

I was born March 9, 1938, the year the planet neptune was discovered and Superman was created. Heh, heh, heh. I was born in Receiving Hospital in downtown Detroit.

Being an only child, I had a lot of love and was always surrounded by this. I always had what I wanted and whatever, a lot of affection.

I discovered music when I was three years old. Music always intrigued me, I danced at this age.

The music was there so my parents bought me my first set of drums when I was seven years old.

And to the assemblies I'd bring a snare drum and I'd play. And the teacher would ask the kids in the class, "Children please express what you would like to be when you grow up." So, one kid said, "I'll be a policeman." And I never would participate because I was a drummer there and that's all I ever wanted to be. So, I never would say, "I wanna be a drummer." I just kinda shyly wouldn't say these things. So, drumming put me in another..... kids looked at me as a real musician. At age twelve, I became interested in basketball which took me away from the drums temporarily and I went into high school playing basketball. And I was pretty good. I would spend hours in my basement dribbling. That was my forte, which is percussion, if you dig it, you see. It's like the idiom called "Jazz". It's improvised to a great degree. You have plays that you have to make up something.

The word "Jazz" in many African dialects it means to

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hurry up. In several African dialects it means to hurry up, quick. And that's what it is, it's quick.

And we would play dances, (we were in high school at this point), at the Urban League Friday or Saturday night for our school chums. And they were dancing to our music, I mean, the floor was packed. There's a room there like a ballroom and it used to be packed. And we used to play, not every week, but every month we would perform. And we would emulate the records that we would get 'em from but we tried our own improvisation. And the biggest compliment that a musician can have is if somebody dances to his music. That's gone now because musicians were in the clubs now and people sit down and I suppose intellectualize what it is but there should be dancing.

Oh yeah, that happened too, house parties. But they had some different kind of music going. We were in the jazz idiom and we were live guys so when we were at the Urban League everybody, the guys were sharp with ties and suits of that day... in fact, the suits are coming back. And the ladies..... (conversation interrupted, at this point, by a phone call)..... So, it was a whole social thing going on. It was male and female. It was real different, I haven't seen that since.

Music had a lot to do with it because the girls would find out who was the best musicians on these records and they would dance to these certain records and they would try to be

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on the level of the guys who were supposed to be hip. So, it was like a hip thing there because they were gathering around the music. The social thing was gathered around the music and the fact that they could dance together and that's another thing, people danced together, they touched.

Now, Black people, at one time, could dance to anything where there didn't have to be one certain beat or one certain rhythm or rock, we could dance to anything. And go back to the jungle, if there was a drought there was a guy that come out and danced and made it rain, right? The Indians, it was the same thing. So, the dance is a very integral part of our society and we aren't dancing right at this time. You see the rappers, I say, "Wait a minute man, what is that? What are you doing?" Ten years from now you won't be able to do that. It's all right but there's no females. They put some females in the background but there's not a hand touch, there's never nothing. The male or female never touch. Now, my contingent is in the jazz dance we touched and to be close wasn't necessarily a sexual thing, the female was following the male, and it wasn't that he was dictating, it was just like jazz. Whatever he thought that's where she was. If she stumbled, hey, she was probably ostracized. Heh, heh, heh. So, there wasn't no stumble, she followed the guy wherever he thought that he wanted to go, she was right there with him.

I won an athletic scholarship playing basketball at the Detroit Institute of Technology. And at that time I didn't

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want to play basketball because I had just started working for Yusef Lateef at an after hours place in Delray, Michigan Friday and Saturday. And I would practice eight hours a day. I was inspiring to really be something, this is where I wanted to go. I just kept doing what I was doing. I kept practicing and studying. My first major road trip was to Las Vegas, this is before I went to New York, with the Four Tops, Joe Henderson, Kirk Clancy, and Clarence Sherril. We were out there six weeks and I saw another side of the entertainment world I've never forgotten 'cause they do everything that's big, grandiose. And Tony Bennett, we weren't allowed, so, he came and applauded the group, I mean stood up, I said, "Man, that's Tony Bennett!" And, then, I saw a lot of money, the most money I've ever seen in my life. But that was in January of 1959. And September Horace Silver called me, to come to perform with his group in New York and I stayed with Horace Silver for four and a half years. So, that was the acceleration of my career and it's still accelerating, thankfully.

I have been fortunate to been around many masters. And masters are different people, they don't order you to do anything. They use parables to say what they want to say to get what they want. Before you know what you're doing whatever they want to do and they don't demand anything. There's no demand out of masters. Now, the reason why I'm saying it is because I've been around. A master very seldom

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talks about himself. He's given up information. He's talking about spirit. If he saying anything about himself it's still enlightening. All these people are about same thing. So, I've been around them and I didn't realize it until really I had to come by here, I said, "Oh, this is different." I get other kind of challenges from the community. But I've never seen, I don't understand them. Heh, heh, heh. It's another environment altogether. If you're a twenty-four hour person, at which you do, you have to excel: Doctor, Lawyer, etc. You ever heard of a bum lawyer? Heh, heh, heh.

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