The Same By Any Name?
A Look At The Emerging New Orleans "Jazz" Band

A common stereotype of New Orleans jazz is of a standard "dixieland" band comprising a trumpet (or cornet), clarinet, trombone, piano, banjo, tuba (or string bass), and drums. While this combination is the norm for traditional jazz bands today, (see photo, p.2) photographs of New Orleans bands from the early jazz era reveal anything but a fixed instrumentation. Indeed, these photos show such a diversity of ensemble size and make-up as to confound any single definition of a New Orleans jazz band.

Part of the problem is that the term "jazz", it seems, was not used by New Orleans bandsmen until 1913 or 1914, about the time New Orleans bands began regular tours North. The term is conspicuously absent from the names of local bands before this time, and thereafter it is found only intermittently, even among the bands active in early "jazz" recording. For example, the name of the first New Orleans band to record (1917) was The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, whereas the first black "jazz" recordings (1922) were issued under the name Ory's Sunshine Orchestra. On the other hand, some of the best black recorded jazz was by King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band (1923) and another noted white band recorded as The New Orleans Rhythm Kings (1920's).

One apparent constant in the nomenclature of New Orleans bands during the early years of touring and recording (c. 1914 - 1924) was the frequent use of the terms "dixie" or "dixieland" among white bands and "creole" among black bands (Oliver's Dixie Syncopators being a relatively late exception). It seems likely that such terms, like "jazz" itself, were belated appendages to New Orleans band names for purposes of promotion abroad; as were such descriptive apppellations as "syncopators," "shakers," "stompers," and "footwarmers," intended to convey an image of fast and lively dance music. Despite a lack of recorded evidence, it is assumed that all earlier (pre-1915) New Orleans ensembles played such "hot" music, if in an earlier, raggier style. Yet these former groups, still playing locally, rarely used such descriptive words ("ragtime" included) in their titles.

Much more common were the simple designations "orchestra" or "band" (with no apparent distinction between these), proceeded by either the leader's name or by some word symbolic of perfection, such as "superior," "imperial," "olympia," "peerless," "invincible," "eagle," "camelias," or "magnolia." These latter names, inherited from contemporary parade bands, reflect little of the kind of music played by such bands but much of the premium placed on technical excellence and precision in the

continued on page 4

Frank-McCurdy Peerless Orchestra photo courtesy of Jazz Archive

Some Thoughts on the Jazz Archive

The Howard-Tilton Library and its antecedents at Tulane University have been collecting books for teaching and research for over 150 years. So have hundreds of other academic libraries. Thus, our collections are largely duplicative. Acquiring, processing, and servicing these materials is necessary but becomes quite routine. What provides the excitement, the

continued on page 2

Richard B. Allen and William Russell in an oral history interview taping session with Alcide "Slow Drag"Pavageau, 1958. photo courtesy of Jazz Archive

Tulane
Some Thoughts on the Jazz Archive, continued.

glamour, and the pride in a library are the unique materials—the one-of-a-kind items or the groups of sources which, in the past, form a singular resource. The Hogan Jazz Archive is just such a collection.

Since 1965 the library has been the home of the Jazz Archive. With its arrival came the premier collection of jazz oral history, more than 600 interviews of New Orleans jazz pioneers taped in the late-1950s and early-1960s with a grant from the Ford Foundation. Over the years, this unique resource has been tapped by researchers, book and journal publications, and media productions. The Archive also holds the most distinctive collection of photography on New Orleans jazz extant, including nearly 700 images of the city’s folk life shot by the distinguished photographer, Ralston Crawford. Its phonodisc holdings include donations from such prolific collectors as Dr. Edmond Souchon and Al Rose.

Not the least valuable of the Archive’s holdings, is its extensive collection of print and manuscript popular music, containing such treasures as the performing library of the John Robichaux Orchestra, the pit orchestra of New Orleans’ historic Lyric Theater portrayed in the hit musical revue, One Mo’ Time. Understandably, as the Tulane University Librarian I take much pride in this special collection. Fully integrated into

Emma Barrett Band recording on American Music label at Jeunes Arnis Hall (New Orleans), c.1958  
photo from the Ralston Crawford Collection

the organization of the library, the Hogan Jazz Archive receives its share of the library’s budget for staff, supplies, and equipment. For example, some $2,000 is allotted to the Archive for book and journal purchases alone. Funds are needed for a larger staff, better equipment, collection purchases, and a myriad of other things. However, there seems little chance of increased University funding in the near future.

Where can support come from? Following the usual paths, Curt Jerde, the Curator, has looked to state and federal agencies, foundations, individuals, and the Friends of the Jazz Archive. He has been successful. Creatively and doggedly, he has raised money, labor, and gifts in kind from all these sources. Applications for funds are pending in several offices. So the work goes on.

To what end? To collect, organize, preserve, and make available materials on New Orleans jazz. All efforts are directed ultimately to attracting and serving the users. Without the researchers, the information seekers—even the idle curious—the Archive has no purpose. But knowing about the collections precedes using them. Thus, publicity is vital. The present Curator has done an excellent job in exploiting brochures, concerts, newsletters, catalogs, exhibits, and sponsorships to make the Archive better known than ever.

An unusual collection of which Tulane is justifiably proud, the Hogan Jazz Archive deserves the fullest support of all who care for the preservation and continuation of America’s gift to music.

P. Leinbach

Hogan Jazz Archive Presents Al Rose Exhibit

From mid-April into summer, the Hogan Jazz Archive has on display selected materials from the donations of jazz author-impresario Al Rose. The Archive’s principal donor, Mr. Rose has brought to its collection a variety of photographs, print music, phonodiscs, and memorabilia accumulated during the course of nearly a half-century in the music business. His desire to share these treasures with students of jazz was a primary incentive for his numerous donations, which still continue.

“A Jazz Voice For American Vernacular Culture: The Al Rose Collection” seeks to elucidate the many roles Rose has played as record producer, concert promoter, author, and confidant to numerous jazz musicians. For instance, in 1947 he produced and directed a recording of pianist Dan Burley in New York City, assembling New Orleans sidemen Danny Barker and Pops Foster as accompanists. Test pressings on display

Al Rose with Earl Hines (left) and Eubie Blake (center) in New Orleans, 1979.  
photo from the Al Rose Collection

in the exhibit reveal that in addition to “Skiffle Blues”, released on the Arkay label, Burley also recorded some material which he had co-authored with Al Rose, Hot Lips Page, and Una May Carlisle. The exhibit includes the Arkay release, along with other materials pertinent to Rose’s productions.

Although it is not widely known, Al Rose began his career as an artist-caricaturist, the proceeds of which made possible his jazz endeavors. The Archive’s exhibit contains examples of his art, including caricatures of Pee Wee Russell and the Archive’s first curator, William Russell, depicted at home with his pet parakeet amid the clutter of thousands of old 78s, posters, pamphlets, musical instruments, and tools. Also on display are representative images from Rose’s photographic donations, some of which are published in his book, New Orleans Jazz: A Family Album, co-authored with Dr. Edmond Souchon and presently in its third edition. There are candid shots of such jazz greats as Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Barney Bigard, and Henry “Red” Allen, as well as lesser-known but important local musicians such as Burrell Santiago, Ernest “Ninesse” Trevigne, Lawrence Veca, and Albert Artigues. The exhibit provides a cross-section of photographs from all of Mr. Rose’s published works on jazz, including his most recent, I Remember Jazz. (1987), a generously illustrated memoir.

More than 5,000 pieces of print and manuscript music form yet another part of Rose’s contribution to the

continued on page 3
Al Rose Exhibit, continued.

Archive. Ranging from mid-nineteenth-century sheet music published locally to nationally circulated popular music of the "roaring twenties," the print music dimension of the Rose Collection is an invaluable source for students of art and social history as it is for music historians. Prior to its donation to the Archive, much of the music toured the nation as an exhibit sponsored by the Smithsonian Institution, entitled "Placed With Immense Success."

Pieces in the exhibit, such as "Shoo Skeeter Shoo" published locally by Philip Werlein in 1905, Robert Hoffman's "I'm Alabama Bound," another New Orleans imprint, "Au Clair De La Lune" by New Orleans composer, Lucien Lambert, "The Banjo Rag," and "The Flapper Song," serve to illustrate the breadth as well as the predominantly regional character of the collection. They also demonstrate the utility of cover art in gauging the vagaries of social and cultural change.

Finally, items from the nearly 2,000 phonodiscs in the Rose Collection are on display. Included are such rarities as the Willie "The Lion" Smith-Sidney Bechet "Haitian Orchestra" versions of "Sous les Palmiers" and "Rosa Rumba" on Varsity, "Okehs by Esther Bigou with Tim Brynn & his Black Devil Orchestra, Vess Ossman Columbias (c. 1907), and recordings of Frisky Foot Jackson with Punch Miller on the Champion label.

All students and lovers of jazz are invited to see the Al Rose exhibit during the Hogan Jazz Archive's normal business hours, 8:30 a.m.-5:00 p.m. Monday through Friday, and 10:00 a.m. - noon on Saturdays. In closing, it might be worthwhile to ponder these words by Al Rose from the preface to his latest book:

Time has demonstrated that the public, the people who have delighted in these sounds, collected the records, gone to the festivals, want more than the music. They long to know more about the men and the lives that created their music.

Certainly Rose himself deserves to be included in that number, given his lifelong devotion and creative contributions to the music.

B. Raeburn

The Panorama of New Orleans Jazz:
Graphics in the Archive

The Hogan Jazz Archive's graphics collection has become an important resource for scholars, students and especially media and museum programmers from all over the world. The collection contains over 7,000 photographic prints and negatives, most of which came to the archive by way of incidental donations from the private collections of photographers and jazz historians. The images, dating back to the late-nineteenth century, are of musicians, bands, orchestras, funerals with brass bands, parades, and landmark buildings of jazz history in New Orleans.

Over sixty prints from the collection were displayed in the archive during February and March of this year as part of an exhibit entitled, "The Sweep of Jazz History." The exhibit highlighted bands, buildings, and individuals important to the development of New Orleans' jazz from the early period, through the Revival, to more recent times. Representative of the first category were prints of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band (with which Louis Armstrong made his debut outside of New Orleans), Tom Brown's band (thought to be the first N.O. band to be labeled a jazz band, in 1915), and A.J. Peron's New Orleans Orchestra. Photos of jazz figures such as Bunk Johnson, Kid Ory, Johnny Wiggs, "Sweet Emma" Barrett, and the Dukes of Dixieland portray the impact of the Revival period upon the city, with Michael White's Original Liberty Jazz Band, the Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble, Danny and Lu

continued on page 5
Same by any Name, continued.

densely competitive milieu of band music in early twentieth-century New Orleans. The photographs on these pages, from the Archive's rich collection, are of New Orleans ensembles from the first three decades of the century.

Probably the earliest shown here is the photo (p.1, c. 1905), of Kid Ory's first band, The Woodland Band. Though a rural band from nearby LaPlace, its odd combination of violin, guitar, string bass, cornet, trombone (Ory), and drums was probably not uncommon in New Orleans at the time. Here is visual evidence of the importance of the string band in the genesis of the early jazz band.

The photo of Frank and McCurdy's Peerless Orchestra (p.1, c. 1906), shows a predominantly wind band, with the core of the later Dixieland band (cornet, clarinet, trombone) present. Of interest is the inclusion of a flute (and piccolo) and the absence of a string bass, leaving the rhythmic support to just guitar and drums, with possible assist from the trombone.

A later photo of The Peerless Orchestra (top, left, c. 1911) reveals different personnel and instrumentation: a violinist (A.J. Piron) replaces the flutist and a string bass rounds out the rhythm section. This combination—a balanced ensemble of three winds and four rhythm instruments with an added violin doubling the lead cornet—became fairly standard in New Orleans in the 1910s. Pictured about 1918 (left, center), the Cornelis Dance Orchestra displays new additions that were to become common fixtures of New Orleans bands in the 1920s: saxophone and banjo. The sax (here an alto) usually doubled with clarinet while the banjo supplanted the guitar. This group lacks only a piano (which it may have used indoors) to fit the stereotype of the New Orleans jazz band of the 1920s and after.

Clestin's Original Tuxedo Jazz Band (bottom, left, c. 1928), lacks little in the way of instruments and some to spare. The expansion of the band (here to 11 players) is characteristic of New Orleans bands in the later 1920s, as is the even greater expansion of timbres (through instrumental doubling). There is an extra trumpet, a ukulele, and a greatly enlarged reed section with three clarinetists doubling on a total of eight saxophones. The range of sonorities produced by such an array of instruments (especially the two baritone saxes in conjunction with a brass bass) must have been quite at odds with that of a "typical" New Orleans jazz band.

Still different instrumental combinations can be seen in other photos in this issue. The photo above of the Original New Orleans Jazz Band, as well as that of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band (p.6) display the 5-piece ensemble (cornet, clarinet, trombone, piano, drums) most widely associated with the name "jazz" before 1920. It is the instrumentation used by the O.D.J.B. in the first jazz recordings (1917) and by most of the New Orleans white bands playing in Chicago after 1915. The New Orleans Owls' 9-piece ensemble of the late twenties (photo, p.5) includes both banjo and guitar in its rhythm section; more remarkably, the Louisiana Five (back page) combines violin and saxophone, eschewing the usual front-line mix of cornet, clarinet and trombone.

We must conclude that very little was fixed or standard about New Orleans jazz during its formative years: neither its name nor its instrumentation nor, to judge from recordings, the styles and repertoire of its individual bands. This was, in part, a response to the changing times, but it was also owing to the basic function of these bands. By whatever name, the ensembles pictured here played primarily for dancing and freely adapted their size and make-up, style and repertoire to fit a particular social or recreational occasion.

J. Joyce
Panorama of New Orleans Jazz, continued.
Barker, Jeanette Kimball, and the New Orleans Classic Jazz Orchestra representing the later phase.

Many of the prints displayed came from two important donors to the archive's collection. Al Rose has donated over 1,000 images, and renowned jazz historian, William Russell, has contributed a variety of items that document the lives of the city's jazz pioneers.

As the aforementioned materials suggest, the bulk of the archive's graphics collection are vintage items. Its holdings, however, also include works by several recent photographers, including over 600 photographs by precisionist painter-sculptor, Ralston Crawford. Prints of New Orleans' folk culture from the Crawford acquisition formed the core of a highly successful exhibit entitled, "MUSIC IN THE STREET," presented jointly by the archive and The Historic New Orleans Collection as part of the 1983 Tulane Hot Jazz Classic.

The Paddock Lounge (now Lulu White's Mahogany Hall) in 1953. 
photo from the Ralston Crawford Collection

Celebrated art photographer, Lee Friedlander, and noted jazz photographer, Dr. Bernard Steinau have also donated prints to the collection, as have local photographers Jules Cahn, Don Perry, and Mona Macnurray. Numerous of the archive's images have served as illustrations in textbooks, encyclopedias, and other published works.

Hitherto, the archive has dry-mounted its photographic prints onto acid-free posterboard, storing them upright in standing file cabinets. Its present policy is to store all prints and negatives in acid-free envelopes manufactured by the Hollinger Corporation. Specific images are available for viewing by name of an individual, band, building, riverboat, or an event, such as a parade or funeral.

continued on page 8

Speaking Of Jazz

As the latest addition to the Archive's oral history holdings, on 2 October and 10 November the Curator and I interviewed Frank Netto, trombonist with the New Orleans Owls in the 1920s. He later played with many other well-known local musicians, such as Al Hirt and Pete Fountain, and reports having met Louis Armstrong at the home of the latter's aunt, a neighbor of the Netto family. An aversion to travel has doubtless contributed to Netto's relative obscurity.

A little-known but noteworthy fact revealed in this interview is that he recorded with Tony Parenti's band in a session which included drummer, Von Gammon, and trombonist, Charlie Hartman. By the 1930s, Netto was also playing string bass, notably in Tony Almerico's band with which he recorded in the 1930s and appeared on the riverboat, Capitol, during World War II. Born in New Orleans (January 15, 1904) to a nonmusical family, Netto joined the Navy at age seventeen and used some childhood violin lessons to get himself classified as a musician. He attended the Navy School of Music in Newport, Rhode Island in 1921, where he studied several instruments.

Netto joined the Owls between their Columbia recording sessions of September, 1925 and April, 1926. Though a Downtown professional musician, he fit in well with a band made up largely of Uptown jazz "babies." According to him, they did not mix socially, but got along well on the bandstand. They played not only in the city's fashionable hotels, but also in its gambling houses and lakefront spas, such as the West End Roof. Cornetist, Bill Padron and pianist, Edwin "Mose" Ferrer paid tribute to the pleasures experienced amid the lake breezes with their composition, "West End Romp."

The New Orleans Owls were a hot big band and swung mightily in the relaxed New Orleans fashion, with a sound remarkably fresh today.

The New Orleans Owls, ca. 1929: Netto is fourth from right, next to leader, Monk Smith, center. 
photo courtesy of Frank Netto

A review of reissue LPs by the Arcadian Serenaders, the Halfway House Orchestra, and the New Orleans Owls, all contemporaneous ensembles, in the April, 1971 issue of Footnote comments as follows: "Here is spirit, strong rhythm, integrated ensemble work, and a high musical standard.... If you are interested in the development of early jazz, sample these bands. All drew inspiration from the great originators of N.O., but none copied and each brought something individual to the idiom."

Frank Netto played with many other bands in many styles, among them Pinky Vidacovich's WWL, Radio Staff Orchestra and Albert Kirst's society ensemble, associations that provided him the chance to meet and observe such historic figures as Huey Long. He also filled in with countless name bands at places like the Club Forest and the Roosevelt Hotel's Blue Room, formerly the Venetian Room where Netto had played with the New Orleans Owls in the 1920s. Brian Rust in his liner notes for the Vintage Jazz Masters reissue LP of the New Orleans Owls (VLP 21) characterizes Netto as "a reliable trombonist in the manner of the better-known Dixieland men such as Eddie Edwards, George Brunis, and Santo Pecora."

Curt Jerde and I would like to thank jazzmen David Boddieinghaus and Godfrey Hirsch for their assistance, respectively, at the two interview sessions. Frank Netto's fertile memory could fill many more reeds of tape. Numerous questions remain unanswered, awaiting perhaps another session. He continues to play to the present day, though only occasionally with such friends as Godfrey Hirsch and Bernie Richterman.

R.B. Allen
With a Little Help from Our Friends--
the Archive Exhibits the LaRocca Collection

Academic 1986-87 has shaped up as a banner year for exhibit
activity at the Hogan Jazz Archive. Though the repository
of numerous unique collections, it has not always had the wherewithal to
give them adequate public exposure.

Through the exceptional support of the
present University Librarian, Philip E.
Leinbach, the Archive's exhibit initiative
has grown substantially in recent years.

Beginning in 1983 with "Music in the
Street", its exhibition of Ralston Crawford
jazz photography, the Archive has mounted
a sequence of notable exhibits, culminating
this past fall in "Dominic James LaRocca:
Legacy of a Jazz Pioneer." That exhibit
represented the first public exposure of the
LaRocca Collection, an assortment of
artifacts, graphic images, manuscript
materials, and other memorabilia donated to the Archive more than
twenty years ago. The collection serves to document the spread of
jazz from New Orleans after 1910 by focusing upon the activities of
LaRocca's Original Dixieland Jazz Band, the Crescent City ensemble
that made the first commercial jazz records (New York, 1917) and was
the first to tour abroad (England, 1918).

On display from late September to Thanksgiving, the
exhibit was highlighted by a reception on October 18 sponsored by
the Friends of the Jazz Archive. It included the dedication of a
permanent OJDJB display in the Archive's Johnson Listening Room,
and talks by Al Rose and Jacob Scambra. Dignitaries from Tulane
and the New Orleans jazz community attended, among them

The O.D.J.B. in a posed photo at the Aceda Studio, New York, Janu-
ary, 1917. L to r., Tony Sbarboro, Eddie Edwards, Nick LaRocca,
Larry Shields, Henry Ragas. photo from the Dominic LaRocca Collection

Willie Humphrey, Allan Jaffe, Betty Rankin, and Tulane University
Librarian, Philip Leinbach.

On permanent display are some of the more prominent pieces of
the collection, including photographic portraits, matted advertising
posters, and framed press collages. Many of the pieces were restored
for the exhibit at considerable expense. Donations from the city's
American-Italian Renaissance Foundation and the Friends of the Jazz
Archive helped defray the cost. However, more restoration effort is
required. Toward that end, the Archive would appreciate financial
support from anyone in the community interested in the origins of
early Dixieland and the role played by Italian-American jazzmen. In
reciprocation for their contributions, the Archive loaned the exhibit
to the American-Italian Renaissance Foundation for redisplay at their
headquarters in the Piazza d'Italia during the period from St. Joseph's
Day (Mar.19) to Jazz and Heritage Festival time (April 24-May 3).

The Archive is preparing to publish a catalog of the LaRocca
Collection. It hopes that the exhibit will bring renewed attention to
the collection from the research community, stimulating new
publications pertaining to LaRocca, the ODJB, and the early
Dixieland period. H.O.Brunn's The Story of the Original Dixieland
Jazz Band (1960) and Nick LaRocca, Fin Portrait, by German jazz
scholar von Horst H. Lange published in the same year remain the
only critical studies of LaRocca or the band.

James Lincoln Collier, author of The Making of Jazz: A
Comprehensive History, (Houghton Mifflin, 1978), Louis Armstrong,
An American Genius, (Oxford U.P., 1983), and a soon-to-be-published critical biography of Duke Ellington, recently spent time
in the Archive working with the collection, having been attracted to it
by announcements of the exhibit. He reports of many unique materials from the early jazz period hitherto
untouched. Collier took note especially of the depostions taken of
the members of the ODJB in association with a 1917 lawsuit
between LaRocca and cornetist Ray
Lopez of the Tom Brown band
concerning copyright of "Livery Stable
Blues," recorded that year by the ODJB.
The exhibit showcased those depostions along with the test
pressings of the band's early recordings. It also presented contracts

The O.D.J.B. on stage at the Palladium in London, 1919; replacing
the deceased Ragas on piano is J. Russell Robinson. Emile Chris-
tian has replaced Eddie Edwards on trombone. photo from the Dominic LaRocca Collection

signed with Victor Records, Columbia Records, and Vocalion
Records, as well as correspondence and assorted memorabilia
documenting the activities of the band as they traveled throughout
the United States and Europe between 1916 and the 1920s. In
addition, it contained items chronicling the band's short-lived revival
between 1936 and 1938, and LaRocca's well-known polemics with
the media in later years.
Featuring the Friends

In Memorium

All of us in the Friends, especially those of us who served with him on its Board of Directors, join the family, friends, musicians and associates of Allan Jaffe in mourning his passing on March 9, 1987. As founder of Preservation Hall and the moving force behind its success over the years, Allan made a major contribution to the world of jazz, and to the pleasure of all of us who enjoy New Orleans jazz. We will miss him very much.


From the Chairman of the Board

We approach the end of our first year since the regrouping of the Friends of the Jazz Archive. I'd like to thank all of you for your help and cooperation. One of the most valuable assets of an organization such as ours is the enthusiasm of its members. Those of you in the New Orleans area who are able to pitch in first hand, as well as those of you living far away are equally important.

One of you wrote on your membership application: "Wish I could be there to help, but it's too far." Just by supporting our organization with the payment of your annual membership dues, you make a contribution vital to our success. We thank you.

Much of the past year's efforts have involved reorganization and planning. We have had to establish an official mailing address, have stationary printed, and rework the bank account. With most of that behind us, we can now concentrate on building the membership even larger. Beyond that, committees must be formed and chairmen selected, that we might move ahead with more projects in support of the Archive.

Our involvements, however, have been more than procedural this past year. The reception we sponsored for the Archive's LaRocca exhibit last fall was successful and enjoyable to all who attended. It formally opened a permanent display of ODJB material from the LaRocca Collection in the Archive's Johnson Listening Room.

In cooperation with Archive Curator, Curt Jerde, we are planning more such events for the coming year. We will keep you informed as plans materialize, and invite any and all who live away from the Crescent City to schedule trips here to coincide with these events. We would be delighted to get to know all of you.

We will have our annual full membership meeting in May, of which you will receive an announcement. We call upon those of you who can to attend and participate in the election of Board officers. Until then—and at the risk of repeating myself—I thank you all again for your help and encouragement.

E. Edwards

Board members at the LaRocca reception. Back row, I. to r., Plata Smith, Al Rose, Eddie Edwards, Eddie Bayard, Philip Leinbach, Conrado Jones, Jacob Schram, Curt Jerde; seated, Bill Russell, Frances Fernandez. photo courtesy of The Friends

Letters to the Editor

Editor's note:

With this issue we initiate a regular column for readers' reactions. The editorial board of The Jazz Archivist welcomes all questions or comments and will print them—in whole or in part, as space permits—with appropriate editorial response.

December 30, 1986

Some indication of the state of my desk and in basket can be gathered from the fact that I just now got around to looking at the second number of The Jazz Archivist. I wish the publication a long and vigorous life and commend you and the Jazz Archive for the initiative.

May I also make a plea for exceptional care in dating photos, something which is often passed over when they're used for decoration. Case in point is the "Valuable Image" of the Invincibles, c.1916. If Red Mackie and Gelpi were really born in 1904, then this photo, in which [they] look at least 18, if not older, has to be from the early twenties. Also, if the photo in the Family Album, p.169 (first ed.), is correctly dated as 1916, then Monk Smith of the Archivist photo has to be 5 or 6 years older.

Concerning the opening of the ODJB room: it bothers me a bit that, once again, the spotlight is put on someone whose claims for stylistic originality, or a creative role in setting the style of the ODJB are pretty weak. My own examination of some of the materials of the LaRocca collection shows him to have been bitter to the point of paranoia, and possibly quite dishonest— that is, if what seem to be alterations after the fact of signatures to contracts are in fact that. Not much point in whining about a fait accompli, I guess.

Dr. Lawrence Gushee
Department of Music
University of Illinois, Urbana

Dear Professor Gushee,

Your appeal for more accurate dating is apt, as are your specific conjectures concerning the Invincibles photo. We have been able to verify, through family members, the 1904 birth dates of Gelpi and Mackie, as well as the 1898 birth date (given in the Rose-Souchon Family Album) of Monk Smith. Regrettably, we cannot establish precise dates for either of the Invincibles photos you mention. The dating of the earlier photo (ca. 1916) in the Family Album is certainly plausible, given the birth date and apparent age of Monk Smith (about 18) in that photo. As you suggest, however, the photo of the Invincibles printed in our last issue is clearly a later one and, thus, our ascribed date of 1916 is surely inaccurate. A sister of Red Mackie, Mrs. Fay Swanson, recalls several reunion performances of the Invincibles in the mid-twenties, one of which may have been the occasion for this photo.
Panorama of New Orleans Jazz, continued.

The archive files negatives according to a numerical code developed through consultation with the Kodak Corporation. It presently has a comprehensive index, under preparation to better facilitate patron access, especially for remote use.

The graphics collection includes art and advertising posters of jazz concerts, festivals, and other varieties of jazz performances from far and wide through time. For example, one advertises trumpeter Alvin Alcorn featured with the Yarra Yarra Jazz Band in a 1973 Australian concert. Another presents Bunk Johnson and George Lewis as featured artists at the 1959 Czechoslovakian concert, “Renesance Jazz.”

Rare films and recent video creations round out the materials included in the collection. They include footage of a funeral with the Eureka Brass Band, a street parade filmed by the Smithsonian Institution with the Onward Brass Band and Danny Barker as grand marshal, and a recording session with the Kid Howard Band at historic San Jacinto Hall. Another film entitled “The Jazz Party” done by New York television station, WNTA in 1958 features such elder statesmen of New Orleans’ jazz as Tom Brown, Peter Bocage, Sharkey Bonano, George Lewis, Punch Miller, and Paul Barbarin.

The graphics collection continues to grow at such a rate that an enormous processing backlog has developed. The Friends of the Jazz Archive are developing a volunteer worker program which it is hoped will enable the archive to alleviate the problem. In the meantime, it handles patron requests on a case by case basis, generally with satisfactory results.

A. Williams

Picturing The Past
Another Valuable Image from the Archive’s Collection of Vintage Photography

The Louisiana Five, c. 1919. Despite its name, this recording band never played in New Orleans. The only New Orleanian in this photo is the drummer, Anton Loda; the band’s other Crescent City native, clarinetist “Yellow” Nunez, is missing here. photo from the Al Rose collection

A. Williams

Pot Pourri
Major Exhibit Planned for Big Music Meeting in New Orleans

October 15-18, 1987, the College Music Society, the American Musico-logical Society and the Center for Black Music Research will hold their annual meetings jointly at the city’s Sheraton Hotel (500 Canal St.). To further enhance the scholarly sessions, workshop demonstrations, and panel discussions planned, the Hogan Jazz Archive will mount an exhibit of source materials relevant to local black music history. Planners have also scheduled several concerts, both during the day and in the evenings, including a presentation by Diana Rose on Thursday, Oct.15th at 9 p.m., of a segment from her new program series on National Public Radio, “Creole Cameos.” The Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble will also perform a cocktail concert on Sat., Oct.17th, 6-8 p.m.

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