THE JAZZ ARCHIVIST

A newsletter of the William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive
Volume XXXI, 2018

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Regarding the Cover Photograph

This photo was taken in 1961 by the intrepid Bill Russell. The musicians in the photo are, from left to right: Sammy Penn, drums; Louis Nelson, trombone; Kid Thomas Valentine, trumpet; Punch Miller, trumpet; Joseph Butler, bass; Emanuel Paul, saxophone; George Lewis, clarinet; Emanuel Sayles, banjo. They were apparently posing for someone else, but Bill was opportunely positioned to capture the sign for Associated Artists Studio hanging overhead; this in the moment before it was transformed into Preservation Hall.

The photo has a back story that relates to Florence Mars, who may be best remembered for her 1977 book, Witness in Philadelphia, about the 1964 murder of three young civil rights workers in Philadelphia, Mississippi. Back in the 1950s, Florence Mars took photography lessons from Ralston Crawford, and in 1961 she was associated with the Jazz Archive, making photo copies of historic photos. A box of her copy negatives from that exercise resides here at the Hogan Jazz Archive, and a recent encounter with that box revealed that she had also been developing rolls of film shot by Bill Russell, including the roll which offered up our cover photo. It is dated, probably in Mars’s hand, April 1961. Can anyone identify the young lady in the doorway on the left?
Picture Worth a Thousand Words

By Elijah Wald

For eighty years most historians have tended to frame jazz as an essentially African American music, and it is easy to forget that the first band widely marketed using the word “jazz” was a group of white, mostly Italian, players, the Original Dixieland Jass Band. That was in 1916, and for the next twenty-plus years a lot of white consumers tended to think of jazz as young people’s music rather than black people’s music, and even as white collegiate music. The “jazz age” of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s stories is a time of young white Americans breaking loose after World War I, drinking bootleg liquor and going wild to the rhythms of youth and the city.

Of course a lot of the music was originally made by black artists, but the process of marketing it to white listeners often involved erasing that fact. The most famous example of this erasure is the “cover” records of the 1950s, when every hit by a black artist was immediately re-recorded for the “mainstream” market by white singers, typically with larger sales. A less commonly mentioned practice was to simply market black music as racially ambiguous: Berry Gordy carefully avoided putting pictures of the artists on the sleeves of his early Tamla/Motown releases, so consumers who might not want records by black artists (or whose parents might not want them listening to black artists) could imagine the singers were white.

Of course, music marketers also wanted to sell to black consumers, and that also has become a famous story: the invention of “race records,” featuring black artists and targeted at black fans. That story begins with Mamie Smith’s recording of “Crazy Blues” – which was not, as it is often mischaracterized, the first blues record, but the first blues record released in the United States with a black vocalist, and which became a huge hit in 1920. Notably, it was not only a hit with black audiences: on her first national tour after making the record, some of Smith’s bookings were in segregated theaters where black customers were not admitted. But whatever the race of the consumers, Smith was marketed as a black artist performing authentic black music. Hence, the sheet music for Smith’s hit featured a picture of her and her notably African American backing band, the Jazz Hounds.

That band changed personnel somewhat as musicians joined and left, but with one exception the group in the photo is the band on the record: Ernest Elliot on clarinet, Dope Andrews on trombone, Willie “The Lion” Smith on piano, and Leroy Parker on violin. The exception, oddly enough, was the group’s star soloist: the trumpeter in the photo is Addington Major, but most authorities agree that the player on “Crazy Blues” – and certainly the most famous trumpeter in Smith’s touring group, was Johnny Dunn.

Dunn was from Memphis and had come to New York as a featured player with “the father of the blues,” W. C. Handy. He quickly made a name for himself as one of the top players on the jazz scene – some people credit him with pioneering the use of the plunger mute on cornet – and Perry Bradford, who produced “Crazy Blues,” recalled that when he was picking personnel for the recording date, “a thought hit me about a tall-lean-lanky man that moaned some mean blues at the Lafayette Theatre with W. C. Handy’s Memphis Blues Band.”

Dunn stuck with Smith for about a year then struck out on his own, capitalizing on their record success by calling his group “Johnny Dunn’s Original Jazz Hounds,” and in 1922 they recorded his biggest instrumental hit, “Four O’Clock Blues.” In hindsight, it’s hard to see what set this song apart, since it is a standard twelve-bar blues, and the melody is not particularly distinctive. Nonetheless, it was quickly covered by a local white band, the Original Memphis Five, and survived as a blues standard, most...
famously in a 1937 recording by Robert Johnson (as “From Four Until Late”), but also in versions by Memphis Slim, Speckled Red, and various other players, almost all with direct connections to Memphis. Dunn’s recording was clearly meant to reach the audience who knew him from Smith’s hits, and “Four O’Clock Blues” was published by Perry Bradford, Smith’s mentor and the composer of “Crazy Blues.” (Authorship was credited to Dunn and Gus Horsley, a frequent Bradford collaborator.) Bradford hired Sol Wohlman, one of the most prolific and popular sheet music illustrators of the period, to do the cover, and apparently gave him the cover shot of Smith’s band to use as a model… and that’s where things get strange.

Almost a century later, it is impossible to know why Bradford (or, less likely, Wohlman) chose to change the race of the Jazz Hounds for the “Four O’Clock Blues” sheet music cover. If they simply wanted a picture of a white band, there were plenty around, so why use a black band as models? In particular, why use this photograph, which required erasing the central artist, Mamie Smith? Perhaps Bradford originally commissioned a drawing of the Jazz Hounds sans Smith, then decided he might reach a wider market if the song wasn’t identified as “Negro.” Perhaps the Original Memphis Five’s version of “Four O’clock Blues,” recorded just three months after Dunn’s original, was a catalyst – or perhaps Bradford was behind that recording as well, and the recorded cover by a white band was part of the same marketing scheme as the sheet music illustration.

Whatever the reason, these two sheet music covers are eloquent testimony to the power of segregation and race-based marketing. The logic of “race records” was that black consumers (and some white consumers as well) would tend to favor black recording artists. But the logic of the sheet music market was quite different. The typical sheet music consumer was assumed to be a young middle class woman who took piano lessons, which is to say it was considered an overwhelmingly white market, and a respectable white market at that. The biggest sheet music hits, even at the height of the swing and rock ’n’ roll eras, tended to be sentimental ballads. There was nothing unusual about marketing sheet music by a black composer with a picture of white characters – that was the norm for any pop song that was not explicitly sold as blackface minstrel comedy.

One final possibility: maybe this cover was always intended as an inside joke, a nudge to the few people who might happen to make the connection. Perry Bradford was a notorious hustler, with his eye firmly on the economic bottom line, but he also took pride in his role as a “race man,” a pioneering promoter of black musicians. The choice to use a picture of white musicians was sound economics, but that fact undoubtedly irritated him – so maybe this was his way of getting a little of his own back, playing a trick on the segregated world in which he moved. The white mainstream had been buying white men in blackface for three-quarters of a century – this time, for once, they were getting black men in whiteface.

(Endnote)

1 Perry Bradford, Born with the Blues (New York: Oak, 1965), 122.
Louis Armstrong made eight visits to Sweden between 1933 and 1965. Thanks to his many gramophone records, he was already well known when he first visited Sweden in October-November 1933. He played on his eight visits a total of 86 performances in 16 cities from Umeå in the north to Malmö in the south. The concerts were mostly sold out within a few hours.

1933: First Trip to Sweden

Armstrong was very popular in the Scandinavian countries and had many fans who fought to get a ticket to his concerts. His popularity was much stronger than the concert agency in charge had estimated, and they had to arrange for several extra concerts. In 1933 six of the nine concerts were extra!

In July 1933 Armstrong sailed from New York to Europe. He made this trip, his second to Europe, a year after the first one, together with his girlfriend Alpha Smith and manager Johnny Collins. In August Armstrong fired Collins, following a deep disagreement. However, Collins had already signed the contracts for Armstrong’s initial engagements in England. In September 1933 Jack Hylton
replaced Collins. Armstrong had met Hylton on his first visit to England in 1932, and they had become good friends. Hylton booked Armstrong’s introductory tour of the Scandinavian countries: Denmark, Norway, and Sweden. To accompany him on the Scandinavian tour, Hylton put together an orchestra with eight black musicians working in London and Paris, and named them The Hot Harlem Band. The members were Charles S. Johnson, trumpet; Lionel Guimaraes, trombone; Peter duCongé, clarinet, alto saxophone; Harry Tyree, alto saxophone; Fletcher Allen, tenor saxophone; Justo Barreto, piano; German Araco, string bass, and Oliver Tines, drums. They were advertised as “America’s most popular jazz band;” however, these black American and Cuban musicians had been based in Europe for several years. Peter duCongé (1903-1965) was, like Armstrong, born in New Orleans. Justo Barreto Rodríguez (1905-1971) had toured Sweden with Sam Wooding and his Chocolate Kiddies in February 1931, and later in life he settled in Sweden. He died just a few months after Armstrong, and is buried in Huddinge, near Stockholm.

Armstrong’s first visit to the Scandinavian countries took place between October 19 and November 7, 1933. After five days and eight concerts in Copenhagen, he and The Hot Harlem Band arrived by train at Stockholm Central Station on Tuesday, October 24, and were welcomed by a huge crowd of fans. He had originally been contracted for a single concert in Stockholm on October 25 at the Auditorium in the center of the city. However, the tickets sold out within a couple of hours after they went on sale. Consequently, no less than three extra concerts were scheduled for October 27, 28, and 29 in the same concert hall.

Armstrong described his first visit to Sweden in Swing That Music: “From Denmark, we crossed over to Stockholm, Sweden, and there another big crowd met us at the station and it was about the same thing all over again. In Stockholm I was very pleased to have dinner one night with Marion [sic, Marian] Anderson, our fine colored concert singer, who was there at that time. From Sweden we went to Oslo...”

The visit to Stockholm was a great success for Armstrong and his band. They had Thursday, October 26, off, and that evening he and members of the band visited the restaurant Birma on the South side of Stockholm. Armstrong sat in with the orchestra for a couple of numbers and had a good session with the Swedish musicians. The Swedish Broadcasting Corporation (SBC), the one and only radio channel in Sweden at that time, noted Armstrong’s...
great success and made a very rare decision to change their Saturday, October 28, program in order to broadcast live 45 minutes of the second half of the concert at the Auditorium. The live broadcast ended after 38 minutes, when Armstrong played the last number. The studio man at the radio station filled the remaining seven minutes by playing a record with music by Strauss. Then the ordinary program continued with dance music played by two orchestras, led by Hans Bingang and Håkan von Eichwald, respectively.

For the broadcast from the Auditorium the SBC used a permanent telephone link to their studio provided by the Swedish state telephone company. At the telephone station they had recently installed equipment for checking the sound quality of the lines, which had an acetate disc recorder connected. The man in charge of this equipment decided to record some numbers from the broadcast. Three acetates were recorded and were later issued commercially. These seem to be the very first recordings made by Armstrong from a live performance, and perhaps the earliest live recordings of jazz ever in the world.

When Armstrong and the orchestra left Stockholm on Monday October 30 to travel to Göteborg (Gothenburg), four movie theaters in Stockholm ran newspaper ads on the same day with a photo of Armstrong and a handwritten note: “I say all Stockholm good bye. Personally I leave. But you can hear and see me in the Ri-Cinemas. Best wishes to all. From Louis Armstrong 28/10/33.” As an extra added attraction, the four cinemas screened the Betty Boop cartoon from 1932, in which Armstrong sings “You Rascal You.”

After the four concerts in Stockholm Armstrong played two concerts at Lorensberg Circus in Göteborg, October 31 and November 1. The latter was an extra concert, added because of the great demand for tickets. Following a two-day visit to Oslo, Norway, where they played four concerts, Armstrong and the band returned to Malmö, Sweden on November 4 and played one concert at Realskolan’s Aula that evening and another two extra concerts the following day before returning to Denmark on November 6.

Armstrong and his Hot Harlem Band made a great success with the Swedish audience, but the critics were less than kind. Even the most positive newspaper reviews were tinged with racist sentiment. The morning Stockholms-Tidningen sent sports reporter Oscar “Glokar Well” Söderlund to review the October 25 debut concert in Stockholm, and he wrote under the headline, “Jazz success - Audience knocked out for Armstrong’s silver trumpet:” “As black as night dementia were let loose with a silver trumpet at Auditorium Wednesday evening. Sold out, giant success and the audience roaring as if they protested against a judgment at a boxing fight - oh boy, here it was in high spirits.” The evening Aftonbladet sent Gösta Rybrant, a then-famous Swedish classical violin player, to review the same concert, and he made no attempt to disguise his racism: “This settles the old dispute about apes having a language. Those who yesterday heard Louis Armstrong giving his gravelly comments by the microphone can’t feel dubious about that.” After the first concert in Göteborg, Gösta Nystroem, a famous Swedish classical composer, wrote in the daily Göteborgs Handels- och Sjöfartstidning: “Mr. King of Jazz and man-eater offspring, Louis Armstrong, shows his clean shaven hippopotamus physiognomy. Flapping with an ordinary trumpet and a giant white handkerchief, he splashes up to the tribune, shows his teeth, snuffles, raises one of his wild negro african ancestor’s primitive cries, now and then alternating with a gravelly gorilla roar from the jungle.” Why were the reviewers inclined to dispense such racist vitriol? Certainly they were reflecting the rising tide of fascism in Europe and the rest of the world in 1933. Whatever effect they may have had on their readers, the Swedish fans who filled the concert halls for every performance appear to have admired Armstrong and his band members both as musicians and as human beings.
1949: A Two-Month European Tour Begins In Sweden

When Armstrong returned to Scandinavia again in October 1949, the Swedish part of his two-month tour was arranged by the concert agency Estrad in conjunction with the evening paper Aftonbladet. Other countries visited on this tour included Denmark, Norway, Finland, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Italy, and France. This time Armstrong was accompanied by his All Stars, with Jack Teagarden, trombone and vocal; Barney Bigard, clarinet; Earl Hines, piano; Arvell Shaw, string bass; Cozy Cole, drums, and Velma Middleton, vocal.

Armstrong and his All Stars took an SAS flight on Saturday, October 1, from Idlewild Airport in New York to Stockholm. At Idlewild, manager Joe Glaser gave Armstrong some final advice before he entered the aircraft: “Whatever you do, don’t sing. These are all foreigners. Remember, they don’t understand English.” Louis nodded gravely, according to Ernie Anderson, a member of Armstrong’s entourage. Down Beat noted in a photo caption in its issue of November 18: “New York - Louis Armstrong, pictured at Idlewild airport before taking off for Sweden, had no sendoff demonstration to compare with the mob which met him when he and his band landed at Stockholm. A crowd of several thousand fans was reported to have given Louis and troupe a royal welcome. Armstrong currently is touring Europe, is expected to return within the next two weeks.”

Armstrong and company arrived in Stockholm on the Sunday afternoon of October 2, and were met at Bromma Airport by a lot of fans and a group of musicians led by trumpeter Gösta Törner, whom Armstrong had jammed with on his first visit to Stockholm in 1933. With Törner was Georg Vernon, trombone; Putte Wickman, clarinet; Reinhold Svensson, accordion; Roland Bengtsson, string bass, and Georg Oddner, drums.

From the airport Armstrong and his band were transported to central Stockholm. In the caravan of cars was an open-sided lorry with the Hep Cats orchestra led by trumpeter Jack Lidström playing tunes made famous by Louis Armstrong. During a brief stop at Vasaparken in central Stockholm, Louis and the All Stars were introduced to an audience of about 40,000 youngsters attending a Teen Festival, “The coming youth.” There it was no time for the band to play. They had to hurry to the next stop, a reception and press conference at the Carlton Hotel, where they stayed during the visit in Stockholm. After the press conference Armstrong was interviewed by Folke Olhagen for the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation.

The following day, Monday, October 3, Louis Armstrong and his All Stars played their first sold-out concert at Kungliga Tennishallen. In the audience that evening was, among others, trumpeter Buck Clayton, who had come by air from Paris just to hear Armstrong. Clayton was introduced on the stage, but did not play.

The next day, Tuesday, October 4, Armstrong and his band left for a three-day stay and four concerts in Copenhagen, Denmark. They returned to Stockholm on Friday, October 7, for two extra concerts at Kungliga Tennishallen. Both were sold out within eight hours! Armstrong invited the Swedish singer Alice Babs to perform with the band at the two extra concerts. She sang “Sugar” at both concerts. During intermission at the first concert the blind Swedish pianist Reinhold Svensson played “Rosetta” as a tribute to Earl Hines and he also played “Indiana.” Armstrong and Alice Babs were interviewed by Grant Olson from the Swedish Radio (issued on CD by Screen Air Television, SCRAT-4901).

The December 30 issue of Down Beat touched on their Stockholm experience in an article titled “Armstrong Explains Stand Against Bop:”

The Armstrong European junket, which started out as a relatively placid affair with reasonable jumps between dates, turned into a riot of adulation from the moment he landed in Stockholm. There his coming had been heralded by daily front page stories.
in the papers. At the airport he was met by thousands of persons and a band playing Muskrat Ramble.

A parade of 100 autos and 500 bicycles took him into town. He stopped off for a few minutes at King’s Park (Vasaparken), where 40,000 more persons were gathered to greet him. Fifty-four hundred tickets to his first concert were sold out in 20 minutes to a line which formed at 7 p.m. the night before the concert.

The concert was covered by more than 50 photographers and, afterwards, more than 1,000 flash bulbs were swept up.

After the successful concerts in Stockholm, Armstrong and his band travelled by air to Göteborg to play two concerts on Saturday, October 8. Like in Stockholm, these concerts were sold out in a few hours, and it was estimated that about 2,500 other persons were very disappointed not to get hold of a ticket. The band then left for a one-day trip to Zürich, Switzerland, followed by another one-day trip to Helsinki, Finland. On Tuesday, October 11, Armstrong and his musicians returned to Sweden for one concert in Malmö. There they played another sold-out performance at the Tennisstadion.

1952: Tour Delayed One Week

The initial plan for the 1952 European tour of Louis Armstrong and His All Stars was to have them start in Malmö, Sweden, on September 20. However, negotiations with Joe Glaser took longer than expected. By the time the final agreement was signed, the first week of the planned performances had to be cancelled. The October 9, 1952, issue of Jet magazine included a photo of Armstrong and his wife Lucille entering a SAS air craft, with the caption: “Satchmo Flies To Europe: Trumpet King Louis Armstrong and his wife Lucille, left from New York by air for a two months European tour. They are to have a reunion with Louis’ former wife, Lil, in Paris.”

For this tour the All Stars consisted of Trummy Young, trombone; Bob McCracken, clarinet; Marty Napoleon, piano; Arvell Shaw, string bass; Cozy Cole, drums, and Velma Middleton, vocal. Trummy Young had joined the band just one week earlier. Armstrong and company left New York by SAS flight on Wednesday, September 24, and arrived at Bromma Airport in Stockholm the next day. After a day off in Stockholm they went by bus on Saturday, September 27, to Eskilstuna, 115 kilometers west of Malmö.
Stockholm. On the way to Eskilstuna Velma Middleton told the bus driver that she needed to see a restroom. The chauffeur told her: “Sorry, there are no restrooms in the woods in Sweden, but I can stop at the next service station!” At the stop Louis Armstrong took out his trumpet and played “Pennies from Heaven” for two of the service men at the station.

Armstrong and the band played the opening concert of the tour at Folkets Park (People’s Park) in Eskilstuna in front of 5,000 people. After that performance Armstrong and company travelled 51 kilometers north to Västerås for a second performance that same evening, at another Folkets Park. There they were met by 10,000 persons, setting a new attendance record that lasted until the Park went out of operation in the early 1990s. The next day the All Stars played at two more Folkets Parks, one in Karlsgoda and one in Örebro, with the same successful ovations from the audience. From Örebro the band travelled by train to Denmark for two days in Copenhagen before they returned to Sweden on October 1, and played two concerts at Lorensberg Circus in Göteborg. The next day they played one concert at Kungliga Tennishallen in Stockholm.

The following day Armstrong and his band took a flight to Helsinki, Finland, and played one concert at Mässhallen. On October 4 they returned to Stockholm and played two more concerts at Kungliga Tennishallen. Then the tour continued with three days in Norway. In all, on this European tour they played a total of 130 concerts in 63 days.

“Wild Crowds, Broken Records Greet Armstrong Abroad Again”

Stockholm - Jazz has been a tremendous box-office attraction for several years in Scandinavia, especially when top American names have been involved, but seldom has anything been seen like the riotous reception accorded to Louis Armstrong on his first visit since 1949.

Incredible prices were offered in a black market for tickets to Satchmo’s concert at the Royal Hall in Stockholm (capacity almost 5,000). Scores of fans lined up all night outside the hall to await the opening of the box office. A dozen people were reported to have fainted in the crowds that tried to break a police cordon in Oslo, Norway. In Gothenburg police had to chase the more fervent fans off the roof of the Cirkus Hall.

In four shows at the huge KB Hall in Copenhagen, Denmark, Armstrong played to more than 18,000 frenzied customers.

Everywhere the group went, the business was as fabulous as the audience reaction, with Velma Middleton, Arvell Shaw, Trummy Young and Cozy Cole coming in for heavy shares of the applause along with Louis.
1955: Sweden First Stop Again

Down Beat announced Armstrong's next tour of Scandinavia and Europe in its issue of September 21, 1955, under the headline: “Sweden 1st Stop For Armstrong.”

New York - Louis Armstrong’s All-Stars arrive in Stockholm on Oct. 2 to start their tour of Europe. The group will visit various Scandinavian cities until Oct. 14, after which they move on to Germany.

After winding up in Berlin on Oct. 28, Armstrong will travel through Amsterdam, Brussels, and the French Provinces. The band will spend six days in Switzerland (beginning on Nov. 4) and then leave for the Olympia theater in Paris for a three-week engagement from Nov. 15 to Dec. 6.

On this tour, Louis Armstrong’s All Stars included Trummy Young, trombone; Edmond Hall, clarinet; Billy Kyle, piano; Arvell Shaw, string bass; Barrett Deems, drums, and Velma Middleton, vocal. The tour started with three concerts at the Concert Hall in Stockholm, Sunday October 2. The first was an extra arranged afternoon concert because of the great demand for tickets. The second concert was recorded by the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation and part of it has been issued on LP and CD. The following day the group played two more concerts in the same hall.

Armstrong and the band had a tight schedule for this tour, with dates in Örebro, Växjö, Lund, and Borås. Altogether they played 16 concerts in eight days; five of them during a two-day visit to Oslo, Norway. During their October 6 concert at Akademiska Föreningen, an institution of the University of Lund, in the south of Sweden, Louis showed his great generosity. When a Swedish fan asked him if he could tape the concerts, he answered, “Mr. Glaser doesn’t like it, but if you hide the microphone so I can’t see it, it’s OK.” The microphone was then hidden on the curtain and the two concerts were successfully recorded, but they still remain unissued!

1959: Extended Tour

On Wednesday, January 14, 1959, Louis Armstrong and his All Stars and staff left New York on an SAS flight and arrived the next day at Bromma Airport in Stockholm, to begin what would be a five-month tour on the European continent. Representing the All Stars were Trummy Young, trombone; Peanuts Hucko, clarinet; Billy Kyle, piano; Mort Herbert, bass; Danny Barcelona, drums, and Velma Middleton, vocal. This time the Swedish part of the tour was extended, with a total of 19 concerts in eight cities. These concerts were all sold out well before Christmas 1958. In Stockholm the tickets were delivered in a special envelope with a photo of Louis Armstrong wearing a Santa Claus cap. It was one of the most wanted and welcomed Christmas gift in many Swedish families that year.

On Friday, January 16, Armstrong and the All Stars opened the tour with two concerts at the Concert Hall in Stockholm. Both concerts were recorded by the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation. They appeared in that same hall for the next two nights, giving two more concerts each night. Two of these concerts were added to satisfy the great demand of tickets. After their six successful week-end concerts in Stockholm, they flew 380 kilometers north to Sundsvall. When they landed at Sundsvall Airport they stepped out of the aircraft and were met by a temperature of minus 26 degrees centigrade, equal to minus 14 degrees Fahrenheit! In Sundsvall the All Stars played two concerts in a warehouse for anti-aircraft guns belonging to the LV5 regiment.

The next day, Tuesday, January 20, Armstrong and his group flew 276 kilometers further north to Umeå, where they played two concerts in the evening. The head of the town’s cultural department had
gathered some English-speaking people for a reception at Stora Hotellet, “so that the American guests had someone to speak to.” Unexpectedly, one of the persons that Louis met at the reception was his pianist from the 1933 tour of Scandinavia, Justo Barreto, who was currently playing in the Stora Hotellet bar, under the name Tico Rodriguez! The first concert that evening was recorded by the local office of the Swedish Broadcasting Corporation. A couple of the songs were used in a local radio program. Due to a tight time schedule, the two concerts were played without an intermission and with just a short break between the two performances.

At Sundsvall, Armstrong and His All Stars played two concerts in a warehouse, while the outdoor temperature reached minus 26 degrees centigrade. The audience kept their hats and overcoats on for the entire performance. Photo by Kjell Sandström, courtesy Sundsvalls Museum.
Immediately after the two concerts in Umeå, Armstrong and the group flew to Copenhagen for a nine-day tour in Denmark. After 16 concerts in Denmark they returned to Sweden on Friday, January 30, for two concerts in Malmö. The following day they performed two concerts in Göteborg. After the concerts the All Stars were invited to a party at the Club Bohemia, where some of the All Stars played with the local band of the evening. The next day they played two concerts in Borås, followed by a two-day visit to Oslo, Norway, where they played four concerts.

On Wednesday, February 4, the Armstrong group backtracked to Sweden and played two concerts in Örebro. The next day they gave their last concert of the tour in Sweden at the Sporthallen in Linköping. Then they flew to Nice, France, to continue the tour. It is estimated that no less than 63,000 Swedes heard Louis Armstrong during the course of this tour.

1961: Just a Short Visit


At the end of January 1961, Louis Armstrong and the All Stars were back in Europe and after concerts in France, Switzerland, and Germany they arrived at Bromma Airport in Stockholm Wednesday, February 15, for a short visit to Sweden. On this tour he visited “only” three cities in Sweden and played all together eight concerts.

This time the band included Louis Armstrong, trumpet and vocal; Trummy Young, trombone; Barney Bigard, clarinet; Billy Kyle, piano; Mort Herbert, string bass; and Danny Barcelona, drums. The only change in the All Stars this time was that Barney Bigard was back. Velma Middleton had initially been with the band for this African and European tour, but suffered a stroke when the band played in Sierra Leone and remained there in a hospital. She passed away February 11.

Louis Armstrong and the All Stars started the Scandinavian part of the tour less than two hours after their arrival in Stockholm, with two concerts at Kungliga Tennishallen and another two extra concerts there the next evening. Then they travelled to Oslo, Norway, Friday, February 17, and played two concerts. The next day they returned to Sweden and performed two concerts at Mässhallen in Göteborg and played the two last concerts in Sweden this time at Idrotthuset in Hällsingborg Sunday February 19. Armstrong and the band then continued their European tour with concerts in Denmark.

1962: A TV Show

Armstrong returned to Sweden in May 1962 for a brief visit, playing only in Stockholm and Gävle. The line-up for this tour was Louis Armstrong, trumpet and vocal; Trummy Young, trombone; Joe Darensbourg, clarinet; Billy Kyle, piano; Bill Cronk, string bass; Danny Barcelona, drums, and Jewel Armstrong was presented with a Laplander cap and a pair of Loovika-gloves at his first concert in Umeå, January 19, 1959 (the presentation was repeated at the second concert!). Armstrong gamely tried to play the trumpet wearing the fingerless gloves. Photo by Harry Lindwall.
Brown, vocal. The tour started with two outdoor concerts at the amusement park Gröna Lund’s Tivoli in Stockholm Wednesday May 23. The entrance fee was increased from the regular 2 crowns per person to 7 crowns for the three days Louis Armstrong and the All Stars played there.

During their three-day stay in Stockholm, they also recorded a TV show, filmed by the Sweden's Television (STV) for Nordvision, a cooperative venture between five Nordic public service broadcasters in Denmark (DR), Norway (NRK), Iceland (RUV), Sweden (STV), and Finland (YLE). In the afternoon of Thursday, May 24, they had a rehearsal for the TV-program at Circus in Stockholm. That evening they returned to Gröna Lund’s Tivoli for another two performances. On Friday, May 25, they held one more rehearsal for the TV show at 1:00 p.m. and then made the final recording at 5:30 p.m. Swedish singer Monica Zetterlund appeared as a guest star on the program, singing “My Man” with the band. The evening ended with two more concerts at Gröna Lund’s Tivoli. After a busy day Armstrong and his company relaxed until after midnight in a little movie theater named Hollywood, close to their hotel, viewing the first showing of the Goodyear picture they had made at Pathé Studios in New York a month earlier, on April 2. This visit to Sweden ended the next day, May 26, with a performance at Furuvik Folkets Park, near the town Gävle, north of Stockholm.

1965: Appointed Fire Captain

In June 1965 Louis Armstrong made what was to be his last visit to Sweden. This time his All Stars included Tyree Glenn, trombone; Eddie Shu, clarinet; Billy Kyle, piano; Buddy Catlett, string bass; Danny Barcelona, drums, and Jewel Brown, vocal. The Swedish part of this European tour started Saturday, June 5, with a performance at Furuvik Folkets Park, near Gävle, where they had made a successful concert in 1962. The next evening Armstrong and his All Stars performed at Mariebergsskogen in Karlstad. On June 7 and 8 they played two concerts each evening at Gröna Lund’s Tivoli in Stockholm. The following day they flew to Budapest, Hungary, for a single concert.

Returning to Sweden on Thursday June 10, they landed at Bulltofta Airport in Malmö, Sweden’s third largest city. At the airport, Armstrong and the group were met by two bands and more than a thousand fans. The Malmö Fire Brigade’s 15-man band played together with a brass band made up of local jazz musicians, and Armstrong was appointed honorary captain of the Malmö Fire Department, with Fire Chief Sven Sönnerberg placing a special helmet on his head. Armstrong joined then an exclusive group and shared the honor with Henry Ford II, conductor Arthur Fiedler of the Boston Pops orchestra, and the first Russian spaceman, Yuri Gagarin.

In the evening Louis Armstrong and his All Stars performed for an audience of circa 10,000 people at Folkets Park in Malmö, where they were the main attraction of the Skånefestivalen. Other stars at the festival included the Danish violin player Svend Asmussen, George Russell, Dexter Gordon, and Buck Clayton. During the evening there was music by more than a hundred musicians from eleven different stages. After the performance at Skånefestivalen, Armstrong and the band left the park to play for dancers at the Amiralen Restuarant in Malmö. They spent the next three days in Denmark, then returned to Sweden, arriving June 14 at Göteborg to perform at Liseberg Tivoli that evening and again the following day. These were the last gigs that Louis Armstrong performed in Sweden.

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1955-10-06 Lund, 24 + 22 tracks, unissued.
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Bessie Smith,
J. C. Holmes, Frankie, and that Careless Lover

By Wayne D. Shirley

Editors’ note: This is the fourth installment of Wayne D. Shirley’s annual column, exploring the recorded repertoire of Bessie Smith.

In this year’s column on Bessie Smith I’ll consider three of her recordings which bear a relationship to well-known folksongs. In the first and third of these recordings the relationship is clear and actual; in the second the relationship is basically in the mind of the beholder. The three folksongs are, in the order in which we shall consider them:

Casey Jones
Frankie and Johnny
Careless Love

The three recordings, with their dates of recording are:

J.C. Holmes Blues (27 May 1925)
Frankie Blues (6 April 1924)
Careless Love Blues (26 May 1925)

All three of these titles bear the name “Blues”: none of them, however, is a twelve-bar AAB blues. “J.C. Holmes” and “Careless Love” are both strophic sing-throughs of a set of four-line verses, while “Frankie Blues” is, basically, a verse-and-chorus vaudeville song.

I’m starting with “J.C. Holmes Blues” because I can relate it to a personal memory. In the mid-1960s folklorist Archie Green was asked by the Music Division of the Library of Congress to select the material for an LP of railroad songs from the field recordings in their Folk Archive.1 One of the limitations placed on Green by the head of the Music Division was that the record was not to include any version of “Casey Jones,” since the owners of copyright in that song were notoriously litigious.2 The recording duly came out in 1967 – AFS L61; “Folk Music of the United States: Railroad Songs from the Archive of Folk Song; edited by Archie Green,” on the Library of Congress Folk Archive recordings’ iconic translucent red vinyl. It is a wonderful collection of field recordings; it has no version of “Casey Jones.”3

The producers of the Bessie Smith session which would produce “J.C. Holmes Blues” seem to have known of the ferocious attitude the copyright owners of “Casey Jones” toward any possible infringement of their rights. The number they were going to record was originally titled “K.C. Jones Blues,” a series of four-line verses invoking with some blues inflections the melody of the original “Casey Jones.” Wiser eyes saw that substituting “K.C.” for “Casey” would fool no-one, and “J.C. Holmes” was born. The process of rewriting can be seen in the copyright deposit for the words of “J.C. Holmes Blues.”4 To us this change may seem trivial, even a blunting of the force of the takeoff; to the producers of the recording session it may well have seemed a necessary precaution. And, finally, it feels good to have a J.C. Holmes separate from that other brave engineer, whom we take seriously – at least until the final four lines of the last verse.

The copyright deposit of “J.C. Holmes Blues” contains five four-line verses: Bessie Smith ad libs a sixth verse at the end of the recording. “Casey Jones” itself is a verse-and-chorus song, with eight-line verses, each followed by a chorus which repeats material from the last line (or last two lines) of the verse it’s attached to. For example (first verse, last two lines; then chorus):

[end of verse]
He mounted to his cabin, with the orders in his hand
And he took his farewell trip to the Promised Land.

[chorus]
Casey Jones – mounted to his cabin
Casey Jones – orders in his hand;
Casey Jones – mounted to his cabin
And he took his farewell trip to the Promised Land.  

There’s no trace of a chorus in “J.C. Holmes Blues” with its five four-line stanzas; nor, in fact, is there a trace of that “farewell trip to the promised land”: when we get J.C.’s dying words in the final stanza he’s just one of the greats who’ve Gone On Before, like the dying gamblers in other Bessie Smith songs. Nor is there a trace of the final four lines of the last verse, a jokey four lines which made “Casey Jones” itself a natural for the vaudeville stage. Here are final lines of the last verse of “Casey Jones” – not of “J.C. Holmes”!

Mrs. Jones sat at her bed a-sighing,
Just to hear that her Casey was dying.
“Hush up, children, and quit your cryin’,
For you’ve got another poppa on the Salt Lake Line.”

And, of course, the final chorus rubs the joke in. With “Casey Jones” itself ending with a vaudeville stinger, the song was ripe for parody.
Who wrote the words to “J.C. Holmes Blues”? If you look at the copyright deposit for the words, you’ll see the credit “Gus Horsley” with “Gus” crossed out and “Iris” substituted. The page of music in the copyright deposit reads “Iris Horsley.” Gus Horsley has a modest but extant discography as a songwriter, including at least part credit for the “Kansas City Blues” as recorded by Perry Bradford and His Gang, a tasty if straightforward verse-and-chorus blues song. (You can hear Horsley’s banjo – good solid playing – on the record.) “J.C. Holmes” is credited to Gus Horsley – or “G. Horsley” – on standard discographies that list composers/lyricists, and on most record labels which list authors. Iris Horsley does show up as author in the January-June 1952 issue of the Library of Congress Catalog of Copyright Entries, and on the website AllMusic, so she is not utterly without honor.

The first and last stanzas of “J.C. Holmes Blues” as they appear on its copyright deposit are close relatives of the first four lines of “Casey Jones” and the first four lines of Casey’s final verse respectively. The middle three verses of “J.C. Holmes” are plays on the idea of “riding,” verses two and three with a remarkably female viewpoint for a railroad song (a reason to think kindly of Iris Horsley as the writer). Bessie Smith adds a sixth verse in her performance (perhaps ad libbing?), pulling the song back from its fallen-hero ending (“…just before he died…”) to its basic jokey/parodistic ambience. Her verse starts
promisingly but it ends without a punchline:

J.C. said “I don’t feel right;
I saw my gal with a man last night.
Soon as I get enough steam just right
I been mistreated and I don’t mind dyin’”

“I been mistreated and I don’t mind dyin’” is, admittedly, a great line – Bessie Smith had sung it in her cover of Ma Rainey’s “Moonshine Blues” in April 1924 and, as just “Been Mistreated, don’t mind dyin’” in Perry Bradford’s “Sinful Blues” in December of that year. But Bessie Smith’s added stanza requires a punchline as an ending; without such a punchline the record ends with a puzzling anticlimax.

Bessie Smith’s instrumental partners for the recording of “J.C. Holmes Blues” are Louis Armstrong, cornet; Charlie Green, trombone; and Fletcher Henderson, piano – her ideal trio of accompanists. They catch the spirit of this record, with their slightly parodistic micro-introduction and Armstrong’s answers to each of Bessie Smith’s lines, ably seconded by Charlie Green while Fletcher Henderson supplies rhythmic-harmonic background. Bessie rides happily above the three, grateful for material which gives her a chance to tell a story with characters who say things like

I ain’t good-looking and I don’t dress fine,
But I’m a rambling woman with a rambling mind
And
There’s two more roads I’d like to ride…
The Southern Pacific and the Santa Fe.

This is the one real parody among the Bessie Smith recordings. As such it isn’t very exportable. But Hoyt Axton, in his 1965 album Hoyt Axton Sings Bessie Smith, did a quite creditable cover of “J.C. Holmes” (duly credited to Iris Horsley). He omits Bessie Smith’s puzzling extra stanza and revises Iris Horsley’s last stanza into something that keeps up the parodistic tone of the earlier verses:

J.C. said just before he died
“Yeah, there’s just two more roads I’d like to ride.”
Yeah, the fireman said “What could they be?”
“The Southern Pacific – and a gal named Ida Lee.”

“Frankie Blues” is odd-blues-out in this threesome. It’s not, in fact, related to “Frankie and Johnny” except for the name in the title. But the name in the title affects how people listen to the record (“If it’s the Frankie Blues, where’s Johnny?”). In reality it’s a good solid vaudeville-style popular song well worth listening to, with a prehistory worth talking about. And Casey Jones and the anonymous lady of “Careless Love” are perhaps the most logical company for the equally anonymous heroine of “Frankie Blues.”

There are two aspects of Bessie Smith’s recording of “Frankie Blues” which cause it to be underrated among her recorded performances. Besides the reaction “Why Frankie with no Johnny?” there’s the initial reaction to Robert Robbins’ watery violin (I will admit he gets somewhat better when we get to the chorus of the song; but the damage has been done). If we can trust the index to the current edition of Blues & Gospel Records, 1890 – 1943, Robbins never recorded with a blues singer before or after his April 1924 sessions with Bessie Smith. (Irving Johns, the pianist, is his usual reliable
self.) Bessie herself is in great voice; the material is right up her alley (where else can you get St. Peter and Hackensack, New Jersey, in the same song?); it’s a pleasure to write about this record.

Well, to start: “Frankie,” who is of course a gal in the folksong “Frankie and Johnny,” is a man in Bessie Smith’s “Frankie Blues.” But Bessie Smith’s recording of “Frankie Blues” wasn’t the first recording of “Frankie Blues”; Mamie Smith, whose August 1920 recording “Crazy Blues” is usually cited as the start of the Classic Blues tradition, recorded what seems to be the original version of “Frankie Blues” in February 1921, and in her recording Frankie is a woman. Mamie Smith’s “Frankie Blues” is clearly the source for Bessie Smith’s: the tune is the same, and the words are a close parallel.

How is the change from female Frankie to male Frankie made? Mamie Smith’s version relies on a standard trick of vaudeville-style popular songs to make a song whose chorus is gender-specific singable by any singer. In the verse of the song a gender-neutral singer starts telling a story; as it gets to the chorus the singer says that she/he will report what one of the characters says; then the chorus consists of what the character, male or female, does in fact say. Here’s how Mamie Smith does this in the verse to her recording of “Frankie Blues” (warning: line eight would be a lot clearer if it started “She had left” rather than just “She left”):

Frankie was a good girlie
To everyone she knew;
She had some trouble with a sweetie
Which made her feel so blue.
She packed her grip for a trip
And said “I’m leaving here, honey dear.”
He called to see her next day;
She left, and this is what he had to say:
[chorus]
“I’m worried now…

Bessie Smith sometimes uses this strategy (or, perhaps better, accepts this strategy in a song she’s given to sing): thus several of her songs have a male protagonist in the chorus. But she can also alter wording to keep her female persona throughout the song. This can occasionally be ruthless: in her recording of “Beale Street Mama” she goes through a straightforward, as-published verse which sets out the tale of a “Poor Joe,” who loves a “Minnie Neal, down in Beale” who “gives him the air” and how, “if you were near him, you would hear him start his mournful cry.” Then throughout the chorus she sings a plea to a “Beale Street Papa” rather than a “Beale Street Mama.” For “Frankie Blues” her changes are more subtle (and less confusing). Here’s her straightforward rewrite of the verse:

Frankie was a good fellow
To everyone he knew.
I had some trouble with Frankie
That made me feel so blue.
He packed his grip for a trip
And said “I’m leaving here, honey dear.”
He called to see me next day;
I was mad and this is what I said:
[chorus]
“I’m worried now….
Bessie Smith’s change does not establish that Frankie in fact leaves.\textsuperscript{15} It does, however, allow her to sing her choruses in the persona of the “I” who “had some trouble with Frankie.”

Though Mamie Smith’s recording of “Frankie Blues” was made in early 1921, it was not released until later: the other side of the recording, “Mean Man,” was not recorded until December of 1922, and the recording number (OKeh OK 4856) suggests that the recording was not released until sometime in mid-1923. So Bessie Smith was not reviving an older number but trying her hand at something in recent memory.

The verses for the two “Frankie Blues” appear above; the choruses of both appear in the appendix to this column. Bessie Smith in general follows Mamie Smith’s words in the first chorus, appropriately changing all the “she’s” to “he’s. I will admit to preferring Bessie’s “Hackensack” to Mamie’s “Halifax” (it even rhymes). Bessie skips the first part of Mamie Smith’s second chorus; she cuts to the chase with “Now I’m weeping like a willow tree….”\textsuperscript{16} What happens after that is wonderful. We’re used to Bessie Smith dropping a reference, usually casual, to the Lord;\textsuperscript{17} but here the whole angelic host is asked to join in the search for her man:

\begin{quote}
I phoned the angels; they didn’t hear.
I phoned St. Peter: “Send a brown down here.”
\end{quote}

(Her message to St. Peter sounds more like a requisition for a replacement than a call to find Frankie.) Throughout the recording Bessie is in her best voice, enjoying every moment of the song. Even Robert Robbins redeems himself with some of his intense double-stop work.

The history of “Frankie Blues” does not end with Bessie Smith’s recording. Later in 1924,\textsuperscript{18} Hazel Meyers recorded for Ajax covers of Bessie Smith’s “Frankie Blues” and its flip-side “Hateful Blues.”\textsuperscript{19} Meyers doesn’t just imitate Bessie Smith’s recording; her version of “Hateful Blues” owes as much to Edmonia Henderson’s version (complete with Gatling gun) as it does to Bessie Smith’s (with its “student
doctors”); her “Frankie Blues” is basically the Mamie Smith version minus the start of its second chorus – that is, the Frankie-as-female version. It does borrow “Hackensack” from Bessie Smith – and, God bless her, she sings “She had left” rather than “She left” in the final line of the verse.

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The relationship between Bessie Smith’s “Careless Love Blues” and “Careless Love” as it is best-known is the easiest to talk about of the three relationships between folk-song and Bessie’s blues. The tune is the standard tune of “Careless Love”; the words are different, and indeed bear a somewhat different message from those of “Careless Love” in its standard version, but their source is clear and readily available.

The subject of the folk-song “Careless Love” is unwanted pregnancy – “Once I wore my apron low / Now I wear my apron high. / You see what careless love has done.” But pregnancy – childbearing in general – is not one of the general subjects of what we’ve come to call “classic blues.” (There are occasional references to a desire to avoid pregnancy, using the word “safety” to indicate either contraception-by-device or just plain abstinence.) “Careless Love Blues” sings rather of love-the-emotion conferred on an inappropriate subject:

Love, oh love, oh careless love,
You fly to my head like wine,
You’ve wrecked the life of many a poor gal,
And you nearly spoiled this life of mine.

Where do these lyrics come from? There is no known appearance of them on recording before Bessie Smith. They first appear on paper, as “Additional Choruses for Careless Love/ by Martha E. Koenig and Spencer Williams,” in W.C. Handy’s <i>Blues: An Anthology</i>. There are seven four-line stanzas of these “additional choruses,” of which Bessie Smith sings versions of the first five. The page has the lyrics only; there is no music on the page, nor is there any explanatory material. Spencer Williams is, as many of you will know, a songwriter whose work appears frequently on Bessie Smith’s recordings; of Martha E. Koenig I know nothing but that the website Discography of American Historical Recordings lists her as lyricist for three recordings of “Careless Love.”

If “Careless Love” proper takes on the plight caused by love without caution – carelessness in a specific sense – the “additional choruses” take on the destructive power of unsuitable love, requited or no. Perhaps “carelessness” is not quite the word for falling in love disastrously, but its meaning is clear in the lyrics as we have them. It’s easy to intellectualize this change: it’s probable that Handy just wanted a few more stanzas for the song. (It’s not the only song in <i>Blues: An Anthology</i> to get extra verses – specifically labeled as “extra” and on a separate page. There are three “Extra Choruses” for “Dallas Blues”; there are six “Extra Verses to Patter” and five new “Catch Lines” to “Wall Street Blues.”)

The “additional choruses” were, in fact, a better choice as words for “Careless Love Blues” than the traditional lyrics. The main note of the traditional lyrics is ruefulness rather than resentment. Bessie Smith can do ruefulness well enough – think of “He’s Gone Blues” – but it’s not the material for this burning, straight-ahead version of the “Careless Love” tune. Perhaps Bessie’s recording is not quite the “hymn of hate” Spencer Williams and the mysterious Martha E. Koenig label their work as –

You’ve made me throw my only friend down,
That’s why I sing this hymn of hate.
but their words serve as a good climax to the unfolding verses as they’re sung. Bessie rides triumphantly over them, as she does over the somewhat disconcerting last line she sings:

For my sins till judgment I’ll atone.

The Last Judgment is no concern of Bessie Smith’s except in her two fake-spiritual numbers.31 How did Bessie Smith get these “additional choruses,” which become the source of her entire text for “Careless Love Blues”? Were they, perhaps, written for her, for this recording session? The session, as noted above, took place in May 1925, while W.C. Handy’s Blues: an Anthology was not published until 1926. No copyright deposit was made for “Careless Love Blues” simply as “Careless Love Blues” until 1941, and then what was deposited was the page from Blues: an Anthology containing the seven “additional choruses.” It’s tempting to think of those “additional choruses” as having been written for this recording session – Spencer Williams, as we have said, was a frequent source of Bessie Smith’s material – but there’s no evidence that this is the case.

Bessie’s fellow musicians on “Careless Love Blues” – it’s a mistake to call them “accompanists”; this is a meeting of four equals – are, as they were in “J.C. Holmes Blues,” Louis Armstrong, Charlie Green, and Fletcher Henderson. I said about their performance in “J.C. Holmes Blues” that they “catch the spirit of this record, with their slightly parodistic micro-introduction [etc.]” They are much more than that in “Careless Love Blues,” which shows a remarkable cooperation between the two wind-players, each of whom knows his role at each particular moment. It works like this: the four-line stanzas give, in fact, three possibilities for an instrument to “answer” the singer: after line one, after line two, and at end of stanza. (Line three in each of the verses leads ruthlessly into line four;32 Bessie extends the last note of line three and accents the upbeat of line four, blocking the chance for a good responsible instrumental “answer” to line three; this in fact gives a greater importance and poignancy to the “answers” to lines one and two.) For the odd-numbered verses Armstrong takes the answers for the first line and the end of stanza while Green takes the answer for the second line; for the even-numbered stanzas it’s Green who answers to Bessie’s first line and end-of-stanza, while Armstrong takes up the answer to her line two. (Admittedly in a recording containing five stanzas this gives a preponderance of solos to Armstrong; but Green plays casually under some of Armstrong’s solos, while Armstrong generally stays courteously silent so that his more audible instrument doesn’t get in the way of Green’s solos.) Behind singer and solo instruments Fletcher Henderson supplies a straightforward and solid rhythmic/harmonic foundation. At first this foundation is simply four accurate, well-spaced chords a bar, but as the record goes on he applies occasional subtle touches between the main chords, never rising to the level of a solo but showing the sensitivity which made him one of the great jazz arrangers of the 1920s-1940s. He is not the background; these are three equals.

A fourth equal rides above them. If Henderson achieves his special importance by his small additions to the basic laying down of four solid rhythmic/harmonic beats per measure, Bessie Smith accents her driving and basically straightforward delivery of her five stanzas of the tune with what is even for her a reckless defiance of the standard spots where a singer will breathe (“Now I’m walk[breath]ing, talking to my[breath]self.”) As always in Bessie Smith, these breaths-in-the-middle add rather than subtract from intensity; “Careless Love Blues” is a classic spot to see how they propel her performance. A quarter of a century ago I described the Smith/Armstrong/Green/Henderson “Careless Love Blues” as “a splendid performance in which four co-equal musicians Play the Spots Off a Standard”; this is still how I think of this record. All three of the records I’ve considered here are well worth repeated listening, and I particularly wanted to write about the other two, which tend to be under-rated by casual listeners; but “Careless Love Blues” is one of the cornerstones of the Bessie Smith legacy. And of the three we’ve looked at it’s the one which stays closest to its folk-melody original.
Appendix:

Choruses of “Frankie Blues” as sung by Mamie Smith and Bessie Smith (verses for both versions are found in the body of the paper); “Careless Love Blues” as sung by Bessie Smith (not a transcription of the “additional choruses for Careless Love” as published in Blues: an Anthology)

Chorus to “Frankie Blues” as recorded by Mamie Smith and Her Jazz Hounds
Okeh 4856 (ca. February 22, 1921)

  I’m worried now,
  Ain’t gonna be worried long, No I ain’t.
  I miss sweet Frankie
  Since she’s been gone, Yes, I do.
  She ran away;
  I know she done me wrong.
  Now I’m weeping like a willow tree
  Now since sweet Frankie went away from me.
  Where she’s gone I do not know;
  She’s been seen near Baltimore.
  I will pay any fair reward
  If you will find [sweet] Frankie, Lord;
  I been to Frisco, I’ve gone to Halifax,
  Trying to find Frankie and bring her back:
  Someone find sweet Frankie of mine!
  [chorus 2]
  Someone find sweet Frankie, Lord. Please!
  It would give my poor heart some ease.
  She turned me in, she threw me down;
  Now she [flirts?] away with Henry Brown;
  Someone find that sweet Frankie of mine.
  I tell you
  Now I’m weeping like a willow tree
  Now since [sweet] Frankie went away from me.
  Where she’s gone I do not know;
  She’s been seen near Baltimo’.
  I will pay any fair reward
  If you will find [sweet] Frankie, Lord.
  I’ve been to Frisco, I’ve gone to Halifax,
  Trying to find Frankie and bring her back.
  Someone find that [sweet] Frankie of mine.

Chorus to “Frankie Blues” as recorded by Bessie Smith, April 8, 1924 (Columbia 14023-D)

  […]I’ll tell you
  I am weeping like a willow tree
  Since sweet Frankie’s went away from me.
  Where he’s gone I do not know:
  He was seen someplace near Baltimo’.
Yes, I will pay most any fair reward
If you will find Frankie, Lord.
I been to Frisco (and) Hackensack,
Trying to find Frankie and bring him back.
Somebody find that sweet Frankie of mine
(And) ease my mind.
Yes, I will pay most any fair reward
If you will find Frankie, Lord.
I phoned the angels; they didn't hear.
I phoned St. Peter: “Send a brown down here.”
Somebody find that sweet Frankie of mine
And ease my mind.

“Careless Love Blues” as recorded by Bessie Smith

Love, oh love, oh careless love,
You fly to my head like wine.
You wrecked the life of a many poor gal,
And you nearly spoilt this life of mine.
Love, oh love, oh careless love,
All my happiness I’ve left.
You filled my heart with them worried old blues;
Now I’m walking, talking to myself.
Love, oh love, oh careless love,
Trusted you, now it’s too late.
You made me throw my only friend down,
That’s why I sing this song of hate.
Love, oh love, oh careless love,
Night and day I weep and moan.
You brought the wrong man into this life of mine,
For my sins till judgment I’ll atone.

(Endnotes)
1 At that time the Archive of Folk Song was part of the Music Division; now it is part of the Archive of Folk Culture, itself a part of the Library’s American Folklife Center.
2 The Fireside Book of Folk Songs (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1947) includes brief, half-a-line copyright notices for eight songs (they couldn’t do without songs such as “Joe Hill” and “Lili Marlene”); it contains a whopping two-line copyright notice for “Casey Jones.”
3 In fact “Casey Jones” would have been somewhat of a guest on this record; though I suspect that if Archie Green had come on a sufficiently into-the-folk version among the Folk Archives field recordings he would have suggested it and the Library would have dealt with the licensing of the song. But the prohibition of “Casey Jones” – perhaps made jocularly by the head of the Music Division, who was prone to in-jokes – made a deep impression on this new employee.
4 The reader should remember that, while an advertisement for “K.C. Jones Blues” would be easily noticed by the copyright owners, they would have to listen to “J.C. Holmes Blues” or read somewhere of its relation to “Casey Jones” before they would be aware that J.C. might provide the subject for a lawsuit.
5 Quoted from The Fireside Book of Folk Songs, 142-143.
6 Again, from The Fireside Book of Folk Songs. (I knew, and was puzzled by, this last half-stanza and chorus before I was old enough to understand the joke.)
7 “Casey Jones - got another poppa. / Casey Jones - on the Salt lake Line. / Casey Jones – got another poppa, / For
you’ve got another poppa on the Salt Lake Line.”

8 Five items (as “songwriter”; he also has entries as composer, lyricist, and vocalist) on the University of California at Santa Barbara / Discography of American Historical Recordings website.

9 Only the chorus is sung in the record; but it starts “Yes, I’m desperate…,” an opening which presupposes a verse.

10 This is a fresh copyright, not a renewal of the 1925 copyright. Easy way to find it on Google: enter “Iris Horsley Holmes”; when this comes up click on “Catalog of Copyright Entries: Third Series.”

11 “Pasifit,” she sings, enjoying the pronunciation.


13 Here, in footnote, is a completely skippable paragraph on the confusing claims of authorship of “Frankie Blues”: Authorship of “Frankie Blues” is in dispute: record label of the Mamie Smith version credits it to Marion Dickerson, wife of Perry Bradford. (Matrimonial information from “Lemonier’s Letter” column in the Chicago Defender, May 24, 1919. Thanks to Lynn Abbott for this. (I am assuming that this marriage lasted at least through February 1921.) The record label for Bessie Smith’s recording credits the authorship of the song to Perry Bradford; the copyright deposit credits it to Ethel Bradford (the copyright deposit itself has not been located; this information is from the registration; as a 1924 copyright deposit, it almost certainly applies to the Bessie Smith recording rather than to Mamie Smith’s); it is credited to “E. Johnson” in the 1970s LP of the complete still-extant Bessie Smith recordings (Columbia G30450); my old files have this as “Eli Johnson.”

14 A particular favorite of mine is “Keeps On A-Rainin’,” where the singer (singing as “papa”) complains in the chorus “Keeps on rainin’ / Look how it’s rainin’ / Papa he can’t make no time.”

15 I like to think he storms out at being told that the singer “won’t be worried long.”

16 I do hear the chorus as starting with “I’m worried now” rather than with “Now I’m weeping….” The major shift in the music (“here’s the real tune, folks!”) comes at “I’m worried now…,” as does the shift to direct discourse.

17 A quick count of the first 100 songs in the 1970s Columbia LP ten-record series gets a total of twenty-six songs in which she sings “Lord” or “Lordy.” Admittedly these are, at least for the most part, casual interjections.

18 “ca. July” according to the most recent edition of Blues & Gospel Recordings, 1890 – 1943.

19 Actually it was probably “Frankie Blues” that was the “flip side”: “Hateful Blues” was almost certainly the more popular number.

20 Though her first two lines start with a male Frankie – “Frankie was a good daddy / To everyone that he knew,”

21 Nor, in fact, are children in general.

22 In Bessie Smith’s recordings: “I’m one woman believes in safety first” (in “I’ve Got What It Takes [But It Breaks My Heart To Give It Away]”) and “I’m a safety mama / Looking for a safety man” (in “Safety Mama.”).

23 Line three can certainly be interpreted as referring to unwanted pregnancy, but it’s far from the ruthless specificity of the “Careless Love” lyrics.

24 I am working from the 2012 edition, published by Dover Publications, Mineola, NY, where these “additional choruses” appear on p. 57.

25 He gets at least partial author credit for eighteen songs, including “Keeps On a-Rainin’,” “Midnight Blues,” “Cemetery Blues,” “Louisiana Low-Down Blues,” “What’s the Matter Now?,” “Washwoman’s Blues,” “You Don’t Understand,” and “Moan, You Mourners!”.

26 Though not as lyricist for Bessie Smith’s “Careless Love Blues.”

27 Quick intellectualization: in Plato’s Symposium, after everyone else has given his speech in praise of love, Socrates gives his attack on its miseries.


30 End of the fourth stanza of the “additional choruses,” as it appears in Blues: an Anthology. Bessie Smith sings “this song of hate.”

31 “On Revival Day” and “Moan, You Mourners.” I suppose we should also add the line “Bend down low for to drive away your sin” from “A Hot Time in the Old Town.” (Her “Sinful Blues” is a good-timey revel ending with a kazoo chorus.)

32 The third lines start “You wrecked the life…,” “You made me…,” “You filled my heart…,” “You made me…,” “You brought the wrong man….”: the force of these statements carries the singer over to line four.

33 Johnny Dunn, cornet; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Phil Worde, piano, Harry Hull or Chink Johnson, tuba; unknown, drums; Leroy Parker, Violin.

34 In several spots “sweet” is almost inaudible; in these spots I’ve put “sweet” in brackets. I do believe it’s somehow there.

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Sister Elizabeth Anderson Eustis: Down by the Riverside

By Royliene Montrell Johnson

Sister Elizabeth Eustis was a well-known gospel singer, recording artist, and licensed missionary in the city of New Orleans. In addition to recording for several national labels, she was much sought after as the gospel vocalist who could provide an authentic heartfelt rendition of gospel and spiritual songs on local New Orleans traditional jazz albums. But to me, her grandniece, all I knew was that my “Nanan” could really sing gospel music and was dedicated to sharing her talents. When her youngest sister, Gertrude, died at an early age, Elizabeth stepped in and raised her youngest son - my father - Roy Montrell. After my father met and married the love of his life, Edna, I was the first born of their growing family of nine children, which included two sets of twins. With such a large household, my parents gave their permission for my grandaunt Elizabeth to raise me. While growing up in Nanan’s household, there was always somebody coming over to sing, play music, or just enjoy her good holiday cooking. I never really realized the enormous contributions my grandaunt had made to spreading gospel music on the local level, and certainly not nationally. But, what an amazing discovery! I hope this article will help bring to light more of Sister Elizabeth’s achievements both professionally and personally.

Elizabeth’s journey began in Daisy, Louisiana. This small community of sharecroppers, fishermen,
and trappers, once located in Lower Plaquemines Parish, is since gone. The nearest town, Empire, is approximately six miles away. She was born on March 14, 1897, to Paul and Elizabeth Anderson. Her family worked on the Edgecombe Estate. According to the 1900 U.S. Census, Paul aged 60 years, and his wife Elizabeth, 23, had three small children, Estella, 8; Mary, 4; and Elizabeth, 3. Paul was listed as being able to read and write. Later they had two more children, a son, George, and another daughter, Gertrude. The family lived a very simple life, and Paul's fishing and hunting skills provided their basic needs and supplemented their meager sharecropping income.

The Andersons looked forward to Sunday church service and would walk down towards the river bank to the nearby Bethlehem Baptist Church, where they would join in with the lively and spirited singing of gospel songs. Paul, a church deacon, was often inspired to sing gospel songs during these times, and this greatly influenced his daughter Elizabeth. In “A Brief History of Sister Eustis,” written by her nephew Rev. Lloyd V. Montrell wrote in tribute to her, he explained: “Spiritual guidance from the family circle plus the hard struggle of Mrs. Anderson to educate her children, played a major role in molding the qualities found in Sister Eustis's character.” As young Elizabeth continued to grow spiritually, she also grew more confident in her ability to lead out in gospel and spiritual songs as a member of the church choir. She shared many a heartfelt gospel song, using her very distinct, strong contralto voice.

Elizabeth was baptized in the muddy waters of the Mississippi River at the age of 13, as a member of the Mount Zion Baptist Church. After the death of her mother and oldest sister Estella, Elizabeth's father struggled to raise and provide for his children while working several jobs. Finally, Paul made the difficult decision to send Elizabeth to live with her Aunt Mamie in the French Quarter neighborhood of New Orleans.

Paul and the other children remained in Daisy, where, like all Negro families in Plaquemines Parish during the early 1900s, their lives were controlled by the most powerful and repressive political segregationist “Boss of the Delta,” Leander Perez, who strictly enforced segregation and made millions of dollars off lucrative mineral leases in Plaquemines Parish. His illegal and unscrupulous political dealings made him, his family, and the people he endorsed wealthy through the subleasing of state mineral lands. Most of this land was located in the area of the Bohemia Spillway in Lower Plaquemines Parish. Many Negro families in that area owned small parcels of land, but were unaware of the rich oil and mineral rights they held. Paul Anderson was among those who owned land in the Bohemia Spillway. Although he was an expert hunter, trapper, fisherman, and swimmer, he was mysteriously found floating next to his turned-over fishing boat in the waterway, drowned along with his dogs. Over the years, several puzzling mishaps occurred in Plaquemines Parish, including a fire at the Parish Courthouse. Numerous records of ownership and deeds to properties have been destroyed and/or stolen in order to profit those in power and others. Paul Anderson's deed to the small parcel of land he owned in the Bohemia Spillway cannot be located in the records of the Plaquemines Parish Courthouse.

While living with her Aunt Mamie in New Orleans, young Elizabeth often shared her voice in song, as she became a member of several church choirs. The French Quarter during that time was experiencing a decline in overall neighborhood qualities. Surrounded by numerous saloons, dancehalls, and other outlets for vice, and being adjacent to the infamous “Red Light District” of Storyville, the French Quarter was grossly different from the small sharecropping community, with the hard-work ethics and virtues of moral conduct that she had grown up with back in Daisy. This period became a dark and unpleasant time in her life. Her life changed for the better when she met and married Henry Eustis, a veteran of World War I. She and Henry, a bricklayer and plasterer by trade, managed to save up enough money to purchase a home in the French Quarter. They were able to stretch finances by renting rooms to boarders in their home. Life improved for the couple and they were able to purchase another property in the French Quarter.
In his “Brief History,” Rev. Montrell wrote of the most impactful time of Elizabeth’s life; how, due to a very serious illness, she was hospitalized at Charity Hospital. Her condition was so poor and her health so rapidly declining that the hospital staff had given her up to die. She accepted their diagnosis, prayed, and then waited for her life to end. The night passed and she woke up the next morning with a miraculous recovery. Knowing that God had answered her prayers, Elizabeth was filled with a strong desire to share what God had done for her. She wanted others to know that just as He had answered her prayers and spared her life, He could do the same for them. This experience gave her the inspiration and vision to put into words and music uplifting gospel songs demonstrating how faith in God may at times be tested, but that it is no secret what God can and will do for all that believe He can. She composed several gospel songs to honor God and to encourage others. To further dedicate her life to serving God she became a licensed missionary. Her missionary license was

sanctioned by her church, the Zion Hill Missionary Baptist Church in Treme, under the leadership of Rev. Alexander Griffin. After all the years of faithfully serving God as a lay person, she was now on her Holy Spirit-led mission to save others through her words, music, and singing, as Sister Elizabeth Eustis. Her signature pink business card simply stated her personal message: “Prayer Changes Things.”

Sister Elizabeth began her recording career in 1947 with the release of a Kenneth Morris composition titled “I’ll Let Nothing Separate Me from His Love” on the Harlem label. In 1953 she recorded her own composition, “A Sinner’s Plea,” on the Bayou label. In 1954 she began a recording relationship with local New Orleans producer Joe Mares, whose Southland label was dedicated to the true New Orleans traditional jazz sound. When Mares decided to include an authentic gospel/spiritual singer on some of his albums, Sister Elizabeth became that gospel voice. She lent her gospel voice to several of his traditional jazz band albums, backed by such memorable players as George Lewis, Percy
Humphrey, Thomas Jefferson, Don Albert, and others. On May 2, 1962, she recorded a gospel session for Grayson Mills at 2nd Mount Olive Baptist Church in New Orleans. Mills released four songs from the session on his Euphonic label, and in the year 2000 the full session was released on a Delmark label CD.

Sister Elizabeth and her gospel choir were very welcomed guests at many events sponsored by the New Orleans Jazz Club. Her 1972 New Orleans Jazz Club performance at the Marriott Hotel received a review in the daily Times-Picayune: “Miss Eustis and her gospel singers fairly brought the aroma of rural churches and riverside baptisms into the ornate Mardi Gras Ballroom. . . Before working into her opening number, Sister Eustis told the audience she was just trying to glorify
God through her singing . . . From ‘Just a Closer Walk With Thee’ to ‘Down by the Riverside,’ she brought sweetness and solidarity to the afternoon.”

Former New Orleans States Item columnist, author, publisher, and composer Laurraine Goreau classified Sister Elizabeth as “New Orleans’ home-based counterpart to Mahalia Jackson.” In her “c’est la vie” column of October 25, 1963, she reported that Sister Elizabeth’s gospel singing was catching the attention of a record label in California, and that Southland records producer Joe Mares was discussing an appearance on the Ed Sullivan Show. Sister Elizabeth and Laurraine Goreau developed a long-time working relationship, and they collaborated on several songs. One thing Ms. Goreau came to know for sure: Sister Elizabeth was “Strictly gospel music; she won’t touch anything else.” She quoted Sister Elizabeth saying, “Somebody’s always trying to get me to sing blues, because I have the voice for it, but no indeed…. The blues have no hope. Singing gospel, you have a hope, a vision in view that you want to reach other people. Even though this present popularity of gospel singing may be a fad, it’s a good thing, because even people who don’t go to church will hear a true message.”

Dr. John (Mac Rebennack), a prominent local singing icon of New Orleans R&B music, told in his book, Under a Hoodoo Moon, how, for a short period, he had been a part of Sister Elizabeth’s traveling band. He described how her singing style changed in order to meet the audience: “She had one style of arrangement that she’d do just at her church, another set when she went out on missionary work, and a third set she’d lay down when she spread the gospel stuff with a Dixieland band.”

For over a decade, Sister Elizabeth had a weekly radio broadcast, every Sunday morning from 9:00 to 9:15am, on radio station WYLD, AM 940. It was sponsored by the Star Chrysler automobile dealership on Canal Street. The day before each broadcast, she would dedicate herself to God and after reading her Bible go into meditation and be consecrated in order that God would bless her singing abilities that they would uplift and give hope to whoever was listening to her sing. This sacred time with God was special to her ongoing mission. Throughout the years, many in the radio listening audience would write to her and let her know how they felt blessed to have heard her sing songs of inspiration. She was dedicated to bringing hope and faith in God through her radio broadcast and often arrived early so that she could open and read mail sent to her from her listening audience. She would take the time to sing whatever special song they requested making sure to acknowledge their name and any other special prayer request. Additionally, each year, she would present a “musical extravaganza” of gospel singers at the International Longshoremen’s Association (ILA) Hall. Some of the major singing groups to perform included Sherman Washington and the Zion Harmonizers, the Cavalcade of Gospel Stars, and many more. To further highlight her association with the Star Chrysler dealership she would
have a motorcade of new and old Chrysler cars traveling from her Treme home to the ILA Hall on South Claiborne Avenue.

Sister Elizabeth Eustis died on July 4, 1975, in Charity Hospital of New Orleans at the age of 76, after a brief illness. Her wake service at the Ebenezer Baptist Church on South Claiborne Avenue brought out a multitude of individuals whom she had touched through her singing over the years. Many gospel recording artists and groups from across the city were there to share in the celebration of a life
dedicated to helping others know the God that she served. Song after song was sung; hand clapping, foot stomping, praising, testimonies, and a profound sense of exuberance, joy, happiness, and peace prevailed as individuals each experienced their own sense of closeness to something divine. The next day her body was brought back to her Treme neighborhood, to lie in state at Blandin’s Funeral Parlor on St. Claude Avenue. At 12:00 noon, the Eureka Brass Band struck that mournful note to begin her “last mile of the way” to her final earthly home at St. Louis Number 2 Cemetery.

As tradition dictates, it was customary and respectful to the deceased for the funeral procession to pass in front of the deceased’s house. So, the Grand Marshall solemnly led the way, while the band played a funeral dirge and the group of mourners wound their way through the streets to her home on the corner of Marais and Kerlerec. But, Sister Elizabeth had always known, and would joyfully let you know, that her final home was not going to be St. Louis Cemetery Number 2, but her “home over there” . . . in Heaven!

Sister Elizabeth Eustis greatly contributed to and influenced the gospel music culture of the city of New Orleans. Her vibrant singing style not only touched church goers, but crossed over into the world of traditional jazz enthusiasts, touching them as well. The petite, Black woman from down in Lower Plaquemines Parish, who once survived a doctor’s grim medical report, with her powerful contralto voice now forever silenced in death, lives on in the many recordings that bear witness that she made God’s love real through her gospel singing, be it accompanied by a Hammond church organ, or the swinging rhythmic pulse of a Dixieland jazz band.

To hear two of Sister Elizabeth Eustis’s early recordings, follow the links below:
https://jazz.tulane.edu/sites/default/files/jazz/audio/Just_a_Closer_Walk_With_Thee.mp3
Sister Elizabeth Eustis and her choir singing “Just a Closer Walk with Thee” with Thomas Jefferson, trumpet, Frog Joseph, trombone; Sam Dutry, clarinet, Lester Santiago, piano, Placide Adams, bass, and Paul Barbarin, drums (Southland LP 238, reissued on GHB BCD 138).

https://jazz.tulane.edu/sites/default/files/jazz/audio/Holding_My_Saviors_Hand.mp3
Sister Elizabeth Eustis and her choir singing “Holding My Savior’s Hand,” with Don Albert, trumpet; Louis Cottrell, clarinet; Frog Joseph, trombone; Jeanette Kimball, piano; Placide Adams, bass; and Paul Barbarin, drums (Southland LP 239, 1962; reissued on GHB BCD 139).

Thanks to the George H. Buck Foundation for allowing us to share these recordings.

Works Cited

Dr. John (Mac Rebennack) with Jack Rummel, Under a Hoodoo Moon: The Life of Dr. John the Night Tripper (New York: St. Martin’s Press Griffin, 1994.


Clockwise from top left: Bay Area-based guitarist John Schott; Tulane University Italian professor Elena Daniele (far right) with one of her classes, exploring the Italian connection to New Orleans jazz; New Orleans researchers Tim Watson and Aimee Toledano examining slides; New Orleanians Bobby and Ione Bolden researching relatives; New Orleans writer/producer Gwen Thompkins, working on one of her popular WWNO radio shows; Tulane student Royliene Johnson researching her musical New Orleans family tree; University of Arkansas at Little Rock professor George Jensen.
IN THE ARCHIVE

Clockwise from top left: pianist Anuraag Pendyal; jazz pilgrims Laura Vendeiro and Janet Conover; New Orleans family historian Arnold Thomas, pointing to relative Achille Baquet in a back issue of The Jazz Archivist; Alex van der Tuuk, author of The New Paramount Book of Blues, Frog Records producer Paul Swinton, and musician Brody Hunt; Wendell MacNeal III (seated), namesake grandson of the second violinist with John Robichaux’s Orchestra, and standing (left to right) Ms. Jimmie Wickham and Bernadette MacNeal; Connie Atkinson, co-director of the Midlo Center for New Orleans Studies at UNO; researcher Nora Daniels.
Clockwise from top left: New York band leader Vince Giordano, and, in the background, New Orleans banjoist A. P. Wilking; jazz researchers David and Stephanie Butters from Great Britain; New Orleans photographer Girard Mouton; (left to right) New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation representative Nadir Hasan with the Honorable Travis Robinson from the Bahamas, pianist/student worker Lerin Williams, and Bahaman cultural ambassadors Clay Saunders and Fred Munnings; bassist and music scholar David Lowe; Patrick Hennessy, Director of Jazz Studies at Stetson University; New Orleans-based record producer Brice White and daughter Zora.
Clockwise from top left: (left to right) Kevin McParlan, Laura Platt, Margaret Platt, and Todd Platt, here to visit the Bill Mossman Collection of Recorded Sound; (left to right) Yale University graduate students Karma Masselli and Raffi Donatich, (and, in the background) James Danderfer from the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra School of Music; Jordan Hyde, La Trobe University, Melbourne, Australia; Steve Call (far left) and his Brigham Young University Student Jazz Band; Mokihana, Bob, and Wesley Barr, friends of Friend of the Jazz Archive Art Scully; New Orleans photographer Judy Cooper; Streckfus family biographer Arthur Smith.
“Jazz Palaces” in 1900 Scotland 
and other obtuse clues around the word “jazz”

by John McCusker

Since 1919, when the Daily Picayune editorialized against “jass and jassism,” it would seem everyone has an opinion about where jazz came from. The question has been addressed in different ways by different people over the last century. People like William Russell, Richard B. Allen, Alan Lomax, and others, sought answers from the lips of pioneer musicians by recording oral histories. At the same time, a popular history emerged, one that sometimes back-filled gaps in knowledge with myth and embellishment. This was on

Los Angeles Times, April 2, 1912

Examples of the latest slang heard in various American cities, as chronicled in the Rushville, Indiana, Daily Republican, June 7, 1913

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display for all to see on Capitol Hill in the spring of 1978 when Senator S. I. Hayakawa, R-California, took to the well of the Senate to filibuster a bill. His address was on his understanding of the history of jazz: “If you will listen carefully to something like ‘Tiger Rag,’ you will hear the melodies, the construction, the composition, the forms of French, Belgian and German band music, but in rhythms and the way the horns are made to drawl, you will hear the influence of the lower-class field negro,” he opined.

Everyone has an opinion.

The other tricky jazz question is over the origin of the word. Like the music, the tales of its history have tracked a path of mystery, mythology, and scholarly consideration. Among the stories out there is one claiming that “jazz” is derived from jasmine, a popular fragrance in New Orleans. Another is that it may be derived from a Creole word, “jasser,” meaning with pep or vigor. Still, the earliest known use of “jazz” to describe music was not in New Orleans, and many musicians, though not all, said they did not use the term before 1917.

Researcher Richard Holbrook found “jazz” in use in San Francisco as early as 1913, employed as a sports colloquialism. In turn, Lawrence Gushee traced this setting for the word back to 1912, in a Los Angeles Times report of a local pitcher’s new “jazz curve.” A seemingly broader meaning emerged in a 1913 newspaper column on slang, which noted that, in San Francisco, people say, “Are you jerry to the old jazz?” The article went on to note that, “Down in New Orleans they say, ‘I think I’ll make a little dodo,’ meaning they’re going to ‘hunt the hay’ or go to sleep.”

In the years since Holbrook’s and Gushee’s discoveries, text-searchable databases have become available online. Re-asking the question via this tool yields some interesting occurrences of “jazz” in different parts of the country and the world.

On New Year’s Day 1900, the Anniston [Alabama] Star published a United Press wire story from London on page one, recounting a failed business venture in Glasgow, Scotland. It spoke of an effort by one Scot to set up a “jazz section” in town,
occupied by so-called “jazz palaces. “The cryptic story inexplicably lamented that mainly Jews attended the palaces. The story sheds no light on what a “jazz palace” actually was.

Coincidentally, the word jazz shows up again in the same Alabama newspaper, on the same day, in an agricultural advertisement for “Jazz Dairy Feed.” Jazz brand feed was packaged in Birmingham.

Another benefit of text-searchable newspaper databases is being able to track the popular acceptance of the word “jazz” in the general vernacular. For example, in 1916, a search for “jazz” nets 189 hits. Once false hits are removed, the number falls to under a dozen. In 1917, the word shows up 11,117 times and continues to climb in usage through 1921, when it peaks at 66,195. Through the rest of the 1920s, use of “jazz” hovered around 52,000-60,000 per year.

We will never hear jazz music as it was first played at the dawn of the 20th century, but perhaps through further sleuthing, more pieces to the puzzle of the word will emerge in plain old black and white.

Endnotes
6. There are false hits on all of these searches; however, the typical words which caused many of the false returns, like “Jail,” “Razz,” and the phone number JA22, were constant from year to year, while correct hits surged in the tens of thousands.
Yesterday’s Papers

Being the first installment of a new column, in which we present music-and-culture-related articles harvested from old newspapers, one of the strongest remaining prospects for mining early jazz and pre-jazz history. The article presented here was penned by Rev. W. P. McLaughlin, under the title, “Report of Mission District, Louisiana Conference,” and published in the February 16, 1888, edition of the Southwestern Christian Advocate. The Southwestern Christian Advocate was the New Orleans-based mouthpiece for the Northern Methodist Missionary Society, which began its New Orleans work in the immediate wake of the Civil War, with the primary mission of educating the freedmen and converting them (and everybody else) to Methodism. Rev. McLaughlin was the Society’s newly-appointed presiding elder of the Louisiana Conference. In this, his inaugural progress report to the Advocate, he managed to reference three major touchstones of New Orleans jazz history and lore – Creole songs, Congo Square, and the Lower Ninth Ward:

The municipal limits of New Orleans include nearly 119,000 acres - of these only 10,000 are built upon or cultivated at all - the remaining 100,000 still lie in swamp and primeval cypress forest. The Ninth Ward of New Orleans is as unknown and unexplored as the depths of Africa - the leading citizens of this ward are alligators - they are a lot of tough citizens and extremely hidebound in their opinions. It was in this ward that Octave Johnson, a runaway slave, took refuge just before the Civil War. The slave-hunter with bloodhounds was put upon his track. Octave reached the swamp and there found other refugees. The dogs soon tracked and found them. The poor slaves seized clubs and fought them till the close of day, when torn and bleeding they retreated towards the Bayou filled with alligators. They scrambled across logs and fallen trees, the dogs pursuing. The alligators paid no attention to the men, but attacked the dogs - a short, fierce fight ensued, the water was crimsoned with the blood of the hounds, and the slaves escaped.

Some years later Octave was asked how it was that the alligators attacked the dogs and not the men - did he now regard it as a special Providence? “Dunno massa” - said he - “guess it was, but I tink, too, dat der alligators liked dogs' flesh bett'n pussonal flesh.” But the point I wish to make is that this vast region of swamp and cypress forest still lying unexplored and uncultivated in the parish of Orleans is a good type of that spiritual desolation for those whose redemption the Mission District was projected. In this district, which included as many tribes and tongues as Pentecost, and as much confusion as the Tower of Babel, I have served as presiding elder and also pastor in the French and English work. I have preached the Word as far west as Lake Calcasie... I have distributed French tracts in the Sulphur Mine region and carried the everlasting gospel two hundred feet down the salt mines of Avery's Island. There is scarcely a parish in Louisiana along the Morgan line that has not read a few of our French tracts. Where the train did not stop I distributed them at the rate of twenty-five miles an hour... I ate my Thanksgiving dinner on the banks of the Bayou Teche - said dinner consisted of dry bread and corned beef, washed down with flagons of water that required no microscope to see the animalcular. I visited New Iberia and Jeanerette, preaching the gospel by the way... I preached the first Protestant sermon in the old French village of Charenton. On the outskirts of the village the colored brother who believes in water and plenty of it has established himself, but in the town itself the Romish church and convent school hold undisputed sway. After considerable difficulty I finally secured what they called the “Public School” as a place for service... My congregation consisted of ten persons – it was a mixed congregation – very badly mixed – for there was only two white persons and eight colored. But the Lord was with us...
The greater portion of my time has been passed in New Orleans in the English and French work... By Act of the quarterly conference... what has been known as Ames Church, will hereafter be called from the street on which it is located, St. Charles Avenue Methodist Episcopal Church... Services in both English and French have been faithfully attended throughout the year... When the large theatre across the street was built it was predicted that it would be so detrimental as to about finish up the church, but we bid it defiance in the name of the Lord and every Sunday evening, with organ and singers, take our station in front of the church, and after a short service there, invite the crowd inside the church. Some object to our church because, as they say, we admit "niggers" into it and allow them to receive the sacrament... We plead guilty to the reproach...

In New Orleans and the parishes of Southern Louisiana there are probably 200,000 French speaking people. For more than 150 years the Roman Catholic Church has been the only one known among them... I began my work among these people February 7, 1886. I conducted seven services that day in French and English in three different parts of the city... We have had some trials, made many mistakes, won some souls for Christ and realize that we have thus far largely been engaged in laying foundations... "Let me write the ballads of a people," a great French writer has said, "and I care not who may make their laws." We have followed the maxim and given much attention to our musical foundation. First of all we printed a thousand cards containing a dozen good French hymns – Later we obtained from France a supply of the Cantiues [sic] Populaires, the best book in the language for Evangelistic work. Here are some of the songs in the old Creole (Gumbo) dialect, sung on the Louisiana plantations long, long ago:

Z'autres qu'à di moin, ca yon banbeaur
Et moin va di, ca you peine,
O'Amour quand porte la chaine,
Adieu Courri tout bonheur
Pauve piti Manzel Zizi!
Pauve piti Mamzel Zizi!
Pauve piti mamzel Zizi!

Li gagnir doulor, doulor, doulor
La gagnir doulor dans couer a lit
Others say it is your happiness
I say it is your sorrow,

Poor little Miss Zizi!
Poor little Miss Zizi!
Poor little Miss Zizi!
She has sorrow, sorrow, sorrow
She has sorrow in her heart
A very common refrain to a number of these ditties was:
“Mo l’aimin vous
Comme cochon aimin la bonnell”
“I love you just as a little pig loves the mud.”
“If thou wert a little bird
And I were a little gun
I would shoot thee – bang –
Ah dear little
Mahogany Jewel
I love thee as a little pig loves the mud.”
Contrast these ditties with the hymnology we have introduced.
“Vene coeurs souffrants et meurtris
Au medecia de l’ame.”
“The great physician now is near
The sympathizing Jesus”
“Reditis moi l’historie
Je l’amour de Jesus.”
Tell me the old, old story of Jesus and His love.
The old Huguenot hymn:
“On rochu de Jacob, tonte l’olure est parfaite.”
And that other so full of joy and praise:
“Grande Dieu nous te benisons.”
We have gathered to our services a little company of French Protestant, descendants of the ancient Huguenots, but nearly all among whom we labor are Roman Catholic... Our French Mission is now on Rampart street, near Congo Square. There we have services five times a week. We shall also continue to hold French services at St. Charles Avenue, LaHarpe and Nashua Churches.

A note to follow up on the Methodist Missionary Society’s public exhortations in Congo Square: On March 1, 1888, two weeks after Rev. McLaughlin’s “Report of the Mission District” appeared in the Advocate, a reader wrote to say that she had “attended an out door French service in the Congo Square, ... which inspired in her great confidence in the ultimate success of our French work under Bro. McLaughlin’s management.” How this “French work” may have played in the phenomenal success of the Methodist Church in black New Orleans, or the purported ascension of jazz from the bamboula to Buddy Bolden, is wholly open to conjecture.
In answer to our most frequently-asked question of the year: recruitment for the position of Curator of the Hogan Jazz Archive will begin soon. Meanwhile, we welcome our new Director of Special Collections, Jillian Cuellar, from UCLA, who is charting new directions for the Jazz Archive and everything else under the Special Collections umbrella.

In answer to our second most frequently-asked question of the year: we are currently working with our colleagues in Tulane Library to restore access to our digitized oral history collection. We appreciate your patience, and we are excited that many of our oral histories will soon be available via the Tulane Digital Library.

Visitors from all over the city and around the world have made for a very busy and rewarding 2018 at the Hogan Jazz Archive. We had two Bärnheim Fellowship recipients in the house this year, Josiah Boornazian, saxophonist and doctoral candidate at the University of Miami; and Dr. Vic Hobson, who just published a new book from the University Press of Mississippi, Creating the Jazz Solo: Louis Armstrong and Barbershop Harmony. Both gave the collection a solid workout pursuing new research projects. In keeping with the donor’s wishes, we will now be awarding a single Bärnheim Research Fellowship per fiscal year, in order to focus on the digitization of endangered audio tapes, crumbling scrapbooks, and other materials in dire need of conservation. This shift has placed us in a productive working relationship with conservation librarian Sabrena Johnson, who has our utmost respect going forward.

Regular patrons of the Jazz Archive have not failed to notice that our Storyville artifacts – the Mahogany Hall desk and Hilma Burt House gilded mirror - are conspicuously missing from the Piano Room. They have been loaned to “Empire,” the exhibit currently showing at the Newcomb Art Museum. One of many projects associated with the New Orleans Tricentennial, “Empire” was curated by the Fallen Fruit Artist Collective of Los Angeles. Of course, our Storyville artifacts literally qualify as fallen fruit, having come to the Jazz Archive as discarded objects, salvaged from the ruins of Basin Street by righteous representatives of the first generation of jazzologists.

The processing of collections never stops at the Jazz Archive. This year we processed the Richard B. Allen Correspondence Files. Of course, it was Dick Allen who gave impetus to the founding of the Jazz Archive in 1958, and who served as its first curator. That he also served as a forward scout for some of the greatest jazz photographers of the era is confirmed in letters from Lee Friedlander and Ralston],
Crawford, as well as one quick note from Stanley Kubrick. For those who would explore the history of jazz scholarship, the Richard B. Allen Correspondence Files harbor many surprises.

Meanwhile, we continue to process the Louis Prima Collection. Fortunately for staff and patrons alike, Tulane graduate student and jazz pianist Lerin Williams is applying her special skills to the task of straightening out Prima’s orchestrations, which arrived in a discombobulated jumble.

We continue to be humbled by incoming donations. Currently in process are some 3,000 LPs which constitute the personal collection of the late Bob Erdos, founder of the Stomp Off label, which was largely dedicated to New Orleans-style traditional jazz. The Stomp Off catalogue ranges from the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra of New Orleans, Louisiana, to the New Orleans Rascals of Tokyo, Japan. Bob’s personal collection also covers the wide, wide world of New Orleans-style jazz bands, harboring representatives from Australia to Argentina, to France, Holland, Germany, Czechoslovakia, and beyond. These records represent a genre; a dissertation lurks between the liner notes and the cover art. Among the more recognizable names of New Orleans-style players from overseas, Ken Colyer comes forth in abundance; ditto Acker Bilk. On a different note, the collection harbors a surprisingly rich vein of recordings by African American singer-guitarists like Lightnin’ Hopkins and Snooks Eaglin. Powerful strains of gospel music also brighten the collection. We are beholden to Bob’s wife Erda for placing this collection with the Hogan Jazz Archive.

Sue Hall’s collection of scrapbooks, photos, brochures, obsequies, and other New Orleans jazz-related ephemera also landed at the Jazz Archive this year. A self-professed “behind-the-scenes person and champion of the musicians;” Sue has been on the New Orleans jazz revival scene since the early days of Dixieland Hall. She booked the Palm Court Jazz Café from 1989 to 2006, and she is currently affiliated with Nickel-a-Dance.

With apologies in advance for any and all omissions, we are also very grateful for donations received this year from Sally Young, Mary Katherine Aldin, Keli Rylance, John Edward Hasse, Mara Rockliff, Charles Suhor, Bo Sherman, Per Oldaeus, John Lilliendahl Larsen, Art Scully, Greer Mendy, and others.
We respect and appreciate every donation, large or small.

Finally, a word about the authors whose scholarship is represented in this issue of The Jazz Archivist. It gives us genuine pleasure to provide an outlet for work of this quality:

Björn Bärmheim is an abiding friend, researcher, and donor to the Hogan Jazz Archive. Björn has made dozens of research visits to New Orleans from his native Sweden since the 1960s. An avid scholar of Louis Armstrong and George Lewis, he has been meticulously documenting the return trips that Armstrong made to New Orleans, as well as his tours abroad to Sweden.

Royliene Montrell Johnson is a Tulane student, the mother of a Tulane graduate, and a descendent of one of New Orleans’ great musical families. She grew up and still lives in the city’s historic Treme neighborhood.

John McCusker is a retired newspaper photographer, New Orleans jazz tour guide, the author of Creole Trombone: Kid Ory and the early years of jazz, and coauthor with Shane Lief of the upcoming book, Jockomo: 300 Years of Indians at Mardi Gras.

Wayne D. Shirley has charted an exemplary career as reference librarian and music specialist for the Library of Congress, editor of American Music, and author of several indispensable discourses on American composers. He holds a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Society for American Music.
is currently retired, living in Durham, New Hampshire, revising his edition of Porgy and Bess to comply with House Style of the nascent George and Ira Gershwin Critical Edition while creating a concordance of the lyrics of songs recorded by Bessie Smith.

Elijah Wald is an itinerant singer-guitarist with an incredible reservoir of songs, and the award-winning author of Escaping the Delta, Narcocorrido, How the Beatles Destroyed Rock ’n’ Roll, Talking ‘Bout Your Mama (The Dozens), Dylan Goes Electric, and other modern classics. He has also written a book about hitchhiking and is currently working on a historical-survey-cum-family-memoir about borders and immigration.

The image above is a thoughtful gift from our friend Keli Rylance, former Head of the Southeastern Architectual Archive in Tulane’s Special Collections, and current Head of the Richardson Memorial Library of the St. Louis Art Museum. It is of interest from so many avenues that it is hard to know where to focus our description. Louis Kohlman operated various businesses over the years in this building in the 400 block of Homer Street in Algiers—a restaurant, a billiards hall, lunch counter, and, as depicted here, a taxi cab service. A musician in his own right, Kohlman was the father of internationally successful drummer Freddie Kohlman. Many New Orleans musicians supplemented their incomes by driving cabs, including Warren “Baby” Dodds, Henry “Pickle” Jackson, Professor Longhair, and Nat Perilliat, just to name a few. Can anybody identify the drivers in this photo? And, can anyone offer a good guess at who might have taken it? We long for attribution. One last thought on the utility of this image: it serves as a sobering reminder that segregation in the Jim Crow South tainted every aspect of life; even separate cab services were necessary for African Americans wishing to travel safely through the city.
The Kid Thomas Dixieland Band playing for the Grand Opening of Doussan’s Shell Service Station at 2900 Gentilly Boulevard, across from Dillard University. The musicians are (left to right): Sammy Penn, drums; Louis Nelson, trombone; Kid Thomas Valentine, trumpet; Emanuel Paul, saxophone; Joseph Butler, bass; Ernest Rouleau, guitar. Photo by Bill Russell, from negatives developed by Florence Mars, September 23, 1961.