

# MASTER CLASSES

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## Jazz Notes



Excerpt from a Speech given at

**LA JAZZ SOCIETY**

The 25th Anniversary Tribute Event

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**VALUE** = the measure of how strongly something is desired for its physical or moral beauty, wisdom, rarity etc. It is expressed in terms of the effort or money one is willing to expend in acquiring, retaining possession of or preserving it.

I want to talk to you briefly about value and our jazz aesthetic.

**What of the role of the “new model” in the Jazz Aesthetic ?**

- the way we acquire our music is different
- music is virtually “free” of cost
- therefore our attention becomes more focused ultimately on, the importance of live music and especially its presentation as it is the primary “connecting point”.

Music is meant to be experienced and that experience includes one in which the musicians’ themselves are perceived to be treated in a way the shows and speaks to their artistic relevance, importance and value.

**From education perspective,**

- the study of jazz is now institutionalized...

There are so many aspects to this which have made this fact a great thing. Those classes don’t replace, however the part of the tradition and language that is handed down through practical experience playing with masters on an ongoing basis and/or personal study time with them.

**This is the environment where players learn how to play.**

Preservation of the most important elements of this music ...the experimental, the openness, the pushing of the envelope, the sensitivity and well as business sensibilities are best learned when one has been an “observing participant. And what is the message for young people who want to play jazz, when deals are struck for performances which continue to challenge the balance of art and commerce? Where is the young player to learn? Where is the platform for growth and experimentation musically which is such a vital part of this art form?

**Audience education.**

There should be no fear on the part of those who are supposed to know and protect jazz and the jazz musician’s value.

**Jazz is a language.**

Gaps in the “language” happen when musicians and jazz aficionados, close their ears to the possibilities. Some of our kids aren’t brought to this art form in the same ways we may have been. Yet , their creative voices are more and more drawing on the same renegade spirit and desires that created bebop. A need to play. A need to try something different.

A whole generation of young musicians who’s experimentation with a melding of forms labeled “fusion” of the 70’s early 80’s were practically shunned by the jazz community ... but a language, a new “dialect” was being born out of and from people who had a grasp on the tradition . That’s the difference today. The desire on the part of the younger players are there, but the language has holes in it. Those holes are made even wider when we, as “educated” fans within the jazz community don’t fulfill our roles as “the keepers at the gate,” of the true elements which make this music what it has been, what it is and what it will be.

In conclusion, I would submit that we challenge ourselves to examine what we are doing to promote the music’s value. ... its societal value, its artistic value, and the value of those who practice , and play it. It’s not just thrown together, it’s not just about the jamming.

And today, its survival , with the fortunate few who find a way to continue it’s great legacy in a market place that is ever changing, requires musicians with a skill set that embraces excellence no matter what the category of music.

Jazz is at the root of so much contemporary music . Its proponents deserve the respect of a sense of value beyond that of being entertaining.

**May these considerations remain part of our continuing collective mission.**

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