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Artists - Azar Lawrence

"Black people overall came to America very spritual, that's why the music is called Soul"



Azar Lawrence

The legendary saxophonist **Azar Lawrence**, renowned for his work with **McCoy Tyner**, and **Miles Davis**, talks to **Seymour Nurse** about his amazing career, and the albums "**Bridge Into A New Age**" and "**Summer Solstice**", that gave our **Jazz-Fusion Dance Movement** the classic "**Forces Of Nature**" and "**Novo Ano**".

Azar Lawrence's new recording:
"Legacy and Music of John Coltrane"



This album is available at: [Clarion Jazz.com](http://www.clarionjazz.com)

[Listen to samples of this album at: Myspace/Azar Lawrence](#)
as well as the, "Forces Of Nature"

Seymour Nurse: You were referred to as a child prodigy, and experienced a musical life from a very young age. What kind of environment were you in as a child that enabled you to develop this talent?

Azar Lawrence and Zarman Productions official Website: AzarLawrence.com



Azar Lawrence: My mother is a pianist and taught music as an elementary school teacher. **I grew up in a house of music. My mother exposed me to jazz.**

Seymour Nurse: What musicians, and recordings inspired you the most?

Azar Lawrence: Lee Morgan's, "Sidewinder", John Coltrane's , "A Love Supreme", Miles Davis "Sketches of Spain", and the late great Dexter Gordon.

Seymour Nurse: Your parents were very aware of your musical talent. How important was their encouragement and support?

Azar Lawrence: Very. **My dad loved that I inherited my mother's musical gift and encouraged my talent.** He made sure I studied, providing me with my instruments and music lessons, **he was my biggest fan.**

Seymour Nurse: Your teacher and mentor was the late **Herbert Baker**. You described him as "**one of the greatest pianists that ever lived**". What were the valuable lessons that he taught you?

Azar Lawrence: I can't put it into words. **Herbert taught me to reach deep within myself, and listen to the voice.**

Seymour Nurse: You worked with **the legendary McCoy Tyner**. How important were those early days of your career with him?

Azar Lawrence: Looking back, bigger than life. **McCoy's wisdom is still with me today.** Most of the time when I address audiences at performances, **I always end up quoting McCoy's wisdoms and lessons he taught me** then, and still does to this day.

Seymour Nurse: His live version of "**Love Samba**", **which you were featured on, was one of the most challenging tracks to dance to**, for Tyner truly is the master of intensity within a composition.

Azar Lawrence: Yes, **Love Samba is truly a wonderful piece of work.**

Seymour Nurse: You joined the **Miles Davis band**, but turned down the invitation when he first approached you. Why was this?

Azar Lawrence: I wanted to stay with McCoy. **I dig McCoy's music.**

Seymour Nurse: You later played on **the amazing Miles Davis album, "Dark Magus"**. How was this experience?

Azar Lawrence: Surreal, I was 26 at the time and had **no idea that to this day it would be considered one of Miles' deepest performances.**

Seymour Nurse: The first album you recorded as a solo artist was, "**Bridge Into The New Age**". This is an exceptional piece of work. **As a black child growing up in the UK, this music was very significant, as it enabled us to connect to our roots** through its spiritual message.

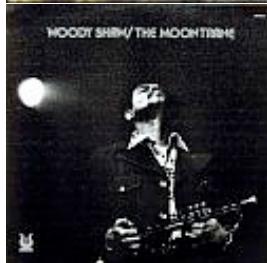
Azar Lawrence: Parker, Coltrane, Miles, were architects of that bridge... we're **just carrying it out.** We're all a bridge into the coming Aquarian age; **McCoy, the late Elvin Jones, Billy Higgins, Horace Tapscott are major forces in making it possible for us to be where we are now.**

Seymour Nurse: The introduction to, "**The Beautiful And Omnipresent Love**" features some powerful chanting and lyrics, which I find so inspiring. How important was it for black musicians to embrace spirituality in that particular time period?

Azar Lawrence: **Black people overall came to America very spiritual, that's why the music is called Soul.**

Seymour Nurse: That's a beautiful quote. The "**Forces Of Nature**" was a **huge track in the Jazz Room at the legendary, "Electric Ballroom"**. It was a real test for the kids to dance to, and I referred to the introduction of your solo as, "the point of no return". **For me, this tune produced one of your most powerful solos on record.**

Azar Lawrence: Thank you. Actually **it was written by Shams & Ernest Straughter** and evolved from their performances with the **Horace Tapscott Arkestra.** **How the Most High expresses him/herself through the elements are**



the "Forces of Nature".

Seymour Nurse: The second album you recorded was "**Summer Solstice**", which featured some great Brazilian artists in collaboration with **Ron Carter, Billy Hart, Gerald Hayes** and **Albert Dailey**. "**From The Point Of Love**" is an exquisite composition, and "**Highway**" is such a joyful samba, that was covered by the Brazilian percussionist **Dom Um Romao**.

"**Novo Ano**" was another big tune amongst us 'children' in, "**The Horsehoe**" and "**Electric Ballroom**" **Jazz Rooms**. This track produced some passionate solos from yourself, **Raul De Souza, Dom Salvador**, some great percussion work from **Guilherme Franco** and the beautiful melancholic vocals of **Amaury Tristao**. This music really captured the true spirit of Brazil.

Azar Lawrence: That was my sophomore album and **I really wanted to expand on "Bridge Into The New Age"**... musically the journey through ages and Brazil has that energy. Yes, all of those mentioned above are very good friends of mine to this day. **There is an album right now in the works that follows along the same line, with a renewed energy.**

Seymour Nurse: You recorded another album called, "**People Moving**". This took a more soulful direction, and featured **Patrice Rushen, Harvey Mason, Paul Jackson, Mtume, Skip Scarborough, Lee Ritenour** etc. This was embraced by dancers and DJs over here in the UK. "**Theme For A New Day**" and "**People Moving**" (to name a couple) were very popular tracks.

Azar Lawrence: Yes, thank you very much. **The late Skip Scarborough used chords that reminded me of McCoy Tyner when he first played "Can't Hide Love"** for me on the acoustic piano. The chords were those often used by **McCoy Tyner**. **Skip Scarborough was a very down to earth songwriter, producer, arranger.**

Seymour Nurse: As well as, "**Can't Hide Love**", "**People Moving**" also had a good version of **Earth Wind And Fire's, "Gratitude"**. In 1983 **you worked with the very talented Maurice White**, writing and performing on **Earth, Wind, And Fire's, "Powerlight"** album.

Azar Lawrence: Yes it was a very wonderful experience working with **the great Maurice White, the man is a scholar. Working with him work was phenomenal, he had a very advanced knowledge of producing.**

Seymour Nurse: You have performed with **Ike and Tina Turner** in their heyday. This must have been quite an experience?

Azar Lawrence: **Working with Tina & Ike was a rich learning experience.**

Seymour Nurse: Your career has been a very versatile one, for you have also worked with **Elvin Jones, Clark Terry, Roberta Flack, War, Frank Zappa, Horace Tapscott, Henry Butler, Buddy Collette, Candy Finch, Busta Rhymes**, and **Marvin Gaye** on his **Grammy Award Winning Album, "Here My Dear"**. You also formed a band called, "**Chameleon**" that involved the **legendary Fred Wesley**. Obviously, you have been very busy over the years.

Azar Lawrence: Yes, I was busy developing for others and myself, mainly for others. **Now I've switched the focus to myself and am working on a new sound.**

Seymour Nurse: You've released a new CD entitled, "**Legacy And Music Of John Coltrane**". This album embraces the spirit of the master himself, **and features some of your best playing yet, producing the most amazing solos**. What was the motivation for recording this album now?

Azar Lawrence: I saw it as an opportunity to **express gratitude to those who have gone before that laid the groundwork for this music, that truly fulfills my inner being.**

Seymour Nurse: **Your epic version of Coltrane's "Impressions" is outstanding.** What are your musical plans for the near future, and **can we expect to see you here in the UK?**

Azar Lawrence: **Absolutely, you can expect to see me in the UK. I'm composing and arranging new music for the healing of people, those who know about it get it.**



CHAMELEON



Seymour Nurse: Azar, thank you so much, for your works have touched me in such a deep way from an early age. **May you continue to play the celestial music.**

Azar Lawrence: Seymour, thank you and it is gratifying to know that the music has touched you in such a profound way, and I am truly honored.



Many thanks to Linda G at Zarmedia

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