TAILGATE RAMBLINGS



"Look, I'm fed up to here with your 'old sweet jelly roll' anyway!"

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS, VOL. 4, NO. 8 October 1974

Editor - Dick Baker

This Month's Cover - Tom Niemann

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS is published for members of the Potomac River Jazz Club, a nonprofit organization dedicated to the preservation 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 (no charge for members' personal ads) should be mailed to:

Dick Baker, Editor TAILGATE RAMBLINGS 2300 S. 25th St., Apt. 101 Arlington, VA 22206

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PRJC FINDS A NEW HOME

As promised in this space last month, the club has found and moved into a new home. the Holiday Inn in Tyson's Corner, Virginia, on Route 123 right across from the shopping mall. We are in the Tower Suite, which is nine stories up and affords a fine view of the Virginia countryside. The room is a good one: although it is long and narrow, the acoustics are fine, allowing one to hear perfectly at the far end of the room. And there are none of the hanging obstructions which bothered us in the Windjammer Room. We opened there September 22 with Dick Stimson's Free State Jazz Band and followed on the 29th with Southern Comfort. Drinks in the Tower Suite are less expensive than in the Windjammer Room; a variety of sandwich platters is available, from a Rueben at \$2.25 to a steak sandwich at \$4.75.

We have, however, come to the point where it is up to us, the members of the Potomac River Jazz Club, to keep jazz alive on a weekly basis as a club activity. Unlike our arrangement at the Marriott, wherein they paid the band regardless of attendance, it is now up to the club to collect an admission fee at the door and pay the band. We expected audiences to be small at first, and they were; but that was to be expected, since there was no way to publicize our move between issues of TR. Also, we won't be getting anywhere near the walk-in trade of hotel guests which we enjoyed at the Marriott. The Board of Directors has authorized a raid on the treasury to make up the difference between gate and band salary for two months; we hope that by the end of that period all of you will be attending our Sunday sessions fairly regularly, and bringing your friends.

Would like to apologize for being late with this issue. I promised myself I would have each month's issue out by the first of the month, and I've made it so far, but in mid-September I broke both my automobile and my head in a rather spectacular crash and wasted a whole week waiting for the bells to stop ringing (they were playing "Chimes Blues"). Would you believe I was trying to out-do Evel Knievel by jumping over 20 Harley-Davidson motorcycles in my Volkswagen?

Later in this issue you'll find an ad for an outfit called Oak Lawn Books. OLB is run by PRJC member Fred Turco, and I just cannot recommend him highly enough. I've placed several orders with Fred over the last couple of years; he claims and <u>delivers</u> same-day service, and all his books are discounted. He has an incredibly complete 15-page catalog of jazz books and a 10-page record catalog (very fine print).

PIER FIVE JB AT PRJC SPECIAL

The club will hold its first special event at our new home, the Holiday Inn in Tyson's Corner, on Friday, October 25. Performing will be a first class group from Baltimore, Gene Franklin's Pier Five Jazz Band. The Pier Five band has been playing together for over 16 years and is in great demand on the Balto

(cont. on p. 4)

Potomac River Jazz Club

** TOWER SUITE **

OCTOBER 6 RANDOLPH STREET GANG

- 13 ANACOSTIA RIVER RAMBLERS
- 20 Original Washington Monumental Jazz Band
- 27 Good Time Six

September 3 World's 3rd Greatest Jazz Band

REGULAR GIGS

Please note: all gigs are tentative--always check 630-PRJC

Sunday PRJC weekly session in the Tower Suite of the Holiday Inn in Tyson's Corner, Virginia, on Rt. 123 right across from the shopping mall. 7:30-11:30 p.m. \$2 admission. Open to the public. See article, p. 2.

ANACOSTIA RIVER RAMBLERS, Lighthouse Restaurant, on Rt. 50 in Falls Church, Va. 7-11 p.m. Sit-ins welcome.

MOUNT VERNON STOMPERS, Peabody's Book Store, 917 N. Charles St., Baltimore. 4-7 p.m.

- Monday RANDOLPH STREET GANG, Bratwursthaus, 708 N. Randolph St., Arlington, Va. 8:30-midnight.
- Tuesday MOUNT VERNON STOMPERS, Peabody's Book Store, 9-midnight.
- Wednesday ASPEN HILL GANG, featuring Wild Bill Whelan, D'Angelo's Restaurant, 4064 Aspen Hill Rd., Wheaton, Md. 8:30-11:30 p.m.
- Thursday GOOD TIME SIX, Bratwursthaus, Arlington.

PRJC OPEN JAM SESSION, first Thursday of every month, Cinders Steak House, 1500 S. Joyce St., Arlington. 8:30-midnight. See story, p. 8.

- Sun, Oct. 6 (PRJC members only) Rod Clarke's Birthday Party and New Orleans Jazz extravaganza. 3-7 p.m., Blues Alley. See p. 4 for details.
- Sun, Oct. 13 FAT CAT & THE MANASSAS FESTIVAL JAZZERS, The Pub, in the basement of the Healy Bldg, Georgetown University, 37th & O Sts NW. 8-11 p.m. Admission free; beer & wine on sale.
- Tue, Oct. 15 FREE STATE JAZZ BAND, The Tavern, in Mary Gradon Center, on campus of American University, Nebraska & Mass. Aves NW. 8-11 p.m. Admission free, beer, wine & food on sale.
- Sun, Oct. 17 ORIGINAL WASHINGTON MONUMENTAL JAZZ BAND, the Pub (same as Oct. 13 entry).
- Fri, Oct. 25 GENE FRANKLIN'S PIER FIVE JAZZ BAND--a PRJC-sponsored special at the Holiday Inn in Tyson's Corner. See p. 2 for details.

PRJC PICNIC: A SUCCESS!

by Ed Fishel

This year's PRJC picnic was very much like its predecessors--perfect weather, more than a dozen bands, music from noon until an hour or so after dark, and around 500 picnickers, almost all of them loyally complying with the club's all-the-beeryou-can-drink policy (ain't it the truth--D.B.).

Three bands made their first PRJC appearance. A new Baltimore band, the Falstaff Five Plus Two, lacked a couple of its regulars and filled out with members of the Bay City Seven. This band played a standard book, but did not lack for eye appeal--it features Chris Henderson, a banjoist who is (a) left-handed and (b) exceedingly feminine. The New Randolph Street Gang--"new" in that it's now a singing band--presented a half-hour of almostnever-heard tunes, but without Dick Tubbs, one of its two principal singers.

The third new band was the PRJC-sponsored teenage band, making its first public appearance. The boys played Terrible Blues and a locally composed tune, March of the Red Baron; the rest of their program was standard. They were playing from charts and finished up at the same moment the last glimmer of daylight disappeared from Blob's Park--one more piece of evidence favoring our theory that God loves Dixieland. This band has one unanswered prayer, though, and that is for more personnel (see item on p. 8). In order to field the band by picnic time, they had to fill out with a pianist and a drummer who were teenagers about the time jazz was invented.

Almost all of the 12 adult bands, however, had to ring in at least one substitute; and substitutions, plus the normal overlappings of regular personnels, made a couple of the bands look (and sound) a great deal like a couple of the other bands. This is one area where the picnic just might be open to faultfinding; but remember, (1) it's a freebie performance by the musicians as well as by the club officers and their helpers, and (2) everybody seemed happy (and this is one of the great virtues of strong drink) with the quality of the music and, for that matter, with its variety. The PRJC picnic is a Beer Blast and Jazz Jamboree. You want great music, you can find it at Carnegie Hall or somewhere--but

without having as much fun. When the anthropologists of the future study the quaint ways of the local natives, note is bound to be made of their ability to round up a dozen bands to play for free on a Saturday afternoon. A proud record; can we top it next year?

AN OPEN LETTER TO ALL PRJC MEMBERS

Dear Friends:

On Sunday, October 6, I'd like you to be my guests from 3 to 7 p.m. at a jazz concert at Blues Alley in Georgetown. The concert will feature Al Webber's Good Time Six playing traditional New Orleans jazz. Al has assured me that there'll be no *STAD*. Refreshments will be available on a cash-bar basis.

The principal objective of this affair is to help me celebrate the completion of my first semicentennial, but a close second is to launch some innovations in our local jazz scene. Among these will be a traditional New Orleans funeral procession down the Alley and a cakewalk contest. So all you second liners get your umbrellas ready and you dancin' fools practice up on your best prancin'.

Think Dixieland,

Rod Clarke

Rod adds that the friendship of other jazz fans is all the enrichment his life can stand, so no presents, please!

Pier Five JB to Play for PRJC (cont. from p. 2)

country club circuit. The PRJC had them down here early in 1973 for a special at Blues Alley, where they played to a standing room only crowd which came away highly impressed with their musicianship and professionalism. The Pier Five Jazz Band will play from 9 p.m. until 1 a.m. in the big ballroom off the main lobby of the Holiday Inn. Admission will be \$3 for PRJC members, \$4 for non-members. A SMOGGY NIGHT IN POTOMAC TOWN (or When the Music Wilted Instead of the Lettuce)

by Tom Everett

The members of "The Godfathers" band were in fairly good condition for what promised to be a fun evening playing music for the local swim club in Potomac, Maryland.

The amplifier and microphone were in good working condition, the piano had been trucked in and put in place by a local devotee of the band, all instruments were oiled and in excellent playing condition, the electrified bass guitar was shiny and the strings were good and tight, the music was neatly in order and in place on the music stands, and the thirty-year-old, very rare soprano sax had just been returned from the repair shop where it had been shined, re-corked and just plain over-all reconditioned.

So far, so good!

As the band leader, I had most of the music gear in my station wagon and had proceeded to the swimming pool, which was only a couple of blocks from my house. The gig was set to begin at 8:30 p.m., so I dutifully arrived there early to check out the scene.

Then things began to happen! My clarinet player (who doubles on that rare old soprano sax) had been having a running battle with his wife concerning how many nights she would allow him to be away from home, especially when it came to his activities with the band. You would think from her attitude that she considered us as members of the Mafia, though I had assured her that our dark shirts, white ties, spats, derbies, slouch hats and "rods" were just for costume effect and nothing more (quoth the raven!). Anyway, by hook or crook, my clarinet player shows up for the gig, but like a bear with a sore ---! You wouldn't believe the complaining he did that night.

Next, my trombone player arrives. Or should I say departs as he arrives, since it seems that his wife is a couple of months on the way and is not feeling too well, so he has to turn around to go back home and get her. This kept us from meeting our goal of getting the gig started on time. (The clarinet player complains)

Now my piano player, "Fingers," arrives with his wife in tow. Thank God! She is a real jazz fan and makes sure he gets to his gigs. I am a little concerned about "Fingers" and his red eyeballs and swaying gait, but let it pass. (The clarinet player complains). "Fingers" sits down to the borrowed piano, tickles the keys and says, "It's a little tight." I could say the same about him, but I don't (the clarinet player does!). Next, "Fingers" takes the vocal mike (the only mike we had that night) and places it in front of the piano sounding board. The clarinet player, who thinks he can sing (well, if you consider Ted Lewis as having been a singer, then I guess he can sing), moves the mike back in front of the band. ("Fingers'" eyeballs get redder and redder!)

My bass player now arrives with this gorgeous blonde on his arm and in her bikini! (She is one of the pool lifeguards for the night--she can guard my life anytime!) He is the only bass player I know who can talk, neck, and still play good bass, never missing a note or beat. The trombone player now comes rushing back with his wife and we are finally ready to play (we are now a half-hour late).

During all this time the heat and humidity in the air was really building up. The moisture just hung in the air. At first, all we felt was a little dampness in our costumes. Remember too that we were set up and playing only ten feet from the pool. The moisture began to form on and in the piano, on the bench where we were sitting, in the new pads and corking of the soprano sax and in the sheet music. Have you ever experienced soggy music sheets? We now have! The sheets reacted like a damp dishrag, went limp and then fell from the stands to the wet pool concrete. The pads on the soprano sax began to pop and come loose, the spit valves on the brass instruments had to be blown out after every verse, the bass guitar was in danger of getting a warped neck (my bass player was still playing and necking--I should have warped his neck!), and I felt like I was in a Turkish steam bath.

The situation by this time was bad enough, but on top of it, "Fingers," who is an avid swimmer, had to take a swim between each set. He would come back dripping wet, red eyeballs glowing (I could see that glow even under water, where he was most of the time), change his clothes and then return to his wet piano. I had considered using our electric piano that night, but I'm sure glad we didn't, because with all that electronic gear and moisture around we'd have fried "Fingers" right then and there.

The food served was in the form of a sixfoot-long submarine sandwich. No kidding! One of the local beaneries makes the sandwiches up in that manner and then each person can cut off his own portion. Remember all that moisture in the air? Have you ever tried to play a horn with a soggy, leaden piece of bakery dough in the pit of your stomach? (Man, did the clarinet player every complain!)

Well, friends and jazz lovers, it was quite an experience. One I hope you all can learn from. We did. Our next gig is at the Frederick County Fair. If we can manage to get through that job without stepping in cow---- or being hit with some over-ripe tomatoes from the local rubes in attendance, perhaps I'll have another interesting playing experience to relate in the future. I'm sure of one thing, however--the clarinet player will still find something to complain about!

PRJC MUSICIANS DIRECTORY

Since the data for the first edition of the.PRJC Musicians Directory were compiled, the club has acquired no less than 66 musician members. Because the number is so substantial, it has been decided to publish a supplement to the directory rather than await the new musicians' inclusion in a second edition.

NOTE to musicians omitted from the first directory: the supplement will be made up from data you furnished on your PRJC membership application. There will be entries for name, address, phone number, instrument (or instruments), what bands you belong to (if any), whether you're interested in jamming or joining an organized band, what style(s) you prefer, and whether you read music. If you want to modify the data you furnished, or if you'd rather do the job of condensing those data yourself instead of relying on the directory editors to tell your story, send your proposed entry to Ed Fishel, 3819 N. Albemarle St., Arlington, VA 22207.

NOTE to musicians included in the first <u>directory</u>: if you want to revise your entry (or entries), here's your chance. Drop a card to Ed Fishel at the above address.

For those who don't yet have a Directory, they are available for \$1 from TR or from Ed Fishel.

"This Is Ragtime" on WAMU

This Is Ragtime, the superb series on ragtime done for National Public Radio by Terry Waldo, will be aired in half-hour installments every Saturday at 7:00 p.m., beginning October 5, on WAMU-FM (88.5). Waldo played for the PRJC in the Windjammer Room last January and was a big hit; that session was recorded by Johnson McRee and has just been released as "Terry Waldo--Sounds of Ragtime and Vaudeville, with liner notes by PRJC ragtime buff Ray West (FCJ-151). I recommend the disc highly. Now that you've turned your radios on (whisper "I love you" into its speaker grill--that'll turn it on), be sure to tune

grill--that'll turn it on), be sure to tune in to the other traditional jazz shows available in the area. On WAMU at 7:30 p.m. each Saturday is *Jazz Revisited*, by Hazen Schumaker. Also on WAMU is the continuing series by PRJC co-founder George Mercer, *Jazz Anthology* (weekdays 5:30 a.m. and 11:00 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday 6:00 a.m.). And our old buddy Royal and his show, *I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say...*, on WGTB-FM (90.1) at his new time slot, 9 a.m. until noon Saturdays. Happy Listening!

MORE JAZZ BOOK & RECORD BARGAINS FROM OLB

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Dear TR:

Re muskat vs muskrat: I asked Ed Ory about this pseudo controversy in 1955 when he was playing at the Tin Angel in San Francisco. His response was, "Who cares?"

Rod Clarke

Dear TR:

The opinion prevailing in PRJC seems to be acceptance of Club boatrides as a good thing, so forgive me for making waves with my oar.

I attended the June 15th boatride, and was I disappointed! Got there in plenty of time, only to discover that all the seats topside were taken or being held, and was hard-put to find seats even on the main deck below. The only music down there was that PA'd down, which leaves almost everything to be desired. And from the seats I finally did negotiate, we could hear so little that the event became conversionon-a-boatride instead of the anticipated musical treat. We were even unaware when La Kittrell came on! Finally went topside to join those cluttering the aisles and floor, no doubt to the inconvenience of those seated there. How else were we really to hear the music?

To PRJC I urge acknowledgement of the fact that the "Diplomat" is just not big enough for what these boat excursions ought to be. If further boatrides are planned on that boat, the seating situation and the advisability of getting there early (also the bar line and prices) should, in fairness, be communicated to the newcomers or ticket sales should be limited to the number that can be accommodated where the action is.

I hope that PRJC members will give some though to what should be done in this situation. Your point is well taken, Don, and your criticisms are valid. However, as the saying goes, the Diplomat is the only game in town. The Wilson Line is planning to have some spiffy new vessels for next season; if so, we'll try to get on one of them. Failing that, we're open to specific suggestions. -D.B.

Dear TR: SUPPORT YOUR PIANO MAN!

Should we promote our local jazz bands without pianos? Who would know the difference...the band? The audience? Economically, the management might applaud over paying one less band member. After five years of gigging around here, I can still count the number of pianos even remotely in tune and fair mechanical condition on the fingers of one hand.

Most are unplayable under any circumstances, but the audience has the pianofurniture image and the illusion is carried. While the remaining band members enjoy improvisation on instruments of their own choosing (and products of their own care and maintenance), the piano man is forced to pound another "dog," usually a dilapidated old upright or spinet (which isn't even a piano), out of tune and/or with critical keys missing or inoperative.

Is tuning a piano any less important that other instruments? (One cafe owner theorizes that the instruments can tune with the piano and thus all be out of tune together while he saves \$25) Consider the role the piano plays in the jazz group. It lays down the harmonic theme to support ensemble and solo passages, it introduces, bridges, fills holes and also solos. Despite these formidable responsibilities in jazz ensemble playing, the piano continues to be treated as a piece of essential furniture without regard to musical qualities.

The PRJC was founded to strengthen the roots of traditional jazz in this area. Why can't it strengthen the quality of jazz music by recognizing the role of the piano in performing it, and insisting on good mechanical condition and accurate tuning wherever it (the club) or its members appear?

Tom Niemann

Another point well-taken. The club has attacked the problem in a variety of ways at different times, with mixed success. Here's my own call for a solution: do we

Don Coyle

have a volunteer? Many of us, on the Board of Directors and off, devote a lot of time to making this jazz club work. When we have more to do than we can comfortably handle, we recruit more volunteers, such as for manning the gate at the picnic. Do we have a qualified pianotuner in the club who would give us several free tunes a year? -D.B.

September 5 Open Jam Session

The second in the PRJC's new series of monthly open jam sessions took place Thursday, September 5. Like the first session, in August, it was well attended and promises to become a regular feature of area jazz activity.

Musically, it was an improvement over the first session. The PRJC Teenage Band was there and played quite well, even attacking some tunes considered pretty tough, like *That's A Plenty*. About 30 musicians were there, and while space prevents listing all of them, several which stuck in my mind were: Lou Weinberg, tp; Coleman Hankin & Steve Kwass, cl; Jim Tarn & Jerry Fain, bjo; Bill Jones, John Helm & Frank Kast, drums; and Bob Grimes, po. A special treat was St. Louis bass player Ray Helsel, in town on business. Ray is the bass man with Dan Havens' Mississippi Mudcats.

At least one new band has already grown out of these sessions. It is being put together by Lou Weinberg and at the present plans to hold jam sessions in the Bethesda area.

So it looks like these sessions will continue for a while. They are held the first Thursday of each month, from 8:30 to midnight, at the Cinders Steak House, 1500 S. Joyce St., Arlington (in the River House apartment complex near the Pentagon). There is no admission, but we do pass the hat to pay the bartender. Musicians should check in with the musical director for the evening (usually Ed Fishel or Scotty Lawrence) upon arrival.

WANTED: musicians willing to devote daytime hours to a major PRJC project. The Board of Directors at a recent meeting directed Scotty Lawrence, vice president, and Ed Fishel, music director, to look into the possibility of organizing an "official" PRJC jazz band, to play at local high schools and colleges and thus carry the Jazz Word to youngsters who may never have heard the music. Lawrence and Fishel (phone numbers 548-5198 and 536-8065, respectively) would like to hear from any musicians with daytime hours to give to such a project. Requirements, besides daytime availability, include ability to read music--plans call for starting (though not performing) with written music. In fact, it is hoped to choreograph the whole program in the manner of the military services' highly polished jazz ensembles.

PRJC Teenage Band

The teenage band sponsored by the PRJC, which debuted at the picnic with adult musicians at two positions (see p.4), has filled those slots in recent weeks. However, more musicians are wanted, in the hope that there can be two bands, one on each side of the river, to simplify transportation logistics. The present band consists of three boys from Montgomery County, one from Prince George's, one from Arlington and (we are glad to report) a girl from D.C. Musicians interested should call Reverdy Fishel at 536-8065. He is the band's trumpeter; other members are: clarinet, John Wagner; trombone, Dave Sager; tuba, Willem Scheltema; drums, Ron Palmer; piano, Sarah Carter.

Wanted: A Party Hall for a Jazzy New Year's Eve

New Year's Eve is the toughest night of the year for jazz lovers. Jazz musicians have to accept playing Mickey Mouse music or else stay home; jazz listeners have the same choices.

The PRJC Board of Directors some months ago determined that the club ought to tackle this problem by hiring a hall for a BYOL party and organizing club-member musicians to play--assuming there would be plenty who'd rather play jazz for free than get rich playing Mickey Mouse.

A grand idea it was--back in May. In four months of effort since then, no one has been able to turn up a party room that wasn't booked for New Year's long before our search began.

If you know of a room that might be available, call club president Fred Wahler at 894-6370.

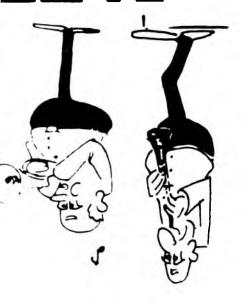
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RECORD COLLECTOR? YES () NO () MUSICIAN? (What Instruments?)
MEMBER OF ORGANIZED BAND?
INTERESTED IN ORGANIZING OR JOINING ONE? INTERESTED IN JAMMING OCCASIONALLY?
READ MUSIC? YES () NO ()
DESCRIBE YOUR JAZZ INTERESTS BRIEFLY (What styles interest 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. QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER? YES ()
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