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**The Birth of Cool: Bill Charlap  
Jazz at Lincoln Center  
Season #16  
Program 25; Airdate 3/12/09**

**1) Music: Lester Young tune**

**2) Pierce:**

WHEN MOST OF US THINK OF THE "COOL SCHOOL" OF MUSIC, WE THINK OF GERRY MULLIGAN, EARLY MILES DAVIS AND THAT 1950'S WEST COAST SOUND.

WELL, SO DOES PIANIST BILL CHARLAP. BUT **HE** BELIEVES THE SCHOOL CONVENED MUCH EARLIER---WITH THE TENOR SAXOPHONIST THEY CALLED 'THE 'PRESIDENT' -- LESTER YOUNG.

**3) Vox: Bill Charlap**

"Lester had an ability to play in a way that was relaxed at any tempo. There was an emphasis ... on making a beautiful sound all the time, a very lyrical and very vocal sound. "

**4) Pierce:**

...BUILT ON A SMOKING RHYTHM SECTION.

**5) Vox: Bill Charlap**

"That rhythm section was able to cook in a way that had great intensity & really strong back bone but was very light at same time. It was kind of like a kettle that's boiling but the top is still on the kettle."

**6) Pierce:**

AN ARDENT STUDENT OF THE AMERICAN SONGBOOK, BILL CHARLAP GIVES US A TUTORIAL IN COOL.

WE’VE GOT A HOT BAND, TO PLAY THE COOL CLASSICS –FROM LESTER YOUNG TO GERRY MULLIGAN, AND GIL EVANS IN THE ALLEN ROOM AT THE HOUSE OF SWING,

IT’S “JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER.” I’M WENDELL PIERCE. WE’RE GLAD YOU’RE HERE.

**6a) Music - Hawkins in Henderson band**

**7) Pierce:**

THESE DAYS “COOL” SEEMS LIKE IT WAS ALWAYS A PART OF JAZZ. BUT IN THE EARLY NINETEEN THIRTIES, TENORMAN COLEMAN HAWKINS DOMINATED THE FIELD -- WITH LUSH TONE AND DRIVE.

IN A MARATHON DUEL, AT KANSAS CITY’S ‘CHERRY BLOSSOM’ LEAN LESTER YOUNG STEPPED INTO THE SPOTLIGHT -- AND IN HIS PHRASING, ECONOMY AND HARMONIC SOPHISTICATION WERE THE SEEDS -- OR MAYBE THE ROOTS, OF THE ‘COOL’.

AND IN THAT SPIRIT, BILL CHARLAP LEADS THIS “LADY BE GOOD.”

**8) Music: Lady Be Good 5:18**

**9) Pierce:**

“LADY BE GOOD”--- THE GEORGE GERSHWIN TUNE WITH A VIRTUOSO ENSEMBLE -- FRANK WESS ON TENOR SAX – THE ROLE HE PLAYED WITH THE COUNT BASIE BAND, JERRY DODGION ON ALTO, GENE BERTONCINI PLAYING GUITAR, WARREN VACHÉ ON TRUMPET, PETER WASHINGTON -- BASS , KENNY WASHINGTON ON DRUMS— AND BILL CHARLAP LEADING FROM THE PIANO.

CHARLAP GREW UP IN MUSIC. HIS FATHER WAS A BROADWAY COMPOSER WHO WROTE THE SCORE FOR “PETER PAN.” HIS MOTHER, SANDY STEWART, SANG WITH BENNY GOODMAN’S BAND.

BILL HAS WORKED WITH LOTS OF SINGERS – FROM MARGARET WHITING TO TONY BENNETT—OCCASIONALLY HE CAN BE FOUND ACCOMPANYING HIS MOM at NEW YORK’S STILL SOPHISTICATED ALGONQUIN HOTEL.

BUT RIGHT NOW, BILL CHARLAP LOOKS TO ANOTHER EARLY GREAT, BILLIE HOLIDAY.

SHE GAVE LESTER YOUNG THE NICKNAME ‘ ”PREZ,” HE DUBBED HER “LADY DAY.” AND HELPED HER BRING ‘COOL’ STYLE TO JAZZ SINGING -

**10) Vox: Bill Charlap**

“The recordings that they made together feel light all the time, light in the sense of being airy. But not light in the sense of their intensity. They’re always incredibly strong underneath everything. But they’re light from the top down...and almost on a turquoise cloud.”

**11) Pierce:**

“PREZ” AND “LADY DAY” FIRST RECORDED THIS TUNE IN 1938. BILL CHARLAP AND THE BAND MAKE IT OLD AND NEW.

**12) Music: I Can’t Believe That You’re in Love with Me 4:40**

**13) Pierce:**

BILL CHARLAP AT THE PIANO –WITH AN ALL STAR ENSEMBLE. IN THE ALLEN ROOM -- AT THE HOUSE OF SWING – JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER.-- “I CAN’T BELIEVE THAT YOU’RE IN LOVE WITH ME” –

**14) Pierce:**

NOW MARY STALLINGS JOINS THEM ONSTAGE -- STALLINGS SANG WITH LOUIS JORDAN’S TYMPANI FIVE WHEN SHE WAS IN HIGH SCHOOL AND CAME

OF AGE IN THE BIG BAND ERA. SHE BRINGS ENTHUSIASM AND AUTHORITY TO CLASSICS LIKE THIS ONE --- "PENNIES FROM HEAVEN."

**15) Music: Pennies from Heaven 6:06**

**16) Pierce:**

"PENNIES FROM HEAVEN"---MARY STALLINGS' IN THE ALLEN ROOM WITH FRANK WESS, JERRY DODGION, GENE BERTONCINI, WARREN VACHÉ, PETER WASHINGTON, KENNY WASHINGTON AND BILL CHARLAP LEADING FROM THE PIANO.

CHARLAP STUDIED CLASSICAL MUSIC AND JAZZ. BY HIS TWENTIES, HE WAS PLAYING PIANO WITH GERRY MULLIGAN.

THREE DECADES EARLIER -- IN 1952, MULLIGAN HAD CREATED A BAND THAT LASTED JUST ONE YEAR -- A PIANO-LESS QUARTET WITH MULLIGAN ON BARITONE SAX AND TRUMPETER CHET BAKER, BASSIST BOB WHITLOCK AND THE DRUMMER CHICO HAMILTON.

WHAT THEY PLAYED WAS THE ESSENCE OF THE WEST COAST 'COOL' SOUND. BILL CHARLAP.

**17) Vox: Bill Charlap**

"The thing that was amazing about this group is that they seemed to be able, particularly Mulligan and Baker to create counter lines to each other that sounded almost as if they were written. They had the ability to improvise collectively and along with the trumpet, and the baritone sax and the bass, you only had three lines but those three lines worked together like a Bach invention."

**18) Pierce:**

BILL CHARLAP -- WHO WILL SIT OUT ON THIS NEXT TUNE -- SINCE IT WAS WRITTEN FOR THAT PIANO-LESS BAND. WE'LL HEAR SCOTT ROBINSON ON BARITONE SAX AND TRUMPETER JOE MAGNARELLI JOIN PETER WASHINGTON ON BASS AND KENNY WASHINGTON AT THE DRUMS.

**19) Music: Line for Lyons 8:17**

**20) Pierce:**

GERRY MULLIGAN'S TRIBUTE TO JIMMY LYONS -- THE CO-FOUNDER OF THE MONTEREY JAZZ FESTIVAL -- "LINE FOR LYONS."

JUST AHEAD, WE'LL HEAR WHAT CAME FROM GIL EVANS' JAZZ INCUBATOR -- AND KEEP TRACING THE ROOTS OF THE COOL.

**21) Pierce:**

YOU KNOW, YOU CAN FIND MORE COOL JAZZ PERFORMANCES IN OUR BROADCAST ARCHIVE, AT J-A-L-C (DOT) ORG SLASH JAZZCAST. THAT'S ALSO A GREAT WAY TO KEEP UP WITH OUR JAZZ EDUCATION PROGRAMS --"SWING U," 'WEE BOP.' AND ESSENTIALLY ELLINGTON.

IT'S ALL AT J-A-L-C DOT ORG. SO CLICK IN -- AND BRING HOME THE SWING.

THIS IS JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER. I'M WENDELL PIERCE.

**22) Music: (midbreak):**

**23) Pierce:**

YOU CAN HEAR IT IN HIS PIANO PLAYING. BILL CHARLAP IS A GREAT STUDENT OF THE JAZZ TRADITION. HE'S ALSO LYRICAL, WITH DAZZLING TECHNIQUE AND GREAT SKILL AS AN IMPROVISER.

THOSE ATTRIBUTES SERVED HIM WELL WHEN HE PLAYED IN PHIL WOODS' AND BENNY CARTER'S BANDS -- AS THEY DO NOW WITH HIS OWN TRIO OF BASSIST PETER WASHINGTON AND DRUMMER KENNY WASHINGTON.

AND CHARLAP HAS ALWAYS LOOKED TO THE AMERICAN SONGBOOK FOR INSPIRATION ---MUCH LIKE HIS EARLY MENTOR GERRY MULLIGAN.

**24) Vox: Bill Charlap**

"Gerry Mulligan always said that he shot for 42<sup>nd</sup> Street and he overshot and he ended up on 52<sup>ND</sup> Street. That is to say, that he was equally influenced by the great songwriters like Richard Rogers and Jerome Kern and George Gershwin and Irving Berlin as he was by the jazz compositions of Duke Ellington and many other great writers. And although his pieces are always jazz pieces they also have the flavor of American popular song. They're very tuneful and very lyrical and very direct."

**25) Pierce:**

THIS IS GERRY MULLIGAN'S --- "A BALLAD."

**26) Music: A Ballad 6:44**

**27) Pierce:**

"A BALLAD" -- BY GERRY MULLIGAN. BILL CHARLAP AT THE PIANO, MARK TURNER ON TENOR SAX, SCOTT ROBINSON ON BARITONE, PETER WASHINGTON ON BASS, AND KENNY WASHINGTON AT THE DRUMS.

IN THE LATE 40S AND EARLY 50S, GERRY MULLIGAN -- ALONG WITH MILES DAVIS, JOHN LEWIS AND OTHER MUSICIANS -- USED TO HANG OUT IN GIL EVANS' NEW YORK APARTMENT -- BEHIND A CHINESE LAUNDRY ON WEST 55<sup>TH</sup> STREET. IT WAS AN INCUBATOR FOR JAZZ THINKING. AND THE FOUNDATION FOR MILES' SEMINAL RECORDINGS ON "THE BIRTH OF THE COOL." THAT GROUP LISTENED TO A WIDE RANGE OF MUSIC -- INCLUDING IGOR STRAVINSKY'S MODERN COMPOSITION (FROM 1910) , "PETRUSHKA."  
BILL CHARLAP.

**28) Vox: Charlap:**

"Well, Gerry Mulligan was thinking of that when he wrote the shout chorus of "Godchild"—which sounds like this (plays it). You can kind of hear that Stravinsky influence. And it has a kind of ugly beauty to it. It has a real

jazz sound to it."

**29) Pierce:**

ANOTHER PARTICIPANT IN THOSE 'BIRTH OF THE COOL' SESSIONS, TRUMPETER JOHN E. CARISI, INCORPORATED THAT 'UGLY BEAUTY" INTO THIS NEXT PIECE. IT HAS, AS CHARLAP SAYS, THAT "ANGULARITY AND BITE TO IT."

THIS IS THE QUINTET CALLED "ISRAEL."

**30) Music: Israel: A Quintet 5:54**

**31) Pierce:**

"ISRAEL -- A QUINTET" BY JOHN E. CARISI.

JON GORDON ON SAXOPHONE, TRUMPETER JOE MAGNARELLI ; PETER WASHINGTON ON BASS, KENNY WASHINGTON ON DRUMS AND BILL CHARLAP AT THE PIANO IN THE ALLEN ROOM.

IN THE 1940S -- THE CLAUDE THORNHILL ORCHESTRA WAS KNOWN FOR ITS INNOVATIVE AND ATMOSPHERIC MUSIC. GERRY MULLIGAN AND GIL EVANS BOTH PLAYED AND ARRANGED FOR THORNHILL -- AND WITH THAT SOUND IN MIND, BILL CHARLAP RE-ARRANGED THIS NEXT GEORGE GERSHWIN STANDARD.

**32) Music: Foggy Day 5:54**

**33) Pierce:**

THE SAXOPHONE SOLO BY FRANK WESS -- ON 'A FOGGY DAY' WITH JERRY DODGION AND MARK TURNER ALSO ON SAX, WARREN VACHE ON TRUMPET, PETER WASHINGTON PLAYING BASS, KENNY WASHINGTON ON DRUMS AND BILL CHARLAP AT THE PIANO IN THE HOUSE OF SWING....

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER.

TIME FOR US TO CLOSE IT OUT NOW. AND WE'LL DO THAT WITH THIS FAVORITE. ORIGINALLY COMMISSIONED BY CHARLIE PARKER, THIS WAS AMONG THE TWELVE SONGS ON GIL EVANS' AND MILES DAVIS' HISTORIC 1949

ALBUM “BIRTH OF THE COOL”. IT’S A GOOD EXAMPLE OF JUST HOW HOT THAT COOL SOUND CAN BE.

SAXOPHONIST JON GORDON AND THE TRUMPETER JOE MAGNARELLI REJOIN THE BAND FOR GERRY MULLIGAN’S “ROCKER.”

**34) Music: Rocker 5:10**

**35) Pierce:**

GERRY MULLIGAN’S “ROCKER.”

PIANIST BILL CHARLAP’S BAND AT THE ALLEN ROOM. OUR SAXOPHONES - FRANK WESS, JERRY DODGION, JON GORDON, MARK TURNER AND SCOTT ROBINSON. TRUMPETS WARREN VACHÉ AND JOE MAGNARELLI.

GENE BERTONCINI PLAYED GUITAR; WITH VOCALS FROM MARY STALLINGS, PETER WASHINGTON ON BASS; AND KENNY WASHINGTON AT THE DRUMS.

**36) Pierce:**

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER RADIO IS PRODUCED AT MURRAY STREET. THIS EDITION WAS WRITTEN BY LAUREN KRENZEL. OUR PRODUCERS ARE DAVID GOREN AND STEVE RATHE WITH ALEXA LIM.

THE MUSIC WAS RECORDED BY ROB MACUMBER AND ZACH BERKMAN AT THE XM STUDIO IN THE HOUSE OF SWING. ADDITIONAL RECORDING BY JENNI LAWSON AT WWNO, NEW ORLEANS.

OUR THANKS TO MATTHEW LONG-MIDDLETON, OMAR LITTLE, KAY NIEWOOD AND ADAM POGOFF.

CAT HENRY SUPERVISES OUR RECORDINGS AND BROADCASTS.

THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER IS ADRIAN ELLIS. OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTOR IS WYNTON MARSALIS

I’M WENDELL PIERCE. THANKS FOR JOINING US.