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Herb Ellis
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MUSIC

Tears

I'm Glad There Is You

I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles

They Can't Take That Away From Me

Herb Ellis's arrangement of
Sweet Georgia Brown

"Reves D'Automne" by Tchavolo Schmitt

INTERVIEWS

Earl Klugh

Dan Effland • Tchavolo Schmitt

Richard Maxwell

Dietmar Osterburg

Intros and Endings

Voicings on the top 3 strings
plus 9 more lessons

Remembering Herb Ellis

John Pizzarelli Meets the Duke

Listening Test with Paul Bollenback



The Martin Taylor
Guitar Academy



Richard Maxwell

BACK TO
THE FUTURE:
MEET

CLINT
STRONG

Dan Effland by Thomas Cray



Dan Effland

The fact that it's nearly a minute before you hear Dan Effland's first chord ring on the opening track of *Small Hours*, the recent release by The Rose Colella Trio, shows what a team player Dan is in this combo that is equal parts voice, guitar, and bass. The sounds they create bring to mind the mid 1950s work of Julie London with Barney Kessel, as well as Sheila Jordan's debut a decade later with Barry Galbraith and Steve Swallow. As the CD continues you begin to hear the delicate arrangements in the music. You're listening to a perfect conversation. At no time are any two musicians "speaking" over each other, yet Dan, Rose, and Joe Policastro have no problem finishing each other's sentences when it benefits the song. Perhaps it's the ease of communication between these musicians, on and off the bandstand, that allows their music to sound fresh and new. They have borrowed from the past to create something new, presenting old songs to a young audience in a manner that's both deliberate and current, with ample space carved out for the improvisational virtuosity that's found throughout this CD. It was after hearing them perform at Katerina's, a favorite Chicago bistro and music venue, that I decided I wanted to learn what was behind their music, and how this young and talented

guitarist found himself in the middle of it.

TC: Was there a point, early in your education, where something just clicked and the fretboard opened up for you?

DE: The first thing like that was when I figured out how all five of the pentatonic forms fit together... so that you could play your "E" blues all over the neck. I would practice these Jimmy Page diagonal pentatonic shapes where you could work through three or four of these little boxes. It was interesting to me how they locked into one another and they were all the same notes, but their sound varied because of the difference in thickness of the strings, and the timbre was different all over the neck. I was always very interested in using the full range of the instrument, and constructing lines based on the subtle differences in the timbre came very naturally to me. I remember this one exercise that I got out of a Joe Satriani book that I still force my students to do. You take a metronome and put it on 60, and one day you play all the "E"s all around the neck. Open, 12th fret, 7th fret, etc., in no particular order. The next day you move on to "F", and so on. I think it's a great way to learn where the notes are outside of the tonal systems and scales. It's an abstract and simple way to learn the fretboard, which is a huge barrier for most guitar players. And when I got deeper into harmony, the patterns were more evident to me.

TC: When did you first hear guitar in jazz?

DE: My first exposure to jazz guitar was when my grandpa gave me Wes Montgomery's *Incredible Jazz Guitar*. I think it was for Christmas or something. He was really into classical music. In fact, he lived in New York City in the 1940s and 1950s and never saw a single jazz gig! He went to the opera, and to the symphony; he was really into that world. He's writing his memoirs now, and there's a chapter called "Me And Music," or something like that, and he wrote about how his father, who was really into classical music, hated crooners - especially Bing Crosby! I think that probably had an effect on his tastes.

TC: Did you have any early accomplishments that encouraged you to continue to play and learn?

DE: I remember entering a scholarship competition for the American Federation of Musicians in my senior year of high school. I worked out that beautiful version of *Days Of Wine and Roses* that Wes did on Boss Guitar (Riverside) and recorded it and won a \$1,000.00 savings bond. That combo was great - Charlie, the

trombone player, who also played piano, worked out simple voicings and played bass parts with organ pads. Joey, the drummer, played a basic ballad feel, and then I played a worked-out “improvisation” (I can’t imagine that I was really improvising at that time, though).

TC:At what point did you decide you were going to study music in college?

DE:I started college as a history major, but that lasted a very short time. I was thinking I would be a music minor, so my advisor suggested I take freshman theory and ear-training. A music degree is so front-loaded and history was just the opposite, so he advised me to basically act like I was a music major right from the start. I got so involved that I just dropped the history idea right away. I think I took only one history class at West Virginia University.

TC:What degree did you earn?

DE:A Bachelor of Music in Jazz Studies. I graduated in 2003. They had a very small jazz department. There were only 6 or 7 of us. There weren’t even enough students to make a full, functioning combo. The bass player was actually getting a law degree. There were two big bands, mostly full of music education majors. I guess there were about 60 music majors per class, and out of that, maybe 4 performance majors.

TC:Was there a guitar teacher?

DE:Yes, Scott Elliott. He wasn’t strictly a jazz teacher, though. He taught a little bit of everything. One of my first gigs in college was as second guitar in a wedding band with Scott. I think it had been a while since he had a student who was as serious as I was. He made me take classical for all four years, which I went through periods of enjoying, and other periods of resenting, but I’m glad that he insisted because it really helps with some things now that I’m playing a lot of finger-style.

TC:When you graduated, did you feel like you were ready?

DE:(Laughs) No, not at all. I did get a decent amount of playing experience in a wide array of styles. I would fill in for Scott, or sometimes take over these music theater jobs for him because he worked a lot with two companies in Pittsburgh, and one that was a Summerstock company in West Virginia-West Virginia Public Theater. Sometimes I’d fill in for one night and

other times I’d take over the week. I also played in a wedding band with him-top Forty stuff, mostly.

TC:How was your reading at that time?

DE:It was okay. Sometimes I’d have to get the books and work out the hard parts. The mathematics of it was something I was always comfortable with, but I might also rely on my ear, and piecing together bits of theory I had learned.

TC:So Scott not only took you under his wing but also helped you get some of your earliest gigs.

DE:Yeah, he was great. They didn’t have a piano or guitar jazz major until I came. They were borrowing a piano player from the theater department when they had to. So when I arrived, I immediately began playing gigs way before I was ready. I remember I had been there for just 3 weeks when I played a duo gig with a trumpet player. I was trying to read from a Real Book. I have no idea what it sounded like - I bet my timing was a mess, and my accompaniment wasn’t organized very well. There were a lot of playing opportunities because I was, like, the only “cat” in town. No matter how young or inexperienced or unstudied I was, I owned a “jazz” guitar.

TC:What was that “jazz” guitar?

DE:A Silvertone. At some point in my senior year, when I began playing in that jazz combo, I began to deal with trying to craft a jazz sound... with a Strat, and pedals, and at the music store where I was taking lessons they got in an old Sears Catalog Silvertone. It was a full-depth, non-cutaway, smaller plywood guitar that someone had put a humbucker pickup in. It had a huge tree-trunk of a neck, and was really hard to play. But all of the sudden I could sound like a jazz guitarist because I had an archtop guitar with a humbucker.

TC:Do you still have it?

DE:Yeah, but it’s basically unplayable because it has no truss rod, and the action is really high. I filed down the bridge so much that I ruined it. A band director, who mostly played trumpet, saw me battling this guitar and took pity on me and loaned me a Washburn he had. I used that for about a year while I waited for a Heritage I had ordered from the factory.

TC:Really! What model was that?

DE:It was a Golden Eagle. I had them make it like Wes’s L-5; one pickup, a soft cutaway, etc. It was a

really cool guitar. It played really nice. Interestingly, I sold it to a guy in D.C. through eBay, and he still sends me photos of himself playing it from time to time. I played it all day, every day, for about six years. It was mine, new from the factory, and as it opened up, and got warmer, I got to experience all that. I played that until I sold it to get my Byrdland a few years ago.

TC:How did you meet other jazz musicians when you moved to Chicago?

DE:I started going to jam sessions. The first one I went to was in River Forest at a place called Molly Malone's Pub. It was with (Joe) Policastro, and Paul Kogut, and Tim Davis on drums. I remember there weren't too many guys there, and I don't remember why I chose to go to that one, since I lived in Ravenswood... it must have just been the date that worked out. So I went down there, and I brought the Heritage, and I remember we played "Alone Together," and some other numbers. It's interesting that Joe was there because now I play with him nearly every night. So, then I started to go to the Andy's (Jazz Club) sessions that John Banyan... still does, actually. I think it's Monday nights from 9-1. John is really supportive of younger guys, and got me on some of my earliest gigs in Chicago, which I really wasn't ready for. There was this vocalist, Claudia Stefanski, and John was playing with her and I would do these gigs and it was more or less a disaster.

TC:How so?

DE:When I moved to Chicago I bet I knew 10 standards. I had no idea that it was not cool to read on the stand. I came from this isolated world in West Virginia, and there were 5 or 6 of us doing it, but we really had no idea what the professional standards were. So I was not really functional when I arrived here. On the tunes I knew I could sound like a young jazz guitarist, but I really didn't have the skills together to do a gig. It's something that, now, I kind of rant about with the cats I play with. I don't understand how there are guys in town who get through grad school, but can't do a gig! They don't know how to lead endings, they don't know how to set up a tune, they don't know enough songs to get through, and it's unfortunate because some of them are excellent players! I've played with some burning, burning horn players who can't count off a tune, don't know enough songs to get through three hours, and have no concept that some of their ideas are not acceptable for the restaurant we're playing, and that

they can't take a ten-minute solo on Days Of Wine And Roses. I think there are very few college programs that succeed in teaching-either because of the professors, or simply because of their geographical location-the fundamentals of being a working jazz musician.

TC:Were there specific instances when you remember being unprepared?

DE:Oh, definitely. I remember the first gig I had with John and Claudia, showing up with, like, 4 Real Books... all I had. You just don't use Real Books at gigs in Chicago. I remember getting some early opportunities after showing some promise on an F Blues, or "On Green Dolphin Street" at a jam session. And then getting exposed on that gig, both to myself and to the person who got me that gig, just how green I was. It was pretty rough a couple of times.

TC:How green? I mean, did you actually get lost at times?

DE:A bit. My ears just weren't together enough on common standard chord changes. That's one of those things - if you don't go through the process of learning hundreds and hundreds, if not thousands, of standards... I mean, you can have good ears, and recognize chords when you hear them, but learning songs helps you narrow the possibilities of where a song can go. So whether you know a tune or not, you just know where it's going. Songs have similar ways of moving around. And I just wasn't at that stage at all. I could get lost in a song, like if I was getting lost in a chart, following the bass player or whatever, I wasn't experienced enough to know that the bridge probably went to the four chord, and to take a shot and get back on. But mostly I just didn't know any songs, which is exceptionally bad working with singers... ironic, because now that's mostly what I do. But at the time, I was nowhere near prepared to accompany singers, and crashed and burned pretty bad.

TC:So what did you do?

DE:I just went home and learned as many tunes as I could. And that just became an obsession, really. I had a lesson with Mike Allemana, whom I get together and play with from time to time now, and he talked to me about the process of learning tunes. Basically, get a bunch of different recorded versions of a song and learn the melody, learn the changes, and compare the changes, and get a sense of what the most common practices are, what your options are, check the melody

against the sheets (from a published songbook if you can) and get an idea of what the real melody is, as opposed to just someone's interpretation and then put that tune through all 12 keys. That's the way I learned, and still learn songs. For me, it's the only way to do it. I don't memorize well, and I don't think of it that way; I think of it as learning-learning to hear the song. Learning from the sheet wasn't all that fruitful for me, especially when you're working with singers and you need to be able to play the song in different keys. The process of taking a tune through all twelve keys really opens up your ears. You have to deal with the harmony and everything, in all the keys.

TC:You do this with every song?

DE:Even bop heads, if I'm feeling disciplined enough. I definitely don't do that with every one. And less and less... but all of this came out of that one hang with Mike. He was so adamant about it, and he's such a great player, it was like, if this guy says that's how to do it, then that's how to do it.

TC:And what would you try to get down first, the melody?

DE:Usually, yes, though sometimes I'd try to get the chords down first, though it's different now, because after doing it for so long, the chords are fairly easy to deal with, and even the melodies have become easy to find. Sometimes I might find the chord, and use the harmony to give me an idea of what the melody probably is.

TC:Do you ever sing lyrics?

DE:I might occasionally, just for fun, but I've never intentionally sat down and tried to learn the lyrics to a song. They seem to come to me after I've performed a song with a singer a number of times.

TC:If you had to sing a song to save your life, right now, is there any song you could sing? Something you've played on with Rose Colella or something on one of your other albums?

DE:I'm sure there's something. I could probably make it through the lyrics of something I really like, like "Tis Autumn."

TC:Really! Is that a favorite?

DE:Yeah, I really love that tune. One of the interesting things about learning that tune was it exposed me to Jackie Paris. He was a favorite bop singer in New York

in the '40s and '50s, and then he disappeared for a while, and then did some stuff in the '70s. He had a big hit with "'Tis Autumn." In fact, there's a documentary called, "'Tis Autumn: The Search for Jackie Paris."

So, once I have the tune sorted out in my mind, and I feel like I know it in one key... well, actually, after working with several versions, I'll usually already have started dealing with it in different keys.

How many songs do you think you have in your repertoire at this point?

Oh, I don't know... 400? 500? It's hard to say. And I've learned them to various degrees. Though I go through the same process learning each one, a few months later I might be wondering, "How does that part go?" Some are internalized more deeply than others.

TC;How long have you been making your living as a jazz guitarist?

DE:I taught a lot of guitar lessons the first few years I was living here, but for the last three years or so I haven't taught, and just play gigs exclusively.

TC:Interesting. I was surprised to hear the same from Andy Brown when I spoke with him recently.

DE:I went through a period where I think it was important for me, psychologically, to be able to say, "I'm doing this just to play." I wanted to be a cat that just played gigs. I'd actually be more open to teaching now than I was. If there was a good opportunity to teach jazz guitar I'd be all for it, but I don't want to go back to teaching beginning guitar in the back of a music store.

TC:So, back then you would go to work, come home, pick out four versions on a new song, and learn it?

DE:Yeah.

TC:You must have a huge collection of music to pick from!

DE:Well, maybe a thousand CDs, a few hundred LPs, and now, with iTunes and Amazon, I might listen to a bunch of versions of a song and then spend the \$.99 to buy one or two. And actually, these days, learning new songs isn't quite as free-flowing as it was early on. Now I often find myself learning songs specific to

the gigs I have coming up. Like if I have a gig with Rose (Colella) or Paul (Marinero), especially these monthly themed shows we've been doing at Katerina's lately (a Chicago north-side Bistro with live jazz most nights of the week), there are usually a lot of songs to learn, so Rose and Joe (Policastro) and I usually end up shooting emails back and forth, so I might end up with a batch of MP3s that way.



Rose Colella Trio

TC:I've been to a few of those shows and they have been great! The Julie London Tribute you did with Rose and Joe, Paul's Rogers & Hart and Frank Sinatra shows... I remember a Blossom Dearie night...

DE:I think that for vocal jazz performed in a traditional way, the Katerina's theme series has become a great part of the scene. The shows have been surprisingly well attended, so we make money and Katerina makes money. We put on these really polished shows. I've been able to attend some, as well, and they are a really satisfying experience for the performers and the audience. The shows aren't haphazard, the way (unfortunately) some jazz shows can be. I think the poor presentation that a lot of us jazz performers are guilty of is one of the things that can hurt the music. I really do think that jazz musicians could and should be doing a better job presenting the music.

TC:I also like the history that's presented with the music.

DE:Yeah. The Duke Ellington show had a lot of that. Blossom Dearie... Rose told a lot of stories about her, and Julie London.

TC:What other themes have been done?

DE:Katerina used to do these theme nights with movies, and that's where I think these came out of. An early one was a Doris Day Movie (Young Man With A Horn) and then Petra (van Nuis) did a set with Andy (Brown) afterwards. Kimberly Gordon did some of those... there was a Marilyn Monroe, Fred & Ginger, and what the audience got to see was music that was arranged in that style, and presented with a level of care and organization, with anecdotes, and as a polished jazz performance, which I think is becoming increasingly rare. Unfortunately, sometimes you see great guys - international jazz stars - screwing around on stage without having a set of music organized. They don't even take 10 minutes to write down on a napkin what 6 songs they are going to play. As someone who loves jazz more than anything, I still sit in the audience at those gigs and think about the \$20.00 it cost me to get in the door, my drink was \$10, and I get a little ticked off that you couldn't work this out beforehand. I mean, this is what you do, right? It just seems so careless to me.

TC:Almost as if they said, "Well, since I'm playing improvised music why not wing the whole night...?"

DE:Yeah, and that's absolutely not how all the people we love presented their music back in the day. Mikel Avery, a drummer in town, and I have this conversation all the time about presenting the music in an organized and enjoyable way. We feel we owe the audience something in return for their money and their attention. It's important we don't insult them by wasting 5 minutes on stage deciding what tune to play. It's one thing if you're in the background in a restaurant, but when you're playing onstage in a club setting, I just think it's really unfortunate when jazz musicians don't take the time to organize their music and present it in a way that's more satisfying for the listener.

TC:Well, it certainly shows in your most recent release with Rose Colella. Your arrangements showcase your guitar, Joe's bass, and Rose's voice exceptionally, and I think you've created a perfect example of what you're urging other players to strive for. How long have the three of you been playing together?

DE:Rose and I have played together for almost 5 years, now.

TC:As a duo?

DE: Yeah. We met when I was playing at a cafe as part of a trio with a drummer and bass player. John Celebi, the drummer, had gone to Roosevelt with Rose and invited her to come out and sit in, and we had a good time. And at that time I had started getting the idea that I wanted to play with singers... I had met Andy & Petra recently...

TC: Had you ever played with a vocalist before?

DE: Very little. Maybe I sat in for Andy once and played a song with Petra, but maybe not even that. So I just called her up the next week and asked her if she was interested in working on some music together. Rose, like me, was pretty inexperienced at that time. So, in a way, we were both figuring out how the Guitar/Voice thing worked... how to present vocal jazz. We kind of figured that out together.

TC: Did you guys reference existing recordings like Joe (Pass) and Ella (Fitzgerald)?

DE: Oh yeah, all that. We got together pretty much once a week for nearly two years, and probably only had 5 or 6 gigs in that entire time. We were both pretty green about how to get gigs at that time. And then I had played a little bit with Joe... and then he went to Germany for a year.

TC: Really?

DE: Yeah, I actually visited him there. We had become good friends. So when he got back he was looking for work, and at that point Rose and I had begun our steady gigs at Hemmingway's and I told him, "You really gotta come hear this singer. She's really gotten good..." and he was psyched and then we started working together as a trio. I think we got a month at Pops (for Champagne) or something, and we started working on arrangements and found we all liked the same sounds - like on the Julie Is Her Name record. We also realized that all three of us didn't mind rehearsing and actually enjoyed working out these arrangements.

TC: It shows on your CD. The arrangements are well thought out and do a great job at presenting the songs and showcasing your skills as musicians.

DE: It was actually pretty haphazard recording it. It was a pretty hectic process, but it gave us an opportunity to work on a lot of trio and duo material. There are a lot of other cuts in the can that didn't end up on the CD. I think we have a full record worth of duet cuts.

TC: So, did the music change a lot when Joe joined? Did you have to give up anything with the addition of a bassist?

DE: No, I actually think it unburdened me, and allowed me to approach the music in a completely different way. I don't mind saying that when I play behind a singer in a quartet or trio setting, my entire point of reference is the way that Barney (Kessel) plays behind vocalists. I mean, there aren't really a lot of examples out there. A lot of the records that have guitar on them also have piano, and that's a different role for the guitarist. The way he plays on Julie Is Her Name, and other records with singers... It really starts and ends with that. I love that pulled strum of the pick, not arpeggiated, but sweeping. Playing with Joe allowed me to get that sound. When I play in a duo I'm playing finger-style and crafting a different sort of thing.

TC: We're getting short on time so I wonder if we can run through some of your other projects to get a better overview of your musical interests and creative endeavors.

DE: Sure. As far as organized projects are concerned, I had a band a few years ago that was much more of a "free" thing. We don't play anymore, but while we were together we recorded an album. I couldn't get anyone to put it out, and then the bass player moved away so I couldn't really see the financial value in putting it out myself at that point. It was very cool, though, and I was proud of it. It was such a different thing than I do now. Once I started working with Rose, I began working with a variety of other singers in town like Lisa Roti, Elaine Dame, Lesley Byers...

TC: And you also did the EP, "What It Is".

DE: Yeah, there was a guy, Ben Gray, who was booking the Velvet Lounge (a club owned by Fred Anderson, a well-known Chicago sax legend) who had the idea of doing "Blue Mondays," a weekly blues-oriented jazz night, which was definitely a departure for the Velvet, which is a much more avant-garde club. Anyway, he gave me the first 3 or 4 weeks. Now, one of my all-time favorite albums is Kenny Burrell's Midnight Blue, so I transcribed some of those tunes, some Jimmy Smith recordings, some Hank Mobley tunes, put together a book, and got Mike Schlick (drums) who's really great at that kind of stuff, and Todd Boyce on sax, and Joe on bass, and sometimes Ben Patterson would play organ. We ended up recording without organ because one of the things I like about Midnight Blue is that there is no

organ on it, which gives it a really different sound. So that group is 7 or 8 different musicians, whoever is available, and this book I put together of original tunes I've written in that style. Sometimes Mike Avery will sit in on drums, sometimes I'll have another bass player in place of Joe. Sometimes Chris Madsen will replace Todd on tenor. So we recorded the CD as a demo - a way to get some gigs. We recorded it in Mike Avery's living room with 3 microphones.

TC:Are you happy with it?

DE:I probably wouldn't release it. I'm not that happy with my own playing, I guess, and with some of the sounds. Some of the solos are a bit short. I think if we were going to record it again to release it, I would do things differently. As a demo, it worked fine, though. After the gigs at The Velvet we did some gigs at Pops, and then I started this weekly jam session at Lizard's Liquid Lounge, which got really popular this past year. Some nights we fill the bar with 20 musicians wanting to sit in.

TC:How about a common interview question for a guitarist: Can you name three non-guitar albums that have inspired you?

DE:Sure. There's the Johnny Hartman Impulse records... the one he did with Trane, and the ones on each side of it - The Voice That Is and I Just Dropped By To Say Hello. Those are terrific. I love Sonny Rollins, Bud Powell, Bird, and of course records with singers (guitar or not). I guess in the last couple of years, as I've organized my playing around vocalists, my listening and practicing have gone with it. That's been where the money is, where the gigs have been, and I've enjoyed it tremendously. To play a gig with Rose and Joe, well, for me, that's just about as good as it gets. I've enjoyed playing with the quartets, and in other situations, but playing in this setting is just... deeply satisfying.

Dan appears regularly at: Hemmingway's Bistro in Oak Park, IL, and Pops For Champagne in Chicago, IL

For more information about Dan visit:<http://www.daneffland.com>

The Rose Colella Trio: <http://www.rosecolellatrio.com>
You will also find some recent video of Dan with the Rose Colella Trio on YouTube.com

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