



The name says it all...

# Just Jazz

December 2019-January 2020

Hi Friends —

**The lyricists who gave us The Great American Songbook** — Berlin, Gershwin, Hart, Porter, Mercer, Fields, Harburg, Hammerstein, Lerner, Loesser, Cahn, and the rest — **although not all of them "well schooled," were well read** with a well learned command of grammar, vocabulary, and syntax that informed their work. And it is my belief that **listening to their songs — especially the stories they tell and the way they are told — like reading good books, can only elevate the listener's thinking, writing, and speaking.** It certainly did that for me.

A crucial, but much overlooked, part of a popular song's storytelling quality is the **verse**, the bit that comes before the far more familiar refrain. The verse is the "prologue." It sets the stage. It gives the song its meaning, especially in a Broadway or Hollywood musical. Alan Jay Lerner reminisced how, during previews of "My Fair Lady," "On the Street Where You Live," arguably the best song in that titanic score, was inexplicably not connecting with the audiences. Then he realized why: They didn't understand how it fit with the show's characters and plot. So he added a verse, set to the music of Frederick Loewe, and suddenly the song not only worked, it became a hit and a standard.

Take, for instance, Ira Gershwin's verse to "A Foggy Day":  
*I was a stranger in the city. Out of town were the people I knew. I had that feeling of self-pity. What to do, what to do, what to do? The outlook was decidedly blue.*  
Setting, character, mood, motivation, in other words, the entire dramatic context — *the story* — of the song: it's all there in these all too often forgotten and literally unsung lines.

More than that, a verse frequently will raise a question that is answered by the refrain. Let's continue:

*But as I walked through the foggy streets alone, it turned out to be the luckiest day I've known.*

"Why was that day so lucky?" you ask. The refrain tells you why: *For suddenly, I saw you there.* Again, from another Ira Gershwin verse:

*They may take you from me, I'll miss your fond caress. But though they take you from me I'll still possess ...*

"Possess what?" the listen wonders. And as the refrain begins, the answer emerges: *The way you wear your hat, the way you sip your tea, the memory of all that — no, no, they can't take that away from me.*

Don't get me wrong: The refrains to these songs, and so many others, can and do stand alone as landmarks, masterpieces of the Great American Songbook. **But their stories are rendered even more vivid, more witty, more poignant when preceded by their indispensable verses.**

Here's wishin' you all a **Cool Yule** and a **Trump-free 2020, by any means necessary**

Bob

## Here's the verse, name that tune (We'll start with an easy one)

1. Days can be sunny with never a sigh  
Don't need what money can buy  
Birds in the trees sing their dayful of song  
Why shouldn't we sing along?

I'm chipper all the day  
Happy with my lot  
How do I get that way?  
Look at what I got

2. When the mellow moon begins to beam  
Every night I dream a little dream  
And, of course, Prince Charming is the theme  
The he for me

Although I realize as well as you  
It is seldom that a dream comes true  
To me it's clear that he'll appear

3. I know too well that I'm just wasting  
precious time  
In thinking such a thing could be  
That you could ever care for me

I'm sure you'll hate to hear that I adore you,  
dear  
But grant me just the same  
I'm not entirely to blame

4. Behold the way our fine feathered-friend  
His virtue doth parade.  
Thou knowest not, my dim-witted friend,  
The picture thou hast made.  
Thy vacant brow and thy tousled hair  
Conceal thy good intent.  
Thou noble, upright, truthful, sincere,  
And slightly dopey gent, you're ...

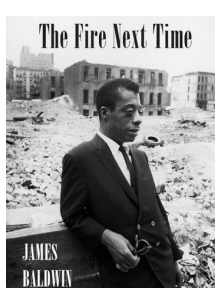
5. Time and again I've longed for adventure  
Something to make my heart beat the faster  
What did I long for? I never really knew  
Finding your love I've found my adventure  
Touching your hand, my heart beats the  
faster  
All that I want in all of this world is you

*Feel free to email me your answers.*

## Quotes of the Month

The real architect of the Christian church was not the disreputable, sunbaked Hebrew who gave it his name but the mercilessly fanatical and self-righteous St. Paul.

A civilization is not destroyed by wicked people; it is not necessary that people be wicked but only that they be spineless.



## RECOMMENDED INTERNET JAZZ RADIO

**NEW LISTING! Sunday Night Swing Set:** Swing is hard to define, but you know it when you hear it. And Linda Yohn knows it *and* plays it. Sun. 7:00-9:00 p.m. ET

**Late Night Jazz with Rusty Hassan:** A Hall of Fame jazz broadcaster. Thurs. 10:00-midnight ET.

**Café Latino:** Singer-songwriter **Laura Fernandez** features two hours of great Latin music. Sat. 4:00-6:00 p.m. ET on Toronto's Jazz FM91.

**Jazz Lives:** Hosted by Bob Dauber: "Classic jazz over the decades covering a variety of genres with one exception — smooth." Mon. 9:00-11:00 p.m. ET

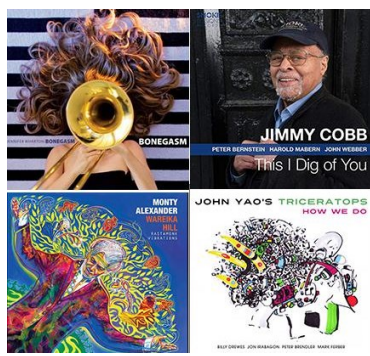
**Friday Night Jazz:** Hosted by renowned trumpeter-educator **Ray Vega**. Fri. 8:00-11:00 p.m. ET on Vermont Public Radio.

**Jazz Spotlight on Sinatra:** Nancy Barell presents Frank Sinatra's music through the decades, along with jazz instrumentalists and singers performing songs he recorded plus other beloved standards. Tues. 7:00-8:00 p.m. and Thurs. 11:00 a.m.-noon ET.

**The Tail-Finned Turntable** and **Still Rockin'** hosted by my buddy, "the Golden Gup," Gup Gascoigne. Sun. noon-2:00 ET on [wnti.org](http://wnti.org).

## THE JUST JAZZ 10 "BEST" NEW JAZZ CDS OF 2019\*

- Akiko/Hamilton/Dechter: **Equal Time** (Capri)
- Monty Alexander: **Wareika Hill (RastaMonk Vibrations)** (MACD)
- Alan Broadbent: **New York Notes** (Savant)
- Jimmy Cobb: **This I Dig of You** (Smoke Sessions)
- Nick Grinder: **Farallon** (Outside In Music)
- Mike Holoher & the Gotham Jazz Orchestra: **Hiding Out** (Zoho)\*\*
- Peter Nelson: **Ash, Dust, and the Chalkboard Cinema** (Outside In Music)
- Roberta Piket: **Domestic Harmony: Piket Plays Mintz** (Thirteenth Note)
- Jennifer Wharton's Bonegasm: **Bonegasm** (Sunnyside)
- John Yao's Triceratops: **How We Do** (See Tao)



## BEST LATIN JAZZ CDS

- Jane Bunnett & Maqueque: **On Firm Ground / Terra Firma** (Linus Entertainment)
- Wayne Wallace Latin Jazz Quintet: **The Rhythm of Invention** (Patois)

## BEST NEW CD OF PREVIOUSLY UNRELEASED MATERIAL

- John Coltrane: **Blue World** (Impulse)

## BEST BOX SETS

- The Art Ensemble of Chicago and Associated Ensembles (ECM)
- Nat King Cole: **Hittin' The Ramp: The Early Years (1936-1943)** (Resonance)
- Various Artists: **The Complete Cuban Jam Sessions** (Panart)

\*Of course, the word "best" is nonsense, since all it means to anyone is just "my favorite." Incidentally, if your CD is not on my list, maybe it's because your record label or publicist or you didn't send it to me.

\*\* Congratulans, Mike, on your Grammy nomination in the Best Large Jazz Ensemble Recording category.



## UPCOMING AREA JAZZ EVENTS

**Sun., January 26, 3:00:** drummer **Nick Scheuble** Quartet featuring pianist Tomoko Ohno, trumpeter Max Morden, and bassist Tim Givens  
\$30 advance / \$35 at the door  
Rutherford Hall, 1686 Rt.517, Allamuchy, NJ; 908-852-1894 ext. 338 or 908-637-8461

The **New Brunswick Jazz Project** — "bringing great Jazz to Central Jersey" — regularly offers jazz events at numerous venues throughout New Brunswick, NJ. Click [HERE](#) for their monthly schedule.

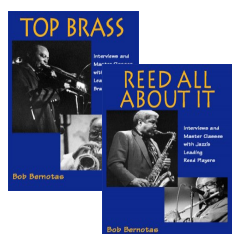
## Acclaimed Jazz Books by Bob

*Top Brass: Interviews and Master Classes with Jazz's Leading Brass Players*

*Reed All About It: Interviews and Master Classes with Jazz's Leading Reed Players*

[temporarily out of print]

\$20, plus shipping  
[jazzbob.com](http://jazzbob.com)



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