

[0:00:00]

Preston Lauterbach: All right so musical heritage of Manassas High School. Please begin.

Emerson Able: Okay.

Preston Lauterbach: Well I guess you have to introduce yourself, too.

Emerson Able: Huh?

Preston Lauterbach: Tell us who you are and then tell us what you know about the heritage of Manassas High School

Emerson Able: Oh, okay. My name is Emerson Able, Jr., also “R” in my name that I really didn’t find out what the R meant until they told me I had to have a middle name instead of an initial and it ended up my daddy told me that it was for “Russell” and even though I was a senior I didn’t know how to spell “Russell,” *[laughter]* so he put me straight on that line but as far as Manassas High School is concerned as far back as I can remember, musically, it had a lot going on ____ ____ and I say that for only

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---one reason. My father attended Manassas High School during the days of Mr. Lunceford and at this particular time he was living at 846 Center, in Orange Mound and the strange thing about it there was no bus service from Orange Mound to Manassas during that particular time so he road to school to Manassas with the music teacher who was Mrs. Quinn who wrote the Alma Mater for the school and along with him was a fellow by the name of Lonnie Brisco. Those two guys were the two individuals who were living in Orange Mound but attended Manassas. Everybody else went to Booker Washington. I don’t know whether it was Booker Washington at that time or **Contra** Intermediate but my

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father played in Mer. Lunceford’s band and he was not too particular about the instrument that he played because it was an oboe and, believe it or not, as a teacher, at Manassas, it was a handmade oboe but we used that same oboe. I left Manassas in 1987 and was still useable. It was. A lot of the instruments were given to Manassas High School by people that lived in that particular area unlike South Memphis.

Preston Lauterbach: Let me ask you real quick, what year was your father there using this handmade oboe?

Emerson Able: Come again?

Preston Lauterbach: I said what year was your dad there using this homemade oboe?

Emerson Able: Before I was born!

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: And so I don't know what year that was!

Preston Lauterbach: So Lunceford was there what until about 1930, I think.

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Emerson Able: ____ I'm not sure.

Preston Lauterbach: Okay, '25, '30.

Emerson Able: Sometime ____ 1930 and whatever they said then, they registered me you know because I arrived there before it was an adjective.
[Laughter]

Preston Lauterbach: [Laughter]

Emerson Able: [Laughter] So [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: Did they teach you that at Manassas, too?

Emerson Able: Huh?

Preston Lauterbach: Nah, you already knew that.

Emerson Able: What?

Preston Lauterbach: Nah, nah, I'm just playing.

Emerson Able: [Laughter] Okay.

Preston Lauterbach: [Laughter]

Emerson Able: Yeah but anyway unlike the South Memphis community back then, in that day, Manassas was an integrated neighborhood. The street on which I lived, 1017 North Dunlap, we knew ____ living close

to ____ us, the same thing happened on Leeds, Woodland, Tolland, Pierce, the whites lived on the south side of the street but we lived on the north side of the street and we had a lot of

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playmates who were white and the relationship was good, the relationship was good. As an example I think you had me mention this the last time we was out here because one the ____ ____ said that he was [laughter] going to do a tune about this but Jerry Wilson was going with a young lady that lived up the street from me that was my babysitter and whenever Jerry would come to visit her, I would always be there and I think I told you about what Jerry called me. [Laughter]

Preston Lauterbach: I remember. [Laughter]

Emerson Able: [Laughter] But [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: So what was the big deal about Gerald Wilson, though?

Emerson Able: Well, Jerry called me a cock block. Well, but he'd been going with Elizabeth Fondren, I mean at that time was Elizabeth Dawson and

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she, too, has passed on.

Preston Lauterbach: Okay.

Emerson Able: And I'll tell you something else about Jerry, too. Now Jerry was from down in Mississippi, ____, Mississippi, and he come up through Illinois to Memphis. Okay another person did the same thing and that was Michael Wolf. Some of you might not know Michael Wolf but he traveled the same route as Gerald plus Michael graduated from East High School. Now when he finished East High School, he went to Monterrey, California and studied under Jerry!

Preston Lauterbach: Wow.

Emerson Able: Jerry gave him his first gig with Nancy Wilson. Okay from Nancy Wilson he went with Arsenio Hall's show as the music director but, see, when you think in terms of Memphis music and Memphis

musicians, hell, the people that's writing all the stories don't know nothing about it.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

CUT 0:05:59– Begin Section 2

Emerson Able: You under

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stand during my day wasn't nothing wrong with the segregated schools. I wish the hell they'd go back but what's happened is this, Jim Terry, Don Brooks, all of us, man, they went to Humes, we went to Manassas but when the time came, they went this-a-way to school and we went that-a-way to school however on the weekends, at the Water Works over here on Parkway, the black and white played football, ____ football, they would come over the next week and go to Washington Park, wasn't no problem. No problem at all.

Preston Lauterbach: Did y'all play music together?

Emerson Able: Wasn't a thing about it, it was integrated!

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Now after we got a little bit older some of the white guys would be in the ____ and come to the jam sessions at Club Handy.

Preston Lauterbach: Right.

Emerson Able: Okay? But not all! Some! I'll give an example.

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Calder Stokes Music Store was on the second floor of Madison and November 6th Street. We used to get together on Sunday at **Calder** Stokes Music Store. Don Fuller who was working for **Calder** and also did – was with the union for awhile before he passed – Phineas Newborn, **Bennie Morrell**, **Eleanor Smith**, W.A. Spencer, Don Brooks, Jeb Cherry, all right, we had the integrated thing going. Police were just riding around because during that particular time everything was closed. Mr. Crump said, “Everything is closed down on Sunday but church,” and the police

didn't know where the music was coming from and they were just rolling, just

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rolling, [laughter] just rolling, trying to find out and they saw one guy throwing in the door on Madison Street with his horn and that turned us off and the police came upstairs and told us, "All of y'all, get outta here!"

Preston Lauterbach: Oh my goodness, they raided you, huh?

Emerson Able: Yeah because we ain't supposed to be together!

Preston Lauterbach: Wow.

Emerson Able: You understand that?

Preston Lauterbach: Sure.

Emerson Able: So sometimes when we be playing over at the plantation some of the white guys would be playing, you know, would come over and sit in with us but we had a real good thing going for us during those so-called black-and-white days.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: Okay.

Preston Lauterbach: Hey do me a favor; take me back to Gerald Wilson real quick.

Emerson Able: That's about all I can tell you about Jerry.

Preston Lauterbach: Well no give me basic stuff like what did the play?

Emerson Able: Jerry played trumpet.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah and what kinda role did he play in your life when you weren't getting in the middle of his dates, what? [Laughter]

Emerson Able: [Laughter] Well, the next time I saw Gerald

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was in Chicago at the International Association of Jazz Educators. This particular organization was formed by Ferguson, who was then the band director, you know? He was band director at

Memphis State but this organization was formed by him and when Gerald, I have a picture of him at home with Michael. Both of them was at the same table so when I went up to the table, Jerry remembered me and that's about all I could say, that was the first time I had seen Jerry since.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh but you had told me that he was one of the first people that got you interested in music, is that right?

Emerson Able: Yeah, from the instrument that he was playing.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: You know he was trying to screw Elizabeth.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: But you know I was not so young that I didn't know what was going on, you understand about that love thing, you *[laughter]* know,

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but, yeah, he was a nice guy, man.

Preston Lauterbach: So seeing Gerald Wilson with the trumpet and the girl that made it seem like music was a good idea to you?

Emerson Able: Yeah that was one thing, yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: *[Laughter]* Was it?

Emerson Able: Yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: Well, tell me what. You had a conversation?

Emerson Able: And then see my grandmother was a musician.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, okay.

Emerson Able: Okay my grandmother played behind Alberta Hunter.

Preston Lauterbach: Wow.

Emerson Able: Yeah and oh man, oh lord have mercy, she swore that she never had a drink, which was a lie. My grandmother was the lyingest person I think could recall but she drank Gold Crest 51 Beer.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: And I remember that. Okay she'd come over to the house after I found out I had a piano, she rubbed her hands and started playing some Blues I just really couldn't understand it because the Blues that they were playing

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was kinda different. Now you would find her name mentioned in the story of Alberta Hunter and then when Alberta died the press came up and interviewed my grandmother and I still could not understand that. I said, "How did they know that my grandmother was associated with her?" You understand that was a mystery but I didn't worry about it anymore but they did a thing, Alberta did a thing, on Nash NPR. What's the radio station on North Main, South Main?

Preston Lauterbach: Which one, WEVL?

Emerson Able: That's it.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: They interviewed Miss Aunt Alberta is what I used to call her and she had on that radio program. I was in the process of taping it and she says that

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she and my grandmother were prostitutes and, man, I just stopped taping it because I didn't even turn it off and she went on to tell me about how they'd be playing downstairs. See but upstairs, people lived upstairs over the joints on Beale Street and how they would go upstairs with this guy, would be under the bed and all of that stuff, whether she was telling the truth or not, I didn't hear the rest of it but I do remember that they knew quite about -- the press knew quite a bit about -- my grandmother.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

CUT 0:12:45– Begin Section 3

Emerson Able: Uh-huh. Then my Uncle danced, he was a tap dancer and he was with the **Rod** American Shows and there was another show I can't remember the name of.

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He ended up being the first tap dancer on “The Lawrence Welk Show” and he was making good money but they wanted him to do the minstrel type thing, you know. With the [crosstalk] --

Preston Lauterbach: Black up?

Emerson Able: You know with the black face and the lips?

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: And he quit and my daddy told me he was out of his head because he was making good money and he just told him he couldn't hang with it. My dad said, “Well, you could've made the money and then wash the stuff off your face now because they didn't recognize you anyway, they just recognize the image,” you know, but he couldn't explain it to him. His name was Patrick Henry Duncan. He was referred to as “The Fred Astaire of Beale Street.”

Preston Lauterbach: Wow.

Emerson Able: Yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: That's deep.

Emerson Able: Yeah, he wasn't no good, though.

Preston Lauterbach: [Laughter] No?

Emerson Able: Yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: You talking about beyond dancing?

Emerson Able: Huh?

Preston Lauterbach: You talking a

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bout other than dancing he wasn't any good?

Emerson Able: Yeah, he always pimped his mamas.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, yeah?

Emerson Able: She took care of him, man, and then not only that took care of his kids and his grandkids but she passed. One of 'em in jail now. He's in Rikers.

Preston Lauterbach: That's frustrating.

Emerson Able: Yeah but he wasn't no good.

Preston Lauterbach: Huh.

Emerson Able: He still ain't no good.

Preston Lauterbach: So listen by the time you got to Manassas, were you already [crosstalk] –

Emerson Able: As a teacher or what?

Preston Lauterbach: No, no, a student, were you already playing?

Emerson Able: Nah, man!

Preston Lauterbach: So you learned at Manassas?

Emerson Able: Yeah, that didn't happen. We didn't. We had a drum and bugle corps at Manassas, which was all girls, which was sponsored by a Dr. Hickman and Dr. **U.S. Walter**. They bought the uniforms and everything and the bugles and the drums.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: That's what we had prior to that time. You understand just a drum and bugle corps. Now Mr. McDaniel came there, W.T. McDaniel who

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Emerson Able: trained most of the musicians from Manassas because he was working at the two schools. He was working at Manassas twice-a-week and he was working at Booker Washington three-days-a-week so our mission at Manassas even though we two days, we

were gonna make for those other lost days that we had missed and in doing so we had nothing but cooperation from the people in the community. We practiced on Saturday at the homes and these people would prepare meals for us, these parents, but they were interested because, you know, hey man, if you were involved in something you didn't go over to Juvenile Court and a lot of them who were not involved in other activities [crosstalk] –

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what happened? [Crosstalk] What? Why you want me to? Okay.

Preston Lauterbach: All right so Mr. McDaniel?

Emerson Able: Yeah and we just got to moving!

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: And we made up for the lost time.

Preston Lauterbach: What kind of music were you playing?

Emerson Able: We were playing, while I was in the 7th grade, we was playing out of the *Bennett Band Book* and the graduating tune was “Majestic Overture.” That was on the last page in that book and, after that, every

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thing was smooth sailing. We performed in the Christmas Parade and I got highly, highly PO'd because the little white kids said, “Oh mama, look, there's a midget” and I didn't think I was a midget. I'd never been called a midget but I was very, very small and when we finally got the uniforms, the principal didn't wanna do a uniform for me because he said I was too small and wouldn't nobody else wear it however the person that wore my uniform, after the Second City uniform was Frank Strozier.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, yeah?

Emerson Able: Yeah now Frank lived right behind me on – he lived on Randle I lived on Speed and our back doors were like this and I started Frank out of it when he was in the 6th grade playing saxophone.

Preston Lauterbach: How old were you, how much older were you?

Emerson Able: Huh?

Preston Lauterbach: How much older were you than Mr. Strozier?

Emerson Able: Mister? Oh, Mr. Strozier.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: Frank, okay.

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Emerson Able: Oh, I was in college while he was in 6th, yeah, I think, yeah. No, I was not in college the first year but the second year I had gone to Tennessee State so I guess maybe about 5, yeah, about 5. Now Frank is on a dialysis machine.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, really?

Emerson Able: Uh-huh.

Preston Lauterbach: That's terrible.

Emerson Able: Yeah and while **Matt Garrett** was there, he also Harold Mabern. Now we hear Harold Mabern playing on recordings now with Eric Alexander and Eric was taught by George Coleman. See these are the guys that we don't hear, man, you know? With all due respect to Kirk, I know Kirk's whole family, see, and Mickey

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Tucker who was married to Kirk's father's sister. We were playing at The Plantation and his – she gave – she had a baby but it died in childbirth and that's the first time I ever saw Mickey just wanna whip everybody. He was so down, man; he just would walk up to a person and hit 'em. Now he's in South America if he's still alive because he got in a fight on an international flight and he can't even come back to the United States.

Preston Lauterbach: Wow. Got him quarantined, huh?

Emerson Able: I guess so.

Preston Lauterbach: Wow.

Emerson Able: I don't know what kinda disease he got.

CUT 0:19:45 – Begin Section 4

Preston Lauterbach: [Laughter]

Emerson Able: [Laughter]

Preston Lauterbach: So go back again to that first band that you were in Manassas.

Emerson Able: Oh, it was good!

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah, how many pieces?

Emerson Able: Mmm, it was big!

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: I mean it's bigger than the bands that we see

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Emerson Able: in the black schools now.

Preston Lauterbach: And had you gone to saxophone by then?

Emerson Able: Yeah I was playing saxophone!

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: Yeah, \$35.00.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, yeah?

Emerson Able: Yeah and my dad was repairing instruments at the Melody Music Company during that time, which was on Madison on the right hand side between Main and Front Street and you had to go down some steps to get to it. Now that's Mr. Averwater who now owns – the Averwater family owns Amro Music.

Preston Lauterbach: Mmm-hmm.

Emerson Able: Yeah, uh-huh. My first saxophone, \$35.00 and, boy, you talking about a used horn. I think it was an instrument from World War II. No, World War I!

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Yeah because I thought – yeah, a long time ago. Man, I’m telling you. Man, man, that horn was so horrible but I was able to master it with chewing gum.

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Preston Lauterbach: Patching the holes?

Emerson Able: Well, you know, putting chewing gum behind the pads to fall out and if a pad is leaking, you can put a piece of paper under it, you were building keys and everything but I was doing it.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: I was learning them Louis Jordan solos, Earl Bostic.

Preston Lauterbach: Is that what you playing with the school band or on your own?

Emerson Able: Nah, man. This is in high school! Yeah!

Preston Lauterbach: That was what McDaniel was teaching you?

Emerson Able: Yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: Now he took y’all – okay, tell me what kinda gigs you played. You did marching-band stuff?

Emerson Able: Well, we did. We played marching band but, see, at that time we used to have what they called the Music Festival. Oh boy, that was beautiful. Now the only person I know that still might have a picture is WT McDaniel’s son who is now in the Jazz Study program at Ohio State University but the hardest tune as of yesterday that I have ever

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Emerson Able: played in my life was “Go Down Moses,” by W.C. Handy. Whew, I don’t know what was on his mind, I don’t what he’d been smoking, drinking or thinking but that sucker was hard, man, and, even today, if they put the music in front of me, and everybody that was in that band, they’d still have a problem with it but we made it. We learned from Mr. Handy, you know, just like he told us. He says that “if you’re really interested in music, get outta Memphis!” [Laughter] And I think he told the truth because everybody that left Memphis that went to New York and other places, they didn’t come back, you understand, and those that came

back, I wrote down this guy's name, Rozell Claxton. Okay as a student at Manassas High School, it's an institute on the corner of Mad

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ison and 2nd, Goodwin Institute. He was the piano player there for the radio broadcast but didn't nobody know he was black because they couldn't see him. All they could do was hear the notes, you understand? We're talking about on the radio. As an example, they say that Nate D. Williams was the first black disc jockey, no, no, no, no, no, no. Benny Fields was the first black disc jockey in Memphis. He was at W-MPS at the Commercial Mutual Tower Building or something down on Main, which was right next to Coat Square. Yeah, Jazz, whenever, once-a-week. That was enough but those of us who were interested in music, hey; we tuned him in, see, because the hardest was you by a 78 record and then when you wind the thing

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up to play it, sometimes it'll be in the right key and most of the time be in the wrong key so, hell, we had learned tunes in tunes that was more difficult than playing 'em in the right key so, you know, we had some strange experiences. Okay, Edmond Ellison, we're still talking about the Rhythm Bombers. When Lucky Millinder came to the Handy Theater he was having problems with the musicians. Okay Alder Burris, Berg, Kevin Jones, Eddie Mathews, Jake Somerville and I played and made the circuit with Lucky Millinder's band. We read the book

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Emerson Able:

but Bull Moose didn't want Eddie Mathews' solo on it. Bronco played, man. I didn't solo. We had our lead alto player as Bernie Peacock. He's from Johnson City. Never heard of Johnson City. It could've been China but we couldn't play. All we had to do was to read the music.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able:

Yeah now I guess some of you might know and some of you might not know but Al and Jack Goldman did a lot for black musicians, I mean a whole lot, with Duke Ellington's group. See, you know, as black groups, we still had white friends, you understand, and you didn't get made if your good buddy [laughter] said -- used -- the

N-word, you know, because he knew how to use it. You see sometimes we get PO'd because you didn't say it right.

[Laughter]

[0:26:00] CUT Begin Section 5

Emerson Able: Okay, okay, that was so much for that. Now some of the other strange people that I played with, man, first of all, The '5' Royales, oh, that was outta Nashville. In college, George Hunter, they just had his funeral Tuesday of last week, he was – he ended up being – he didn't go to Manassas now. He was from ____ but I'm just trying to associate some of the groups from my being in the Music Department at Manassas High School. We had a woman there named Miss West that was a fourth grade teacher. She taught us fourth. We had so ____ in the fourth grade, man. We could sight-read! We could sight-read! We could sight-read! And Mr. Lunceford wanted her to leave Manassas and go to Chicago. She eventually did, you understand, but she could play, man.

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Emerson Able: Golly! .

Preston Lauterbach: By the time you got Manassas, were people still talking about Mr. Lunceford, you know?

Emerson Able: You mean as a student?!

Preston Lauterbach: Well, like were you [crosstalk] –

Emerson Able: Well, where I was, see [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: Were you conscious of his legacy at that time?

Emerson Able: Well, see Mr. Lunceford, Mr. Lunceford played at our school every year when he would come to Memphis.

Preston Lauterbach: All right.

Emerson Able: Yeah and if you look in the book *Rhythm is our Business*, there are pictures that were made, you understand? So he was a heavy influence on us, man, and he said, "How do you" – no, I think Buddy Merrill asked him, "How do you go about writing a tune?" And so he said, "Well, you come up with the words, first, if it's going to be a ballad and the way that you pronounce words is the rhythm to it" and

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Emerson Able: you just write pattern to the way that you write the words. You got the rhythmic pattern, now you got to decide how the melody's going to be." You understand and he was very, very, very, as my father said, he was very neat, very amenable. Now the lady at Fisk University that wrote the book at Fisk, in 1936, didn't even met – she was there with Lunceford before he came to Manassas. See, he came to Manassas as a English teacher and to coach football and Mr. McDaniel was the first paid band director in Memphis. Everybody else was if you had a saxophone and knew how to play it, people would go to you and take private lessons just like I could not take piano because we didn't have a piano and if I told my dad, "I want a piano," he'd say, "Where are we gonna put it, on the front

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porch?" So that was it.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: So the first piano I had in my house, Isaac gave it to me.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, really?

Emerson Able: Yeah and I just gave it away last week.

Preston Lauterbach: You did?!

Emerson Able: Yeah. I'm sick of it. I'm sick of music.

Preston Lauterbach: Well tell me, so there was W.T. McDaniel.

Emerson Able: Yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: How many until you were mentoring?

Emerson Able: Matt Garrett, Andrew Goodrich, Onzie Horne, and I ____ on Onzie. Now you talk about a guy that was nervous, man, because see [laughter] Onzie's – hell, Onzie's one of the best musicians that ever lived in Memphis and little that is known while he was on the road with Lionel Hampton. He was on the road. Quincy was also in that band and taught Quincy how to write.

Preston Lauterbach: Wow.

Emerson Able: Now I

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got a picture of them somewhere at the house at Quincy's. I don't think Quincy knew how old he is because whatever is his – I think he started off at the old age and now he gonna work down to where he's gonna end up being one or two years old.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Yeah but [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: Working backwards, huh?

Emerson Able: But I got a thing at – a picture at home – that was made a club in Chicago and at Quincy's 19th birthday and there's Ozzie playing the vibes.

Preston Lauterbach: Wow.

Emerson Able: But he taught Quincy and he was one hell of an influence on me, man, because I was nervous. I knew that musically I came nowhere then to Ozzie and even after Ozzie's death, it's the same. I respect him highly and I'll tell you somebody else that did not get the music credit that

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he deserved was Bill Howard.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: Yeah so there's a whole lotta strange things that have gone down in the music field, especially in Memphis, Tennessee and I think that the reason why we are having problems is because the kids, they don't hear it.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

CUT 0:31:21 – Begin Section 6

Emerson Able: They don't see it, you understand? Okay now when was the last time George Coleman, Harold Melvin, Frank Strozier, Marvin Stan, okay? Very few people know about Joe Gardner. These are musicians, man that left Memphis. I'm talking about Marvin, Pocket Full of Money, and I can't think of that other little boy's name. He came along with James Wynn and went to Central. So many musicians came out but what they don't know is we had an outlet,

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the kids had an outlet. Okay, James, Gary Topper, we were playing at the Living Room down on Lauderdale. Hey man, every night we played! Onzie didn't stop them from coming in the club and they would come in the club! We had clubs for the kids! See Sidewalk University is closed now. Ain't nowhere they can go, nowhere! And then when you walk into a band room and the band director tells his students that –and I heard this at Manassas – they had many band directors at Manassas since I left, too. Two of 'em made supervisor. Raymond Sales was first and after Raymond Sales, I can't think of the other guy's name. He taught at Manassas. I used to arrangements for him while I was a director at Westwood,

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and how can these guys draw a check and they can't play? They can't arrange and when they say at 150 in the paper the other day, I say, "I wonder how many of these gonna be band directors?" Because some of them cats are pitiful, man! They pitiful. I mean for them to put a clarinet together, it's just like an IQ test for them. They are sad.

Preston Lauterbach: Tell me this, what years were you band director, then?

Emerson Able: Where at Manassas?

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: From after I got out the army, '56 -- I never should've come back to Memphis, I should've gone back to Florida – to '87.

Preston Lauterbach: All right.

Emerson Able: Then I left and went to Westwood. Nah, that – no, '56 and I retired in '87. I was at

[0:34:00]

Manassas from '56 to '81.

Preston Lauterbach: Okay. Who were some of your outstanding pupils there?

Emerson Able: Well, Joe Gardner. He played with Charlie Mingus. Herbie Smith, oh man, he's in the Washington, DC area. He's teaching at a college. Oh man, now see, now you – Nicky Gregory, a lot of 'em ended up doing work for Stax. Isaac Hayes, Howard Grimes, these are guys that could've gone further, like Fred Ford; they loved Memphis, like me. I didn't give a damn about Memphis but I really should've gone back to Florida but see

[0:35:00]

even with four years of experience, two teaching in Florida before coming back to Memphis plus two years in the service, I wasn't making enough money.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: I didn't have enough money to get Mound Bayou – not Mound Bayou but Holly Springs, Mississippi, man. I couldn't get back to Florida but I really wanted to go back to Florida because Florida was definitely a learning experience for me and it kept me on my toes but them kids at Manassas kept me on my toes, too.

Preston Lauterbach: Yes, sir. Tell me that story about Isaac Hayes.

Emerson Able: What about, me putting him outta the band? Oh, [laughter] well, yes. I had to cut him loose, man. See we had a principal. We had assembly programs at certain periods of the day for – see Manassas was 1-through-12.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah,

[0:36:00]

the grades you talking about.

Emerson Able: Okay yeah and the 1-through-grade went to the assembly program. During my 3rd period class this is where Isaac was, in my 3rd period class but the guidance counselor, Mrs. Harvey, crazy about Isaac, and every time they would have an assembly program, his class was either on a Tuesday or Thursday or either Monday,

Wednesday and Friday. They would not come in every day. It would always be during his class period because he had the same from Mrs. Harvey. The kids didn't care. They didn't like his singing. They'd half asleep anyway but – and I told him. I said, “Well, [laughter] man,

[0:37:00]

you got to go, you know? I want you to go on be your singing,” and believe it or not his best friend stayed with me and Isaac went on to – during that time he was in the junior high department – went on to Billy Mayes class to take vocal music during that time, see, because you could take vocal music or in the band at that time.

CUT 0:37:25 – Begin Section 7

Preston Lauterbach: What was he trying to play in the band?

Emerson Able: Saxophone!

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, yeah?

Emerson Able: Okay now the saxophone was passed on to ace boon coon, Sidney Kirk!

Preston Lauterbach: Okay. [Laughter]

Emerson Able: [Laughter] Yeah, they're good friends.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah, he got to be a big deal, too, Sidney Kirk.

Emerson Able: Yeah, Sidney's a beautiful guy, man.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Yeah we were on the road together with Isaac.

Preston Lauterbach: All you guys got back together in Isaac's band?

Emerson Able: Most of us.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Yeah, uh-huh, all but Howard.

Preston Lauterbach: Mickey Gregory was in there, too.

Emerson Able: Yeah, Mickey was there. Uh-huh, we had Nookie

Preston Lauterbach: Was Nookie a student of yours?

Emerson Able: Huh?

Preston Lauterbach: Was Nookie a student of yours?

Emerson Able: No, no, no. Nookie went to Mel

[0:38:00]

rose.

Preston Lauterbach: Okay.

Emerson Able: And then Ben Cauley that was with the Bar-Kays.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: He went to Booker Washington, mmm-hmm. Then we had Errol Thomas playing bass, finally, after Murphy left and Murphy's in Nashville now. I think he was selling Bibles last I [laughter] heard.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, yeah.

Emerson Able: Yeah that was funny; Murphy's selling Bibles, [laughter] man? I wasn't really got into that Bible that is. Well man but anyway, Willie Hall, and we had a guy from – well, we had Boots. At one time we had three to four guitar players in the band, man! You know other than Skip!

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Yeah we had so many guitar players. We had one guy that had learned how to play the guitar; he never did change his strings

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and he was playing the downside up or upside down, whichever so therefore we get a different sound from him because his top line ain't what the top line is on the other. Then we had a guy from one

of them strange countries, he's playing the 12-string guitar. I said, "Golly." [Laughter]

Preston Lauterbach: [Laughter] So what was it like for Isaac to bring you into his band after you kicked him out of your band?

Emerson Able: To get a portion of his band together [crosstalk] --

Preston Lauterbach: Okay.

Emerson Able: straight [crosstalk] --

Preston Lauterbach: I gotcha.

Emerson Able: and stop being [crosstalk] --

Preston Lauterbach: So he knew that you could get -- what'd you do? Did you do horns for him?

Emerson Able: Huh?

Preston Lauterbach: Did you do horns for him?

Emerson Able: I guess so.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: I rehearsed the group, especially the saxophone section.

Preston Lauterbach: Okay.

Emerson Able: Now we did -- shhwwwwh -- we did a take on -- Onzie was arranging for Isaac, too.

Preston Lauterbach: Basically that whole Isaac Hayes Band was just a big Manassas super

[0:40:00]

group.

Emerson Able: It was a big Manassas group other than a few outsiders.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: [Laughter] So but he did an arrangement, man, on -- doot-doot-doot -- what's its name? It's by Al Green. Da-shabada-daa-da.

“Let’s Stay Together.” Shhwwwwh, we practiced on that sucker for ten in Hawaii and, believe it or not, we finally played. We did a recording at Willy’s studio and when we heard ourselves, we didn’t believe but something went down and the only time we ever heard it was after Onzie Horne and they played it every day. Hey but Willy told us that he did not hear it.

Preston Lauterbach: Huh.

Emerson Able: Willy was a strange character. He

[0:41:00]

Emerson Able: took advantage of his brother. I forgot that. Maybe I shouldn’t say it but he did.

Preston Lauterbach: You signed the release do I mean the world’s gonna know about it now.

Emerson Able: Oh okay well anyway he messed over James.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: And James and I from 846 Cellar Street, in Orange Mound, as youngsters, we rode the broom together. Riding the broom is playing cowboy with a mop.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, yeah?

Emerson Able: Yeah and I’ve been knowing James a long time.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah well we don’t have to get into all that. Tell me about Howard Grimes. How did he stand out to you when he was a youngster?

Emerson Able: Howard Grimes is a human metronome. You don’t have to wind him up for him to be tight enough to keep the beat going because that’s it. If the metro

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nomic beat is at 160, when Howard started if it end up next Tuesday and you wanna test him, just turn the metronome back on 160 and will still be at 160. He had unusual ability for rhythm and everybody could recognize Howard’s beat. When Al Green did this thing, he went to Philadelphia and recorded. [Crosstalk] He went to Philadelphia with the Philadelphia Sound Orchestra and everybody in Detroit; everybody knew Howard knew that that Howard was not playing on it!

Preston Lauterbach: Mmm-hmm.

Emerson Able: Because of the beat! Man, Howard’s something else with the rhythm. Yeah and plus that he’s easy to get along with.

[0:43:00] CUT – Begin Section 8

Emerson Able: Some guys, you know, they'll cop an attitude on you in a minute and they will mess you up if you don't get rid of 'em but what happened with Howard at Stax, he's just a mild-mannered person.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: And he would not speak up. He's a very religious person, too, and that particular portion I admire because I got religion but I ain't too religious, you understand, and I have a problem going along with the preacher sometimes because I think maybe you might've misinterpreted that. I see it this-a-way but so what?

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: That's it.

Preston Lauterbach: Tell me [crosstalk] –

Emerson Able: But Howard is one of the better drummers.

[0:44:00]

Preston Lauterbach: So you had him in the regular school band [crosstalk] --

Emerson Able: Yeah!

Preston Lauterbach: and you took him to clubs, too.

Emerson Able: Howard's [laughter] – Howard was working with me at the River Mount. Now this is before the River Mount downtown. This is at The Castle over the on Central. The building we was playing down in the basement and Mr. Mc – [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: Ashlar Hall.

Emerson Able: Huh? Ashlar Hall, that's it.

Preston Lauterbach: Yep.

Emerson Able: And Mr. McDaniel was a waiter there and [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: Your old band director?

Emerson Able: Yeah!

Preston Lauterbach: [Laughter]

Emerson Able: Yeah well see he had – he was having problems then like what some of the teachers are having now with the girls at school.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-oh.

Emerson Able: Yeah so they finally caught him one time on La Paloma [laughter] and it cost him his job so he ended up working there and waiting tables across the street at that racket club.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: But

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Emerson Able: this was his main place, Ashlar Hall. Now we had when they filmed that movie “Distant Drums,” all those movie stars came up to Memphis and this is where they would hang out, in that basement, while were down there playing and when they had the CB thing, my nickname was “African Hillbilly” and Robert Mitchum gave me that name.

Preston Lauterbach: Really? [Laughter]

Emerson Able: Yeah but he was crazy about Erskine Hawkins’ music and tunes like “Tippin’ In” that I had played as a kid in high school, other tunes that had the saxophone solo, see, because we only had Howard, George, myself.

Preston Lauterbach: George who?

Emerson Able: George **Causer**. He was the band director at Lester during that time but we made good money, man, good money.

Preston Lauterbach: What’d y’all

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play, Jazz stuff? You said Erskine Hawkins.

Emerson Able: Well, we played Jazz and ballads.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: You know so we got a difference between white artist and black artists and you have to know, see? Believe it or not I always enjoyed playing for white folk because I didn't have to sweat and [laughter] you know they – looky here, they want some ballads, they wanna dance, you know, but they don't wanna do this all night long, you understand?

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah, I know.

Emerson Able: So that helped us, you know? Just like when we was playing over here for the ____ _____. I think I was telling you about this. We had a good time.

Preston Lauterbach: Mmm-hmm.

Emerson Able: But now if it had been somewhere else, the Barn Nightclub, when we'd come outta there, man, we'd have marks, perspiration marks, tired, and everything that's why a lotta

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the musicians didn't have jobs in the daytime because they was tired from blowing them horns half the night, see, and, aww, I dunno, man, I just – I've had a lot of experience and [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: Tell me real quick. Take me through your recording career. What songs have you recorded on?

Emerson Able: Oh shoot, I can't tell you the name of all of 'em. Some of 'em I don't even know the name myself.

Preston Lauterbach: I remember recently you told me you were Christine Kittrell [crosstalk] –

Emerson Able: Oh that was the first one. That's when I was in college.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Yeah, "Blow Top Blues."

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Yeah, they gave credit to somebody else but we played when Fats Domino would come to Nashville, we played at The Riverlark

behind him and we played with The '5' Royales, The '5' Royals or whatever that vocal group was. I was with Jimmy Liggins,

[0:48:00]

East Jimmy or Joe.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah, Jimmy.

Emerson Able: In Mississippi when he got killed and that kinda put a [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah, you were telling me that story. Now was that gig arranged through Mr. McDaniel?

Emerson Able: No, no! Some business.

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: Yeah and I was playing with a guy they called Jazz Ferguson. He played tenor.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: Yeah but when they shot that guy, man, boy, I had jaw and everything on me, man, blood all over me, shwwwh. Then when I told you about being up in Tipton County, didn't I?

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah. [Laughter]

Emerson Able: [Laughter] Yeah, yeah, whatever. I'm running the wrong way up the highway but I was running the right way from John's place in Illinois when the guy got shot, when he got shot. He did this tune, "The Honeydripper," boy!

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: [Sings] The honeydripper, he's a killa,

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Emerson Able: the honeydripper -- and then it goes into, like, daah-dah daah-dah BOOM!

Preston Lauterbach: [Laughter]

CUT 00:49:08– Begin Section 9

Emerson Able: [Laughter] Oh lord, boy I'll tell you, I had some strange days, man. I played with some good groups when I was in Florida. I didn't play but with one and that was with Lady Doris and that was at Opal Locket at Harlem Garden and then when Bob got out of service, Sam Ford and I played with Junior but he told Lady Doris, [laughter] said, "Hey been telling you all along, Junior coming back, Junior coming back" because I thought I was a hot player, man [laughter] and who the hell is Junior?! I didn't know who he was and Sam Ford knew him because he was a couple years older than me but doing Florida Inn and Tennessee Stadium Battle of the Band and "Juni

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or's coming back" and these clubs were owned up and down the East Coast by Harlan Jack Goldman as I mentioned his name before and he told Lady that – Lady Doris, she was a fine player, she used to play with the – what was that all-girl orchestra? Sweet House of Rhythm or something, it was a group outta Mississippi. One of the young ladies is a little old fat trumpet player, she's still alive in Chicago.

Preston Lauterbach: Oh, really?

Emerson Able: Yeah she [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: One of 'em went to Booker T. Washington, Tiny Davis.

Emerson Able: That's who it is.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah big fat woman. She's dead.

Emerson Able: What? Last I heard. Well, I ain't been keeping up on her but she was kinda plump, yeah. [Laughter]

Preston Lauterbach: That's why they called her "Tiny."

Emerson Able: Yeah. [Laughter] Yeah but anyway I've had an interesting life. The only person that left here

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Emerson Able: and didn't owe me any money was Sunbeam.

Preston Lauterbach: That was it, huh?

Emerson Able: Yeah, Sunbeam lived true and whatever he said he was gonna pay you, he would. Nobody could beat Sunbeam out of a dime. He was not an educated person but he was a mathematical genius. I could not believe it. I could not believe it when you could add things like this and when you get to the bottom line get – Onzie could do it, too, but he'd give you the bottom figure and we're talking about 389, 573, and, hey man, he just [*crosstalk*] –

Preston Lauterbach: He's like a calculator, huh?

Emerson Able: Yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: One thing I was curious about I meant to ask you earlier, what did yawl's uniforms look like?

Emerson Able: Which one?

Preston Lauterbach: Your first one when you were a student.

Emerson Able: At Manassas?

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh.

Emerson Able: We

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had blue jackets, trim in gold with the sand-brown belt. The sand-brown belt is the one that goes around here and comes this-a-way.

Preston Lauterbach: Okay.

Emerson Able: And we wore white duck pants and Mr. McDaniel made sure that you did not wash the blue coat but you kept them white ducks clean, yes, sir, and ironed. Then the next uniform was an all-blue uniform. This was the last one before I graduated, the one that Frankie ended up wearing and that was it. That was it and when I came back the band got real good because I was getting help from Onzie and I was doing the arrangements and I was doing the arrangements. See when

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you can do different things if – I'll give an example. Memphis States Band, the best band that I think they ever had was when Tommy Ferguson was out there. I might be wrong but see Tom

and I was at the Naval School of Music together. Man, we learned more stuff there than he did at Murray State and than I did at Tennessee State! Man, you'd be surprised what they teach you! And so that was my strong point! If I ever took -- if we went -- well, when we went to Philadelphia, when we'd go to New Orleans, I'd get the New Orleans Picayune Paper, *Philadelphia Enquirer* and they used to list in the tunes for the top tunes, hell, I found out what the top tune is and guess what? I arranged it! And when we'd get there, we'd shock the heck outta everybody! When we went to New Orleans and

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then, oh man, one of them black movies and we did "Soul Train," the theme from "Soul Train" and it wasn't even published, man!

Preston Lauterbach: Hmm.

Emerson Able: And so when we were walking through -- well we didn't walk through no black neighborhood because [laughter] everything was in the gentile section or different parts of New Orleans and, man, look at 'em, man. We kept 'em swinging, man! They wrote Westwood's band up in *Inside Mardi Gras* and we were ready to bust St. Augustine. Now St. Augustine School in New Orleans is where the Marsalises and all of them and Terence Blanchard went, whoo!

Preston Lauterbach: [Laughter] All right one last one. Did you get to play with Lunceford?

Emerson Able: I went to Ellis -- not Ellis Auditorium -- Beale Street Audi

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torium. My mom and dad had took me to hear him and I knew that he knew my dad. I could see that and I got -- I have some pictures that Joe Thomas was the tenor player and he used to sing just like Bull Moose Jackson. Now have you ever seen Bull Moose?

Preston Lauterbach: Oh yeah, oh yeah.

CUT 00:55:20-- Begin Section 10

Emerson Able: That's the ugliest dude I ever seen in my life, man! Golly! But let me see I'm trying to think because I know I had my horn with me. Oh man, I don't remember right now.

Preston Lauterbach: Now you told me that Rhythm Bombers would open up for him so did he ever come out with y'all?

Emerson Able: He played at the school with us!

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah, okay.

Emerson Able: Yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: That's what it was. So he was going to school to [crosstalk] his gigs.

Emerson Able: Hey we was – man! Shoot man and looky here, he was very impressed with us, you know, but see we was – we weren't playing music like the other

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Emerson Able: high school bands were. We had music that was arranged by top arrangers and we had – I'll tell you somebody else that was a student at Manassas that very few people knew about, Ed Townsend. Ed Townsend wrote a whole lotta tunes, man and then after he decided to give it up he moved to Mound Bayou, Mississippi and he ran for a political position down there and won. Now whether he's still alive now, I cannot tell you. I can probably find out from Honeymoon's first wife, Barbara Bell because everybody else – I'd die to see us for fear I'd by then being helped and I remember because that was the area where he was from, you see? Yeah.

Preston Lauterbach: So what do you think has set Manassas bands apart over the years?

Emerson Able: Hmm?

Preston Lauterbach: What has Manassas bands so good over the years?

Emerson Able: Interest

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and a person that tried to do for the kids at Manassas, like Mr. McDaniel and, see, Manassas band was kinda like a family thing.

In other words if your brother was in the band, your other brother was gonna be in the band, too, or else y'all was gonna have a fight. If it's your sister, she was gonna be in the band. My role every year I had somebody in the band that was related and now especially after the dust of my wife man up, I could – whoo, I – whew, I get whole lotta calls from schools and that's from

[0:58:00]

Emerson Able:

California to New York. Shhwww. Robert was in Russia, that's Honeymoon's son. They called me from Russia. Wherever he goes, whenever's outta town, they call me, Rudy calls me all the time. Now Rudy, that's Honeymoon's son, this is the one that was in the movie "Taps" and had done a whole lotta things that was on – things like W-KNO and he -- New York, was a little bit too fast for him. He came back but Robert didn't and, see, Robert is playing with The Duke Ellington Orchestra, and he just finished doing a recording with The Dizzy Gillespie All-Stars. He calls me, on average, once-a-week, you know, and see I've got some strange telephone call. Well, I

[0:59:00]

Emerson Able:

got some strange telephones that I don't know how to operate. You know how it is. I ain't no – them computers came out too late in my life and it's to the degree now, shit, I can't even set my clock. It's hard [laughter] you know? So – but I'm enjoying what's left in my life. I went Day Inn, made another payment on the funeral so I want to get away. I don't like what's happening here in Memphis, musically. Is it okay if I just call off some names? Okay in regards to – I wrote these down this morning. Shhhh, the notes on Beale Street are really not – they're not done in chronological order

[0:60:00]

and a lot of people with notes on Beale Street. See it shouldn't be that way and I'm talking about people that I know. I thought once when they said that they were going to do Beale Street and put notes down, I thought in terms of five lines, four spaces and a cliff and where they put the names down, do it in terms of like you see music. This is what I thought but I' don't think like normal people. Okay first I have Rozell -- whew, it's hurting, man. Rozell Claxton. I mentioned him before.

[0:61:00]

Chris Woods from Booker Washington, Chris Woods played with – the last group that he played with before he started teaching the Jazz Theory Program in Fort Lauderdale, Florida for the University of Miami, whooo, was with Buddy Rich. He's on a lot of Buddy Rich albums. He's from Booker Washington. Sonny Chris, okay now when we had the -- whatever it was – the Beale Street Music Festivals, Chris Woods was there and also Sonny Chris. Chris Woods did not play but Sonny did. Two weeks later, three weeks later, he got killed. Okay now we talking

[0:62:00]

about Jazz artists. Now I had the Jazz artists, Fred Ford had the Rhythm & Blues, Harold Winfield whose dead, the two of them's gone now. I don't know why I'm still here but we had Marvin Stan. Marvin Stan after Conrad died, Marvin is lead trumpet player in New York, man! Nathan Woodward played with Duke Ellington, he went to Booker Washington. I got Mr. McDaniel's name who should've been there.

CUT 00:62:42 [or 01:02:42]—Begin Section 11

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah.

Emerson Able: Evelyn Young that played with B.B., she went to Manassas. Oh boy, Anita Tucker. Anita Tucker was original from West Memphis but she went to Booker Washington but Memphis Slim took her away

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to France. She came back here and could not get a gig. Now what she was trying to do on the Beale Street thing was to – the guy that owned Rum Boogie, you know, he had one or two or three places right together, one place, and we were gonna do a thing like Preservation Hall, in New Orleans, shhhh-smack! The only time – she's the only woman in Memphis would show us arrangements, she had arrangements that had been done for – oh man, I can't think of some of the arrangers, man, but we played the Boogie and all the time she had a chance to sing in Memphis was when we performed for the NAACP Banquet but she was rebel rouser. I'd mentioned Ed Townsend.

[0:64:00]

Emerson Able: I did not mention Marilyn McCleave but she was a concert singer that taught a whole lotta people here in Memphis vocal techniques,

including most of the guys that – the Whalum Family. Well man, Booker T. Little, him and Louis Smith, Steve Purchase, Cleophus Johnson, Gatemouth Moore ended up being a preacher, “I Ain’t Mad at You, Pretty Baby.” Willie Smith, Harry James, saxophone player, they didn’t know what he was

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because he was like Frank, white folk characteristics, straight hair. A hell of a saxophone player. I had mentioned Bill Harvey. I mentioned Frank Strozier. I mentioned Harold Mabern and I mentioned George Coleman. These people that are known – oh, Marvin Stan, Joseph C. Otter, damn I can’t think of the other trumpet player’s name but he’s graduated from name Central AMU with Topper and – Mobley! Man that took off of me trying [laughter] [crosstalk] –

Preston Lauterbach: We can shut it down now.

Emerson Able: Okay, man.

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah but thank you. I appreciate you sharing the stories. It’s beautiful.

Emerson Able: It’s not right. It’s not right and that woman they got, I don’t know how.

[0:66:00]

Emerson Able: This is why I don’t wanna play no more, man, because Memphis has not been fair. I’ll give you an example. My being at Malaco, it used to be a place over there on Raynor, Sounds of Memphis Studio, whoo, Chelsea and Thomas, Chips Moman [crosstalk] --

Preston Lauterbach: Yeah, American Studio?

Emerson Able: Yeah!

Preston Lauterbach: Uh-huh

Emerson Able: Tanner.

Preston Lauterbach: Pepper Tanner?

Emerson Able: Ardent. And see when you’re in the studio you don’t know who – see if you’re singing, if you’re playing background for a singer, you don’t hear the singer, you’re just playing the music and all

that other stuff is either been recorded or either they gonna dub in over him, over

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the music. Who, I've been at every studio in Memphis. I put a whole lotta money into the Pension Fund and excuse the expression, I'm talking about a whole lotta money, man. We did one thing with Disco Connection for ABC Paramount, platinum, platinum, platinum, this was during the days of the people doing the Disco. Who, we never got no royalties. Seymour went to California. Chico Hamilton's buddy, I can't think of his name, he was going to get the money for us.

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We got threatening calls from ABC Paramount if we got it we never would enjoy it. Then when I applied for pension, after my being in the union all these years, they told me that I was not vested. How in the hell could I not be vested and I'm on the Board of Directors for the Local 71. I done paid my union dues and I have always filed contracts. Howard can tell you he ain't getting no money.

Preston Lauterbach: Right.

Emerson Able: I ain't getting no money and then this sucker tell you that he's getting a check other than David Porter, Booker T and The MG's and _____, Wayne Jackson and another – woo, I

[0:69:00]

Emerson Able: almost said the N-word. Ain't nobody is getting is no money man, ain't nobody getting no money, and so you have --

[End of Audio]