

Eric Newmyer

JazzOutside

The ART and SOUL of the Advanced New York Music Scene

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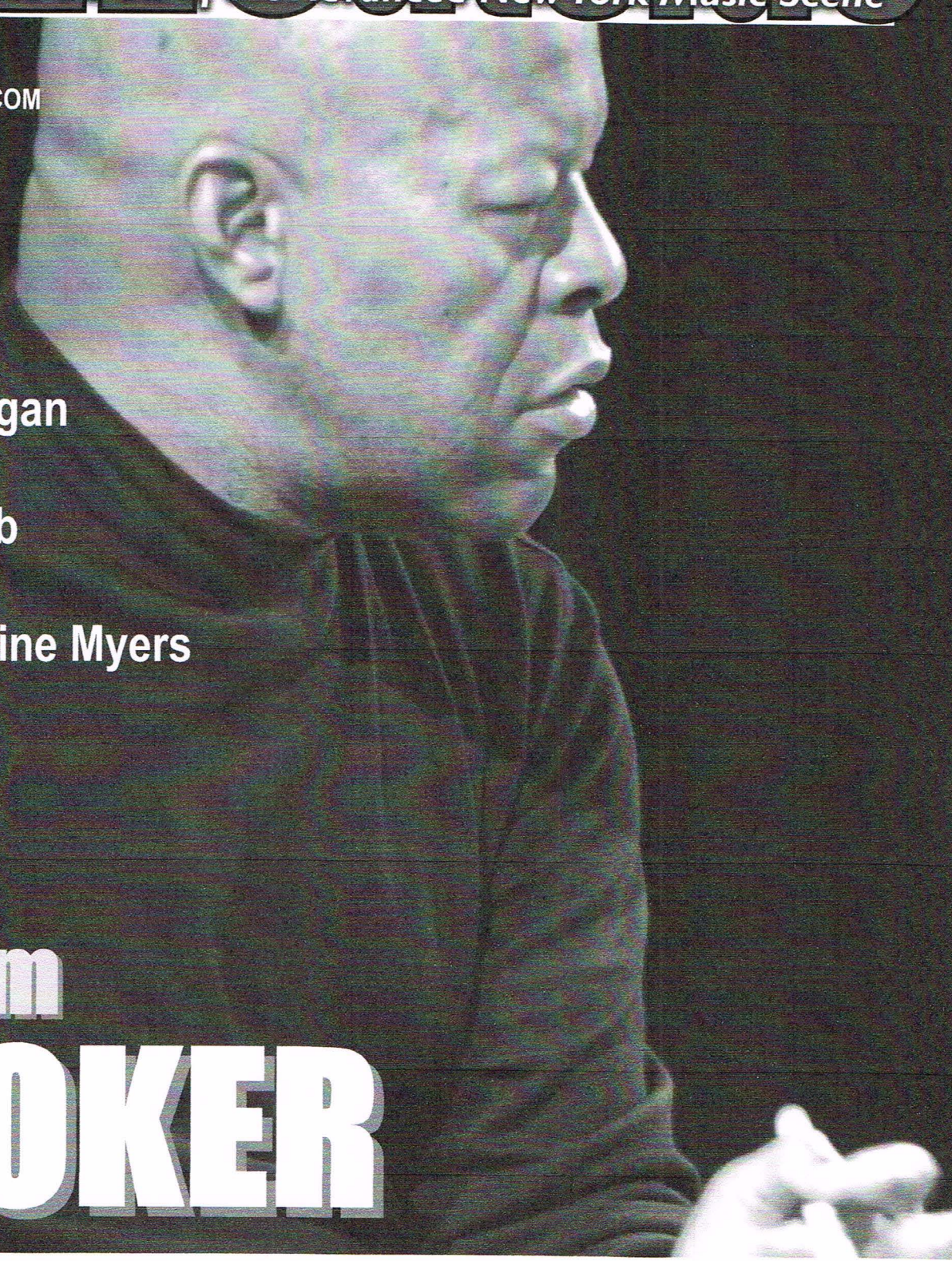
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William Hooker

A Creative Force, Drummer, Composer, Poet

Interview by Nora McCarthy

Photo By Ken Weiss

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Jazz Outside: I am very delighted you agreed to join us for the second issue of *Jazz Outside* Magazine and give us this candid interview with you. Please talk about your 2012 release, *Channels of Consciousness* the CD I had the pleasure of reviewing for this issue.

William Hooker: Thank you so very much. *Channels of Consciousness*, is one of my best recordings I think and one of the CDs I'm most proud of.

Jazz Outside: It's a masterpiece I think. The story that you're telling is pretty intense.

WH: Let's investigate the story. I read a book by Richard Wright and it is called, *A Father's Law*. That book had an effect on me. Of all of the many things that Richard Wright has written, this one hit me in particular because it's a novel that not that many people know that he wrote. Also, it's a hard-to-find book. I read this book and I said, "Whoa." Here's the premise. There's been a series of murders that have happened in this quaint village, and the father becomes the head of the police because the other fellow passed away and he's going into this situation as the first Black head of police and his family is overwhelmed with the job that he has to do. He's really happy about it because he's up on his game and he's knows what to do, he knows what's happening, but he's presented with this

case that involves a person who commits these horrendous deeds in this small village and now it's his job to find out who this person is in order to capture this person. So, in the meanwhile, he has his family to deal with, his wife who is really happy that he got this new job and his son that is a very astute young man, going to college, doing very well and he knows that his son, in terms of his class, not only his race but his class, who he hangs out with, he knows that his son knows all of these people that are in this circle in the village and he starts to ask his son, about these people, what they are like, who they are, asking him if he remembers this and that person. His son responds saying "Yes," that he plays tennis with them. Then, it gets deeper and deeper, and he realizes that his son knows a little bit more about these people than he's telling him, because he's intuitive, throughout all these years of having dealt with criminality, not only criminality but social unrest. So he keeps using his intuition and what kicks in are his feelings about being a father and his feelings about his own guilt as to what is this boy like that he raised and not wanting his mother to know that he suspects his own son and he thinks that he has something weird going on in his brain and he didn't want to jeopardize the trust that his son has in him. But he comes to find out that his son is the one who has been doing all these things and he has to deal with it overall. He sees his son doing some really strange things, his relationships with women and the people he has grown up with and his take on life, and that's the basis of it, it's like a morality play. When you think of Richard Wright's work and his contribution to not only Black literature but literature on the whole, and this book, which is really a crime story, but again, not really, that's why a lot of people are not acquainted with it—it's hard to find, but I found it, read it

and it's really heavy. So, that was the basis for the whole piece that wound up to be *Channels of Consciousness*.

Jazz Outside: Throughout the CD, you say things sporadically that are related to the piece when you're in the moment that indicate where it's leading—there's so much emotion. I did get the idea of something that involved murder or something being taken away, and the sorrow behind that discovery—I was picking up those kinds of things without knowing the story that it was based on. I was also wondering if it might have come from a poem or something that you had written—but I knew it was a story.

WH: I'm a very happy guy. [Laughter] No, it was just the impact of Wright's work, and his impact on me in terms of all the things that I've read about him and his relationship as an expatriot. I have a book, *Richard Wright: the Demonic Genius*. There are a lot of things to be said about him with regard to what he has to deliver to literature as an artist, separate from the *Black Presidents*. He really packs his work with things that make people think, not just about moral questions, about class vs. cast questions, questions about what we are doing as artists and people to people question, separate from race or any of those kinds of things. He's an excellent writer.

Jazz Outside: You did his work proud. I'm not changing one word of my review after finding out where the story came out of because you touched on all the things that are important from what you're telling me that he demonstrated in his work. You certainly translated all of those things in this CD...the emotion, the anger, the sorrow, all of it, it's all there. Let's talk about other projects you have and any recent or upcoming recordings, performances, etc.

WH: Stepping back a little, *Channels of Consciousness* is the third recording I've done for the NoBusiness label.

Jazz Outside: Please tell me about that label.

WH: NoBusiness is an excellent label—I can't stress it enough. I have a really good relationship with them and this is the third piece that I've done with them. The first one was, *Earth's Orbit* which is *Bliss (east)* and *Bliss (west)*. It's a

ABOUT JAZZ OUTSIDE

When we title, name or call a given style of music, we do so in order that we can communicate something about the music, and or to establish a point of agreement or departure. *Jazz Outside* is our title for this section of the magazine where readers will find coverage of the music that listeners alternately identify as open form, avant-garde, free, new music, improvised music, among other descriptors - and the artists who perform the music that is created and

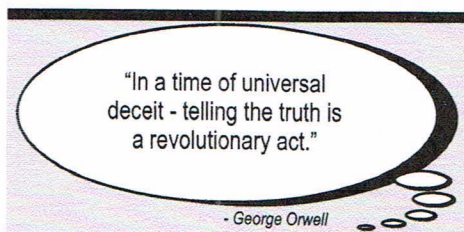
expressed on this broad landscape. As a publication that is created by musicians, we are especially sensitive to the concerns of our fellow creators and music makers. By sharing their perspectives about the creative process, and insights into their ever-evolving lives, events, ideas and contributions, we hope that readers will gain greater understanding about and appreciation for the music.

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double vinyl. It's a collector's item because every copy has a certain number on it. It's both CD and vinyl. I used the groups that I had, *Bliss (east)* which is Adam Lane and Darius Jones and myself. That's on the first vinyl—on the second vinyl is *Bliss (west)* which is me, Damon Smith, Weasel Walter and Aaron Bennett. Those are the people I work with when I go to California and I go to California pretty frequently. That came about because I was working very hard with those two groups, so they put out the first one. Then the second one came, which was the opportunity for me to put out, *Crossing Points* and it was the work I did with Thomas Chapin. That was a concert that happened on the Lower East Side and was recorded and we went through quite a wait for it and they chose this one because I presented two pieces to them. One was from *Live at Yoshi's* in San Francisco, which is a beautiful place to play and it was a great performance I thought. The other one was the Thomas Chapin piece. They said they liked it. I liked it too. It's intense and I must say I never heard Thomas play like this, ever. What happened was he died from leukemia, he was a person that was more or less in the mainstream, playing at Newport Jazz Festival and places like that, doing those kinds of things, worldwide traveled and everything. It just so happened that through Bruce Gallanter at the Downtown Music Gallery, we both met. We found out we came from towns that were very close to each other and then we bonded and I got this gig and I said, "Let's play." And we played for like an hour and a half. He played as he never played before. That's another duo double vinyl and then *Channels of Consciousness* which was done at Roulette and that was the third one. The fourth one we're working on which should be in the spring of next year. I just came back from Lithuania where I performed at the Vilnius Jazz Festival 2013. I'm playing with a European reed player by the name of Liudas Mockūnas—he's one of the better players over there, absolutely. He's also one of the people who runs NoBusiness but I never knew that. I developed a relationship with one of the head people there also because he came over to visit and we walked all through Brooklyn, he was selling the records at the Vision Festival and he spent the day. Then when I went over to Lithuania about three weeks ago to perform at Vilnius, we recorded it and it's to come out in the spring. It was a really excellent performance, really captivating.

Jazz Outside: Just you and him?

WH: Yes. That was the first piece we did; the second piece that I did I was invited to the Riga Splendid Palace cinema in Riga on October 10 with a Baltic trio assembled specifically for



Skaņu Mežs along with a visual called "Approaching the Garden." I was there for seven days, and I played at that festival with the trio and then I took a bus to Vilnius and we recorded the Vilnius thing for NoBusiness. It was a very, very eye-opening experience for me.

Jazz Outside: In what way?

WH: These people love culture. I had seven hundred people that were at the performance. And as you know, when you play here, you're lucky if you get fifty.

"A person just wants to communicate with another person. So many things happen in this world that you can't really anticipate the results of what you do. You just kind of want to put the energy into the universe, put the energy out there and see what happens, because half of the time you really don't have any control over it. If you're going to stress out from the conception of it all the way up to what it becomes, it's kind of ridiculous actually."

Jazz Outside: Oh tell me about it. We performed in Austria to the same kind of thing. To perform in a filled-to-capacity beautiful concert hall, for people who utterly loved and appreciated our music, who gave us their rapt attention and a standing ovation, brought us to our knees and was an incredible feeling.

WH: We played in a place called the Splendid Palace. Just to know that when I went into this place I was given everything that I needed to make the performance just the way I wanted it—like an IMAX screen—I didn't even have to talk to the engineer, he was reading my mind. The drums sounded like thunder. I was just so impressed and I'm still realizing that they just appreciate this in terms of culture and in terms of their lives. This is important to them, and they're proud of it.

Jazz Outside: That's it. The value that they place on art is incredible as opposed to this country—it's gone, it's washed away. Did it every really exist here? I really wonder because it's not ingrained in the hearts and minds of the masses.

WH: There are so many commercial concerns here. Just to see all of these resources that I had to actually implement the idea that I'd been thinking of. Just to see that when I came down from this room, (it was in an old palace) and when I walked downstairs and looked and saw there were seven hundred people in this place, I'm saying, "This is really beautiful." And, these

people, they didn't look at me as if I was some sort of star or something, we just sat and we talked and then after that I did a seminar at the conservatory, which was also eye opening, because I saw the younger people there—early twenties and they were into this music. They were into wanting to know about it, they were into wanting to know about who I am listening to, what they can do to further their education and understanding of our music, because one thing I noticed, the way we play here in America is on a different level in terms of the artistic excellence of the people that I've worked with so

far. These people are giants and when you go to Europe and you have the opportunity to present this to them, they appreciate it and they show it. And, they're very down to earth about this being an important part of their lives, not something that I have to buy, that I have to sell, that I have to package in a certain way, that I have to play all the angles; I have to do this, it's just a part of their lives. And, then I went to Vilnius where the NoBusiness people were located and I hooked up with them and that was the opportunity for me to spend time with the people that put the records out. We spent time, went out to eat, and there were nine hundred people in that place. So, you come back and then you're doing your work and you're just happy about the fact that you know that there are places on this earth that can really foster the love of art and culture and that's important for civilization to me.

Jazz Outside: Absolutely, that's the end result, civilization – life on this planet, in peace, love and harmony.

WH: That's where I'm coming from with this. My eyes were opened and as a matter of fact, I'm in contact with these people right now, we're thinking about how to put out the Riga concert and a person from Germany sent me the whole video of it and wants me to review it, etc. My mind took a turn within the last three weeks or so. And, here we are meeting and talking and I'm feeling really good about the things that have happened.

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Jazz Outside: I'm personally glad I'm getting the chance to get this from you now—everything is happening right now. There are no consequences. Your whole body of work brought you to this place. However you started, you went on this journey and went through it all and now your mission has been divulged. Just what you said, "for our civilization," maybe when you had your first gig you weren't thinking that that was the heavy task that was being asked of you.

WH: Never. Some of those things that were happening in the sixties and the early seventies—never! Forget it! Are you kidding? I couldn't get arrested.

Jazz Outside: But you were being groomed. Everything that happened to you in your life, brought you to this place and groomed you for this, serious, serious, very important mission that you are accomplishing with this music.

WH: My history in music has been this that I understand, beautiful songs like "You've Changed," I understand changes. I'm not out here to just blow. I'm not just out here to play till I get exhausted and pass out and that's it. No, I came from knowing changes; I came from the Black book. That's where I came from. When I was thirteen, fourteen, fifteen years old, I had to memorize that thing. And, they thought I could play and they wanted to take me with them and my mother consented as long as they didn't have me coming home drunk because I was only in the eleventh grade, you know that kind of thing? But I had to learn that, and all those tunes, those things, that stuck with me; that's in my soul, so I can appreciate that. In my work now, I try to even foster the people that I play with to play in kind of an elevated transcendental change in their improvisation. Instead of just one full-on blast, it's not about that at all. I think if you listen to some pieces like Alice Coltrane's, "Lord of Lords" the way she plays you realize it's not just about power, and it's not just about chops—it's about some sort of beauty—you looking into one flower and trying to see the beauty of that as opposed to even looking at a whole big garden full of flowers, all different types, you're looking at one flower and then when you play those changes, to people who even understand it more deeply, you see part of what we're doing in terms of this "avant-garde," I'm talking about the people that I feel have really mastered it and understand it—we know it's not just about blowing, it's not just about that, not at all. Because, how could it be about that if I came from something that is a part and parcel of the tradition. You are your music. You play oft times your accumulation of experiences and since I have experienced those things, I can say, "You've Changed" made me almost cry, because it's so beautiful, it's beautiful—you know that tune, obviously. So what I'm saying is that even in those times like in *Channels of Consciousness*, when the guitarist deals with slide guitar and we go into blues, I'm trying to really bring back the

roots and the blood of what is inherent in the tune itself and inherent in the concept of just what it's called, *Channels of Consciousness*.

Jazz Outside: And you did it, you freaking did it.

WH: Yes, and I'm trying to do it every time I sit down. So because of that, rehearsal is important and all these things are important. It's almost as if, I've come to this music with a lot of playing of a lot of different kinds of music Nora. And, this is where I am at now. I'm continuing on the same path, using all these tools—not forgetting these tools, not just discarding them, not just all of a sudden saying, "No, that's not intense enough for me." It's not about that for me, it's about transcendent beauty rather so that I can inspire something in myself and in others and I'm inspiring something, not out of fear, not out of just blasting, not out of, "Let me stuff this down your throat." I want to inspire by taking people up with me as I go there and see where we go, that's my purpose.

Jazz Outside: Would you say that when you hear a lot of the free stuff that's being played now, it is precisely the stuff you're talking about, just the blasting, the blaring, the one decibel, the screaming all at once kind of thing. I don't know how that happened to seem to take the place of the individual voice and the conversation and the overall design of something when you're collaborating in a group ensemble, I've worked with several great conductors who truly understood what I'm about to say as well and some of the cats that are on the fringe or underneath it or wherever they want to categorize themselves but there seems to be that concept that playing free means to be blaring and screaming at top intensity with not giving thought to the underlying universal harmonics of some kind of changes, rhythm, dynamics, or space...you know, a little space please, I love space. You can't have a vase without a space, you know?

WH: Yes, [Laughter] Space is the Place! My philosophical and musical thought on that is this: for every person that you go to see, every person has a different voice. That's kind of the beauty of it too and it just so happened that, I think—there was book that came out about Coltrane and the avant-garde of Coltrane and the Black Revolution of the sixties and something like that, and it was trying to really deal with the latter part of the avant-garde where we got into like more freedom, freedom as it is interpreted in terms of Black Music. The freedom as interpreted as a scream again the status quo. The status quo at that time was changes. We could not get past Ornette, Cecil and Trane and we can throw Jackie McLean in as well—we couldn't get past that and then to get past that, sometimes you have to destroy something to build something new. Like the element of fire—fire serves a purpose. The purpose to me is that if everything is all of a sudden ash out of that comes something—the phoenix. So, to my thinking you have people that adhere to that particular way of doing it and you have other people that adhere to other ways of doing it and I myself, I love all these

people. I can understand where they are coming from and I can appreciate where they are coming and all I can say is if your motive is the correct one—fine, come from wherever you want to come from; if your motive is the correct one. But I'm speaking for me because some people like to be assaulted, that gets them off—they like that—I'm kind of not like that.

Jazz Outside: To me it's like if you're decorating a house, would you stuff a living room with every piece of furniture you could think of, where nobody could go in?

WH: But you wouldn't want to go into that house.

Jazz Outside: You couldn't go in, you wouldn't fit, there would be no room.

WH: But that's their house. The house that I'm trying to build, I'm trying to build it on a different premise, I'll just put it that way, so I'll be comfortable in it; I can work in it. I can do what I have to do in it.

Jazz Outside: Do you think that there needs to be some formal training or education in terms of theory = musicianship before you can break out and play free, or do you think that just being very fluent and familiar with your instrument with the ability to just blow is enough?

WH: As opposed to trying to find the criteria for what I think makes a great statement, I think that different people approach life differently. They approach their own awakening differently and so because of that I look at what I think I'm listening to or what is being presented to me musically, if it's really something that I can find a beauty in, but that's me, I can roll with it. Just like Thelonius Monk made that piece, "Ugly Beauty." If you were to say that to any person they would say, "Jeeze it's beautiful, how could it be ugly, blah, blah, blah." You could go off on a very, heavy esoteric study about beauty and ugliness.

Jazz Outside: But you know you can't have one without the other because they define each other.

WH: Like Yin and Yang. What I'm saying is that if people want to approach things that way it's fine, but that doesn't necessarily mean that those are the kinds of people that I'm going to work with within the context of what I'm trying to present and what I'm trying to do. There are many branches on the tree and as long as they aren't hurting anybody and saying things that are derogatory and racially getting crazy and acting all stupid and thinking that they are all that and they're not—I can handle it. It gets to the point where sometimes we start to believe our own press. If we get into believing our own press, then we kind of eliminate constructive criticism, we eliminate other people's viewpoints. I don't want to be dogmatic, is what I'm trying to say. And, I'm not saying that out of being a chicken to approach other people but in terms of the way I approach "humanness" I can basically accept
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good people. I don't know about how they want to do things artistically or if they've mastered their instrument or if they know "Solar" or if they know "Spring Can Really Hang You Up the Most" or if they know "China" by Frank Wright, it's cool with me, I'm good and I'm happy. I can relate to the goodness in them. That's what I'm seeking — to find that goodness in people that gives them the impulse to even want to do this. This is not something that if you want people to like you, you do this.

Jazz Outside: And if you want to be popular or reviewed in the New York Times, or have anybody breaking down your doors with record deals....

WH: You don't do it and you sure don't do it this way. That's why I get happy when I see certain things being successful and certain things still carrying on. So, I would want to reserve judgment in that case. So for me to tell somebody else, how to do this and how to do that, I don't know where they are, I just know what I did and it seems to work for me.

Jazz Outside: That's very good advice.

WH: I wouldn't want to impose my path on someone else. If they ask how they could approach something differently, I may answer that one, but I wouldn't say, "This is what you have to do." I was told certain things that I had to do, and I just decided that I'm not doing it. A lot of times I would say, "I already did that." "You can't tell by the way I'm playing but I already did that." That was my inner pretense for not doing it, not just to be arrogant.

Jazz Outside: I'm very interested in learning about your poetry writing — the poem in your liner notes is very abstract — there are many methods to writing poetry — what are the sources of your inspiration and please describe the way you use the words. When did you begin writing, how many books do you have published?

WH: I don't have books published because the vehicle basically has been magazines like *Parabola* as well as a lot of esoteric magazines. Because as you know, it is very difficult to have someone give you money to publish a book. I can spend time doing that and I'm learning now how to deal with foundation grants and things like that to actually be able to materialize this stuff. But throughout the course of my life I've had to take, in terms of the writing, had to take second place to the music.

Jazz Outside: When did you start writing.

WH: In the seventies, when I was in California. It became just a part of what I was doing and when I got back, I realized I had all of these papers and all this poetry all written down. I had to write articles for people and for magazines and then I started putting the poetry inside of my

recordings and then I would do performances where the poetry was very essential and that's the way I did. But it was always secondary, just like painting, it's secondary.

Jazz Outside: You paint as well.

WH: Yes, go to my website, williamhooker.com and you'll see all my paintings, all my poetry, because that's completely different—a different medium. But the main thing with that it could enhance the gift that was being created, that was it, really and that's how I've used it.

Jazz Outside: You are clearly a storyteller. The poetry on Channels of Consciousness sounds spontaneous, improvised in the moment, and is an integral element of the overall composition — I'm interested in how and when you began composing and your personal approach to composition. The thing that's good is that for me, word is more singular that group music. Because then I'm dealing with more than just myself then just the written word. I'm dealing with usually at least, four or five other musicians making interpretations of the music and in this case, I can just interpret it myself through writing. That's a major difference, you know what I mean. It's a major difference because you are including more people in terms of the creation of this thing with music than you are with poetry. Are they stream of consciousness or do you sit down and think about something; do you pick a subject or a topic—do you ever do a work for hire?

WH: No.

Jazz Outside: Don't you think when you're sitting down to write poetry you're kind of dealing with people you can't see?

WH: Oh, do you mean all the influences?

Jazz Outside: All the influence all the spirits and the channeling of the whole creative process.

WH: That's true, but there's a difference when there's actual human beings and you're all in the same room, working on my interpretation of a melody for example. I'm also adding all of those things you just mentioned even in that situation. But it gets more singular in terms of the word for me.

Jazz Outside: The *Channeling Consciousness* CD is absolutely incredible. The levels of energy and emotion are intense, the performance flawless, how long have you been working with this particular group of musicians, what is the preparation for a performance such as this, and how does it differ from your other performances—in other words do you usually play without interruption? Is the music notated? Do you conduct while playing?

WH: Let's go through the whole process. First of all the idea happens and the idea happening, I'm thinking about the conceptual part of how long this performance is going to last, how it's going to fulfill itself, what's it going to do. Then I find the people I need to do certain things be-

cause I know what kind of sounds I want. Maybe sometimes I want a bass player, maybe sometimes I don't want a bass player. Maybe I want an expansive piano player, maybe I don't. Maybe I want somebody who plays multi-reads as opposed to somebody who is basically sticking to one reed or that kind of thing. Then with the stuff that's written down usually, those are the springboards that I use. I can place it in front of them and say, "This is the seed of this portion of the improvisation."

Jazz Outside: Do you write specifically for the instruments you're using?

WH: No. Also, there is no rhythmic sign on it either. There's none because I want to be totally free to do anything that I want to do. It's really like a person listening and hearing the melody and almost being able to sing it back to me.

Jazz Outside: When I was listening to the very first piece on the CD, I noticed how the time was building and everyone's participation as they entered onto the stage and made their presence known, this stuff built up like a beehive, within moments up to the point of such high intensity with no one bumping into each other at all and then it began and took off changing shapes and going in different directions and now you're telling me you don't write with any time?

WH: Yes, there's no time. I write that way so I can be free. If the person approaches it with their tapping their foot, if they think it's 3/4 or 6/8, that can be an impediment because they're really being too stiff. Like if you were singing something to someone, you wouldn't do it that way, because that's making everything more inflexible. Then when I add the rhythm on top of it, it really makes it inflexible, that's not even workable for me. Then, that person would be imposing that particular strict time signature on what I'm playing and it wouldn't make sense to the person that's tapping their foot. I could handle it but still, I want them to feel free enough so that they could sing it back to me if they to or they could hum it back to me. There are some people that don't have to deal with that at all for some reason. I put it in front of them and they sing it right back to me on their instrument automatically, that's happened many times.

Jazz Outside: I think what you just said, is what makes this music at a supremely higher level than all the other forms, I'm putting it out here because I think that's it in a nutshell because so many people are anchored to these things that we're talking about, reading the time and the this and the that and it has to be here or there...or the question, "Why are you phrasing like that, I'm over here, the downbeat is here."

WH: That's it, phrasing; the human voice thing. That's important, even if the person doesn't want to use it I know that they have it. I'm trying to bring it out in them, to make it comfortable so that they understand what's going on separate from the way I interpret the rhythm and separate from usually the wild card that is thrown in

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there. In this case (*Channeling Consciousness*), the wild card is Sanga of the Valley. He's the wild card. You probably listened to that.

Jazz Outside: Oh yes, I listened to that intensely and I thought that what he was doing with you was like he were an extension of who you are.

WH: Exactly.

Jazz Outside: First of all I loved how he complimented what you were playing,

WH: Practice and strength in himself. A lot of times you can't throw these things at people and expect them to catch them. But he was the wild card because obviously they didn't know where I was going to be coming from and then when you have him backing up where I'm coming from, and I'm like feeding off of him too, and vice versa, then you've got this other thing happening in terms of rhythm and the turbulence that's underneath it. That keeps that whole foundation in the center of the cauldron working.

Jazz Outside: Are you in total control of what's going on there? So when you want to change it up, you're like the conductor, you are changing the mood and shape, they all are with you 100% of the way.

WH: Yes, Exactly.

Jazz Outside: You made it a suite, is this how you played it?

WH: Yes, that's the way it was conceived, that's the way it was meant to be, it was like that. That's why I'm really happy with that one.

Jazz Outside Magazine: Talk about the other ways that you compose with your other projects, is this kind of indicative of how you work, or are things that are maybe completely the opposite of this—do you have any abstract polar opposite approaches to what you do?

WH: Yes, and one of them is going to be done at Lincoln Center on February 20, 2014. It's at the Atrium. It's a different approach because I'm going to be doing a live music silent film project. There are nine players and I'm doing the film, *Body and Soul*, a Black silent film by Oscar Micheaux that featured Paul Robeson in his motion picture debut. So that's going to happen. The way I'm approaching the rehearsal is first off, everyone has to look at the film, because it's not people just getting up there and blowing. I want them to actually have a conception of how I'm approaching the film and actually having a conception of not making it corny to the point, where they are automatically reacting in an obvious way to what is happening on the screen. They have to be free enough in their own minds to know what it is that I really want which is to not create a sound track, because it is not a

sound track. It is an open conversation based on the film and based on the entire story of it and how it's used so that it is a different approach separate from the way *Consciousness* was done because there is no film there at all and it's really me sitting at the drums and directing from there. And, in this case, I will be doing the same but there should be a relationship, as far as I'm concerned with myself, the players and the film.

Jazz Outside: I do know because I have done that kind of work with silent film—specifically *Battleship Potemkin* by the Russian Director Sergei Eisenstein and *The Cabinet of Doctor Caligari*, a silent horror film by German director Robert Wiene with the Dissident Arts Orchestra led by innovative vibraphonist/leader/composer, John Pietaro. We performed these at The Frost Theater in Williamsburg, Brooklyn October of 2012 and *Battleship* in February, 2013. It was totally improvised but conducted by Pietaro with various directives that involved interludes, key changes, and concepts and of course the word that I utilized in my improvisation. It was the first time I had done something like that and I loved it.

WH: Yes, you can hope that the people you are working with can respect the fact that you are directing something not based on just musical motifs but you are also directing something based the progression of the work and how long it takes to tell a story that lasts for an hour and twenty minutes, so you just don't keep repeating the same thing over and over again. That's like another approach and then there's going to be a tour happening with some people from Canada. I just did something at the Vancouver Jazz Festival recently. We're going to be doing a tour and it's going to be assisted by the Canadian Arts Counsel and we're going to go to Portland, Seattle, Vancouver, Toronto, London, Halifax, Ottawa and come back down into New York and that's going to be a pianist, alto player, another drummer and an electronics person and myself. It's called "Approaching the Garden," that's the piece, that's what it's called. In terms of your question about the approaches; I have many different approaches. I have to take into consideration my respect for the players that I'm working with and how well we work together and how well they fit, because if they don't fit then I have ego problems going on which is something I don't feel like dealing with it.

Jazz Outside: So it's not necessarily a collective, it is your thing, and you put the guys in the positions and then you all make the work. It's not like you're taking instructions from the various members.

WH: It's like any group. You can call it the John Coltrane Quartet. You knew whose quartet it was, you know where the ideas were coming from, where the impulses were coming from and it's not like I'm playing just solo stuff and these people are like filling in. I don't approach it like that. So those are the two things coming and just to answer how the approaches are different, those two approaches are going to be very different than what you're listening to right now.

Jazz Outside: Well William, this is all great and I'd love to talk to you forever, because you are a fountain of information. I would like to wrap it up with one final question. I understand from reading some of your other interviews that you practice/warm-up several times a week. With your schedule, and being a family man, how do you maintain the kind of stamina that is required to play the way you do, at such a high level and at such a relentless burning pace? Mind, body, spirit—do you workout—what are your spiritual practices—how do you maintain your health and your center. You can't create on the level that you create and be dealing with a bunch of nonsense.

WH: [Laughter] The best way I would explain that one is that I don't think my life is helter skelter, I really don't. There is a certain order to it. Even though sometimes it may feel like I don't have a handle on certain things, I do and basically that is just the way my mind works. I get more and more inspired by it; inspired so much by it that I have to actually turn it off because I get hyped. In getting hyped you become this thunder ball. Lately, what has happened is that I've realized, by speaking to other people, the necessity to go to the gym as often as I should, and the necessity to be a lot more regular about things that it takes to be able to keep energy at a certain level. I think for the most part, I just live a wholesome life—I like it. In terms of all those things, all of it makes sense to me and all of it is just working. There were times when it didn't work, where there was a little bit more chaos than now, but for the most part just having parallel careers in terms of the economics of it, I wasn't always just playing music like now. Just making sure the rent and the bills were paid. Those things didn't impose their will on the music I'm trying to do. A lot of times that's what happens. We find ourselves in the situation not because the person didn't do anything in a healthy way but because of all the stress of this is all I do...."I've got to go to Paris to make \$300 to pay my rent in Brooklyn...." You know what I'm saying? That's like stressful.

Jazz Outside: Yes I do, [laughter,] I spend most of my time keeping the wolf away from my door, and I do understand the concept of parallel careers.

WH: Separate from what you do, all of those things bring added grief and a lot of times, I just don't have that kind of grief.

Jazz Outside: What do you do for recreation? Do you read, take long walks, do you go to the movies?

WH: All those things you just said, it just makes life a lot more enjoyable, it makes you happy when you wake up, it's a good thing.

Jazz Outside: Well you are indeed a self-fulfilled human being and it has been a real joy talking with you.

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