

Jazz Listings

By The New York Times

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JAZZ

SONNY ROLLINS AND GARY GIDDINS IN CONVERSATION The tenor saxophonist Sonny Rollins is one of the few indisputable titans in the history of jazz. The writer Gary Giddins is one of its most acute and insightful critics. So the prospect of a conversation between them carries weight for a certain segment of the population. Such an event isn't unprecedented — as recently as 2005 Mr. Rollins appeared under the auspices of the New Yorker Festival with Stanley Crouch, another critic of serious repute — but it does command fresh attention.

Mr. Giddins has been one of Mr. Rollins's fiercest champions over the years. He has also described this tenor saxophonist as "jazz's most provocatively enigmatic man." His assessments of Mr. Rollins, above, have not only shaped public perceptions but have also had a more material impact: a dozen years ago, after the publication of a Village Voice essay arguing the selective merits of Mr. Rollins's Milestone Records catalog, the label credited Mr. Giddins with the concept behind "Silver City: A Celebration of 25 Years on Milestone." (Fans of Mr. Rollins know that two-disc compilation to be essential.)

Few jazz artists have a more complicated relationship with the spotlight than Mr. Rollins, and even fewer exercise his self-lacerating brand of humility. But in conversation he can be entertaining as well as thoughtful, and rewardingly self-aware. And there's plenty to talk about, including his recent Carnegie Hall concert and his latest studio release, "Sonny, Please" (Doxy).

Mr. Giddins has recently marveled at that album's closing track, an original calypso called "Park Palace Parade." More specifically at Mr. Rollins's solo on the tune, which he sees as intriguingly uncharacteristic. Which begs a line of inquiry, perhaps? (Wednesday at 6:30 p.m., Proshansky Auditorium, the Graduate Center at the City University of New York, 365 Fifth Avenue, at 34th Street, web.gc.cuny.edu/humanities; free, no reservations.) **NATE CHINEN**