



TAILGATE

PRJC

RAMBLINGS

DON'T THEY EVER STOP?

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS VOL. 2 NO. 3

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WHAT PRICE KNOWLEDGE?

By Al Webber

"Suggest direction of the PRJC be influenced by experienced and knowledgeable persons."

The above bit of no-nonsense prose adorns the membership application of a distaff member of the PRJC.

Right on, baby! That's telling it like it is! Only trouble is it's kind of hard to know an "experienced and knowledgeable" jazz person when you see him - or her.

I guess you could have called Muggsy Spanier pretty experienced and knowledgeable,

at least about traditional jazz. And Leonard Feather has turned a nice dollar or two in the 30-odd years he has been writing the Jazz gospel according to Feather.

But this doesn't mean that Muggsy and Leonard saw eye to eye on this music called jazz. Matter of fact, Muggsy differed so violently from Leonard that he once chased Leonard out of Nick's. Or so I'm told by some other experienced and knowledgeable persons.

Then there's my good friend and fellow record collector Joe Badass (that's pronounced B'dass; Joe's touchy about that). Joe didn't actually see Pinetop Smith spit blood, but he knows Pinetop's blood type and nickname of every girl Lulu White employed in Mahogany Hall in 1912, not to mention the matrix numbers of every record Clarence Williams ever made. Moreover, he's read every book ever written on jazz in this country and Europe and believes them all.

Funny thing is, Joe can't carry a tune in a bucket and can't tell the difference between Art Tatum and Art Hodes on record. But he can reel off ad nauseum what various authors have written about both those gentlemen. No doubt about it, Joe is experienced and knowledgeable about jazz and has a wall-to-wall record collection of old 78's. But I don't really know how valuable his influence on the direction of the PRJC would be.

Wilbur de Paris is another cat who can claim to be "experienced and knowledgeable" in jazz. He's been blowing trombone for 50 years or so. But I can't forget his reply when I asked him some years back what the basic difference was between white and Negro traditional jazz. Wilbur didn't have to give the matter any thought at all. He just trotted out somebody else's cliché.

The difference, quoth Wilbur, is that white traditional jazz is two-beat, Negro traditional jazz is four-beat. Guess Wilbur never heard Jelly's "Shoe Shiner's Drag," or "Kansas City Stomps" or any of countless other recordings by New Orleans Negroes playing heavily accented two-beat.

Don't get me wrong. I do know some "experienced and knowledgeable" persons in jazz.

They happen to be musicians and record collectors who share my likes, dislikes, and prejudices in regard to style, tempo and individual musicians. This means that they are narrow, bigoted, partisan, backward-looking musical reactionaries and I love 'em for this.

But the PRJC would be impractically small and select if we depended only on this clique for membership. So while giving experience and knowledge their cue, we seek as members people who just happen to like traditional jazz, even if they can't spout matrix numbers, recording dates, and the mixture of myth and mumbo jumbo which so often passes for "scholarship" in jazz.

PRJC PICNIC BECOMING MINI-

JAZZ FESTIVAL

By Gary Wilkinson

Washington, D. C.

No wonder more than 400 jazz diggers showed up for the Second Annual Potomac River Jazz Club Picnic at Blob's Park September 16!

First, Mother Nature beamed a major smile. It was clear, the temperature was just right, and the humidity was low. And then with a name like Blob's, it had to be good!

Rudy Adler's P.A. system took the strain out of playing and listening. And since he gets a bouquet, so does Chuck Liebau, who tuned the ancient PRJC piano not once, not twice, but three times before the picnic. Johnson "Fat Cat" McRee kept the fans straight on who was comin' and goin', a tough EmCee chore that day.

The crowd went through 17 kegs of beer, not bad for the \$2 per PRJC member admission price. The \$2 also included the efforts of 11 jazz bands. Blob's had food for sale, but many folks brought their own.

Oh, yes, the bands. The mini-festival started about 1 p.m. with the fine Bay City

Seven from the Baltimore area. It ended after 8 p.m. with a second set by the Kid Bastien Camilia Jazz Band, which drove clear from Toronto for the occasion (they were invited to Fat Cat's Manassas Jazz Festival on the spot!).

In between were seven hours of jazz on Blob's concrete "bandstand," surrounded on three sides by big green picnic tables, all of them occupied by fans. People were down from New Jersey and up from North Carolina. We even had a member from Natchez, Mississippi -- Charlotte St. Germain (husband Ray couldn't come).

The fans showed a lot of staying power, with a good crowd still on hand as Kid Bastien's trumpet muttered for the last time into his metal derby hat.

One reason the crowd stuck around was the variety. The Bay City Seven, as those who have heard them in the Baltimore area or at the Bratwursthau have noted, play a West Coast style reminiscent of Lu Watters in the Forties or Turk Murphy today. They were followed by the Dixie Five-O and their nifty vocalist, which provided a complete change of pace.

Chuck Liebau's Shakey's Jazz Band put on one of their typical routines which are so successful at the pizza palaces and were rewarded by one of the day's biggest hands. The newly formed Anacostia River Ramblers made one of their initial appearances; this band was born primarily through contacts made at PRJC functions, especially the Bratwursthau scene.

Another band born last year - the Bull Run Blues Blowers - displayed yet another style of jazz, led by the driving horn of iron chops Kenny Fulcher. The area's oldest jazz band, in name at least -- the Original Washington Monumental Jazz Band -- strutted their wares in their usual smooth and competent manner.

Washington's two most traditional bands were there, the Good Time Six and New Sunshine Jazz Band. The Six hauled out some melodic King Oliver material while the Sunshiners played some interesting but obscure oldies from their new LP due out early this Spring. Both bands use a trumpet as well as cornet.

Rudy Adler's Capitol City Jazz Band played

tunes featuring each of their front line musicians as well as their bass. This is another hard-driving band, capitalizing on Larry Skinner's noble trumpet skills.

Alexandria's Ragtime Band, which had a successful run at the Arlington Bratwursthaus two years ago, was re-created for the picnic. Bixian jewels were dispensed by our good Australian friend, Tony Newstead, who, alas, is going back down under early in March. It was good to hear them again!

Bastien's group knocked everyone out! Strictly a New Orleans style outfit, they conjured up visions of the Crescent City yea decades ago. Shut your eyes and Kid Bastien is Kid Thomas - it's that close. George Lewis still lives through Brian Williams' clarinet. Pete Savory's trombone sounds like Jim Robinson and Louis Nelson. The rhythm section is straight out of Preservation Hall. Drummer Denis Elder kept injecting sex into things with an off-beat New Orleans "bump."

The Camelia band was discovered by PRJC members who attended last year's New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. They weren't even part of the official program but they developed a throng of admirers through their midnight to dawn escapades in the Quarter.

Any jazz club which can turn out 10 area jazz bands at one time has to be lucky. That's a lot of music.

PRJC PICNIC GETS PLAY

ON VOICE OF AMERICA

By A. Pismo Clamm

If you had been in Siberia back in October, nibbling your PRJC Membership card for sustenance and fiddling with the dials of the miniaturized AF/FM set you concealed in your left nostril, you might have picked up some good sounds to remind you of home, hearth and the good ol' PRJC.

When your guard was out of earshot, you might have picked your nose until you tuned

in the Voice of America's program (broadcast Oct. 17 and repeated Oct. 21) "From the World of Jazz."

Assuming you had done so, you would have heard Maria Ciliberti announce that on this particular program traditional jazz was up for discussion. And you would have tapped your frostbitten extremities to the strains of Turk Murphy's "Alligator Hop."

Maria rattled on about the rebirth of interest in Dixieland jazz, and you might have dozed a bit (those Siberian nights are a real soporific) until she said:

"In Washington, Dixieland fans can hear their favorite music in a club called Blues Alley. In the Washington suburbs, Dixieland bands have begun to appear in various restaurants, where their music is greeted with great delight."

If that didn't bring you to your feet, rattling the bars of your cell and screaming hoarsely, "FISHEL LIVES!" surely this would have been your response had you heard Maria go on to say:

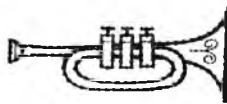
"I visited one of these restaurants recently (would you believe The Bratwursthaus? Ed.) and was honestly astonished at the enthusiasm of the audience. . . . When the band took a break, several people--amateur musicians--took the stand and began improvising freely. I then learned that people are encouraged to bring their instruments to the restaurant where they get a unique opportunity to appear publicly. . . ."

At that point Turk Murphy ripped into the proceedings with "Working Man Blues." And while your nose was still vibrating from the impact of the Murphy sackbut, you would have heard Maria introduce PRJC Member Dick Baker - "one of our colleagues. . . has been a fan of traditional jazz for many years." And then Dick proceeded to tell about the picnic at Blob's in September:"

"Recently, in a park halfway between Washington and Baltimore, there took place a major event for Washington area lovers of traditional jazz -- the second annual jazz picnic of the Potomac River Jazz Club.

"This club was formed last year (1971) and now has over 300 (closer to 500 at press time) about a third of which are musicians

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4. **The Mooche** (4:30)
5. **Someday You'll Be Sorry** (3:04)
(vocal by Johnson McRee)
6. **See See Rider** (6:03)
7. **Fizz Water** (3:04)

Side II

1. **Knock Out Drops** (3:17)
2. **Melancholy** (5:22)
(vocal by Johnson McRee)
3. **Sidewalk Blues** (3:28)
4. **In The Still Of The Night** (3:45)
5. **Blue River** (4:42)
(vocal by Johnson McRee)
6. **Hot Ralston** (3:11)
(vocal by The Straight Shooters)
7. **New Orleans Hop Scop Blues** (3:04)

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Manassas Va., 22110. Records are
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themselves. The club organizes all sorts of get-togethers dedicated to Dixieland jazz -- picnics, riverboat rides, evenings in various night clubs. There's always at least one jazz band present for these outings, sometimes several. Their concerts are open not just to club members but to anyone who wants to hear good traditional jazz.

"The recent picnic was a great success. On a beautiful sunny day people sat at picnic tables in the open air, drank beer and enjoyed the performances of 11 different jazz bands, representing all aspects of the Dixieland genre.

"In my opinion, the most successful performance at the picnic was that of a group of young Canadians -- Kid Bastien's Camelia Band, from Toronto. This group plays in the style of old New Orleans....

"It should be noted that there were no professional musicians at the picnic. All the groups were amateur ones, composed, except for the Canadians, of people who live and work in this area and who play jazz in their spare time.

"Other significant groups at the picnic were: the Bay City Seven from Baltimore who play San Francisco style jazz; the oldest jazz band in Washington -- The Original Washington Monumental Jazz Band, which sometimes appears at the famous Washington night club, Blues Alley; and Shakey's Dixieland Band, which performs weekly in a local pizzeria to a packed house.

"Also of interest was the band called the Dixie Five-O which combines elements of Dixieland with the native music of the Hawaiian Islands. Technically speaking, their music isn't pure Dixieland, but it is unusual and was very popular at the picnic."

Maria Ciliberti returned to close this portion of the program with a social note of nostalgic interest to any PRJC stompers who might have been stranded on the steppes.

"On December 2-3, in the town of Manassas, Va. there will be a festival devoted entirely to traditional jazz.... The Manassas Jazz Festival has been winning more and more fans every year; it is organized by Johnson "Fat Cat" McRee...."

(Tailgate Ramblings wishes to thank PRJC

Member and Voice of America staffer Dick Baker for making the transcript of this excellent program available; also for a tape of the Leningrad Dixieland Band. Ed.)

ATLANTA BLUES

By Eleanor Waite Johnson
Rockville, Md.

Forget that other place in Underground Atlanta, and head straight for The Apothecary's Dixieland Hall, to hear The New Orleans 16th Precinct Jazz Band! This group formed up last May 15th, but the boys sound as if they'd been playing together for years. The background of the individual musicians includes plenty of name-band experience - Tommy Dorsey, Paul Whiteman, Woody Herman, Ray Charles, Bobby Hackett, and Sharkey Bonanno -- to drop a few names.

In the front line it's Herman Foretich on clarinet; Cricket Fleming, trumpet; and Wray Thomas on trombone. The leader, Fred Deland, plays piano; Pepper Himmage is on bass; Al Nicholson, Jr., on drums.

The night I made the scene, an enthusiastic audience applauded the group into a memorable seven-number set that included At the Jazz Band Ball, Panama (great!), Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans? Basin Street, Wolverine Blues, Sweet Georgia Brown, and Jazz Me Blues. WOW!

Fred Deland has a smooth, effortless style at piano, and plays deadpan - very reminiscent of Hoagy Carmichael in that Humphrey Bogart movie - what's-its-name? No it's NOT Casablanca. With Deland egging them on, the rhythm section did an outstanding job on Honeysuckle Rose. The interplay between piano, bass and drums was a real delight. Al Nicholson, incidentally, plays utterly compelling drums. His solos had the place cheering.

If you want to hear more kudos for this band, talk to Shannon Clark or Paul and Teddy Wertz, who have also been down there recently. The 16th Precinct group has records coming out shortly. All I can say is buy, BUY!

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BLACKBIRD offers the following gems: 12001, Eddie Davis and His Dixie Jazzmen; 12002, The Chicago Footwarmers; 12003, The Original Salty Dogs; 12006, Gene Mayl's Dixieland Rhythm Kings; 12007, Wally Rose Piano Solos; 12009, Ted Waldo's Gutbucket Syncopaters.

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To order any of the labels listed, make out order sheet listing record by title, label and number and mail with check payable to Alan C. Webber to that gentleman at: 5818 Walton Road, Bethesda, Md. 20034.

You will receive your records from the various companies, generally in about two weeks. **WARNING!!!** Delivery on Blackbird and Merry Makers is sometimes very slow - up to six weeks. And don't be upset if Larry Conger (Solo Records) is behind schedule.

For the widest choice of traditional jazz labels in the Washington area try DISCOUNT RECORDS, 1340 Connecticut Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C.

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George Hornig also offers real bargains from time to time. Write him at 94 - 85th St., Brooklyn, N.Y. 11209.

WAX IN MY EARS

By Al Webber

If the name Plato Smith doesn't send an instant thrill of recognition through your system, count yourself among friends. But it's a good bet you, and many other jazz collectors, will be hearing more of Plato Smith as the result of Plato's recently cut record "Dixieland Dance Date" on the new Land O' Jazz label (LOJ-1972).

Plato is a trumpet player with a gently lyrical approach to a tune. More important, he is a Man With A Beef. His beef, shared by Easy Ed Fishel, myself, and doubtless scores of others is that one of the more obvious drawbacks of present-day Dixieland is its slavish reliance on a relative handful of warhorses.

Instead of "jazz" or "Dixieland" tunes, Plato's record contains 12 unabashed pop tunes. And not only did Plato kick over the traces of choice of repertoire - "Melancholy Baby" (yet!) in place of "Jazz Me Blues," etc. - he also thumbed his nose at the idea that Dixieland has to be "two-beat." Plato's rhythm section lays down a swinging 4/4 and it doesn't hurt the proceedings one bit.

Plato and the Land O' Jazz record company operate out of good old New Orleans, and the trumpet player makes the most of this happy geographic arrangement. He surrounds himself in what he rather immodestly calls "New Orleans' Finest Jazz Band" with the following latter-day Crescent City stalwarts: Clarinet, the one-and-only Raymond Burke; trombone, Bill Crais; piano, Armand Hug; string bass, Phil Darois; and drums, Paul Edwards.

This is not what Scotty Lawrence would call a "bashy" approach to the music, and if you feel "hot" is synonymous with fast and loud, Plato and his gang are not for you. But if you enjoy swinging melody and an easy, relaxed approach to Dixieland, then you might want to give Plato Smith a listen. His record retails for the usual \$5.95, if you can find it. Or you can buy it through the PRJC for \$4.00.

One of the distinct pluses in Plato's favor is that his band is well-recorded. And, chillun, if you think this is the case with all small

label jazz, your hearing isn't all it might be. Not long ago, I bought a record, taped "live" at a concert, which was so unbelievably badly balanced I would have returned it to the producer if I weren't such a kindly, lazy lout. Jean Kittrell had the misfortune of singing on some tracks, and it sounded as if she were using a toilet for a megaphone. Very obviously, the record had been made on the cheap. And very obviously its release was mistake.

A record taped from concert proceedings which did come off well is ol' Fat Cat McRee's recently released "Lou McGarity, Jazz Master" (Fat Cat FCJ 124). The late trombonist was in fine form, and the recorded sound is good. The occasion was the 1970 Manassas Jazz Festival and Lou communicates the good vibes that were present that Sunday in Osbourn High School, along with the likes of Wild Bill Davison, Jimmy McPartland, John Eaton and Tommy Gwaltney. The Fat Cat label is also available to Potomac River Jazz Club members at reduced rates.

Another Fat Cat release which deserves mention is "Clarinet Wobble" (Fat Cat FCJ 118), featuring clarinetists Herb Hall and Joe Muranyi dexterously interweaving reed lines over rhythmic support from Dill Jones, piano; Bill Pemberton, bass; and Oliver Jackson, drums.

And finally a plug for dear old Turk Murphy, who has been leading a staunchly traditionalist band for longer than most 39-year-olds remember. A lot of the piano ragtime which is flooding the record racks strikes me as something less than muscular. But there is nothing effete about Turk's band rendition of rags on "The Many Faces of Ragtime" (Atlantic SD 613). Murphy leads my kind of jazz band, and I wish I could smugly announce a PRJC cut-rate on this one. I can't, but the \$5.20 you will lay out if you buy it at DISCOUNT RECORDS (Connecticut Ave., just below Dupont Circle) should give you many years of pleasure. We can supply two other recent Murphy records (Merry Makers mmrc 105 and 106) at reduced rate, but the distributor who supplies them to us takes his time. Be prepared for a six-week wait if his stocks are slim.

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BUGS ABOUT DIXIELAND

By Sidney Morey
Silver Spring, Md.

An old entymology textbook says that the scarab beetles (family Scarabaeidae, order Coleoptera) are diggers and clumsy afoot. Why not a genus Dixielandis for those of us who have about as much talent as Kid Bastien's milk cow, but who dig listening to the music?

Tailgate Ramblings are informative and entertaining; the rambler I have read all seem to know what they are writing about. This then is from the other side of the jazz scene. We don't know the key of B flat from the harmonic similarities, if any, in Royal Garden Blues and Come All Ye Faithful, but our earbones are connected to our footbones, and that Dixieland beat pipes in the same delightful euphoria that the cats thrive on.

Thanks to the Potomac River Jazz Club, Mrs. Scarabaeidae and I have had, these past couple of months, a big load of listening and looking fun. We have not caught a lot of the local talent yet, but what we have seen beats listening to tapes and records. And if they are not the best in the world, you can't prove it by me. Blissful ignorance may be a factor, but the musicians we have seen and heard have sounded just fine to us. And we have not been the only customers with tapping feet.

The November party at Greenbelt was a real joy. After that we just had to go to Manassas, which we had only vaguely heard of in the past. Accompanied by a couple of out-of-town bugs (also S.C. Dixielandis) we had an incomparable experience. It was all so great it is difficult to avoid extravagant praise.

So much talent and such showmanship, and still the knowing that there could never be enough of their particular music! Freddie Moore and Southampton's frenetic trombone Rubinstein were shows in their own right. George Lewis and Jelly Roll came back to life for at least a couple of days. What a thrill it was to see some we knew only from records or TV--Maxine Sullivan, Hodes, Leeman, Wiggs and Burke, Wild Bill, Danny Barker, and Claude

Hopkins (an idol from the early thirties).

Each moment had its own particular glory as each performer shared in a rare musical treat. I quite agree with Tom Bethel's evaluation of Bob Greene, and he probably is right about Wallace Davenport, but isn't all Dixieland to a degree show-off music? Mr. Davenport does have a very sharp wardrobe. His muted Just A Closer Walk With Thee had the whole auditorium hypnotized. I am sure the parade that followed was not altogether spontaneous, but it could not have been more fun.

The South has won again at Manassas. But with the reinforcements New Orleans had this year, it could not have been otherwise.

THE SMALL WORLD OF JAZZ

By Roderick W. Clarke
Arlington, Va.

There are many reasons for going to Paris; mine was to hear a special brand of Dixieland. It all started when I first heard the High Society Jazz Band (HSJB) when they played at the Jazz Festival in New Orleans last April. Their exuberant style and high quality renditions of traditional jazz classics only whetted my appetite for more. Through conversations with a French student in the audience, I learned that the band was based in Paris and played regularly at various restaurants there. In addition, he stated that there was to be a jazz festival in Paris in late October. Right then I made up my mind to attend.

Well, as it turned out, the festival was held on the 11th of November (the Jazz Band Ball with many bands in attendance from all over Europe) and I was three weeks early. But I did get to hear more of the HSJB.

The band is currently playing at the Restaurant Bofinger (Beaufahnjay), 5 Rue de la Bastille (Metro Bastille). The establishment specializes in Alsatian dishes and the management claims it to be the oldest and most beautiful brasserie in Paris. Although I didn't see them all by any means, it certainly is a far cry from Shakey's. And the upstairs

dining room is reserved for jazz lovers six nights a week.

The first night at Bofinger's, my wife, Marian, and I managed to wangle a seat up front near the stand just as the band was coming on. The drummer that evening was an American. Pierre Atlan, the HSJB's leader, introduced him, phonetically, as "Jilbear Cahrtay." I was wearing my "Bix Lives" button and it wasn't very long before Pierre spied it and started to chuckle. He asked, "Are you from Davenport?" I replied, "No, Washington -- I'm a member of the PRJC." At that point, the drummer jumped up and said, "Hey, I am too. What a small world." It was Gil Carter of the New Sunshine Jazz Band, whom I had never met. From then on the ice was broken and everyone had a great time.

I'm not very good at describing the musical aspects of performances, so I won't try. (If you want to hear them, try to get one of the several records they've made on the SFP [French] label.) The HSJB specializes in Original Dixieland Jazz Band numbers and they play them just as they were originally recorded. Not just content to play the notes, they also emulate the clowning style of the ODJB, bobbing and swaying to add a touch of fine showmanship to the performance. But it wasn't all ODJB; they also did well by Joe Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton and other masters.

The only misfortune of the evening was that they played two sets. It seems that the neighbors complain if they play after 11 p. m. However, we did have a chance to chat with the members of the band afterwards.

Pierre Atlan (clarinet) is a systems engineer for Dassault, one of France's major aircraft companies. He and Pierre Merlin (trumpet) are model railroaders and are said to have one of the largest layouts in France. Martine Morel (piano) is a great ragtime artist who is writing a major article on ragtime for a French musical magazine. You can hear her on the Fat Cat Jazz Label (121) which she recorded with the European All Stars at the New Orleans jazz festival in 1971. Dan Barda (trombone), Freddie Yzerman (sousaphone) and William Azoulay (drums and banjo) round out the organization.

The band members were delighted to have so many PRJCers there and made a big fuss over us that night and on subsequent nights that week. But it wasn't all one-sided. I passed out PRJC bumper stickers--THINK DIXIELAND--to the band members. Although I wrote the area code for Maryland on them, Anna Wahler tells me that they haven't called yet.

CHESTER N. J. AND ALL THAT JAZZ

How Chester, N. J., population less than 2,500, can have not one but two truly fine traditional Dixieland jazz bands admirably supported by fans, is a mystery to me. Chester is located about 40 miles west of Newark, in the rolling New Jersey countryside. It has a quaint inn dating back to 1802, where Chuck Slate and his traditional Jazz Band play Friday and Saturday nights. Chuck is the drummer and plays in the traditional New Orleans four-beat style. He has surrounded himself with excellent sidemen. They include Larry Weiss, cornet; Marv Ross, clarinet; Marty Bergen, trombone; Red Richards, piano; Warren Vache, bass. Chuck has an album out entitled "Bix and All That Jazz," on the True Tone label.

On Saturday night the lucky residents of Chester have a choice of bands. In addition to the Chuck Slate Band, Bill Barnes and his Southampton Dixie, Racing and Clambake Society Jazz Band hold forth loud and clear at The Hillside Lounge. Bill, a Bix enthusiast, plays trumpet in the West Coast style. I think I can detect a little Bob Scobey influence in his playing. Anyway, the band really wails on the uptempo tunes, and makes you want to cry when they play the blues. This accomplished group of musicians consist of: Bill Barnes, trumpet; Connie Worden, banjo; Roy Rubinstein, trombone; Joe Ashworth, clarinet; Barry Bockus, bass; John Gill, drums; Hank Rose, piano.

Anyone who is in the vicinity of Chester should certainly try to drop in and hear either of these fine bands. Dinner at the Chester Inn is also delightful.

Shannon D. Clark

CORNET CHOP SUEY:

REFLECTIONS IN A GOLDEN HORN

By John "Scotty" Lawrence

(Much as it irks a Sassenach to pay tribute to a North Briton, we must confess that for a bloke wot's on the right side of 100, Scotty knows jazz and jazzmen as do few others in the D.C. area. Until he runs dry, he will be ruminating and reminiscing in that area each issue of Tailgate Ramblings. Ed.)

* * *

It is tempting to concentrate on the interesting careers of the major figures in traditional jazz and skip over the fact that for every Bobby Hackett (is there more than one?) there are hundreds, perhaps thousands of cornet blowers of considerably less ability but with unbounded enthusiasm.

Perhaps our major role is to serve as horrible examples. Yet we too served apprenticeships in crummy joints and on the road where we had more than our share of panic gigs. (I have always been convinced that the great American pastime, at least among club owners, during the '30s was cheating musicians out of their hard-earned money.)

Jazz literature contains many anecdotes about the jazz giants, e. g., someone's prodigious alcohol consumption or a player's witticisms in answer to some stupid question by Joe Public. But there is no correlation between exceptional ability and odd experiences on and off the job. Consider:

I was working a summer job (a long time ago) where the dimensions of the bandstand were such as to require the front line to sit very close to the edge of the stand, which was about a foot and a half off the dance floor. Like many musicians then and now, I was wont to vocalize on certain tunes. This was in the days before PA systems were in common use, and I used a long, slim megaphone of the cheerleader type with the inside encrusted with rhinestone-like material that sparkled in the light.

About halfway through one of my unforgettable vocals, the local lifeguard (a loudmouth

Joe College) playfully hit the end of the megaphone. This, of course, caused the mouth-piece end of the megaphone to bump against my lip. Even then my embouchure was nothing to brag about and the last thing it needed was a swollen lip.

Furious, I stopped singing (?) and smashed the megaphone down hard over the lifeguard's head where it fitted tightly. After some struggle and muffled curses, the cat came up for air with sparkling material all over his hair and with the tops of his ears bleeding where the rough shiny material had scraped on the way down and up again.

The guy was ready to take me apart. Fortunately, we had a large, aggressive bass man who had a marked penchant for physical violence with little or no provocation. When he put down his bass and leaped to the front of the stand to inquire if I was having trouble, the incident died aborning...

While working in an obscure club (most of the clubs I worked in were in that category) I once wrote a couple of arrangements for an acrobatic dancer. I did the job very cheaply, with an eye to "establishing rapport" at a more convenient time and place - only to discover that she was the girl friend of a notorious Pittsburgh gangster called Louis. I backed off in a hurry.

Months later while working in a Pittsburgh roadhouse, I found myself during an intermission on a barstool next to Louis with no diplomatic way to avoid recognition. Louis spoke of his appreciation of the arrangements and the price, and, to show his thanks, he mentioned that he was about to install slot machines in the club and said I should play them the first three nights but not after that. I made a few bucks on this solid advice.

Each night thereafter, on the way back to the stand after intermission, I would pull the handles of the three slots as I passed. Sometimes I would get a free play from a coin left in by a former player.

One night when I casually pulled the lever of the dime machine I found that it worked without putting a coin in. I pulled the lever again, and again, and again. For the next few minutes I stood pulling the lever and pocketing dimes every time I got a hit while the band frantically

waved to me to come back to the bandstand. Just as frantically I waved to them to go ahead and play without me for a while.

Finally, the proprietor, a very tough cookie, ordered me to get up on the stand. A few minutes later, from the stand I saw him and the head waiter carting the broken machine off to the back room.

Very late that night, a guy came in and asked me if I wanted to buy a trumpet, and as I was playing a very beat-up old Holton cornet I told him I was interested. The horn was a beautiful Blessing trumpet, and he wanted only \$40 for it. However, when I pointed out that the horn had USQMC stamped all over it, we settled on 20 bucks and by good fortune the seller had no objection to being paid in dimes. I played that Quartermaster horn for years.

For a long time in the early 1930's, I had a competent five-piece band in Pittsburgh that got its share of local gigs. (A bass was not considered absolutely essential in those days and the economics of the times did not allow for one.) Months in advance one year I accepted a good-paying New Year's Eve gig that called for six men.

About a week before the gig, the contractor called to make sure that we were all set and that the six of us would be there at the appointed time. Alas, I had completely forgotten about getting hold of a bass or guitar, and it was far too late to have any hope of latching on to a competent musician for New Year's Eve. I began making up stories that I could spin when we showed up without the sixth man, but none of them satisfied even me.

Now it happened that I always bought my daily newspaper from the same boy, and I suddenly noticed that he was just about my size. I asked him if he would like to make an easy five bucks and he was eager. I outfitted him in my old discarded extra tux, retrieved a beat-up tenor guitar from the basement and strung it with four rubber bands. He quickly learned how to hold the guitar and move his left hand up and down on the fingerboard while appearing to stroke the phony strings with his right hand. We stuck him back with the drums and the contractor never knew the difference.

The kid was happy with the five bucks and I was happy to pocket the balance of the pay for

the sixth man on the job. The newsboy often asked me for more gigs. Perhaps he plays traditional jazz somewhere today.

YOU CAN'T WIN 'EM ALL

PRJC Member Gordon Gullickson, founder of "The Record Changer," passed along this tidbit. Gordon knows his jazz from 'way back and usually calls 'em right, but...

"This takes me back 25 years. Dr. Tom Williston said, 'Come up to the house tonight. I got a 17-year-old kid that can really play the soprano saxophone. 'So about 20 of us found ourselves in Tom's third floor bar and penthouse on 13th & Q Sts., NW, going back and forth between the bar and upholstery.

"Finally, Tom put on the record by Bechet and Albert Nicholas of 'High Society! This kid picked up his soprano sax and played note for note everything they played, and in some respects improved on their performances.

"'Tom,' I said, 'This kid is a real bum. All he can do is play things that have already been played or written. He's a copier. What's his name?'

"'Name is Bob Wilbur,' said Dr. Williston.

"I said, 'Take it from me, Tom, this kid will never amount of a hill of beans.'"

A.C.W.

DO YOU KNOW WHAT IT MEANS

TO MISS.....MANHATTAN?

Art Hodes today is a revered Elder Statesman of traditional jazz, as sought after on the lecture circuit as on the bandstand.

But in the early 1940's, in New York City, Art was scuffling. And in the winter of 1943 the Chicago pianist turned editor. On Feb. 15, 1943, a slender little publication calling itself "The Jazz Record" appeared, with Hodes as Editor, Dale Curran as Assistant Editor. Issue No. 1 sported a photo of drum-

mer Kaiser Marshall on the cover and a feature by John Hammond entitled "Is The Duke Deserting Jazz?"

Hammond, one of the most noted pioneer critics, opined that "by becoming more complex, he (Duke) has robbed jazz of most of its basic virtue and lost contact with the audience." However, he was still able to declare that the Duke "is still the greatest creative force in jazz, and his band is a wonderful instrumentally, if not rhythmically...."

War or no war, New York was a jumping town in 1943, and, as the PRJC is trying to do 30 years later, "The Jazz Record" published a semi-monthly rundown on who was playing where. That first issue listed these activities, in Greenwich Village and on 52nd Street.

Kelly's Stable - Red Allen and band.

Onyx Club - Pete Brown and trio.

Nick's - Georg Brunis and his band.

Village Vanguard - Eddie Heywood and trio.

Cafe Society Uptown - Teddy Wilson's orch., alternating with Bill Coleman trio.

Jimmy Ryan's - Joe Eldridge's quartet.

And there were jam sessions, too.

Mondays - Harry Lim conducts at the Village Vanguard. No admission.

Tuesdays - Ralph Berton at Nick's. No admission.

Saturdays - Harry Lim at Kelly's Stable, \$1.00 admission. Art Hodes at Newspaper Guild, .75¢.

Sundays - Kelly's Stable, \$1.00; Milt Gabler at Jimmy Ryan's, \$1.00.

Every issue of "The Jazz Record" carried a feature "Where To Go In New York." The first issue, quite rightly, describe Nick's, the unassuming Greenwich Village steak house which gave thousands their first live exposure to "hot jazz." Perhaps these quotes will bring back pleasant memories to some PRJC Members.

"Beer (at the bar) is .20¢, drinks .55¢ up.... If you really have a little change to spend, let's sit at a table. There is no cover charge, and every night except Saturdays or holidays the minimum is only a dollar. Drinks run 10 to 15 cents higher at the tables, and you either have one drink and pay the dollar anyway, or you have two and find yourself

over the minimum. Night club owners figure that angle. However, you can have a couple of drinks apiece and still come out with a check under three dollars for two people.

"There isn't much that needs to be said about the music, once you realize it's George Brunis and his band. If Brunis happens to feel like putting on his act, you get the equivalent of a floor show at no extra charge. Pee Wee Russell doesn't need any build-up either. And there is an excellent trumpet in the person of Chelsea Qualey. Danny Alvin on drums and Dick Carey on piano round out the Nicksieland crew. Cliff Jackson plays intermission piano."

That was the New York scene 29 years ago, as depicted by "The Jazz Record" editors. An added attraction was the Commodore Music Shop over on 42nd Street, a few fast steps from Grand Central, where you could play Louis, Bix and Jelly 78's in booths inscribed with the graffiti of a generation of record collectors. If you frequented the place often enough, you were sure to see a short, youthful looking guy who always seemed to wear bow ties stopping in to see how his Commodores were selling. Condon was his name and his stuff did sell well, even at \$1.05 per.

No riverboats, no Buddy Bolden callin' his chilun home, no sporting houses. Just jazz, and lots of it at prices a pennypinching teenager could afford. When Jelly sang "Good old New York" on that old General record, he knew what he was singing about.

Al Webber

"JASS AND JASSISM"

(The following is condensed from an editorial in the New Orleans Picayune of June 17, 1917, which carried the title listed above)

Why is the jass music and, therefore, the jass band? As well ask why is the dime novel or the grease-dripping doughnut? All are manifestations of a low streak in man's tastes that has not yet come out in civilization's wash. Indeed, one might go further

and say that jass music is the indecent story syncopated and counterpointed.

Like the improper anecdote, in its youth it was listened to blushing behind closed doors and drawn curtains, but, like all vice, it grew bolder until it dared decent surroundings, and there was tolerated because of its oddity....

Although commonly associated with melody, and less often with harmony also, rhythm is not necessarily music, and he who loves to keep time to the pulse of the orchestral performance by patting his foot upon the theater floor is not necessarily a music lover....

Prominently, in the basement hall of rhythm, is found ragtime, and of those most devoted to the cult of the displaced accent there has developed a brotherhood of those who, devoid of harmonic and even of melodic instinct, love to fairly wallow in noise. On certain natures, sound loud and meaningless has an exciting, almost an intoxicating effect, like crude colors and strong perfumes, the sight of flesh or the sadistic pleasure in blood.

To such as these, the jass music is a delight, and a dance to the unstable bray of the sackbut (trombonists, take note! Ed) gives a sensual delight more intense and quite



different from the languor of a Viennese waltz or the refined sentiment and respectful emotion of an 18th Century minuet.

In the matter of the jass, New Orleans is particularly interested, since it has been widely suggested that this particular form of musical vice had its birth in this city -- that it came, in fact, from doubtful surroundings in our slums. We do not recognize the honor of parenthood, but with such a story in circulation it behooves us to be last to accept the atrocity in polite society, and where it has crept in we should make it a point of civic honor to suppress it. Its musical value is nil, and its possibilities of harm are great.

A DISGRUNTLED GNAT'S EYE PEEK AT ONE SECTION OF THE 1972 MANASSAS FESTIVITIES

(It has been our policy to carry only by-lined articles - largely because what contributions we have received have identified the writers. The following breaks with this tradition. It was submitted, bearing a D.C. postmark, identified only as "anonymous." Some of the things he says may strike some readers as unkind, unwarranted and downright unfair. On the other hand, the author, whoever he or she may be, gives credit where he feels credit is due. Therefore, we are going to print it, with the warning that any other anonymous screeds will be consigned to the wastebasket.)

By Anonymous

The plan for the Seventh Manassas Jazz Festival held promise of being a better deal than the previous ones. Unfortunately, it was not so in the execution. Splitting the production into three sessions with one a party type affair where you could walk around and drink, etc. seemed a good idea. It would be, if it was carried out properly.

The night session was supposed to start at 9 p.m. The first band, the Washington Monumentals, out of order on the program, started at about 9:45. Time to organize and set up between groups was unreasonably long, as it always has been. Next, Tony Newstead and his group played very well. Country Thomas was not up to his usual caliber, but Bob Greene probably was. The trouble was, you couldn't hear the piano, or even see it.

When the Bill Barnes band finally played - out of order on the program, but, happily, where they should have been - it was obvious that they were really what the crowd had come to hear. For that, they got to play an extra tune - five instead of four. By this time the piano had been repositioned to where it was drowning out the rest of the band.

This band was followed by Johnny Wiggs and his group (which, if it had had Jim Robinson could have been called the New Orleans Octogenarian Orchestra). Even though two

years older, Wiggs played a lot better than he did at the Fifth Manassas - still not worth the price of admission.

Bob Greene played some nice unscheduled piano during intermission. Who needs an intermission when it takes at least twenty minutes between sets?

This reviewer would have liked to have heard the Kid Bastien Band, but he succumbed to his bed about the time that Wallace Davenport was ending the opening number of the second half of the program on a high C-squared at about one a. m.

The Manassas Festival, Inc. always presents some talent that would be worth the price of admission if given enough of a chance. But there are always too many performers to fit into a reasonable length of time. This is further diluted by too many local performers. Many of the locals play as well or better than the imports, but why go all the way to Manassas and pay five or six bucks to hear the same people you can find for nothing at the local pizza parlors? Before the PRJC, exposure was a problem for these bands. Not anymore.

Fat Cat would do the local fans (who make up 95% of the paying audience) a great service if he would import a few really good performers and then give them a chance to really perform. This should be done in a more professional manner with the bandstand and sound system organized so that everyone can see and hear.

Also, at Manassas, the customer never seems to get much of a break. When you pay six bucks to get in you shouldn't have to pay another buck to get a program, particularly one which contains enough advertising to more than pay for its production. That's not the way they do it downtown at the Kennedy Center, for instance.



There were some good things that took place in the hangar in spite of it all. The performers, generally, performed well and the tunes they played were interesting. Very few of the old Dixieland chestnuts or evergreens, or whatever you want to call them

were played. The performers did not honor requests. Also, Fat Cat did not hog the microphone, introducing the collections of performers and letting them announce their own work.

Overall, though, the spectator got the same impression that was common to other years. This is Fat Cat's big party to which he invites the old time performers, who he reveres, while the customers supply the bread to let it all happen. It's a great deal as long as you can make it last, and there undoubtedly will be an Eighth Manassas and many more after that.

Anonymous

The editor regrets that he was unable to personally cover the Glory That Was Manassas this year. Through an arrangement with George W. Kay, PRJC Member and Editor of The Second Line, we will carry a report by one of George's keen-eared correspondents either in this issue or the next.

BE FAMOUS AND A HERO TO YOUR

KID: JOIN THE PRJC

If you happen to bump into Washington Post and honorary PRJC Member Hal Willard, don't kiss his feet or throw money. He embarrasses easily.

But it would be a nice gesture if you tipped your hat, genuflected, or bought him a drink.

Because Hal wrote not one or two but four articles about the local traditional jazz scene - the lead story being about the PRJC - in the Post's Panorama section Nov. 30th. And it wasn't the usual red-beans-and-rice-and-magnolias guff which newspapers periodically produce about Dixieland. Hal knows his jazz and he has an eye as keen as his ear. Witness these observations:

"Dixieland musicians, it seems, unlike other entertainers, always have been a selfish lot; they play primarily for themselves. Paradoxically, they have a childlike desire to attract attention to themselves, to be heard;

and the completely adult desire to be appreciated. . . ."

* * *

"The supreme irony and paradox of Dixie-land jazz is that it was created by black people, developed by black people, refined by black people, reached its zenith in performances by black people -- and is now perpetuated by white people. It was deserted by black people and left to spin itself into the oblivion of musical archives on the plink-plank records of the 1920's and early 1930's. Of course, many great jazzmen were white, but its best were black. . . ."

* * *

"At present, 40 or 50 tunes are played over and over. One reason is that the changing personnel and the lack of interest in rehearsals, as such, make it difficult for the players to work together on too broad a selection of numbers. . . ."

But Willard saved his best prose for the dean of Washington jazzmen, trombonist Walter "Slide" Harris. Hal concluded a profile of that modest, well-loved man in this fashion:

" 'I'm not trying to stir you up or anything like that,' I said, 'but does it ever bother you knowing, you must know, how good you are at music -- but you can't make a living at it; you are down there at the paint company every day. Does it make you mad?'

"His head kind of drifted over to the side, the way it sometimes does when he's playing the trombone. The face now was very gentle, the voice calm. The tone carried the patience of a man who has lived long in an unappreciative world and who has forgiven it for its ignorance.

" 'It's two different kinds of life, playing and working at the paint company. Working's not so bad. You know, they play music over some kind of loudspeaker and I sometimes whistle along with it. I've had people who didn't know me come up and say they heard me whistling with the music, and hitting all the notes, and ask if I ever played.

" 'I tell them I used to play a little.' "

A. C. W.

HELP!!! HELP!!!

The PRJC needs, and badly, a home of its own, a room capable of seating 150 - 200 persons, with a piano, where monthly jazz sessions could be held at modest cost to the club and members. If any member has ideas on this subject, please write Eleanor Johnson, Secretary of the PRJC, at 10201 Grosvenor Place, #905, Rockville, Md. 20852.

WANTED - piano rolls. Write Polly Wagner, 4127 Conrad St., Alexandria, Va.

I THOUGHT I HEARD. . . .

Jazz shows on the air in the Greater Washington area include these of interest to traditionalists:

Felix Grant, Mon. thru Fri. 8 p. m. to midnight, WMAL-AM, 630

The Harley Show, WBAL-AM, 1100, M o n. thru Fri., 10 p. m. till midnight.

Fat Cat's Jazz, Sun. 6-7 p. m., WPRW-AM 1460

Jazz Anthology; George Mercer, Sat. 3 p. m. WAMU-FM, 88.5

TWO BAR BREAKS

Anybody got more Wild Bill Davison records than he needs or wants? Bill Dunham of New York City, a member of the Grove Street Stompers and pal of Ken Underwood's, is putting together what he hopes will be a complete Davison collection: every record on which the Wild One ever blew a note. If any of you want to help Bill toward his goal - for reasonable financial recompense, naturally - write him at: 30 Horatio Street, Garden

Apartment "A", New York, N.Y. 10014. Or phone him at 212 WA 9-7762.

Dick Gibson, the Denver, Colo., investment banker noted for his plush, popular jazz parties, has some interesting observations on jazz fans. A few from the Denver Post's Sunday magazine section are as follows:

"Dumb people do not like jazz, never have, never will. Dumb adults and kids like rock."

"Jazz fans like to drink. I can't recall a dyed-in-the-wool jazz buff who wasn't, at least at some point in his life, a pretty nifty drinker."

"Jazz buffs are not fancy or fastidious people. In fact, they tend to be direct, even earthy. Jazz is gut music, played by gut people, appearing to gut people."

In general, women do not like jazz, although exceptions abound. . . . But taken in the main, most women do not like jazz. When it comes to where the boy friend or husband is going to take a woman out for the evening, the man's liking for jazz counts for zero. She did not dress up to go hear a lot of noise made by sloppy-looking men in a joint that could be the locker room of the 'Y'. . . ."

JAZZ COUNTRY

Mason "Country" Thomas of Arlington is an easy guy to hate -- if you happen to be, or think you are, a musician. Not only does he play fine, Irving Fazola-like clarinet, he can also get more meaning out of a trombone than most sackbut specialists in the area. And he plays both with deceptive ease. It just ain't fair!

This much most PRJC members know about Country. What they may not know is that Country has been on the jazz scene many more years than you would think to look at him. The Jazz Finder, '49, contains an article entitled "New Stars In the Making" by Thurman and Mary Grove. It covers bands of then-young traditionalists and opens on this note:

"The Casablanca in Washington, D. C. is quite a place. Until only recently it had a dual music policy. On the ground floor was a hillbilly band. . . but as you mounted the

stairs to a dance hall on the upper floor these corn squeezings became diluted with intermingling strains of a rip-roaring jazz band. . .

"A cheap silvered sign reading Mason Thomas and The Capitol City Jazzmen hangs over a dinky bandstand and a gang of teenagers knocking out jazz standards with lusty abandon. They fluff requests from the dancers for 'Stardust' or 'Body and Soul' and bear down instead of 'Jazz Band Ball' and 'High Society,' playing their hearts out for a music they love.

"The band is terrific you think. . . Their leader plays a good clarinet and you're amused when he honks away on his cumbersome baritone-- but good. The trumpeter is only 18, you hear someone say. He's a vest pocket edition of Max Kaminsky, with a wonderful tone and great drive on the Dixieland tunes. . . ."

"This band of tyros is typical of the tremors jazzwise in other parts of the nation. Youngsters are banding together into small groups and learning to play real jazz. . . ."

Country's band, which so excited the Groves nearly 25 years ago, consisted of Country on clarinet and baritone sax; Mac McCurdy, trumpet; Adolph Scaggs, trombone; Gus Herrington, piano; and Al Pometto, drums.

Ye editor was pleasantly surprised to find his own early efforts also mentioned in the article, as follows:

"Up New England way is The Delta Five, who are Dixielanders drawn from the students at Amherst College and the University of Massachusetts. They earn some money from college dates and other engagements. Their leading figure is the pianist Douglas "Red" MacKenzie, who copies the general style of Jelly Roll Morton and is considered a musician of unusual merit. . . ." Personnel of that long-ago group, besides Red on piano and myself on clarinet, was Bob Freeman, trombone; Johnny Bucher (a fixture of New York's Red Onion Jazz Band for many years) cornet; Dick Chapin, banjo; Bob Morse, drums.

Golden, carefree days, those.

Al Webber

POTOMAC RIVER JAZZ CLUB MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

(Please type or print)

NAME _____ DATE _____

ADDRESS _____
(Street) (City) (State & ZIP)

RECORD COLLECTOR? _____ MUSICIAN? _____

IF MUSICIAN: WHAT INSTRUMENT(S)? _____

DO YOU READ MUSIC? _____

NOW A MEMBER OF A REGULARLY ORGANIZED BAND? _____

INTERESTED IN JOINING OR FORMING A BAND? _____

INTERESTED IN JAMMING OCCASIONALLY? _____

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

DO YOU HAVE OTHER COMMENTS OR SUGGESTIONS WITH REGARD TO FUTURE P.R.J.C. ACTIVITIES?

WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN CONTRIBUTING ARTICLES TO THE CLUB PUBLICATION "TAILGATE RAMBLINGS"?

REGULARLY _____ OCCASIONALLY _____

I enclose check for \$7.00 initiation fee (\$2.00) and first year membership dues (\$5.00)

I enclose check for \$5.00 membership renewal

SIGNATURE _____

Make checks payable to Potomac River Jazz Club and mail to:

**Mrs. Eleanor Johnson
Secretary, Potomac River Jazz Club
10201 Grosvenor Place, #905
Rockville, Md. 20852**

TAILGATE RAMBLINGS
5818 Walton Rd
Bethesda Md 20034



HOORAY FOR DIXIELAND JAZZ