

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS

April 1978

Vol. 8 No. 4

THE Record Changer



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IN MEMORY: 1899-1974

Tailgate Ramblings

April 1978

Vol. 8 No. 4

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TR is published monthly for members of the Potomac River Jazz Club, a non-profit group, dedicated to the preservation of traditional jazz and its encouragement in the Washington-Baltimore area. Signed articles appearing in TR represent the views of their authors alone and should not be construed as club policy or opinion.

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

Mary Doyle, who's column "Is It True What They Say" normally appears in TR and Al Webber, proprietor of "A Pride Of Prejudices," also a TR fixture are out this month. Mary, still recovering from a broken leg, Al, taking a well-deserved sabbatical.

NOTICE

Last fall, TR announced an experiment. We would expand the editorial space in the newsletter and pay for it by mailing Bulk Rate, and all would be well.

It didn't work.

With this issue, we are returning to a slightly smaller size and mailing via First Class. In order to continue with such features as the Record Changer reprints, various columns, and other material to which our readers have become accustomed, this will entail some changes in format.

Many of these will become obvious with the next issue. In the meantime, in our new slimmed-down incarnation, we pledge to continue our efforts to bring you the best in jazz club news and features.

-- TC

Record Changer Reprints

Our Record Changer reprints this month are, we think, winners. Besides Duke on the cover, there are two articles by two close Gullickson associates.

From the Apr. '43 Changer comes a piece on Ellington by one Tom Williston. He was better known as Dr Thomas Williston, a cardiologist, professor at Howard, one of the Nation's first Black heart specialists, and rabid jazz fan. He was also a sensitive Ellingtonian.

The article on Bunk Johnson is from Apr. '45 and was typical of Gene Williams, for whom Leonard Feather may well have coined the term moldy fig. Gene, who died far too young, loved N.O. jazz and viewed with intense suspicion any slight divergence from the true faith.

PRJC MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please Print)

NAME _____ SPOUSE'S NAME _____

STREET _____ CITY _____

STATE & ZIP _____ TELEPHONE NO. _____

MUSICIAN? _____ WHAT INSTRUMENTS? _____

PRESENTLY MEMBER OF BAND? _____ CARE TO JOIN ONE? _____

DESCRIBE JAZZ INTERESTS BRIEFLY (WHAT STYLES INTEREST YOU AND WHY)

PRJC DUES TO END OF 1978 - \$7.50. Checks payable to Potomac River Jazz Club.

Mail to: Doris B. Baker
Membership Secretary
7004 Westmoreland Road
Falls Church, Va. 22042.

Notes From the Bakery

Have you renewed your PRJC membership? This is to remind you that membership renewal notices went out in early March. If you joined since Jan. 1, you're paid up through 1978 but everyone else must ante up \$7.50 for the period April 1-Dec. 31, 1978, at which point we'll be on a straight calendar basis.

If you misplaced your renewal notice don't fret: just send \$7.50 in pennies, nickels, or old saxophone reeds to PRJC at 7004 Westmoreland Rd., Falls Church, Va., 22042.

Early returns on the idea of a PRJC Membership Directory seem to show quite a bit of interest. More on this next month.

Telephone Intrigue Dept. or, If a Russian Answers Hang Up. I've always welcomed personal calls at work but the great number of calls that have accompanied the presidency of our happy little clan has become quite a burden at the office. My colleagues have threatened to cut off my extension. I therefore urge my telespondents to avoid calling me at work; my home phone is equipped with an answering device which will take your name and number so I can get back to you.

Member Joe Godfrey is compiling a list of music and record store managers in D.C. who express willingness to post PRJC flyers in their establishments (Ed. Note: Among these - The Melody Record Shop at 13th and E NW. They are very gung ho about jazz. TC) Club members might take a copy of TR with them when visiting such shops in the suburbs. Tell the manager what we're all about and see if he can post our literature. If you get a nibble, send the name and address to Joe at PO Box 14117, D.C. 20044.

A Bethesda tavern owner has expressed interest in giving jazz a try if he can acquire a used piano at reasonable price. Let me know if you've got a box that fills the bill.

Advance Boat ride Sales. This year's jazz boatride will take place June 24, with music by the Tarnished Six, from State College, Pa. The boatride almost always sells out in advance, so we're giving TR readers plenty of notice. Order your tickets now at \$10 for PRJC members, \$12 for nonmembers, from Boatride Cap'n Ray West, 4040 Uline Ave., Alexandria, Va. 22304. Don't be left on the levee waiting for the Pinky Lee! -- Dick Baker

SWEET ADELINES PRESENT: The Suntones - International Champion barbershop 4. Excellat showmanship, beautiful harmony! Sun. Apr. 9, 2PM, Wakefield Hi, Arl. Va. \$4.00. Details, call Pat Dudley, h - 333-3972; w - 296-7840.

3 New Jazz Spots Open

Hope springs eternal in the breat of both club owner and musician, so even as discussion of Dan Priest's TR piece on why we're losing gigs continues in this issue, four new nights and two afternoons of jazz in three clubs have been added to the gig list.

First, came Seymour Middleton, (PRJC recruit) who runs the Devil's Fork Restaurant of the Intown Gramercy Inn Hotel. Middleton attended a jazz brunch recently at New Orleans' Commander's Palace and returned to Washington determined to try it out here. So now John Skillman's Trio (Skillman, Dick Walters, and Charlie LaBarbera) stroll through The Devil's Fork Sundays from 11:15 am to 3:45 pm. \$5.95 buys a brunch, a drink, and all that music.

Middleton liked the response to the brunches so much that he's presenting similar action Friday evenings with the Dick Walters Trio (Walters and LaBarbera again, with George Hay on clt.). Friday's buffet goes for \$8.95 the trio plays alone from 7-9:30, then swaps with a modern group, Center Stage, till 11. The Devil's Fork is at 1616 R.I. Ave, NW. Call 628-1886.

A second new jazz scene is the Green Dolphin Restaurant at 1128 Lee Highway in Fairfax. They've been on a diet of bluegrass, but owner Larry Owens has made a switch. Dave Littlefield's Shieks of Dixie are in residence Friday evenings, the Band From Tin Pan Alley does it's swing thing on Saturdays, and Fat Cat's Festival Jazzers take over on Sunday afternoons.

The third new gig is in Maryland, with Jimmy Hamilton's Night Blooming Jazzmen going into Frank Condon's Restaurant on North Washington St. in Rockville on Tuesday evenings - 9:15 to 12:25 pm.

TR wishes Middleton, Owens, Condon (there's a name to be reckoned with) and all the bands involved good luck in these gigs. And let us bring to the attention of all concerned the following quotation attributed to the Illiana Club of Traditional Jazz and reproduced in the newsletter of the Monterey Bay Hot Jazz Society:

"Well, jazz comes, jazz goes; new jazzmen and jazz groups rise, swell to fame, break up then like bubbles, only to start over again in some other form, or as some other group. The main thing is to keep plenty of yeast in the kettle and plenty of fire under the brew. Don't let the jazz cooker cool down and the sharps go flat."

-- DB

But On the Other Hand . . .

An Editorial Outcry

One night when the world was young, I was sitting with friends at the Copley Terrace in Boston listening to Shirley Mhore play piano and sing.

Quietly so as not to disturb Shirley, the new band came in and sat at a nearby table. Shirley finished, smiled, and said, "Now I'd like you to meet the Copley Terrace's new attraction, Joe Marsala, Adele Girard, and their band."

The band got up, and I muttered a little too loudly, "Mr. Marsala, play Wolverine Blues." My tablemates chuckled and Marsala overhearing his name, turned. I told him I wished he was still playing tunes like Wolverine. He nodded, and with rhythm backing, played 3 flawless choruses. Then he said, "That was a request for Wolverine Blues - a tune I love to play. But now we're trying other things."

The rest of the gig, it was bop. With Joe and Adele were Neil Hefti and Chuck Wayne - teachers at least as much as sidemen. Joe was fascinated by bop and Hefti and Wayne were lavishing on him all the attention the Unification Church offers a new Moonie.

Yet, night after night, Joe and Adele would find their way to our table and, between listening to Shirley Mhore who they loved, would patiently argue their position with us. I recall Joe saying, "Look, all I'm trying to do is grow a bit as an artist and make a few dollars. Is that so awful?"

I'm amazed now at how arrogantly I reacted, and even more at how the Marsalas put up with me. Hefti and Wayne didn't. They returned my disapproval with contempt for a moldy fig tin-ear who didn't know what he was talking about (They were probably right).

The Sunday Post reminded me of all this one day last month when it told me that Joe had died on the Coast, victim of the big C. He was described as writer of Little Sir Echo.

Joe Marsala was a hell of a nice guy and a fine clarinetist and I liked him very much. But Little Sir Echo was what, I hope, made him financially well-off. What he was was player of marvelous choruses of Wolverine Blues; an artist seeking growth; and a kind and decent gentleman.

April 29 is the birthdate of the great transcendent genius of American jazz. Duke Ellington is not subject to silly limitations placed by the unknowing on what constitutes jazz. It would be an exercise in absurdity for us to review Ellington's life work here.

But consider the range of musicians who played with Duke - Rudy Jackson and Charles Mingus; Barney Bigard and Dizzy Gillespie; Rex Stewart and Oscar Pettiford; Otto Hardwicke and Paul Gonsalves; and this variety took place within an almost incredible stability of personnel which saw the Ellington band developing through the years not according to the ability or lack thereof of its sidemen, but according to the musical development of its leader. The old cliché that an orchestra is the instrument on which its leader plays found real objective truth in the case of the Duke.

Our cover this month comes from the Record Changer and was done by Don Anderson, art director for that magazine and brother of Stu of Saxophone War fame. It is our small tribute to the towering figure of Duke Ellington.

Speaking of Duke, the Duke Ellington Society of Washington has regular monthly meetings in a comfortable clubroom at 13th and Harvard, NW in D.C. Some of the most knowledgeable Ellington fans you'll ever meet. And at the last meeting we sat around and listened to a remarkable program of rare Ellingtonia. Nobody mentioned heresy or other sins, and a number of PRJCers turned up.

We heard Bob Milne a few times during his recently concluded stay at Il Porto in Alexandria, and can only feel sorry for those who stayed away. Milne, an engaging young guy to start with, has a raft of material and plays it all very well. To give you an idea of the range: Joplin's Solace; Fats' Sweet Savannah Sue, Pete Johnson's Pete's Mixture (At least I think so. It was a fast rolling boogie by Johnson anyway), and Hines' Rosetta frequently pop up along with tremendous stride passages on the most banal of requests - like Alley Cat, which becomes in Bob's hands almost a jazz classic. This is a cat Il Porto could stand bringing back many times instead of the big names with sleeve garters who have prepackaged all the blood out of their material.

If you've noticed a quantum leap in the appearance of TR, this month, it is because of the kindness and skill of Dave Sickles, PRJC member, Gullickson friend from way back, and compositor and printer of many skills. Dave has offered to set our heads for us free of charge - an offer we accepted with Gusto, Al Acuity, and all those cats. Dave works with Mimeoform Service, Inc, the Litho-Type Co. at 514 10th St NW.

Thanks, Dave.

-- TC

Won't You Come Home, Tom Bailey

Tom Bailey was born south, but lived in the north. One day when he opened his front door in Fishkill, N.Y., he found the snow was up to his eyebrows. He closed the door and made a firm decision. When he got his car shoveled out, he drove it to a friend who had room to store it and asked for a lift to the airport. After checking available reservations, he went to St. Thomas in the Virgin Islands and completed his career there. He sold his house by mail.

And it was in St. Thomas that I found him on a recent vacation. We go there for beaches, tennis, restaurants, and the view - not for music. Both AM and FM dials on my radio have for years produced only Latin American rhythms. Even most of the news is in Spanish. Imagine my surprise, therefore, to hear Bunny Berigan and then Lionel Hampton pouring forth on FM one Saturday night. I fell asleep before the show was over - with my cassette recorder left on so I could hear more the next day. During the week, I called the only St. Thomas FM station, WCRN, and found that Tom Bailey worked only on Saturday nights but would probably welcome a visitor.

The FM transmitter is at the top of Crown Mt., one of the Island's highest. The road leads up - and up and up - from the main harbor where several cruise ships were resting for the day. It was a clear day and the views were gorgeous. WCRN turned out to be just over the crest of the mountain and a new set of views greeted my eye as I reached the station.

The station was hardly impressive. A mobile home had been converted into a complete station, with the tower on top. One busy young man was performing all the transmitting functions while also testing newly received tapes for later use. Outside, a worker was moving the jungle back a little way from the mobile home.

I returned after dark to hear most of "This Is Jazz" (6-12 Saturdays). I knew from Tom's announcements that he was not an Island native. The evening was spent listening to records, discussing jazz, and commiserating over conditions at the struggling FM station.

Tom had been in Virgin Islands radio for quite a while. One caller while I was there checked in to say a farewell. He was moving to Hawaii. He had heard Tom's jazz on various stations for 8 years. Tom sells his own spots, has several advertisers who follow him from station to station.

At first I didn't know who owned the records - the station or Tom. It was Tom. Each week he packs a shoulder-

bag with the records he expects to play (some to fill requests) and runs through the best numbers, working from two studio turntables. He generally starts out with dixieland, has a special feature (Andy's Corner, for Andy Mullen a jazz enthusiast who died last year), moves to big bands, and gets into Black N.Y. jazz, thym and blues, as the program progresses. His taste is good, intros brief, musical content high. Tom says he was a pianist until he heard Art Tatum and gave up all hope. He may not have given up the keyboard entirely but he did attach himself to Tatum's entourage for some time, and became a listener. Tom was also friendly with numerous other jazz greats including Fletcher Henderson. He is now 63 and has a fund of anecdotes - all delightful.

He interviewed me briefly on the air, so St. Thomas knows there is a Red Lion JB playing at the Hotel DuPont in Wilmington, Del., once a month. We also reviewed my early experiences with Jack Teagarden, one of Tom's favorites.

There is little live jazz in St. Thomas, or anywhere around, Tom said. Jimmy Hamilton, Duke's old clarinetist, and Specs Powell, the drummer, live on nearby islands but seldom play. Tom says Buzzy Drootin is anxious to come to the islands if he can find work, but Tom's not optimistic.

Tom would welcome other jazz enthusiasts if any such get to St. Thomas.

-- Jim Weaver

(Ed. Note: Jim is the guy who plays bass clarinet with the Red Lion JB. He has promised more writing soon. -- TC)

This isn't a book review - there's nothing new about the book it having been published in 1974. I borrowed it from Dick Baker, and couldn't put it down. It is STORYVILLE, NEW ORLEANS by Al Rose. It is repetitive and poorly organized, but it is a stunning look at a gaudy, cheap, and nasty kind of degradation that the legend-makers didn't tell us about. Storyville - where 10 year olds were sodomized, where even the joy was joyless, and where, in the words of the song, "black and white folks meet" but only in terms of a strictly enforced white supremacy.

Did jazz come out of this? Not nearly so much as the mythmakers want us to think. Starting in an early issue of TR we'll look at the jazz traditions to see if our commonly held assumptions can hold up under scrutiny.. -- TC

FOR SALE Antique upright piano. Stieff, circa 1900. Maintained in top condition. Plays beautifully if right keys pushed. Prof. ref. in gloss white. Suitable for living room. \$500. Sig Seideman, 11 Stone-mark Ct. Owings Mills, Md. 21117.

The Baird's Jelly Roll

A packed house at the Baird in Feb. heard an exquisite concert of Jelly Roll Morton compositions and arrangements for piano, trio, quartet, and septet. The evening was a triumph. It was recorded for release on the Smithsonian label.

Celebrating Jelly were members of the N.Y. Jazz Repertory Co., led by pianist Dick Hyman. They included Bob Wilber - clt; Warren Vache Jr. - tpt; Jack Gale - tbn; Marty Grosz - gtr/bjo; Major Holley - bass/tuba; and Tommy Benford - drums/slide whistle/encouraging shouts.

The pity was that this company was restrained from stretching out on its own. The evening was rightly Jelly's, and the notes were all on paper. You were subject to the eerie feeling as you sat there that this must have been exactly what people heard if they were lucky enough to hear the Red Hot Peppers in person. It was as if the Star Ship Enterprise had been caught in a time warp and here you were back in 1927.

The trio selections, Shreveport and Perfect Rag, were gems of that neglected genre, the clarinet-piano-drums trio.

The prime offering was a set of orchestrations as Jelly might have written them of 5 tunes he never recorded with the Peppers. I was a bit let down. Of the five, Milenburg Joys and Wolverine have been heard so often that new arrangements are a bit less than earthshaking; Froggy Moore was done nicely by King Oliver; Mamanita is better as a piano solo; and the chart on King Porter was fine, though it owed as much to Fletcher Henderson as to Jelly.

The overall concert, though, was a marvelous glimpse of Jelly's muse interpreted by by top-drawer musicians. Jelly and his Peppers were well served. And the audience, containing all too few PRJCers, was enthusiastic.

-- Jazzbo Brown from Columbia Town

Md. Swings into April

Some exciting things happening in Maryland this month. Paul Pearson is bringing a series of events of interest to PRJCers to the King of France, and to wind up the month, Ella Fitzgerald will be in concert at Baltimore's Lyric Theater. See the gig list for times and dates.

The Annapolis-bound attractions include Kenny Davern's band with Dick Wellstood; Jack Maheu and his Salt City 6 with former local John Thomas on trumpet; and the brilliant mainstream pianist Ray Brtant and his trio. Ella's gig at the Lyric will benefit the Concerts in Schools program of an ambitious outfit called Young Audiences, Inc.

Communication

Editor:

(With reference to your obit on Raahsaan Roland Kirk..) Kirk was a master musician, able to play a variety of instruments, sometimes several at once, but always with great skill and taste. What might have been vaudeville tricks to some were legitimate musical expressions coming from Kirk. Always, even in the most advanced musical contexts, the whole tradition of jazz was present in Kirk's playing.

Those who claim to appreciate "traditional" jazz should applaud, not denigrate, those contemporary musicians who know and appreciate their jazz roots. Certainly, many of the favorite musicians of PRJC members prefer to play or are limited by talent to a specific early jazz style. But most others are quite capable of playing in more modern styles and often do so -- obviously without the knowledge and permission of some PRJC members. Such Manassas Jazz Festival favorites as Dick Wellstood, Dill Jones, Bob Wilbur, Kenny Davern, John Eaton, Butch Warren, Steve Novosel, Larry Eanet, Van Perry, Eddie Phyfe, Bill Reichenbach, Country Thomas, among others, have musical tastes and abilities that transcend the ears and musical tastes of some PRJCers. It would take pages to list the "modern" music affiliations of the musicians many Trad listeners have applauded in traditional jazz contexts.

-- Tom Lodge

(Ed. note: Well said, Tom. People who close their ears to alternative sounds because they don't seem traditional enough miss a great deal. But that's their decision. What disturbs us is when they want us to close our ears. That's censorship. -- TC)

Sell with a TR Ad

It pays to advertise in TR! Who would know it better than TR? Last month, we asked 1) for the services of a piano tuner and 2) for someone to volunteer as advertising manager. Jim DeRocher is now handling piano tuning chores before the monthly specials, and we've had not one, but two offers on ad manager. We'll probably use them both - more on that next month.

In the meantime, the ad ratecard looks like this:

Full page	- \$50 (20% member disc.)
Half page	- 25 (10% " ")
Quarter page	12.50 (No discount)

No - positively no - ad space sold to record pirates or for the sale of unauthorized tapes. Please don't ask us to compound an illegal practice.

Salable Jazz

(Editor's Note: Following publication of Dan Priest's article "Where Has the Traditional Music Gone?", we have had notice of 3 PRJCers wanting to reply. Al Brogdon got there first, and this is his reaction. Others will follow in later issues. -- TC)

Dan Priest gave TR readers some excellent food for thought. I'd like to add my comments using Southern Comfort as an example (because I can speak of Southern Comfort knowledgeably).

There are no philanthropists I know of who run bars in this area. Bar owners are good old-fashioned capitalists trying to make a living. If they put money into their business they have to get a return on it; if they hire a band, they have to increase their business enough to pay it. For the band to increase the bar-owner's take it not only has to play good music, it has to play music the customers want to hear, play it well, and provide an entertainment package rather than (as Dan said) having "the verve of Supreme Court Justices en banc" (That means in the bunk; an old phrase originated in the New Orleans redlight district).

I disagree with the idea of playing for a few dollars and a pitcher of beer. If we are going to tell the bar-owner the music isn't worth much, he'll believe us. I'd rather put together a good band with a good entertainment quotient, tell him that dixieland is good music and deserves good pay, and then show him I'm right. Can it be done with strictly trad jazz? I don't know. I do know that it can be done quite successfully with a dixieland band that plays some trad stuff, some more modern stuff, and ties it together with a generous amount of fun and horseplay. If you haven't yet guessed, I give you Southern Comfort:

We're in the 29th month of our current Friday night gig at Shakey's in Rockville. In April, we're playing 4 out of 5 Sat. nights. We will play each day from June 4-9 at the Spoleto USA Festival in Charleston, S.C. We must be doing something right.

And we get decent pay for all this. I always get at least \$10 per man per hour (excepting charity gigs or for a specific reason), most of the time \$15 per man per hour for one night stands, and once got \$55 per man for a one-hour concert. We've never had anyone complain that he didn't get his money's worth. On the contrary, we get quite a few return jobs and the run at Shakey's is still going strong.

Southern Comfort does this by playing both traditional and nontraditional tunes; by playing well, and with enthusiasm and variety; and by having so much

fun that the audience can't resist joining in. If we blow an ending, Mike Pengra will ask, "Now look, folks, you didn't pay anything to get in, did you?" Everyone forgets the clinkers but remembers laughing.

We could play for a few bucks. But we would be saying to the world that dixieland isn't worth more than a few bucks. The best way I can promote dixieland is to put together a good band, sell its services for a decent price, and be sure the buyer gets his money's worth.

I have not mentioned anything about encouraging PRJC members to come out and hear live dixieland. This is a lost cause. At live jazz gigs, you can usually count on no more than 25, and usually some 10 to 15 members showing up; this was even the case at PRJC's own Sunday Windjammer gig (RIP). I don't understand why PRJC members are so apathetic to the music form they profess to love, but that's the way it is.

Where has the traditional music gone? In Southern Comfort's case it has been repackaged a little to suit a wide enough variety of tastes to be commercially salable. And thank you, it is alive and well. -- Al Brogdon

Makers of Tone

(With apologies, sotto voce, to H.L. Mencken.)

THE TRUMPET - Joshua giving music lessons to Robert E Lee Prewitt... Gabriel playing Gotterdammerung at a county fair.

THE CLARINET - Six virgins dancing a capella under the marquee of a porno movie house.

THE TROMBONE - A pretty girl winks drunkenly in the general direction of the bandstand. A raucous glissando shakes the house; it bears more relation to the wink than the music.

THE PIANO - A doctor of mathematics computing 88 to the 88th power, with the intention of putting a dollar sign in front of the result and selling the whole works to the biggest crook in town.

THE STRING BASS - A pair of 400-lb. wrestlers wired to grunt directly into the TV microphones.

THE BANJO - A baggy-pantsed P.T. Barnum hawking snake oil in front of a police station, assisted by a team of hustlers consisting of Ted Lewis, Clyde McCoy, Russ Morgan, and Homer Rodeheaver.

THE DRUMS - Roomsful of mad scientists working non-stop to synchronize lightning with thunder.

THE TUBA - The amiable fat boy that the other boys don't know how to play with.

-- Ed Fishel

Bix's Birthday Bash

It happened in the Commonwealth Room of the Twin Bridges Marriott. PRJC sponsored a Happy Birthday Bix Party featuring the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial JB. It was the sixth such event in as many years. The transient character of our area is such that the sixth annual anything is apt to create visions of permanence and stability rivaling that of Clark Clifford. In any case a near capacity crowd was in an up mood for this one and voiced its approval with much foot stomping and handclapping. The dance floor took quite a pounding, as I believe did some of the dancers.

The BBMJB is a big band - 9 members in all - and its members must be ranked among the best in the business. A jazz-band, however, is more than a group of musicians playing the same tune in the same key. A practiced band develops a character which sets it apart from all others. The BBMJD is simply not a practiced band. It meets but a few times each year. The result is a large number of tunes played in the standard manner or a series of solos with ensemble effort limited to the traditional passages. This band is not creative.

Let me, as a former resident of this area often said, make myself perfectly clear. I thought the event was great fun. PRJC crowds are always friendly and I hope to attend many more such parties. Billy Barnes is as fearless a cornetist as can be found anywhere. Joe Muranyi provided some really sensational low register clarinet on Singin the Blues and South Rampart. Dick Cramer moves effortlessly from valve to slide trombone and back again. Some sounds came out of the valve on Davenport that I thought could be done only on a slide. Vince Giordano, who has the biggest smile this side of a Vegas chorus line, does the banjo bit and some vocals.

Bill Taggart who according to Barnes thinks the tuba should be played like a trumpet did just about that in his solo on Runnin Wild. Tex Wyndham, a luminary in the Del. branch of PRJC, gave the piano a good workout and was splendid as usual. Johnson McRee was persuaded to join the band in a heartrending version of I'll Be a Friend With Pleasure. Johnson also provided a brief description of Irving Kaufman's contribution to traditional jazz. Rumor has it that if sufficient interest exists, Johnson plans a 3-credit-hour course on the subject. Inquiries should be made to Johnson direct, not through TR.

There was room for a few more at the party. Those who are hesitant should harken to my sainted mother's observation about beach blanket bingo: "Try it - you'll like it." See you next year.

-- Jay Dee

Record Review

Jay McShann - The Last of the Blue Devils. Atlantic SD 8800

Jay McShann is a remarkable pianist who's fate it was to bring a band east from Kansas City a few years after Count Basie, Harlan Leonard, and Andy Kirk.

Such fame as was McShann's was most likely occasioned by the fact that the band he brought east contained Charlie Parker. Which is really a shame, for if he lacked Bird's transcendent genius, McShann was - and on the basis of this record - remains a pianist of breadth and depth with a strong penchant for rocking blues.

What we hadn't known before is that McShann is also a fine blues singer. The best sides on this new Atlantic release are those in which he sings.

This is no nostalgic look at KC. It is where a group of mostly KC musicians are now - matured and settled into a comfortable groove. In a word, mellow. The musicians - the front line all Basie alumni - are brilliant. Milt Hinton conjures up memories of Walter Page, and John Scofield reinserts the electric guitar in its rightful jazz place.

Joe Newman seems to me a vastly improved musician over his Basie days when his bland, vibrato-less tone made intelligent cogent statements but never really grabbed hold. Here, his horn is emotional and driving. Paul Quinichette and Buddy Tate recreate the great saxophone war with Tate's rhapsodic style pitted against the driving, rocking horn of Quinichette.

And McShann! With the exception of Hootie Blues, which for reasons of his own he plays on electric piano, he never lets down. On Confessin' the Blues he sings marvelously; on My Chile, he hits a moderate boogie woogie pace that refurbishes that style, and on Jumpin at the Woodside, he dares a comparison with Basie and comes out looking good.

The record closes with Goin to Kansas City. The glories of the pretty little women there have been hymned often, but never more convincingly. This is a must record for anyone who views KC blues as deep in the jazz tradition. One of these is your humble and obedient servant,

-- Jazzbo Brown from Columbia Town.
PIANO TUNER Offers discount to fellow PRJC members for tuning, repairs, and/or rebuilding. Uprights, grands and players. Call Jim DeRocher 280-4398

PRJC SINGLES - Third Thursday each month at the Bratwursthaus, Arlington. For info call Jim Nielsen 562-7235; office - 693-6500.

SALE - Premier Grand Piano 4'10". Newly refinished. Jim Nielsen 562-7235; office 693-6500.

BUNK JOHNSON—AMERICAN MUSIC

by EUGENE WILLIAMS

This is a report on two new records which I like better than any music I've ever heard. They're by Bunk Johnson's band; the titles are ST. LOUIS BLUES, WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN, SEE SEE RIDER and TIGER RAG; and they are issued by a new company which labels its product simply "American Music".

The records are available directly from AM Records, 647 Means Avenue, Bellevue, Pittsburgh 2, Pennsylvania; the price, \$1.75 each. That should be all the information anyone needs; but if people want to know a few more facts about the records before buying them, here are the facts... along with a few opinions.

Bill Russell went to New Orleans with the best recording equipment he could buy. He hired the best band he could find, rented a big dance hall, set up his machine, and asked the men to sit on the stand and play. He didn't tell them what to do - just switched his recorder on, and told them to start whenever they were ready. So these records reproduce, as accurately as possible, the music Bunk Johnson and his band played in San Jacinto Hall on a hot summer day.

The six men (trumpet, trombone, clarinet, banjo, bass and drums) in this band were all Negroes; all natives of New Orleans or of nearby Louisiana towns; all experienced, working musicians (their average age was 51). Most of them had played together before - three, George Lewis, Lawrence Marrero and Jim Robinson, had played with Bunk on earlier records. They had little trouble in getting together again, for they all play the same way they have always played, and they know it's good. What they play is old-style New Orleans music, which is as modern as a new baby. For, as Bunk himself says, whatever is standard is always good.

Among other selections, which were recorded and which are to be released later, the band played the four tunes which are heard on these two records. They played them as they would at a dance, and made wonderful dance music - with that strong, loose beat growing more and more intense as the playing got raggier and raggier and Bunk demonstrated just how he could really "make the band go. As in all New Orleans music, the whole band was a rhythm section; and they produced the same relaxed and solid rhythm, with a steady build-up towards the climax, in each of these performances.

The band's purpose, with every tune, was the same: to play that tune, together. Each tune was played recognizably, but with all the shadings and variations of rhythm and melody at their command. The result is on the records: the best performances of SEE SEE RIDER, of ST. LOUIS BLUES, of THE SAINTS, of TIGER RAG, that I have ever heard. The best, because the band is the best, with every man a musician and nobody a star.

This is the happiest, the simplest and most beautiful music played in America. Its death has often been proclaimed, and its funeral sermon preached countless times. No one knew it was still alive, for no one had thought of looking for it. But the slow advance of the American Negro people and all the varieties of their music has made it possible, very late in the day, for us to hear these wonderful records.

I am writing as if these were the first recordings of Bunk Johnson's band. They are almost that. Bunk has made records on six different occasions, but the new American Music releases are the only ones so far which fill two basic requirements: a really first-rate band playing under good conditions, and modern recording equipment intelligently used. They are, of course, the best "jazz" records ever made; but they may become more than that if everyone who buys them will let as many others as possible listen to them. Unlike the earliest records of New Orleans music, which are hard to hear because they were so badly recorded, these new records are very easy to enjoy. They require no special course of study. The original audiences of this music just got up and danced; we might well do the same.

Because this article is intended for people who are supposed to have a special interest in the music, I will add that they may have to listen to the records many times before they begin to hear everything that goes on. But if they don't enjoy the records the first time they hear them, something is wrong. Here is the handwriting on the wall for those who can't feel the beat, who think that blue notes are out of tune, that raggy variations are out of time, that jazz ought to "progress" towards more cleverly arranged harmonies or more fantastic improvised solos. This is jazz, and it's still going strong.

Bunk's music belongs, not on every collector's shelf but on every American phonograph. That can't happen with these records, which are 12-inch discs, pressed on expensive, high-quality vinylite, necessarily released in limited quantity and priced too high for mass sales. But they do show the way which must be followed; and they could easily be a revelation to thousands of people who think they dislike "jazz". Most of the arguments about the merits of Bunk Johnson and his music come from people who don't know what New Orleans music is and who have never heard a New Orleans band. Now they can hear one. And even more strikingly than Kid Ory's recent recordings, these new Bunk Johnson records prove how much dynamite still remains, after fifty years, in the music of the New Orleans Negro.

Ellington in 1943

-by Tom Williston

To say anything in evaluation of Duke Ellington at this time may seem redundant in the extreme, in view of the fact that more praise and tribute have been heaped on him this year in magazine and press than in any previous year. For the first time he has won several magazine polls and has given a concert in Carnegie Hall.

However, to record collectors and others with a real and lasting interest in jazz, public acclaim is not the sole measure of merit. On the contrary, far too often the winning of the Down Beat or Metronome poll has signalled the decline of a musician or group. Public acclaim has been commercial acclaim and our popular music magazines have followed rather than given guidance to the public. In the instance of Ellington, I believe a pleasant exception to the rule is being made,--belated to be sure, but still highly deserved.

I have had many arguments on the place of Ellington in jazz, and I do not intend to argue that issue here; I am merely contending that if he ever "had it" he still "has it". There is a tendency among jazz enthusiasts to fall away from publically acclaimed bands, and I am asking you, who have liked Ellington thru the years, not to take it for granted that the crowd is wrong as usual and that Ellington must be slipping. Give the band another hearing.

I recently listened to Ellington three times under widely different circumstances,--Carnegie Hall, a college formal, and a big public dance. Bearing in mind the stock phrases of his detractors, I attempted to evaluate Ellington's music with as much objectivity as a 17-year follower could muster. The phrases "orchestral sophistication, ease and finesse", "too formal", "instrumental experimentation" "folk music grown up", "canned improvisation" are uttered in somber tone by critics like doctors consulting over a very sick patient. I found much truth in what they have said, but the patient still seems to be in good health.

I found "orchestral sophistication, ease and finesse" just as one would expect to find it in a group of good musicians who had collaborated constantly over a period of fifteen years. I didn't find that distracting,--rather the contrary.

"Too formal?" At Carnegie Hall the pall that falls over jazz musicians in those austere surroundings and stiffens up their work was evident that night.

Black, Brown and Beige, the 45-minute concert piece was formal in style, but in spite of setting out on the well nigh impossible task of telling the history of the Negro in 45 minutes of jazz in 3 symphonic movements, good Ellington jazz kept popping up through out the thing. I do hope they take eight or ten of those tunes out and play them individually. I believe that Carnegie Hall concerts and symphonic jazz happen because we haven't yet made jazz musicians feel that their music is an art form that need not borrow or copy.

As for "instrumental experimentation", it had an important role in the birth of jazz; why decry it now unless we feel that all has been said and done.

I have never been able to understand the "folk music grown up" controversy. The crux of that question seems to me to be: what folks are you talking about? After all Duke Ellington and Lead Belly aren't giving expression to the same folks.

"Canned improvisation?" That the Ellington men improvise one solo on a tune and from then on it is more or less fixed and always sounds the same, is a fairly frequent criticism. By and large, this is true, but if it is a good solo and you like it the first time, what makes it less admirable when repeated? Isn't your favorite Louie solo on wax good through hundreds of playings? Isn't the Picoou chorus of High Society still good after twenty years of repetition by a half dozen different clarinets? If Hodges improvises a few or even one good solo on 200 compositions is he less inspired than some dead giant of jazz who left four choruses of Shim-me-Sha-Wabble on the Champion label?

After hearing the Duke under the adverse circumstances of Carnegie Hall, the subdued atmosphere of a formal dance where the more commercial tunes were requested, and a jamboree where he cut loose, I think I can say that Ellington in '43 is still producing the best jazz of any big band in the land. You may miss Cootie, but Rex and Tricky Sam have done an amazing job of filling that gap. I am sure that Bigard's loss is far more noticeable. The faithful imitations of his solos by Haughton with his entirely different tone only serves to remind you that Barney is not there. Ben Webster, now fully integrated into the band, gives me a new kick and helps to make up for the losses. Rockin' in Rhythm, It's Glory, and St. Louis Blues as played at the public dance were as big a kick as they were 10 years ago.

Let me commend to you Duke Ellington of 1943. Listen again and closely. See if you can't string along with the crowd. As Lincoln said "You can't fool all the people all of the time". Who knows,--this may mark the awakening of the people in general to good jazz.



JIM CULLUM'S HAPPY JAZZ BAND

Jim Cullum, Jr.	-	cornet	Brian Nalepka	-	tuba/bass sax
Allan Vaché	-	clarinet	Mike Masessa	-	drums
Randy Reinhart	-	trombone	Bobby Black	-	banjo/guitar
Cliff Gillette	-	piano			

One of America's most popular and successful jazz bands, the Happy Jazz Band has played at its own club, The Landing in San Antonio, for 15 years. They have appeared at all the major jazz festivals and have recorded 24 LP records. This will be their first appearance in the Washington area since 1974.

**Potomac Room
Marriott Twin Bridges
So. end of 14th Street Bridge**

**Sunday, April 2
8 p.m. - midnight
No reservations**

**Admission \$5 - PRJC members
 \$7 - non-members**



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"Here we will sit, and let the sounds
of music creep in our ears....."
- The Merchant of Venice -

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Regular Gigs

Mondays

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

Tuesdays

Storyville 7 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthaus

The Tired Businessmen 9:30 on. Dutch Mill Supper Club 6615 Harford Rd. Balto.

Jimmy Hamilton's Night Blooming Jazzmen 9:15-12:45 Frank Condon's Rest.
N. Washington St., Rockville, Md.

Wednesdays

Fat Cat's Festival Jazzers 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthaus
(Apr. 12 - PRJC Open Jam at the B'haus.)

Thursdays

Riverside Ramblers 8:30-11:30 Bratwursthaus

Fridays

Washington Channel JB 8:30-12:30 Crystal City Howard Johnson's

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

Shieks of Dixie 9-12:30 Green Dolphin Rest. 1128 Lee Hiway, Fairfax, Va.

Dick Walters Trio 7-11 pm Devil's Fork Rest. 1616 R.I. Ave NW, Wash., D.C.

Saturdays

The Band from Tin Pan Alley 9-12:30 Green Dolphin Rest.

Sundays

Fat Cat's Festival Jazzers 4-7 pm Green Dolphin Rest.

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

Nightly

Ragtime at Il Porto Ristorante, Alexandria, Va.

Ron Cope started Mar. 27, for extended stay through spring.

Other Gigs of Note

SUN. APR. 2 - THE HAPPY JB - 8-12 Marriott Twin Bridges Motel. PRJC Special.

Fri. Apr 1 - New Sunshine JB, Rosensteel Hall, Silver Spring. Vols for Visually
Handicapped fund raiser. info - 652-4347.

Apr. 4-Apr. 9 - Kenny Daven's Orch, with Dick Wellstood. Maryland Inn, Annapolis.

Apr. 3- 8 - Jackie and Roy Kral Quintet Blues Alley, Georgetown.

Apr. 7 - Tex Wyndham's Red Lion JB, Green Rm, Hotel DuPont, Wilmington, Del.

Apr. 7 - Va. Shy Jam, home of Frank McPherson, 2619 E. Meredith Drive, Vienna,
Va. (938-4461)

Apr. 15 - Southern Comfort 12 noon-4 pm. Joseph Square, Harpers Choice
Village, Columbia, Md.

Apr. 16 - Skip Tomlinson's Mach 2.2 6-10:30 Dulles Marriott Hotel.

Apr. 16 - The Kingsmen. 1:30 pm. Wakefield Park Rec. Ctr. Annandale, Va.

Apr. 21 - Md., D.C. Shy Jam, home of Dave Littlefield, 6809 5th St., NW,
Washington, D.C. (723-9527)

Apr. 11-23 - Jack Maheu's Salt City 6 Maryland Inn, Annapolis.

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

The Happy JB - Coming

Jim Cullum's Happy Jazz Band from San Antonio, Texas, will be the PRJC special attraction Sunday, April 2.

Take special note of day and time - Sunday April 2, from 8 to midnight, at the Marriott, of course. It will be the group's first PRJC concert since 1973.

Jazz on the Air

The Jazzband Ball on WPFW-FM (89.3) has the following set for April:

Apr. 2 "All Star Sessions", Sonny McGown. Helen Ward, Steve Jordan guests.

Apr. 9 "Creole Clarinets Pt 2", Bill Riddle. Rescheduled from Mar. 19.

Apr. 16 "Hot Like Jazz," Jim Lyons. African music reflected in new world styles.

N.B. Late April scheduling is unclear. WPFW will be running some marathons to raise bread, and programing will be altered during that time.

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS!

Mary Jo and Thomas Bowman
Betty McCreanor
Don and Rebecca Collins
Sidney & Pat Fisher
Seymour & Mary Ellen Middleton
Lou & Karen Perullo
Gail Webb
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