

# TAILGATE RAMBLINGS

June 1978

Volume 8 Number 6

## Boat Ride Set for June 24

It being June, it is the season of PRJC's second biggest attraction of the year (just behind the September picnic), the Annual Jazz Riverboat Ride.

Since it's beginning in 1973, the event has always been a sellout. By mid-May this year, 70 of 250 seats had already been purchased.

PRJC is especially happy to bring the Tarnished Six from State College Pa., for the event. Last fall, the band invited their Washington fans to State College for their 10th Anniversary celebration, and those who went found that they had matured as a truly dedicated traditional jazz band with a large repertoire. In the 2 weeks before the boat ride, they will be playing in Charleston, W Va, Indianapolis, Columbus, Ohio, Detroit, and at the St Louis National Ragtime Festival.

-- Dick Baker

## FJC Plays Major D.C. Gigs

Calling their reception "phenomenal," the commissioners of the Federal Jazz Commission completed a 4-day weekend in May having played to rather more than 7,000 people.

The long weekend started with a 6-hour gig at the National Portrait Gallery on Thursday, May 11. According to Fred Starr, clarinetist-leader of the FJC, more than 6,000 people heard them as they played continuously in the courtyard of the Gallery and were enthusiastically received. The following day, they spent trying to pick their chops up off the floor, but were back in business Saturday evening at a private party in Annapolis. Sunday, before crowds numbering well into the thousands, the Commissioners were on a sidewalk in Georgetown playing in the rain for the annual Georgetown Parade. They opened their part of the festivities in dry but threatening weather, with Dr. Jazz. As the last note died away there was a clap of thunder and the rains came all at once. The Commissioners had rarely received such a critical evaluation from such a highly placed critic.

Playing all gigs with the FJC was their newly inducted Commissioner for Cornet, Marty Frankel.

## Mention My Name in Donets

...it's the greatest little town in the world...

Donets is not something you dunk in coffee. It's a city in the USSR where, this month, Gunther Schuller and the New England Ragtime Ensemble will play one of a series of State Dept.-sponsored concerts.

Dick Baker, PRJC president and rags fan extraordinary, will be along on the trip. Dick was asked to go in view of his familiarity with the Russian language and his knowledge of ragtime.

The tour will range across the USSR from the Ukraine to Siberia and will take about a month to complete. Dick should have some interesting stories on his return.

## JAZZ AT THE WHERE?

Among the robustious ginmills in jazz are such famed pubs as the Red Onion, the Sunset Cafe, the Royal Garden, and the Apex. Then there's the Stuyvesant Casino, the Metropole, Nick's, and Ryan's. Add the Big Bear, Two Deuces, Birdland, the Famous Door, and the Royal Roost. How about the Yummy Yogurt Health Foods Lunchroom?

Not to laugh. Yummy Yogurt, at 1337 F St. NW in DC has jazz. You know you're in the right place because the sign says "Yummy Yogurt Health Foods." Action starts at 4:30 Thursday and Friday and continues til 7:30 - to help wind down the work week.

According to Ed Fishel, who lined up the gig, it's a jam session. The house provides a rhythm trio - Fishel - po; Rich Gerbich - drums; Larry Collier - bass - the rest of the band will be sit-ins. Drinks are on the house for guests who bring their axes - except for extra pianists, bassists, and drummers who are excused from having to schlep their equipment around. The new jazz spot is a liquor licensed upstairs room over the yogurt shop; a big room with good bandstand, real piano, adequate lighting, and booze. It's owned by Sheldon Fischer, a jazz clarinetist, who one day recently called 573-TRAD and thereby started the whole thing.

Fifty years from now, will classical style bands be playing that old traditional tune, Yummy Yogurt Lunchroom Joys?

# Tailgate Ramblings

June 1978  
Vol. 8 No. 6  
Editor - Ted Chandler  
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TR is published monthly for members of the Potomac River Jazz Club, a nonprofit group dedicated to the preservation of traditional jazz and its encouragement in the Washington-Baltimore area. Signed articles in TR represent the views of their authors alone and should not be construed as club policy or opinion.

Articles, letters, and ad copy (no charge for classified ads for members) should be mailed to the editor at:  
7160 Talisman Lane  
Columbia, Md. 21045.

## Is It True What They Say . . .

Talked to Lee Dade, still in hospital, and recovering from a coronary. Lee says he is great and doctors say he can be in Mexico in August as planned. Lee and his wife Helen were on board one of the nights Carol Leigh vocalized at the Bratwursthau -- think it was the night Carol's husband, Russ Whitman sat in on clarinet and tenor sax. Hard to believe Carol when she sings Sister Kate; she could never have a sister who was better at anything.. even the shimmy.. than she is!

Yes, Grown Men Cry. No wonder people talk about drugstore jazz. I was there one night when people asked for, after The Saints (everyone knows that one), The St. James Infantry

Blues, and that other well known classic, Bertha Blues.

Max and Hap Lowe just returned from Martha's Vineyard where Hap was banjo in the lounge at a local hotel. Right before Hap had been sitting in for Bob Walker of the Storyville 7 - who was in London.

They Shall Rise Again. The Buck Creek JB (you heard them at the picnic) is still a going concern, according to Jim Ritter, with a few new faces - appearing occasionally at the Devil's Fork, and going to be at Reston for a celebration at this writing.

The Grays Ride Again Past President Gray and wife, Lida, accompanied Louise Everett and Lonna and Walter Rohlader, from Richmond, stalwart attendees at PRJC functions, to the Big Horn Jazz Festival, Gurnee, Ill. last month. Harold had enough stamina left after a Monday drive back from Ill. to make the B'haus scene to dig the Fed. Jazz Commission that evening.

New Members. Hello to Steve and Roberta Maloney, a couple who love jazz. Both are high school principals; besides knowing about polkas and round dancing, they love to dance to jazz music.

Hello Comrades. Congrats to Pres. Baker who has been chosen to accompany as escort officer and diplomatic escort, the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble in a tour of the Soviet Union. Fantastic opportunity.

We miss Bob Harris -- who else knows the words to Evolution Mama -- but Marty Frankel is doing a more than respectable job with the FJC. -- Mary H. Doyle

Have you seen the PRJC special annct. for our monthly attractions (The Cake Walking JB in May) or the TR gig list posted in your nearby record store? If not, please tell Joe Godfrey, P.O. Box 14117, D.C. 20044, or tel. 829-4664.

## PRJC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION (Please Print)

NAME \_\_\_\_\_ SPOUSE'S NAME \_\_\_\_\_  
STREET \_\_\_\_\_ CITY \_\_\_\_\_  
STATE AND ZIP \_\_\_\_\_ TELEPHONE NO. (optional) \_\_\_\_\_  
MUSICIAN? \_\_\_\_\_ WHAT INSTRUMENTS? \_\_\_\_\_  
PRESENTLY MEMBER OF BAND? \_\_\_\_\_ CARE TO JOIN ONE? \_\_\_\_\_  
DESCRIBE JAZZ INTERESTS BRIEFLY (WHAT STYLES, ARTISTS YOU PREFER. WHY? optional)

PRJC DUES THRU 1978 - \$7.50. Checks payable to Potomac River Jazz Club.

Mail to: PRJC Membership Secy  
7004 Westmoreland Rd.  
Falls Church, Va. 22042

## BUT ON THE OTHER HAND

### An Editorial Outcry

A word, if we may, on this month's Record Changer reprints. We're especially pleased to be using a piece by a PRJ Cer - an authority on jazz then as now - Bill Riddle. Bill reflected in his RC article a pessimism widespread in 1944, and not without reason. His ideas stand up pretty well, though, even if we think he was a bit hard on the Bechet-Spanier Big 4 records! Then too, we have another appearance by that figgiest of all figs, The Cat, and a short excerpt from an Ernest Borneman piece.

Next month, be prepared for a rather truncated TR. We will devote a lot of space to the most recently updated list of traditional jazz clubs. There are now 100 or more in the U.S. and Canada. The listing is the dedicated work of Fred Wahler and Harold Gray.

We got a note this month from our friend Jack Bradley of the Cape Cod Jazz Soc. He wants to reprint material from TR, and since we have lifted stuff from his Jazz Notes, we'd be pretty low to refuse. The only prohibition is on the Record Changer stuff. The permission we got to use this great treasure trove was such that we don't think it proper for us to pass it on. Anything else, though, feel free. We hope the lifter would give us source credit.

After reading Dick Baker's fine piece in this issue on the Priest Perplex, we are moved to brief comment. What we seem to have here is sort of an extension of the story of the blind men and the elephant. Sure, the elephant is there and defies rational description. But the blind men, able to feel only a small part of him at a time, are hopelessly at odds when asked to tell what he's like.

We think everyone who has commented has a bit of the answer. No one has all of it. Still, one thread runs through each comment. The mere presentation of traditional jazz is not enough. Al Brogdon made that point - makes it each Friday night at Shakey's. Ed Fishel made it by pleading for more swing in the repertoire. Dick underlines it. Maybe we ought to think about forming a mainstream jazz group to play music of the small band swing, bop, cool schools of the mid-40's. -- TC

WANTED: Rider to share expenses.  
M/F. Going to St. Louis Jazz Fest  
Sunday June 12, ret. one wk. later.  
Don Angell - call 280-1999.

## Jay Dee on the CWJB

The Cakewalking Jass Band drove in from Toledo on Saturday. That's Ohio, not W. Va, and according to my Rand McNally, is 450 miles, which amounts to about 9 hours of wheel time, plus whatever is added for sandbox and pit stops. The a little dindin and on to play a smash 4-hour jazz concert. With that for openers, the question was not so much "What do they do for an encore," but "Will they last until time for the encore?"

The musical proceedings got off to a marvelous start with "Cakewalking Babies," which is the band's theme song. The balance of the first two sets was good, but certainly not great. By my calculation, they must have eaten breakfast 16 hours earlier. It gets to be a matter of the spirit and the flesh. "Isle of Capri", given a George Lewis type treatment, was interesting, and on an extended "Doing the Second Line" Ray Heitger's clarinet began to take hold. The dancers were having a ball. The third set was simply outstanding. From the first number, "Dippermouth," through Ellington's "Stevedore Stomp." it was a delight. Meantime, the dancers were having a ball. This band operates without a piano, so Chimes Blues came as a pleasant surprise. Heitger's clarinet was particularly creative. The Cakewalkers do not include a tuba in their group and without either piano or tuba a lot is up for grabs. Grab they did, and by encore time they were really sailing. Meantime, on the dance floor...

This band deserves high marks. It is a young group which seems to take its music, and not itself, seriously. I hope they will be our way again -- and soon.

-- Jav Dee

### Notes from the Bakery

Not much from the Bakery this month, since I'm in quite a rush and in any case have already filled a page and a half elsewhere in this issue.

As of mid-May, 40% of the boatride tickets had been sold, so don't delay - get them while they're hot.

It's now very likely that we'll be presenting Bob Barnard's JB from Sidney, Australia, on Sat., Aug. 5. Mark your calendars.

Now the reason I'm so rushed: As you read this I'll be somewhere on the Moscow-Donetsk-Odessa-Tashkent-Tbilisi-Novosibirsk circuit with Gunther Schuller and the N.E. Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble, serving as escort officer and interpreter on a State Dept.-sponsored cultural exchange tour. Ask me for war stories the next time you see me. -- Dick Baker

There's Lydia Pinkham, Carter's Pills, and Hadacol. But for what really ails you, call 573-TRAD.

## In Praise of the Saxophone -- Part 2

Besides the polemics the revivalists were carrying on with partisans of bop, swing, N.Y. and Chicago jazz, there was one further and more serious cause for their neglect of the saxophone. They failed to realize that the sax that had figured in the early jazzbands sounded quite different from the instrument of more recent decades. Just as the forte-piano of Mozart's day differs dramatically from the powerful steel-framed Steinway that was common by 1850, so the sax of the 1920's underwent a considerable evolution before it emerged as the commanding instrument it was by 1950.

What is the difference? The body of the instrument has scarcely changed since it first appeared in Adolphe Sax's Brussels shop a century ago. But fundamental changes have been made in the mouthpiece with the result that standard mouthpieces available since WW II all produce a more strident tone capable of bearing the full load of a highly charged bop solo. The steel mouthpiece that appeared in the '50s took this tendency to its natural conclusion.

By contrast, the mouthpieces of the 1920's (nearly impossible to find today) produce a gentler, more textured tone that lacks the myriad overtones which give the modern sax its brilliance. The necessary tension and dynamism of sound was achieved not by added volume, but with a rapid but narrow vibrato - a technique that sounded corny by the 1950's. The popularity in the 1920's of the C melody sax further reinforced this quality, since that now-extinct species of the instrument produces a tone lacking the penetrating quality of the alto or soprano and the reedy "bite" of the tenor.

How then was the saxophone used in the classic ensemble? Before the rise of the fully orchestrated sax section, the sax played fairly simple figures, backing the leading horns without intruding on their domain. It's role can be compared to the flour that cooks add to thicken gravy. This assignment was not invented out of thin air. The sax did not become widespread in American brass bands until after WW I. When it made its debut, it immediately succeeded in pushing aside both the alto and tenor horns that had been regular features of every town band in America, including the street bands of New Orleans. After achieving its victory over the alto and tenor horns, however the sax proceeded to assume many of the musical functions that the horns had heretofore performed. It added fluidity and warmth to the ensemble sound and gave it a kind of sophistication which, whether or not we like it today, was highly esteemed by most jazzmen of the early period.

It is true that the development of the sax section was among the most powerful stimuli pushing jazz into the highly orchestrated idiom that it became in the 1930's. It is therefore not inaccurate to say that the saxophone helped force N.O. jazz to evolve away from itself. But the new instrument was available to Crescent City musicians, and its adoption by the Eureka Brass Band and other street ensembles that survived into the middle third of the century testified to the fact that the saxophone was never viewed, as it is today, as an alien force. Given this, are there not ample grounds for experimenting with this neglected but certifiably traditional instrument?

-- Fred Starr

(NOTE: Mr. Starr is Commissioner for Reeds in the Federal Jazz Commission. The views expressed in the above essay are those of Commissioner Starr alone and do not necessarily reflect the official position of the Commission of which he is a member.)

### From Blake to Bop in Balt.

Rain and gusty wind didn't dampen the enthusiasm of a packed house who came, May 4, to hear Eubie Blake and the Peabody Ragtime and Jazz Ensembles at the Peabody Institute's Concert Hall.

Conductor-narrator Gunther Schuller guided a program that began with ragtime touched on Dixieland, moved through the Black band era and wound up with a well-executed West Side Story medley.

The Ragtime Ensemble presented Hilarity Rag (James Scott), Kinklets (Arthur Marshall), and the Ragtime Dance (Joplin) in pleasing fashion, then used a traditional configuration for a breakneck tempo That's A-Plenty which held together only through sheer musicianship.

Then came Eubie Blake, now 94, who, between reminiscences, played some of his own compositions including Chevy Chase, tunes from Shuffle Along, and the incomparable Charleston Rag. The highlight was the Ragtime Ensemble's playing of Schuller's arrangement of Charleston Rag, which managed to capture the composer's rhythmic subtleties to a surprising degree, much to Blake's delight.

The Jazz ensemble did well with Ko-Ko (Ellington, 1940), a velvety low-register Boplicity (Miles Davis, early 50's), Count Basie's Shiny Stockings, and Maynard Ferguson's Nice and Juicy.

Afterward, Eubie Blake met with his admirers - an unexpected treat.

-- Gary Wilkinson

FRJC SINGLES - MEETING EACH MONTH  
3rd Thursday at the Bratwursthaus,  
Arlington, Va. Info call: Evelyn  
Franklin (H) 946-5325; (O) 295-0952;  
Jim Nielsen (H) 562-7235; (O) 693-6500;  
or Dottie Beltron (H) 362-7819, (O) 695-  
4951.

# On Supporting Jazz

By way of introduction, let me review a bit of dialogue you've all heard in conversation or read in the pages of jazz club newsletters. This dialogue comes in two standard forms:

## The Big Concert

Jazzfan A: Oh, the pain! We brought a fantastic band, the Chattanooga Stompers, all the way from Tennessee for our monthly special, and nobody showed up. We lost a bundle.

JF B: Well, dammit, those PRJCers just don't go out and support jazz.

## Variation on a Theme: The Local Gig

Jazzfan A: Oh, the pain! Charlie's Bistro has fired the Silver Spring Stompers and switched to bluegrass. Charlie says there just wasn't enough business to justify keeping the band on.

JF B: Well, dammit, those PRJCers just don't go out and support jazz.

Sound familiar? Sure it does. The hardcore, 4-night-a-week jazz fans love to fling it sanctimoniously at those with less faith, and I know a few bandleaders who have sung that tune so often they know it better than Bill Bailey.

After a great amount of research and careful preparation of computerized models of cash inflow, beer outflow, and the length of waitresses' skirts at Charlie's Place, I am now prepared to pass profound judgement on the validity of the above argument: HORSEFEATHERS.

Last month's TR made reference to the fact that our April special with the Happy Jazz Band was dismally under-attended and lost a pile of money. The two previous issues of TR contained interesting articles by Dan Priest and Al Brogdon on the viability and salability of traditional jazz. As a keen supporter, avid listener, and sometime promoter (actually facilitator) of jazz in this area for the past few years, I would like to make a few observations of my own on the subject.

Back to this old "supporting jazz" baloney. First, the 700 or so members in the D.C. area, by the virtue of the fact that they carry PRJC membership cards, have singled themselves out from a population of several million as genuine supporters of jazz, and are to be appreciated, not castigated.

The viability and salability of local bands in local joints has long been a subject of debate in PRJC and other jazz clubs; the New Jersey Jazz Society is currently worried over a downturn in jazz activity in that area.

Let me chisel in stone one Truth to be found in this essay: Jazz lovers alone cannot pay the bills. 700 professed jazz

lovers may sound like a lot, but they're spread over a wide area with other social obligations and musical interests. Even if you could convince these people to double or even triple the amount of time and money they spend on live jazz, they would have to be concentrated on one or two bands once or twice a week to really do any good, and that's not liable to happen except in the unlikely event that the Black Eagles move to Washington or Turk Murphy decides to switch bays. There have sadly been instances when a club owner is shown a copy of TR and told that 700 thirsty jazz lovers will beat down the doors to his joint if he'll hire a certain band. In most cases this is innocent wishful thinking and naive enthusiasm and is merely regrettable; in a few cases, I fear, it is out and out duplicity and is to be condemned. We do the music a disservice and the club owner injury by overselling the product.

I perceive there to be two basic categories of PRJC musicians who perform in public; the "semipros" and the "hobbyists." The semipros see public performance as a genuine source of extra income, a part-time job, and insist on being paid relatively well. They know that to accomplish this they have to broaden their appeal (remember the Truth), and this was described well by a leader of this school, Al Brogdon, when he said that to make the club owner's investment pay off, you must have "a good band with a good entertainment quotient...a dixieland band that plays some traditional stuff, some more modern stuff, and ties it together with a generous amount of fun and horseplay."

To Al's comments I would add that the band which expects good pay must exhibit good stage professionalism, i.e.: wear some sort of band uniform rather than that day's work clothes; have a prearranged tune list rather than group discussions after each tune; have a relatively glib announcer to introduce tunes and players, crack wise occasionally and keep the show moving at a brisk pace; and look interested. (Have you ever seen a clarinet player leave the stage for drink and cigarette while the trumpeter takes a solo?).

The hobbyist musician is not in it for the money, although if his band occasionally gets a good-paying party job, he'll be glad to take the money, thank you. The hobbyist is probably a bit of a musical historian, interested in recreating or reinterpreting the classical jazz repertoire. He likes nothing more than learning some nearly forgotten gem which is greatly appreciated by his jazz lover audience and which would be incomprehen-

THE POTOMAC RIVER JAZZ CLUB  
Presents Its  
SIXTH ANNUAL JAZZ RIVER BOAT RIDE  
Saturday, June 24, With Music Provided By



# THE TARNISHED SIX

of State College, Pennsylvania

Aboard the Wilson Line's M.V. America, sailing from Pier 4, 6th and Maine Avenue, S.W., Washington, D.C.

The Tarnished Six will be winding up a June tour which will see them performing for the Charleston (W.Va.) and Indianapolis Jazz Clubs, the Detroit Hot Jazz Society, and the St. Louis National Ragtime Festival.

*Boarding* - 7:30 p.m.  
*Music Starts* - 8:00 p.m.  
*Boat Sails* - 9:00 p.m.  
*Return* - Midnight

*Ticket Prices*  
\$10.00 - PRJC Members  
\$12.00 - Non-Members

Family Fun - Bring a picnic basket, BYOB or use the boat's bar. Children welcome, but no discounts available.

Advance ticket sales only - send check to "PRJC" at 4040 Uline Avenue, Alexandria, Va. 22304. (After June 16 call 370-5605 to check ticket availability.)

For more information on this and other area jazz activity call 573-TRAD

## The Jazz Traditions - Part 2

Last month in the first of this series, we dealt with jazz as the product of specific historical and social factors around the turn of the century.

We should look at those social factors. They are important. We start with the wide gap often commented upon in New Orleans between Uptown (Black) and Downtown (Creole). That split was a shaping factor in jazz. The dicty Creoles heard the Black music and applied their musical sophistication to it. Generally aloof from the Blacks, the Creole went to the opera; sent his children to music teachers like the Tios. Many who could - Alcide "Yellow" Nunez, Jack Perkins - passed, playing with white bands until found out. It is said that Perkins, on boarding a streetcar, would stand on the platform rather than commit himself to Black or white jimcrow section.

Others, like Sidney Bechet, middle-class people with values to match, saw the professions as the way out of the worst effects of segregation. Sid's brother, Leonard, became a dentist (he would later fashion new chops for Bunk Johnson). It was a far cry from the lives of the Black musicians. Bunk drove a truck in the New Iberia rice fields. George Lewis was a dock wallop on the N.O. waterfront. Louis Armstrong sold chunks of coal door to door.

The twain rarely met. The Creoles - the Renas, Picous, Bechets, and Robichauxs - played rarely with the Olivers, Johnsons, and Doddses. This dichotomy had continuing consequences. It may be blamed for the conflict that dogged the attempt in the mid-40's to put together a band co-led by Bechet and Johnson. Donald Marquis points out in his new book on Buddy Bolden that today, Preservation Hall bands are largely Black; Tradition Hall mainly Creole.

We should mention one more point before seeing what happened to N.O. jazz in Chicago. Mark Twain once remarked that the trouble with sin is its monotony. Storyville was far worse than monotonous. It was joyless, graceless, debased. The famed houses on The Line were gaudy, tasteless palaces of raunch run by women who's only talents were copulation and counting money. Storyville music came mostly from player pianos, with sometimes a professor taking over. Tony Jackson and Jelly Roll Morton were among these, but their main interest in the District was probably pimping. Outside the bagnios, some jazz was played in segregated bars - Black bands entertaining whites. Not much of an incubation ground for new art forms. When, years later, Ida Cox sang "I wanna go down to Tom Anderson's Cafe where I can hear that Creole jazzband play," she recalled that which was not. Being Black,

she wouldn't have been allowed in the joint. Being decent, she wouldn't have wanted to be caught dead there.

-- Ted Chandler

(Author's Note: To head off comment, of course I'm aware that Creoles are Black. The N.O. musician's union was equally aware and jimcrowed them. That unfortunately doesn't change the sociological and cultural distance between the groups, imposed by the Creoles. - TC)

### NEW GIGS STARTED IN MAY

Some important new gigs began in May, the Yummy Yogurt jams are soon to start, and another Shakey's - Annandale - has caught the jazz bug, with Al Stevens' Barnstorming JB. Ad to these a regular gig at La Boheme in Va. for the Band from Tin Pan Alley.

Meanwhile, two of the area's most interesting drummers are leading trios in weekend gigs - Eddie Phyfe at the Chase at 44th and Jennifer, and Skip Tomlinson at the Windjammer Lounge in the Marriott Twin Bridges.

### JAY DEE'S LOST AND FOUND

FOUND in Reston, Va. May 21, '78, about 3 pm: A great traditional jazz sound. Their Big Bear Stomp suggests western orientation. Band answers to name "Buck Creek Gang." Jim Ritter says band not lost - looking for a home. For moment, Good Samaritan providing basement shelter. Phone Ritter for details.

## PUBLIC NOTICE

you are invited  
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the gently swinging music  
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each Friday and Saturday evening

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Jazz for dining and dancing at

THE CHASE

44th and Jennifer Streets, NW

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Reservations

362-1006

# "Hey Mr. Teagarden, You Sure Look Cute. . ."

I froze when Jack Teagarden said, "A young fellow in the audience sings a song with me that I'd like you to hear. Come on up, Jim." I hadn't played his record of that song for over a year, and wasn't sure I remembered the lyrics. Jack had given me no warning, though I had sung it with him before.

I was an MIT student in Boston in the early 40's and a very big fan of Jack Teagarden. Jack brought his big wartime band to the Raymor-Playmor Ballroom for a 2-week stand in Feb., 1943. The ballroom, on Huntington Ave., was only a few blocks from my fraternity house on the Fenway.

Business was not overwhelming at best and some nights were hardly crowded. Jack noticed the young fellow with his elbows on the stage night after night, and we struck up a conversation. He asked me for requests, and played them. His wife, Addie, was traveling with the band and I got to know her, too.

One night I asked Jack if he ever played the old Johnny Mercer tune, Fare Thee Well to Harlem, which he had sung with Johnny on a Paul Whiteman Victor. Jack chuckled and said, "We still have the arrangement, but it needs two voices and I don't have anyone to sing it with. Too bad. I like that song."

I said I knew the words by heart and would be glad to sing it with him. I think he was a little taken aback. "Can you sing?" he said and at first put me off a little. He said we'd try it sometime when the crowd thinned out. One night we did!

It went over pretty well, so Jack had me do it again in prime time.

I built up memories in those 2 weeks which I will treasure always. Jack was the only trombonist I know of who some times played half the trombone, taking the bell off and playing through the slide, capping it with a glass for sound. Addie usually brought it, but one night Jack sent me scurrying out to the bar to bring him a glass. His solo on it didn't sound any better than usual but I should have saved it at the end of the evening. Better than a World Series homerun ball - if I had it!

Well, the 2-week stand came to an end, Jack went his way, and I went back to studying for the next set of MIT exams. I heard Jack on the radio several times, we exchanged a couple of letters, and then I read he was coming back to town.

This was not a convenient engagement. It was at Coral Gables, a nightclub in Weymouth, south of Boston, only accessible if one had wheels and gasoline. This was wartime - remember gas rationing?

None theless, one September Friday in 1944, my date and I went out to enjoy the show. Jack invited us to sit at his table. He was still on good terms with Addie (a situation which unfortunately did not last) and the evening was particularly enjoyable.

We sat through the first show and then came the big moment.

I'd been studying hard and dating often and, as I said, I hadn't played Fare Thee Well to Harlem since Jack had left town. All I could think of as I walked toward the bandstand was lyrics! lyrics! What if I didn't come up with the right word at the right time? I got a big hand and put on a big smile, but I couldn't reconstruct all the lyrics as the band went into the chorus. I can still recall the fright - stepping up to the mike grasping for the necessary phrase.

It came quite naturally, and I went right along - "Well, Mr. Teagarden, sure as you're born, I'll do anything you say.." We finished to big applause and I went back to Jack's table. I never took a poll, but I'm quite sure I was the happiest kid in the Boston area that night, and was my girl friend impressed!

Apparently there was no talent scout there, but there was a columnist from the Hearst tabloid, the Record, and I was written up in the next day's paper as Jack's biggest fan in the country with a complete collection of his records. Even then, that was impossible; an early introduction to inaccurate news reporting!

Late contact with Teagarden was unfortunately minimal. I saw him a few times but my sporadic letters went unanswered. At Louis Armstrong's 1947 Symphony Hall concert I went backstage and Jack introduced me to Louis. Jack had a bad cold and everytime I hear the Decca recordings, I'm reminded that Jack should not have been on his feet that night. Wonderful as they sound, it isn't the same timbre in his voice as other nights. But the trombone sounded great.

After that, I saw Jack only once before he died. He and Max Kaminsky were about to start a world tour for the State Department. I said hello and introduced the people I was with, but by then, the "big fan" was a small recollection. He did tell me that he and Addie were no longer together.

The notice of his sudden death on tour in New Orleans in 1963 appeared in the local paper right beside a note about a Ford Foundation grant to a group I had formed to work on computer districting. The adjacency of the two items reminded me how much my interests had changed and how much I would have liked to reminisce once more with Jack. -- Jim Weaver

# JAZZ MISREPRESENTED ON WAX

By BILL RIDDLE

With Jimmie Noone's recent and untimely passing those of us who know and love the kind of music he played must realize that the number of really great jazz players who came from New Orleans is an ever diminishing one. When the last of these giants is gone we shall have left only the memories of those who were fortunate enough to have heard and seen them play, and their immortal phonograph records.

There were many great jazz classics recorded from fifteen to twenty-two years ago, but the unfortunate truth of the matter is that comparatively few great performances have been recorded in the last fifteen years. Since the very nature of the music itself makes it impossible to sell to the public in great quantities, it has no particular commercial value, and consequently the better jazz records of recent years have been made either by small independent companies or by the larger companies at a high percentage of loss risk. The men who supervised and planned these "lates" deserve much credit, but the records which they turned out during the last fifteen years should be far better than they are. I believe this sad state of affairs to be due largely to a lack of judgment and a misconception of values on the part of these men. With a few exceptions the bands consist entirely of second- or third-rate musicians or of musicians who, because of the variety of their styles, cannot play homogeneously. The really good bands of this period, such as Johnny Dodds' band of 1939 with Baby Dodds, Dominique, Lonnie Johnson, Lil Armstrong, and Suttie Reynard, were not recorded at all. Noone at the time of his death was playing a radio program with a band which was surely one of the greatest jazz bands ever assembled, but this band was not recorded. In fact, with one exception, Noone has not made a single record in many years playing the kind of music for which he was best suited or with a group which would show his wonderful clarinet to best advantage.

This condition is true not only of Noone but of other great jazzmen who have passed away in recent years. What of the great Johnny Dodds? We have nothing from 1930 to his death but six sides made with a group of "Harlem jump-style" musicians, and two sides made in Chicago at a time when he was ailing and with other men who, though they were New Orleans musicians, were not in good form. Jelly-Roll Morton,

considered by many to be one of the two most important figures in jazz, recorded almost nothing after 1930. After a long and strenuous period of scuffling, which ruined his health and sent him to his grave at a time when a man of his stature should be in his prime, he was "re discovered." As a result he recorded an album of solos which proved him to be as good as ever, but it was too late; a year later he died. Hugues Panassie is to be thanked for sixteen remarkable sides by one of the last of the last of the New Orleans trumpet players, but do we have enough left of Tommy Ladnier's marvelous trumpet?

There we have four of the greatest jazzmen. Their cases are typical. Life was very hard for them in their last years because there wasn't a living to be made by just playing their music. Not because the years had made their playing bad (they were as good or better than ever, certainly far better than the youngsters who replaced them) but because no one would listen to them when it was possible to do so, they were forced to shine shoes, drive taxi-cabs, and do other such odd jobs in order to eat. These were men of musical genius, not to be cast aside like worn out vaudeville hoofers. Such men deserve understanding and appreciation while they are alive. Instead we ignore them when they are alive and then write sentimental and laudatory obituaries for them after they are gone.

How many records made during this period can be said to approach in excellence the classics made during the five year period from early 1923 through 1927? As an example of what can be done I think the sides made at the first three sessions supervised by Panassie in 1939 do compare favorably with those early records. Ladnier, de Paris, and Mesirow play superb ensemble. The rhythm of James P. Johnson, Elmer James, Bunn, and Zutty is flawless and in perfect taste. Again Ladnier and Mesirow play marvelously with the fine rhythm trio of Bunn, Foster, and Manzie Johnson. The wind trio on "Really the Blues" (Ladnier, Mesirow, and Bechet) is a treat to hear. These are great performances.

The records by Armstrong and Bechet, and particularly those by Allen's group in the Decca New Orleans Album of 1940 certainly do not reach such artistic heights. The feeling of sympathy between the musicians on these Decca records or on Frankie Newton's Blue Note sides

certainly cannot be compared with that of the ensemble passages on Morton's "Billy Goat Stomp"; the chorus by Noone, Armstrong, Hines, and Cara on Lillie Delk Christian's "You're a Real Sweetheart"; or the last chorus of Morton's orchestral record of "Big Fat Ham."

The enterprising owner of a New York record shop has made something of a name for himself by extensively recording the efforts of a group of transplanted white Chicago musicians, and quite a few people are paying a dollar per record to hear what they believe to be the best jazz music being played today. They have been educated to believe this by suggestive advertising and by magazine articles and books written by undiscerning critics. While records by these men have been published in great numbers the music of such giants as Jelly-Roll Morton, Albert Nicholas, and Santo Pecora has gone virtually unrecorded. It seems shameful that the few recordings by these men in recent years have not been outstanding because they have had to play either with inferior musicians or with musicians whose styles conflict rather than harmonize with theirs. It would be sheer idiocy to record Kid Ory with a group of men from Count Basie's orchestra, and yet this sort of thing occurs in the studio repeatedly. On

the Morton General Tavern Tunes sides of 1939 we have Nicholas, Braud, Zutty, and Morton, all typical New Orleans ensemble style musicians, playing with Henry Allen on trumpet. I am told that the function of the trumpet in this style of ensemble playing is to play a simple, direct lead, the more economical the better. Obviously Allen was the wrong man. Further the two trombones (used at different sessions) and the alto saxophonist were equally ill chosen. Perhaps if these records had been made with a George Mitchell on trumpet and a good "tail-gate" trombonist they would have been great records.

In the Spanier-Bechet records made by the Hot Record Society in 1940 we have a fine cornet and a man who is unquestionably one of the greatest of the clarinetists. It has been clearly demonstrated elsewhere that these two men are well suited to the phenomenal New Orleans ensemble style, but instead of surrounding them with other musicians who play in the same manner and using traditional instrumentation, it was decided to experiment. The result is typical. The rhythm is totally inadequate; Bechet and Spanier play against each other with a distasteful display of virtuosity; and eight twelve-inch sides, which could easily have been classics under the conditions



"Then Ory put a 'Gliss' on F sharp—and everything went black!"

which they were recorded, are of little or no musical or historical value. These are but two examples. There are countless others.

Bebel is an outstanding ensemble clarinetist, but his playing becomes meaningless when he is recorded merely as a soloist and a virtuoso. Of all the records he has made in the last fifteen years, on how many does he play clarinet and with groups consisting entirely of other New Orleans musicians, or with musicians whose styles are suited to this type of ensemble playing?

Magazine articles by the few clear-sighted critics and the pioneering efforts of Heywood Hale Brown, Eugene Williams, and William Russell in making records in New Orleans using the best of the old-timers have slowly increased interest among collectors in the old-school New Orleans musicians. Perhaps out of this interest will come some truly important new jazz records, but we must choose the men for our future recording banis with a clear head and a discriminating ear.

One small recording company in Chicago, Session Records, has recently recorded four twelve-inch sides played by a group of last generation New Orleans musicians, some of whom have not recorded in years. The personnel is as follows: Bob Schaffner, Preston Jackson, Darrell Howard, Richard M. Jones, John Lindsay, and Baby Dodds. I am sorry to say these sides are very disappointing. At least half of the men on these sides do not play as they did fifteen years ago. Schaffner retains some of the old New Orleans trumpet style in his solo work but his melodic line is closer to that of the present day Harlem jump musicians. Preston Jackson seems to have no more than a vague idea of New Orleans ensemble style. He plays solos very much like those of Dicky Wells, a former Count Basie trombonist. Darrell Howard plays what are probably the brightest spots on these records. He plays both ensemble and solo in a fluid effortless style quite like that of Barney Bigard on the records he made around 1920. He is particularly fine on "Canal Street Blues" and "29th and Dearborn." Richard M. Jones' solos are dull and pointless; his ensemble playing and devotion of rhythmic and harmonic invention. He is probably more to be blamed than anyone else for the poor quality of these performances. Four fine tunes are spoiled by banal arranged passages and repeated riffs, played in the manner of the (Frank) Severi, in the place of improvised ensemble. As a result the records, instead of increasing in tension and excitement as they progress, become tiresome and dull in the last three or four choruses of each side. Lindsay and Dodds are apparently still great players

but they don't belong in such a group. Baby puts on quite a show, as he does on the recent lamentable "Tut Soper records," but this is not the Baby who played on the Oliver, Morton and Dodds' Black Bottom Stompers records.

A few of the "greats" are left whose music has not changed, but if they are to be recorded it must be done soon. Time grows short. If we give such men as Orv, Baby Dodds, Messtrow, Mint Carey, Pop Foster, and Tubby Hall the chance to record again in the proper musical atmosphere we shall be handsomely rewarded.

There is also a handful of comparative youngsters (all white) who should be encouraged to play and record with these proved grants. It seems natural for Yank Lawson, Nappy Lamare, and Ray Hawkins to play in the old style. There are others who are almost unknown, such as George Lange. An experiment in jazz, the Lu Watters Yerba Buena jazz band, has also given us, in Turk Murphy and Ellis Horne, at least two musicians who show great potentialities. Ben Strickler, former full-billy trumpet player who has recently joined forces with Horne and Murphy, is said to be very good. Further, I understand that another West Coast trombonist, who is but seventeen years of age, has learned to play very convincingly in the style of the early New Orleans men—Orv, Palmer, George Brown. Perhaps in these men there is still a future for the real jazz.

I repeat what I said in the last installment of *The Astronomer*. Looks at jazz a year ago. We cannot easily ignore the lesson of the last half century, and we cannot go on much longer in search of the lost perfection of various period styles whose greatest exponents are dead or swiftly aging. If I were asked today to record a session which was to leave the greatest possible impact on the future of jazz, I would not go back to the well-tried orchestrations of New Orleans and Chicago, for I know that even at best I could not expect to produce anything better than nostalgic recitations of a period long dead, and I would fail to see the sense of doing anything, however well, which has once before been done equally well. I would rather hire up a large band made up of men who are compatible and can improvise collectively in ever changing sub-groups and sub-units within the band. This, basically, was what Ellington did at his very best, before and until the commercial needs of the band business required him to play for someone else's cashbox.

-- Ernest Borneman  
Record Changer  
Feb. 1946

## Supporting Jazz - cont.

sible to the general audience of the semipro. Given no public venue, the hobbyist band would gladly spend an evening a week in a basement practicing and learning new tunes. Luckily there are joints - the B'haus - where the hobbyists can do their thing in public. The pay may be only gas money and beer, but it's better than bringing your own 6-pack to a basement session, and the hobbyist band can play for family, friends, and a small but enthusiastic group of PRJC purists.

Since Dan Priest started this dialogue 3 months ago, bemoaning the seeming dearth of public jazz performance, the cycle has begun to rise again with activity all 7 nights of the week. The big winner is Friday, with no less than 4 full bands plus a N.O.-style trio. There's also ragtime piano 7 nights a week in Alexandria, one of the few places in the country where this is the case. We've seen these cycles before and we will again. I don't really know how to explain them.

As to the monetary rewards of playing jazz, the fact is that to make any real money the musician must make concessions to commercialism in his repertoire and performance, and he must still contend

with the fact that our music, much as we may love it, is one of limited appeal. That's why there are more people boogying to electric rhythm music in one or two Georgetown discos every night than there are listening to traditional jazz all over town, and why there's no burning need for a Society for the Preservation of Disco Music. And let's dispel right now the great myth of jazzlovers everywhere: that if you can just expose jazz to new audiences they'll go crazy over it and become lifelong converts. I hear that regularly and it flies in the face of all experience and observation. How many musician's wives and kids do you know who have heard the music for 10 or 20 years and still don't care for it?

As in most other human endeavor, the rewards of public jazz performance match the investment. So bandleader, when you get another gig down at Charlie's Bistro, and the crowds are small, and Charlie is standing morosely by the cash register with that look on his face that says you're not going to be back next Friday, don't question the loyalty of 700 PRJC members scattered all over the area for not supporting you; question your appeal and make the requisite adjustments in your expectations or your performance.

-- Dick Baker

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## Regular Gigs

### Mondays

Federal Jazz Commission 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthaus, Arlington, Va.

### Tuesdays

Storyville 7 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthaus  
The Tired Businessmen 9:30 on. Dutch Mill Supper Club 6615 Harford Rd. Balto.  
Jimmy Hamilton's Night Blooming Jazzmen 9:15-12:45 Frank Condon's Rest.  
N. Washington St., Rockville, Md.

Band from Tin Pan Alley 9-12:30 La Boheme Rest. Willston Shpng Ctr, Falls Ch.

### Wednesdays

Fat Cat's Festival Jazzers 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthaus  
(June 14 - PRJC Open Jam at the B'haus)

### Thursdays

Riverside Ramblers 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthaus  
Upstairs at the Yummy Yogurt jam from 4:30-7:30 pm. 1337 F St. NW, D.C.

### Fridays

Washington Channel JB 8:30-12:30 Crystal City Howard Johnson's Rt 1, Va.  
Southern Comfort 8:30-12 Shakey's, Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.  
Stutz Bearcat JB 8-12 Shakey's in Fairfax, w. of Fairfax Circle.  
Dick Wolters' Trio 7-11 pm Devil's Fork Rest. 1616 R.I. Ave. NW Washington D.C.  
Orig. Crabtowne Stompers 9-1 pm Buzzy's, West St., Annapolis, Md.  
Skip Tomlinson Trio Windjammer Lounge, Marriott Twin Bridges  
Eddie Phyfe Three 9-1 The Chase Rest. 44th and Jennifer, NW

### Saturdays

Sheiks of Dixie Ramada Inn, Oldtowne Alexandria  
Original Crabtowne Stompers Buzzy's in Annapolis  
The Barnstorming JB Shakey's, Annandale, Va.  
Skip Tomlinson Windjammer  
Eddie Phyfe The Chase

### Sundays

The John Skillman Trio - Jazz Brunch Buffet 11 am-3:30 pm Devil's Fork

## OTHER GIGS OF NOTE

June 2, July 7 Tex Wyndham's Red Lion JB, Green Rm., Hotel Dupont, Wilmington, Del.  
June 2 Va. Shy Jam, home of Frank McPherson, 2619 E Meredith, Vienna (938-4461)  
June 16 Md, D.C. Shy Jam home of Dave Littlefield, 6809 5th St. N.W. (723-9527)  
June 17 New Sunshine JB 8:30-11:30 Crystal Ballroom, Glen Echo Pk.  
June 17 Duke Ellington Orch cond. by Mercer Ellington, La Boheme  
Rest. Falls Church, Va.

June 24 JAZZ ON THE POTOMAC (PRJC SPECIAL) See ad, this issue

Folklore Society Hotline - 281-2228 Left Bank Jazz Soc. Hotline - 945-2266

## Record Review

Jimmy Mazzy Sings: R & M Osgood; OZ1001

The Boston area abounds in good and interesting sounds from Tony Pringle to Seiji Ozawa. This is an observable fact having little to do with any previous domicile of this reporter.

Add to the good sounds Jimmy Mazzy.

A banjoist and singer, Mazzy is, in the obscure song department, a sort of Hub City Tex Wyndham. He goes from the seldom heard (Don't Leave Me Here; Glad Rag Doll) to the wholly unheard of (Get Up off That Jazzophone; Jazzbo Jenkins) with aplomb and good humor.

Backed on one side of this record by the Dixie Jackpot, apparently a pick-up group, and on the other by a small string band, Mazzy dominates both bands and exacts excellent performances from them - especially from Bruce Burrell, clt, on Jazzbo Brown from Memphis town, and pianist Bill Whitcraft on Sweet Emmalina.

A pleasant and thoroughly professional first outing for a very good singer at a time when there are not very many around. Available for \$6.95 from R&M Osgood, 126 Dexter St., Malden, Mass. 02148.

Steve Hancoff - Classical Ragtime Guitar - Dirty Shame Records 4553

Tom Lehrer once introduced a folksong he was about to sing by bemoaning the fact that he played a piano. "You might want to think of it, he said, "as a huge 88-string gee-tar."

His job was easy compared to that of a ragpicker who plays a little 6-key piano. Steve Hancoff plays rags on a guitar and the results are, in a word, salubrious. I'm a bit handicapped in discussing Hancoff's record in that rags are not always my cup of tea. I can't say whether he plays great ragtime (though I suspect he does), but it takes no expert to know that he exploits his axe marvelously well and the result is rich, full bodied sound.

This record might be subtitled "Rags for People Who Hate Ragtime (But Love Nice Sounds)." But it is more. It is virtually a textbook on playing guitar apparently effortlessly, subtly swinging as you go. A nice, and most of all, musical record that deserves a lot of attention. Next, we'd love to hear Hancoff in a Teddy Bunn bag.

-- Jazzbo Brown from Columbia Town

Ted Chandler, Editor  
Tailgate Ramblings  
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