

Transcript
Interview of Austin Zhang
By Alan Tanenbaum
January 24, 2019

Alan:

Hello?

Austin:

Hello, I'm here.

Alan:

Hey, Austin, thanks very much for taking my call and helping us out with collecting these oral histories from Vail Jazz Workshop alumni such as yourself.

Austin:

No, I think it's a beautiful thing; there's so many amazing alums of this program, and I'm happy to be included in that list.

Alan:

There are, and that's wonderful. We're happy that you're involved with it as well, and want to get some of your perspectives on having attended the Workshop and all the things that it meant. But just to remind you, I am recording this call and, when we're done, we'll have a transcript of it typed up and, if you wish, I can then send you the transcript for review.

Austin:

Sure, yeah, that's fine.

Alan:

Okay. So, before we get to your thoughts and recollections about the Workshop, would you please talk a bit about your early musical interests and development, and your family's and/or other people's influence on these during your childhood?

Austin:

So, pre-Workshop type things?

Alan:

Yah. Did you come from a musical family?

Austin:

No, I did not. I'm from Dallas, which is, historically, an amazing musical city. You know, there's a whole tradition of great saxophonists – like David Fathead Newman, and James Clay, and Marchel Ivery – this whole tradition of great musicians from Dallas. But when I was growing up, a lot of that was gone. A lot of the clubs and places where people like those guys, and also Red Garland and Cedar Walton, that I know about now, they're totally gone.

Alan:

Was it still a musically-based area to grow up, or had it transitioned out of that?

Austin:

The University of North Texas, which was around 30 minutes from where I lived, is kind of the center of all music now. And they have great faculty and they have a lot of great younger musicians as well, but I wouldn't say there's a great professional scene anymore. There's some players, here and there, if you know where to look.

Alan:

So how did you get involved in music? How did this happen for you?

Austin:

Well, it's kind of interesting. I had to audition for my high school all-region jazz band or something like that, and my lesson teacher at that time told me to get some Basie recordings – told me to check out some Charlie Parker – and this was around eighth or ninth grade, somewhere in there – and something about it, when I heard it, was really, really fascinating to me at the time. My parents were never really into that type of thing. My dad kind of played when he was in high school but he's definitely not involved with it any more. So, just the music itself, I guess, was what attracted me to it. I just remember – not to be overly prosaic, but – the first time I heard it, it was just something I never even thought was possible; that all these notes were being improvised on the spot. And all these melodies that made so much compositional sense, were things that they felt at that exact time – I don't know if I would have said it that way back then but I think that that was what was attracting me to it.

And then I happened to make first chair saxophone in the Texas All-State Jazz Band that year, which was a total fluke; I got to the convention and every single person in that band could out-play me. But it was a really interesting achievement at that time because I had just started checking it out; I was practicing a lot but I still didn't think of myself as a worthwhile musician. I thought I was just dedicated to things, which I was, absolutely, but to have an organization in Texas, I guess, validate my playing in that way gave me a lot of self-confidence and allowed me to meet a lot of like-minded individuals in the State, in a similar way that Vail did for me at a later point in my career. They gave me all these musicians to check out. I started hanging out at the University of North Texas getting to know people like Professor Brad Leali and Lynn Seaton, and playing sessions at University of North Texas and it kind of just got rolling from there.

Alan:

When did you first pick up a saxophone? Do you remember the first day you picked up a saxophone?

Austin:

Well, I started taking classical saxophone lessons pretty seriously a little bit before sixth grade. I had one a little bit before then – like fourth or fifth grade – just because I had told my dad pretty early on that I wanted to learn the saxophone. I know that he had played the saxophone at one time – I don't really remember that far back or why I decided I wanted to, but my parents bought me like a cheap \$300 USD-equivalent saxophone, from China, actually, like on a trip, and they brought it back; and I thought it was the coolest thing I'd ever seen in my life. I do remember that much. And I played that same horn all through middle school. I think I might have even done my first All-State recording on that horn.

Alan:

Fantastic!

Austin:

Yeah, so that's when I started.

Alan:

So, when I first contacted you about getting your impressions and your recollections about your Vail Jazz Workshop experience, did it conjure up any particular or specific memories for you?

Austin:

Well, mainly it made me think about the people that I did it with. One of which is my roommate now, who I met at Vail!

Alan:

Who's that?

Austin:

Joe Giordano. He's a trombonist at MSM, we're both at the Manhattan School of Music, and he's one of my best friends now. And I met him through Vail Jazz. Basically, half the Workshop, at least, is now in New York City with me and I see them on a fairly regular basis. I don't know if you want to include any names, but Jake Sasfai is at Columbia just down the road. I see him occasionally. Gabe Rupe, who was my roommate at Vail, he's now at Julliard and I see him quite often. And Alex Yuwen, who was the other saxophonist and who really inspired me back when I was at Vail Jazz; he's at New School right now, and I see him every once in a while. We're literally all still around each other. And I think it's really cool, my year specifically, to have that experience.

Alan:

And your year was 2016, if I remember correctly.

Austin:

I don't remember the number – but it was the one with all those people in it!

Alan:

It was just a couple of years ago, right?

Austin:

Yeah, I'm just in my second year of college now.

Alan:

So, I take it that one of your great memories of the Workshop is all of these cohorts of yours, who were there at the same time, and now see each other regularly?

Austin:

Yeah, absolutely. They really pushed me musically in a way that I hadn't been pushed back home. I don't know if I was so ready musically to handle all the situations I was put in at Vail; I think that's also kind of the point, though, because they want you to learn all of the music by ear and I hadn't done a lot of that type of thing at that point yet. But the people around me – even though I felt like they were a lot more advanced than myself, I don't know if they were or not, but they definitely introduced me to a lot of new music; the biggest thing was just a whole other level of seriousness. I remember having my saxophone lessons with Dick Oatts, and there were joint lessons with Alex; and Alex has amazing perfect pitch and just great ears, and had studied John Coltrane to a crazy extent and I was just shocked by his level of ear training, level of musicianship, and the amount that he's loved and appreciated the music's history. And just to see people my own age – he might even be a year younger than me – at that level of seriousness just really propelled me forward. In addition, of course, to Dick, and John Clayton, the Alumni band – who I do see a lot regularly, Russell Hall, and Benny Benack, and Braxton Cook – I took a lesson with Braxton and when I got to New York, of course, I tried to stay in touch; Benny Benack, he's everywhere!

Alan:

And I just saw Russell Hall with Emmitt Cohen and his trio.

Austin:

Oh, were you at the Vanguard with Ron [Carter]?

Alan:

No, they came down to Blues Alley in DC. I live in the DC area.

Austin:

Oh, beautiful!

Alan:

So, how had the Workshop come to your attention, and what, if anything, had you heard about it before you attended?

Austin:

I think I just saw some audition videos online of other people auditioning for this Workshop. And I was looking for some summer opportunities to expand my playing, you know? So I just looked into it, just Googled it, probably. I didn't really hear anything about it before; I just looked it up. And the website gave me all this information; I saw the list of faculty and I was shocked – you know, Dick Oatts was one of my heroes at the time, and John Clayton was one of my idols. I just saw the list of alumni and the percentage of them who were players that I greatly admired in New York at the time.

Alan:

I was wondering, when you mentioned Dick Oatts, if Jeff Clayton was also there?

Austin:

I think Jeff Clayton was listed but that was the year that he had an injury and Dick had to fill in his place. Oh, and the year before me, the alto saxophonist, Alex Laurenzi, I asked him some questions about the Workshop, and he knew Dick as well. Yeah, I got in touch with Alex. Just a lot of the alumni were younger players that I looked up to and maybe had played with like in Jazz in America, or some other youth program at that point.

The biggest thing was that it wasn't like a touring, showcase group. It really did seem like an intensive camp for improvement. The goal wasn't this huge concert at the end in front of this whole conference or festival. It wasn't like all these tour-date gigs that you had to make. It was like in the middle of Colorado wilderness with these jazz masters, and they teach you the ropes a little bit. That's kind of the impression I had of it, which was absolutely true.

Alan:

How, if at all, did that experience alter your perspective or guide you in mastering your instrument, or performing with others, or improvising, or in any other way?

Austin:

You're talking about the Workshop itself?

Alan:

Yeah, or the approach and theories of the mentors.

Austin:

Well, I would say it took a long time, and it's probably still going to take a long time. A lot of the things I just wasn't ready to grasp at the time. And it's fairly often when somebody will say something to me now – like a lessons teacher or a professor here at school, you know, any person I'm with – will say something and I'm like, wow, Dick said that to me two years ago. It's crazy. It happens all the time. The emphasis on learning things by ear was a huge asset. I remember – John Clayton will probably be mad at us for this, but – I remember we were all huddled in the bathroom sometimes, and like “what are the chords to this tune? I couldn't figure this one out when they were teaching this to us?” – and Alex, who has perfect pitch, would say, “I think it was this.” So maybe we weren't able to do it 100 percent at the time and they had to show us really slowly a hundred times for us to grasp it. Especially myself, I remember; I was not prepared for that. But following that it's the only way I learn music. I'm trying to start a band right now here in school where we play all original music but without sheet music, and we try to teach each other all the tunes. Just because, . . . I mean, I don't need to list all the reasons for that. Other than it adds a whole level of flexibility where you can go, and possibilities if you aren't glued to maybe even a specific form, or whatever. But yeah, there are a lot of lessons that – Dick taught me about my embouchure, about playing with the rhythm section, about using my ears, about flexibility in all keys. But I think the main thing was the seriousness of everybody, how much they were working, how much they practiced, how much they loved it. And the last thing was that the faculty interviews, I guess, or presentations, in the mornings, where they would all tell about their journey; that meant the world to me. Some of them have told the same or similar stories at other talks and they're online, and I've gone through all of them listened to them again and again – it was a different time, where you could be in college and Thad Jones would call you up or Monty Alexander would take you on tour, or you played with Sonny Rollins – like Lewis Nash did – that just boggles my mind.

Alan:

Well, I see that you've played with some great players – with Paquito D'Rivera, and Bobby Sanabria, and I've read several others.

Austin:

Well, a lot of those have been through educational opportunities. And I've been really blessed to have them but it may have been a week's rehearsals with the big band; they taught me an incredible amount, absolutely, but it's still nothing like touring the country with Monty Alexander or Sonny Rollins. It's just a whole education. And playing drums behind him? And then to have that type of person, with that experience, being humble enough to come back and, not donate his time, but give his time to a younger generation, it taught me a lot about not just improvisation but just what the music is about – just the act of giving back. Yeah, those people are so humble and they really gave me a role model to chase after.

Alan:

What advice would you give to incoming Workshop students, now that you've been through it?

Austin:

I mean, the easiest thing to say is just be prepared to work, of course. I mean, they give you like a notebook and stuff, and being a naïve high schooler you probably won't take notes, but I would really advise that you write down any little nugget of information that they give you. The thing with those guys is, and I just keep reiterating how amazing they are, I could be 50 years old with a 30-year performing career and I could still take a lesson with Dick Oatts and learn an immense amount. So, there's no way as a high schooler you're going to be able to grasp – even if you're the baddest 18-year-old in the country, which I guess a lot of the people doing the Vail Jazz Workshop are, there's still no way you're going to grasp all the things these faculty members say to you, and you really should write it down. If your faculty member lets you record lessons, then you should absolutely take advantage of that. Go back and stay in touch with your peers that you meet there; a lot of that will come naturally because they'll just be so great musically that you'll want to be around them more and, if you end up going to school together, if you end up making groups together, then that's amazing. But just keep an open mind and jot everything down.

Alan:

And since participating in the Workshop, have you returned to Vail, either as an alumnus performing at the Festival or in any other capacity?

Austin:

No, it's just been a couple of years since I did it. I've been meaning to; I've been following the Festival, I've been keeping in touch with Howard, and with Merv Lapin – my host while I was at Vail. But no, I have not returned back yet.

Alan:

So, I read on your website that you're based in both New York and Dallas, and it also looks like you spend time performing in both of those locations. I'm wondering, how do you pull that off, logistically; and, are there local cultural differences between those two places that result in any different approach to performing, or a different sound, or anything like that?

Austin:

Absolutely. The location of the gig actually has a lot to do with it. As far as the logistics, it's pretty easy. Whenever I have a school break I make sure to contact some clubs that I know, at least four months in advance, trying to get a week's worth of gigs while I'm in Dallas for a week so I don't lose the connections that I had. Just being pro-active, I guess would be the word. You know you're gonna have like a couple of months in the summer that you'll be in Dallas. Make sure to plan ahead six months in advance and get with some clubs and get some work so you're not sitting around. That's mainly the thing. It's not like I'm flying back and forth all the time. It's mostly on breaks.

And, as far as artistic differences, it's immense. I used to have this monthly residency of sorts at The Bar Next Door in Greenwich Village, and it was a chordless trio and I was playing all this kind of adventurous original music – adventurous for me, I'm not saying anything beyond that – but I was playing some Ornette Coleman as well, just a lot of things that a lot of people here (NY) can resonate with, I think. And I was thinking to myself that I can't think of a single venue in Dallas that would pay me to play this music. Which is terrible, you know? It's a thing in the South, a little bit, where people want to come to your show and want to feel good, and they've been working nine to five, or whatever, and they don't want to hear your projects; they probably want to talk over your thing. I've been lucky to find some clubs that are good listening rooms and they'll listen to you, but they definitely don't want anything that will put them on edge, make them question any sort of thing. And there are places you can do that, but not that will pay you anything.

Alan:

That's interesting.

Austin:

The musicians I play with there (Dallas) are all top-notch as well, a lot of them are from New York and they have joined the faculty at UNT (University of North Texas), like Quincy Davis is the drum professor now, and I hire him whenever I can now for gigs. And the bass professor, Lynn Seaton, oh my gosh, he's played with Teddy Wilson, he's played with the Count Basie Band, with Woody Herman. They're just as good as most of these players up here, so putting together good bands is not usually a problem. It is a little restrictive artistically.

Alan:

Interesting. On your website it says that you understand that the incredible level of expression achieved by Louis Armstrong, Miles Davis, John Coltrane, Ornette Coleman, and Thelonious Monk came not just from musical talent but “an inconceivable ability to touch people and a strong societal message to convey.” And then you give “A Love Supreme” and “Strange Fruit” as a couple of examples of that. So, I watched a video performance of your recent composition dedicated to the victims of the Parkland, Florida shooting of February 2018. Obviously conveying a strong societal message. I'm wondering, when inspiration for musical composition comes from such a place, does it make a difference in how quickly or easily the composition takes shape, or in how satisfying it is to you?

Austin:

Let me think about that. I think I'm very much at the beginning stages of exploring music with political messages. And music with political messages can take the form of a lot of different contexts. You know, when Paquito D'Rivera did the concert here, he was talking a lot to the audience the whole time of the importance of Latin-American cultures in America – how much they've affected American culture – obviously making a reference at the whole border wall thing that's been going on. And, in showing his level of excellence and genius, I think he proved to the audience that the contributions of his people, and his own, of course, are really worthy of their respect and admiration; not just culturally, but he showed the audience how much love he was capable of, the way he was talking to them just showed so much empathy. I don't think any

of the music, specifically, was all that political but, in a way, just the excellence that he showed absolutely was – in the same way that I wouldn't consider Louis Armstrong's music to be overtly . . . Ornette, or "A Love Supreme" or anything like that . . . but at a time when race records were a thing and his excellence on the trumpet forced record companies to reconsider only selling white bands to white people because they wanted to tap into this – they wanted to sell Louis Armstrong's music to the masses because it was just so unbelievably unlike anything they'd ever heard. I think that's, wow! You know what I mean?

Alan:

Yes, I do.

Austin:

So I don't necessarily know that I want my music in the future to be so specifically political as that specific project I did, but that was something I really felt strongly about at the time – and still do, of course – but I do have a lot of respect for artists, and jazz musicians and other musicians who don't say as much explicitly but through their hard work they prove to society that their messages are at the level of genius. Someone like Sonny Rollins, I don't think he ever really wrote anything that was aimed at anybody, but just proved to the world that the African-American is capable of this level of creativity. To me, that's the biggest legacy of jazz music, or whatever you want to call it. I know that jazz is somewhat of a problematic term nowadays, I guess has always been, but to me that's it, it's an ethnic music that proved something to the masses.

Alan:

Well, speaking of respect, I read the interview you did with Sheila Jordan for your Jazz History class.

Austin:

Wow, you did your research, huh?

Alan:

Oh yeah! I like to research who I'm going to be interviewing and I just really enjoy it; I learn a lot. So, one thing that Sheila said during the interview was this: "I think of jazz music as a step-child of American music because they don't respect it here (meaning the US) the way they should, like they do in Europe and Asia; all other countries love jazz." I'm wondering, do you share her views on this and, if so, how is that manifested from your vantage point as a jazz musician, and what do you think causes it, and how can it be overcome?

Austin:

That's a huge problem that I haven't had enough time to think about, but I do agree with her to a large extent, to the point where I'm actually going to be taking a semester of college in Amsterdam next fall, just to experience another cultural embracement of the arts. I mean, part of it is that European society has been affluent and developed for longer than any other society on

the planet, except maybe Asian societies, but they're also very appreciative of the arts. America is still in its infancy, of course. I don't need to give a history lesson, but I feel like the attention spans of American people, in general, it's really, really drastically different. And I say that because, first, there are a ton of international students that I've had the absolute pleasure to meet, people from Spain, from Amsterdam, Copenhagen, who go to school here, that I wasn't exposed to in Dallas. Just the way they conceptualize life, they just have a much better balance. When they need to work hard, they do, and when they know their body needs to take a break or when they're off, they absolutely know how to do that. Versus in American culture it's not like that, it's all about chasing the American dream, hustling all the time, working your Saturday nights to get to that other thing. So people are working all the time, and I guess when they do take some time off, like they're watching football – nothing against that, but – there's a very small percentage of the population, unfortunately, that is open to spending that time on art. I think that's why someone like Frank Sinatra will always be more popular with American masses than John Coltrane ever will be, of course. But it seems to be that, just the balance of life in general in Europe, the fact that their people are economically better off, just gives them all the opportunity to explore this other facet of life and appreciate it more; and it's just part of the culture to be artistic there.

But being close to Harlem, it is an American music, even if the masses don't tend to appreciate it anymore, it's amazing to live in Harlem and just see a fruit vendor blasting the music of Billie Holliday on their speaker. I can have a full conversation about my love for Billie Holliday with this fruit vendor. Harlem is just a special place in America. I think New York City in general – but Harlem specifically, it still has that, you know, you go to a club and you can have educated conversations with non-musicians and musicians alike. So that has really changed my mind a little bit; that this music belongs here – it's not like we should jump ship and go to the next available market. It's part of our duty to keep it, this American music, here as well. But, as it currently stands, I 100 percent agree with Sheila, that other societies are embracing it in a much bigger way than we are.

Alan:

She also said that she hopes that young jazz students are not being overly schooled in colleges. She says everything is from the book, "I hope that they have classes and encourage young musicians to go out there, fall on their faces and take chances. Learning and doing. Soloing and creating!" I'm wondering, have you experienced this yourself, or is the new generation of jazz musicians – like yourself – learning to ply your craft differently? And how do you, as an educator yourself, strike a balance with those students you are teaching or mentoring?

Austin:

I do try to go off and play as much as possible. I try to put myself in real-life situations. It's hard being so new to New York City, compared to everybody, but that is just priceless knowledge from Sheila right there. It's amazing. And I think the Manhattan School of Music specifically does an incredible job of this because we have people – you know, Stefon Harris just brings a whole theory of music to the table that seems intellectual but it comes from years of experience of playing with people like Max Roach, with people like Buster Williams, and he's codified that into a curriculum, I guess, that doesn't go by a Mark Levine text or the common text of jazz pedagogy; it's radically different in that it comes from a real-world experience rather than a degree. To get a little bit technical: with my students, I don't teach them that this scale works

over this chord, or anything like that, that would probably be taught in a university theory class. I really don't like that because, first of all, if you tell a student to play these notes, number one, that's incredibly restricting and inaccurate if you do any sort of listening to how people actually play this music. And, number two, they don't hear those pitches or internalize those pitches. The whole process of learning this music is aurally, right? So even if you come to the same conclusion if you've played that chord a million times and you've figured out from this recording or through your own ears that these are the notes you like to play over these chords, then that is a way better education from my vantage point than giving you, I don't know, G Mixolydian. That's a terrible way to teach students. Think about when the first jazz pedagogy programs were made, like in the late 50s, early 60s, "Kind of Blue" was already recorded, Bird had already revolutionized the music, Thelonious Monk; and all these things had already happened. None of them, not a single one of them, had jazz textbooks or majored in jazz. Not to say that there isn't a place for jazz in higher education, but to learn the music from anything else but the source is doing yourself a disservice because you don't internalize any of it, right? I think a lot of the professors here, especially, are very well aware of that; they're assigning listening, they're assigning transcription – some professors are for that or against that – everybody has different philosophies here, which is really cool to me. Stefon definitely has a very different way of thinking of jazz pedagogy than a lot of the professors even within our own building. There's a lot of diversity. And I think that just the level of care that they take; they think about how they're teaching their students all the time. They think about, is this really giving the student a real-world skill that will help them if someone calls them out on the road tomorrow. Will they be prepared, and if not, what do I need to do to help them? The answer to that is almost never "turn to page 68; let's analyze this fugue from a page, or this transcription from a page." That's all the work that needs to happen on your own. And they're very well aware of that. And I try to teach my students with that same way.

Alan:

So what do you think is next for you? You mentioned going to Europe in the fall. What else is on the horizon for you? Are you recording anything now? Are you still composing?

Austin:

Yeah, I still write. I'm trying to play more regularly with people here. A really long-term goal of mine that I've been thinking about recently, and I have no idea whether I can pull it off or not, but it's something I've been kind of a little bit obsessed with, researching, trying to figure out how to do this – I've been trying to plan, after I finish undergrad, like a field research project in the real source of this music, which is Africa. I would love to go to an African country for a year and play with indigenous musicians. That would be a whole thing. I'm doing a ton of research on how I can make that happen, because the stereotypical definition of jazz that, again, is taught in textbooks, is that jazz is European harmony and melody, with African rhythm. Which is, of course, a gross simplification of it, because music in African society, it was never entertainment; you know how foreign that is to them, like they don't have clubs where people go to like chill and listen to music. You know, music is ceremonial, it's spiritual, it's communal. Everybody plays. There's no distinction between audience and performer. You play this beat when someone is married; you play this beat when someone is of age; the whole village gets together and does this dance when somebody passes. Everybody knows these traditions, and it has nothing to do with relaxing and putting your feet up after a hard day's work. It has everything to do with a connection to God, a connection to human spirit, a connection to nature; and I think

that's the root of what makes jazz so special. You listen to the emotion and the sounds of people who play jazz versus if you're listening to a lot of classical music, like played on a harpsichord at one dynamic level, and it's all about the intellectuality of it, how the parts interlay against each other. It's a totally different thing. People tend to codify and analyze jazz in the same way, you know, they write it out and say "play this note, play this chord," and that's crazy because it's not a Bach fugue. Why does this major third work on this minor chord? People debate that all day, but it's not a Bach fugue. The way you play that note – it's like a cry in the African sense, it's tribal at its core. It has definitely lost some of that, but that's what I hear when I hear Miles or any of those greats. So that's on the horizon for me. Just really learning about the source of it and trying to incorporate that into my composition, into my style, because that's not the background I'm coming from. I'm an Asian American, but I love African American music, African music. It's definitely not indigenous to me, but, if it's something I want to do, I need to learn about it and recognize where it comes from. Absolutely.

Alan:

I hope that goal comes to fruition for you. Is there anything else you'd like to add to our conversation on the subject of music, career, the Vail Jazz Workshop, the future of jazz, anything else of interest to you and possibly to future Workshop students?

Austin:

I don't know. I really wasn't expecting this conversation to go here.

Alan:

Sorry about that!

Austin:

No, no, it's me, I love to talk about this stuff.

Alan:

And we love to know about it; we love to listen to you!

Austin:

I would say, if your goal is to be an artist, you know, an artist of integrity, of creativity, and your goal is not to be an entertainer – there's definitely validity in that, of course, and there's a great history of that type of thing in our music as well – but if your goal is to be a really creative artist that will leave you personally fulfilled, and your audiences enriched; if that is your goal, the number one thing to consider – with Vail, with anything – whatever someone tells you what to do, you have to evaluate whether that's honest to yourself, and every time you do a performance, it has to be, is this to my integrity. Not to say you have to turn down everything but, I was just talking about this the other day, Ornette Coleman worked operating an elevator because he didn't want to take these gigs that dissatisfied him artistically. Cecil Taylor did something similar to that. Even now, Greg Osby I know, like, drove a cab even though he was getting calls from all these great musicians. Not that you have to go that far, because those type of artists have really

specific visions of what they want to play, but that was what was honest to them. I would never go that far; I'd rather be playing than driving a cab, of course. But just to give an example of that level of integrity.

Alan:

Well, that's great. Austin, I want to thank you for all of your time, and for sharing your recollections and insights with us. I hope to see you back in Vail again sometime.

Austin:

Absolutely, I would love to be back any time.

Alan:

And if I'm lucky I'll also get to see you perform sometime in New York, or Dallas, or anywhere else across the globe. I hope to have that opportunity.

Austin:

Please! I'd love to talk with you off-record and meet you for who you are and not as a representative of Vail Jazz, and I really appreciate you taking the time to know a little bit about me before you did this. Like I said, I'm really shocked, and very appreciative of that. Thank you so much.

Alan:

My pleasure. It was great talking to you. Take care.

Austin:

You too.