



Quincy Jones composing with his signature pen by Montegrappa

**EDITORS' NOTE** Quincy Jones' career has encompassed the roles of composer, record producer, artist, film producer, arranger, conductor, instrumentalist, TV producer, record company executive, magazine founder, multimedia entrepreneur, and humanitarian. As a master inventor of musical hybrids, he has shuffled pop, soul, hip-hop, jazz, classical, African, and Brazilian music into many dazzling fusions, traversing virtually every medium including records, live performance, movies, and television. Jones's creative magic has spanned over six decades, beginning with the music of the post-swing era and continuing through today's high-technology, international multimedia hybrids. As producer and conductor of the historic "We Are The World" recording (the best-selling single of all time) and Michael Jackson's multi-platinum solo albums, *Off The Wall*, *Bad*, and *Thriller* (the best-selling album of all time, with over 50 million copies sold), Jones stands as one of the most successful and admired creative artist/executives in the entertainment world.

Jones became Vice-President at Mercury Records in 1961 and won the first of his many Grammys in 1963. That same year, he started work on the music for Sidney Lumet's *The Pawnbroker*, which was the first of his 33 major motion picture scores. In 1985, he co-produced Steven Spielberg's adaptation of Alice Walker's *The Color Purple*, which garnered 11 Oscar nominations including Best Picture, marking Jones' debut as a film producer. In 1990, he formed Quincy Jones Entertainment (QJE), a co-venture with Time Warner, Inc., where he served as CEO and Chairman. QJE produced NBC Television's *Fresh Prince Of Bel-Air*, as well as UPN's *In The House* and Fox Television's *Mad TV*. In 1991, Jones founded VIBE Magazine and, with his publishing group VIBE Ventures, went on to acquire SPIN Magazine before divesting his magazine interests. In 1997, he formed the Quincy Jones Media Group and remained highly active in the recording field throughout the

## The Song and the Story

An Interview with Quincy Jones

1990s as the guiding force behind his own Quest Records. In 1994, he led a group of businessmen in forming Quest Broadcasting, a minority controlled broadcasting company, which purchased television stations in Atlanta and New Orleans. He served as Chairman and CEO. In 1999, he and his partners sold Quest Broadcasting for a reported \$270 million.

Jones won an Emmy Award for his score of the opening episode of the landmark TV miniseries, *Roots*; has seven Oscar nominations; and the Academy of Motion Picture Arts and Sciences' Jean Hersholt Humanitarian Award. He also has 27 Grammy Awards, N.A.R.A.S.' prestigious Trustees' Award, and The Grammy Living Legend Award. He is the all-time most nominated Grammy artist with a total of 79 Grammy nominations. In 2001, Jones was named a Kennedy Center Honoree. He was recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts as a Jazz Master and was most recently bestowed the National Medal of Arts. In 2001, Jones added the title of "Best Selling Author" to his list of accomplishments with, *Q: The Autobiography of Quincy Jones*.

Through The Quincy Jones Foundation, Jones raises awareness and financial resources for initiatives that support global children's issues in areas of conflict, malaria eradication, clean water, and efforts to restore the Gulf Coast (post-Katrina).

**You recently collaborated with Montegrappa, the first Italian pen manufacturer that produces top quality writing instruments with an Italian flair, to produce a Quincy Jones Collection. How did this come about?**

I have been associated with Italy for a long time, since the '50s and '60s – I've worked with top composers from the country.

Our whole business is about the song and the story. You have to write the song and the story, and the art of writing is in my soul; I'm a composer and an orchestrator too. My close friend, Frank Geary, often says that music must be liquid architecture – and it really is.

**How involved did you get in the design and details of the actual pen?**

Quite a bit. After Giuseppe Aquila (Montegrappa CEO) and I met each other, everything changed. We did some things we never thought of before, because everything is about relationships. We hung out with each other and had a good time, which helped our collaboration efforts.

**You've been in this business a long time. In the old days, you'd sit with paper and pen to jot things down. Has that changed?**

No, and it never will. I wish more people would learn to work that way. If you know your music, the machine will work for you; if you don't know it, you will work for the machine – that's the reality.

There is very effective technology, but there are still only 12 notes. You can put elements like rhythm, harmony, and melody behind them, but there are only 12 notes.

**Where do your ideas come from? It seems your mind is constantly working.**

It's a jazz mind. I came up with the guys who wanted to create a revolution in American music, and we did. It went over the heads of some people because it was so progressive.

I had a meeting recently with Jeff Katzenberg to discuss a 3D animation film that will tell the whole genesis and evolution of jazz and blues with 3D animation characters. Kids need to know the background of music.

**When you consider music today, are people still doing it the right way?**

It has changed. In a lot of cases, the goal is to make money and be famous. In the '40s and '50s, we didn't care about money or fame. We just wanted to be included in that revolution. This gives you a mindset you can never change.

**How important were mentors for you?**

I had some of the greatest teachers in the world, but I didn't think about it until I turned 80. You can't just go and work with Louis Armstrong or Frank Sinatra.

I was always prepared for opportunities and worked very hard to get my craft down so I would be ready.

**At the age of 81, you're still doing so much. What's left to accomplish?**

We are doing 10 movies and six albums, and I have a group of kids from 12 to 30 years old that are the most talented young people – we do concerts all over the world.

**What should young people be doing early on to ensure a successful career in music?**

Be humble with your creativity, because it comes through you, not from you. I'm very aware of that process – I feel it when I'm writing; I just let it go. If God gives you the talent, you owe God the work process to develop the science behind your craft. ●

