

Fred Katz: the Cellist Who Brought a New Genre to the Violoncello

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Abstract

This paper is written in partial fulfillment for a Master of Music degree from the Academy of Music and Sound, a division of the University of West London. The main subject is Fred Katz, a cellist who brought jazz to the violoncello. A larger consideration of this research is the impact that nurturing a creative skillset has on a musician. Since expression and technique provide abundant opportunities within classical playing for exploration, the scope of the present study is limited to the creative aspects of improvisation and composition.

After an introduction that traces the connection between innovation and the cello, the focus changes to the work of Katz. Social and historical factors are taken into consideration, as are notable cellists of the early twentieth century. Katz's pivotal solo album, *Zen and the Music of Fred Katz* is described and reviewed. The paper concludes with reflections on how creativity can affect a cellist and advocates for a curricular shift towards its universal inclusion.

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1. Introduction: Cello's Creative Potential

The history of the cello is rich with exemplars of creativity. From the instrument's inception to the present day, experimentation has been a hallmark in its evolution. The violoncello, translated as "bass violin," is known for its rich, soulful sound (Bonta, 2001). Landmark achievements on it include the codification of the cello to its current dimensions, attributed to Andrea Amati in the 1500s (Stowell and Cross, 1999); the invention of thumb position, ascribed to Francesco Alborea in the 1700s (Liu, 2011); and the popularization of the endpin, typically credited to Adrien-François Servais, in the 1800s (Braun, 2015).



Photo 1: Detail from *Angel Concert*, c. 1535

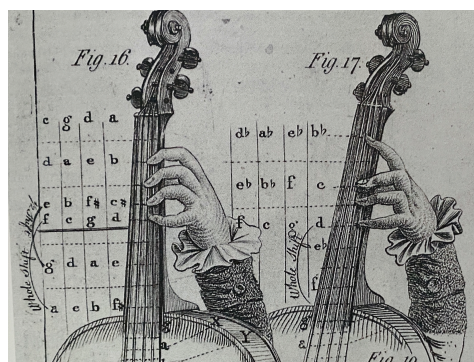


Photo 2: Violoncello hand positions, 1789



Photo 3: *The Cello Player*, c. 1660

Photo 1 by Gaudenzio Ferrari; Photo 2 by John Gunn; Photo 3 by Gabriel Metsu. All taken from "Violoncello" by Bonta, 2001.

Later, cellists such as Luigi Boccherini, Jean-Louis Duport, and David Popper also distinguished themselves as innovators. Like Bach, Beethoven, and Mozart (Nettl, 2001), these cellists were improvising-composing-performers. Each produced a significant amount of repertoire (Moskavitz, 2001; Raychev, 2003; Speck, 2001; Walden, 2001). Nevertheless, the practice of teaching improvisation as a skillset and art form went through a significant decline in the 1800s (Hummel, 1828; Moore, 1992). As a result, in our time, many curriculums do not include instruction in the art of spontaneous music-making. In fact, young cellists are often discouraged from exploring freely on the instrument or producing their own material (Markevitch and Seder, 1999).



Photo 4: Luigi Boccherini (1743-1805) Photo 5: Jean-Louis Duport (1749-1819) Photo 6: David Popper (1843-1913)
 Photos 4-6 from *The New Groves Dictionary*, (Bonta et al)

Nevertheless, in the present day, forward-thinking cellists are abundant. A current sampling of 21st-century visionary cellists includes those who improvise, such as Eugene Friesen, Leyla McCalla, and Jacob Szekely; cellists who play in world styles, such as Yo-Yo Ma, Natalie Haas, and Saskia Rao-de Haas; cellists who arrange and compose, such as Sheku-Kanneh Mason, Joshua Roman, and Ben Sollee; cellists who are rock stars, such as 2Cellos, Rasputina, and Apocalyptica; cellists who sing, such as Abel Selaocoe, Mike Block and Marta Roma; cellists who are jazz artists, such as Matthew Brubeck, Erik Friedlander, and Chris White; and cellists who score music for film such as Tina Guo, Zoe Keating and Hildur Guðnadóttir (see the attached bibliography for each artist's website; also visit <https://newdirectionscello.org>).

All of these cellists have enjoyed careers that did not exist in the decades before their time. Furthermore, most of them qualify in many, or all, of the above-listed categories. Lastly, there are many inventive cellists who did not make that shortlist. The trend of creative cello is not diminishing; in fact, it is in a state of growth that is so profound, that some have described it as a "revolution" (Szekely, 2021). Therefore, it is pertinent to ask, when did the renaissance in creative cello begin? And who paved the way for such a flowering of original music?

While many individuals have served as catalysts for innovative approaches, some of the earliest include Fred Katz in the 1950s, David Darling in the 1970s, and Eugene Friesen in the 1980s. All three of these pioneers broke new ground by taking the cello to new genres well before the flurry of creative cello began. All three built their careers with improvisation (Carpenter, 2013, Morris, 2015, Jaffe, 2021). Because these cellists wrote their own music, they created new styles, which opened up avenues for future cellists to pursue, for generations to come.

David Darling, who lived from 1941 to 2021, began experimenting with the Paul Winter Consort in the 70s. Darling departed from the group to pursue a solo career and then debuted his first solo album in 1980, titled *Journal October*. Darling also founded a program called “*For People*,” with a *Musical Bill of Rights* that powerfully advocates that music is for all people (Darling, 1986, www.daviddarling.com).



Photo 7: David Darling (1941-2021) from daviddarling.com



Eugene Friesen, born in 1952, continues to blaze new trails in the world of creative cello. Friesen, accomplished in the classical canon early in his career, turned to improvisation in the 70s. Mr. Friesen released his first solo album in 1986, titled *New Friend*. The album, comprised entirely of recorded free improvisations, appears to be the first cello album of this kind. *New Friend* was a collaboration with pianist and organist Paul Halley, also in the *Paul Winter Consort* with Friesen. Since that album, Friesen has joined forces with *Trio Globo*, Dave Brubeck, Martin Sexton, Toots Thielemans, Betty Buckley, Will Ackerman, Dar Buckley, and Joel Martin, to name a few (www.celloman.com).

Photo 8: Eugene Friesen (1952-present) from eugenefriesenmusic.com

While other artists started to cross over into new styles in the 1970s and 80s (Holland, 1971; Ma, 1984; Roberts, 1988; Webber, 1978; White, 1997), it was Katz, Darling and Friesen that first created their own material, then continued to produce, prolifically. These cellists have several notable parallels in their careers. Highly trained and accomplished in the classical realm, each took their own direction on the instrument. Poetry, meditation, and transcendental thought appear as topics in their music, interviews, or writing. Compassion towards others and a devotion to nature were also common themes. Lastly, all were passionate proponents of improvisation (Darling, 1980; Darling, 1986; CelloBello, 2021; Dilberto, 2021; Ferris, 1979; Friesen, 1986; Friesen, 2021; Friesen, 2021; Jaffe, 2021; Kalish, 2007; Katz, 1957; Morris, 2015; Pinnell, n.d). Due to limited scope, this paper will focus on the first cellist of the three: Fred Katz.

2. Fred Katz: Break from a Long Tradition

Fred Katz was born in 1919 in Brooklyn, New York, and died in Los Angeles, California, in 2013. Katz reached impressive heights on classical cello at a young age. His solo recital debut was at the age of thirteen, in New York City's famed Town Hall (Katz, 1957), and his debut as a solo principal cellist with orchestra, at age 15, with the National Orchestral Association in Carnegie Hall. It is often incorrectly stated that Katz studied with Pablo Casals. As Katz himself corrects, his classical training took place with Leif Rosanoff, who was a student of Pablo Casals (Idelsohn Society, 2012). Katz was also skilled as a classical pianist (Carpenter, 2014).



Photo 9: Fred Katz (1919-2013), "From the Vaults"

Katz's life changed dramatically during the Second World War. Initially, Katz served as a medic, but at the end of the war, he was appointed to a prestigious post: musical director of the Seventh Army. One of Katz's responsibilities was to score band music as entertainment for American troops still stationed in Europe. In a later interview, Katz laughed that since he didn't have "the first idea" how to write for band, he'd blame mistakes on his copyist (notation happened to be another one of his duties). It was in this post that Katz first scored music for Tony Bennett, among other headliners (Idelsohn Society, 2012).

When Katz returned to the U.S., he lived in the heart of New York City's jazz scene. He performed on piano at bar mitzvahs, and became hooked on the exhilaration that he experienced while playing spontaneous music. Katz also played classical cello in vaudeville shows. One night, vocalist Lena Horne heard Katz play cello and piano at a cast party for such an event. Shortly after, Horne invited Katz to audition to sub as a pianist in her ensemble. At the audition, in a rehearsal room at Carnegie Hall, Katz was required to "compete" on piano with jazz phenom Gerald Wiggins. The only song Katz "knew" was *Tea for Two*. Somehow, Katz won the job (on piano). That is how Katz met drummer Chico Hamilton, who shared Fred's eclectic taste in sounds (Hamilton, 2020).



Photo 10: Fred Katz by Hyman Katz (LATimes, 2013)

Shortly after meeting, Hamilton and Katz embarked on an extended collaboration. They put out a flurry of albums in quick succession. The album cover in photo 11, which excluded the band and featured Katz with a Caucasian model, was a Pacifica label marketing concept that Katz found distasteful (Idelsohn Society, 2012).

Photo 11: *Fred Katz and His Jammers* (1960)



Since he was caught up in a community of Los Angeles creatives, Katz began scoring albums, then scored music for film (Carpenter, 2014).

Katz's film scores were described as "funky, jazzy, beat, hipster music, with occasional horror touches, that will keep a smile on your face" (Kimmel, 1986).

Late in his career, Katz became a professor of anthropology. He taught a wide range of topics, including mysticism, shamanism, world music, and philosophy (Kalish, 2007). Notably, John Densmore, who later became a drummer for the *Doors*, was one of many distinguished students of Katz (IMDb, n.d.). As is evident, Katz led a diverse and prolific career in improvisation on the cello in the 1950s. This was followed by work in film scoring, with a third career as an educator.

Solo Albums of Fred Katz

- 1955: *Fred Katz Trio at the Strollers*
- 1956: *Zen: The Music of Fred Katz* (Pacific Jazz)
- 1958: *Soul O Cello* (Decca)
- 1958: *4-5-6 Trio* (Decca)
- 1958: *Folk Songs for Far Out Folk* (Warner Bros)
- 1959: *Fred Katz and his Jammers* (Decca)

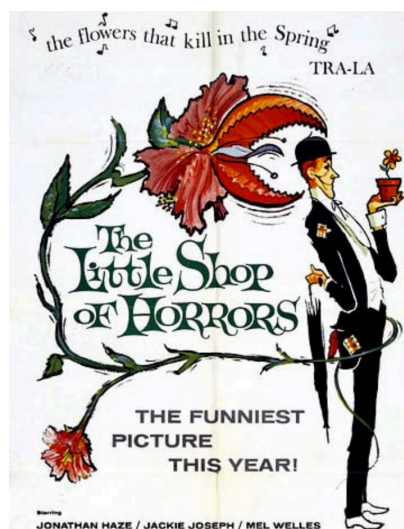
Collaborations with Chico Hamilton

- 1955: *Chico Hamilton Quintet featuring Buddy Collette* (Pacific Jazz)
- 1955: *Chico Hamilton Quintet at the Strollers*
- 1955: *A Nice Day*
- 1955: *Free Form (live)*
- 1956: *Topsy*
- 1956: *Chico Hamilton Quintet in Hi Fi* (Pacific Jazz)
- 1956: *The Wind*
- 1957: *Chico Hamilton Quintet* (Pacific Jazz)
- 1957: *Sweet Smell of Success* (Decca)
- 1958: *South Pacific in Hi-Fi* (World Pacific)
- 1959: *Ellington Suite* (World Pacific)
- 1960: *The Original Chico Hamilton Quintet* (World Pacific)

Sources: discogs.com and YouTube.

Film/TV Scores of Fred Katz

1957: *The Sweet Smell of Success*
 1958: *T Is for Tumbleweed*
 1959: *A Bucket of Blood*
 1959: *The Wasp Woman*
 1959: *The Ten Commandments* (TV movie)
 1960: *Ski Troop Attack*
 1960: *Battle of Blood Island*
 1960: *The Little Shop of Horrors*
 1960: *Rebel in Paradise*
 1960: *Johnny Staccato*
 1961: *Creature from the Haunted Sea*
 1961: *Checkmate*
 1962: *Leaf*
 1962: *College*
 1963: *The Sorcerer*
 1966: *Quest for Freedom*
 1971: *The Birth of Aphrodite*



Source: IMDb.com

Photo 12: *The Little Shop of Horrors* (1960)

3. Historical Context

The emergence of jazz around 1900 can be traced back to systematic, institutionalized slavery in the 1600s. As Africans from many nations, with many languages, were forced to cope with new lives that were inhumane in a strange new world, they produced a distinct music culture of their own (Sarath, 2013; Smoak, 2003; Zenni, 2016). African Americans were finally made “free” in 1865 by the 13th Amendment, (National Archives, 2016). It is no coincidence that jazz emerged in dance clubs shortly after; however, when jazz was “discovered,” it was already an evolved art form. Due to its distinct traits, jazz is often identified with specific names such as Dixieland, Swing, Latin, Bebop, or Cool, to pinpoint a few (Tucker and Jackson, 2001). However, it should be noted that the genre didn’t evolve in a uniform way, as such labels have come to imply. In fact, styles lived in chaotic coexistence, and at other times, were “mutually hostile” (DeVeaux, 1991).

It is widely agreed upon is that some of the most formative figures in jazz include Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie. After the Second World War musicians developed a new style of jazz. It featured the familiar 12-bar blues and 32-bar song form, indicative of the tradition, but with chords containing sevenths, ninths, and dissonance. Furthermore, new tempos were un-danceable. These features gave emerging virtuosos like Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie platforms for their extended improvisations. Soon after, Miles Davis began to emerge as a seminal artist. Davis was a powerful figure that served as a catalyst towards a more mellow style with neoclassical overtones, a genre in which Fred Katz would flourish (Magee, 2007).

The Cello had been used in jazz as early as 1916 in Ciro's Club Coon Orchestra. Later, it was featured on recordings with Ethel Waters and Marion Cook, who played composed parts in background textures. In the late 40s and 50s, Harry Babasin and Oscar Pettiford began to improvise on the cello in jazz albums. However, neither Harry Babasin nor Oscar Pettiford, both bass players, used the bow. Therefore, Fred Katz was the first to take the unique sound of the cello to a jazz ensemble (Bonta et al, 2001; White, 1997).

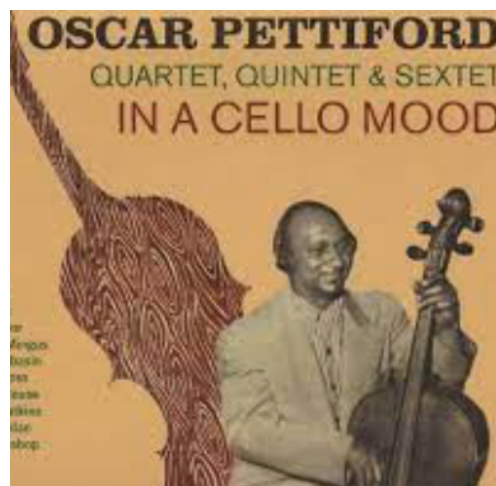


Photo 13: Oscar Pettiford, *In a Cello Mood* (1952)

Katz's career was intertwined with that of Chico Hamilton, who lived from 1921 to 2013. Hamilton's career had tenacious beginnings (Hamilton, 2001), but rose to spectacular

heights. During the course of his life, Hamilton collaborated with a long list of the most formative figures in jazz history, including Lionel Hampton, Count Basie, Charles Mingus, Lena Horne, Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, Tony Bennet, and Chet Baker (Schroeder, 2018).



Photo 14: Chico Hamilton *Quintet Complete Studio Recordings* (1955)

closed, did not notice that the band was in place, waiting. Eager to start the next tune, the band started, and Katz was trapped behind the cello on a crowded stage. Rather than put his cello down and creep across the platform, Katz started to play his piano parts on the cello. According to fellow bandmate Buddy Collette, "that's the first time, we knew it would work" (Reny, 2013). Eventually, the band discarded having a pianist altogether (Hamilton, 1955).

The use of the cello in Hamilton's band began by accident. The ensemble relished chances to take breaks, so Katz would provide entertainment on solo cello during interludes. However, one particular time Katz got lost in the music, played too long, and with his eyes

4. Context: Cello in the Early Twentieth Century

Prior to Fred Katz, the twentieth century saw a flourishing of virtuosic cellists from Europe, the United States, and beyond (Campbell, 1988). Notably, for the first time, women became virtuosos, a phenomenon spurred by the standardization of the endpin (Braun, 2015). Twentieth-century female virtuosos included Guilhermina Suggia, 1888-1950; Beatrice Harrison, 1892-1963; Zara Nelsova, 1918-2002; and Jacqueline du Pré, 1945-1987.

Katz would have been familiar with pinnacle cellists David Popper, Pablo Casals, and Mstislav Rostropovich. David Popper, a cellist, and composer who lived from 1843 to 1913, is credited with profoundly advancing the technical possibilities of the cello (Choe, 2016; Moskavitz and Jesselson, 1994). Pablo Casals 1876-1973, more known as a performer, was also a composer (allmusic.com, Casals, 1963; Vazquez-Ramos, 2002). Mstislav Rostropovich, 1927 to 2007, developed close relationships with composers and had many works written for him (Botstein, 2006; Campbell, 1988; Ivanov, 2007). Furthermore, Rostropovich also wrote music. However, his compositional output pales when compared to his achievements as a cellist and conductor (allmusic.com; Botstein, 2006; Campbell, 2016, Goodwin, 2001). That Popper, Casals, and Rostropovich sought to produce some of their own material is powerful advocacy to allow and even encourage students to explore their instruments creatively.



Photo 15: *Polonaise de Concert* (1878)
by David Popper

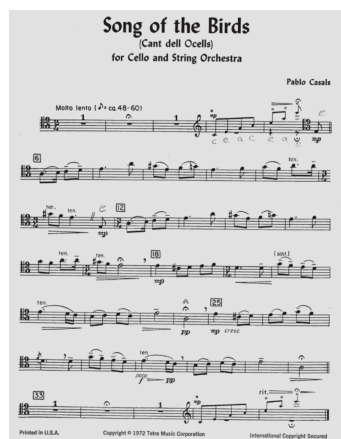


Photo 16: *Songs of the Birds* (1954)
by Pablo Casals

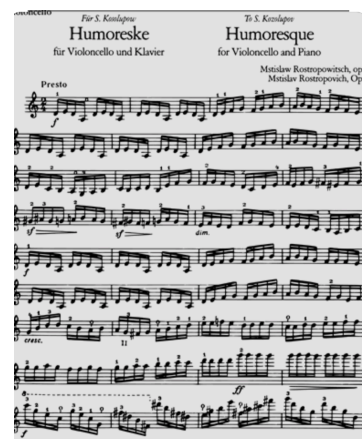


Photo 17: *Humoreske* (1968)
by Mstislav Rostropovich

Since Katz transformed the cello in meaningful ways, it is important to contextualize cellists who were contemporaries of Katz and the repertoire that emerged simultaneously, in parallel to Katz. As cellists are sure to have listened to some of these artists or this repertoire, it will provide yet another lens for examining Katz's accomplishments.

Timeline of Twentieth-Century Cellists to 1960: in Chronological Order of Birth

Guilhermina Suggia (1888-1950)
 Pablo Casals (1876-1973)
 Beatrice Harrison (1892-1963)
 Maurice Eisenburg (1902-1972)
 Emmanuel Feuermann (1902-1942)
 Gregor Piatagorsky (1903-1976)
 Pierre Fournier (1906-1986)
 Raya Garbousova (1909-1997)
 André Navarra (1911-1988)
 Paul Tortelier (1914-1990)
 Zara Nelsova (1918-2002)
 Fred Katz (1919-2013)
 János Starker (1924-2013)
 Mstislav Rostropovich (1927-2007)
 Bernard Greenhouse (1916-2011)
 Leonard Rose (1918-1924)
 David Darling (1941-2021)
 Lynn Harrell (1944-2020)
 Jacqueline du Pré (1945-1987)
 Mischa Maisky (1948-present)
 Julian Lloyd Webber (1951 to present)
 Eugene Friesen (1952-present)
 Yo-Yo Ma (1955-present)
 Steven Isserlis (1958-present)

(Campbell, 1988; Stowell and Cross, 1999).

Groundbreaking Repertoire from the Twentieth Century

1914: *3 Klein Stücke (Three Little Pieces)* Op. 11, by Anton Webern
 1915: *Sonate pour Violoncelle et Piano* by Claude Debussy
 1917: *Schelomo: Rhapsodie Hébraïque for Violoncello and Orchestra*, by Ernest Bloch
 1918: *Sonata for Solo Cello*, Op. 8, by Zoltán Kodály
 1919: *Cello Concerto*, by Edward Elgar
 1922: *Cello Sonata* Op. 25 No. 3, by Paul Hindemith
 1934: *Sonata for Cello and Piano in D Minor*, by Dimitri Shostakovich (written for Viktor Kubatsky)
 1945: *Concerto for Violoncello and Orchestra* Op. 22, by Samuel Barber (written for Raya Garbousova)
 1946: *Cello Concerto* Op. 37, by Erich Wolfgang Korngold (written for Eleanor Aller of the Hollywood String Quartet)
 1949: *Sonata for Cello and Piano in C Major* Opus 119, by Sergei Prokofiev (written for Mstislav Rostropovich)
 1950: *Sonata for Violoncello and Piano*, by Elliot Carter (written for Bernard Greenhouse)
 1952: *Sinfonia Concertante*, by Sergei Prokofiev (written for Gregor Piatagorsky)
 1957: *Cello Concerto*, by William Walton
 1959: *Cello Concerto No. 1*, by Dimitri Shostakovich (written for Rostropovich)
 1964-1971: *Suites for Solo Cello*, Op. 72 (1964), Op. 80 (1967), and 87 (1971), by Benjamin Britten (written for Rostropovich)

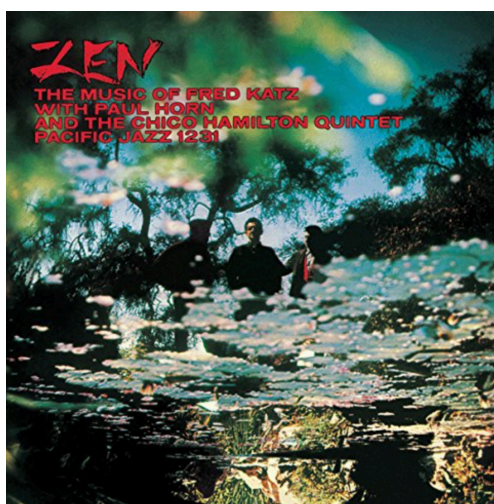
(Bonta, 2001; Campbell 2011; Horvath, 2016; Ivanov, 2007; and McBurney 2001).

5. The Pivotal Album

Zen: The Music of Fred Katz with the Chico Hamilton Quartet

Zen: The Music of Fred Katz with Paul Horn and the Chico Hamilton Quartet was released in 1957. Recorded at Capitol Studios in Los Angeles, California, produced by Richard Bock, and released on the Pacific Jazz label, the album featured the Chico Hamilton Quintet. This ensemble was comprised of Fred Katz, cello; Chico Hamilton, drum set and timpani; Paul Horn, alto flute and clarinet; John Pisano, guitar; and Carson Smith, bass. Additional musicians played *Suite for Horn*. These include Joe Howard, Dick Noel, and Herbie Harper, trombone; Harry Klee, flute; Marty Berman, bassoon; Willy Schwartz, clarinet; and Julie Jacobs, oboe.

There are seven tunes on the album. Several are composed by Fred Katz, with pieces by Carl Fisher, Caron Smith, and a collaborative work (Lara, Musel, and Lisbon). As the standard format of the time was vinyl, the presentation was organized into “sides.”



Side 1

Lord Randall by Fred Katz (7:27)

Suite for Horn by Fred Katz (13:22)

1. Allegro
2. Zen
3. Science Fiction

Side 2

Pluck It by Fred Katz (2:56)

Classical Katz by Fred Katz (2:56)

Loma by Carl Fisher (3:25)

Granada by A. Lara, B Musel and E Lisbona (3:50)

Katz-Up by Caron Smith (3:48)

Montuna by Fred Katz (4:36)

Photo 18: *Zen: The Music of Fred Katz* (Pacific Jazz, 1957)

From the first moment, Katz set out a clear and distinct style. Vibrato ranged from wide and intense to none at all. Katz’s articulation also followed a pattern of contrast, such as light and dry, in *Pluck It*, to rich and thick, in *Classical Katz*. Katz’s tone was exceptionally bright, even harsh at times, undoubtedly because he played so close to the bridge to make the soft volume of the cello more functional in a higher volume ensemble. Katz’s playing is also extremely technical. He used the full range of the cello, creating soaring melodies and impressive licks beyond a four-octave range. Furthermore, Katz’s chromaticism seems as sophisticated as any abstract classical composition from this period, a feat that is particularly impressive because so much of Katz’s material was improvised.

ZEN: THE MUSIC OF FRED KATZ

FRED KATZ, cello; CHICO HAMILTON, drums & tympani; PAUL HORN, alto flute & clarinet; JOHN PISANO, guitar; CARSON SMITH, bass. on "SUITE FOR HORN" add JOE HOWARD, HERBIE HARPER and DICK NOEL, trombones; HARRY KLEE, flute; MARTY BERMAN, bassoon; WILLY SCHWARTZ, clarinet; JULIE JACOBS, oboe.

Fred Katz is unique in that he is abnormally-normal, i.e. a supernormal human being. And, incidentally, a perfect musical medium for the principle of Zen. Inevitably and inextricably he combines all forms, including jazz. The natural mingling and assimilation of forms evinces a music removed from boundaries. The very soul and spirit of jazz in the concrete and abstract is the harmonic consequence of mutual acceptance of differences in concept. That, as its structure, constitutes jazz criticism as a matter of emotional affinities, technique merely as a means of arriving at a statement. The above accounts for the non-mention of musical technicalities in these notes. Deliberately a gesture of discretion in respect of the natural beauty speaking through the music itself. It is an effort to keep listeners from pre-categorizing this first important album of F.K.'s music through the mental suggestion placed by someone else. It is in his breadth, lack of one-sidedness, absence of category that the music's true new greatness lies. Quality here is predetermined in superlative performance of superbly inspired scoring; the rest is purely individualistic through emotional identification. Coagulating the many bloods of contemporary musics, it represents what is actually a new era in music.

A thoroughbred blue-ribboned concert cellist and pianist, this protege of Art itself has unassumingly devoted the major portion of his time in the past to tenderly and tenaciously coaching his students to the top-flight vocal stardom of such as Jana Mason, and numerous tops-in-pops types. Fred came from a home that loved music. His strongest influence, spiritual and ethical, was his father, Dr. Haysman Dr. Katz played all the strange instruments plus concertina; Fred's mother played drums. His father was a deeply evolved person; besides being a musician, he was a true philosopher, a Kabbalist and Hebrew scholar. Abe and Stanley, brothers, both inspired Fred musically. The selective contents rainbowed in this album with almost sensual appeal show Fred's keen empathetic sense, which keynotes his personality. Unself-conscious love and kindness is the language of his February face.

Born February twenty-fifth, nineteen-nineteen, New York City. At seven directly across the street from him moved a family with a little girl named Lillian who practiced on her trumpet. So while Fred continued his piano lessons and started swinging on his celebrated cello, Lillian became his partner in practice. At thirteen, Town Hall placed his debut. Fred's first cello concert was successful. Lillian had meantime switched to French Horn. And, not to forget — from the age of eight on, the trio, Fred, Lil and music, were destined to be inseparable.

This long and short haired Katz is as deeply and lushly fertile artistically as the rich cultural background that skeletons every reason for a prolifically successful future. So inexhaustive are his potentials that eventual world acclaim is inevitable. Fred's music is an expression of, but more than that, an extension of his personal life which begins and ends at home. There it is a seemingly reckless composite of practicing, high-flying parakeets, two *avant-garde* little girls that are a study in opposites, but blend as necessity itself, a young baby, Hyman, suspiciously old and, wise who beats out crazy time as he conducts, smells of a never-cool oven, a phone ringing constantly, people popping in-and-out-that-quick; a home welcoming the strangest of strangers (including yours truly) as immediate members. A wonderfully contagious feeling of peace pervades inconspicuously amidst the noisy pell-mell. Activities, differences, interferences and provocations are held and moulded into a prolifically profitable unit by an over-abundance of love. True human dignity is the centerpiece at the table and the wood in the fireplace. I could pay no greater compliment than the statement Schweitzer or Goethe would find eloquence of heart and home in principle at the Katz breakfast table. This 'music' is Whitman's and Plato's alike. That the man himself and the artist is so tightly composed of opposites: elegance, humor, humility, sloppy-joes and perfect precision, explains the stretching-tension founting up and spiriting pure genius. A glimpse of Zen in method, i.e., absolute concentration on two opposite, black and white (the literal success of

SIDE ONE

LORD RANDALL—By Fred Katz (Time, 7:27)

SUITE FOR HORN—By Fred Katz (Time, 13:22)

1. ALLEGRO
2. ZEN
3. SCIENCE-FICTION

SIDE TWO

PLUCK IT—By Fred Katz (Time, 2:56)

CLASSICAL KATZ—By Fred Katz (Time, 2:56)

LOMA—By Carl Fisher (Time, 3:25)

GRANADA—By A. Lara, B. Musel and E. Lisbona (Time, 3:50)

KATZ UP—By Carson Smith (Time, 3:48)

MONTUNA—By Fred Katz (Time, 4:36)

which is impossible) frees the subconscious, the gray meditative source, for release. Here, the Zen principle and the one of jazz is shown in relation. The 'gray meditative release' corresponds to the creativity in jazz-improvisation. Zen is defined too briefly in the big Websters. If you are curious to really comprehend it's true meaning, extensive study is needed. Jazz in 'definitive' use is as broad as it's musically political parent, democracy, which it so communicatively chalices.

Nineteen-forty-one found Fred being formally escorted (twice) to the White House after personally extended invitations, to conduct his songs of America. Nineteen-forty-five, his ballet "Lysistrata" was most successfully produced in New York City. In the service he acted as the clearing-house for talent overseas, plus conducting a program that was broadcast throughout Radio Germany. A good-will-gesture concert devoted completely to his compositions was performed by the Heidelberg Symphony. His vastly varied musical history extends to "Beloved Comrade" so beloved and recorded by Josh White, to Frankie Laine's "Satan Wears A Satin Gown", which illustrates his full-ranged musike. In partial tribute to the late Carl Fischer is the Katz one option of "Loma" from Fischer's "Reflections Of An Indian Boy". It's beauty Fred understands — its core is the soul of the boundless Indian. East and West shake hands thru Nature's harmonics. Carl (as with Fred) sliced through life's complexities with ecstatic simplicity to the expression of truth. Frankie Laine's warm respect for the memory of Carl Fischer is extended, too, to Fred, so mutual is their expression in attitude.

In Los Angeles for the screen-testing of his protegee, Jana Mason, Fred called Chico Hamilton. Fred and Chico had become close friends while working with Lena Horne. Respecting his unique drum-work, naturally Chico was hired for the Mason Mocambo, date to play the special drum parts in Fred's arrangements. After the shows at night, Fred and Chico used to talk about "Chico's plans for a group with a new sound. So began the Chico Hamilton Quintet. Having played eight years under Hans Kindler plus his other serious concert work, composition-wise and instrumentally, Fred's spirits sprung with the freedom in jazz. He had been rejected from music school as too 'unorthodox' and

completed study with Franklin Robinson, author of "Aural Harmony". So through Chico, Fred was show-cased and full-blown with freedom from his jazz-transfusion. The name 'jazz' was given to his secret thirst. It adequately, completed his needs. He says: "Most serious composers do not think of jazz other than rhythmically; aside from the rhythm, the lyricism is it's true poetry." His translating of loss in an argument to gain in understanding reasons his channel to easy-swing. Albeit he is a too positive rascal, he appreciates others' rights of exploration. This applies particularly to Charlie Mingus, where the question of "Charlie, where or how does the jazz on your Ming-tree grow?" frequents many music minds. First questioning negatively, Fred mused on the Muse long enough to realize Mingus' expression in jazz was, after all, deserving of that credit, and that the past criticism was a matter merely of semantics in music.

Technical precision should be taken for granted along with a good solid background in the knowledge of music." Paul Horn says: "Freddy's writing's not concerned with the mechanics involve. Guys like it, because he writes up to them and not down. He makes you play better!" Particular prestige belongs to Paul, whose gorgeous tonal beauties and elegance of execution and tender jazzings are purposely show-cased in this album as a salute from Fred Katz with whom he blends musically in perfection. An ex-Sauter-Finegan find, Paul blows luscious testimony to his past credits here.

This last year brought Fred scoring for U.P.A., Toni T.V. commercials, a Harpo Marx album, teaching, prized commissions, film scoring and now his own album. The world renown cellist Piatigorsky first heard Fred with Chico and the group. Rich affinity was established between the two, and thru Fred Piatigorsky became a jazz enthusiast. At an evening of music at the great cellist's home, Fred was commissioned by him to write a jazz-work for concert presentation, possibly a blues. Piatigorsky complimented Fred, "I feel so young when you're around. You're very lucky! I envy you, being so close to the people (through jazz), so much variation. It's invigorating!" He didn't have to sell Fred on this! The "Petite Concerto" requested by George Avakian for his wife was premiered enthusiastically at Town Hall in New York City the end of May.

In Fred's "Suite For Horn" you are wonderfully opportuned to dig all his forms. Swing, jazz, blues, any name you wish to file it under, this work has them all! It's his conception of America in motion. And, with all the intellectualism filtered thru his life, Fred is funky. Simple, beautiful funk.

Fred's work with the Hamilton Quintet for "Sweet Smell Of Success" was given a gold stamp of approval by the director, Sandy Mackendrick. I walked right in where he was at the piano with a score in front of him. He said, "Sit down Baby. Go ahead and talk. I have to finish this bit and do another." (You know, like he was ordering eggs for breakfast.) Time? The world was his! When most writers would be 'all shook up', here he was deliriously calm.

That's the man. This is his story. And here is his music. However a closing bit, a Zen saying Fred loves:

"To a man who knows nothing, mountains are mountains, waters are waters, and trees are trees.

But when he has studied and knows a little, waters are no longer waters, trees no longer trees.

But when he has thoroughly understood, mountains are once again mountains, waters are waters, and trees are trees."

Notes are by Fran Kelley, West Coast poetess and musician.

(original liner notes)

Cover photograph is by William Claxton.
A Richard Bock Production



FRED KATZ



CHICO HAMILTON



PAUL HORN



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Photo 19: Back side of the album cover of *Zen: The Music of Fred Katz* (Pacific Jazz, 1957)

Cycling through an impressive range of color and texture, moods ranged from mournful, angry, to joyful. The golden, smooth sound of electric guitar, followed by dry clarinet or *secco* cello, was one way the ensemble created continuous contrast. Tightly in sync with intricate, sophisticated rhythms, dialogue between the instruments was copied when ensemble members traded four-bar phrases of improv. Elsewhere, solo improvisations went off on new tangents.

Hamilton's playing was particularly notable, as he produced dull, hammered tones, light crisp sounds, lengthy brushes, and virtuosic fills. On timpani, Hamilton sometimes traveled up and down in pitch, across a wide range of volumes. This effect created wild, out-of-control moments, which would later return to precise and pristine continuity.

The inclusion of the word *Zen* in the title may be confusing to some. *Zen* is often associated with calm, peaceful sounds, such as water bubbling, birds chirping, and gentle music (Bodiford, 2021). While this album has subdued moments, on the whole, it's visceral, chaotic, and free. A closer look at the concept of *Zen* reveals that this word infers joy (Burk, 2014). Furthermore, according to the liner notes, *Zen* "frees the subconscious, the gray meditative source, for release" (Katz, 1957). By those standards of measurement, the album hit the mark.

The most palpable trait of the album is that it is infused with an abundance of personalization and creativity. The music and its interpretation were personal, authentic, and genuine. From Katz's style of playing to his ensemble's work alongside him, to the compositions, arrangements, and featured improvisations, it is clear that this album was a creative masterpiece. It rings true to the album notes, written by Fran Kelly, that "the very soul and spirit of jazz is in the concrete and in the abstract is the harmonic consequence of mutual acceptance of differences in concept" (Pacific Jazz, 2013).

6. Conclusions

There are many ways of "knowing" (Blackmore, 2005; Wilbur, 2001). While some people favor external, empirical and scientific methodologies, others individual expressions are internal, personal, and unique (López-Gonzalez and Limb, 2012; Kara, 2017). Both Fred Katz and his cello playing were impressive, even groundbreaking, both technically and emotionally. However, despite his many achievements, Katz is hardly remembered in today's world of the cello (Bonta, 2001; Campbell, 1988).

This may be for a variety of reasons. First, music as a whole stands squarely in subjective realms of perception. As all people experience music differently (Deutch, 2001), there may be cellists who listen to Katz, and due to personal taste, fail to make a connection

with his playing. Yet much of Katz's playing falls within the same style that cellists of the early twentieth century favored, and they are lavished with recognition and accolades. Another factor may be that Katz functioned alongside Hamilton and other African American artists, and Black artists have a long history of being marginalized (Bull, 2019; DeVaux, 1991; Leight, 2020).

However, a powerful factor may be that Katz was functioning in a landscape that cellists don't understand, nor recognize, even in the present day (White, 1997). Nevertheless, seventy years ago Katz successfully proved that the cello is well suited for a new genre. Katz didn't just pave the way for jazz on the cello; he also served as an exemplar for every genre-crossing cellist that has followed him.

Many musicians report that creating one's own music leads to a deeper connection to it (Hummel, 1828; Friesen, 2012, 2020, and 2021; Sarath, 2013, Werner, 1996). This is evident with cellists Boccherini, Duport, Popper, Casals, Rostropovich, Katz, Darling, and Friesen. Each of these respected artists chose to compose for their instrument. Intriguingly, current technology reveals that the brain makes distinct neural connections during musical exploration that are unique (López-Gonzalez and Limb, 2012; Scheck, 2013). If one considers the legacy of these cello creators, alongside new science and the present surge of exploration on the cello in the present day, it is clear that students will benefit from a massive shift in our cello curriculum, to include improvisation and composition at every level of study.

A virtuosic performance at the Montreux Jazz Festival compels one to consider this point of view. *My Funny Valentine* features Katz with a Chico Hamilton ensemble (Chico Hamilton Ensemble, 1989). The cellist, now white-haired and wrinkled, begins mournfully, then proceeds to dig in. His eyebrows are wild and furrowed, his body is hunched slightly over the large instrument, and his glasses droop over his nose. Yet there is no sign of aging in his technique. Katz gives an impressive performance that is authentic to his beginnings. Expressive techniques range from soulful to ferocious. A



large variety of vibratos are utilized, which infuse soaring lyricism. Katz contrasts these emotional elements with virtuosity. At times Katz is up off the fingerboard in wild, chromatic licks; at other times he is passionately crossing all four strings. It is playing that is worthy of admiration, and a legacy to be remembered, even treasured.

Photo 20: Fred Katz and Chico Hamilton at the Montreux Jazz Festival (1989)

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