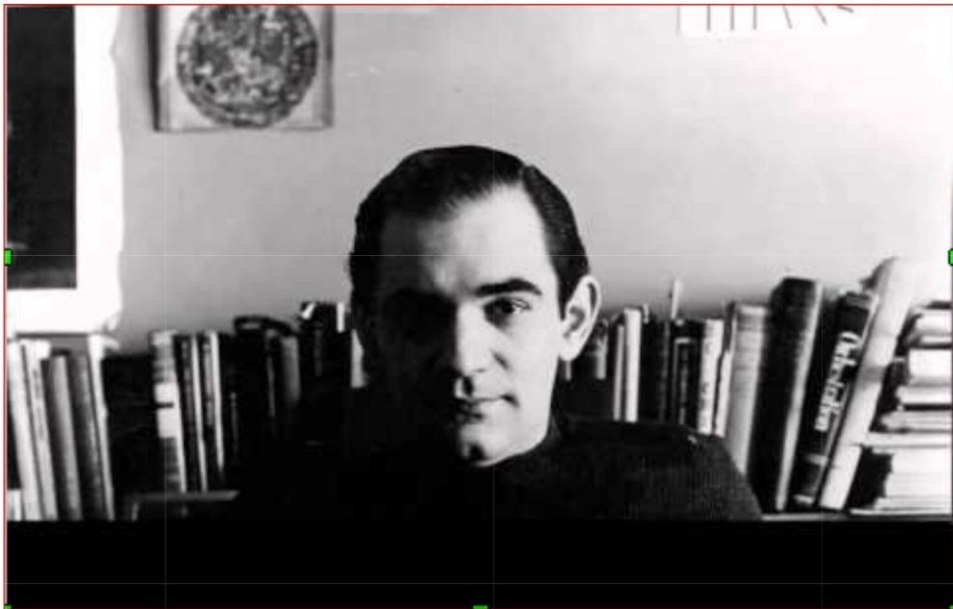


The "Crossroads" of Music
From Jazz to Classical & from Classical to Jazz

WILLIAM BILL RUSSO

(25.06.1928 - 11.01.2003)

Master orchestrator and brilliant theorist



(Photo: Facebook)



Maurice Creuven 2022

Talking about music is good; listening to it is better!

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THE LENOX SCHOOL OF JAZZ.

During his stay in New York and despite his many activities as a composer-arranger, conductor and recording sessions, Bill found time to teach.

At that time, in the 50's and 60's, perhaps the most exciting and passionate of all the history of jazz, with the return of prosperity and the massive use of the young LP, the great schools, the new styles, the strong personalities rubbed shoulders in all sympathy, but in a marvelous burst of creativity and imagination.

The world of jazz is particularly active and dynamic, offering the music lover an extraordinary abundance of recordings of a quality and duration far superior to what was obtained with 78 rpm records.

Musically, all styles are present: Blues, New Orleans, Dixieland, Swing, Bop, Cool, West Coast, Hard Bop, Mainstream, Third Stream, Modal, Free, so many aspects of jazz that quickly give rise to debates, a little vain, between supporters and opponents of one or the other form.

From 1957 to 1960, Bill Russo was one of an impressive group of prominent professional musicians who spent three weeks during the summer sharing their experience and insight into jazz with students at the influential Lenox School of Jazz in Lenox, Massachusetts (West), a community located halfway between New York and Boston.

These summer courses were organized in 1957 on the initiative of Marshall Stearns (1908-66), professor of English at Hunter College, specialized in English literature of the Middle Ages and founder of the Institute of Jazz Studies.



Marshall Stearns 1951



(Photos: Clemens Kalischer/Music Inn)



John Lewis 1959

The goal is to fill a gap, especially a technical one, in the teaching of jazz music, a bold and non-profit project.

Kenny Dorham states, on this subject:

"When I came as a youngster to New York, the seniors would not tell me anything, no advice, even Bird. I hope the students, at Lenox, realize how lucky they are!"



Philip and Stephanie Barber 1951
(Photo: Clemens Kalischer/Music Inn)

It was Marshall Stearns who, as early as 1950, led the debates on jazz and folk music organized by Philip and Stephanie Barber in their quiet Lenox home called the Music Inn, and in 1956, it was the Modern Jazz Quartet who played there.

plays in residence. In 1959, it is the turn of the Dave Brubeck Quartet.

The teaching staff of the Lenox School of Jazz is headed by John Lewis (of the M.J.Q.) and includes personalities with sometimes very different, if not opposing, musical orientations.

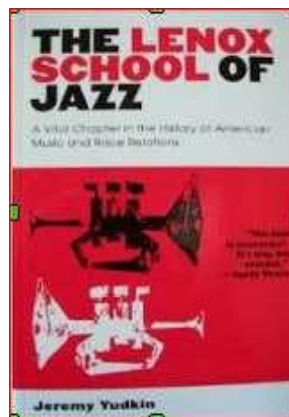
Michael Fitzgerald, musician, musicologist, author, educator and documentarian, says:

"Before the Lenox School of Jazz, there was the Berklee College of Music, established in 1945 by Lawrence Berk, but the quantity, quality and stature of the Lenox School's faculty have never been matched."

According to John Lewis:

"We don't come here to be tested ... We are not professional teachers ... We are mostly interested in the approach to jazz ... The students will take away, from their stay, a musically very enriching experience."

But it is the renowned and charismatic musicologist Jeremy Yudkin who speaks best and most eruditely about the School of Jazz, in his magnificent and well-documented book "The Lenox School of Jazz - A Vital Chapter in the History of American Music and Race Relations", (157 p.) from Farshaw Publishing, 2006 :



(Photos : Jeremy Yudkin)

"The Lenox School of Jazz was the brainchild of the Barbers and John Lewis, the jazz composer and pianist who led the Modern Jazz Quartet for over forty years. Although it was only a short summer program that lasted only four years, the School attracted many of the most important musicians of the day to teach there: John Lewis, Milt Jackson, Percy

Heath, Connie Kay, Dave Brubeck, Jimmy Giuffre, Dizzy Gillespie, Freddy Hubbard, Kenny Dorham, Booker Little, Oscar Peterson, Bill Evans, Jim Hall, Herb Ellis, Ray Brown, Chuck Israels, Ralph Peña, Art Davis, Bob Brookmeyer, J.J. Johnson, Lee Konitz, George Coleman, Don Heckman, Ed Summerlin, Ray Draper, Max Roach, George Russell, Bill Russo and Herb Pomeroy.

Great concerts were also organized at the Music Inn, featuring such jazz stars as Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Dave Brubeck, Stan Kenton, George Shearing, Sarah Vaughan, the M.J.Q. and Sonny Rollins. Over the four years of its existence, the School trained more than one hundred and fifty students, many of whom went on to have successful careers in jazz: David Baker, Ran Blake, Jamey Aebersold, Bob Dorough, Don Ellis, Margo Guryan, Don Heckman, Steve Kuhn, Arif Mardin, Larry Ridley, Tupper Saussy and Earl Zindars.

But the most famous are probably Don Cherry and Ornette Coleman, whose quartet (with Charlie Haden and Billy Higgins) turned the jazz world upside down. It was in Lenox, in 1959, that Ornette Coleman caught the public's attention.

John Lewis has decreed that students will be called "Mister" or "Miss" regardless of age and that classes will begin at 9 a.m. sharp. There will be no alcohol in the rooms and no smoking in the classrooms.

The teaching is intensive: classes are held in the morning and afternoon, lectures take place in the evening, plus individual work and informal discussions over meals which are served in the "Potting Shed", an old greenhouse converted into a 60-seat restaurant, plus a terrace which can also accommodate 60 people. At noon: grilled chicken, beef Stroganoff, turkey Divan, filet mignon, green salad and potatoes or a simple snack. There is Beaujolais and Bordeaux wine. In the evening, there are various sandwiches. And late into the night, you can hear the echo of the exercises that the students practice in their rooms.

The specialized magazines took an interest in the Lenox phenomenon and gave it a good publicity: Down Beat, Musical Courier, Musical Leader, High Fidelity and Jazz Today. In the very classical music magazine, The Saturday Review, Nat Hentoff declared: "This new adventure marks a turning point in the history of jazz".

The New York Times publishes several articles on the school; The Nation announces its creation and Harper's Magazine dedicates an article to the school that emphasizes the seriousness of the enterprise and concludes by noting that the Newport Jazz Festival has made a donation of 1,000 (= \$9,000 today) for the 1958 session."

Born in London in 1948, Jeremy Yudkin is the youngest of three sons of the famous English physiologist and nutritionist John Yudkin and his wife Milly Himmelweit.

He studied in England and the United States. A graduate of Cambridge and Stanford Universities, he teaches in Palo Alto, San Francisco, Harvard and, as a visiting professor, at the Ecole Normale Supérieure and the Conservatoire National Supérieur de Musique in Paris.

Since 1982, Jeremy Yudkin has been Professor of Musicology at Boston University (Center for Beethoven Research) and Oxford University.

He is also very active in the Tanglewood Festival where he created the "Pre-Concert Tanglewood Talks" which he presents each year and whose comments allow the audience to discover, in a friendly way, the works that will appear in the next concerts.

Particularly prolific, Jeremy wrote in the Journal of the American Musicological Society, the Journal of Musicology, the Musical Quarterly, Musica Disciplina, Speculum, Notes, Early Music, American Music, Music and Letters, The Salisbury Review, Berkshire Living, The Stanford Italian Review, and The American Journal of Philology.

He is a contributor to the Harvard Dictionary of Music, an advisor to the Smithsonian Institution for the Smithsonian Collection of Classic Jazz, and a jazz consultant to the Oxford English Dictionary, among others.

Numerous conferences take him to the United States, Europe and Russia; the list of his activities is endless!

His analyses (8 books, most of them copious) cover Beethoven, Bartok, medieval music (his definitive Music in Medieval Europe), the Beatles and jazz. In addition to his Lenox, he is the author of "Miles Smiles, Miles Davis and the Invention of Post Bop" (2009) which received an Award for Excellence in Historical Sound Research from the Association for Recorded Sound Collections.

His greatest success is entitled "Understanding Music" which corresponds to one of his great passions, namely to help any public in a clear and lively approach of the music.

Although the Lenox School of Jazz episode was relatively short, lasting only four summers, it was a particularly creative moment in the history of jazz in the 1950s, and in his book Jeremy Yudkin highlights its importance with clarity and relevance.

He is also an excellent clarinet player, photographer, gardener and soccer player. His wife, Kathryn, is a French teacher; they have two children, Daniel and Susanna, and live in Berkshire, Massachusetts.

The site to visit : <http://jeremy-yudkin.com/>



Bill Russo's Bach Choral Class 1959
(Photo: Clemens Kalischer/Music Inn)

In Lenox, we approach the Swing, the Bop, the Cool, the Free and especially the Third Stream dear, in particular, to the duo John Lewis - Gunther Schuller.

"Ladies and gentlemen, I'm going to drown you (musically)!"

With these words, Bill Russo welcomed his candidates to the first jazz composition class in 1957. He taught at Lenox until 1960.

Some of the students were a little intimidated, having never been in contact with real professional jazz musicians. Of all the options used, the Bill Russo method of *"instruction by immersion"* was the favorite of the students, who readily cited it as the pinnacle of their training.

Indeed, the results were excellent.

At the end of the session, a big concert is organized which brings together, in various ensembles, students and teachers.

At the time of the concert of August 29, 1957 at 20H.40, the first small formation is directed by Oscar Peterson; the second by Dizzy Gillespie then it is the turn of Ray Brown, followed by Jimmy Giuffre and Max Roach.

The evening ends with the School's big band, directed by Bill Russo, in which we find, among others, Jimmy Giuffre, Dizzy Gillespie, Ray Brown and Herb Ellis. On the program: "Tickletoe" (by Lester Young), "Jig-Saw" (Mulvihill, Baker, Galino, Mathieu), "Manteca" (Dizzy Gillespie, arrangement by Bill Russo), "Pussy Willow" (Bill Russo and Petan), "Picadilly Circus" (Sture Swenson).

In 1958, the ensembles were led, successively, by Bob Brookmeyer, Lee Konitz, Max Roach and Jimmy Giuffre. Arif Mardin led a group of teachers: Kenny Dorham, Jimmy Giuffre, Bob Brookmeyer, Milt Jackson, Jim Hall, John Lewis, Percy Heath and Connie Kay, while Bill Russo was in charge of

again, from the big band.

The School also organizes a series of lectures that are given by Gunther Schuller, Bill Russo with Lennie Tristano, Nesuhi Ertegun from Atlantic Records, etc.

Concerts are also a major part of the education at Lenox. Every Thursday and Saturday night, the School's musicians can be heard, along with guests such as Wilbur DeParis, Mahalia Jackson, Chris Connor and the Boston Percussion Ensemble.

To remember the performances of Oscar Peterson's Trio, with Ray Brown and Herb Ellis, joined by Dizzy Gillespie and Max Roach. Jay Jay Johnson plays in a quintet, including Freddie Hubbard, and, of course, the entire Modern Jazz Quartet.

All of this is wonderful, but the School lacks financial resources and the 1960 session can just about be completed thanks to a few grants and a last-minute donation made by Michael Bakin (\$5,000, or \$45,000 today), son of the founder of the Museum of Modern Art.

In 1958, the Barbers were forced to sell Music Inn except for their own residence in which they tried to continue the jazz school, but the 1960 season was to be their last.



The Modern Jazz Quartet 1957
(Photo: Warren Fowler/Music Inn)

And so ends the great and beautiful adventure of the Lenox School of Jazz. All the details of its history and many photos can be consulted on the site :

<https://www.musicinnarchives.org/the-lenox-school-of-jazz.html>

Gunther Schuller:

"The Lenox School of Jazz was an incredible, unique and pioneering effort in jazz education. It was twenty years ahead of its time."

Sonny Rollins:

"The importance of the Lenox School of Jazz lies in the fact that it gave jazz a status of respectability that did not exist at that time."

Atlantic recorded some of John Lewis' Third Stream performances at Lenox: "John Lewis Presents Jazz Abstractions" (1365) as well as others, on behalf of the Modern Jazz Quartet, which are part of the Mosaic box set (MD7- 249) "The Complete Atlantic Studio Recordings of The Modern Jazz Quartet 1956- 64" with, sometimes, a guest: Jimmy Giuffre, Jim Hall, Ralph Peña or Sonny Rollins. These historic recordings are generally referred to as "at Music Inn".

In 1967, Music Inn's new owner, local entrepreneur Don Soviero, who had increased the outdoor capacity to 6,000 seats, went bankrupt and the new owners marketed the place more with activities and concerts that were less and less related to jazz.

Finally, at the 1979 concert of the Allman Brothers, a southern rock band, the audience went so wild that the police had to intervene very forcefully. This was the end of Music Inn.

The Barbers separated in 1972 and their home currently operates as a luxury hotel-restaurant.

And the Music Inn epic, which lasted some thirty years, remains today only in the memory of Berkshire County residents.

From 1959 to 1961, Bill Russo also taught composition at the prestigious Manhattan School of Music (N.Y.), founded in 1917.

In 1961, he published "Brookville", a work for wind instruments.

VIVA ITALIAN AMERICAN JAZZ !

That same year, Bill went to Rome to complete his first opera: "John Hooton", three acts for which he wrote the music and text.

According to Howard Reich of the Chicago Tribune,

"It is a sort of jazz version of Otello that can be classified as a major work by an artist who has produced many important scores over the last half century or so."

With this opera, Bill makes his first contact with the Italian tradition that is part of his family and cultural heritage.

During his stay in Italy, Bill Russo participated in the 1962 San Remo Jazz Festival. He is heard with his quintet but also at the head of a big band, The Italian Orchestra, composed only of Italian musicians: Sergio Fanni and Nino Impallomeni, trumpets; Stanislao Massara, Athos and Raoul Ceroni, trombones; Edoardo (Eddy) Busnello, alto; the veteran Eraldo Volontè, tenor; the very popular (on alto) Fausto Papetti, baritone; Bruno DeFilippi, guitar; Piero Lapolla, bass and Gil Cuppini, drums.

You can enjoy an excerpt of the performance on YouTube; it is a very personal arrangement (as always) of Bill on George Gershwin's theme "Summertime". Three soloists: Athos Ceroni, Eraldo Volontè and Nino Impallomeni.

By all accounts:

"A splendid and well-deserved tribute to a great artist: Bill Russo."



(Photo: YouTube)

We remember, in fact, that at that time, Italy had an impressive number of talented jazz musicians, particularly gifted and inspired, both as soloists and as sidemen of American stars.

During the glorious years of the 50s and 60s, Italy played a role in Europe that was not so much the

the West Coast in the United States.

And the phenomenon continues to this day, in Europe as well as in the United States, where there are countless jazz musicians of Italian origin.

By the way, it is worth mentioning the very interesting and perfectly documented book on the subject, written by Bill Dal Cerro and David Anthony Witter: "Bebop, Swing, and Bella Musica - Jazz and the Italian American Experience", published (2015) by Bella Musica Publishing, Chicago, Illinois (383 pages).

There are, of course, typical Italian names, such as La Rocca, Prima, Butera, Venuti, Candoli, DeFranco, Sinatra, Pizzareli, Tristano, Russo, Lovano, Di Meola, DeFrancesco, LaFaro, Rosolino, Rugolo, etc.

But also real surprises, for many, such as Eddie Lang (Salvatore Massaro), Flip Philips (Joseph Edward Filipelli), Louie Bellson (Luigi Paolino Francesco Balassoni), Tony Bennett (Anthony Dominick Benedetto), Ray Anthony (Raymond Antonini), Vinnie Burke (Vincenzo J. Bucci), Frankie Capp (Frank Cappuccio), Johnny Desmond (Giovanni Alfredo DiSimone), Joe Farrell (Joseph Carl Firrantello), Jimmy Giuffre (James Peter Giuffre), Jerry Gray (Generoso Graziano), Pete Jolly (Peter A. Ceragioli), Frankie Laine (Francesco LoVecchio), Marty, Phil and Teddy Napoleon (Matteo, Filippo and Salvatore Napoli), Tony Scott (Anthony Joseph Sciacca), Nick Travis (Nicholas Anthony Travascio), Charlie Ventura (Charles Venturo), George Wallington (Giacinto Figlia), etc, etc, etc.

Well no, Louis Armstrong is not Italian!



David Anthony Witter & Bill Dal Cerro
(Photo: IAP - Italian American Podcast)



(Photo: Robert Aulicino)

A big Bravo to the two authors who have done a wonderful job for which they have received the praise of many jazz professionals. Grazie Italia !

Bill Russo will also be Director of Orchestra Studies at the Scuola Europea d'Orchestra Jazz in Palermo, Sicily.

The world is small because it is in Sicily, in San Piero Patti, that Pete Rugolo was born, on December 25, 1915.

RETURN TO LONDON

In 1962, Bill returned to London, where he worked for the BBC, and in July formed the London Jazz Orchestra, 21 professional musicians, among the best in Great Britain, who agreed to participate in weekly rehearsals until late at night and almost voluntarily, which did not prevent Bill Russo from being very demanding, even severe with them. He directed this ensemble until 1965.

The band performs concerts, plays on the radio and participates in recording sessions. It consists of four trumpets, Ron Simmonds, Leon Calvert, Gordon Rose and Tony Mabbett; four trombones, Johnny Edwards, Keith Christie, Bobby Lamb and Don Lusher; two bass trombones, Jack Thirlwell and Ray Premru; five saxes, Johnny Scott and Al Newman, altos, Duncan Lamont and Art Ellefson, tenors, and Ronnie Ross, baritone; an oboe, Richard Morgan; Ray Dempsey on guitar; Arthur Watts, double bass; Kenny Clare, drums; and four cellos, Raymond Clark, Derek Simpson, Hilary Robinson and Jack Holmes.

On December 21 and 22, 1962, all this beautiful world is gathered in the Lansdowne Studios of London under the direction of Bill (William) Russo (assistant: his pupil and great friend Richard Dick Peaslee of whom we have the pleasure to speak, under his name, elsewhere on the site) for the recording of two Suites taking again themes composed by Bill, a dozen years earlier, for the orchestra of Stan Kenton.

The "Suite No. 1" (Opus 5), consists of five parts and begins with "Portrait of a Count" (dedicated to Conte Candoli) performed by Leon Calvert. "Egdon Heath" (dedicated to Stan Kenton) features Johnny Edwards and Johnny Scott. Third theme: "Frank Speaking" (to Frank Rosolino) with soloist Keith Christie, followed by "Thisbe" (to Max Jones, English jazz critic) and "Sweets" (to the very eclectic producer Pete Kameron) with soloists Tony Mabbett, Duncan Lamot, Ronnie Ross and Arthur Watts

The "Suite No. 2" (Opus 8), in four parts, is dedicated to Sally and John Thompson. The latter, a famous American pianist (1889-1963), is well known for his numerous piano teaching methods, especially for children.

The Suite begins with a performance of "Bill's Blues" featuring soloists Duncan Lamont, Leon Calvert and Johnny Scott. "Ennui" is played by Johnny Edwards and "Dusk" by Richard Morgan. As for "23° North - 82° West", it features Keith Christie and Duncan Lamont.

In each Suite, the themes are linked together on the basis of their harmonic closeness and rhythmic diversity. The orchestrations have all been modified, rewritten, and some of them very profoundly; they are not at all exact copies of the original scores. We have here Bill Russo revised by Bill Russo.

Listening to it, one cannot, however, forget the great Kentonian versions of all these themes as much for the perfection of the orchestra as for the value of the soloists who were the dedicatees. But, very objectively, it must be recognized that the London Jazz Orchestra perfectly masters Bill Russo's writing, whether in the complexity, nuance, subtlety, power, virtuosity or homogeneity of the ensembles which are remarkable.

As for the various soloists, they are fully inhabited by the role they assume. Leon Calvert is brilliant in his tribute to Conte, although he brings a slightly more romantic phrasing to the introduction. Keith Christie makes the most of his dedication to Frank, but perhaps Bill could have used Don Lusher in this case? In "Sweets", Duncan Lamont's magnificent solo, Ronnie Ross's ease and the efficiency of the rhythm section should be highlighted. Johnny Scott's viola is particularly fluid and lyrical. Johnny Edwards is admirable in "Ennui" but it is in "23° N.- 82° W." that we find a great Duncan Lamont who expresses here clearly his attachment to the Getzian sonorities.



(Photos: Vocallion Ltd)

Even if they are based on recompositions of pieces from his repertoire, these

two Suites allow one to fully appreciate Bill Russo's idea of music. Ideally, a unique, rich, vast, complex music, a very personal, serious style (just like Bill, the musician), an absolute mastery of all the sections of the orchestra, especially the brass, beautiful melodies, moving atmospheres, crescendos and silences, rhythmic variations, swing and romanticism, compositions which, musically, always have different characters.

For those who love jazz and have an open mind (to classical, eventually), Bill Russo's music is a must, and each audition brings new discoveries.

One can, therefore, be somewhat surprised by the opinion of the very distinguished English music critic, Steve Race (1921-2009), also pianist, composer and presenter on Radio 4 (BBC), which is reported to us by Ron Simmonds, of Canadian origin (1928-2005), first trumpet of the orchestra and producer of the magnificent "Jazz Professional" website <http://www.jazzprofessional.com/Main/welcome.html>

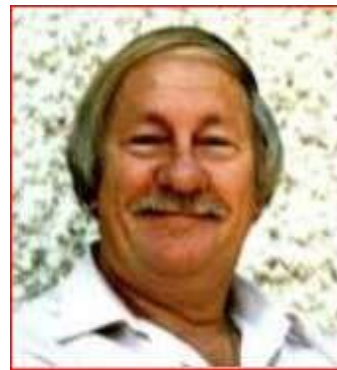
Note that, under the title "William Russo disappoints", Steve Race expresses a kind of disappointment that shows how much he expected more from Bill Russo, which is a kind of spontaneous tribute to the composer:

"My first approach to Bill Russo's music was with the release of the "Stan Kenton Showcase" LP, which contained the music of Bill Holman and Bill Russo.

During his stay in London, Bill formed an orchestra with the top English musicians. We now have the result of this collaboration under the title "Russo in London" which consists, to my great surprise, of old Bill Russo compositions that already exist on other recordings.



Steve Race
(Photo : Discogs)



Ron Simmonds
(Photo : Jazz Professional)

We all know that Louis Armstrong plays the same repertoire year after year, but I'm sure that Bill Russo has been devising new scores since the

Kenton. So why not record them? Bill Russo's records are not so frequent that he would devote an entire LP (originally) to revising old compositions.

The ensemble is rarely exciting and the rhythm section is sometimes a bit soft. Moreover, how do you explain why an orchestra that contains Art Ellefson and Don Lusher has only Duncan Lamont and Keith Christie as tenor and trombone soloists? To put it bluntly, I find the record disappointing and a bit boring."

Guided by a real disappointment about the content, the commentary is severe but let us add, as Steve Race recognizes, that the rarity of Bill Russo's discs makes this production an important element of his catalog and allows, in spite of everything, to appreciate excellent English musicians placed in professional conditions not always ideal in front of complex scores, as often with Bill.

The recording of the two sessions was, at the time, published on a Columbia LP. Today, it is included on a Vocalion CD (CDSML 8490) "Russo in London" along with eight tracks recorded on February 23 and 24, 1959 by the excellent English trumpeter Kenny Baker and The Baker's Dozen under the title "Blowing Up a Storm."

Musically, Kenny Baker is more in line with Woody Herman than Stan Kenton; his title clearly says it. Great jazz, direct, clean, energetic, imaginative soloists to whom Kenny Baker generously gives the floor, in short, an efficient big band that already includes some of Bill Russo's musicians: Ron Simmonds, Ray Premru, Johnny Scott, Art Ellefson, Ronnie Ross, but also a magnificent Don Rendell and the fantastic drummer Jackie Dougan. It was high time that these excellent tracks appeared on CD.

In absolute terms, one must recognize the musical and multiple interest of this Vocalion CD which proposes two very different visions of Jazz, one being of intellectual orientation with sometimes classical accents, the other betting mainly on spontaneity.

And this is what Jazz is, a universal and living art, open to all the variations of the creative imagination.

AN OPERA : " THE ISLAND

In 1962/63, Bill Russo composed, for the BBC, his second opera: "The Island" (Opus 42); the lyrics are by Adrian Michell.



(Map: Google/Le Monde diplomatique)

The action takes place on the island of Diego Garcia, the main island of the atoll of the same name, in the Chagos archipelago, a British territory in the Indian Ocean, and relates the problems caused by the announcement of the forced and definitive evacuation, between 1968 and 1973, of all the inhabitants of the island when it was leased, in 1966 and for fifty years, to the U.S. Army, which turned it into an important strategic base whose geographical location could allow actions towards Asia and the Middle East.

The agreement has been extended for twenty years, until December 30, 2036.

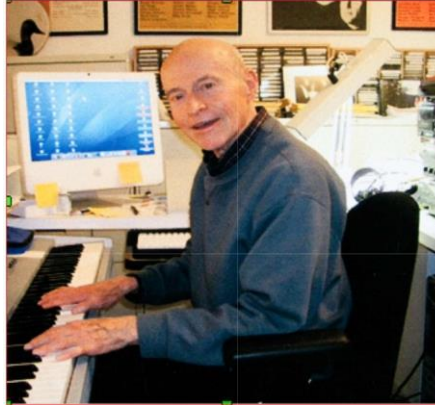
But in its February 25, 2019 statement, the International Court of Justice ruled that London and Washington illegally occupy the island, whose territory should return to Mauritius, which claims sovereignty over the archipelago.

However, the decision is not binding. To be continued, therefore ... So much for history!

The opera was produced by Douglas Cleverdon; the BBC broadcast it on Network Three on July 13, 1963, at the time of the expulsion of the islanders, and it emphasized the contrast between the superficial side of American popular culture and the simplicity and naturalness of the islanders. It has only one act (45 minutes) but is divided into three short scenes:

1. Message from the Mainland, 2. Mainland Bounty, 3. Escape.

Bill Russo conducts, with the help of Richard Peaslee, a chamber orchestra and a big band, led by Leon Calvert, as well as a group of singers, including the famous Cleo Laine (Mrs. Johnny Dankworth) and Denis Quilley, an English baritone (1927-2003), in order to restore, musically, all the strength of this tragedy.



Richard Peaslee
(Photo: New Music USA)

To my knowledge, there is no commercial recording of the opera; however, the following link allows access to the site which offers, in good conditions, a very convincing execution.

<http://sgs.lpi.org.uk/seagreensingers/theisland/The%20Island%20-%20Cleo%20LaineRARversionPt3.mp3>

BILL THE LONDONER

Let's come back to Bill Russo with some confidences collected from Caroline Gowers (see William Patrick Gowers, on this site) and which situate a little bit the atmosphere !

created by Bill during his various visits **to** London:

*"When Bill arrived **in** Landres, Patrick contacted him to ask if he could get some compositional readings as he greatly admired the work.*

*that Bill had done at Stan Kenton's. But, after one reading, I believe, Bill said that he had as much **to** learn from Patrick as Patrick had **to** learn from him. **There was,** Thus, a great deal of mutual admiration. Bill was very envious of the academic training Patrick had received and said that all jazz musicians should learn the great rules of harmony and counterpoint.*

*When we lived **in** Paris, for Patrick's PhD on Eric Satie, we gave our apartment in Landres **to** Bill who used it as a studio.*

On our return, we experienced the Saturday afternoon sessions that Bill organized there with the musicians of his London orchestra. He had them sing Bach chorales. Bill conducted; Patrick and I participated. I personally produced the 'Tea and Cake' I

All these musicians used to meet once a week in the middle of the night at Lansdowne Studios when it was not busy with recordings. And that's how we met Richard Peaslee, Patrick and Dick being Bill's assistants.



Caroline and Patrick
Gowers (Photo: Caroline
Gowers)

Bill had a lot of charisma; the musicians loved him and would do anything for him. He was an excellent friend. After returning to the States, he came back to Landres periodically. He would come to visit us and often ask me to organize a dinner party and invite people he knew. Bill would arrive in a cab, loaded with supplies, and the party could begin. We had a wonderful time, the conversations went in all directions and Bill kept the mood light.

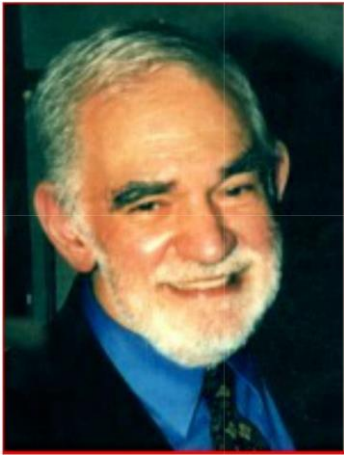
Back in Chicago, Bill invited our daughter Katharine, an excellent violinist from the Menuhin School (see Patrick Gowers in the Menu), to play the English Concerto and she flew to Chicago.

Later, Kathy played the concerto at a concert in Landres. Bill was conducting but he was very ill and it was not a very happy experience.

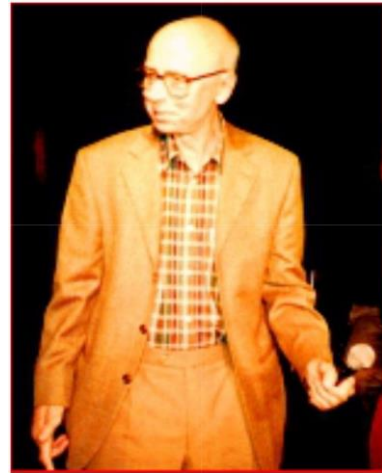
In 2001, when Patrick had his stroke, Bill, who was already suffering from cancer, came from Chicago to visit him in the hospital. At that time, Bill was making a kind of return to religion and was becoming quite deaf. I remember a strange scene where Bill and Patrick, each with a bible in hand, were discussing miraculous wars: Patrick had almost no voice and Bill could hardly hear anything he said.

Bill led a varied and lively private life. He was not an easy man to live with, but he was warm and generous in spirit. Patrick and Dick, two quiet and reserved temperaments, loved him very much although they were quite different from him. But I think I can say that Bill's infectious charisma freed them a little from their reserve."

WILLIAM RUSSO **"IN MY OPINION**



Bill Russo
(Photo: Dennis Matthews)



The Tomkins
(Photo: Jazz Professional)

In 1962 and 1964, Bill confided in the great English specialist of jazz interviews, Les Tomkins (1930), whose complete and impressive list of artists he interviewed can be consulted on the "Jazz Professional" site.

Here is a summary of the two interviews plus Bill's opinion of Duke Ellington:

- 1962 -

"About my compositions, I am rarely satisfied, but that is normal. <a would be more fun to write music if I were satisfied more often. ¶ sometimes I hear some music and I know that their authors are happy, but this is not a good sign. I think that the more satisfied you are, the more problems you have unless you have the same genius as Mozart...

Among my contemporaries, I place Duke Ellington first, then Gil Evans and many of the Third Stream people, especially John Lewis and Jimmy Giuffre. I really liked what Giuffre was writing five years ago but I don't know what he's doing today. John Lewis' music is also beautiful and some of George Russell's pieces impressed me a lot...

My favorite soloists are Bill Evans, Lennie Tristano, Lee Konitz, Miles Davis, Harold Baker (at Duke's), Bob Brookmeyer, Gerry Mulligan, Ray Brown and Charlie Mingus, Jimmy Raney and especially Jim Hall; I still love Jack Teagarden...

I am not interested, neither in atonality, nor in free, nor, for that matter, in the avant garde in any art. I feel that the subject, the content, the idea are trap and narrow and that the scope of this art is limited; it is not directed towards great goals. The music must have beauty, openness and address the world...

*I don't believe that jazz itself needs **to** be changed. The Count Basie idiom, for example, can be indefinitely developed rather than reproduced... Personally, I don't see how big bands could get out of their decline: where they could go and who would be interested in **them**. The big jazz band is*

is in the position of the symphony orchestra; in a way, it must be maintained by the state. It cannot even function for dance anymore because popular music has been too badly treated, too corrupted. Recording is not enough and the clubs are not managed properly. Besides, the jazz audience is not large enough to cover the necessary expenses. What the jazz band really needs is a place to work and develop ideas, not just to play...

Musicians and composers absolutely need some (financial) security...

During the war (1940-45), it was the time of the great jazz bands. Jazz was the popular music of the country and there was a lot of energy and enthusiasm in the society that supported it. It was an exciting time...

Today, music has only a superficial appeal; the effect it has on a teenager is not comparable to that of a big band of 15 or 20 musicians...

I think that all composers need to practice an instrument and all instrumentalists need to have some knowledge of composition. It is much easier to play when you know how and why a score is put together... In my opinion, you don't have to be a good desk musician to be a good soloist. I know some instrumentalists who would never be able to play in a section but who are magnificent soloists. But there is also a great satisfaction in playing in a section that can even exceed the pleasure of producing a great improvised solo. Not many people know this. It is a wonderful feeling to be in a large orchestra and to be part of a group that plays well together, with precision, music that is charged with meaning. Nowadays, individualistic fever runs through all performances; everyone sees himself as a soloist and this tendency frequently marks the work in sections...

One of my goals is to prevent the extinction of the big band; if we are not careful, it could become extinct, just like the dinosaurs. The whole tradition of jazz and its evolution has been a part of the development of excellent session musicians, which has allowed the promoters of commercial music to use the benefits of this education and culture for their own benefit without investing in their renewal. As a result, they may not have any more musicians in the next fifteen years or so; you can't make cream without milk!"

1964 -

"You ask me to compare English and American musicians; I will answer you frankly... The sound of the English musicians is very rich but is not balanced in the sections of the orchestra...

About sight-reading, American musicians are much faster, especially outside of 4/4 and they memorize while reading. The most important difference

The important thing is that the American musician works harder. The English musician takes his time, calmly; he believes that things will work themselves out, which is not the case; he thinks that jazz is a romantic art, that the essential part of jazz is soul, and this is true, but it is also the case in all arts. It is true that music is 'feeling' but this idea does not go far enough. Music is also skill, technique, discipline, control, study and a lot of work...

With the English musicians, we were very successful but, unfortunately, we were the exception. I tried to replace the old habits with new ones. The musicians worked with me, participating in weekly rehearsals, without being paid. I think they did it because they thought it would help them musically, and also because they felt a kind of responsibility to the music to fight against the anti-cultural forces that were oppressing them. And, to be fair, I think it's also fair to say that everyone in the orchestra was touched by the goddess of music and had an ideal...

I didn't write all the music for the orchestra. In the last two years, most of the scores have been written by Dick Peaslee, Tony Russell, Ken Wheeler, Richard Rodney Bennett, Bill Geldard and Tony Kinsey...

Since I have been in England, I have had a lot of work; I have had musicians who are able to play my music with a high degree of sympathy and technical skill; I love London and I believe I can help the English music world...

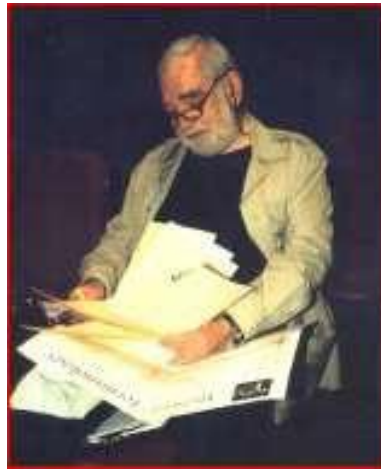
Financially, I've been rich and I've been poor. As a musician, I depend on my work to make ends meet. I've always taken risks; I've refused to be drawn into commercial music. A lot of the money I make goes to the orchestra, The London Jazz Orchestra...

Over the last two years, I think we've had about a hundred different musicians; if I count the substitutes, the number approaches two hundred...

Yes, the band swings; not always, of course. Some people think we want to turn jazz into classical music. Nothing could be further from the truth. We play pieces of music that are longer, more worked out than the jazz pieces of twenty years ago. Swing is created by discipline; restlessness is not swing. We forget that Count Basie, in the 1930s, had one of the most controlled ensembles in music history. Ironically, that's what I've tried to do, but perhaps I haven't always been clear enough...

We try to avoid naive titles like 'Jumping At Joes' because they suggest to the listener that what they are about to hear is not very important. If jazz has real value, why diminish it by using teenage songs? So, for example, as far as I'm concerned, I find it very condescending to jazz to use my diminutive Bill in this case and to talk about William Russo for classical. I don't appreciate the practice of such differences because many jazzmen have made substantial contributions to

the musical art...



(Photo: Dennis Matthews)

The London Jazz Orchestra is not in the Stan Kenton line, but I take this opportunity to say that Stan Kenton's mistakes were far better than many others' successes...

The influence of Duke Ellington -

"The indisputable greatness of Duke Ellington's orchestra is often attributed to its longevity, which forced the Duke to use, over a very long period of time, many talented musicians from whom, it is said, he found his inspiration. For me, this reasoning is only partly true.

Many of these musicians were wonderfully expressive and imaginative; some were even formidable soloists in jazz alone but also in the Ellingtonian aesthetic. I believe, however, that of all the Duke's soloists, only Jimmy Blanton (bass) was an improviser of a class comparable to Lester Young and Dizzy Gillespie; he possessed the gift of constructing a complete and structured solo.

Moreover, although the Duke was certainly inspired by his men, it is true to say that he inspired them even more, using the best of their abilities and providing them with a magnificent musical context.

In general, the improviser plays along a continuous line that often limits the orchestra to an accompanying role. Ellington got the soloists to express themselves within his music: they stop when the orchestra intervenes, they play shorter solos, with fewer notes, use sordines, in short, they are subordinate to the orchestra and participate in the enhancement of the ensemble. Even the drummer works in the spirit of the band, using a wide variety of sounds and maintaining the rhythm in unusual ways.

The fact that the Duke kept several of his talented musicians for a very long time

has, without a doubt, made it possible to realize and complete some of his projects. However, it was his vision and extraordinary gifts that brought all of these resources to such a magnificent level of accomplishment. It's not what you do, but how you do it!

The orchestra needs beautiful scores but also Ellington's hand. The realization of his music by the orchestra allows us to understand what his thoughts were. Without the orchestra, he would never have been able to demonstrate his talent, but the reality is that it is Duke Ellington's music (and Billy Strayhorn's, of course) that determines the orchestra, not the other way around."

"THE ENGLISH CONCERTO

In 1963, Bill composed "Five Pieces for Jazz Orchestra" and his superb "English Concerto, Opus 43, for violin and jazz orchestra, commissioned by Lord Astor of Hever (of Kent County, England) and the legendary violinist Yehudi Menuhin, who premiered it on June 11 of the same year at the prestigious Bath Festival (southwestern England), with Bill Russo's London Jazz Orchestra



(Photo: Warner Classics)

Yehudi Menuhin Steven Staryk



(Photo: Instant Encore)



The Bath International Music Festival, since 1948
(Photo: Bath Festival)

"The English Concerto" has three movements:

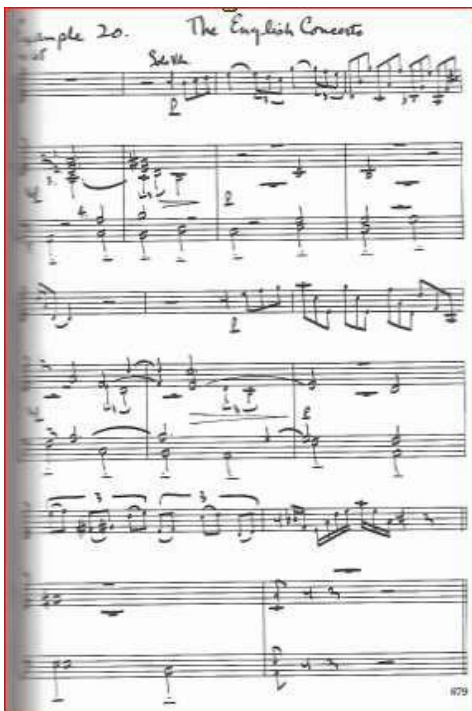
1. The Thames - 7'02; 2. Salisbury Plain (South East England) - 4'51 and 3. Leicester Square (London, pedestrian) - 3'55.

Despite its short duration, less than 16 minutes, the Concerto is a complete, coherent and diversified musical work, the result of the talent and creativity of its author.

The entrance is solemn and introduces the soloist in a happy contrast. Then comes a magnificent passage, slightly rhythmic, a bit dance-like, with Bill Russo's signature ensemble sounds; they are powerful, surprising, but not aggressive. The violin continues in a sequence that is both virtuosic and melodic, with a reprise of the very beautiful theme. The movement ends with a strong intervention of the orchestra.

The second part is made of softness, of discretion, as much from the orchestra as from the soloist, the two harmonizing perfectly to emphasize all the musicality of the beautiful melody imagined by Bill Russo.

The third movement clearly asserts the influence of jazz through the rhythmic element, especially the double bass, and the dialogue between the violin and the orchestra whose riffs are somewhat reminiscent of those Bill experienced with Stan Kenton.



The English Concerto - excerpts

(Photos: William Russo - Jazz Composition & Orchestration/The University of Chicago Press)

As he does in his jazz compositions, Bill Russo applies to the Concerto all his art of melody for the soloist and orchestration for the ensembles, thus realizing his dream of writing a score on the model of the Brahms Violin Concerto; a challenge that has been admirably met: to be listened to again and again, for the pleasure of it!

On August 16, 1964, Bill conducted the recording of his Concerto at Lansdowne Studios in London with, again, the impressive London Jazz Orchestra and four cellos.

As soloist, the brilliant Canadian violinist, of Ukrainian descent, Steven Staryk (1932), concert master from 1963 to 1967 with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra of the great Fritz Reiner era, but who seems to be perfectly at ease with a musical language to which he is probably not accustomed.

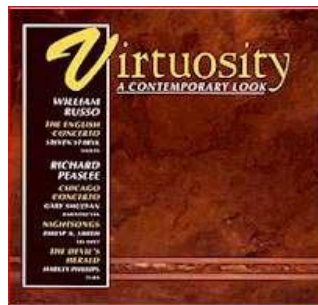
He reveals an astonishing musical versatility by the great diversity of the repertoires he tackles in addition to his performances in several major symphony orchestras. As a soloist, his impressive discography covers up to four centuries of the history of the violin, and he has been nicknamed

"A Musician's Musician". Accessible site: <http://starykanthology.ca/> _

The session is produced by Bill Russo and Patrick Gowers (see under the Site Menu). The London Jazz Orchestra includes : Al Newman, Roy Wilcox, Eddie Mordeu, Vic

Ash and Alex Leslie on saxes; Leon Calvert (leader), Ray Simmonds, Don Blakeson, and Kenny Wheeler, trumpets; Maurice Pratt, Ric Kennedy, Tony Russell, Chris Smith, and Jack Thirlwall, trombones; Arthur Watts, double bass; Ray Dempsey, guitar; Tony Kinsey, percussion; John Shineborne, Vivian Joseph, Paul Marinari, and Lionel Ross, cellos.

The American premiere of the "English Concerto" took place on December 12, 1965 in Chicago. The soloist is the same Steven Stryk; Bill Russo conducts, this time, his very young Chicago Jazz Ensemble, whose first concert it is.



(Photo: GM Recordings)

In 1991, GM Recordings released a rare CD (GM3017CD) entitled "Virtuosity: A Contemporary Look" which allows us to appreciate Bill Russo's Concerto as it was recorded on August 16, 1964, but also gives us the privilege of discovering three pieces, including the masterful "Chicago Concerto", by his student, collaborator and long-time friend, Richard Peaslee, an American musician who deserves our full attention and who is mentioned elsewhere (see under the Site Menu).

FROM THEORY TO PRACTICE

From the beginning of the 1960s, despite his many activities as a composer, teacher, lecturer and conductor, William Russo set out to describe, in detail, the methods he conceived and used in his compositions, especially in jazz. Three volumes are published by The University of Chicago Press.

The first, "*Composing for The Jazz Orchestra*" (90 p.), was published in 1961 (revised in 1973). It was accompanied, in 1978, by a "*Workbook*" (119 p. of exercises) that William signed with Reid Hyams (1952), then a young graduate of Columbia College, pianist, composer and educator very active, today, in the world of music in Chicago.



Composing for The Jazz Orchestra

(Photos: The University of Chicago Press)



Workbook

In 1968, he published the imposing treatise "*JAZZ Composition & Orchestration*" (825 p.), a technical sum that contains numerous exercises and a multitude of excerpts taken from the Master's scores.

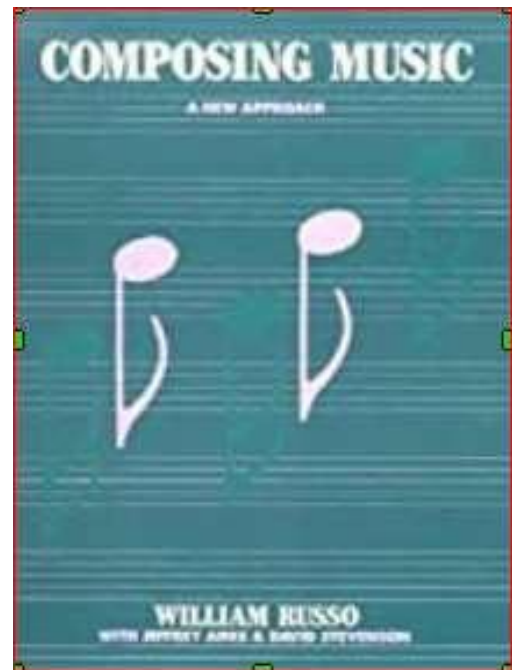
Finally, it was in 1980 (1983, 88) that William Russo published "*Composing Music; A New Approach*" (230 p.), a book that unites, from the first chapter, theory and practice, knowledge and experience. He receives the collaboration of Jeffrey Ainis, designer, writer, editor in fields such as spirituality and world music, for which he practices kirtan, devotional singing in India. David Stevenson, designer and creator of electronic and acoustic instruments, also participates.

In the Preface (1961) to his very first volume, William Russo explains in these terms:

"The jazz orchestra is immensely important, if only as the permanent repository of jazz. Not only does it contain and codify what the improviser has done, but it has also created a new way of combining instruments, especially brass and saxophones. It uses a fresh and lively melodic and harmonic language. It requires from the performers a commitment and spontaneity that is less and less found in music."



JAZZ Composition & Orchestration



ComposingMusic: A New Approach

(Photos: The University of Chicago Press)

Some say that jazz cannot be written; that there is a contradiction between the terms "Jazz" and "writing". In this sense, no music can be written; musical notation has always been woefully inadequate. However, the music played by Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Woody Herman and Stan Kenton cannot be ignored; no one can claim, without distorting the historical reality of jazz, that in the case of the orchestras mentioned, they serve only as a support for the virtuoso soloists.

This book is not theoretical; it is not meant to observe, classify and define.

For the most part, the text came from my own techniques as I first conceived them. I can even say that they came out of the ground, inch by inch. I also offer other jazz composition techniques that I think have value.

In spite of all the current interest in jazz, there are very few opportunities for the student to obtain information about its techniques. I wrote this book with the hope that it would answer some of the questions that many people have asked me.

The potential of the jazz band is very great!"

The first sentence of "JAZZ Composition & Orchestration" reads (p. 2):

"The four main elements of music are melody, harmony, rhythm and orchestration. Melody is unquestionably the most important element; it constitutes the essence, the soul of music."

As for his latest book: "Composing Music - A New Approach", William Russo proposes it as follows:

"This book is intended to teach you how to compose music. If you are already composing, it will make it easier for you and help you develop the ideas and skills you already have. This is not a book about music. It is not a book about composing. It is a book that assumes your participation; in fact, you will start composing from the very first chapter. In other words, knowledge and experience are offered to you in one transaction."

That's what's clear! And, William, to continue:

"The teaching is primarily in the form of exercises; in fact, to read this book is to work the exercises. Each exercise introduces you, in most cases, to a particular procedure that you immediately use to compose a small piece. I find this way of teaching to be highly effective. The instant application gives you the instant experience. Also, there is absolutely no better way to learn something than to try it yourself."

On the user side, opinions are generally very positive, as Malcolm Bessom (The Music Magazine), about the first volume:

"While of primary interest to those embarking on composition, this book is also recommended for music lovers who wish to delve into what makes jazz writing so different from the traditional approach."

Doug McMullen (The Whole Note/Canada) *ibid*:

"Compose? Study this book and you'll find it's simple. This is not a book of theory but a way to learn, on your own, the basics of composition with the utmost emphasis on musical expression. You won't become a Beethoven but you will have learned a lot about music because the method is extremely creative. A great book for the self-taught, improvisers and composers. I can't recommend it enough."

Jon Newsom (Notes) gives a really positive review of "JAZZ Composition & Orchestration:

"William Russo has undertaken a very ambitious project that consists of presenting, together, the elements of music that are usually proposed

in separate volumes on harmony, counterpoint and orchestration. As such, his book contains enough musical instruction to interest all students, even those who are not sensitive to jazz or to William Russo's own musical idiom. But the student who wants to write for a large jazz orchestra will find, in this generous book, a wealth of very useful advice."

Here is the summary of the four volumes:

<p>CONTENUS :</p> <p><u>Composing for The Jazz Orchestra</u> Alphabetical chord symbols – The six types of chords – Elaboration of the six types of chords – Basic harmonic considerations – The ranges of the instruments – Voicing – Close position voicing (I-II-III) – Open position voicing (I-II-III) – Non-chordal tones – Harmonization of non-chordal tones (I-II) – The thickened line – The widened line – Percussion – The double bass – The guitar – The piano – A preliminary view of the ensemble – The basic ensemble method – The four-tone ensemble method – The percussive ensemble method – Brass mutes – The background – The planning of orchestration – Combinations of instruments – Identities – Chords derived from scales – The progression of chords derived from scales – Mixed voicing – Mixed ensembles.</p> <p><u>Workbook for Composing for The Jazz Orchestra</u> Les exercices portent pratiquement sur les thèmes repris dans les chapitres du livre de base ci-dessus.</p> <p><u>JAZZ Composition & Orchestration</u> The nature of music – Harmony – Rhythm – Melody – Counterpoint – Harmonic use of the modes – Chord progression – Open position voicing – Close position voicing – Modification of the thickened line – Voice crossing – Supernumeraries to the Jazz Orchestra – The cello – Pairs of wind instruments in unison or octaves – Mixed orchestration – The division of the orchestra into five real parts – Transformation – The principal jazz form – Appendixes – Index.</p> <p><u>Composing Music : A New Approach</u> Preface – General rules for the exercises – The cell, the row, and some scales – Harmony – Transformation – The small theme and the large theme – More scales and the 12-tone row – Isomelody and isorhythm, combined – Ostinato – Accompaniment procedures – Harmony – Counterpoint – Organum – Imitation : a useful game – Words and music – Picture music – Popular music as a source – Minimalism – Appendix A : Instrument ranges – Appendix B : Musical symbols – Appendix C : Bibliography – Index.</p>
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Back to Jeff Sultanof, on the same topic:

"Bill wanted to convey his ideas about composition and arranging in a more in-depth form than he had previously done. At the time of writing this book, the year 1968, big band scores were rarely printed and available, which was the case with the music of Duke Ellington and others that Bill would have liked to use to illustrate his point. The only option left was to choose sequences from his own repertoire. The book is a treasure trove of wonderful new ideas. It's not a book to be rushed through; it's a book to be read over and over again, talked about and absorbed slowly. Bill was a very deep thinker who believed that the jazz composer was not always respected as he deserved and the purpose of this

volume was also to help rectify this fact.

Although he had no regrets about that book, Bill would have liked, much later, to write a new one featuring excerpts from the Duke Ellington repertoire that he had conducted so often with his Chicago Jazz Ensemble and that, being then entrusted to the Smithsonian Institution, became available.

If you're serious about jazz music and the jazz band, you need to read this book and listen to the music of Bill Russo who was a major American composer; it's like he never left us."

His excellent knowledge of our composer and his work allows Jeff Sultanof to enlighten those who were kindly surprised to find, in this large volume, 'only' excerpts of scores signed William Bill Russo.

It should also be noted that most of the copies still available, often second-hand, unfortunately no longer contain, except at exorbitant prices, the CD that originally accompanied the book.

As for "Composing Music," we note Jim Stockford's (Co-Evolution Quarterly) opinion:

"Intended for those who have some knowledge of music but not necessarily of composition, this concise introduction begins immediately with a brief exercise in that discipline and then proceeds, step by step, to a series of increasingly complex, truly challenging problems that will gradually develop the student's musical grammar."

For his part, Leon Harrell, well known for his method of quickly learning to read a score: <https://oneminutemusiclesson.com/>, states:

"This book is one of the first I recommend to all my composition students. It uses a very interesting methodological approach and is perfectly designed for both the true beginner and the veteran.

While not totally rigorous about the topics he covers, William Russo does a wonderful job explaining each technique and offering many exercises that will make your creativity blossom."

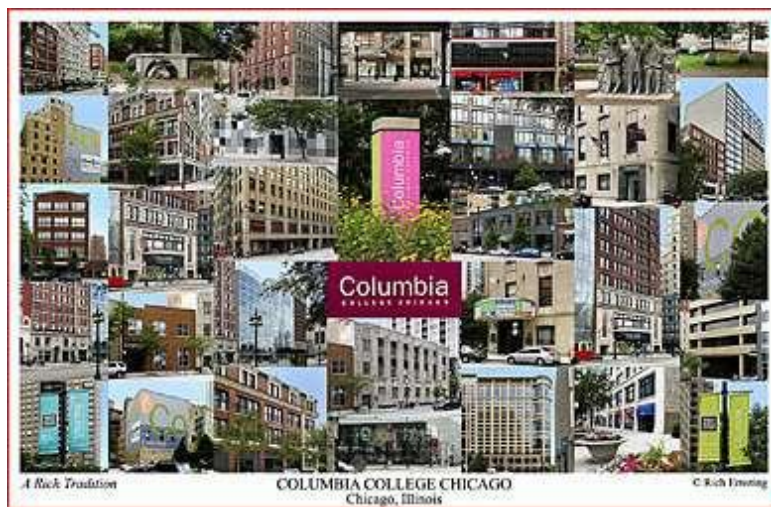
It is not possible to reproduce here all the appreciations, all the praises, which concern the writings of William Russo so much these opinions are numerous, whether it is in the specialized press, on Internet or among the users, of today still.

Like his arrangements and compositions, Bill Russo's writing about music has attracted the attention, even the interest, astonishment and admiration, of professionals and music lovers alike. His great concern

is, moreover, not only to participate in the development of a major art but also to make it discoverable to the greatest number of people; a true "Crusader" of music.

FROM LONDON TO CHICAGO

In 1965 Bill returned to Chicago, a sort of homecoming, where he became a full-time faculty member at Columbia College for ten years. He founded Columbia's Music Department, became director of the Center for New Music and, as usual, organized a new big band: the Chicago Jazz Ensemble.



The many sites of Columbia College Chicago (Photo: Rich Traditions)

In June 1966, Bill Russo proposes, at the Playboy Theater of Chicago, a great concert musically very diversified: " Sounds for a Swinging Sunday ".

In addition to the Chicago Jazz Ensemble (23 musicians, including 4 cellos) that Bill directs and that had participated, a few months earlier, in the American premiere of his

In addition to the "English Concerto" (with Steven Staryk), we can hear a rock band: The New Colony Six and the vocal sextet of trumpeter Warren Kime. The McLaurin Dancers also participate.

On the program, compositions by: Bill Russo ("Sweets," "Club Gigi," "The Lion House," "Jazz in Motion" and "In Memoriam"), Richard Peaslee ("Black Pedro"), Tony Russell ("22-50 Paris East"), Jerry Mulvihill ("Rags Old Iron"), Edward Baker ("Dr. Bop"), J.S. Bach ("Trio"), Robert Ragland ("Blues for My Father"), Gerry Mulligan ("Limelite") and Stan Kenton ("Statues").

In his commentary (Down Beat), Pete Welding especially emphasizes the very

of Bill Russo and the magnificent performance of the big band whose players are among the best in Chicago, namely :

Art Lauer, Chuck Kainz, Sandy Mosse, Bob Ericson and Ron Kolber, saxes; Gary Slavo, Warren Kime, Oscar Brashear, Bobby Lewis, Marty Marshack and Lenny Morrison, trumpets/flugelhorns; Cy Touff, bass trumpet; John Avant, Harry Lepp, Bill Dinwiddie, trombones; Fred Luscombe, bass trombone; Roberta Guastafeste, Marilyn Becchetti, Roberta Jacobs and Bob Lah, cellos; Robert Roberts, guitar; Jim Schipper, bass and Bob Cousins, percussion.



William Russo
(Photo: Columbia College)

Three years after taking up his position at Columbia College, Bill founded Free Theater, an avant-garde company whose experimental concept would leave its mark on the entire Chicago theater scene (Steppenwolf, Lookingglass, etc.) and spark initiatives as far away as Baltimore and San Francisco.

The themes used are usually very political, very free, and target civil rights, the war in Vietnam, and other current issues. The shows are always free, making them accessible to all. A collection is taken at the exit.

In the meantime, Bill continued to compose: "Suite for Violin and String Orchestra" (op. 46), "America 1966" (op. 48) for wind band and two operas: "Land of Milk and Honey" and "Antigone".

In early 1968, he published a cantata, "The Civil War" (op. 52), for which he used jazz, classical and rock elements, as well as two singers, a choir and numerous light effects. The argument is based on four poems by the American writer and historian, two-time Pulitzer Prize winner Paul Horgan (1903-1995).

The cantata was premiered, after only one rehearsal, on April 7, 68 in San Antonio, three days after the assassination of Martin Luther King Jr. on April 4 in Memphis; it was dedicated to his memory.

In June 1968, Bill was ready to leave for London, but the Company was hired at the Second City Theater in Chicago, founded by Paul Sills, for two performances per evening of "The Civil War". The troupe is paid by a grant from the Music Industries Recording Trust Funds.

The contract was for two weeks, but Bill decided to extend it by one week, even though the grant was over. The artists worked for free and the show continued for 70 weeks with two shows per week.

Encouraged by the success of his cantata, Bill chooses to stay in Chicago. He writes the music for Paul Sills' new show, entitled "The Sex Life of the Gods" inspired by Ovid's "Metamorphoses".

There are two more shows by Bill Russo: "Liberation" and "City in a Swamp", this time for The Body Politic Theatre in Chicago (now The Greenhouse Theater Center).

A DAY IN NEOPHONY

At this time, Bill Russo divided his activities between Chicago, Baltimore, New York and Los Angeles. It was also the time when Stan Kenton was finally able to offer the public the first concert of the Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra at the Music Center Pavilion of the brand new Center for the Performing Arts in Los Angeles, which was inaugurated for a whole week, from December 6 to 12, 1964, with various classical and jazz concerts on the program,



Stan Kenton and The Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra
(Photo: All Things Kenton / Terry Vosbein)

The first of the eleven L.A.N.O. concerts took place on Monday, January 4, 1965 under the direction of Stan Kenton; the last one was given on April 15, 1968. For the evening (8:30 p.m.) of Monday, March 7, 1966, the seventh concert (third of Season 2), Stan gave way to Bill Russo as guest conductor.

Season 2, Concert 3
7 March 1966
Bill Russo, Guest Conductor,
Cal Tjader Quintet, Guest Artists

NEOPHONIC ORCHESTRA

Stan Kenton, Musical Director
THE ONLY ORCHESTRA IN THE WORLD
J. M. ... rtw, f O, . I. C. H. H. H.

3rd Concert March 7, Tomorrow, 8:30 P.M.
Guest Conductor: **WILLIAM RUSSO**

Soloists: The **CAL TJADER** Quintet
Mr. Russo will also be presented as composer
in a premiere work for the orchestra,
(a film scored by 4 cellos and 8 voices.)

Other Preliminary Works by:
**DICK GROVE, FRANKLYN MARKS,
RICHARD PEASLEE, PAUL RUHLAN**

Theater at Wall Street, 54th Street, New York City,
So. C. II. # Clubs & Music Center, New York City

PAVITI; "Of HtMUSIC CENTER

Five compositions are announced:

Franklyn Marks' "The New World", Paul Ruhlan's "Contemplations" and Dick Grove's "Tangents" with soloists from Cal Tjader's Quintet. After ! Intermission, it's the turn of " Stonehenge " by Richard Peaslee (see his name on this site) and, finally, Bill Russo's "Requiem".

As you can see on the program page below, taken from the "Kenton Kronicles" by Steven D. Harris, the great Stan Kenton specialist, the Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra is a super big band of 26 professional instrumentalists. Harris, the great Stan Kenton specialist, the Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra is a super big band of 26 professional instrumentalists and includes many of the great names in 1960s California jazz.

Depending on the pieces to be performed and which are generally dedicated to them, some prestigious soloists are invited to dialogue with the orchestra: here, Cal Tjader, but also Friedrich Guida, Dizzy Gillespie, Jimmy Smith, Buddy De Franco, Gerry Mulligan, Shelly Manne, Don Ellis, Michel Legrand, Louie Bellson, etc.

Neophonic Program #7

Monday, March 7, 1966 at 8:30 PM

TITLE:

The New World
Contemplations
Tangents – Soloists: Cal Tjader Quintet
 Part 1: *Movin' Out* Part 3: *Time Table*
 Part 2: *Canto* Part 4: *Montuno*

COMPOSER:

Franklyn Marks
 Paul Ruhlan
 Dick Grove

INTERMISSION

Stonehenge
Requiem

Richard Peaslee
 Bill Russo

Guest conductor: Bill Russo
 Reeds: Bud Shank, Bob Cooper, Bill Perkins, Don Lodice, John Lowe.
 Trombones: Bob Fitzpatrick, Vern Friley, Lou Blackburn, Jim Amlotte (bt), John Bambridge (tuba).
 Trumpets: Ray Triscari, Conte Candoli, Ronnie Ossa, Dalton Smith, Gary Barone.
 French horns: Vince De Rosa, Arthur Maebe, Henry Sigismonti, Richard Perissi, George Price.
 Piano: Ray Sherman. Bass: Bob West. Guitar: Ron Anthony.
 Drums: Larry Bunker. Percussion: Emil Richards, Frank Carlson.
 The Jimmy Joyce Voices: Jean Sewell, Ray Johnson.
 Cellos (2nd set only): Fred Sekora, Jessie Ehrlich, Victor Sazer, Ray Kelley.
 Cal Tjader Quintet: Tjader – vibes, Armando Peraza – Latin percussion,
 Al Zulaica – piano, Monk Montgomery – bass, John Rae – drums.

In his "Kenton Kronicles", Steven reports the explanations given by Stan Kenton to the journalist Ralph Schoenstein about the term "Neophonic":

"With the Neophonic Orchestra, we had great moments but it was a terrible task. It was created primarily to play the music of jazz composers. Our feeling was that the orchestra had to have a name of its own because the enterprise was far too big to simply attribute to Stan Kenton and his Orchestra. So we coined the word "Neophonic" which means "new sound". The scores had never been played, the repertoire was all original compositions, and every month we only had two days to do all the fine-tuning, and sometimes when we went on stage we weren't sure what was going to happen."



Steven D. Harris



John A. Tynan



Leonard G. Feather

(Photos: Steven Harris / The Desert Sun / Getty Images)

For his part, John Tynan explains in *Down Beat* of January 14, 1965:

"The news arrived at the end of November 1964, a little prematurely but always mysterious as usual with Stan Kenton. A press conference was held at the Ambassador Hotel in Los Angeles to announce the organization of the "First permanent and stable orchestra in the world devoted to contemporary music" and the creation of the International Academy of Contemporary Music.

The new orchestra is not scheduled to appear in public until January 4, 1965; the staff is not yet complete and the rehearsal schedule has yet to be established.

The name of the orchestra is a bit magical: The Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra.

The music it will perform will be "neophonic". Initially, four concerts are announced; they will be conducted by Stan Kenton and will take place at the prestigious Music Center for the Performing Arts located in the heart of Los Angeles.

Kenton is eager to make the true nature of the orchestra and its function clear:

"The composers who contribute or are asked to contribute must be oriented in the same direction as us, musically speaking, but that doesn't mean that there can't be different opinions, so for example a connection between Neophonic and the music of Gunther Schuller and John Lewis would not be impossible. However, I believe that our music is not Third Stream because it has nothing to do with classical music; it is entirely based on the jazz tradition. In my opinion, the two schools should remain separate and composers should choose one or the other. (Maybe Stan is forgetting City of Glass a little bit?).

In reality, it's very difficult to come up with something new in music, and I think New York composers should be complimented for their effort to bring in brand new music, but I think they're still too tied to European classical music; I'd like them to be more in the American music tradition."

A little over 20 years ago, it was Eager Beaver, Artistry in Rhythm and a whole new approach to swing music; 15 years ago, it was Innovations and a

radically different form of concert jazz; today (1965) it's Neophonic, and the emphasis is still on the new and experimental. How does Kenton see himself now in serious American music? Does he think he is still in a position to communicate directly with the mass market? He answers firmly in the negative and, it seems, with great regret."

As for Leonard Feather, in the Los Angeles Times of March 9, 1966, he relates his impressions of the March 7 concert:

"Stan Kenton is not onstage Monday night when the Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra performs the third concert of the second of its three seasons (1965 to 1968). This is the first time Kenton has given way to a guest conductor. But his spirit is nonetheless present as the guest is one of his most distinguished alumni from the 1950s, Bill Russo.

The first piece of the concert, "The New World" is by Franklin Marks, also a former Kentonian. It begins with a broad largo that allows the horn section to produce admirable effects in a variety of moods, including a fast waltz, a slow passage in 4/4 with Conte Candoli, and a swinging moderato with several soloists. Despite the relative brevity of this composition, each small movement has a meaning of its own.

The concert continues with "Contemplations," a composition by Viennese Paul Ruhlan. The prolixity of the writing is contrasted by the use of a wide variety of rhythms, the introduction of striking sonorities by the sax section and, apparently, the attempt to produce a huge canvas but with too little paint. Nonetheless, the piece does offer several noteworthy moments, such as the passage in which Bud Shank, on alto sax, plays brilliantly against the trombones and tuba.

The first part of the concert concludes with "Tangents," a four-movement composition by Dick Grove for which Cal Tjader's Quintet is added to the orchestra. One of the most protean writers on the Hollywood scene (1966), Dick Grove always seems to be aware of the vital role that improvisation must play in any successful marriage of symphonic and jazz. His first movement is of exemplary quality and recalls Gerald Wilson's orchestra. Worth mentioning is the moment when a trio of drummers - Larry Bunker, Armando Peraza and Johnny Rae - create an exciting polyrhythmic climate, with Cal Tjader's vibraphone being the very dynamic centerpiece.

For the second part of the evening, four cellos make their entrance and the horn section disappears.

Richard Peaslee's composition, "Stonehenge," focuses on creating a richly textured atmosphere. In direct opposition to Ruhlan's work, "Stonehenge" appears to be a very dense painting within a somewhat narrow canvas.

The final piece on the program is by Bill Russo. It is a Requiem, "In Memoriam," which features a nine-voice choir, The Jimmy Jones Voices, plus

two soloists: contralto Jean Sewell and baritone Ray Johnson.

Writing a large score inspired by the theme of death has always been a rather critical challenge, but Bill Russo manages to bring enough vocal and instrumental variety to his requiem to sustain interest from beginning to end. He is a brilliant composer-arranger who pays as much attention to the melodic aspect as he does to the rhythmic drive and overall form. "In Memoriam" has clarity, continuity and cohesion.

One may be surprised, in the first movement, to hear a text by Langston Hughes sung almost in operatic mode, but the beauty of Miss Sewell's sound quickly dismisses any objection.

As for Ray Johnson, his voice has a bluesy quality. Between his solo, Bob Fitzpatrick's trombone and the swinging atmosphere produced by the band, the jazz peak of the evening is reached. In short, this concert is one of the most stimulating at the Neophonic."

As for Bill Russo, the conductor, everyone agrees that he is an attentive, precise, even meticulous conductor; in short, very professional. We must therefore recall his participation, in 1986, in the particularly vast and brilliant tribute paid to Stan Kenton by the fantastic and versatile trumpeter Paul Cacia, a student of Pete Rugolo and a great admirer of Stan the Man.



Paul Cacia
(Photo: SecondHandSongs)

Five conductors share the leadership of the orchestra: Paul Cacia, Bill Russo, Shorty Rogers, Pete Rugolo and Dick Shearer.

Bill leads two of his compositions: the spectacular "23° North & 82° West" (soloists: Carl Fontana, Jack Sheldon and Lee Konitz), and the romantic "Solitaire" (soloist: Roy Wiegand).

This wonderful initiative by Paul Cacia is featured on the CD "Paul Cacia Presents The Alumni Tribute To Stan Kenton" (Empressario 5400) available via <https://www.paulcacia.com/nav1.htm>.

Further details on this exceptional event are available on this site, via the home page, in the work dedicated to

Pete Rugolo, "Recognition" chapter, page 51.

Let's get back to the neophonic idea; it was born nearly sixty years ago in the mind of Stan Kenton, who was pursuing his constant quest to discover a new aspect of American music.

Many continuators maintain the movement in the same philosophy with, sometimes, slight personal nuances, which is logical.

Let's mention a few of them:

The University of North Texas Neophonic Orchestra, The Collegiate Neophonic Orchestra, Bobby Lamb's Trinity Big Band (London), The Kim Richmond Concert Jazz Orchestra, The Jack Elliott's American Jazz Philharmonic Orchestra, Orbert Davis and The Chicago Jazz Philharmonic.

In 1972, Joel Kaye, ex-saxophonist (1961-63) with Stan Kenton, formed The New York Neophonic Orchestra and in 1994, he created The Neophonic Jazz Orchestra in Denver, Colorado.

Some recordings of these various ensembles are available on Capitol (for LANO), Mama Records, Tantara Productions, 3Sixteen Records-CD Baby, Universal Victor, Vartan Jazz,



Joel Kaye and The Neophonic Jazz Orchestra on June 14, 2020 at the Oconomowoc Arts Center
(Photo: The OAC - Wisconsin)



Orbert Davis and the Chicago Jazz Philharmonic.
(Photo: Darron Jones)

In classical music, the twentieth century is certainly the century of interpretation, an art brought to a level of perfection that was probably never reached before. This does not exclude, of course, that the 20th Century also knew great composers and generated important musical pages.

The incredible diversity and the extraordinary quality of both the great orchestras and the chamber music ensembles have allowed a multitude of equally brilliant conductors to express themselves, but whose very marked personalities produce, from the same work, interpretations that are sometimes quite different and incomparable.

And we find the same abundance of talent among both instrumentalists and singers, each artist developing, by technical or vocal means of his own, a very personal thought, expression and sensitivity.

Today, we are still discovering more and more young performers, sometimes even revelations, who come from certain regions of the world where we hardly suspect such a rich classical culture.

Let us not forget, in this regard, that unlike other art forms such as painting or literature, for example, music needs the performer who occupies an indispensable and essential place between the composer and the listener.

Thus, jazz, born at the dawn of the 20th century, perfectly responded to the philosophy of this great movement centered on the development and the personalization in the interpretation of the music because, if there is an art which carries to the highest the value and the importance of the interpreter, it is indeed jazz !

Jazz is everywhere: it is international and multiracial, created by genius soloists and wonderful composers and orchestrators who make it an art of great diversity but also increasingly complex.

Jazz has its history, its periods, its schools, its styles; it is American, African, European, Asian, Slavic... but it is always Jazz ! Great jazz musicians are French, Belgian, Dutch, German, English, Swedish, Italian, Japanese, ... and also, of course, black or white Americans. Jazz is universal.

With the Neophonic, in California, Stan Kenton once again pioneered a remarkable expansion of jazz thinking by welcoming a multitude of talented composers, sometimes very young and many of whom were languishing in the corridors of film, television and recording studios, but who were going to make the concept of the (very) large jazz orchestra blossom even more.

Some names: Hugo Montenegro, John Williams, Jim Knight, Lalo Schifrin, Allyn Ferguson, Gerald Wilson, Dee Barton, Clare Fischer, Bob Florence, Oliver Nelson, Duane Tatro, Don Ellis, Michel Legrand, Tommy Vig and Friedrich Gulda, dazzling in his "Music for Piano and Band No. 2".

We also find several of Stan's "former" collaborators too happy to take this chance to reach the limits of their creativity: Johnny Richards, Pete Rugolo, Marty Paich, Russ Garcia, Shorty Rogers, Ken Hanna, Bill Holman, Franklin Marks and Bill Russo.

In New York, as Stan mentioned above, a movement called Third Stream Music is part of a similar process; it is led by John Lewis (of the M.J.Q.) and Gunther Schuller, an American musician: horn player, composer, conductor, teacher and musicologist.



John Lewis Gunther Schuller
(Photos: NPR / MacDowell-Andrew Hurlbut)

Other New York musicians also participated in this new direction of East Coast jazz from time to time, including: Laurindo Almeida, Jimmy Giuffre, Jay Jay Johnson, George Russel, Charlie Mingus, Milton Babbitt, Teo Macero, Bob Prince, John La Porta and Harold Shapero.

In France, André Hodeir also believes that the future of jazz lies with the composer. Objectively, one can consider that he, as well as Michel Portal, Michel Legrand, Claude Bolling, Martial Solal and others, are part of the great lineage of the "Crusaders" of music.

Some music lovers may feel that at times it is not really jazz anymore, but the goal of the movement, in the East as well as in the West, is neither to reproduce the music of the schools that preceded it, nor to deny its importance. The ideal pursued by Stan Kenton and John Lewis was to carry the evolution of jazz further by using more sophisticated but equally lively and spontaneous architectures.

We have seen how much Bill Russo admires Duke Ellington and we know the brilliant tribute that Shorty Rogers paid to Count Basie. As for Bill Holman, he rarely deviates from the road traced by Count and does not hide his great sympathy for the music of Thelonious Monk, of which he wrote magnificent arrangements, including an admirable "Round Midnight" that he performs at the 2019 LAJI concert (below).

And Shelly Manne sums it up well when he declares that he is passionate about this kind of music, more intellectual, more structured, more complex, but also recognizes that he willingly returns, for pleasure, to a straighter jazz, more directly swinging; "*a necessity*", he says.

One remembers, of course, the previous attempts, generally isolated, due to a few classical composers and some of which became very popular; Let us mention only George Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" (1924), the two "Suites for Jazz Orchestra" (1934/38) by Dmitri Shostakovich, Igor Stravinsky's "Ebony Concerto" (1945), the "Concerto for Jazz Band and Symphony Orchestra" (1954) by the Swiss Rolf Liebermann and other scores by Leonard Bernstein, Aaron Copland, Morton Gould, etc.

As usual, Stan Kenton does not do things by halves; he sets a goal and goes straight ahead, despite the obstacles that may arise. He wants to give this new musical world a vast and courageous dimension of which the Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra is the perfect amplifying instrument.

As mentioned above, other similar ensembles will be inspired by it

despite the heavy financial burden that is inevitably associated with this type of initiative. During the four years of the Neophonic, Stan tried to amortize the costs by performing in the summer with his regular orchestra in tours, theaters and clubs, including Howard Rumsey's Lighthouse and Shelly Manne's Manne Hole.

According to Carol Easton, Stan told the L.A. Times:

"Music brings, to the human being, what he cannot obtain from any other source except in religious faith."



Stan Kenton, perpetual jazz innovator
(Photo: Capitol Records)

Terry Vosbein reports that:

"In 2005, at the initiative of the Los Angeles Jazz Institute and to celebrate the 40th anniversary of the first Neophonic concert, musicians and fans gathered in Los Angeles to pay tribute to this vision of Stan Kenton. More than a dozen concerts are presented, featuring some of the original pieces but also looking to the future with new compositions in the Neophonic spirit."

Rahne Pistor details the festival program in The Argonaut (Marina Del Rey, Calif.):

"The Neophonic Impressions Festival takes place Thursday, May 26 through Sunday, May 29, 2005 at the Four Points Sheraton-LAX in Westchester, LA.

The new Los Angeles Neophonic Orchestra, assembled to commemorate this 40th anniversary, will be led by Clare Fischer, Russ Garcia, Bob Florence, Joel Kaye, Gerald Wilson, Tommy Vig and Lennie Niehaus in neophonic pieces by Clare Fischer, Shorty Rogers, Russ Garcia, Johnny Richards and Bob Florence.

The festival will culminate at the Sunday night closing with a performance by the Bill Holman Big Band joined by Bud Shank as a soloist.

Bud Shank will give a concert with his own Big Band on Saturday at 5 pm. Other "Neophonic" bands on the program are Joel Kaye's New York Neophonic, The Collegiate Junior Neophonic Orchestra of Southern California, Kim Richmond Concert Jazz Orchestra, Bob Florence Limited Edition, Clare Fischer's Jazz Corps, Buddy Collette Big Band, Gerald Wilson Orchestra and Richard Simon's Jazz America Big Band.

On Friday evening, a special dinner is held in honor of composer Russ Garcia on his 89th birthday (1916-2011).



(Photo: Four Points Sheraton-LAX)



(Photo: Ken Poston)

The Los Angeles Jazz Institute is an organization that preserves the archives of both contemporary jazz and the great jazz periods of the 20th Century with a special focus on Southern California jazz. It holds the personal collections of Howard Rumsey, Bud Shank, Gerry Mulligan, Shorty Rogers, Art Pepper, Bob Cooper, June Christy, Pete Rugolo, Johnny Richards, Ken Hanna, Dr. Wesley La Violette, Jimmie Baker, Sleepy Stein, Ray Avery, Warne Marsh, Woody Herman and Phil Moore.

The Institute (non-profit) is housed at California State University Long Beach. His site <http://lajazzinstitute.org/> allows you to discover a multitude of activities and archives which, as Rahne Pistor mentions, concern jazz and its history in all its diversity with, of course, a strong emphasis on Californian jazz but not only.

Ken Poston, Director of the Los Angeles Jazz Institute, states:

"This was the only large-scale event. Other, more modest, events took place in 1991 "Back to Balboa" and in 1997 "The Kenton Era" with, however, the performance of some neophonic pieces by Bob Cooper: "Solo for Orchestra", Bill Holman (for Gerry Mulligan), Lennie Niehaus: "Atonal Adventure" and Shorty Rogers: "Invisible Orchard".

In addition to his passion for the neophonic movement, Ken Poston regularly presents concerts devoted to the music of the more traditionally conceived Big Bands.

Thus, the "Way Out West" festival will see, from October 5 to 8, 2000 at the Crowne Plaza Hotel in Redondo Beach: Maynard Ferguson's Big Bop Nouveau, The Gerald Wilson Orchestra, The Bill Holman Orchestra, The Terry Gibbs' Dream Band, The Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra, The Bob Florence Limited Edition, The Phil Norman Tentet, The Tom Talbert Orchestra, The Pete Rugolo Orchestra with The Four Freshmen, the music of Johnny Richards led by Joel Kaye, The Toshiko Akiyoshi-Lew Tabackin West Coast Reunion Band, The Louie Bellson Orchestra and The Frank Capp Juggernaut, the latter two, together on stage, engage in a kind of Battle of the bands.

Certainly, four exciting days!

In 2019, Ken Poston and LAJI are hosting a masterful three-day event called "Best From the West - Ultimate Big Band Experience" featuring a series of 19 concerts, plus films and discussions, at the Westin Los Angeles Airport Hotel.

The big bands of Bernie Dresel, Gordon Goodwin, Mike Barone, Steve Huffsteter, Kim Richmond, Roger Neumann, Scott Whitfield, Johnny Mandel (93), Tom Kubis, Phil Norman, Chris Walden, Rob McConnell (Dir. Charlie Ferguson), Bob Florence (Dir. Kim Richmond) and the star of the festival: Bill Holman (91).

Also worth mentioning are the combos of Rickey Woodard, Lanny Morgan, Doug Webb and the always amazing trumpeter Carl Saunders.

It is easy to see that all these current ensembles deserve, in one way or another, by the intelligence of their orchestrations, to join the ranks of the "Crusaders" of music, whose family is constantly growing and becoming more valuable.

Mike Kaiser is gradually putting several of these wonderful concerts on YouTube; they are humorously presented, under a huge portrait of Shorty Rogers, by the very friendly and knowledgeable Ken Poston himself.



Bill Holman and his Big Band in concert, May 25, 2019, at the Westin L.A.: LAJI's "Best From The West"
(Photos: You Tube / Kathryn King Media)

A simple click+Ctrl like, for example, [Bill Holman Band-YouTube](#) (above) gives access to the concert of the orchestra chosen among the names mentioned above.

Have a good listen and enjoy California Jazz!

LECHICAGO JAZZ ENSEMBLE

In 1965, upon his arrival at Columbia College in Chicago, William Russo decided, as usual, to create a new jazz band: the Chicago Jazz Ensemble. He devoted himself body and soul to this work, creating a repertoire of new compositions, but which also included original arrangements of numerous traditional pieces, notably by Duke Ellington, or of scores that Bill had written for Stan Kenton's orchestra.

*To be
continued
please.*

*Thank
you.*

