

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS

DR JAZZ -
M.D.
P.R.J.C.
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MAY 1974

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS, VOL. 4, NO. 3

May 1974

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TAILGATE RAMBLINGS is published for members of the Potomac River Jazz Club, a non-profit organization dedicated to the perservation and encouragement of traditional jazz in the Greater Washington, D.C. and Baltimore areas. Signed articles appearing in TR represent the views of the author alone and in no way reflect official club policy or opinion.

Articles, letters to the Editor and ad copy (for which there is no charge to members) should be mailed to:

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The sharp-eyed reader will have noticed something new in the first paragraph of this page. It is a proviso to the effect that opinions expressed in signed articles in this publication in no way reflect official opinions of the PRJC, nor of this editor. It is probably not proper for the club as such to take critical positions on musicians, their music or their practices. In any case, it would be an impossibility to achieve any kind of unity of opinion on behalf of the Board of Directors--the healthy differences of opinion which arise at each board meeting attest to that.

Nor does it seem right that I, as editor, should presume to speak critically on behalf of the Board of Directors or the more than 600

members of the club. Therefore, I will try as scrupulously as possible to keep my own opinions, biases and preferences from intruding on the parts of this publication which I write myself.

However, there must be some forum for dissenting opinions and criticism. Members with legitimate axes to grind or especially with constructive criticism about how traditional jazz can best be furthered (which is, after all, our stated goal) should have some way to put their ideas into the arena of general consideration, which is classically the way good ideas are separated from poor ones. That is why these pages must continue to be open to material other than that of a purely reportorial nature. In the past we have had slightly irreverent articles by a New Orleans observer, Icon O'Clast; these will continue. Also in this issue you will see reactions to a rather strongly-worded article which appeared in these pages some months ago.

I make this point in hopes that any time some reader should find himself offended by something in these pages, he will not take the club or this editor to task for the offense, real or imagined. And I hope that neither would he take to task that person who wrote the "offensive" piece, for if I'm able to adhere to the above-stated editorial policy, that author will only have been trying, as best he can, to constructively criticize and thus further the music we all hold so dear.

CALLING ALL PRJC BAND LEADERS

Would like to remind you to help me help you publicize your band's activities, both in this publication and on 630-PRJC. Let me know about any of your gigs which are open to the public. Call me at 521-4597 or drop me a card.

- D.B.

The Potomac River Jazz Club



For recorded info -

DIAL (301) 630-PRJC

** WINDJAMMER **

May	5	BULL RUN BLUES BLOWERS
	12	ANACOSTIA RIVER RAMBLERS
	19	ORIGINAL WASHINGTON MONUMENTAL JAZZ BAND
	26	GOOD TIME SIX
June	2	WORLD'S THIRD GREATEST JAZZ BAND
	9	BAY CITY SEVEN

ATTENTION: CHANGE OF LOCATION FOR MAX COLLIE RHYTHM ACES

The Max Collie Rhythm Aces will play in the CRYSTAL CITY SUITE of the CRYSTAL CITY MARRIOTT, Jefferson Davis Highway (Route 1) in Crystal City, Arlington, Va.
9 p.m. - 1 a.m. \$3 PRJC members \$4 nonmembers

REGULAR GIGS

Sunday PRJC weekly session in the Windjammer Room, Marriott Twin Bridges Hotel, south end of 14th Street Bridge, Arlington, Va. 7:30 - 11:30 p.m. Open to public. \$2.00 cover charge.
ANACOSTIA RIVER RAMBLERS, Lighthouse, Falls Church, Va. 7 - 11 p.m. Sit-ins welcome.

Monday GOOD TIME SIX, Bratwursthau, 708 No. Randolph St., Arlington, Va. 8:30 - midnight

Wednesday ASPEN HILL GANG, D'Angelo's Restaurant, 4064 Aspen Hill Road, Wheaton, Md. 8:30 - 11:30 p.m.

UPCOMING EVENTS:

Saturday, May 18 BOWIE STARLINERS "SWING IN IV" featuring Dick Hyman and Urbie Green. Prince George's Junior College, Largo, Md. 8:00 p.m. Admission \$4.00

Saturday, June 15 POTOMAC RIVER JAZZ CLUB S.S. DIPLOMAT BOAT RIDE. Details page

DON'T FORGET TO RENEW -- Membership renewal notices went out last month. At \$5, unchanged since the club was founded, this is truly one of the last genuine bargains in this inflationary period. And this is probably the last year to get in on such a bargain since the dues will no doubt have to be raised next year due to increased costs. A very great percentage of the PRJC's operating expenses each year goes into the mailbox. As you know, postage rates recently went up 25% and the paper shortage has driven printing costs up. These increased costs may yet force a cutback in the size and coverage of TR, but we will try to keep providing as much service as possible.

NOTES ON NEW ORLEANS 1974

Ray and Esther West were the first PRJC'ers to return from this year's New Orleans Jazz Festival, getting back to Washington the day TR went to press. Waiting for them in genuine "hot scoop" journalistic fashion was your editor, who rushed the following, Ray West's account of events in New Orleans, into print. Remember, you read it here first!

Tuesday night, April 16: Arrived NO with PRJC Prexy Fred Wahler and Anna, Liz McRee, Shannon Clark and Judy Doles. Met Tom Martin meandering down Bourbon Street at 3 o'clock in the morning. Not much going on.

Wednesday, April 17: In a.m. visited NO Jazz Museum; their stock of records and books is fantastic, could have bought the place out if hadn't exercised a little self-control.

Later strolled Bourbon Street, ended up at Preservation Hall. The house band under Kid Thomas sounded good, similar to the touring band. Out-of-town musicians and jazz fans drifted in and out, including members of Kid Bastien's Camelia JB, Jim Hamilton, Martin, Bill Bacin and the Ray St. Germaines from Mississippi. First impression of Preservation Hall is one of shock at the incredibly shabby, dirty condition of the place. It was unswept, with empty beer cans and cigarette butts all over the floor, the walls are filthy and there is no place to set except for a few crude wooden benches. I just couldn't believe that this was a place that musicians and jazz fans from all over the world come to hear and play jazz at its birthplace. Yet they continue to do so and there is a feeling about the place and the way they play that seems to do credit to the whole New Orleans place in the history of jazz, in spite of its appalling condition.

Thursday, April 18: In afternoon attended concert by the New Black Eagle JB, sponsored by the New Orleans Jazz Club. They sounded great, looked different, since all but one are now sporting full beards. Have added more rags to their repertoire. Sell-out crowd. Also attending were DC PRJC'ers George Mercer, Johnson McRee, Fred and Jackie Dietrich, Jim Nielsen.

Thursday night on the MV PRESIDENT: first official activity of the Jazz and Heritage Festival. First band was the Legends of Jazz, a group of old-timers who still play really well. Johnny Wiggs' band featured our own Fat Cat mc'ing and singing--sounded great. Also heard Don Albert band, Kid Thomas and Pres. Hall JB. Unfortunately the concert was poorly miked, crowd noise high. Overall impression: a disappointing exercise in frustration, neither enjoyable nor instructive because of poor sound system, crowded conditions and inconsiderate spectators who stood in front of those sitting. Evening not a total loss: after boat ride got to hear Armand Hug play some very tasty piano at the Royal Orleans Hotel.

Friday, April 19: Spent entire evening at the Esplanade on Bourbon Street listening to the Climax Jazz Band from Toronto. This band is super; payed their own way to NO and played all night for beer just to be there.

Saturday, April 20: In afternoon Jim Nielsen and I walked the streets that were the official boundary of the Storyville district prior to 1917. Nothing remains to suggest that this was the birthplace of New Orleans jazz, where the sounds of Jelly Roll, Buddy Bolden, King Oliver and Louis Armstrong were heard. Just groups of two-story brick dwellings of the type called town houses in Washington. The street signs naming Basin Street, Iberville, Bienville are the only reminders of the significance of this area. Heard that Fat Cat sang again at the fairgrounds and that he never sounded better.

In evening stopped in at Pete Fountain's. Not principally traditional jazz, but this man's ability on the clarinet is awesome, puts on a fantastic show. From there back to the Esplanade to catch last set of Climax JB, again great. All the traveling jazz fans were there or eventually showed up. Discovered that Pres. Fred is a frustrated band boy as he carried drums down Bourbon Street to help the NBEJB catch a plane to Boston.

Sunday, April 21: To Stage Door Canteen to hear Legends of Jazz again. Confirmed my first impression: a good band considering their ages; several tunes not trad. Had to tear ourselves away from listening to the Climax band to leave for airport. We had a great time. New Orleans is a great city with a character all its own. Didn't hear as much traditional New Orleans jazz as I thought I would.

CHICAGO REVISITED
by Scotty Lawrence

Gene Mayl brought his Dixieland Rhythm Kings into the Chesapeake Room of the Marriott on March 25 and recreated an exciting Chicago atmosphere with a competent group of first-rate musicians.

PRJC devotees of the more economical, "pure" New Orleans jazz may not have been as impressed as I was, for the front line was undoubtedly "busier" than one would expect from a New Orleans oriented group. But this front line knew what they were doing and played their parts with technical competence and a fire that overcame even the normally cold ambience of the Chesapeake Room.

Ernie Carson's cornet took charge with a driving lead and Gene Bolen's clarinet was outstanding both in support and in solo. It was apparent that the clarinet and trombone men were listening attentively to Ernie's statements, for there were several instances of imitation of his phrasing by both clarinet and trombone, i.e., repetition (with modifications) of cornet phrases by both instruments. In fact, Ernie likes to use imitation of his own phrases in solos, displaying humour and musicianship in the process.

If you were determined to carp, it was possible to find minor flaws. The trombone player, Hans Kuntzel, seemed a bit overfond of the extreme high register on solos without the precise control that is essential for playing up there, but it may just have been one of those nights that all brass men know too well when the chops are not exactly right. However, his ensemble work was fine and his middle-register solos were well constructed, and they swung.

The band has not been together long apparently, for there was no indication of any special arrangements. But that too is a minor point, for they did what they wanted to very well.

For me, this was a highly satisfactory evening, for this is my kind of jazz.

As happens too often at PRJC sponsored events, the turnout was disappointing, causing the officers of the club to wonder just what the members want. Any comments?

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SAILING DOWN THE POTOMAC

PRJC members should ACT NOW to order their tickets for the PRJC jazz cruise on the MV DIPLOMAT June 15. It will sail the Potomac from 8 pm until midnight with an all-star PRJC jazz band on board (already engaged for the evening: piano-player Tex Wyndham from Wilmington, Delaware). Last year's cruise sold out when we sold 300 tickets; this year we are only selling 250 seats, feeling that the boat was too crowded before. This event is open to the public, but PRJC members will be the first to find out how to order tickets by reading these lines. Tickets are \$7 each; send your check made out to PRJC to Fred Wahler, 3903 Buck Creek Road, Temple Hills, Md 20031. Don't delay!

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Attention collectors, musicians, researchers: I am disposing of several rare 78's from the collection of the late Roy Carew, pioneer authority on Joplin, Morton, rag-time and early New Orleans jazz. List furnished upon request. George W. Kay, 6169 Paris Ave., New Orleans, La 70122.

Conn alto sax, brand new, \$225.
Also Bundy (Selmer) clarinet, \$75.
Call Dick Baker, 521-4597.

Summertime...Is Jazz Festival Time

Many PRJC'ers like to plan their vacations around the various annual jazz festivals, almost all of which fall in July this year. The following is what information was available as of TR press time.

June 27-30 - The Detroit Jazz Fest

July 9-13 - The Saint Louis Jazz Festival

Performers include: Turk Murphy's JB, the Salty Dogs, Dan Havens' Mississippi Mudcats, the Renaissance Ragtime Orchestra, St. Louis Ragtimers, St. Louis Saints, Knocky Parker, Terry Waldo, Dave Jasen, Dick Wellstood and many other fine piano soloists. This is the fest which seems to draw the most PRJC'ers each year. It takes place on two riverboats moored on the Mississippi River right under the magnificent Gateway Arch. Most of our club members will be staying on the 12th floor of the Bel Air East Motor Hotel, 4th & Washington, St. Louis 63102; tel. 314/621-7900. Mention PRJC and the 12th floor if you'd like to be with your fellow Washingtonians. There should be at least two dozen of us there.

July 25-28 - The Sedalia Joplin Fest

The first in what is to be an annual event in the town Scott Joplin called home. Should be a host of fine piano-pickers there. Further info and reservations from Festival Coordinator Larry Melton, P.O. Box 967, Sedalia, Mo 65301.

July 26-28 - Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival, Davenport, Iowa

Another PRJC favorite. Performers to include Max Collie Rhythm Aces, Smokey Stover's Firemen, Reedy Creek JB, New McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Bix Beiderbecke Memorial JB, West Des Moines JB, Davenport JB. Contact Don O'Dette, 906 W. 14th St., Davenport, Iowa 52804.

BREAD FOR WEEKEND DIXIELANDERS:

MAYBE THERE ARE REASONS WHY A FOUR-HOUR GIG PAYS ONLY \$7

Ed Fishel's article in the Fall 1973 issue of TR on the tetchy subject of compensation for weekend Dixielanders may have rendered PRJC members, players and non-players alike, a real service.

Below are the comments of two respected local musicians on why all the local Dixie gentry aren't rolling in coin.

Banjo/guitarist Lowell Peart writes:

"Ed Fishel's thought provoking discussion in the Fall Tailgate Ramblings did exactly that for me. As some readers know, it has been my pleasure (mostly) to front the Goodtimers at Shakey's in Rockville for the last five years. We also spawned the Annandale group. This gives me adequate credentials, I feel, to comment.

"In my opinion, the scarcity of long-term Dixieland jobs can probably be attributed to the following:

"1. There simply are not enough Dixie fans in the whole D.C. area to support even one full-time band.

"2. Many Dixieland enthusiasts are terrible snobs. They have no tolerance for other types of jazz, let alone other types of music. Some put down any band or musician that does not play all Dixie, and, moreover, it must be their own style, whether New Orleans, Condonese, etc. (Interestingly, most musicians put down Dixieland as being too primitive musically). This attitude makes it difficult to please a large number of patrons and mount any support unless one does go "commercial."

"3. This brings me to the question of what is wrong with giving the public what it wants? The public doesn't want Dixieland.

We play about one-third Dixie and may be pushing our luck. Let's face it. Dixieland is over 50 years old. In the fickle world of popular music its a wonder it survives at all. (How many groups are doing the Tijuana Brass sound today?)

"4. Now, let me ask what Dixieland has to offer? Jazz fans are notoriously poor spenders. Two beers for the evening doesn't pay the bill, friends. I don't know of a single restaurant in the D.C. area in the last 15 years that has been successful with Dixieland alone.

"This may be a shock, but a lot of nice average people still think of jazz as disreputable music. It is associated with barrooms and worse and tends to draw a seedy clientele. Dixieland musicians often have a strange notion that playing jazz gives them the right to drink, if not get drunk, on the job and hopefully at house expense.

"5. For a musician with versatility Dixieland is a bad bargain. Who needs \$4 or \$5 an hour, if that, playing Dixie when one can easily make two or three times that amount by playing dance music?

"There are a bunch of other things I could mention -- the general economic conditions, unrehearsed bands, constantly changing personnels, etc., but these really aren't that important in a world where the patrons are more impressed by form than content. Let me close with a Parthian shot, where do we come up with this idea that restaurants owe Dixielanders a living? And please, Ed, don't knock the pizza parlors anymore. They are Dixie's best friend in town."

(Ed. note: since this letter was written both the Rockville and Annandale Shakey's have been forced for financial reasons to drop jazz)

Scotty Lawrence has this to say:

"The problem discussed by Ed is well nigh insoluble but his views deserve consideration.

"I can't buy the idea of playing gigs for minimal wages with expectations of increases as receipts go up - if they ever do. You are stuck with the original price forever, Ed. If and when the club takes in extra money, the usual course is for the owner to hire a larger band, or perhaps one with a leader who plays three clarinets at once while tap dancing to The Stars and Stripes on a pepperoni pizza on top of the bartender's head to the delighted screams of the discriminating audience. It's far more realistic to quote a fair price on a take it or leave it basis and collect while you can.

"Ed has a good point in bemoaning the lack of promotional effort and probably much could be done in that area. However, along with promotion such as use of the PRJC mailing list, there are some basic things we should be paying attention to right now on both old and new gigs. For instance:

"If the band is scheduled to go on at 8:30, why are some of the guys often still drifting in around 9 p.m.? Far too frequently the first note isn't hit until 9:15 - hardly an auspicious beginning.

"How often are intermissions stretched beyond reasonable limits? Customers can and do get bored enough to leave.

"Questions for the leader: Do the guys stay reasonably sober all night (including the leader)? Do they appear as if they had shaved and changed shirts recently? Fair questions, I believe.

"Ed says that 'One way to make our music a big success, obviously, is to work up a sensationally good band.' Maybe, but that doesn't mean that a band need be made up of sensationally

good players individually, and I doubt if that could be accomplished locally anyhow. None of the area cats is in the process of putting Bobby Hackett out of business or eclipsing the memory of James P. Johnson. However, granted some measure of individual competence, any band playing gigs needs some degree of organization to include such considerations as common understanding of planned intros and endings, order of solos, who should be featured on a particular tune, what dynamics should be used and where, etc. This takes hard work, including rehearsals, but organization is an essential ingredient for any band.

"Each band needs some individuality in repertoire, vocal numbers, showmanship. Too often the customers are served the same old tired tunes, with every man on the stand looking as bored as he feels on the 10th chorus of Muskrat Ramble. Surely a little effort in this area is worthwhile both for customers and musicians.

"Promotion may get customers in once, but even this once they deserve adequate jazz, started on time, and played with some flair and show of enjoyment by the musicians.

"If none of these considerations helps the financial picture, perhaps we should stop shaving, buy a 10,000 watt amplifier for each man, turn up the volume and hope for the best. If that fails, too, better forget all about bread and start working towards a PRJC-owned or operated clubhouse where we can play for the hell of it -- which is more or less what we're doing now.

"If you still have difficulty getting out of the house, you can always turn your rec room over to the PRJC and we'll all come to your place, thus solving your problem."

ALAS AND A LACK...

A lack of regular band jobs, that is. April took a terrible toll on the fortunes of Dixieland jazz bands in this area. First, the Bay City Seven lost their Friday evening gig in Timonium, north of Baltimore. Then Country Thomas and his World's Third Greatest Jazz Band lost their Tuesday evening job at the Place Where Louis Dwells in D.C. And finally, the most severe blow of all is the news that Bob English's Jazz Band has played its last Friday and Saturday nights in Annapolis. That job was the longest-running jazz engagement in the area, having lasted over four years.

Methinks it's time for all of us, musicians and fans alike, to start beating the bushes looking for restaurant and club owners who will give jazz a chance.



The club wants to again express its gratitude to the media people who have helped us so much by giving us free air time and column space. Space doesn't allow us to mention all the radio stations and newspapers which have done us favors, but we do want to especially thank WMAL personalities Felix Grant, Tom Gauger, John Lyon, Bill Mayhugh and Bill Trumbull. From the world of paper and ink, we want to especially thank Washington Post writer (and genuine hard-core jazz fan) Hal Willard, who has consistently reported PRJC events in the Panorama section of each Thursday's Post.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION, POTOMAC RIVER JAZZ CLUB

(Please print or type)

NAME _____

STREET _____

CITY _____

STATE & ZIP _____

PHONE NO. _____

OCCUPATION _____

RECORD COLLECTOR? YES () NO ()

MUSICIAN? (What Instruments?) _____

MEMBER OF ORGANIZED BAND? _____

INTERESTED IN ORGANIZING OR JOINING ONE? _____

INTERESTED IN JAMMING OCCASIONALLY? _____

READ MUSIC? YES () NO ()

DESCRIBE YOUR JAZZ INTERESTS BRIEFLY (What styles interest you, etc.)

ANY OTHER COMMENTS, REMARKS OR SUGGESTIONS IN REGARD TO FUTURE P.R.J.C. ACTIVITIES?

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING SHORT ESSAYS OR ARTICLES TO THE P.R.J.C. TAILGATE RAMBLINGS? YES () PLEASE DESCRIBE

I enclose check for \$7.00 initiation fee and first year membership dues: I enclose check for \$5.00 membership renewal.

Signature _____

Mail to:

Mrs. Dolores Wilkinson
Secretary-Treasurer, PRJC
2122 Massachusetts Ave., N. W. Apt. 813
Washington, D. C. 20008

PRJC

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS --

Hy Bergman
Alexandria, Va.
Richard W. Danforth
Fairfax, Va.
William R. Schaffer
Fairfax, Va.
James A. Hudgens
Washington, D. C.
Sarah Carter
Washington, D. C.
Harry E. Cronin
Alexandria, Va.
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HOORAY FOR DIXIELAND JAZZ