

# SEVEN LEE MORGAN LESSONS

One of Philadelphia's most talented offerings would have been 75 years old come July 10<sup>th</sup>, 2013. The lessons we can learn from his work and his life have been deemed immeasurable. As the Philadelphia Clef Club Of Jazz and Performing Arts prepares to celebrate his having been part of our family, we thought the following might give Lee some new talking points as a sage at this age.

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## Lee Morgan Lesson 1: WHY LIMIT YOURSELF ?

*“Originally interested in the vibraphone, he soon showed a growing enthusiasm for the trumpet. Morgan also knew how to play the alto saxophone”.*

## Lee Morgan Lesson 2: DON'T JUST HANG AROUND OTHER MUSICIANS; MAKE IT YOUR BUSINESS TO TOUR, RECORD, INSPIRE & MATURE WITH THEM.



*“His primary stylistic influence was Clifford Brown, who gave the teenager a few lessons before he joined the Dizzy Gillespie Big Band at 18. He began recording for Blue Note Records in 1956, Lee also recorded for a variety of labels, including Blue Note, Vee-Jay, Roulette, Jazzland and Trip eventually recording 25 albums as a leader for the company with more than 250 musicians”.*

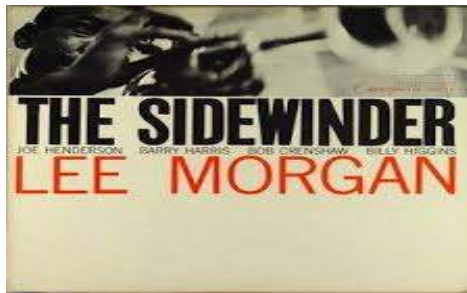
*A SERIOUSLY SMALL SAMPLING of this list includes:*

Hank Mobley	John Coltrane	Art Blakey	Benny Golson	Wayne Shorter
Bobby Timmons	Jymie Merritt	Billy Hart	Grachan Moncur III	Freddie Hubbard
Wynton Kelly	Paul Chambers	Grant Green	Herbie Hancock	Reggie Workman
Billy Higgins	John Gilmore	Stanley Turrentine	Jackie McLean	Ron Carter
Joe Henderson	McCoy Tyner	Lonnie Liston-Smith	Elvin Jones	Jack Wilson
Reuben Wilson	Larry Young	Clifford Jordan	Andrew Hill	Billy Harper
Bennie Maupin	Marold Mabern	Mickey Rokey	Freddie Waits	Oscar Peterson



### **Lee Morgan Lesson 3: NO MATTER HOW GREAT THE INFLUENCE, DON'T LET THEM INFLUENCE YOU WITH DANGEROUS, STUPID HABITS LIKE DRUGS.**

*According to Tom Perchard, a Morgan biographer, it was Blakey who introduced the trumpeter to heroin, an addictive drug that impeded his career trajectory. The drug problems of Morgan and Timmons forced them to leave the band in 1961, and the trumpeter returned to Philadelphia. Sadly, that was NOT the end of his struggle with substance abuse.*



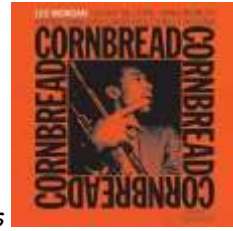
*[The Sidewinder \(1963\)](#),*

### **Lee Morgan Lesson 4: DON'T JUST COME BACK IF YOU CHECK OUT. DEFINE COMEBACK!**

*“On returning to New York in 1963, he recorded [The Sidewinder \(1963\)](#) which became his greatest commercial success. The title track cracked the pop charts in 1964, and served as the background theme for [Chrysler](#) television commercials during the [World Series](#). The tune was used without Morgan’s or Blue Note’s consent, and intercession by the label’s lawyers led to the commercial being withdrawn. Due to the crossover success of “The Sidewinder” in a rapidly changing pop music market, Blue Note encouraged its other artists to emulate the tune’s “[boogaloo](#)” beat”.*

## Lee Morgan Lesson 5: DEFINE COMEBACK, AND STAY BACK!

“Morgan himself repeated the formula several times with compositions such as



He felt that his

playing was much more advanced on [Grachan Moncur III's](#) essentially avant-garde *Evolution* album, recorded a month earlier, on November 21, 1963.



Morgan

continued to record prolifically, producing such works as [Search for the New Land](#) (1964 ), which reached the top 20 of the R&B charts.. Morgan also was filmed by the BBC as part of the seminal jazz



television program



*Jazz 625*”.

As the 60's progressed, he recorded an immense amount of work, including countless albums with the jazz greats previously referenced and others including:



## Lee Morgan Lesson 6: LEAVE YOUR CREATIVE FOOTPRINT

*“He became more politically involved in the last two years of his life, becoming one of the leaders of the Jazz and*



*People’s Movement. The group demonstrated during the taping of talk and variety shows during 1970-71 to protest the lack of jazz artists as guest performers and members of the programs’ bands.”*

**Lee Morgan Lesson 7: FOR BETTER OR WORSE, SOME THINGS SADLY DO NOT CHANGE AND THANKFULLY, SOME THINGS DO.**  
**BOTTOM LINE? BE HERE FOR CHANGE.**

*“Morgan was killed in the early hours of February 19, 1972, at [Slug’s Saloon](#). The injuries were not immediately fatal, but the ambulance service was reluctant to go into the neighborhood where the club was located. They took so long to get there that Morgan bled to death. He was 33 years old”. ([Click HERE for additional information on Lee Morgan’s Death](#))*



*Thankfully for the most part, those who save lives have less personal issues than other systemic problems prohibiting the administering of care needed in the tragedy that unfolded that night for everyone at the bar. Additionally, many individuals that are in need of emotional and mental health treatment have received help before such nightmarish instances occur. Being the socially conscious brother he was, Lee would want us all to keep working these and other hard issues to give a bright future to any and every one of Philadelphia’s own New Jazz Messengers.*