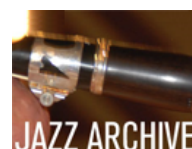


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Ann Rabson

Ann Rabson latched onto the Blues at an early age and has made a lifelong career of performing and composing. She is an accomplished guitarist, pianist, vocalist and songwriter, and her gigs encompass Blues festivals and clubs as well as school auditoriums. Ann was a founding member of Saffire, the Uppity Blues Women, has recorded multiple solo albums, and is a W.C. Handy Award nominee.

Ann was interviewed at Hamilton College on September 21, 2007 by Monk Rowe, director of the Hamilton College Jazz Archive. Bonnie Tallman, Ann's manager, participated in a portion of the interview.

13

14 MR: We are filming at Hamilton College for the Jazz Archive and I'm really pleased to have
15 Ann Rabson with me today. And I will introduce you as one of the rare working
16 musicians, I think, that I know.

17 AR: Is that right?

18 MR: Well most of the people I know, they play music but they also do a lot of other things.
19 They teach or, you know, so congratulations on that.

20 AR: Well congratulate my manager on that.

21 MR: Yeah. That is an important thing. We'll talk about that. But I'm curious, where do these
22 music genes come from in your family?

23 AR: I don't know. I'm not a biologist. But everybody in the family plays. My father, I guess
24 his family thought of musicians as being basically one up from beggars. He was raised on
25 the Lower East Side and had known these Klezmer musicians. And it was not looked on
26 as any important thing. And so although he played music, he went to Cornell and he got a
27 degree. And he was going to write the great novel, you know, be a writer, but then he
28 discovered mathematics and he became a mathematician. But he always played music.
29 And when I was coming up I thought all grownups played music. I assumed that I would
30 be playing music. And actually my brother was the one that got the lessons. I was not.
31 But I'd always wanted to play. And so as an adult, or as an older kid I did.

32 MR: Was there — what was the feel like in your neighborhood? Was it a friendly, family-
33 oriented type neighborhood?

34 AR: I lived a lot of different places. My father was a college professor who moved every four
35 years because he never got along with the administration. So a lot of neighborhoods. But
36 to tell you the truth I was a very, very — what do you call it — I was a kid who pretty
37 much, I pretty much stayed to myself. I really — wasn't really fond of other people. I'm
38 still — ummm — a little bit, but as a kid I liked my solitude even more than I do now.

39 But I listened to music. And music was something that really — I didn't play until I was

40 like in high school. But I always listened to it. In fact when I was a little kid if my brother
41 and I behaved ourselves well, which didn't happen all that often, but if our parents
42 deemed that we had behaved ourselves well, we were allowed to listen to music as we
43 went to sleep. That was, you know, but it was usually like Gilbert & Sullivan or
44 something. We loved it. All of it.

45 MR: Were your tastes usually not aligned with the kids who were your age?

46 AR: Absolutely. Absolutely. When I was in seventh grade they dubbed me jazzbo, and they
47 made fun of me. Well I loved jazz. I've always, I still love jazz. And I was listening to
48 Bop. I mean I was just really into that. But I was also, you know I was very lucky
49 because the popular music when I was coming up was pretty cool, some of it. And I
50 really loved Bo Diddly and Little Richard and you know people like that, Ruth Brown.

51 MR: Were you a word person when you listened to the music? Did you really pay attention to
52 the words?

53 AR: No I really didn't. And I think part of that comes from my jazz roots which are really not
54 vocal roots. My father, my family had all kinds of music. No Blues in our — uh that
55 came later with me. But I remember we had like Mary Lou Williams — 78's — that was
56 what was records when I was a kid. And you could hear her music in my music and you
57 can hear her music in my brother's playing. My brother is a jazz pianist, doesn't play any
58 Blues, and I'm a Blues pianist, don't play any jazz, and you can hear Mary Lou Williams,
59 her early work, this is when she was a Boogie Woogie person out of Kansas City.

60 MR: Did Mary Lou Williams also — I don't want to read anything into that — but did she
61 represent something to you being a woman professional musician?

62 AR: You know it's absolutely true, I'm not sure I made the connection. But I know
63 particularly — because I didn't start out playing piano. And when I started out playing
64 guitar there were no women I could look at except Sister Rosetta Thorpe and of course
65 Memphis Minnie were the only two who I could look to and say these people, these
66 women play guitar. And when I was just learning to play guitar I was I think a junior in
67 high school. And I had this wonderful boyfriend who turned me on to just all kinds of
68 wonderful things, especially music. And he took me to lots of concerts. And one of the
69 concerts he took me to was a young woman named Odetta. And I loved her voice. It
70 wasn't really my favorite kind of music that she was doing at that time, although I liked
71 it, but she was playing the guitar. And that meant a lot to me, yeah.

72 MR: Was there a — this may sound silly, but — was there an issue as far as being a non-
73 feminine thing to do? Like if you play guitar you can't grow your nails long, right? And
74 in junior high — you were like not concerned about it?

75 AR: I was really isolated. I really isolated myself. I hated school. I didn't enjoy the society of
76 people much. But as I got older of course, male musicians who couldn't play as well as I

77 did, I mean I've heard "oh you can't play guitar" or "women shouldn't play guitar
78 because a guitar is like a woman, it's shaped like a woman."
79 MR: Oh my God.
80 AR: Or I also heard "women shouldn't play guitar because look it's a man thing, it's got that
81 thing sticking up." So you know, wait a minute, which way is it? But I didn't pay any
82 attention to them. I knew what was going on. But what was a problem was getting work.
83 When I first started out I was living in Chicago, well I'd actually played some before
84 then. But when I was really ready to come into the professional world seriously I was
85 living in Chicago and I couldn't get auditions. I mean I don't think I've ever auditioned
86 for a job I didn't get. But they wouldn't pay any attention to me. I mean I'd show up with
87 my acoustic guitar, this is in Chicago. And they'd say "oh we don't have Folk music
88 here." And I'd say "well I don't play Folk music, I play Blues." And they'd look at me
89 like "what?" You know, well, yeah, right, come back next Saturday. So then maybe they
90 did that to everybody, but I got the feeling, well I also got the feeling that if I'd go to bed
91 with them it might have been different. I mean you know I was a lot younger and prettier
92 and all that, well not prettier but I was younger then.
93 MR: And that would have been a club you're talking about, the club scene you're trying to get
94 into.
95 AR: Yeah. Absolutely.
96 MR: Wow. And were you performing — mostly that would have been as a solo performer.
97 AR: Oh yeah. Most of my career has been solo. I love, as you probably found out, I love
98 playing with other people, but mostly I play by myself. And I did play some in Chicago
99 but I played for nothing. I played for the Job Corps Center, I played for Veterans'
100 hospitals, this was when the Vietnam War was going on and there were a lot of
101 paraplegics, you know I played for them. You know, great audience. But at the Job
102 Corps, I played for the Job Corps one time and there was this young comedian who was
103 also playing there, a guy named Richard Pryor. He was so funny. And I've never seen
104 him funnier than he was at that show. I mean never on television, never in the movies,
105 never, nothing. He was so funny and so — I mean he was playing to these Job Corps kids
106 and it was just terrific.
107 MR: And this would have been the early seventies?
108 AR: Late sixties. I left Chicago in '71.
109 MR: Okay. What would a club date pay back then, if you could get one?
110 AR: If you could get one fifty bucks. And you know, they probably still pay fifty bucks. I
111 mean I've had a lot — people say oh you're a woman and has it been hard. I don't know.
112 But the truth is I've had a lot of — it's hard to say that anything's hurt my career because
113 my career is so much better than I ever expected it would be. And I expected I'd always

114 be playing for fifty bucks, and having all that trouble. And really the Blues revival and
115 well the fact that I learned to play the piano too, that helped. And I've had wonderful
116 management and I've learned. I mean I love music.

117 MR: Let me just rewind a little bit. I've read a couple of times that you credit Big Bill Broonzy
118 with like this a-ha moment or something.

119 AR: It was very much, what do they call it, an epiphany or something?

120 MR: Yeah.

121 AR: I was four years old and I heard live on the radio, a college radio, Purdue's radio station, I
122 heard Big Bill Broonzy playing live on the radio. And I was just blown away. I mean I'd
123 heard lots of music in my home, but it was like this was my music. It was like, and he
124 was singing, you know looking back I know, one of the songs he sang was "I'm Going to
125 Move Way Out on the Outskirts of Town." And I know that as a kid you can't really
126 understanding the sort of sexual innuendo and all that. But what came through to me was
127 the loneliness and powerlessness. And I mean I was four years old. I had those feelings.
128 And it really gave me goose bumps. I mean it really changed my life. I always thought I
129 was five years old and it was 1950. But later in life, like a couple of years ago, I met
130 Studs Turkel. And we were talking and he asked me, you know he was great interviewer.
131 He asked me when did I first hear Blues. And I told him and he said "oh no," he said
132 "that wasn't 1950" he said, "that was 1949 and I was with him on that trip."

133 MR: No kidding.

134 AR: Yeah. So you know, that was that.

135 MR: I'll be. That's a neat coincidence. Were you able to go to — who could you go to in your
136 family, or whatever, and you're four years old and like try to share this feeling?

137 AR: My father. Absolutely. My father was so excited that I was excited about music. He went
138 out and got records and showed me — he could play Boogie Woogie and showed me
139 some of that, and definitely. I mean my brother and I were not on real good terms much
140 in my childhood. And my mom was, you know, she was really busy and stuff. But my
141 dad, he was really the one who encouraged me, and is still encouraging me.

142 MR: That's great. Was there a point when you were a teenager or whatever, that you really
143 decided I want to be a professional musician?

144 AR: Oh, that's a good question. No. There was no time when I thought I was going to do
145 anything else. Well that's not quite true. When I was, you know I guess I was probably in
146 the seventh grade, sixth grade or seventh grade, I thought maybe I wanted to be a vet or a
147 forest ranger. And there were all these reasons not to be. I couldn't be a vet because I was
148 a terrible student. I mean my grades, I was lucky — they passed me because my parents
149 were college professors. And I didn't even show up for school half the time. And the
150 forest ranger, at that time I was told that they don't hire women as forest rangers, and

151 they probably didn't. But when I started playing, which wasn't really until the summer
152 after my sophomore year in high school, I got a guitar. And I'd always wanted to play the
153 guitar. I always wanted to play anything. And I mean I learned the tuning. I locked
154 myself in a room. I was in a camp, a camp in Vermont, at Goddard College, a very sort of
155 radical and leave the kids alone — I locked myself in a room for a month, or maybe it
156 was two months, and I taught myself to play the guitar. I didn't know that you couldn't
157 do that. And then when I came out I played gigs. I mean it was like — the same thing
158 happened with the piano. I mean when I decided to learn to play the piano it was not at all
159 long. I mean the first Saffire album that came out, the tape we put out, I had only played
160 piano for a few years. And I still, I mean I can hear that it's not good but nobody else can.
161 But so many people just love the piano, well and the saxophone of course.

162 MR: But you have a very muscular style on both your instruments. I don't know if that's the
163 exact right word but I just love to watch the way you snap your fingers down on the
164 guitar and it seems — well it works.

165 AR: I think of it — I pretend that both of them are percussion instruments. But the guitar
166 again, you know, I was listening to Broonzy, I was listening to Lightnin' Hopkins,
167 Brownie McGhee, you know, these guys. There's a style of guitar called Piedmont style,
168 which I never would know, but that's what I was playing. I didn't realize it until I moved
169 to Virginia and fell in with all these people who played Piedmont guitar. But yeah, I do
170 play, I guess it's — you know I'm kind of ambidextrous. That doesn't hurt. I really don't
171 think it hurts. And it allows me to have strength in both hands.

172 MR: Okay. Did you have major influences on the piano? People that you —

173 AR: How many hours do we have here? My first well of course Mary Lou Williams and all
174 those boogie woogie guys that — my dad got me these albums — Pinetop Smith and
175 Albert Ammons, and Meade Lux Lewis. So that really influenced me. But this guy, this
176 guy who I met when I was a junior in high school played a couple of things for me. He
177 played a man named Jimmy Yancy, who, you know if I had to have only one influence
178 that would be it. And it sounds so simple, what he does. And I truly believe in making
179 things sound simple. Even if they're not. Because there's a real booty in that. And then
180 Leroy Carr, who — I guess he's really more of an influence on me vocally than as a
181 piano player — but he's a wonderful player and he wrote wonderful songs, most of which
182 I don't do. The only one of his I do is "Midnight Hour Blues."

183 MR: What attracts you to do somebody else's songs?

184 AR: That's a really good question. If it's got great music and okay words I probably won't do
185 it. If it's got great words and not very interesting music I'm not doing it. And there have
186 been cases where there was one song, and I'm embarrassed to admit this, well actually
187 it's happened several times, where there'll be a song — well I'm not embarrassed —

188 there's a song that I really am inspired by the music. I mean I don't copy the music, but
189 I'm really inspired by something about the music, but the words just do nothing for me.
190 And I'll take it on and make it my own. Or, another thing is a song that's done so much
191 that I'm just so sick of playing it and hearing it, like "Stormy Monday" is a good
192 example. A neat song. But you know, oh God. So I wrote another song with a similar
193 feeling and similar changes but I added [inaudible] here and some, what do they call it,
194 altered chords?

195 MR: Um hum.

196 AR: Substitutions.

197 MR: Substitutions, yeah.

198 AR: And I didn't know what they were called I just knew to do them, you know, to change it.
199 But it was inspired by another song.

200 MR: You said something almost in passing the other day, I think it might have been in the
201 brief rehearsal we had. And I almost felt like saying "oh get out." Because you said "I
202 don't know anything about music." And I just felt like saying —
203 Okay we're going to take a short pause here.
204 [Pause]

205 MR: Now I think my — okay we're all right. At rehearsal you said "I don't know anything
206 about music." I think you were talking about the chords or the form of the song or
207 something, but I thought that was so interesting a thing for you to say.

208 AR: I don't know the names of the chords. I do make a lot — and I'm learning them. I mean
209 I've learned some of them. I've learned sort of the basic chords and what they are, but
210 there are a lot of chords I play that I have no clue what they are. And I'll ask people, what
211 is this? And I'll ask like half a dozen people who know a lot about music and they'll give
212 me different answers. See that's why music isn't — it's not like arithmetic where it's
213 always — the same notes can be a different chord depending on factors I don't
214 understand it. But I can hear a lot. I'm not a religious person, I'm not a spiritual person,
215 but I really feel that my music is best when I just get out of the way. And something, it's
216 a force or something, takes over. And I know that you've experienced that. And that's
217 when it gets — that's why we play music, is that moment when you're not yourself
218 anymore. You're just a conduit for something.

219 MR: Well I can tell you that schooled musicians are often times envious of that ability to play
220 things that maybe you don't know what they are but you know they sound good. Because
221 it happened to me, getting out of college and feeling like I knew everything and then
222 getting in with groups that were basically self-taught musicians and seeing the way they
223 operated and being envious of that and the hearing that they had developed.

224 AR: But you know you can develop both. Because you've obviously got both. My sister went
225 to the New England Conservatory of Music. And now she's teaching at Berklee. And she
226 is one of the most passionate improvisational musicians. I know she doesn't process
227 things through her head. I really know, which to me is the absolute only way I can work.
228 And the way I want to work is just to not to think. People say what do you think about
229 when you're playing. And I think, I say, hopefully nothing. Because you've just got to be
230 — I guess in your spinal column. But anyway, maybe she's thinking while she's playing
231 but I don't think so. And there are people who can do both. I like people who can do
232 both.

233 MR: Yeah, it's a tough question to really answer: what do you really think about when you're
234 playing. But you know, in sitting next to you the last couple of nights and I'm watching
235 you, when you come down on that piano you sort of know what you're going to hit first
236 and then you see what happens.

237 AR: That's right. The president of Alligator Records, for whom I've done some recording,
238 once said to me, "you know when you play, and when I'm recording you, I hear things
239 that I think are clams and then they become clams casino." And that's exactly right. I
240 mean I love, you know, you make mistakes and then you make them into — that's the
241 fun.

242 MR: Right.

243 AR: But what you probably also noticed the last few nights is that when I'm playing with
244 other people, especially wonderful musicians like that, that we kind of merge. I mean it's
245 like the guitar player's does a little line and I can accompany him and play something
246 else, and you know it's — I don't think there's any more close relationship that you can
247 have with a human being than to play music with them. Even if you never talk to them
248 ever. But it's like for that time you are one. And you never get that way otherwise.

249 MR: Yeah. There was some great feels last night. And I was going to ask you, you already sort
250 of answered me, what makes you happy with a backup band?

251 AR: You know what makes me happy? When I first started using backup bands I thought that
252 I wanted them to play what I was hearing you know, that if I had a saxophone and I could
253 control what they played. But that's really not what I want. What I want is for them to
254 play something that surprises me. Because they're them and I'm me and — the only
255 analogy I can think of is probably to obscene for this show, for this archive.

256 MR: Oh try me.

257 AR: But you know, well, and I say this about — I mean it's true, it's like making love to
258 another person or people I guess, instead of to yourself. If you do it to yourself it always
259 works and you know exactly what to do. But if there are other people involved it
260 surprises you and it's much more fun. Much more fun.

261 MR: Yeah. Okay.
262 AR: Don't tell your wife.
263 MR: No, I won't. The other night you played a song, you said it was the first song you ever
264 wrote, except the one about bubbles —
265 AR: Right. I don't usually mention that one. I was four.
266 MR: What was the name of that song you wrote when you were four?
267 AR: "All the Pretty Bubbles."
268 MR: And was it bluesy?
269 AR: No not at all. But it was very interesting. It was very interesting structure. It went [sings]
270 all the pretty bubbles I see/ all the pretty bubbles I see/all the pretty bubbles I see — and
271 you know it kept going up, like the bubbles.
272 MR: Oh neat.
273 AR: So I wasn't quite separating music from other reality. I was a kid.
274 MR: But the one then you said you wrote first, I thought was a pretty sophisticated song for
275 the first one. But you said you didn't write really until well into your career.
276 AR: No. I guess I wrote that in '71 and I started my first paying gig was in '62. But you know
277 there's so many great songs out there that I would much rather take those songs and learn
278 from them and make them my own, and you know, why would I want to write songs
279 when there are such great songs out there, you know, "Please Send Me Someone to
280 Love" or "It Hurts Me Too" or all these great songs. But I got so angry in 1971. I didn't
281 have any way to communicate. I couldn't communicate except I just wrote a song, and it
282 helped.
283 MR: Was it — it turned out to be an angry song?
284 AR: It was a very angry song.
285 I'm going to cough now
286 MR: Okay.
287 AR: It was a very angry song. It was — I was 26 years old and I was getting rid of the second
288 husband at that point. I was always a little bit ahead of myself. And very happy to be
289 getting rid of him and angry because he, you know, I was needing to get rid of him. So it
290 really helped. The second song I wrote, which was right after, was about this new guy I'd
291 met, who was also a problem. But he mellowed out. We've been together since 1971.
292 MR: That's great. Being a professional musician and the process of trying to be a professional
293 musician, has that made relationships harder to keep?
294 AR: Yeah. It absolutely has. I had to find somebody who — I don't know if it was because of
295 his being raised by women, strong women, or what, but I had to
296 I'm going to cough again here
297 MR: Well take a little drink.

298 AR: Yeah. I had to find somebody who was happy for me to be successful at something that
299 he couldn't do, and who doesn't have a jealous bone in his body, or if he does he
300 certainly has never showed it. It doesn't seem to be in his repertoire. Not just sexual
301 jealousy but any kind of jealousy. And all of the women that he's always liked have all
302 been very strong and very independent and so that worked out very well. But prior to that
303 I had a lot of men who — and I know that male musicians have the same problem — men
304 fall in love with me because I play music and then they want me to stop playing music.

305 MR: Huh?

306 AR: I've got to write a song about that. But I know that happens to men too.

307 MR: It sounds like a song all right. Is the club scene — a little shifting of gears here — how
308 has the club scene changed for you in the last 25, 30 years?

309 AR: Well in the last — I mean it ebbs and flows. There was a period of time, I guess it was in
310 the 80's, maybe it was in the late 70's, where people just weren't coming out to clubs. I
311 guess they were going to the discos. Most people. Many people. But there were still
312 people coming to the clubs. They were all bikers. And as a matter of fact I wrote a song
313 for them because I really appreciated that they came out. But booze, live music, seems to
314 ebb and flow. But right now we're in a big ebb, because I think people are staying home
315 and playing with their computers. So live music in general is not ...

316 MR: Well, yeah. It almost goes along with the record sales thing.

317 AR: Oh. Record sales, that has I think to do with downloading. I really do. And making
318 copies. I mean people come up to me at shows and they say "I love your music so much I
319 made copies of your CD for all my friends." And I'm thinking what am I supposed to say
320 to this person, thank you? I mean I have another "you" to say.

321 MR: Yeah.

322 AR: But it used to be, and not so long ago, that people would come up at shows and they
323 would buy everything you had, one of each. And now they'll buy one. And it may be the
324 economy. I don't know what. There's so many factors. People say well they don't allow
325 smoking in clubs anymore. I know a lot of people who, I mean I for one prefer to go to
326 clubs that don't have smoking. So you know I think it's probably somewhat of a wash.
327 But there are all these reasons — I think part of it is just that people are getting older and
328 they're not out looking for love anymore. I think there was a lot of that.

329 MR: Oh I see.

330 AR: Don't you think?

331 MR: Yeah. Well plus the younger generation now, buying music for the younger generation is
332 almost like a novelty or something. Oh you're buying music.

333 AR: Yeah.

334 MR: I can get it. They can get it without ...

335 AR: Well another thing, I mean there's a lot of factors, I mean another thing is that with all the
336 computers and everything people can make their own music more easily, which is lovely.
337 But a lot of times it's not that good. But a lot of times people can't tell the difference.
338 One of the things that I think is happening is that people who are part time musicians or
339 who are retiring, and I've got nothing against that, I'm all for it, but a lot of times they
340 think well I'll just play for ten bucks. And the club owners say "great" you know, ten
341 bucks. And they're worth every penny you know. I mean and then people go out to the
342 clubs and they say well I hate this music. Music is terrible. There's no good music
343 anymore. Well they're right you know. But there is hope. And I was just talking to a
344 drummer friend of mine about this on the phone just this afternoon. He just did some
345 shows at libraries in New Jersey. And I've been doing shows at libraries here, I've done
346 shows in schools, I mean these things, we just have to find another — other venues.
347 Because people do come out to shows. They just don't go to bars. They come to festivals,
348 they go to concerts and town squares, and so we just, I don't care, as long as I get to play.

349 MR: Right. And you do a lot of schools now. What attracts you to that?

350 AR: You know I never thought I would want to do that. I hated school and I just never wanted
351 to even be inside a school again. And I didn't think I had the skills necessary to play for
352 kids. But as it turns out, and you know this is true, the same skills you develop playing
353 for drunks, it's the same skill playing for kids. Isn't that right? It's the attention thing. It's
354 the attention problem. And so I love it. And I love changing people's lives and making
355 people — doing for people what Big Bill Broonzy did for me back in 1949. I mean music
356 has real healing power. And being a kid, people think oh being a kid, they're so carefree.
357 It's horrible. I mean it's a terrible time and I think kids need music more than anyone.

358 MR: Especially, you mentioned yesterday about playing for that middle school, that junior
359 high age. And that's a tough crowd.

360 AR: Eighth grade. I love it. I love eighth grade. I go in there and they're belligerent and
361 they're not going to like this and this is not their kind of music. And I mean within
362 moments, within moments you've got them. And I think part of it is just because they
363 never hear live music. But I really do try to — I mean I try to do songs that will talk to
364 the people I'm playing for. You know, and I'm not going to do "Mary Had a Little
365 Lamb" for eighth graders. I'm also not going to do [inaudible] for eighth graders. But I
366 can do things like "'Taint Nobody's Business What I Do" or one I wrote called "Don't
367 You Tell Me." You know, things like that. I also, well for the high school I will do,
368 there's a song called "Skin and Bones" that's a Roosevelt Sykes tune that's — it's not
369 about AIDS but it sure could be. You know, it's about watching somebody die of
370 something, they did something that made them get it, but not for the junior high kids. But
371 yeah, and they walk out of there, a lot of them, I believe that they walk out of there

372 thinking wow, that's my music, that's music that speaks to me. And that's what I want to
373 do.

374 MR: The lyric form of the Blues works well for teachers, I have found out, because they can
375 have the kids write that A-A-B form really easily and they can tell their little stories and
376 all that. So it's a good connection.

377 AR: It's wonderful. And I love it when schools, when I show up and the kids have written
378 poems. Sometimes they're so deep. I mean there was one who wrote about their
379 grandfather dying, or their grandparents dying, and how much they missed them. And I
380 mean it was just exquisite. It was just beautiful, a lot of feeling and I really, yeah.

381 MR: When you're in that situation — and I've seen you do that — there you are on the piano
382 in front of all these kids and here's this stack of lyrics, you know, from the third or fourth
383 graders. When you put that in front of you, talking about their grandfather dying, do you
384 wonder, should I share this with the school here.

385 AR: Yeah. I do wonder. I do wonder. And sometimes there are ones that I don't. In fact there
386 are some — there have been times where I've talked to the teacher afterward. I mean
387 there's one where they're being abused by their parents or they feel that they are. There's
388 a lot where their being abused by their siblings, and I mean I'm really into that one. I
389 mean not sexually abused but yeah, there are ones. Mostly they're pretty silly. And lot of
390 them are about school. In fact, that always leads me into that song "Schoolday," that
391 Chuck Berry song that I do, because it's wonderful for the kids know that other people
392 hated school and they wrote about it.

393 MR: Right. Getting back to your songwriting for a moment, last night during the concert you
394 said sometimes to the effect that you're not in control when you're writing a song.

395 AR: Yeah. That's true. I don't know.

396 MR: Who's in control?

397 AR: I don't know. Well I think I've heard fiction writers talk about this too. I mean I suppose
398 I could have wrestled, I was talking about writing an intro to a song, 'cause like all that
399 classic Blues stuff, doing that Bessie Smith and the Ma Rainey and all that stuff it's got
400 those little introductions that have almost nothing to do, certainly nothing to do musically
401 with the song. And I really wanted to write one and I couldn't, and I couldn't, and I'd
402 written, I'd actually even wrote a song that was very much like those songs, a thing called
403 "What's Good for the Gander is Good for the Goose." But I couldn't seem to get an intro
404 for it. So when I finally did write an intro, what came afterward, I could have probably
405 wrestled it and used it for a classic Blues type song. But it just really led into this New
406 Orleans rhythm and so I went with it. A lot of my best songs sort of do write themselves.
407 Then you have to rewrite and rewrite and rewrite and rewrite. And that's certainly true.
408 But the ones that I say, okay I'm going to sit down, I'm going to write today, I'm going

409 to write about this thing I saw in the newspaper, it'll be a good song, it'll sell lots —
410 they're crap, really.

411 MR: Really. And if someone said, say commissioned you to write, either another musician or
412 something, even if you had sort of a monetary incentive, they're going to pay you to write
413 a song.

414 AR: I've never had that happen. But I have had situations, there were a couple of times where
415 people wanted a song that had certain criteria, like a Christmas song for example, which
416 is great 'cause I'm Jewish, well I'm not even Jewish, but — so was Irving Berlin by the
417 way, who wrote "White Christmas" and "Easter Parade." But anyway, that was a good
418 example. He wanted a Christmas song. He wanted it for the band Saffire so he wanted it
419 to be kind of humorous, he wanted us, all three voices there and it needed to be able to be
420 played by the instrumentalist and the instruments that we had. So that was lots of criteria,
421 and it was easy to write. You know I joke about this, I don't know if I've done it here, but
422 the hardest thing for me is not writing — the words are easy they just come, the music is
423 easy. The problem is finding something to write about. Subject matter. So I don't think it
424 would be hard to do that. You going to pay me some money to write a song?

425 MR: Well let's see what I got with me. You take credit? Yeah you mentioned that, the idea of
426 writing a Blues song if you're not suffering.

427 AR: Right. Right. Well actually that was an inspiration for a song.

428 MR: Yeah. Well that's what I love about the Blues is that it's so, you can do whatever you
429 want with it.

430 AR: It's very, very open. And people, of course I write stuff that's not that A-A-B form all the
431 time. But people say "how can you write Blues?" My jazz friends say "oh it's so dull, it's
432 so limited." And I say "are you familiar with Haiku?"

433 MR: Uh huh. Good analogy.

434 AR: Because you have limitations. And even if the form isn't that A-A-B form, there are
435 chords you would almost never use in Blues like major seventh I guess is what it's called,
436 right? Is that right?

437 MR: Yeah. That's exactly right.

438 AR: I've done it though. Bruce Iglauer said "I will never have a major seven on my label."
439 And I threw one in. Anyway.

440 MR: What a funny thing to say.

441 AR: Well yeah, but I mean I know what he means. It's very loungy.

442 MR: Yeah.

443 AR: Yeah, so there are limitations. And I love them.

444 MR: People think that freedom is such a good thing sometimes, but I think it sometimes makes
445 it harder. Too much freedom is hard to deal with it.

446 AR: Yeah. Well having limitations gives you a different kind of freedom. You don't have to
447 — it's like having a great bass player like I've had the last few days. And a great
448 drummer. There are things I don't have to think about. So that frees me up to think about
449 other things.

450 MR: How did the idea for Saffire come about?

451 AR: There was no idea. It was totally random. There was this woman who used to come up to
452 me at shows and say she wanted me to teach her guitar. And I said, "you know what?
453 You want to learn guitar? Go over here this guy gives lessons or this gal gives lessons.
454 And they know what they're doing, so take lessons from them." And three years she
455 hounded me. And I finally said fine. And I gave her lessons and she learned very quickly.
456 I mean she learned very quickly as much as she wanted to learn and then she started
457 doing an occasional job, started doing some things with another accompanist, another
458 guitar player, and occasionally I would call her for a job or she'd call me for a job and
459 we'd do something together. And then one day there was a room that I think they called
460 her, I guess it was her, and they wanted, you know it was a big room. And she felt that, or
461 I felt that we needed another person. And so we asked this woman who I was teaching a
462 class, nothing to do with music in, this was during, well it's a long story, during an era
463 when I was putting my daughter through college so I was doing some non-musical things.
464 So she joined us for that one gig. And they asked us back. And then other people asked us
465 back. And they kept asking us back. It was totally random. The fact that we were all
466 women was totally random, you know, there was no thought involved at all, at least not
467 on my part, and I don't think it was on anybody's part. But it ended up being very
468 successful.

469 MR: It wasn't, obviously then it wasn't a contrived — gee if we had a group with three women
470 we'll be able to get more gigs.

471 AR: Yeah, or a Black, a Jew and — no. That did not happen. I love it that people say that we
472 were that smart but we weren't. But the truth was is that there were, at that time, you
473 know, no other bands like us. Now there are others. You know there's Three Bitchin'
474 Babes and there's another one that's named after a jewel, Rubies or something. But I
475 mean there have been girl groups but not recently and not that played instruments. So I
476 guess at one time there was the International Sweethearts of Rhythm but that was a long
477 time ago. Remember that?

478 MR: Yeah. That was a whole big band.

479 AR: That was a big band, yeah.

480 MR: Do you have grandchildren?

481 AR: I have one.

482 MR: You have one grandchild.

483 AR: I have one granddaughter, in fact it's her birthday soon. She's a great drummer.
484 MR: I just wondered sometimes, like your children or your grandchildren, what do they think
485 about what grandma does for a living?
486 AR: Well my daughter, she said once she'd been in more green rooms — by the time she got
487 to high school than most people will ever.
488 MR: Oh because she went with you.
489 AR: She went with me. She was a kid. I couldn't leave her alone and I couldn't afford to hire
490 a babysitter, so she'd come. You know in coffee houses she'd help make coffee and she'd
491 sleep in the green room. She she's into it. In fact she's done some stuff herself. I think
492 she's great but she — she's a great singer and she plays guitar and she used to play
493 accordion but then after she got pregnant I guess she got out of that. But she plays organ
494 and things. And I put together an album, all my family. Because they all play. I mean
495 we've got — and in fact she's on one cut playing rhythm guitar. But when I went to
496 observe the family to find musicians I found there were lots of guitar players, lots of
497 keyboard players, violinists, bass players, no drummers. Not a single drummer. So I got
498 sticks and a video from Sam Zucchini on how to play drums for kids, and I gave it to
499 everybody under the age of ten, and I don't know if their parents are still speaking to me.
500 But anyway my granddaughter really got into it and she's been taking private lessons I
501 guess for about three years now. And she is great. She's really great. So next time there's
502 going to be a Family Way Part Two, I'll have a drummer.
503 MR: Uh huh. Now you'll have a whole rhythm section.
504 AR: Although she started to play the piano too so, oh well.
505 MR: Let me play a couple of pieces of music for you here just to see if there's — you have any
506 particular comments
507 [musical interlude]
508 AR: That's funny, we just did one of these last night. Big Joe Turner.
509 MR: Yeah.
510 AR: I don't think that's Pete Johnson on piano though, is it? Yeah, you talk about the roots of
511 Rock 'n Roll.
512 MR: Yeah.
513 AR: Actually Big Joe Turner was booked at a festival in Norfolk, Virginia very early on in the
514 band Saffire's career. I mean we hadn't played any big gigs at all really. And he got sick.
515 And they needed a substitute and they called us. And that was our first big gig. And
516 unfortunately he died — I mean you sort of hate to, you know, feel good about that, but
517 well there's a Memphis Slim song — what makes one person happy is bound to make
518 another one sad. I mean we weren't happy. But it was great to have that gig and we
519 played for thousands and thousands of people. It was wonderful.

520 MR: To you what — is there a line between something that pushes something over from Blues
521 into Rock ‘n Roll?
522 AR: Naaah. That’s Blues. I mean come on. But that is Rock ‘n Roll. And that’s what was on
523 the juke box when I was coming up. I mean we had some stuff which I would definitely
524 consider Blues. Big Joe Turner was one. And he did some wonderful stuff. I said the stuff
525 he did with Pete Johnson just knocked me out. But anyway, Big Joe.
526 MR: How about this one?
527 [musical interlude]
528 AR: Is that Ruth Brown?
529 MR: Yes.
530 AR: Miss Rhythm. She’s wonderful. She was a wonderful person too. She was great. I hope
531 that somebody had a tape recorder and talked to her. Because you couldn’t shut her up.
532 MR: We did an interview with her.
533 AR: You did an interview with her?
534 MR: Yeah.
535 AR: Did she tell you all the dirt on everybody and everything?
536 MR: She did not. Not to my memory. It was really early on when we did it.
537 AR: She was everywhere, she knew everyone, she knew all the — I mean I’m not saying she
538 talked bad about people but oh she had such wonderful memories. Yeah she was a
539 wonderful — we lost her this year. We lost a lot of people. But yeah, she was on that juke
540 box and she was a great singer.
541 MR: And crossed a lot of genres.
542 AR: Absolutely. Jazz, Blues, Soul. I don’t even know if they had Soul at that time. But we
543 used to call — well they used to call it Rhythm & Blues, Rock ‘n Roll, and now the
544 Rhythm & Blues is something completely different now, right?
545 MR: Right. R&B.
546 AR: But yeah. Well she was — really good music to my mind, you can’t categorize it. I mean
547 really. Hank Williams? Is that Country? Well I don’t know. You talk about Blues, I
548 mean. Yeah. Ruth Brown.
549 MR: Right. Well we were talking about being stuck for material to write about.
550 [musical interlude]
551 MR: And I thought it was interesting the way you took this idea of like I’m not sad enough to
552 write Blues. Okay. So you’re sitting there and you’ve got this idea for a song. Do you sit
553 at the piano and work on it?
554 AR: No. I can do that in my head. I mean it’s good later on I get to a piano. But I can — night
555 before last there was a song that I do that I was going to try a different rhythm and
556 different pattern with the piano on it. And I lay around and did it in my head. I mean I

557 have a good musical imagination. This one, I was at somebody's house. It was at my
558 unfortunately now retired booking agent's house. And I was whining about, you know
559 I've got to write songs for my new album and I've got to write songs for a new Saffire
560 album, and I don't have any ideas. And then I thought maybe I'll write about that. You
561 know so I remember I had a big yellow pad and I wrote, I think I filled, I don't know
562 probably the whole pad, and I crossed things out and I'd start again and I'd do — do you
563 know how many rhymes there are with blues? But Blues does not have to be sad. I mean
564 it's almost like the sad stuff makes people feel like they're not alone and the happy stuff
565 makes them happy. I mean it's a therapeutic thing. But yeah, no I don't — writing at the
566 piano, I have to get to piano eventually. But I did, I had that left hand thing in my mind,
567 which is sort of a Memphis thing. Actually I stole it off a bass player from Texas. I — do
568 I dare tell this? Yeah I'll tell it. I used to, at Blues festivals if I heard a bass player who
569 was doing stuff that I was interested in I always had a guitar in my room so I'd invite
570 them up to my room under false pretenses probably and get them to show me what they
571 were doing. And so that's where I got that little lick there. I think I added a little twirl to
572 it. But yeah, I can think these things pretty well.

573 MR: Um hum. And then there's that one sort of chord near the end, which you probably could
574 call a substitution [scats] sort of you just ...

575 AR: Oh I'm going down?

576 MR: Yeah. I mean it's not a normal 5-4 progression or something.

577 AR: No, no.

578 MR: So is that something that you might just be fooling around with chords that match what
579 you're trying to sing?

580 AR: No. It's something that — I mean I suppose I do that sometimes — most of the time I
581 hear it in my head and I try to find it on the piano.

582 MR: Oh.

583 AR: And I do listen to a lot of different things, which is probably why my music isn't strictly
584 straight ahead Blues, which is, I don't want to hear just straight-ahead Blues, you know? I
585 mean those old guys weren't playing straight-ahead Blues, the people I admire most.
586 They weren't even playing all major — major and minor at the same time sometimes, and
587 twelve bar Blues would become thirteen and eleven. I mean you know, but I listen to
588 everything. I mean I listen to birds, I listen to jazz, I listen to Classical, I listen to
589 Country, Gospel, I listen to Gospel. You know, so that all goes in and I guess it all comes
590 out too.

591 MR: Do you spend a lot of time listening? I mean when you're at home and you've got a day
592 off, are you a person who deliberately goes and puts on music as you do your —

593 AR: Never as I'm doing anything. I can't listen to music when I drive, it's really dangerous.
594 I've tried. And I can't do both things. I'm not good — I don't like background music at
595 all. But sometimes I will — I don't listen to music like I used to before I became so
596 involved in it. I mean I really just don't. But I do, like at festivals I get to hear other
597 people and sometimes I'll go out and hear other people. My life right now, I have people
598 at home I take care of. My mother-in-law lives with me and my mother is close by. And
599 so I don't go out as much as I did or will in the future sometime. I mean I certainly plan
600 to spend more time listening to other people. But I love hearing live music. I mean
601 listening to records is to pale by comparison. I mean to me it's a person — music where
602 it's not nearly as good live is better than terrific canned music, and I don't know why that
603 is. I couldn't tell you in a million years. And I do listen to people like Charles Brown or
604 you know, I listen to all kinds of people. But when I heard him live, that really got in. It's
605 just different.

606 MR: There's that Big Bill Broonzy moment all over again.

607 AR: Yeah. Oh absolutely. And you know I never got to see him live. Never. But he was live
608 on the radio. You know? It was almost. And there are a lot of people I regret. I mean
609 there's this jazz piano player I heard on the radio once when I shouldn't have been
610 listening to the radio. A guy named Gene Harris. And I thought wow, that's really great.
611 I'm going to go see him. So I wrote his record company and I said could you tell me
612 where he's going to be? Would you put me on his mailing list. I've got all these frequent
613 flier miles, I'm going to come hear him sometime. And it didn't work out and it didn't
614 work out, and I kept thinking well next month, next month. And he died. Just very
615 unexpectedly, suddenly. You know you've just got to go see them while you can,
616 'cause...

617 MR: You never know.

618 AR: You never know, and you never regret it.

619 MR: Yeah, yeah. Some people — do people come up to you, young musicians, and say how
620 do I do what you're doing? How do I get where I want to go?

621 AR: You mean musically or in the business?

622 MR: I think they probably mean in the business.

623 AR: Yeah. 'cause musically I have a very good answer.

624 MR: Well give me both.

625 AR: Well no I can't give it to you because it's in my computer. I wrote an essay.

626 MR: I remember that essay.

627 AR: Yes. I wrote an essay. And every time somebody asks me that I say "here." Because as
628 far as in the music business I guess the first thing I would say is you have to really want
629 to do it and you have to — your idea of making a living, you have to be willing to not

630 have maybe a big house or a new car or, you have to be — priorities. And money is
631 important, you have to have enough to live on. But you only have a certain amount of
632 time. You can always get more money. And you don't want to spend your time doing
633 something you hate. So anyway you have to be willing to make your lifestyle fit what
634 your income's going to be, and that — when I went on the road when my daughter was
635 finished with college — the first thing I did is I had to have a day job for a while. I still
636 played but not much. The first thing I did was I bought a piece of land and a trailer. So I
637 paid for it, so when I started out I didn't really need that much income. I had a place to
638 live. Anyway, see the trick is not to go into the business thinking you're going to make a
639 million dollars, or even —

640 MR: What's the best way to get —

641 AR: Roy Bookbinder says something like “yeah this is a great business, you can make
642 hundreds of dollars a year.” I know what you're going to say.

643 MR: There was something about “how do you get a musician to make two million dollars?”
644 “Give him four million.” Or something like that.

645 AR: Right. They tell it about the farmers too. Or “what are you going to do now that you've
646 won the lottery?” “Well I guess I'll just keep playing until the money runs out.” Yeah.
647 But anyway so that's the first thing I tell people, is that you're not in it for the money,
648 you're in it because you love the music. And then, you know, I think it's very important
649 for people to realize that it is a business. And if you're not willing to do the business, or if
650 you're in a position to pay somebody else to do it, I mean I think it's very important to
651 find a booking agent for sure, and a manager if you possibly can. And you'll have even
652 less money. But you have more time to play music. More time. And these people, they
653 know a whole lot more about business than I do. You know? It's like if you're going to
654 do your own taxes, you're going to end up paying more than if you hire somebody to do
655 your taxes. So it's the same thing. But it is a business. Somebody once said “tell them if
656 they can possibly do anything else that they should do it.”

657 MR: I've had jazz musicians say that. It's not a choice, it's like something you're driven to do.
658 Like if you have a choice to be a lawyer or a musician, be the lawyer.

659 AR: Be a lawyer, right.

660 MR: And play their music.

661 AR: That's a really good point, because it is no choice. It's not a choice.

662 MR: You seem fortunate with your management right now.

663 AR: I'm very fortunate with my management. I've been very fortunate with my booking
664 agents. I've been very fortunate in so many ways. I mean you know, musicians, golly, I
665 can't tell you how nice those older musicians have been to me. You know, people like
666 Johnny Johnson, people like Sunnyland Slim, have all taken me under their wing, and

667 you know they don't do things for me, but they show me things and they encourage me.
668 To find that Johnny Johnson came out to shows to see me, I mean that meant a world to
669 me. It scared the piss out of me, but it meant something to me. And now that he's gone,
670 you know. Little Richard once, I was playing at a thing in L.A. with Saffire. And he came
671 up to me. In fact he was giving an award to Ruth Brown. That was great. But anyway, he
672 came up afterward and said "I really like your piano playing." And I — you know — it
673 meant a lot. And people have opened doors. Older musicians. John Cephas is the reason
674 that Saffire ever got heard. There was a baritone sax player who had a studio in Florida
675 who is no longer with us, a guy named Bob Greeley, who got Saffire on Alligator. I mean
676 musicians have been, well, and there's this saxophone player who got me started in this
677 great thing with schools.

678 MR: Well he must have been crazy.

679 AR: He was nuts. So you know people have been very helpful. And I mean if it was just me
680 I'd still be playing in little motel lounges for fifty bucks a night.

681 MR: Is it worth it? Let's see how to I ask this? If you're thinking of doing another recording,
682 you're going to put out another CD, what is the main reason for doing it nowadays?

683 AR: Well it depends on the CD. I am thinking about putting out another CD. And the reason is
684 that I would like people to remember that I'm here. You know I'd like to be on the radio,
685 I'd like to be available or have something out there so that I can be nominated for an
686 award, I'd like people to hear me and think "oh yeah, let's hire her." You know. That's
687 part of the reason for this new CD. Part of it is because I have a lot of originals that I've
688 never really been happy with the way that they were done and I want to do them again.
689 Or I've got some new ones that I want to do. So this one's going to be all originals. But
690 the album before this one has an even more interesting background. It's called "In a
691 Family Way," it's all my family. And at holidays, you know Thanksgiving, we get
692 together and when other families start bickering, we all pick up instruments and start
693 playing. And I just — it's so joyful, that experience, and so musical and so varied, that I
694 just really wanted that saved for posterity.

695 MR: Yeah. That's a good reason.

696 AR: The first recording that I did solo, which was really late in my career, for a long time I
697 didn't believe in recording because I mean I had opportunities but I just felt like Mary
698 Martin felt about videotaping, that it's going to take away from live performance. And
699 you know what? I was right. I mean look at, people are staying home and — anyway. But
700 that first recording I did, I did because I was cussing a lot of musicians. Well Jimmy
701 Yancy and Big Maceo and all these wonderful musicians who had not recorded very
702 much in their lifetimes and didn't leave a legacy for me. And I was angry. And I thought
703 wait a minute, maybe people are going to feel that way about me someday. You know

704 Pinetop's Memphis, the real one was just four cuts or something. Louis Johnson, same
705 thing, four cuts. But anyway so that was the reason I first started recording was I thought
706 maybe somebody might want to hear.

707 MR: Is there a dream project that you have?

708 AR: Well after the last couple of nights, I'd like to record with that band. It was great.

709 MR: Well that can be arranged.

710 AR: We'll have to do that. A dream project, wow. I mean it'd be nice to have enough of a
711 budget that I could have a great Gospel B3 player on some songs, and a great Gospel
712 choir and somebody playing vibes and somebody with pedal steel. You know it'd be fun
713 to have, not to be at all concerned about the restrictions of money. But on the other hand,
714 same thing, because of those restrictions, you know you have to be more artistic and you
715 have to be, it's more of a craft, because you have the restrictions.

716 MR: Yeah. And you think of reading about some of the bands that have these unlimited
717 budgets and they spend four months in the studio.

718 AR: On one song. Can you imagine? Yeah my sister has played on some of that stuff. I'm not
719 going to call any names, but you know where they put in every note, and of course she
720 was paid very well. And I'm sure she contributed a lot.

721 MR: Where are you bound for after you leave here? Home I hope.

722 AR: Home for a little while and I think I've got a couple of gigs, one in Charlottesville, I'm
723 not sure. You know I have to look at my calendar. But you know why I don't know
724 anything? Because next month I'm going to Italy for a couple of weeks. So that's kind of
725 blowing everything else out of my mind. I'm going to be playing in Torino with a band of
726 my choosing, although I hadn't met you guys before, but a couple of great, great players.
727 And we're going to spend, well we're going to spend like I said, basically a week or ten
728 days. something like that, we'll be always in the same hotel but then we'll be going to
729 different little places around.

730 MR: I bet they're going to love you.

731 AR: Well I hope so. I know I'm going to love them. I've been to Italy before and I love
732 traveling overseas, I really do. I can't think — the only place that I did not particularly
733 enjoy or as much, I played in Hong Kong. I had a two week engagement at the Jazz Club
734 of Hong Kong, before the handover. And I felt uncomfortable there. There was not a
735 single Chinese person in this club.

736 MR: It was a British ...

737 AR: It was a British thing. They hired me a band and they were great musicians. The drummer
738 was from India. The guitar player was from Australia. The bass player was from the
739 Philippines. I mean nobody was from China. And I found that uncomfortable, although I
740 loved playing with the guys, and you know the audiences were great. But I do, I love

741 Eastern Europe, Western Europe. I tell you what I really want to do is go to Sweden.
742 Because my nephew, who plays bass on my family album, he has moved to Sweden now.
743 So if I want to see him I've got to go to Sweden.

744 MR: I'm going to take a — Bonnie, is there something I should have asked her?

745 BT: I think you've just done a marvelous job. I'm sitting here thinking I am so grateful. This
746 interview, it's so important. And the questions are so — I imaging they're well thought
747 out but they come across as being so spontaneous. It's marvelous. I'm just having a ball.

748 AR: I'm just really honored. I mean I know who the other people are in this Archive and I'm
749 going wow, Milt Hinton. You know?

750 MR: Right. Have your name on the same list as Milt Hinton. Well I really like talking to
751 people who are able to cut it in this business. And not all the people I've interviewed
752 have been able to do that. You know, some of them have found — a lot of jazz musicians
753 these days, not by choice, end up teaching at universities and so forth, and then they play
754 when they can. And I think they pretend they like it, but I'm not sure that they really do.

755 AR: I bet they do.

756 MR: Yeah, they like the steady paycheck and the benefits and all that.

757 AR: Yeah. But I know that like my nephew went to school, the Manhattan School of Music,
758 studying jazz. But even before that when he was a kid he went to jazz camp and his
759 counselor was — oh dear, great drummer —

760 MR: Shaughnessy?

761 AR: No. His daughter plays violin. He's one of my favorite drummers.

762 MR: Oh Max Roach?

763 AR: Max Roach, yeah. It was his counselor.

764 MR: Wow.

765 AR: And he also studied with Milt Hinton and, you know, these guys. And they give so much
766 to the students. As long as the students are really interested. But yeah, I don't know, I
767 guess I know I'm lucky. And that's one nice thing about that Kenji lives in Sweden and
768 they really support the arts there and they really support the artists there. And I think he's
769 going to be teaching but he's going to be teaching because he wants to. And he plays
770 whenever he wants and he has healthcare, and they give a stipend to artists. Well there
771 are other kind of, I mean Canada, I've thought about emigrating to Canada for a number
772 of reasons. But they have very strict rules about who can emigrate. You have to have
773 money, you have to be young, you have to be healthy, you have to know French, you
774 know, all these different criteria which George, with George a couple of years ago I
775 might have managed. But now, you know we're even older and he's had problems and
776 we all have problems. But then I found out from unfortunately somebody who's no
777 longer with us but if you're an artist, you're in.

778 MR: Really?
779 AR: They consider you valuable, you're in.
780 MR: Wow. That's some attitude.
781 AR: I like that, yeah.
782 MR: Well on that note, I want to thank you for being here, it's been a real pleasure.
783 AR: Likewise, always, always.
784 MR: Okay. So over and out.