

Bill Chase

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Written by Kevin Seeley

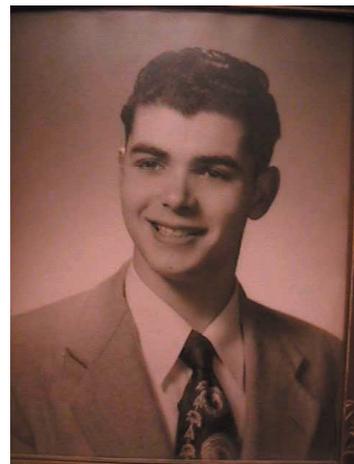
William Edward Chiaiese was born on October 20, 1934 to John and Emily Chiaiese(key-ah-tze) in Squantum, Massachusetts. John changed the family name to Chase, understanding that the Italian name Chiaiese was both hard to spell and pronounce.

While Bill was growing up his parents felt that he needed to broaden his horizons and arranged for him to take violin lessons. Bill did not even touch the trumpet, until the middle of his high school years. A newspaper clipping dated 1956 pictures Bill listed as a Corporal in the 26th Yankee Infantry Division Band holding a bass drum. Bill's experience as a drummer changed his life and the lives of many others. During the St. Patrick's Day parade he had to lug his huge drum for five miles during the miserably cold pouring rain. It hurt so bad that he decided never to do it again, he wanted his father to dig out his old trumpet for him.

Boston Globe writer Ernie Santosuosso wrote about Bill in 1971, "Bill Chase has been experimenting with sounds all of his life. As a youngster in the Fields Corner community of Dorchester, he was intrigued by the drums. Since he didn't own a set, he'd improvise with the aid of a couple of galvanized steel rubbish barrels.

Bill's backyard became his bandstand as he beat out precocious rhythms atop the inverted barrels. The little Italian lady, who sat at her kitchen window, regarded Bill as a pet but voiced emphatic objections to his make-shift paraddling on the barrels. So, when Bill's father, who played trumpet, decided to retire his horn, the boy's curiosity inevitably led him to the instrument and away from the barrel-house. The maturation process as a trumpeter had begun for Bill.

The ex-drummer put his horn to work for St. Ambrose's Band, then for Boston English high, Berklee, Stan Kenton, Maynard Ferguson, and Woody Herman. The little old Italian lady was given special command performances in her kitchen and she almost lit a candle in thanksgiving for young Bill's return to his barrels and rubbish deposits."



He started playing his fathers old trumpet the summer before his junior year in high school and showed a natural aptitude for it. He soon joined a Drum and Bugle Corps, along with his school groups. This, was prior to his stint in the Boston National Guard where he said he wrote music and played trumpet in 1957. He served for six months in the guard band, which honed his talents as a trumpeter and arranger.

Not long after switching to trumpet, Bill was playing first chair in the school orchestra and classical music was his main love. Early 1950's a neighbor coaxed Bill to attend a Stan Kenton concert with him. This was the band with Maynard Ferguson, Buddy Childers, Conte Condoli, etc. After that night, Bill was hooked on jazz and high note trumpet.

As you can tell, this time period in Bills life is hard to decipher. Bill was doing so much playing, and he became very good so quickly, that the dates are very confusing. Since Maynard left the Kenton band and headed to Hollywood in 1953, Bill must have seen Kenton before then. I can only assume that he switched to the trumpet around 1951 at about the age of 16.

Educator and trumpet player Herb Pomeroy on his first recollections of meeting Bill, " I want to place it about 1953 and the reason I'm placing it there is because Charlie Mariano and myself and a few other musicians (Ray Santisi and Serge Chaloff) started a little school the "Jazz Workshop". We started it in Jun of 1953. This was not associated with Berklee, just a little thing that we did. It went for about two years and I believe the first time I met Bill was that he came by the school. It was the kind of place where we'd give guys a private lesson for a buck, the teacher would make \$.50 and the house would make \$.50 and we'd have small groups play and the students come in and play. It was a very informal thin, nothing of any formal nature. My memory is that Bill came by that school because I remember going to a couple of dances that summer, maybe Duke's band or the Kenton band, and seeing Bill at this particular ballroom and saying "Hi, how ya doin?" because I remember him from the school.

The next time that Bill and I had a connection, that I can remember would have been the Fall, September of 1955, when I began teaching at Berklee. Bill had already entered and was a student when I joined the staff. I had just come off the road with Lionell Hampton, Stan Kenton and the Serge Chaloff sextet. I had Bill playing in some of my trumpet ensembles, by then he'd already developed some good chops and was playing lead trumpet in ensembles and my memory tells me that I had him in an arranging class or two also.

Bill was playing for the ensembles and writing for them, and he had improved greatly as a trumpet player. At this point I did not consider Bill a real strong jazz trumpet player, solo wise, I mean he was competent, he was adequate. His real strength was as a lead trumpet player. He had a very strong, projecting, singing sound over a brass section and over a band. Of the trumpet players that were at Berklee at that point I would not say that he was musically any better a lead trumpet player than the other two people there, but he was physically the strongest and combined his musicality also. He had a good lead trumpet mentality, a “take charge” sort of thing.

At that time in Boston, my big band was working professionally and I had a band that we used to call the Junior B and, a band made up of younger musicians from Boston who rehearsed once a week so that I would have substitutes who knew the music, so if any one of the fellows in my professional band were sick, had a better paying gig, whatever it might have been, I had a band of the younger players who knew the book. Bill played lead trumpet in the Junior Band. He never played trumpet in my professional band as a regular. He subbed in it many times for a trumpet player named Lenny Johnson who was the lead trumpet in my regular professional band. Bill played lead and it was a wonderful band; Chet Ferretti played second and Paul Fontaine was in the band and Jake Hanna played drums in the band. Ever so many wonderful players were either at Berklee or just native to Boston. Jimmy Mosher and a number of wonderful players were in that band.

One of the things I remember is the role that he would assert himself into as a lead player: the projecting sound, his upper register was developing, at this point he had a good high “F”, high “G” and with a nice fat sound to it. I think at this period he was still learning about “time”, I don’t think he was a fully mature lead trumpet player. Sound wise and projecting over the band with sound in a nice singing quality and a nice edge to his sound, all of those things were present. I think he was still learning rhythmically how to play lead in a jazz band. I think by the time he left Boston he had not yet become rhythmically as fine a lead player as he became later with Maynard and Woody, but I think sound wise he had developed into essentially sounding kind of lead trumpet player that he was with both Maynard and Woody and later with his own band. His writing was competent, he was a competent arranger at the professional level, but his writing was not his strong point when he was in Boston. He never wrote anything for my band. He wrote some things for another commercially oriented band. That was Ted Herbert’s band. Bill did some of his “cutting of his teeth” professionally with that band. He was actually the regular lead trumpet with that band, at one point, and wrote for the band. That would have been around late 1954 until about 1957. So writing wise, I don’t remember Bill as being outstanding, but as a lead player you could see that he was coming on. He had the ability and the strength. Bill was a very strong physical person and that was an aspect of his lead trumpet playing. One of the aspects of him becoming the great lead trumpet player that he did and I saw back then when he started developing, was that he had a real strong sense of wanting to do well at what he was doing. You could see that there was a drive and he wanted to create in himself and build himself to be a strong and well-appreciated lead trumpet player which he did.

The energy that he would bring to rehearsals or to gigs and the amount of time you knew what he had to be practicing to keep his chops up at this point. Whenever he was part of something, he would have some of that take over, not in the sense of him taking over from the band leader, but taking over the trumpet section, taking over the brass section, wanting to fix things, wanting to make things to be right, like a good lead trumpet player needs to be responsible beyond just for his own part, but for making sure the whole section sounds good. Bill always had that sort of drive. You could see leadership qualities in him both as a lead trump player and later on as leader of his own band, that’s something that I saw definitely brewing, developing back in the 1950’s.”

Bill went to the Berklee School of Music in Boston and studied with renowned trombonist and teacher John Coffey. Armando Ghitalla was his primary teacher as far as his classical approach to trumpet at Berklee. Bill played in the big band that was directed by trumpeter Herb Pomeroy, whom Bill credits with helping him develop as a lead trumpet player and stylist. He gradually gained a reputation around Boston with his work in the local dance bands. In 1957 the Berklee Band recorded the first Berklee “Jazz in the Classroom” album with Bill on the lead book. Half of this album is very “intellectual” jazz and half is more straight ahead swing. Bill’s lead work drives the band, just as it did years later with Woody Herman. There were many young musicians in this band who later went on to the professional scene. Paul Fontaine, Jimmy Mosher, Hal Galper and Toshiko Akiyoshi were just a few.

Things are more confusing at this point. Woody Herman hired Bill after the Herd played a gig with Pomeroy’s band in a park in Boston. Woody liked what he heard and hired Bill and several other players for his own band. However, I also have information showing that Bill’s first big gig at the age of 19, was a brief stint with Maynard Ferguson in 1957, to replace the ailing Chet Feretti, which was interrupted by six months of military service. He may have gone with Maynard for a brief time, then returned to Boston after the military, then out with Woody’s small group and so on. He returned to Maynard in 1958 to record a couple of albums as lead trumpet. Throughout his entire stay at Berklee, he was constantly taking time off from school to make enough money playing to return.

Trumpet player Roger Middleton "Bill joined the Kenton Band sometime in the summer of 1959. He and his wife traveled in his beautiful little sports car. I envied him because he didn't have to travel on the bus and I think he came right from Boston rather than from Maynard's Band. Bill was an exemplary player, flexibility, range, technical skills. I didn't enjoy his sound an awful lot, but then a beauty of tone was not a big thing on the Kenton Band. Conception, jazz feel, power, were far more valuable on that band. It wasn't necessary to have a beautiful tone at all, besides that's a very subjective quality in a player and would differ very much according to the listener and since I was brought up as a cornet player listening to Del Stagers, my idea of a beautiful tone would be very, very different from someone who grew up listening to Louis. Anyway, Bill was an excellent, excellent sight reader, played with great execution, did not often make mistakes, was a heady player, new what the job required, was dependable, as far as I knew did not drink, was on time, was devoted, dedicated to playing and he did something that astounded us after each job, whether it was a 2 hour concert or a 5 hour dance gig in a stuffy ball room. During the few times Bill did travel on the bus, he would get back on the bus with his mouthpiece in his hand, sit down and proceed to buzz. It would drive us crazy! We would say "stow that thing, get rid of it, what are you doing?!" But he'd keep right on buzzing and buzzing for, I'd say, ½ hour to 45 minutes after he got on the bus and then he would have done his night's work and he'd go to sleep but, but an astounding player. He had quarrels with Stan over his trumpet. He never played a regular straight trumpet. He always played a "Dizzy Gillespie" model trumpet and after I watched him playing it for a while, I thought what a great idea for that band because Stan would insist on us standing a lot of the time to play. We often stood up as a section sometimes through a whole tune. That's my memory, so that if you were unfamiliar with the music, it was very difficult to read the parts, play with the bell of the horn straight out, and stand up, almost impossible. So as a new member of the band, it was an excellent idea for him to play that style of trumpet because his head could be in a downward position, he could read the notes and still have the bell of the trumpet going straight out, but Stan was a stickler for a kind of Germanic precision and the look of the band members and he did not want anything to look different so he quarreled with Bill about that horn. First, very cordially and with humor and with jokes and then it became more and more serious as he saw that Bill was determined to hang on to the horn and finally that's what I believe led to his firing, although that was not put into words by Stan. I don't remember any statement that "if you don't get rid of that horn I'm going to fire you!" I don't even know if he was fired or Bill quit, maybe Bill just quit. It could be.

I don't remember exactly when Bill left the band but it was about after a period of 4 to 6 weeks, I believe. He wasn't on the band long enough, that's for sure and it was I'd say in the early fall. We did the "Standards in Silhouette" album on September 21 and 22 1959 at Capitol Studios in NYC. IT was a room with a very high ceiling, perhaps it was a ballroom and they mounted monitors, large speakers for us to hear the playbacks in the hall. The technicians, the engineers, of course were all back in a booth situation, they were not listening to the band live. Then we listened to the results through the speakers and of course the trumpet players were always annoyed by the habit of engineers to mix things so that the saxophone section is heard more prominently than the trumpets even during a full ensemble, which is, of course, sheer nonsense, and we always felt that if you want us to play softer, tell us to play softer but get the true balance of the band, but they almost never came out of the booth, I know this is an old complaint to hear the band live. They thought they had a better idea of what Kenton's Band should sound like than he did, I guess, whatever."

Kenton Historian Anthony Agostinelli "Bill Chase came on the band on September 21, 1959 for the recording in NY. He rejoined the band for the gig at the Blue Note in Chicago on November 18, 1959. He stayed with the band until the band's vacation from February 12-April 16, 1959. When the band recorded again in Hollywood on March 5, 1969, Jack Sheldon had replaced him." His Kenton Recordings were – "Standards in Silhouette" – Sept. 22,23 1959, "Viva Kenton" (same dates), "Kenton at March Field" December 13, 1959, "Live at Barstow" January 30, 1960.

Maynard Ferguson "I don't remember who told me about Bill, it may have been Herb Pomeroy or Boots Mussulli, it might have been people from that area other than Herb, I just don't remember. What a wonderful guy he was and also a great player and one quick story to move along many years after was that when I came back from Europe and from India where I was for over 8 years before I came back to this country and when I came back we were playing at the "Top of the Mark" in Rochester, NY and anyway it was one of those clubs on top of a skyscraper, so to speak and Bill Chase had just flown in the middle of a blizzard. I remember running into him in Vegas in the late 1960's he was wearing very tight white pants and he was playing great trumpet in the middle of about 30 of the most gorgeous women in Las Vegas and they were doing kicks around hem (and he was loving every bit of it by the way) so our personalities are somewhat the same in a sense.

One of my favorite stores was at Sea Isle City in New Jersey. We were there with the Birdland Dream Band. We had a night off and we went to this marvelous restaurant and I thought I was being really slick and I said "Give me the biggest, baddest lobster you've got" and I should have known there were four of us and we were at a huge table and then they brought over another huge table and I was waiting. Have you ever seen a 22lb lobster? Because I never saw one before or after but nowadays it is like nonexistent so whenever I think of Bill Chase now that dinner always comes to mind.

In a 1971 interview with noted Jazz critic Leonard Feather, Bill recalled his days with Maynard, "Playing for him was literally a dream realized. There wasn't a single night of the 18 months I worked in his band that I didn't get chills when he played "Tenderly". He's so heavy he's ridiculous! I love that cat."

Herb Pomeroy "I would bump into him when he was working with Maynard's Band. They were on the road, we were in New York and I'd bump into him. I knew Maynard well, Maynard was very pleased with him. He thought he was doing an excellent job with the band, and then like I mentioned when he joined Woody's band, it was that band that Woody had in that 63 or 64 era, where Bill was very key to the character of the band. I don't know if Woody ever labeled it one of his "Herds" or not, but about half of the band were guys from Boston. A lot of the trumpet section were fellows that had been on my band and Phil Wilson was with the band and Jake Hanna, the drummer, and Nat Pierce the piano player and Andy McGhee the tenor player. It was a very Boston-oriented band and Bill, I think, as much as anybody, was responsible for that period of Woody's band being a very strong, very exciting band."



Trumpet player Paul Fontaine "I first met him in 1956. We were roughly the same age, about 18 years old. He played in a local band called the Pete Cutler Band. I made some rehearsals subbing but never actually worked with the band. Bill did work with the band quite a bit. Herb Pomeroy had a band that was working a couple of nights at a place called The Stable in Boston across from Storyville which was a famous jazz club owned by George Wein at one time. The Stables had a nice little small group with Joe Gordon, a very fine trumpet player. Herb had a big band. He had Serge Chaloff, Boots Mussulli, and all kinds of great players. He used to play Tuesday and Thursday nights. So Herb started what he called the "B Band". He held rehearsals on Saturday morning at the old Berklee School which was just one small building in Boston. We used to rehearse there every Saturday morning and play the same arrangements that they played at The Stable, the club that they were working at. In case he had to have subs for that band, somebody could come in and do it and not have to do it cold. The music was kind of hard and was being written by Boots Mussulli and Bobby Freedman, a saxophone player. The music was kind of demanding. Herb felt that if he had a second band of people who could come in and play the book it would be better for him. It gave us a chance to really play some fine music and to hear other fine players. We did that and sometimes we did work The Stables. That went on for a short time in 1956. Bill went out on the road to play with Maynard Ferguson. I was still going to Berklee. Bill called me one time and said that he had played an album that was Berklee's first album called "Jazz in the Classroom" which Bill and I were on with other people like Jimmy Mosher. Bill had played the album for Maynard. I was featured on one little thing. I felt very embarrassed that he would play it for Maynard, but Maynard liked it and he told Bill to have me come to New York City to rehearse with the band because he was looking for a replacement for Don Ellis. Bill was going to be playing lead and he told me to be at Nola Studios at 2:00PM on Monday. Nola was a place where you could rehearse big bands. I was there at 1:30 all warmed up. Nobody showed up until 4:30. Pretty soon a few guys came in. I met Willie Mained and I was asking about Bill. Will told me "Oh, Bill has left. He's not going to be here today." Two other guys filtered in, but we never had a full band. Maynard showed up. The only people I actually knew were Jackie Byard, the piano player and Gene Cherico, the bass player. I didn't know Frankie Dunlap, but he was the drummer. The lead trumpet player at the time was Clyde Reasinger, a pretty prominently known lead trumpet player. Of course I was disappointed because I sort of felt that here I am, an 18 year old kid expecting Bill to be there and he wasn't there. The other trumpet player never showed up. It was just two trumpets and Maynard called a couple of tunes that featured the trumpets and we played fours together. He says "Oh, that's fine. I'll see you guys tomorrow at 2:00." Now, I couldn't get a hold of Bill and I had checked into a hotel. I really had no money. I had about fifteen dollars or something like that and I was able to get a draw from Maynard's wife. I think her name was Flo. She was the one who handled all the money, so she gave me enough money to pay my room at the hotel and have a few bucks left over to eat. It didn't cost very much at that time to get a good meal somewhere. I didn't hear from Bill. I got up to Nola Studios the next day (Tuesday) at 1:30 again and again nobody showed up until 4:30 or 5 o'clock when the same amount of people appeared. Maynard never had a full band. Then Maynard told us that the first job would be next Saturday in Montreal. We would be riding six to a car and it would pay \$25 and I figured, how can I make it until then. I'd have to go home and it'll cost me that to come back. It just wasn't feasible for me. The next job after that would be the week after Saturday in Chicago and six in a car that pays \$30. So I was put out with it. The rehearsals were only an hour at the most, it was just fooling around. It was not a full band. I got back to the hotel after the rehearsal and there was a message from Bill Chase to call and he left a number for me. I called him and he said "Look, I just joined Woody's band. Why don't you come down here and make the audition. The chair is open for the jazz chair and I'll bet that you can get it. I went down there and, oh God, there must have been trumpet players galore trying to get a gig on the band. That was around the summer of 1958.

Woody was taking the band out on a summer southern tour. It was all in the summer time and it was only nine or ten weeks. I got to the studio and there were 30 trumpet players sitting in at different times, on different tunes. I finally got to

sit in and had to play a solo on something which I was able to do from the back chair. I figured well, if this was it, I want to go home. This is unbelievable. Bill said, "You've got the chair" and I couldn't believe it and that was beginning of a long story. That was the first time I had seen him since he had left Boston to go with Maynard's Band. So I got to know most of Bill and his wife Nan quite well through that summer touring with Woody's Band. Probably the most personal time that I ever spent with him was during that summer because he used to drive a car. We were all in cars at that time. Sometimes I would ride with Bill a lot and he took his wife.

Don Lanphere was the lead tenor player on the band, he drove his own car and I used to go with him once in a while, but he was crazy. He'd drink all the time and be driving drunk and fast: 95, 100 miles per hour. So I didn't like that too much. I used to get in with Bill and his wife a couple of other guys. We toured through that summer and that was kind of a drag. The bass player was Jack Six and he was the road manager. We played nothing but country clubs and VFW halls. It was just strictly danceable stuff. In that respect, it wasn't really a great band and Woody wasn't really enthused about it. The drummer was Jimmy Campbell.

When we were at Berklee, Bill was always powerful. He always had pretty good high chops, and he maintained a consistency at that time and he was reliable to be able to play lead. I wasn't into lead playing. I was a jazz player. I had no interest in big bands except for the fact that I was in them all of the time. I had been put into them in school. My interest was really small groups and I really didn't have the aspirations of being a lead trumpet player, so I didn't follow that, that closely. I don't know how he improved, but he seemed to get better and better all the time. He must have been pretty good to get on Maynard Ferguson's Band and he stayed on there for quite awhile.

Woody disbanded at the end of that first summer. Then the following summer which would have been 1959, the band was going to get back together again. The person who was booking the band was Abe Turchin and I forgot what happened, but Bill called and asked "Do you want to go out on this tour with Woody this summer?" And I said "Sure, do you need anybody else?" So I got Jimmy Mosher on baritone saxophone and Gordon Brisker out on the band.

That was a pretty good band, with Don Rader and Rolf Ericson. We were still traveling in cars and we had more time to be social with each other on that trip. That tour actually kept going and it was not just for the summer but went into the next year. The band kept going and then I got my draft notice. I had to leave the band in May of 1960 to be drafted into the army. I wouldn't sign up because signing up would have meant 3 years, so I waited to be drafted and it took two



years. I didn't see Woody's band for a while because I was doing basic training down in Texas. I made an audition for the post band down there and they wanted to keep me in the post band, but I didn't want to be in Texas. I met some of the guys in the local post band and they all told me to do whatever I could to get out of there. Really, they said "This is the worst". I was lucky because I came back to the barracks one afternoon and there was a message for me to go to the commanders office. There was a phone message from US Air Force Major and I couldn't understand what this was all about. I called the number and he introduced himself as Major Azzolina of the NORAD band. I didn't know anything about it. He says we have some friends of yours in the NORAD band already like Phil Wilson; I didn't know Phil but I knew his name. He mentioned somebody else that was going there, but I can't remember who it was. He said, "Would you like to come out here and join this band." I told him that they were

going to keep me in the post band and he said that he could straighten that out. He got me out of that predicament and got me into the NORAD band, where I immediately met Phil Wilson. The reason that I was offered the position on the NORAD band, was because Woody's band and the NORAD band were both staying at the Wolverine Hotel in Detroit, and some of the guys in the coffee shop started talking.

Woody's musicians, especially Jimmy Mosher, told the NORAD people where I was taking basic training. So that's how I was able to get the call through the guys in Woody's band. I went on the NORAD band for two years. I got Bobby Shew on the band. Phil Wilson and I were roommates and the band traveled around quite a bit. At the end of the two years there was the Cuban missile crisis. Phil and I were extended months because of this crisis, so Phil ended up having to stay a week or two and then they dropped the crisis and I got out on time. Phil left the NORAD band and went right to Woody's Band and I guess it was the same thing, playing small clubs. The NORAD band now went to Detroit. This was funny because I was looking in the newspaper and I saw that Woody Herman was playing at the Rooster Tail with Nat Adderley in a small group. Woody didn't have the big band. I took a cab out there and met and talked to him. I guess this must have been around January of 1963. Woody said, "I'll be starting the band in a couple of months, so just call Abe and tell him you want to come back, you can get your old chair back. I said "Great! I've got a job I can go to right after." I

got out on May 12th or something like that. I was back in New York to rehearse with Woody's Band about four days later. This time the band was rehearsing, I think at 55th and Broadway. This was the band I met Sal Nistico on. Woody wasn't there and Nat Pierce was rehearsing the band. So the personnel at that time would be Nat on piano, Chuck Andrus on bass, and Jake Hanna on drums. I think it was Billy Hunt, David Gale, Jerry Lamy, Bill and I on trumpets. The Trombones were Phil Wilson, of course and there was another guy there I think his name was Bill Hanna, and I'm not sure who the third guy was. I think the sax section was Sal Nistico, Joe Romano, Frank Hittner on bari from Maynard's band and Larry Cavelli. That rehearsal was in the evening. That was a Tuesday or Wednesday or something like that. We were supposed to rehearse Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and then take a bus to go to Chicago to an actual jazz club called the Plug Nickel. Nat Pierce was rehearsing the band and the band just sparked together right at the rehearsal. It was unbelievable. We all heard Sal Nistico, some of us for the first time. He was just incredible and the whole band was also. Nat was really enthused about it. He called Woody up and he said "Woody, you ought to hear this band. It can really play." And Woody was skeptical. He said "Ah, well, we'll see when you get here." We rehearsed the next couple of nights. Then we went to the Plug Nickel. I'll never forget the look on Woody's face when he called the first tune. He called the tune just to see if the band could play it and they played the hell out of it. His mouth dropped! He became enthused. He called back Abe Turchin and he said "Abe, cancel all those country clubs and put some jazz dates in there." We got rid of some of those country club things and we were now starting to play more of the jazz jobs. This would have been May of 1963. We had a recording coming up in November. I remember it very clearly because it was the day President Kennedy was assassinated. Phil and I were staying at the Bristol Hotel on West 48th street. Across the street from the recording studio. It was about the bar where a lot of the guys liked to go have a drink called Jim and Andy's. It was upstairs. We heard about the shooting and we went to the studio and hung around listening to the bad news. Somebody had a portable radio there and we didn't start recording at all. Woody said "Well, let's just do one", and we recorded Bill Holman's chart of After You've Gone. We did that one tune and cancelled out. We didn't record again until the next week. Everything in NY closed down at that time. We were supposedly working at the Metropole and they closed down. All the lights in New York just were eerie, it was so quiet out, it was unbelievable.



Bill practiced quite a bit, especially in the first couple of years where I really got to know him better. At that time, he was the type of person who was very conscientious. If we were in a hotel, he'd find a room somewhere away from people, so he could practice before the job and he'd practice after the job – "warm down" he called it – and he was very conscientious about that. On the bus, if we were going to a job he would be buzzing his lips a little bit both with and without his mouthpiece. He was practicing all the time. Bill used to arrange for getting hotels for the band. Bill and Woody used to travel together and eat together all of the time. Bill had a lot of say in personnel changes in the band."

After a total of 18 months with Maynard, Bill joined Woody to work with his sextet and vaudeville show. This was when Woody had financial problems and the big band was too expensive to keep. Bill joined Stan Kenton in September of 1959 mainly as a lead player, but I have a picture of him and his tilted bell horn playing the third book. He recorded a couple of albums, but ended up getting fired by Stan due to remarks he made about the trumpet section which also contained Bud Brisbois and his unwillingness to switch to a straight Bb trumpet. Things are confusing again with the new release of a live Kenton concert from January 30, 1960 which has Bill listed in the section.

Throughout his entire career Bill was extremely dedicated to his practicing. He had the habit of buzzing his mouthpiece for 30 to 45 minutes after each show, whether it was a two hour concert or a five hour dance gig. In the back of the Kenton bus Bill would drive people crazy with this particular habit. This was, of course, when he wasn't driving his sports car from show to show.

Bill's first real taste of fame came when he took over the lead book in Woody's Herd. Bill's rock solid lead work and fierce solo efforts helped the band swing it's ass off. Bill became a featured soloist with the band, not only on high note finishes, but on beautiful ballads as well. Songs such as "Somewhere," "I Can't Get Started," "Summertime" and others showed the sweet side of his horn.

Bill also began to write and arrange for the band. Many of his tunes were recorded by the band in the 60's. "Mo-Lasses," "Somewhere," "Taste of Honey," "Y'Know What I Mean," "El Toro Grande," "23 Red" and "Camel Walk" which made it into the 1964 Downbeat yearbook as a featured score.

In 1959, saxophonist Don Lanphere and his wife Midge were traveling companions with Bill and his wife. They would drive from town to town following the band to the gigs. On the way to the Monterey Jazz Festival in California, Don and Midge played jokes on their companions and began to make up many incredible stories about famous sites and events. Bill was an avid photographer and wanted to take pictures of all of the places. This was his first visit to the West Coast he did not know the truth. Bill didn't find out that they were joking until several years later.

Another amusing story took place at a hotel in Galveston, Texas. After the show, the band was hanging out around the pool drinking and relaxing, when Bill put on his swimsuit grabbed his horn, dove to the bottom of the pool and started to play "I Can't Get Started." Don remembers bubbles coming to the surface, and even a faint trace of the melody.

The Herman band was also a prize on a 1961 episode of the Price is Right. The winner would receive a concert by the band, all expenses paid, including a location for the event. The band was featured on several numbers and during the closing credits. Although it is hard to see, you can hear Bill screaming on top of the band.

Paul Fontaine "We did a whole series of recordings. We recorded Encore, 1963, out at Basin Street West in California. We then did a whole bunch of club dates – Basin Street East, the Plug Nickle out in Chicago, and different jazz clubs. We used to do the club "Off Broadway" in San Francisco which was around the corner from the "Black Hawk" a famous jazz club. The band really started getting more prestigious as a jazz band and it was really good. I think the reason the band stayed so much together is that very few players left. I can't really remember too many players leaving except maybe a trombone or two. We really became a family because we were on the bus now a lot of times. I remember one time we did a record 92 one nighters in a row, without any time off and that was really something else. We got along fine on the bus and we had a great time on the bus during the day. We had great personalities. There were no drag personalities on the bus. I left the band at the beginning of 1966. In 1965 we went to Sweden with the band. Bill took his wife, Nan at the time.



They had a little boy, Billy Jr. We had a great time. We toured around there. We did a film in Brussels. Two one-hour shows filmed in front of two different audiences (Jazz 625). I hear that somebody like Phil Wilson has the audio of it. I think at the time we were kind of pissed off at Woody or Abe mainly because Abe booked the job in Brussels and forgot to tell us that we weren't going to get paid for it. So, when Woody called "Apple Honey" or one of those, he counted it off, but the band took it so fast that he couldn't say the words to sing it. The band was incredible, because Jake stayed up with Sal. Sal was featured on it and Sal could play tempos like crazy. That was our revenge recording!

When we got back at that time the trumpet section had Danny Nolan in it and he was leaving the band when we returned to New York. We were going to be playing the Metropole. He used to be with Stan Kenton as well. Bill left the band also in 1966. He left to go to Las Vegas. I was still in the band. This was one of the times where I was doing a two or three month thing on the band. The band was OK and we really missed him a lot because the trumpet player we had was good, but he wasn't really as strong a player and a lot different time-wise too."

The Herd, in it's prime during the early sixties was given ample time to perform for a national audience. The band was a guest on the Ed Sullivan show each year from 1963 to 1965. These performances coupled with two featured spots on the PBS Jazz Casuals shows, brought the band to the attention of music lovers all across the United States. A European show called Jazz 625, was also filmed during this time period. The playing on the Casuals and the 625 shows is outstanding. Bill is playing the lead book and is featured on several numbers including a few of his arrangements.

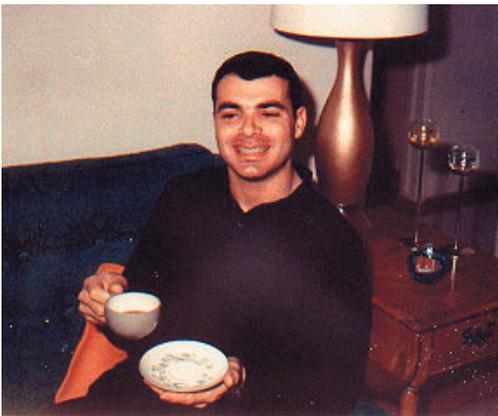
The Casuals shows were sort of dry in nature due to the fact that not even a studio audience was provided. In addition the host of the show was narrated by the rather dry jazz writer Ralph Gleason. The first show featured Bill soloing on his own composition of "Mo-Lasses," and his outstanding vehicle for tenor saxophonist Sal Nistico, "El Toro Grande," which seem to be the best numbers. Trombonist Phil Wilson is also featured, whistling his way through the trombone's upper register with ease.

The second show is also very good, featuring Bill on his arrangement of "A Taste Of Honey." A brief solo spot on "Satin Doll" is also in this episode. However the lead playing is what makes the shows so great. Bill pushes the band as far as

he can considering the energy level is so low because of the lack of a crowd. Gleason, although a well respected jazz critic, is useless in the shows. He asks such questions as, "Woody are big bands coming back?" This was in 1963. What a tough question in a time that gave us some of the better big band albums, not only by the Herd but by other bands as well.

Bill spoke about playing the demanding lead book on the Herman Band with Leonard Feather, "That was hard work – I had to play lead trumpet and set fire to the whole band. Even when we saw nothing but buses and hotel rooms and ballrooms, when my chops were beat or swollen, I just forced myself to keep going. Woody Herman showed me a lot, he showed me that my prime duty was never to let the public down."

Critics were astounded by the power of the Herd in the 1960's, each album they recorded received more praise than the previous one. "Many critics have attributed much of the band's spark and drive to Chase's forceful lead work (the trumpeter plays what he calls the "screech" parts and often solos, but it is his lead work that has been most often cited)."



Trumpet player Bill Byrne "I first met Bill Chase at Jake Koven's practice studios in New York City. Fife Dollars got you 12 hours of practice in those days. Sometimes I would watch the studio for Jake and he'd let me practice for nothing. Bill used to practice there when he was in the city. I got the job with Woody when I was at Jim N Andy's with Bill Berry when Berry got a call from Chase looking for three trumpet players. One thing led to another and I got a call from Chase to go with the band. I told him I was basically a section player and didn't play any lead or jazz but my range was about an E-flat above high C. He said "that's OK man, we can't all be stars" this was in 1965.

Chase did all of the hiring for the brass and Nat Pierce did the rest. I started out on third and eventually ended up playing the fifth book. After the first two weeks Woody asked Bill why I was still in the band. Bill told him I was playing the parts as good as anyone. He knew I was practicing them every day.

Chase was playing a Martin at the time but started getting into Schilke at the time. One reason Bill sounded so strong on lead is because Jerry Lamy. Jerry was indestructible and he was always there for him. He would cover what lead Bill didn't play and support him all the way. They were great buddies. Chase was also writing for the band at that time. As a matter of fact, he was working on charts for the band when I met him at Koven's studio. I'd hear him pounding away at the piano.

We were pals. I guess it's because I like to eat and drink wine, and that's what he loved to do. We'd eat tons of food before the job, especially when it was an Italian restaurant. I recall when we were in Milan in 1969, he asked the concierge for a good restaurant. He directed us to a tiny joint in an alley where we had our first taste of Mediterranean scampi. We ended up eating four servings each. Bill was also a terrific cook. He would make all kinds of Italian dishes.

Chase would do long tones and intervals to warm up if he had time before a gig. He also liked to use a warm down. It was basically starting at the top and coming down. That was a ritual when time permitted. He also had a set of physical exercises that he did all his life. He had learned stretching routines from the women dancers in New York's Latin Quarter. I think he did a little bit of weight lifting too. The stretches are what kept his muscles toned up.

He told me that the way he got his range was long tones. When he was a kid he'd work his long tones in intervals and a half step at a time. He would expand the exercise a half step at a time and wouldn't move to the next half step until he really had it locked in. So his range wasn't some natural or freak thing, he worked his ass off on it! Another thing about Bill was that he could analyze chop problems and figure out solutions. If someone got a cut or something, he would figure out what the guy was doing wrong.

He was a stickler for accuracy. He would call sectional rehearsals just to work on tone quality and cut-offs. We'd run some things as many as 20 times until it was really solid. And when we got to the gig, we played it that way too. One thing I noticed is that the band played with a big open sound. It was the loudest I ever played but it was a solid and musical. The section really blended well even on the soft passages.

Chase would give you the "ray" look out the side of his eye at you or have a talk if he thought you weren't up to par. If the guy wouldn't cooperate, he'd get somebody who would. Another thing is that Bill would listen to the balance of the whole band. He was very aware of what the band was doing. He would talk it over with Nat and the guys to make it better all of the time.

Chase would ask Nat Pierce if it was a sit down gig or a stand up gig. He had sit down pants and stand up pants.

Chase was also an excellent photographer. He took his 16mm movie camera to Africa when we were there on tour in 1966. He shot a tremendous amount of footage and made a great movie about the band being there. Unfortunately the film got stolen when Bill's apartment was looted after the plane crash. Woody was thinking about having Bill write music for the film and have the band record it.

I was on the band with Bill from August 65 to August of 66. He left after a gig at the Tropicana Hotel in Vegas. He left to play the "Viva Les Girls" show, taking over for Charlie Turner. It was kind of a shock for Bill because it was a different type of playing. Three shows a night took a lot of endurance. When they redesigned the show, they had Bill out front playing trumpet with beads hanging all over him, When the other players in Vegas would put him on about this he'd say, "Man, I get a hundred bucks a week extra." He came back to Woody's band in either February or March of 1969 and played until September.

I first heard the Chase band at the Pussycat A-Go-Go when we were playing at Ceasar's Palace. That was around 1970. They would play five sets from 12:00am to 5:00am. Bill lived in some little apartments behind the Tropicana Hotel and that's where we would go to eat. Bill was a very good chef and he'd really put on a feast after the gigs.

The concert reviews from the current band were better than ever. "The trumpets with some new faces on hand, had their customary bite and sparkle, paced by Chase's remarkable lead work. Chase has some exciting solo bits, mostly in high note climaxes, but also in a more melodic vein, as on "Everybody Loves Somebody."

"The trumpet section led by the fiery Bill Chase is a killer. Chase a dark and handsome 28 year old is a superb trumpeter. Musicians are astonished by his chops. His range is literally the same as Maynard's, and he is playing lead an octave over the others much of the time. When he's not doing that he's playing straight lead. The rest of the time he plays solos-sensitive and extremely musically solos."

The Woody's Winners album in 1965 is probably the best, as far as Bill's playing goes. "The best writing is Chase's 23 Red, a wild, boppish up tempo arrangement in the first Herd tradition. Chase does a terrific job in the section. He's one of the stronger lead trumpeters around now and maybe one of the best in history." All of this from a Downbeat critic, usually one of the tougher magazines to get a good big band review.

Bill was always in command of the Herman trumpet section with his playing and even sometimes the whole band. "There are things I made Woody's band do that I accomplished without saying a word. Just by taking one note and placing it in a certain position, maybe an infinitesimal fraction of a beat further each night, with the objective in mind that eventually it would get to the point where I thought it should be. And the guys would follow those subtle changes without even knowing that they were doing it. That's a groovy satisfaction." Bill was called on many times to be the sparkplug of an exhausted band. "And there were times when I knew I'd simply have to turn on the whole band, like after an all-day bus ride when everyone was totally beat...So I would turn it on so damned hard that at the end of the night I'd be completely spent. I wouldn't have one note left. Because no matter how tired or swollen your chops might be, when a key highnote passage comes up, you pace yourself and you play it. A major part of it is mental. If you say, 'There's no way I can make it tonight,' then you will not make it. But when it has to roar and you're the lead player, you can't say that. Because you HAVE to make it!"

In 1966 while on a tour for the state department, Nat Pierce had this to say: "We were playing a reception for the second vice president of Tanzania, and I had to write out the Tanzanian national anthem for the band. I thought I'd doctor it up a little and put some flashy things in for Bill Chase to play. We were rehearsing it in the room in which we were to play while workers were up on step ladders decorating the place with crepe paper and banners. When we started to play it and Bill started playing the flashy stuff, the workers started coming down off the ladders and coming towards the band. I said 'uh-oh, we'd better leave out that Bill Chase Part'."

In a 1966 interview with Melody Maker Magazine, Bill spoke about wanting to develop as a soloist, "I definitely have it in mind to develop as a soloist. I never used to think this way until the last couple of years. I like the usual soloists, like Clark Terry, Clifford Brown, Dizzy and don't forget Harry Edison. But I would like to fashion my style on Clark. It's more and more difficult to be original these days. I'm certainly not original, so it's a matter of getting the right influences."

Trumpeter Bill Byrne credits Bill for keeping him on the band (Byrne remained with the band until it folded after Woody died) "Bill Chase was the main reason that I got to stay on the band. He saw me working hard on the parts and let me stay on the band." Bill later became the band manager and tour director among other capacities he held with the band. "Bill

Chase was a great cook and took wonderful films of our Herman Africa trip in 1966.”

In 1966, Bill left Woody and landed in Las Vegas to work the hotel show circuit. He started working primarily at the Dunes hotel playing the Viva Les Girls show. He also played in the Tommy Vig Orchestra, but did not record with them. Bill briefly worked as a studio player, but there wasn't enough work for him, so he just stuck with the show circuit.

Melody Maker magazine quoted Bill on his desire to improve as a jazz soloist in a 1966 article, “I like all the usual jazz soloists, like Clark Terry, Clifford Brown, Dizzy and don't forget Harry Edison. But I would like to fashion my style on Clark. It's more and more difficult to be original these days. I'm certainly not original, so it's a matter of getting the right influences.”

Paul Fontaine “We got to Las Vegas a few times when we were on Woody's band to play different places. There was a place in Las Vegas called the “Casino de Paris”. It was part of the Dunes Hotel and it was the lounge room, not the show room. The showroom had the Follies Bergere or something like that. The lounge room had a thing called the Casino de Paris. It was a great little show. I went one time to listen to it. The band played behind a curtain where they were never seen. It was dancing and music. I think it was Bill Reddie who wrote the music for it. It was a small band that sounded so full. It was great. I came back in town with Woody's band. Now Bill had already been there. Bill had replaced the trumpet player Charlie Turner who used to play the show. Bill had replaced him on the Casino de Paris show so I went out to see it and this time I found out that Bill was featured. He came out and played a couple of trumpet high note things with the group which wasn't done before so that was worked into the act. Then, I didn't see him for a long time because I left the band and came back to Boston. The next thing I knew he had organized that group CHASE and I heard about the records and they were touring. I live in Peabody and there's quit a famous club here called “Lenny's on the Turnpike”. All the names played there. They loved it here. Bill was here for a week and we got to hang out a little bit at Lenny's. I was kind of disappointed. Bill was great looking guy and he was a womanizer. I really liked his wife a lot and hated to see them get divorced. I never saw her after that, but I felt kind of bad for her. Bill got into the “showbiz” a little bit and I actually didn't see him after that. The next thing I heard was that he had died in an airplane crash.”

Several sources say that Bill appeared on the Ed Sullivan show as a featured soloist in 1968 when Sullivan was filming in Vegas. In an all too brief two minute spot Bill played his high note feature as scantily clad chorus line girls danced all about. No one remembers exactly what was played, but one source thought it was the “Carnival of Venice” up an octave. Throughout his stint in Vegas, Bill continued to do occasional tours with Woody even up until 1970. Several of these concerts have recently been issued on compact disc.

In an article in Melody Maker Magazine by Jerry Dawson, Bill spoke about his 1969 tour with Woody Herman and the Las Vegas experience, “It has required a lot of adjustment to return to the Herd. It is entirely different from what I have been doing for nearly three years in Vegas. There, I was leading a nine piece band at the Dunes Hotel backing the Viva Les Girls show, a typical girlie-revue with no star names. And the fights started almost immediately, I opened at the Dunes with the big sound of the Herd still ringing in my ears. Although the band was small by comparison, I wanted to create as big a sound as possible. The only answer was amplification, but I was most unhappy about the house equipment.

I started experimenting with electronic instruments and eventually finished with my own equipment balanced to our particular requirements, amplifying piano, bass and saxes. I am aware that a lot of people particularly in the jazz world are anti electronic sounds and I prefer the pure sound of acoustic bass myself, but I can remember so many concerts when bass and piano might just as well have not been there. In a big swinging band one can possibly get away with this, but economics being what they are I had to bow to the inevitable if my band was to be heard.

I'm all right on trumpet, I can make myself audible but the balance wouldn't be right. My spell in Vegas taught me a lot and I know just which way I am going. I intend to stay with the Herd for the summer and in the autumn plan to form a band of piano, drums, electric bass and guitar and four trumpets. I visualize a rocking rhythm section with a front line jazzmen, and already I have written a number of charts. I hope that what I have to offer will be acceptable for concerts and club dates, and we shall try to sell records by getting across to young people.

Woody has proved that, by careful adaption, jazzmen can get across to the youth of today, and I've enjoyed doing it with him. I've heard rock groups. I think I know what they are attempting and I've even enjoyed sitting in with them.

It's really funny how way back the Four Freshmen and particularly the Hi-Lo's used the voices as instruments. What I would like to do is use instruments in the manner that groups like the 5th Dimension use their voices. I'm very happy indeed in the way music is moving. One can play much more freely today then ever before. New sounds are no longer unfamiliar they are evident even in the simplest of television commercials. Listeners are being brought up on them, they are no longer strange on their ears.

Rock, beat, pop, call it what you will, has made people accept change, new sounds particularly, as they would not have accepted them a decade ago. It is up to we jazzmen to take advantage of this situation. Music is progressing harmonically and the 5th Dimension are doing with the music of today what the Hi-Lo's did in their era, but they are taking it even further by simplifying it and getting into the listener's ears. And you can relate a lot of what they are doing to Gospel music.

I did a lot of research into Gospel music when I was last with Woody Herman. It was my intention to do a lot of writing in this idiom, but I never got around to it. I shall certainly use the idea in my own band. Gospel really gets the message across and swinging. I shall retain this, adding a little more harmonically."

Speaking with Leonard Feather, Bill discussed his "research" for his new group. "During my last tour with Woody, just a couple of years ago, I spent a lot of time in England. All over that country I went to every night spot I could find, and I mean rock places, not just jazz clubs. I wanted to find out everything that was happening and absorb it before deciding what direction to take with a group of my own."

In Vegas, Bill's reputation as a fearless lead player landed him many quality gigs. However he became bored of life in the clubs. He once mentioned that he used to play cards and read comics with one hand as he played the show with the other. Bill also spent time as Vic Damone's lead player. When big shows came to Vegas needing an extra trumpet player, Bill was the trumpeter that each artist would call on. When Johnny Carson would come to town, Doc Severinsen would call Bill to play in the band. Bill, Doc, Johnny and Ed McMahon were all close.

Trumpeter Byron Lingenfelter met Bill in 1964 when he joined Woody's band to replace Larry Ford. Byron was only on the band for three weeks when he received his draft notice. After the service Byron settled in Vegas and played the Viva Les Girls show with Bill.

Byron's daughter Diane remembered this time "I do remember that Bill always called me 'punkin head' and that when we first moved to Las Vegas in 1967, we stayed at Bill's while we were looking for a house. He had this dinky little apartment that I thought was the epitome of glamour at the time! Bill was into Mediterranean type furniture then and he had this octagon coffee table with a brazier in the middle. I thought it was the coolest thing on earth. So did my mom, it took her about ten years looking, but she eventually found one like it. I also remember various incarnations of the band practicing at our house all of the time. It's probably why I'm half deaf now! Thinking back, I wonder why all of the neighbors were so cool about it, must be because it was Las Vegas. One thing I very vividly remember was that Bill didn't play the way the rest of the trumpet players we knew did, he puffed his cheeks out when he played. He'd turn really red in the face, the veins in his head would pop out, and I always thought he was going to have a stroke or something! You know, I never had a clue that Bill was famous. To me, he was just one of my dad's dorky friends!"

Jay Burrid remembered one time Bill was working at the Dunes and in the main room Siegfried and Roy were there with their tigers. Bill had his corvette, he put a tiger in the corvette and drove to his hotel and walked into the pool area with the tiger (and the trainer), people just scattered. Every once in a while, Bill did something crazy..... Bill also taught me how to make a good Martini. Bill learned this particular method from Woody Herman. Jay also mentioned a clear mouthpiece that Bill used to have that allowed him to show airflow when he put it on his horn....

Bill became so bored with playing the same show that he began to look for a new way to express himself. Drummer Jay Burrid was on the road in 1968 with Bobby Darrin and then settled in Vegas. He hooked up with Bill and they discussed the band concept. Bill was playing the Viva Les Girls show at the Dunes and Bills girlfriend was dancing in Jay's show. The first rehearsal was late in 1968 at Jays house. The trumpets were Bill, Buddy Childers, Chuck Findley, and Bobby Shew, piano was Bob Rosario from Bobby Darrin's band, Brent Alverson on Bass and John Palmer on guitar. They used to rehearse at 4:30am after everyone had finished their shows. The trumpet section went through some immediate changes. By 1969 things started coming around. The band began to rehearse in a large vacant warehouse after they had finished their jobs. Usually rehearsals would run from 2:30 a.m. to 7 a.m. The band also rehearsed in a dance studio that was behind a Mexican restaurant. The band originally learned tunes off the radio, such as "Vehicle," "With a Little Help from My Friends," "Celebrate" and others. The first rehearsal saw Bill, Gerry Lamy, Bobby Shew as trumpets, John Palmer on guitar, Brent Alverson Bass and Jay Mitthauer (Burrid) on drums. Shortly after, the regular band was Bill, Lin Biviano and Byron Lingenfelter on trumpet, Palmer, Alverson, Burrid in the rhythm section and joined by Phil Porter on organ.

Originally the band was going to be all instrumentals, but Jay convinced Bill that they would need a vocalist in order to have commercial success and Bill found Terry in early 1969. Finally with enough cover tunes learned they auditioned at the Pussycat-A-Go-Go. They signed on as an after hours music group. They would play five one hour sets. The band gradually formed a local following and slowly added in some original tunes.

The first gig at the Pussycat was originally booked as a two week job, however it soon stretched into two and a half months. This was in the summer of 1970. Bill felt that he needed to shop his product around a little, so he got some help from Woody and friend Tommy Martin in finding some record executives who would listen. Frank Rand was one of the first people to really feel that the group would have a future and he enthusiastically added his support and background to getting the band with Epic records. Rand was in LA with the Ides of March cutting "Superman" when he received a demo from Tommy Martin. Even though the demo was very rough, Rand heard something that he liked in the trumpet playing of Chase. When the Ides sessions were finished, Rand cut some songs by Chase, including "Get It On" and "Cronus". Thanks to the efforts of Rand, the band was inked to a contract with Epic Records. Rand then moved the band to Chicago since it was his base of operation. The band didn't really like the area at first, but after receiving a few warm receptions at Beaver's, the band began to warm up to Chicago.

Frank Rand " Bill was an incredible musician. He had one of the best pair of lips I have ever heard. In a trumpet player, the lips are almost everything. Musically, he never sat still. We spent many hours talking music, and with Chase, the talk almost always was on centered on the future. He was just coming into his own when the future was cut short. Everybody at Epic was excited about his "Pure Music" album, and we were looking forward to his next one. Had he lived, there would have been a next one. "Pure Music" sold in the neighborhood of 100,000 pieces. Above all, Bill Chase was a sensitive and intense human being. I am proud to have been able to know and work with him."

Bill Byrne commented some on this time period too. "The Woody Herman band used to go to the Pussycat in Las Vegas and listen to Bill break in the new group till 8 am every morning. Woody would be out on the dance floor having a ball to Bill's music. Woody was one of the people who really pushed Bill to start his own group."

Bill flew to Boston to play a show with Woody and over dinner he talked to his buddy, trumpeter Lin Biviano who was then playing with the Glenn Miller Band, about the band. Soon after this meeting, Bill called Lin at his home in Pennsylvania, asking him to fly to Vegas that day to play on his demo. The next day Lin arrived in Vegas and went to Bill's apartment at the Tropicana hotel and found Bill fiddling with his electric keyboard writing what would soon become his most popular song. "Get It On" was originally written without a vocal part. The band recorded a 6-12 song demo in Byron's living room with record executives from Epic present including producer Frank Rand. Jay Burrid found Bassist Dennis Johnson, Dennis who joined the band after six weeks remembered recording a great tune called "Pensive Passion" which was in 7/4 time on the demo.

The band at this time was made up of Bill, Byron, Jerry and Lin on trumpets. The rhythm section was comprised of John Palmer on guitar, Jay Burrid on drums, Dennis Johnson on bass and Phil Porter on keys.

Trumpeter Alan Ware came in to replace Byron who decided he wanted to keep his steady hotel playing job. Alan was working in the lounge act in the same hotel where Bill was playing. They became friends in their off hours and naturally when Bill needed another player, Alan came to mind. Alan became the band's road manager. He was also the only band member with good credit. He bought a car for the band to travel in. This was a major commitment, as sometimes they had to scrape by on only \$75 a week.

After about two months of rehearsals, Guitarist Angel South joined the band bringing a heavy background in blues, and rock music. Angel soon became one of the most inventive and talented guitarists on the scene. Later when the band started to tour, Bill would rely on Angel's soloing to bring the crowd to it's feet.

When the band decided to go out on the road, several members chose to stay in Vegas, hoping that a gig in a club would be more steady than the life on the road with Bill's fledgling band. Byron left the band early in 1971 to stay with his wife and newborn son. Lin was offered the lead chair in Buddy Rich's band. Gerry also wanted to stay with his steady job in town.

With replacements needed, Bill went to the band for help. Jay Burrid had been in the Navy with trumpeter Jerry Van Blair stationed in San Francisco. Jay moved to Vegas to try and make some money after his stint with Darrin, while Jerry stayed in San Francisco for the same reason. When a spot in the trumpet section opened, Jay recommended Jerry for



the chair. He filled it better than anyone could have hoped. Young trumpeter Ted Piercefield was also a highly talented arranger and vocalist and was recruited to fill Gerry Lamy's spot. Bill heard Ted playing lead at the Thunderbird Hotel with Ray Anthony and invited him to play split-lead trumpet with his new group.

Ted remembered that tunes like "God Bless the Child" were done off the cuff. Terry was a great lounge singer and was wonderful on those standards. At the Pussycat at a Go-Go, Bill would sing "Sweet Home Chicago". During this time, Ted was asked to join Wayne Cochran and the CC Riders but had already joined Chase.

Epic records saw a future in the band and had the band move to Chicago to record what would soon become their most popular album. The band was booked into "Mothers," a club in Chicago, playing from 9 p.m. until 3 a.m. After the gig was over they would pack up and move all of their gear to Universal Studios for the recording session that afternoon. The band had rented some apartments nearby, so they were able to eat and get some rest before the call at the studio.



After the early afternoon session they would move all the gear back into the club for the show that night. This process was repeated for more than a week. In nine days they figured that they had the album completed. After compiling the total time of the album, Bill realized that it was about six minutes short. He sent Ted and Alan into a practice room to arrange something. In very little time, they had an arrangement of Rod Stewart's "Handbags and Gladrags" finished. Bill loved it and it was recorded that same afternoon.

The album proved to be a huge success as "Get It On" became a number one pop hit in the summer of 1971. The band was nominated for a Grammy award. Bill was voted as the number two pop musician of the year, runner up to Carly Simon. The group also placed second in the Rock/Pop/Blues group category and the album was the number one pop album of the year, according to Downbeat Magazine. At one point, the band had 260 one nighters in a row.

Again speaking with Leonard Feather, Bill discussed the music, "On our next album we'll be aiming for more color, more variety of expression. I built a bit of a monster for myself with the four trumpets, especially since I don't care for the more commonly used mutes. But we can level off a lot by doubling more often on Flugelhorns. There have to be plenty of vocals because it helps sell the band. But I agree about the words. We have some lyrics now that are more meaningful. In most jazz-rock bands, the horns tend to be just a background, the horns are in the forefront here and that's what's different about our group, I believe. We want the horns to be predominant, to share the mileage without drowning the singer out, and to allow for enough instrumental passages so that the right proportions are maintained.

Luckily the tune that got the best reaction in the first album was a thing Terry and I wrote called "Get It On" in which we achieved the best balance between vocal and horns. We want to keep up that pattern of bouncing back and forth between the trumpets and the singer."

Bassist Dartanyon Brown "The first time I heard Bill Chase was in Fond du Lac Wisconsin in 1971 probably about a week after the first album was released. Ron Dewitte, Craig Horner, David Bernstein and I were all playing one of those great little 'near beer' teen gathering places so common in the northern Wisconsin lakes region. The name might have been Judy's Gin Mill or something cute like that. It was a Friday afternoon and David, Ronnie and I were sitting around doing basically nothing. Things were calm until Craig literally burst through the door (knocking over nightstand in the process) and bounded to the record player. He took the record that was playing on the turntable and frisbee'd it across the room. Replacing it with another one, he said: "You guys are NOT going to believe this...!" Well, we'd heard a lot of music and sarcasm was starting to take over until the needle hit that first note of "Open Up Wide...."

At this point, I'll leave you to savor the first time YOU heard Chase. That's the reason any of us are here (hear) interacting in the first place. Hearing the album definitely changed my impressions of what music could be; but I had no idea of how William Chase's music would soon literally reshape my life in the years ahead."

In May of 1971, CHASE helped re-open the Aquarius Theater in Hollywood. The first show featured CHASE, American Eagle, and Shiloh as the headlining acts.



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In June of 1971, CHASE made it's New York debut at the Schaefer Music Festival in the Wollman Rink at Central Park. CHASE was in the area for the upcoming Newport Jazz Festival. The concerts was shared with the Buddy Rich Band.

Jazz Promoter George Wein, from the liner notes of Dave Brubeck's "The Last Set at Newport" Before Dave Brubeck made his appearance at Newport on the fateful night of July 3rd, 1971, Bill Chase and his jazz/rock group had just finished playing one of the most exciting opening sets that we ever had at the Newport Jazz Festival. Dave was visibly affected by the reaction of the audience and the enormous volume of sound that came from the incredible amount of electronic equipment that Chase used in their performance. Dave asked me to please turn up the sound system as loud as possible so that his tiny quartet would not appear dwarfed by the sound of the previous group. I told him to forget it and go out and "wail".

Riding the crest of the first album's success the band was booked into George Wein's Newport Jazz Festival. The show went over extremely well, but the festival had it's problems when riots broke out during the following group's performance. Angel remembers rioters tearing the place apart and even hurling the grand piano off of the stage. All of the bands ran for their lives. This was the event that caused the moving of the festival to Carnegie Hall for several years.

The band's fame soon spread and national television spots followed. Performances on the Smothers Brothers and Tonight Shows brought their music to more people. The band was doing a gig in Lincoln, Nebraska, they finished the gig and then flew immediately to Los Angeles first thing in the morning, they went to the hotel for a quick clean up and then went over to the studio to tape the Smothers Brothers Show, after the show they went back to the hotel to clean up again, then they went to NBC to tape the Tonight Show. From the Tonight Show, they went and did two sets at the Whiskey a Go Go. After the gig they flew back to the Mid-West for a show the next day. The Smothers show was taped in the studio with no audience. In between numbers the camera was filming the band as Bill's voice over talked "people ask me why the name CHASE, well, that's my name too!" The band played "Open Up Wide" and "Get It On" on both shows. On the Tonight Show the audience went crazy, prompting Johnny Carson to quip "Fine group, just fine, but there are nine fellows who will not be invited to Lawrence Welk's birthday party." That evening the band played at the Los Angeles club the Whiskey A-Go-Go and put on a spectacular show in front of a packed house, including Doc Severinsen, Ed McMahon and Johnny Carson.

Trumpeter Dan Jacobs, "I first met Bill in '64 when he was playing with Woody in San Francisco. We got to know each other a bit from some mutual friends and mutual interest in playing. We would run into each other on the road from time to time and I recall one time in Colorado Springs in '69 when Bill was there with Woody playing at the same club I was playing at; they were there for one night, and I was there for a month with the house band.



On a break, we were talking and he mentioned for the first time the idea of putting together the band with a 4 trumpet front line, that ultimately ended up being the "Chase" band. He said he was sick of being a side man and that playing behind a curtain, unseen, in the Vegas bands was driving him crazy. In fact, he said that is why he asked Woody to let him go back on the road for that tour, he said he felt he was losing it with the bands in Vegas.

In 1971, they were touring after the first album, and they had a one night stand at a place called "Mr President" in Grand Rapids, MI.

The band I was working with was also playing there during the week for a month. Anyway, he and his band arrived, but the truck with all of their equipment didn't make it for some reason. So Bill asked me if he could use our equipment as it was already set up and ready to go on the stage from our performance the previous night. Of course I agreed. So Bill and the Chase band actually did use all our equipment, drums, piano/synth, mikes, amps, lights, etc. (they had all their own individual horns) for their performance that night. It was a great show"

Throughout 1971 the band maintained a vigorous touring schedule. The band was a supercharged bunch of musicians on stage and after each show they were totally exhausted, having given their all. Usually the shows went off without a hitch, however there were a few occasions when something did go wrong. During one show the drum beat got changed around, nothing like this had ever happened before. Everyone was so amazed that something went wrong that they all broke into laughter. The music stopped and the band took several minutes before they regained enough composure to start the tune over.

In order to ensure a great crowd response for "Get It On," Bill would typically have Angel play a 10 to 15 minute solo displaying his guitar skills. Angel was a forerunner in the use of guitar effects, that are used so much today. At a show in

Indiana something happened that still brings a smile to Angel's face. Bill had flown to Chicago for an interview and was due back an hour before the show. Angel had a habit of sipping a glass of wine before each show. On this particular night he went through his warm up routine and then started on his glass of wine. Showtime rolled around and Bill was still not there. Angel had another glass. Bill arrived one and a half hours late, by then Angel had finished his bottle. The show was going well, even though Angel had much more wine than he was used to. When it came time for his solo the alcohol finally hit him. Angel played on and on for almost forty five minutes. He only stopped because he finally noticed Bill frantically waving his arms for him to signal "Get It On."

Ted-"One time we opened for Black Sabbath & Alice Cooper. Meeting Ozzy Osbourne and Alice Cooper was neat because they were just regular guys, we actually shared the dressing room with them. Also Karen & Richard Carpenter were huge fans of the group. One time when we played Madison Square Garden we got this huge bouquet of flowers and the card read from Karen & Richard Carpenter

"A lot of times I would double the lead parts with Bill, if I felt like it. If I ever missed something Bill would say "If you're gonna do it...DO IT!" Bill didn't care about me doubling the lead with him on a few things, if he did he never said anything."

"GG was a far better singer for the group, Terry was good, damn good, but he was a lounge singer, one of the best I heard. It's just for what we were doing, GG was the better choice and GG had to get used to being in a band like Chase, it was alien to him at first, especially things like the Greek suite."

The band was really a group of good friends during the early years. Nicknames were common: Bill – "Craze" (Phil Porter used to call him "Grease" and joke to him about having 3-4 of his shirt buttons undone so everybody could see his chest hair)

Alan – "Carrot Ass" (because he was a vegetarian) also called the "Prince" because of his long straight blonde hair

Dennis – "the Oaf" (Listen to several of the live concert tapes and you can hear Phil playing the Addams Family theme on the organ after Dennis was introduced. Dennis used to trip over amps, cymbals, etc.)

In August of 1971 while at the Hollywood Bowl, the band opened up for the 5th Dimension and over 10,000 people. After the gig Marylinn McCoo told Chase "Never again!", meaning that they were FAR too powerfull and exciting a group to be opening for the 5th Dimension.

Each member of the band received many of opportunities to be featured. Piercefield and Van Blair sang a couple of numbers. Ware and Piercefield helped in arranging some tunes. Van Blair was provided ample space to showcase his fantastic Clifford Brown-like flugelhorn work. His playing on "God Bless the Child" was beautiful.

Audiences and critics alike loved the band. Critic Chris Van Ness could not get enough, "In thirty seconds Chase took in an audience and brought them to their feet standing and cheering. It is impossible not to be affected by the musical power that nine men called Chase put out. Bill Chase began the evening soloing somewhere around double-high C, and it was impossible not to think back to the showmanship of Maynard Ferguson. And later when all four trumpets started taking one bar solos off each other and building with each one, the other three brass players proved to be almost an even match for Chase's skill and artistry. Chase is quite possibly the most perfect blending of musical elements and musicians to ever hit the rock pop music scene."

Some concerts would begin with total darkness over the stage. Bill would start his solo introduction to "Open Up Wide" as the spotlight focused in on him. When the rest of the trumpets joined in, the lights spread to engulf the whole section. The whole show was well produced and had audiences raving about the band. "In less than thirty seconds Chase took in an audience which had already been dulled into a state of soporific boredom by two hours of mediocre (or worse) music and had many of them standing on their feet cheering. It is impossible not to be affected by the musical power that nine men called Chase put out."

Later Woody Herman described the band as, "A group that has four trumpets all milked up to an acid, heavy rhythm sound with an organ. It's a gas. You walk right in and get pinned right up against the wall with the sound."

Alan did all of the scoring for the charts. Bill wrote out things very slowly. One time Bill called Alan over to his pad to score some things and Bill had only written 8 bars. Alan said "you've been writing all day and there's only 8 bars?" Bill said "Yeah, but it's a great 8 bars!"

Alan said "Bill wanted to do a tribute to the Rolling Stones and have Jimmy Peterik join the band. Alan wanted to have Bill

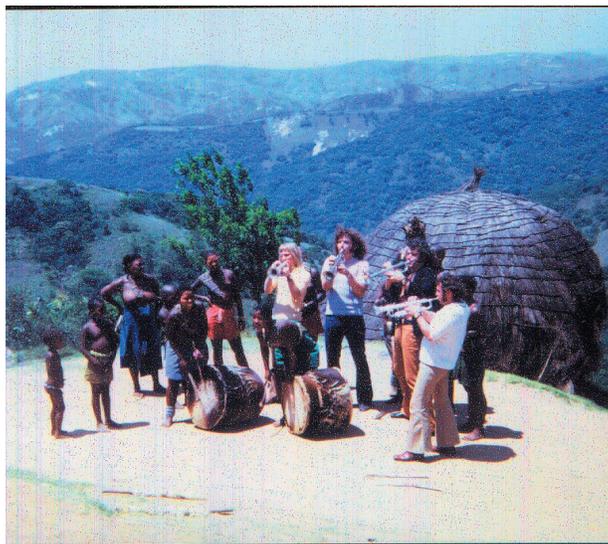
write a big band type of tribute piece for the group and Bill said "No Way!"

WBBM-TV in Chicago, a CBS affiliate, produced a weekly half-hour show called "Repertoire Workshop," a program for the arts sponsored by RC Cola. Usually the show featured dancers or dramatic acting performances. Since Chase was based in Chicago and attached to CBS they ended up on one of the shows. Unfortunately the show was only broadcast in Chicago and on a couple of other affiliate stations. The performance was top notch. "Woman of the Dark" featured all of the trumpet players. "Listen to Her Sing" was a beautiful ballad written by Joe Ambrosia and sung by Terry Richards, also featuring some exceptional section work by Bill and the trumpets. An appreciative studio audience helped the band play at their finest.

Alan – "That WBBM TV show was weird because Bill and Ted stood on this little platform and Jerry and I stood on either end of the platform and we could NOT hear each other that well. It was typical TV BS but it came out alright considering we were still tired from that big LA trip."



The Chicago Sun Times TV guide placed CHASE on the cover the week of the broadcast. The preview also featured a short article on the band. In the article, Bill was interviewed about the band, "We didn't want to sound like any other group, and that saxophone and trombone sound would have been unmistakable. I use trumpets on top, the middle is taken care of by guitar and organ and the bass is the bottom. So I'm not losing the fullness of the sound because of the missing trombone or something like that. And I've been able to get many colors just using trumpets."



The band was often booked at odd settings, one time they opened up for ZZ top at the warehouse in New Orleans. The crowd booed and threw things. They also played at Rockefeller center with Billy Preston and the Clowns (a heavy metal type band) one band called the Dwarfs had all midgets playing super loud thunder heavy metal.

Alan-"Bill never had anything negative to say about any other group, we all loved BS&T, Chicago, Beatles, Crosby, Stills, Nash & Young, CCR, Ten Wheel Drive, Santana, 3 Dog Night, you name it. One time I took Bill to see this girl singer Melanie who sang (Brand New Key). Well we get in for free because I knew the bouncer at the door, we sit down and this chick starts singing and it was so awful we were turning green. All these little teeny-boppers were screaming for more and Bill leans my way and yells to me 'What are they yelling about?' It was pretty bad."

January of 1972 on the way to Africa, the band stopped in Rome for a promo event. Jerry scored some hash at the coliseum in Rome and when they went to fly out, the airlines wouldn't let Jerry on the plane (it was the early 70's)... Jerry ate it all and was sick the entire trip to Africa, he missed the first press conference the next day as well. The band toured South Africa and soon after, Japan. While in the South Africa, the band visited several villages and since the trumpeters never went anywhere without their horns they played several songs while the locals played their drums.

The bands busy tour schedule taken from the tour program was like this: January 3-5 Johannesburg City Hall 8pm, 6th Pietermaritzburg City Hall 8pm, 7th Durban City Hall 8pm, 8th Durban City Hall 6 and 9pm, 10th Durban City Hall 8pm, 11th Durban City Hall 6 and 9pm (Coloureds and Asiatics), 13th Cape Town University 8pm, 14th Athlone Stadium Cape Town (Coloureds), 15th Cape Town University 6 and 9pm, 17th Pretoria City Hall 8pm, 18th Johannesburg City Hall 8pm.

In April of 1972, when touring Japan the band received a welcome that marked them as royalty. As they departed the plane they saw a huge crowd and a large banner with the Chase logo waiting for them. The band had five singles in the top ten in Japan. Sold out concerts in Nagoya, Osaka and at the Budokan, the largest concert hall in Tokyo followed on

this tour. The Budokan show, Sponsored by Mobil Oil was televised across Japan. The concert hall was packed with thousands of Chase fans. Tours to Italy and Europe followed to promote their album.

A big thrill for Ted was at the 1972 Newport Jazz Festival at Carnegie Hall, Ted got to trade solos with Bill on valve trombone on the tune Close Up Tight which was the encore for the night, Jerry Van Blair was also featured. Jon Faddis was backstage waiting to see Bill and the band after their set.

Ted-"Sure there were drugs, not as much as with other groups maybe. Jerry was a big stoner and Jerry was so beautiful man, he could play great straight or stoned, it didn't matter. I didn't like coke, it made me too jumpy. Bill was a fan of cocaine but it did NOT get in the way. Usually Bill was straight, in fact one time we all came to a rehearsal stoned and Bill was upset. He never yelled at us, but he was like "Come on guys, we HAVE to get this thing together. Go home...we'll do it tomorrow."

For the second album, "Ennea," the band traveled to San Francisco. Most of the music was actually written in the studio. Bill was continually changing the music. After a few tunes had been recorded even the personnel had a couple of changes. Gary Smith replaced Jay Burrid on drums and G.G. Shinn replaced Terry Richards on vocals. Shinn's vocal virtuosity and his ability to play the trumpet when needed, allowed for a fourth trumpet player when either Piercefield or Van Blair sang.

Alan-"The cover for the ENNEA record was done at the National Park Museum in San Francisco when we were doing the 2nd album. Jim Marshall did the photos and it was done real early in the morning and we were all hung over, even Bill was a little hung over. To top it off it was cold as hell that morning, that's why Bill's in a turtle neck and we're dressed heavily. It was funny, we we're all staggering up against those pillars trying not to fall over.

GG was supposed to be the first singer, he and Angel knew each other. Angel called GG to join the band for \$250 a week. GG laughed and told Angel he was already making \$2000 a week with his own group. His band was working in LA and broke up in December of 1971. When the Chase band was in San Francisco working on the Ennea album, Angel called GG again and asked him to come up to San Francisco to join the group, GG joined.

This recording session proved to be a very exciting album for trumpet players and music lovers alike. However the critics disliked it and sales did not reach the success of the first album. Containing an entire side dedicated to Greek Mythology, this album was quite a step for Bill's writing talents. "Cronus" had been an instrumental version since the early days of the band, Erin Adair added lyrics to the song and to the rest of the Ennea Suite. "Woman of the Dark," a tune that had been in the bands books since early in 1971 proved to be one of the jazzier songs the band recorded as far as free blowing goes. In the solo section Chase and Van Blair each play a chorus, then trading fours on out were Chase, Piercefield, Ware and Van Blair. The ending turned out exceptional, considering they had only outlined the idea beforehand. According to Chase's attorney Alex Devience, the album took about three weeks and either cost \$130 thousand (which was a lot of money for an album) or was \$130 thousand dollars over budget, he couldn't remember exactly which.

Ted Piercefield-We personally felt the Ennea album was too non-commercial and too early in the bands history to go that far out there. The music was unbelievable but everything changed after the 1st album. We often felt, at times, it was all about Bill and Bill only. Even though the band WAS Bill's vision, it was more of a group effort. Everybody was a star and everybody had a role to fill. Jerry's parts were the weirdest, those 4th parts. If you looked at his music it made no sense, but put the other 3 voices on top of it...it was beautiful. Jerry had to play a lot of roots and 9th's in the chords, but Jerry was a better soloist than anyone, even Bill knew that.

In concert the band was always full of energy. The band members had fun on stage. Dennis made a habit of going to Phil at the keyboards to tune his bass before the song "River." He realized that Bill was listening to him and using it to find the pitch he was supposed come in on. One night Dennis asked for a tuning note a half step off on purpose. Bill played his entrance and then realized he had been tricked.

Drummer Gary Smith was only 20 or 21 years old when he joined the band. He was a good friend of Dennis Johnson who helped to get him on the band. Gary remembers how hard the shows were to play. At the end of each tune Bill was always going for that highest note. Gary had to play drum fills all the way to the cut off. He would become exhausted, even with all of his youthful exuberance.

Always willing to help students, Bill worked as a clinician at the Elon College Jazz Workshop in North Carolina in October 1973. In 1974, Bill toured with Ron Modell's Northern Illinois University Jazz Band for a week. Performing big band arrangements of tunes such as "Get It On," "MacArthur Park," and "Bochawa."

The band again toured South Africa in January 1973 achieving great success. Bill was also musically inspired and wrote

"Bochawa" on the tour. It originally featured Van Blair (Bo), Chase (Cha), and Wally Yohn (Wa). Although never recorded on an album by the second band, it became a big hit when played live mainly by the third band. Drummer Joe Correro mentioned that "Bill loved Jerry's playing so much that every time Jerry would be playing a solo, Bill would just watch him closely." Ted said "Bill knew that Jerry was the better soloist and that didn't bother Bill one bit, he knew what he could do and it was HIS group, so letting Jerry be the jazz player was no big deal. Dart mentioned "the band was never the same after Jerry left." Ted felt that "Jerry was every bit as good as Clifford and Freddie, it's tragic that nobody knew about him, he had a great laugh." GG spent an entire evening with the Dutchess while on the tour. The extended solo section on the album allowed Jay Sollenberger to trade solos with Bill. After their return from South Africa, the band went into Universal Studios in Chicago, and recorded several tunes for the next album, including "Dead," "Love," "Frustration," "Close Up Tight," and "Twinkles." These recordings went unreleased until February of 1997, because the band broke up soon after the session.

In mid 1972 the band went on hiatus for a time due to a rash of problems, culminating with Bill declaring bankruptcy. His dream did not die, he soon reformed with an exceptional line-up of talent. Jay Sollenberger, Jim Oatts (who incidentally saw Bill playing with Woody in 1963, when he was 14, convincing him to drive towards a future on the trumpet) and Joe Morrissey formed the trumpet section for the longest period in 73-74, however there was a lot of changing personnel during this reformation process. Carl Haefili, Van Blair, Rick Gardner and Byron Lingenfelter floated in and out of the trumpet section. Lynn Nicholson was on the band only briefly and Bill's long time buddy Lin Biviano often subbed for the band, as did Alan Ware.

In 1972, Bill attended the National Trumpet Symposium in Denver as an observer. Since he was a prominent trumpet player he was asked to participate in the panel discussions. He enjoyed the symposium so much that in 1973 he returned as a lecturer and with the Chase band as performers. Unknown to most trumpet players, a young Lynn Nicholson was in the band at that time. His tenure in the band was very brief, due to a conflict of ego's with Bill. Jay and Jim's buddy Joe Morrissey was originally supposed to fill the chair. While in Denver, Bill also played with several high school bands, and sat in with the Denver Broncos pep band.

Lynn was playing with the Bobby Christian big band in Chicago in 1973 and one night Bill walked into the club where Lynn was playing, he did not even meet Bill, some guys told him that Chase was there. Three weeks later Bill calls Lynn and Lynn almost hung up on him thinking it was a buddy playing a trick "NO...come on, who is this really?" Well, Bill finally convinced Lynn it was for real and had him drive out to Denver for the National Trumpet Symposium gig.

Lynn Nicholson mentioned that Bill never really had a kick ass night playing wise during his short stint on the band, there just was not enough work to keep everybody's chops up at that time. Lynn was there at a "lean" time for gigs, Bill also had taken several weeks off working on new material for the Pure Music album. Lynn added that the particular band had an odd mix of people and the gig seemed dark and desperate, the vibe never seemed harmonious. My first gig was the Trumpet Symposium in Denver. Chase left my book at the hotel, so the concert was held up for 45 minutes while someone went back after it. I was a good player, but not clairvoyant, so I needed to see the music. After all, the whole audience was trumpet players. Chase's chops were really down that night and mine were up. You heard the tape. After the performance, there must have been 30 trumpet players asking me various questions about trumpet and only a couple over by Bill. I knew then that I wouldn't last long on the band.

Bill did have a hand in getting me on Maynard's band, but I was only on the Chase band for a couple of months and in that time there were hardly any gigs. Chase's chops were not that strong when I was on the band because there were no gigs, Bill never practiced. If Bill wasn't out playing gigs, he wasn't playing. Period. Maynard was the same way. Bill did have a few moments in each show, though, that reminded everyone who he was and what he was capable of. It's just the gigs always seemed dark and desperate. The music was great, but the vibe was never harmonious, just dark and desperate. I'm not sure where the darkness came from, I always felt Jay Sollenberger did not like me and several weeks after being on the band I was fired.

However, to this day, Chase and Maynard are my favorite players...when they were on. Bill is the perfect trumpet player, kind of mix between Maynard and Bud Brisbois. Great lead high chops, good jazz chops...great endurance when he was on. He had a great feel for his music. He fit perfectly into the rock world, too, but just couldn't seem to stay popular. Longevity is much easier to maintain in the jazz world.

When I was on Maynard's band Johnny Emma came by to say hi. He told I was lucky to have left the band when I did. Very prophetic, Johnny was on the plane...I guess I was just there at an odd time.

Lynn was there as a sub for Joe Morrissey and on one night Sandy Sandburg of the Holton Co. set up a dinner with Lynn and Maynard. At the same place, in walked Bill with Lin Biviano, Stan Mark and the rest of the MF trumpet section.

Unknown to Lynn he was being screened for the MF job. Lynn mentioned that Bill is his all time favorite trumpet player, he was the perfect trumpet player, a mix of both Maynard and Bud Brisbois – great high note lead chops – good jazz chops. Bill fit in well with both jazz and rock fans, it's just by the time Lynn was there, the money wasn't too good and it was tough to stay popular.

Dartanyon added that when the band broke up in December of 1973 it was because the money was pretty much gone to keep it going. Dart went to Manhattan to seek work, in January Bill called him and said " We're giving it another go." Dart remembered that Bill paid for a lot of things out of his own pocket to keep the band afloat.

Jay Sollenberger mentioned that "Lynn did not fit well within the section, also Bill did not really like the fact that Lynn could play higher." Dart felt that "Lynn was at Conflict with Bill, Lynn and Tony (guitar) did not get along too well either." Lynn was totally unaware of any ego conflicts, he was only 21 at the time and was just there to have fun.

During this break Bill rented a condo in Florida or New York for a place to practice at. Rumor has it, that he was evicted after several weeks because he continually practiced long tones for hours. Other band members also had some great experiences during this break up. Ted, Gary and Dennis went to Florida and started their own band, "X." They received a record deal from Epic, but changed their minds when Bill wanted them back in Chicago to help him reform the band.

Angel South formed "Cottonwood South," and also had a record deal with Epic, which resulted in one album. One tune on his album had originally been written for Chase and another had been written by Dennis and Ted for their band.

Bill reformed the band in September of 1972 to record a new Demo featuring the tunes: "Dead, Love, Frustration, Close Up Tight and Twinkles". The band was Bill, Ted, Alan, Jerry, Gary Smith, Dennis Johnson, Augie Bucci on organ and Clay Cropper on guitar.

October of 1972 saw a newly reformed band and Bill looking for a different sound. From October through March of 1973 the band was Bill, Rick Gardner, Alan and Jerry on trumpet, Davy Ferguson on guitar, Jerry Manfredi on bass, Joe Corroero on drums, and Wally Yohn on keyboards. Skip Weiser was on trombone briefly. At the beginning of the tour the band carried a vibraphonist and a trombonist who doubled on flute. This did not last long as Bill returned to his trademark sound. Bill had also learned that by adding a few more tunes on flugelhorn, he could add some new color to the music. Bill's playing was stronger than ever.

Rick Gardner "I brought Wally Yoh (pronounced Yawn), Jerry Manfredi and David Ferguson to the band per Bill's request.. Alan Ware was from my home town of Wichita and Jay Sollenberger was my understudy at Wichita State University... how time fly's".

Jay Sollenberger-"I was playing with the Wichita State jazz band in 1973 when I received a call that Bill Chase was looking for a trumpet player. Rick Gardner was leaving the Chase band and Rick and I had played in the mid-west rock band The Fabulous Flippers from '68-'70, So I drove to Chicago to start rehearsals at Universal Recording Studios in April 1973. We rehearsed for one week then went out on the road, it was odd for me at first because the rehearsals would usually start at midnight and last until 5 or 6 a.m.

Our first gig was in Houston at the La Bastille Club, we used music & wire music stands for the first week on the road, then Bill took the music away from us. We DID eventually memorize the music, but that method of taking the music away was pretty interesting. I was on the band when we played the National Trumpet Symposium in 1973 with Lynn Nicholson. The reason he left was he was really young and had not had much experience playing in a section and we were not really happy with his section work in the band at that time. Also I don't think Bill liked the fact that he could play higher than him so there may have been some ego things there too. But he did go on to play with Maynard and was a fine player, really strong. It's just he was in the wrong place at the wrong time.

I remember in 1974 we played a gig in Washington DC and got standing ovations after each show and just got terrible reviews in the Washington Post and because of that, to this day, I seldom read a newspaper. The crowds just went wild everywhere we played.

We would start every show in the dark. We had to find our way to the stage in the dark. There would be a spot light on Bill as he started on a double high C. He'd do the cadenza for awhile, using electronics, playing high notes, bluesy licks – the works. When he was ready, he'd play a certain lick four times, and we knew it was our cue to start the tune Open Up Wide.

I picked up his way of falling off a note using all three valves and continuing down a long way. Also, he'd play a high A

with all three valves down. I don't know anybody else who does that. He taught me how to back off and shape phrases so you don't have to play loud all the time and how to really play short notes short. I was always impressed with his concept of time. Sometimes he'd be so on top of the beat he'd be almost pushing us. He was definitely unique. Nobody played like him. He was an original.

One thing I do remember is that he'd insist we play with our feet apart. I was the biggest offender. He'd stick his foot in and pull my feet apart. He believed you could afford the air better with the proper posture. He probably learned that from Maynard. He also had this yoga thing where he could release air just when it was about to give out. He'd contract the stomach muscles to force the air from the diaphragm. It would look like he was breathing but he wasn't. I used that quite a bit when I was with Stan Kenton. I'm not sure if I learned correctly but it seemed to help.

He had a way of writing for the trumpet section that was unusual. He'd write the first eight bar phrase for the first player playing lead, then the second player would pick it up for eight bars and so on down the line. It kept the music interesting for the section."

Jim Oatts "I couple of the band members from Iowa recommended me for the gig. I took Jerry Van Blair's place. Bill showed me the left hand grip I use to take the pressure of the chops. I remember asking him how he got such iron chops and was able to do so much work all night. He kind of laughed and said "long tones". Sometimes we'd be off for a week and he wouldn't touch his horn. He'd have rough moments, but he was strong, and he'd pull it together. I believe he did work out. I used to see ankle weights and stuff like that around his room. I don't for sure that he did a regular workout, but I suspect he did.

Every night we got there to play it was like "go for it". Everybody was good friends. There was no bickering that I've seen on so many other road bands. Bill treated you with respect, so you really wanted to play and make it happen. He was the kind of guy that if you asked him for \$500, he'd give it to you if he had it, no hassles. I'd never experienced that kind of respect before on a band.

I remember my first rehearsal very well. He said here are the parts, memorize them in a week. He was a great believer in letting things happen naturally. The band was his idea, and he worked on locking it in.

I'd hear him warm up before a gig, and he'd really warm the horn up. You know, he'd take it up to the top. Basically his warm up was short and sweet to get it working, not burn it all up before the gig. For two hours that was a demanding book, we'd play an awful lot, especially him. He not only played with the section but did a majority of the solo work as well. Sometimes I thought the band got way, way too loud, but that was the whole rock and roll syndrome. Actually, I suffered a little hearing loss because of it. When Bill hit double high C's through those giant monitors, you thought your fillings would come out.

We played in Texas and then had five days off. At the time we were all living in Chicago and I hadn't been home to see my family in maybe six or seven months. The next gig was above the Iowa line in Jackson, Minnesota. So all of us from the area went home and got together to drive up to Jackson. Well, the band was always late and we thought Bill and the rest were driving and didn't give it too much thought. We kind of soothed the promoter and all that. But when it got to a certain point, we called Beacon Artists in Chicago and found out that they flew. It got to the point where it was obvious the gig had to be canceled. It turned out they were in a sever storm, and it was probably a wind shear that took the plane down. There probably hasn't been a day that's gone by when I don't think about that guy. He'll always be with me."

Dartanyon Brown "Another nice thing about my residence was that it was across the parking lot from a popular night club/roadhouse called the 505 Club. Owned and managed by Dick Kampus, a large and hearty man with a real lust for throwing a party, The "5" was the classic edge-of-town out in the county-type place which even the local police didn't mess with too much because it was that rough.

Over the years, we saw lots of different groups there. Funky horn groups like the Flippers, singer Marvin Spencer and lots of groups from Kansas, Florida, Louisiana and elsewhere. The list of bands that toured the roadhouse circuit to carve out a career is long. Before I happened to run into Chase, however, I was home one day when the phone rang...

I picked it up. "Hello", I said.

"Hey Dart" said the excited voice on the other end, "Get your ass over here now and see this...!" I recognized the voice as Dick's from across the driveway at the 505.

"What are you talking about, man?" I queried.

"Just get over here NOW, you won't believe it."

He was right.

As I loped across the expanse of white gravel, I heard through the walls of the club the rhythmic thud of bass guitar and drums but as I got closer to the door, the syncopation was getting “too good” if you know what I mean (the players do). By the time I entered the cavernous club it only took another two or three minutes to realize that something special was happening on the stage--and this was just rehearsal.

The group rehearsing for the evening's show was Wayne Cochran and his band, the CC Riders. For those of you unfamiliar with the tradition, Wayne Cochran was a soul singer in the tradition of James Brown, but just like Pat Boone, Elvis Presley and the Osmonds, Cochran was a white version of a black innovator.

The cool thing about Wayne Cochran is that he, like Brown, is the real deal. He was a loud, signifyin' funkified white boy who could drive an audience as well as any R&B veteran I ever saw. But I digress.

Cochran's energy came as much from his band as his own nasty soul and in this case, the band was being stoked by a young, tall skinny kid named Jaco. Yep, the original bass legend was playing in my home town and just like a private party in my backyard!

Jaco Pastorius was the heart of the rhythm section which also included guitarist Charlie Brent (ironically, Brent was/is a dynamite arranger who would contribute charts to Chase's Ennea album.

Well, I watched my life flash before my eyes as I listened to Jaco creating a totally loose, but on-the-mark groove. They were actually playing “3 Views of a secret”, (years before Jaco would record it on his own solo album.) His sensibilities for groove and support and melodic bass playing was strangely scary but at the same time an affirmation of where I knew the instrument could go.

After the rehearsal, I made a beeline for the stage and introduced myself to Jaco. Being an old newspaper reporter, I wasn't going to miss an opportunity to “interview” this guy to find out where he got his style from.

For the next 3 days, I was host to the Future Of Jazz Electric Bass. Jaco stayed with us and we jammed, talked, went to the Cochran gig then jammed some more talked a lot more about life, our families, Miles, and why each of us had a lot to offer. I have never met a more honest, caring, sensitive and talented individual as Jaco Pastorius in 1972. The reason I am including this anecdote in my story about how I met Bill Chase is that the two events were really a one-two punch to my career as a musician and a human being.

Jaco was a natural musician who, told me about his father who played drums and toured and his Mom, Greta who he was totally devoted to. He already had a young family and it was his single-minded goal to support his family by convincing everyone that he was the world's greatest bass player! He was totally convinced of that fact (I certainly wasn't going to disagree from what I heard..) and he told me of his plans to leave Cochran soon and travel to Boston to join up with a new friend named Pat Metheny. Metheny, he said, offered him an opportunity to teach at Berklee College of Music in Boston. (Metheny, as you know, recorded the seminal “Bright Size Life” with Jaco and the two joined pianist Paul Bley and drummer Bruce Ditmas to record an even better album on Bley's improvising Artists label) Bill Milkowski's excellent but still-incomplete work on the life of Jaco Pastorius covers this part of the bass player's life pretty well. Read it.

Anyway, I spent three fairly private days with Jaco and we had what could only be termed as a meeting of kindred spirits. The next time I saw Jaco was in 1976 at the Newport Jazz Festival. By then he was with Weather Report and a true star. The funny thing was, when I saw him again, he actually spotted me at the back of a large auditorium (Alice Tully Hall, I think) as I was walking in for to see Weather Report's sound check.

From the stage, he saw me (barely visible I was) and yelled at the top of his lungs “Hey DARTANYAN, HOW YA DOIN'.” It was a testament to his eyesight, his memory and his heart to actually remember our time together after HIS life had changed so radically.

One sad note: The Jaco I knew in 1972 was on a natural high of life. He played in some of the nastiest sin pits in the country but at that point in his life he never smoked, drank or talked about anything but the most inspiring subjects. His goal was to play with Miles Davis. Period. He knew he was good enough, musical enough and hip enough and that was that!

I never saw Jaco again after Newport. Every time news came in about him it was usually great professional triumph but leavened with the sad news of his descent into drug and alcohol abuse.

He told me in Des Moines that he had a chemical imbalance which meant his sensitive system could not tolerate stuff

like cocaine, speed, heroin or any alcohol. Moving to NYC was probably the worst thing he could have done because the influences on him at that time were uniformly bad.

The musicians he hung out with in the Apple (both known and unknown) were into drugs and other bad habits and I believe that he was ultimately demoralized (and hence vulnerable) when he (as I heard but never confirmed) was rejected by Miles Davis. So much of Jaco's life was dedicated to reaching Miles that when he did meet--and was rejected--it was more than he could understand.

I personally can't listen to anything Jaco recorded after his stellar work with Joni Mitchell and Heavy Weather. I hear too much pain and not enough precision in his playing compared to the cat I knew who helped Wayne Cochran and the CC riders rock the house in '72. Bless you Jaco.

Our band, Wheatstraw was an idealistic, talented, naive (at least I was) band, attempting at doing music business with no business plan. What we did have was raw love for the music and we made it work for two years as I said earlier. When reality finally caught up to us, I went back to Des Moines to write music and work on a degree.

Gathering energy...

Well, in Des Moines my first working group was an extremely funky quartet with members Phil Aaberg on piano, Rod Chaffee on guitar and Tom Gordon on drums. It was a great group.

A band of writers, we were a precursor to the Bruce Hornsby-type jazzy roots music which you hear these days. Funny, in those great days we morphed from one style to another with relish. It was a joy to listen to John Coltrane, Paul Butterfield, John Cage, Tree, Donny Hathaway and the Sons of Champlin and to incorporate such disparate forms in our own compositions.

It was a great band with talent to burn and unfortunately for our band (but fortunately for my future) Tommy Gordon was called by Jerry Manfredi, Chase's bass player at the time to join the band (The Ennea album had been released months earlier). Tommy was a great drummer who jumped at the chance to play with Bill, he was off to Chicago to play with the hottest true fusion band of the early 70's.

Of course, it meant the end of our great little Des Moines band but things were far from boring...."

Back to Bill....

It was now spring '73 and, as I mentioned earlier, Tommy Gordon had already joined Chase through his connection with a group called the Fabulous Flippers. Former members of that group were touring with Bill doing the Ennea tour and so TG's connection from years earlier paid off. It was about to do the same for me.

I was in my kitchen making a sandwich when the phone rang.

I picked it up with my mouth half-full and almost choked when the voice on the other end said. "Hello this is Bill Chase."

Needless to say, I was nervous and incredulous as he laid out his offer.

"I've been looking for a new bass player and Tommy says that you're a great bass player and a singer too." I didn't quite know what to say except to try to agree without sounding too egotistical (unlike my friend Jaco who would have had no problem promoting himself)

We have a tour due to start in El Paso, Texas in two weeks. Do you think you can make the gig? He asked me if I knew the music and I said that I knew the first album from listening but that was it. He said "no matter, we've got all the charts. (a word about those charts later...) I just said a little prayer that I was playing in the Jazz band at Drake University with Bob Weast. Taking two semesters of Jazz Band gave me exactly the foundation I needed to read the charts I lived with for the next 6 months.

Talk about bittersweet....

I had just signed a lease with my friends in Des Moines to make our band house work and now was I going to leave town and the guys too?

Well, like all professionals, my partners, John Rowat, Michael Schomers, Frank Tribble and Bill Jacobs were more supportive of me moving up than they were at losing a renter so I was off to Chicago to begin what would be life-changing circumstances.

Time has scraped away the memories of actually leaving Des Moines but I do remember arriving at O'Hare Airport and being driven directly to the legendary Universal Studios on Rush St. where we began rehearsals for the gigs which would begin in a few scant days.

The time went fast. We worked like madmen, rehearsing for hours and then heading out into the Rush street night to dig who was playing at the Rush Up rock club or the Jazz Showcase where we saw George Benson, Eddie Jefferson, Bill Evans, and many other great artists.

Bill put the band up at the Maryland Hotel directly across the street from the Jazz Showcase and Rush Up. So here I was at 23 coming from sleepy little Des Moines and in a few scant days, I was playing with one of the best bands in the world and living in the heart of Chicago's music center. I WAS IN HEAVEN. You understand, don't you.

The wonderful thing about my situation was that Bill really was an understanding guy who wasn't really into showing you what a powerful boss he was. He treated me as an equal from the beginning and with old pros like Jerry Van Blair in the band, I learned pretty quickly about how to pace myself on the road.

I quickly realized that if I was going to keep up with 'Craze' (Bill's intra-band nickname) I had better learn how to stay up late, get up early, practice on the bus, or plane, or later station wagon) and learn to handle any bad habits you might have without letting it affect your performance.

I don't have to tell you about the energy involved in a Chase concert. All those stories you might have heard about sex and drugs and (jazz)rock 'n roll are generally true, but not if you let it interfere with your performance. Consequently, you learned how to 'party hardly' (spelling correct..) “

Drummer Joe Correro was with singer Helen Reddy when CHASE opened up for Helen, when Joe heard CHASE, he was totally knocked out! After his show, Joe went backstage to Bill and told hem how great he thought the group was and that he liked the drummer. Bill told Joe that it was not the regular drummer and they were looking for someone. Joe said "How about me?", Bill auditioned him right then and there and Joe went to LA and told Helen Reddy's manager he was leaving the next day for Chicago to play with Chase. The manager chased Joe around his car trying to clobber him screaming at Joe "Are you nuts?". Joe said the CHASE band was one of the best experiences of his life, it was great because the music was so great and the energy level so high.

Joe said "One time while flying the DC3, I noticed oil leaking out of the engine, I asked the pilot 'should it be doing that?' he responded 'no problem, it's fine'. When they landed, sure enough the engine had to be replaced. We spent the entire month of January 1973 in South Africa living on the coast. There were more days off then playing gigs. While on Safari, lions chased some of the guys up a tree."

April through June of 1973 saw the band personell change again, Bill was joined by Jay Sollenberger, Carl Hafelli and Jerry on trumpet, Tony DeCaprio on guitar, Dartanyan Brown on bass, Wally on keyboard, Tommy Gordon on drums, Russ Freeland on trombone and Fred Raulston on vibes and percussion. Lin Biviano also filled in on trumpet periodically.

Dartanyon flew with Bill and Tony to the Kansas City Jazz Festival in 1973, Dart got so scared in that tiny plane that he was sick, he NEVER flew again with the group, he liked to drive.

August through October of 1973 saw Lynn Nicholson replace Carl Hafelli in the trumpet section briefly and the exit of the trombone and vibes from Bill's vision. Joe Morrissey came in to replace Lynn. Johnny Emma joined on guitar. This band was together through December of 1973 and the recording of the "Pure Music" album.

Bass player Dartanyan Brown joined the band in April of 1973, the following is from his writings on his time with the band: "The year was 1973 and winter was begrudgingly releasing its grip on Des Moines and the rest of central Iowa. The seasons in Iowa are distinct and severe and the chilly wind only revealed a hint of the spring to come. The house, a rather huge 5 bedroom house with an attached high ceilinged studio was the hub of activity for myself and a band I was playing in at the time (the band was called the Mothership). I was attempting to build a life as a working musician in town after spending the period from 1970-1972 on the road playing with a great blues band called Wheatstraw featuring Ron Dewitte from Cedar Rapids, Iowa on guitar.

At 22, I was ambitious and now as I look back on it, I was extremely hungry to play with the very best players I could find. Thanks to playing with local Des Moines musicians George Clinton, Sam Salomone, Tom Gordon, Don Archer, Joanne Jackson, Bobby Jackson, Rod Chaffee, Mike Edwards, Rick Lussey, Harlan Thomas, and Speck Redd, I was extremely

motivated to follow the path of music. Musical discipline tends to be its own reward and of course, at that time in history, we actually thought we could change the world with music. Kinda like day traders do now.

The first time I heard Bill Chase was in Fond du Lac Wisconsin in 1971 probably about a week after the first album was released. Ron Dewitte, Craig Horner, David Bernstein and I were all playing one of those great little 'near beer' teen gathering places so common in the northern Wisconsin lakes region. The name might have been Judy's Gin Mill or something cute like that. It was a Friday afternoon and David, Ronnie and I were sitting around doing basically nothing. Things were calm until Craig literally burst through the door (knocking over a nightstand in the process) and bounded to the record player. He took the record that was playing on the turntable and frisbee'd it across the room. Replacing it with another one, he said: "You guys are NOT going to believe this...!" Well, we'd heard a lot of music and sarcasm was starting to take over until the needle hit that first note of "Open Up Wide...."

At this point, I'll leave you to savor the first time YOU heard Chase. That's the reason any of us are here (hear) interacting in the first place. Hearing the album definitely changed my impressions of what music could be; but I had no idea of how William Chase's music would soon literally reshape my life in the years ahead. Wheatstraw was in was an idealistic, talented, naive (at least I was) band, attempting at doing music business with no business plan. What we did have was raw love for the music and we made it work for two years as I said earlier. When reality finally caught up to us, I went back to Des Moines to write music and work on a degree.

Well, in Des Moines my first working group was an extremely funky quartet with members Phil Aaberg on piano, Rod Chaffee on guitar and Tom Gordon on drums. It was a great group. A band of writers, we were a precursor to the Bruce Hornsby-type jazzy roots music which you hear these days. Funny, in those great days we morphed from one style to another with relish. It was a joy to listen to John Coltrane, Paul Butterfield, John Cage, Tree, Donny Hathaway and the Sons of Champlin and to incorporate such disparate forms in our own compositions.

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On Bill's birthday in 1973 the band had a show. They had been on the road for three days straight with little or no sleep. On the way to the gig Bill ruined his Corvette, his bad luck wasn't over. During the show he knocked his horn into the orchestra pit. Luckily, Schilke fixed it for him easily. The horn had been designed originally for Bill. It was said to be one of the first Schilke tuneable bell trumpet.

Rick Rockey remembered this "In 1973, my girlfriend and I attended a Chase concert at the Bald Eagle Nittany High School in Mill Hall, PA. It was sponsored by the high school band --- probably to raise money. We were excited to see Chase live but a little confused as to why he would be playing in such a backwater, rural community.

It was a great concert but few people attended – probably because it was winter (a cold PA winter) and few people in this area realized who he was. Bill and the band looked tired but the energy was high. The band was well received. I distinctly remember that he played "Ode to a New England Jellyfish." It was a beautiful tune....I never forgot it!!!

Near the end of the concert, Bill had been playing his flugelhorn (while his trumpet was setting on the trumpet stand). Somehow he accidently knocked his trumpet off the stage and what would have served as the orchestra pit. He damaged his trumpet quite badly and was noticeably upset. He then proceeded to do something I would have guess as almost impossible—he played lead on "Get It On" with only one valve working...the first valve. You couldn't tell any difference between this rendition and the one on the album.

After the show I'd hoped to have my picture taken with him. Upon leaving the auditorium and entering the hallway where Bill and a number of other people were standing, I soon changed my mind, Bill was so angry over what had happened, he grabbed his trumpet by the bell, tearing it from the bracing, and bent the bell backwards. Needless to say, I wasn't about to ask him for a photo now so my girlfriend and I silently moved away..."

The band went back to Chicago to record their third album for Epic. Originally a ballad by Jim Peterik was slated to be the title track, however the record executives thought it wasn't hit material. They scratched it off of the album but kept the title, "Pure Music." Bill had to write another tune. He took some time and then came up with "Love is on the Way" with the help of Jim. The album was finished. Engineer Murray Allen remembers the recording session and Bill very clearly. He mentioned that Bill had a habit of brushing his teeth every hour. Who says that musicians don't have good personal hygiene?

Jay-"There was supposed to have been a Weird Song #2 at one point, we rehearsed a tune in 10/8, but it never got past the sketch stage"

Bill let the band go on vacation while he stayed in town to listen to the playbacks. While listening to "Close Up Tight," Bill had an idea for some flugelhorn parts. Jay was at the studio with his horn, so Bill asked him to help add the parts. Bill wrote out the parts in 15 minutes and within the hour they were dubbed onto the tune. If you listen closely you can hear them.

John Baeke added "Chase was in his prime when I was in my brass blowing prime as a jazzer in high school. He came to our high school in Overland Park, KS and put on a clinic in the afternoon prior to his concert. I will never forget walking in to the band room to see that he had already been there and rigged up his trumpet hanging from the ceiling by mere

strings. After the entire band room filled up with area brass studs, in walks Chase, with his hairy chest, gold chains in all their glory. He had some type of wide leather bracelet on. Made him look more like a mythological figure. Sad that I don't remember much about the clinic, except when Chase walked up to his hanging trumpet, without touching it with his hands...only his lips...he started hitting high C's. Not even Maynard has that kind of breath control and chops. Left the clinic with my colorful Chase bumper sticker. Still have it locked inside my foot locker, never peeled apart.

After the clinic, I went home, and put on my best leisure suit and silk shirt. Strategically unbuttoned the top four buttons, just like Chase. Picked up my date...it was my first date ever actually....and off I went to meet my other band geek friends for concert and dinner. We all sat together. No one understood why I made a stink about wanting to sit on the aisle. You see I had snuck in my tape recorder, and I wanted to have clear airspace between his trumpet and my recorder. Recorded the entire concert on the cheapest quality tape Radio Shack ever made. Chase had just released his third album. The place was sold out.

The concert started with Bochawa. Great light/smoke effects...at least considering this was the 70's and in a high school theatre. Chase was standing on a riser higher than the other trumpeters in total darkness. Slowly a lone spot dimly illuminated his trumpet. Then gradually the rest of the trumpeters joined in. The entire stage was never fully illuminated the entire evening. Merely, spots of different colors bouncing around, and reflecting off all of the brass. You know the song. The intensity was rabid. I am sure that the live version that night must have been 3 times longer than the recorded version. Chase had all of us intoxicated with his power. Forget putting my arm around my new date, there would be many movies in the years ahead for that, tonight the date was merely along for some after concert fun. For now, Bill Chase had 110% of my attention. He played all of my favorites. Gladrags, Get It On. And one I had never heard on any album, "Ode To A New England Jellyfish", I still have that old homemade tape. Though I haven't listened to it in over 25 years, I still reassure it like some prized possession. It wasn't long after, that Bill and members of the band were killed in that plane accident. It seemed like so many rockers of that era had met similar fate. Almost as if being killed in a plane accident was the ultimate mark that you had arrived with true musical greatness. I was so upset. I had planned on Chase pouring out years more Bochawa's and the like. I vicariously hoped that someday I might too blow a horn with half the verve as Bill Chase. Now all that changed. Maynard, the Thundering Herd, Kenton, Rich, all were still touring with their bands, but somehow, though more musical, they lacked the power that provided such incredible joy for this pubescent kid. My idols were not football players, politicians or chess champions. But guys like Chase who could show that it's still cool to be a band geek."

Trumpet player Mark Biegel " I'll never forget when I was fortunate enough to see Bill Chase's group live in concert at a local high school in Munster, Indiana back in the '70s (year???) . I had known he was active in the big-band scene and was a well respected Trumpet player but was totally overwhelmed when I heard him live. I think there were 3 trumpets leading the group and most of the players were the same as listed on his first album. They used an old Shure sound system with the skinny upright speakers that produced rock-band sound decibals. Being a young trumpet player myself, I thought I had died and gone to heaven. At that time, most of us were rock and roll fans, and we played in conventional high school big bands/stage bands etc....Chase had unbelievable range on the horn and with the other trumpet players on the stage playing jazz licks along with the rock rhythms -- were were blown away by the intensity of the band. Sadly, the auditorium wasn't even filled. But those who were there will always remember that night. What I remember most was the bands version of 2001 Space Od./Also Sprach.... (spelling). Imagine Chase and the other trumpets exchanging riffs leading to the climax of that song. This band accomplished what Chicago or Blood Sweat and Tears couldn't----True jazz playing in combination with the intensive rock rhythms. It was a powerful combination which really has not yet been equaled. It was only a couple of weeks after this gig that Chase and several band members died on a terrible plane crash. I believe if Chase would have lived, the band would have progressed to produce even more powerful jazz-based pop-rock music. The power of that concert still lingers in my mind---its probably part of the reason I continue to try to grow with my jazz trumpet playing. I'll never forget Bill Chase and that night.

January of 1974 saw Walter Clark replace Tommy Gordon on Drums. When the album was released, the band held several release parties. New York at the Half Note w/ Herbie Hancock on March 7th 1974, Boston and Chicago were the locations. At Faces, a club in Chicago, a Japanese contingent presented a slide show with a narrated history of the group. Also a short video of Bill talking about his new music was shown. The concert itself featured all of the new tunes, with Jim Peterik sitting in on vocals. The show was relayed by television around the club so everyone could see the band, they definitely didn't have a problem hearing the band. This was video taped and copied for several record executives and other music industry people.

Dart Brown-"I had my original electric bass stolen at Universal Studios in Chicago when we were recording Pure Music. I was furious, I went to the owners yelling 'Don't you guys lock up when you leave, and what are you going to do about

my bass?' They didn't care man, it was like they said 'Fuck you!' Some of the highlights for me was when we played the Whiskey A Go-Go in May 1974, that was big time. Walt Clark & I were close too so we were like 'Let's show this LA cats how it's REALLY done. That was fun because LA was a big scene, Bill was on and Jay had good chops there as well. Walt & I were HUGE fans of Head Hunters (Herbie Hancock)".

This band proved to be one of the most exciting to listen to. Many of the numbers had expanded solo sections, and the only vocalist in the band was bass player Dartanyon Brown. He liked singing, but didn't have the capabilities of Richards and Shinn. Solo spots were added to "Get It On," showcasing all of the trumpets, "2001" and other tunes were now trumpet free for all's.

Jay Burrid recalls catching the band at the Whiskey A Go-Go in 1974 and Walter talked to him about subbing for a bit so he could take a break. Jay was waiting to hear from Walter when he learned of the accident. Jay was at Knotts Berry Farm with a group that included Don Menza on sax and Dalton Smith on trumpet.

In 1973, Dartanyan was given a deal by Gibson, to promote it's new model, the Gibson "Ripper" bass guitar. He was to record a tune on a demo to showcase the new improved features of the bass. He invited Bill to come and join him on the session. He wrote the rhythm parts and Bill added the trumpet parts. Bill overdubbed all of the parts himself, adding some tight punches and licks to a great little tune. Bill enjoyed Dart's writing style so much that he asked him to do some more writing for the band.

In June of 1974 Alan Ware replaced Joe Morrissey, original band member Byron Lingenfelter returned to the band in July of 1974 replacing Alan. He was the only band member to be on the band at both the beginning and the end but never record anything on the three albums.

In 1974 work had been started on a fourth album between gigs on the road. The band would fly to Chicago and lay some tracks down and then hit the road for a few shows. "Ode to a New England Jellyfish," was nearly completed. Bill's flugel solo was all that was needed, but it was never finished. Bill was toying with the idea of having just Bill and the rhythm section on the album, Dart had written a tune titled "Eye of the Hurricane" for the recording. Bill had once talked about getting rid of the other trumpets and trying something with just himself and rhythm, in fact I had written a tune called 'Tornado' for that idea at one point but I guess it was just talk."

Nelson Hatt became friends with Bill early in the 1970's and later Bill got Nelson into Woody's trumpet section. Nelson an avid photographer, like Bill, had taken several pictures of the band in concert that were to be used on the fourth album cover. Bill wanted to give him something for the pictures, but he wouldn't take any money, so Bill slipped him a couple of his mouthpieces. In 1977 Nelson played on one tune on the tribute album as did Allen Vizzutti. The cut they played on was "Superman," featuring Walt Johnson. A track that later had a disco re-mix made.

In August of 1974, the band played a week long stint at the Village Inn in Houston, Texas, followed by a scheduled appearance at the Jackson County Fair in Minnesota. Charlie and Bud Hall owned the Village Inn, it was a thriving music club and pizza parlor. That was packed every night. Jim Knight was bartending and was also taking pictures of the band at the time. Jim became friends with Bill and the band and never missed a night. Jim also attended the funeral services later in Boston. On the way to the fair in Jackson, Minnesota, Bill's plane went down in a heavy rain storm. Bill, Wally Yohn, John Emma, and Walter Clark, as well as the band's pilot and co-pilot were killed. Conflicting reports say that they were between 75 yards and three miles of the airstrip. Several lawsuits were filed by family members and won. Ultimately, officials stated that pilot error was the cause of the accident. August 9, 1974, marked the end of a remarkable trumpet player. Bill Chase was only 39 years old and at the height of his playing. Bill was laid to rest in his hometown of Squantum, Ma.

The rest of the band was waiting for Bill at the fair. When they received the news of the crash, the equipment truck left and headed for Chicago carrying the Yamaha flugels, their sponsor, as well as the rest of the equipment. Much of the gear disappeared and nobody is really sure where it went.

Mike Dowling, Bill's agent at the time with Beacon Artist's said " I have known him for four years and had worked with him since the conception of the group. He was one hell of a trumpet player, and I don't know anyone who could replace him as a musician. He was one of the finest men I've ever known, and this comes to me personally as a great loss. A lot of people knew Bill and many, many more miss him. It's really difficult to say anything meaningful at this time. Whatever does go out, I think it is important to reflect upon Bill Chase both as a man and a musician."

Bill's sudden death left a void in the music industry. He had many friends and admirers throughout the world. In his honor Reonald Schilke and Charles Colin set up a memorial scholarship fund for the NY Brass conference in 1975. Angel

South's album was dedicated to Bill. Woody's "Road Father" album was dedicated to Bill. The title for that album was the nickname that Bill's parents had given Woody during the 60's. Former Chase trumpeter Jay Sollenberger played on the album.

Trumpeter Roy Roman, became a friend of Bill's in the 1960's as a young musician. Later in 1973 Roman had written some charts for the band. Roman went into the studio to record the charts so Bill could hear them and then make any changes he thought necessary. Bill never got a chance to listen.

Maynard Ferguson, a man that Bill was often compared to, had kind words for Bill also. "Bill Chase was one of my closest friends in my own band somewhere in the 1960's (1958 to be exact). We used to go out to dinner together, hang together and that sort of thing. He was a great lead player in my band. He didn't play very many solos in my band. When you have a great lead player you tend to keep him just on lead and I guess I unconsciously did that to Bill. On the other hand, maybe he hadn't developed his solo chops then... because when I heard him later on with Woody Herman he just sounded absolutely marvelous."

Bill got Bobby Shew onto Woody's Band when a spot opened up. Bobby also played with Bill in Las Vegas and went to the first Chase rehearsal, but it was far too loud for Bobby's taste. Bobby credits Bill as the person who really got the trumpet sections standing up in the big bands. "His ego was so big, he always wanted to be seen by all of the ladies. He would sometimes stand a foot in front of everyone so that he could be seen better. He would be doing poses and all sorts of flamboyant moves so the ladies and photographers would notice him. He carried a set of weights and a personal tanning lamp with him so he could use them when we were in a town for a couple of days. Those dumbbells would be rolling around over my head when I was trying to sleep. If Bill were on the bus instead of riding in Woody's Corvette I might have slugged him. We called him the Omar Sharif of the trumpet. He was the pretty boy that liked to pose for the cameras."

Later in Vegas, Bobby was around Bill again. When Bill was playing the Viva Les Girls lounge act, Bobby would come to see him play. Bill had talked the musical director into adding a jungle number to feature his playing. Bill wanted to show off. "Bill would come out wearing a loincloth, orange and green feathers around his ankles and wrists, a lions-tooth necklace and an ugly hat filled with green and orange feathers. Bill was a big guy, so he was showing off his body to the ladies and his high notes to everyone. I would kill to get a video of that, probably one of the funniest things I've ever seen."

One trait about Bill that many of his close friends knew was his penchant for good food. Said to be a gourmet chef himself, Bill would continually search out good restaurants for pre-concert meals. Usually a large steak would do. Alan Ware remembers being in a small town in the Mid-West with the band and everyone was hungry. Bill took the lead and led everyone well out of town and down a dirt road, to a cafe. Bill had eaten there many years earlier with Woody's band. He had a good memory for hot spots to find good food.

Over the years the band had performed with a variety of other top groups. Herbie Hancock's "Headhunters," Sly and the Family Stone, B.B. King, The Allman Bros., the Temptations, Maynard Ferguson and other bands.

Music magazines all around the world presented tributes and stories on Bill. Allen Scott had previously devoted a whole chapter to Bill in his book, "Jazz Educated Man" in 1973. Scott's article in Sabin's Radio Free Jazz, proved to be one of the best tribute articles written about Bill.

Three years later, in 1977 a tribute album "Watch Closely Now" was recorded, using mainly alumni of the first band and featuring Walt Johnson on the high note trumpet stuff. This album is hard to come by, because Columbia dropped their sponsorship of it after it had been recorded, so most of the copies around are the ones printed by Tommy Martin, Chase's early manager. This recording was released on CD in late 1997 with an added cut "Celebrate", although the cut left out Walt Johnson's opening solo work that was recorded up front at the beginning of the tune.

As far as his approach to playing, Bill was an advocate of playing with the lips rolled in. He continually used long tones to build up the lip muscles. Originally he used a lot of pressure, so he began to hold the horn by his finger tips while he practiced to try and break his old habits. While with Maynard, Bill had bent horns in half because he used so much pressure. Bill said that the arched tongue is very important and that he used the ah-oo-ee tongue levels according to register. This increases air velocity and causes the lips to vibrate faster. He used his tongue for lip trills, and moved the horn on a shake, as well as for vibrato. He believed that air pressure was developed in the abdomen.

His equipment changed over the years. In the 50's and early 60's he played Bach and Martin Committee horns, in 1964 he briefly played a Getzen 900S, in 1965 he switched to a Schilke trumpet model B6, after 1968 he played a B6L with a 6 a/2 ounce beryllium-bronze bell. He had Jet Tone make him mouthpieces for a while, four separate models, and again landed on a Schilke of his own model. It is still sold as the Schilke 6A4A. It has a wide diameter but has a very shallow

cup.

Bill's trumpet style and sound have influenced many of the great players of today as well as many up-and-coming musicians were greatly influenced by Bill's lead playing with the Herman Herd, as well as by his playing with his own band

Bill Chase was truly a legend in his own time. His popularity as a musician is still very strong in the trumpet world. His albums are continually the most sought after at record conventions. The memory of Bill Chase will continue to live as long as his music is still appreciated.

Interviews for this article were done by Kevin Seeley, JJ Martin, Pat Dorian (Roger Middleton, Paul Fontaine, Herb Pomeroy, Maynard Ferguson), John Labarbara, Dartanyon Brown's website, and collected from other printed articles about Bill.

