

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS

September 1978

Volume 8 No. 9

Ragtime to Russia Part 2

Last month, I wrote something of my trip to Russia with the New England Conservatory Ragtime Ensemble. It may be of interest to review what I found in the way of indigenous jazz in the USSR.

As I mentioned, jazz activity is high. I found dynamic jazz clubs in Donetsk, Tbilisi, Tashkent, Novosibirsk, and Moscow, and was told that most large cities have clubs. While none of them publish newsletters, there is an effective grapevine, with jazz club officers regularly traveling and passing information over the telephone. And whenever the U.S. embassy receives any kind of jazz film (which happens several times a year), Moscow Jazz Club manager Georgiy Bakhchiev goes on tour with it, showing and explaining it to local jazz clubs.

Although western records are not sold in the USSR, they seem to find their way into the country in sufficient numbers so that jazz people are pretty successful at keeping up with the latest recordings. What they badly lack, though, is jazz literature, both in terms of monthly publications such as Down Beat, and of books about jazz history and music theory. Incredibly, jazz club people have translated nearly 40 different books (mostly American, some German and Polish) into Russian, and distribute them in hand-typed manuscript form. One of the prime movers in this is Yuri Vermenich, president of the Voronezh Jazz Club.

Official support for jazz is also at an unprecedented level. Many of the clubs I visited actually have their own clubhouse, often loaned by the local Young Communist League. Also, nearly every city on our tour (the exception: Odessa) had put on a jazz festival in the recent past and is looking forward to a bigger and better one next year. They all brought bands from all over the Soviet Union to their festivals and hope to invite bands from other socialist countries to later festivals. These festivals are generally cooperative efforts between the jazz club and the local conservatory or philharmonic society. The jazz club people are extremely proud of these endeavors, and their outlook is generally quite optimistic about the future of jazz in their country. (They did, however, tend to swoon in envy when I told them that we have over 100 jazz clubs devoted just to traditional jazz in this country.)

As far as traditional jazz goes, it is primarily limited to Moscow and Leningrad. Moscow has two amateur jazz bands,

those of Grachev and Melkonov. Grachev's band just celebrated its 24th anniversary. Trumpeter Grachev himself looks surprisingly like Joe Oliver, though several shades lighter. Unfortunately, neither these bands nor any of the other amateur bands I found have a regular public venue - what the country needs is a Shakey's or a Bratwursthaus.

The Leningrad Dixieland Band has recovered from the untimely death (at age 34) of its trumpet playing leader, Korolyov, and is again swinging in fine style - the country's only professional traditional jazz band. Also in Leningrad is Gamma-Jazz, a band that plays traditional as well as other styles. I was told there is also a very good traditional band in Yaroslavl'.

-- Dick Baker

Picnic Upcoming

Habitues of past PRJC picnics will feel right at home at Blob's Park, Sat. Sept. 16 - PRJC is not about to tinker with a winning combination. It's a format which attracted nearly 1,000 to the park on the B-WX at Rt 175 in Jessup, Md., last year.

An ad elsewhere in this issue gives the basic info; for newcomers the following is added. Blob's Park has an outdoor bandstand in a tree-shaded area. There are picnic tables and benches, but not enough, so those with folding furniture might want to consider bringing it.

If it should rain (it hasn't yet on our picnic) Blob's has a large picturesque old beer hall which can hold several hundred people. Food is available at the park, or you can pack a hamper.

One innovation musically this year: A ragtime piano set early in the day. It will feature fine local tickler Terry Hartzell, and Tom Shea if he can break away from business in North Carolina.

Souvenirs will be available. We'll be introducing PRJC T-shirts with the traditional parasol logo and several folks will be selling records, new and used.

HELP WANTED - Editor of TR must step down after Nov. issue. Replacement needed to run monthly newsletter. Knowledge of jazz; writing and editing capability; layout; liaison with printers; some typing skill absolute necessities. Contact any PRJC Board member if interested.

Tailgate Ramblings

September 1978

Vol. 8 No. 9

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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 . . .

The Australians came and went. Nice crowd. The Australian Embassy provided some supportive representatives and many Australian girls who work locally showed. Great fun. Joe Shepherd gave his all-cooked steaks for 10 - 2 drivers and Mrs. B. - before the Marriott gig, and then raced to his gig at Shakey's, then back to the Marriott to give the Barnards a 3 ayem tour of Washington with a stop at the Jefferson Memorial. Our contribution and the Kramers', which consisted of housing three people each pales by comparison. The only unusual service we provided was a morning screwdriver for medicinal purposes and a 7:30 trip to Joe Shepherd's house. Very nice gents, by the way.

A New Classic Attended a party in Wahlers' basement. Heard the Buck Creek gang and a new tune, "Jazz in Wahlers' Basement," written by Bill Strogis, which could be a winner. Great food, sounds, and fun.

Celeb Corner Bob Milne, attractive rag piano player from Detroit who played last spring at Il Porto has just married Linda Leithous. Dick Baker on Felix Grant WMAL show talking about his Russian tour; and Fred Starr on Today Show - talking about Russia.

Play Ball Some have commented on the affinity between certain jazz lovers and baseball (afterall, Muggsy Spanier got his nickname from the manager of his beloved NY Giants, Muggsy McGraw). Anyway, Frank Higdon is on the Board of the Carolina League Alexandria Dukes, as is Rod Clarke, ex-PRJC Board member. Chris Henderson and Bob Harris have been spotted at a Dukes game, and TR editor Ted Chandler shows up from time to time. Johnson McRee's band played for opening day festivities.

A Gracious Lady Jerry Addicott's parents were here a while back, and Jerry's mother, particularly, turned out to be a great jazz fan. Came with Jerry to some sessions, and admitted that the light in her eyes was part maternal affection, but also love of jazz. Lots of girlfriends, wives, even children but not many mums turn out.

Outer Darkness One should mind how one goes at the B'haus and be ever so polite to the waitresses. It is said that once you've been cast out for unseemly behavior, readmission is well-nigh impossible.

Go West Many PRJC fans heading for the Central City Festival. Since I am one of them, will report on it first hand next month. Mark in red letters Sept 16 - the PRJC picnic on your calendar. -- Mary H. Doyle

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 - \$5.00. Checks payable to Potomac River Jazz Club.

Mail to: Doris B. Baker, Membership Sec'y
7004 Westmoreland Rd.
Falls Church, Va. 22042

But On the Other Hand . . .

An Editorial Outcry

One does not need to try to make the case that Joe Venuti, who died in Seattle in August, was one of the founding fathers of jazz or even one of its most luminous stars. He was not.

But Venuti was, from the time in the early 20's when he joined the Goldkette band, an important figure in the propagation of a certain kind of jazz. He was associated with the white Chicagoans who experimented with the new music from the south side of town, and was an important force in its popularization.

Playing the violin, an axe as terribly unforgiving of mediocrity as the oboe (which has been called an ill wind that nobody blows good), Venuti was one of the tiny handful of people - Stuff Smith, Ray Nance, Stephane Grapelli, and recently the highly acclaimed Jean Luc Ponty - who went beyond making appropriate noises on the instrument and managed to swing.

None swung more or harder than Venuti. Listen to a Venuti-Lang All-Stars record from the early 30's; a borrowing from Dippermouth Blues called In The Ruff. Venuti and young Bennie Goodman played their heads off and the result was sheer inspiration.

Or hear some of the things he did recently. In his late 70's, Venuti swung as irresistably as in the days of Red Nichols and Eddie Lang.

There is little sense in writing solemnly about Venuti. He was not a solemn man. He never lost sight of the fact that jazz playing is fun - that jazz is far too important ever to be taken seriously.

And he could communicate that to his listeners. So we'll let others talk of the profundity in Venuti's playing (we doubt there was much) and we'll happily yield to others who want to debate whether the violin is a jazz instrument. It is, of course. So too is the kazoo, washboard, and nose flute. One cat used to blomp out passable jazz on a bagpipe. But what's important is that Venuti played jazz well and with a zest that far transcended any limitations that might otherwise have been imposed by his axe.

We're delighted this month to have another product of the historical research arm of the Federal Jazz Commission. Some of the best writing about jazz has come about when a professional in a discipline far removed from jazz applied his discipline to the music. You may recall Erest Bornemann in the old Record Changer - An Anthropologist Looks at Jazz. Nat Hentoff

has applied his talents as a sociologist to jazz with brilliant results. And now, Fred Starr, a bona fide historian has his innings.

Yet another, of course, was semanticist and now Senator (and PRJ Cer) S.I. Hayakawa. He once wrote on the back of a record envelope something that bears repeating. He called it Hayakawa's Theorem: "If a song is about travel, real or imagined, from South to North (Goin' To Chicago Sorry But I Can't Take You, etc.) it is written by Negroes; if it is about travel from North to South (I Wanna Go Back to Carolina, Alabam', Georgia, on anywhere else in the Dear Ol' Southland) it is written by whites, temporarily role-playing the imagined nostalgia of Negroes for Dixie."

There aren't just too many exceptions to Hayakawa's Theorem. And it adds to a point upon which we have frequently commented in this journal; i.e. that jazz moved north with the Black hegira from the old plantation - a move celebrated most affirmatively by the ebullient words to Duke Ellington's Jump For Joy ("Have you seen pastures? Groovy! Green Pastures was just a technicolor movie!").

Blacks came North and with them they brought jazz - and neither were in the market for overmuch nostalgia.

We note in passing that the proprietor of a certain rag purportedly devoted to jazz paid us high tribute this month. He called this editor, Ted "Rahsaan Kirk" Chandler. Thanks. We couldn't be more pleased to suppose that we have any part of the talent and guts displayed by Roland Kirk in his too-short life. We don't deserve it, but we'll accept it anyway.

Great news! Out of our mailbox the other day dropped an envelope from Stu Anderson. Inside, a new chapter of A Private in the Great Saxophone War. We'll have it for you next month.

Another great piece upcoming: George Kay has sent us a piece he did a number of years ago for Sinclair Traill's Jazz Journal, in England. It is a tribute to Roy Carew and consists in large part of a piece Carew did about Jelly Roll Morton. It requires clearance from Traill before we can use it, but it will be upcoming, and is worth waiting for.

Final note: Dick Baker informs us that the Yankee Rhythm Kings are coming in Oct. They bombed financially for us last year, which is a damn shame, because they are excellent. Be there!

Notes from the Bakery

My thanks to all who skipped their vacations this year to be in town for the Bob Barnard concert Aug. 4. It was a fine party and the first special this year to show a profit (except the boatride).

But now it's time to think about the picnic, which as you might well imagine, takes a whale of a lot of thinking about. All the planning seems to be running smoothly enough though; we're looking forward to another happy, successful outing.

The picnic is the one event where we are absolutely dependent on volunteer help in manning the gate, running sales and information booths, setting up the area before the noontime kickoff, etc. If you'd like to participate directly in making this year's affair the best one yet, please give me a call or drop a card. Your help will be definitely appreciated by me and by gate chairman Ray West. Folks planning to sell records or anything else (be reasonable, not) are reminded to bring their own tables and set up in an area we'll designate for such activity. If you'll send me a description of your wares, I'll try to include you in the picnic program.

Even as the picnic demands our primary focus, other club activities are in the planning stage. The Yankee Rhythm Kings from Boston will be making their second appearance in this area Oct. 7 in the Potomac Room of the Marriott Twin Bridges.

In conjunction with the annual meeting and election of board members, a nominating committee consisting of Johnson McRee, Ted Chandler, and Don Angell will soon be at work selecting candidates. If you would like to bring your own name or someone else's to the attention of the committee, please contact one of these gentlemen, or drop a card to McRee, Box 458, Manassas, 22110.

The Annual Meeting will be held Nov. 11 at the Arlington-Fairfax Elks Lodge, just outside the Beltway on Rt. 50. This is the one PRJC event where we buy the beer, so don't miss it. And the New Years Eve Party Committee (Mary Doyle and Doris Baker) who did such a fine job last year, is already working on this year's celebration. And how does this sound for March 1979: The Bix Beiderbecke Memorial JB and the New Black Eagles at opposite ends of the month! We're going to try.

See you at the Picnic.

-- DB

Marsupial jay dee

Following an absence of two years, Bob Barnard and company surfaced last month at the Marriott as one of a number of stops on a month-long tour of the USA. This band plays professionally, which for purposes of this write-up means, "for a living," and not as a sometime or leisure activity. It produces a practiced and polished sound; a precise sound, I am inclined to think, not unlike groups of various sizes which occasionally stepped out from amongst the music racks of the large swing bands of the 40's.

It is an arranged sound that, no matter how brilliant in execution, lacks a certain something because of its predictability. Barnard's trumpet was Armstrong all the way. The style was straight Chicago/N.Y. most of the night, the tempo was up and the forte was triple. (The last, in some measure, possibly caused my a malfunctioning sound system.

At the risk of further offending Mr. Laudenslager's sensitivities, the crowd, who by the way pays the bills, gave the band a warm reception. This same crowd (and it is the same crowd of about 100 plus or minus) seems to continue to enjoy its choice of music seemingly unconcerned as to how, or more probably if, it is written about. Doubt exists in some minds as to whether attendance at any given PRJC special is related to writeups of past specials.

In the individual tune/performer department, I thought: John McCarthy's clarinet was superb on Tin Roof Blues, and again in a Goodman treatment of As Long As I Live; Kansas City Stomp gets the nod for ensemble tune of the night; the jazz version of Sousa's El Capitan never quite got out of the novelty class; Waltzing Matilda can be played in a jazz idiom, but at an enormous sacrifice. The band also played Royal Garden Blues, which for those statistically inclined, is leading in this year's sweepstakes for most sinned against tune. The Barnard crew's rendition did not change the standings significantly.

-- jay dee

The Gullickson Collection, compiled by the National Museum of Traditional Jazz, in honor of Record Changer publisher and longtime Washington jazz buff Gordon Gullickson has been accepted by the Martin Luther King Jr Library. Dr. Hardy Franklin, Library Director, says the collection will eventually be made available to the public in the Washingtonia Division.

PRJCers Play Festival Roles

(At least 2 bands and two other PRJCers played important parts in National jazz festivals this summer - perhaps the widest exposure club talent has yet received. We have reports from 2 of the individuals taking part. - TC)

Southern Comfort at Spoleto

Southern Comfort played the Spoleto USA Festival in Charleston, S.C. in June. We played daily 3-7 pm for four days at Charles Towne Landing, a really nice State Park near the city. The crowds were small but appreciative, so it was a nice gig.

During the week we were there, Tim Eyerman and the East Coast Offering and Dick Hyman were also playing at the Landing, so we got to hear some good music during our breaks. The original idea was to have overlapping sets, with two or three different events going on simultaneously. As it turned out the crowds were so small that the sets were changed from overlapping to serial so as not to divide the crowds.

Our closing set on Thursday turned out to be longer than scheduled. A severe thunderstorm arrived as we were in our final few tunes, and the evening events were cancelled. We kept playing to entertain the crowd until the rain stopped so they could go to their cars. We ended up playing about an hour overtime.

On Friday all the jazz events at the Landing were cancelled on the threat of more bad weather. However, we were invited to play an opening set at the Ella Fitzgerald concert that evening. The crowd for Ella numbered about 4,500 and was very receptive to our music. Ella performed both with the North Texas U. Lab One band (a 20-piece stage band) and with her own trio, and delivered an outstanding show. We had good seats down front for her performance - a fine way to end our week at Spoleto, USA.

We got pretty good media coverage at Charleston. We were carried as the third story on the WCSC-TV 11 pm news the day we arrived (OK, so it was a slow news day). The evening Post gave us some very nice reviews several different days.

Our wives came along with us and we all had a good time playing tourist when we weren't playing jazz. We could go sight-seeing every morning, play the afternoon set, and have a leisurely late dinner. A nice relaxing week.

Because of the small crowds at the Landing this year, they are planning to move the Jazz at Spoleto back downtown next year. Funny but true, the local

people think the landing (about a 15 minute drive on good roads) is too far from town to make the trip.

All in all, we had a really good time and would go again if asked. Our thanks to the Buck Creek JB for covering for us at the Rockville Shakey's on the Friday night we were at Charleston.

-- Al Brogdon

Steve Hancoff at St. Louis

There were brass players at the St. Louis Ragtime Festival. There were reed blowers, piano ticklers, drum boppers, banjo pickers, and vocalists of every traditional persuasion. But I was the only guitarist invited to perform at the 1978 festival.

There were 1,500 souls on the boat every night with long lines of mostly frustrated ticket buyers stretched out along the levee. Add to those the realistic folks who brought chairs and plopped down and listened to whatever might be happening on the levee barge, and I'd say 2,000 people enjoyed the music nightly.

They were a pleasure to play for. They actually listened. Turk Murphy and the Salty Dogs generally drew the biggest crowds. The other groups; the St. Louis Ragtimers, the Conductors, the Tarnished Six, and others were very well received every time I caught their gigs.

The solo pianists: Terry Waldo, Darryl Ott, David Jasen, Patrick Gogarty and the others, were also well liked. But the enthusiasm was mostly reserved for the groups. Deserving special mention was the David Refkin Quintet. This group played ragtime arranged for 2 violins, viola, and cello, with Ott left-handing the piano while his right brought mugs of beer to his lips.

I mostly played solo sets, surely the softest performer around. I dueted with several keyboarders, and enjoyed backing Jeanne Kitrell as well as joining with the St. Louis Ragtimers for a set and with Mike Montgomery's group for one of theirs. I also made the string quintet a sextet by playing a gig with the Refkin group.

The success of the festival was ensured not alone by the quality musicians and the enthusiastic crowds, but by an apparent total lack of competition among the musicians. It was easy. If you could play jazz or rags reasonably well, acceptance was available to you. I'd like to go back next year - and I'd sure like to see more PRJCers there to share the experience.

Also would love to see an annual bash in Washington. I don't see why it wouldn't work, and the traveling would sure be easier for me!

-- Steve Hancoff

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A session takes about 1½ hours; the cost is \$20. My office hours are flexible, but sessions are by appointment only.

STEVEN HANCOFF, M.S.W., MS.T.

(301) 431-3784

Pa. Has First Picnic

To get in training for the PRJC picnic, Sept. 16, Lida Ruth and I attended the first annual Parke Frankenfield Dixieland Jazz Fest (picnic) on July 30 at Klien's Grove, near Bath, Pa. Over 1,200 fans heard 5 hours of non-stop jazz by Chuck Slate's Traditional Jazz Band from N.J. alternating with the local Frankenfield band with Marty Napoleon on piano. This band was sometimes augmented by Spiegle Wilcox on trombone and a vocal quartet.

Slate's band several years ago inspired the formation of the New Jersey Jazz Society with it's Sunday afternoon Cester, N.J. session.

The bands played in an outdoor pavilion. Among the crowd-pleasers: Napoleon's high-spirited piano solos, Frankenfield's showmanship as MC, and a front line of three soprano saxes on San.

It was worth a trip to the Lehigh Valley to learn of Frankenfield's other musical enterprises. He is chief of the Fugowees Jazz Club, runs a music store, leads a big band, and has a 3-year gig 3 nights a week with a dance combo - all in Bethlehem. He also conducts jazz charter flights to New Orleans in mid-October, and his second annual picnic will be on July 29, 1979.

-- Harold Gray

New Book

American Sheet Music by Daniel B. Priest. 81 pp (illus.) Paper. Wallace-Homestead Book Co. 1978, \$7.95

American Sheet Music with prices, by Dan Priest, is no a directory, or just a listing. It is a historically fascinating and entertaining "guide to collecting sheet music from 1775 to 1975."

Only 81 pages, this soft-covered book is so crammed with interesting facts and tidbits that even a non-collector finds himself totally captivated. And for the collector there is a splendid and indispensable listing of American sheet music dating back over a century with current prices, the year of first print, and the composer. Did you know that Hail to the Redskins was published in 1938 and the original sheet is worth \$2.00?

Author Dan Priest, cornet with the New Sunshine JB, is a Kensington, Md., antique dealer and song sheet collector. The book is well worth the \$7.95 investment. -- Jazzbo Jenkins

PRJC 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.

Recording's Effect on Early Jazz

(Herewith, Part 2 of Fred Starr's recent research into early jazz.)

More than most artforms, early jazz was shaped by the technology that brought it into the world. Yet the impact on jazz of the process of recording and the dissemination of records has scarcely been noted, notwithstanding the fact that nearly every book on jazz relies heavily on the recorded evidence.

To be sure, the temporal limits imposed by the 10-inch 78 RPM record have been duly noted, although little attempt has been made to discover, for example, what actually went on in the extended performances that Armstrong recalled the Oliver band engaging in, or what the Oliver band's repertoire consisted of beyond the few works preserved on record.

The impact of recording on early jazz can be likened to the influence of Gutenberg's printing press on European writing. In the first place, the mass distribution of records encouraged standardization. Far more than we can readily appreciate today, early jazz was marked by diversity - with widely divergent local and individual styles and even repertoires being the rule rather than the exception. Those who are trying now to identify the distinctive qualities of early jazz in such places as Memphis, Cincinnati, Baltimore, or Atlanta are coming to appreciate the actual diversity that existed. Obviously, the standardized routines and even breaks of the revivalists would have been impossible for musicians who rarely if ever had the chance to hear one another.

Second, the advent of recording depersonalized jazz to some extent. Benny Goodman did not actually have to have met Omer Simeon in order to pick up the thoroughly "swing" style of the last chorus of Simeon's 1927 recording of Shreveport Stomp with Morton. Before that time, the "laying on of hands" was direct and personal, though teachers and students, mentors and disciples. Not until the early Bop era, and then only briefly, was such intimacy reestablished.

Third, the record industry liberated the musician from his immediate audience and hence caused jazz to cease to be a folk music in the traditional sense of an art flowing from a specific and localized environment. In this respect, it is of interest to observe that jazz went international almost at the same moment that it went national.

Fourth, the recordings with their limited time frame and their audience expecting to buy a product that would hold up under repeated listenings, placed

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JA 39; REALLY THE BLUES CONCERT, MEZZROW/BECHET	6.75
JA 40; COLLECTOR'S JACKPOT, VOL. 2	6.75
JA 41; COUNT BASIE AT THE FAMOUS DOOR, 39/39	6.75
JA 42; LESTER YOUNG & CHARLIE CHRISTIAN, 39/40	6.75

a premium on organization and discipline. All evidence suggests that the Oliver band played in a far more spontaneous and less arranged idiom in the dance hall than in the studio. Morton's Red Hot Peppers sessions epitomized the emphasis on careful planning and even on flamboyant tricks that were essential for the recording band but less crucial in the steamy ballroom. However, once on record, a band was under strenuous pressure always to play the recorded music in a manner recognizable to the non-expert record buyer, usually at the expense of improvisation.

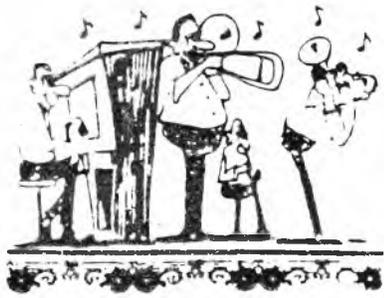
Thus, recording did much to professionalize jazz. Only a professional could take time to travel to one of the major recording companies; only a professional could stay in touch with his national audience through tours; and only a professional would ordinarily have the proven track record that would warrant a company investing in him in the first place.

If this is so, then the chronology of early jazz may be different from what we usually conceive it to be. To be sure, the early bands that chose to record do give us intimations of the old days before recording. Yet at the same time, their decision to record marks the end of that more informal, personal, localized, and less professional era in which traditional jazz was born and originally flourished.

-- Fred Starr

The Potomac River Jazz Club

8TH ANNUAL



JAZZ PICNIC

SATURDAY, SEPT. 16 - BLOB'S PARK
12 NOON - 9 PM - JESSUP, MD

14 Jazz Bands - Ragtime Piano - Continuous Music

Admission includes unlimited beer and soda pop!!!

PRJC Members - \$5

Non-members - \$6

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Band from Tin Pan Alley
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Riverside Ramblers
Sheiks of Dixie
Southern Comfort
Storyville 7
Jam set for visiting players

- Food on sale or bring a basket
- Bring lawn furniture if you have it
- Large indoor facility in case of rain

Blob's Park is on Md 175
just east of Balto-
Washington Pkwy (Jessup-
Odenton exit)

LONDON NEWSLETTER

by Albert J. McCarthy

The bulk of the interesting news at the moment comes from the countries recently "liberated" by the Allies. In the course of this letter I hope to give some hitherto unpublished information regarding conditions in France and Belgium.

Thanks must go to Hugues Panassie, Charles Delaunay, Robert B. Sales and Stanley Dance for permission to use some of the news contained in their letters to me, and to my wife for all translations from the original French.--A.J.M.

ENGLAND:

After a happy period of a few months when the B.B.C. through the Radio Rhythm Club programmes, put out the finest series of non-commercial jazz scripts that have ever been heard in this country, the inevitable reaction set in. Radio Rhythm Club was taken off the air suddenly, despite the fact that it was very high up the list in popularity, with no reason given. In its place we had Spike Hughes' Swing Half-Hour, a very mediocre and dull programme. Hughes is bored with what he likes to call jazz, and hardly takes the trouble to hide it. Rhythm Club is apparently returning to the air shortly, but there is no indication of the type of scripts it will use.

The record situation deteriorates. It is almost impossible to obtain older records which are nominally in the catalogue, and the new issues go out of print very rapidly. Amongst the welter of records by local "swing" groups, a few decent items are issued, and there is some hope that there may be a general improvement in releases shortly.

The advent of the large band led by the late Major Glenn Miller has thrown the MELODY MAKER fans into ecstasies. His concerts were attended by the musical profession in bulk, and his influence is already having its damnable results.

FRANCE:

Charles Delaunay reports that HOT JAZZ will resume publication immediately. He also has ambitious plans for reissuing many records by Louis, Bessie and others, and he awaits supplies of shellac before going ahead.

The 1943 edition of HOT DISCOGRAPHY is a fine job, and considering the fact that it was printed underground amazingly well produced. As I understand that Robert Sales has written notes on this for DOWN BEAT, I will not go into details of format or contents here.

Hugues Panassie is still in the south of France. He visited Switzerland early in the war, but a second attempt to get there was stopped by the German authorities. He had a few broadcasts at one time, but again the Germans forced him to discontinue these. He has been hard at work writing, and is now busy on his tenth book. He has had published, mostly in Switzerland, the following books:

THE MUSIC OF JAZZ AND SWING--A simplified version of THE REAL JAZZ.

THE KINGS OF JAZZ--Biographical and critical notes concerning the leading jazz musicians.

THE HISTORY OF THE SWING RECORDS MADE IN NEW YORK.

The following will be published shortly:

A DOZEN YEARS OF JAZZ--A book of anecdotes and memories of the musicians he met between 1927 and 1938.

RUGBY--Rugby football is Panassie's favourite game, and this book explains the rules and how to play well.

FIVE MONTHS IN NEW YORK--A diary of his stay in New York in 1938. Besides musical matters it treats of the New Yorkers' way of life, their food, dress, manners, etc.

ANACHRONISTIC REFLECTIONS--this consists of thoughts on music, art, literature, the cinema, education of children, psychology and life in general.

Finally, Panassie is at present working on a study of the philosopher Nietzsche.

The bulk of the French musicians are safe. Django Reinhardt has already taken part with his New Quintet of the Hot Club of France in a broadcast to this country. With a clarinet in place of Grappelly, who is still touring in this country, the new quintet lacks the charm of the original group. Reinhardt was offered huge sums of money to play for the Germans, but refused--at one time finding it expedient to disappear for a while.

Some mystery surrounds the fate of Alex Combelle. He made some records at the beginning of the war but has not been heard of for some while. Other musicians escaped to the Argentine, including Pierre Allier, Louis Volz, Eugene d'Hellennes and Big Boy Goodie.

Following the famous ZAZOU riots, the Germans attempted in every way to discourage the jazz and swing clubs, but it says much for the resilience of the movement that their attempts were not successful. It can be affirmed with certitude that Paris will once again become the jazz centre of Europe in the near future.

BELGIUM:

Little news from the Hot Clubs has yet arrived over here, but Robert Sales has sent me a number of books and magazines published since the occupation.

The magazines are L'ACTUALITE and RYTHME FUTUR. The former is published in Brussels. It is a sort of entertainment guide for people in that city, with articles on American musicians of the nature of Artie Shaw, and the bulk of the news being of local bands and entertainers. RYTHME FUTUR published in Liege also deals mainly with local personalities. A great interest in what has been going on in America dominates all the magazines--a typical note in the latter says:

"A few discs which came through Switzerland were insufficient to give a clear idea of the actual state of jazz in America. However, those which we did hear were excellent, and promise agreeable surprises for future issues."

Two books have been published recently in Belgium. One, called APOLOGY FOR JAZZ has not yet reached me, so I am unable to make comments. The other, ELEMENTARY THOUGHTS ON JAZZ by Paul Edward is well titled, as the following extracts will show:

"However, this music (a reference to the violin-A.J.M.) gives the impression of artificiality, of lack of feeling. And in spite of the wonderful musical discoveries of this prodigious instrument, we find ourselves preferring the animal bellowings of a certain Negro singer."

In a book of about 25,000 words M. Edward devotes around 150 words to blues and boogie-woogie, which are dismissed in the following fashion:

"Though they are generally pleasant to hear and play, they retain a disconcerting vulgarity of foundation, and left to his own, the uninformed attaches unmerited importance to them. These pieces are those that hot men, even the best of them, perform just when their mind and body are wearied by too long a musical stimulation, when their attention is no longer held by the mystical exaltation of Negro themes".

In his chapter on some of the classic themes M. Edward manages to attain a new level of inspiration--he becomes positively lyrical!

"If they sing of love it is always with the slightly childish notions of a simple lover (I Can't Give you Anything but Love; When You're Smiling; Ida, Sweet as Apple Cider; After You've Gone).

"Others are inspired by the most profound sentiments of the human frame: the family (Come Back Sweet Papa; Baby, Won't You Please Come Home; My Melancholy Baby Ol' Pappy; Pardon Me Pretty Baby; I've Found a New Baby; Save it Pretty Mama)".

Verily have the doctrines of the late Sigmund Freud found an admirer!

It can be presumed that something a little more satisfactory will emerge from Belgium when the old established Hot Clubs reorganize.

HOLLAND:

As yet little news has come out of Holland. Hugues Panassie says that he has had no news of Joost Van Praag, Bert Hove, Eric von Blarcom or the other well known Dutch critics since 1940, and fears for their safety.

It was in Holland that the Germans were most thorough in their efforts to stamp out Negro jazz. An amazing document which they circulated to dance musicians included the forbidding of:

"licks' and 'riffs' repeated more than three times in succession by a soloist or more than sixteen times for one section or for two or more sections."

An exception made was:

"where such music is interpreted by persons having two or more Negroid or Negritic grand-parents".

The whole document reads like a fantasy, and it is astonishing that the Germans could devote such meticulous care to jazz in the middle of a life or death struggle.

SWEDEN:

The Swedish Hot Clubs maintained their existence throughout the war. A very surprising item is a page of the ORKESTER JOURNAL published in Stockholm. It has an article by Dr. Dietrich Schulz-Kohn on Django Reinhardt called PARIS BRFV. This is the Dietrich Schultz who

wrote for SWING MUSIC in the late 30's, and it must be presumed that he was one of the army of occupation.

This month's Record Changer reprints include another piece on New Orleans by the late Roy Carew - a nostalgic look at the Gulf Coast that perhaps tells us more about the music of the area than a piece on the music itself might. Also, British critic Albert McCarthy surveys the European jazz scene in a time of conflagration.

THE Record Changer



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New Orleans Recollections



by R. J. Carew

To anyone who is fond of the water, New Orleans offers many attractions. In all directions can be found opportunities to enjoy outdoor life on some sort of a body of water. Mightiest of all is the Mississippi River, sweeping in from the northwest in broad curves, and after making its great crescent around part of the city, swinging away to the south to meet the Gulf of Mexico, about one hundred and twenty-five miles away. Bounding the city on the north is Lake Ponchartrain, some twenty miles wide and thirty miles long, where almost any sort of water sport may be indulged in—swimming, boating, fishing, yachting, etc. Across the river to the south is Bayou Barataria, reached by boat via Harvey's Canal, which

white adult riding back to New Orleans on a colored child's ticket.

The excursion trains ran at a very leisurely rate of speed. Leaving New Orleans about seven in the morning they would reach Mississippi City, my destination (some 73 miles), about eleven o'clock, sometimes later, seldom earlier. I would be getting on toward noon when the train arrived at the last stop, Ocean Springs. On the return trip, the train would depart from Mississippi City close to five o'clock, so I would have about six hours to visit my relatives there, which was reason enough for me to make the trip. Although there were no regular commercial beaches, the excursionists could enjoy bathing, fishing or boating during the short stay that the trip gave them. I must admit that, although the beaches along the coast looked tempting, the bathing often proved somewhat disappointing. In days gone by the coast residents, appreciating the succulence of the southern oyster, planted beds of oysters close to the shore in front of their homes. When they craved oysters all they had to do was to go down to the shore, rake in a few oysters, shuck them, eat the oysters and throw the oyster shells back in the water. As a result the bottom of the Gulf near the shore is covered with razor-edged oyster shells in many places, and bathing shoes are an absolute necessity, unless there has been a wholesale dredging since I used to splash around there.

It was on the trip back to New Orleans that patience and fortitude were needed. Most of the excursionists were tired from the outing and were anxious to get back home; the coaches had stood out in the hot summer sun for several hours, and were stifling, especially when the train stopped; there were no screens on the coach windows, and the cinders came into the coaches in quantities. Folks brought all kinds of bundles and packages with them; birds, chickens, dogs, cats and other pets were carried in baskets; gam baskets, if not loaded with the day's catch, at least carried the smell of previous catches. Anything and everything shoved up on the return trip, and the coaches carried quite a conglomeration of things in general. At each station the passengers would crowd on board and hurry to find seats for themselves and their bundles; succeeding in their search, they would stow the bundles and settle themselves as comfortably as they could for the slow trip, and subside into silence and waiting. Getting on the train where I did, I was usually able to get a seat next to the window, and would spend my time gazing at the landscape or into the swampy ditches that ran parallel with the tracks. Sometimes I would be rewarded by seeing an alligator swimming lazily along or sunning himself at the edge of the water.

It was when the most of the distance back to New Orleans had been covered that the most exasperating experience had to be gone through. If the excursion had been permitted to make its modest speed all the way back into New Orleans, it would have arrived there about nine o'clock. However it so happened that there was a New York flyer scheduled to leave the city via the Louisville and Nashville about half past eight, I think. Consequently, when the excursion train was less than twenty miles from town, it would be run onto a siding to await the passage of the flyer, there being no double track system at that time. Had the flyer left New Orleans on time there wouldn't have been such delay, but, owing to some arrangement with the other railroads, the New York flyer was compelled to wait for through passengers from the West, and usually the other trains were late. So, there we would be on a siding in the heart of the swampy lands between Lake Borgne and Lake Ponchartrain, on a sultry summer night, with the car windows wide open and no screens to protect us. The occasion was made to order for the mosquitoes. They swarmed into the coaches in clouds, and what misery the passengers endured! What fanning and fussing and slapping! Children would wake up and cry, women would sigh, and strong men would just about break down! Folks would pace up and down the aisles of the cars, brushing the mosquitoes off their faces and necks with their handkerchiefs, while others would be doing the same thing along the sides of the track. Perhaps this would go on for an hour before the welcome whistle of the New York flyer would be heard in the distance. Passengers would get back on the train, and folks would get back into their seats, giving thanks that they had survived once more. The excursion would get under way and before long the lights of New Orleans could be seen in the distance. When the train puffed past Stern's Ammoniated Paw Bone Superphosphate and Potash Works and swung into Elysian Fields Avenue, I would begin to feel that I was getting back home after a visit to foreign parts.

As the train was slowly pulling into the Louisville and Nashville yards I would try to drop off soon enough to take a short cut to Canal Street by going through the plant of the American Sugar Refinery, which was still operating at that time alongside the train sheds. As I hurried through the empty streets I could smell the heavy fragrance of sugar on the night air, and hear the distant singing of some Negro worker deep in the plant. That little short cut seemed to refresh me, and as I got on Canal Street and saw the lights of downtown New Orleans blinking a welcome, I lost the tired feeling, and everything was all right once more.

were usually fishermen, duck hunters, etc. Camps and boats could be rented, and apparently a good business was done catering to the real and would-be sportsmen. I never heard it said, but it occurs to me that Chef Fenteur (Chief Liar) may have been named after one of those hardy fishermen, who told of the fish that got away. From Ansley on to the end of the run, the towns were more or less resort towns, and I presume that most of the passengers to those points were drawn by the attractions of the Gulf Coast. Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Gulfport and Biloxi were the largest towns, and received the greatest numbers of visitors. When the trains came to a stop at Bay St. Louis and Pass Christian, negroes of all ages would pass up and down along the sides of the coaches, selling scuppernongs, fish, crabs, shrimp, and sandwiches of all kinds—fish, oyster, crab cake, chicken, etc. Most of which were right tasty, too, if one could control his imagination.

At all of the stations in those days there was a great traffic in the excursion tickets. Many of those taking the trip would be going for a vacation of a week or two on the coast, and would have no use for the return privilege, and many others would be completing a vacation and hoping to get a cheap trip back to the city. So there would be much running to and fro, and the familiar question "Want to sell your ticket?" would be heard on all sides, in spite of the fact that the railroad company stipulated that the tickets were not transferable. Although separate coaches were provided for colored patrons, their tickets were the same as those for the whites, and they participated in the bartering as vigorously as anyone. In an effort to stop such widespread selling of tickets, the railroad company tried various checks to make this transfer more difficult. They finally had the tickets printed to show whether the holder was white or colored, male or female, child or adult, as well as stating the date and destination. Most of the information would be punched by the conductor as he made his rounds on the outbound trip, and it was required that the back of the ticket be stamped by the station agent at the point of destination. All this caused the customers a little more trouble, and doubtless prevented some sales, but the conductors were lenient and sympathetic, and I have known of a

affords a route by boat to Lake Salvador and other bodies of water, and finally the Gulf. To the east are Lake Borgne and the Gulf Coast of Mississippi. This last was a poor man's Riviera and the trip to the Gulf Coast, at least in my time, was doubtless the most popular with the New Orleans folks. Today the Gulf Coast can be reached very handily by automobile, but in the early days the Louisville and Nashville Railroad furnished the only transportation available to the general public. And during those years the New Orleans public certainly availed itself of the opportunity. Many high class Louisvilles and Nashville trains made the trip along the Coast, but the Sunday excursion trains were the ones that really hauled the multitude. In every sense of the word they were the popular out of town Sunday trips, and during the summer season they ran them on Wednesdays also. At the height of the season there were often three sections of fourteen coaches each necessary to accommodate the crowds. The trip was a great bargain, since in the early days one could ride from New Orleans to Ocean Springs and back for the remarkable price of \$1.00,—a total of about 170 miles. Consequently it is no wonder that the folks began to congregate at the Louisville and Nashville depot, at the foot of Canal Street, well before six o'clock on Sunday mornings, to get tickets and clamber aboard the trains just as soon as the gates were opened, so as to assure for themselves the best seats possible. That is to say *best* in so far as it relates to *location* rather than *quality*, for quality about those cars was something conspicuous by its absence. They used any kind of coaches that were available, even those with red plush seats, which were not exactly appropriate to the summer season. Nevertheless, the eager crowd surged on board, carrying all sorts of impediments which might be necessary or contribute to a day's enjoyment at the beach.

As I recall, the usual stops on the excursion were Chef Fenteur, Rigulets, Ansley, Waveland, Bay St. Louis, Pass Christian, Long Beach, Gulfport, Mississippi City, Biloxi and Ocean Springs. The first two stops are in Louisiana and not on the Gulf Coast; they are close to Lake Borgne and a network of waterways that connected Lake Borgne, Lake St. Catherine and Lake Ponchartrain, and passengers to those points



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of music creep in our ears....."
- The Merchant of Venice -

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

Tuesdays

Storyville 7 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthau

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.

Wednesdays

The Sheiks of Dixieland 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthau
(Sept. 13, PRJC Open Jam at the B'haus)

Thursdays

Riverside Ramblers 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthau

Bill Potts' Big Band 9-1:30 Frank Condon's Supper Club, Rockville

Fridays

The Tin Pan Alley Trio 8:30-11:30 B'haus
(Sept. 15, Open Pre-Picnic jam at B'haus)

The John Malachi Trio 10 pm-3 am Jimmy McPhail's Gold Room 1122 Bladensburg Rd
(Res. - 399-1444)

Southern Comfort 8:30-12 Shakey's, Rockville Pike, Rockville, Md.

Stutz Bearcat JB 8-12 Shakey's in Fairfax, w. of Fairfax Circle

Orig. Crabtowne Stompers 9-1 Buzzy's, West St. Annapolis, Md.

Saturdays

The John Malachi Trio Jimmy McPhail's Gold Room

Original Crabtowne Stompers Buzzy's

Sundays

Jazz Brunch Buffet 11 am-3:30 pm Bevil's Fork 1616 RI Ave, NW, Washington

OTHER GIGS OF NOTE

Sept. 1, Oct. 6 Tex Wyndham's Red Lion JB, Green Rm., Hotel DuPont,
Wilmington, Del. (Reservations strongly advised)

Sept. 1, Oct. 6 Va. Shy Jam, home of Frank McPherson, 2619 E. Meredith St.,
Vienna (938-4461)

Sept. 15 DC-Md Shy Jam, home of Dave Littlefield, 6809 5th St. NW (723-9527)

SEPT. 16 ANNUAL PRJC PICNIC - 12 noon-? BLOB'S PARK, JESSUP, MD.

Sept. 12-17 - The Tommy Flanagan Trio, Maryland Inn, Annapolis (From DC call
261-2206)

Sept. 25-Oct. 1 - Jimmy Witherspoon w/ Larry Eanet Trio - Maryland Inn

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BLOB'S PARK, SEPT. 16

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