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Jazz at Lincoln Center Radio
John Coltrane: The Breakthrough – Giant Steps
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1) Pierce:

50 YEARS AGO -- IN 1959, THE JAZZ RECORD BUSINESS WAS BOOMING. CONSIDER SOME OF THE ALBUMS RECORDED THAT VINTAGE YEAR: MILES DAVIS' *KIND OF BLUE*; DAVE BRUBECK'S *TIME OUT*; ORNETTE COLEMAN'S *THE SHAPE OF JAZZ TO COME*; AND JOHN COLTRANE'S *GIANT STEPS*, -- RECORDS THAT DEFEATED TIME WITH RESOUNDING RETHINKING OF MELODY, RHYTHM, STRUCTURE AND HARMONY.

I'M WENDELL PIERCE. THIS IS JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER .THE MUSIC THAT COLTRANE WROTE AND PLAYED 50 YEARS AGO ON *GIANT STEPS* CAN STILL SOUND AS FRESH AS YOUR FIRST CUP OF COFFEE, -- A PROPOSITION WHICH WE'RE ABOUT TO HEAR IN CONCERT AT THE ROSE THEATER. FEATURING THE RHYTHM SECTION LED BY MULGREW MILLER, AT THE PIANO; IVAN TAYLOR, BASS; AND RODNEY GREEN DRUMS...AND THE SAXOPHONISTS: WALTER BLANDING, ON SOPRANO, SHERMAN IRBY ON ALTO, AND TED NASH AND GEORGE GARZONE ON TENORS. THE FULL SEPTET KICKS THINGS OFF. THE TUNE IS *COUNTDOWN*.

2) MUSIC: COUNTDOWN (4:05)

3) Pierce:

JOHN COLTRANE'S *COUNTDOWN*, ARRANGED BY SHERMAN IRBY. IT FEATURED ALL OUR SAXOPHONISTS, IRBY ON ALTO, WALTER BLANDING ON SOPRANO, WITH GEORGE GARZONE AND TED NASH ON TENORS, IN A CONCERT TRIBUTE TO COLTRANE'S GREAT ALBUM "GIANT STEPS".

4) Vox: TED NASH:

“Giant Steps is one of those records that every saxophone player, every jazz musician at some point finds, because someone says, You’ve got to listen to this!” or they hear it, or a friend plays it and -- you’re transfixed by it! Because, now, even 50 years later, it holds up in such amazing ways.”

5) Pierce:

SAXOPHONIST/ARRANGER TED NASH.

WHEN JOHN COLTRANE WAS 13 YEARS OLD, GROWING UP IN HIGH POINT, NORTH CAROLINA, HE ENDURED A CASCADE OF SUDDEN LOSSES, THE DEATHS OF HIS FATHER, HIS UNCLE AND BOTH HIS MATERNAL GRANDPARENTS. WHAT WAS LEFT? IN THE WORDS OF A SCHOOLMATE: “FOR AWHILE, I DON’T THINK HE HAD ANYTHING BUT THAT HORN.”

“HE NEVER SEEMS TO HAVE PUT IT DOWN,” SAID THE DRUMMER T. S. MONK. “HE’D ALWAYS BE PRACTICING, BETWEEN SETS, BETWEEN REHEARSALS, BETWEEN RECORD DATES, YOU COULD ALWAYS HEAR JOHN WORKING AT HIS HORN.”

GIANT STEPS, WAS “THE FAMILY ALBUM.” SAID HIS COUSIN -- MARY LYERLY ALEXANDER. MUSIC, FAITH AND FAMILY WERE THE PILLARS OF JOHN COLTRANE’S LIFE.

SYEEDA’S SONG FLUTE, OUR NEXT TUNE, WAS DEDICATED TO COLTRANE’S STEP-DAUGHTER ANTONIA “SYEEDA” AUSTIN. IT WILL BE FOLLOWED BY *COUSIN MARY*.

6) MUSIC: SYEEDA’S SONG FLUTE (7:12) /COUSIN MARY (5:20)

7) Pierce:

COUSIN MARY, SOLOS BY GEORGE GARZONE ON TENOR AND MULGREW MILLER ON PIANO, PRECEDED BY *SYEEDA'S SONG FLUTE*, FEATURING IVAN TAYLOR ON BASS AND TED NASH ON TENOR SAX BOTH PIECES WERE ARRANGED BY NASH.

BY 1958, THE YEAR BEFORE GIANT STEPS, JOHN COLTRANE HAD ALREADY LED THE FIRST CLASSIC ALBUM UNDER HIS OWN NAME, *BLUE TRAIN*. THAT FEATURED SEVERAL NOTABLE COLTRANE COMPOSITIONS, INCLUDING THIS SWINGER -- *MOMENT'S NOTICE*.

8) MUSIC: MOMENT'S NOTICE (6:36)**9) Pierce:**

ARRANGED BY SEAN JONES, AND FEATURING VICTOR GOINES ON TENOR AND SHERMAN IRBY ON ALTO. JOHN COLTRANE'S *MOMENT'S NOTICE*,

10) Pierce:

IF YOU WANT TO HEAR THIS SHOW AGAIN AT A MOMENT'S NOTICE, YOU CAN CLICK OVER TO J-A-L-C (DOT) ORG (SLASH) JAZZCAST. YOU'LL FIND OUR ARCHIVED SHOWS AND SCRIPTS PLUS YOU CAN KEEP UP WITH OUR ORCHESTRA AND THE TEN GROUPS WE'VE SENT ABROAD ON THE RHYTHM ROAD.

SO BRING HOME THE SWING AT J-A-L-C DOT ORG. I'M WENDELL PIERCE WITH JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER.

10A) MUSIC (:59)

11) Pierce:

JOHN COLTRANE'S BAND ON THE *BLUE TRAIN* ALBUM HAD BEEN A "PICKUP" GROUP – THE BEST MUSICIANS AVAILABLE WHEN HE WENT INTO THE STUDIO. BUT FOR GIANT STEPS, THE PLAYERS WERE CANDIDATES FOR SOMETHING MORE PERMANENT, COLTRANE'S WORKING BAND.

JAZZ WRITER ASHLEY KAHN:

12) Vox: ASHLEY KAHN 1:06:30

It really represents a moment in his career when he is about to permanently become a leader. It's actually recorded roughly a year before he leaves Miles Davis for the last time, But when he records Giant Steps, he's really become a leader as far as recording sessions go. He's in charge. He knows what he's doing in the studio. He's bringing a lot of new compositions, of new material to be recorded under his own name.

13) Pierce:

ONE OF THOSE NEW COMPOSITIONS IS SPIRAL, ARRANGED HERE BY OUR ALTO SAX PLAYER TED NASH, WITH, WALTER BLANDING ON TENOR AND MULGREW MILLER AT THE PIANO.

SPIRAL.

14) MUSIC: SPIRAL (5:19)**15) Pierce:**

SPIRAL – ONE OF THE TUNES THAT PLACES *GIANT STEPS* AT A TRANSFORMATIONAL MOMENT FOR JOHN COLTRANE. PERSONALLY, HE WAS MOVING FROM SIDEMAN TO LEADER, MUSICALLY HE WAS LEAVING ANOTHER COMFORT ZONE FOR SOMETHING MORE CHALLENGING.

16) Vox: ASHLEY KAHN

"He is almost about to say goodbye to the language of bebop, and bebop and as any musician can tell you is about the elegance of chords. It's about harmony it's about able to jump from one scale to another to another, and run down the highway of harmony in a very knowledgeable and yet melodic way. And that's really what John

Coltrane was reaching for on Giant Steps... [P]ushing the whole sort of harmonic idea, the harmonic ideal, of bebop as far as it can go. “

17) Pierce:

AND THEN THERE'S THE MOMENT WHEN *GIANT STEPS* STOPS, RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF THE STAIRCASE, RAPT IN HEARTFELT SPOUSAL LOVE. THE MUSIC HONORS COLTRANE'S FIRST WIFE NAIMA AUSTIN.

FOR US THE TUNE IS ARRANGED BY VICTOR GOINES, AND FEATURES PIANO MASTER, MULGREW MILLER. JOINING THE BAND NOW IS A SPECIAL GUEST, THE DRUMMER ON THE ORIGINAL VERSION OF *GIANT STEPS* JIMMY COBB.

JOHN COLTRANE'S *NAIMA*.

18) MUSIC: NAIMA (5:07)

19) Pierce:

NAIMA.

WHEN JOHN COLTRANE MADE THE ALBUM *GIANT STEPS* HE USED THREE DIFFERENT QUARTETS: THREE DRUMMERS, THREE PIANISTS. BUT HE PLAYED TENOR SAX IN ALL THREE. PLAYED TENOR SAX ALONG WITH HIS FAVORITE BASSIST PAUL CHAMBERS, OR -- AS 'TRANE CALLED HIM: *MR. P.C.*

20) MUSIC: MR. P.C. (7:20)

21) Pierce:

MR. P.C. (PAUL CHAMBERS), ARRANGED BY SHERMAN IRBY WHO ALSO SOLOED ON ALTO SAX. WE FEATURED WALTER BLANDING ON TENOR, MULGREW MILLER AT THE PIANO AND THE GREAT JIMMY COBB ON DRUMS.

JIMMY NOT ONLY MADE *NAIMA* FOR COLTRANE, HE MADE **KIND OF BLUE**, AS PART OF HIS REGULAR GIG, DRUMMING FOR MILES DAVIS.

NOW, AS RODNEY GREEN RECLAIMS THE DRUM THRONE OUR VERSATILE REEDMAN TED NASH INTRODUCES THE TUNE...

22) Vox: TED NASH

“At some point, everybody learns the Coltrane solo on Giant Steps – (sings). I mean, you just know it, because you have to learn it. Nobody tells you this. You just realize that this is a very important thing to learn. Everybody has to learn this.”

23) MUSIC: GIANT STEPS (7:40)

24) Pierce:

GIANT STEPS THE TITLE TUNE AND MUSICAL EFFECT OF THE CLASSIC RECORD ALBUM, AND ITS CREATOR JOHN COLTRANE.

WALTER BLANDING DID THE ARRANGEMENT AND SHARED TENOR SAX SOLO DUTIES WITH GEORGE GARZONE. TED NASH ALSO PLAYED TENOR WITH THE ALTOIST SHERMAN IRBY. OUR BASSIST IS IVAN TAYLOR, THE DRUMMERS RODNEY GREEN AND JIMMY COBB. THE PIANIST AND MUSICAL DIRECTOR – MULGREW MILLER..

JOHN COLTRANE SAID:

“I think the majority of musicians are interested in truth. They’ve got to be, because saying a musical thing is a truth. ... all musicians are striving for as near certain perfection as they can get, and that’s the truth there, y’know. So, in order to play these kinds of things, to play truths, you’ve got to live as much truth as you possibly can.”

24) Pierce: (continues)

AND WHAT COULD BE TRUER THAN THIS... FROM JOHN COLTRANE’S ORIGINAL 1959 RECORDING OF ‘*GIANT STEPS*’

25) Music Coltrane – Giant Steps: UP and under

26) Pierce:

LIVE TRUE, PLAY TRUE, JOHN COLTRANE’S PATH TO GREAT MUSIC.

JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER RADIO IS PRODUCED AT MURRAY STREET.
THIS EDITION WAS WRITTEN BY DAVID MARASH (mar-ish, rhymes with parish).

OUR PRODUCERS ARE DAVID GOREN, STEVE RATHE AND ALEXA LIM.
RECORDINGS BY ROB MACUMBER AT XM STUDIOS IN ROSE HALL, AND AT CDM
STUDIOS, BY JOHN KEITH.,

CAT HENRY SUPERVISES OUR RECORDINGS AND BROADCASTS. THE
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF JAZZ AT LINCOLN CENTER IS ADRIAN ELLIS. THE
ARTISTIC DIRECTOR IS WYNTON MARSALIS.

I’M WENDELL PIERCE. THANKS FOR JOINING US.