



*(A Life in Harmony, continued from page XX)*

Park School became the first in the United Kingdom to have a small ensemble Dixieland band and a full 17-piece big band. Our success led to a recorded vinyl record in 1978—another first in British education.

**A TWIST OF FATE**

A rugby injury led to an encounter with orthopedic surgeon and jazz saxophonist Arthur Edward George Themen, MD. This meeting revealed the feasibility of melding a medical career with a passion for jazz. During my teen-aged years, I wrestled with the ambition to be a jazz saxophonist and the daunting prospect of reaching the prowess of my musical idols. This dilemma influenced my decision to pursue a medical career, with an aspiration to maintain my saxophone skills at a commendable level among accomplished jazz musicians. I never wanted to hear, “He’s a really good jazz musician ... for a doctor.”

**CAMBRIDGE AND BERKLEE: A HARMONIOUS BLEND**

Securing a spot at Cambridge for medicine was challenging, but I believe that my dedication to jazz played a significant role. The support from my professors was made evident when they approved a deferral of my clinical training to study jazz at Berklee College of Music, Boston. The intensive musical training at Berklee proved advantageous in my later surgical training (Figure 1).

Studying under renowned musicians such as Gary Burton, Dave Mash, Billy Pierce, Tim Hagans, Greg Hopkins, and George Garzone enriched my experience. Informal interactions with fellow students—many now leading jazz figures, including Tommy Smith, Vana Gierig, Jamshied Sharifi, Robert Bonisolo, Michael Rosen, Kai Eckhardt, Warren Hill, Mike Ringquist, Skúli Sverrisson, and Dag Kristofferson (Figure 2)—and private sessions with Jerry Bergonzi, a world-class jazz artist and educator, were invaluable.



Figure 6. Dr. Reinstein playing with jazz guitar idol John McLaughlin (guitar), Vana Gierig (piano), Morris Pleasure (bass), Bertrand Fouriner (guitar) and Jojo Mayer (drums) at London’s Ronnie Scott’s Club, 2014.



Figure 7. Top row (from left to right): Bill Evans (saxophone), John McLaughlin, Chick Corea, Steve Smith, and Tom Coster. Second row: Dean Brown, Jerry Bergonzi, Bob Franceschini, Dennis Chambers, Bill Evans. Third row: Victor Bailey, Ron Carter, Tom Coster, Robben Ford, Branford Marsalis, Bill Evans (pictured at the 606 Club).

One winter morning at Berklee, feeling disheartened, I confided in Billy Pierce about my perceived inadequacy. His response transformed my perspective: “If they sound good, they’re not practicing; they’re playing what they already know. If you sound bad, it’s because you’re attempting something new, something you haven’t yet mastered. That’s how you’ll learn.” This philosophy profoundly influenced my subsequent surgical training.

Returning to University College London after Berklee, I noticed my medical training remained intact, motivating me to pursue a further 2-year diploma at Berklee. With the support of my mentor, David Rickards, FRCR, FFRDSA, and Dean Arthur Miller, MD, I embarked on this unique academic journey.

After Berklee, with enhanced musical skills, I was able to perform with professional jazz artists (Figures 3–5). Continuous learning and feedback from

seasoned musicians have been integral to my growth, allowing me to enjoy the essence of improvisational music.

In 2002, I established London Vision Clinic with Craig Engelfried, who also attended Orley Farm School in 1974. The clinic has since become a leader in academic refractive surgery, with more than 200 peer-reviewed publications and numerous collaborations with Carl Zeiss Meditec. My musical journey continues with regular performances at venues such as the 606 Club in Chelsea and Ronnie Scott's Club, where I share the stage with renowned jazz musicians (Figures 5–7).

### BALANCING DUAL PASSIONS

The fusion of my musical and medical endeavors was a product of creativity, serendipity, vigilance toward emerging opportunities, and sheer determination.

Reflecting on my teenage years, I often recount my uncertainty of ever attaining jazz excellence, my initial aspiration—or plan A. As a humorous alternative, I formulated a plan B: pursue a career in ophthalmology with a focus on corneal and refractive surgery and aim to invent an effective presbyopia treatment to benefit my musical idols.

Plan B unfolded successfully following my residency at Mount Sinai in New York, refractive surgical fellowship in Vancouver, and corneal training at the University of British Columbia.

My quest for an advanced presbyopia treatment culminated in the creation of Presbyond in 2004, later commercialized by Carl Zeiss Meditec in 2009. This innovation has facilitated interactions with numerous jazz and pop icons, rewarding me with a harmonious blend of my medical and musical worlds. Through Presbyond, I have had the privilege of treating and forming personal connections with jazz legends such as Chick Corea, Ron Carter, John McLaughlin, Randy Brecker, Peter Erskine, Bill Cobham, Bill Evans, Branford Marsalis, Bela Fleck, Robben Ford, and Eric Marienthal. In the pop realm, I have

treated Ed Sheeran, Keith Richards, Tom Coster (of Santana), Steve Smith (of Journey), Bonnie Tyler, and Brian Bennett (of The Shadows; Figure 7).

Performances at the annual ESCRS meetings, especially at top European jazz clubs, have been a highlight. A standout moment was playing at Ronnie Scott's with my Laser Blended Vision band during the 2014 ESCRS in London and featuring acclaimed musicians and fellow Presbyond recipients (Figure 8).

The close bonds formed with my musician patients, many evolving into close friendships, have immensely enriched my practice in refractive surgery. The ability to gift sight to those whose music has inspired me offers an indescribable reward.

### HARMONIZING MUSIC AND MEDICINE

My dual passions for music and medicine have consistently enriched my life and career. Music provides an emotional outlet and enhances my medical skills, while my clinical practice offers a methodical perspective to my musical endeavors. The mental agility and creativity necessary for jazz improvisation are akin to the skills required for surgical research and on-the-spot decision-making in the OR. While music serves as a refuge from the rigors of surgery, my medical background brings a scientific and analytical approach to my musical pursuits. The principles of dedication, discipline, and perseverance, honed through music, have been invaluable in enhancing my surgical skills and spurring medical innovations.

Our family narrative mirrors this unconventional blend. Guided by a dedicated and qualified veterinarian mother, our children are carving their unique paths across music, medicine, and academia.

### CONCLUSION

Ultimately, my dual love for music and medicine has led me to the profound sense of never having worked

**'MUSIC FOR EYES'**  
at Ronnie Scott's jazz club

On: Sunday 14th September 2014  
At: Ronnie Scott's  
47 Frith Street  
Soho  
London  
W1D 4HT  
Doors open: 6:30pm  
Performances: 8pm and 9:30pm  
Close: midnight

The star-studded band:  
Prof Dan Reinstein (Saxophone)  
Vana Gierig (Keyboards and Piano)  
Morris Pleasure (Bass)  
Jojo Mayer (Drums)

With special guest:  
John McLaughlin (Guitar)

Tickets via: [tinyurl.com/l62fqx](http://tinyurl.com/l62fqx)

This is a charity event. All proceeds will go to the sight-related charities Fight for Sight and the Royal National Institute of Blind People. The minimum donation is £50-60. If you would like to make a larger donation, please visit: [www.justgiving.com/teams/MusicForEyes](http://www.justgiving.com/teams/MusicForEyes)

Figure 8. Flier for the Laser Blended Vision Band "Music for Eyes" concert at London's Ronnie Scott's Jazz Club, during the ESCRS 2014.

a day in my life. This unique journey has instilled a profound sense of fulfillment and gratitude for the support from my parents, teachers, and professors. The opportunity to interact with and contribute to the lives of numerous extraordinary artists through my medical expertise has been a gratifying blend of my dual passions. ■

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