

COLTRANE

The podcast meets the documentary in a new exploration of the saxophonist



FOR AN innovative look at the life of John Coltrane, grab your iPod.

"The Traneumentary" is a documentary presented in podcast form. Unlike traditional radio or television profiles, it's parcelled out in free five-minute weekly installments. In each episode, a different jazz musician offers recollections or impressions of Mr. Coltrane as the legendary saxophonist's music plays in the background.

The podcasts's creator, Joseph Vella, a media consultant and former musician, has interviewed dozens of musicians for the series and posts a new episode every week. The artists range from some who played with Mr. Coltrane, such as pianist McCoy Tyner and drummer Jimmy Cobb (the last remaining member of Miles Davis's legendary "Kind of Blue" sessions), to contemporary jazz stars like Terence Blanchard and Jason Moran.

The resulting recordings have an informal, conversational feel. There are no introductions or repartee between Mr. Vella and the musicians, who simply tell their stories. The music—clips from classics such as "My Favorite Things" and "A Love Supreme"—ebbs and flows, growing louder during pauses and subsiding as the artists speak.

Mr. Vella, who has worked on similar documentary projects with Yo-Yo Ma and the Beach Boys, was originally commissioned to make a single podcast on Mr. Coltrane last summer for Concord Records, which was releasing a box set of Mr. Coltrane's recordings.

Mr. Vella decided to

expand the project to a full-scale audio documentary. He enlisted the support of Warner Music Group, Impulse! and Blue Note Records, who, along with Concord, provided access to their Coltrane recordings and funding for the project.

Mr. Vella, who started his own jazz Web site in 1991 and has streamed live broadcasts for more than a decade, says the podcast was the natural medium for the project. Podcasts are "a way to reveal something that had been lost in the commercialization of radio: its intimacy," he says.

HOW TO FIND IT: Go to traneumentary.blogspot.com.

—*Jamin Warren*

