



## **Learning to groove**

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#### **Ben:**

When I'm playing music, I just feel that I need to move my head, so I can get in the groove of it and it really makes me feel really happy about myself.

#### **Gary:**

We spend a lot of time together. We get to play music, you know we hang out. I think it's quite like a family orientated environment. So I think that's the best thing.

#### **Cara:**

Most people would say it's about playing but I don't think it's about playing, I think it's about making friends and having good fun.

#### **Mark:**

We're trying to achieve something together, so it's like a community.

#### **Jason:**

Learning to Groove sounds in some ways a bit like a contradiction in terms. Grooving is something surely that you just do that comes from within, something that can't really be learnt in a way. I'm Jason Toynbee, I'm the principal investigator of the research project based at the Open University called 'What is Black British Jazz, Roots, Ownership and Performance'. What we found on this project is a really fascinating form of music education and training, whereby young people really are learning, not just to play their instruments in an accurate way but in a way that really means and feels, and gets people moving.

#### **Camilla:**

It's the way you can express yourself like through music and you can convey sadness or happiness or being angry, through your music.

#### **Janine:**

Tomorrow's Warriors is the band where we get all the young up and coming kids in. And they develop through that and it's like a training band. From there, you go on into the other Dune projects. Because it's like a path that you follow from being a youngster and then as you become more experienced you just start doing the other gigs.

#### **Gary:**

My name's Gary Crosby. I'm Artistic Director of Tomorrow's Warriors and a Director of Dune Music. I was a member of Courtney Pine's Jazz Warriors. I always took on the role of the bigger brother with the younger musicians. At the end of my time with the Jazz Warriors I felt it necessary to do something specifically related to that kind of informal situation I created. The Tomorrow's Warriors started nineteen years ago in the Jazz Café. It was a need for young black artists to express themselves basically, in a live performance situation. I met Janine about seventeen years ago, and then it begins to formulate.

#### **Janine:**

It's more to just put some structure underneath what Gary was doing.

My name is Janine Irons, Managing Director of Tomorrow's Warriors and of the Dune Music Company. He was managing to get lots of young people, black and white, to come and join in with the professional jazz musicians. So it was giving them a platform to cut their teeth, being mentored by their elders, like Gary. Hence the young people who'd been joining in the jam, then were the core group that we selected from to become the next generation.

#### **Camilla:**

I'm Camilla George. I'm twenty-seven years old and I play the Alto Saxophone. I won a competition at school and I was given a Saxophone, so that's how I was allowed to - because I think my parents didn't want me to do it. When I was about sixteen I first found out about what Gary and Janine were doing. They encouraged me to come along to the jam sessions, which I did. I think that's the most important thing about improving as a musician is playing with people who are a lot better than you. And every one in the band is amazing and we did a gig at Ronnie Scott's with Ernest Ranglin and I think that has to be my favourite moment. At the moment I'm doing a Masters at Trinity College of Music and I'm loving it. And again, I would never have done that if Gary hadn't kind of made me apply. He really gave me the confidence. So at the end of the two years I just want to be a really good player, I think that's the aim really.

**Kalisha:**

My name's Kalisha Stapleton. I'm ten years old and I play the Piano. I started playing the Piano when I was around about nine years old. Then my friend Ben told me "Are you interested in joining a band?" It was called The Teeny Warriors and then when they're older they move into the Junior Warrior Band. We sort of practice the music that we've already been playing. And sometimes we make new music that some of us have composed. I composed a song called 'Swinging Beat' which is a really good song. I like that song actually. In our jazz music especially, you've got to really have that passionate feeling of playing. When I'm playing the Piano and you have like a little jig to it, it really lets people that are watching you know that you're feeling happy. Know that you really want to be here. And not just happy, you're really confident about yourself. You've got to really get into that groove of jazz music, so I would like to be a musician.

**Ben:**

My name's Ben. I'm eleven years old and I play the Double Bass and Trumpet in The Teeny Warriors. When I was about seven, me and my mum used to go along to this jazz club in Soho. And Abram Wilson and Gary Crosby were there and I asked if I could play with Abram. And he's like "Okay, maybe some time in the future." He obviously didn't think I was very good. And then one day I played with him and he decided to make a band and we got together and did rehearsals. The best thing about The Teeny Warriors is the gigs and the co-operation that you use in the music. In some music you can't sort of groove or like wave a bit to it, so it gives you that sort of feeling where it makes you feel relaxed. In the future I would like to be a musician full time. Not for my whole life but like until I'm like thirty-five or something. Yeah.

**Jason:**

It's a story about access, opportunity, democracy. But it's also about learning how to be part of the best side of contemporary British culture. Which is all about inclusion, all about spontaneousness, creativity. It's remarkably multi-cultural. So it's often kids from inner city schools, from different ethnic and racial backgrounds. And the idea that you can actually, from quite an ordinary position in society, that you can be exceptional.

**Gary:**

It initially started with people I knew that I felt needed that extra bit of support. And then once we had started the sessions, then it starts on its own inertia and so the process just became natural. I try and encourage self development. I hope I pass on a kind of enthusiasm as well as a respect for this music. It's a mixture of deliberation and a mixture of improvisation, which requires trust in other people. It's not curriculum style. What we're dealing with is an art and the individuals are artists. And I want to hear what they have to say about their world.

**MC:**

Good afternoon. How you doing? This next group is called Tomorrow's Warriors Youth Jazz Orchestra.

**Mark:**

My name is Mark Covuma. I am seventeen years old and I play the Trumpet and I am part of the Tomorrow's Warriors Youth Band. Nobody in my family is a musician at all. Nobody's interested in music at all. In fact I got to learn the Trumpet by chance. It was through a friend

who was always telling me about 'The Spice of Life' in Soho. They have a jam session where anyone can get up and play. I remember being scared for a long time. I thought I wasn't good enough. But Gary would always be like "You have to get up and play." I know all the guys now personally and I'm quite good friends with them. It's like we're not just kind of playing, we're trying to achieve something together. So you know how certain people play and you know what do in order to complement the way they play. I'd like to move people with my playing and I would like to take Mr Moore's Warriors thing further. I'd like to be part of the actual band. I want to be the best.

**Janine:**

Each generation attracts a new and younger generation to the jam sessions. We then support their development until they're ready to move on to record or to tour. So there's this continuing legacy of young musicians, and particularly those from the African Diaspora who can continue to be bringing jazz to a new generation and a new audience.

**Cara:**

My name's Cara and I'm ten years old and I play the Drums in The Teeny Warriors. Our leader Ben, I was at his party and he had a drum kit and I was just playing on it. And then Abram came over to me and taught me some patterns. So then I started coming to each rehearsal and then I got into it. Quite cool, because I'm playing with other people and other people get to see what my talent is and what I do. Well in the future, when we get good enough and more, you know like we practice even more I would want to do a tour like in maybe Spain. Because it's got really good dancing music and I want to bring some jazz in to see how their music is and they can see how jazz is. And I think Spain is a really nice country as well.

**Moses:**

I'm Moses Boyd. I'm nineteen years old and I play Drums in the Tomorrow's Warriors Biggish Band. We just go through like jazz repertoires, so playing standards. Everybody trying to play on, improvise on a couple of choruses. We practice things like trading with the Drums, trading with the Piano and just general musicianship. And it's on a very informal level you know. No one's really expecting you to be John Coltrane or nothing. You just come together to play to get better. And you know we go home and practice and hopefully get better. And it just goes on and on and on. It's very hard to describe to be honest. It's just such a great feeling.

**Honour:**

My name's Honour Kaytabs. I'm nineteen. I'm in Tomorrow's Warriors and I play alto sax, and flute. Even when I go to jazz jams like at Charlie Wright's or Ronnie Scott's or Spice of Life, people always ask me "Are you going to sing today?" They expect me to sing. There's no great saxophone players that are female. Being female should not stop you from what you want to do. That's my goal in life.

**Jason:**

Tomorrow's Warriors were in the final of a Yamaha competition. In which the other competitors were a band from Cheetham School in Manchester, which is a privately owned specialist music school, an academy for young musicians. And also a band from, associated with the Royal College of Music. Both in their different ways elite institutions, producing really accomplished young jazz musicians and players.

**Honour:**

We decided to do 'Cool Blues' by Charlie Parker. And 'Oleo' by Sonny Rollins. As a group we arranged both the tunes to fit us. We do it all together and we pitch in. Like you say what would work and what doesn't work.

**Moses:**

Gary had just got back from Africa in fact. And he showed us how you could sub-divide sixteen beats with groups of five and six. So we implemented that on 'Oleo', which was very unusual and it was quite free in sections. We added very, very different types of elements.

**Honour:**

'Cool Blues' we had to decide how we can make it original. I suggested at the beginning that we should just try something different. Like have the bassist play the melody. We did different grooves over everyone's solo. Like Rosie's solo, it had a New Orleans groove over it. And then there was double time with like Mark who plays trumpet. So it's basically a collective thing.

**Gary:**

As far as I was concerned they hadn't played the best so they hadn't won. And then I was trying to tell people it's the act of participating that counts. And the trumpet player looked at me and said "No. We're here to win." Oh God you know it's going to be such a let down. Because the standard of the other groups was so high. That minute or so between the MC going up with the judges' results, it felt like forever. Because I knew the importance of winning that for those kids, would have been so much. And also the importance for us as for what we do, for the next generation. When they said "Tomorrow's Warriors." They went mad.

**Jason:**

The Judges' recognised that here was a group of kids, not in that situation of being given every resource from an early age, but who had often gone without and in some of the cases had learned their instruments quite late, but who were performing at an incredibly high level. This is exactly the kind of music education that we could have in a genuinely democratic, multi ethnic, multicultural Britain.

**Janine:**

Now that we've got our South Bank Centre, weekend residency, where we can host regular rehearsals, we can develop new work, hold workshops, jam sessions. It's just opened up all the possibilities, which means that we can then extend the reach and impact of Tomorrow's Warriors across the country.

**Jason:**

We started out the "What is Blackberry's Jazz Project." We knew about Tomorrow's Warriors but we were thinking really much more that our focus would be on professional musicians. We started to realise that this was an incredibly interesting and important part of what they get up to. And so it's become a much more important part of the project. Helping to bring the work that Gary and Janine and Tomorrow's Warriors are doing to a wider audience. Maybe even having an impact in policy circles. That kind of thing which is very important.

**Honour:**

You go to music school and you get taught the notes. But you don't get taught how to play as a group and learn the harmonies and stuff. So Tomorrow's Warriors has given me that. And feeling proud to be a female musician. My dream is to be a very successful musician saxophone player. I've been accepted into Middlesex University to study a jazz degree. So that's a step into the future.

**Mark:**

We're quite privileged in a sense we have Gary and you know the members of the Tomorrow's Warriors. The elder ones you know Denys, Baptiste, Abram, Pete Edwards, those type of guys to help us along. Because they've been through it and they're just sharing their knowledge with us. I'd like to do it all. I'd like to travel, see the world. Play with as many people as I can. As many of my heroes, musical heroes as I can. Give back to the community musically wise.

**Gary:**

There's such low expectations of black males in this country, still. Me, being from that sort of background, hence why I'm so passionate about it. And I know that there are kids in those areas, if given the opportunities, they are the ones that create great art.

**MC:**

Ladies and gentlemen. We hope you enjoyed this little session on 'Swing and Sing'. We're going to come back with some poetry and jazz together....Thank you very much, we'll be right back.