The Many Hats of Robert Altman: A Life in Cinema

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Born and raised in Kansas City, Missouri, Altman spent much of his youth listening to the city's jazz musicians. These early experiences inspired him to create an ode to Kansas City's raucous 1930s nightlife, its dirty politics, and the jazz played in the hottest downtown clubs in Kansas City (1996). Altman's film embodies the spirit of Kansas City jazz with its spontaneity and exciting storyline. Above all, it brings back a poignant nostalgia to natives of Kansas City and those deeply invested in the jazz music scene.

Letter from George Burt to Robert Altman, June 1, 1996,
mentioning how a scene from Kansas City seen the year before was still remembered and evoking memories for him. Burt had composed the theme for Altman's Secret Honor (1984) and Fool for Love (1985) and had been Professor of Musical Composition at the University of Michigan when Altman was in residence.