IASJ

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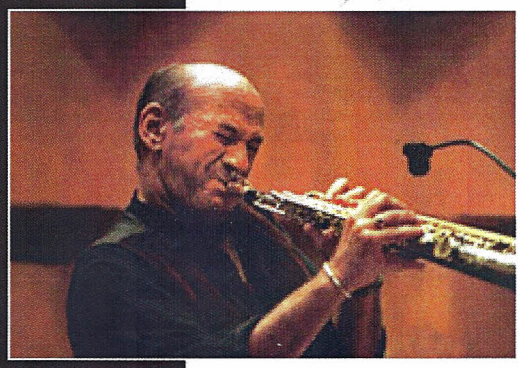
David Liebman on the passing of John Coltrane on 17th July 1967

It was forty years ago that I landed in Stockholm, Sweden and called pianist Lars Werner whose number had been given to me by bassist Cameron Brown. After the usual salutations Lars asked, "Do you know that John Coltrane died today?" I immediately broke into tears while Lars urged me to quickly take the train to his home...

I was at the right place at the right time in the 1960s, being able to see Trane many times in New York. It was completely by accident but it has determined my life since. I would not be the same person without the music of John Coltrane. Whatever words I write cannot express my appreciation, as I was definitely privileged to have been witness to greatness. His music is as close to a belief in a higher power as I have ever felt.



Anyone who knows me, either personally or through the music over these decades realized how important Coltrane was to my life, way beyond the music itself. When I think of the most important influences that have moulded me outside of direct family, it is Trane, number one. Through his music, I saw the power of sound and human creation; that there is something else besides what we materially see or hear in front of us. What underscores these thoughts is that over the four decades, the power of Trane's music has just grown more and more, obviously in some ways as a result of the constant releases of "new" material, but more than that. Eventually, by hook or crook as I became a better musician over these years, my appreciation of the skills and depth of what Coltrane gave the world keeps increasing. This reality has strengthened my convictions about the power of art to raise the human condition. As well, when you have such a model in your mind and ear on a daily level, it puts everything else clearly in proportion, in the real world as well as musically. I am a lucky guy!!

Thank you John and continue to rest in Peace!

David Liebman

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