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**DANIEL SMITH,
BASSOONIST TALKS
ABOUT JEAN PIERRE
RAMPAL.
RECORDED IN APRIL,
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Hello, this is Daniel Smith, and I am one of the pioneers, so to speak, of performing jazz on the bassoon. At some point, on any instrument, there's a breakthrough that happens which didn't happen before. Up until roughly the time of Jean Pierre Rampal, pretty much the only instruments that were

acknowledged as valid solo instruments in classical music were piano, violin, and sometimes the cello, like Piatigorsky, for instance. The only other times another instrument would be heard would be like if the first chair player in the Philadelphia Orchestra on oboe would do an oboe concerto. That would be it. But nobody really had careers on any other instruments in classical music, except for, you know, one little thing here or there. So, Jean Pierre Rampal, who's pretty much a household name, he was building up a career in Paris, and, again, he wrote about this in his book called *Music, My Love*, and it's very interesting the psychology or the politics involved here. His French manager was very keen on what he was doing because he was—people would love what he would play, but if he tried to sell his career to American agencies and in other countries, they all said pretty much the following, “A, nobody would want to hear a flute. B, it's boring. C, you can't hold an audience's attention,” and on and on, like that. So this is the situation, in other words because nobody had done what he was doing on the flute before his time—in other words, the psychology is, “If it was never done, then therefore it can't be done,” but, of course, it can, as we all know now. Finally, he made it—it was a woman manager; she made a breakthrough with one of the agents who was in New York City. Then a New York-based disc jockey was starting to play his albums on flute, and audience reaction was wonderful. It was a classical music station, and, based on that, then came the breakthrough, and then, as we all know, one thing led to another, to another, and then he became like a household name on flute. Now, jump to the next major soloist, who is still around, James Galway. Same problem but in a different guise. I happen to know personally his former manager in London.

I even know the man who got him involved on getting his albums onto RCA Victor, and I even knew his former sister-in-law, who I met in Italy at a festival. Now, Jean Pierre Rampal was the name to market, so to speak, on flute, worldwide. So people would tell him, James Galway's manager, "You can't possibly replicate it with another flute player," if you follow what I'm saying here now. So, that was his problem. Well, obviously he overcame that. He devoted a lot of time and energy. Galway, at that time, was playing with the Berlin Symphony, and he got him to leave the orchestra, set him up in Switzerland, and do nothing but practice for two or three years while he built his career. This is, by the way, a true story. At that point, his name started to become the household name that we know today, James Galway, but, as you can see, in both cases, there were problems to overcome to get the recognition, or the instrument accepted. Now, to add onto that—and, again, as a jazz musician you'll understand this too—it took years to get the flute going; that would be Frank Wess, and then Herbie Mann, and others. And then the flute got a breakthrough, and then it happened on violin. You know, talking about Regina Carter. And then it happened on other instruments. So, again, when you're a pioneer, it becomes a double problem not only to learn how to play the idiom on the instrument, which is hardly ever done before or is rarely done, and then use that as a wedge to get a promoter or presenters or whomever to get you accepted. It's never a problem—and, again, this is almost a cliché among people who play music—it's probably never any big problem to be on a stage and get an audience to like what you're doing. That's a given if you're good at what you do. The problem is, how do you get on that stage, or into that festival, or into a recording situation? That's where the problems arise. I call that political. But it can be done; it has been done, as I just stated on other instruments, and, with my fingers crossed, hopefully I am able to do that on my own instrument, or will do it.

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