

- **THE PLEASURES OF VOICE IN AUTOPHYSIOPSYCHIC MUSIC**

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Let me begin by saying: my notions concerning voice in Autophysiopsychic music, to some, may border on the realm of speculation; however, I am suggesting that the door for research is open. To be specific: one researcher, Mr. Walter J. Ong, a University Professor of Humanities and Professor of Humanities in Psychiatry at Saint Louis University, Missouri, has said, and I quote:

"In various parts of the world, new methods of analysis have been developed whose conclusions reveal the limitations of the Anglo-American outlook we inherit"--end of quote.

I once asked the late Joe Jones the question:

"What was Lester Young's philosophy concerning

Autophysiopsychic music?" He promptly replied with four words:

"Lester played his philosophy."

Now, frequently when musicians, who play Autophysiopsychic music, are talked about, they and their music are described in various terms. Some of the expressions, written off as metaphors, used to describe them are as follows: "he/she was cooking, they were burning last night, they had the pots on, he was intensely F-U-N-K-Y, his chops were together and so on."

Now, it is difficult to know the intentions of the people who use these expressions; however, intentionally or unintentionally, in many instances these descriptions are vulgar to say the least, inadequate and in fact, it is an injustice. It is conceivable, as it is, that some people use these terms due to their environmental conditioning, so consequently they are unaware that these expressions are inappropriate. At best, these kinds of expressions are a way of saying that the musician and his music be given no aesthetic or intellectual admiration. It could be that these expressions are inventions as the late James Baldwin has written, and I quote:

"Be careful of inventions; the invention describes you, and will certainly betray you." --end of quote.

On another level, in discussing a musician's Autophysiopsychic presentation, we can, although it is not speech, talk about it as though it were a voice also, we can talk about "the individual" and about what we "hear" his/her music "saying".

Some listeners, those who are aware, even refer to some individuals as having "found their voice."

Though the musician's voice has become an unclear and controversial notion, I will try to show that we need the term. Voice will become a useful critical concept for the study of solos once we build up a foundation of analysis and application -- a foundation I seek to work on in this paper. I can make the term serviceable by distinguishing three kinds of voice: (1) AUDIBLE VOICE: how much do we hear the person as we listen to it (or how much does the person demand our attention as we listen)? (2) DRAMATIC VOICE: what kind of musician is implied in the music (and how vividly)? (3) ONE'S OWN VOICE: what is the relation of the music to the actual musician? Let me attempt to describe these senses of voice.

(1st) AUDIBLE VOICE: How much do we hear the person?

The distinguishing mark of good music is "the unique sound quality of voice somehow entangled in the tones and transmitted from the instrument for the ear of the imagination. Though music is literally sound, some sounds make us hear someone's character.

Sounds with audible voice give us the sense of a sound coming from the whole being of the musician--; and they touch us--they seem to give us energy, or a sensation, rather than requiring energy to listen.

Perhaps the best example of audible voice is the absence of it. The classic examples tend to be music which does not hold your attention, i.e., inaudible voice. Although we hear it, it has no meaning. The best impression it can make on the ear, which includes the ear of the presenter and the listener is: "Wow! Listen to how much technique I have." Technique, no matter what its limitations, is to project the ethos, the personal character of the presenter. Valid presentors use their technique, only to project their character, their vast array of experiences, thoughts, feelings, concerns and ideas that are entombed in their brain's memory--and more than that--I will say: they speak with their heart. It has been said that the heart is the seat of the intellect. And in the Bible we read:

"for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh" (MATHEW 12:34). And in the Holy Quran we read: "Aye! It is in the remembrance of God that hearts can find comfort" (Cha 13, 29th verse).

You see, there is a relationship between the valid presenter and his/her presentations . The unique factor is that these particular musicians are able to transform the events of their mind and heart into sound. They are able to manifest into sound that which is meaningful to themselves. They are not unlike elegant rational scientists--they only operate with deeply different grammars.

(2nd) DRAMATIC VOICE: What kind of musician is implied in the presenter (and how vividly)?

The sound of the music seems to tell us what kind of person is playing. We feel that we can hear their character or personality in that which they are presenting.

Obviously this dramatic dimension of the music usually comes from the qualities of the music. In such situations the music implies a character who produces those sounds. Just as there is no life without death, however unpredictable, so there is no music without implied character, however nondescript.

(3rd) ONE'S OWN VOICE: What is the relation of the music to the actual musician?

Some people speak of instrumentalist as having found their own voice. People

use this common phraseology to mean that the musician has attained a distinctive profile that sets him/her off from others. We must remember that to attain one's own profile is not easy. Miles Davis has said that it takes years to sound like yourself. This could be because the musical language we think of and experience as private ideas are in fact constituted through the voices of other musicians that echo in our listening experiences. Nevertheless, when some other musician's ideological concept is internally persuasive for us and acknowledged by us, entirely different possibilities open up. Consequently, when a musician finds a profile that seems her's/his they often take on a certain added assurance or authority.

As well, they are poetic--they are, through music, able to express their thoughts and feelings--and if they have lofty character and their

thoughts are filled with appreciation and love for all--their music reflects their love, and if the listener listens intently they will hear and feel that love. The listener, moved to a frame of

mind by the music, senses the character of the musician. The result is that the listener, in listening to the music, experiences a sense of pleasure which is only the musician's character being communicated to the listener through the language of sound.

What I have postulated in the above is that even though Autophysiopsychic music is a grammar, which is not words, it serves as a voice which denotes character, which is the dramatic dimension of Autophysiopsychic music.

For example: the implied character in the music of the late Lester Young tells us that he was a person of humanistic aspirations and values. He expressed and brought joy to thousands of listeners throughout the world. When listening to his music your ear will tell you that his character was warm and sensitive. Trombonist, Dicky Wells, a Count Basie alumnus, maintained that Pres, as he was called, was a "beautiful person, full of (love), harmless. (He) did not bother anybody, loved everybody."--end of quote. Those who knew him will tell you that he was essentially a gentle soul, and I can verify that--he was a gentle soul. Pianist, Billy Taylor, claimed that Young's "approach to everything he did in life was concerned with beauty." Of course I recognized the kind of person he was long before I met him in person. Through recordings, the sound of his told me what kind of person was performing. I could hear his character or personality in his message.

It seems that early in life he found a musical voice, which remained with him throughout his life. The point I am trying to make here is that the pathos--the way he caused you to feel when you listened to his music was the way he really was--if you felt joy--he felt joy--if you felt sadness--he felt sadness, etc. In other words, his music voice could never be divorced from his character.

Equally important were the timing and quality in his musical language, sometimes referred to as terminal junctures or intonation patterns. Above all, in this area, he was impeccable. He could treat notes so as to indicate assurance, by rapidly dropping the pitch, or indicate incompleteness by leveling the pitch in a manner which would suggest continuation, or when he thought it appropriate he would avoid traditional tones, by applying innovative fingerings, whereby he produced a new genre of sound textures. In conjunction with the

sound textures that he introduced let me say that: as a tone language uses changes in pitch to indicate differences in the meanings of words--Lester used changes of texture, pitch and nuance, tempered by his immaterial self, to indicate differences in feelings or to put the audience into a certain frame of mind.

Another unique aspect of his music-voice was the way he voiced silence. It was powerful. (Listen to his recording of D.B. Blues and you will hear the powerful silence that I am referring to.) His silence was powerful because what he choose to present as sound was free of prattling. I never heard him produce idle or meaningless sounds. The elements of music, from his position, were only important when they contributed to his own feelings. His music-voice like his personality revealed his poetic and lyrical qualities to the listener. Those qualities of genius, which seem so natural,--which seldom surface in the Autophysiopsychic music community--he produced and emphasized consistently during his life time. He never sounded as though he was confronted with an ambivalence in deciding what was central to his message--always convincing, authentic, and the logos, the proof, or apparent proof of his artistry was always there, provided by the sound of his music itself, nurtured by the gentle soul that he was.

Finally, Lester found much more than a profile that seemed to be his. He was the purveyor of a theory, tradition, or discipline in which other tenor saxophonists have, in their turn, found a place. That is to say, he is in a position which we call transdiscursive, i.e., he produced the possibilities and the rules for the formation of other Lester Young's, like: Charles Parker, Dexter Gordon, Stan Getz, Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt, Zut Sims, John Coletrane, Sonny Rollins, Ike Quebec, Wayne Shorter, Archie Shepp, Hidehiko Matsomoto etc.--all who were inspired and motivated--who followed the notion or qualities in his voice of music--those who sensed character, warmth, love, meaning, truth and deep feeling in his voice.