

George Garzone

By Eric Nemeyer

Jl: Give us a thumbnail sketch of the Triadic Chromatic Approach and how you developed the concept. You and JodyJazz have created a DVD on this approach which is now being released.

GG: The Triadic Approach was developed from years of my listening to John Coltrane and studying his three tonic system - by using major triads as a means to form a harmonic development. I took all four triads and worked them out in a way so that they all could be played over any chord at any place of the harmony,

Jl: Could you talk about your long time association with bassist John Lockwood and drummer Bob Gullotti in the group The Fringe?

Dave Liebman and Jerry Bergonzi: "Go forward and don't look back."

Jl: Tell us about your work with Mike Mainieri and the kinds of discussions you might have had during your tenure in his band?

GG: The thing I got from Mike was how knowledgeable he was about music - not just about the actual music, but also his understanding of the music business.

Jl: Could you compare the leadership styles of some of the artists with whom you have worked, and share some of the ideas you picked up or observations you

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GG: The Fringe has been together for 35 years because of the musical commitment between us - a bond that was formed without trying. The path of the band was pursued by chance ... which is what keeps us together..

Jl: Could you talk about your background, and what motivated you to pursue this path?

GG: I grew up in a musical family and I excelled to the point that my family sent me to Berklee. That's where I found out about Coltrane and became fascinated by the strength of everything he did musically.

Jl: How has the conversation deepened amongst the members of the band over the years?

GG: As the years went on we started to talk less and less because the music was so strong. The music was the conversation of the band.

Jl: How do you feel it has benefited you during your career to have stayed in Boston instead of moving to New York?

GG: I'd like everyone to know, in New York, that I've been living in New York since 1995; people have related to me as being more from Boston, which is great. But I also feel that I've put in my time into New York by driving back and forth between there and Boston for the last 13 years. I actually do live in Brooklyn.

Jl: Could you share some ideas or words of wisdom or encouragement that you received from one or more of your mentors?

GG: The words of wisdom I got from people I idolized like Frank Tiberi, Joe Lovano, Michael Brecker,

made that made an impact on your approach? Mike Mainieri, Jack DeJohnette, Joe Lovano?

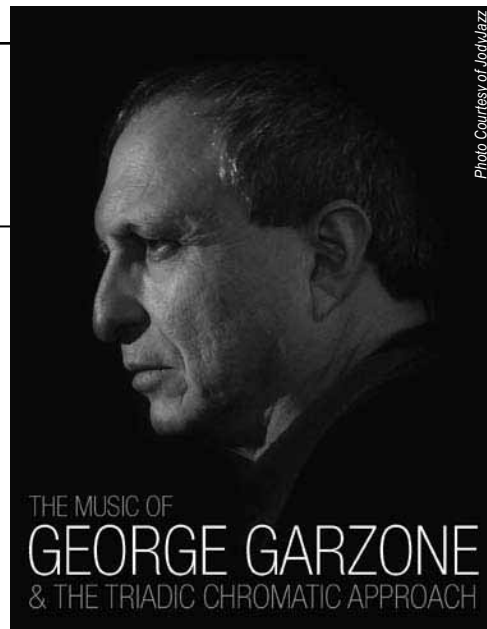
GG: They understand what goes on and what needs to go on and how to deal with this life as a jazz musician.

Jl: Could you share some of your experiences about teaching and the illustrious list of students who have benefited from your experience and guidance?

GG: All the guys I've had - like Joshua Redman, Mark Turner, Donny McCaslin, Seamus Blake, Chris Cheek, Kenny Brooks, Doug Yates and Danilo Perez - these guys were already up and playing, and it was a joy to be around these people who knew what was happening. I would just instill little tidbits of experience into their music-savvy minds.

Jl: Could you talk about your activities as a clinician and educator and how working with students is a challenge or supports or otherwise impacts your artistry?

GG: As a teacher I feel that you always have to be two steps ahead of the students, especially today when musicians are learning how to be highly-developed at a young age and that's a challenge. That's why I developed this Triadic Chromatic Approach because something as simple as major triads with half-steps in between used with random inversions can cripple the most proficient player. This concept was also de-



veloped from years of teaching students and trying to help them play outside of what they can already do.

Jl: Could you share a fragment of wisdom or quote from someone who has inspired you or from something you've read or heard?

GG: My father, George Washington "Lucky" Garzone, and my uncle, Rocco Spada, always said to me, "Never doubt yourself."

Jl: What do you do to recharge your batteries in our stress-filled contemporary world?

GG: For thirty years I've studied the art of Zen Mind Meditation and Moving Form from Korean Zen-Master Chang-Sik-Kim from Boston. This Master was so super-charged with energy that he made me realize that once I started working out with him, there was an immediate impact on my playing. I also run to help keep the stress down.

Jl: If there is one for you, what is the connection between music and spirituality?

GG: My connection between music and spirituality is knowing myself and knowing who I am. In closing, I want everyone to understand that this concept was put together in the most musical way possible - not by writing or planning. What this means is that I spent years putting it together playing with the Fringe and playing it with people who sometimes questioned what they were hearing, and the proof in what I am doing is in this DVD. I thank John Coltrane, as all of us do, because he left many secrets for us to tap into in terms of creative playing, and I feel that I've touched on one of numerous concepts in the realm of improvisation of this master. ■

Visit George on the internet at www.GeorgeGarzone.com. To order George Garzone's new DVD The Music of George Garzone and The Triadic Chromatic Approach, which features performances and instruction, including Garzone with Mike Mainieri and more, contact: JodyJazz Inc., 811 Barnard St, Ground Floor, Savannah GA 31401, 912-234-1622, Toll Free: 866-563-9529, www.jodyjazz.com