

## Prologue: “I Made Things Work”

The chartered bus carrying impresario Norman Granz and his Jazz at the Philharmonic troupe pulled into the parking lot of the Regent Restaurant in Jackson, Michigan, about sixty-five miles west of Detroit, with a couple of hours to spare before their appearance at the Jackson County Auditorium on Monday, October 6, 1947. Granz and JATP, as the national concert tours were already known by legions of fans, had been building a reputation for fiery jam sessions of all-star musicians in integrated settings since the concerts had begun in his hometown of Los Angeles in July 1944. The bus that night carried Granz, who emceed his shows, and a lineup including tenor saxophonists Coleman Hawkins and Flip Phillips, trumpeter Howard McGhee, trombonist Bill Harris, pianist Hank Jones, drummer J. C. Heard, and bassist Ray Brown—all dressed in tuxedos—as well as the equally resplendent former Count Basie singer Helen Humes.

What unfolded at the diner was vintage Granz. An increasingly vocal provocateur on the subject of racism, he had begun campaigning in 1947 for antisegregation contracts across the touring band circuit and without blinking had turned down \$100,000 in bookings by promoters who could not abide his terms. As always, it was a headache (though one he gladly bore) finding hotels and restaurants that would accommodate the racially mixed group. Granz and company often operated from Detroit’s black Gotham Hotel as a temporary hub for concerts in neighboring cities as he strung together smaller dates across the country in between big paydays in the major cities.

“Helen and I got off first,” Granz recalled in 2000. “The musicians wanted to put their instruments away. We went into the restaurant about 6:30. It was totally empty. The woman, wearing a typical black taffeta dress, rushed over and said, ‘What can I do for you?’”

“We came in to eat.”

“Do you have a reservation?”

“You have reservations here?”

“Yes, and if you don’t have a reservation . . .”

“But you’re empty!”

“I’m sorry, you have to have a reservation.”

They were still arguing when a white couple walked in. Granz asked them if *they* had a reservation. “No, this restaurant doesn’t give reservations.”

“Now will you give us a table?”

“No, you don’t have a reservation,” she said, showing the couple to a table.

Granz called the rest of the musicians in, and they made their way to the counter. “Then I said, ‘Now you’ve got to serve us, because we don’t need a reservation for the counter.’”

After telling them it might take as long as four hours to be served at the counter, the waitress had had her fill of Norman Granz and called the police. When the officer arrived, Granz buttonholed him: “I’m so glad you’re here. I want your badge number. We’ve got a problem. These people won’t serve us. No one is drunk, and we have a concert. We’re advertised in the newspaper.”

The policeman said, “Listen, between you and me, yes, you’re right. And I can take you to a very nice restaurant not far that serves blacks.”

“I don’t want to go to a black restaurant,” Granz countered. “I want to go to *a* restaurant. We’re all Americans, and I want to sit wherever we choose to and pay whatever the tab is. So we’re not going to do it. In fact, we’re going to sue them, and you’re going to be *our* witness.”

The restaurant began filling up with people, many of them headed to the concert. Granz and the musicians occupied the counter until around 9:30. The concert was by then an hour late in starting, and he finally decided it would be unfair to make the audience wait any longer, so the musicians departed for their venue.

The concert began as always. “We had a routine with Jazz at the Philharmonic,” Granz said. “Everywhere, we started with ‘The Star Spangled Banner.’ I did that for two reasons. One, it settled the people,

because there are always people rushing in with their overcoats and stumbling over people or in case a member of our group was late.”

Granz had more on his mind than introducing the musicians when, following this patriotic salutation, he stepped to the microphone. “Ladies and gentlemen, we are happy to be here. Now I want to apologize for not having begun the concert as advertised. But let me tell you a story.” He named the restaurant and recounted the tawdry story of what had just occurred. “This is supposed to be America and American freedom,” he concluded. The result, as he recounted later, was that “everybody clapped. We did the concert and went back to Detroit.” Granz called his attorney in New York the following morning, and he, Humes, McGhee, Jones, Phillips, and Heard filed suit under Michigan’s civil rights law. Ultimately, the restaurant owner preferred to maintain his policy and paid the fines.<sup>1</sup>

“I don’t care about posterity. I don’t care about what I accomplished, if anything,” Norman Granz said in his Geneva apartment in a final interview for this book. His voice was hollowed out with the cancer that would kill him six months later, on November 22, 2001. Granz, at eighty-two, crankily dismissed the music business he had had such a hand in shaping. But history’s spotlight illuminates him, along with his contemporaries George Wein and John Hammond, as one of the most influential nonmusicians in jazz history. In his early twenties Granz had fallen in love with jazz after hearing Coleman Hawkins’s 1939 classic “Body and Soul” and had started hanging out with black jazz artists in Los Angeles and absorbing their music. He eventually became a leading promoter of jazz in concerts and on records, using his forum to present great artistry and, with equal force, to campaign relentlessly against racial segregation in the music business and in society at large.

Recent books tell the stories of Hammond and Wein; this volume, by telling the story of Granz, the most independent of the three, completes the narrative of how jazz reached a mass audience in the heyday of the music. John McDonough’s observations on Wein apply equally to Granz. McDonough reserves a special place in the jazz pantheon for the handful of truly great impresarios, promoters, and record producers who presented the music to the public and helped make jazz a viable living for its practitioners. The “musician-centered view of jazz has driven many chronicles of jazz history. . . . But turning jazz history

into a string of musicians' bios is like telling American history through the presidents. It may be basic, but it's hardly the whole story."<sup>2</sup>

Until his final retirement in the late 1980s, Granz was a pioneer in making live recordings, doing worldwide jazz concert tours, and radically coupling his popular jam session concerts with his voluminous and artfully packaged records of the performing artists. The first of his legendary touring jam session concerts, known as *Jazz at the Philharmonic*, got under way in Los Angeles in July 1944 and quickly became a national phenomenon. He rode the wave of popularity to an enviable and solitary niche in the music business in the 1940s and 1950s. By 1953 half a million people a year attended his concerts in the United States, Europe, and Japan, and he was producing half the jazz records in America. His loyalty to the generation of musicians with whom he came of age impelled him to return to active recording with Pablo Records in 1973, long after his relocation to Switzerland in 1959, for the simple reason that many of his favorites were no longer being recorded. They deserved better.

Granz was unique as a white promoter for his ties to the black community, including its powerful press. Black newspapers early on recognized him as an uncompromising artistic and social maverick, and they covered his events widely. Granz's philosophy of jazz rested on his belief in a race-blind democracy of talent as vetted by the jam session, which he upheld throughout his life as the most personally and musically challenging proving ground for jazz musicians. This belief squared perfectly with his confident, risk-taking, hard-driving, and competitive nature.

Granz was one of the few mid-twentieth-century progressives to make capitalism simultaneously serve his adventurous artistic aspirations and a then-radical social agenda of racial and economic justice, integration, and equality. He resolved that jazz artists who worked for him would enjoy respect, financial rewards, top-drawer working conditions, and recording and promotional opportunities. "I insisted that my musicians were to be treated with the same respect as Leonard Bernstein or Jascha Heifetz because they were just as good, both as men and musicians," he once said.<sup>3</sup> Granz's cachet as manager and recording producer made Ella Fitzgerald and Oscar Peterson, and later guitarist Joe Pass, top international stars throughout their lengthy careers without their ever having signed formal contracts with him. Decades after *Jazz at the Philharmonic* ceased touring in the United States in 1957, his stamp is evident to anyone who has waded into the jazz section of a record store and discovered his vast output: on Verve from the 1940s

to 1960; on Pablo Records, which he operated from 1973 until 1986; in a massive reissue of award-winning Granz-produced albums for Clef, Norgran, and Down Home (which Granz had consolidated into Verve) undertaken by PolyGram and later Universal Music, subsequent owners of Verve; and in similar reissues from Pablo, acquired from Granz by Fantasy Records and then sold in 2004 to Concord Music Group under the ownership of another Norman—Norman Lear, the groundbreaking television producer and political activist.

Gene Lees, jazz historian and biographer of Oscar Peterson, has compared the breadth and quality of Norman Granz's recorded output to the printed music of Franz Schubert: the comprehensive Art Tatum recordings from the mid-1950s, the Ella Fitzgerald songbooks, three hundred pages of discographic listings by Oscar Peterson, and a blitz of recordings by the likes of Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Louis Armstrong, Benny Carter, Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Lester Young, Coleman Hawkins, Joe Pass, Ben Webster, Roy Eldridge, and Buddy Rich, to name a few. His output was so prolific that it yielded ten compact discs of the work of Billie Holiday alone. "He made music so available, so hugely accessible, in both concerts and on records that people carped about it: this album wasn't as good as that one, and so on," wrote Lees, who praised Granz despite his personal dislike for the man. "The collective work of Norman Granz can be seen now, for those who care to reevaluate it, as being among the most important musical canons of the twentieth century. . . . No one else created anything remotely resembling the collected body of his work. And let us note in passing, nobody else created so much work for so many musicians."<sup>4</sup>

To tell the Granz story, I have explored how he fulfilled the three oft-repeated aims on which he founded his reputation: presenting good jazz, challenging segregation, and showing that good money could be made by bringing the two together. Granz's brilliance and toughness, along with the era in which he emerged—a confluence of circumstances never to be repeated—made him successful in all three aims and shaped the music business that came after him.

Granz presented and recorded jazz from Cole to Coltrane. He intuitively grasped the opportunity to transcend parochial arguments between jazz purists in the swing and bop fiefdoms of the 1940s, gathering the best talent from both schools of jazz and creating an intriguing mixture of top figures that no other promoter dared put together on one stage. Nat Cole and Lester Young represented the style of jazz he discovered in the early 1940s in Los Angeles and championed throughout his career in

music. John Coltrane and others included in his European tours in the 1960s may have marked the outermost limits of his musical sensibilities, but his personal tastes did not dull his pragmatism in recognizing what contemporary audiences wanted to hear a generation later.

Granz never faltered in his commitment to civil rights. Born in 1918, the first-generation American son of impoverished Russian Jewish immigrant parents, he held his country accountable to its basic creed of equality. The first JATP concert in 1944, a fund-raiser for the Latino defendants in the notorious Sleepy Lagoon murder case, was a preview of Granz's dedication of jazz to the cause of racial justice, a position that gained economic clout when in 1949 Ella Fitzgerald joined JATP. Time and again, Granz exhibited quick wits, physical and moral courage, and an unbending force of will to open accommodations for his African American musicians. Challenging segregation policies in hotels, restaurants, and transportation was even more important to him than playing in the country's most prestigious concert halls. He was truly in the vanguard of the modern civil rights movement that emerged from World War II, embracing tactics the movement would not adopt on a wider scale for another decade. His strategies were rooted in the philosophy of A. Philip Randolph, president of the all-black Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters, and the founders of such militant new organizations as the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE), established in 1942, who understood that economic opportunity, direct action, and political freedom were inseparable components of full equality for blacks. Granz's brief flirtation with the organized Left—he joined the Musicians Section of the Los Angeles County Communist Party between 1945 and 1947, for which he would be questioned by the FBI a decade later—was motivated by the party's bold stand on race relations.

Granz built up national and international constituencies for his artists, concerts, and recordings as part of his dual mission of making money on jazz and raising its status as an art form. Jazz concerts, intermittent until Granz came along, were packaged as seasonal fare with a strong band name identity in much the same way that classical music had long been handled. In the hands of Granz and others who followed in his wake, these concerts became commercial juggernauts. But it was Granz alone who possessed the concert mechanism—some of the best talent in jazz, the financial resources, and the vision—that permitted him to maintain a near-monopolistic status in hiring, concert presentation, and recordings for a decade beginning in the late 1940s. He used that financial leeway to release volumes of JATP records, along with art

pieces such as *The Jazz Scene* and *The Astaire Story*, precursors to the Ella Fitzgerald songbooks. *New York Times* jazz critic Peter Watrous, writing in 1994, said that his “particular genius was to make show business subservient to jazz.”<sup>5</sup>

Granz brought a benevolent order to what previously had been a poorly governed and especially venal sector of the music business, where musicians were all too frequently the biggest losers. His money was about as clean as it gets in show business, especially because of his unstinting personal and financial generosity toward musicians who were in his tours at the time—and often much, much later. He proved that jazz could put bread on musicians’ tables and provide him with a livelihood as well. The record of his business conduct is virtually unblemished, despite the dubious assumption that any promoter who made money on jazz was ransacking others’ talent. This book discloses few surprises or unreported scandals regarding his business affairs to contradict the consensus that Granz, although tough and shrewd, was entirely aboveboard in his dealings. To be sure, his legendary brusqueness, which often carried with it a naive, blunt honesty, put off many natural allies. But he combined his entrepreneurial ambition with self-discipline, love for the music, devotion to its most visible and important artists, and a sense of fairness.

Jazz at the Philharmonic’s financial success, which Granz had built up for his concert and recording empires, showed the way to such generational successors as Newport Jazz Festival impresario George Wein and later Wynton Marsalis, artistic director for Jazz at Lincoln Center. Like Granz, they captured the biggest stages for presenting (and defining) jazz in their day, although Granz was the only truly financially independent operator. For their labors as well, some critics denigrated their views of jazz and its direction and meaning and questioned the commercialism of their efforts. But they too secured large, grateful audiences and helped make jazz a viable living.

Granz’s saga is far more than just an industry story or the biography of a figure on the music’s sidelines. His bold interaction with culture and ideas over decades gives his life the dimensions of a great American story. If history is late in getting to that story, it is partly a measure of the conflicted emotions with which Granz viewed the prospect of such a work. It may be due as well to the broad and layered scope of the story, the fact that the world of this well-known international impresario was populated by giants within music and beyond. Whatever the reasons,

Granz became embittered, feeling that America was usually “a little late” to honor her cultural contributors. Yet he did little to cultivate his own fame. He had always labored behind the scenes and preferred to leave it that way. “I made things work,” Granz said late in life.<sup>6</sup> Like A. Philip Randolph and Bayard Rustin, organizers of the 1963 March on Washington, which bestowed immortality on Martin Luther King, Granz was not on the same public plane as his artists. In fact, though he emceed his shows, he rarely if ever even introduced himself.

The delay in honoring Granz may also stem from the fact that he did not endear himself to writers and others in and beyond the music business. He did not—to put it mildly—glad-hand his way through life. His humanistic values existed in tension with a keen intelligence that deterred fools and discouraged the well-intentioned and well-informed as well. “He could offend a thousand people as easily as he could offend one person,” said his longtime friend Archie Green. “Norman didn’t tolerate fools. I knew that. But so what? I accepted that. He was moral and straight and honest, but he remains an enigma.”<sup>7</sup> In a reevaluation of Granz, Gene Lees asked whether he had alienated writers who otherwise might have told his story. “If Norman Granz is not given his due in the history of jazz, it is to some extent his own fault,” he wrote.<sup>8</sup> His friend Benny Green put it another way when he said that “Norman hasn’t got the slightest interest in his reputation. He doesn’t care about people’s opinions, only the musicians. He looks upon himself as a kind of conduit down which the music has flowed, that’s all. In that sense, he has no ego at all.”<sup>9</sup> Granz was a blunt instrument, a battle-hardened free agent, wealthy beyond retribution, who felt he had met his obligations to posterity by providing a creative atmosphere for musicians in concert and in the studio and by satisfying the multitudes who came to his shows and bought his records.

Granz addressed the issue of legacy, although in a different context, when Duke Ellington declined to cooperate in a biographical film of the bandleader that Granz had optioned in the mid-1960s and in which he had given Ellington half-interest. Granz hoped that a more thorough autobiography than the one that eventually appeared in 1973 might emerge as a result. It is useful to consider his frustration, self-revelatory in some respects, concerning Ellington’s diffidence about revealing himself and the loss to history Granz believed would result. “All I can think of is that, to the very end, he made sure he left nothing behind that would let people know the real Duke Ellington. That’s the only conclusion you can come to. He really worked out a theory: let my music



“He really missed his last act.”<sup>10</sup> Ellington further obscured the trail, Granz observed, by his rhetorical caginess with interviewers—an evasiveness that found its counterpart in Granz’s own refusal even to grant many such opportunities. “He really missed his last act.”<sup>10</sup>

Did Norman Granz willfully court a self-defeating “last act” himself, or did he just not care about his legacy? His disillusionment, disdain, and combativeness suggest both. Once in the 1970s, when he considered writing an autobiography, Granz traveled to Chicago to dig through past issues of *Down Beat* magazine. He came away with a lengthy list of articles chronicling his career over twenty years, from his earliest days of organizing freelance jam sessions in Los Angeles nightclubs to the first Jazz at the Philharmonic concert through the sale of Verve Records in 1960. He even started writing about his hardscrabble upbringing before setting the manuscript aside, reluctant, like many self-made people, to publicly revisit where he had come from.

Despite this quickly aborted effort, for decades Granz had vowed that he would not write an autobiography. The first glimpse of his reticence came during a November 1963 interview with the British journalist Sinclair Traill. “I am unhappy to say that he informed me he was not interested [in writing an autobiography],” Traill wrote. “Yet here is a man who by his own work has been in close harmony with so many famous musicians that he must have a story to tell—a story that should not be lost.”<sup>11</sup> But Granz did not see his life, he often stated, as a string of anecdotes about “what Billie Holiday ate for breakfast,” whatever clarity and liveliness such details might add to the bigger picture. He challenged potential biographers to understand the premise of any work that might engage his cooperation: the *raison d’être* of his career was fighting racial segregation in the United States, using jazz as his medium.

Although Granz declined to set down his memories for posterity, he could get thoroughly riled when he thought mistakes or misrepresentations about his life had found their way into print. He scoffed at a 1999 interview with Illinois Jacquet in which the saxophonist claimed credit for insisting that an integration clause be included in the contract for a Houston JATP concert in October 1955 as the troupe prepared to play on his musical home turf. That provision had been a standard feature of Granz’s contracts for nearly a decade.

Granz compounded his reclusive ways with a sparse paper trail hardly worthy of his many deep and lengthy involvements. This neglect contrasts sharply with George Wein’s collection, in a Manhattan storage facility, of hundreds of boxes of historic business records, documents,

correspondence, and memorabilia that date back to the Newport Jazz Festival's early days over half a century ago—a personal archive Wein consulted frequently in writing his 2003 autobiography. The first major loss of Granz's papers came as he was wrapping up his affairs after selling Pablo Records to Fantasy in late 1986. He disposed of about seventy boxes of files probably dating from the late 1940s or early 1950s, a veritable treasure, stored in a back room of his Beverly Hills offices. Granz was especially sensitive about protecting the privacy of salary and other business and financial transactions, including his art trading. He made a more selective decision in the months before his death when he disposed of several plastic garbage bags containing papers, tapes, and other material to make sure they remained forever private. (He took it with him.) The most exciting extant records are some papers, photographs, and other items still held by his widow, Grete.

The loss of extensive documentation, along with the inevitable thinning of the ranks of firsthand observers, puts out of reach much knowledge regarding Granz, his operations, and musicians, many of whom shared long relationships with him. It underscores the biographer's difficulties in venturing to reconstruct a whole from fragments of the past. In the case of Norman Granz, many missing links are filled in by decades of coverage of his activities in the press and in books, new sources uncovered in researching this book, and the myriad recordings to his credit. Some events, absent conclusive evidence, lead to the use of more *likelys*, *probablys*, or *mights* than I prefer, but these are labeled as qualified, reasonable assumptions. Given that Granz was a man whose personality could switch gears unpredictably, he nonetheless exhibited a consistency and confidence seen first by his peers at Roosevelt High School and later by those who came to appreciate the energy he applied to solidifying his place in the world of jazz and pursuing other endeavors in his equally eventful and satisfying private life.

The beginnings of this book date back to 1975, when my late mother, Connie Hershorn, an entertainment writer for the *Dallas Morning News*, began sending me the earliest Pablo Records with the understanding that I would review them under her column heading. During this time, I began photographing some of Granz's artists, "Pablovians" (as Gary Giddins once called them), beginning with an August 1976 solo concert by Joe Pass at San Francisco's Great American Music Hall. In subsequent years I took enough pictures of Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson, Count Basie, Pass, Clark Terry, and others to show to Granz in Dallas personally in March 1980, encouraging him to use them on

record covers, as he did beginning the following year. That same week, I met Fitzgerald's manager and longtime Granz employee Pete Cavello, who sparked my interest in Granz's multifaceted life and career.

Granz's early commitment to racial justice resonated with me. The civil rights era of the 1960s was very much a presence in the household in which I had grown up because of my father Shel Hershorn's work as a freelance photojournalist covering the movement for national magazines and my mother's progressive views on the subject of race. When I first contacted Granz about writing his biography in 1981, I had great enthusiasm but no credentials to speak of. His reputation and my brief firsthand experience confirmed that he was no pushover—unless it was you he had pushed over. After all, when I had showed him the portfolio of my photographs of Pablo musicians, his reaction had been, “My records are so esoteric, people would buy them if they were in grocery bags.” The second time I asked Granz about writing his biography, at his office in Beverly Hills two blocks from Rodeo Drive in July 1987, he said he was not interested because he thought most writers would miss the centrality of civil rights in shaping his story.

The long march toward this book began in earnest when, after seventeen years as a newspaperman for smaller Texas papers, I began the first of two master's degrees in the 1990s and wrote a thesis on Granz as part of a history degree at George Mason University. The greatest surprise in my initial research came with the discovery that there was no previous master's thesis or doctoral dissertation on him. Granz, who predictably ignored my requests to interview him, received a copy of my finished thesis shortly after it was submitted in June 1996. On August 7, he called me out of the blue in Houston to say that he had finished reading it the day before, his seventy-eighth birthday, and I “pretty much had the story straight,” despite some factual errors we could discuss later. But getting his attention was easier than maintaining it while collaborating on an undertaking for which he had long expressed antipathy. That said, we began a series of conversations that lasted over the final five years of his life.

A few other comments on my approach to the subject are relevant here. Few biographers are invited into their subjects' lives to participate in a project that, for good or ill, may come to define that person's memory, and many authorized accounts may be suspect because of possible compromises made in exchange for access to the subject or to private papers. Consequently, there is a question of whether writers pull their punches in accounts of people of Granz's stature and accomplishment.

I did not approach this task with any overriding opinion regarding Granz's legacy and was prepared to learn anew from the avalanche of existing and fresh sources in building the story. Although Granz and I had many conversations from 1996 onward, I did not get to know him personally. As far as this biography's being "authorized," that was a sometime thing and largely undefined.

Our relationship culminated in a series of interviews from May 18 to 25, 2001, after Granz graciously invited me to Geneva at what was probably the last time his health would have permitted such a visit. He called on Tuesday, May 7, and said to be prepared to come the following week. He called a week later to ask me to come right away. I bought the tickets on Wednesday, flew on Thursday, and walked bleary-eyed into his apartment, aptly named "House of Picasso," three hours after getting off a Swissair flight Friday morning. He encouraged me to extend my stay to meet his friends Frank Tenot, the late French publishing mogul and longtime publisher of *Jazz* magazine, whom he had known since 1952, and Jacques Muyal of Geneva, an electrical engineer who had worked with Granz in later years to produce his films and videos for release.

The door opened again in October 2003, when Grete Granz invited me back to Geneva to look over the remainder of Granz's papers and effects and, more important, to penetrate the iron curtain around his private life. Grete's openness and the effort she made to pull things together and share her insights and memories countered a widespread impression of an emotional austerity and harshness in Granz's life at odds with the joys of the music he promoted. Even the remnants of Granz's papers and memorabilia add key insights into his personal and professional life: financial ledgers of the 1949 and 1952 seasons that detail the economics of his touring jazz concerts; over thirty pages of autobiographical writings; a handwritten tour highlighting museums and restaurants across the south of France; personal correspondence; photographs; and official documents, such as passports and military records. Granz had even preserved a March 1982 letter I had written him requesting his participation in my effort to chronicle his life.

Even though the depth of my research and my orientation intrigued Granz, my years of tracking his story did not result in a significant bond between us that might have produced a more in-depth personal portrait. Granz wrote some noteworthy and intimate reminiscences of his early days, which are quoted in this book. I wish there had been more. The chapter on his art collecting and his friendship with Picasso

contains one of the richest lodes of personal material in this work. Those memories surfaced in a series of taped conversations with Grete that were made at his instigation in 2000 to detail some of his non-jazz activities and that he hoped would be published posthumously in a separate volume. Some friends, like Benny Green, had died by the time I began researching this book. Others, such as Oscar Peterson, opened up only upon his blessing, shared only what long-standing loyalty and discretion permitted, and clammed up when Granz occasionally let it be known that he was holding me at arm's length. And Granz himself, like Ella Fitzgerald and Duke Ellington, left little behind to reveal much beyond what he shared publicly.

That said, any biographer, especially when dealing with a living subject or one within living memory, encounters sensitive matters and wrestles (or not) with whether to publish all that is known about both the subject and others integral or peripheral to the story. I have withheld some personal details where the omission does not distort the story, and I resisted speculation when there was no corroboration to justify including it in this book. *Norman Granz* primarily recounts a professional life writ large upon jazz performance and recording, the life of a man with a gift for turning both into gold and a will to lock horns with anyone that got in his way, especially where racial justice and “his” musicians were involved. The intellectual and artistic currents that coursed through his life made Norman Granz not just an instrumental figure in jazz history but also a person who engaged the great social issues and high culture of his times. His effort to present and record jazz's reigning talents on a global scale remains one of the best breaks jazz ever had, and his commitment to the cause of civil rights ultimately takes his story to a higher plane.

Granz justified his monumental project to record Art Tatum in his last years on the belief that jazz “owed” Tatum. For all the luster Tatum had added to the music, there were perilously few recordings in the Tatum catalog to convey his massive stature. Granz vowed to remedy that himself. That notion animates this work on Norman Granz: considering all that this gifted, heroic, difficult, and enigmatic man brought to jazz beginning almost seventy years ago, now is finally the time to reestablish his place in jazz history and among other notable social activists of the twentieth century.

But Granz's elusiveness did not foreordain a bad “final act,” any more than Duke Ellington's did; the difference is that Ellington cared about posterity whereas Granz only flirted with it on occasion. Neither

need have worried. Ellington's music *does* speak for him. Granz's irreplaceable catalog of recordings, dearly held memories among those who packed his concerts, and the sense of racial justice that infused his life's work *do* speak for him. His attitude about how his memory would be interpreted reflected his view of the public's reception to JATP or his recordings: if you like them, fine; if not, that's okay too. He insulated himself against the frustration of history's neglect with the conviction that his contributions were long term. For someone who preferred the limelight to shine on others, it's finally time to acknowledge the obvious by borrowing an introduction he bestowed countless times on those he presented: "Ladies and gentlemen, I'm pleased to introduce one of the real giants of jazz: Norman Granz."