Jazz in New Orleans in the 1960s

Charles Suhor on drums with unidentified onlooker, from Loyola University Yearbook, The Wolf (1956). Photo by Russ Cresson.

In 1994 Charles Suhor donated to the Jazz Archive a 702-page collection of writings and letters, comprising the most comprehensive aggregate of primary source materials on jazz in New Orleans during the 1960s. The core of the Charles Suhor collection is the author's writings for two journals -- Down Beat, the twice-monthly magazine that was the dominant jazz journal during the decade, and New Orleans magazine. Moonlighting as a writer and drummer during his career as an English teacher and supervisor in New Orleans Public Schools, Suhor was the local correspondent for Down Beat. He submitted over 150 "Where & When" (W&W) listings of jazz clubs and artists and about 130 "Ad Lib" columns of brief news and news about the jazz scene. He also wrote feature articles, news stories, reviews, and obituaries for Down Beat (hereafter DB), finding virtually no interest in jazz in the local press until New Orleans magazine and the Vieux Carre Courier accepted jazz coverage late in the decade. The five-volume collection includes an introductory essay with autobiographical information and a commentary on four areas of interest that developed during the 1960s -- traditional New Orleans, Dixieland,
and revivalist jazz; Louis Armstrong; Jazz festivals; and modern jazz. Each volume contains a chart that lists the contents and notes key events. The materials below are adapted from the introductory essay.

TRADITIONAL NEW ORLEANS, DIXIELAND, AND REVIVALIST JAZZ

During the period covered by the materials in this collection, several noteworthy developments occurred in traditional New Orleans jazz, Dixieland jazz, and revivalist jazz. For purposes of convenience, I'm defining those terms in the following roughly descriptive manner.

By Traditional New Orleans Jazz I mean the range of early jazz styles that evolved in the first two decades of the twentieth century. To some, this is the only "pure" jazz -- identified with figures and bands like Oliver, Armstrong, Bunk Johnson, the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, Jelly Roll Morton, etc. Rhythm sections sometimes included a banjo and/or tuba. In the 1960s this style was most strongly represented by the bands that played at Preservation Hall. Many of the marching bands of the 1960s, reported sporadically in my materials, are also heirs to early New Orleans traditions, although some were going far afield with everything from scream trumpets to drummers’ bass bops. (e.g., see the comments on p. 17 of my July 11, 1968 DB review of Jazzfest '68).

By Dixieland Jazz I mean the slicker, more widely popular style that evolved in the 1930s in New Orleans, Chicago, and elsewhere. Musicians associated with Bob Crosby’s Bobcats, The Austin High gang in Chicago and the celebrated Wild Bill Davison/George Brunis Commodore recordings of 1943 were practitioners of this style. Instrumentation typically included trumpet, trombone, clarinet, piano, bass and drums. Dixieland artists (mostly white) like Sharkey Bonano, Pete Fountain, and the Assuntos were active in New Orleans in the 1960s.

I define Revivalist Jazz as a conscious attempt to emulate or mimic traditional New Orleans styles. In the 1960s the Crawford-Ferguson Band was the prototype of the thoughtful revivalist group -- knowledgeable about the source music, emulative more than imitative, and concerned with musical and historical values. By contrast, bands such as the Last Straws were often brassy, bungling and amateurish; the very worst of the genre was represented by campy banjo-and-tuba bands that catered to toe-tapping tourists at clubs like Your Father’s Mustache and the Red Garter. I’ll write briefly about revivalist bands in the section on Jazz Festivals. Their exclusion in the materials in this section seems proportionate to their musical merit.

As fond as I am of all-night arguments about jazz genres, I offer the above definitions not as philosophical categories but only as a rule-of-thumb framework for the discussion below. I could easily pick apart my own definitions, and I would be hard put to use them in placing complexly situated musicians like Georg Brunis, Raymond Burke, Edmond Hall, Monk Hazel, Thomas Jefferson, or Pee Wee Spitelera in either a "traditional" or "Dixieland" slot.

Fuzzy genres get even fuzzier as the passage of time effectively blurs and intermingles influences. "Dixieland" bands in New Orleans and elsewhere in the 50s and 60s often included older players who were clearly in the New Orleans tradition, along with identifiable Dixieland figures hailing from just about anywhere in the country, augmented by swing musicians and even boppers who found ways to adapt to small-group Dixie improvisation settings. My designation of genres, then, is a
tracing of general contours and not a sculpting of detailed and static features.

DIXIELAND JAZZ – A BACKDROP FOR THE 60S

In my view there were virtually no significant developments in Dixieland jazz in the 1960s in New Orleans. Identifiable Dixieland artists like Sharkey Bonano and Pete Fountain, whose names appear abundantly in the DB Ad Lib and W&W materials, are for the most part musicians who had been active in previous decades. The few newer names, like Harold Cooper, George Finola, and Bob Havens, tended to be solid players who did not advance the genre notably or make a significant popular splash.

Nevertheless, it is the most convenient to start a review of the 1960s with a discussion of the Dixieland jazz, because the 1950s saw major Dixie breakthroughs that opened up numerous possibilities in the 60s—possibilities for sustaining a Dixieland presence in New Orleans’ night life, for highlighting jazz as a positive part of the city’s national and international image, and for opening the eyes of the community, its leaders, and the world to numerous traditional and Dixieland artists who might otherwise have been forgotten.

It was the wide national exposure received by the Dukes of Dixieland and Pete Fountain in the 1950s and by Al Hirt at the turn of the decade that persuaded civic leaders that we might have something salable here. The Dukes hit the big times when they made the first jazz stereo LPs on Sid Frey’s Audio Fidelity label in 1958. The LP was, as Frank Assunto acknowledged (see New Orleans, March 1970), for the most part a wretchedly commercial and unrepresentative set, revivalist in style. But it launched their national career and reminded the nation that jazz-like music still comes out of New Orleans.

Pete Fountain, a former Duke, a Basin Street Six alumnus, and youthful product of the late 1940s revival, appeared improbably on Lawrence Welk’s immensely popular TV show in the 1950s. The weekly presentation once again demonstrated to the nation (and to the city) that, minimally, a half-bound and gagged New Orleans Dixieland artist can have wide public appeal.

Al Hirt led a respectable Dixieland combo in an unsuccessful follow-up to the Dukes on an Audio Fidelity label LP. His first big break focused more appropriately on his skills as a powerhouse trumpeter with loads of technique. At Dan’s Pier 600 on Bourbon Street in 1959, he was discovered by actress Monique Van Vooren, wife of New York promoter Gerald Purcell (see the Hirt article in New Orleans, April 1969). Hirt was soon a bona fide national star, appearing at top clubs in Las Vegas and on Dinah Shore’s TV show and Victor Records.

Hirt wisely decided to make use of the image of New Orleans as a Dixieland jazz town, established by the Dukes and Pete Fountain. His combo (which consisted of the usual Dixie lineup of trumpet, trombone, clarinet, piano, bass, and drums) was called “Al Hirt and his Swingin’ Dixie.” Even so, the Dixie instrumentation was used as a backdrop for his prodigious technique and for breakneck tempos and pseudo-Dixie head arrangements that traditional jazz purists hated and tourists loved.

Of course, the Establishment was looking at tourists, not purists. So by the 1960s civic leaders understood that the city’s successful Dixieland artists were a potential asset to the economy. The Dukes were playing out much of their career in Las Vegas and other foreign outposts, but both Fountain and Hirt were nationwide celebrities who had night clubs in the French Quarter. The time was ripe for a
Publicity photo of the Dukes of Dixieland, circa 1959. Fred Assunto, tb; Bill Porter, tu; Jac Assunto, tb; Frank Assunto, tp.; Stanley Mendelson, p; Jerry Fuller, d; and Norman "Red" Hawley, d.

dramatic new development in 1961, when a few true-believing traditional jazz lovers opened Preservation Hall as an experiment that captured just about everyone's imagination.

TRADITIONAL NEW ORLEANS JAZZ -- THE 1960S PRESERVATION HALL REVIVAL

Preservation Hall did not follow the 1950s formula, viz., fame and fortune for young white jazzmen playing post-twenties Dixieland. Rather, the music was traditional New Orleans jazz and the artists were almost exclusively little-known African-American musicians who were active in the early 1960s.

The rapid success of the Hall and the national publicity it got was, like the success of the Assuntos, Fountain, and Hirt, a surprise and a gift outright to the less-than-with-it Establishment. And again, civic leaders were not hesitant about spreading the news about New Orleans jazz once everyone else knew all about it; so jazz became an important part of the city's advertised image. Not all jazz, of course. As reported in "Jazz in the New Orleans Press" (DB, June 12, 1969), modern jazz in New Orleans received little attention in the 1960s, even though the city had been a
fertile ground of creativity since the early 1950s.

To move on to details about Preservation Hall and its impact, the story of the Hall is chronicled in depth in William Carter’s 1991 book, *Preservation Hall -- Music from the Heart*. My DB "Where & When" listings for Preservation Hall and the other halls usually gave a general "various traditional bands" designation; but many "Ad Libs" columns include specific information about who was playing at the halls, making records, going on tour, and the like. It is fortunate that many of the early musicians got to play again at the kitty halls, and that their recollections were recorded in interviews at the Tulane Jazz Archive before they died. The DB "Potpourri" and "Final Bar" sections contain numerous obituaries of these players, often with brief biographical information that I got from Dick Allen of the Jazz Archive or from the less dependable, sometimes ludicrous, daily newspapers. (See, e.g., the tasteless *States Item* obit of pianist Joe Robichaux reported in DB, June 12, 1969, "Jazz and the New Orleans Press.")

To add my chunk of testimony to the controversy over the name and origins of Preservation Hall as described by Carter (pp. 147-148), I'll note that the first name for the Hall mentioned in *Down Beat* is "Slow Drag" (Ad Libs, Aug. 3, 1961). I cited Ken (Grayson) Mills as the source both of the name and of artists set to appear, viz., Kid
Sheik, Peter Bocage, the Eureka Brass Band, Kid Thomas, and George Lewis. I distinctly recall talking to Mills outside the Hall on St. Peter Street in the summer of 1961. Of course, as Carter reports, other names were tossed about and applied to the Hall during the early weeks; so it was likely that Mills was giving me his preference, possibly the name du jour. The August 7th W&W lists the name "Slow Drag" with "various traditional groups" appearing. The September 14 W&W switches to "Preservation Hall (Slow Drag);" in the next issue (September 28) and afterwards, the listing is simply "Preservation Hall." Carter chronicles the Hall’s early popularity and national recognition via an Associated Press and NBC-TV coverage on David Brinkley's Journal. The latter is reported in my March 15, 1962 DB news story, "Brinkley Jazz Feature Irks New Orleanians." Brinkley and New Orleans States-Item columnist Bob Sublette locked horns over the TV story’s central assumption that strippers were "replacing" jazz in New Orleans -- the precise opposite of what was indeed developing. At my behest, Sublette continued to give some then-rare local copy to jazz, reporting on the DB story.

In 1962 I prepared an article for DB, "New Orleans Rebirth--Preservation Hall," published in the January 17, 1963 issue. Carter, referring to my positive comments and my caveats about critiquing the quality of the music from a purely nostalgic perspective, called the article "as wisely dimensional as anything
written on the Hall, before or since" (p. 187). In Volume II of this collection, the pages immediately following the DB article include alternate endings to the article that I brought to my students at Franklin High School for advice.

One important measure of the success and importance of Preservation Hall is its many imitators. The DB materials chronicle these somewhat systematically. The Dixieland Coffee Shop (managed by Al Clark) appears in the W&W listings from April 12–October 25, 1962; Icon Hall (managed by Ken Mills), from April 26–September 27, 1962. Perseverance Hall is in for a single listing -- October 11, 1962; Dixieland Hall for a very long stint, beginning November 8, 1962, and continuing until the end of the W&W listings in May of 1969. The Southland Jazz Club (George Finola, band leader and proprietor) is listed from May 5 to June 30, 1966. Mahogany Hall has a single mention--August 24, 1967-- in Ad Libs only.

After the W&W listings were discontinued by DB, Economy Hall is noted in some Ad Libs columns (e.g., November 13, 1969; December 11, 1969; February 5, 1970). This "hall" is the ultimate ironic tribute to the success of the true kitty halls that began early in the decade. It was located in the plush Royal Sonesta Hotel, and it featured the Dukes of Dixieland. Frequently, Economy Hall imported nationally known artists, among them the great bop saxophonist Zoot Sims.

As with other W&W listings, the various hall dates should be considered approximate. As noted earlier, copy was due at the Down Beat office about five weeks in advance; so some listings continued on beyond the actual time that a hall or a club was opened. Also, there were some complex competitive/cooperative relationships among the halls. For example, a "Dixieland Coffee Shop" listings ends just before the Dixieland Hall listing begins. My unchecked memory suggests that Al Clark, proprietor of the former, either moved his club or changed the name, or both. Other documentation should be sought concerning such refinements.

The Preservation Hall revival invites some comparison with the limited traditional New Orleans jazz revival of the early 1940s, when William Russell and others organized Bunk Johnson and other early jazz artists that recorded on his American Music label. But the differences in the scope and effect of the early 40s and 60s revivals are immense. Russell was one of a small number of jazz lovers who worked with a relatively small coterie of early jazz musicians. Bunk's band--mainly Jim Robinson, George Lewis, Lawrence Marrero, Alton Purnell, Alcide "Slow Drag" Pavageau, and Baby Dodds--became the best known of the American Music artists. Important as these efforts were, the local populace had virtually no knowledge of the revival or of Bunk's Band. (A large Johnson following did arise in San Francisco, where he recorded with Lu Watters. Also, Bunk's excellent New Orleans unit received national attention from the group's Columbia recordings.)

Not until the late 1940s did a popular local jazz revival occur, sparked by WDSU deejay/jazz buff Roger Wolfe. Curiously, many writers outside of New Orleans seem wholly ignorant of this hot little revival. The widely respected critic Whitney Balliett wrote in 1992 that the first New Orleans revival "began around 1940 and petered out in the late forties" (p. 94). The actual happenings late in the decade were otherwise. The key bands and clubs were Sharkey Bonano and his Kings of Dixieland at the Famous Door and Oscar (Papa) Celestin at the Paddock Lounge, both on Bourbon Street; and the All-Stars at Sunday concerts on Royal Street at the...
Papa Celestin's Band at the Paddock Lounge, circa 1950. Christopher "Black Happy" Goldston, d; Ricard Alexis, b; Bill Matthews, tb; Alphonse Picou, cl; and Oscar Celestin, tp. Gift of Robert "Sonny" Vauresson.

Parisian Room (initially featuring Sharkey, Irving Fazola, Julian "Digger" Laine, and others before Tony Almerico's clunkish band took over.) The revival held into the early 1950s, when the Dukes of Dixieland (named after Sharkey's "Kings...") and the Basin Street Six (with George Girard and Fountain) had large local followings. All of the bands had local radio shows, and Sharkey and the Basin Street Six had TV shows for awhile--the former from WDSU's TV studio, the latter from L'Enfant's restaurant.

All but the Celestin band were white Dixieland groups. Celestin's popular traditional New Orleans band was energized by Papa's lusty vocals and Alphonse Picou's clarinet, but the group was no kin to Bunk's blues-drenched band of a few years earlier.

Both of these modest revivals--the Bunk Johnson phenomenon and the late 40s revival--were directly linked with later developments in the evolution of both traditional New Orleans and Dixieland jazz. Both produced some absolutely wonderful music, much of it recorded but to my knowledge never re-released (e.g., the excellent Roger Wolfe Bandwagon recordings of Sharkey's band and of Armand Hug in duo with Ray Bauduc; Johnny Wiggs' popular "Bourbon Street Bounce" and "Congo Square" on the Blackstone brothers' label).
But neither of the excellent 1940s revivals brought back to active performance the large number of traditional New Orleans artists who participated in the Preservation Hall revival; neither caught the attention of the mainstream press, let alone the city fathers, mothers, and Chamber of Commerce; neither had a transforming effect on tourism or on the image (including the self-image) of the city as a still-thriving jazz mecca. Preservation Hall accomplished all of those things.

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG STRAND**

There is little in my writings that can contribute to the rich Armstrong literature and legend. But reviewing my materials, I did find a narrative of sorts, a set of items that highlights aspects of Armstrong that related in unique ways to the city of New Orleans in the 1960s.

The Louis Armstrong strand in the *Down Beat* materials begins with a news story (May 24, 1962), "Jazz Museum Gets Original Satchmo Horn." It included a picture of jazz buff lawyer Harry Souchon (Doc's brother) with Manuella Jones, widow of the late Captain Joseph Jones, who was superintendent of the Waif's Home in 1914 when Armstrong was there. Two *DB* news stories of July 16 and July 30, 1964 covered the Kafkaesque confusion that surrounded the lamentable destruction of the house where Louis was born ("Armstrong's Birthplace Center of Confusion"; "Deadline Passes; Armstrong Birthplace Torn Down"). My recollection of conversations with Harry Souchon, who wore his attorney hat in working to preserve the house, is that the young lawyer representing the demolition company "didn't return phone calls." The matter is well worth exploring by an interested researcher.

![Louis Armstrong's birthplace on Jane Alley. Courtesy Ralston Crawford Collection.](image)

The *DB* Armstrong strand picks up with a September 23, 1965, "Potpourri" item. It states that a forthcoming Armstrong concert (sponsored by the New Orleans Jazz Club for the benefit of the Jazz Museum) will be Armstrong's first appearance in the city in over a decade. He had come to town for Mardi Gras as the King of Zulu late in the 40s, but had often been quoted as not wanting to return because of Louisiana's Jim Crow attitudes.

A December 16 news story, "New Orleans Hails Conquering Hero Pops," describes the celebration surrounding Louis' 1965 return, including a reunion with Peter Davis, a former teacher at the Waif's Home. The formal declaration of Louis Armstrong Day and the numerous awards and honors from civic
groups are evidence of the slowly evolving jazz-consciousness of the local Establishment.

Armstrong was again officially honored in connection with his appearance at Jazzfest '68 (Ad Libs, July 11, 1968). His band's appearance at Jazzfest didn't get much space in my long Jazzfest review article (DB, July 11). Armstrong is always worth hearing, but the Jazzfest band was retreading its well-worn Dixieland material. The competent but uneventful Dixie performance was virtually identical to sets I had seen on TV over the years and in a Washington, D.C. concert in 1957.

The next part of the Armstrong strand in DB comes in January 8, 1970 with a news story, "Satchmo Statue Fund-Raising Drive is On." I am sure I did not submit the entire contents of this story. Information is included about the Los Angeles base for the fund, as well as the New Orleans support from a Chamber of Commerce committee headed by Durel Black and James Nassikas.

Interestingly, in the 1950s a proposal had been made by local jazz "affectionados" to erect a statue of a jazz band at the corner of Basin and Canal Streets, and it received virtually no support from civic leaders. One citizen even wrote a contemptuous letter to a local paper protesting that a statue of Lulu White would be equally inappropriate. In 1970 the anti-statue protest came from the respected British jazz critic Valerie Wilmer in the "Chords and Discords" (Letters to the Editor) section of DB (May 28, 1970). She said that playgrounds,
not statues, were needed by poor kids in New Orleans. My DB letter in response (July 23, 1970) said that a community’s choice of heroes and symbols is also quite important. Wilmer then wrote me a surprisingly scathing and self-righteous personal letter, and I responded with a temporizing note. She later visited New Orleans, and I took her on a tour of the city. When neither of us had the need to appear important in print, we had a fine and congenial visit.

Sadly, the final entry in the Armstrong strand is my coverage of the memorial ceremony in New Orleans after his death. The Down Beat annual, Music '72, paired Don De Michael's touching "Louis Remembered" piece with my "New Orleans Farewell," an account of the local ceremony honoring Louis.

Of course, I did not and could not have planned an Armstrong strand in the Down Beat writings. Events occurred, and I reported and commented with joy and chagrin, depending on the nature of the events, because I believed that what was happening was important and historic, and because I loved and respected the man and his work. The Armstrong statue has long since stood in Armstrong park near Congo Square -- but the park is described as "little used" in a Times-Picayune article (Egger, 1992). I have not been able to keep up with developments of the site, but I understand that plans for expanding the park as part of the National Park Service have bogged down.

That is regrettable. An expanded park could further honor Armstrong's genius and provide a genuinely attractive recreation area for Treme area residents, making a statement about community values while addressing substantive concerns raised by many local leaders, and by Wilmer in an earlier decade. Within New Orleans, Armstrong should not be a mere icon. He embodies much of what is best in the city's generosity of spirit and abiding creativity.

**JAZZ FESTIVALS**

A tenacious mythology has grown to the effect that the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival began with the excellent 1970 program organized by Quint Davis and Allison Miner, working with George Wein. The 1970 date is cited in Michael P. Smith's New Orleans Jazz Fest -- A Pictorial History (1991), although Davis (who was my drum student for a brief time in the 60s) acknowledges vaguely that "another organization, headed up by Durel Black, ... put on several festivals in the late 60s" (p. 9). Jason Berry et al. (1986), also cite Davis and Miner's 1970 event as the launch of the festival (p. 21) in Up From the Cradle of Jazz. The recent Lichtenstein and Dankner (1993) volume Musical Gumbo, which lacks perspective on numerous jazz movements, refers to "various concerts" in the 60s prior to the 1970 festival but notes that Wein's 1970 effort was a "multidimensional festival at Congo Square."

If administrative continuity were the sole and adequate criterion for tracing the origins of the festival, then the 1970 festival might be called the first one. But by any other reasonable standard, the 1970 festival was in fact a direct descendant of two mammoth events -- Jazzfest '68 and the New Orleans Jazz and Food Festival of 1969. The conceptual groundwork, the model of large-scale organization, and certainly the publicity momentum of Jazzfest '68 and the 1969 Jazz and Food Festival were key to the 1970 event. In many respects the '70 festival would have started from Square One rather than from Congo Square without the experience of the two preceding years.

As seen in the program schedules for the 1968 and 1969 festivals (see May 1968 and June
1969), in the festival reviews in *DB, New Orleans* and the Vieux Carre *Courier*, and in the numerous *Down Beat* Ad Libs entries, the range and scale of the 1968 and 1969 events were essentially the prototype for the festivals that followed. The '68 and '69 festivals, both week-long events, featured major and lesser festival, folklore lecture, and some blues, gospel, and Cajun artists.

I will return to the difficult, sometimes comical story of the truly seminal event, Jazzfest '68, but it is important to note that other attempts at jazz festivals were made in the 1960s. Their failure to get off the ground was bound up with larger social issues such as racial segregation, myopic local leadership, and the like.

The *Down Beat* reportage on local jazz festivals begins with a news story headed "Congressional Act Helps launch a Southern festival" in the February 11, 1965 issue. I reported that segregation laws in Louisiana had previously made it virtually impossible to schedule a major jazz festival in the Deep South. Indeed, up until the early 60s it was illegal for integrated groups to perform on stage in Louisiana.

The projected 1965 jazz festival had proceeded so far as to have a list of officers that included Olaf Lamberts, general manager of the Royal Orleans Hotel, as chair, with board members and a talent committee that included Harry Souchon, architect Arthur Q. Davis (Quint's father), Tom Sancton, Sr. (a fine writer and the father of writer/trad clarinetist Tom Jr., -- see the younger Sanction's Feb. 9, 1967 *DB* article), Al Hirt, George Lewis, Dick Allen, and Pete Fountain. George Wein was to be the producer of the event which "would include three afternoon performances in addition to four night concerts," all to be held in 1965 at City Park Stadium, along with "parades, workshops, lectures, and other events."

However, in the very next *DB* issue I reported that the festival was postponed ("New Orleans Jazz Festival 'postponed' -- till further notice," February 25, 1965). The editors parenthetical addition quoted George Wein as stating that
the event was cancelled, not postponed. I had noted that the official line was that the festival might occur "next year or in 1967" in order to allow "additional time... for better planning." I further noted the unofficial explanation -- viz., that the cancellation was prompted by the previous month's withdrawal of an American Football League all-star game scheduled for New Orleans. Twenty-one black football players refused to come to New Orleans because they had experienced discrimination in the city. The AFL Football cancellation had received heavy publicity and sent a chill through the community.

Lichtenstein and Dankner's treatment of the Jazzfest history makes no mention of the aborted 1965 attempt but does state, either erroneously or on information that I did not have, that Wein was asked in 1962 to develop a festival but he refused because of the "city's Jim Crow laws" (p. 270).

A fascinating anecdote in the evolution of the Jazz Festival was provided in mid-1965 by attorney Dean Andrews, the cigar-chomping, eccentric attorney who later played a mysterious role in the district attorney Jim Garrison's investigation of the murder of President Kennedy. (Andrews was played by John Candy in Oliver Stone's film JFK; having met Andrews, I can state that Candy's wacky performance was by no means overplayed.) Andrews said he was heading a group called "The International Jazz Festival of New Orleans" (DB Potspoirri, August 12, 1965). A "miniature" festival was to be presented at Luthjen's Lounge on June 27-30, 1965, strictly for the press.

But the "pilot" festival was moved to the Roosevelt Hotel because of requests for tickets from the general public. I noted that the "festival's scope was still limited," and wrote euphemistically that "a youthful rock-and-roll band billed as modern jazz drew raised eyebrows." I dutifully quoted Andrews' statement that a larger event would be held in 1966 at Municipal Auditorium. I never heard from him again but was not surprised when he struck grand and ludicrous poses for the press during the Kennedy investigation.

The first report on what became Jazzfest '68 appeared in DB Ad Libs, August 24, 1967. The two-sentence entry merely indicated that plans were being made for a jazz festival that would celebrate the 250th anniversary of the city, with "quite a few name groups" to be included.

By the November 30 issue a full news story, "Jazz Events to Spark New Orleans' Birthday," could be reported, with then-current information (later greatly altered by the program committee) on the main concerts and ancillary events. In the December 14 DB "Potpourri" I reported on a press party during which Pete Fountain was signed "to appear at the upcoming international jazz festival in New Orleans." Another roster of potential performers was listed.

Things heated up early in 1968. In the March Ad Libs I noted that Tommy Walker, New Orleans Saints manager, was named director of the May festival and that Dave Brubeck and Gerry Mulligan had been signed. Incidentally, it went virtually unnoticed that the staff, board members, and other leaders--headed by Durel Black of the New Orleans Jazz Club and talent coordinator/emcee Willis Conover-- were almost exclusively white, a situation that was not significantly changed until the mid-1970s when a boycott was threatened by the African-American Coalition (Smith, p. 15).

But an interesting protest did arise in 1968. Traditional jazz writer/historian Al Rose was "waging a one-man war on the festival" (Ad Libs March 21, 1968) by attempting to elect
anti-festival candidates to the New Orleans Jazz Club's Board of Directors. Rose was claiming that modern artists on the program were not jazz musicians. (See comments on Rose and the festival in *New Orleans* magazine, "From Ragtime to Riches," November 1970.)

In the April 4, 1968 DB "Potpourri" I reported further Jazzfest '68 signings (Stan Getz, Gary Burton, Carmen MacRae, Ramsey Lewis, Thomas Jefferson, and Willie Tee). A news story, "Cradle of Jazz will Rock Again in Spring," in the April 18 issue included five paragraphs about the festival, naming over 30 of the bands and artists and citing the various events. Jazzfest '68 was the DB cover story for the May 2, 1968 issue. Pete Fountain was on the cover, and my brief booster article, "New Orleans: A Do-It-Yourself Jazz festival," was part of a three-page layout that features Jim Whitmore's fine photographs of local artists.

In the January 1968 issue of *New Orleans*, I had done an article entitled "A Festival for the Funeral?" It started a bit of a flap, because I stated the position that the local jazz scene was remarkable mainly for the Preservation Hall revival of old-timers and the city's excellent young modern jazz musicians. I said that few youngsters were playing in the New Orleans jazz tradition or in the Dixieland style. Metaphorically, the jazz festival could be a funeral of sorts, since the cultures that produced our traditional and Dixieland artists had changed, and the most we seemed to be getting from young musicians was pallid role-playing in the form of young revivalist bands. Carolyn Kolb's response, placed directly under my article, was a surprise to me.

The pages that follow my piece and Kolb's in the collection include *New Orleans* editor Jim Autrey's apology, Gilbert Erskine's letter about the two articles, my testy personal response to Kolb (which I did not submit to the magazine but cc'd to Durel Black and Harry Souchon) and Souchon's response to me, cc to Kolb.

I'm no longer quite so persuaded that young musicians can't perform well in the traditional New Orleans style. I've heard some extremely good bands working within the genre, albeit with revisionist tendencies. Some meld contemporary sensibility and even post-swing contemporary rhythms and harmonies with the old style. The Memphis Five, an excellent band that played in the Champaign-Urbana area in the late 60s and early 70s, was one such band. Some "trad" bands in recent years have skillfully synthesized New Orleans and Dixieland traditions into enjoyable, highly musical ensembles. I hasten to add that none of these groups would please purists like Al Rose or Tom Bethell, and I still believe young musicians who try too hard to sound like the "real" early artists miss the mark in terms both of expressiveness and musicality. As Bobby Hackett once said about the West Coast trad revival of the 40s, "It's certainly funny to hear those youngsters trying to play like old men" (Shapiro and Henthoff, 1955, p. 400).

Returning to Jazzfest '68, I had been in regular contact with Durel Black, Willis Conover, and others during the planning of the festival, often giving solicited and unsolicited advice. But I kept a low profile except for the extensive *Down Beat* coverage and the *New Orleans* magazine article. For the festival's printed program, I wrote the "New Orleans Jazz Scene Today" feature, basically a booster piece with occasional editorial adjectives and appositives.

Dan Morgenstern, who had replaced Don DeMichael as editor of *Down Beat* (See DeMichael's letter to me, May 18, 1967), gave me the okay to do a full-length review of festival activities. The July 11, 1968 issue includes the extended review, with numerous
pictures. Since some of the ancillary events were simultaneous, and I had a demanding day job to boot, I charted out a course that brought me to as many of the featured programs as possible, plus the lesser events that interested me most strongly.

To no one's surprise, the local press treated Jazzfest '68 as a bright commercial event at best. By contrast, Down Beat's Chicago-based staff had long acknowledged the musical and sociopolitical significance of the event, chronicling the festival's stumbling precursors early in the decade and giving Jazzfest '68 advantage status as a cover story and major review space for the program itself. I did a few follow-up items from the 1968 festival in Ad Libs (July 11, July 25, August 22, 1968).

DB gave the event even more attention the second year. Editor Dan Morgenstern arranged to have the June 12, 1969 issue of Down Beat bound into the printed program for the 1969 festival. Again, the festival was the DB cover, and my "jazz and the New Orleans Press" article was in that issue. Morgenstern wrote a wonderful essay about New Orleans as the birthplace of jazz for the issue, and he flew to New Orleans to cover the festival personally.

My April 1969 New Orleans magazine preview article, "Jazzfest 1969," began with a reflective essay on the '68 event and several paragraphs on economic and sociopolitical factors underlying the failed jazz festivals earlier in the decade. The tentative lineup for the 1969 event followed.

I did two reviews of the 1969 New Orleans Jazz and Food festival (as it was entitled, although everyone was calling it "Jazzfest '69"). My full-length review was published in two parts in the Vieux Carre Courier (June 6 and June 13, 1969), the hip, city-watching weekly paper edited by Bill Bryan, Jr. For New Orleans magazine I did "Jazzfest 1969--an Ad Lib Review." I departed from the traditional review format to do some New Journalism stunts that showed some different perspectives on the festival, from venerable artists like Eubie Blake to the excellent German trombonist Albert Mangelsdorff.

By early 1970 I had resigned from my Down Beat duties, so the various events leading up to the Quint Davis/Allison Miner program are not part of my reportage. But in fact, the festivals from 1970 on have been treated in
various other sources. What I've tried to do here is correct the impression that 1970 was somehow a clear starting point for the current Jazz and Heritage Festival. The 1968 and 1969 festivals were events that had marvelous depth and range, with considerable outreach to other musical forms and other aspects of local culture. They represented a quantum leap from ambitious misfires such as the 1965 Wein effort and Dean Andrews fizzes of '65 and '66, and from various earlier small-scale events (e.g., Dillard University's excellent Jazz and Folk Concert; December 1, 1966 Ad Libs).

MODERN JAZZ

Modern jazz artists in New Orleans played a prominent part in my Down Beat coverage of the 1960s, but the real roots of the evolution of modern jazz in New Orleans go back into the 1940s and 1950s. Several clusters of young modern jazz musicians existed in the African American and white musical communities, and these are poorly or partially treated in the recent literature that I have read.

In Up From the Cradle of Jazz, Jason Berry, et al., achieved focus and narrative coherence by selecting and concentrating on a few figures and institutions -- notably, the Battiste family, Al Belletto, AFO (All For One) Records, and the American Jazz Quintet. As a result, most of the artists in the gifted post-World War II modern jazz community were slighted or ignored. For example, the two quotations in Up From the Cradle from Rhodes Spedale and Jimmy Drew (pp.142-143) -- neither of whom was to my knowledge regularly on the scene in the 1950s-- seriously misrepresent the early bebop culture, claiming a dominance of "the West Coast influence" on the white musicians of the 60s in New Orleans. As will be seen, some of the white modern jazz popularizers (e.g., Belletto, Joe Burtn, Ronnie Kole) were indeed subdued in their approaches to jazz, but that warrants no generalizations. Lichtenstein and Dankner's treatment of modern jazz in the 50s and 60s is even more distorted, focusing almost exclusively on Ellis Marsalis and stating blindly that "there were not many other beboppers around New Orleans in the mid-fifties" (p. 241).

It would be inaccurate and unfair to minimize the influence of Battiste, Belletto, Marsalis, and others who are privileged in recent writings about the 1950s and 1960s. But the emphasis on family dynasties and a few figures radically limits our understanding of modern jazz during those decades.

What gets distorted is the musical leadership exercised by the players of those decades. For example, during the 1950s the musicians I knew viewed saxophonist Mouse Bonati, drummer Ed Blackwell, and pianist Fred Crane (a Belletto sideman) as far more normative, cutting-edge musicians than those given strongest attention by Berry, et al., and Lichtenstein and Dankner. And in the 1960s artists like Bill Huntington, Nat Perriilliat, and Earl Turinton were advancing the art of modern jazz as brilliantly as the young Ellis Marsalis. And again, a large number of pre-1960s players who were part of the early modern jazz communities have received no mention at all in emerging accounts.

During the 60s I was quite zealous in logging modern jazz activity in my DB materials. The music was emerging a bit into public view, and I took some pains to track much of the insiders' activity as well. The 1950s will prove more difficult to document. In future writings I will try to provide a broader and deeper sense of the development of modern jazz in New Orleans in the 50s, with attention to lesser known instrumentalists of that decade. My present file on the 50s, gathered from memory and from conversations with a few
musicians, already includes about 150 modern jazz artists.

By the time I wrote the first "Ad Libs" columns and "Where and When" listings for *Down Beat* in the summer of 1961 the modern jazz community in New Orleans was solid and musically mature, albeit little known to the general public. I did not need to search or strain in order to include in the first column the names of modernists Dave West, Buddy Prima, Bill Huntington, Ellis Marsalis, Joe Burton, Jay Cave, Alvin Tyler, Nat Perrilliat, and others, along with various traditional and Dixieland artists.

The genesis of my interest in writing for DB was, in fact, my desire to dispel the idea that New Orleans was strictly a traditional/Dixieland music town. My first letter to former Orleanian (and a friend of my brother Don) Gilbert Erskine was a query about doing an article for *Down Beat* on modern jazz in New Orleans. (The letter, now lost, was probably written August 17, 1960, according to my personal datebook.) There was some presumption in my query; I had never published anything except letters to the editor. Erskine's two return letters (September 21, 1960, and March 18, 1961) reflect Don DeMichael's lukewarm interest in the article and his subsequent decision to give me a tryout as New Orleans correspondent.

DeMichael's letter of March 27, 1961, was an orientation to the writing style for the *Down Beat* Where and When and Ad Libs materials. His June 5 letter expressed confidence in my early work and extended an invitation to convince him of the validity of the idea of a modern jazz article. Of course, I was ecstatic about DeMichael's satisfaction with my coverage and at the prospect of doing an article on local modernists. My June 21 letter made a case for the article, and when I received the go-ahead I proceeded to gather materials and do interviews for "New Jazz in the Cradle." It was published in DB in two parts (August 17 and August 31, 1961).

Coverage of modern jazz continued in DB throughout the decade and was the focus of my first *New Orleans* magazine article in August 1967. Additionally, my various "state of jazz in New Orleans" articles (*Jazz Journal*, February 1965; *Delta Review*, November - December 1966; *Jazzfest '68* program, May 1968) always featured modernists as well as musicians of other styles.

In the remainder of this segment I will describe the pre-70s modern jazz scene in two ways. First I'll briefly give my personal views about the most adventurous individual players of both the 1950s and 1960s--the latter, of course, being artists frequently cited in the materials of this collection. Then I'll list a few focal points of modern jazz in the 60s--individuals, groups, and clubs that advanced the music, popularly and/or artistically, during the decade.

In giving my personal views about the leading early modern jazz artists in New Orleans, I'll make no attempt to provide a structured narrative. There are indeed many stories to be told, but the fact is that the most exciting jazz events often unfolded untidily in loosely knit jazz communities or at impromptu sessions. An emphasis on families or a chart that traces influences in terms of popularly known figures might paint a "clear" picture but a deceptive one. Such approaches risk underplaying, or omitting altogether, artists who were most productive at the time in terms of sheer brilliance of performance. Those approaches also tend to bring some lesser players to special attention, simply because those players fit the limited narrative and analytical constructs selected by the writer.

I acknowledge up front that my discussion
consists of subjective impressions of who were the leading musical inventors—that is, the musicians who were playing not merely excellent jazz, but great jazz, groundbreaking music that was on a level with the best modern jazz being played elsewhere in the country. In doing this I hope to open up the historical and critical record to the notion that New Orleans’ contemporary jazz pioneers during the 1950s and 1960s have been poorly represented, both numerically and qualitatively, in writings to date.

The 1950s were in many ways the richer years because modern jazz was being shaped by a musical underground in New Orleans, with almost no one getting local or national recognition of any kind. In my view the pioneer modern jazz artists of that crucial decade, those who blazed a trail for the 1960s players, were Alvin Batiste (cl), Ed Blackwell (d), Mouse Bonati (as, sops), Benny Clement (tp), Fred Cane (p), Bill Huntington (g), Earl Palmer (d), Nat Perrilliat (ts), John Probst (p), Mike Serpas (t), Don Suhor (as, cl), and Reed Vaughn (d).

Much of the great jazz of the 50s was heard at jam sessions and dingy little weekend joints like Danny’s Inferno in the Quarter, because the local market would not sustain nightly performances at an established club. Nevertheless, some musicians did stick together, and the American Jazz Quintet was far and away the most adventurous organized group I heard. The personnel shifted over the years, but the marvelous unit that Bill Huntington and I heard included Ed Blackwell, Alvin Batiste, Nat Perrilliat, Chuck Badie, and Ed Frank. Of course, Al Belletto’s commercially successful group must be mentioned, not just because they were recorded on Capitol’s “Stan Kenton Presents” series, but because the group included artists like Fred Crane (p) and Jimmy Gwynn (tb).

It would be easy to add others to the roster of outstanding 1950s players. Carl Fontana (tb), Chuck Badie (b), Joe Mantry (ts), Pete Monteleone (p), Roy Montrell (g), Triggs Morgan (p), Ed Frank (p), Charlie Blencz (d), Richard Payne (b), Herb Tassin (tp), and Louis Timken (d) come to mind. And there are many 50s musicians, such as Ellis Marsalis, who I didn’t hear until the 1960s.

I should add that not all of the players from the 50s or 60s continued to play brilliantly in succeeding decades. For example, Reed Vaughn is now a straightahead combo and big band drummer but not the pure percussion artist of the 50s who could inspire the Triggs Morgan trio in the Quarter or the Stan Kenton Band on the road. Don Suhor is
playing better than ever on clarinet but is less exploratory on alto sax, and he is rarely heard in modern jazz contexts. Herb Tassin is now essentially a spot job combo trumpeter who makes no attempt to reach jazz heights. Alvin Batiste’s continuing excellence has not in my view matched the brilliance of his early work with the American Jazz Quintet. Again, my initial list of the 1950s modernists includes 150 players of real competence but less originality. I’ll write about them in the future.

Moving on to the musical pioneers of the 1960s, I found these artists most exciting during the decade: James Black (d), John Boudreaux (d), Fred Crane (p), Bill Huntington (b), David Lee (d), Ellis Marsalis (p), Nat Perrilliat (ts), Don Suhor (as), Earl Turbinton (as), Willie (Tec) Turbinton (p, organ), and Jimmy Zitano (d). To put these musicians in context with the materials in this collection, I’ll note below the clubs where I heard their music, with a Q in parentheses if the club was located in the French Quarter.

At Cosimo’s (Q), James Black and Nat Perrilliat were absolutely stunning and John Boudreaux was following a highly original path. At the Playboy and other clubs, Bill Huntington, who had switched from guitar to bass, was ever original in conception. At the Music Maven and elsewhere, Ellis Marsalis was stretching out wondrously, often with Black, Perrilliat, and Richard Payne. At the Sho’Bar, Don Suhor played an incredible bebop on alto sax for strip acts. At the Black
Knight Fred Crane's approaches to harmony and rhythm, with a trio that included Bill Huntington, were an intellectual and emotional tour de force. At Al Hirt's (q), Bostonian Jimmie Zitano played unforgettable after-hours sessions with Crane, sometimes with bassists Jay Cave or Bill Huntington. At the Jazz Workshop (q), Earl Turbinton and Willie (Tee) Turbinton and David Lee were playing state-of-the-art avant garde jazz.

The 60s musicians above, some of whom are given short shrift or no shrift at all in recent writings, were on the cutting edge of the art. I could have flipped a coin and named others, such as Sam Alcorn (tp), John Brunious (tp), Betty Farmer (vocals), Larry Mahoberac (tb), and Buddy Prima (p).

A final perspective-making comment is in order about the fine individual modern jazz artists of the 1950s and 1960s. Without slighting in the least the wonderful art of the New Orleans modernists who emerged in the 1980s and beyond--Wynton and Branford Marsalis, Nicholas Payton, Harry Connick, Jr. --I think it fair and accurate to say that the previous generation of boppers advanced the art far more significantly and with greater originality. The highly visible younger artists are standing on the shoulders of largely invisible giants. Many of the earlier pioneers--for example, Blackwell, Bonati, Crane, Perrilliat--died prematurely, with varying degrees of success and recognition. But I for one lament the fact that their early playing and the presently marvelous art of musicians like Bill Huntington, Don Suhor, and Earl Turbinton go relatively unnoticed while the media and general public focus on the work of young musicians.

In the final section I'll focus on other individual bands and on night clubs and promoters who advanced modern jazz, popularly and/or artistically, during the 1960s.

Mainly as a convenience, I'll use jazz clubs as a handle for getting into the topic.

The Playboy Club was probably the most important single influence in making modern jazz visible to a wider audience in New Orleans. It opened on Bienville Street near Bourbon in the fall of 1961, with Al Belcetto leading the house combo and booking bands and entertainment (Ad Libs, October 26, 1961). As was the case with his popular sextet of the 1950s, Belcetto proved to be a brilliant promoter with an earnest passion for advancing modern jazz. He set out to hire the best modern artists, with a conscious eye towards breaking longtime taboos against integrated bands. As musical director for the club, he also imported varied jazz acts, from Jackie Paris to Clancy Hayes.

A partial list of modern jazz artists who played at the Playboy during the 60s, interspersed throughout the DB Ad Libs and W&Ws, includes James Black, Charlie Blaneq, Chuck Badie, Bill Huntington, Roger DeLillo, Ellis Marsalis, Buddy Prima, Earl Cobble, Jay Cave, John Probst, Louis Timken, Richard Payne, Earl Turbinton, Alvin Batiste. Rusty Mayne, Fred Crane, Dave West, Ed Fenasci, and others. If a single individual can be cited as the most zealous and effective popularizer of modern jazz in New Orleans at a time when virtually no one outside of the hip and pseudo-hip fandom respected New Orleans' creative modernists, that person is Al Belcetto.

The down side of the Playboy Club was the stilted, mock-sophisticated atmosphere that went with the so-called Playboy philosophy and permeated the club's various rooms. I played the gig a couple of times, heard numerous bands there, and did a review of Buddy Prima's trio for DB (October 22, 1964). The super-cool audience seemed to know that modern jazz was the "in" thing, but their responses showed little understanding of the
music. They were not interested in hearing the musicians stretch out, much less explore the boundaries of the art. The code of bland hipness at the Playboy might have sounded like cool "West Coast jazz" to some, but it did not define the styles or preferences of most of the musicians who played there. Nevertheless, it was a modern jazz gig, and at the very least the Playboy brought good jazz musicians together in integrated settings and advanced the image of jazz as listenable contemporary music in New Orleans.

Another influential popularizer during the 1960s was pianist Joe Burton. As noted in my DB article on modern jazz in New Orleans (August 17, 1961), Burton came in from New York in the late 1950s with the express intention of establishing himself as a modern jazz presence in the city. Burton was a complex figure. A promoter with extraordinary persuasive powers, he managed to get financing to open the club that bore his name on Canal Street at Jefferson Davis Parkway. During his years in the city, he sporadically had his own radio and TV shows and a following of fans who responded not only to his music but, oddly, to his charismatic posturing as an artiste. At the same time, Burton's apparent lack of business acumen and his penchant for alienating both his sidemen and his audiences with unpredictable outbursts of temper damaged and ultimately defeated his artistic project.

I heard Burton numerous times and played drums with him occasionally. His playing was as varied as his mood, ranging from a fine, laid back jazz style to rushed, repetitious lines, described by one drive-through writer as "adroit noodling." Eventually, his reputation as a volatile eccentric and his money problems were overpowering, and he left town suddenly in the summer of 1962. He returned in 1966 (W&W, June 16) and opened a new club but never regained the popular momentum that marked his early days as a crusader for modern jazz in New Orleans.

Another pianist and popularizer of the 1960s was Ronnie Kole. He had played Al Hirt's club with a variety group, then was hired as music director and leader of the house trio, composed of bassist Everett Link and drummer Dickie Taylor (Ad Libs, August 12, 1965). They were to stay with him for many years. Soon he opened the first of his own clubs, Kole's Korner, in the rear of the old Absinthe House (W&W, Nov., 1965; Ad Libs, Dec. 16, 1965). Kole had a smooth, technically crisp, and showmanly approach to jazz reminiscent of pianist Peter Nero, who was then nationally popular. With a devilish goatee and a warm rapport with audiences, Kole won popularity with unabashedly gimmicky treatments of tunes like When Johnny Comes Marching Home and the Batman theme, the latter a surprise hit on ABC-Paramount records. During the 1960s and beyond, Kole was ubiquitous and indefatigable, playing everything from Pops concerts to youth benefits to shoe store openings. He made inroads into New Orleans' social elite and gave modern jazz a presence and acceptability previously unknown in such circles.

I like Kole, and for a while taught drums to his daughter. I had the feeling that he could have been a fine jazz musician, but in truth I rarely heard him play more than the clean, cute near-jazz that was his trademark. But he was a relentless and effective popularizer of modern jazz in a decade when jazzfansmanque and civic and social leaders in New Orleans were looking favorably only on traditional and Dixieland jazz.

In the Black community, the active promotion of modern jazz in many ways went hand in hand with that of rhythm and blues. I reported sporadically in Down Beat on the group of jazz players (Harold Battiste and others) who were
involved in the interesting jazz/blues cooperative called AFO (All For One) Records. The AFO group was described by Berry, et al. (p. 153) as a unique effort in which the R&B records were intended to sell well enough to support the jazz offerings. Broven (1978) writes unflatteringly of the AFO project in *Rhythm and Blues in New Orleans* (1978), describing it as a "pipe dream" that resulted in "the mess which the New Orleans music scene became..." (p. 161). But Broven’s perspectives are myopically tilted towards R&B. In fact, he described the mid-sixties as "the dark ages" in New Orleans, stating that "in 1964, New Orleans was a depressed area musically"--this at the very time when traditional and Dixieland musicians were gaining momentum locally and nationally, the city’s boppers were intensely immersed in their art, and the Playboy Club and other sites were enabling modernists to reach popular audiences.

Clinton Scott was another promoter with interests in both modern jazz and R&B in the Black community. His materials in the tabloid called *Data* furnished information about jazz and R&B artists, and he was helpful in various telephone contacts. Scott is mentioned sporadically in this collection (e.g., Ad Libs, Dec. 26, 1968; *New Orleans*, June 1969) as an impresario and jazz and blues buff.

I should note that the DB coverage was not devoid of treatment of blues and rock artists. I considered the jazz scene to be my beat, but I occasionally reported on blues artists. When Dan Morgenstern took over as editor, I was encouraged to be more comprehensive, since part of his charge was to broaden the scope of the magazine. Over the decade, the DB Ad Lib column included mention of, among others, Ronnie Barron, Dave Bartholomew, Ruth Brown, Fats Domino, Clarence (Frogman) Henry, Margie Joseph, Deacon John, Jerry Jumonville, Ernie K-Doe, the Meters, Oliver Morgan, the Neville Brothers, Lloyd Price, Smilin’ Joe, O.C. Smith, Babe Stovall, Allen Toussaint, and Irma Thomas.

Mention should also be made of educational institutions that helped to promote modern jazz during the 1960s. In Ad Libs columns I reported frequently on college big bands, and I did an article (New Orleans, January 1969) on the roots of the Loyola University program in the 1940s and 1950s. I produced a jazz and Black poetry tape for New Orleans Public Schools ("Jazz on Campus," *DB* November 27, 1969), featuring Earl Turbinton (as), Willie (Tee) Turbinton (p), Richard Payne (b), and David Lee (d), with readings by Sarah Landrum, Consuela Provost (Deacon John’s sister, now known as Sybil Klein), and Sterling Vappie. And as noted earlier, Dillard University sponsored numerous excellent jazz and Black culture events during the decade.

Finally, the development of night clubs other than the Playboy during the 1960s deserves attention. The June 1969 *New Orleans* magazine article "Jazz Off Bourbon Street" focused on this. As odd as it may seem in today’s ultra-busy French Quarter, there was little jazz outside the earshot of Bourbon Street at the time. Decatur Street was just developing, with leadership coming from the Turbinton brothers at their Jazz Workshop. Also noted in the article is a cluster of clubs on North Claiborne Avenue that featured Black artists ranging from trumpeters Porgy Jones and David Lastie to the young Neville Brothers.

The same article also points to a lively modern jazz intersection at Tulane Avenue and Carrollton. At the Bistro, pianist Ronnie Dupont put together an excellent jazz-for-dancing quartet with the marvelous vocalist Betty Farmer. The Fountainbleau Hotel had the remarkable clarinetist Tony Mitchell playing danceable jazz. Down the street from
the Bistro, a tiny club called Caesar's Palace opened for a short time with trumpeter Jay Barry and drummer Paul Ferrara in a combo that did jazz-oriented sets. The article also cited modern jazz offerings at Mason's on South Claiborne (June Gardner and Germaine Bazzle), Sylvia's on Freret Street (James Rivers, Porgy Jones), Laura's on North Dorgenois (James Rivers), and others.

The materials in this collection, then, make it clear that New Orleans was rich and varied in modern jazz talent in the 1960s. I hope that this overview essay, along with the innumerable Down Beat listings and columns and other primary source materials, provide details that help to flesh out the city's fine modern jazz heritage.

Signed,

Charles Suhor
Urbana, Illinois
March 1994

FAST TIMES
AT THE HOGAN JAZZ ARCHIVE

Except for the newsletter, that is. Once again, we apologize for the need to combine issues of The Jazz Archivist. Originally slated for May, this issue was delayed by the pressures of increased patron demand and a year of intense "outreach" activity on a variety of fronts. The 1994-95 Annual Report of the Hogan Jazz Archive shows a record year for patron service -- 2,237 researchers were served. In addition, the Archive joined with the Newcomb Department of Music to inaugurate a Masters in New Orleans Music Studies Program (training scholars rather than performers), with curator Bruce Boyd Raeburn offering a bibliography and methodology seminar and staffer Diana Rose giving a directed study on 19th century music during the spring semester. Throughout the summer, collaboration on a number of special events continued the active pace, particularly with regard to the New Orleans Jazz Centennial Celebration and the establishment of the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park by Congress under the auspices of the National Park Service.

The NOJCC was initially sponsored by the Louisiana Music Commission to call attention to the importance of jazz for the city and the state, concentrating on 1895 -- the year Bolden formed his first band -- as the benchmark for a centennial celebration. Of course, jazz historians generally have not invested any given year as the "birthdate" of jazz, so the Archive's role has been to develop a way of communicating the relativism of the centennial concept without defeating the idea of a 1995 celebration. Accordingly, a symposium entitled "Imagining a Century of Jazz" was held at the Old Mint on September 15-17, featuring presentations by Lawrence Gushee of the University of Illinois, Kathy Ogren of Redlands University, and Stanley Crouch of the Jazz at Lincoln Center program. Curator Bruce Boyd Raeburn provided an introductory slide show and participated in a panel discussion, "The Meaning of Jazz in American Life," with Gushee, Ogren, and Michael White. The symposium concluded with another panel session, "The Future of Jazz," moderated by Ellis Marsalis with Crouch, jazz trumpeter Nicholas Payton, and writer Tom Piazza. Ultimately, realization of the concept was made possible by the dedicated efforts of producer Julia Burke, NOJCC Executive Director Nancy O'Connell, and the funding provided by the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities and the National Park Service.

The curator was also involved in preparations for the debut gala for the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park on September 3. He
and Don Marquis (curator of the New Orleans Jazz Club Collection at the Louisiana State Museum) collaborated on a script for the narrative portions of the program, "The Origins of Jazz in New Orleans, 1890-1927," which included performances by the New Leviathan Oriental Fox Trot Orchestra, Michael White’s Liberty Jazz Band, the Dirty Dozen, Clyde Kerr, Jr.’s Sextet, and Kidd Jordan’s Heritage Youth Orchestra. Narration by Wanda Rouzan kept the program swinging along, treating those in attendance at the Mahalia Jackson Theater for Performing Arts (including Mayor Marc Morial) to a memorable night of music and history. Currently, the Archive is working on an exhibit for the New Orleans Jazz National Historical Park which will be used to publicize and promote the entry of the NPS into the New Orleans jazz community.

Other recent activities included sponsorship and participation with the New Orleans Music and Entertainment Commission in an exhibit for the Louis Armstrong Stamp Celebration in early September, collaboration with Eric Cager on a "Roots Music Gathering" as part of the Cutting Edge Music Business Conference on August 31-September 1, and presentation of the annual Jazztown "Living History" award to trumpeter Lionel Ferbos on October 1, part of the Archive’s "Jazz Awareness Month" collaboration with the Louisiana Jazz Federation. So, it has taken us a while to get back to the newsletter, but I trust the results will justify your patience.

Bruce Boyd Raeburn
Curator