American Federation of Musicians Locals 174 and 496
Records at the Hogan Jazz Archive
by
Sue Fischer

Application forms of George Brunies and Louis Prima

Researchers looking for information on the development of the music industry in New Orleans or on specific jazz musicians might find some interesting reading in the 22 boxes of records donated by American Federation of Musicians Local 174-496. Although the records are not yet organized topically or chronologically, the following summary of the contents may help researchers locate items of interest.

Contributors:
Sue Fischer, Dr. Jack Stewart, and John Doheny

Editorial Board:
Dr. John Joyce, Editor
Dr. Bruce Boyd Raeburn, Curator
Dr. Lance Query, Dean of Libraries
Local 174 was chartered on January 14, 1902, and served the white musicians of southeastern Louisiana. After an early and short-lived attempt to organize in 1880, African-American musicians established Local 242 later in 1902 with Theogene V. Baquet as president. By 1905, this local had lapsed, and none of its records remain. In June 1926 another group of African-American musicians—including Oscar Celestin, A.J. Piron, and Sam Utrex—chartered Local 496. This local merged with 174 late in 1969.
Records of Local 496 prior to 1941 are not held at the archive, and may either have been destroyed or remain in private hands.

Willie Humphrey’s ledger page

The accession of materials from AFM Local 174-496 was initiated by Curtis D. Jerde, who was Curator of the Hogan Jazz Archive from 1980-1988. The first donation consisted of personal records belonging to David Weinstein, who had been President of the Local from 1948 to 1994. He donated a variety of union membership and rules books and some personal papers. Weinstein then decided that it would be a good idea to transfer some of the union’s "dead files" to the Archive. The next batch of materials included typed board minutes for Local 174 beginning with 1923 and extending through the 1970s. In addition, there were some random financial records, checkbooks and dues records, contracts, and some notebooks of materials for 496 containing membership lists but no board minutes.

After Bruce Boyd Raeburn became Curator in 1989, Weinstein and his successors, Ted Demuth and Jerry Verges, donated additional materials. These included handwritten ledgers of Local 174 board minutes from 1902 to 1917; business records, including ledgers from 174 and 496; and membership applications. The only types of materials not transferred to the Archive are certain recording contracts that have been retained by 174-496.

Although the records of Local 174 date back to 1902, they are not complete. Membership applications for 1921-22 are missing, as are the board minutes for 1918-1922. Other types of information might be duplicated in several ledgers, and still other bits of information were only recorded for a short period of time, then dropped. Some of the later records may be restricted to researchers, as they contain Social Security numbers and other personal information.

Two of the most useful record groups are the membership applications and the Board minutes. Applications list the date of joining, the musician’s address, instruments played, and date and place of birth; for a brief time in 1926-27, the form asked for the applicant’s race as well, most likely as a reaction to a proposal by the AF of M in 1926 that Local 174 accept African Americans into its rolls. While many applicants did not complete every line of the form,
these applications still provide valuable
details of nativity and residence.
Researchers looking for specific names
will probably have the best luck in the
dues ledgers and membership
applications, but board minutes can
provide some interesting facts if one has
the patience to search through them.
Board meetings were held once a month,
with an occasional special meeting if
needed to resolve a time-sensitive issue.

The minutes of these meetings are useful
in tracking the progress of ongoing
issues such as disputes among members,
contract negotiations with theaters and
the symphony, and venues that did not
comply with union rules. Listings of
new contracts indicate who was working
for whom, and can help identify
musicians that led their own bands. The
union also set prices for different types
of jobs, and the minutes often reflect the
practice of giving discounts for
charitable events. Perhaps the most
interesting discussions involve disputes
between members: one musician was
fined for using profanity directed against
union officials; Leon Prima was fired
from a job for leaving the bandstand to
dance with one of the female patrons.

Another interesting ledger lists the
names of musicians from other cities
who played New Orleans between 1954-
1970 (including those who played with
the New Orleans Symphony), showing
names of the sidemen, their home local,
venue played, and the dates of the job.
Some of these bandleaders included Paul
Whiteman, Isham Jones, and Duke
Ellington. According to the Board
minutes, Jones and Whiteman tried to
bring their orchestras to New Orleans
several times in the 1920s, but the union
turned down the requests. It was only
much later that both were allowed to
perform in the city.

Although the information contained in
the union files is incomplete and was
often sporadically kept, one can usually
find—somewhere in the files—the
names of nearly all of the professional
musicians working in New Orleans
during the first three quarters of the 20th
century. These primary documents are
especially useful, when combined with
the oral histories and other holdings of
the Archive, as a cross-check on places
and dates.

Detail of membership ledger c.1918

More than just a treasure trove of
information on individuals, the AF of M
files provide a history of the music
business in the Crescent City. The
decine of theater bands, the rise of
dance bands, and continuing conflict
between the union and the Symphony
are all traced in these documents.
Unlike most other major cities, New
Orleans is fortunate to have had union
officials who saw the value of retaining
their old records, and even more
fortunate to have them made available to
the public.
FINDING AID

All documents dated prior to the merger of Local 174 and 496 in 1969 pertain to Local 174 unless otherwise specified.

**Box 1**

1.1 Membership applications, 1967-68

**Box 2**


2.2 Correspondence pertaining to lawsuits filed in 1968

2.3 New Orleans Symphony contract negotiations, 1971-1980

2.4 Correspondence pertaining to the Opera Guild dispute, 1959

2.5 Correspondence pertaining to misc. symphony, and ballet disputes

2.6 Minutes of the Southern Conference of Locals, 1963-1982

---

**Carnival Engagements**

Sec. 2 (A) Carnival Balls and Mystic Societies such as the Twelfth Night Revelers, Rex, Comus, Proteus, Mithras and kindred societies, where both Concert and Tableaux music is required, for (4) four hours or less, per player $7.00; leader $14.00; each additional hour per player, $3.00; leader, $6.00.

(B) All other Carnival Balls on Monday night preceding and Mardi Gras Day, $1.00 per player extra, see Condition No. 22, for four (4) hours or less, per player, $6.00; leader, $12.00.

(C) Review of Maskers on Mardi Gras Day for four (4) hours or less per player, $7.00; leader, $14.00. Holidays extra, see Condition No. 22. Each additional hour, per player, $3.00; leader, $6.00. No less than ten (10) men.

---

Pay scale for musicians playing Carnival engagements

---

**Box 3**

3.1 Ledger, 1941-50, loose sheets showing name, address, date of joining, instruments played (Local 496)

3.2 Membership applications, 1960-62

**Box 4**

4.1 Membership applications, 1960-69 (Local 496)

4.2 Membership applications 1970-79 (Combined Local 174-496)

4.3 Receipt book, 1919-27, receipts for expenses of the Musicians’ Fraternal Home Association

4.4 Receipt book, 1927-1932, receipts for expenses of the Musicians’ Fraternal Home Association

4.5 Envelope of documents, 1917-32, pertaining to the Musicians’ Fraternal Home Association

1. List of stockholders, 3/10/21

2. Articles of incorporation, 1917

3. Letter dissolving the legal partnership between Local 174 and the Fraternal Home Association, 1921

4. Letter discussing new issuance of Fraternal Home stock, 1922

**Box 5**

5.1 International Executive Board meeting minutes (paper bound) 1960-1975

5.2 President’s correspondence, 1987-89

5.3 Constitution, bylaws, & policy, 1965-79 (21 copies)
Box 6
6.1 Ledger, 1954-70, with names of musicians from out of town who played New Orleans (including those who played with New Orleans Symphony), showing bandleader, sidemen, home local, venue, dates of opening and closing
6.3 Membership applications, 1950-59

Box 7
7.2 Property survey and title to property at 2401 Esplanade
7.3 Ledger, Sept. 1951-Sept. 1962, members’ fees, fines, ball tickets purchased
7.4 Ledger, 1922-26, stockholders of treasury stock showing name, date, certificate #, number of shares purchased
7.5 Ledger, 1940-70, membership ledger with name, birthdate, date of joining, dues, fines, etc.
7.6 Roster of members’ death dates

Box 8
8.1 Membership applications, 1963-65
8.2 Membership applications, 1977-80
8.4 Check stubs, Apr. 1969-Jan. 1970
8.5 Check stubs, Sept. 1967-Apr. 1983

Box 9
9.1 Correspondence, 1964-1980, relating to the International Executive Board

Box 10
10.1 Correspondence, 1960-1989 (roughly) pertaining to the New Orleans Symphony

Box 11
11.1 Symphony negotiations, 1970-79
11.2 Pension correspondence, 1960-69
11.3 Pension fund trustees’ minutes (foil wrapped)

Box 12
12.1 Receipts, Musicians’ Fraternal Home, 1416 Bourbon St.
   1. Purchase of property, Aug. 1928
   2. Paving assessment, 1930
   3. Real estate taxes, 1935
12.2 Deed for fishing camp on Lake Catherine, 1950
12.3 Receipts for Musicians’ Recreation Home, Mandeville
   1. Deposit to electric company, 1933
   2. Electric bill, 1923
12.4 Mortgage for 1416 Bourbon St., 1925
12.5 Deed, Musicians’ Fraternal Home Association, 1919
12.6 Deeds for 1416 Bourbon St.: 1888, 1891, 1899, 1903, 1919, 1928
12.7 Documents pertaining to 1416 Bourbon St.
   1. Paving bill receipt, 1919
   2. Rat-proofing certificate, 1915
   3. Plumbing inspection, 1923
   4. Electrical inspection, 1920
12.8 List of members entitled to credit for stock purchase (Capital stock in Musicians’ Fraternal Home Association)
12.9 Lease of 305 Royal St. to Morris Keil, Oct. 1926-Oct. 1927
12.10 Charter, Musicians’ Fraternal Home Association (copy made at MFHA request), 1926
12.11 Amendment to Charter, 1922
12.12 Savings account books for 305 Royal St., 1919-1930
12.13 Savings account books for 1416 Bourbon St., 1929-32 and 1932-33
12.14 Receipts, real estate tax on 1416 Bourbon St.: 1926, 1928, 1929, 1930
12.15 List of signatures of original stockholders in MFHA, 1927
12.16 Drainage assessment, 1930 (1416 Bourbon?)
12.19 Fines book, 1926-44

**Box 13**

13.1 AF of M Annual Convention, official proceedings, 1953-1979 (paperback copies)
13.2 Court of Appeals, 1966, printed record of Wirtz vs. Local 174 (case of Phil Zito and the union’s election process)

**Box 14**

14.1 President’s files, 1975-83
14.2 “International Musician,” 1986-88
14.3 “A Study of 26 Representative Symphony Orchestra Agreements”
14.4 Annual Report, 1985-86
14.5 AF of M Annual Convention, official proceedings, 1983 (hardcover) and 1985 (1 paperback, 1 hardcover)

**Box 15**

15.1 “International Musician” 1975-79 (roughly)

**Box 16**

16.1 Accounts ledger, 1918-45, arranged alphabetically according to specific purpose or fund
16.2 Membership applications, 1970-71
16.3 Membership applications, 1971-73

**Box 17**

17.1 Membership applications 1968-69
17.2 Accounts ledger, 1918-60, arranged by purpose or fund

**Box 18**

18.1 President’s correspondence, 1981-91
18.2 Correspondence, Wage-Scale Committee, 1977-85
18.3 Monthly Bulletin, Local 174, 1963-76

**Box 19**

19.1 Membership ledger, 1925-55, showing name and dues paid

**Box 20**

20.1 President’s correspondence, 1968-75
20.2 International Executive Board minutes, 1968-70

**Box 21**

21.1 Membership applications, 1909-59, filed alphabetically by decade (1921-22 are missing)

**Box 22 (all Local 496)**

22.1 Ledger, 1941-56, membership book with names, addresses, phone numbers, date of joining, dues payments, instruments played
22.2 Ledger, 1957-60, showing dues, fines, insurance, & tax paid by members
22.3 Ledger, 1961-63, showing dues, fines, insurance, & tax paid by members
22.4 Ledger, 1961-67, balance sheets for members, list of engagements with dates and amounts paid
22.5 Checkbook, 1967
22.6 Checkbook, 1969, with cancelled checks & stubs showing reason for payment along with bank statements & account register

**File Cabinet Drawer 1-2**

23.1 Minutes to board meetings, 1923-85

**File Cabinet Drawer 3**

24.1 Membership book, 1906-1929: Name, date enrolled, some remarks
24.2 Receipt book, dues and fines, 1930
24.3 Minutes ledger, Fraternal Home Association, 1917-21
24.4 Board minutes, 1904-1909, in bound ledger
24.5 Fraternal Home Association, accounts ledger, 1919-1928
24.6 Journal, yearly income and expenses, 1921-1940
24.7 Membership obligations, 1918-1919
24.8 Fraternal Home Assoc. subscribers, 1918
24.9 List of members, 1920
24.10 Receipt book, dues and fines, 1968-69
24.11 Receipt book, dues and fines, 1969
24.12 Price list and conditions, 1926; 1937; 1955; 1960

24.13 Membership directory, 1979, 1983
24.14 Misc. copies of “Jazz” quarterly newsletter, 1963-85

**File Cabinet Drawer 4**

25.1 Ledger, minutes, 1911-14
25.2 Ledger, minutes, 1914-16
25.3 Ledger, minutes, 1916-17 with price list amendments, 1919
25.4 Membership & transfer book, 1920-21
25.5 List of members, 1906-19

**Top Shelf**

26.1 Dues ledgers, 1918-68
26.2 Cash books, 1931-86
26.3 Fines, 1940-51
26.4 Accounts of the Fraternal Home Association, 1922-36
26.5 Accounts of the Musicians’ Recreation Home, 1931-96

---

![Price List and Conditions](Image)

Musicians Mutual Protective Union
Local 174, A. F. of M.

In effect September 11, 1926

The Spanish Tinge
Hypothesis:
Afro-Caribbean
Characteristics in Early
New Orleans Jazz
Drumming
by
John Doheny

"Now in one of my earliest tunes, New Orleans Blues, you can notice the Spanish tinge. In fact, if you can't manage to put tinges of Spanish in your tunes, you will never be able to get the right seasoning, I call it, for jazz."
- Jelly Roll Morton

When Morton spoke these words to Alan Lomax at the Library of Congress in 1938, his career had been relegated to a footnote in jazz history. It would take the rehabilitative efforts of Lomax, Lawrence Gushee, Bill Russell and others to restore him to his rightful place as a seminal figure in the music. Morton had come to the Library of Congress to re-establish a failing career and to reassert his primacy as the "inventor" of jazz, so it is tempting to take much of what he said as hyperbole and braggadocio. But investigation of Morton's bragging almost always reveals a truth at the center; he may often have been guilty of exaggeration, but not of outright deception. His reference here to the "Spanish Tinge" regards a supposed characteristic of early New Orleans jazz, a Latin or Afro-Caribbean strain. Many of Morton's piano compositions do contain certain "Spanish" rhythmic features and melodic references. The presence of these musical devices in Morton's work is easily verified by examination of his written scores. However notation is not particularly adept at conveying certain subtleties and nuances of phrasing. For this we must turn to the "fossil record" of his recordings and that of other early 20th century jazz musicians, which would indeed seem to reveal a "tinge," or rhythmic lift, that sets jazz music apart from other music of the day.

If there is, as Jelly Roll says, a "Spanish tinge" in New Orleans jazz, what might it be, precisely, and in what form does it manifest itself? It seems likely that Morton's use of the term is not particularly specific, but rather refers to any number of musical characteristics, not all of them "Spanish" per se. One must keep in mind that during Morton's time many musical devices that were considered exotic or out of the ordinary were assigned ethnic or national sources that may have had very inauthentic relationships with their true origins. In the case of the Spanish Tinge, the route taken was not a direct line of musical influence from Spain to New Orleans. Jelly Roll's Spanish Tinge is more likely Afro-Cuban in origin.

Pamela J. Smith has written of the central role played by Cuba in 19th century Caribbean musical culture. In a sense, the acculturative processes that shaped Cuban music in the 19th century can be seen as predecessors to the cultural amalgam that later produced jazz. Mid 19th century Cuban music incorporated elements of Spanish and African folk music. Smith suggests a clear line of development from the habanera rhythm (a variant of which,
the Tresillo, is clearly present in Morton’s “New Orleans Blues”), which she suggests is “the basis of the danzon, the tango, the rhumba, and the guaracha” (Pamela J. Smith, Caribbean Influences on Early New Orleans Jazz, MA Thesis, Tulane University, 1986, pp. 47-48). These forms became tremendously popular and were heard outside of Cuba in Europe and the Americas from about 1850 on, first when New Orleans composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk assisted the Cuban nationalist composer Nicholas Ruiz Escardero in publishing his work in Europe, and later when visiting European composer Sebastian Yradier incorporated the habanera in his compositions “El Arreglito” and “La Paloma.” “La Paloma,” in particular, quickly entered the repertoire of many popular orchestras. “Its influence transcended the years. It was heard in the 1850s in Havana, the 1860s in Mexico, and still heard by the turn of the century in New Orleans” (Smith, p. 55).

![New Orleans Blues Music Notation](image)

The Tresillo rhythm present in Jelly Roll Morton’s “New Orleans Blues” is a common Afro-Cuban dance figure which, when notated, looks like this:

```
\[ \frac{4}{4} \]
```

Early jazz contains numerous examples of this and other ostinato-like phrases (sometimes called Clave) such as the cinquillo:

```
\[ \frac{4}{4} \]
```

the 3-2 son clave:

```
\[ \frac{4}{4} \]
```

and its retrograde version, the 2-3 son clave:

```
\[ \frac{4}{4} \]
```

from “Earh ‘Father’ Hines Pianostyles,” 1936

The presence of these rhythmic cells in early jazz has been investigated by Christopher Washburne, Thomas Fierher, John Chilton, Donald Marquis, Raymond Martinez and others. Their view is that jazz is a variegated music that reflects the complex mix of Spanish, French, English, Native American, Caribbean and African cultures present in New Orleans at the beginning of the twentieth century. Washburne in particular has documented examples of these rhythms in all of the instruments used in jazz, and in all of its subsequent styles up to the period of “free” jazz beginning in the early 1960s. He contends that the less frequent appearance of clave rhythms in more recent jazz styles represents a shift away from a social dance function toward abstract improvisation in a concert format, a process of “more recent influences in this constantly evolving music tradition that have taken the music further from its roots” (Christopher Washburne, “The Clave of Jazz: A Caribbean Contribution to the Rhythmic Foundation of an African-American Music,” Black Music Research Journal, vol. 17, no. 1 [Spring 1997], p. 77).

Lawrence Gushee has argued compellingly for a timeframe of 1890-1910 as the period for the emergence of jazz in New Orleans. He notes the difficulties inherent in finding notated musical examples of what is often an oral tradition, but does find some distinctively West Indian polyrhythms in Allen, Ware and Garrison’s pioneering collection of slave songs. But then he states, “we cannot rule out the possibility that African or West Indian rhythms were largely absent from the New Orleans dance music of the 1880s” (Lawrence Gushee, “The Nineteenth-Century Origins of Jazz,” Black Music Research Journal, vol. 14, no. 1 [Spring 1994], p. 10). Gushee writes of Lafcadio Hearn’s interest in music with noticeable African influences, and of his failure to find this music in 1880s New Orleans: “all the orchestras and bands are coloured. But the civilized instrument has killed the native manufacture of aboriginalities. The only hope would be in the small islands, or where slavery still exists, as in Cuba” (Hearn, quoted in Gushee, p. 10, italics mine). Hearn confirms the presence of African influences in Cuban music in an 1897 letter to a friend: “My friend Matas has returned. He tells me delightful things about Spanish music, and plays for me. He also tells me much concerning Cuban and Mexican music. He says these have been very strongly affected by African influence -- full of contretemps” (Hearn, quoted in Gushee, pp. 10-11).

The presence of Afro-Cuban rhythms in New Orleans dance music of the early 1900s, though, is a documented fact. The ingress of these rhythms would seem to be both a matter of the popularization of songs that employed them (like “La Paloma”) and musicians with obvious cultural affinities toward these styles. Through painstaking sifting of city directories, census returns, license registries and other primary source materials, Gushee documents a dramatic increase in the number of musicians of color between 1890 and 1910. This is further confirmed by a passage from the music trade magazine Metronome at the end of 1888: “We have here some twenty to twenty-five bands averaging twelve men apiece. The colored race monopolize the procession music to a
great extent as they are not regular workers at any trade, as are most of the white players...” (Metronome, December 1888, quoted in Gushee, p. 7). As well, the importance of social dancing as a driving force in changing musical styles cannot be overemphasized. Through an examination of the surviving dance cards of various social clubs, Gushee notes a shift away from the group oriented dances of the 19th century to the closed couple styles of dancing that would dominate the 20th. The perfect music for closed couple dancing was the syncopated “rocking” style produced by the synthesis of these primarily Caribbean-derived rhythms.

When examining the syncretic process that produced jazz in the early 20th century it is important to understand two key elements: the role played by social dancing as an agent of change in popular music; and the cross fertilization which occurred between ceremonial (or “processional”) drumming styles, such as were employed at parades and funerals, and the more entertainment oriented devices used when playing for dancers.

Social Dancing As an Agent of Change in Popular Music

Jazz, in its emerging phase in the early part of the 20th century, moved from a ceremonially functional music to a social one. It was employed chiefly for social dancing and for the community-based ritual of the “jazz” funeral and the jazz parade. Thus the style of dancing popular at any given time will have had significant influence on the music being played, since musicians playing for dancers are concerned less with creating art music than with enticing couples onto the dance floor. “The role of exotic and erotic dance in the emergence of ragtime and jazz deserves more consideration than it has yet received. Shifting musical styles were invariably linked with new dancing trends” (Lynn Abbott and Doug Seroff, Out of Sight: The Rise of African American Popular Music, 1889-1895, University Press of Mississippi, 2002, p. 285).

As American social dancing gravitated from the old, formally structured group dances to the newer, more intimate closed couple styles, African American influences came to the forefront, particularly in the aspect of a “bent knee posture, quite different from the upright, straight legged posture of earlier ballroom dances. This posture -- common to many African-influenced dance traditions in the Americas -- had the effect of freeing up the dancers’ hips and upper body” (Larry Starr and Christopher Waterman, American Popular Music: From Minstrelsy to MTV, Oxford University Press, 2003, p. 46, italics mine). Dances such as the Texas Tommy, the Todolo, the Turkey Trot “and other shoulder rocking, feet dragging freak dances” (Starr and Waterman, p. 45), which were originally thought to have appeared in San Francisco around 1915, have in fact been documented by Lawrence Gushee as appearing in New Orleans much earlier (Gushee, pp. 19-22).

Processional Drumming and Dance Drumming

The latter part of the 19th century saw the United States in the grip of a brass band craze and New Orleans was certainly no exception. The large brass
bands of this period typically used three percussionists: a snare drummer, a cymbal player and a bass drummer. New Orleans brass bands usually reduced this number to two, a snare drummer and a bass drummer, who also played cymbal. (The logistical problems involved in crashing two cymbals together while playing bass drum at the same time were solved by beating one cymbal with a stick, a system which persists to the present day). This combination of two percussionists was also used when slightly smaller, 10 piece versions of street marching bands were hired for ballroom jobs. Eventually this two-man percussion section evolved into the single-player “trap drum set” arrangement, which persists to this day. Here we have a situation where the drummer’s instrument itself (and the techniques necessary to play it effectively) undergoes a profound and rapid evolution at the same time that musical style and performance practice is also quickly changing.

It is important to note that, as in the relationship between music and social dance, the function of parade music in New Orleans at the end of the 19th century had a cross-fertilizing effect on musical style, and transformations occurred in the music of the (primarily, but by no means exclusively) black and Creole bands. The “old tradition of strict reading bands, rigorously schooled to play ‘legitimate’ concert music and highly proper dance tunes, gave way to... a younger generation of musicians who were essentially dance-band oriented and for whom street-band playing was secondary” (William J. Schafer, with assistance from Richard B. Allen, *Brass Bands and New Orleans Jazz*, Louisiana State University Press, 1977, p. 50). Yet it would be a mistake to underestimate the influence of the street band, with its two-man percussion section, on dance band single-player trap drumming. In many cases players worked in both styles and in both contexts, and “all this new dance music was sewn together, like a patchwork quilt, of the practices, repertoire, and social functions of older brass bands” (Schafer, p. 50). By around 1910 these various elements had coalesced into an identifiable, discrete style, with a distinctive rhythmic underpinning. Rhythm patterns played by dance drummers influenced the entire melodic and harmonic shape of the music in much the same way that the Cuban clave does in Afro-Cuban style. An analysis of early New Orleans jazz drumming vocabulary would seem to be a good place to search for Jelly Roll’s “Spanish Tinge.”

**Annotated Transcriptions**

Since the music contains so many elements that resist accurate notation, it is probably safe to say that without the “fossil record” of recordings of early jazz our understanding of the style would be very limited, and in fact the limitations of early 20th century recording techniques present formidable obstacles to research. Tulane professor John Joyce, Jr., who has done extensive transcription work in this area, has written that, “the notation of ‘drum’ parts in early jazz recordings is particularly challenging, for several reasons. The first is their sheer audibility, which is fitful, at best, on earlier recordings...The only percussion parts that are clearly audible are such high-pitched sounds as wood blocks, temple blocks, cymbals, and the
occasional tom-tom. What are consistently inaudible -- if, indeed, they are being played at all -- are the core instruments of early jazz trap sets: snare and bass drum. This is particularly problematic with recordings of New Orleans bands since New Orleans drummers of the pre-Swing period 'led' (i.e., kept time) from the snare and bass drum in live performance, reserving such sounds as cymbals, wood block, and tom-tom for accents and stop-time patterns. On early jazz recordings, then, one is left with one of two assumptions: either the drummer is keeping time on snare and bass drum throughout the recording (as he did in live performance) and their frequencies are inaudible, or he is limiting himself to only such high pitched sounds (blocks and cymbals) as can be picked up by early recording apparatus. When, as on many of Oliver's Creole Jazz Band recordings, the drummer keeps constant time with wood block patterns throughout (an acoustical accommodation?), a continuous, even if skeletal, drum part can be accurately notated” (John Joyce Jr., in forthcoming volume in MUSA of transcriptions of the complete recordings of Sam Morgan’s Jazz Band).

Since New Orleans drummer Chinee Foster has stated that recording engineers instructed him to “stay off the snare” and that “drums wouldn't record then,” so he confined himself to cymbal and woodblocks on early jazz recordings (Chinee Foster interview, June 29, 1960, Hogan Jazz Archive, Tulane University), it seems likely that Joyce's assertion that early New Orleans jazz drummers often played snare drum parts on wood blocks to assure their audibility on sound recordings is correct. For this reason, in the following transcriptions, wood block patterns will be assumed to be synonymous with snare drum patterns.

The issue of how musicians operating outside the bounds of European musical tradition conceived time-patterns is also of primary importance. Musicians who were adherents to European training and musical aesthetics, operating in the “metric” rhythmic system, perceived rhythms as divisive in nature, with shorter notes felt as divisions of a slower underlying pulse. In the metric system, the Tresillo pattern would be conceived as a three-note division of a four-beat measure. Counting four, the percussionist would strike the first note of the pattern on “one,” the second note on the upbeat of “two,” and the third note on “four,” notated as follows:

Here, the three-note Tresillo played against an underlying four beat is felt as an asymmetrical pattern, often described as a “lilting” Latin rhythm. This pattern is actually a syncopated variant of the Cuban habanera rhythm, with the two middle notes of the habanera “tied” together:

or:

The Afro-Cuban tradition, on the contrary, is based on the “additive” rhythm of most non-Western cultures. Where metric rhythm forms shorter (rapid) notes as divisions of a longer
(slower) beat, additive rhythm forms longer notes as cumulative fusings of rapid beats. Thus, Cuban negrito bands perceived the three notes of the Tresillo pattern, not as a three-way “splicing” of a four-beat measure, but as irregular cumulative groupings of a rapid underlying pulse. This can be notated as follows:

\[ \frac{3}{4} \]

or:

\[ \frac{3}{4} \]

or:

\[ \frac{3}{4} \]

This may seem like a small distinction, but in performance practice it makes an enormous difference. A perusal of the phonograph recordings from the period of classic 1920s jazz reveals that drummers in particular (and ensembles in general, to greater or lesser degrees) interpreted rhythms as additive in nature, resulting in the distinctive “lope” or “groove” which was to be a unifying factor in jazz styles up to the avant-garde period beginning in the early sixties. In addition to this distinctive “feel,” which jazz musicians applied even to the most European of rhythmic structures, early New Orleans jazz drummers often employed figures easily identifiable as Afro-Cuban in origin, such as this example of a pattern which occurs on woodblock in the piano solo section of King Oliver’s “I’m Going Away To Wear You Off My Mind.” Note that in the second bar, the pattern is displaced by an eighth-note:

\[ \frac{3}{4} \]

We see that the pattern is continually moved forward by an eighth-note in each measure, so that by bar four it has come back around to its original placement on beat one, creating a sensation of two meters occurring simultaneously:

\[ \frac{3}{4} \]

As in most early New Orleans jazz, the eighth-notes are weighted slightly differently from each other in what would later be called a “swing” feel, but it is the accents that concern us here. If only the accents are played, then the rhythm is revealed as identical to the Afro-Cuban Tresillo:

\[ \frac{3}{4} \]

In King Oliver’s recording of “New Orleans Stomp,” a similar pattern is revealed, except the eighth-note displacement occurs in bar two of what is, in this case, a repeated two-bar phrase. It should be noted that, when these types of figures are executed on
the snare drum, it is the accents that form the audible outline of the rhythm, resulting in a Tresillo figure in the first bar:

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Tresillo}}}} \\
\end{array} \]

Examples of variations of this pattern can be found in Oliver’s recording of “Buddy’s Habit,” in which the accents in the stream of eighth-notes played in the accompanying banjo figure reveal a bar of three quarter-notes, followed by the Tresillo pattern:

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Tresillo}}}} \\
\end{array} \]

And in Freddie Keppard’s recording of “Adam’s Apple,” in which a bar of “swung” eighth-notes is followed by a bar in which the eighth-note accents reveal yet another Tresillo pattern:

\[ \begin{array}{c}
\text{\textbf{\textit{\textbf{Tresillo}}}} \\
\end{array} \]

It should be stressed that these repeated rhythmic cells were by no means used throughout every piece. They were generally deployed in trio, bridge or contrasting sections, sometimes in “out” (final) choruses, and appear to have been used as a means of generating additional rhythmic excitement. They do not appear to have been used to consciously replicate actual Afro-Cuban styles of the period, but since these styles were “in the air” during this period, it seems safe to assume that local musicians seized upon them as a means of generating rhythmic interest which would be attractive to dancing couples attending the social and ceremonial functions at which they performed. An additional affinity for these rhythms would presumably have been present in those musicians (“uptown” African Americans and, to some extent, Creoles of Color) who were more likely to have an unbroken cultural connection to these concepts. I absolutely do not mean to imply that this tendency is somehow genetically based, but rather that members of particular cultural groups are likely to be taught things like the generation and interpretation of rhythms as their ancestors were. While 19th century New Orleans was less prone to cultural and social apartheid than the rest of the United States, it still seems to me that someone coming of age in a Creole of Color or African American family and social environment would be more likely to interpret even strongly European-influenced forms (such as Sousa marches) in an “additive rhythm” context.

In later periods the swing feel would become ubiquitous, crowding out the more obvious Afro-Cuban rhythmic devices, and yet a case can be made (indeed has been made very persuasively by Christopher Washburne in “The Clave of Jazz”) that the underlying rhythmic structure of jazz remains based on these figures, that it influences and shapes the melodic and harmonic content of the music as well, and that it is the inherent tension between the two types of rhythmic conception (the divisive European and the additive Afro-Cuban) that gives jazz its unique flavor.
The Original Dixieland Jazz Band’s Place in the Development of Jazz
by
Jack Stewart

For many years I have been trying to understand how jazz music came into existence. During the time I worked at the New Orleans Jazz Museum in the 1960s and 1970s, this question came up endlessly. Related to this was a photograph in the Museum’s collection that was taken at the WDSU television studios in the 1950s. In the foreground were cornetist Nick LaRocca (1889-1961), formerly of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, and trombonist Tom Brown (1888-1958), formerly of Brown’s Band from Dixie Land (Brown’s Band went to Chicago in 1915, and the ODJB predecessor group, Johnny Stein’s [John Hountha (1891-1962)] Band went in 1916). As I recalled it, LaRocca was smiling, talking and gesticulating, while Brown looked on with an angry scowl on his face. We were told by Don Perry, who was a WDSU cameraman and a New Orleans Jazz Club founding member, that right after the photo was taken, during comments on the origins of jazz by LaRocca, a fist fight broke out between the two aging musicians, which had to be broken up by onlookers.

Generally, at the time, people tended to side with Tom Brown on origins issues, not only because his band went to Chicago first, but because Nick LaRocca’s somewhat abrasive manner has given him a reputation as someone you loved to hate. Also, Brown was still actively playing in an attractively lazy...
“slush-pump” style, and had built up a loyal, local fan base. However, since LaRocca was on the first jazz records, he had something going for him also.

While I first leaned toward believing Brown's origin claims, I then started looking in depth at all the claims including those of LaRocca, Jelly Roll Morton (1890-1941), Stalebread Lacombe (1885-1946) and those made by others for Buddy Bolden (1877-1931) and Freddie Keppard (1889-1933). Eventually, I began to have more regard for LaRocca's, as I began to see that his claim was actually more modest and more specific. A serendipitous sequence of events that took place over several years led me in this direction.

The first of these occurred in August 1976, when I mentioned to jazz historian Al Rose that my music teacher Eva Tisdale (1894-1992), who had been a silent movie organist, knew many of the early New Orleans theater musicians and composers. He was researching information on composer Al Verges (1879-1924), and he asked if I would set up a visit with her, which I did in lieu of my music lesson on the next Wednesday night at her house and studio on Woodrow Street. Her sister May had been a sweetheart of composer Irwin Leclere (1890-1981) at one time, and Mrs. Tisdale knew Al Verges's younger brother, composer and pianist Joe Verges (1882-1964) very well. It turned out that she had not known Al Verges. While we were there she played some ragtime pieces on the piano for us, and Al chatted and complimented her on her playing. Right before we were about to leave, he asked her who she first heard play jazz, and she replied, “The Original Dixieland Jazz Band.” At the time, I was somewhat surprised, and as we were leaving I asked Al what he thought of this. He seemed unsurprised and said that a lot of musicians told him that.

The second event occurred in September 1978, when I went to visit bandleader and cornetist Johnny Dedroit (1892-1986) at his house on General Pershing Street. The reason for the visit was to let him hear the final tape for the upcoming New Leviathan Oriental Fox-Trot Orchestra LP and ask him for comments. I also hoped he could help solve some questions concerning composer Robert Hoffman for the biographies that were to be included in the liner notes. (He solved the problem by telling me that Hoffman had been married three times.) At the end of our discussion he told me to turn off the tape recorder and put it aside, because he had something he wanted to tell me that he did not want recorded. He also said not to tell anybody, because he would have to deny it, since he did not want to be involved in any controversy, especially at his age. However, he said he did want to tell it to me because he knew I was interested in historical matters regarding New Orleans music. I was slightly taken aback by these comments, but I was by then very curious.

He then proceeded to tell me that the first band to play jazz was the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, but not until after they had left New Orleans, and that everybody in New Orleans first heard jazz on their records. This was the second time I had heard this from a New Orleans musician, and I was now really astonished, because it was coming from the legendary Johnny Dedroit rather than from Eva Tisdale my music teacher. (Eva Tisdale was actually more famous...
and highly regarded than I realized at the time, having played the theater organ at many New Orleans theaters, having taught a young Al Hirt, and no one had anything other than kind remembrances of her.) I asked him what about Tom Brown, what about Buddy Bolden, what about all the other people? He answered that they all played ragtime. I asked him what he meant by ragtime, and he said all the popular pieces that the bands played. I asked him what the local interpretation of ragtime sounded like, and he said that, “It was a nice lilting music if you liked that sort of thing, but it wasn’t jazz.” This last part is exactly what he said, because I wrote it down in my ear the minute I left his house. I mentioned it later to Hogan Jazz Archive Curator Dick Allen and asked him what he thought about it, and he said only that I should write it down and save it, which I told him I had already done.

Before I left Dedroit’s house, he also told me that he had written to LaRocca (whom he had known in New Orleans) in New York and asked him if he could send arrangements of some of the ODJB pieces from the records so that he (Dedroit) could play them with his band.

In 1990 the New Leviathan Oriental Fox-Trot Orchestra was invited to play at the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival, June 7 through 10, in Sedalia, Missouri. In extending the invitation the festival organizers specifically asked us to program New Orleans rags. While we had recorded a few New Orleans rags and Tin Pan Alley pieces, a whole program of New Orleans rags and other rags for the festival meant a lot of new research, missing part writing, and rehearsals. In the process, we found information on a whole group of composers that immediately pre-dated those on our earlier New Orleans Tin Pan Alley record. They spanned the period from 1895 until 1917. (Currently, the pieces that we played in Sedalia in 1990, plus others, are about to be released on a new CD entitled “New Orleans Before Jazz.”)

Several months later we were scheduled to do a return performance at the Great Connecticut Traditional Jazz Festival in Essex, Connecticut, from August 9 through August 12. At my suggestion, we decided to play our series of sets with each having a different type of music: rags, New Orleans rags, Tin Pan Alley, New Orleans Tin Pan Alley, fox-trots, Oriental fox-trots, and so on. What seemed like a great historical way of grouping pieces for sets turned out to be bad as a performance strategy. We quickly learned that it was better to have a sampling of styles in each set. However, the approach was not without its lasting rewards.

In search of additional narrative material for each group of music, I delved into my reference library. In Robert S. Gold’s A Jazz Lexicon, I stumbled across a definition of the fox-trot that says: “Generic term for jazz (and popular) dance (and its tempo) since c. 1917.” Gold supported his definition with the following citations: “1926 So This Is Jazz, p. 25. A tune played doubly slow for a ‘toddle’ is no less jazz than when performed at its original fox-trot tempo. - 1926 Melody Maker, Sep., p. 7. The fox-trot still holds sway everywhere. - 1929 Jacob’s Orchestral Monthly, June, p. 6. Jazz grew up around the fox-trot and is still mainly supported by it. - 1941 Father of the Blues, p. 226. They [i.e., the Castles] went abroad and while
in mid-ocean sent a wireless to the magazine to change the ‘Bunny hug’ to the ‘Fox-trot.’"

A flashing red light went off in my brain. This definition linked the fox-trot, jazz, and the year 1917. Since I was in the process of fooling with all of these different types of music in our repertoire of 1895-1935 compositions, it was quite evident that a big change had taken place in 1917. With very few exceptions, music before 1917 was in 2/4 time; music after was in 4/4 time. Music before 1917 was called ragtime; music after 1917 was called jazz or fox-trot. My understanding of all these things suddenly became clearer, especially since I had just spent months researching over two decades of New Orleans music published prior to 1917, along with other American sheet music and phonograph records from the same time. During those months, I was rapidly coming to the conclusion that jazz to some degree really evolved over a twenty-plus year period rather than having emerged quickly – evolutionary rather than revolutionary. This realization also helped explain the arguments over origins; over a long time period many things were done by many people, and therefore, there were many justifiable claims based on individual and subjective assessments of what was the most important or defining step. I came to the conclusion that all of the claimants could easily and legitimately claim at least one of the many magic moments in the long process, without having been the sole inventor of the whole genre.

After we returned from the Connecticut festival I decided to take my research one step further. With an eighteen piece orchestra and a large music library at hand, I proposed that we experiment briefly. I suggested that we take the trio strain of Joe Jordan’s “That Teasin’ Rag,” a ragtime piece, and play it in 4/4 as a fox-trot rather than as written, in 2/4. The first voiced reaction was that changing it to 4/4 would not change the sound, but would only change the number of measures to half the original amount. I said that we had to change it to 4/4 by adding two extra beats to each measure, so that the drums, banjo, guitar and piano would be hitting four beats and the tuba and string bass could play two or four beats, but if they chose two, they would have to play them shorter.

We played the piece this way and the difference was immediately evident. Banjoist and vocalist George Schmidt screamed out a surprised, “You’ve solved it.” The time change also caused the trombone player to use glissandos where there had not been any before, because the original figures were now almost impossible to play. So – we had transformed the trio of “That Teasin’ Rag” to the trio of the “Original Dixieland Jazz Band One-Step,” by a time signature change!

We played it again, and then George suggested we try the same treatment on the original arrangement of “Panama” by William Tyers, which was also in 2/4. Aside from the change to jazz, there were two additional striking things. Bunk Johnson-style “licks” developed in the 1st cornet part in the first strain, and the “maxixe” style section (sometimes mistakenly called the “tango”- style section) lost most, or all, of its “exotic” feel, but was hotter.

An interesting corroboration of my conclusions took place a year later on
October 23, 1991, when I was doing research on the Mexican influences on New Orleans music for an article in the Jazz Archivist. At the time I tried to talk to anyone who knew anything about or anybody from the “Mexican Band” visits to New Orleans. I called retired drummer and music store operator Harold Peterson (1900-1993) – son of George Peterson, one of the best early drummers and teachers. There was a picture of Harold playing in violinist and bandleader Charlie Fishbein’s Orchestra at the La Vida Night Club – a group which included pianist Buzzy Williams, banjoist “Stalebread” Lacombe and saxophonist Florencio Ramos (1861-1931). Ramos had played in the largest Mexican Band, remained in New Orleans, and became a naturalized citizen. I had heard Mr. Peterson years before at a Pete Fountain testimonial banquet, and he talked on and on about him and Pete in his music store on North Broad Street (where the headquarters for the Zulu Social Aid & Pleasure Club is now located). At first he seemed wary of my call, but he warmed up after I gave him a few personal references, and he told me a fair amount of information about Ramos, repeatedly calling him Felix, a strange corruption of Florencio.

After finishing the Ramos discussion, Peterson said he wanted to tell me how jazz came about. I was reading a long-winded account, but what he said was concise and orderly, and I scribbled down notes:

1. He said first there was ragtime, and that ragtime went way back, and even his mother played ragtime on the piano.
2. Then he said that there were the prize fights, and that this was one of the few places that you could play the ragtime music, and that they were more than happy for you to play it there.
3. He then said that, of course, black people had a lot to do with it, and that there were some good black bands. The Barbarins had a good band and Manuel Perez had a good band.
4. And finally he said there was the Dixieland Band – ragtime with a beat.

I mentioned this conversation to Dick Allen, who was helping me with the Mexican Band history, and he once again said to write it down, and I told him I had. Peterson’s four observations intrigued me. They were astute, both individually and collectively. I was especially surprised by what he said about the ODJB, because, based on my own general New Orleans music history research, his other three observations were so right. As a result of his comments, I began to wonder why the ODJB’s claims were not taken a little more seriously.

At about the same time I re-read H. O. Brunn’s The Story of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (LSU Press, 1960). On pages 31 and 32 Brunn tries somewhat confusedly to explain how the ODJB changed their music in Chicago to make it different from their music – and their contemporaries’ music – back home in New Orleans:

“During the months of daily practice and nightly performance in Chicago, an important evolution took place. The artists finally mastered their medium. More sure of themselves, they speeded up the tempo to satisfy the frenzied spirit of the dancers. LaRocca’s cornet devised
a new driving style; the clarinet began its first awkward attempts at ‘noodling’ around the melody; Edwards’s trombone accented the beat with deep, powerful tones and overlapped LaRocca’s phrasing with a new type of counter melody – a style partly resembling the old military bands of New Orleans.”

After some additional descriptive comments, he ends another paragraph with, “It was a fast, traveling, two-beat style.” However, realizing that this is not adequate to describe such a momentous change, he adds a long footnote:

“The question of whether the rhythm of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band was two-beat or four-beat is deceptively simple on the surface. Actually, even the original members themselves cannot agree. LaRocca and Sbarbaro are sure that it is two-beat, because of its parade origins; Edwards insists that it is four. The author is inclined to go along with Edwards and has always believed that the Dixieland Band’s fast one-steps had a four-beat ‘feel.’”

Brunn further muddles the issue by going on to quote Don Fowler’s, J. S. Moynahan’s, and New Orleans trombonist and bandleader Santo Pecora’s comments. The problem with Brunn’s analysis is that both jazz and the fox-trot evolved. One can see this progression even in the ODJB recordings, starting with “I’ve Lost My Heart in Dixieland” in 1919 and ending with “Tiger Rag” in 1923. The tempo slowed down and the time changed to cut-time, or 2/2, thereby forever confusing the two-beat, four-beat argument, since 2/4 and 2/2 are both two-beat, but very different kinds of two-beat.

Since Brunn was inconclusive on the subject, I went to the LaRocca Collection at the Hogan Jazz Archive and started sorting through the hundreds and hundreds of letters and clippings falling out of several scrapbooks and folders. In it I found two things of particular interest. The first was a clipping from Billboard Magazine that was quoted in Brunn’s book (which I will deal with shortly). The second was a copy of Johnny Dedroit’s letter to Nick LaRocca in New York, dated December 6, 1918, asking him for an arrangement of “Bluin’ the Blues.” The existence of the letter convinced me that Dedroit had a pretty good memory regarding things in the distant past, thus giving some more credence to his comments about the ODJB and jazz.

I next read through the massive Nick LaRocca oral history interview at the Hogan Jazz Archive. On pages 50-51, when asked by Dick Allen what other New Orleans bands played, LaRocca says, “Well, they all played ragtime.” Allen for clarification asks, “In 1910; 1918?” LaRocca then gives his answer:

“Well, now the bands, they played regular popular tunes. And I never heard any numbers that was improvised or worked on. If they played a chorus of different tunes they may have add lil’bit flourishes to ‘em with their own. I don’t say they didn’t do that; but they were playing ragtime. I played ragtime. The rhythm wasn’t changed until I hit Chicago. Now this [is] gonna be a strange thing, and this is why they say the miracle couldn’t happen. It was a dance team called [thinks awhile] – wait
a minute – the Castles. And the Castles was bringing out a new dance like a straight dance – like a walk. Now ragtime music would fit it, but I noticed the general public, it was hard for them with the methods of the music we were playing – that jumping music – so I decided to play in march time, slow down, making a fox trot out of it, fast, making a fast march. Instead of the four beats [that] was customary they were playing around New Orleans, we made two beats and a syncopated beat. That’s what gave it the driving qualities. Now the music that came up from New Orleans they were still playing ragtime. Many of them followed us up to Chicago.”

He also says on page 62:

“I forgot to tell you we played shows in Chicago, with a fellow named Johnny Fogarty while we were at the Casino Gardens. You’ll find that in the Tulane files, too. That was the first introduction of jazz into theatres.”

Johnnie Fogarty’s Dancing Review was the act that was mentioned in the *Billboard* article in Brunn’s book and in LaRocca’s scrapbooks. Fogarty was the leader of a dance team from New York that traveled around the country giving exhibition programs of the latest dance steps. The troupe’s picture was featured on the cover of sheet music editions of the latest popular dance pieces.

According to LaRocca, the ODJB changed the rhythm, or time signature, to more easily accommodate the dancers who were doing a new dancing style. LaRocca says they changed from four beats to two beats, whereas the reverse is what actually happened. They did this at either Schiller’s or the Casino Garden, or both, and then accompanied Fogarty’s troupe at the McVicker’s Theater.

Advertisements and reviews for McVicker’s Theater in late August and early September 1916 show that the dance troupe advanced from third billing to the premier act, and “The Jass Band,” as they were called, got rave reviews, both individually as musicians and as accompanists for the dancers.

After digesting this over time, I decided to weigh in on the subject. I got H. O. Brunn’s telephone number from the Hogan Jazz Archive, and called him at home. He told me how, in his opinion, he had unsuccessfully bounced the question off of many musicians over the years, and I told him of my theory and experiment. He listened and then said that he thought that I had figured it out. I understand that he is now going to present some variation of this conclusion in his revised edition.

There is also some other corroborating evidence:

1. On pages 2 and 3 of his March 27, 1957, Hogan Jazz Archive interview, Paul Barbarin (1901-1969) says he first heard 4/4 in New Orleans played by “Red Happy” (Bolton) with Oliver and Ory in Economy Hall. The best estimate of the time this event took place, according to Hogan Jazz Archive curator Bruce Raeburn, was in 1917.

2. On page 95 of Bill Russell’s *New Orleans Style* (Jazzology Press, 1994), Ed Garland (1885-1980) says, “When I started playing we played most always two beats to
the measure but later on we started to double up and play four.”

3. In Dan Meyer’s “Slap That Bass!” internet article, which he has written, revised, presented, and is still updating, he points out three comments worth noting. Multi-instrumentalist and string bass player Arnold Loyocano (1889-1962) says that when he left New Orleans in 1915 to go north with Tom Brown, no one was playing the slap-bass style. Eddie Dawson (1884-1972) recalled doing it some time before Storyville closed in July 1917. When Joseph “Babe” Phillips (c.1879-1960) arrived in New Orleans in 1918 everyone was playing it. While you could have slapped a bass in ragtime, it would not have made much sense because the slapping and picking is used to drive the beat.

4. Most pieces of music published in New Orleans before 1917 are in 2/4; most pieces published in 1917 or thereafter are in 4/4. Many pieces of music published in New Orleans in 1915 or 1916 in 2/4 time were re-published in 1917 in 4/4 time. “New Orleans Hop Scop Blues” by George W. Thomas and “Don’t Leave Me Daddy” by Joe Verges are two of these.

5. On Jazzology Book CD 3, which accompanies Richard H. Knowles’s Fallen Heroes (1996), on track 7, Bunk Johnson in talking about funerals says all the music was played in 2/4; he also says this elsewhere.

6. In an article by Myra Menville in the Second Line, Spring 1977, pp. 3-13, entitled “Wiggs Self-Explained,” teacher, cornetist, bandleader and New Orleans Jazz Club founder Johnny Wiggs (1899-1977) remembers hearing King Oliver playing blues at the dances at the Tulane Gym in 1916, and how wonderful the music was. But he did not say that Oliver was playing jazz. He goes on to say: “In 1917 the ODJB recorded their first records on Victor. This was too much for the Invincibles and we yearned to play real jazz.”

7. Prior to 1917, New Orleans was not a mecca for fox-trots. A few articles appeared in the newspapers in 1915 about demonstrations of the popular new dance in the Grunwald Cave. In 1916 you could get a free booklet showing how to dance the fox-trot and other new dances if you purchased a new Victrola, but there seems to have been no fox-trot craze like there was for the earlier animal dances.

8. In the American Mercury, August 1924, pp. 465-467, in a great summarizing article titled “Jazz,” Virgil Thomson wrote: “Jazz, in brief, is a compound of (a) the fox-trot rhythm, a four-four measure (alle breve) with a double accent, and (b) a syncopated melody over this rhythm. Neither alone will make jazz. The monotonous fox-trot rhythm, by itself,
will either put you to sleep or drive you mad. And a highly syncopated line like the second subject of the Franck symphony in D minor of the principal theme of Beethoven’s third ‘Lenora’ overture is merely syncopated until you add it to the heavy bump-bump of the fox-trot beat. The combination is jazz. Try it on your piano. Apply it to any tune you know. In case you are not satisfied with the result, play the right hand a little before the left.”

Thomson goes on to talk about the development of the fox-trot, various dance musics, and jazz.

For more on the historical development of the fox-trot, the best account is in the Complete Book of Ballroom Dancing by Richard M. Stephenson and Joseph Iaccarino (Doubleday, 1980), pp. 32-36, which outlines its creation by Harry Fox, born Arthur Carringford (1882-1959). Fox’s association with Yancey Dolly of the famous Dolly Sisters of eastern European lineage may explain the straightforward driving 4/4 rhythm, most likely borrowed from klezmer music.

I have been presenting this idea in conversations with individuals and in lectures to groups for fifteen years. It has been met with hostility by 49%, lack of understanding by 49%, interest by 1%, and agreement by 1%. Comments have included the following:

1. Hostility to LaRocca and/or the ODJB.
2. Hostility to the notion of any white contribution to jazz origins.
3. Seems like a tempest in a teapot — who cares?
4. Ragtime and jazz are pretty much the same.
5. Jazz is the blues.
6. Of course you’d think that, because you play fox-trots.
7. Being billed as “Original” is automatically suspect.
8. It had to be more than that (just changing the time).
9. That isn’t what happened because jazz is 2/4 and ragtime is 4/4.
10. If that’s the case then where did the fox-trot come from?

The question remains: what is one to make of all this?

It is often said that everyone has his own opinion and/or his own agenda. This is especially true about jazz, and even truer about jazz origins. However, the succession of events described above makes a strong circumstantial case for what the ODJB did. What has not been proven is that there were no other steps being taken in the same direction at about the same time. There are several “close-but-no-cigar” compositions published between 1915 and 1917, including “Camel Walk” by Joe Verge, “Original Jelly Roll Blues” by Jelly Roll Morton, “When I Die Bring Me to My Ma” by J. Russel Robinson, and “Long, Long Time before You See My Face Again” by Jimmie Cox.

Each of these has many of the characteristics of jazz but not the complete criteria (which itself is hard to establish). One could also arrive at jazz by playing early syncopated blues with a strong driving 4/4 beat, although I do not think that this was done — the blues seems to have been played slow and low-down; fast jazz-inspired blues.
appear to be a later development. Other groups could have done exactly what the ODJB did; Keppard could have independently combined New Orleans ragtime and the fox-trot in Chicago or New York. Trombonist, record collector, and music scholar Dave Sager recently found an early fox-trot recording by an obscure Ohio band that sounds very much like jazz. I have found several fox-trots played by Hawaiian string bands that sound close, also. You can hear the transition in Hawaiian music by listening to three recordings: “Honolulu March” (1914); “Hilo Hawaiian March” (1914), and “Maui Aloha” (1916), all reissued on Harlequin HQ CD 57 (“On the Beach at Waikiki 1914-1952”).

There are many magic moments in the development of jazz, some after the ODJB, some before. Some think that ragtime is jazz. Others think that the blues is jazz. Still others think that jazz originated with the Louis Armstrong-Earl Hines recordings of 1928, and that everything before that is “funny-hat” music. With such a divergence of opinion and definition, it is unlikely that things will ever be settled. However, we can come to some conclusions about the steps that the ODJB took in the process and how they were pivotal for the time.

This article may not solve anything, but it may raise the argument to a higher plane.

Curator’s Commentary

Well, 2005-2006 will certainly be a fiscal year to remember, to say the least, not only for its disasters, but also for its brighter moments. The fact is, the staff at the Hogan Jazz Archive survived “Katrina” (as Dr. John calls the double whammy of Katrina and Rita) and our facility sustained no major damage, despite the presence of four feet of water in the basement of Jones Hall. Tulane was knocked off track for the fall, yet the spring semester commenced with an inspirational speech and concert by Wynton Marsalis on Martin Luther King Day that deftly set the tone for renewal, with 91% of the students returning to campus (depending on how one does the calculations). Everyone had a different story to tell. Lynn Abbott and his wife Linda went to Lafayette, where Lynn was made to feel at home at the Center for Louisiana Studies at the University of Louisiana-Lafayette. Alma Williams Freeman and her husband Don got out the Saturday before Katrina, evacuating to Wichita, Kansas, where her sister lives. She decided to stay, so the staff at the Archive has been reduced to two for the foreseeable future. For those of you who have met Mrs. Freeman or have heard about her work, you know what a deep blow this is to our operation. Alma was with us for twenty-seven years, and her knowledge of the collection, magnanimity, and ability to make patrons feel welcome were essential to our success. In many ways she was the soul of the Jazz Archive, and we miss her even as we wish her well in her new situation, as a Senior Administrative Assistant with the Upward Bound program at Wichita State University. My wife Linda and I caught a flight to Oakland the night before Katrina struck
(amazingly, Continental was still flying out of Armstrong International as late as 5:30 p.m. on Sunday). I had just returned the day before from a conference in Veracruz, Mexico, and knew nothing of the storm because the television in my hotel room had lacked an “on” switch. I found out about the hurricane on the taxi ride uptown. Saturday night we called my sister in Oakland and told her we were staying. After witnessing the size and intensification of Katrina Sunday morning, however, we called again to say, “We’re on our way.” Everyone in the Bay Area was exceedingly kind and empathetic, but like so many other New Orleans evacuees, we were distraught and wanted our lives back.

When we returned to uptown New Orleans on October 6, the water had just been deemed potable, electricity had been restored, and our neighborhood grocery store was open for business. The Tulane campus was off limits unless one had special dispensation from a Dean, so it took about a week before Lynn and I were able to inspect the Hogan Jazz Archive. Belfor, a Texas-based disaster management company, had been brought in immediately after Katrina to establish temperature and humidity control in the library buildings on the Tulane campus, and although there was no electricity in Jones Hall, a flashlight tour of the premises revealed that it was exactly as we had left it. The Archive reopened on December 19, about two weeks before Howard-Tilton Memorial Library (which had taken seven feet of water in the basement, destroying the Music Library, Government Documents, and Microfilms). Since then we have seen a steady rise in patron service, peaking with French Quarter Festival and New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival, which coincided with the last few weeks of the spring semester. Our daily reality today seems not very different from what it once was, except for one thing: we cannot escape the day-to-day realization that 80% of the city remains devastated and most of its population is still dispersed, including about 87% of the musicians. Everyone wants to know about the future, and there are no answers.

While Tulane was in suspended animation, it was necessary to take advantage of every opportunity to remind the rest of the world that we still existed, and due to the generosity of many friends and colleagues, I was invited to various locations to share information on New Orleans music and culture, including a visiting scholar-in-residence position at the University of Idaho’s International Jazz Collections in October 2005 and February 2006, a conference co-sponsored by the Historic Brass Society and the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University-Newark in November, and a month-long visiting professorship at Centre d’études nord-américaines, École des hautes études en sciences sociales in Paris in December. The Paris trip coincided with my friend Anne Legrande’s dissertation defense at the Sorbonne (she has done a marvelous study of Charles Delaunay)—I’m sure when she sent me the invitation she never expected me to actually show up! This event put me in touch with the Parisian jazz community, which had turned out in force for Anne. My thanks to Philippe Baudoin and Isabelle Marquis, Dan Vernhette, Tommy Sancton, Valérie Leroy, and especially to Claude Carriere for their hospitality and willingness to share their knowledge and passion for the music. It was
inspiring, because they all love New Orleans! Another highlight of the trip was a conference organized by Sara LeMenestrel of CENA, “Louisiane à la Dérive” (“Louisiana Drift”), which allowed Parisians a chance to witness the devastation wrought by Katrina and Rita from the ground level through Sara’s slides and interviews and to place it in historical context. For professor Randy Sparks of Tulane’s Department of History and me (the American presenters), it was a cathartic moment, allowing us to share our thoughts and feelings on a difficult topic with a supportive audience.

Just prior to departing for France, I attended a book signing at the Octavia Book Shop for Tom Piazza’s Why New Orleans Matters (Regan Books, 2005)—a moving treatise on the city’s music and culture written post-Katrina—during which I had a conversation with the music writer Michael Tisserand that turned out to be quite fortuitous. Pat Jolly had put Michael in touch with Larry Brunner, the grandson of Danny Barker, who conveyed his mother Sylvia’s permission for the Archive to salvage material from her deceased parents’ flooded home on Sere Street. There was little time to line up the logistical support necessary, but since the collection in question had belonged to Danny and Blue Lu Barker, everyone who was asked to lend a hand said yes. From the “hands on” salvage operation itself (requiring boots and masks) to the storage, collation, drying, and conservation of damaged items, the Danny Barker task force brought together a dedicated cadre of Barkerphiles that included Michael Tisserand, Jason Berry, professor Larry Powell, Dean Lance Query, Lynn Abbott, Dr. Jack Stewart, David Clements, and Larry Brunner. Although not everything could be saved, about 40 boxes of photographs, scrapbooks, clippings, recordings, and other memorabilia were retrieved, about half of which was sent to Belfor for treatment. Considering that the personal collections of Fats Domino, Dr. Michael White, Dave Bartholomew, Allen Toussaint, Sybil Kein, Irma Thomas, Henry Butler, and Herman Leonard, among many others, were lost due to Katrina, the rescue of Danny Barker’s papers represents a bit of good news in an otherwise very dismal tale. The Barker materials include numerous photographs (Danny with Fairview Baptist Church Band, Danny and Wellman Braud, and Louise Barker with the Louisiana State Club of New York, circa 1939—that’s her just below the “y”), ephemera (such as a questionnaire collected from Lionel Tapo), letters, magazines, clippings, unpublished writing in manuscript, artwork, posters, business records, and a small number of phonodiscs (Danny on a 1962 radio show on Gotham). In addition, a good portion Danny’s uncle Paul Barbarin’s memorabilia was saved and restored by Belfor, including playbills from his tenure with bandleaders King Oliver and Luis Russell.
In the months that have elapsed since the Archive’s re-opening, several other important donations have been acquired. Mina Lea Crais’s collection of photographs documenting the New Orleans jazz scene in the 1950s and following provides candid views of the friendships that existed among musicians and fans alike. Mina Lea and her husband Bill Crais were the publishers of *Mecca*, a traditional jazz magazine in the 1970s, and ran Carnival Records, a New Orleans jazz label. Bill was a trombonist who worked with a number of traditional jazz bandleaders, such as Sharkey Bonano and Mike Lala. Seen here are a portrait of Punch Miller, Harold Dejan, and George Lewis (possibly taken by Carey Tate), an image of Alphonse Picou’s funeral with Grand Marshall Fats Houston and Walter Nelson holding Picou’s clarinet, and a candid shot of former Hogan Jazz Archive Curator and oral historian Dick Allen with Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn, and Paul Barbarin.
Bandleader Al Ballanco’s library of orchestrations and memorabilia was another major gift arriving during 2005-2006. This collection consists of about 70 linear feet of sheet music, orchestrations, and folios—essentially the working library for Ballanco’s popular band—as well as numerous broadsides, letters, and other ephemera. The Ballanco orchestra was a favorite with the city’s social elite and offered a smooth and sweet alternative to Dixieland jazz, as seen in the telegram from Mrs. Edgar Stern, one of New Orleans’ best known philanthropists. Smooth dance music was also favored by the Streckfus Steamers Company, and the letter written on Ballanco’s behalf by Roy Streckfus attests to an ongoing relationship in the late 1950s, long after the heyday of the riverboat excursion trade had passed. Yet the presence of “Decatur Street Blues” and similar material in the band library would indicate that Ballanco could depart from the sweet repertoire when necessary. He knew how to please an audience, which kept his big band working, although often by stringing together spot jobs, such as the one described in this flyer from Tregle’s Dreamland Nite Club in Jefferson Parish. Interestingly enough, the John Robichaux sheet music collection that resides at the Archive was purchased from Al Ballanco many years ago, and it is to the bandleader’s credit that he saw the need to rescue that band’s musical legacy and ensure its preservation. One might say that given their musical predilections, Robichaux and Ballanco were kindred spirits.
Decatur Street Blues

Piano

International Copyright Secured Made in U.S.A. All Rights Reserved

Streetcars Steamers

New Orleans, La.

December 31, 1920

To Miss E. H. M.:

As Hall's Orchestra has played aboard the Steamer President during the past seven or eight years on eight occasions, operating three nights per week for weekly engagements, I might state that Hall's Orchestra has given good satisfaction and his orchestra is expected to be back again for three nights per week - the coming month of March.

Sincerely,

[Signature]

Author Rick Coleman, whose recently published *Blue Monday: Fats Domino and the Lost Dawn of Rock and Roll* (Da Capo, 2006) is the first biography of that New Orleans rhythm and blues legend, donated a photography collection from the estate of pianist Walter "Fats" Pichon acquired at an auction sale. Like Ballanco, Pichon led a band that worked for the Streckfus company, and the image on the previous page shows one of his bands aboard the steamer *President*, probably in the late 1930s. Fats Domino’s music director, trumpeter Dave Bartholomew, worked the boats with Pichon, who passed leadership of the band over to him, effectively launching him as a leader for the first time. Pichon’s collection also contains images of the many friends he made within the music industry, including an autographed photograph from drummer Paul Barbarin.

In December several hundred phonograph records and cassettes were received from the estate of collector Hugh Gould, a scion of British landed gentry who grew up in Vancouver, Canada, and ultimately came to reside in Los Angeles, where he became a devotee of jazz in the late 1940s. He served in the Korean War, and there are numerous 78s produced by Japanese affiliates of American labels within the collection, as seen in these examples. The Gould donation fills a number of gaps in our recorded sound holdings and was negotiated by Lynn Abbott under difficult circumstances via e-mail before the Archive resumed business operations just before Christmas.
Lynn also continues to work his way through the Robert Palmer Collection (ably assisted by our new student worker, Mary Varner, who has inventoried the more than 8,000 phonodiscs contained therein), and he has culled some interesting pieces to share with our readers, including a photo of Palmer with bluesman Cedell Davis (whose Fat Possum recordings Bob produced), a promo shot of Bob’s band The Insect Trust, a portrait of Bob with William Burroughs, a list of “Bob’s Top Ten Likes and Dislikes,” and a snapshot of “master” Bob. Given the broad scope of the Palmer collection, which covers the spectrum of American popular music, we are going to maintain it as a free-standing archive within the Hogan Jazz Archive: books, videos, and phonodiscs from the collection are now accessible, and we anticipate having vertical files of oral histories, manuscript materials, and clippings available in the near future.
Bob's Top Ten

LIKES & DISLIKES

LIKES:
1. Human Freedom
2. Music, non-Western
3. American Vernacular
4. People who disobey orders
5. Chaos, the contrast to a practical
6. A sense of humor

DISLIKES:
1. Christian Amrikka
2. Patriotism and the entire concept of the nation-state
3. Money and money values
4. "Authority" and law and order
5. Regimentation of personal freedom by strict orders
6. People who follow orders
Finally, I am pleased to announce that The Grammy Foundation has awarded the Hogan Jazz Archive $40,000 to continue the digital transfer of its oral history collection, which will be enough to finish the remaining 1,367 open reels (of about 2,000) requiring preservation back up copies. Previous funding from The Pritzker Foundation and the New Orleans Jazz Commission allowed us to undertake initial transfers of selected interviews on both open reel and cassettes, and The Grammy Foundation preservation grant, a special subvention designed to assist Gulf Coast sound archivists in the wake of Katrina, could not have come at a better time.

Before closing, some special thanks are in order. Prior to Katrina, on May 14, 2005, Alma Williams Freeman experienced something much worse than a hurricane. Her youngest daughter, Laura Elizabeth Williams, age 13, lost her life as the result of an automobile accident. Dean of libraries Lance Query, Assistant Dean for Special Collections Bill Meneray, Lynn Abbott, myself, and other staffers from the Howard-Tilton Memorial Library attended the memorial service at the Thompson Temple, Church of God in Christ on May 21, a moving celebration of a beautiful spirit whose smile never failed to brighten up the workday at the Hogan Jazz Archive the moment she would walk through the door. As a means of honoring the memories of both mother and daughter post-Katrina, members of the local jazz community have organized and contributed to a fund in Laura’s name. We therefore recognize and extend our gratitude to Rosemary Loomis, Sue Hall, Andrea Duplessis, Julie Fishelson, Jack Stewart, Daniel Meyer, Don Marquis, and John McCusker. I’m happy to report that such generosity is typical of the people who nurture traditional New Orleans jazz in this town. For those who would like to contact Mrs. Freeman, her new address is 1570 N. Gentry, Wichita, KS 67208. She may not continue to work here, but Alma will always be a part of our family at the Hogan Jazz Archive.

Bruce Boyd Raeburn