BEYOND CENTRAL

Chuck Berghofer

Interviewed by Alex Cline

Completed under the auspices
of the
Center for Oral History Research
University of California
Los Angeles

CONTENTS

BIOGRAPHICAL SUMMARY

PERSONAL HISTORY:

Born: June 14, 1937, Denver, Colorado.

Spouse: Barbara Berghofer, divorced, one stepson, one daughter; Julie Allis, one daughter.

CAREER HISTORY:

Bassist, 1955-present.

Played bass for such artists as:

Christina Aguilera
Steve Allen
Ernestine Anderson
Ray Anthony
Patti Austin
Hoyt Axton
Louise Baranger
Mike Barone
The Beach Boys
Louie Bellson
David Benoit
Bill Berry
Mary J. Blige
Bobby Caldwell
Glen Campbell
Conte Candoli
Frank Capp
Vanessa Carlton
The Carpenters
Pete Christlieb
Rosemary Clooney
Adam Cohen
Natalie Cole
Ry Cooder
Bob Cooper
Michael Crawford
James Darren
Tim Draxl

Herb Ellis
Skinnay Ennis
The Everly Brothers
Michael Feinstein
Ella Fitzgerald
Herb Geller
Stan Getz
Vince Gill
Buddy Greco
Charlie Haden
Sam Harris
Enrique Iglesias
Pete Jolly
Philly Joe Jones
Rahsaan Roland Kirk
Bobby Knight
Diana Krall
Peggy Lee
Julie London
Melissa Manchester
Henry Mancini
Monica Mancini
Barry Manilow
Shelly Manne
Nancy Marano
Bette Midler
Joni Mitchell
Gerry Mulligan
Sammy Nestico
Aaron Neville
Neil Norman
Van Dyke Parks
Art Pepper
John Pisano/Flying Pisanos
Elvis Presley
Ruth Price
Howard Roberts
Linda Ronstadt
Frank Rosolino
Dennis Rowland
Jimmy Rowles
Adam Sandler
Lalo Schifrin
Diane Schuur
Tom Scott
Jon Secada

Jack Sheldon
Zoot Sims
Frank Sinatra
Nancy Sinatra
Keely Smith
Joanie Sommers
George Strait
Barbra Streisand
Mel Torme
Bobby Troup
Steve Tyrell
Sarah Vaughan
Robbie Williams
Tony Williams
Frank Zappa

Played bass in Los Angeles studios on over 400 motion pictures—notably *Bird*, *The Majestic*, *On Golden Pond*, *Rocky*, *Rocky II*, and *True Crime*—and on countless television shows, including the *Carol Burnett Show*, *Charlie's Angels*, *Enterprise*, *The Simpsons*, and *Star Trek.*

SELECTED RECORDINGS:

With Ernestine Anderson:

Concord Jazz Heritage Series

With the Beach Boys:

Pet Sounds

With Louis Bellson:

The Art of the Chart

With Bill Berry:

Shortcake

With Frank Capp:

In a Hefti Bag
Live at the Alleycat
Play it Again Sam
Presents Rickey Woodard

With Pete Christlieb:

Mosaic

With Rosemary Clooney:

Brazil
Concord Jazz Heritage Series
Dedicated to Nelson
Demi-Centennial
For the Duration
Mothers & Daughters
Still on the Road
White Christmas

With Natalie Cole:

Stardust

With Ry Cooder:

Jazz

With Ella Fitzgerald:

For the Love of Ella
Whisper Not

With Herb Geller:

To Benny and Johnny with Love from Herb Geller

With Charlie Haden:

American Dreams

With Pete Jolly:

Pete Jolly Trio and Friends
Yeah!

With Diana Krall:

When I Look in Your Eyes

With Henry Mancini:

The Latin Sound of Henry Mancini

With Shelly Manne:

At the Manne-Hole, Vol. 1
At the Manne-Hole, Vol. 2
Checkmate
Navy Swings

With Joni Mitchell:

Both Sides Now
Travelogue

With Sammy Nestico:

Big Band Favorites of Sammy Nestico
Night Flight

With Van Dyke Parks:

Discover America

With Art Pepper:

Art Pepper Live at Donte's, Vol. 1
Art Pepper Live at Donte's, Vol. 2

With John Pisano/Flying Pisanos:

Among Friends
Conversation Pieces
Ensemble

With Elvis Presley:

A Touch of Platinum, Vol. 2
The Collection
Elvis TV Special
Memories: The '68 Comeback Special
Platinum: A Life in Music

With Ruth Price:

Ruth Price with Shelly Manne at the Manne-Hole

With Tom Ranier:

In the Still of the Night

With Howard Roberts:

Jaunty-Jolly/Guilty!!
The Magic Band, Live at Donte's
The Magic Band, Vol. 2
Something's Cookin'/Goodies
Whatever's Fair/All-Time Great Instrumental Hits

With Linda Ronstadt:

The Linda Ronstadt Box Set

With Diane Schuur:

Heart to Heart
Friends for Schuur
Love Songs
Music is My Life
The Very Best of Diane Schuur

With Tom Scott:

Smokin' Section

With Zoot Sims:

Zoot Sims Plays Johnny Mandel: Quietly There

With Frank Sinatra:

Duets
Duets II

With Nancy Sinatra:

Boots
California Girl
Nancy

Sugar

With Barbra Streisand:

The Broadway Album

With Mel Torme:

Concord Jazz Heritage Series
In Concert in Tokyo
In the Studio and in Concert

With Tony Williams:

Wilderness

With Frank Zappa:

Lumpy Gravy

HONORS AND AWARDS:

Most Valuable Bass Player, National Academy of Recording Arts and Sciences (NARAS), four consecutive years, mid-1980s.

INTERVIEW HISTORY

INTERVIEWER:

Alex Cline, Senior Writer, UCLA Oral History Program; Musician.

TIME AND SETTING OF INTERVIEW:

Place: Berghofer=s home, Studio City, California.

Dates, length of sessions: April 2, 2003 (104 minutes); April 9, 2003 (98)**,** April 16, 2003 (80)**,** May 1, 2003 (84).

Total number of recorded hours: 6.1

Persons present during interview: Berghofer and Cline.

CONDUCT OF INTERVIEW:

This interview is part of the ABeyond Central@ series, which extends the UCLA Oral History Program=s ACentral Avenue Sounds@ series and preserves the spoken memories of musicians who were active in the jazz music scene in Los Angeles from the 1950s to the 1970s. The series includes a broad range of interviewees, some of whom are well known and others who may be less known, who were chosen to document their specific point of view, contribution, role, or experience.

In preparation for the interview, Cline consulted jazz histories, autobiographies, oral histories, and relevant periodicals, listened to recordings, and viewed personal archival material when made available.

EDITING:

TechniType, independent contractors, transcribed the interview and edited for punctuation, paragraphing, and spelling. Cline edited and verified proper names. Words and phrases inserted by the editor have been bracketed.

Berghofer reviewed the transcript. He verified proper names and made minor corrections and additions.

Cline prepared the table of contents and assembled the biographical summary and interview history. Michelle Weis, editorial assistant, compiled the guide to proper

names.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTS:

The original tape recordings of the interview are in the university archives and are available under the regulations governing the use of permanent noncurrent records of the university. Records relating to the interview are located in the office of the UCLA Oral History Program.

TAPE NUMBER: I, SIDE ONE

April 2, 2003

CLINE: Good morning.

BERGHOFER: Good morning.

CLINE: Thank you for sitting down with me. As I already explained, for these sorts of interviews, predictably, we like to start at the beginning. So if you could tell us, when and where were you born?

BERGHOFER: Well, I was born in Denver, Colorado, June 14th, Flag Day, 1937, the same day as my father, actually, so that's a pretty amazing start, actually, I think.

CLINE: What was your father's name?

BERGHOFER: Curtis [Berghofer]. That's my middle name.

CLINE: What can you tell us about your parents? Let's start with your father since you mentioned him.

BERGHOFER: Yes. Well, my father was— Actually, his love in life was golf, and he was a big golfer. He wanted to be a golf pro and all those things. His mother died early, so he took a job with the railroad at that time and stayed there for the rest of his life. So he worked for the railroad, and that was basically it. He didn't make a lot of money at all, but we lived fine. So that was in Denver, Colorado. Then he was transferred to California in 1945. That's how I wound up getting here.

CLINE: Do you know where his family came from before he settled in Colorado?

BERGHOFER: Well, there's not much I know. His father died very young, and there's not much of a history there.

My mother's side has a long history, but my father's side was— Yes, not a big history. Now that my mother's gone, there are a lot of questions I often have, and there's no one to ask anymore.

CLINE: So what was your mother's name?

BERGHOFER: Her maiden name was Bambridge. Dolores was her first name. She came from a very musical family. Her father [John Bambridge] played with John Philip Sousa. He was from Tahiti, which is really strange, but I mean, the French— Bambridge was the name. He came from Tahiti, and his father was married to a Tahitian woman, so that puts Tahitian blood in our family. My mother became a whatever it comes down to. I think I had an eighth or something by the time it got to me. But he, like I say, played with the cornet and piano, but he played with John Philip Sousa, which was a big thing.

Then his son, my mother's brother [John Bambridge], was a musician, and he played with the St. Louis Symphony for many years. Then he moved here, and he was at Warner Bros. on staff, played tuba and bass.

CLINE: And your mother, did she play music as well?

BERGHOFER: Just for fun. Then, her mother [Katy Bell Bambridge] was a ballet teacher. So there was a combination of all that going on.

CLINE: Interesting. What part of the country was her family from?

BERGHOFER: They were all from St. Louis, Missouri. I was the only one out of the whole family born in Denver. That just happened to be that my father was transferred there at that time.

CLINE: About how long was the family in Denver, do you know?

BERGHOFER: Well, let's see. I was there about— Well, I left there when I was eight years old, so they were there about ten years.

CLINE: Do you remember hearing music in the household even when you were that young? Do you have any memories of that?

BERGHOFER: Not much at that age, although I do remember they got me a violin when I was real young. I made some awful sounds on that. There wasn't a lot of music in the house at that time, but later on it seemed like we had a little more. My mother did play the piano some, you know, just kind of by ear. It was her brother's family that was— Like, for instance, I left out my cousin who played on the *Tonight Show* for the whole time, John Bambridge Jr., and wrote a whole bunch of the arrangements also.

CLINE: What did he play?

BERGHOFER: Saxophone. He still does. He's basically retired now. He went to Juilliard [School], and he was really well trained. Basically, that side of the family was always warning my side of the family, my parents, "Don't let him get into this." It's kind of funny. And I just did it anyway, because, I don't know. My father was well behind me, because he did a job he really didn't like all his life. He knew I loved

music, so he stood by me all the way, never once said, “Why don’t you be an engineer?” That’s what everybody was supposed to be back in those days.

CLINE: Interesting. Do you know how your parents met at all? Do you have any stories about them?

BERGHOFER: That’s a good question. I’ve heard little things. I’m not sure. I know my mother, I think she was double dating or doing some kind of a thing like that, and my father was with someone else at that point. They met some way along those lines, I guess. I’m not sure.

CLINE: That was St. Louis?

BERGHOFER: Yes, that was in St. Louis.

CLINE: So your father got transferred. He came to California.

BERGHOFER: Came to California. We wound up in Arcadia in 1945. I was eight years old. I was in third grade. I changed— I mean, I remember that part. We started at a place called First Avenue [Elementary] School. It’s still there. That’s where I kind of got started on the trumpet. I mean, they had music actually in those days all the way through. That was part of the curriculum. Nowadays, you can’t find it anymore unless you do a separate thing after school or something like that. But now— I mean, back then it was just part of the day. Anyway, I took up trumpet then.

CLINE: Why trumpet?

BERGHOFER: I don’t know. It was strange. I remember my uncle got me the trumpet. I remember when I opened the case with the red velvet inside, and I took this beautiful looking, shiny instrument out. My grandmother taught me how to make a

sound out of it, because her husband was the one that played with John Philip Sousa. She said, “It’s like spitting a hair off the end of your tongue.” That’s the way it started, and it actually worked. But I did that for a while and then kind of worked my way down with the trombone after that.

CLINE: Down the frequency.

BERGHOFER: Exactly, yes, and then wound up on tuba, and that was all the way at the end of my— Like in high school I actually marched one time in the Rose Bowl Parade carrying the sousaphone. The tuba, doing that—

And suddenly we sent away for— We had a little German band with a tuba, and we sent away for some arrangements that called for— I guess it was more of a Dixieland thing. It called for string bass. So the piano player that was— The girl piano player that was in the group, her father owned the music store in Arcadia, and she was really a talented girl. Patty Pratt was her name. I got the bass from school. Then she taught me C, A, D, G, which— You can play about ten thousand songs just with that kind of a thing. Anyway, we started playing with a little combo. Now all of a sudden it was piano, bass, drums, and vibes.

At that time, I kind of moved all the way from the third grade up to high school, but at that time, we were into Bobby Troup for some reason. I don’t know why. Also “Something Cool.” I’m trying to think of her name now. June Christy. For whatever reason, we were all into that, listening to that stuff. So the vibe player kind of sang a little bit like Bobby Troup, and he played vibes. We were kind of into

that bag, I mean, kind of modern, you know, trying to make it sound modern. So we worked a few gigs around doing that.

CLINE: Let me back up, then. So by now you're obviously hearing some music. I don't know if it was in your household or not, but something about music must have captivated you. Did you have, before they needed a bassist in this combo, any awareness of the bass? Or had you seen bass players?

BERGHOFER: I saw bass because my uncle had one all the time, and we'd go to see him and it would be sitting in the corner, great big thing, and I couldn't even reach the— As I got bigger, I got to the point where I could play a couple of notes on it. But I always knew that music was the thing, because even before the bass, somehow I wound up with a tenor saxophone.

CLINE: You moved out of the bass into the woodwinds.

BERGHOFER: I don't know where I even got this thing. It was probably a hockshop or something. And I'd spent hours like making believe I was [Cecil] "Big Jay" McNeely or somebody.

CLINE: Did you listen to his music?

BERGHOFER: Well, I did. I mean, he used to work out in El Monte, at the El Monte something stadium.

CLINE: Legion Stadium.

BERGHOFER: Legion Stadium. I used to go see him. This was later on, too. This was during the— Well, during the high school years. But I always, I don't know, I just had a thing for music. I knew right away. For instance, going all the way back to

the trumpet, I took lessons on the trumpet, and there must have been three or four of us in the class. So right away, when I got into the band, I was playing first trumpet. Then I played first trombone and all these kind of things. I was the president of the choir. I don't know, the musical thing was real easy for me. I had to admit I used my ear most of the time. Everybody else would be studying all these things and come back for the next lesson and try to do it. It was just easy for me. I'd look at it or listen to it, and I could sort of play it, or at least by ear. Then I looked at the notes, and between the two things I'd have it, so I could play it.

CLINE: So did you have lessons at school? Or did you have a private teacher?

BERGHOFER: I had just school lessons, yes, at the school with the trumpet and trombone, all the way until we got to the bass, and I never really had lessons on the bass until later on, so I kind of learned that on my own.

CLINE: So you played from a very early age. You went all the way, I guess, through school. You went on to junior high school. Were you still in Arcadia during all of these years?

BERGHOFER: Yes. The junior high school part was strange, because at that time we didn't have high school in Arcadia. It was in Monrovia, and it was called M.A.D.—Monrovia, Arcadia, Duarte. That's where I would have gone. However, they built a new high school, or they were building one, and when we got to that point, we were the first graduating class going through it, but we didn't start till our sophomore year. So we actually had three years in the new high school, with the first year of high school was still done— We did it still in our middle school, which is kind of a strange

situation, but that's what went down. Otherwise I would have gone to Monrovia, I guess.

But it was interesting, because I never had a senior in front of me. I mean, we were always the seniors, always, so we kind of missed out on all the hazing and everything else.

CLINE: You mentioned Big Jay McNeely. Do you remember any of the music that you listened to or heard during the time you were growing up through that period?

BERGHOFER: Well, yes. I was in a choir group, and out of that came four of us, and we had this little thing. We did tunes like "Sh-Boom" and all that kind of stuff. I was kind of into that. I don't know. It was before the jazz scene hit me.

CLINE: Yes, the popular music of the day.

BERGHOFER: Popular music of the day.

CLINE: This is post-World War II.

BERGHOFER: Exactly, yes. And I liked it, and it was fine. I mean, I hate it now. I think, "How could I like that stuff?" But it was okay.

I know we went along one Christmas, and for whatever reason, my folks bought this record— We had the tree sitting on a corner table, and underneath we had a record player, for whatever reason—played Christmas music and stuff. They'd bought this record, and it happened to be Jimmy Rowles, called *Rare But Well Done*. Let's see. It was Art Mardigan [on drums] and Red Mitchell [on bass], I think. Anyway, that turned me around there. That was the one that— I started listening to

that and was, “Wow! This is really different.” I don’t know where it came from. I don’t know why they bought it. I think they liked the cover, maybe. I’m not sure.

CLINE: Were you playing the bass by then?

BERGHOFER: I was fooling with the bass, yes. Yes, I mean, playing pretty awful. We actually made a record back in those days, and I’ve lost it now, but I had it for a long time. It was awful.

CLINE: This was the combo that you were talking about?

BERGHOFER: Yes. I mean, we made an acetate, a big red acetate thing.

CLINE: So that was the first jazz that you heard, then?

BERGHOFER: Basically the first, yes. And living in Arcadia, there was a little jazz club right on the border of Pasadena and Arcadia, and maybe the name will come to me later, but I can’t think of the name of it at the time. But they had some great groups in there. Red Norvo was there. So after I got interested, my folks took me to hear that stuff, and I started listening, went, “Wow! This is what I want to do.” I’d watch the bass player playing all these notes, Harry Babasin at that time. Then my folks— Somehow I got to the point where I sat in one night there.

CLINE: How old were you then?

BERGHOFER: I was about, oh, probably seventeen.

CLINE: So this is getting near the end of your high school days.

BERGHOFER: Yes. I took up the bass pretty late—I might have been sixteen—and played at it for a while. At that point, I somehow was able to— I don’t know how, I mean, I can’t imagine them doing this, but I sat in. And then Harry Babasin— My

folks said, “How did he do?” He said, “Well, he’s got a lot of talent, but he doesn’t know what he’s doing.” I remember that part. Which I didn’t. But that didn’t stop me. I mean, it was still fun.

CLINE: So then did you start taking lessons on the bass?

BERGHOFER: Well, not really. That’s the funny part about it. I got a couple other— I don’t know, don’t ask me how, but I got another couple of gigs, and I kind of learned, and I got a little better doing it.

Then finally, moving on up a— Well, I don’t want to jump too far ahead, but I mean, I was working at Allstate Insurance Company when I was eighteen, after I got out of high school. That’s the only job I ever had of a day-job variety, other than summers working as a gardener and different things. But I got this job at Allstate Insurance Company, and for some reason out of the clear blue I get a call from this— I guess my name was getting around somehow. I don’t know how. I don’t remember how or why, really. But I got this gig in Glendale somewhere with a guy by the name of Johnny Pease. He’s still around, and he works at Steamers once in a while. I think it was just like two nights a week, Friday and Saturday, something like that. Anyway, it paid like twice as much as I was making for the five days at the other thing. So I took that job and left the mailroom at the Allstate Insurance Company, and I’ve never had a job since then. I got started doing that. There was a real good piano player there, kind of taught me some things.

CLINE: So you were having to walk and do all that fun stuff.

BERGHOFER: Yes, and still had no technique. I mean, I was still grabbing the bass like it was a broomstick or something. I didn't have any of that yet. The piano players would teach me the right notes, basically, and I'd thump along. I had a bass that my mother bought me out of a pawnshop in Pasadena, and I was off and running.

But I did that gig for a while, and eventually it turned into one other gig. Somebody else called me, a girl by the name of Yvonne Rivera, really a wonderful piano player, and she was working at Marineland. That's before there were any freeways to Marineland. So I started working that job. The drummer lived right on Highland [Avenue] in Hollywood, Highland just north of Sunset [Boulevard]. I'd come from Arcadia, and I'd pick him up in my Volkswagen. At that point, I finally had a 1955, brand-new—I bought it—Volkswagen. It might have been the first year they came out. We put the bass and the drums in that. But anyway, I'd pick him up every night from Arcadia, and I'd drive all the way to Hollywood. Then we'd go all the way down to Marineland, going down Highland [Avenue] and La Brea [Avenue] and all that stuff. It must have taken three hours.

I played this job and really learned a lot there. She was a wonderful piano player, and he was really a good drummer, too. They took me under their wing, and we did that, I did that, and that was fun doing that job, I think it was six nights a week or something like that.

So I'm sitting at home having dinner with my folks, and the phone rings. I pick it up, and there's this guy on the other end offering me this job on the road. I asked his name three or four times. I finally wrote it down, got back to the table, and

told my dad. I said, "Some guy by the name of Skinnay Ennis called me and wants me to go on the road," and paid big money, too. Eighty dollars a week, I think it was. And he couldn't believe it, because Skinnay Ennis was a big, pretty big, deal back in those days. "Date with an Angel" I think it was the hit, and Hal Kemp. This is ancient history, you know.

Anyway, to make a long story short, again, took the job, got down to the union [American Federation of Musicians, Local 47]. I was nineteen at this point. I got down to the union and met everybody there. I get on the bus, pick out a seat, and sit down. We start driving, and pretty soon I look around. This guy right across from me, Fred Otis is his name, he's a great piano player. It's eleven o'clock in the morning, and I see this paper bag come out of his thing, and he uncaps the top and takes a big gulp. I think, "Jesus, eleven o'clock in the morning, he's got a drink." Anyway, these guys were hardened guys. So here I am, nineteen years old, thrown in with all this. That was the beginning of my musical career.

CLINE: Okay, we'll come back to that. I want to back up a bit and ask you, during the time you were growing up in Arcadia, you're starting to play music, what do you remember about the neighborhood that you lived in, the area? What was it like? What kind of people were living there that you went to school with or lived near?

BERGHOFER: Well, the area that I lived in is still there. In fact, I lived in that house. I just sold it not long ago, and the house was exactly the same as it was the whole time I was there. Now it's a big house. It was a big lot. But the people and the

kids and the— It was a wonderful area. It was like— Oh, gosh. It was like a small little town. Arcadia was a beautiful little place.

We had two different, distinct areas. I mean, I was in an okay area, but most of the kids were up above Foothill Boulevard they called the Oaks—beautiful, huge homes, like Beverly Hills style. So I mean, there were some very, very wealthy people who lived there. I wasn't one of them. The kids I went to school with were people such as Bill Voit from Voit Rubber Company, Pat Wynn from Wynn Oil Company. These were close friends of mine at the time. Spreckles Sugar. Big-time people. Then the girl, like I mentioned before, who owned the music store, her father owned the music store, lived there. So, I mean, that was a big influence, she was, because there were some teachers that worked at her store there that helped our group out as a whole—not necessarily just as a bass player, but I mean as the whole thing. I mean, they'd come and listen to us. "Oh, you guys are doing that wrong, doing this wrong," and make us learn proper chords and stuff.

CLINE: Do you remember much about the L.A., the Hollywood area, when you started coming in?

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: What it was like, I mean, especially coming from Arcadia? Did it seem like the big city to you? What was it like?

BERGHOFER: Pretty much, yes, it did. But it was fantastic. It was— Well, to go way back for a second. When my friends back in Denver found out I was moving to Los Angeles, right away they're— For some reason even back then—this is 1945—

Los Angeles had a reputation for being a high-crime area for some reason. "The gangsters all live out there." Something to do with that. So I was kind of scared. I thought, "Wow, I'm going into this bad place." I got on the train, came out, and by the time we get here, I see nothing but beautiful palm trees and the sun is shining. This is before smog, even. Everything was totally gorgeous.

Arcadia is nestled in the San Gabriel Mountain area there, and you could see almost every tree on the mountain, it was so clear. And it was beautiful. So when I'd drive to Hollywood, which I had to do it a different way— The only freeway that they had then was the Pasadena Freeway. But I'd go down Highland and pick up my friend. I'd park right out there in front, on Highland right in front of his place—I mean, always a parking place there. I'd pick him up, and we'd drive down. It was never even thought about, "Well, what time should we leave because of the rush hour?" There was no rush hour. It was like Sunday morning is now all the time.

I never even saw a hint of any kind of criminal activity that I've ever seen in my life, really. I mean, I've never had any of that happen here, but I know it happens now. I've never been a witness to it. But especially back then, it was so safe. I mean, we never locked our doors. I don't think I ever locked a car door.

CLINE: Once you started getting interested in jazz, other than the little club in El Monte you mentioned and things like that, did you ever wander anywhere further outside your neighborhood to go hear any jazz? Did you go to any jazz clubs and check people out or anything like that?

BERGHOFER: Back in the early part, the only place I went was a place in Pasadena, that first place, because they had a lot of groups that came through there. Monty Budwig I actually saw there. When I saw that, I couldn't believe it. I thought, "My God." I almost gave up the bass because the technique he had, I thought, "Jeez, there's no way that I'll ever learn this."

CLINE: So you never left—

BERGHOFER: Yes, I never really stretched out too far.

CLINE: You never went to Central Avenue or anything?

BERGHOFER: Yes, actually, I did. I shouldn't say that. I did a few times.

CLINE: What was that like?

BERGHOFER: I was a little scared about that at first, but once I got there it was fine. I mean, it wasn't a problem at all, yes. I mean, everybody was there for one reason in these clubs. But yes, I heard a couple of groups downtown. I can't even remember who they were now. I made it down there a couple of times is all. Other than that, once I got started doing my little road gig and this and that, I was pretty much off and running. I mean, it kind of falls into place after that.

CLINE: What about the racial mix of people in your neighborhood? Was it pretty much white folks?

BERGHOFER: It was totally white where I was, yes. I don't think we had one black kid in the school. I don't think we did.

CLINE: So what was it like for you going into an area like Central Avenue which was so predominantly African American?

BERGHOFER: Well, it's funny. Like I say, at first I wasn't sure what to think, but any times that I ever had an instrument with me or anything, I always felt in my mind, "It's okay, because he's a musician." I don't know why, I mean, I had that feeling, because there wasn't any— At least from my point of view there wasn't any racial thing at all. I mean, in fact, it was the other way around. I always thought that white people were more accepted because you were a jazz player than you could— I mean, I played with a lot of black players and never even thought about the racial thing at all. I mean, it was totally just music. The music was what it was about. It didn't have any kind of a racial thing until later on. That kind of started late, I mean like recently, but back then it actually brought the races together, I think, in a lot of ways. I mean, I know there were bands that traveled around, and everybody had to stay in different places, but that was later on, too, I actually saw that, because I went on a couple of road trips.

CLINE: Okay, we'll come to that.

Did you have any notion at all when you took up the bass that this was, as far as steady work goes, one of the best instruments to take up, and that everybody needs a good bass player?

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: You had a notion that that was wise, a wise move?

BERGHOFER: After I took it up. I didn't take it up for that reason, but, yes, I definitely thought, "Well, everybody has to have a bass"—which isn't true anymore, by the way. But yes, I thought that for sure.

CLINE: Were there any other subjects in your school days, other than music, that captivated you? Or did you always just plan to assume the course of music?

BERGHOFER: No, just the music. I never even thought about one other thing but that at all. I can't think of one other— No.

For one short period of time—and this is when I was eighteen also—I joined the naval reserve and I wound up being in the medical part of the thing, which consisted of learning how to give a shot to somebody. That's about as far as I got, but for a brief second there, I almost thought, "Well, maybe I'll become something in the medical profession." But that didn't last long at all. No, I just thought about music. I just knew that's what I was going to do, and I didn't even question it at all. That was it.

CLINE: And you sort of lucked out, too, by finding yourself between wars as far as the military goes.

BERGHOFER: Yes. I joined the reserve, yes, when I was eighteen years old, with several, a few, of my friends at the same time, one of which wound up retiring as an ex— Let me see. He wasn't an admiral. He retired as a captain in the navy, I guess. But starting right from the reserves, I thought that was pretty amazing. Anyway, I don't know why I brought that up, except that I still see him, and he played the trombone in school with me all the time, but he's now retired and works as a consultant or something for someone.

CLINE: Do you remember why you chose the medical direction particularly, when I know there were a number of musicians who went into the military for musical training?

BERGHOFER: Yes, well, they didn't have a band there. This was in Pasadena, again, you know, so I don't know. It's funny. I think I started out in some other area—I don't remember what it was—but somehow I wound up into that. I don't know if they needed it. I think they were looking for people to do that or something at that point, and I just kind of fell into that. And I hated it. I actually hated every second I spent there. I did eight years of weekends. I went in, I never— I just hated every second of it. I really did. It makes me feel for these guys that are actually in the service now, especially that are fighting this war [in Iraq] in this moment. But I mean, it must be, because it's a different set of circumstances now.

But you're right, I missed all the wars. I was lucky enough to be too young for the Korean War, way too young for the Second World War, of course, but the Korean conflict. Then I was too old for the Vietnamese conflict, so I was kind of in between.

CLINE: How did you manage to do your reserve time when you were on the road and playing music?

BERGHOFER: Well, one way I did it is I dropped out, and I went for quite some time without doing anything until I got my draft notice. At that, I was out for about three, two or three years, without doing anything, and then there's some loop[hole], some sort of something in the policy that allowed me to go back in. I'm not sure what it was, but I know that the guy that had to let me in was really mad at me. He said, "If

you do one thing out of line you're going to be in the regulars the next day." So they had to let me back in, for whatever reason, and I got back in.

Then I had to do my duty, and during that period of time is when I was— We're moving up a bit, but I'll just tell you that during that period of time is when I was at Shelly's Manne-Hole. It was 1960. I had to work the Friday and Saturday night there and go to the meetings. I had to be there at five [o'clock] in the morning and so forth. By the end of that weekend I was so wiped out that I'd sleep nineteen hours or something like that.

CLINE: Wow. Amazing.

BERGHOFER: Yes, that was tough, but not as tough as— I mean, for some reason when you're younger you need more sleep. I guess I could do it now without even— I mean, I do stuff like that now where it doesn't bother me.

CLINE: So you are playing music through your schooling. You graduate from high school, and you're a musician now. You've gotten this call from Skinnay Ennis. Do you have any idea how he got your name?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I think he got it through this Von Riviera group, the drummer. Somebody said, "Hey, we're looking for a bass player." And he knew somebody, went, "Hey, this kid we're working with," and I'm pretty sure that's how I got it.

CLINE: And you had to grow up very quickly, I guess, on the bus there.

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes , definitely did. I mean, at that point I didn't drink at all or do anything. By the time I got six months' road trip and was coming home, Christ, I

was— You know. Not that I was a heavy drinker, but I'd kind of keep up with whoever I had to at that point.

It was a tough— I thought it was easy then, but when I look back, it was really tough, because we just about lived on the bus, and we would share rooms. Our suits were hanging on the bus. They were awful. The bass I'd carry on the bus and put it in the back. It was one of those things. Each time you'd stop and you'd play the gig, get back on the bus. Sometimes you'd go to the hotel, sometimes drive all night, and, like I say, eighty dollars a week.

I'd send home at least— I'd send home sixty of it, I think, because the rooms were— This is so ridiculous sounding, but, I mean, I used to pay something like three fifty a night or something, three dollars and fifty cents, and split it. I don't know. It sounded like money then, I guess, but now it's funny sounding. I mean, you can't even get a cup of coffee.

CLINE: You said six months. Was that how long the tour was?

BERGHOFER: About six months on the tour, yes. And that's where I went through the whole United States. It was summertime, too, part of it. The air conditioner, it was awful. But that's where I wound up in the southern areas and saw some of the restrooms and the drinking fountain and the thing. We really didn't have any black guys in the band, but I saw what that was about. I went, "Oh, my God." I didn't know that existed, actually, until I saw that.

CLINE: What was the music like? How was that for you?

BERGHOFER: It was actually really good. It was very good. It was a real hip kind of a band. The leader, I sat right by him, Skinnay Ennis. He was nice. Boy, he always had his half a pint on the bus. Everybody had their half a pint with them.

And the music was good. And the piano player was so great, Fred Otis. He's the one that really started teaching me music. He was a very similar piano player, although I would put him in the— Played very similar to Jimmy Rowles, but that was his style. We'd play for hours and hours everywhere we'd go. He really taught me music. I still hadn't had a bass lesson, though. I was still learning that way.

CLINE: Interesting. You said you traveled all around the country, and this was during the summer mainly. What were your impressions of seeing the rest of the country?

BERGHOFER: Well, when I say "all around the country," I never made it back, all the way back to New York. I didn't do that till years later. But it was mostly Midwest, Midwest. We never made it— I don't think we even got to Chicago or anything. It was all mainly Midwestern places.

CLINE: And parts of the South.

BERGHOFER: Yes, and part of the South. Little Rock, Arkansas, and places like that.

CLINE: What were your audiences like?

BERGHOFER: Country club crowd, I would say, as I recall, mostly that. It was a lot of those kinds of places. I think we probably played a lot of country clubs, played some halls, but mostly playing for dancing. That's what it was. It was a dance band.

The other part that's kind of funny about that is when I got on the bus the first day, I didn't really know how to read that well at all, even though I'd studied trumpet and this and that and whatever, but I wasn't a good reader. I was embarrassed to ask to look at the book, so I had to wait until we got to the very first gig. We get to the very first gig and we set up. Finally I put the music out on the stand, and I'm really apprehensive. I open it up, and I look at it, and I see quarter note, quarter note, rest; quarter note, quarter note, rest; and I thought, "Jeez, I can cut this." I didn't know what to expect. I thought, "Well, maybe I'm going to be playing all these eighth notes and stuff" that I didn't know anything about. So between my ear and just— You know, I learned how to read, actually, on that gig, just learning the parts, and do the thing. I can't imagine what I sounded like, but I had this big bass by then that was so, so resonant. This is way before amplifiers or anything. I mean, this would just cut through the whole band. Everybody would always talk about it. "Wow, listen how big a sound that is." So that helped. But anyway, that was one little thing that I still think about. I was embarrassed to ask to look at the music, so I waited till the gig. Nobody knew about that except me. I opened it up and looked at it, and, oh, what a relief. It wasn't hard. Some of it was even chord symbols.

CLINE: So how many guys were in the band?

BERGHOFER: It was like a sixteen-piece.

CLINE: Like a swing band?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes. Although not like Woody Herman or anything, but it was more commercial, but yet still had a nice thing. The eighth notes were important, the

way they played them. They kind of liked to play— I don't know. That's the first time I heard people say, "Play these eighth notes straight." I thought, "What the hell does that mean?" And they would play them straight. It wasn't rock and roll, but they'd play them straight. [sings phrase alternating between a "swung" eighth-note feel and a "straight" eighth-note feel]. So they'd do that.

CLINE: So they were aware of phrasing.

BERGHOFER: Oh, they were really good musicians on this thing. And, like I say, the piano player, afterwards, I mean, he lived in Glendale and I lived in Arcadia, so I wound up almost living there at his place, and we'd play constantly.

CLINE: How long did you have the gig with Skinnay Ennis, then?

BERGHOFER: I had to start around— Let me see. That was about 1956, '57, about two years. We wound up at the Statler Hotel down here in L.A. and worked there for about a year. Stu Williamson was on the band at that time. But I worked there for about a year. That was a six-night-a-week gig, too.

CLINE: So you weren't able to do any other kind of freelancing?

BERGHOFER: As I recall, yes, I did mostly that, I think. I might have done a few things, but mostly that.

Then right at that time—it's so weird, I'm not sure how all this worked out, because I was nineteen, and I'm not sure how this happened either, but—suddenly I get a call from Bobby Troup. This is sort of what took me into the jazz scene. The only reason I remember I was nineteen is because he used to advertise me as the

"nineteen-year-old German bass player." I mean, I guess people thought I was from Germany or something.

CLINE: Yes, well, nice German name.

BERGHOFER: So he called and wanted me to come over to this house, and I don't know if he had called it an audition. I can't remember if it was called that, but that's basically what it was. So I went over there and played. The guitar player turned out to be Herb Ellis. So here I am suddenly playing with Herb Ellis and Bobby Troup, doing this, and that was the big turnaround. That was like probably the biggest thing that happened at that point that would get me anywhere. But that was right after Skinnay.

So I spent the time with Skinnay Ennis and then started— I might have been eighteen when I started with Skinnay, and then I was nineteen when Bobby Troup called me and I was working with him. So maybe I lasted a year on Skinnay Ennis's thing altogether.

CLINE: So at some point, particularly when we're talking about the forties into the fifties now, when did you hear bebop for the first time, and what happened when that took place, if you can remember?

BERGHOFER: It was funny, because bebop itself wasn't until a little later for me, because things like Bobby Troup I wouldn't consider bebop. It was more— At that time we called it modern. I don't know. It's kind of funny, because— But I guess that's truly West Coast jazz in a lot of ways, the way it started. But it was real

modern. It sounded like modern chords and different kind of things. It wasn't as harsh as bebop was.

It wasn't till later on that the bebop thing happened, and I don't know if I was ever really a bebop player. Of course, I mean, that's later on with Shelly Manne's band and everything. But in the beginning with Bobby Troup it was much more smooth, subtle, whatever you want to call it.

But some great players. I played with Howard Roberts during that time, and Herb Ellis and Al Viola.

CLINE: A lot of great guitar players.

BERGHOFER: So I learned a lot of things from those guys.

CLINE: So where you playing with Bobby Troup then?

BERGHOFER: Played for quite some time at a place called Kirkwood's, which now is a deli there on Ventura Boulevard. It was called Kirkwood's Bowling Alley, and Joe Kirkwood owned the place. There was a driving range over there and everything. It was a whole big complex. We played there. I played down at the Encore for a while, down on La Cienega [Boulevard], and a couple other places with him, but the main gig was right there at the Kirkwood's. It was a nice little club. I think it's still there, actually. There still is a bowling alley there, and I think that little room that we played is still there. I haven't been in there in years.

CLINE: Looking back at this time, it sounds like you were working every night. Were you able to go hear music at all? Were you curious about some of the other things going on in some of the clubs around L.A.?

BERGHOFER: No, I didn't really hear that much, because I was working a lot, and I've sort of always been that way. I don't know. It's a funny thing. I call it now "a barber watching haircuts," but, I mean, that's only when you have to pay a cover charge to go hear somebody, which I don't really. A couple times I've had to, I remember I used that line. I said, "Well, wait a minute. You're going to charge me? I'm a musician." I said, "It's like a barber watching haircuts."

Yes, it's funny, somehow through my entire thing I've never—well, how can I put it—tried to copy some other kind of form of music from watching it or listening to it. Maybe it's because I wasn't exposed enough to it or something. I don't know. I've just always kind of done my own thing, fallen into these different bags.

Not that I wasn't influenced, definitely influenced, by two bass players especially, the first one being Leroy Vinnegar. That was the other thing that my folks bought during that period of time back when I was talking about the Jimmy Rowles album; they wound up buying an album that Leroy was on with Shelly Manne, actually, and André Previn. When I heard that bass, I mean, I thought, "My God." It got me right in the center plex—

CLINE: The solar plexus.

BERGHOFER: In the solar plexus. Boy, I mean, it was so— I don't know. The pulse was so great, and this huge sound.

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CLINE: So was that the *My Fair Lady* record?

BERGHOFER: Yes, *My Fair Lady*.

CLINE: André Previn.

BERGHOFER: Yes. At that time, Shelly and Leroy— Leroy was a busy bass player then, and he was all primed to go into the studio, see, but he couldn't read. In fact, he used to brag about that. People would say, "Can you read?" He'd say, "Well, not enough to hurt my playing." Anyway, that turned me on big time.

Then the other bass player, of course, was Paul Chambers. Most people would say, "Oh, well, Ray Brown did it." Well, he did later on, but the first guys that really turned me on were those two, and Leroy was the first. Thank God I got to tell him all about that before he passed away.

CLINE: Wow. That's great.

So how long were you doing this gig with Bobby Troup?

BERGHOFER: I did that quite a while. Gosh, it took me up to almost 1960, I guess. I must have started around '56 or something, '57.

CLINE: Then things really changed.

BERGHOFER: Well, yes, but it covered a lot of territory with him, because I wound up playing with a lot of different musicians. Jack Sheldon, it's when I met him,

because Julie London, we did a little tour with her, and Jack came with us. So I met him during that period of time.

CLINE: So this was also a road thing, not just—

BERGHOFER: A little bit, not much. We did one little trip, tour. I think we went to— In fact, it wasn't even a tour. We went up to Canada, I think, so I can't say that was a—

CLINE: Any other musicians that you worked with that are notable? You mentioned the guitar players.

BERGHOFER: Well, with Bobby it was only a trio.

CLINE: Right, but you met some of these other guys.

BERGHOFER: Well, during that little stint, no, that was about it. I'm trying to think if I might have. Not a lot. It wasn't until 1960, which was another phone call that came along from Shelly Manne, same idea. "Can you come down and audition?" It wasn't "audition"; they didn't use that word. But he said, "I'm opening a club, and I want you to come down and play with the band, and we're going to rehearse" on whatever day it was. Boy, I mean, talk about being nervous and everything.

So I show up, we get on the stand, we play. And at that point Russ Freeman played piano, Richie Kamuca was playing tenor, and Jack Sheldon was actually playing trumpet, and then Shelly and myself. So we played whatever tune— No, like one tune, maybe two tunes we played, and right away Shelly says, "You got the gig." "Wow. Okay." So that was it, and I did that. I mean, that was like the beginning of my whole career, really.

CLINE: Was he calling just standard tunes, and you played those?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, yes, yes.

CLINE: No music?

BERGHOFER: No, we had some music, too. Yes, we had some music, chord changes on different things, but it was standard tunes. Although I shouldn't say that. We played a lot of off-the-wall things, too, but at that point, I mean, on that particular— You know, like I think we did "Love for Sale" or something like that. But at that point it was mainly just things I already knew.

CLINE: Other than the *My Fair Lady* record, did you have any greater awareness of Shelly's music, his playing, his stature on the scene?

BERGHOFER: Not at that point, except I knew who he was, of course, and, I mean, a big thing. I mean, God, you know. But once I started working— The Manne-Hole opened in 1960. I remember we rehearsed a few days before the opening and all that, and then we did the opening. But just working with him— I think it might have been a three-day-a-week gig or something, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday. I can't remember. Maybe even just a weekend. But that's where I started working with a lot of guys that came through there. I wound up working maybe five nights a week there with different players.

But that's also the point where I realized, gosh, what he's doing, that's what I want to do. He was coming from working with Hank [Henry] Mancini and different people, and he owned the club. I'm thinking, "This is amazing." I'm making sixteen dollars and fifty cents a night, sweating to death, and it was fun, but it was hard work.

I thought, "God, what's he doing? He's doing the studio thing." That's what opened me up to that, just being in contact with him.

CLINE: What were you doing on the nights when you weren't playing at the Manne-Hole?

BERGHOFER: I'd work other gigs. Guys would call me up. I was busy. I was doing other things. Marty Harris is another friend of mine, a piano player, who used to hire me all the time, because at that point I'd met not my present wife but my ex-wife [Barbara Berghofer]. We actually got married in '61, but I'd met her, and she had a five-year-old boy [Mike Ace] at the time. Then we had another daughter [Michelle Berghofer]. So, I mean, I was getting to the point at that time that I had a family, and I had to come up with some money.

CLINE: Yes, really. How old were you then?

BERGHOFER: By the time I got married and had the family, I think I was about twenty-two.

CLINE: Wow.

BERGHOFER: But I'm leaving out one little portion. I've always never been able to figure out where it fits in exactly, and it's in between all this where Pete Jolly comes into the picture.

CLINE: Yes, I was wondering, actually.

BERGHOFER: This is where I started learning how to play the bass, because I started— And I'm not sure how I got his name in beginning, but I started studying with Ralph Peña, who was Pete's bass player. I used to go over to his house and his

garage, and I'd take a lesson. It was probably forty-five minutes. He showed me a lot of things—first of all, how to hold the bass. But I'd take a lesson, and then I'd hang around. Not every time, but at least once a month, all of a sudden he'd have a rehearsal, and Jimmy [Jim] Hall would show up, and Jimmy Giuffre, and they had this little trio thing, and they'd play, and I used to sit there and listen to them. That too turned into a thing where they'd let me play once in a while. But Ralph really is the one that showed me how to get the sound out of the bass, how to play bass lines. So that's the real first instruction that I ever had.

He was playing with Pete at Sherry's every night. By chance, Pete had a— I don't know if it was his night off, maybe, or he worked in Pasadena for some reason, out near where I lived. I knew about that, so I came out and said, "Do you mind if I come out and just play with you that night?" "Oh, yeah, fine," because he was playing by himself. I went out and played with him, and we hit it off immediately. It was just wonderful.

So I'd go in and sit in all the time Sherry's. Ralph would let me play a couple of tunes at the end of the set or something, and that worked out pretty good. Then once in a while Ralph would get something, and Shelly would take off, and I'd sub.

Then suddenly he got this call. I didn't even know who it was at the time. It's funny, because I wasn't into it, but he got a call from Frank Sinatra. I could care less about Frank Sinatra then, you know. But anyway, I knew he left, and so I wound up doing the job. And I played with Pete six nights a week just as a duo, no drums, so that's where I learned how to play time and everything, because there was no

drummer to rely on and so forth. Pete's time, still to this day, is actually incredible. I mean, he just swings automatically. So I learned to do that there.

I still can't place it. I can't put it in a chronological order where that came, between that and Shelly's Manne-Hole, because after Shelly's Manne-Hole, things started to really happen. So that was in between all this stuff, so it all actually happened in a short period of time between 1955 and 1960. That's five years, and it seems like a lifetime. It really does.

CLINE: What was it that it really motivated you to take those lessons? What made you think that, "Well, now I'd really better do this"?

BERGHOFER: Seeing Monty and other— I don't know why I didn't go to him. Maybe I asked him; I can't remember now. He might have been too busy, or maybe I was too frightened after seeing him play. But I realized I needed some help, because I didn't know really what I was doing.

CLINE: Had you heard Ralph Peña play and you approached him?

BERGHOFER: I don't know how I got Ralph's name except that I can only think that I got it through the drummer that was with Yvonne Rivera; the one that I was talking about before, might have given me his name. I cannot remember where I got his name or why I went with him, because I don't think at that time I really knew who he was or anything. I mean, I knew he was teaching. That's about it. It wasn't till later that I found out how great he was.

Then I listen to things that he's on now, and I can't believe how much it influenced me, because I sometimes think, "Is that me?" No, it's him. "Oh." I didn't

even realize how much he influenced me until I hear things now. It's mainly in sound and the way he plays the— Not necessarily notes. We play a little different.

He told me one time about the bass line. He said, "Just make sure you play chromatically. Don't jump around too much." Okay. And that made a lot of sense, just little things like that. But he mainly showed me how to get the sound out of the bass.

CLINE: So you've mentioned Leroy Vinnegar, Monty Budwig, Ralph Peña. What about Albert Stinson? Do you remember him?

BERGHOFER: Yes, but, I mean, I knew him during that period of time, and I never got connected there. I thought of myself as competition— Not competition, but on that level for some reason at that time. I'd hear all these names. "Who's that? Well, that's okay." I don't know, I just never— Now I hear all this stuff and I think, "Jeez, what a—" You know. That's just— Youth is wasted on the young.

CLINE: Right. You mentioned another big influence then became Paul Chambers. When did you first become aware of Paul Chambers?

BERGHOFER: Well, that was about through the Miles Davis era. That was still in the early, early sixties. Then I'd listen in on— I mean, not much has gotten better since. I've always loved the bands that he had during the period of time of Philly Joe Jones and Red Garland especially, but Wynton Kelly also and Paul Chambers, of course John Coltrane. Those were my favorite bands that he had. And I used to just wear out those records playing them all the time. To me, that was what it was about.

So I tried to copy that feeling that Paul had, just that pulse. It was actually kind of similar to Leroy when you think about it. It was just that pulse that was always happening.

CLINE: So having had a lot of experience playing now, especially with piano players, not playing with drummers as much, what was it like coming into the situation with Shelly where not only are you playing with a drummer all the time, the drummer is the leader of the band?

BERGHOFER: Yes. Actually, in some ways it was harder, because Shelly and I in the beginning, I think, probably had a few times when we'd kind of fight each other, because I'd say, "Well, I think it should be here," and he'd do something else. But I, of course, realized right away that, "Hey, wait a minute. It's not because he's a leader, nothing to do with that." But I kind of learned to give a little bit at that point. And I have to admit I was a little bit rigid, I think, because I hadn't been playing with drummers, and if they did something I didn't think was in the right place, I was strong enough to force them to do something else.

Well, I did that for a while, and then one night in the club, Philly Joe Jones came in, and Shelly let him sit in, and he played. When we got off the stand, Philly Joe came up to me and said, "Hey, I can make a bass player out of you." And he told me then, he said, "All you've got to do is lighten up a little bit. You're trying too hard. Just kind of let it happen." Man, that was like studying for ten years with someone, that one sentence. I finally realized what I was doing, and I stopped doing it. I've never done it again. I learned that immediately, like right then—bang!

CLINE: Wow. Then what was it like going back to playing with Shelly?

BERGHOFER: That made a whole difference. I wasn't fighting him. I had this idea before that I was, you know— And it had to come from not playing with drums. I had this idea that, no, this is where it is and that's it, and, man, as soon as I let it go and just relaxed— And just a little bit. It's not a big thing. It wasn't like a big change in playing. It was just you don't have to be the judge. That opened up a whole lot of things then, because when you're playing with a band, you have to play with what's going on around you. You can't just play your own thing all the time. It's a unit, especially with drummers and piano players and everybody. Everybody's different, and it always feels different.

But anyway, after not only the chance to play with Philly Joe, who was wonderful, but to have him give me advice like that, lucky, really lucky. Actually, my whole career I've been lucky that way, falling into this, and this happens. It's partly because it's maybe like anything else: if you don't try too hard to do something or be something, it falls into place. The minute you force it and try to be there and try to "Oh, wow, if I had this job," "Well, how do I get that job?" then nothing happens. Kind of weird when you let it all go and it falls into place.

CLINE: I've been only learning that fairly recently myself, I think, in certain areas.

I am guessing that playing with Shelly's band and playing at the Manne-Hole, that also afforded you the opportunity to play with a lot of other musicians and have them exposed to your musicianship, aside from the guys that you mentioned who started out in Shelly's band. Who were some of the musicians that you started to work

with regularly, or even some memorable musicians, like Philly Joe who sat in, or opportunities you got to play with people from out of town?

BERGHOFER: Oh, well, the first to come to mind—I don't know why, because I played with him quite a bit, actually—was Roland Kirk, who was a wild guy.

CLINE: This was then before he was Rahsaan Roland Kirk.

BERGHOFER: Yes. Well, he played those two or three saxophones and the whistle and the thing, and it was bizarre, actually. But, I mean, I don't know what I thought of him right off the bat.

Then, of course, I meant to mention that Conte Candoli joined the band shortly after Jack, I mean like the second week, so I was already playing with "the Count." So that led to Frank Rosolino. I played with them a lot.

It also led to one of the funniest— Not funny. I don't know how to put it. Strange things that happened to me, which was Duke Ellington came in one night, and about two days later I got a call from his manager, "Hey, Duke loved the way you played and wants you to come with the band." I turned it down because at the time I thought that was corny music. I thought, "I don't want to play with some big band." I don't know. Strange, anyway. I didn't do it. The manager is still around to this day, and I see him at some jazz festivals and things. We always talk about it. He says, "Duke wanted you," and he points at me. Now, of course, I look at it as one of the greatest compliments I can think of. I mean, every bass player he's ever had was the greatest. I mean, I've never heard him with a bad bass player, Duke Ellington's band. I've listened to all those records all the way back. Of course, Jimmy Blanton. But he

never had a bad bass player. It was always the strongest thing. So I really take that as a compliment.

CLINE: Of course, the big bands were really struggling at that point, I suppose.

BERGHOFER: I think so, and I wasn't into big bands at that point. I later got into big bands big time, and I would, in fact, sometimes have a reputation of being a big band bass player, but I don't know. But that was something that I— Anyway, it was during that period of time, I mean, all kinds of people would float through there. Bill Evans. Gosh, I didn't get to play with him, but I heard him there.

CLINE: You heard him there with Chuck Israels and Larry Bunker?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, all those cats. Then another one that actually asked me to go with him, and I don't know what happened there, was [Thelonious] Monk.

CLINE: Oh, really?

BERGHOFER: Yes. I can't remember why I didn't go or what maybe was the reason, but at least I was asked at one point. These were all things at the time you don't think about, that are just like things that are happening right then. I always thought at that time, I thought, "Well, Monk is kind of far out. I don't know if I'd like that. I'm more of the swing thing." Monk was like out. But now I look at it and now I say, "God, all these things I could have done."

And still at that point, the funny part is, that's all in the early sixties. It was Duke Ellington, I turned that down. Monk, that didn't happen. The other thing that happened, I got asked to go with Frank Sinatra, and I turned that down, too. The only reason I did that was because that was right at the point I started getting a little bit of

action in the studio scene, which we'll get into later. But that's my big— Most people have a list of people they worked for. My list is people I've turned down, which is pretty big.

One of the others during that period of time—I'm not exaggerating—is Elvis Presley. This is about '64. Once I got into the studio scene I started doing Elvis, and I did a couple of things with him, and his guitar player [James Burton] asked me to go on the road, which I turned down, too. But anyway, I turned down Frank Sinatra, Elvis Presley, Monk, and Duke Ellington.

CLINE: And that's an eclectic bunch.

BERGHOFER: Yes, that it is.

CLINE: Was your family situation, the stability required for that, also a consideration? Could you maybe just have had reluctance to hit the road?

BERGHOFER: No, I wouldn't have minded, I don't think, the road. It probably would have been nice. But it was musical. It was all basically musical. Of course, I mean, to me, like at that time, for some reason, Duke Ellington sounded old-fashioned to me.

CLINE: Yes, well, music was changing very quickly at that point, a lot of developments in so-called modern jazz with the people like Miles and John Coltrane.

BERGHOFER: Well, that's what I was hooked into then. I was trying to get that out of Shelly's group, which, actually, in a lot of ways there were similarities. Some of the records we made were similar to that. I mean, Conte playing like Miles. At least in my mind, that's the groove I was trying to create, and it came from that. If it wasn't

into that groove, which Monk wasn't, then I didn't really want to do it at that point. It was kind of strange, and I don't think money was a consideration. I don't think that was even discussed.

CLINE: Did a lot of these guys hear you because they heard you playing on the bill with Shelly's band on the weekends then?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, yes, yes. I still to this day have people come up, "Oh, I used to go hear you at Shelly's Manne-Hole," like Chuck Domanico. He said, "I came to town, and the first place I went was Shelly's Manne-Hole. I heard Berghofer." This is funny. He told me this, actually, in another interview. It was just before he passed away. We had an interview with a couple other bass players, and we did this thing. Anyway, his story was, "Yeah, I went and heard Chuck Berghofer at the thing. When I heard that," he says, "I was ready to give up the bass," he said. "So I went home and I woodshedded." So that when he tells the story— I was going to tell the story later. Yes, he came and heard me, and he was ready to give up the bass, so he went home and woodshedded, and I've been subbing for him ever since. [mutual laughter] Which was basically what I did, because he was like the king of that whole scene, and a wonderful jazz player in his own right who never followed that up either. He had the greatest ears.

But anyway, I don't need to get off on that tangent.

CLINE: But then, I guess, in exchange, you would have to have heard a whole lot of the out-of-town musicians who were coming through Shelly's alternating sets with you. Are there any of the people that you heard who really stand out particularly

during this early sixties period? I mean, you mentioned Bill Evans, you mentioned some of these people.

BERGHOFER: Well, actually, you know, the funny thing is, when you say alternating sets, during the time that I was there, they didn't do that. So we just played all night long and got off the stand and went and got a beer for a quarter and sat in the little back room and waited for the next set, talked about stuff. So it became a sort of a gig. I mean, it was work. The only time I'd hear other bands was if I went in there on another night, and a lot of times I wouldn't go in on another night because I was already there three nights a week. And I was married then, and "Where are you going now?"

CLINE: Sure. So you weren't hanging out there on your off nights.

BERGHOFER: No, I wasn't hanging out there on my off nights.

CLINE: I know they also had bands in there sometimes for extended periods.

BERGHOFER: Yes. A lot of that happened later. See, it was right in the beginning when this club was still half the size it became later. That kind of happened a little bit later.

Once I got started in the studio scene— I don't know, I can't remember how I finally left that band. I can't remember that either. I can't remember. I know that Shelly started kind of a different band all the way around, I mean, some other guys, and it was another era, another thing. But I don't remember exactly, like, "Okay, next Tuesday I'm having a new band." It wasn't that way. It just kind of fell into place. So I don't remember how I actually left there and why.

CLINE: Can you describe Shelly's for us a bit, sort of paint a picture for us?

BERGHOFER: Wow. Well, Shelly, I guess, the first thing I'd have to say about him is that he's probably the nicest person I ever met in my life. As great as he played and as great as he is known to be, and as popular and big of a name as he is, he never failed to get off the stand and walk up and say, "Did I sound okay on that one?" I said, "Shelly, are you kidding? God!" So he was a humble guy. I mean, he was always— I mean, not that he wasn't strong; he was. But I mean, at the same time, a lot of humility. "Did I sound okay?"

But he taught so many things. He was wonderful. He told me— And I still do this to this day. I try to, and that's kind of— It shouldn't be taken in the wrong way, but it was like, "Don't worry about the audience. Don't play so much for them. Play for yourself." In show business, that would be the wrong thing to say, because people actually play— "Oh, you've got to play for the audience, make them love you." Well, in this realm it's different, because if you try to do that— And it's hard to do, because if you look out there, and there's Ray Brown sitting there, "Shall I try to be fancy or something?" Or whatever. I don't know. You have to play within yourself and do your thing. Basically that was his message, play within yourself. I don't know if he did that all the time either, but that was sort of his message to me.

He was, I mean, just a wonderful drummer. He's the most musical drummer, I guess, I've ever played with. There are a couple of them around nowadays. One of them is Peter Erskine right now, who is musical like that. The music— I mean, it's not just playing time and playing this and that, it's whatever is happening around you.

They seem to be able to adapt to that and make music. Making music out of the drums is not easy, because it's a pretty harsh instrument. I mean, you hit the cymbal and it crashes. The drum is loud. So to actually make a sound and make this come alive, well, Shelly did that.

I mean, the whole thing of the fifty-cent piece, letting it roll around on the snare drum, putting all the different things he did like that. He played with his fingers.

CLINE: Used mallets a lot.

BERGHOFER: He always had this great energy. The energy was absolutely incredible, never laid there. You could feel this pulse that was happening. It's just this energy. It's easy to go "boom-chuk boom-chuk boom-chuk." He had this other underlying thing you could feel while playing with him. Now, I don't know if you could tell it out in front or not, because a lot of times when you play with somebody, it's totally different than listening to them. But you could feel this thing. You could feel it coming. It was like, "Wow, I can feel this."

What can I say? He was just a wonderful guy, and I miss him very much.

CLINE: Did a lot of the musicians spend time together off the bandstand? Or was it pretty much like a working kind of thing?

BERGHOFER: Well, pretty much a working thing, except that I spent quite a bit of time. Richie Kamuca and I spent some time. In fact, he had this beautiful house in North Hollywood, and when he moved back to New York he let me have it. I mean, people were waiting in line to get this place, to rent it. It was really nice. So he helped me out there, and I wound up living in that house for quite some time. It was

right next door to Joe Maini on one side and Mike Melvoin on the other. It was a pretty interesting place.

So I hung out with Richie a little bit. Conte Candoli, for years I always have. But, God, they're all gone. I'm just thinking now, at this moment, come to think of it, I guess I'm the only one still alive out of that whole band, because Russ Freeman has passed away now.

CLINE: Yes, just last year.

BERGHOFER: Boy, that's pretty scary. I'm the only one. Wow. It's weird. I hadn't thought about that. I guess I have thought about it, but it just kind of hit me now.

CLINE: Well, if you were to consider the original band with Jack Sheldon, he's still around.

BERGHOFER: Yes, he's still there, yes. Thank God. He lives right around the corner, in fact, down the street. You don't think about—how can you put it? Not just age, but—time moving on, and sometimes even though it's many years that go by, it still seems like it's— On one hand it seems like it's just weeks ago. On the other hand, it seems like five lifetimes ago. So I don't know. It's a strange thing.

CLINE: What was the Manne-Hole like? Can you give us sort of a picture of what the club itself was like?

BERGHOFER: Yes. Well, it was unlike any other club I'd ever been in. Of course, I didn't spend much time in San Francisco, but it always felt to me like it was that kind of a place, because it had all the wooden, old wooden stuff around, old antique things.

In the beginning, the first club was kind of funny, because there were posts holding up the ceiling or whatever, and many seats were right behind these posts. So if it was crowded, a lot of people wound up sitting behind a post. You had to look around the side of it.

And then Rudy, a guy by the name of Rudy Onderwyzer, ran it, and here's another San Francisco-type guy, I mean with a beard, little glasses, back in those days. And he was great. He was lovely. To me it felt— It wasn't a hippie place, but it was sort of into that era in a way, I felt, like you should see the beads, the guys wearing beads and this and that. It had that kind of environment. It wasn't a nightclub-looking place. It was definitely a jazz club. I don't know whether it could have been anything else. The atmosphere was that way.

CLINE: So other than the beads and whatnot, what kind of an audience came? How could you describe the audience?

BERGHOFER: You know, it's funny, definitely a— Well, of course, I was so young that it didn't make any difference, but it was a young crowd. It wasn't like the jazz crowd is today, which is, gosh, when I look out there, it's all blue hair now. [mutual laughter] But, yes, it was a young crowd then. And people really listened, too. It wasn't noisy, as I recall. It wasn't like we were playing and it was so noisy you couldn't hear anything. People, out of respect, listened to you. They were there to hear jazz, and that was it. I don't know if that happens that much anymore in most clubs.

CLINE: The bass player, I guess, would have to be especially conscious of audience noise, especially during solos.

BERGHOFER: Yes. This is all before amplifiers. I mean, all that stuff was— You put a mike on the bass, and that's it.

CLINE: Other than, I guess, the obvious sort of touch factor, how do you think the advent of amplification has changed the approach to the instrument?

BERGHOFER: Wow. Well, pretty big-time, actually. I thought, in the beginning— I used an amp for another reason in the beginning, and that was because during that period of time that— I mentioned Fred Otis from Skinnay Ennis's band. He played in a bunch of Latin bands, so he got me on some of these gigs. I started working in this Latin circuit. Then I had to get an amplifier, because they used that kind of a sound. So I wound up with this mike that goes inside the bass, and I put it in an amp. It sounded like a jukebox. I mean, it was awful, really. I never used it for any jazz things, but for that I used it. So I used it for that. But I never thought about using it in any other thing, because it sounded like a different thing.

But when amps started coming in and guys were using them all the time, when they finally developed a couple of pickups that sounded okay, it changed. I thought, "Wow, this is going to solve everything." You don't have to worry about acoustics anymore and this and that. Well, it opened up another can of worms that was even worse, because as soon as you get the bass up to a certain level, then it makes the acoustics even more of a factor.

What happened, I think, was once the amps started, everybody started getting louder, because to keep up with it— Because, naturally, the beginning part of it was you wanted to sound— Always on a record, you could control the sound of the bass, so the bass was always up, just with a microphone. So you'd hear the bass really well on a record, but you'd go to a club, and if the sound system wasn't right and all that kind of stuff, you maybe sometimes wouldn't hear it. You'd feel it, maybe.

So this started happening, getting the bass up to where it was like on a record, and pretty soon if that gets to a certain level, then the drummer has to play a little louder, and then the horn player, and then you turn the mike on that. Pretty soon— I've been in situations where everything is so loud, especially sitting out in front, that you have to almost put earplugs in. So I think in some ways it's helped a bit. In other ways I think it's really too bad.

There are some guys—and I'm close to it myself—like John Clayton today that still doesn't play with an amp. His thing was, "I just can't get the right sound out of any pickup that I've ever tried," and so he went back to— And to me it sounds great. It makes everybody else play softer, to come down to that level. You have to have a bass that sounds up. The funny part about the whole thing with an amplifier is that the bass that doesn't have a lot of sound sounds better through an amp. If you have a big-sounding bass, it's hard to amplify it. It doesn't amplify properly. It gets booming. It gets weird. So I have all those. I have one that you don't need one. I've got one that I use all the time with an amp that sounds great with the amp. If you take the amp off, I don't know if you can hear it.

So that opened a whole other can of worms. I don't know. I have to say that in a lot of ways I don't like it, and also including carrying it around.

CLINE: Did you yourself have to lighten your touch a bit? I mean, certainly in the older days you had to lay into the instrument pretty hard to be heard.

BERGHOFER: Exactly.

CLINE: How do you think that affected the development, the evolution, of the instrument in terms of especially younger players?

BERGHOFER: Well, in a lot of ways it did. There are some younger players I don't think ever played without an amp, and when I play some of their basses I can't play them because the strings are so low. It makes them easier to play a lot of fast stuff. But you can't get any sound out of the bass at all, at least I can't. I mean, it's weird. Nothing comes out, but you turn the amp up, and it comes out of there. They missed that whole era of what the bass really sounds like by itself. So yes, there's quite a few of them around that missed that part.

So I don't know. That's why, even with an amp, I've never had— Like I used—I hope Tommy Guimina's listening—a Polytone, and I've never put it above two. I mean, once it gets above two you might as well use a stick bass or something. So I really kept it at a low level.

CLINE: Just a little reinforcement, that's all.

BERGHOFER: That's all, yes.

CLINE: You mentioned that Ray Brown became an influence.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: So obviously you encountered him and his playing along during this time at some point. Can you describe how that came about?

BERGHOFER: Yes. That actually goes all the way back to Bobby Troup when Herb Ellis was on the gig. Right at that period of time when Bobby called me, I was also listening to Oscar Peterson, of course, and Herb was playing with Oscar and Ray. They made an album called *Oscar Peterson at Stratford*, just a trio, no drums or anything. It's probably one of the best albums I've ever heard in my life. It's so exciting, and it grows and grows and grows. I mean, they get faster on things and this and that, but it's part of the whole package. But Ray Brown sounds so great on this album, so I just about wore that one out, too. He plays "How High the Moon," some different things. Anyway, I mean, there's nothing— Ray Brown was like the— I've often said, almost every bass player you hear on the radio came from that, including the people that I had heard first or got connected with, with Leroy and so forth. Ray was really the underpinning of all that. But because Jimmy Blanton was there, he's the one that basically brought the bass into another realm of— And then Ray Brown, I think, took it from there. But all these other guys kind of come along.

So I mean, as far as giving Ray Brown credit for putting the bass where we know it today, I would say he gets 90 percent of it. But these other guys, to me, I was looking for more of a groove in the whole entire rhythm section rather than a soloist or somebody that's really— Because Ray, I mean, still to this day— I told him this before he passed away, I was giving a little talk about him or something, and he was there. I'll be listening to the radio and I hear this thing, whatever it is, and I say,

"Boy, that bass! Who the heck is that?" "That's, on the bass, Ray Brown." You'd say, "Oh, well, that's different. That's Ray Brown." You accept that. I mean, it's like it doesn't count because it's Ray Brown. If it was anybody else you'd be flipping out. "Who the hell is that?" But with Ray Brown it's just a given, that's all. I don't think I've ever heard him sound bad on anything. I mean, he's just there. So that's another echelon above everything.

But these other guys, Leroy included, I mean, to me it was the groove I was listening to.

CLINE: What about soloists, now? You mentioned, for example, at an early age you heard Red Mitchell.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: Were there any other bassists?

BERGHOFER: Scott LaFaro, because Scotty used to come in and sit in at Sherry's when I worked there with Pete.

CLINE: That's where I was headed.

BERGHOFER: He was the same age as I was. This little red-headed— Well, a little red-headed guy came in, a very slight guy, and he played. I thought, "Jeez, what is he doing?" I mean, he was all over the— He was playing way up in the thumb position. Kind of far out, you know. He wasn't doing the job of the bass player at that point, you wouldn't think. I mean, I don't know what I thought. It was just so different.

CLINE: Yes, redefining the job description.

BERGHOFER: Redefining it, yes, exactly. Of course, later, I'm here with Bill Evans after that and this and that, and I thought, "Gee." This is before he was even with Bill Evans. But he— Yes, pretty amazing. He is the one that took the bass, I think, to the other side of the spectrum. In other words, Ray Brown took it— I don't know how you want to put it, left or right, but I would say Ray Brown maybe took it one direction as far as just traditional bass sound, and Scotty took it the other way. That's where all the many, many disciples came along and took it to another totally different place, which is great. I mean, it's a place that I don't— I wish I could do it. That's not my thing, but I respect it very much. I love it. I think it's a great thing. I mean, the only thing that sometimes—which he didn't do, actually, that much, but—some of those kind of bass players, a little too much sliding and intonation problems. But other than that—

CLINE: Right. Scott LaFaro played really remarkably in tune.

BERGHOFER: Oh, and no amp. He never used an amp, so I mean, he had a huge sound just on his own. His strings weren't low; they were high.

It's like Gary Peacock, who was a disciple of his, obviously, and who does the same thing. Gary Peacock's got his strings way up there, too. I call the other guys a vest player, because they play up here [positions his right hand up near his chest], when they play up here by their vest.

CLINE: Did you know Gary when he was in L.A.?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I sure did, yes.

CLINE: What was he like back then?

BERGHOFER: Oh, well, kind of a hippie kind of a guy, and he was always into something else, different religions and different things. But yet a nice guy, happy guy, always smiling.

CLINE: What about his playing at that time?

BERGHOFER: Well, see, now, that's funny. Back then I didn't like that style, because it was too avant-garde or something. I don't know what you'd call it.

CLINE: Did you find it maybe a little busy?

BERGHOFER: Yes, too busy, and it was different than what my mindset was. But now, I mean, I just totally, you know, accept all that stuff now, and I admire it, because it's definitely something that I've never even tried to do. That's another realm. It's just another thing. It's like now I'm becoming interested in classical bass playing.

CLINE: Yes, I was going to ask you if you studied bow.

BERGHOFER: Well, not really, never did, except from learning it on the gig. I learned everything on the gig, and I wound up being in the studio scene and filling in with the bass sections. Joe Mondragon, "How do you hold the bow?" He showed me how to hold it, this and that, and other guys showed me how to do this and that. So I really learned from a lot of— You know. But you don't learn to be a classical bass player without spending hours practicing, because that's what it's about. It's like any other string player. It's just like a violin player or anybody else. They spend hours of scales and practicing and this and that. You don't just do that by going to the gig, believe me.

So even at this point late in life, I'm getting interested in that now, and only just for my own enjoyment, really. It's a totally different scene. If anybody came along now and said, "I want to learn to play the bass, jazz bass," I would send them to a legitimate teacher first, because, boy, if I could have learned that first and then gone on, then you could play, like— Well, I'm assuming Scotty LaFaro maybe had some of that training because of his facility, especially up in the thumb position and so forth. Same with some of the other guys who played with Bill Evans, the guys coming up.

CLINE: Like much later?

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: Eddie Gomez.

BERGHOFER: Eddie Gomez, for instance, playing all those things they do up in the thumb position, had to study a lot, I think.

CLINE: A lot of the bass players here in town, since you've mentioned a few of them, did you guys know each other pretty well? Was there kind of a camaraderie? Or were you just kind of orbiting around one another?

BERGHOFER: I would say orbiting around one another.

CLINE: It wasn't like the bass players club or anything?

BERGHOFER: No, in fact, when the bass players do have a club, or did [the Bass Club], a bass player or whatever it is, for starters, I thought stupid. Who wants to get together with a bunch of basses and go play? Now it's great. I guess it's great. But since there's only one normally, except in symphony orchestras, only one bass on the gig, you never get to play with other bass players.

Of course, that's another thing. When you're in a bass section it becomes a whole other thing. Now there's a principal bassist, and then you follow what he does. He marks the bowings, and it's very restricting. You have to find a balance to play with everyone else. You can't be louder than someone else and this and that. There's so much stuff, and it becomes like any symphony orchestra, and in any section it is the same way. The guy sitting back there, "Why am I not up there?" So it becomes another mental trip. Where you don't have that in jazz, because you're playing your instrument, and you're playing principal right there. Nobody's telling him what not to do, this and that. So definitely there are two different schools. They're far apart, too.

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CLINE: You talked about playing with Shelly Manne. You talked about your rather pivotal experience having the opportunity to play with Philly Joe Jones during this period. Now, we're talking, still, about the earlier part of the sixties. Were there any other drummers of note that you had the opportunity to play with that might have been interesting or memorable for you?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I should say so. The first one comes to mind is Nick Ceroli, who passed away at quite a young age, but I got to play with him. He was another— And funny, because he wound up subbing for Shelly a lot on different road trips or whatever. I know he went to Hawaii for Shelly once and did a couple other things. I'm not sure. But he was another incredible drummer.

Another fellow that I know that we were talking about on the break for a minute, that you're interviewing, is Larry Bunker. He made his main living playing the studio scene on mallets, a wonderful mallet player. But a lot of people remember him as a drummer. He played with Bill Evans, played with a lot of people. But he's a big-name drummer, and I'm surprised that— I'm sometimes curious why he doesn't play more drums. I would think he'd be a big name in Europe to play. He's like out of the West Coast jazz scene. He's one of the few guys that are still around, really, out of that. Like Stan Levey doesn't play anymore. But Larry, who's been there the

whole time, I mean, he could tell stories like— Well, I'm sure he has. Anyway, Larry's one of them.

Then there are other guys. With Pete Jolly I play with Nick Martinis, now, for forty-three years or something. And we call him "Philly Joe Nick." He comes right out of that era, that bag. He's a wonderful, incredible soloist, a bebop soloist. So I mean, there are a lot of drummers around that are great. I mentioned Peter Erskine today, of course, but he's sort of a culmination of all the guys that I think of back there, because he's studied with a lot of them. When you mention Shelly Manne to him, I mean, he melts. I mean, that's one of his idols.

Then there's Jeff Hamilton, a wonderful— God, one of the great drummers of the day today. He's younger than I. I remember playing at one of the very first gigs he ever played. It was a record, actually, and with Jordan Van Dam, the accordion player. Have I got the wrong name? [Art] Van Dam, anyway, accordion player; I can't think of his first name, pretty famous guy. Well, anyway, there was Pete Jolly— Played accordion. Art Van Dam. The two of them, they made an album, and it turned out that they had Jeff Hamilton, this kid, there. That's one of the first times I ever played with him, and, man, I thought, "Who is this kid?" Well, obviously he's come a long way since there. I mean, he's probably one of the premiere drummers of today. He's always so busy, nobody can get a hold of him. But he's another one.

I'm sure I could go through— Actually, I shouldn't say that. I'm not sure I could go through a lot of drummers, because there are not that many great ones. There

haven't been that many great ones. But the ones I mentioned so far definitely fall into that category.

CLINE: There had to have been one or two that you found that you had a particularly effortless sort of fit with. This seems to be a rhythm section phenomenon. Are there some that you can name that you just had a special rapport with?

BERGHOFER: Yes, in fact, you're good at asking questions, because that reminds me of what it is. Frank Butler was one drummer I played with at Shelly's Manne-Hole also, that was probably the— I never played with anybody that was so like a glove. It made it so easy. Yes, it was just another, totally another plateau, I guess, or another version of a drummer that it just felt so comfortable. I don't know. It made you feel like— It just made it easy. I would imagine he could play with you or he could take somebody off the street and hand them the bass and show them C, A, D, G, and they'd sound good with him, as I recall. I mean, he would just— No, that was quite an experience. I never got to play with him much at all, but I remember playing with him there. Actually, going back when you're talking about people I played with there, that's one of them there that I'll never forget, Frank Butler.

CLINE: Of course, he wound up having a lot of personal problems that led to his sort of decline.

You mentioned Philly Joe. Obviously, you had a nice piece of instruction from him. What was the feeling like playing with somebody like Philly Joe, with that kind of drive, when you were at that stage? Can you describe that?

BERGHOFER: Well, yes. The funny thing is, the drive part was— I didn't feel as much drive from him as I did from Shelly. I felt looseness, I mean to where it opened up the— The beat became very wide, a lot of space to put it in. It wasn't restricted, wasn't restricted.

CLINE: Interesting.

BERGHOFER: Yes. Much, much looser. I mean, when you listen to him, he is loose. I mean, you play any of his solos, at the end of each solo he'd play [demonstrates], coming into the downbeat, and, God, it's just like drums falling down the stairs sometimes, only right in time.

CLINE: Right.

Moving into the sixties and sort of the changing vocabulary and approach to the drums, were you becoming aware of drummers like Elvin Jones or some of these people who had a different approach?

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: And did you feel that any of the drummers that you were playing with were absorbing any of that? Or were they pretty much sticking to their own style that they'd already established at that point?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I think, well, most of them that I played with were sticking to their own thing. I mean, I never got to play with Elvin Jones, and I can't imagine what that would be like. I don't know. That's something that— That would be pretty amazing. Some of those, I don't know what you'd call them. New York drummers? I

don't know. I missed out on that, so I can't really comment much about that. I guess I am West Coast jazz.

CLINE: You mentioned Stan Levey. Did you ever play with Stan?

BERGHOFER: Oh, yes, yes, I did. Through all this period of time, somehow I left out Peggy Lee. I went with her for— This was in the sixties, too. I played with Peggy Lee for a little period of time and did a little road stuff and actually roomed with Stan Levey. Yes, Stan Levey was— What a great guy, really nice-feeling drummer, made it very strong. Strong drummer. Another beautiful, beautiful person, really a great guy. So, yes, I don't know how I left him out. Yes, I shouldn't have. Unfortunately he doesn't play anymore. I don't know why. Every time I see him I try to say, "Why don't you bring it up?" Because he's another guy like Larry Bunker, been in the jazz scene so long, West Coast scene, even though he's from New York originally.

CLINE: You don't remember exactly when your gig at Shelly's sort of came to a close, you were saying.

BERGHOFER: Boy, I wish I— Isn't that strange? I can't remember how it came to a close. All I know is that 1964 is when I recorded Nancy Sinatra's "[These] Boots Are Made for Walkin'."

Not to jump ahead too quick, but just before that I did a record date with somebody at RCA, and the engineer liked the sound of my bass so much he gave my name to Jim Bowen, who was the producer for her. I'd done about two record dates in my life up till then, and it happened to be one with Herb Ellis, and then whatever this other thing was—it was Irv Cottler who was on it, the big band [drummer]. Once I

did that—that was like about 1964—they put me in, shot me right into the record scene. So right around that time is probably when I left there, because I didn't— I don't know, but I'm not sure how exactly it went down. I can't remember that. But all I know is that I— I mean, I remember, if I look at my old statements, yearly statements, it goes from like, I don't know, four thousand [dollars] a year, and all of a sudden it jumps up to twenty-two [thousand dollars] or something like that. So, ridiculous.

CLINE: Leading up to particularly the period we're talking about, how would you describe L.A. as sort of a jazz city, as a center? Did you have a sense of how much was going on, how healthy a scene it was, anything? What was your awareness of that at that point?

BERGHOFER: Well, at that point I'm not sure. I mean, Shelly's Manne-Hole was happening. There were some other clubs around that I don't think I frequented that much. I don't know. But then, of course, whenever, maybe it's later on, but Donte's started. But we don't want to get into that yet.

CLINE: Right, we'll talk about Donte's.

BERGHOFER: But that became— Then it really became a place and a jazz mecca, actually. But before that it was like Shelly's. And then I worked a little club called Sherry's with Pete, of course. But it's never been— This whole town, even through all those periods of time, I don't think was ever like New York was, where it had all the jazz clubs. It was still always on the fringe. Once in a while it would be places you probably never heard of that somebody would have a gig on a weekend out in

Pasadena or someplace, some crummy little places. I'm sure they're around. But I mean, as far as the big-name jazz clubs where people heard about them— Then on top of that, because you're working in that environment all the time, most of the time on your days off you don't—at least I didn't—go hang out at them anymore.

CLINE: You mentioned that the audience at Shelly's was young, generally.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: What was the racial makeup of the audience? Do you remember?

BERGHOFER: You know, I didn't pay much attention to that. I think it was pretty evenly divided. That's something I've never— I don't know. I've never had a racial thing. I've never thought about, "Gee, look how many black people are there," or how many this or that. I don't know. I never thought about that, and that didn't come around till in the last ten years, maybe, or something when the— I don't know. Wynton Marsalis made everybody aware that, "Hey, black people are the ones that started all this stuff," and it sort of divided everybody. Like when they did the thing on TV, the KCET [public television station]—

CLINE: Oh, yes, the Ken Burns thing [*Jazz: A Film by Ken Burns*].

BERGHOFER: The Ken Burns thing kind of upset me, because they didn't mention enough about Stan Getz and Zoot Sims and some of the people that really— Even Bill Evans barely got in there. So that kind of bothered me a bit. But before all that time, during this period of time, I never even thought about it, I mean, at all. I never cared whether somebody was black, white, red, blue. It didn't make any difference. When you're playing, that has nothing to do with it.

CLINE: It was integrated on the bandstand then, too, you would say?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes. I didn't feel any kind of like cultural difference or anything.

CLINE: Were there both men and women in large numbers coming to the clubs at that point, do you remember?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I think so.

CLINE: Do you remember any memorable women musicians at that time?

BERGHOFER: Not that many, no. That was another that's kind of strange. Yes, there weren't that many.

CLINE: I think maybe we'll call it now. We'll pick up with the advent of rock and roll—

BERGHOFER: Maybe I can remember more about the seventies or something.

CLINE: —No, you're doing great—and the changes in the music scene and the changes in your musical life as you start working more in the studios and doing all of that. Okay?

BERGHOFER: Great. All right, Alex.

CLINE: All right. Thank you.

TAPE NUMBER: III, SIDE ONE

April 9, 2003

CLINE: Good morning once again.

BERGHOFER: Good morning. All right.

CLINE: It's like summer.

BERGHOFER: Yes. Funny you just mentioned April 9th, because it hit me now, it's my mother [Dolores Bambridge Berghofer]'s birthday today.

CLINE: Oh, really?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I forgot about that. She's been gone for a while. She'd have been ninety-five, I think, today.

CLINE: Oh, really?

BERGHOFER: Yes, today, April 9th.

CLINE: Oddly enough, I also remembered, since I'm finishing an interview with Larry Bunker right now, that it's also the birthday of the Billy Gladstone snare drum that he has the possession of that belonged to Shelly Manne. It was custom-made for Shelly Manne. The bag says right on it, "April 9th, 1950, drum number one."

BERGHOFER: Wow. No kidding.

CLINE: An amazing instrument, and Larry still uses it. It's got a calfskin head on it and everything.

BERGHOFER: Gee, that's great.

CLINE: Yes.

Okay. I had some follow-up questions from last time, a little area that, for some reason, kind of slid by us. I wanted to ask you if you had any siblings growing up.

BERGHOFER: Oh, well, yes, I do. I have a stepson [Mike Ace]. He was five years old when I got married to my first wife [Barbara Berghofer], so he's forty-seven now.

CLINE: I mean when you were a kid, did you have brothers or sisters?

BERGHOFER: Oh, no, I didn't. I thought you were— Yes, thinking about, yes, kids. No, no, I'm an only child.

CLINE: Oh, that would explain why that didn't come up.

BERGHOFER: That's why it didn't come up. Yes, right, exactly.

CLINE: Okay. Another thing that I wanted to ask you about is, you mentioned that you were really only interested in music pretty much when you were going through school growing up. Did you have any memorable teachers, whether they were musical teachers or anything, any memorable people who helped sort of direct or inspire you or support you in what your interests were?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I did. My first teacher's name was Mr. Boyer, and he was very good. That's when I played the trumpet and so forth, but, yes, he was very supportive. Then later on, the band director was Frank Largent, I think his name was. He helped me. I was playing tuba at that time, and he helped me a lot. I'd go have lessons with him. He actually did, he encouraged me. Nobody ever discouraged me.

Then I mentioned before about the music store people that I knew, the one fellow there, and I can't remember his name now. He was older than us, and he was a

good musician and he encouraged us. So it was basically a lot of encouragement like that. And then the choir director. Forgive me. Gosh, he might have been the most influential. He was quite a guy. Neumeister was his name. Actually, several of the kids that were in the choir wound up being professional. One of them became a choir director himself. Several went into the music field. I'm sure it was because of him. He was really— I don't know, he put a real soul thing into the music from a legitimate standpoint, I think. I mean not a jazz-wise thing, but he really took it serious. And I was the president of the choir for a while, so I sort of was close to him.

One of my other high school buddies [Al Eaton] wound up being a teacher because of him, a choir teacher, and a teacher, and he's retired now, actually, already. So, yes, yes, definitely.

CLINE: Where did this teacher teach?

BERGHOFER: This is all in Arcadia at the high school.

CLINE: At the high school?

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: And the first teacher you mentioned, was that going back to elementary school?

BERGHOFER: First teacher, yes, that was elementary school, called First Avenue [Elementary School].

CLINE: That's good. You played the tenor saxophone briefly, you said. You said that you thought you maybe wanted to play like [Cecil] "Big Jay" McNeely.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: Did you ever go to hear Big Jay when he was playing around the area?

BERGHOFER: Yes, went to hear him at El Monte Legion Stadium.

CLINE: Oh, right. What was that like?

BERGHOFER: Oh, just a bunch of guys standing around in their ducktails, you know. It was actually— I thought it was kind of rowdy then, but it was nothing compared to today, I guess. But I enjoyed it. I loved that sound of that saxophone. Sounded like the tailpipes of cars, the sound a glass muffler makes, sort of a similar thing. I think that's what the attraction probably was.

But the saxophone, when I say I played it, I owned one, is all. I got a sound out of it, a little bit, not much. It was probably an awful one. It probably had pads leaking, and I didn't even know about it.

CLINE: Was Big Jay, I guess, doing all his usual sort of theatrics and—

BERGHOFER: Yes, on his knees and laying back, doing all that stuff.

CLINE: Did that appeal to you? Did you think that was pretty cool?

BERGHOFER: For some reason, yes, I did then. It's funny, because now I hate it, but yes. Then, I guess, I was taken in by it, yes.

CLINE: Of course, he actually started out as a local jazz player, so it's an interesting turn of events for Big Jay.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: Also moving forward a bit, you mentioned that when you were playing, actually sort of just learning, a couple of the people that you got to play with during that period was Jimmy Giuffre and Jim Hall.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: When you were sometimes, I guess, stepping in for your teacher, Ralph Peña.

BERGHOFER: Well, just mainly at my lesson, because I'd go down there and they'd come and rehearse and I'd stick around.

CLINE: So what can you say about those two guys when you were just really learning and having the experience of playing with them? What were they like?

BERGHOFER: Well, they were very nice to me. In fact, Jim Hall, I worked with him even other gigs after that. But during that period of time when I first met them, they'd come over and rehearse. Jim Hall was always a real quiet-spoken guy, really a nice man. I haven't seen him in a long time. And Jimmy Giuffre also, I didn't get real close to him. I don't know, didn't play with him at other places or anything. But Jim Hall and I actually worked several gigs later on in town here, and I can't remember exactly where, but I remember doing that. So it paid off there, I guess. The main thing was just hearing— It was a great little group, but just being exposed to that caliber of musicianship.

CLINE: Certainly, Jimmy Giuffre considered one of the architects of the West Coast Sound, even though he hasn't been on the West Coast for a long time, since you were not playing in a group with drums at that point, did you ever later investigate the trio that he had with Paul Bley and Steve Swallow, that sort of chamber trio?

BERGHOFER: No, no, I didn't. I actually didn't. So I don't know, really, anything about that.

CLINE: Because that was, I think, ahead of its time.

BERGHOFER: Yes, more of an avant-garde thing, I think.

CLINE: Or a little more of a third-stream kind of classical thing, yes.

Then I also wanted to ask if there was any more you wanted to say about the experience you had playing with [Rahsaan] Roland Kirk at Shelly's [Manne-Hole]? You mentioned that right off the bat as one of the memorable people you played with. I wondered if there was anything you could say about— You mentioned all the instruments he played and all the whistles and all that stuff. If there was anything more you wanted to say about what the experience was like—

BERGHOFER: Well, I think the main part of it is that it was so different than anything else I've ever done and the way the people— You can look out in front and see the way they took it, because it definitely was entertaining to them. I mean, it wasn't just a usual guy standing up there with his eyes closed, blowing. And, plus, the energy that he had. There was really a lot of energy going on. I don't know if I would say it was one of the great musical experiences I ever had in my life, by any means, but it was certainly different. It was the first real different one, and yet it was good. I mean, it wasn't anything bad about it. It wasn't a drag to do. It was fun. But it was definitely different, and it's probably the furthest-out band I've ever played with, put it that way, the most unconventional.

CLINE: What was he like as a person?

BERGHOFER: Seemed very nice. I don't know if I hung out with him that much or not, I mean, just didn't seem bad at all, just seemed real nice to me. I didn't have any problems with him.

CLINE: Do you remember who else was in the band?

BERGHOFER: You know, I don't. I don't remember. I don't remember what I did last Tuesday, but, yes, I can't remember who else. I just remember— I can still remember just standing there at Shelly's and him up there doing his thing with—

CLINE: Playing two and three horns at once and all that stuff.

BERGHOFER: Yes. It was a little bit of a circus thing to it in a way.

CLINE: Indeed.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I don't remember who else was in the band then.

CLINE: Some of the other saxophone players you played with, we haven't talked about yet. I don't know if we're not in that period quite yet or not, but Stan Getz is one of them.

BERGHOFER: Well, Stan I didn't play with until well till close to the end of his life.

CLINE: Well, we'll save that.

BERGHOFER: We'll wait for that.

CLINE: And what about Gerry Mulligan?

BERGHOFER: Yes, well, that was still Shelly's Manne-Hole after it moved to the new place out on Wilshire [Boulevard]. I'm not sure what year that was.

CLINE: Well, that would have been in the seventies, then.

BERGHOFER: Probably so, I guess. It was after it moved to Wilshire Boulevard. That was quite an interesting group. When we get to that, I'll—

CLINE: Yes, when we hit the seventies, which will be fairly soon—

BERGHOFER: Yes, that's probably more stuff happening by then for me.

CLINE: What about Art Pepper?

BERGHOFER: Yes, well, now that was more at Donte's. Yes. So that was later, too.

CLINE: So I'm going to make a note of this here. Okay.

BERGHOFER: Had an album with him, too.

CLINE: I wanted to ask you, too, that you had mentioned that among the many extremely illustrious people that you turned down gigs with, one of them was Elvis [Presley].

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: First of all, I wanted to know, since you also wound up doing some recording on projects of his—

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: But did you have any interest in Elvis at all before then? Had you any awareness of—?

BERGHOFER: No, no. Well, I was aware of him, but I didn't care for that music. Actually, he was such a nice guy, being around him a little bit, I don't know, he was a big star, obviously, and there was something there, definitely something there. It was in that other realm, in a total non-jazz realm, of course, but I've always looked at music as being— I mean, jazz is my favorite thing, but there's other kinds of music. As long as it's good, it doesn't make any difference what it is. I mean, it could be country, it could be a polka for some people. Maybe I haven't heard the greatest polka in the world, but I'm sure the greatest polka band sounds great. But with him, the same thing. It was good. It wasn't bad. It was good.

So I did a couple of— There's an NBC [National Broadcasting Company] TV show that was done, and I was on that. I remember working at Western Recorders with him a couple of times, and that was probably in the sixties, during the period of time after Nancy Sinatra and all of that.

CLINE: Okay, we're coming to that.

One of the things that I also wanted to talk about was, since we're sort of in the Shelly's period, and you mentioned when Shelly's moved over onto Wilshire Boulevard into the restaurant, which was called Tetou, as I recall, what do you remember about what led to the demise of Shelly's on Cahuenga [Boulevard] in Hollywood?

BERGHOFER: The only thing I can remember is something to do with the lease being up. Wally Heider, actually, I think, owned that particular part of the building or whatever. The lease was up, and they wanted— I don't know. Maybe he sold the place, whatever. I'm not sure how that went down exactly. He might have sold the place. Wally Heider was a wonderful engineer that had a place right on the corner there at Shelly's. I think that was the demise of it, and they were trying to find something that would be anything like that.

Now, I don't think there anything existed like Shelly's Manne-Hole, as far as the décor inside. It was really just a great place. I don't know if they could redo that somewhere else. It would be tough, because that place was sort of like that to begin with. So they moved to Wilshire, and it was a very modern-looking building. I don't think— It just didn't have the same kind of ambience, and it was kind of further away

from most of the people that lived in the [San Fernando] Valley to get there. It was down the west side. A lot of the people that— Musicians, anyway, even, that were in Shelly's band and all, we all lived basically in the Valley part. People that came to see us, I don't know, Hollywood seemed like a central place, I guess, whereas his other place was too far. I think that's probably what happened there.

Then I'm not sure what the deal he had there, either. I didn't really work with Shelly's band at that place. I just wound up working with, well, with this one gig we were talking about, turned out to be Dave Grusin was the leader.

CLINE: We'll talk about that in a little while.

What do you remember about some of the other jazz clubs that were around Hollywood at that point, all of which, I guess, must have gone out eventually. By the time the seventies hit, a lot of those clubs were gone.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I can't even remember any clubs. I mean, there must be something I'm forgetting, but I can't remember other clubs on that level, anyway. I'm sure there were some little bars that the guys played at or something like that, but there wasn't anything that I remember on that level. Maybe down in other areas, either out east more or down in L.A. somewhere, but I don't know about those. Yes, I don't know much about other clubs.

CLINE: Well, that's okay, because there don't appear to have been many. That's one of the interesting things. You mentioned that you played at Sherry's at one point.

BERGHOFER: Well, yes.

CLINE: Do you remember when it went out?

BERGHOFER: Yes, that was later on. Actually, Sherry's was an interesting place, because it was right next to Schwab's Drug Store, which was a very famous drug store where, supposedly, several movie stars were discovered and so forth. That was right at the beginning of the Sunset Strip, had a marquee outside on the Sunset Strip with my name on it—I mean, "Pete Jolly and Chuck Berghofer" and all that, which is kind of wild. I never did get a picture of that. But Sherry's was a very small little club with a piano bar in it. But it had a nice atmosphere, and so that was the other club that I worked at.

There were, actually, now that I'm thinking about it, there were some other clubs along that area. The Summit was a place on Sunset Boulevard, which is now a rock and roll place, I think. There were several other little— Let me see. The Summit. The Encore Room was another room down on La Cienega [Boulevard] that had, I don't know— I wouldn't say— Well, that's where Bobby Troup worked. I worked with him for a while. And I think Page Cavanaugh or something like that. That was a little bit of a light jazz thing, but at least it had stuff going, and it was usually several nights a week.

There was another place called the Pandora's Box, which was right next door to Sherry's, basically, almost next door to it. That was a pretty good little— It was a coffeehouse, called it a coffeehouse. I actually worked there with John Williams, *the* John Williams, playing piano. Pandora's Box, and that was in the sixties, in the early sixties.

CLINE: Eventually, that whole area became very consumed by the Sunset Strip scene.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: Do you remember anything about that?

BERGHOFER: They built some kind of another big— I don't know if it was a hotel, I think, and I don't think that's even there anymore. But they built a big place, and I remember they had Latin music in there. I worked in there with a Latin band, also, and I can't remember the name of that place, but that's where the Pandora's Box was. Pandora's Box was just a little teeny nothing, really small. But you had to go down— It was below the level of Sunset Boulevard, actually. You'd kind of walk down from the street.

CLINE: That was sort of the hipsters' hangout?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, it was. They read poetry. They read poetry and did all that, and once in a while they had a group in there. I might have played with some other groups that I don't recall, but I remember playing with John Williams there. He played good, too.

CLINE: Interesting. So when do you remember Donte's starting up?

BERGHOFER: Well, let's see. I'm not sure what year that opened, but I know that the guy that owned Sherry's actually was the first owner of Donte's.

CLINE: Do you remember his name, by any chance?

BERGHOFER: John. I remember his first name was John. The name Donte's had something to do with his wife and something else combined. It wasn't like Dante's *Inferno* or anything.

CLINE: Yes, well, it's not spelled that way.

BERGHOFER: Yes, it looked like it, yes, but it was more some kind of a name with his wife and this and that. Anyway, he owned it, the first place, and he had Sherry's. His name was John, a very nice man.

I remember that Pete Jolly, actually— I think we kind of opened that place in the beginning. He wanted to make it a piano room like he had before at Sherry's. Anyway, it started off that way, and, they had— Gee, they had some good players. Hampton Hawes, I think, played there, and I don't know. It seems, but I can't remember all— Jimmy Rowles maybe in the beginning. But it started off as a piano with a trio-type thing.

I remember that they did enlarge it somewhat or knocked some doors down or walls out, because at the time, one of my relatives, not a brother-in-law, but a cousin of my wife's, had something to do with helping out knocking the walls down in there. They made it a little larger, and they did a few things. Anyway, eventually, after a short period of time, John wound up selling the club to— I think it was Carey or Sonny. I'm not sure who had it first, Carey Leverett or Sonny. Anyway, they sold the club, and that's when it opened up to a club where they actually had bands in there playing.

CLINE: Do remember about what year that might have been?

BERGHOFER: Boy, that's what— I'm sure somebody could find out, somebody knows, but I would estimate it at between '68 and '70, maybe, somewhere in that area, I would think. I don't know. I'm sure somebody knows. I don't.

CLINE: Did you get the opportunity to play with any of those other piano players that you mentioned, or were you there mostly with Pete Jolly?

BERGHOFER: I was there with Pete mostly. I played with Jimmy Rowles a lot, and I played with Hampton Hawes a couple of times. There was another piano player at Sherry's that I didn't play with. Carl Perkins is his name. Played very unusual, with his left hand in an odd position, and, boy, was he great. I used to go in there and just listen to him. I never did play with him, but I know his name came up all of a sudden in my mind. Carl Perkins and, I think, actually, even Don Randi back in those days played at Sherry's for a while.

But anyway, the Sherry's movement went to Donte's is what happened in the beginning, because this guy that owned it bought Donte's. Then that only lasted a real short— Maybe a year or something. I'm not sure how long. Then it really changed once Sonny and Carey took it over.

CLINE: Do you remember Sonny's last name?

BERGHOFER: Oh, gosh, I should. She'd be really mad at me. But I know she was from Persia, which is Iran now. I always used to get in arguments with her and say, "You Americans do this," when she was doing something. But she had a great husband. Her husband's name is Bill, who was really a sweet man, who he wound up with cancer and died very young. He was the force in there that made everything

okay. The other ones were always fighting. Carey and Sonny, god, they were real volatile. Bill was real, real smooth. He always smoothed everything out.

CLINE: Before we pursue Donte's further, did you ever work at the Lighthouse?

BERGHOFER: That's funny, because— How can I put it? I appeared at the Lighthouse when I was in high school, because they had days where they'd have young kids in high school bands and kids come in and play. It was probably on a Sunday afternoon. I can't remember what days. I went in there with this— I'm wondering. I'm trying to remember who it was, even, if it was my high school band that I played with, or the one I was talking about before with the vibes and all that, or if it was a little later, maybe, with Johnny Pease or somebody like one of those guys.

But anyway, I worked in there and played. Of course, I knew all about the Lighthouse. That was still the period of time when the Lighthouse All-Stars were happening. That was like a big thing. So it was fun to be standing on the stand. But to make a long story short, they gave out awards for this and that, and I don't know how many groups were in there, but I wound up winning an award, which was a fairly unusual one. Howard Rumsey was there, and we've talked about this a month ago, even. But the award that he came up with, an award that no one else had ever received before, and he wrote it out or changed it or whatever he did on the— I don't have it anymore. But I got an award for having the best bass, which was pretty unusual. I did have a good instrument then, too. But the best bass. And I thought, "Wow." So I don't know if it was because of the sound I could get out of it or it was just the instrument, I'm not sure, but it was very unusual.

CLINE: And from one bassist to another, too.

BERGHOFER: Yes, one bassist to another.

CLINE: Did you ever make it all the way down there just to listen, ever?

BERGHOFER: Not really. It was too far away.

CLINE: Yes, it's pretty far.

BERGHOFER: Yes. I know I had gone there. I've been there, but I mean, I didn't do it — I'll put it this way, I might have been there once, so whatever you want to call that, other than the time I was there for the school thing.

CLINE: But for a West Coast jazz guy, it's almost ironic, with the Lighthouse being sort of the— You're certainly of the Shelly's generation, but the Lighthouse—

BERGHOFER: Well, the thing is, I was just young enough to miss most of that. I was about maybe ten years behind, agewise, to be able to— I might have been involved in it had I been a little bit older, but not playing bass, because Howard was the bass player.

CLINE: That's right. It's amazing to think, though, that it lasted all those years all the way down there and thrived so well, despite the journey.

BERGHOFER: Yes, that's true.

CLINE: There was no freeway that went there.

BERGHOFER: No. In fact, even when it moved later on, moved to another location, I think it was a little closer, they still called it the Lighthouse, but it was different then. Now the Lighthouse is there again, and it looks the same, which is really funny. In fact, I'm working there coming up soon.

CLINE: It's the Lighthouse Café now, I think.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: So, going back to Donte's, once it started up in this period where it's a full-on jazz room, they have bands. It's not just a piano venue. So we're into the seventies now. By now you're doing work in the studios during the day and playing there at night. How much of a center of work for you does Donte's become at this point?

BERGHOFER: Oh, boy. Well, more even than a center of work, it's a center of my hanging-out period of time. I do dates, and a lot of them were in a place called United Recording and Western Recording, which was down on Sunset Boulevard and Gower [Street], basically.

In order to get home, I'd take the freeway, and I could not get past Lankershim [Boulevard] turnoff. I mean, I'd say to myself, "Okay, I'm going to go home tonight." Then I'd get where I had to make a split decision, say, "I'll go by there for one beer." And I'd stay there and hang out all night. That was sort of just a real hangout place for me. I mean, I worked there a lot, but it was a barter system in a way. They didn't pay much, you know. You wound up actually basically working for— I think the pay was thirty-five dollars or something. But it almost turned out to be like you get free food and free drinks when you play there. That's almost about what it amounted to.

So I mean, I almost lived there. All the different bands that were there that, I'd go in and listen to them, and then I'd play with a bunch of them, too. But, yes, it was the center of everything. Guys that were busy studio players— There was always

dates eight to eleven. That seemed to be a big thing. So after eleven o'clock, a lot of guys would be coming by there. John Guerin used to live there, like I did, just about. He was real busy in the studios at that time. Max Bennett. Quite a few guys. And that was sort of the little place you would hang out and stop on the way home.

There isn't a place like that anymore, unfortunately, but I mean, of course, the driving laws are different. I used to drive home with one eye open many times. Now you'd be put away for life. So that's probably why those places don't exist now, I think. Too dangerous to drink and drive anymore.

CLINE: So you had mentioned earlier that you actually didn't go to hear a lot of music, but now you must have heard a lot of music, because you're stopping at Donte's and listening to whoever's playing, at least for a little while.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: By now, as we're entering into the seventies, certain things about jazz music are starting to change. How much of those changes do you remember seeing reflected in what was happening musically on the stage there?

BERGHOFER: I don't know. The funny thing is, when it starts changing so gradually, you don't notice it when you're involved in it. It's just an everyday occurrence, and then you kind of take everything for granted, like, oh, the place is there, and if somebody who— Oh, Art Pepper's playing there, or whoever happened to be playing, they'd just happen to be there, and they'd play and they'd sound the same as they always do, and this guy and that guy. It was so gradual that it's not like, wow, it all changed.

But to me, I didn't really notice that big of a change, because, like I say, because while you're involved in it, it's like anything else. When you're on a daily basis with your child, you don't notice they've changed that much. Then when somebody hasn't seen them in a while, they say, "My goodness, look at how they've grown," or whatever. So it's that was in music when you're around it.

The only change, I mean, the big shock things, are like later, in the beginning like at the Manne-Hole when Ornette Coleman came in and stuff like that. Well, that was what I would call change. I mean, that was a lot. What is that? What kind of a sound is that? What is all that about? But I didn't notice that at Donte's. I mean, it was just actually the local cats playing, that's it basically what I heard there.

CLINE: Did you see or hear Ornette at Shelly's?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, sure. Plastic sax and all, yes. I thought it was awful.

CLINE: Was this in the early sixties then?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes. It almost made you mad. I thought, "Well, man, like Richie Kamuca, what a beautiful sound he's got." And then I hear this and I think, "How can anybody listen to that after that?" I guess it's the side of music that it's my shortcoming for not having an open-enough mind, maybe, to listen to it. I don't know. That kind of bothered me, because, to me, it sounded to me like somebody just picking up the horn for the first time and trying to get a sound out of it. So it kind of makes you—

CLINE: Cringe.

BERGHOFER: Yes. Then you see people accepting it and thinking it's great. Well, I've heard records after that of his, recently, once in a while I'll hear one on the radio or something, so I know I've got a more open mind now that I listen to it, and there are things that I hear that I think, that's interesting. I mean, there's something there, there's something happening. And with the whole group, it's not just him. It's the entire group, the way they're able to know where they are, which is beyond what I— That's part of it. So there's a lot of things beyond my comprehension that I'm sure I was missing before, because there is a certain thing that makes the group come together, in other words, and it was almost tight in far-out ways, which is hard for me to— I always thought of freedom as you just play anything you want, whatever you want, and it really isn't freedom.

CLINE: Yes, certain things work and certain things don't, even though it seems like it shouldn't be that way.

So was Charlie Haden playing bass with him when you saw him?

BERGHOFER: I don't remember. I don't think he was then, because I knew Charlie. I met Charlie Haden at Westlake School of Music, which was on Sunset Boulevard.

But anyway, I met Charlie Haden at Westlake music school, and that was still, gosh— That might have been in the late fifties, actually. I don't remember if he was playing with Ornette. He might have been playing. He had a pretty big name already, but he wasn't as big as he is now. So I can't remember who was playing with him now at all

But it's funny, because I'm trying to think of the piano player that lived right behind the school. I just saw him a while back, and maybe his name will come to me. He had a great career, too, this guy. I can't think of it right now. [Les McCann] But, yes, I don't know if Charlie Haden was playing with him or not. He probably was. I don't know who else would have been at that time. Because Charlie and I are probably close to the same age, I think. We've been confused. In fact, it wasn't too long ago I worked a job at a place that Quincy Jones was there, and he came up to the bandstand. I'd worked with Quincy a lot in the past, I mean, with different things, playing electric bass and all that. But anyway, he came up and he said, "Hey, Charlie," and he was looking at me.

I thought, "That's funny, he's calling me Charlie," but my name is Chuck, and some people do call me that.

He turns to the guy next to him, and says, "That's Charlie Haden."

So when I got off, I said, "I'm not Charlie Haden. I'm Chuck Berghofer."

"Oh, yeah, that's right, okay." So that was kind of funny.

CLINE: So you remember seeing Charlie working around town in that period?

BERGHOFER: Not a lot, actually, no, I didn't.

CLINE: Because then he went to New York, I guess.

BERGHOFER: Yes. I think he did. He was in another realm, too. It took me a long time to really appreciate what he does, too, and what he does, I mean, it's interesting. I love how he gets a really nice sound, but he plays the way he plays, man. It's a different way. And technically, too, he's got a very strange— In other words, he still

plays the same way as I did before I took lessons. In a way, later on, I found out that he probably doesn't have carpal tunnel syndrome like I do, because the way he's playing, he's never going to hurt his hand. But he seems to be able to do it fine. I mean, he obviously learned to do it that way.

Harry Babasin played that way, too, kind of grabbing the bass. I know we're not on video now, so I'm kind of just grabbing the bass like that, how you would naturally, really, and learning to play notes in tune that way are difficult, but he seems to do it. I won't put him down.

CLINE: He has that self-taught technique that you just don't see anymore.

BERGHOFER: Yes, and he has some great ideas harmonically, every once in a while he comes through with. I don't know. He's a different animal, marches to his own drummer.

CLINE: So before we go further into the Donte's era, during the sixties, something happened that I guess must have changed your life pretty dramatically. You got called for a pop record date. Tell us how you got into the studio record date scene.

BERGHOFER: First of all, I did a record date at RCA with a big band. I don't even know what it was about exactly, except it was a big band. Irv Cottler was on it and some really top studio guys of the day, Willie Schwartz, I remember. Anyway, then the engineer came out. I don't know if I mentioned this already.

CLINE: No.

BERGHOFER: The engineer came out and said, "Man, the bass sounds so great." He actually brought people into the booth and said, "Listen to the bass on this thing." The

guys in the band are saying, “Yeah, you’re going to be doing all the work in town.” Whatever. It was like in one day, boom, I’m the biggest thing.

So anyway, to make a long story short, the engineer said, “You know, I’ve got a friend of mine who’s a producer. I’m going to give him your name.”

I said, “Great. Fine.” So I didn’t think much more of it.

And about a week or two later, I got a call. A contractor by the name of Don Lanier, who I didn’t know, called me for a record date over at United, and I went over there. It turned out to be for this guy by the name of Jim Bowen, who was producing a bunch of different groups, and one of them was Nancy Sinatra. I don’t remember if I did Nancy the first day or the second day or whatever it was, but after doing a few record dates for him for different people, I remember doing this one date for Nancy Sinatra. It was “[These] Boots Are Made for Walkin’.” Billy Strange was the composer, and it had a little hook to it, you know, a sliding bass line, which he wrote in a different way altogether. He wrote it in quarter-tones, like [sings descending chromatic phrase where a quarter-tone descending glissando is slid inserted between each descending chromatic note]. I tried that once, and, god, it was hard to fit them all in.

CLINE: Yes, especially at that tempo.

BERGHOFER: Yes, especially at that tempo, yes. Whatever was it, eight bars that I’d took up. So I just did the slide all— Tried to fit it in the period of time, and that was it. It was no big deal, but it turned out to be a big hit record for her, and naturally,

because of the bass solo on it, people, "Who was that?" It turned out to be me, and so I started getting gangs of record dates from that from different people.

So I wound up doing three record dates a day, usually, maybe two if it was a slow day. So I did that for a long time, all the way through the remaining part of the sixties and through the seventies. Did a lot of that. And Hal Blaine. There was a group called the Wrecking Crew. I can't even remember half the people I've—Everly Brothers and stuff like that. It was all music and nothing to do with jazz, totally nothing to do with it.

CLINE: What was your feeling about that?

BERGHOFER: Actually, I mean, the funny part is, I always had a thing about studio music that I didn't mind, because like I said before, if something was good, I could still play it. It didn't bother me. Just the fact that we were there, for one thing, and that one thing was to make the music happen, wasn't there to entertain anybody or to do any of those things, just there to record this stuff, really makes it okay somehow. The music, even though it wasn't something I loved, I just tried to do the—Everybody that was there was playing the best they could. You can't make mistakes. If there's a mistake, you had to stop and do it over again. So it was actually done in a realm there with perfection in a way. So that part I liked, too.

So there was a lot of things about it that made it okay. It wasn't an expression of jazz or anything like that, but yet you expressed yourself in doing something with the correct sound and in the correct environment that had to take place at the time. So that made it okay to me. Not to mention that you made a lot more money, even

though the scale was very low then, compared to— Well, for instance, Shelly's Manne-Hole paid $16.50 a night, and a record date was $65. Actually, I did a few at 45, and the scale went up. That was quite a difference, I guess.

CLINE: You must have played some music that you really, really didn't like, I would think.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I had many nights where I felt almost sick to my stomach after the fifteenth take. If I had to do this one more time, I couldn't stand it. And Donte's helped a lot there, because I'd go by there afterwards and really get bombed. But there was also a prestige thing, I guess. Here comes the studio guys, or whatever you want to call them, and so that was— I don't know. But yes, musically, it was pretty awful. I don't have any of those records myself. I might have "[These] Boots Are Made for Walkin'" somewhere around here, but all the records out— The only reason I know— I mean, I can find a list on the computer, has a list of all the stuff. So many things that I even forgot about, totally forgot about.

In fact, I didn't realize— Somebody printed up list, and I didn't realize. I forgot that I did an album called *Lumpy Gravy* [by Frank Zappa].

CLINE: Yes, I've got it on my list there. I'm going to ask you about that.

BERGHOFER: Stuff like that. Things like that, that's a little bit later on.

CLINE: That was in the later sixties, yes.

BERGHOFER: So my memory of what I did is fairly limited. I mean, I remember, like I said, I mentioned the Everly Brothers. There's so many different—

CLINE: I've got a list right here, actually.

BERGHOFER: Oh, beautiful.

CLINE: This is from Barnes and Noble, and I just have to mention that these are only records that are in print on CD now, so I'm thinking that there's got to be way more than this in reality, but just logging on and getting a list of CDs that you're on here, there are 141 listed here.

BERGHOFER: You're kidding.

CLINE: No, I'm not.

BERGHOFER: [laughs] I need to get a copy of that.

CLINE: There is quite an amazing variety of stuff on here. I mean, it's just staggering.

BERGHOFER: So I probably won't remember any of it.

CLINE: And a ton of it that you did, obviously, must be out of print, so we couldn't even quantify this at this point.

BERGHOFER: You say, 140?

CLINE: One hundred forty-one on this list. This is just one source, and it's not complete.

BERGHOFER: Because I know that the list that I get from the motion picture reuse thing, I've counted that up once, it was several years ago, and it was in the neighborhood of 450 movies or something.

CLINE: So you got an idea. This is a fraction of the output.

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CLINE: So, you've had a chance to look over this list of recordings, a partial list, though it may be. What are some of your feelings, looking over this?

BERGHOFER: Well, it's stuff that I don't remember doing, most of it, but I mean, now that I look at it, I remember it. But I mean, these are things I wouldn't have come up with in my mind of who I recorded with. But I didn't realize there were so many Elvis Presley things on there. Then the Beach Boys was the other one, and I do remember the Beach Boys stuff and Brian Wilson back in those years.

CLINE: I wanted to ask you about that specifically. You recorded on the Beach Boys *Pet Sounds* album, which now, I think, has achieved certain legendary status, not only because of the quality of the work on it, but because it supposedly, according to Paul McCartney, anyway, was one of the major inspirations for what became the *Sergeant Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band* album of the Beatles.

BERGHOFER: Really? I didn't even know all that.

CLINE: Yes. It was out of print for many years, and it was this massive collector's item, and then finally when CDs came around, it got re-released. What do you remember about working with Brian Wilson and the Beach Boys?

BERGHOFER: I just remember showing up at the Western Recorders. It always was done there in the back studio. He was wild, a total wild— In fact, I was up at his house a few times, too. But he was just out, all the time. We'd go back in to listen,

and he'd always have some comment about I'd have to fix something, because I never heard— That bass note right there was whatever it was, was wrong. I'd say, "I don't hear anything." Well, anyway, so I'd fix it or whatever. So he'd hear things that I wouldn't hear, and I don't know, it was pretty interesting. So it's possible that it's some intuitive thing that he's got going on, that he heard things that other people didn't hear, I don't know. But I mean, it's weird, I'd be fixing things I didn't think needed fixing, but I'd do it anyway.

It was kind of a stressful thing. You would think, "Hey, we're doing the Beach Boys. What a fun gig." It wasn't that way so much. It was more—It was hard, pretty demanding, as I recall. He was very demanding, and it wasn't just on me; it was on everybody. So, yes, that wasn't a laid-back job like you might think of it.

CLINE: Now, was this a Wrecking Crew project?

BERGHOFER: Yes, basically, yes. I'm sure Hal Blaine was on all of that, too.

CLINE: Yes, a lot of the Beach Boys records were. What can you tell us about the Wrecking Crew, this legendary bunch of studio players who played on virtually everything during that period?

BERGHOFER: Tedesco was probably one of the guys there, Tommy Tedesco, guitar player who could read anything. That's a weird thing about him. He looked like a guy that would be a truck driver from somewhere, and talked like one, too, and acted like one. But yet here's this guy that could read anything you put in front of him, which didn't require— Most of those gigs didn't require a lot of reading, but he was able to do that. But he had a mindset that he ate this stuff up, because he looked at it

for what it was. He never took it serious, and that's the thing that really— The thing he took serious about it was how many dates you could do in a week, in a day, and how much money you could actually make. He took that serious. But he never took the music serious. Later on, he started playing some jazz and stuff, but he just had a way that I don't think any of it bothered— He really enjoyed it. As for me, I was hating most of it, but he didn't.

Then, Hal Blaine was incredible. I'm sure he changed a lot of drumming when it comes to rock and roll. I think he's the first one that had the tom-toms going around in a circle.

CLINE: Right. The concert toms with a single head, yes, that's true.

BERGHOFER: Yes, with all that stuff. Then after a while he had covers put on them, I remember that. So he never felt great to play with, but when you listened back, the sound was so good and it sounded great. So it's one of those weird dichotomies about that. But I played with a lot of guys that feel better to play, but the sound wasn't the same. And he understood the music. I mean, he'd really get into it. He almost, almost, became a co-producer on anything that he'd play on the drums. He'd give suggestions about "What if we did this here?" and, "What if we did that there?" and so forth. Nine out of ten times, they'd go along with what he said. So he really kind of produced the whole thing.

As far as I know, he probably made double scale at least on all this stuff. I'm trying to remember if I ever got to that double scale. I do now. That's what I usually

get, double scale. But I can't remember during that time. He was really a legendary guy.

Then there were some other guys that were always there. One of them, there was one guy that I remember by the name Larry Nechtel, who played bass and piano, and he played great piano, too, but his bass was wonderful. He played electric bass.

Then there was Carol Kaye, who was a bass player. Most of the time, there was two basses on everything. She played electric bass, and I played string bass. And the parts were written identical. At that time, it was, you know, a lot of "bomp, bomp bomp" going on. She was, of course, the boogaloo, started all that stuff, sort of Motown, at least out here. I wasn't involved too much in Motown, because the bass lines are more intricate, so they used one electric bass. But most of these other things that I did for Jim Bowen and that bunch were two basses, including Nancy Sinatra's thing.

Then, let me see. Another guitar player that was actually involved a lot during that period of time was Glen Campbell. Before he became a star, he was just a session player. He'd be on a lot of these sessions. I remember hanging out with him a lot. We went around the corner for a beer. He was so talented, this guy was incredible. He didn't read like Tedesco did or anything like that. I don't think he was that great a reader, but, boy, he was like sort of the Jack Sheldon of the country guitar players in a lot of ways. He was so good that I actually took him into Donte's one time, and we played one night, a jazz gig. He played.

CLINE: Yes, he was an amazing guitarist.

BERGHOFER: And he sounded great. It's still with a country touch, but he was a remarkable guy and musician. I remember him one time telling me that he was really busy and he was going along, he said, "Man, I've got $10,000 in the bank, I don't know what to do with it all." I thought, "Wow, that's great." I mean, can you imagine? That's how much he's got in his pocket now, probably. I don't know, thinking back to those days. Anyway, he started writing tunes, songs, of course, and it wasn't long and he was gone.

Now, this is reminding me of some of these famous guys that were into this group that I used to see all the time. Oh, boy, I can't think of his name, with the big beard, wore a top hat.

CLINE: Leon Russell.

BERGHOFER: Leon Russell was one of the piano players, and he used to work there. I worked, god, days and days with him, months, years, I mean. His thing started as not taking morning dates anymore, I remember. It has to be like two o'clock. That was the beginning of his leaving that scene because he became a star himself. Well, there's Glen Campbell and him, both, I watched start as just sidemen. But it was funny to watch them gradually bail out of this stuff we were doing.

I'm trying to think of any other guy. Oh, there's another guy. Bill Pittman was his name. He's still around. He played Dano electric guitar. Now, that was the other— It's like a bass guitar. Not a Fender bass, but that's the thing that had that real clicky sound.

CLINE: Like a six-string bass.

BERGHOFER: And that was hot for a while. What was the record that came out with all that real clicky sound on it? Oh, the famous record and it was a big hit, and now everybody tried to get that sound. Well, anyway, he played the same thing. We'd do three dates a day, all these different things. He was on everything. So there's the Wrecking Crew, yes. I think there's books out on that thing now.

CLINE: Right, yes. Well, Hal Blaine's got a book out, himself, on that. Apparently his entire house, the walls were covered with gold records.

BERGHOFER: Yes, it was, yes. He lives up there on Outpost Drive, I think. I was over there a few times. He was the first house I ever saw that I walked in that had a theater, its own personal theater, yes, where the screen comes down and all that stuff. Yes, he was into it. I think he lost it all through divorce and stuff.

CLINE: I guess he's kind of retired now.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I think for a while he was living in the Palm Springs area. I'm not sure what he's doing now. He's a pretty resourceful guy, and plus he's wild to be around. I mean, he's got one joke after another. He's real personable. I mean, he's a good talker. I mean, he puts words together in the right way, but he's a talented, talented guy.

CLINE: When I mentioned there must have been some things that were just really, really bad, and you mentioned that you just hated a lot of it, is there anything that really stands out as being just the bottom of the barrel for you, that just you won't forget for that reason?

BERGHOFER: Well, I hate to mention names, I guess, but the Everly Brothers used to be— They'd fight amongst themselves, on top of everything else. They'd actually fight. But it was probably one of the— I don't know. It was the most nonmusical stuff I've ever done.

Most of it was fairly much in the same bag. It wasn't anything. Because I was locked in usually playing with two basses, you were totally locked into a bass part, you have to play it exactly, so you don't have much freedom. It's basically sound.

Then there was an engineer, too, that's right, Eddie Brackett, used to wear this little hat. I mean, I'm thinking back to the boards now where they had four knobs on them, this gray thing, and so there wasn't much you could do about anything. I mean, the sound was— There wasn't a lot of help. In order to get a sound, you had to produce it, and it went through the microphone and went to them, but they couldn't help you much. They could turn it up, I guess, is about all they could do. But there wasn't any EQ [equalization] systems and stuff.

CLINE: Anything that stands out as being really amazing, really memorable, because it was such a—

BERGHOFER: Well, of course, "[These] Boots Are Made for Walkin'" was the most memorable one for me, because that had a bass solo on it, and it seemed like it was— I don't know. I listen to it now, and, of course, musically, it's pretty awful. They tried to drive— I know they played it over and over in Waco, Texas, to try to drive them crazy. That's one of the things they used, actually. They played it real loud, all day long. Could drive them nuts.

CLINE: To get David Koresh to give up.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I thought that was kind of funny. And Saddam Hussein used to listen to "Strangers in the Night," [by Frank Sinatra], which I'm on also. So actually, I'm big with some of these.

CLINE: An interesting distinction.

BERGHOFER: Yes. [laughs]

CLINE: You did do this project in the late sixties that became the album *Lumpy Gravy* by Frank Zappa. What do you remember about that?

BERGHOFER: Well, the main thing I think I remember about that is the bass that I used on that. I played an electric bass on, I think, most of it, as I recall, if that's the one I'm thinking of. When I did it, I had no idea it was *Lumpy Gravy*.

The writing was really hard and some stuff that was like— Christ, that was like almost classical kind of music. I might have played string bass on some of it, too. I have to listen to it again. I borrowed an electric bass from Bob Bain, a guitar player, and it's one of the very first ones ever made. It has like a serial number of eight or something, some real— And it was that old, old model [Fender] Telecaster model, and it had such a great sound that this was the same thing, almost happened— They came out of the booth, "What is that you're playing?" and blah, blah, blah, just like the string bass was before, and that sort of rocketed me into playing more electric bass.

So anyway, this bass I was borrowing, and he wouldn't sell it to me, and I couldn't buy it and that was it, so I wound up getting another old bass that was okay. But this particular instrument, that's what I remember about that album more than

anything. But that instrument now wound up— There's a guy by the name of Jack Marshall, who did *The Munsters* TV show and everything. That's something I did at Universal [Pictures]. I did that. Anyway, it turned out it belonged to one of his sons, who is one of the co-producers with [Steven] Spielberg and all that. Anyway, he's got that bass still, I guess. But that's what I remember about that album more than anything, other the fact that it was really difficult and written in odd time signatures and a lot of hard stuff.

For example, playing with Frank Zappa, I played with him one time somewhere. I think he played piano or something and I played bass in some little joint one time, and that was pretty wild. But I mean, he was— I don't know. At that time, I didn't realize he was a star or anything then.

CLINE: Well, I don't know that he was yet.

BERGHOFER: Yes, he may not have been. That's what stands out, is that instrument, I guess. But that kind of propelled me into the electric scene more, I think.

CLINE: Were you starting to say what that instrument might be worth now?

BERGHOFER: Oh, well, gosh, you know, as a collector's item, it's probably, I don't know— I have no idea what things are— I mean, I've got a bass downstairs Red Mitchell owned, that was a prototype made for him, a five-string electric bass. I don't know, but I'll have to take it to a guitar shop. His ex-wife was really hard up, and she brought it in where I was working. I gave her three hundred bucks for it or something.

I don't know what it's worth. I thought it was going to be great. It sounds awful. I played it, but I don't want to touch it to make it do anything, because it's an original.

But that's funny. It just reminded me. That period of time we're talking about, kind of left out something about— The first television program that I did during those periods of time, I'm trying to remember when that— That might have been the late sixties, actually. It's *Get Smart,* when I started. I'm not sure if that's— I think it was the late sixties.

CLINE: Yes, it was.

BERGHOFER: I did that show, and that was the first television show that I did during that period of time. Then right after was *The Munsters*. That's sort of when the record date scene was going on strong, that's how I kind of crossed over to the other side.

Jack Marshall, this guy I mentioned before, who did *The Munsters*, wrote *The Munsters*, guitar player, wonderful guy, and funny guy, very close friend of Howard Roberts, and we used to play a lot together and do everything. Oh, he was incredible. He got me started at Universal by doing *The Munsters*. But before *The Munsters* started, I did this other show which I was talking about, the *Get Smart.* They still play both of those shows, by the way. So that kind of got me into the film stuff, other than records, because I eventually did switch into that more.

CLINE: We probably wouldn't even be able to come close to quantifying, then, the number of film soundtracks you played on.

BERGHOFER: Well, the only thing I can go by is counting the sheet that they send. I don't know. I'd have to actually count that. But it was maybe five hundred or maybe more, I don't know, because on the sheet they also include a lot of television things. For instance, all the *Star Trek* stuff for television, they include on there for some reason for special payments. I guess that comes out as movie episodes in Europe. I'm not sure why it's on there that way.

CLINE: Maybe video release.

BERGHOFER: Video release, I guess, is what it is, yes.

CLINE: Do you remember your first film date?

BERGHOFER: One of the first film dates, other than TV, an actual movie, was called *Hotel*. I don't remember the composer now. It was out of Warner Bros. [Pictures], but when it was the old Warner Bros. What was his name? I think John Guerin was on that with me. It could have been one of his first dates. But, yes, I think that was my first film date.

Then right after that, right at that period of time was *The Graduate*. So that was Dave Grusin. Then after *The Graduate*, I did every movie Dave Grusin did, up until maybe just— I don't know what he's done just recently now, but gosh, it goes all the way through *Electric Horseman* and all that stuff. *Electric Horseman* is the one that I was packing up the bass, and I stood up and Clint Eastwood was standing there right in front of me. I didn't know what to do. I just put my hand out and said, "Hi, I'm Chuck Berghofer."

He says, “Oh, I know who you are.” He says, “I’ve been a fan of yours for years.” That’s what Clint Eastwood said to me, if you can believe it. I thought, “Wow.” Ever since then, we’ve been— I wouldn’t say buddies, but every time I see him, “Hey, Chuck, how you doing?” “Fine,” blah, blah, blah, blah.

CLINE: Yes, he’s a jazz fan.

BERGHOFER: Real jazz fan.

CLINE: Of course, he made that film *Bird*, which also Dave Grusin had something to do with, which you’re on as well.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I did that.

CLINE: A bit controversial in some quarters.

BERGHOFER: Yes, but at least he made an effort to do it. I mean, I respect him for that. And the other thing he did that I thought was great, is he didn’t have another saxophone player try to sound like that. He used Bird, and somehow through noise reduction, he took all the other rhythm section out and left Bird by himself there, and then we filled in the rest, which wasn’t easy to do. It was a prepared click [track] you had to follow, because there was no rhythm to listen to or anything, just Bird playing. That was quite a project, really. I know it’s controversial, just because they maybe zeroed in too much on his drug life instead of his musical life.

CLINE: And also a lot of people, I think, even though the technical demands required it, were, I think, somewhat miffed by the fact that the rhythm section tracks did have to be re-recorded, and there is always— You can’t please everybody.

BERGHOFER: I don't know why they didn't just use the original ones. I'm not sure, except— That's a good question. I remember one of the dates I did, that was funny now, but it was the one with *Strings*. What's the most famous one with *Strings* that he played? Whatever.

CLINE: *Charlie Parker with Strings*.

BERGHOFER: Yes, but I mean, the famous song, "I Remember April," was it? No. Well, whatever it is. I'll never forget but one of the band players— I mean, we showed up on the date, and we're doing this thing. One of the band players leans to the other guy, and I could hear him, and he says, "Who's Charlie Parker? Who is this?" They didn't know, because they were just there doing a studio gig. That broke me up. I thought, "Wow."

CLINE: Indeed.

That threw me, what you were saying about Bird. Oh, you had said earlier that you didn't have the experience of hearing bebop as a youth and deciding, "That's for me," or get to the hardcore bebopper, and here you are now playing on the soundtrack as a hardcore bebopper, in a sense playing with Charlie Parker, to some degree. How did that feel?

BERGHOFER: The best part of the whole thing was looking at the album that said "Saxophone, Charlie Parker. Bass, Chuck Berghofer." Jesus, you know, just that alone was kind of funny.

Well, how did that feel? Well, it was still a studio scene, and it was hard to do. It wasn't like having fun at all. It was very difficult.

CLINE: Yes, it sounds very difficult.

BERGHOFER: But as far as the bebop part of it was concerned, naturally, through the years, I played that style with Art Pepper and so forth. So I mean, it's not that so much, but that actually was difficult. I can't say that that was fun either. A lot of studio things aren't, and they're not supposed to be fun. I mean, you go in there to do a certain thing, whereas jazz gigs are fun. I mean, that's the way I approached them anyway. I mean, I'd just go do that. Then it's more for my— In most of the ways, my own enjoyment, really.

CLINE: So when you're coming back from these record dates and eventually film work, TV work, and you stop at Donte's, you encounter this completely other world, you mentioned that a lot of the music that you were playing in the studio, you hated. Obviously, it's work. It's not supposed to be fun, necessarily. Then you reconnect with the music that you love and the thing that really has driven you to be a musician. What were some of the feelings that you had then when you stopped at Donte's? Did you have any qualms? Did you have any second thoughts? Did you have regrets? Were you just totally accepting of this? Did you have any kind of complex feelings about it?

BERGHOFER: A little bit. And other players, sometimes, I think, had the idea that, "Well, he's not really a jazz player. He's a studio musician." I had a little bit of that, but I always stayed in jazz anyway. A lot of guys stopped playing jazz, because they didn't want to play at night anymore or whatever reason, I don't know. But I always had to stay with it. It was mainly because I had to for my own sanity. If I didn't play

jazz every week, tension would build up, and it still does, inside me, that I would have to release other ways, I guess.

Somehow by playing a gig, you get so into it and you release so much pent-up things that comes out that way. In fact, you have to have something to give. I mean, if you were totally empty inside and totally peaceful, I guess it would be hard to play, I don't know. Maybe not, but I— So I did that probably just out of trying to keep myself straight. But I didn't do it to try to make a name as a jazz player or do any of those things, but just for my own.

In fact, my whole career has been that way, in the jazz vein, ever since Shelly said to me, "Don't worry so much about what people think out there. Please yourself." That's really what it is. I mean, it's a total release. It's like going to the— I used to say, "Well, if I didn't have a jazz [unclear] every week, I'd have to go to the headshrinker once a week instead." So that's the way I felt like I could mix the two together, and it didn't bother me too much. In fact, I felt kind of proud of it, that I could do it.

I remember, getting back to one of the first dates I ever did was with Herb Ellis, actually, one of my first record dates, even though it was just a— I don't remember what album. But he told me at that time— Because Herb dabbled in the studio scene. He did a couple of TV shows and this and that and started getting into it. He says, "You know, Chuck, you're adapted to this stuff." And I knew I was, because I could play all kinds of different music. He told me I was adapted to it, and that was true. I was.

I was doing a *Glen Campbell* [*Goodtime Hour*] show. Now, this was way back, too. I did it for about three years or so, and then all of a sudden this other show came, *Carol Burnett* [*Show*]. I got a call from the contractor. He was on his way out here from New York. I didn't know what to do, leave that show or do whatever. So that night I was at Donte's, and Herb Ellis was sitting with me. I said, "What do you think I should do?"

He said, "Oh, you should take the *Carol Burnett Show*, because that one's already been on for three years," and blah, blah, blah. So I took his advice and I did that, and it stayed on for like nine years. So Herb gave me a lot of advice way back then. I met him with Bobby Troup right in the beginning, like I mentioned before, so he gave me a lot of advice about that kind of stuff, and I didn't follow that.

CLINE: Who were some of the other musicians that regularly hung out at Donte's that you would see there?

BERGHOFER: Well, I don't know. Let's see. Well, Nick Ceroli, of course, was always there. And John Guerin hung out there a lot. And let's see. After that I draw a blank. There's plenty of them. I'm sure they'll come to me later.

CLINE: You would characterize it as really the hangout for the musicians?

BERGHOFER: Yes, pretty much. I mean, more than just a hangout. In other words, you had to close at two o'clock, but they didn't. We'd stick around, and then they would start, and that would go till five in the morning.

CLINE: And you had to be at work the next day.

BERGHOFER: A lot of times. If I had to be at work the next day early, then I wouldn't do that. On the weekends or something, sometimes I'd hang out till really late. Then they started doing lunches. Don Mupo, the bartender, was great. Then there was another bartender there, Bob Powell, that had a collection of records that was absolutely incredible. They were still records then. But he had every record known to man, and so he'd play all of his records. He was there at night.

During the day, they had another guy come in, Don Mupo. So they started having lunches. So now that place was a hangout even at lunchtime. It was pretty amazing. They had good lunches, too. Guys would be hanging there in the day. It was quite a scene.

So what was the question you asked me?

CLINE: Some of the musicians that—

BERGHOFER: Just local guys around.

CLINE: Would you say that there was a particular music policy there that was perceivable?

BERGHOFER: That's interesting. Not really, because they had all kinds of different things. They even stretched it into big bands and things, but it was a small room. I remember seeing— "Hello from the North." That band was in there one night. Rob McConnell [and the Boss Brass], really wonderful, too, I mean, right when they were first getting hot.

There was a period of time when I first started, I was there constantly. I know I had a big falling out with Sonny, the woman that— And I didn't go in there for—

Gosh, several years I missed. During that period of time, I know they had some big-time stuff. I don't know if Stan Kenton played in there or who the hell it was, different people played in there that I missed. So I missed a chunk of it. Then I went back toward the end.

CLINE: You mentioned John Guerin a couple of times, and he was certainly one of the big up-and-coming players who became one of the biggest session players during the seventies, for example. Yet he started out as a jazz player. This brings to mind a band that you must have played in, I'm guessing, most of the time, but it's something you hear about now years later, which was Mike Barone's band.

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, yes.

CLINE: And John Guerin was in that band.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: What can you tell us about Mike Barone's gig at Donte's?

BERGHOFER: That was the highlight of the whole thing, really. There were two highlights, but I mean, that was one of them. That was interesting, because at that time, I didn't even use an amplifier in there. So it was really like the old days, in a way, before amplifiers.

We'd had a great time playing all night, and then the last tune we played was the only one that Mike didn't write. Bill Hood wrote an arrangement on "Melancholy Baby." We played that every night at the end. We used to get stomping so hard. That was really one of the highlights.

That band is still going now. I was doing it for a while. He rehearses every Tuesday, and I got where I couldn't make it half the time. There's some young guys now that are really good, that are doing it now. I'm not sure who's doing it at this point. Kevin Axt was doing it. He's another great bass player now. Anyway, it's a lot of work for nothing, really. I mean, Mike drives all the way from— He lives way out of town, up north somewhere, takes him two hours to get here. He has one gig once in a while like at the Jazz Bakery, and everybody gets thirty bucks.

CLINE: It's a love thing.

BERGHOFER: It's just a labor of love, totally. And it's some very difficult stuff. I mean, with the band, it's not something you just side rate. You've got to work on it. Even as many times as I've played, I still have a hard time playing some of the music. It's really difficult, even though you open up the part and it looks easy. It looks like, "Oh. This is easy." It really does look easy when you look at it. When you go to play it, Jesus, it becomes difficult. So I don't do that. I haven't been doing that lately. But, yes, Mike Barone was one of the highlights. That's for sure.

CLINE: At that point, sort of in those early classic days, who do you remember were some of the musicians in the band?

BERGHOFER: Let's see. Boy, without getting a list out, that's a good one, because I don't know if I can really name anybody.

CLINE: You mentioned John Guerin. Do you remember who else was in the rhythm section?

BERGHOFER: I'm trying to remember who played piano. I think Mike Wofford played once in a while with us. He might have been the main guy at that time. In fact, I think he was, yes. I'm trying to remember the trumpet players and everything. Gosh, I don't know. At that time, I can't remember who they were. I don't know if like they were guys around that did the *Tonight Show,* Johnny Odino and guys like that. But I don't know if he played in that band. I don't think so. He was another great trumpet player. I don't know. I can't think of the names of the guys in that band.

CLINE: Now that we're moving into the seventies here, you mentioned Art Pepper, and you said you played with Art.

BERGHOFER: Yes, right there at Donte's. Made an album there [*Art Pepper Live at Donte's, Vols. 1 and 2*].

CLINE: What was it like playing with Art Pepper?

BERGHOFER: Well, it was kind of wild. He was kind of outside there. He was a heroin addict, actually.

CLINE: Right.

BERGHOFER: Somehow, he maintained it. He was very quiet. He hardly said anything. The album we made, believe it or not, to show you how long— I mean, the way it finally ended up was, each side there's one tune. That's how long the tune was. That's how long we played, on and on, chorus after chorus. I don't know if I still have it anymore. I just had it on a tape. It was hard work, actually. It was fun, but we

played a lot of fast tempos, and it was hard work. Still would be today. But it was fun. I enjoyed it.

CLINE: Who else was on that date?

BERGHOFER: Nick Ceroli played the drums. Oh, let me think. Maybe Frank Strazzeri. I don't remember. Possible it was Frank Strazzeri that played piano.

CLINE: I also wanted to mention off tape last time I mentioned that there was a video of a set at Donte's, part of a set at Donte's, with you and Zoot Sims, Larry Bunker, and Roger Kellaway.

BERGHOFER: Right. Now, that was fun.

CLINE: What was it like playing with Zoot?

BERGHOFER: Well, nothing like it. I mentioned, when I mention what it's like to play with Zoot, I say it's like taking a magic carpet ride, because it's effortless. He just had a way of making the whole thing run so smooth. That was really, really fun. I wish I could have done more of it. I actually did his last album [*Zoot Sims Plays Johnny Mandel: Quietly There*], too. Yes, that was wonderful. What can I say? And easy and fun.

The other thing at Donte's that stands out, it was called the Thursday Night Band. It started off, originally, it was Conte Candoli. It was his band, but Leroy Vinnegar did it. Then when Leroy moved away, I started doing it. So that was every Thursday night we had that band, and that was Larance Marable played drums. And Frank Stazzeri. That was the Thursday Night Band. That was the most fun. I mean, it was always the most fun with "Count." Count was another guy like Zoot in a way,

just easy, real easy. Miss him a lot. Some of the most fun I've ever had playing was actually with the Count, and then also Frank Rosolino.

CLINE: What was it like playing with Larance Marable? How did you enjoy that?

BERGHOFER: Great. I still play with him. Yes, he's great. He's one of the last of the real bebop drummers, I think, and a sweetheart of a guy, too. Yes, I still play with him once in a while. He called me not long ago. I worked a gig with him. Yes, he's nice. He's a good guy. In fact, we made a record not long ago. Stix Hooper puts out these records with a whole bunch of different people. Did one with Pete Jolly at one time.

CLINE: You mentioned Frank Rosolino, one of the really outstanding players on this coast, whose life ended up extremely tragically.

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, it did.

CLINE: What can you, if anything, say about Frank Rosolino and, then your reaction to what happened with him?

BERGHOFER: Well, Frank Rosolino was— I don't know. I've never played with anybody, any other trombone player like this, and I probably never will. He was just a step beyond anybody I've ever played with. I don't if anybody will quite be the same as that. There's guys that come close and everything, but nobody will do that. But the combination of Conte Candoli and him together was really one-of-a-kind thing. They were like brothers.

Frank was a comedian. He was always funny. I mean, god, he just had me in stitches all the time. He'd get up on the stage, a happy-go-lucky kind of a thing. But

yet his life, personal life, was kind of tragic. I can't remember all the details, but one of his wives committed suicide, another one this and that, and he's had a lot of tragic things. Then he was depressed about— He wasn't in the studio scene. I mean, all these record dates I was doing and everything, I'd go in and see trombone players that were very good, but nothing like Frank. And Frank wasn't included. But I think that's probably because he was such a great jazz player. I don't know if he was that great a session player, I'm not sure. But I don't know if that's why or they were jealous of him or what it was.

I'll never forget one time I went down there to United Records to do a record date. I pull up, and out in front is Earl Palmer, another great drummer that was in all that scene, buying Frank's golf clubs, because Frank had no money. I mean actually selling his golf clubs, and he was a great golfer, to Earl. I walked in and looked at the trombone players in there, and I thought, "Oh, my god, this is awful." So he was real depressed about that.

I don't know. I saw him about two weeks before this unfortunate thing happened, and he was about as low as I've ever seen anybody. I thought, "Wow, what's going on with him?" And the next thing, I just heard it. I picked up the newspaper, it said, "Jazz musician," and told what happened, which was pretty awful, shot his children and then shot himself. Anyway, took his life, and it was awful. Most people have never forgiven him. He was a great soul, and I'm sorry about that.

There were other people like that. Joe Maini did the same thing, basically, although it was supposedly a game of Russian Roulette. But things like that, some of

these guys, I don't know, he was another wonderful player I didn't mention much about. But Joe Maini was a—

CLINE: You lived near him.

BERGHOFER: He lived next door to me. But Frank Rosolino and Conte Candoli were just partners. It was like Martin and Lewis or something. That's the way they were. I'll never forget the funeral. It was awful. I mean, "Count" came up, and he came in kind of late, and just walked up to the casket and gave him a kiss and left. It was tough.

The good side to that whole thing is that I got a chance to play a lot with them, and that was something I'll never forget.

CLINE: I just have a couple more questions, and I will have to put in a new tape in order to get those without running into danger, so hang on.

TAPE NUMBER: IV, SIDE ONE

April 9, 2003

CLINE: We were talking about some of the musicians that Chuck worked with at Donte's jazz club. Another one that you mentioned you worked with in the seventies was Gerry Mulligan, somebody who had developed a reputation early on while being out here on the West Coast for a while. What was it like working with Gerry Mulligan?

BERGHOFER: Well, probably one of the most musical saxophone players ever. I know he's a baritone player, but he made it sound like a tenor or something. It never sounded heavy or anything. That was a thrill. He liked me, which was even better. I mean, I thought, "Wow." But I mean, the whole group was incredible. Dave Grusin was the piano player, and John Guerin was the drummer for most of the time, and then I think Harvey Mason might have done it for a while. But we worked there, I don't know, not that long, but it seemed a few weeks. Then we worked in the Lighthouse, the new one, a couple of times. That was about it.

Then Gerry asked me to go on the road and do something a couple of times, and I couldn't make it, and kind of disintegrated after that. But, yes, I'll tell you, he was a big-time heavyweight. He really felt good to play with. Baritone isn't an easy instrument, and he made it sound like it was easy. I had a good time with him definitely, yes.

CLINE: What about playing with John Guerin? Obviously, you played a lot together. He developed a reputation for a style that most people wouldn't associate with jazz playing. What can you say about John?

BERGHOFER: Well, he's got his own thing, definitely. He's pretty self-taught, I think. Yes, he plays totally different than anybody else I've played with. I remember back in the older days, olden days, he definitely— He was sort of like Howard Roberts. He'd stretch as far as you could go. He would never be happy with just playing, just doing the same thing all the time. He would push it to the limit. So sometimes it made it hard that way, but it was exciting. He was a very exciting drummer, really, and he got hot doing some of the, I guess you'd say, rock-oriented things, which was kind of unusual for a jazz drummer like he is. Most guys who play jazz never could cross over that well, but he was able to do that. So he's quite a talented guy, still around doing it.

CLINE: You mentioned Howard Roberts, an excellent guitarist who very few people probably appreciate.

BERGHOFER: Well, except the guitar players. They all know him really well.

CLINE: He did a lot of session work.

BERGHOFER: A lot of session work with him, and then I did all his albums that he did. We worked at Donte's a lot, too. That was another group that we worked with a lot. John was on a lot of that.

There was another piano player that played organ, and I'm trying to think of his name now. Steve. Oh, god. He died in a car crash early. I mean, he was

incredible, and I can't think of his last name. Hopefully, before we're done sometime, I'll come up with it. His father was a trombone player. Bohanon. Steve Bohanon.

CLINE: George Bohanon.

BERGHOFER: George Bohanon Is the trombone player, right. But that's not his son. No, it's a different Bohanon.

CLINE: I see. It's the same name.

BERGHOFER: Yes, there's another Bohanon there. Yes, Steve. He's on some of them. I recently played with him. I'm not sure if he's on some of Howard's records or not. He played with us at Donte's quite a bit. Because Howard went through a period of having organ players instead of piano. But anyway, yes, that was another big thing at Donte's.

CLINE: What can you say about Howard?

BERGHOFER: He always pushed it to the limit, too. He was never happy just setting a groove and going along. He'd push it as hard as he could get. So, he was amazing.

One time we had a conversation in a restroom real quick about something. I said, "Well, my whole thing is finding the time thing, feeling the groove."

He said, "Really? I don't even ever think about that. Mine is the harmonic thing," and so forth. That went along for years and years, and finally later on, way later on, the Pete Jolly Trio, we were working at Alphonse's over here. He started coming in, listening to us all the time. Then he said at the bar one night, he says, "You know, I know it's the thing that you guys really have your timing." He called it timing. "Your timing is so great." So, to me, that was like a whole period of time,

from the time where he never thought about that, to where he saw how important it was, because that's the thing that was lacking in his playing. His time was all over the place most of the time, because he was stretching out trying to play all these ideas that he had, never got into the pocket. He finally, toward the end of his life, realized what that was about.

Because to me, music, if it doesn't start with it being in the groove, or whatever you want to call it, and then go from there, it's tough. If you start some other place and never find the pocket, it's torture to play. So I mean, that's what I find with some of the avant garde players. I don't feel a groove so much. Although like I say, I've heard some of those tapes of Ornette Coleman, and there is something happening there, a lot more than I would have given him credit for.

CLINE: So you played a lot at Donte's, and you hung out at Donte's, even except for the period when you had the falling-out.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: At this point, you were married. You were starting to talk about a stepchild.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I had a stepchild [Mike Ace]. He's forty-seven now. We've got a daughter [Michelle Berghofer] that's forty-two now, and some grandkids [Sara Berghofer, Jesse Lacoff, and Andy Ace], and a great-grandson [Nathan Berghofer], and then a new daughter [Charly Berghofer] that I have now, my present marriage, that will be five in July.

CLINE: How did all that playing during the day in the studio and hanging out at night affect the family life?

BERGHOFER: It wasn't good, definitely. It was bad. I have to blame myself for that. I don't do that anymore.

CLINE: Sometimes it's a situation where you're staying out basically because you don't want to go home, because it's already not good there.

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, that's part of it. That was part of it. I didn't really enjoy going home that much. It's too bad. I mean, my kids suffered for it, I think, in the long run. But that's part of the reason I'm not there anymore.

CLINE: How would characterize the, perhaps, inherent difficulty of being a working musician and being a family man?

BERGHOFER: Well, it's not easy. I think I was lucky, actually, because I did most of my work in town, in fact, all of it. I didn't go on the road hardly at all. But guys that have to go on the road, that's a disaster. I mean, especially if it's on the road all year, gigs like if I was working with Tony Bennett or somebody that does two hundred and some-odd dates a year or whatever. I couldn't do that. The only way I could do it, I guess, if you didn't have any children and your wife wanted to travel with you. That might be okay.

But as far as the old days, just even doing it here, being gone all day and then hanging out at night, I have to take the blame for that. Like I say, my car would not go past Lankershim [Boulevard]. I tried and tried. Every night I tried not to do that.

CLINE: Well, I think we'll call it for now, and I want to pick up next time talking particularly about the sort of amazing array of singers that you've accompanied over the years, since you seem to have done a lot of that. Also, even though I'll only have

a brief period to view it, Larry Bunker actually found that video [Zoot Sims Quartet *Live at Donte's*] of the gig with Zoot, which I will have to view tomorrow.

BERGHOFER: Oh, fantastic. Oh, good. Maybe you can get a copy made or something if it's—

CLINE: I won't have time, actually. I have to give it back to him tomorrow when I interview him, but I'm going to get a chance to see that. I'll have a more informed point of view, as far as that goes. But for now, we'll call it, and we'll schedule another session.

BERGHOFER: Okay, good.

CLINE: Thank you very much.

BERGHOFER: Thank you.

CLINE: All right.

TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE ONE

April 16, 2003

CLINE: I have a few follow-up questions from our last session, which ended with the period where you were firmly ensconced as a studio player doing both record dates, and then eventually more and more film and TV work, as well as playing and hanging out a lot at Donte's, among other places, playing some serious jazz music.

Speaking of serious jazz music, you mentioned a couple of piano players that you played with, and I wanted to see if you had a little more to say about either of them. One in particular I'm interested in because he, among other things, but besides being one of the great, I think, under-recognized talents of jazz, was the musician who performed on the first jazz record [*Rare But Well Done*] you heard in your home growing up, and that's Jimmy Rowles. After hearing that record and getting into jazz, what was it like playing with Jimmy Rowles?

BERGHOFER: When I mentioned before about Fred Otis, way back, who was a similar-type piano player, who kind of taught me how to play, when I met Jimmy Rowles and actually played with him, it was a very similar situation, except that Jimmy Rowles sounds, when you hear him on record, like he's sort of a little bit laidback, maybe, you'd say, or something like that, but when you play with him, he's probably the strongest piano player I ever played with. He's actually just really strong. I mean, not overbearing, but you never would doubt where he was. Plus the fact he played so uniquely himself, I mean he didn't copy anybody at all. I never

heard anybody else in his playing. It was just him. He didn't do clichés or do any of those things, so he was a special guy all by himself. And the way he'd voice things and everything was totally different than everybody else.

He was a Leo, and he acted like it. If you look up Leo in the dictionary, his picture should be there, because that's exactly the way he was.

CLINE: Was he sort of the center of attention in that way or the life of the party, in a sense?

BERGHOFER: Well, in a way. Not really, no, no, he didn't try to do that. He was just very straightforward, as far as he didn't— He told it like it was, I'll put it that way. And he enjoyed having a few tastes, so the more he did that, he had a little mean streak in him, too, so he'd kind of get into that. That comes out of his playing, too; you can hear that. But overall speaking, he's just absolutely one of the greatest that ever came along, so I'm really thrilled that I got a chance to play with him and make a little couple of recordings. I made the very first album with him and his daughter, actually, Stacy [Rowles].

CLINE: Another pianist that you mentioned, who, of course, is a local product who had his own share of problems, was Hampton Hawes. What can you say about playing with him?

BERGHOFER: I didn't get to play with him much. I can't remember. I didn't spend a lot of time with him. I listened to him quite a bit. The only thing I can recall is, he was kind of quiet and kind of had his head down at the keys all the time and played great. But I didn't get to play with him that much. He worked at Sherry's, and then

he worked at Donte's when they reopened, or when they opened under that name. Like I say, I maybe played two or three tunes with him is all, so it's hard for me to get into that.

CLINE: You talked a bit earlier about the special relationship that exists between the bassist and the drummer in a jazz group. But there's a very special relationship that in some ways may be even more fraught with difficulty between the bassist and the pianist, particularly because you're not even just dealing with issues of time, but picking appropriate notes to play behind the pianist's harmonic language and to get the feeling to fit. What can you say about that special relationship between the pianist and the bassist, and how do you adjust to different pianists to make that relationship work as best as it can?

BERGHOFER: If it's a piano player that hard to follow, I make sure that I'm standing near their left hand, and I follow them around the keyboard as much as I can. But piano players that I meld with, I don't have to do that. I don't even have to see their hands, and I can tell where they're going. That's the way Pete Jolly always was, of course. Jimmy Rowles, I had to watch his hand once in a while, because he'd do some off-the-wall thing.

CLINE: He'd take some left turns.

BERGHOFER: So as long as I can see their left hand, it's okay.

There's a guy now in town playing, actually one of the busier piano players around anywhere, is Tom Ranier, who absolutely— I mean, it's funny, because he actually listens to the bass line and kind of follows you a little bit, so there's this give

and take. So, many times I'm standing in the crook of the piano, I never see his hands at all, and we're able to play anything.

So it's a give-and-take thing. Some piano players just play the way they do it, and you follow them. And other piano players, if the bass player play another line, he'll kind of go with that. And the same with drummers, of course, some people just play the way they play, and then you play with them. Then other ones, it's a give and a take. So it's a give-and-a-take thing. But some piano players just don't want to— Not that they don't want to give. It's just that they play what they play, and you follow them. So that's sort of where that's coming from.

CLINE: Do you find that some tend to take up a lot of the space in the low register with their left hand that leaves you with a little bit less to do, and some leave you a lot of room? Is that one of the things that's appealing?

BERGHOFER: Yes, boy, yes. That's a good question, because definitely. Some of the— Gosh, I don't know what you call the style, more like Russ Freeman with Shelly Manne used to have the—

CLINE: I was just about to ask about that.

BERGHOFER: The left hand was down there a lot, rumbling around, and so it kind of did get in the way of the bass sometime. Whereas, like, Red Garland or Pete Jolly, that's where that kind of came in, that light left hand, those little comments, leaves it wide open for the bass player. Other guys that play a lot of roots all the times, I like roots in ballads and things, but if you're playing swing or anything tempo, the roots get in the way of the bass, in a way.

But there's just the style of the piano is what does it. There are heavy left-handed piano players that I think probably stem from playing by themselves a lot, for one thing, because they have to cover the bass part. And then there's other piano players that never play a root, and that's difficult to play with sometime. If you don't know the tune they're playing, and I'm looking at their hand, I think, what, what are they— I can't even follow them, because sometimes I won't play some roots till I learn this thing. But, yes, the piano player's left hand has a lot to do with the bass. It can be like in a rhythm section, all of a sudden they add a conga player, and that wipes out the bass. Well, that's the same thing, if the left hand on the piano can do that.

I hate the older style. I shouldn't say that, but I guess I will. Some of the older style piano players are more left-hand oriented. They play a lot of roots, and that's fine, but then you can clash very easily that way.

CLINE: Is there a style of piano playing that you can describe as your favorite or that you prefer to play with?

BERGHOFER: Let's see. I don't know.

CLINE: I mean, obviously you liked playing with Pete Jolly. Is there a way you could sort of put words to it?

BERGHOFER: With Pete, I don't know. Pete's a different animal altogether, because— But he did come from Red Garland, so I don't know. I just love that kind of feel that he gets. But the guys around today are so great, many of them, actually. It's hardly any of them that aren't fun to play with. I'll put it that way. I can't think

of any right now that if somebody called me, most of the guys now, I enjoy playing with all of them.

CLINE: Do you prefer a more transparent approach? Or a fuller approach? Or maybe more strong right-hand melodic sort of approach?

BERGHOFER: Yes, somewhat, but just the musical approach, I mean. If it's good, it's good. So I can't really say I like this one kind and that's it, because it gets back to the old thing I said before, I think, if music is good, it's good. It doesn't make any difference what style it is.

CLINE: Another thing that I wanted to ask you about is, you mentioned some of the session people you were playing with, and now we're going back to sort of the Wrecking Crew period, guys like Glen Campbell, for example. While most session musicians certainly remain pretty anonymous to the public, Glen Campbell certainly did not, and you certainly saw his star rise and then rise some more and then fall, I guess. What were your feelings? Did you have any reactions, watching this happen to somebody who's clearly such a talented musician and who went such a kind of maybe surprising direction with his career? Or maybe it wasn't surprising. I don't know.

BERGHOFER: I think his lifestyle caught up with him. He was, I don't know, partying too much, maybe, which is understandable when you're successful like that. Not sure. I mean, I don't want to get into all the things he was doing.

CLINE: Oh, no, I just wondered—

BERGHOFER: You know, I don't know if he fell or not. Actually, he rose high, but I mean, he's still well known all over the world today. He may not be the star he was

before, but still everybody knows who he is and the wealth of material that he's written and left for everybody to know. I just worked in Phoenix last week, and I have to admit I get on the plane, and I'm thinking, "By the Time I Get to Phoenix." [mutual laughter]

CLINE: Right. But I was thinking, did you, for example, know that he sang and did all that as well? You knew he was a guitarist.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I knew he sang when he was a session player. He used to sing tunes. He'd be— Sure, yes, definitely. Like I said before, I called him the country Jack Sheldon and so on.

CLINE: Right. Another thing relating to the session work, which I really want to explore today, is at some point you began playing bass guitar on these sessions, and you started playing the upright bass and frequently in unison with the bass guitar. Then pretty soon, I'm assuming because of the requirements of the job, you were playing bass guitar. Can you explain how that happened?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I remember it well. Actually, we called it Fender bass, not bass guitar. But in that period of time, people did call it bass guitar. In fact, sometimes I got parts written in treble clef, for some reason, thinking it was a guitar, which were very difficult, because I've always only played in bass clef from trombone on to tuba.

But anyway, there was a show. John Davidson, I can't remember his name anymore, but it was a Kraft Music Hall Hour. John Davidson, you remember he was a big star.

CLINE: Yes, John Davidson, right.

BERGHOFER: I got a call to do that, and I wasn't actually even home. My ex-wife took the call, and it was to do this show at NBC [National Broadcasting Company], and it was on electric bass, they said. At that time, my wife just thought, well, that means an amplifier on my bass or something. She didn't know. Anyway, she took the show.

To make a long story short, it turned out to be on Fender bass. So I borrowed one from a guy by the name of Mel Polland, who was a bass player in town. I took it home, I sat on the edge of the bed and I fooled around with it. I thought, "Well, this is not too hard. It's tuned like the bass. Yeah, I can get by on this."

So I went to the job, and Jimmy Haskell was the leader. We start playing, and get about halfway through the first tune, and he stops the band and looks over at me and says, "Chuck, can you use a pick?" Because of the sound Carol Kaye made with a pick, you know.

Holy god, I don't know. So Bobby Gibbons, a guitar player, was on staff at NBC then, was the guitar player, and I asked him, I said, "Do you have a pick?" He gave me a pick. Now I'm trying to hit the right string with a pick and read the music at the same time. It became very complicated. But I made it through that day, and I made it through the thirteen-week show, and by the time that show— I don't know, it probably went more than thirteen weeks. It went for some time. By the time that show was over, I was playing electric bass with a pick. That was my whole thing.

That started me off pretty much a new instrument. I'm playing electric bass. Well, got to the point where that's all— I did it enough where I started really liking it,

and I got to the point where I wasn't playing the string bass much. In fact, when they'd say, "Do this on string bass," I'd say, "Well, no, try it on this, because it might—" whatever. I could play almost all my gigs on electric bass. So I went almost ten years of hardly touching the string bass at all and playing electric bass, which is ended now.

CLINE: Well, that was certainly the direction the music was going at the time.

BERGHOFER: Yes. If you didn't play electric bass, you didn't work. That's the other side of the coin.

CLINE: You told the story about playing on *Lumpy Gravy* [by Frank Zappa] and borrowing this rather extraordinary old instrument, and you just said that you enjoyed it and you did it a lot. It doesn't seem like the transition was too difficult for you. Does this mean that you were playing bass guitar during the day, and if you were playing jazz gigs, you were playing the string bass at night?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes.

CLINE: How did it feel to go back and forth for you?

BERGHOFER: Well, it was all right. It was not a problem. No, no. It was two different sets of chops, so it doesn't interfere with each other. The calluses were in different places and stuff like that.

CLINE: Did you start listening to other electric bass players and checking out what they were doing, to keep up with the trends on the instrument at all?

BERGHOFER: I'd have to say no. That's weird. No. I don't know. Not really. I don't know who I would say was my— Actually, most of this stuff on electric bass, I

just kind of took it from whatever I did on string bass and made that happen on electric bass and sort of went for that same sound.

I stopped playing with a pick shortly after that show, because I didn't like the highs, and it wasn't warm enough. Just started trying to play, get a decent sound out of the electric bass. The thing that kind of ended that part of my career was when the slap started coming in. Then it became really another technique that— Not only the technique, and as much as I loved it, I love funk music, I'm not funky. I just don't have that thing. I'm a swinger, but I can't play that. I got thrown into that a lot, but I never felt comfortable. I just felt out of place, and it wasn't my thing, so to speak. So, eventually, I just wound up going back, playing what I do. That's basically it.

CLINE: So the ten years that we're talking about where you played mostly bass guitar, are we talking about the seventies now, that period?

BERGHOFER: Yes. If I can remember, it's like *Charlie's Angels*, whenever that was.

CLINE: Yes, that was in the seventies, yes.

BERGHOFER: That was in the seventies? Yes, during that period of time.

CLINE: So we're also then moving into the disco era now.

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes.

CLINE: Did you have to do a lot of that stuff?

BERGHOFER: Yes, unfortunately, and that was part of that slap thing coming in. That started on that, *Saturday Night Fever* and all those things, yes. I showed you a sheet earlier today, and on there is a couple of shows, one of them called *CHiPS*. That

was that same kind of thing. I did a lot of that stuff. I masqueraded as a funk player, but I never felt it right. I never did feel it right, and I still don't today. It's like drummers like Harvey Mason can cross over, can do all that stuff, but I just don't—I've never felt the other side of it. I can feel almost any other kind of music, and not that I don't like it, I mean, I love listening to it. I wish I could do it. It must be sort of like a classical player listening to jazz. Ain't no way I can do it.

CLINE: Yes, some amazing bass playing on some of those funks things.

BERGHOFER: Oh, man. But it's an eighth-note— It's a study in the eighth-note instead of the quarter-note.

CLINE: Right. That's true. Referring to this list that you showed me, this really overwhelmingly large list of movies and TV shows that you've worked on, when did you start moving back into playing the string bass then? What necessitated the move back to the string bass? Was it an artistic shift in the music, what people were demanding?

BERGHOFER: Yes, it would come under the heading of John Williams, I think. He brought orchestras back to the scene. Up until this time, so-called legitimate bass players weren't really working unless you worked with L.A. [Los Angeles] Phil[harmonic Orchestra] or the different symphony orchestras around town, the [Los Angeles] Opera downtown. There were gigs around, but nothing compared to where it is now. Now, orchestral players are at a premium. That's where the movies and everything is. That's what's happening.

The period of time for TV when I was playing electric bass was things like I mentioned, *Charlie's Angels* and, I don't know, *CHiPS* and whatever. Without looking at the list, I can't remember the names of all.

CLINE: It's a lot of the stuff that I think everyone's probably forgotten by now.

BERGHOFER: They were smaller bands, too, as far as horn players and maybe a small string section on some of them. It wasn't really any jazz scoring as opposed to the period of time just before that, you know, going back a ways, when Red Mitchell and Shelly Manne used to do some of the jazz scores for— What's the name? Oh, god, there's some shows back there, I can't even think of those.

CLINE: *Peter Gunn*.

BERGHOFER: *Peter Gunn* and stuff, that's the perfect example, things like that. There's actually a jazz kind of a feeling. Wasn't much happening of that anymore, so it was all either electric bass and then it moved into actual orchestral background.

So suddenly, I got thrown into playing, actually, in bass sections, doing more of that. Like David Rose, I'd play with him during— What was that show? Something about "Heaven Can Wait" or whatever it was, I don't know.

CLINE: Was this the one with Michael Landon?

BERGHOFER: Yes, Michael Landon, yes. Was it "Heaven Can Wait"? I think something like that. [*Highway to Heaven*] That was all arco bass, just one bass. So, gosh, I spent gangs of time just doing that. So that sort of got me back into the string bass.

But still all this time, even through the electric bass and everything, I still played at Donte's at night. I still played my jazz dates with Pete Jolly. So I kept that part up, always did that.

CLINE: Yes, you said you had to for your sanity.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: Since you earlier had mentioned that you had more recently, at least relatively speaking, investigated the so-called legitimate studies of the instrument, you were talking about arco playing and all of that sort of thing, and based on what you were just describing, I was curious to know how it was for you to suddenly find yourself in a role that once again, maybe like the bass guitar, was something that you probably didn't have a lot of background in, playing in a bass section, playing arco parts, playing in an orchestral setting. Was there anything that you did in terms of study or experience that helped prepare you for this or helped you refine it once you found yourself getting called for these gigs?

BERGHOFER: That's a good question, because I'm not qualified for that, actually. That's another example of learning on the job.

But some of my partners that I've played in the bass section with have helped me a lot, each one. I pick their brains constantly. I get free music lessons from them. One fellow, a good friend of mind, young fellow, that's a wonderful classical bass player, Drew Dembowski is his name, showed me a different method of holding the bow, for instance, and showed me a different method of how to get a sound with it. He, along with his other contemporaries, somehow they've all taken me under their

wing, and they don't mind me being there, because I try not to play too loud or get in the way, put it that way, because it's a totally different mindset. It's a different sound, a different way to play.

But the bottom line is, they are classically trained musicians, and that's the other side of it. You don't just become a classically trained musician by deciding to do it. That takes years of practice and everything, so I'm not kidding myself at all that I'm one of those. When it comes to most of the studio work, 90 percent of the studio work we do, it's all fine. It falls well within my realm of capability. In fact, sometimes those kinds of things, the simpler things and so forth, that just require a good sound and pitch, I'm almost better at sometimes. Some of the classical players aren't, because they don't use their ear as much they do maybe a jazz player would. They don't bend as much as might be required for session music that we're playing.

So sometimes a guy like me, a jazzer, we call them, is almost better. A couple of jazzers are good. But when it gets into any of the classical repertoire or anything like that, forget it. Then you're kidding yourself. These people know it, and that's what they do. That's what they study, and that's what they really live for. But not that they don't love jazz; they all come and listen to me play.

CLINE: Are there some of the bassists in these sections who are also jazz players?

BERGHOFER: Not anymore. Chuck Domanico was the only one that was very busy doing that. Actually, I shouldn't say that. There's a new kid now, Mike Valerio. He came in second or something at the L.A. Philharmonic tryouts, which is doing pretty good. He's a jazz player and he plays great electric bass, so he's one of those guys. I

guess, from what I understand, one of his parents or something was a cello player. Anyway, he had a bow thrown in his hand right in the beginning, so he started early.

CLINE: Do you use a French or German bow when you play?

BERGHOFER: I use French mostly, but I also use both. Depends. If I'm playing a gig that has a lot of long whole-notes and it's hard on your arm, I'll take the German bow, because it's a different angle, so I use that. But if it's anything that has any kind of finesse to it or something, I just feel more comfortable with a French bow.

CLINE: Do you find that because of your jazz background, doing things like playing to click tracks or having to sync up with other rhythm players, should that come about in the music, is easier for you than for the classical players who you normally follow a conductor, or are these guys all pretty savvy in the studio?

BERGHOFER: They are now, yes. They're definitely savvy in the studio now, but I think, in general, probably throughout wherever, the country, I'm talking about L.A. players, I guess, but throughout the country, I think it's harder for them time-wise. Some of them don't have the— In fact, I accuse some of them of clapping on "one" and "three." [mutual laughter] I tell them that, too.

CLINE: Oh, yes, I know what you mean.

Interestingly, you brought up all the points that I wanted to talk about today. So what I wanted to talk about now is specifically a lot of the experience you had doing record dates. There's obviously a point where you mentioned where you started doing fewer record dates and more film and TV work, but you've always, it seems, done record dates particularly with famous and at times upcoming and then later

famous singers. Before I get into talking about any of the specific ones, since I'm sure some of these were just record dates you got called for and maybe you didn't even know what it was until you got there, but are there special requirements, qualifications that you think for playing with singers? We've talked about drummers. We've talked about pianists. What about singers and what their needs are?

BERGHOFER: That's a good question. I don't know. Yes, that's a good question. I don't know if there are any special qualifications except that the music is written as a sort of music minus one, when you think about it. Like a lot of times we'll put a track down without the singer. We'll just play the music and then they put themselves over later. Or they'll sing and then they'll do a scratch track, which is usually what, if I have anything to say, I always ask them to sing, because otherwise you're playing against nothing. You don't have any idea what the actual groove is.

In a way, I think probably playing for singers is, to me— I've done a few operatic things, by the way. I've worked with [Luciano] Pavarotti a couple of times, thrown into that realm, in a bass section, and it's been incredible and all, because it's a similar thing. I shouldn't say a similar thing, but the fact is, you follow the singer. I'll put it that way. The orchestra is basically doing that. That's sort of what it is in this. Not that you follow the singer. I mean, the time stays the same, but you follow the mood of the singer. When you can hear the singer, then you can put little fills and stuff in.

So, I don't know. To me, it's almost easier than just the instrumental things, because it's more free, I think. I'm not sure about that. But I'm not sure if it takes

any special thing. You know what it is, actually? It's playing the basic thing for them, because if you get too busy and too jazzy, then it doesn't make it for a singer. You've got to play really the basic thing, and I enjoy doing that. So maybe that's what. I don't know what, but I'm wondering maybe that's what. I don't know.

CLINE: You don't get in the way.

BERGHOFER: Exactly. You don't get in the way, but you have to lay a nice foundation down for them.

CLINE: Do you find that there's a more emotional directness working with a singer doing those songs in that sort of context?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, I do. I do, yes.

CLINE: How do you enjoy doing that kind of work?

BERGHOFER: I love it. In fact, in a lot of ways a lot of guys say, "We've got to play for a singer," and everybody thinks it's a drag. I like it, because in a club or in a live atmosphere, a singer brings the audience into the music a little bit more, I think. They capture their attention, for one thing, and people are much quieter, because if you're just up there playing with a trio and people are talking and do whatever they want to do, but as soon as the singers start, they can still talk and do what they want to do sometimes, but most of the time it quiets down.

So I don't know. I'm one of the rare people, maybe, that actually enjoys playing behind singers rather than— I know a lot of my contemporaries don't really probably enjoy it. But I just enjoy it, always have.

CLINE: Do you think that somehow that gets communicated? You certainly do enough of that kind of work.

BERGHOFER: I must. I don't know. I must, because I know, for instance, like with Rosemary Clooney— I know you don't want to mention names yet, but she was—

CLINE: Yes, she was someone I was going to ask about.

BERGHOFER: She was at— I don't know. She'd be in the booth, and I'd be in a glass. I could still see her and hear her, and there was just this— I mean, the way phrased everything, I don't know, it was wonderful. The same with [Frank] Sinatra, of course. But the whole thing is following their cue.

CLINE: Were most of these sorts of dates then sort of larger group or even like big band or orchestra settings, or were some of them smaller?

BERGHOFER: No, all different sizes. With Rosemary, it was a lot of small groups, like just two horns and a rhythm section. Then also big bands, too. With some of the other singers, it was big orchestras. It depends. It's funny, because if you have a big huge orchestra around you, it's got to make you sound better, I would imagine. Yet some of these singers sound great with just a little teeny group. So it's a testament to their— I'll never forget. There's some Frank Sinatra stuff that's done with just a little small group with Emil Richards playing vibes, a very small group. They did some stuff in Japan and England, and there are some tapes out on that. The old man sounds— Just sings incredible, right with that— Doesn't need a big orchestra behind him. He doesn't need— Naturally. He was the one that made the band happen instead of the other way around.

CLINE: Wow. Interesting.

Well, let's start talking about some of these people in specific. Since you mentioned her first, Rosemary Clooney, let's talk about Rosemary Clooney a bit. What were the special qualities that you felt she had that you enjoyed working with? You mentioned there was some kind of maybe rapport there that you were able to even experience in the studio.

BERGHOFER: Oh, yes.

CLINE: What was it that made her so special?

BERGHOFER: Her absolutely simplicity of singing a song without any— She never did any kind of funny stuff or anything. She just sang it, the tune, the melody, but the way she phrased it was the whole thing. She didn't get frilly or do all these— Or any scat. I never heard her scat one note. Just stuff like that. But she made the tune happen just by singing the pure song itself and the way she phrased the melody itself. Boy, that is the hardest thing, I think, to find in a singer. Most of them feel that they have to embellish something to keep everybody's attention or something like that.

CLINE: Or to show off a little technique, maybe.

BERGHOFER: Show off something, technique, this and that. But to me, well, it's not only in singers, it's in anybody, period. Any instrumentalist. To me, my whole— It's been a study in simplicity, because the hardest thing to do is to do the simplest thing, because you can't hide behind it.

CLINE: What about the experience of playing the time with singers, especially if they start getting pretty creative? How can you describe that role as a rhythm section player [unclear]?

BERGHOFER: Well, that's when you walk into the drummer. [mutual laughter] It's us against them sometimes. It shouldn't move around anyway, and it doesn't, the kind of music we're talking about. So that part, sometimes, if it's a singer that is moving around, then you just concentrate harder and let them fix it later.

CLINE: Since you mentioned scatting, one probably automatically thinks of Ella Fitzgerald, and you worked with Ella as well. What was that like?

BERGHOFER: The stuff I did with her were albums, so she's in a booth somewhere. It wasn't like a live— I wasn't performing with her. I think a lot of it actually made it easy, because Marty Paich— Most of the stuff I think I did with Marty Paich. The arrangements were great, so it was all really straight ahead. So it was pretty easy, actually, and she was very nice. So that was easy. The funny part about all that is that I barely remember it. In fact, if somebody had asked me if I'd done an album with Ella Fitzgerald, I'd have said no. Then it turns out on this list I've got, whatever it is, a couple of them or something.

CLINE: Yes, there they are.

BERGHOFER: So I might have been, like, I don't know, maybe she didn't even sing on them at the time. I don't remember. But I know I was working a lot with Marty Paich in those days, and so that was part of it, I think. I don't know if I was that— I wasn't as close to her as I would have been to Rosemary Clooney, I'll put it that way.

CLINE: You mentioned Frank Sinatra, but I want to make sure we have enough tape.

BERGHOFER: Save the best for last.

CLINE: We may not have enough tape for that. We're getting to the end of this tape. But oddly enough, you've told the story of turning down a gig with Frank Sinatra earlier in your career, and yet one of the things that really made your career take off was cutting a record with his daughter.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: Because of any feelings you may have had about Frank Sinatra as an artist, what were your feelings about Nancy Sinatra, working in the pop music field? And you worked with her again later in more recent years.

BERGHOFER: Yes. We'd become not friends, but I see her, because of "[These] Boots [Are Make for Walkin']" thing and all that stuff. Then I worked with her dad for a long time. Anyway, but there's two different entities, totally. She's the daughter, of course, of Frank Sinatra, and Frank Sinatra Jr., is the son of Frank Sinatra, and I played with both of them. I played with Junior a lot. Junior actually conducted with Frank when I was there. Anyway, two different things. I respect them for who they are and what they do.

Of course, the thing with Nancy, I mean, I'm— What's the word? I'm grateful for that because it did change my career overnight. I mean, it put me on the map, I'll put it that way, and I was really lucky to do that. Now, saying that, the other side of the coin is that it's not exactly something I love being known for on that in my jazz career, but it was a nice thing to happen in my financial career.

CLINE: Yes.

TAPE NUMBER: V, SIDE TWO

April 16, 2003

CLINE: We are back on. All right. Frank Sinatra. You said you worked with him quite a bit. He's certainly one of the more colorful, celebrated, controversial, and famous artists of American music. What was it like working with Frank Sinatra?

BERGHOFER: Well, I started— You know, my first times that I was ever around him at all was back when we did "Strangers in the Night" and that period of time, which, I guess, was in the seventies. It was done at a record studio called Western Recorders. I'd go in there, and he wouldn't show up. In other words, the band would go in and rehearse, and then he'd show up and make like one take and leave, just about like that, and sometimes two or something. So I never got to be around him or anything.

But the good part was that we'd do the music and then he'd sing it and that was it. So the few things I did back in those days were like, "Where is he?" "Oh, there he is over there." You see him for a minute. So I never got to really speak to him or do anything.

You asked me a question just a little bit ago about the fact that I turned him down in the sixties, but yet I did his daughter's album and that was influential and so forth. The main reason, the only reason, I did that is because— Not musically at all. It was because I was just getting started in the studio scene, and I didn't want to— One of the fellows told me along the line, you've got to be available all the time.

Well, that's true. So if I went on the road with Sinatra, that would have been the end of my studio career. So I stayed in town and became available all the time, which was the right move. I've never regretted that.

The only thing I regretted is not being able to play with Frank Sinatra during the period when his voice was at its peak. I still listen to all those records and everything. It brings me back to ground zero. I put them on in the car. I mean, any kind of music that I play all day long and I come home and whatever, I put on, in the car, Sinatra and it brings me right back to just to ground zero, I call it, to where it is. So he, to me, was— I don't know how to put it. I mean, he's the greatest musician I've played with. That's the only thing I can say.

I played with Zoot Sims and Stan Getz and some really good— See, I'm equating, I guess, voice to tenor, aren't I? In a lot of ways, I am.

CLINE: Which makes sense.

BERGHOFER: Yes. Playing with those, that's a similar situation. Even though Sinatra only sings the melody, and he always said he's not a jazz singer, which isn't true, but he sings the melody and phrases it in a way that no one else ever has or probably ever will or ever can.

I don't know if you've ever tried— I'd like to give anybody that reads this a test. Put on a Frank Sinatra record and try to sing along with him. You can't do it. You'll see what I'm talking about. It sounds like the most natural thing when he's singing. Sounds like it's just the way it's supposed to be, but you try to do it along with him, and you'd be surprised. That's a good test for any kid or anybody, student

of music, to do. You know, Miles Davis said he got into listening to Frank Sinatra because of his phrasing.

CLINE: I was just thinking of Miles when you said that, too. It's that somehow there's some people who are so unique that you can't even really fully adopt their mindset, even if you try to imitate them. They're just too original.

BERGHOFER: But yet the funny part about him is he sounds so simple. He sounds like that's the way it's supposed to be. I always thought that, "Wow, that's easy." Sings, "Come fly with me," whatever it is. But, boy, it sure isn't that way.

Of course, he always says it was Tommy Dorsey that he listened to that taught him that, but my feeling is, it's just totally natural ability, because I know there's no way he studied any of this. So it's just a god-gifted thing, and it's hard to be believe, when you actually talk to him, that he has these things inside of him that come out like a pure artist, because he's like a street guy. That's kind of funny, the two different ends. I mean, his life as a celebrity and all the stuff he went through and the things he's done and whatever, all the bad things, all the cameramen he's knocked down and all those things. It's hard to believe it comes from him, because he's got this tender, beautiful thing that comes out when he opens his mouth and he sings a love song. It's hard to believe that person can do all these other things, but I don't know. I never zeroed in on any of that. I didn't care about that.

I mean, look at Miles Davis, the same way. Stan Getz was a pretty evil guy.

CLINE: Yes, and Chet Baker, too.

BERGHOFER: Yes. So the two things don't really seem like they go together, but I guess they do some way. I don't know why or how. There's two different sides. But I just looked at it musically. In fact, with all of them.

It's like— You can't put this in the book, but whoever quoted this phrase was right, "Give me an asshole that plays." Somebody said, "Well, that guy's an asshole." "Give me an asshole that plays," and that's sort of what that is, I guess.

CLINE: How is it different playing behind a singer in even a smaller group, especially in a larger group like I imagine you did with Mr. Sinatra a lot, how is that different from playing in a small jazz group? Not just in terms of— I think it's pretty obvious what's different about the demands of the gig, but in terms of musical satisfaction for you. Is it just different? Is it similar? Are there different rewards? How are they different from one another?

BERGHOFER: Yes, they are different. Playing behind a singer is a little more restricting, but depending on the singers. But it is more restricting, which I don't mind. I mean, that's the funny part about it. There's something I don't mind about that. Playing just in a jazz group is much more free and you do what you want and not worry about stepping on somebody's lyrics or whatever it is.

Yes, it is much more free, and it's probably more work. I know that when I'm playing behind a singer, I tend not to be soaking wet at the end of the job. When I'm playing in a jazz gig, then it is harder work. It's more difficult and it's harder and it takes probably more concentration. But there's something about— I like the simplicity of the singing part, because I still get some musical feedback from it, which

I enjoy. Unless I'm playing with a group of guys that I really love playing with. I mean, sometimes just because it's a jazz scene doesn't make it good. They could be players that are really hard to play with and a lot of work. Sometimes some of those things are the least amount of fun. I'd rather be doing a studio job than a— So it was a big, big area there.

CLINE: For sure. You also, earlier in our interview, mentioned Elvis Presley, and you wound up, especially now that he's been gone a long time, having your name pop up on all kinds of recordings of his. Is there anything more that you can say about Elvis in terms of what he was like as an artist or as a person, or did you even get a sense of that?

BERGHOFER: I remember being in a room with him and hanging out and hearing him talk, and doing things, whatever. Not that I was some sort of a close friend, by any means, but I got to see him on the inside. In other words, not being on a stage or something. I guess the only bottom line I can think of is that, here again, just like I said before, if it's good, it's good. And, boy, he had something happening that was good. Not that I loved that kind of music or anything like that, but what he did with it was pretty incredible. It was good. It wasn't bad. It wasn't like, "Listen to how awful that is." I've never heard anybody say that.

CLINE: What about someone else you recorded with, more in the jazz realm, Mel Torme?

BERGHOFER: Well, that's whole other category. Mel Torme. The best way I can explain what he's like is I did a tour in Japan with him. He's gone now. But he had a

very large ego, and all the guys would tell you about that. I mean, he wrote arrangements, he did—

CLINE: Yes, he did everything. Played the drums, too.

BERGHOFER: He played the drums. He did everything. He was sort of almost like Steve Allen, can do anything. But he had a very large ego, and he'd kind of get on your nerves, I have to say, put it that way. I don't know. He's, what can you say, not the most pleasant guy to be around.

The saving grace of that is, as soon as you get on stage and he opens his mouth and you hear him through your little monitor, all is forgiven. It makes no difference. So there, again, it comes right back to the personality versus the musicality of the person. So I don't count that, again. Now, if he couldn't sing, forget it. I wouldn't want to be around him. But he opened his mouth, and all is forgiven, boy. He was absolutely a genius.

CLINE: How about Carmen McCrae?

BERGHOFER: There again, the studio. I never worked with her in a club or anything. I've heard all kinds of stories about her doing weird things. When you're in the studio, everybody's on their best behavior, I guess, including the artist, I think, because they are being whatever.

CLINE: Well, it's the fishbowl effect.

BERGHOFER: Yes, it is, it is, it is. With her, I mean, she's just another great singer. What can you say? You listen to her stuff.

There again, it's almost like Ella Fitzgerald, I don't remember much about it except we did it. The same with Sarah Vaughan. I don't think that's on the list. There's some Sarah Vaughan stuff I did. God, just gorgeous, you listen to this. You put the earphones on there and the headset and, man, it's like, "Wow, listen to this." The same with Barbra Streisand, I put her on. I mean, the kind of person she is, she's got this entourage and this thing and another big ego, and, oh, god, opens her mouth, all is forgiven.

CLINE: I was just about to ask about her. This is certainly less of a jazz setting than— Barbra Streisand, that is. Clearly you enjoyed and respected her. Is there anything more—

BERGHOFER: Just listen to some of her old standards. I know she sings other things, but way back, she sang just some straight-ahead standards, and, god, they're gorgeous. Here's another person that has no training at all. I don't know if she can read any music or anything like that, but she's just got that pure and natural god-given ability, which all these people we've mentioned so far have.

CLINE: Then there's some people on this list that one would have a difficult time, perhaps, putting in the same category, but I'm curious to know what it was like working with, for example, Barry Manilow. What was it like working with him? He's somebody who started as a songwriter and became a singer and performer almost kind of out of necessity or something.

BERGHOFER: Well, he's another— Well, there again, actually, he's a very nice guy and he's got a big— Well, he should have a big ego, because he really knows what he's doing. He's written a lot of great songs.

But I did an album just not too long ago with Diane Schurr, and he produced it. She, I don't know, for whatever reason, if her voice wasn't up to par or whatever, she was there, but she was like upstairs, whatever. He actually sang in her key all the tunes just so that we'd have some something to play against and any of the keys that she did them in. It's amazing. He sang all the parts. So he's very, very talented guy. I've done several things with him.

He's a big star and so forth, but he's a talented guy. He's not a jazzer. He's just a little bit away from it. He comes close. He understands a little bit, but he's just enough away from it that it's not the real— He's not a jazzer.

CLINE: You did a lot of recordings with Diane Schurr.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: How has that been?

BERGHOFER: Fine. [mutual laughter] It's kind of difficult, I think, because, it depends. But different ideas for— I did one album. I shouldn't bring all that up. Anyway, the point is that she's—

CLINE: Because she's a very different kind of vocalist than the type that we've been talking about, I think, that's why I asked.

BERGHOFER: The latest album I just did with her, I haven't heard yet, but I understand it's very good. So maybe that's different. No, you know what, it's not

even her. It was her managers and people that were around her that made it kind of difficult. That's sort of where I was getting it. But I know Dave Grusin discovered her in the beginning. I did one of her albums way back then. Stan Getz actually played on it. That was wonderful. That was a long time ago, and she was good then.

The only comment I have about her that we can leave out of here is that she got into this screaming mode. But I think people have kind of talked to her about it, and I think they're bringing her back around, because she's definitely got a great talent. She plays piano, does all that. She's funny. Diane Schurr and Diana Krall.

CLINE: Diana Krall is the next person I was going to bring up, because she's somebody who's current. She's very happening right now. Her star has risen very quickly. What's it like working with Diana Krall?

BERGHOFER: I haven't really worked— I mean, I've done a few little things. I did an end title on a movie with her, and she sang one tune on one of Rosemary Clooney's albums. She is absolutely— I mean, I'd love to travel with her, but I can't do it because I've got a family. But I'd like to work some jobs with her around or something, because, god, she's really— How can I put it? There we are again, a study in simplicity in the phrasing. That's what she does. She phrases everything with feeling. The feeling that she has just flabbergasts me, the moods that she sets, and her piano playing is wonderful. This thing we did with Rosemary Clooney, she overdubbed her piano part, and we just sat in the booth. She went out and overdubbed one take, played just absolutely great stuff on it, one take, came back in. Pretty remarkable.

The other thing I did with her, she was just in the booth, and she put her voice over later. When I heard it on the radio another day, it sounded great.

The first time I actually met her that I remembered, was on this particular thing. It was a TV show back in Washington, D.C., the Thelonious Monk Institute TV show. She was on it, and I walked up to her, and that's right when she was getting hot and her album came out. I said, "Oh, I've got your album, and I really love it. I'd like to play with you sometime."

She said, "Oh, we've played together."

I said, "We have?"

It turned out when she was studying with Jimmy Rowles here— She studied with Jimmy Rowles, I guess. While she was doing that, I guess she either came in or she sat in or played and I played with her, and I didn't even remember it.

There's some great players that she's always had. My friend Anthony Wilson now is playing with her, who is my favorite guitar player of all time. But anyway, he's playing with her. In fact, Peter Erskine just called me this morning about something else, and he couldn't do a job that I had for him, and he's working with her. I said, "Well, get me on the gig." He says, "Don't I wish."

But anyway, someday I will. I just hope she doesn't get too big, because she's so good right when she first came out with her little trio playing. God, that was great. I hope it just doesn't get overproduced, that's all.

CLINE: Yes, just leave it alone. Absolutely.

Speaking of vocalists who also play the keyboard, another name that comes to mind is Shirley Horn. I think you've worked with her as well.

BERGHOFER: No, never worked with her.

CLINE: I'm sorry. See, this is what happens.

BERGHOFER: But this is even more important. My daughter [Charly Berghofer] was born while listening to her records. We took her Shirley Horn album, the Johnny Mandel album, into the birthing area, which is like a—

CLINE: Is this the *Here's to Life* record?

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: It's Larry who played on it, by the way. That's right.

BERGHOFER: Yes, that's right.

CLINE: This is the problem I have with doing two interviews simultaneously.

BERGHOFER: That's all right. That's okay, because I've come close. I actually have come close. I was called to do one date, and I couldn't make it. But this is almost more important.

Anyway, we played this stuff, her album, in this room, and every time a doctor or anybody would come in, that the nurses would come in, everything was like, "What is that?" They'd ask, "What is that?" I'd say, "That's Shirley Horn." "Wow." Because it was so peaceful and so lovely. Actually, at the moment that my daughter was born, it wasn't even Shirley Horn who was singing; it was my wife [Julie Allis]'s best friend. Jeannie Pisano was singing from her album at the moment of birth. But

the overall thing was this album I played of Shirley Horn. I still haven't put it on in a while, but that's one of the records I put on to come back down to ground zero again.

CLINE: Yes, it's a beautiful album.

Then somebody that was certainly not considered a jazz singer for most of her career, but someone who has certainly done a lot now and you've worked with in more recent years is Joni Mitchell.

BERGHOFER: Boy, yes.

CLINE: Her more orchestral settings with Vince Mendoza's arrangements. What was it like working with Joni Mitchell?

BERGHOFER: That's a funny story in a way, because they called me. Larry Klein was her producer. He's a bass player, a wonderful bass player. I did a few other gigs with him here in town that he produced. So anyway, I get this call, would I go to England and do this album with Joni Mitchell? Great, wonderful. So I show up in England and get to the studio. I didn't know what to expected, because Joni Mitchell— I was never really a fan of Joni Mitchell. I mean, I know my friend John Guerin was with her for a long time. She, to me, I just thought she's a folksinger or something like that. I don't know. I never was into it.

So we get to the studio, and we play this first chart. I thought, "God." First of all, the arrangements were ridiculous, and then her voice comes in. I thought, "This is the Joni Mitchell?" I couldn't believe it was Joni Mitchell, the one that I was thinking it was. So, actually, after the first— We made a take and we went back in the booth to

listen, and I actually told her, I said, "Joni," I said, "God, I have to admit I've never really been a fan of yours because I'm a jazzer. I was never—."

She says, "Oh, well, so am I." From that day on, she's absolutely— I'm her biggest fan, believe me. She might be one of the very best of them all that I've ever been around. She covers a wide gamut, of course. She's a real true artist, not only musically, but painting-wise, too. But she's just an artist. She sees things in a different light. She sees everything different. You can drive down the street, and she'll see something. "Look. What was that? Look where that tree is over there," or whatever it is. It's almost like somebody that's out-of-their-bird stoned, but she isn't. She's totally straight.

So that album, by the way, *Both Sides Now*, is one of my very favorite. Vince Mendoza was given carte blanche on that, and it's like the— I don't know how to explain it. I call it the new-world Gil Evans. That's sort of what it is. The fact that they let him just do his thing, I love. But, yes, Joni Mitchell— Then I did another album of her material.

CLINE: Right, *Travelogue*.

BERGHOFER: Gosh, I mean, it's a little deeper. It's not just standards. I actually need to have the lyrics in front of me, because it's poetry, on top of everything else. But she's at the top of my list, I'll tell you that. I would go anywhere and do anything with her anytime.

CLINE: That's great. Yet you also find yourself, I'm sure, doing your share of session work where it's just another gig. How much of what you're doing now is, in

the last, say, few years, even the last ten years, really musically satisfying and the kind of thing that you really like to do, and how much of it is just kind of like a paycheck?

BERGHOFER: No, most of it's what I really like to do now.

CLINE: That's great.

BERGHOFER: The paycheck stuff is in the past. I mean, I still get a paycheck, but it's mostly what I want to do now. Whoever said youth is wasted on the young was right, but the older I get, it's a funny thing. You can't have to prove yourself to anybody anymore, so to speak. Not that you've arrived any particular place, but when you're younger, you're always trying to impress somebody. I shouldn't say prove, but impress. That's the point. Not that I don't try. You like to have people like you, I mean musically speaking and so forth, but at this point, the paycheck is important, but I can make it without it. I'll put it that way. So that part, I still do some of those jobs that you're mentioning, like the ones that are a paycheck. And they are, and I look at it that way and think, "Wow, I'm glad I don't do a lot of this anymore," because it's not fun.

But most of the stuff I've been doing now has something to do with music. For instance, right now I'm working with Michael Feinstein at his club [Feinstein's at the Cinegrill].

CLINE: Right, I was headed there, yes.

BERGHOFER: And that's fun. It's kind of a lightweight thing, but it's still fun. He's got a great voice, and he's a nice man. I've got like two dates with Barbra

Streisand with Johnny Mandel coming up. So I know that's going to be musically great. So, stuff like that, and it still pays money. It's good. I'm enjoying it.

CLINE: That's great. And you still play jazz. You still play jazz gigs.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: I did get a chance to see the video of you playing live at Donte's in 1970 with Zoot Sims [Zoot Sims Quartet *Live at Donte's*]. As I was saying to Larry Bunker, it's interesting as sort of a social document, as well as a musical document. The clothing and the styles alone, the hairstyles alone, are somewhat fascinating. Roger Kellaway, for example, I said to Larry, looks like a member of the Bee Gees.

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes.

CLINE: There are many shots of the audience in the club, so you get a good sense of what the place looked like, the kind of people who were there. Everybody's smoking, for one thing, which is something you wouldn't see now.

BERGHOFER: That's right.

CLINE: How much jazz club work do you still do since the demise of Donte's? Actually, maybe I should go there. What happened to Donte's? Do you remember what led to its demise?

BERGHOFER: Yes. Well, it went along and went along and everything was going fine. The owner, Carey Leverett— I mean, I don't know how everything was going fine financially for him, probably not, but the club was still there. Anyway, he decided to sell it. He was getting kind of ill in health. His health wasn't well, wasn't good. He wound up actually living in the backroom of the place, a very small little—

We're talking a closet, almost, an office with a little liquor cabinet thing, and he had a little bed in there. He wound up actually living there.

Anyway, he made some pretty good deal with some Japanese people that wanted to buy the club, and that was all set up, ready to go, and he passed away in the backroom. Well, that, for whatever reason, in their culture, made it not okay to buy. I'm not sure what the deal on that is, so that fell apart. So I think his in-laws or whatever, that prompted them, after he passed away, the people that inherited it, his daughter, he had a daughter then, and his son-in-law, finally, I guess, sold it to the people that wanted it the whole time it was there, which was the BMW agency that surrounded it.

This little club, for people who didn't know, was in the middle of this BMW dealership, and right in the middle was this little club that they'd wanted to buy all these years. Finally, they got it that way. There's not even a plaque or anything there saying what was there, which was a famous place. I can't believe that that didn't happen, at least in the street or someplace. But that was the end of it. It just died right there, but died with Carey, actually, is what it did.

CLINE: Where did you play after that?

BERGHOFER: God, I don't even remember, just little— Whatever was around, anybody that lives— Chadney's was a place that people started. That's gone now, too. Now there's a place called Spazzio, and I worked there, I don't know, twice a month with Pete Jolly, and then I have my own band in there on— I shouldn't say my own band, but I booked so they'd put my name on it, a band once a month I have it in

there with Gary Foster and Tom Ranier and myself and Joe LaBarbera. So that's a nice little band.

Then I work at a place called Steamers once in a while, been working in there with Tamir Hendelman, his name is. Got that up to one date there, another one at Spazzio's, a few things like that.

Then the jazz festival or parties have picked up. I've been doing a lot of those lately, so I go to be away for the weekend and play with different people and it's fun. It's really fun because you don't have to drive home. You go do the gig, and then you just hang out with everybody. So those are fun. Just did one in Arizona this weekend.

I did a couple of jazz cruises, which have been fun. I don't know. That's kind of our vacations, are always those. I take my whole family on the weekend trips and things like that. That's fun. We enjoy it.

CLINE: Did anyplace then take the place of Donte's as a musicians' hangout as a center of activity?

BERGHOFER: Well, there's a new place now that I don't actually go to much, but maybe it's— Nothing has taken the place of Donte's. No, not like that. Not like that.

CLINE: Yes, and before that was Shelly's [Manne-Hole].

BERGHOFER: Now there's a place called Charlie O's that's sort of a hangout, I think, except— I don't know. I don't go in there that much, so I'm not sure. Spazzio's is a very nice restaurant, so it's not really a dive. It's probably more expensive than most. Donte's was a place you'd go in and hang all night, and my tab was five bucks. Now it's five dollars to get a glass of water. So I don't know. But I

don't think there's any real hangouts. But I think the reason, part of that is the laws now. You get executed if you got caught twice drinking while driving, so I think those things have put a damper on places to hang out, so to speak.

CLINE: Do you find that as the musicians themselves, and to some degree the audience, gets older, their priorities change? How much of an effect do you see that having on the [unclear]?

BERGHOFER: A bit. I'll tell you when you see that most is on these jazz parties I do. I look out there and, I mean, it makes me feel young. I'm sixty-five, and it makes me feel young. But it's the blue-hair crowd, definitely. But I'll tell you, more power to them, because you can hear a pin drop in these rooms. You have big ballrooms of people, like four hundred people sitting there and maybe more, I don't know how many, and it's just totally quiet. Anybody that says anything is reprimanded right away. I mean anybody that makes noise. But it's quite a thing, and it's all the older people.

Unfortunately, the young, I don't know what's going to happen. I don't know how you get the younger crowd into that particular setting. I don't know. Two reasons. One is, I don't think that they can afford what the situation is, where people actually go away for a weekend and stay at a hotel. They want to hear all these different players, and it's a vacation for them. But they pay pretty good money to do that. So I think that's part of it.

As far as clubs are concerned, it seems to me that most of the clubs that I see young people in are the real loud rock stuff going on. Jazz clubs are a little more

subdued, and it's an older crowd. I don't know. I don't know how that changes, because it wasn't always that way. The jazz crowd that's there now were all real young at one point, along with the players.

CLINE: And yet you now have jazz education coming up in a big way, a lot of young people going to college now to play jazz.

BERGHOFER: That's right.

CLINE: When they come to places like L.A. to do that, whether it's at UCLA or USC [University of Southern California] or CalArts [California Institute of the Arts] or even some of these independent schools, LAMA [Los Angeles Music Academy] or these other music schools, MI [Musicians Institute], they go to hear music. They go to clubs. They go check out who's playing. How much of that do you see happening in town?

BERGHOFER: I do see a little bit of that. There's a guitar night that happens every Tuesday which John Pisano runs at Spazzio's, and I do see a lot of younger people there. Yes, that is a good example of it, actually. Spazzio's has a younger crowd all the way around. It's not a bunch of old people. But that's the other thing that I always wondered about. Always the musicians' plight of lack of work, so to speak, yet everybody's trying to be one. So it's kind of a funny thing.

So I see it as because of the lack of work, you're making money by teaching other people how to do it so they can have a lack of work and teach other people how to do it. I'm not sure how that works. But it's kind of a strange thing, because all these people— I can understand people wanting to be musicians and everything

because you're in it for love, not money. But on the other hand, I see a lot of people making money doing it because there's a lack of work. So it's kind of— I mean, like going out and doing clinics and all these things, that's a big thing now. A lot of people make their living just doing that now.

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CLINE: I had a few follow-ups from our last session before we start talking about sort of the state of jazz today and your life in it. One thing I wanted to ask you, you've talked a lot about a number of important bassists who came out of L.A. or came through L.A. and whom you encountered during your career here as a jazz bassist. People like Ralph Peña come up, Leroy Vinnegar, Monty Budwig, Chuck Domanico. We'd also talked some about Scott LaFaro, Gary Peacock. I wondered if you had any encounters with or feelings about one of the most famous bassists to come out of Los Angeles, Charles Mingus.

BERGHOFER: Wow. You know what? Somehow I missed him. It was a different style, I guess, for me or something, but I was never— Nothing like I was influenced by the other guys. Somehow, yes, I just totally missed that. I don't know what reason that would even be. I just never got into that. I know he was a great bass player, and I know he was really a pretty violent guy. I heard a lot of stories about that. Just a different style than I was into, I guess.

CLINE: I just wondered.

BERGHOFER: But I know it is kind of amazing that I could have missed somebody with that big of a reputation.

CLINE: It is interesting just to think about how many great bassists came out of L.A. or through here or settled here, because aside from the names that I just mentioned, we've also talked about Charlie Haden and people like Red Mitchell.

BERGHOFER: Red Mitchell was definitely a friend of mine and a big influence, not in my playing so much, but probably the greatest bass soloist I've ever come across even to this day. Not my favorite bass player, as doing the job of walking and accompanying, but as far as playing, well, he just had such a harmonic sense. He played piano great, too, but as far as bass solo, boy, it was just absolutely gorgeous stuff and unlike anyone else that I've ever really heard.

But I was going to say something about Mingus again. I think one of the things about Mingus I remember more than anything is, as more of his composing and writing and everything, as opposed to his actual bass playing, so maybe that's part of it. I thought more of him as a composer, I think.

CLINE: Of course, another bassist who settled here for many years, one of your biggest influences, Ray Brown.

BERGHOFER: Well, that's a given. I don't know, maybe I already told this story on one of these. But when you hear Ray Brown on the radio and you're not sure who it is, "Who the heck is that?" They say, "It's Ray Brown." You say, "Oh, well, that's different." That's something that's just— What can I say? It's almost taken for granted, I guess, because it's so great that you don't even expect anybody to try to get to that point.

CLINE: Do you have any feelings about why L.A. seems like such a great bass town? It's an amazing bunch of musicians on that instrument that come out of here or through here.

BERGHOFER: I don't know. Maybe part of it is it's easier to haul it around than it is in New York. [mutual laughter]

CLINE: Excellent point.

BERGHOFER: Yes, in New York, I've had nightmares. Every time I've been there, I've always thanked God I've had my bass being taken care of for me. I've never actually walked down the street with a bass, but I can't imagine. I know guys that do. In fact, I worked this one job with Barbra Streisand, her last job, her last performance in Madison Square Garden. One of the bass players from New York that was with us in the bass section showed up on a bicycle with his bass strapped to his back. I thought, "My god, riding through all that traffic with a bass strapped on your back." I thought that is incredible.

CLINE: Truly. What about right now? Who are some bassists, maybe some younger ones, in town right now who you think are worthy of mentioning?

BERGHOFER: Yes, there's several, actually, and not necessarily have to be in a certain order that I would put them in, but first one of them that pops to mind right now is Darek "Oles" [Oleskiewicz], which is short for a name that I can't pronounce.

CLINE: Yes, he's Polish.

BERGHOFER: I've heard him play a few times, and he's very good. He's got the strings on here. Funny how some of these guys go back to the old days and trying to

get whatever that sound, and, I guess, the feel. I kind of tend not to do that now because I did it long enough back then that I kind of like the newer— Not new sound, but I mean the metal strings to me are clearer. But there's a lot to be said for that. Anyway, he plays great.

Then there's, of course, Dave Carpenter, who's just wonderful, and he's such an accomplished electric bass player. He does stuff on it that I've never heard anybody else do, accompanies himself. He plays it like a guitar, only he's not a guitar player and he doesn't tune it like a guitar, because he plays a six-string electric bass, but he doesn't tune it like a guitar, which kind of flabbergasts me, too.

Then there's— If I can think of all these names. Anyway, those two come to mind right away, but there is another fellow that works with Joe LaBarbera's group. I can't think of his name right now [Tom Warrington]. It will come to me in a minute. He teaches in [Las] Vegas. He does a lot of— I can't think of his name. It'll come to me later. I'll yell it out in the middle of something. Those three guys.

Let's see. There's a new fellow that came into town that was a student of mine for one day down at UCLA. Was it UCLA? No.

CLINE: USC [University of Southern California] maybe?

BERGHOFER: Not even that. It was Jack Elliot, the Mancini Institute.

CLINE: Oh, yes, at UCLA.

BERGHOFER: Down in Long Beach, I think it was, or wherever it was. I think it's moved now, but this is back when it was actually in Long Beach. Mike Valerio is his name. He's a young fellow that's sort of taken over the town by storm, and he's a

wonderful classical bass player. I haven't heard him play that much jazz, so I don't know about that, but I know he's a great electric player, everybody says. He came in second or something in the tryouts for the L.A. Philharmonic. So anyway, he kind of took over Chuck Domanico's place in the studio scene, which kind of at first really kind of bugged me. But then when I think about it, this kid's like twenty-five and I'm sixty-five. Let him have his turn now. [mutual laughter]

CLINE: Right. How do you view current developments in the approach to the instrument? You mentioned that some people are returning to gut strings, going back to the older sound. I know there's been a lot of back and forth in the last number of years about amplification versus the old way of just putting a mike on the bass. Lots of sort of decision-making has been going on about the instrument and the direction of the instrument. What are your views on where do you see it going?

BERGHOFER: Well, I think that's great. I like it. It's coming back to what the bass— When you think about bass, what the name itself says to me, is even though it's spelled different, it's the base of the thing, it's the foundation. If it becomes strictly a solo instrument, then its function as a base isn't happening. And that happened for quite some time, I thought, through the seventies. The bass became a solo instrument, which is fine. But it's like the old story Barney Kessel told. He played in Europe and he had a bass player over there that was one of those guys that was all over the place and got off the stand and walked up the Barney at the bar and sitting next to him, says, "Well, yes, Mr. Kessel, how do you like it here?" whatever, something like that.

Barney said, “Well, gee, it sounds great, but I think you and I need a bass player.” [laughs] That’s a true story of Barney’s. “But I think you and I need a bass player.”

But that’s what I like about the— I don’t know. I’m kind of enjoying— I know, for instance, John Clayton, wonderful bass player, which I don’t mean to leave out now, either, but doesn’t play with an amp at all. He just uses a microphone, but he’s got a huge-sounding instrument.

Darek Oles does use an amp, but it doesn’t sound like that. I am sort of that way, or I try to be, unless I’m in a— Some rooms you play in, you can’t help it. You have to crank it up, because it’s lost. But the more you crank it up, the worse— You know, I’d rather use an electric instrument, actually, if you’re going to play that loud, like a stick bass or something.

But anyway, as far as that question is concerned, you’re right, it’s changing back. It’s actually going back before— Not before, but back to the beginning when I started at Shelly’s Manne-Hole, had a mike and gut strings. Maybe that’s a good thing.

CLINE: You mentioned at one point earlier in the interview session that you developed a reputation as a big band bass player, even though you hadn’t really come up playing in big bands. Why do you think that is, and how do you see the roles of being a big band bassist and a small group bassist being different or unique?

BERGHOFER: Oh, they’re pretty much different, I think. I don’t know how. You’re right. I never traveled around with big bands. I did Skinnay Ennis when I was

nineteen years old, and that was the only big band I ever traveled with. Somehow, back in the beginning of Juggernaut, which was Frank Capp and Nat Pierce, still going today, that's— Gosh, I don't know if it's thirty years ago or something, it started. I played in that band right in the beginning, and I still do. I don't know if that had something to do with it or not, but it's a Count Basie band, and so naturally, all my listening— I mentioned all this small jazz he was doing, but I also listened a lot to Count Basie, those couple of albums that came out during that period, whatever it was in the sixties, the "Atomic Bomb" album [*The Atomic Mr. Basie*] and the *Basie Plays Hefti* album. Those were absolutely incredible.

But the difference between the big band and the small group is the big band, you're very restricted because you're just playing— You're doing the job, really, of the bass. There you go again. In other words, I don't know if Charlie Haden's ever played in a big band. Maybe he has, but it's a tough job. You've got to play really strong, and it's not that rewarding all the time. You're a workhorse. I'll put it that way. You really are. You have to play really strong, because there's a lot of people that are— Not that you're carrying a lot of people, I don't mean it that way, but it's not an easy ship to move along. When you have a small group, then you don't have to worry so much about moving anything along. In a big band, it's a little different.

So when I play in a big band, I probably play the hardest that I play, but much more so than in a small group. That's sort of the difference, I think. So I sort of got a reputation because I am able to play real strong if I have to, and so maybe that's why I'm a big band bass player. I've got that little thing going like that.

CLINE: Do you enjoy that?

BERGHOFER: I do enjoy it. Once again, it's almost like playing with singers. The arrangements take care of themselves. You don't have to think too much. You just look at the chart. It is a little easier, maybe. It takes some of the pressure off yourself, but it's still not as rewarding as playing in a small group.

CLINE: Did you ever have aspirations to do your own recording project or to become a bandleader?

BERGHOFER: I've had aspirations of doing my own recording project, and I've probably had them for the last twenty-five, thirty years. I'm always saying, "Yes, I'm thinking about making an album," but I never have. I don't know. I've never gotten around to it. I've got the name of the album, and I know what I'm going to call it if I ever do it. I don't know. I'll put the name out now, and maybe it will come out later. Maybe that will make me do it. I'm just going to call it *This Bass is Made for Walking*. [mutual laughter]

CLINE: Well, now you have to do it.

BERGHOFER: And probably do some walking stuff on it. I don't know what I'm going to do. I mean, the idea of an album on bass, to me, I don't know. It's sort of like the Bass Club, when they organized a Bass Club in this town. I thought, that has to be the most boring club of any— I can't imagine anybody going to a bass club and hearing everybody playing together and this and that. I don't know. A bass by itself, I mean, it's nice, and I play once in a while, but it leaves a lot to be desired, I think, because, to me, bass is an accompanying instrument. It sounds so great when you're

playing with somebody and you're down there covering the roots and everything. But when you're just by yourself, it is nice. I listen a little bit.

So when I think about a bass album, if the album has to be all bass solos, I think that's when everybody talks anyway, is during the bass solo. So maybe they'd buy this album and people would communicate more sometimes. [mutual laughter] I don't know. So I'm trying to come up with some kind of an idea to do it that doesn't really have to have a lot of bass solos. And so many things have been done already with, you know, "My friends," and this and that and different things. So I've never been able to come up with an idea of exactly how to present it, so that's probably why I haven't done it yet.

CLINE: You never wanted to seize control of musical direction and become a bandleader and call the shots?

BERGHOFER: No, I don't like that. No, I don't like that. I'm more of a— See, it's the role of the bass. You're an accompanist, and I think that's what happened to me. If I was the piano player, I'd probably had twenty-five albums out, and whatever. But to me, the role of the bass has always been an accompanying instrument, and that's why I'm not the leader of a band, although I have a band. I'm saying I have a band. It's a band I play with, the Midnight Jazz Band.

Because I've been booking it at Spazzio's lately, the girl that books the thing said, "Well, why don't we—" Well, it's a long story. They kept bringing the check out after we'd get through, and they'd give it to the wrong guy, because whoever the

piano player was, that's who they give the check to. Then he'd have to— You know. So I said, "No, give it to me, because I'm booking it."

"Well, the only way we can do that is if you're the leader."

So anyway, to make a long story short, they put my name, "Chuck Berghofer and the Midnight Jazz Band." So that's the first time I've ever had it in the paper, even. I think I cut it out and saved it. First time I've ever been the leader on something. Even though I'm the leader, I don't think I say one word when we're there. Gary Foster still does all the talking. But that band is nice. I think I mentioned it to you before, Gary Foster and Tom Ranier and Joe LaBarbera.

CLINE: Right. Great band.

BERGHOFER: In answer to your question, I don't care about being the leader. Although this little trio I'm working with now, rehearsing, Tamir Hendelman, it's like when I'm playing with these guys, they're young. I said the other night, first time I said, "Maybe I should be the leader." No. But he's got a big name. But because they're so young, I'm like the grandfather, it's kind of funny not to be the leader in that respect. But anyway, you can take that part out of there. [mutual laughter]

CLINE: No, that's okay.

How do you think your work in the studios and your work as a jazz musician have affected each other in terms of your approach to the instrument? Has one enhanced or detracted from the other, or has there been any connection between the two at all?

BERGHOFER: Big, big, big connection, and positive connection. To me, when I hear records I did back before the studio scene, the studio thing is like going to school. It was the closest thing I ever did to going to college for music, because it forces you to learn how to play in tune, for one thing, play different styles, to play things like the first, second time through without making mistakes and so forth. It teaches you about music, which a lot of jazz guys, if you just play jazz strictly, you don't have many restrictions on you, and sometimes it doesn't— I don't know, this is like going to a finishing school. But anyway, for me, anyway, I use that a lot in the jazz thing, because it just makes me play more— Mainly pitch and time and all those things that are so important, more of a musician, but more rounded. I guess that's the best word to use. Much more rounded.

The jazz scene and the studio part of it helps because you have bigger ears than some guys that have never done that. The only ones that haven't done that are basically classical guys, and their ear training is maybe taught with solfège and things like that, which is great. That's a different thing. But as far as you take the music away, and they couldn't make up a tune, some of them. But yet they play great. They can read anything, and as a classical musician, that's the way they are. It's two different things. But for me, the combination of those two things together does nothing but help my situation.

CLINE: That's interesting. I wanted to go back and ask you about a couple of venues, one going way back. I wanted to know if you were aware, when you were

younger, growing up in the San Gabriel Valley, if you'd ever heard of a jazz venue in El Monte called the Georgia Lee's Caprice. Does this ring a bell with you at all?

BERGHOFER: No.

CLINE: No?

BERGHOFER: No.

CLINE: Or a place called the Digger?

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes, yes, the Digger.

CLINE: Okay. Do you remember anything about that?

BERGHOFER: I don't know if I was there. Probably might have been. But yes, I think I probably was. I don't remember anything about it, but I know the name right away, definitely.

CLINE: Because these were places that apparently had big jam sessions and things that would attract musicians from the L.A. area.

BERGHOFER: I must have been there, but I don't remember what it was like or anything, but I know the name, the Digger, for sure.

CLINE: Then one of the things that I also wanted to ask you about specifically in terms of another venue is if you ever went to or played at a restaurant in Hollywood called Linda's during the 1980s.

BERGHOFER: I did, one time, with— Oh, gosh. George Gaffney.

CLINE: Yes, I was going to say it was a big piano players' hangout. George Gaffney played there, Lou Levy, Jimmy Rowles.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I might have played with Lou Levy, too. I might have even played with Jimmy Rowles. I think I started with Jimmy Rowles there. That's right, I did play with him there.

CLINE: So it was the place for a while there for pianists and bassists.

BERGHOFER: Yes, where was that?

CLINE: It was on Melrose [Avenue].

BERGHOFER: Okay. Does it still exist?

CLINE: It's been gone for a long time. And Tom Garvin played there sometimes, I think. But I know that bassists like, evidently, you and—

BERGHOFER: Well, I did a couple. But I know there was another—

CLINE: John Heard played there a lot. Eric von Essen played.

BERGHOFER: Eric von Essen was there the night I played, or one of the nights, one of the last nights I played, he happened to be there, yes.

CLINE: Yes, he wound up working with Jimmy there a lot. They recorded some duo records together.

BERGHOFER: Yes, all those piano players loved him. They thought he was the greatest. I never got to hear him a lot, but I know everybody talked nothing but highly about him. I saw him once. I mean, this kid with long hair, running with like a plywood bass. Amazing. I guess they all loved him. He was a very harmonic player. I think he died very young.

CLINE: Right. He was a close friend of mine, actually.

BERGHOFER: Really?

CLINE: Yes. We played together for like fifteen years or something.

BERGHOFER: Wow. I'd like to hear more about him from you.

CLINE: Yes.

Then another thing I wanted to ask you about specifically was the Pete Jolly Trio, which has an interesting distinction that you told me about in terms of its longevity. How long has this trio been going now?

BERGHOFER: Well, it's more than— All I can say is that the first time I played with Pete was about 1958, and Nick [Martinis], the drummer, used to come and sit in with us at Sherry's. So if you add that up, if it was 1960, it would be forty-three, I think. Is that right? 1960 to now, this is 2003, that's forty-three years. If you add the other two years that I say that we started, that's forty-five years. So we're advertising it, basically, as been together forty-two years or something, I don't know. But it's over forty years, anyway.

Some people have looked into it. Maybe you should look into it. You'd probably have more records, to see if it's, in other words, the group with the most longevity of the original players in it. I mean, there are a lot of groups around that still going around. Count Basie's band is still around, but he's not there anymore. But I mean with the original actual group, I don't know if there's any other group that I know of that's still together for that long. Be interesting to find out.

Anyway, but yes, it's been over forty years with Pete Jolly, the most underrated piano player in the world.

CLINE: This makes me have to ask the question, since any sort of group is a relationship with people, and any relationship with people especially over a long period of time where there's that kind of longevity, that kind of commitment, could be likened as something like a marriage, how do you feel about a group that's been playing that long? Is it still fun? Is it still fresh?

BERGHOFER: Oh, it's fun, yes. It's the most fun I have. The funny thing is, we don't socialize much other than when we play, and I hardly ever see Nick or Pete. And the other ironic thing about the whole thing is we've never had a rehearsal. Now, that's with even doing records. We just go in, and if there's a new tune, maybe we might run over it there at the date or something, but we've never actually gotten together and had a rehearsal. It's so funny. For what?

It becomes such second nature to play with somebody after that length of time. But actually, I shouldn't say that, because the first time I played with Pete, it felt exactly the same. So I don't know if anything's actually changed. It was just so easy.

CLINE: Is there some secret, you think, to having that kind of relationship that lasts that long keep from getting stale?

BERGHOFER: It doesn't get stale mainly because of the way Pete plays. Once again, I'm accompanying him, and his style and the way he plays is just absolutely phenomenal. It's just impossible not to swing with him. If you can find somebody that can't swing with him, then forget it. They can't play. He's the epitome of that.

Starting out together, when we first started out, with just a duo— In fact, Ralph Peña, you mentioned before, who was the only person I studied with, and it wasn't a

very long period of time, short, but Ralph was the bass player with Pete before I was. With Pete, I kind of fell in that way, came in sideways, but they played as a duo. That's all they did. They didn't ever add a trio. So I still kind of told Pete, I said, "God, maybe we ought to work once in a while as a duo and we'll get more work, for one thing. You don't have to pay three guys," because it's really fun because with Pete the time is so locked in that you don't really need a drummer between the two of us.

Anyway, doing that job with him without drums taught me how to play without relying on anybody to keep the time. I think that's helped me through my whole career, just starting out that way.

CLINE: Hearing you talk about the various things that have really helped educate you musically, that kind of an experience, the experience playing in the studios, having to meet the demands of whatever you walk into on that day, makes me want to turn back to a subject we touched on a little bit in the last session, which is jazz education, which has become a big field.

Jazz is now taught at colleges, universities, following the example of North Texas State [University] years ago, and has exploded, basically. You expressed your concerns about what kind of work people actually getting that education are going to find when they finish their education. What are your feelings about this particular way of learning the music, particularly considering how people, say, of your generation and others learned the music in such a different way, because they learned it in such a completely different way?

BERGHOFER: Boy, that's a good question. See, not ever going to college myself, that's hard for me to answer that, because I know that the players that have come from those schools today that I play with, for instance, Tamir went to Eastman [School of Music]. Boy, they are so far ahead of where I would have been at his age, so there's obviously a lot to be said for it. It really helps them. What can I say? There's no other place to go to learn to play. There's no clubs. There's no— What else are you going to do?

But you learn in a different way, I think. I don't know if it's easier or harder, actually, because the other way you're put on the spot and you either produce or you don't or they don't call you back. It's kind of weird. It's like a do-or-die situation. Whereas I'm imagining that going to school, you have more than one shot at it. You can fail and still— Not fail, but I mean you can make mistakes or do whatever you have to do.

But I'm thinking, in fact I'm doing it now, I've got a bunch of bass books I've been reading lately, about actually trying to educate myself. It's almost in reverse. Learning stuff that I probably know, but learning it from how a teacher would show you or something, because I've been thrown into a lot of legit[imate]-type playing, which I'm not, and I always feel uncomfortable doing that. I just learned on the gig with the classical bass players showing me things.

Now, a guy by the name of Dave Young I worked with not long ago, god, I was so impressed with his technique and reading, that I asked him about it. He gave me a couple of books, and now I'm looking at those and got to work on them. Here I

am, this is all with the bow and the thing, and trying to learn a little bit about that instead of just doing— That's something that's really hard to just pick up. You have to study that.

So I guess, you know, I've got the books laying out, and I look at them once in a while. So that's as far— I'm getting closer. I can't say that I'm practicing eight hours a day or anything like that yet, but I might turn into that when I have more time to sit home by myself, just for my own enjoyment, to learn something about that part of it.

But as far as the schooling for jazz, yes, I said that before. I mentioned that. Where's everybody going to go? But from what I've heard of players that come out of that situation, it's amazing how much they learn in a shorter period of time and how accomplished they are. So I mean, obviously, it holds true that education is not a bad thing.

CLINE: There have also been a lot of sort of sometimes contentious arguments over what exactly is being taught as far as what we might define jazz as, and there's been a lot of even further talk, I think, since the arrival of people like Wynton Marsalis and the development of his sort of doctrine about what he thinks jazz is and his role in educating young people about jazz. Do you have any feelings about a philosophy, a best way to look at teaching the music, learning about the music? Or do you even have a sense of how we might define what the music is?

BERGHOFER: Wow. I guess I, along with many other guys that I know, and I saw some quotes on the program that was on KCET, public television, about the history of jazz and so forth.

CLINE: The Ken Burns *Jazz:* [*A Film by Ken Burns*].

BERGHOFER: Yes, yes. I think it's a great thing, because it brought jazz to the people, and all that was wonderful. I was just a little bit upset about the way it was done. To me, it was— How can I put it? More of a— I understand Louis Armstrong's wonderful, and I love him. The way they kind of— I just got the thing out of it like Louis Armstrong started jazz and Billie Holiday. But I don't know what happened to Stan Getz and Zoot Sims and so many people.

I know Bill Evans had one little shot in there for a second. I don't mean to make it say it's a racial thing, and it isn't. I hope not. It never was. Jazz is only place where race didn't make any difference, and I hope that doesn't creep into it now. But it's funny. Maybe it's because it's a West Coast jazz guy talking about it. Wynton Marsalis is brought up on the West Coast, as far as I know.

CLINE: No, he's from New Orleans.

BERGHOFER: Well, that's sort of the West. I mean, not West Coast. I mean East Coast. I'm sorry. I didn't mean West Coast. I meant East Coast jazz, which is a little more— I don't know. That's the theory behind— This goes back to the whole thing, West Coast jazz , East Coast. To me, I was brought up on the West Coast, so my roots actually come from Jimmy Giuffre or somebody. Not necessarily him, but Shorty

Rogers, all those, that kind of thing, whereas the other ones come from a different place.

But I thought that it kind of left out my side of it, anyway, and people that I admire very much, so many players that should have been mentioned in there, to me. Black or white, green, doesn't make any difference. Even Ray Brown, I don't know if he got mentioned much. But maybe he did.

But as far as— What was the original question again? I get carried away on this. I was a little bit upset abut that.

CLINE: Can you indicate maybe an approach, a philosophy, that might be appropriate or advisable to teach people learning about jazz?

BERGHOFER: Yes, I see. Jazz really, if you start putting it into too many categories, then it's not really jazz anymore, because jazz covers a little more of a scope. To me, jazz is music where you improvise and make it up as you go along, basically. There is a form that you follow. You don't even have to do that. But I mean, normally, in the general idea of it, there's a form that you follow, but you have freedom on that form.

So if you start category by saying jazz comes from this and it went to that and it does this and it does that, that puts it in a little tight kind of a restricting category, to me. The idea of jazz, to me, is freedom of expression, of your own self-expression. So that can even take place under— There's a few records that have been out lately with some singers that are almost country, but they're under jazz. But yet they feel that way, too. They feel it is jazz, but they might be with a little bit of a different influence in it once in a while or this or that.

So, as far as teaching and trying to explain what it is, I don't think it falls into one or two or three categories; it falls under a very large one. Then we've totally left out the other side of the coin, which is the more avant garde stuff, which I'm not into, but there's a big— That's a whole other— In fact, I think most of Sweden and Europe is into that. If you're a straight-ahead— Jazz groups over there, they don't really care much about that. They're really into the more stretched-out stuff. That's another category. You have to talk to Charlie Haden about that.

CLINE: He's become more traditional in some ways.

BERGHOFER: Yes, he has, actually.

CLINE: You hit on a topic I wanted to ask you about, which is this whole idea of West Coast jazz. You've described yourself as coming out of that scene as being a West Coast jazz player. Do you think there is something that can be called West Coast jazz, and if so, how would you describe that? What's different about it or unique or special about it?

BERGHOFER: Well, in the beginning, I think it was in— I don't know if it even really exists today. I think it's all one thing today, basically, but back through the fifties and sixties and so forth, I think West Coast jazz was different because it was based on a different kind of harmonic structure, much more, I guess I would call it, modern. I don't know. In other words, getting away from the blues. It wasn't blues oriented. It was based on really some hip changes and voicings between the trumpet and the tenor [saxophone] and the way they— A little bit less aggressive maybe also, if you go back to— If you think of Shorty Rogers' group at the Lighthouse and then

Bobby Troup. He sang and did his thing, but it's all softer. It wasn't blues oriented. That's the main thing. I mean, not that they didn't play blues once in a while, but when they did, it wasn't just straight-ahead blues. It was like on some really different changes and had different melody structure. So I think that's the main difference.

CLINE: Yet many, if not most, of the musicians who played it were not from the West Coast. You being an exception.

BERGHOFER: That's true.

CLINE: What do you think it is about this part of the world that encouraged or inspired that direction, if any?

BERGHOFER: I don't know. When I think of West Coast jazz, for some reason Shorty Rogers hits me between the eyes always, because not so much of his playing, but his writing. And I don't know if that's because West Coast was always sort of the studio, movie, whatever you want to call it, capital of the world, Hollywood. So there was more— I don't know how to put it exactly. People that wrote music tended to be here, other than just straight-ahead jazz players that write tunes, the people that actually wrote music and arranged and so forth, like Shorty. I don't know if that had anything to do with it or not.

Then the other part would be, I think it's a little bit or quite a bit more laidback lifestyle, although maybe it's not that way anymore, but it was then, and hanging out at the beach. I don't know. More laid-back. Clubs were more laidback, everything was more laidback, and so was the music a little more laidback. It wasn't as intense. But those two things together, it seemed like—And I'd have to say, it was white bread

music here. Maybe that put a little different tint to it, a little different thing on the— I don't know, more cerebral maybe, or something like that.

CLINE: Yes, maybe more European in composition.

BERGHOFER: Yes, and so maybe that had something to do with it. But it was definitely two different things. I know that.

CLINE: Do you think the audiences had any influence on the direction of the music at all? Were they perhaps more open-minded, or did it evolve completely separate from any audience considerations? Do you have any feelings?

BERGHOFER: Well, I don't know, because I left out, for instance, Stan Kenton. That's another big influence on that, and on the people, god, they go to wherever, Avalon [Ballroom] or wherever the heck it was that he played, and really a lot of fans. They were principally college students at that time. So I think the music is just a little bit more sophisticated. That's the word I was trying to find. May not swing as hard as East Coast jazz did, and I love— Now I'm more of an East Coast jazz type. I mean that's sort of my way of playing in a lot of ways. But the West Coast part was much smoother and more uptown. I don't know what you'd call it.

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CLINE: Okay, we're back, and we're talking about West Coast jazz, a definition that actually became a bit of a liability for a lot of the musicians, evidently, because it polarized the press so heavily, usually against them, which, I guess, necessitated people like Shelly Manne to frequently point out how many of his musicians were actually from New York.

BERGHOFER: Including him.

CLINE: Including him, indeed. Yet you're comfortable, it seems to me, defining yourself as somebody who was different in that way. You were a West Coast jazz guy. That was your background. When you say that you're more of an East Coast jazz guy now in terms of what you're interested in, how you prefer to play, how would you define that?

BERGHOFER: Well, I'm starting to realize I sound like Ronald [W.] Reagan every time somebody asks that questions, I go, "Well." He does that, too. [mutual laughter]

CLINE: I hadn't noticed that.

BERGHOFER: Well, that's, I guess, only because most of the jazz groups I'm working with, I wouldn't say that they're— Well, maybe they are. Like the band, the Midnight Jazz Band, that's pretty much West Coast-sounding. Pete Jolly, I don't know what you'd call that. It's just swinging hard. I guess the point I'm trying to make is, I don't know if the West Coast and East Coast jazz actually even exist

anymore. I mean, it's all kind of one thing. If you put on an old record, Shorty Rogers or something, or that kind of thing, or you put on— I don't know, what would you call Miles Davis? That's a good one. That's sort of in between, isn't it? Miles Davis, I mean, back in the days of Red Garland, Philly Joe [Jones], those guys, I don't know if you could put that on any coast, because it's right in the middle. There's very great harmonies, modern harmonies.

CLINE: All that stuff that Gil Evans did.

BERGHOFER: I think those terminologies were really for the fifties. I think it all changed after that. Some people are still talking about West Coast jazz. I don't think it exists anymore, unless you happen to— Actually, I'm playing at Lighthouse [Café] coming up with Terry Gibbs and his band. I guess that would be West Coast jazz, and yet if we were back East playing somewhere, what would it be there? I don't know.

CLINE: And yet you think it did mean something earlier, say, in the fifties.

BERGHOFER: Oh, yes, I think it meant something in the beginning. It was definitely different. But now I think it's all mixed together in all one thing. I don't think there is such a thing as that anymore.

CLINE: Well, the world itself is much, much smaller now.

BERGHOFER: Well, definitely. Now I think maybe it's American jazz and European jazz.

CLINE: Yes, and that must be doomed to disappear as a distinction as well one day, I suppose.

BERGHOFER: Yes, hopefully it'll be— Well, that's the only time we'll ever live in peace anyway, is if the world is just a place.

CLINE: Yes. Indeed.

You mentioned one of the people that you felt was neglected in the Ken Burns jazz documentary, Stan Getz, somebody you worked with later in his life during the 1980s. What was it like working with Stan Getz, and what exactly were you doing with him?

BERGHOFER: He called Pete Jolly because he always dug the trio, I guess. He had a concert up in Colorado Springs, and so he wanted the trio to go. I said, "What about the bass?" Because it's hard to travel with.

He says, "I want you to bring your bass." "It's okay," he says, "it's being sponsored by Continental Airlines, and they'll give you a ticket and you just bring it on the plane."

"Really? Okay."

So I go down there to the airport, and I have the bass, and I walk up right to the counter like everybody else does with the bass, no trunk or anything.

"What's that?"

I said, "Well, I have a ticket for it."

So anyway, long story, I finally get on the plane. It won't fit in the seat because the plane is so small now. It will only fit in first class in the front bulkhead seat. So there's a guy sitting there, and I have to go up to him and say, "Would you mind moving back?" The saving grace of the entire trip— I mean, once I got to the

airport, they already started with, “What are you doing with that? You can’t—” I mean, the secret word was Stan Getz. “I’m with Stan Getz.” And Stan was traveling with us. “I’m with Stan Getz.”

“Oh, wait a minute.”

So the same thing happened when I had to go up to the guy in the first-class seat and, “Would you mind?” I said. I dropped the name. I said, “We’re here with Stan Getz.”

“Stan Getz. Oh.” So he got up and he moved, not a problem. I think he got an autograph from Stan or something.

So we get up and we do the gig. We rehearse a couple of tunes, whatever it is, then we had dinner break, and we come back to do the concert. We do the first half of the concert. It’s wonderful. Take an intermission. As we’re walking out onto the stage from the intermission, Stan says, “Just you and me, we’ll do ‘Summertime.’” I think that’s what it was. I think it was “Summertime,” anyway. No, maybe it wasn’t. It doesn’t make any difference. I think it was “Summertime.” “Just you and me. You start it.” “Wow. Okay.”

So at this point now, instead of back where I usually was standing, I moved up front. We start playing, and then he comes in, we play a chorus, we play a two chorus and a three chorus. I look, and I’m standing here on this stage, it’s just the two of us playing. I’m looking at him, I’m playing, I’m thinking— This is a picture in my mind I’ll never forget. It was incredible. Here I’m standing, playing with Stan Getz, who—

There's nothing like the sound that he got. Just the two of us playing, and I take a photograph in my mind that will last a lifetime.

Anyway, so I got the chance to really feel what that was like. He was the sweetest guy to me. I know he had a lot of times in the past where he wasn't the nicest person, I don't think, but, boy, on this thing, he was really, really nice. That's one of my highlights of my career now. But just to hear him take a saxophone out and warm up, it's like a sound that fills up the entire room. You've got to really hear it in person. On records it's wonderful, but when it was in person, it was just an incredible sound.

Anyway, that was a big highlight, definitely. But to have him not be in that thing was a— Maybe he was and I missed it. I don't know. I didn't see every night.

CLINE: Who else was in the band then besides—

BERGHOFER: Just Pete Jolly and Nick Martinis.

CLINE: Oh, it was the trio, right. I see. Wow.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I wish we could have recorded it.

CLINE: Then another person that we talked a little bit about in the last session, that I wanted to hear a little bit more about, is Howard Roberts, one of the least recognized jazz musicians probably in terms of the international awareness of such things, unless you're a guitarist, perhaps.

BERGHOFER: That's true.

CLINE: Somebody who's no longer with us, and somebody who you said is becoming a subject of a book that includes recordings, old recordings that you're on,

and some transcriptions of his solos and things, so maybe he'll get a little more attention. Describe, if you can, a little bit about playing with Howard Roberts, doing some of these early recordings and what your view of it all is now.

BERGHOFER: Well— I'm trying not to say "Well." It's funny, because the few people that I've mentioned his name to that are young people right now that aren't guitar players, actually don't know who it was. "Howard who?" I know they had a big article in the paper a while back, and it had something to do with maybe Bobby Troup or somebody, and the guitar player that was with him, the picture in the background, and they had his name totally wrong. It wasn't Howard. It was like Hugh Roberts or something like that, some other name, not even Howard Roberts. Earl Earl Roberts. Who knows. Whatever it was. I thought, "Oh, man."

But I did many recordings, at least eight albums with him and maybe more, back between '63 and '67. They were what I would call commercial, because they were all like two-and-a-half-minute-long tracks and they were all popular songs of the day and done in a jazz version, but still not really a jazz album.

At the time, I was working at Shelly's Manne-Hole and into playing that music every night. So when I did these records, it was sort of just commercial, so I let them pass. I did the gig and I got the money and was fine and it was fun. But I didn't think much about it, for some reason, so I never really listened to any of that stuff.

Through the years, people would come up to me, guitar players. I mean, every time I'd met a new guitar player, they'd say, "Oh, you're on all those Howard Roberts

albums that I've studied all my life." These kids, you know. I'd think, "Yes, I'm on those, that's fine, yes. Wow, okay." So I still hadn't listened to any of those things.

Now, the book Mitch Holder is writing, this book we talked about, or you mentioned, and he asked me for a quote. I thought, "A quote. Let's see. What can I think of?" I told myself, "I'll have to think about that. I don't know what to say about it."

So he said, "Well, do you have the albums or anything?" Well, I had the albums in the beginning. They were on regular records. They were 33 [r.p.m.] records that my kids put crayon writing on, turned out to be toys. So I didn't have them. So he said, "Well, I'll have them send you copies of these things." Okay.

So finally the copies showed up in the mail one day and I take them out and I look at them, and I say, "Oh, great." I set them up on the record player stand there, and days go by. I thought, "When I have time, I'll put one on and see." So finally, I came home one night and said, "You know what? Maybe I should play one of these." I opened one up, whatever, the first package, *H.R. is a Dirty Guitar Player*, I think was the first one. No, *Color Him Funky* was the very first album. "I'll put it on and see."

I put it on and start listening to it, and then I listen to the next one. I sat there for about four hours and listened to this stuff, and I had tears in my eyes, because I just realized that I let this go by all my life. Here's a guy, one of the greatest guitar players I ever heard in my life, that I actually did all these albums with and didn't even acknowledge it, didn't even realize it. When I put this stuff on, I realized how

great this guy is, or was. I'm sorry it's "was," because I never got a chance to really tell him. I wish he was alive today, because I would have been calling him right now saying, "I listened to this old stuff," because he hated these records, too, by the way. I would have called him up and said, "This is the greatest."

I have to watch it, because my wife [Julie Allis] says, "Don't say too much, because the other guitar players are going to be mad at you." I don't think they would be, because they all know how great he is. But I have to say he's the finest guitar player I've ever heard in my life. So I'm a born-again Howard Roberts fan after forty years. That's forty years ago making these things, and discovering it now is pretty remarkable. So whatever I can do to sponsor his name till he gets recognition he should have had, maybe you can put his name in big letters in the book or something.

CLINE: Right. "Interview with Chuck Berghofer, who talks a lot about Howard Roberts," in big capital letters.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: He definitely was an interestingly eccentric person and player as well, particularly later in his life.

BERGHOFER: Well, always. He was even then. He was kind of forced into the—That's why he didn't like his albums, because it was a commercial-type situation for him. But yet when he played the solos on these things, they were absolutely incredible. I know he felt restricted, and he didn't like to be restricted.

When we played, we played a few clubs, played also with Jack Sheldon and his band and stuff like that. He would love stretching out. I know that. That was his

thing. So he didn't really want to— This was a labor, an actual labor, for him to do these albums. I know that. But, you know, he did say something to Mitch Holder just shortly before he died. Somebody went over to his house and talked to him and said, "Howard, have you ever listened to these old records that you did?"

"No, I hated those things."

So they actually brought some albums over to his house and played it. From what I understand, Mitch said that shortly before he died, he talked to Howard, and Howard said something about, "You know, I heard some of those albums the other day. They're not as bad as I thought they were." So he did get it. At least he did get it, yes.

CLINE: And another great musician who played a lot in the studios and probably because of that didn't get as much recognition as he might have.

BERGHOFER: Yes, that's probably it, yes.

CLINE: Like so many.

BERGHOFER: It's like Wes Montgomery got a lot of wonderful play, all this recognition. That's what bothers me about Howard. Don't put this in the thing, but the first thing I said after I heard Howard was I said, "Jeez, he makes Wes Montgomery sound like a grandmother." But don't put that in there.

CLINE: Okay, we can delete that if you want.

BERGHOFER: Yes.

CLINE: I wanted to ask you, related to what we were talking about with the jazz education topic and also the West Coast jazz topic and various things, you're still

playing jazz and you're still doing studio work. But jazz-wise, do you have any feelings about where you see the music headed right now? Where is jazz going?

BERGHOFER: I don't know. I think it's coming back to where I started, which is— Thank god. For a long time it was going some other direction. I think it's coming back to mainstream now, definitely. And for me, that's good.

CLINE: Do you feel that you're, as a player, being somewhat rediscovered perhaps because of it?

BERGHOFER: Yes. Part of my thing is, everybody else is dead. If you live long enough, yes, really, it's true. It's a weird thing. It's happened in all— It's always been that way. But if you're around long enough, you know— It's strange. At one point, if you live long enough, you're the guy that people come to, to ask about it and do this or that, whatever. But I've got more experience than anybody else. I mean not anybody, but more experience than the younger cats do. So I'm able to— I don't know. I think I've been on more records than they have.

So, you know, your time kind of comes around. It's a strange thing. I always used to think, "I'm going to retire when I'm fifty-five and move to the golf course, and that's it." Well, I didn't realize that you can't retire from music. It doesn't work that way. I guess you could retire if you worked an office job or you worked in whatever, some other form of— And this is something you love. But you can't retire from music.

The funny part is, the point of time I thought I was going to retire is now when I'm actually getting busier in my jazz circles. When I say, "jazz," jazz, I don't know.

That name— God. In playing circles, the kind of music, I shouldn't even say jazz, but music that I enjoy. The other part, the studio stuff, which is mostly very bland and boring, actually, that's diminishing. But it's not just for me, it's for everybody. I mean, it's just the way the business is going. But for me, it works out fine, because at this point in my life I want to really just do more things that I enjoy doing. Instead of saying jazz, I'm going to say good music, is the thing I've been doing more and more of, and people have been calling. It's weird.

I'm starting to do a lot of the jazz festivals now that they have. I mean, by "festival," where you go to a hotel for a weekend and people all come there. So I never did those before, and now I'm being called to do a lot of those, and they're really fun. I take my family and we hang out. All I do is go to one room and I'll play, then I'll be off for a while, and go hear somebody else play, and come back. It's like a vacation with doing something that you really love doing. The other good part, I mean, you're walking down— "Hey!" Everybody knows you. It's fun. So, as far as being busy, I'm probably busier now doing the things that I really love doing than I ever have been before.

CLINE: You mentioned the diminishing work in the studios. Describe a little bit about why you think that is happening.

BERGHOFER: Well, that's simple. I've always done a lot of television work. Movies are another thing, and I do a lot of that, too. But I think, in fact, at last count I've done something like five hundred movies, so that's quite a few of them. But TV shows were always big. Now there is only a few of those going. Most of them either

have the smaller ones, which they've turned into what they call the sitcoms and all those kind of things, if you listen to those, have basically all synth[esizer] stuff with maybe one or two instruments on them. So the synth has definitely cut into the TV part of it, because TV's a thing that goes over your little set, music is there, and nobody even knows it's there.

Movies are another thing. Those are the only ones that are— Big orchestras they're still using for that. But then they're doing a lot of that in other countries because of the politics of— Not politics, but what musicians get here as opposed to other countries. We have special payments. We have a lot of things. In other words, it's much cheaper for them to do it somewhere else. So they're doing that. It used to be every television show, every jingle, every movie, had live music, because there wasn't anything else. And now that there's choices, they're not using it as much. That's what happened.

I always used to turn down as much as I had. That's sort of the way it was. You go along, five days, six days, seven days a week, you'd work, and whatever you worked, you wound up turning down just as much as that. Now it's like everybody's after the one job that's happening somewhere.

CLINE: So where do you see the future of studio work in L.A. being?

BERGHOFER: Well, I think the future of studio work in L.A., you have to go to Budapest or somewhere. [mutual laughter]

CLINE: A lot of these young players who are coming up, one of the big aspirations was always to work in the studios because it was good work and you got to play all

the time, and even though it was still hard to break into that scene, at least there was a lot of work. What do you think these players are going to do now?

BERGHOFER: Well, that's what I'm saying. That's what I've learned about these education systems that are not only educating jazz players, they're educating players. I don't know where they go. I mean, there are community orchestras and there's stuff like that, but I don't know if you can make a living doing that stuff.

There's one outfit in this town, Sandy DeCrescent runs the entire show in the movie scene. If you're not into that particular group, then you might as well forget it, as far as movies are concerned. It was never that way. It's a monopoly now, basically. It used to be four or five contractors for all the different movies. Everybody got a little bit of their share of it. Now it's all basically one monopoly situation.

Like I say, if I was a young guy coming up, I don't know, it'd be awful. But at this point in my life, it doesn't make that much difference to me personally, but it's a little bit sad. I don't know where that's going to go. It's funny, it almost became big corporation running one thing, is what it amounts to.

CLINE: Right. Sort of like the music business. I mean the record business.

BERGHOFER: Yes. The record business is a little more diverse. There's many different companies, different kinds of things. Actually, I'm busier in records than I've been in a long time now. I do more records than I do film work, and that's where I started out, full circle now.

CLINE: So many record companies are really part of one giant company now.

BERGHOFER: Yes, I guess they are, and they're having a rough time because everybody's stealing everything. Why buy a record when you can get it for nothing?

CLINE: Right, get it off the Internet.

BERGHOFER: And not only off the Internet, but I mean, it's always been this way, but more so now, somebody buys a record and you want a copy, they'll burn you a CD. So I don't know what the answer to that is. That's really become— See, the technology has put everybody out, not only musicians playing.

I was in a restaurant the other day in Beverly Hills at the Beverly Hills Hotel and went to the bar to have a drink in between. I worked this gig there. There's a girl playing piano, and then the usual things, you've got bass and drums. But there are no bass and drums, just a synth happening there. So in the old days, would have been a trio there. Now it's just one person.

CLINE: So where do you think the future of recordings is going, then, if CDs are becoming something that aren't purchased so much, everything is just kind of up for grabs in the cyberworld?

BERGHOFER: That's a good question. If I knew that, I'm sure that a record company would hire me to tell them. I don't know. The only thing that's going to stay constant, I think, in music is the art form, and that covers jazz and classical music, basically. And maybe country music, I don't know, yes. But the only thing that's going to remain constant is the art form of the thing, and that'll never end. There's always going to be live players doing that. The only problem with all of that is trying to make a living just doing that.

CLINE: The economics, yes.

BERGHOFER: The economics of it, yes.

CLINE: Indeed.

Another aspect of your life that has had somewhat of a renaissance besides your jazz gig life is your family life. So if you want to just, before we finish this, tell us a little bit about your current family and where things are as far as you as husband and father now.

BERGHOFER: Yes, well, there's a song written, I'm not sure who wrote it, but I'm sure you probably know of it, it's called "Save the Best for Last." In my life, somehow that happened to me.

I was with Frank Sinatra, as I mentioned, I guess, before, in 1991, for about six or seven years up until he retired and then ultimately finally died. But the first orchestra he used was an English orchestra. We toured Europe. So the harpist I met there, Julie Allis was her name. What can I say? I fell in love with her and came back and spent about four years communicating back and forth. Our phone bills were ridiculous, and all this. Make a long story short, she finally moved here. We got married, and we've been married— We just had our sixth anniversary. We have a four-and-a-half-year-old daughter that's absolutely gorgeous. And here I am, sixty-five, with this happening now, with most guys— Even when I mention it to people, they say, "Oh, my god, how can you—" The funny part about it is that people, when I first mention, "Oh, she's having a baby," "Oh, it's going to keep you young." Well, you know, it's true. It does keep you young and makes you, forces you, to stay young,

because you're dealing with a young child, and it makes you not only unable to sit when they're there all the time, because you're getting up doing things for them, mainly. "Daddy, do this. Get up." But it makes you young mentally more than anything.

So here I am in this situation now at sixty-five where most guys are retired, and I feel like I'm just starting a new family. And I am. But I mean I feel like I'm just starting out again in that sense. It's an interesting feeling, because unless I look in the mirror, I feel like I'm thirty-five again or something. Once in a while when I do look in the mirror, it shocks me. I think, "That's me? Holy Christ."

But I have the most wonderful, wonderful wife that anyone could ask for. She's a musician also, and not just a musician, she's a wonderful musician. She's a classical musician. She's trained. She's so much a better musician than I am, so she understands the situation with music and me and allows me to let it come first, as far as my schedule is concerned. And the funny thing is, if there's certain road things I've done lately, I used to love to go on the road. Now I hate it unless they're with me. Now it's pretty miserable, so I've cut that down. I mean, I do it, but in other words, if Tony Bennett called me tomorrow and said, "I want you to go with the band, I'm doing 275 concerts a year," forget it. I wouldn't even consider it. So those things, I have to stay home for that.

Anyway, my life is wonderful right now. It wasn't always wonderful. I had a rough time before. I have a lovely family from before. I have a forty-seven-year-old son [Mike Ace]. I have a forty-two-year-old daughter [Michelle Berghofer]. I have

three grandkids [Sara Berghofer, Jesse Lacoff, and Andy Ace]. I have one great-grandson [Nathan Berghofer]. So that's all there in place and wonderful. But this new one [Charly Berghofer] is like a chance to do it right this time. Definitely, because Julie's such a wonderful mother, this is a chance to do it right and spend time. I was never around the first time. I was just never around. So the kids grew up, and I didn't even realize it. This time, I'm really zeroed in on it. Even though I sometimes get away, I get off easy because of my age. I'll put that once in a while. But Julie does most of the work, I'll have to admit. Anyway, to make a long story short, saved the best for last.

CLINE: That's great. You mentioned last time, or actually a couple of times, you have some recordings that you termed "ground zero" recordings, things that inspire you, things that bring you back to why you're doing all this, what this is all about. You mentioned some of the old Frank Sinatra recordings.

BERGHOFER: Well, that's what I put on.

CLINE: Shirley Horn. Any others that come to mind?

BERGHOFER: Actually, Frank Sinatra is the one that I put on, and almost anything of his. I go through different periods. "Only the Lonely" I put on a lot. I listened, one time, flying back from New York to here, I put "Only the Lonely" on and listened to the track number ten, I think it is, *Spring is Here* over and over and over again, almost the whole trip. I just could not believe how— Anyway, I put that on.

Shirley Horn, I went through a whole— Our child was born while listening to Shirley Horn records, in the birthing. Nowadays you go into it looks like a motel

room, and then as soon as the baby is ready to come, they open up the bed, the thing comes out and all the stuff they need. But we had Shirley Horn playing while she was born.

Then sometimes lately I've been putting on Joni Mitchell, made a beautiful album, which I did with her, *Both Sides Now*. But Frank Sinatra is the one that I put on to bring me back to ground zero. He just does it for me. It's like, "Wow, that's what it's about," when I put it on. It's just so right and just so simple. So that's what I do.

CLINE: You mentioned these old Howard Roberts recordings you've now heard for the first time in forty years or so.

BERGHOFER: Now I've been playing those a lot. In fact, I haven't played the entire eight albums I have yet, but I'll get through all that, because each one, that'll take me eight hours to listen to all of them. But yes, and I've been bugging the hell out of anybody that comes over here. I play it for them, too.

CLINE: How do you feel hearing yourself on these old recordings? Do you ever drag out the old Shelly's recordings, any of those things?

BERGHOFER: No, I haven't brought those out in a while. I didn't like myself on those much because that's before the studio scene, and I was pretty green-sounding to myself. But for some reason, on the Howard Roberts albums, they sound really good. I can't say that— I thought I wouldn't like it, but it does sound good. Some of it, I'm playing electric bass, and it's before we used these roundwound strings, they used flatwound strings. I almost might take one of my basses and put them back on there

because it sounds like the string bass, only not quite. It's more like an Oregon bass or something. Actually, for the stuff that we were doing, I was surprised, it sounds pretty good. I hadn't listened to that for a long time. That's right about the time I started playing electric bass, which I went through, I think I told you before, I only played it for about ten years, because it did make it easier.

But the string bass that I had on Howard's stuff, that was stolen, that was the first great bass that I had. Unfortunately, it got stolen. But, boy, it's nice to have copies of what it sounded like on this stuff.

CLINE: So you don't mind hearing yourself.

BERGHOFER: No, actually, on this I don't. It sounds good. I'm surprised. But once again, it's mainly, there's not— Well, there's a couple bass solos, walking things or something. But it's mainly just a groove thing all the way through, and, yes, that's something I always had anyway. I could always— That carried me through my entire life, is just being able to— I don't know how to put it. If you want to call it swing or something, I don't know. I was always able to lock into a groove and walk. Walk, I guess that's what— And that carried me all the way through my whole career, basically just that, because there's not that many— I hear a lot of bass players, but when it comes right down to really playing time, there's not that many that can do it well, or well enough, I guess.

CLINE: Yes, it certainly has worked for you.

Is there anything you want to add before we wrap it up here?

BERGHOFER: I don't know. It seems like I've gone through my entire life. Each time we've done these things, it's been so therapeutic that I'm figuring maybe you'll continue coming every Wednesday and Thursday. We don't even have to turn the machine on. But you know I'm only kidding. But, yes, it was great going through this. The other thing is, and I talked to Larry [Bunker] about this— I don't know if you want this on the tape or not, of what a great interviewer you are, because the fact that you're a musician and a drummer, but you know how to keep it on track and what questions to ask, and how to do it. That's so important. Otherwise, I'd be just stammering around. I mean, you have a way of leading it through, that makes it so easy, but it's still— You ought to think about hanging a shingle out, saying "Psychologist." You go to musicians and let them tell their entire life story. It's therapeutic, and it's an amazing thing.

CLINE: A lot of our interviewees actually, in all walks of life, all subjects, record that same sort of response.

BERGHOFER: I bet they do. Doesn't have to be just music. Sure.

CLINE: A lot of them find it very amazingly therapeutic.

BERGHOFER: So, maybe add "Doctor." [mutual laughter]

CLINE: That might help me. I could use some help.

BERGHOFER: It was a pleasure meeting you, too. Not that I won't see you again, but a real pleasure.

CLINE: The pleasure's all mine. Thank you very much for taking the time to talk to us.

BERGHOFER: My privilege, believe me.

GUIDE TO PROPER NAMES