

Today is the Question: Ted Panken on Music, Politics, and the Arts

<http://tedpanken.wordpress.com/2011/08/24/brad-mehldaus-blindfold-test-from-2000-uncut-he-turned-41-yesterday>

Brad Mehldau's 2000 Downbeat Blindfold Test (uncut), Ted Panken, Interviewer

(The first ten selections featured Art Tatum, Chick Corea, Herbie Hancock, Hank Jones, Geoff Keezer, Bill Charlap, Earl Hines, Ahmad Jamal, John Hicks, and Kenny Kirkland)

11. Denny Zeitlin, “Cousin Mary,” AS LONG AS THERE’S MUSIC (32 Jazz, 1997/2000) [Buster Williams, bass; Al Foster, drums] (5 stars)

That got me off the most out of anything you’ve played thus far. It felt great. I don’t know the piano player, but I might know the bass and drums. Maybe it’s not them, but it sounds a little like Ben Riley and Buster Williams, that kind of feel. Oh, it is Buster.

The drummer has that great tipping feel; it feels so good. I love the piano player. I never hear any vocabulary. First of all, the arrangement of “Cousin Mary” is really great. You would think, “What can you do with that tune?”—but he finds another harmonic thing that really is also referring to the original, with the strange, different chords for the blues. You get the feeling that he’s blowing on that, but at a certain point he’s just getting away from what roots should be, and he’s sort of making up different forms of the blues — one thing, one thing, one thing, and then...

Again, these 12-bar things. Which I love. [Does he remind you of anybody?] You can hear a lot of the history of piano playing in there. I’m probably going to be really embarrassed that I should have known him. 5 stars.

[AFTER]

Denny Zeitlin! Wow. I’ve never heard him. Charlie Haden always tells me to check this guy out. Really inspiring. A great trio performance. For me the piano is a little high in the mix, but it still doesn’t detract. It’s still really great.