

## RESILIENCE

If relationship is the heart of the **Sounds of the Circle**, then resilience is its character, the psychological muscle mass that has built up from one generation to the next. Historically, sacred, secular and blues music developed into jazz in all its rich variations and has always been the music of **joy** and **hope**, the offspring of **resilience**. On an individual level, resilience is the intangible current that runs through someone's life and ideally, forges more steely as it goes. Everyone has a story, a narrative singed, more or less by life's hardness and also fortified by a combination of genetic gifts and life experiences. It does not seem to be the heaviness of the load that makes one resilient. Rather, it is the strength and suppleness of character that enables one to bear the freight and even, perhaps to become enlarged. It is not true that whatever doesn't kill you makes you stronger. Some suffer a spiritual death or become stuck, even creatively. For others, creativity can be motivated by suffering and it is expressed through hope (resilience). I once had the pleasure of visiting with Ornette Coleman for an afternoon. He spoke of many things including terrible trauma he experienced over the course of his life. I asked how it effected his music and he told me, "I find that thing inside me that will not die and I play that." No text book could describe resilience better than that.

Odean Pope is the epitome of resilience. Odean has suffered with Bipolar Disorder for more than forty years. His first breakdown occurred when his brother died and subsequent breakdowns were triggered by similar losses. I've know Odean through three devastating episodes that required extensive hospitalization. Both Joe and Terry were instrumental in helping me navigate through some difficulty although Odean's daughter, Harriet Taylor and her husband, Rich were the godsends. Although Odean and others bear the scars, he is the valiant survivor of this story. At one time Harriet and I were afraid that Odean would never survive and certainly never be able to play his horn again. Doggedness and grit not only brought Odean back but he is clearly going through a very creative period of his life and his horn is well in harness. Additionally, several years ago Odean had the courage to publicly acknowledge his struggle, previously steeped in stigma, in order to help others. My clinical practice has been reinforced with the knowledge that when working with people I need to understand the psychopathology but even more the capacity for **resilience**.

Resilience was evident at the last meeting of the PLC. The meeting began with Germaine's introduction and updates. I talked about the 'reflections' I'm writing. Odean paid tribute to Sam Reed and others. Odean led the rehearsal of **Epitome** with Keven and Tom, vocals and piano, mellifluously leading into the ensemble. I have the same visceral reaction whenever I hear **Epitome**, with unbidden tears. I want to sway and I feel soothed. Joe's bass sax is gripping. **Minor Infractions** is also played. Monnette's guitar sings through, Bobby solos, Vanessa comes in, piano, Terry solos, Joe solos, Zoe, both violins, Kevin, bass, Victor solos. Violins, bass, piano and guitar together sound like Debussy, like water over pebbles. The solos are 'playing' with the music. I long for the refrain that takes me back into a sweet zone. The fanciful solos provide a striking contrast to the meticulous synchronization of the ensemble. There is rhythmic formality and a richly constructed sound palette.

Odean asked each musician to talk a little about themselves. I heard a collection of stories and musical experiences that left me not being able to write quickly enough in order to list the names of jazz greats who spanned generations, leaving their living legacies before me. Joe Sudler remembered Phil Woods, Clark Terry, Al Grey, Odean and other big band players who would take time to play with younger musicians. Monnette Sudler played with different ensembles including Byard Lancaster. She went to Berlin with Odean. As she was usually the only female she stayed focused on what she needed to do. Sam Reed talked about his friendship with Tootie Heath and how jazz people who came to Philly gathered at the Heath House. He remembered a 16 piece band in the house with trumpets on the stairs and drums in the kitchen. He used to carry Charlie Parker's horn. He and Tootie and Ted Crusan played the Huckaback. He played with Louis Armstrong and Nat King Cole. He played with the Temptations. He talked about Coltrane. He didn't even mention that he was Teddy Pendergrass' musical director. Odean talked about how Sam gave him opportunities including playing at the Uptown Theater. Bobby Zankel said, "When I was 17, the world looked so bad and the music sounded so good that I worked so hard," at music, dropping out of college at 19 to take care of family. He worked with Cecil Taylor, Odean at Model Cities and he worked with Dennis Sandole as did Coltrane. He worked tonality and rhythm with Jymmie Merritt and he studied with Ornette Coleman. He didn't have gigs early on so he stayed home and wrote music. Terry Lawson rose through playing music in school in Virginia. He later played with Roy Haines, Miles Davis and Stanley Turrentine. The breadth of talent and mentoring mentioned here is golden! More than that, however, **resilience** and **relationship** have been paramount.