, yes). I think that’s great. Most guys don’t like to  
937 verbalise this stuff; a lot of people find it very hard to verbalise, you know, but some people get  
938 better at it as the session goes on. (I thought this would be fun ... [both laugh], because you’re  
939 running this. You’re a thinker, Bill!) I am interested in the subject (*yeah*), very interested in the  
940 subject. Not everybody is the same at all, you know; a lot of creative guys are very different in their  
941 attitude to this stuff. (It’s true) [...].

942 A.A.

943

944 01:03:50 A.A. I remember [...] asking [...] about drum clinics, and he said “I don’t like to do too many  
945 drum clinics, you know. I don’t really like to talk about music” (*Yeah*). Okay.

946 INTERVIEWER

947

948 01:04:02 B.B. And often the guys that are terrific at playing are terrible at talking, and the guys that  
949 are great at talking are not so good at playing. (Right). Some people find one easier than the other.  
950 [...].

951 A.A.

952

953 01:04:39 A.A. And you can’t explain it. At the end of the day (*that’s right*) ... the words don’t quite do  
954 it justice (*yeah*). But we try though.

955 TA-AA-9 REFLECTION ON MEANING AND CHANCE TO ADD

956

957 INTERVIEWER

958

959 01:04:48 B.B. That’s just about all the questions I’ve got; is there anything else ... (were they focused  
960 enough?) No, no, they’re really focused enough (*yeah? okay*) ... I’m just thinking is there anything else  
961 about creativity at all that you’d want to chip in, that you don’t think we’ve covered?

962 A.A.

963

964 01:05:04 A.A. The overall thing to me, I think ... I really believe [...] any kind of gig you're doing, you  
965 have the option to be creative (*aha*). I really fully fully believe that.

966 **INTERVIEWER**

967

968 *01:05:16. B.B. So there's no horrible rotten Colgate toothpaste ad (no) that you cannot be creative*  
969 *on; to wit, [...].*

970 **A.A.**

971

972 01:05:22 A.A. I've done the Colgate toothpaste (*you've done that?*) ads ... and everybody in the band  
973 has been ultra-creative (*how interesting*). I used to work in the 80s for this one music production  
974 company and they were very creative people to begin with. She was a classical pianist, she studied  
975 from Nadia Boulanger, got into song writing, her husband is a rock 'n' roll bass player who got tired  
976 of not being paid so they decided to start a jingle company; but it was all high-end jingles, it was  
977 Porsche and Saab (*yeah*) ... They paid us double scale; we got double scale residuals for years, that  
978 kept on running [...]. Booked at Village Recorders, you know, where Steely Dan recorded, and it  
979 would typically be an eight hour day. And they would experiment, they would try things (*for a one-*  
980 *minute commercial?*)[...]. You know music budget is tiny compared to the visual (*yeah. And you were*  
981 *all asked to come up with things, try things, options?*) That's why we were there (*interesting*). Again,  
982 they were creative leaders too, but we were there to come up with something new, and we could be  
983 as quirky as we wanted.

984 **INTERVIEWER**

985

986 *01:06:40 B.B. The more you come to understand how musicians behave, and behave in certain*  
987 *musical contexts, you realise there is almost no uniformity in any of this (no), you know ... A rock solid*  
988 *automated session can be an intensely creative position, or it can be absolutely horrible, and you*  
989 *never really know till you walk through the door what you're going to get (yes, what the parameters*  
990 *are going to be, yeah). So it requires a steady pair of hands which you obviously have, and a lot of*  
991 *guys find that very testing, extremely testing, being able to go [snaps fingers] you know to change*  
992 *from 'I thought it was this and I was going to do that' to 'it's now this and now I've got to do that and*  
993 *I'm outside my comfort zone'. A lot of people find that very rough, you know ... (But I played with [...],*  
994 *[...] because he was always going to turn left). The other thing is you have a bed rock of technical*  
995 *capacity, a deep well of technical capability which allows you to draw on that. Other guys have a*  
996 *more patchy - and I'm not talking about myself here! - a more patchy technical ability (no) which can*  
997 *fail you and let you down, because I didn't go through any kind of a training so I'm a pick-it-up-as-*  
998 *you-go-along guy, which can get you quite a good way...*

999 **A.A.**

1000

1001 01:07:54 A.A. More important is a stylistic understanding of what will sound like a reggae (*yes*) beat  
1002 versus what will sound like a train beat (*yeah*) versus what will sound like ... (*that's all true too*) you  
1003 know, (*yeah*). More than technical, it's (*it is*) understanding the genre (*understanding genres,*  
1004 *absolutely. Just doing it lots of course; nothing quite like doing it lots, is there?*) By working with [...],  
1005 again, I think it made me prepared kind of for anything, because we never knew what he was going  
1006 to do on stage (*yeah*); you just had to realise ... you had to trust that this is going to be really good.  
1007 And we all have enough ability here where we can all make this really good, whatever he throws at  
1008 us. And so if you get the jingle guy...



1009 **INTERVIEWER**  
1010

1011 *01:08:44 B.B. The creativity there lies in almost speed of reaction, isn't it. It's the ability to have*  
1012 *something that's going to work, (yeah and it's...) or even if it's a fall-back position ... you know, it's*  
1013 *maybe not the best thing in the world but it's going to work for now (right) until you find something*  
1014 *better, maybe. The ability to have that is really a top skill (it's very important), and that's part of the*  
1015 *creativity isn't it, to be able to find that in two seconds, you know, provide the right thing.*

1016 **A.A.**  
1017

1018 *01:09:15 A.A. Right. But if you're going to an improviser too you have to have that (yeah). You do*  
1019 *have to have enough confidence (absolutely) and trust to put yourself ... [...] used to call it 'playing*  
1020 *with no nets' (yeah) like a circus performer with no net below (yeah, sure) and be comfortable in*  
1021 *that place.*

1022 **INTERVIEWER**  
1023

1024 *01:09:32 B.B. Yeah, the confidence if... [...] would do the same thing, you know. If you're going to*  
1025 *start playing something, make sure it's really interesting and that if nobody else joined you [laughs]*  
1026 *(right) it's something that you could play, expand, and conclude over a nice five or six minute section,*  
1027 *and it would be a little work of art on its own.*

1028 **A.A.**  
1029

1030 *01:09:49 A.A. Right. [...] If [...] would give anybody a solo in the band, he would leave the stage and*  
1031 *you don't know when he's going to come back, so you would realise oh, okay, this is not a 16 bar*  
1032 *event here, I've got to (yeah) tell a story of a certain, you know ... (that's great, that's great). So*  
1033 *yeah, it was a good training (laughs).*

1034 **TA-AA-10 PARTICIPATION IN THE INTERVIEW**  
1035

1036 **INTERVIEWER**  
1037

1038 *01:10:10 B.B. Two really weird sort of formal questions, (sure, go ahead) so we've covered pretty*  
1039 *much everything you think we should cover which is good; just about the interview itself, any*  
1040 *positives or negatives to taking part? Is it very weird asking drummers to conceptualise these things?*  
1041 *(No, I like it). You're okay with that. [...]. You know I haven't asked you to define creativity so it may*  
1042 *well be that your understanding of what we've been talking about is entirely different from mine*  
1043 *which is quite possible, but that's okay because I'm going to find that out. [...].*

1044 **INTERVIEWER**  
1045

1046 *01:11:03 B.B. And taking part has ... I wonder if it'll change anything about the way you think about*  
1047 *these things?*

1048 **A.A.**  
1049

1050 *01:11:11 A.A. I'll let you know in the future (it might; it might not). It might. [...].*

1051 **INTERVIEWER**

1052

1053 *01:12:06 B.B. Thanks [...]*

1054 **A.A.**

1055

1056 *01:12:07 A.A. Again you're the right guy to do it. [laughs]. You ask the right questions, you know.*

1057 **INTERVIEWER**

1058

1059 *01:12:14 B.B. Well, that is an advantage to what they call 'complete member' research. [...].*

1060 *01:12:17 Transcription ends.*

1061 *01:13:30 Recording ends.*

1062

1063