

of realizing how a theoretical discussion might have been achieved among this group of writers. That said, my account here does not diminish the fact that each author consciously contextualizes the analysis of (inter)personal musical experience within the rich tradition of postmodern cultural theory and criticism. Indeed, the collection as a whole openly demonstrates the performativity of theory and the irreducible polysemy of music. By doing so, the book accomplishes Moore's overarching intentions.

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*Journal of the Society for American Music* (2008) Volume 2, Number 1, pp. 107–109.  
© 2008 The Society for American Music doi: 10.1017/S1752196308081030

*Jazz Visions: Reflections on Lennie Tristano and His Legacy.* By Peter Ind. London: Equinox Publishing, 2005.

The jazz pianist Lennie Tristano (1919–78) broke new ground through a succession of innovations, including his 1949 recordings of free jazz and his use of multi-tracking in the 1950s. He was also a charismatic teacher, a multi-instrumentalist who taught students of various instruments. Author Peter Ind (b. 1928) is an English bass player who studied with Tristano from 1949 through the mid-1950s. *Jazz Visions* is a valuable addition to the literature of jazz history as a musician's firsthand account of the vibrant jazz scene of New York in the late 1940s and 1950s. However, it is as much about Ind himself as about Tristano; in fact, less than half of the book pertains directly to Tristano. The dual focus itself is justifiable, considering that Tristano has remained a great influence throughout Ind's career, but it does lead to the book's diffuse organization, as the author keeps switching between writing an autobiography and a book on Tristano.

Unfortunately, Tristano's historical significance has been largely overlooked, as many writings on him convey misconceptions (especially by labeling him as a "cool" jazz musician), and there are only a few book-length treatments on Tristano.<sup>1</sup> *Jazz Visions* attempts to reassess Tristano's contribution by supplying reasons for his obscurity, straightens out misunderstandings about him, and comments on his music and elements of his teaching. Ind summarizes Tristano's legacy as "what he added technically to the jazz vocabulary and his vision of jazz as a serious musical craft" (108).

Commercialism is the most frequently mentioned reason why Tristano has been overlooked, and Ind voices an endless tirade against commercialism. It is an important issue, considering Tristano's aesthetic view of art for art's sake and his uncompromising stance; he was adamantly against any commercial elements in

<sup>1</sup> These writings include Eunmi Shim, "Lennie Tristano (1919–1978): His Life, Music, and Teaching" (Ph.D. diss., University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, 1999); and Shim, *Lennie Tristano: His Life in Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2007).

music and detested the music industry. Accordingly, Tristano was very selective about his engagements and made his living mainly through teaching, which enabled him to pursue his individual style while limiting his exposure to the public. According to Ind, “commercialism began to take over” as “jazz gradually found an accepted place in America” (58), and Tristano, refusing “to play the ‘game’” (161), suffered from lack of opportunities. Ind further states that “not always the greatest musicians . . . reaped the most success” (116), because “success has been enjoyed by those who marketed themselves or employed agents and managers for the purpose. Lennie, I feel, was one of those left out of this particular rat race” (53). In addition, Tristano’s music was too complicated and challenging, and thus lacked “a marketable quality” (158). Ind identifies not only with Tristano’s view of jazz as an art form but also with his lack of recognition. There is a sense of bitterness, as Ind conceives the problem of jazz as “the battleground . . . between commercialism and musical integrity” (187) and emphasizes the difficulty of maintaining a career as a jazz musician. But Ind had regrets: “By the end of 1951 I was getting offers to go with all sorts of people, like Herman, Brubeck and Red Norvo, but I turned everything down to work with Lennie and Lee [Konitz]: I was so taken with their music that everything seemed a shadow in comparison. . . . Looking back it would have done me a lot of good to have played with Woody for instance, and I would have certainly gained more by being less choosy and open to other offers.”<sup>2</sup>

Ind’s portrayal of Tristano is somewhat limited, perhaps stemming from an effort to present him in the best light possible. Ind describes Tristano’s personality as direct, perceptive, sincere, open, outspoken, forthright, and powerful, and gives a few interesting anecdotes, but does not provide further insight into Tristano as a person and his relationship with students. Ind is actually more forthcoming when speaking to interviewers—for example, bitterly criticizing Tristano’s approach to the rhythm section: “What I think went wrong with that group around Lennie . . . is that what they wanted was something that wouldn’t get in their way . . . but they weren’t equally open and giving to the rhythm section. . . . I felt bruised by it all, because the rhythm section was treated like a commodity, and if the commodity was wearing out or substandard, it was just discarded and another one was put in its place.”<sup>3</sup> One particular issue that I wish Ind had addressed is the accusation of Tristano as a controlling “cult” figure; Ind’s view as an insider would have helped to clarify the subject.

Although Tristano is known to have become completely blind around the age of nine or ten, he had an unusually keen sense of hearing and a strong ability to visualize, which some described as extrasensory. Concerning Tristano’s blindness, some of Ind’s statements contradict the findings from my research. First, Ind surmises that Tristano “could find his way about the keyboard” through “the contours that are made by the arrangement of black and white keys” (99). To the contrary, according to Ted Brown, a tenor saxophonist who studied with Tristano, the key was Tristano’s ability to vividly visualize the keyboard: “He used to tell me that . . . [after] practicing

<sup>2</sup> Gordon Jack, “Peter Ind,” *Jazz Journal International*, June 1996, 7.

<sup>3</sup> Safford Chamberlain, *An Unsung Cat: The Life and Music of Warne Marsh* (Lanham, Md.: Scarecrow Press, 2000), 58.

the scales, especially very slowly . . . the whole keyboard would light up. That is, he could really grasp where the thing was and did not have to stumble around.”<sup>4</sup> Second, Ind suggests that “[o]ne apparent advantage of Lennie being blind was that he did not have to concern himself with the complexities of written music” (132). This statement seems misleading, because both Billy Bauer, the guitarist of Tristano’s group and publisher of his music, and Judy Tristano, his first wife and tenor saxophonist, told me that Tristano dictated music in reference to staff notation, including his big band arrangements written for Woody Herman’s band.

In discussing Tristano’s music, Ind aptly points out his employment of polyrhythm, extended harmony, and a multi-tracking recording device in such 1955 recordings as “Line Up” and “Turkish Mambo.” The chapter on Tristano’s teaching is perhaps the most informative, because Ind presents the thoroughness of Tristano’s approach. It is noteworthy that Tristano helped Ind “realize that the essence of jazz is a living force in music” (132).

*Jazz Visions* is an important step towards the reevaluation of Tristano’s contribution to the development of jazz, especially as a book written by his former student. Ind successfully draws attention to various misconceptions about Tristano, including the myths that have adversely affected the reception of his music. This book will function as a good introduction to Tristano, a unique figure in jazz history, whose music represents a rare achievement.

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*Journal of the Society for American Music* (2008) Volume 2, Number 1, pp. 109–111.  
© 2008 The Society for American Music doi: 10.1017/S1752196308081042

*Chance and Circumstance: Twenty Years with Cage and Cunningham.* By Carolyn Brown. New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 2007.

Read this book if you want a vivid account of the eminent dancer Carolyn Brown’s travels and performances with Merce Cunningham from 1951 to 1971 (and her compulsive desire to please him). Brown kept meticulous journals and wrote sheaves of letters, all of which she quotes liberally. Notwithstanding the book’s heft, she writes in a lean prose that, like her dancing, is athletic while always at the service of insight.

But if you want a memoir of John Cage—who foregrounds the cover photo and gets top billing in the subtitle—the book may disappoint you. This is a *dance* memoir, in the tradition of those authored by other important American dancers. Its pages brim with choreographic notes, travelogues, backstage gossip, and prodigious accounts of meals, illnesses, and physical injuries (three things that haunt dancers’ lives). The book’s intended audience is certainly not musicians, but other dancers and nostalgic fans of the author and Cunningham in their prime. Still, if you’re

<sup>4</sup> Ted Brown, personal communication with the author.