Dominic LaRocca's Collection at Tulane's Jazz Archive

In 1960, Harry Brunn completed the first chronicle of a jazz band, The Story of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (NOJB). A saga depicting the historic departure of the music from New Orleans, the book was published by Louisiana State University Press that year, drawn upon research begun in the immediate post-World War II period.

The absence of any archival documentation at that time made it necessary for Mr. Brunn to commence his research "at the source" by consulting directly with Dominic (Nick) LaRocca, the cornetist with the band who initially captured the public spotlight as its leader. In one of the early applications of oral-history methodology, Brunn spent more than a decade interviewing LaRocca, unearthing a wealth of source materials in the process. The evidence he uncovered and accumulated relates to the origins and legacy of the ODJB, which by Brunn's account made the first jazz phonograph record in 1917. He writes in the book's preface:

Information in this book was contributed by many musicians and authorities connected with the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. Foremost of these was the band's leader and organizer, Dominic James (Nick) LaRocca. The interviews with Mr. LaRocca began in New Orleans in the summer of 1946, lasted sometimes for weeks on end, and continued at regular intervals through the present year. Supplementing the personal talks is a correspondence file consisting of more than two hundred of his letters, all relating in detail to the subject of jazz and the Original Dixieland Jazz Band. Most of the photographs reproduced in this book were unearthed from his garage. Here, buried beneath the accumulation of nearly seventy years—everything from 1898 fishing tackle to homemade radio sets of 1927 vintage—were contracts and records of the historic Original Dixieland Jazz Band. Even Mr. LaRocca himself did not know what to expect, and every box or trunk opened was the source of a new surprise. The documents recovered, having long ago been tossed haphazardly into a trunk or box, were not always in the best state of preservation. Contracts were dog-eared, newspaper clippings yellowed, and photographs torn in half. But the many hundreds of items—account books, ledgers, receipts, passports, letters, fan mail, unpublished compositions—when finally fitted together, formed a rough outline of the band's fascinating past. In 1958 these documents, now known as the LaRocca Collection, were taken over by the Archive of New Orleans Jazz at Tulane University.

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history of New Orleans and its immediate hinterland. It's diversified resources present a cogent profile of the city's neighborhoods and the pastiche of urban folklore they possess with their intermingling of ethnic traditions, especially German, Irish, Italian, and French Creole. — C. Jerde

Researching the Jazz Map at the Tulane Jazz Archive

If one spends a good part of his time playing jazz, learning about jazz and writing about jazz, one must eventually come to New Orleans to finish one's education. Books on jazz seldom devote more than a chapter (a small one) to New Orleans Jazz, and even less often give the names of the many musicians who nurtured jazz in its infancy. Researching the origins and history of jazz in New Orleans means a visit to the Hogan Jazz Archives at Tulane University. What one discovers at the Jazz Archive brings to mind the old axiom: "The more education one acquires, the more one realizes how much there is still left to learn". It is not the sort of place you can cover in a day.

To open the door of the Jazz Archive is to open the mind to the hundreds of New Orleans musicians that were playing in the city at the turn of the Century. The 'real story' of early jazz begins to emerge, especially from the tape recorded interviews (conducted by William Russell, Richard Allen and others) — a fascinating cavalcade of reminiscence comprising some 1500 taped reels. One goes back in time, transported to as long ago as the 1890's, and succumbs to the atmosphere created by the men and women who lived and played music in the city and its environs. For many a researcher what began as a working vacation might well turn into an extended stay or even a permanent move to the Crescent City.

With the help of these taped interviews the Jazz Map of New Orleans was created. In addition to the oral histories, the New Orleans City Directories (Stringers), numerous old telephone books, and vertical files on local musicians provided ample source materials for the construction of a 'Jazz Map', which, in fact, evolved as an afterthought following research into 'unknown' greats such as Chris Kelly, Buddy Petit, Kid Rena and Emmett Hardy. Each interview listed examples of locations where these jazz masters played. The list of venues emanating from the pages of the transcribed interviews became so numerous that the need for a map delineating 'where the action was' became both compelling and necessary. There were and are places that jazz scholars should not only be aware of but should also visit to breathe the air around places like Congo Square, Funky Butt Hall, or Jelly Roll Morton's neighborhood.

As one thing led to another, a jazz tour of these locations became a logical next step, and one can now secure a jazz map and

Documenting the Rise — Cont. from page 1

In its new home, renamed the William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive in 1974 in dedication of its cofounder and the former history chairman at Tulane, the LaRocca Collection sat dormant for a quarter-century awaiting a resurgence of interest in early jazz. Recently, however, it has begun to attract some serious scholarly attention. Noted jazz authority, Dr. Lawrence Gushee of the University of Illinois, jazz cartographer/genealogist Dr. Karl Koenig, and ragtime specialist Dick Zimmerman have dug into this treasure trove of information on the band that played a preeminent role in the dissemination of New Orleans' musical legacy after World War I. It remains a topic critically in need of new monographic treatment.

The LaRocca Collection contains 2,844 items, including photographs, posters, advertisements, and even a motion picture. Phonograph records, taped and transcribed interviews, and LaRocca's own substantial personal scrapbook count among LaRocca's memorabilia as well. Researchers can also have access to contracts and affidavits documenting business and legal transactions of the band.

Apart from jazz history, the LaRocca Collection can provide researchers generally with valuable data on the social and cultural
drive through the city to the various neighborhoods depicted within: the old village of Milneburg; the residence of 'Papa' Jack Laine, very old but still standing; the historic Tango Belt; and old Decatur Street, which is making a comeback today.

Having the advantage of working at the Archive will change your perspective on the origins of jazz and the importance of these early New Orleans Jazz Musicians. Being able to study these interviews and then compiling the information for the Jazz Map has been enlightening in acquiring new knowledge, fascinating in content, and just plain exciting for any jazz scholar or for anyone interested in jazz. — K. Koenig

"Station Calls" was recorded in New Orleans in 1926. This César 78 from the Al Rose donation features performances by Paul Barnes on clarinet, Jeanette Salvat (Kimbal) on piano, Abbey "Chinese" Foster on drums, and composer John Marrero on banjo.

Recent Developments in the Recorded Sound Collection

For several years now the Hogan Jazz Archive has been mounting a concerted effort to reduce its processing backlog in recorded sound materials. Consequently, various donations dating back to the mid-seventies or before are only just now becoming accessible to patrons. Two of the most important are the Al Rose and Edmond Souchon donations. Consisting primarily of 78-10" recordings with an accent on New Orleans artists, these private collections share an emphasis on Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Jelly Roll Morton, and Clarence Williams, but each has its own rarities that render it special. For example, within the Rose donation are several early Columbia releases by Vess Ossman, Fred Van Eps, as well as Van Eps Trio Victors. The coverage of jazz Edison includes Louisianas Five, Earl Oliver's Jazz Babies, and Matson's Creole Serenaders among others. Numerous Takes on New Orleans artists like Esther Biego, Clarence Williams, Luis Russell, Johnny De Droit, and Wingy Mannone comprise another important segment of the donation, as do virtually complete runs of Original Dixieland Jazz Band cuts for Victor.

The Edmond Souchon donation, in addition to extensive examples of New Orleans style, offers rare insights into vintage Haitian and African musical forms via French Pathé, Pau, and Jambo Recordings. Souchon's holdings are also strong on gospel and European jazz. In most cases the phonodiscs tend to be in very good to excellent condition, such was the care with which each of these respective collections was assembled and maintained. Processing on subsequent donations is continuing, as is the preparation of a comprehensive collection log to assist in the evaluation of potential donations. All in all, the recorded sound collection at the Hogan Jazz Archive has never been in better shape and offers more to the jazz enthusiast and researcher than ever before. So just don't sit there, come on in and listen!

— B. Raeburn

Archive's Spring Exhibit Showcases Creole Heritage

Jazz: The Creole Connection is the title of a fascinating exhibit of rare photographs, music and other memorabilia housed in the Jazz Archive. On view through April and May, the display is part of the Howard Tilton Memorial Library's general celebration of New Orleans' Creole culture which includes two other exhibits: the Latin American Library's, entitled The Latin Tinge and the Rare Books and Manuscripts division's, called The Creole Heritage. Where the latter presents photographs and documents from the city's early theater history and the latter delineates the Hispanic Caribbean influences on New Orleans music, the Jazz Archive's show focuses on the impact of the New Orleans Creole musician on the genesis of jazz.

As the exhibit makes clear, "creole" in this time (c. 1880 - 1930) and context meant "creoles of color": cultivated mulatto musicians with French or Spanish blood. Complementing the Latin American Library's theme of Spanish (Cuban and Mexican) musical ties with New Orleans, the Archive display emphasizes the French

Peter Bocage was a product of Creole musical education trained on violin as well as brass instruments.
aspect of this city’s creole music. There are three broad themes in the exhibit. The Creole Roots Of Jazz traces the thread of a creole musical style in New Orleans from its origins in the aristocratic salon and concert music of eighteenth-century Paris and New Orleans, through the emergence in the mid nineteenth century of a Caribbean-influenced variant of this music (musique a la Louisianenne), epitomized in the syncopated works of New Orleans-born composer Louis Moreau Gottschalk, to its ultimate transformation into the distinctive band music of turn-of-the-century black creole musicians that fostered the growth of early jazz.

speaking mulattos who formed the musical backbone of the city’s early black parade and jazz bands, lending them great technical polish. And they, more than the white French-speaking creole colleagues, who exerted the profoundest influence on the rise of jazz in Europe.

The French Response to Jazz examines the particular impact of New Orleans in France from the mid 1920s on. “Le Jazz Hot” electrified the French, who felt a special empathy for the “sweeter” syncopations of such French-creole masters as Sidney Bechet and Omer Simeon. The French response to Jazz was deep and all-pervasive: by the 1930s they had produced the first of many jazz clubs (The Hot Club Of France), the first serious published studies of jazz, and, most significantly, the first mature foreign jazz artists, such as Django Reinhardt and Stephan Grapelli. — J. Joyce

"La Savane" exemplifies the body of original works which made Louis Moreau Gottschalk an early matinee idol of the western world and helped set the stage for the latter-day Creole influences upon repertory jazz.

Hot Jazz: An Ironic Flowering of the Creole Legacy delineates the decline during the Civil War of the "pure" creole culture in New Orleans and its subsequent re-emergence in hybridized form among the "creoles de couleur". It was the superbly trained musicians among the French-
musicians needs checking, typing, and proofreading. Transcriptions will be made eventually, especially if a researcher wants the exact words as nearly as is possible from the tape.

Please write to the Hogan Jazz Archive if you are interested, or phone 865-5688 if you live in the New Orleans area. This work is a way to learn about New Orleans music, the personalities who created it, and its growth. The musicians’ stories reveal the spirit of times, bringing social history to life.

Some of the musicians whose summaries await checking are Harold Peterson, Sr., a jazz drummer and owner of a music store; Ed Garland, the pioneer bassist; Tim Kelly, a widely-traveled clarinetist who lived in New Orleans during the early thirties and also played in various parts of Louisiana; and pianist and minister Lionel Reason, who worked with King Oliver, Wingy Manone, and Kid Ory. These summaries, among others, can serve as a good introduction because checking summaries is the easiest part of oral history processing. The Curator of Oral History will review your work and then provide suggestions and samples as well as more material to be processed.

— R. B. Allen

Richard B. Allen interviewing Raymond Burke in 1958 at American Music Records for the Archive of New Orleans Jazz

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED TO PROCESS INTERVIEWS

The most important way that oral history is made available to the researcher is through the summaries or word-for-word transcriptions of the information on the tapes. A large backlog of summaries of the information on tapes made with jazz

C. L. Cook’s Dreamland Orchestra (Late 1920s) This is the only known instance in which New Orleanians Johnny St. Cyr and Freddie Keppard played together. Can you identify the other New Orleanian in the band?

Hogan Jazz Archive
Howard-Tilton Memorial Library
Tulane University
New Orleans, Louisiana 70118
(504) 865-5688

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