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## Acknowledgments

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## Acknowledgments

Heartfelt thanks to everyone who agreed to be interviewed for this book—without their cooperation it would not exist. Most obviously this includes those artists featured in the book's eight chapters, with an extra thank-you owed to Jason Moran for getting the ball rolling by being the first to agree to participate. Special thanks, too, to the interviewees who agreed to talk without having chapters devoted to them. Those who granted formal interviews are listed by name beginning on page 271. Others told me they were willing to talk, but time ran out before I was able to follow through. Even so, the interview requests themselves sometimes yielded memorable moments: George Lewis telling me he'd rather I not use the word *jazz* to describe what I was writing about; Teju Cole speaking casually about Vijay Iyer and his music over dinner after we'd watched Iyer and Wadada Leo Smith perform together at Harvard, having driven over from Emerson College after Cole had been a featured speaker there that same afternoon; Cassandra Wilson, upon my mentioning that I'd particularly like to ask her about Moran (who backed her on her album *Loverly* and credited her with having years earlier introduced him to the Son House song "Death Letter" during his master class on death music at New England Conservatory), flashing a beatific smile and saying, *Jason*. All of these good people, named or unnamed, enhanced my understanding of the ways in which this music continued to evolve as it entered its second century.

The book was written with the financial assistance of the Norman and Irma Mann Stearns Distinguished Faculty Award. I'm grateful to the Stearns family for establishing the award, and to Emerson College for choosing me as its recipient for the 2016–2017 academic year. The college's faculty development funding, which president Lee Pelton has increased since his arrival in 2011, also helped cover the

travel costs involved in researching this project. And when my own allotment from this funding pool was tapped out in spring 2018 and I needed to make one final trip to New York to interview Esperanza Spalding, dean Rob Sabal redirected a bit more of it my way to underwrite the trip. Emerson also supplied me with a succession of graduate student research assistants, whose duties included transcribing interviews and checking facts. Thanks to Emerson for providing them, and to these researchers for their work: Kyle Dacuyan, Shane Aldridge, Annmarie Tompsen, JennyMae Kho, Bill Hatfield, Matthew Herzfeld, and Rick Bach. (Rick so dependably returned accurately transcribed interviews overnight, usually accompanied by a note zeroing in on something the interviewee had said that he found particularly profound or striking, that I continued paying him for such work myself after he graduated.)

Journalism also helped underwrite the book. At the *Boston Globe*, Steve Smith and Hans Schulz edited the newspaper's jazz coverage over the several years the book was being researched and written. Before them, Hayley Kaufman and Mark Shimabukuro edited me in the years I was getting to know the work of Jason Moran, the Bad Plus, Robert Glasper, Esperanza Spalding, and others I realized were making jazz new, and then executive editor Marty Baron and then arts editor Scott Heller—now at the *Washington Post* and the *New York Times*, respectively—both played roles in giving me the opportunity to do so. The late Jack Maher hired me at *DownBeat* in 1985, and decades later the same magazine's Frank Alkyer and Bobby Reed assigned me feature stories on Rudresh Mahanthappa and Julian Lage. Lee Mergner and Evan Haga of *JazzTimes* assigned me numerous album reviews and a 2012 feature story on Robert Glasper and his album *Black Radio*. Joe Keohane and Nate Hopper each assigned me an interview at *Esquire*, with Sonny Rollins and Herbie Hancock. In between my book manuscript being sent out for peer review and my writing its epilogue, David Pulizzi of *Jazziz* assigned me a profile of Tia Fuller.

Publicists, club managers, and others provided me with access to musicians and their music, both live and recorded. There are too many such people to name all of them, but an honor roll of the most helpful starts with the great Fred Taylor, Boston's legendary booker of jazz at Scullers, Paul's Mall and the Jazz Workshop (shuttered by the time I arrived in Boston), Tanglewood, and other venues. Fred's Scullers associates Dayla Santurri and Alexandra Yabrov were always accommodating, as have been Fred's successor Jan Mullen and her box office supervisor Marla Kleman. Fenton Hollander welcomed me to the Regattabar when I was getting started at the *Globe*; the succession of people the Charles Hotel has had overseeing the club since Fenton's departure, most recently Louis Heck and Molly Collins, have been similarly helpful. Stephanie Janes and Jack Wright of the Celebrity Series of Boston and Jennifer Fox of Global Arts Live have been generous about

providing access to their organizations' many world-class events, and Margaux Leonard of ICA Boston approved press passes to two performances associated with Jason Moran's art exhibit there and a third to Teju Cole reading from his book *Blind Spot* while accompanied by Vijay Iyer and other musicians. Rob Hayes, Nick Balkin, Margot Edwards and others at Berklee College of Music have been consistently helpful, as has Sue Auclair of Sue Auclair Promotions.

Beyond Boston, thanks are owed to Carolyn McClair of the Newport Jazz Festival; Matt Merewitz of New York's Winter Jazzfest and his own PR agency, Fully Altered Media; Ann Braithwaite of the Montreal Jazz Festival, New England Conservatory, and her agency, Braithwaite & Katz Communications; Don Lucoff and Maureen McFadden of DL Media; Scott Southard of International Music Network; Jason Paul Harman Byrne of Red Cat Publicity; Ted Kurland of The Kurland Agency; Alex Kurland and Jordy Freed of the Blue Note Jazz Club in New York; publicist April Thibeault provided me press access to the Jazz Standard, floor manager Ivory McKay treated this out-of-town journalist like royalty when I got there, and artistic director Seth Abramson supplied me Ivory's last name when we crossed paths in the press tent at Newport; my former *Globe* editor Steve Smith, now of National Sawdust; and Marshall Lamm of SFJAZZ Center. Especially helpful folks associated with the recording industry include Cem Kurozman of Blue Note Records; Tina Pelikan of ECM (who aside from dispensing recorded music brought me to a Vijay Iyer/Wadada Leo Smith duo performance at the Met Breuer as her guest); Seth Rosner and Yulun Wang at Pi Recordings; Bret Sjerven of Sunnyside Records; Mike Wilpizeski of Concord Music Group; Julia Casey of Verve; Ken Weinstein of Big Hassle Media; and my Sonny Rollins contact Terri Hinte, who joined me at one of the Miguel Zenón performances I caught during Zenón's residency at SFJAZZ Center, Radiclaní Clytus, Stephen Cohen, and Brenda Goldstein-Young provided special help securing the use of video files featuring Jason Moran, Vijay Iyer, and Anat Cohen, respectively, and Jenna Molster explained how NPR Music links could be substituted for the two artists for whom I wasn't able to obtain them.

All of this support would have been for naught if no one had agreed to publish the resultant book. The trade publishers I approached didn't see sufficient potential profit in a book documenting the current jazz scene—"on the rare occasion we do publish [a jazz book]," an executive editor at one explained, "we tend to stick with the tried-and-true classic artists." Fortunately, academic publishers showed more interest in the project. I'm delighted that Beth Bouloukos acquired the book for Lever Press, and am grateful to Mary Francis of the University of Michigan Press for steering me to her. It is a pleasant bonus that Amanda Karby, a graduate of Emerson's master's degree program in publishing and writing, is overseeing the book's production.

Emerson provided me moral support along with its financial assistance. Jeff Seglin chaired the search committee that initially hired me, his departure for Harvard's Kennedy School of Government a few years later opened a tenure line that I eventually filled, and his periodic nudging in the years after his departure helped ensure that I finished my book in time to secure tenure. John Skoyles also took an interest in my project and helped guide me through academia and the tenure process. My wife has accurately described each of them as a *mensch* for these efforts. Pamela Painter and Steve Yarbrough suggested I create a course on writing about music, and acting dean Dan Tobin and acting chair Bill Donoghue signed off on allowing the course to be offered. Jerald Walker and Maria Koundoura chaired the Writing, Literature, and Publishing department in the years the book was researched and written, and both gave my book project their enthusiastic support, as did provost Michael Whelan and dean Rob Sabal. Pam Painter was a joy to have with me for a bunch of live music, always ready to stick around after a show to chat with the artists and snap photos with her iPhone. Other Emerson colleagues who joined me once or more at book-related concerts include Steve Yarbrough, Maria Koundoura, Kim McLarin, Pablo Medina, Florence Gonzalez, Ladette Randolph, Jabari Asim, Roy Kamada, David Emblidge, and John Rodzvilla. And my wife and I ran into Lisa Diercks and her husband, George Restrepo, at one of Jason Moran's performances at the ICA.

Journalism pals Joe Heroun and Joe Keohane also saw music with me, and served as valuable sounding boards as the book progressed. Fellow jazz writer Jon Garelick and his novelist wife, Clea Simon, showed interest in the project when I ran into them in clubs or at Newport, and sold my wife and me on making our first visit to the Jazz and Heritage Festival in New Orleans. Likewise, encounters through the years with Boston-based jazz writer Bob Blumenthal and radio hosts Eric Jackson, Steve Schwartz, and José Massó proved helpful. A jazz bassist who lives down the block from me, Joe Delia, joined me at several shows while the book was being researched as well. So did Dana Garvey, with Rich Wiley joining Dana and me a couple of times too. In addition to keeping me company at those concerts, Dana translated Miguel Zenón's Caravana Cultural lecture on Sonny Rollins for me from Spanish to English.

Dana and Rich were also among those who minded our kids and/or cats while my wife and I were away on reporting trips. The others were all relatives: Emily Abrams, Dan and Leonora Abrams, Nicole and Jerome Stern, Ally and Randall Yee, Kathy and Ken Kassner, and my mother. Danny and Leonora also lent me the use of their house on Cape Cod for a week in April 2017 so I could get away and write. My mother graciously tolerated my using her house in the Hudson Valley as a writer's retreat from time to time—with *her in it*—and/or using it as a staging post for

quick research trips to New York City. Don Andrews introduced me to jazz before I turned sixteen by playing Mahavishnu Orchestra during a car ride; four decades later he and his wife, Rachel, put me up for a night in Connecticut as I was en route to New Jersey to interview Rudresh Mahanthappa.

Said kids (and cats) had to put up with a father who was too often distracted or cranky while laboring on the book and trying to interest agents and editors in publishing it. I missed many more of Abe's and Henry's basketball games than I wanted to, and vacation trips to Montreal and Los Angeles. Even during what the boys proclaimed our best family vacation ever, I slipped away from San Juan's Caribe Hilton for most of one day to watch Miguel Zenón give his Sonny Rollins lecture and concert in Cidra.

My wife, Kim, cheerfully picked up the parental slack that day in Puerto Rico as she always has at home—ferrying the kids to away games throughout Massachusetts, traveling with them to California and Florida while I stayed home and worked, and so forth. True, she traveled with me on some of my reporting trips. But that could entail spending the weekend before our ninth wedding anniversary in New York and keeping Jason Moran's four-year-old twins occupied across the room while he and I conducted the first interview specifically for the book, or meeting me in New York the weekend before our fifteenth so that I could meet with Esperanza Spalding for its final one. Kim not only tolerated my book-induced moodiness and divided attention, she pitched in and gave my manuscript a thorough first read, tidying typos and grammatical slip-ups as she went. I could never have written this book without her help. Now that it's done and I'm pondering the travails involved, I'm reminded of the bookmarks we distributed as party favors at our wedding reception and the last half of a quotation I'd chosen for them from Mark Twain's *Adam's Diary*: "After all these years, I see that I was mistaken about Eve in the beginning: it is better to live outside the Garden with her than inside it without her." I can only hope she feels the same way about me after all the book has put her through.