

# The Jazz Archivist

A NEWSLETTER OF THE WILLIAM RANSOM HOGAN JAZZ ARCHIVE

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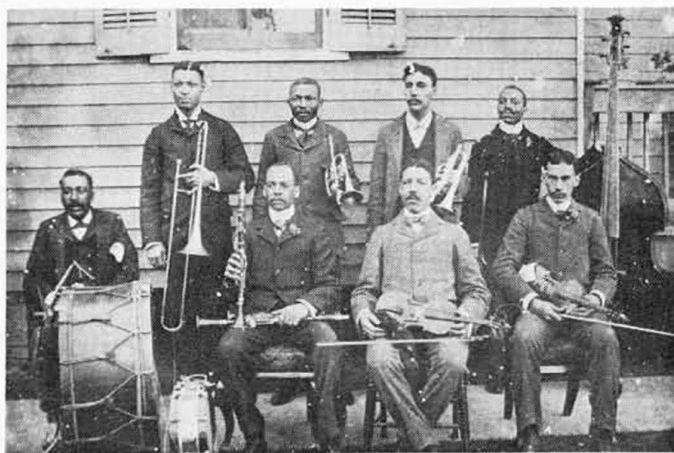
## The "Palmer Method" and the "Three Rs" of Jazz Musicography at the Archive

Over the past two years, a new face has grown familiar at the Jazz Archive, and with its presence has come a new consciousness in methodology related to the archiving of jazz performance literature.

Joel Palmer, a native of Detroit and a periodic visitor to New Orleans, first made his appearance at the Archive as a volunteer worker in 1984. Mr. Palmer has engaged in jazz research, production, and promotion intermittently over the years, while freelancing his livelihood as a private investigator. In the latter capacity, Joel has distinguished himself in a number of ways, perhaps most notably as a member of former District Attorney Jim Garrison's staff in the late 1960's, investigating the suspected conspiracy in the assassination of President John F. Kennedy.

After serving part-time as a temporary member of the Archive's compensated staff in late 1984 and early 1985, Mr. Palmer received a permanent appointment in May of 1986 as Associate Curator of Print and Manuscript Materials. Though he does not assume the task with the advantage of a reading musician, Joel nevertheless demonstrates a remarkable appreciation of the dynamics binding together an oral and a written tradition which together form a fundamental basis for the idiomatic development of the music as a performing art.

Mr. Palmer cultivated his cognitive awareness of jazz in the Motor City while serving as President of the New Detroit Jazz Ensemble, a performance workshop he co-founded with trumpeter Marcus Belgrave, and as executive officer of the Gabriel Historical Music Society. His repertory research related to the music has stressed oral history methodology. Through it he has gained an understanding that reveals folk antecedents transmitted by other than written means form the basis for a popular musical matrix out of which jazz emerged, with the innovation of sound recording serving as an audio extension of the oral tradition. A revolutionary dance music which found itself in need of an orchestrated dimension, the practice of musical notation in jazz arose almost as an afterthought.



John Robichaux Orchestra (1896).

photo from the Al Rose Collection



"The Camel Walk" by Sam Rosenbaum and Joe Verges and "Whoa You Heiffer" by Alphonse Verges.

from the Al Rose Collection

Palmer's method stresses the above mentioned bifurcated approach to repertory research. It enables him to readily identify songs in cognate representation and finds a compatible habitat in the Hogan Jazz Archive which over the years has groomed a substantial collection of popular music in print and manuscript form. The Archive's collection emphasizes in its own way the importance of the "three R's," where the names Rose, Robichaux, and Rosenbaum loom large.

The donation in October of 1965 of material belonging to New Orleans composer Sam Rosenbaum provided the Archive with much to document the popular foundations of jazz repertoire. Over the years, Rosenbaum penned an abundance of flapper songs which caught the fancy of many jazz players. Their reissue in the early 1980's on recordings by the New Leviathan Oriental Foxtrot Orchestra demonstrates their staying power.



Joel D. Palmer, Associate Curator of Print and Manuscript Materials

Numerous Rosenbaum pieces, along with a variety of other popular song materials in the Archive, were received from prodigious collector-historian Al Rose, whose contributions form a rich lode in its unique collection. Ranging from the antebellum period to the jazz age, Rose has donated a diversity of material, including minstrel songs, cakewalks, blues, and cool songs in addition to jazz standards.

Sheet music comprises the bulk of the Archive's holdings in popular print and manuscript music. However, beginning with the acquisition of the John Robichaux Orchestra library in March of 1963, it has also accumulated a substantial body of rare and valuable orchestrations and band arrangements. Robichaux dates to the formative period of the music, performing in historic Lincoln Park and throughout the city's circuit of community dance halls. The Robichaux Orchestra also functioned as the house band at the Lyric Theatre, a local black vaudeville establishment immortalized in recent years by the hit musical production "One Mo' Time".

C. Jerde

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GUEST CONTRIBUTORS FOR THIS ISSUE:

• David Sager • Tad Jones • Kalamu ya Salaam •

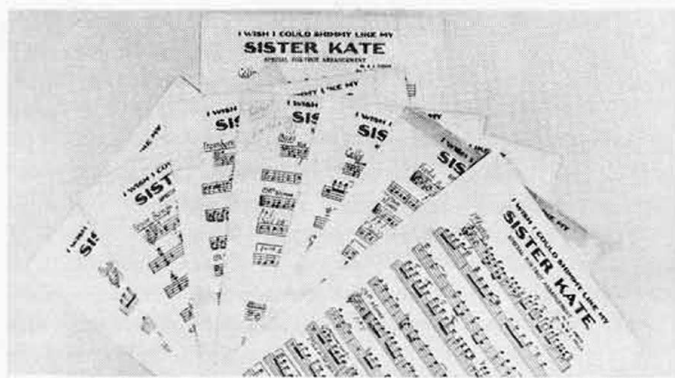
Tulane

EDITORIAL BOARD: Dr. John J. Joyce, Dr. Karl K. Koenig, Curtis D. Jerde, archive curator, Bruce B. Raeburn, associate curator, Richard B. Allen, oral historian, Philip E. Leinbach, Tulane University Librarian.

## Archive Orchestrations- Bringing It Back Alive!

An integral part of the Hogan Jazz Archive is the large collection of vintage dance arrangements dating from c.1890 to 1940. The variety of musical styles is impressive, including "hot dance" jazz, early classic jazz and "Dixieland," cakewalks, rags, and early concert selections politely termed "intermezzo." If one is very diligent, he may even discover some jazz-related habaneras, tangos, schottisches, and Mexican waltzes.

In their day, these orchestrations were essential to dance band leaders who needed to keep tabs on the latest dance crazes and hit tunes. Nowadays, these arrangements are having a renaissance thanks to numerous "repertory" classic jazz and ragtime ensembles which have sprung up over the past ten years or so. Some of these groups play a selection exactly as it appeared on an early phonograph record. In this instance, study of the record in question



Orchestration of "I wish I could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate"  
by A. J. Piron, arr. by W. C. Polla.  
*from the John Robichaux Collection*

would be the main thrust, although consulting orchestrations could certainly augment this approach. Another direction is to replicate the music as it was actually performed on a daily basis in dance halls, in theaters, at picnics, or other places. Since the music existed with greater frequency out of the recording studio and often lasted longer than the required three minutes per selection, phonograph records are of limited utility in such cases. Here is where old orchestrations are so valuable and sought after.

Generously, the Hogan Jazz Archive has served as both "market" and advisory source for many of these present day repertory outfits. What follows is an overview of some of the uses to which these treasures are put.

Gigi Cavicchioli (a member of the Archive's Council of Friends) leads the Ragtime Ensemble di Torino (Turin, Italy). Among the orchestrations he received through correspondence with the Archive are classics such as "Clarinet Marmalade," "Weary Blues," "(At The) Darktown Strutters' Ball," and an obscure blues called "I'm Cert'n'y Gonna See 'Bout That." (The latter tune was recorded in 1923 by Clarence Williams and Sara Martin accompanied by none other than Fats Waller.)

The bulk of the orchestrations collection comprises the one-time library of veteran New Orleans band leader John Robichaux. Phillip Speight of the BBC sought out the earliest examples from this vast library. He was rewarded with such titles as, "Don't Tell Your Monkey Man" (comp., Lukie Johnson, 1919), "You'll Be Sorry Just Too Late" (comp., Billy Gaston, 1908), "You Ain't Talking To Me" (comp., Al. Verges, 1904).

One group which has benefitted greatly from the Hogan Jazz Archive is the Chrysanthemum Ragtime Orchestra of San

Francisco. Through the efforts of Larry Delorier, their leader and manager, they have obtained copies of "Brainstorm Rag" (E.J. Stark, 1907), "Trombone Johnson" (E.J. Stark), "Billiken Rag" (E.J. Stark), "Mississippi Side Step" (Leo Berlinger, 1899), and "Halley's Comet" (H.J. Lincoln, 1910). Other rare orchestrations came from the legendary "Standard High Class Rags" (Red Back Book of Rags) and two early Eubie Blake pieces, "Fizz Water" (1914) and "The Chevy Chase" (1914). (Incidentally, the Chrysanthemum has recorded several LPs on the Stomp Off label.)

Of course, there is much more than ragtime in this immense collection, and its use is not restricted to out-of-town musicians. Local chanteuse and band leader Banu Gibson discovered the Jazz Archive at the onset of her band leading career. She literally spent days upon end at the Archive pouring over old arrangements, discovering rags, popular songs, and hot tunes. Of particular interest were the Melrose "stocks" of Jelly Roll Morton compositions. The Archive also provided Banu with an easier source to song lyrics - the printed word being much simpler to comprehend than the often garbled sound of early recorded vocalists.

The Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble is another local group which has made the Jazz Archive a home away from home. They have concentrated on the classic New Orleans jazz bands such as King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, The Original Dixieland Jazz Band, A.J. Piron, New Orleans Rhythm Kings, and Sam Morgan. Also, there is the New Leviathan Oriental Foxtrot Orchestra whose considerably larger instrumentation has culled from the Archive oriental intermezzos, tangos, and hot dance arrangements. New Leviathan was one of the first local groups to avail itself of the Robichaux orchestrations, along with the New Orleans Ragtime Orchestra, a band which includes two former staff members and a former curator of the Jazz Archive within its ranks.

Mr. Tom Pacl of New Carrollton, Maryland, leader of the Rosebud Ragtime Ensemble, a group which features singers and dancers as well as instrumentalists, once wrote Francis Squibb, formerly on the Jazz Archive's staff, for some very creative research:



The New Leviathan Oriental Foxtrot Orchestra (1981).  
*photo courtesy of Jack Stewart*

"Previously the Archive provided me with the Orchestration for Harry Von Tilzer's 'Cubanola Glide.' I am now looking for the lyrics and if possible the dance steps." Squibb replied: "We do indeed have the sheet music for Harry Von Tilzer's 'Cubanola Glide.' As for the dance steps, the lyrics give some idea as to how this dance may have been performed, but they are ultimately ambiguous." The outcome -

Mr. Pacl used the lyrics to reconstruct the dance steps. The piece was performed shortly thereafter with great success. Once again the Hogan Jazz Archive was there to - Bring It Back Alive!

## Jazz Archive Starts Radio Program

The Tulane Jazz Listening Library is the title of a new radio program sponsored by the Archive on WWOZ-FM, 90.7 on the dial. Curator, Curtis C. Jerde, developed the idea of exposing the seminal recordings housed there to a large regional audience through radio broadcasts. "We have original recordings of great figures in American music. Most of these recordings are not available to the general public, and even the serious music listener or collector would have a hard time finding many of them. This is a way to share the great music treasures in the Archive with an audience hungry for authentic examples of early recorded jazz."

The suggested format for the program is a ninety minute taped segment to be aired at least weekly. Each program will feature recordings of major musical figures or selections that will illustrate a particular period or style. Kalamu ya Salaam, Executive Director of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation, Inc., has agreed to host the program. Commenting on its importance, Mr. Salaam said: "This series offers listeners a unique opportunity to hear the music which is the basis of all jazz and much popular music today. Few of us have the time to visit the listening rooms at the Archive, but all of us can turn on the radio."



Kalamu ya Salaam with Curtis Jerde,  
Curator, at WWOZ-FM Radio.

The record collection at the Hogan Jazz Archive extends from the first jazz recordings of the teens to the present. Many of these recordings are on small labels which no longer exist. WWOZ program director Steve Pierce commented: "This will make an excellent addition to our programming and go a long way toward achieving our goal of offering the widest variety of good New Orleans music."

Future plans for the program include possible national syndication. In evaluating the importance of the radio program, Mr. Jerde noted, "We at the Tulane Jazz Archive look upon this program as a valuable opportunity to reach beyond our doors to the community at large."

Kalamu ya Salaam

## Jazz Archive Awarded NEA Grant To Tape Listening Library

In a world of Walkmans, compact discs, and music videos the 78 r.p.m. phonodisc remains an anachronism, if not an endangered species. Trying to find a phonograph with a 78 speed setting or the difficulty of purchasing a 78 stylus will prove the point. Like the Edison cylinder or the piano roll, the 78 has been kept alive only through the dedicated efforts of a network of collectors, some of whose collections are valued in the millions of dollars, and by the preservationist policies of institutions such as the Hogan Jazz Archive.

Recently, in order to prevent further deterioration of its holdings of 78 r.p.m. phonodiscs, the Archive submitted a proposal to the National Endowment for the Arts to begin taping a listening library from these old records. The proposal was accepted, providing \$8,000 for the initial phase of a project that may ultimately encompass the taping of some 20,000 phonodiscs. The year-long funding will allow for the taping of approximately 1,000 78s with priority assigned to items of New Orleans or regional derivation. Artists such as Louis Armstrong, Henry "Red" Allen, Jr., Sidney Bechet, and Jelly Roll Morton are prominent on the master list compiled as a guide to the taping, but others such as Esther Bigeou, Don Albert, Joe Robichaux, Cousin Joe, Walter "Fats" Pichon, and Paul Gayten will also be included.



Bruce B. Raeburn, Associate Curator  
of Recorded Sound Materials.

Although technology now provides a broad range of possibilities for re-mastering of old 78s through pin-point equalization, the Jazz Archive's strategy from the outset has been to preserve the phonodisc as the listener would normally hear it, employing limited equalization only as a last resort to offset the ravages of time and frequent playings. Consequently, the project consists primarily of simply cleaning, taping, and storing the phonodiscs. However, there is more to the creation of a listening library than the taping of records. A cross-referencing and indexing system is being developed as part of the grant to give patrons maximum access to the tapes when completed. In conjunction with the various discographical and reference works housed in the public area of the Archive, patrons would be able to find their desired selection with ease.

Once taped, the 78 r.p.m. phonodiscs will be permanently shelved in storage facilities to prevent any subsequent damage. Mint condition copies of rare records can thus be maintained for future re-mastering by interested record companies. The progress of the listening library will further diminish the need for multiple back-up copies which can then be diverted for exchange with similar institutions or possible auction. In addition, the listening library will also facilitate tape to tape transfer for radio and other media programming. The musical heritage of New Orleans and its environs is unique; thanks to the NEA and the numerous donors whose contributions comprise the recorded sound collection at the Hogan Jazz Archive, this heritage will remain alive and well, at least on tape, for years to come.

B.B. Raeburn

## SPEAKING OF JAZZ

Tad Jones, author of this column for the current issue, is a highly respected, award-winning author, editor, producer, and consultant. He is also a music lover of broad tastes. He is co-author of a book, *Up From The Cradle of Jazz: A Portrait of New Orleans Music, 1947-1982*, recently published by the University of Georgia Press. At present, he is a researcher in residence at the Hogan Jazz Archive doing fieldwork in oral history.

Richard B. Allen, Oral Historian  
Hogan Jazz Archive

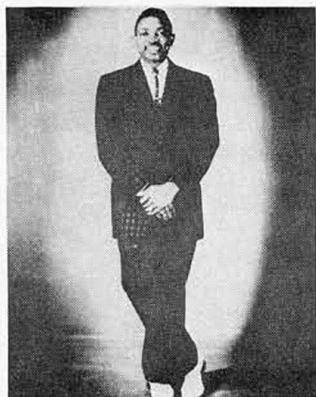
In March of 1986 the Hogan Jazz Archive embarked on an exciting new project in the field of oral history. Since its inception

(Continued on next page)



in 1958 the Archive has amassed one of the largest and most incisive collections of taped interviews in the field of jazz studies. The new project, now in its incipient stage, continues the work inaugurated by former curators William Russell and Richard B. Allen.

The first interview for this new series, conducted by the present writer, was with blues singer/songwriter Tommy Ridgley. Ridgley, aged 60, is the nephew of jazz great William "Bebe" Ridgley, founder of the Original Tuxedo Orchestra. He has recorded for such labels as Imperial, Atlantic, Herald, and Ric, and is best



Tommy Ridgley (c.1957)

*photo courtesy of Tad Jones*

remembered for songs "Shrewsbury Blues," "Going to Cross That River," "When I meet My Girl," and "In The Same Old Way."

The interview, recorded at Tommy's home in River Ridge, Louisiana, employed the basic format developed by Russell and Allen, but has placed a new emphasis on the family, social customs and habits, music of the neighborhoods, schooling, and segregation. The Ridgley interview is being indexed and should be available to patrons in late September. Any comments concerning this project are welcomed. Patrons may call the writer at home (897-3627) or write in care of the archive.

T. Jones

## FEATURING THE FRIENDS

The Friends of The Jazz Archive, an independent auxiliary organization, exists for the express purpose of supporting the William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive of Tulane University. It draws its membership from far and wide reflecting the extensive population who benefit from the Archive's valuable resources. Its Board of Directors meets regularly in an effort to maintain vigilant attention to the needs of the Archive, putting considerable emphasis upon enlarging the organization's membership in the belief that the larger the group the greater the support it can provide.

Among its various functions, the Friends assist in the publication and distribution of *The Jazz Archivist*. An application form accompanies the newsletter for the use of all persons interested in joining. The following joined as new members or renewed their membership in response to the first issue of *The Jazz Archivist*:

Woody Allen	New York
Floyd Levin	Los Angeles
Philip Leinbach	Tulane University
Tom Stagg	England
Mike Palao	New Orleans
John Broven	England
Robert L. Bradley	Houston
Gerald Andrus	New Orleans
Daniel Meyer	New Orleans
Allison Kaslow	Cleveland Heights, Ohio
Martin Williams	Smithsonian Institution
William Russell	New Orleans
William Carter	Palo Alto, California
Vince Giordano	New York
Dr. R. L. Woodward	Tulane University
Thomas Pacl	New Carrollton, Maryland
John Brown	University of Leeds, England
Dr. Arthur Hills	California St. Univ., Sonoma
Dr. Douglas Daniels	UC, Santa Barbara
Dick Hyman	New York

During September-November, 1986, the Friends co-sponsored an exhibit in the Archive of materials from the Dominic James LaRocca collection. It did so in cooperation with the Original Dixieland Jazz Band Foundation and the Italian-American Cultural Society, and hosted a reception for the opening of an ODJB Room in the Archive which showcases items from the LaRocca Collection on a continuing basis.

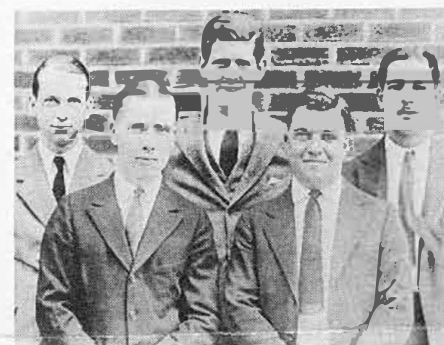
The Friends will also soon commence an on-going auction of valuable phonograph records and other duplicate materials from the Archive's collection. Receipts from the auction will supplement the Archive's operating budget. Lists will soon begin appearing in various national and international jazz publications. Those interested in receiving auction lists or desiring further information concerning the organization may write to:

The Friends of the Jazz Archive  
Post Office Box 850463  
New Orleans, LA 70185-0463

Plato Smith,  
Vice-Chairman of the Board

## Picturing the Past

Another Valuable Image from the Archives  
Collection of Vintage Photography:



The Invincibles (c.1916) Left to Right, Rene Gelpi, Elen Rgu, Frank "Red" Mackie, Lester "Monk" Smith, William Kleppinger; Forerunner to both The 6 7/8 Band and the New Orleans Owls of the 1920's

*photo from the Al Rose Collection*

Alma D. Williams  
Associate Curator for Graphic Materials

## Hogan Jazz Archive

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