

THE JARGON OF JAZZ

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## INTRODUCTION

Jazz, in the past twenty years of its existence and development, has reached the point where it provides employment for literally thousands of musicians. No longer merely a hobby or passing fancy, jazz has become a full-fledged profession, and as such, has naturally developed a vocabulary which is peculiar to the jazzman. It is this vocabulary of the jazzman or those closely associated with jazz music which is the subject of this thesis and which will be referred to hereafter as the jargon of jazz. This thesis includes both a historical study and an etymological glossary of these terms.

### Raison D'Etire

Jazz has been played and listened to in this country now for approximately fifty years. Originally a Negro music of New Orleans, jazz spread northward at first and then east and west, until today it is an undeniable part of the culture of this country. So thoroughly has jazz been assimilated by the American culture that words which were once used only by jazz musicians have now come into common use. Many of the users of these words are unaware of their origin, it is true, and some terms have changed their meanings to a marked degree throughout the years, but that jazz has contributed to American speech is undeniable. Such words as "jazz," "swing,"

"corn," "longhair," and "boogie woogie" are only a few examples of the jazz terms which have found their way into the vocabulary of the average American. Even though they may not be actively employed, their meanings are understood by most persons.

Undeniable as this jazz influence is, however, little reliable information is available concerning the origin and development of this vocabulary. It is true that recent dictionaries of American slang include some of the jazz jargon, but certainly the coverage has been far from adequate, and in no case are there reliable data concerning the sources or possible sources of these words.

In the biographies of such jazzmen as Eddie Condon, "Mezz" Mezzrow and especially "Jelly Roll" Morton, considerably more information concerning jazz terms is available, though again, large numbers of terms are ignored. Particularly important in these biographies is the employment of jazz terms in a natural manner--exactly as the musician would use them--giving the reader both an authoritative context and a presumably accurate picture of the environment of many of these pioneer jazzmen. It must be kept in mind, however, that the picture which these men give may be distorted, consciously or unconsciously, in order to suppress certain facts or to make others stand out in their favor, though generally speaking these autobiographies are accurate and give valuable information concerning the background and source of many jazz terms.

Jazz critics are another source of material in this field, although their contribution is rather in general historical background than in precise information concerning early word origins. Generally speaking, also, while he may and often does present information which is accurate, the critic's main concern is in proving a particular musical point, so that the facts may be slightly shaded one way or the other to create the particular illusion he desires.

The source material for the jargon of jazz, then, consists of: (a) slang dictionaries which give only surface coverage of terms, and neglect for the most part the sources of these words; (b) autobiographies of some musicians, which, though they may be of great aid, are not primarily concerned with either the terms or their backgrounds; and (c) works of jazz critics, which again do not interest themselves primarily in defining terms, but do so only as a means to an end, and as such may not be as precise as one might wish. Thus, though jazz has become enough a part of the American scene to have had some of its jargon assimilated by the standard speech of this country, the technical attention paid the jargon has been slight. In particular, the etymological study of the jargon of this music has been negligible. This thesis is an attempt to list and to define accurately the basic terms of this jargon.



## Purpose and Scope

Jazz jargon is no different from the jargon of any other trade or profession. Jazz terms, for example, are frequently transitory. Likewise, it is possible for jazz terms to be sectional, only heard and understood in one particular part of the country. Also, more than most professional jargon, that of the jazzman is often concerned with life outside the area of the profession, e.g., with eating, sleeping, drinking and nearly every other aspect of life as it concerns the musician. Since only a small amount of research has been done on the jargon of jazz, since musical terms tend to maintain a permanent position in jazz jargon, it was felt that a glossary listing only musical terms would be sufficiently useful to readers to be of value. To compile such a basic list, it was thought that the record titles of records by genuine jazzbands would most probably use only terms which would be recognized by the average musician or terms which because of the wide distribution of the phonograph record, would have quickly acquired currency among jazzmen in practically every section of the country. To obtain such a list of records, Delaunay's New Hot Discography was exclusively referred to. This discography lists all the recordings which Delaunay considers to have been influential in jazz over a period of thirty years (1917-1947). Such a limitation in time does not restrict the coverage of the jargon to any appreciable extent,

however, for no jazz records are known to have been produced before 1917 and it is not likely that a great number of terms have appeared since 1947. In addition to listing and explaining the terms in the glossary, it is hoped that this thesis will encourage an understanding of the problems which jazz music has encountered during its growth and will promote an interest in its colorful history. Finally, it is hoped that this thesis will create an interest in the music itself and help to raise it to a respectable level in the minds of people who may now view it with something less than respect.

#### A Definition

The terms for the glossary were chosen exclusively from the titles in a discography limited to "hot" jazz, and it will now be necessary to define the term "hot."

Winthrop Sargeant defines "hot" jazz as being "purely Negroid, more purely improvisatory and comparatively independent of composed tunes," as compared with "sweet" jazz, which is the "dance and amusement music of the American people as a whole."<sup>1</sup> Probably what Sargeant means when he refers to the "purely Negroid" character of jazz is the unusual syncopation of this music, for he believes that "syncopation is a basic

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<sup>1</sup>Winthrop Sargeant, Jazz: Hot and Hybrid (New York, 1946), p. 128.

structural ingredient which permeates the entire musical idiom and is to be found in every measure of the music."<sup>1</sup> The syncopation of jazz is of two distinct parts: (1) simple syncopation, or the accenting of beats which are ordinarily unaccented and (2) "the peculiar super-imposition of conflicting rhythms known as... 'polyrhythm.'"<sup>2</sup> Simple syncopation is widely known, and is very probably of European origin, but the peculiar type of polyrhythm of jazz "has been heralded as the true Negro contribution, and as the fundamental and distinguishing element of jazz rhythm."<sup>3</sup> A definition of this peculiar rhythm, however, would be awkward at best, since Sargeant assures us that "the naked formula... is something that is usually implied rather than stated."<sup>4</sup>

There are other features of jazz which are generally believed to be Negro in character, e.g., the vocal vibrato of the cornet, trombone and clarinet and the distinctive "blue" sound resulting from the unique flattening of the third and seventh notes of the scale. While these latter features are jazz characteristics, they are not characteristic of all jazz, since the white man has in some ways altered the basic features of jazz today. The basic rhythm as was explained by Sargeant remains a fundamental jazz feature, for without it, the music

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 114.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.,

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 55.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 65.



would no longer be jazz.

The second basic feature of "hot" jazz is that of being "purely improvisatory." This, like the distinctive jazz rhythm, is and always must be a part of jazz.

Improvisation is playing the way the musician feels, with freedom and without the restraint of written notes--an art which European music has lost and which was revived in America by the Negroes who play jazz.

But the greatest soloists who play real jazz never play a chorus twice the same way. That's why improvisation, by which I mean feeling, is important.<sup>1</sup>

Improvisation in jazz does not necessarily mean that the musicians are musical illiterates or that some written music may not be used. Many of the earlier jazzmen were strictly "head" players, it is true; however, such is usually not the case today. "King" Bolden, for instance, who was one of the first jazz trumpet men, "scorned written notation and even the desire to learn the notes."<sup>2</sup> "King" Keppard, another early trumpet man, was also a non-reader, but "all you had to do was play a number for him once," says Mutt Carey, "and he had it...he was a natural!"<sup>3</sup> But the complexity of the arrangements of the average modern jazz band makes reading ability an essential accomplishment for today's jazzman. On the other hand, such discipline in modern jazz has not put an end to

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Eduard Miller, "Analysis of the Art in Jazz," Esquire Jazz Book, 62, (1946).

<sup>2</sup>Rex Harris, Jazz (London, 1953), p. 82.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 85.

improvisation, for, like syncopation, improvisation must remain if the music is to be considered jazz.

The final characteristic of "hot" jazz is its comparative independence of composed tunes. This prerequisite, of course, is similar to the previous point: that jazz should be improvisatory. But to what extent can the music depend on a written score before it ceases to be jazz? The answer to this question is purely a matter of opinion and the division between "hot" bands and "sweet" bands is often the subject of long and involved discussions. Obviously, it is impossible for the large bands of today to give merely the key and the chords of a tune and let the musicians work things out for themselves, as was originally the practice. In addition, the modern jazz band must be, to a certain degree, commercial. It must cater to the wishes of an audience which is, for the most part, white, and, as such, expects music which is rhythmic yet not wild, exciting but not primitive. The white audience, while it generally appreciates good musicianship, must dance to the popular hits of the day, tunes which quite often are nearly impossible to make into an interesting arrangement. And yet, in many cases, these bands continue to play jazz, for so long as the band remains comparatively independent of written music and improvisation is an important function of the group, it will probably be considered a "hot" jazz band. Conversely, when the band stifles the creative drive of musicians by requiring them to play only the music which the arranger has written, the band becomes "commercial" or "sweet."

These three characteristics, then, are the features which basically identify the jazz with which this thesis is concerned. To define such a term as jazz mechanically is difficult, however, for its main identifiable features do not fit comfortably into the usual conventional musical niches. Herskovitz, in speaking of African music generally, says:

The purely African element in this music is the manner of singing these songs; in motor behavior alone has aboriginal habit persisted; not what he sings is so characteristic of his race, but the way he sings. This way of the Negro is identical in Africa and in America and is totally different from the way of any other race, but it is difficult, if not impossible, to describe or analyze it.<sup>1</sup>

#### Difficulties of the Study

The greatest difficulty which one encounters when working with any historical facet of jazz is a discouraging lack of information. This deficiency of dependable data is due to a combination of various factors. First, there is absolutely no way of reconstructing the sound of jazz as it was played in its embryonic stages, since as far as is known jazz did not appear on phonograph records until 1917. Second, the only information available about the details surrounding jazz in pre-1920 New Orleans comes from the few remaining pioneers of that

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<sup>1</sup>Melville J. Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past (New York, 1941), p. 263.

day and much of the information gained in this way is undoubtedly distorted because of failing memories or natural desire to place themselves in the limelight. Third, failure on the part of record companies to keep accurate written records make assembling of data difficult, and what records were retained were quite often lost or destroyed during the 1930 depression. Finally, until quite recently, the belief that jazz was simply a Negro dance-hall novelty stifled serious interest in the historical backgrounds of jazz, so that much useful information which could have been obtained fifteen or twenty years ago is no longer available.

The first jazz recording known to have been made is of the Original Dixieland Band, in the year 1917. This record is late in the development of jazz, comparatively speaking. Men such as "King" Bolden and Manuel Perez were playing jazz before the turn of the century, but unfortunately their style, range and volume will have to remain a mystery.<sup>1</sup> All we know concerning the early sounds of jazz is what the remaining musicians of that period can remember. Even more discouraging is the fact that there is no recording of the genuine Negro New Orleans jazz until 1921, when "Kid" Ory's Sunshine Orchestra recorded in Los Angeles.<sup>2</sup> The 1917 record, though interesting, is far from a valid test of the sound of New

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<sup>1</sup>Harrie, *op. cit.*, pp. 79-81.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 101.



Orleans Negro jazz of the day, since the Original Dixieland Band was but a poor imitation by a group of whites. Recently there has been a New Orleans revival: an attempt on the part of musicologists and critics to gather up some of the old New Orleans musicians and record the original New Orleans jazz style. The experiment was valuable, of course. Famous musicians like Bunk Johnson, who had never recorded were immortalized on wax, which, historically speaking was important. But as far as attempting to recapture the original New Orleans style and sound with men who in many cases had not touched their instruments in years, the experiment had questionable success.

Concerning the other details of the period, i.e., names of musicians, names of old tunes, places of employment and places of residence, again we must depend on the fading and unreliable memories of men who fifty years ago were playing some of the first jazz. Some of their information is undoubtedly accurate, but unquestionably much of it is also tinged by an understandable desire either to share the limelight themselves or to eulogize some former member of a long-forgotten jazzband.

Recorded jazz in the years after 1920 is available in large quantities to historians and musicologists. The technical data so important to accurate study is missing, however. This deficiency is due, to a large extent, to the failure of record companies to preserve written data, for in the period



1920-1930, it was unusual for musicians to receive royalties on records as they do today. Therefore, accurate bookkeeping was unnecessary, and information concerning musicians, composers and dates of recording was in many cases lost. The depression was another expensive blow to anyone today who wants to gather data on the development of jazz. Prior to 1930, the "naughty" reputation of jazz was advantageous, for Prohibition made "naughtiness" the vogue, especially for the younger set. Drinking, gambling, dancing all night, and listening to jazz was "the thing to do," and for a time, the jazzman was far from unhappy. He was playing nightly and eating daily. The daily meals and the party fever ended very abruptly in 1930, however, and jazz became as gaunt and hungry as the rest of the country; it came, in fact, very close to death. The rise of jazz during the Prohibition era before 1930 and its ultimate depression downfall is interestingly similar to the popularity and rejection experienced by the novels of F. Scott Fitzgerald. While Prohibition was in full swing, jazz and This Side of Paradise, both bringing to mind wild parties and bathtub gin, were fine; but when the time came for the country to reckon with the damage the ten year celebration had cost, she swiftly reformed, and, in her eagerness to forget her prodigal past, turned her back on both Fitzgerald and jazz, though neither had caused Prohibition high spirits nor sanctioned them. The depression chaos of 1930 had a direct effect on the search for historical material today. The bankruptcy

of record companies unfortunately meant the loss of much invaluable material. Not only were written records destroyed, but many master copies of jazz recordings also disappeared, some of which had never been used to produce a commercial record. In addition to this, the depression caused countless numbers of musicians to seek employment in more lucrative fields. Many of these men never returned to music and the loss, in addition to the musical one, is felt by the historian, who finds many details missing, which these men, if they were available, could possibly fill in.

Jazz has only recently become the subject of much serious consideration. This neglect was due in part to the reputation which had been brought from the New Orleans red-light district where jazz was first heard. It was "jass" music when it came to Chicago, meaning that it was music from the brothels; and during its stay in Chicago, jazz became nearly synonymous with Prohibition's sinning ways. In neither of these cities did jazz gain respectability in the public mind. In addition, jazz was primarily a Negro music, and while this did not necessarily condemn it, it certainly did little to change the already unwholesome picture which was beginning to form around it. At best, jazz was an interesting music, a popular fancy, a catchy rhythm, but in few cases was it seriously considered.

To make matters worse, what publicity jazz did receive was usually unfavorable. In England, the critics were particularly vehement in their denunciation. Sir Hamilton Harty,

addressing the National Union of Organists, said:

So long as Mr. Gershwin is exploiting the usual jazz tricks he gets hardly any further than the average of his fellow criminals; when he launches out into straight piano concerto music, we begin to ask ourselves what all this has to do with jazz.<sup>1</sup>

Even more violent is the fulmination of this critic:

The brains of the whole lot [of jazz composers] put together would not fill the lining of Johann Strauss's hat....Jazz is the latest word in brainlessness and boredom....Your typical jazz composer or jazz enthusiast is merely a musical illiterate who is absurdly pleased with little things because he does not know how little they are.<sup>2</sup>

In the United States, jazz received no kinder treatment. It was accused of causing everything from immorality to bad nerves. One doctor, when interviewed regarding the adverse effects of jazz, explained the situation this way:

Why will the waltz no longer satisfy? Simply because the nerves of the present generation are in such a state that they are soon bored by slow motion....When the beat of his [the American's] motor fails, it is as if the motorist were deprived of his dope. Thus also with the jazz-lover. The more jaded the nerves are, the more rapid and rhythmic the beat must be.<sup>3</sup>

A few critics were kind to jazz, and, in scattered instances, serious musicians spoke in its favor; but the average person persisted in his view of jazz as merely a clever, novelty dance music.

Today, jazz is looked upon with more favor, both by the

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<sup>1</sup>Sir Hamilton Harty, "Debunking Jazz," Literary Digest, LXXXVII, 27, (March 26, 1927).

<sup>2</sup>Quoted in "Accursed Jazz--An English View," Literary Digest, LXXXI, 28, (October 2, 1926).

<sup>3</sup>Quoted in "The Doctor Looks at Jazz," Literary Digest, LXXXVIII, 33, (September 29, 1927).

general public and the professional musician. Jazz concerts have been heard in nearly every major concert auditorium in the country and composers of international fame are writing major works in the jazz idiom. Igor Stravinsky, to choose a notable example, is interested in jazz and has based several compositions on typical jazz rhythms and chordal progressions. In 1946, Stravinsky personally conducted the Woody Herman band in a recording of his *Ebony Concerto*, which is entirely based on the jazz idiom.<sup>1</sup> Had there been such interest in the 1920's or even the 1930's, much valuable information could have still been recovered from the New Orleans area and accurate records kept on various phases of the art form from then on.

#### Outline and Summary of Content

Chapter II will deal briefly with the history of jazz. The purpose of this chapter is to give the reader some idea of the political and social forces affecting the birth and expansion of jazz, as well as the environment in which jazz quite often found itself. Such a background, it is hoped, will make the glossary of jazz terms more meaningful. The first part of chapter two deals with the political and racial

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<sup>1</sup>Charles Delaunay, New Hot Discography (New York, 1948), p. 379.



forces which are generally believed to have contributed to the development of jazz. The second part of this chapter deals specifically with the great musical and geneological contribution which the French made to jazz. The third section of this chapter concerns itself with the environment of jazz in New Orleans and the more direct causes for this environment. The fourth and final section of chapter two treats the expansion of jazz, especially to the Chicago area, and the effects which Prohibition had upon it.

Chapter three concerns place-names, a frequent source of jazz record titles. The purpose of this chapter is again to acquaint the reader with information which should make the terms of the glossary more meaningful and, at the same time, point out how frequently jazz titles deal with some personal phase of the musician's life: in this case, the street or building where he happens to live or be playing. Because of the large possible number of place names, the list was limited by including only place names from three major cities where jazz flourished: New Orleans, Chicago and New York. The section dealing with New Orleans place names is not exceptionally large because of the few jazz recordings made when New Orleans was still the center of jazz. The names which are included are quite revealing, however. Without exception, the places mentioned in titles are the major jazz areas of the city. A map showing the area of greatest jazz activity in New Orleans is presented in conjunction with this section,



to allow the reader to follow the discussions of the various streets and intersections more easily. In addition, the map should give the reader a sense of the past and aid him in picturing the early environment of jazz.

The Chicago section, considerably larger because of the greater number of recordings made during the period when this was the principal jazz city, shows similar tendencies with regards to place names. The Chicago titles reveal more specific locations than mere streets or intersections, as in the case of the New Orleans titles. From the Chicago titles we learn the names of cafés, theaters and inns, some of which are still active, others no longer in existence. But in every case, a close examination of the place mentioned in the title will reveal details about musicians, bands and general musical activities which might otherwise be overlooked. A map is included to cover the Chicago section, although it will be noted that by this time, jazz is not concentrated in a few square blocks, as had been the case in New Orleans. With few exceptions, however, the reader can locate on the map the precise street or café which is mentioned in the jazz title, the exception being the very few titles which refer to places in the white section of the city, not covered by the map.

The New York section follows much the same pattern, although by the time jazz has become important in New York, it is no longer a strictly Negro music, and for this reason, no particular area of the city can be called the jazz area,

as was the case in New Orleans and Chicago. Because of the wide distribution of jazz in New York, no map is included.

In chapter IV, the possibility of the African origin of certain jazz terms is discussed. The subject of African survivals is extremely controversial and for this reason, these terms have been made the subject of a separate chapter rather than placed in the glossary where their discussion, based on speculation rather than fact, would be out of place. In this chapter, emphasis is placed on attempting to show how, on the basis of traits of the American Negro which have been proven to be survivals of his African culture and on the basis of research recently completed on African language survivals in this country, it is possible also for these jazz words to have an African background.

The first section of chapter IV explains the recent reversal of ideas concerning the extent to which the American Negro has retained African culture traits. Until recently, the Negro was thought to have lost completely all ties to Africa; but, because of the work of such anthropologists as Melville J. Herskovitz, the belief now is that the Negro retains many traits from his African past, but exactly what they are and to what extent they exist remains yet to be determined.

Section two of the fourth chapter is an attempt to explain why the Negro has seemed to retain African musical traits more than any other cultural characteristic. Music, it is pointed out, apart from being a means of entertainment and enjoyment,

is a major function of African life. All activities, literally from the cradle to the grave, center around music. It is hardly surprising that if traits have been retained by the American Negro, as Herskovitz assures us has been the case, music is certainly one of them.

Section three examines three different types of African music survivals: (a) in religion, where it has been learned that several aspects of African religion are retained by the American Negro; one of these aspects is musical; (b) in dancing, which is an integral part of all African musical service and which may have been instrumental in the development of jazz; (c) in jazz itself, which is undoubtedly primarily African in background.

In section four of the fourth chapter, the question of African language survivals is discussed, based, for the most part, on Turner's recent research on Africanisms in the Gullah dialect, which is spoken by the Negroes on the sea-islands off the coast of Georgia and South Carolina. Turner concludes from his study that there is an unquestionable similarity between Gullah and many African languages. Such a conclusion makes possible the theory that African language survivals very probably exist in the speech of the United States proper.

Knowing that African survivals in music are apparent in the United States, supposedly because of the great stress placed on music in African life; and knowing also that African language survivals in the United States are more than a

possibility, it may be presumed that in such an area as that of jazz, where there are terms whose roots are unexplained, there quite possibly exist terms of African origin.

The final section of the fourth chapter points out, on the basis of similarities to African words and historical data, the possible African origins of nine terms.

Chapter five contains the glossary of jazz terms. The first three sections of the glossary will contain general terms: adjectives, nouns and verbs. In the remaining sections, terms will be included which refer to the more technical aspects of the music. In section four, for instance, the terms applying to the various genres of jazz is found. Section five concerns tempo and rhythm, while the sixth section covers timbre. In addition, a complete alphabetical listing of all terms, with corresponding page numbers within the various categories, is offered in the index, which immediately follows the glossary. A summary and bibliography conclude the thesis.

#### A BRIEF HISTORY OF JAZZ

"It is customary...to place the origin of the jazz idiom in New Orleans sometime in the late 1890's," says Winthrop Sargeant. "But...an examination of Southern Negro secular and religious music," he goes on, "shows that most of the essential elements of jazz are far older than the present



centuries....They may well have been present in the music of the early minstrel shows, and of the plantation darkey shows after which they [the minstrel shows] were patterned."<sup>1</sup> Constance Rourke, in dealing with the minstrel show, also detects the Negro influence in the music, as well as the humor of these performances. Such things as the "tonic beat...the open vowels and slurred consonants and rushing syncopated measures,"<sup>2</sup> of the minstrel music are the influence of the Negro, claims Rourke, and jazz music, some forty years later, adopts some of these very characteristics.

Although, as Sargeant suggests, much of the characteristic features of jazz go back much further than the New Orleans jazz of 1890, the fact still remains that it was this city which added something to the music: changed it, nourished it, gave it some small, subtle feature that made it more than just Negro minstrel music. But why was New Orleans chosen to be the birth site of this music? Other cities in the South had just as many Negroes, all of whom were lovers of music and heard and played the minstrel-type tunes. The answer to this question could very likely lead to a lifetime of study and research, not only with regard to early New Orleans jazz, but also the folk music of France and Spain.

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<sup>1</sup>Sargeant, op. cit., p. 20.

<sup>2</sup>Constance Rourke, American Humor (New York, 1953), p. 79.



A thorough understanding of the historical, social and economic development of this city, in comparison with other typical Southern slave cities of this era would also be necessary, and even with such information, the final conclusions would probably be largely speculative. Undoubtedly the unconventional historical development of New Orleans had some effect on the development of jazz. From 1718 to 1763, New Orleans was under French rule.<sup>1</sup> In 1763, New Orleans was given to Spain and remained under Spanish control until 1803, though Napoleon had secretly bought Louisiana back from Spain in 1800.<sup>2</sup>

The rule of these two European countries effected the development of jazz in two ways. First, the rule of Spanish and French masters over their slaves was quite liberal. Possibly because of a natural Latin love for music, they allowed their slaves to gather and perform their ritual songs and dances within the limits of the city. Even today, there is a spot in New Orleans known as "Congo Square," where these dances used to take place.<sup>3</sup> Such practices, however, were not condoned in other sections of the South. In practically all cases, "dances which the captured slaves brought over with them from Africa were considered obscene, and so they were

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<sup>1</sup>Richard Webster, editor, The Volume Library (New York, 1939), p. 505.

<sup>2</sup>Robert E. Riegel, America Moves West (New York, 1947), p. 125.

<sup>3</sup>Frederick Ramsey, Jr. and Charles Edward Smith, ed. Jazzmen (New York, 1947), p. 7.

laid aside in the new life. They were permitted, with certain restrictions, only under Latin influence--French and Spanish--but not elsewhere."<sup>1</sup> Along with a distaste for the "obscenity" of the African dance, went an attitude of caution concerning slave revolt, and so, in most cases, Negroes were not allowed to congregate in large groups; often even their drums were also taken from them, because "the slave owners found to their cost that drums which beat for dances could also call to revolt, and thus it came about that in many parts of the New World the African...drums were suppressed."<sup>2</sup> Unquestionably, such a liberal attitude as was found in New Orleans under the French and Spanish rule is a major factor to be considered when attempting to explain why jazz seems to have been a product of this city.

Important also is the direct influence of Latin music on the African rhythms and melodies. The Spanish rhythms, for example, while not often considered important as a jazz influence, are quite vital to jazz in the opinion of some critics and musicians. "Jelly Roll" Morton, who claimed to be the originator of jazz, says: "If one can't imagine a way to feel this tinct of Spanish in these tunes, they'll never be able to get the right season for jazz music."<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Rudi Blesh, Shining Trumpets (New York, 1946), p. 59.

<sup>2</sup>Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 138.

<sup>3</sup>From side 18 of Circle Record Album, Mr. Jelly Lord.

### The French Influence

Nowhere in the city of New Orleans is there more concrete evidence of the French influx than in the section known as the French quarter, which is bordered on the north by Rampart Street and on the south by Canal Street (Plate I). This is the Creole section, inhabited by people whose blood is, in a majority of cases, largely French. Many of the early jazzmen came out of this section: Bechet, Baquet, Delisle--names which bear witness to the French ancestry of these men. Ferdinand "Jelly Roll" Morton, who immodestly but earnestly insisted "I myself happen to be the creator of jazz in the year 1920," was also of French extraction.<sup>1</sup> "As I understand," Morton relates,

...my folks were in the city of New Orleans long before the Louisiana Purchase, and all my folks came directly from the shores...and by shores, I mean from France, across the world--in the other world--and they landed here in the New World years ago. I remember so far back as my great-grandmother and great-grandfather. Their names--my great-grandfather's name was Emile Pechet--that's a French name, and the grandmother was Mimi Pechet--it seems to be all French and as long as I was able to remember those folks they never was able to speak a word of American or English....my grandmother bore sons named Henri, Gus, Neville, and Melacole (?) all French names, and she called the daughters Louise, Viola, and Margaret--that was the three daughters. Louise, her oldest daughter happened to be my mother--Ferd Jelly Roll Morton. Course, I guess you wonder how the name Morton came in, by the name Morton being an English name it wouldn't sound very much like a French name, but my real name is Ferdinand La Menthe.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>1</sup>Alan Lomax, Mister Jelly Roll (New York, 1950), p. 236.

<sup>2</sup>Harria, op. cit., pp. 54-55.

Jazz, "Jelly" continues, owes a great debt to French influence:

Jazz music came from New Orleans and New Orleans was inhabited with maybe every race on the face of the globe and, of course, plenty French people. Many of the earliest tunes in New Orleans was from French origin. I'm telling you when they started playing this little thing they would really whoop it up.<sup>1</sup>

Rudi Blesh also recognizes the French tone in the music's history and subsequent development:

The interesting thing about the counterpoint that characterizes New Orleans ragtime in part and New Orleans jazz wholly is that it is derived culturally from two sources. It comes from the French classics and the Gallic folk rounds like Frère Jacques and from the African chorales as well.<sup>2</sup>

The French ancestry, particularly of the early rag, is mentioned by P. E. Miller, who believes that "the quadrille... afforded early ragtime musicians opportunity to insert into the 'breaks' of the dance tune their own improvised cadenzas."<sup>3</sup> This, claims Miller, was the way in which Tiger Rag came to be, and "Jelly Roll" Morton, who claims to have written Tiger Rag, confirms Miller's theory. "Jazz," said Morton, "started in New Orleans, and this, er, Tiger Rag happened to be transformed from an old quadrille that was in many different tempos, and I'll no doubt give you an idea how it went....It came from the way that I played it by 'makin' the tiger' on my elbow.

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<sup>1</sup>Lomax, *op. cit.*, p. 62.

<sup>2</sup>Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis, They All Played Ragtime (New York, 1950), p. 167.

<sup>3</sup>Paul Eduard Miller, "Historical Chart of Jazz Influences," Esquire Jazz Book, 45, (1944).



I also named it: a person said once: 'It sounds like a tiger house.' I said: 'Fine.' To myself I said: 'That's the name.'<sup>1</sup>

So jazz, though predominantly Negroid in character, was probably influenced by the Spanish and particularly the French surroundings in which it was invented and developed. Such a common background would probably have been sufficient to condemn it in the eyes of serious musicians, but it was the environment in which it was known to be played which made it repulsive to the average person, who quickly branded it as low and vulgar even before hearing it.

#### Storyville and Jazz

In 1897, a New Orleans alderman named Story drew up an ordinance which legalized prostitution within a "dozen square blocks back of the French quarter. Its principal thoroughfares were Iberville, Bienville, Liberty, Franklin, and the most celebrated of all--Basin Street."<sup>2</sup> To the alderman's dismay, the section was soon nicknamed "Storyville" and Storyville it remained until 1917, when the Secretary of the Navy ordered it closed. Here, within these dozen square blocks, the Negro musician was free to play and develop the music which, up to now, had been a luxury, only to be played in

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<sup>1</sup>Harria, op. cit., pp. 66-67.

<sup>2</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 31.



spare moments. Now a good musician could devote all his time to music; and it was Storyville in which jazz began to develop and spread. Unfortunately, the Storyville atmosphere spread with it.

A musician's life in Storyville was not easy. The hours were long and the pay dependent mostly on tips, but there was a great deal of time to practice and experiment:

These madams were ever on the hunt for good musicians, but particularly good piano players, as a piano could be toned down and the less noise in the wee hours of the morning, the better. Possibly a tired Romeo could be coaxed into spending just a little more if the music fitted in with his mood....He /the jazzman/ could play any way he wanted to as long as he was good, and he could improvise all he wanted--just so long as he didn't stop.<sup>1</sup>

Many tunes were composed in these brothels. For instance, "'Ta-ra-ra--boom-dee-a'" was written in the house of Babe Connors, one of the more colorful Negro madams, in 1894."<sup>2</sup> Such houses and even worse places were the conservatories of jazz. "They came from the toughest of all schools," says Rogers. "They had played the levee front from one end to the other--night life, sporting houses, gamblers, rounders--they knew them all."<sup>3</sup> Musicians soon found that "Storyville was kind to hot music. With a dozen bands, many trios and other musicians employed every night, it is little wonder that jazz first

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<sup>1</sup>E. Simms Campbell, "Jam in the Nineties," Esquire Jazz Book, 19, (1944).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>E. S. Rogers, "Swing is from the Heart," Esquire Jazz Book, 26, (1944).

sprang up in New Orleans."<sup>1</sup> Unpleasant as the surroundings were, it is doubtful whether this new and strange music could have gained any recognition without the sponsorship of the brothels and honky tonks, for they created not only a need for the jazz musician, but also caused a healthy competition among them, so that improvement was inevitable. However, with such an unsavory background, it is not surprising that jazz found great difficulty in becoming recognized as a serious art form.

When the Secretary of the Navy ordered Storyville closed, the musicians who depended upon the gay life of the brothels for their living were suddenly without jobs. Some sought work on river-boats on the Mississippi. A few, such as the members of the Original Creole Jazz Band, had left New Orleans early (1911) and settled successfully in Chicago; so when the closure notice came and jobs became scarce, it was to Chicago that many jazzmen looked, for Prohibition was in full swing and Chicago was beginning to look like another Storyville. It was a different town, but the environment was similar.

#### Jazz Expands

The conditions of the Chicago era can best be described

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<sup>1</sup>Ramey and Smith, op. cit., pp. 35-36.

by one of the men who lived and played at that time, Anton Lada. "I thought we had dives in New Orleans, but for low-down barrelhouse, the Casino [Casino Gardens on Clark Street] (Plate II) had anything in New Orleans beat to shreds."<sup>1</sup>

"Al Capone and his lieutenants replaced the madama of Storyville as sponsors of the new music," says Eddie Condon; "they liked jazz."<sup>2</sup> In Chicago, however, jazz was not confined to as small an area as it had been in New Orleans. There was the usual red-light district in the colored section, to be sure; but as more and more of the entertainment-hungry postwar crowd heard this new music, its popularity increased, and in a short time white musicians were infiltrating the higher class cafes and night clubs. This was the "jazz-age," the day of the "lost generation" and the wildest, most care-free and confused period of United States history. Moreover, it was in Chicago that lawlessness and vice reached a peak, probably not equalled in any other city in the country, though undoubtedly there were many cities nearly as capable of claiming the title of the wildest and most wide-open town in America. It was a crazy town--it was a crazy decade--and in the midst of it all was jazz, for the music seemed to fit the mood.

The Chicago upon which the New Orleans jazzmen descended then, was a turbulent postwar city hemmed in by a Puritanical Prohibition law which gangsterism and an obliging

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Eduard Miller, "Chicago Jazz History," Esquire Jazz Book, 20, (1946).

<sup>2</sup>Eddie Condon and Thomas Sugrue, We Called It Music (New York, 1947), p. 125.

political machinery soon reduced to a low farce. But as in the New Orleans of an earlier era, Prohibition-era Chicago offered employment to the jazzman. In both cases, the jazz played was associated with out-side-the-law and so-called sinful pursuits, but this did not hamper the growth and genuinely musical development of this hardy cultural offshoot of the Southern United States and particularly the Cresocent City. In fact, the social atmosphere of Chicago during this period gave jazzmen a greater freedom to play what they wanted to play, and to express what was in their hearts, than the steadily commercial Hollywood-and-radio era which was to be ushered in during the 30's. The Chicago of the twenties gave the shape and pointed the direction which jazz was not to justify until the forties.<sup>1</sup>

P. E. Miller thus sums up the effects, both good and bad, which the Chicago period had on jazz. Like New Orleans, Chicago gave the musician a job, a chance to play and play what he felt; but also parallelling its New Orleans days, jazz in Chicago was associated with vice, lawlessness, licentiousness and crime.

Though the twenties are considered the "Chicago period," it was during this decade that jazz spread to practically every section of the country: New York, San Francisco, Kansas City, and Philadelphia. It changed, of course. It changed so much that its inventors in many cases could no longer recognize it. There were the crooners and the violins and the symphonic jazz bands. There were the written arrangements and the emphasis on sweet tones and technique. There was the commercialism with which the United States manages to connect

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<sup>1</sup>Paul Eduard Miller, "Thirty Years of Chicago Jazz," Esquire Jazz Book, 8, (1946).



everything--even art; and this, on top of the shady memory of its red-light days, was creating a picture of jazz for the public which was far from being either accurate or desirable.

In Prohibition days, jazz was riding high, a symbol of the carefree mood of the times. With the depression, however, jazz was dealt a blow which in one way was very harmful, for in most cases, the public had little desire to hear a music which reminded them of the folly of Prohibition days; but on the other hand, the fact that jazz rode out the depression storm proved that it was not merely a quickly passing public fad, but a serious art which was truly American.

After the spare days of the depression, there came a period of comparative prosperity for the jazzman known as the "swing" era. The music of this period was an unfortunate but inevitable development, for after the depression, the public began once more to seek entertainment, and those who made their living by providing that entertainment saw the appeal of jazz. In order to "improve" jazz, to make it spectacular and profitable, the jazz band, it was believed, had to be made bigger, more impressive. In doing this, arrangements were not only desirable, they were vital; a sizeable group (usually ten to fourteen musicians) had to have some guiding force. In a little while, groups of immaculately rehearsed musicians appeared--the "swing" bands--which removed from their jazz much of the basic characteristic of that music: improvisation.

Swing, says Harris, "was not the folk music of a section of people; it was the stereotyped music of a section of the commercial world."<sup>1</sup> It is not surprising, then, that headquarters for this new "jazz" established itself in the city which symbolizes commercialism: New York. This is the city that provided the financial backing, the publicity and the business brains for "swing." No longer heard in one particular section of the city as had been the case in Chicago, and particularly New Orleans, this new diluted jazz was fed to every ballroom, theater and cinema circuit in New York, and later to every large United States city.

This new "jazz," though motivated by white commercial interest, was not strictly a white music. In New York's Harlem, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, Chick Webb and Cab Calloway--all strictly "swing" bands-- were received with great enthusiasm. Ironically, it was not in the colored section but rather in a few white dives on 52nd Street in downtown New York, that jazz, though admittedly commercialized, continued to be played.

Though many jazzmen of the old school condemned "swing" for making jazz a disciplined, highly technical form, jazz owes a debt of gratitude to "swing," for commercial as it was, it did create an interest in jazz and at the same time kept

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<sup>1</sup>Harris, op. cit., pp. 180-181.

many jazzmen from starving. Though "swing" did not allow as much freedom in improvisation as did the original jazz, there were some rather good "swing" bands. At the same time, the old "genuine" jazz continued to be played and enjoyed. Today, many of the original jazzmen are either dead or no longer playing professionally; however, despite the depressing comments of the old-timers and the "purist" jazz fans, jazz is not dying. The type of jazz which was played in 1920 has changed, it is true. It has evolved, as all healthy art forms will do, but the fundamentals of jazz are unchanged.

#### PLACE NAMES

With few exceptions, the place names found in titles of jazz records refer to streets, clubs, bars or sporting houses where the musician or composer performed, or where a number of musicians congregated to eat, drink, gamble or talk. Just as the personal name so often came to be used in early jazz titles, so the name of a favorite night club or bar came into the mind of musicians when they were told that the record they had just made would have to be named. The men who came from New Orleans brought many of their tunes with them, some titled, some untitled; but if the title referred to a place, it quite often was reminiscent of the happier Storyville days. For the native Chicagoan and the New York musician, this was equally so: places where they had played, especially places

where they enjoyed playing, where their music was appreciated and they could relax, were very likely to be honored in a jazz title. To demonstrate this phenomenon, jazz titles from three major cities were chosen and are discussed in this chapter. In nearly every case, the area or a specific location mentioned in the title is important in the history of jazz in that particular city, and, in some cases, these are places which have been influential in the development of jazz as a whole. The three cities which have been chosen are New Orleans, the city of the birth of jazz; Chicago, one of the major cities of the 1920's; and New York, a typical city of the later "swing" period. Maps covering the area under discussion are included for the New Orleans and Chicago sections. The New York section, because jazz activity there is not limited to any specific area, does not include a map. In every case, the titles cited are believed to be the first record titles using these specific place names.

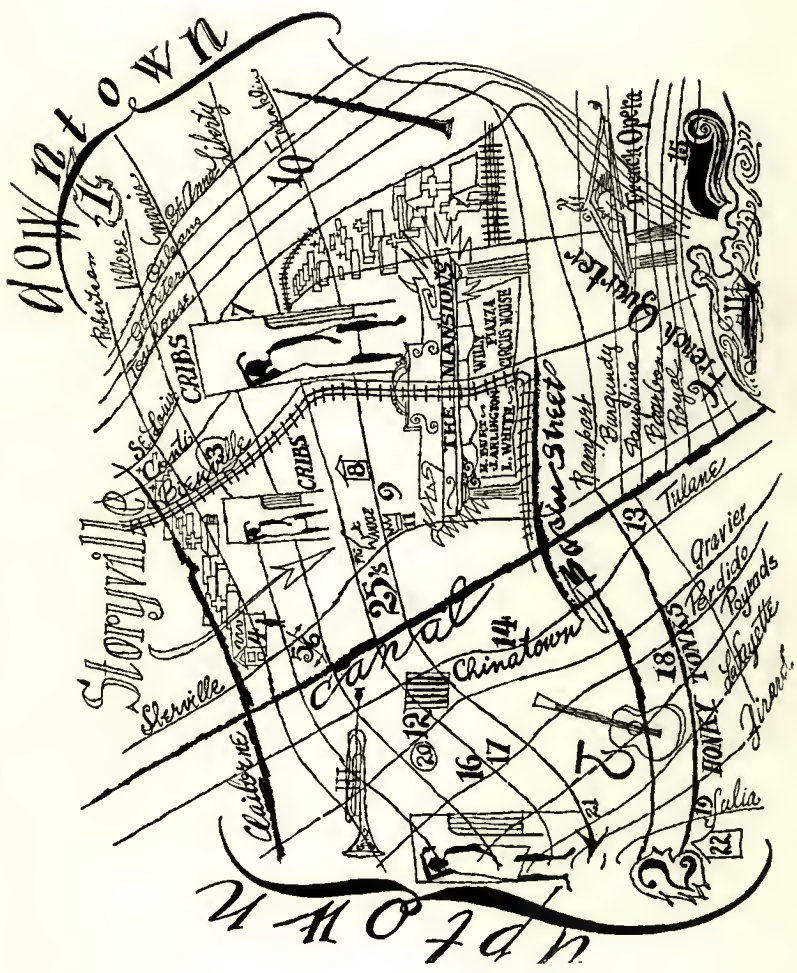
#### New Orleans

Because of the amount of time which had elapsed between the fall of New Orleans as the jazz capital and the time the first records were made, only a few references to New Orleans are to be found. This does not mean, however, that New Orleans had little influence, for these few tunes are basic and have been recorded over and over again. It is also possible



EXPLANATION OF PLATE I

Map of the early New Orleans Jazz Area.



DOWN

UP

Storyville

Chinatown

THE MANSIONS

St. Street

Granier

Ferdisco

Baywards

Saboyette

Lucant

CRISIS

CRISIS

CRISIS

CRISIS

CRISIS

CRISIS

CRISIS

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that many tunes which once bore New Orleans place names changed titles after they left that city.

Basin Street (Basin Street Blues; Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra; 26 January 1933; VI. 24351). Basin Street, because of this famous blues, is no doubt the best-known New Orleans thoroughfare. According to the map on page 36, Basin Street was the dividing line between the old red-light district in the Storyville area and the higher-class Creole section. It was at 235 Basin Street that Lulu White had her famous Mahogany Hall, and elsewhere along this avenue, the more proper and expensive brothels appeared: H. Burt's, Josie Arlington's and Willy Piazza's Circus House. These were the "mansions"--the houses with the beautiful furniture, beautiful girls and the best piano players money could buy. It was in these houses that "Jelly Roll" Morton spent his younger musical days. Says Alan Lomax:

It won him him recognition on Basin Street...a half-world, to be sure, but still a white world, rich and powerfilled, where notoriety compensated an orphan for the loss of his family and for the painful memories of his mulatto childhood. Basin Street seemed a possible avenue of escape from a confining Negro status; at any rate, the kid piano wizard accepted this way of life.... Fifty years later he still reveled in his Basin Street memories.<sup>1</sup>

Canal Street (Canal Street Blues; King Oliver's Jazz Band; Chicago, March 1923; HCA 67-68).

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<sup>1</sup>Lomax, op. cit., p. 105.

Canal Street, the center and pride of New Orleans, takes its name from the slimy old moat that once festered under the palisade wall of the Spanish town, where it ran back from river to swamp and turned northward on the line now marked by the beautiful tree-planted Rampart Street.<sup>1</sup>

In the Storyville section, also, Canal Street "was the center" --more specifically, it was the dividing line. Paul Dominguez, a Creole from the "downtown section," recalls that Canal Street had been the dividing line between two worlds in Negro New Orleans. "As long as you stayed on the Downtown side, you were not 'just another Negro,'" he recalls, "but if you crossed Canal, you carried brickbats and all forms of ammunition....See, us Downtown people, we didn't think so much of this rough uptown jazz until we couldn't make a living otherwise."<sup>2</sup> But eventually they did have to make a living, and eventually they did cross Canal Street, bringing with them real musical ability and technical know-how: things like how to read notes and make beautiful tones--things which the "uptown" musicians had not learned as yet. This legitimate musical background was so much a part of these Creoles that "Jelly Roll" claims: "There is nothing finer than jazz music because it comes from everything of the finest class music."<sup>3</sup> He recalls the tunes he heard as a boy at the

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<sup>1</sup>George W. Cable, "New Orleans, the Great South Gate," Century, XXVI, 218 (June, 1883).

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 83.



French Opera in the Downtown area; tunes which he claims he "transformed...into jazz time using different little variations and ideas to masquerade the tunes."<sup>1</sup> This is hardly an accurate statement but it demonstrates how eager these Creoles were to make jazz appear as legitimate as possible. Paul Dominguez was bitter about what jazz did to the fine old European music: "Bolden cause these younger Creoles, men like Bechet and Keppard to have different atyle altogether...";<sup>2</sup> but what he failed to see was that "men like Bechet and Keppard" changed the style of Bolden too and helped to give jazz some refinement as well as enthusiasm.

Franklin Street (Franklin Street Blues; Louis Dumaine's Jazzola Eight; New Orleans, 5 March 1927; V1 20580). Franklin Street, as the map on page 36 shows, was in the very heart of the Storyville area. It was the jazz center as well. Bolden had his barber shop here, where he used to "gather his orchestra together in the back room...to try over a few new tunes for a special dance."<sup>3</sup>

One of the first cabarets established was the 101 Ranch, on Franklin St., originally a low dive and hangout for river roustabouts, gamblers, and cutthroats. But about 1910, Billy Phillipa decided to put some class in his joint. He hired an orchestra and entertainers, raised the prices, and fixed the odds in the gambling games a little more in favor of the house. For the next seven years, some of New Orleans' hottest musicians played here, including Joe Oliver, Perez, Baquet, Bechet, Roy

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 86.

<sup>3</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 11.

Palmer, and "Pops" Foater. Here could be seen future members of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, the Original Dixieland Band, and the Half-Way House gang, whose first impressions of hot were received while listening to the older Negro musicians.<sup>1</sup>

Gravier Street (Gravier Street Blues; Johnny Dodds and His Orchestra; Chicago, 21 January 1938; De 18094). Strategically centered in New Orleans' toughest section, Gravier Street also was in fine position to hear much of Buddy Bolden's loud, naked jazz. Here, in the Honky Tonka, "river rowdies, card sharks, roughnecks, pimps and all varieties of male parasites" were to be found; and the music out of sheer self-defense, was loud and rough: "honky tonk." "If someone yelled 'play something else!!' he played the same blues a little faster and the entire tonk, satisfied, shook in a quicker tempo."<sup>2</sup>

Here in the "Uptown Section" were the many lodges and dance halls in which Buddy and bands like his got much of their work. These halls were hardly more refined than the tonks, but "the tougher the dance got the more raggedy they [Buddy Bolden] played."<sup>3</sup> Bunk Johnson, who was playing with Bolden in these days recalls several dance halls in which they performed, some of which are still in use: "Oddfellows Hall, Love and Charity Hall, Come Clean, The Big 4, and many others." One of the main functions of the band of this period, says

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., pp. 35-36.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 15.

Johnson, "...were for prades, funerals, Labor day prades, carnival prades, and Club prades such as Bull Club and other clubs of that kind."<sup>1</sup>

Lulu White's Mahogany Hall (Mahogany Hall Stomp; Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra; Chicago, 26 January 1933; V1 24232).

Down in the same block on Basin Street was Mahogany Hall run by Lulu White. She was called the "Diamond Queen," and her mirror room and beautiful Octoroons were known across the continent. At Lulu's the pianists at various times were All Carrel, Richard M. Jones, and Clarence Williams, who celebrated Lulu White's establishment in the tune Mahogany Hall Stomp.<sup>2</sup>

Milneberg (Milenberg Joys; New Orleans Rhythm Kings; Richmond, Indiana, August 1923; Ge 5217). No shown on the New Orleans map, Milneberg (miaspelled on the record) was on the outakirts of New Orleans, in the northern section of the city, along Lake Pontchartrain. It was "the oldest resort established...out on Lake Pontchartrain, near the old lighthouse and Spanish Fort."

The many good times at the picnics there were immortalized in the Milneberg Joya, a classic stomp played by all New Orleans bands. A casino near the Fort and various amusement concessions were added about 1900. For years these offered lucrative employment to musicians....In later years, West End /some distance south, along the lake/ became the most popular summer resort.<sup>3</sup>

It was here at Milneberg that Jack Laine's Ragtime Band, one of the first ragtime bands, played many summer jobs. "Aa a

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

dence band," we are told, "Jack Laine's Ragtime Band played in the days when the crowd was more likely to call for a quadrille or a polka...but one of the favorite of the Laine Bend was Joplin's Shadow Rag."<sup>1</sup> Though Laine's bend was apparently a white band, and indeed is often pointed to by those who believe jazz to be a white product, ironically, "there were in that granddaddy of all Dixieland combinations, two light-skinned blue-eyed Negroes."<sup>2</sup> Milneberg in the summer offered local musicians plenty of opportunity for work, for it was the coolest spot around New Orleans, as well as being the main amusement area. Afternoons and evenings, Laine and other bands were kept busy playing at the many pavilions and dance halls; and here the musician also got a vacation from the dingy honky tonk air.

Perdido Street (Perdido Street Blues; New Orleans Wanderers; Chicago, 3 July 1926; Co 689D). Perdido Street, running parallel with Gravier Street (Plate I), has much of Gravier Street's background. In general, what one could say of the one street would be true also of the other. But Gravier and Perdido are not coupled as often as are Perdido and Rampart Streets. At this cross-roads, jazz seemed to thrive and grow, for here it was that the two basic musical paths met: Rampart Street--the downtown, "correct" European influence, and Perdido Street--the basic, sensual, physical,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 141-142.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 142.



African music. Here, on the corner of Rampart and Perdido, there was "regular gin barbershop where musicians were accustomed to hang out while waiting to get calls for jobs."<sup>1</sup> Future greats such as Louis Armstrong were among these musicians.

"Satchmo" had been gigging around New Orleans and then played with Kid Ory's band at Pete Lala's cabaret for over a year when Marable discovered him. Louis recalls that Kid Ory's band was busily engaged in carving another outfit at the corner of Rampart and Perdido Streets when Marable propositioned him.<sup>2</sup>

Rampart Street (Rampart Street Bluea; Lovie Austin and Her Blue Serenaders; Para 12300). Running from the Creole section and across the Canal Street dividing line, Rampart Street was in position to become identified with jazz, especially in the "Uptown" Negro section. It is appropriate that Sidney Bechet, who more than any other Creole musician, brought to jazz a respect for technique and musicianship, should have been born near Rampart Street on St. Antoine Street.<sup>3</sup> Rampart Street seemed to be the pipeline through which this Creole influence passed: southward to Perdido and Gravier Streets where jazz was heartfelt and energetic if nothing else.

Every Saturday night at the Masonic Hall was Eagle Band night. The Saturday night mob on South Rampart wasn't an especially high-class bunch and they like their music hot and that was the way the Eagle Band knew how to "serve it up!" so they were easily the most popular band in town.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 17.

<sup>2</sup>Robert B. Sales, "No Man Ever Cut Louis," Jazz Information, XII, 7, (August 9, 1940).

<sup>3</sup>Mary E. Karoley, "Sidney Bechet," Jazz Information, VIII, (December 6, 1940).

<sup>4</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 26.

This "most popular band in town" was composed of several Creole musicians from the north end of Rampart Street. The members of the Eagle Band when "Bunk" Johnson played in it: "James Phillip, drummer; Frank Duson, trombone; Joe Oliver, cornet; Frank Lewis, clarinet; Alcide Frank Villion; Brock Mumford, guitar and Bob Lyons, bass."<sup>1</sup> It is uncertain what section of the city these musicians came from, but the sprinkling of French names would seem to indicate the Creole, North Rampart Street influence very clearly. It was on South Rampart Street that the real jazz was heard, however. Here is where the Creoles came to play these wild Saturday night dances and here is where both factions found a new acceptable quality in each other's ability.

West End (West End Blues; King Oliver's Band; New York, 11 June 1928; Vo 1189). Along Lake Pontchartrain, some distance west of the famous Milneberg resort, was West End, also an amusement center and "in later years...the most popular summer resort."<sup>2</sup> In addition to its park and picnic area, West End was doubly useful from the musician's standpoint because of its several night clubs. There also was "a small settlement known as 'Bucktown,' which at one time was a wide-open spot."<sup>3</sup> Since these two amusement areas were close, "Bucktown" being just across the canal, it is easy to

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 61-62.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 28.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

understand why West End became the most popular leke front spot and why it also became important es a New Orleans musicel center. See Milneberg, above.

### Chicago

Jezz, by the time it reached Chicago, had become e sort of popular freek emong the whites. Very few considered it seriously, those few being mostly musicians. The interest which jezz aroused, however, ceused it to spread--not only to other cities, but also to more "respecteble" sections of cities. No longer was jezz confined to the Negro tenderloin district, although it was still the tenderloin district in which the better jazz continued to be heard--music which the white jazz musicians from the "respectable" clubs came nightly to hear and attempt to imitete. Eddie Condon remembers that "When work was done we went to the Dreamland where Louis... was performing...."<sup>1</sup> "The Nest" was another apot where the whites could congregare after-hours to listen to Jimmy Noone end be amazed. Says Condon: "Benny Goodman wes there often too, and nonclarinet pleying Noone fans--Freemen, MacPartlend, Lannigan, Tough, Wettling, Spenier, Mezzrow end myself. We were the Nest's best customers."<sup>2</sup> The split into two factions, black and white, led to two ereas of musioal interest in

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<sup>1</sup>Condon, op. cit., p. 131.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 132.

EXPLANATION OF PLATE II

Map of the Jazz Area in Chicago, 1914-1928.





Chicago, and for this reason, two maps might be given. However, the Black Belt--the Negro area--was the true source of jazz influence, and the majority of tunes recorded by Negro and white musicians alike came out of this area. For this reason, only a very few references to the white area can be found on jazz titles, making a map of the white jazz world unnecessary.

The Three Deuces (Deuces Wild; The Three Deuces; March 1940; CMS 537). Undoubtedly the Three Deuces, located on State Street between Kinzie and Randolph Streets in Chicago, was the best known and most influential jazz spot in the white section. Usually referred to morely as "The Deuces," it was the accepted gathering place not only for local white musicians, but for out-of-towners as well. "Bix" Beiderbecke, who introduced the place to local musicians, used to drop in whenever the Goldkette or Whiteman orchestras came through the Windy City, bringing with him members of the particular band he happened to be playing with at the time. When "Bix" first took the boys to "The Deuces," it was, according to "Mezz" Mezzrow, a "blackened-up old store that looked like it had been condemned before the Chicago fire." But "from then on," says Mezzrow, it "became the hangout for all of Chicago's hot mon."

The address was 222 North State Street, and after we hung out there awhile we named it the Three Deuces, parodying the name of the Four Douces, one of the biggest syndicate whorehouses in town. Whenever we musicians wanted to get together with each other we'd say

"Meet you at the Deuces tonight." Years later, after prohibition was repealed, the name was officially adopted and hung up on a sign outside, and the spot turned into a legit hot-music center.<sup>1</sup>

Jazz was being played and listened to in other spots in the white section, but for the most part, it was at "the Deuces," or an after-hour location similar to "the Deuces," where the men could play freely and compare styles, that much progress was being made. "The Friar's," for instance, where the New Orleans Rhythm Kings first played, was a hangout for white jazzmen, eager to get close to the Kings and their New Orleans music. The "The Inn" was a nightclub, however, and when it and similar clubs closed at one or two o'clock, everyone ended up at "The Deuces" where they could hear the boys giving everything they had until the small hours of the morning.

Forty Seventh Street (47th St. Stomp; Jimmy Bertrand's Washboard Wizards; Chicago, 16 September 1926; Vo 1060). According to the map on page 38, little jazz activity was in progress on this street proper. Other than Warwick Hall, between Parkway and Cottage Grove, Forty Seventh Street seemed void of jazz. Notice, however, the "just-around-the-corner" influences: the "29th Club" on Dearborn, the Owl Theater (where Clarence Jones played), the Atlas Theater and New Dreamland Cafe on State Street. On South Parkway were several music shops, where in the daylight hours, musicians undoubtedly congregated, and where, when it was possible,

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<sup>1</sup>Milton Mezzrow and Bernard Wolfe, Really the Blues (New York, 1946), pp. 147-149.

they bought records of their favorite bends, es well es music, instruments, reeds and mutes. Indeed, e music store, es well es e night club, can be end often is, the meeting point, the musical Constantinople, where ideas and influences, es well as materiel goods, cen be carried ewey.

Grand Terrace (Grand Terrece Swing; Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestre; Chicago, 27 Meroh 1936; Vo 3213). Also on South Perkwey, the Grend Terrece boasts of having been the theater where Earl Hines made his first successful appearance as e band leeder. The theaters of Chicago were e meyor contributor to the growth of jezz, especielly in this section of Chicago, since "they ell featured bends who played for the silent movies and usually offered jezz concerts between the movies."<sup>1</sup> Eddie Condon remembers that when he played in a pit bend at the Commercial Theater, the jazz went on during end between shows.

Actually the customers wero efreid of us. They didn't know whet we were doing when we broke into Jezz Me Blues or Fidgety Feet. We were supposed to wetch the news-reel and play appropriate accompaniment; we seldom did. One night in the middle of Clarinet Mermalade I looked up end sew e French general placing e wreath on the tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Just then Deve Tough went into an explosion on the drums. Things like that confused the Mexicens.<sup>2</sup>

The Grand Terrece began its career evidently as one of these theaters similar to the one Condon hes described. At that

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, "Thirty Years of Chicago Jazz," p. 9.  
<sup>2</sup>Condon, op. cit., pp. 145-146.



time it was known as The Peerless. Later, as a cafe, The Grand Terrace was well-known for its jazz. More recently, it has once again reverted to being a movie theater--this time without the pit band.

Panama Cafe (Panama; New Orleans Rhythm Kings; September 1922; Star 9313). Though little is known about the type of music which was played in the Panama Cafe, certainly jazz must have been heard there at a very early date, for Panama was one of the first tunes of the Chicago repertoire. By referring to the map on page 47, one can immediately see that the Panama was situated centrally in an extremely influential jazz area, but whether or not it was one of the original cafes to which the Chicago jazzmen came, is uncertain. Besides the Savoy and the famous Elite Cafes number one and two, there was, practically next door to the Panama, the Dreamland Cafe, where King Oliver, in his Chicago debut, amazed audience by playing a full job and then going over to the Royal Gardens on Thirty-first Street to play another. Night after night in cafes where the "King" was blowing, the white boys would crowd in and stand open-mouthed at what they heard. Though the Panama, as far as can be determined, did not engage such talented musicians, it probably employed some, since it located in a jazz-loving area; or possibly it became a meeting place for musicians during their off hours.

Randolph Street (Randolph St. Rag; Chicago Rhythm Kings; 1940; Sig 105). On Randolph Street, especially on the corner

of Randolph and Clark Streets (Clark and Randolph; Art Hodes and Hie Chicagoans; 18 March 1944; BN 508), there was at one time a fair eprinkling of white jazz. However, P. E. Miller, in hie etudy of Chicago jazz, tells us that "the jazzfan of today can turn to none of these places for the kind of music he seeke."

All the loop hotels save one cater to lovers of sweet escape music....There are a few uncomfortable saloone along Randolph Street; suppoeedly they feature jazz but it is a rarity rather than a commonplace to find capable and sincere jazz performers in them.<sup>1</sup>

It was, supposedly, in Lamb's Cafe on the corner of Clark and Randolph Streets that jazz got not only its Chicago start but also its name:

They [Tom Brown's New Orleans Band] didn't have union clearance on that first Chicago job. According to Tom Brown it was an attempt by union officials to lowrate them that gave jazz its name. Jazz, or jass as it wae then epelled, wae a familiar word around 22nd Street where the redlighte glowed, but it wae'n't used about music. The story has it that the statement that jazz music was being played at Lamb's Cafe was a whispering campaign, the purpose of which was to smear the band.... Presently the new sign out front read: "Added attraction--Brown's Dixieland Jass Band, Direct from New Orleans, Best Dance Music in Chicago."<sup>2</sup>

This was in 1915. "King" Oliver made his appearance in Chicago a ehort while later.

"The College Inn [across the street from Lamb's] wae in the Sherman House, a loop hotel,"<sup>3</sup> Eddie Condon recalls. At

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, "Thirty Yeare of Chicago Jazz," p. 10.

<sup>2</sup>Ramey and Smith, op. cit., p. 46.

<sup>3</sup>Condon, op. cit., p. 83.

the time (about 1925) Isham Jones was one of its high-class performers. Later, Condon also played there, but he was impressed more by the luxuriousness of the establishment than by the music it featured. "The College Inn, later the Panther Room, did not open at night during the summer," Condon says. "We played for tea dancing from 3 to 5:30 in the afternoon and for dinner from 6 to 8....On Sundays we played for dancing on the roof of the Park West Hotel. For this week's work I received \$145."<sup>1</sup> The College Inn, as the name implies, was probably a meeting place for the college crowd, who were supposedly addicted to jazz, but who in reality either rejected or were ignorant of the real jazz which was being heard in the Black Belt. The College Inn music was soft, danceable and sentimental; but in the musician's mind, the lucrative aspect alone was sufficient to warrant its locale being placed on a jazz title, even though its contribution to jazz music was almost nil.

Royal Gardens (Royal Garden Blues; Original Dixieland Band; New York, 1/4 December 1926; V1 18798). The Royal Gardens has had a long and distinguished musical career. Before "King" Oliver made the establishment famous, it was known as the Café de Paris. Later, in Oliver's hey-day, it was known as Lincoln Gardens, and changed its name again to the now-famous Royal Gardens. However, there seems to be quite

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 83.

a bit of doubt as to which name was used first. According to Plate II, the name was originally Lincoln Gardens. Eddie Condon<sup>1</sup> and "Mezz" Mezzrow<sup>2</sup> agree that the name was originally Royal Gardens and that it was changed about 1922 to Lincoln Gardens. This clashes with Rosenberg and Williams' biography of Johnny Dodds, a star member of the Oliver band at this time: these critics state that "the band stayed at the Lincoln Gardens (later the Royal Gardens) until 1924..."<sup>3</sup> Actually the order of names is probably irrelevant, but since we have a recording entitled Royal Garden Blues as early as 1920, and can be reasonably certain that it was known as Lincoln Gardens in the 1922-24 era, we can safely assume that the cafe was known as Royal Gardens first. Quite probably the popularity and recognition of the early bluess tune led the owners to revert to the original Royal Gardens title. In either case, Royal Gardens, chiefly because of Oliver's trumpet and talented New Orleans band, became nationally known, and the influence and inspiration which was carried away from there during the "King's" run was immense. When "King" Oliver arrived in Chicago, both Royal Gardens and the Dreamland Cafe solicited his talents.

Both Dreamland and the Royal Gardens needed a "King" on the cornet and there was only one to go around. This called for serious deliberation; so they all went to the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 99.

<sup>2</sup>Mezzrow, *op. cit.*, p. 29.

<sup>3</sup>Herman Rosenberg and Eugene Williams, "Johnny Dodds," Jazz Information, III, 9 (August 23, 1940).



nearest bar for a drink. Their solution, which had a lasting affect upon the course of Chicago jazz, was profoundly simple. Joe joined both bands.<sup>1</sup>

In 1920, Oliver decided to lead his own band; so he gathered members for his famous Crale Jazz Band and moved into the Dreamland Cafe. Each member of that band was a master of his instrument, and more than members of any other one band, they were the jazz instructors for the United States at that time. In 1921, the band made a successful trip to California,<sup>2</sup> but by 1922 they were back at the Lincoln (or Royal) Gardens for a stay which Rosanberg and Williams accurately refer to as "one of the most famous and influential runs in the history of Chicago music."<sup>3</sup>

The outward appearance of Lincoln Gardens in those days was unimpressive:

[It was a] tall, thin building with scrolls cut in the stone of the sharply peaked gable where it lopped onto the second story. The facade of the two floors bulged with lumpish balconies that looked dourly down on 31st Street through swollen, bay-window aways. Underneath these aways, two round, ugly arches drooped over the entrance to the ground floor. Once inside those arches, weary wanderers through Chicago's night life received a shock that stiffened their backs, as the low-down voice of the bayou came blasting forth at them from the horns of Joe Oliver and Louis Armstrong.<sup>4</sup>

Savoy Ballroom (Savoy Blues; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five; Chicago, 13 December 1927; OK 8535). Between

<sup>1</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 65.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 68.

<sup>3</sup>Rosanberg and Williams, loc. cit.

<sup>4</sup>Ramsay and Smith, op. cit., pp. 69-70.

Forty-seventh and Fifty-first Streets were two jazzspots to which everyone in the Black Belt turned for top musical entertainment: the Regal Theater, which "came into prominence with large-size jazz bands and stage shows, and...the Savoy Ballroom which Louis Armstrong made Chicago's Jazz Mecca after he left Joo Oliver and joined Carroll Dickerson."

P. E. Miller tells us that the Savoy in 1928 featured two bands: "Clarence Black shared the Armstrong spotlight at first, and later the bands of 'Tate' Cooke, Jimmie Wade and numerous out-of-town traveling bands gave forth with their best music."<sup>1</sup> This was the peak of Armstrong's musical career: at no other time was he so powerful, or so popular.

Today the Savoy has several clusters of horns to amplify that music of its fourteen-piece bands, for the acoustics are not the best and the crowds inclined to be noisy, but in those days a public address system was unnecessary to make Louis heard; in fact, his powerful tone could be heard out on the street in front of the Savoy.<sup>2</sup>

Nor as a crowd-pleaser did Armstrong need an amplifier.

Wherever he went he was assured top billing and more than top prices:

At a special afternoon dance, he "knocked all the tin off the roof" of Chicago's ritzy Congress Hotel. He left the Savoy for two nights to go to St. Louis at a hundred dollars per night plus expenses, a new high. And when Henderson, during his Chicago engagement attempted to lure Armstrong back to his orchestra, the Savoy had to raise Louis to two hundred dollars a week. Although the Savoy had a two-band policy, Dickerson's band, with Louis as the propelling power, had things their way and were the dancer's favorites.<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Miller, "Thirty Years of Chicago Jazz," p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 137.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

When, in 1929, the Armstrong era at the Savoy ended, it did not mean the finish for the famous ballroom by any means. Throughout the years it has continued to offer fine jazz. Frederick Ramsay, who has little of encouragement to report about today's music in Chicago, claims that "excellent Negro bands still play the Savoy, Louis Armstrong's old hangout."<sup>1</sup>

State Street (State Street Jive: Cow Cow Davenport and Ivy Smith; Chicago, 16 July 1928; Vo 1198). As has been noted, State Street from one end to the other was lined with cafes, nightclubs, music shops, theaters and dance halls. That it should be mentioned in a jazz record title was inevitable, for probably no other street in Chicago, or in the world for that matter, could boast of as much musical environment and influence as State Street. The Pekin Theater near 26th Street, for instance,

unquestionably marked a focal point of interest in Chicago's entertainment world, i.e., the world which has some relation to jazz. The Pekin featured not only legitimate theatre, but stock productions, vaudeville and a cabaret for dancing. It was a natural point of gravitation, particularly from 1905 to 1915, for the Negro entertainer; the jazz band--such as it was in those days--had not yet caught on and was chiefly an adjunct to other forms of entertainment. Yet, the Pekin broke the ground, so to speak, for the upsurge of interest which the populace of the Black Belt was to display just a few years later.<sup>2</sup>

Important also in the beginning stages of Chicago jazz was the Big Grand Theater between 31st and 35th Streets

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 257.

<sup>2</sup>Miller, "Thirty Years of Chicago Jazz," p. 8.

(Plate II), which, before the first World War featured such bands as Wilbur Sweatman;

...his band was followed by Dave Peyton's small group, which remained as the house band for a period of about twelve years. Almost every singer who made records during the twenties appeared at the Grand, plus comedy acts and sometimes orchestras. The Original Creole Band, for example, played the Big Grand as early as 1912. Today the Grand is a third-run movie, while the Pekin houses the Third District Police Station.<sup>1</sup>

Farther south on State Street is the DeLuxe Cafe, where "Sidney Bechet and trumpeter Sugar Johnny were playing"<sup>2</sup> back in 1918; and practically across the street from the DeLuxe are the famous Dreamland and Panama Cafes.

Sunset Cafe (Sunset Cafe Stomp; Louia Armstrong and His Hot Five; 16 November 1926; OK 8423). The Sunset Cafe was another Chicago night-spot which Armstrong put on the map. After he left "King" Oliver in 1926, he also attempted the "iron man" act which Oliver had previously performed, playing in the Vendome in the afternoon and evening and "rushing over to the Sunset and playing until dawn."<sup>3</sup> It was at the Sunset where the jazz sometimes got unbearably hot, for immediately across the street at the Plantation, "King" Oliver was playing, and the old New Orleans "battle of music" went on night after night. Legend has it that Oliver warned Louia to "close those windows or I'll blow you off 35th Street,"<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 136.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 134.



but the battle ended in a draw. A Chicago Defender report said:

The boys are rad hot. Just across tha street at the Plantation Cafe is King Joe Oliver and band, another hot one. The fire department is thinking of lining 35th Street with asbestos to keep those bands from scorching passers by with their rad hot jazz music.<sup>1</sup>

Many up-and-coming jazzmen, both white and Negro, congregated at the Sunset. "In tha early morning," Eddia Condon remembers, "Muggsy Spanier, Frank Taschmaker, Jess Stacy and George Wettling would rush in, through with their work over on Cottage Grove, all ready to take over for Louis during intermission."<sup>2</sup> It was during such "digging" sessions that much of the groundwork was laid for future techniques and styles.

Thirty Fifth and Calumet Streets (35th and Calumet; Mezz Mezzrow and His Orchastra; New York, 7 May 1934, V1 25202). As has been already pointad out, "tha Thirty-fifth and Calumet corner was rife with jazz."<sup>3</sup> Armstrong was playing at the Sunset Cafe, and Oliver at the Plantation; at the Apax, Jimmy Noone, Earl Hines and Joe Poston were playing, and at Joe's Paradise was Jimmie O'Bryant. "Thirty-fifth and Calumet was the center of the universe," claim Ramsey and Smith. "The words aren't Latin but to a lot of jazzmen they mean alma mater....Because of the music, 35th and Calumet became more

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid.

<sup>2</sup>Condon, *op. cit.*, p. 132.

<sup>3</sup>Miller, "Thirty Years of Chicago Jazz," p. 9.

a symbol than a street address."<sup>1</sup> This was in 1927. The white musicians had listened to Louis and "King" Oliver for over five years and the music had buried itself deep. Many of them had already acquired musical names of their own; some, such as Muggsy Spanier, were respected even among the colored ranks, which was indeed a tribute. In reality, this was the final lesson for the whites in genuine New Orleans jazz, and it was certainly a lesson not easily forgotten. In no other period of the history of jazz was the Negro so respected as he was here on the intersection of these two Chicago streets. The white influence began to be felt, however; at first slowly, and then more and more, until the difference between the two became increasingly difficult to detect. "King" Oliver in a very few years became ill and died, a broken man. Louis, while he continued to play fine trumpet, never hit the stride which he reached on the corner of 35th and Calumet. The white musicians who came to "dig" every night quite naturally interpreted things in a slightly different manner, and their admirers changed it even more, until we can hear this music today only on the records which Oliver and Armstrong have left us.

Thirty-fifth and Calumet was packed up every night, with Louis and Oliver and Jimmy all playing within a hundred feet of each other; at dawn there fell a tremendous silence. Unless it happened in New Orleans I don't think

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<sup>1</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 99.

so much good jazz was ever concentrated in so small an area. Around midnight you could hold an instrument in the middle of the street and the air would play it. That was music.<sup>1</sup>

Thirty First Street (Thirty-first Street Blues; Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra; 28 June 1923; PAT 036042). Besides the famous Royal Gardens, the only musical place of any note on Thirty-first Street was the Schiller Cafe, between Calumet and Prairie Streets. Here it was that the "white Original Dixieland Band had invaded the Black Belt,...after which numerous colored bands had played there."<sup>2</sup> This "invasion," which took place quite early in Chicago's jazz history (1915), is sufficient ground for remembering not only the Schiller Cafe, but Thirty-first Street as well; for it must be remembered that at this time, a white band playing at a colored club was a revolutionary event. Revolutionary also was the music which the Original Dixieland Band offered the Black Belt. Up until 1915, only one New Orleans band had invaded Negro Chicago: the Original Creole Band, which then split up and played both at the Dreamland Cafe and the Royal Gardens.<sup>3</sup> The white music must have sounded odd to the colored onlookers, because it was, we are told, "strictly a white man's version" of Negro New Orleans jazz, with "a gang of novelty effects: jangling cowbells, honking automobile horns, barnyard noises that sounded like anything but music."<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Condon, op. cit., p. 133.

<sup>2</sup>Miller, "Thirty Years of Chicago Jazz," p. 9.

<sup>3</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 64.

<sup>4</sup>Mezzrow, op. cit., p. 150.

And what about the band and its music? In New Orleans some had been, as La Rocca explained, "fakers" who played by ear. Some had other professions. Yet none were, strictly speaking musical amateurs. All had played in New Orleans bands....The music of the Original Dixieland Band was collective improvisation very similar to that of Jack Leine's Ragtime Band. The tempo was more like that of ragtime than what is recognized today as jazz tempo.<sup>1</sup>

The musical contribution of the Original Dixieland Band was not extremely great. The part they had in introducing jazz to all parts of the country was more valuable, however, for they contributed more to bringing that music to the ear of the public than any other of these early groups. And though it is doubtful whether the Negro gave them much attention, since we know that after their run at the Schiller Cafe, they were followed only by colored bands, this early revolutionary move to cross the color line is in itself no minor contribution. See Royal Gardens, above.

#### New York

In reality, New York heard jazz nearly as early as had Chicago. The Original Creole Band made a tour there as early as 1913,<sup>2</sup> and both Tom Brown's Band and the Original Dixieland Band followed in 1915-1916.<sup>3</sup> However, it was not until Fletcher Henderson's Roseland band featured Louis Armstrong

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<sup>1</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 48.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 127.



in 1924-25 that New York began to take a real interest in jazz.<sup>1</sup> In 1927, "King" Oliver opened at Harlem's Savoy Ballroom, another important event for the New York crowd, and by this time radio, Duke Ellington, Paul Whiteman and Louis Russell all hit the public at once, and practically overnight, jazz was accepted in New York clubs outside Harlem. Unlike Chicago jazz, good jazz in New York is neither in one section of the city nor is it confined to the Negro district. At first, serious, relaxed and unaffected jazz was difficult to discover in any section, but gradually a spot would appear where one could listen to good jazz; then it would disappear. Fifty-second Street was an exception. Here, during Prohibition days, there were a number of very dirty, very smoky small dives where jazz could be heard and which became fashionable for "slumming" visitors: people who, as a rule, knew nothing of jazz music and cared less, but whose support was gratefully accepted by musicians who were finding it extremely difficult to get a foothold on this town.

Broadway (Broadway Stomp; Jack Pettis; New York, 29 June 1928; Vo 15761). This is an insignificant reference. The title may refer to a particular place on Broadway where Pettis at the time was playing, but more than likely, it is merely another salute to the main street of New York's entertainment world.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 81.

Eddie Condon's (Midnight at Eddie Condon's; Bud Freeman and His Orchestra; Keynote 636; Post WW II). Eddie Condon's at 47 West Third Street in New York, opened on December 20, 1945, featuring Chicago and New Orleans musicians of the highest caliber.<sup>1</sup> This policy has continued in Condon's Cafe up to the present time and has been instrumental in the success which jazz has enjoyed there.

Eddie Condon, who started playing banjo in and around Chicago at the time "King" Oliver and Louis Armstrong were battling at the corner of Thirty-fifth and Calumet, is one of the few white men alive who loves and understands the true Negro jazz--as well as it is possible for a white man to understand it. "Mezz" Mezzrow says, "He [Red McKenzie] and Eddie Condon both had a smart business slant; they were practical good managers and organizers and they were always on the lookout for commercial possibilities."<sup>2</sup> Ordinarily, to accuse a musician of being "always on the lookout for commercial possibilities" would be considered tremendously insulting. Mezzrow, however, is not speaking of musical commercialism, but rather of the business sense which eventually led Condon to open this successful club, a club which combines two very unusual features: good jazz and good financial returns.

The Cotton Club (Cotton Club Stomp; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; New York, 3 May 1929; V1 V39079). It is entirely

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<sup>1</sup>Condon, op. cit., p. 9.

<sup>2</sup>Mezzrow, op. cit., p. 151.

proper that Duke Ellington should consider the Cotton Club important enough to immortalize it on records, for it was here that Ellington's band in 1927 received its first important engagement, an engagement which led directly to the national reputation which it today enjoys. It seems ironic that "King" Oliver originally had been offered the Cotton Club date, but because he had done so well at the New York Savoy Ballroom, he understandably believed his band to be worth more money than the Cotton Club was willing to pay.

When he turned down the Cotton Club, he probably hadn't fully realized...that good jobs in New York were rare, that predepression figures he had become used to in Chicago were nothing but a far-away dream...However, the sum seemed just right to another orchestra leader, a young fellow named Ellington from Washington, D. C., who was glad to move into the Cotton Club after the Kentucky Club, where his Washingtonians had been playing.<sup>1</sup>

For Ellington this was the start he needed. "The Cotton Club...was a center of Harlem entertainment vogue and widespread radio facilities....In a short time his radio hook-ups brought him a large national audience--his was the first large hot band to attract any such attention."<sup>2</sup> For Oliver, the Cotton Club likewise was a turning point. He found New York jobs difficult to obtain and low in pay. With the advancing depression, even road trips were unprofitable and the terrific strain of these trips, as well as Oliver's dogged striving to get back his reputation, finally broke his health.

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<sup>1</sup>Ramsey and Smith, *op. cit.*, p. 82.

<sup>2</sup>*Ibid.*, p. 218.

He died in utmost poverty, April 10, 1938--ten years after he turned down the Cotton Club job. "When it was over, there was no money left for a headstone; it is still missing from his grave."<sup>1</sup>

The Cotton Club of Harlem, as were many of the higher-class clubs of this district, was operated by whites. This club in particular was "operated by a white beer syndicate."<sup>2</sup> It was such clubs, run intelligently and shrewdly by men who knew the type of music Harlem enjoyed, which brought enough money "into Harlem's musical circles to encourage the organization of some of the best bands in the jazz annals."<sup>3</sup> Today, there is a white Cotton Club on Broadway, where Ellington also makes appearances, and though most certainly "King" Oliver would never have allowed such frills to be associated with his jazz, it is interesting to realize how far "the Duke" has gone since he signed the contract which Oliver rejected twenty seven years ago.

In a recent appearance at the downtown Cotton Club on Broadway, Ellington's boys wore white jackets, boiled shirts and dress ties, crimson trousers and shoes. Duke himself opened the evening in a light gray coat and black trousers, moved on to full dress, and finished in a henna jacket and the blacks. The trumpets appeared to be made of platinum, heavily embossed, perhaps suitably inscribed and possibly taken out of Tiffany's each day and put back after the night's work. Even the instrument cases were handsomely lettered in metal.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 91.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 214.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 218.



The Deuces (Get Your Juices at the Deuces; Harry the Hipster Gibson; 21 April 1944; Music 292). Named in honor of the famous musician's hangout in Chicago, this was one of the Fifty-second Street dives which sprang up after "the Street" became known as a jazz center.

Famous Door (Swingin' At the Famous Door; Roy Eldridge and His Orchestra; New York 20 December 1935; De 3536). The Famous Door, one of Fifty-second Street's original jazz spots, was dark and dismal, as so many after-hour spots and speak-easies of Prohibition days had been. The repeal of Prohibition did not give rise to a great deal of renovation at the Famous Door, since the customers seemed to enjoy the dirt and smoke--the "atmosphere." But most of all, they enjoyed good music. On Sunday afternoons, Bessie Smith, for example, used to sing her blues in an upstairs room over the Famous Door. "A couple of hundred people," it is said, "sat on camp chairs...goggling at Bessie while she sang, but it didn't affect her."<sup>1</sup> She never even bothered to take her furs off. Eddie Condon, one of the earlier musicians to play at the Famous Door, says:

The club took its name from a small door on which visitors scribbled their names. The signatures I remember as memorable were those of the musicians who came to the jam sessions we held on Sunday afternoons. We didn't charge admission; the audience sat around buying drinks while the best jazzmen in the country played for their own amusement.<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 252.

<sup>2</sup>Condon, op. cit., p. 241.

Originally the Onyx had been where the Famous Door now stands. When Condon and his group moved in, "the decorations on the mirror panels which ran around the room were insulting and in bad taste--they consisted of musical notes."<sup>1</sup> This was quickly remedied, however, and soon the mirrors sported more typical art: "frowsy blonds, gentlemen drunks and dancers..."<sup>2</sup>

Fifty-second Street (Fifty-second Street; Louis Prima and His New Orleans Gang; Hollywood, 20 March 1937; Vo 3506). Wilder Hobson, in his essay on Fifty-second Street, claims: "52nd Street offered just about every conceivable discouragement to those who wanted to hear jazz music for phoney reasons--which is more than you can say for a lot of places."<sup>3</sup> What Hobson means by this is that Fifty-second Street's clubs were far from comfortable and offered nothing good except the music. All the disadvantages of such places: "fetid air and sweat, promiscuous body contact, watered whiskey, etc.,"<sup>4</sup> did not discourage the crowds which poured in night after night, week after week. There was the perennial college crowd, "handsome girls who were just so squirmingly eager to hear 'Wingy' Mannone...or 'Stuff' Smith or go skiing or sit up and see the sunrise or Whatever People Were Doing:"<sup>5</sup> but for the most part, at least in its earlier history, Fifty-second Street attracted

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., pp. 240-241.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid.

<sup>3</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., p. 253.

<sup>4</sup>Ibid., p. 253.

<sup>5</sup>Ibid.

musicians and jazz fans who, when the air was filled with the music they came to hear, overlooked the crowded conditions and the watered whiskey.

The history of Fifty-second Street as a musical center began during and because of Prohibition. Originally the Onyx was the only speakeasy on Fifty-second Street which, because of the musical trade it received, carried musical entertainment. After Repeal, other musical clubs opened on and around "the Street": "'Wingy' Mannone held forth at the Jam Club in the basement of a nearby hotel for a week or so before the place was closed for disturbing the neighbors."<sup>1</sup> "Louis Prima opened at the Famous Door...with 'Pee Wee' Russell and George Brunies; and later Count Basie came to town."<sup>2</sup> The Deuces later made its appearance and in the next block, at the Hickory House, good music could also, at times, be found. The Commodore Record Shop, under Milt Gabler's managership, became one of the leading jazz record markets in the world, even going to the risk and trouble of having many old, valuable records re-issued. This shop was also on Fifty-second Street, as was Jimmy Ryan's, which sponsored a series of popular jazz concerts which took place on Sunday afternoons. Many of these establishments are no longer to be found. Some have moved to new locations or have been taken over by some other

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 251.

<sup>2</sup>Condon, op. cit., p. 165.

business. A recent building project has likewise moved many of the original locations and of the remaining few, not one today features jazz, except as rather ragged accompaniment to the burlesque shows which are now found there. But Fifty-second Street served its purpose. Here many musicians found work at a time when jazz was at a low ebb. It signalled the beginning of a new era in the music business, especially that of New York.

Local 802 (Opus Local 802; Benny Goodman and His Orchestra; New York, 27 December 1939; Co 35362). 802, the New York Musician's Union Local number, is a most familiar number to jazz and legitimate musicians alike. A local 802 card produced in any part of the United States will generally open musical doors which might otherwise be closed, for a person carrying a New York card is usually recognized as an accomplished and experienced musician.

Onyx Club (Onyx Club Breakdown; Joe Sullivan; Hollywood, 8 August 1935; Co 2925D). Fifty-second Street has the Onyx to thank for what happened to it during and after Prohibition days. The Onyx, first of the local speakeasies to feature music, did so because of its clientele: mostly dance and radio musicians. Wilder Hobson, speaking from first-hand experience, describes its un-glamorous appearance:

You went in a brownstone basement entry and up a dark flight of stairs to the second floor where there was a door painted a dirty mottled silver with the customary Judas hole. Inside there was a shadowy hall and a couple of drinking rooms, the rear room containing a



bar, one of those push-ball games, a shabby upright piano, a few tables and some wicker chairs. Many musicians used the place as a club, made telephone calls there and parked their instruments, but nothing very much happened until late in the afternoon and nothing at all like a stampede after that. I don't think there were more than ten small tables in the whole joint, and I'm certain that I never saw more than twenty-five people in the place at any one time.<sup>1</sup>

The Onyx, though a very informal club, employed at one time some of the finest musical talent; especially piano players:

Along about five in the afternoon Joe Sullivan or Charley Born or Art Tatum would be playing the piano, but it was all so casual that if you hadn't known they were engaged by the management you might have supposed they had just dropped in and sat down. This effect was heightened by the fact that any of the guests could make music if he wished.<sup>2</sup>

In time, just before Repeal, a more organized form of entertainment was obtained: the Five Spirits of Rhythm, which Mezzrow claims was the "first colored group on 52nd Street," though he erroneously states that it was at the Famous Door that they first played.<sup>3</sup> It is quite possible that Mezzrow, because of the change which the Onyx made about this time, became confused on the club names, for about 1927, the Onyx, in order to obtain larger quarters, moved to the other side of Fifty-second Street and the Famous Door "occupied the old quarters of the old Onyx, with a downstairs room added."<sup>4</sup> In either case, it was at this time that the Onyx and Fifty-second Street began to be noticed, attracting large crowds

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<sup>1</sup>Ramsey and Smith, op. cit., pp. 149-150.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 150.

<sup>3</sup>Mezzrow, op. cit., p. 264.

<sup>4</sup>Condon, op. cit., p. 240.

and the best musicians. The fortunes of the entertainment world have caused good jazz to leave Fifty-second Street and the Onyx, but many jazzmen recall the time when this was practically the jazz center of the United States.

The intention of the preceding discussion of place-names in titles of jazz records has been to clarify and extend the history of jazz given in Chapter Two. New Orleans and Chicago in particular are important in any study of the development of jazz. The discussion has emphasized the way in which record titles often come about; and, by dealing with specific areas and buildings, as well as with the personalities who lived and musical events which took place in these places, the discussion prepared the reader to understand more fully the glossary which follows and, indeed, the entire jazz tradition.

#### AFRICAN SURVIVALS

Through the recent efforts of several anthropologists, the entire problem of the survival of African patterns in the Negro culture of the United States has been reopened. Melville J. Herskovitz has, for example, exploded what he refers to the "myth" of the Negro past. Among other things, Herskovitz has shown the fallacy of the former belief that the slaves, because of the many different tribes they were taken from, learned English as a sort of common tongue and quickly forgot

their native language. On the contrary, claims Herakovitz, "the region where slaving took its greatest toll was a relatively small part of Africa, while, of these slaves, the major portion was drawn from certain fairly restricted areas lying in the coastal belt of West Africa and the Congo." "In classifying languages," he goes on, "linguists are seen to designate the dialects of most peoples of the slaving areas as Sudanese, which means that, whatever the differences in vocabulary...they had substantial elements of similarity in basic structure."<sup>1</sup> In other areas also, Herskovitz found quite convincing proof that the Negro in America has retained amazing amounts of his former heritage; so much so, in fact, that he strongly urges study of the New World Negro to "deepen our comprehension of the relevant African cultures themselves, give unity to a broader field of research, and open the door for an interchange that cannot but be fruitful for Africanists and Afroamericanists alike."<sup>2</sup>

The recent discoveries of Herskovitz and the break-down of many formerly accepted theories have left vast amounts of work to be done in the Afroamerican field of study. William R. Bascom reminds us of "the extent to which general monographs and even most of the most specialized studies on West Africa

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<sup>1</sup>Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 265.

<sup>2</sup>Melville J. Herskovitz, "Contribution of Afroamerican Studies to Africanist Research," American Anthropologist, L, 1 (January-March, 1948).

represent only samplings of various aspects of culture."<sup>1</sup> Nevertheless, there seem to be at the present enough data to show conclusively there are many African survivals in this country. This is particularly true in music; where, because of the importance of music in African life, many African musical traits have been retained.

#### The Importance of Music in West Africa

It is difficult to overemphasize the importance of music in West Africa, for besides being a means of relaxation and entertainment, it assumes a utilitarian function. "For education there were lullabies and game songs; initiation songs for the young men in adolescence. For mating there were love songs....For war they had battle songs...to stimulate the warriors and to frighten the enemy." In religion especially, song and dance had a place of prime importance: "...songs to bring rain, to cast spells, to inspire submissiveness, and, linked as it was with medicine, to heal and to hurt."<sup>2</sup> There were songs and dances for all occasions, big and small. Weddings, births and deaths were of special importance and were the scene of long, involved ceremonial dances. The description of such an important event as the rites of circumcision will

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<sup>1</sup>William R. Bascom, "West Africa and Complexity of Primitive Culture," *American Anthropologist*, L, 21 (January-March, 1948).

<sup>2</sup>Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 17.



serve to demonstrate how great is the importance of music in such ceremonies:

As soon as the sun set, the drums began to boom forth and the singing and dancing commenced.... The revelry continued through the night. The dancing was still going on as late as ten the next morning when the ritual proper was begun.... The morning following the circumcision they were awakened at dawn and made to dance for a short time.... The following day...they were required to do the same thing. The time during which they danced was lengthened from time to time until at last they danced most of the time from sunrise to sunset. They... went through a long and varied repertoire, singing all the while.<sup>1</sup>

So great is the musical emphasis in African tribal life that some scientists are prone to believe that the musical ability of the Negro is not learned, but that it has been such a vital part of the life of his ancestors for so many generations that musical ability has become ingrained in his subconscious, a psychological phenomenon which is known as a motor habit. "The retention of Africanisms in motor habits presents a vast field for study,"<sup>2</sup> says Herskovitz. "To level palpable differences in racial behavior, and to ascribe those which cannot be argued away exclusively to conditioning," says Rudi Blesh, "may very well be a rationalization."<sup>3</sup>

Especially in the field of dancing, attention has been called to the astounding similarities between the gesticulation of African religious dances and the recent dances of the

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<sup>1</sup>Claire Holdreds and Kimball Young, "Circumcision Rites Among the Bajog," American Anthropologist, XXIX, 664-668 (October-December, 1927).

<sup>2</sup>Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 145.

<sup>3</sup>Blesh, op. cit., p. 350.

American Negro. "Many American Negro forms of dancing are essentially African," Herskovitz points out. "Pictures of the Kwasde rites for the ancestors of the chief of the Ashanti village Askore," for instance, "include a perfect example of the Charleston."<sup>1</sup> Blesh points also to the "remarkable singing and dancing of Negro children," especially their rhythmic ability, which allows them, "without aberration to maintain a beat which may speed up but does so by a smooth and almost imperceptible gradation."<sup>2</sup>

And so, while the motor habit theory is not proven, the fact that definite similarities occur between the musical movements of the native African and the American Negro would seem to indicate that music certainly was extremely vital to African life and helps to explain why it was in the area of music that the Negro retained most of his African past.

Now that the reason for the Negro's retention of musical Africanisms has been explained, a few of the areas in which these Africanisms occur should be dealt with.

### Religion

The basic form of the religions of West Africa has been retained for unknown centuries. Long before the transfer of

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<sup>1</sup>Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 146.

<sup>2</sup>Blesh, op. cit., p. 88.

Africans to America began, the Mohammedan religion was very influential in the coastal area of West Africa. In 1076, "a fanatical band of Mohammedans called the Almoravides invaded Ghana and gradually brought the area under the influence of their religion."<sup>1</sup> In the eleventh century, the ruler of the area was converted to Mohammedanism and made an impressive pilgrimage to Mecca. The natives, however, "continued to adhere to their own religion."<sup>2</sup> Even in their new American environment, they continued to cling, wherever possible, to their original religious views. Herskovitz believes that, especially in South American and the West Indies, "everywhere specific identifications are made between African gods and Catholic Saints."<sup>3</sup> In our own country too, despite the fact that they have been under a predominantly Protestant influence for one hundred fifty years or more, their services, even today, have a marked African character.

The change from Baptist ritual to the African-like "shout" during a given service is gradual, for, as is often the case in Africa itself, even the leader does not know when the spirit will come and possession will occur.... Sooner or later the restraint is broken ...and then the scene turns into one entirely comparable to those witnessed in West Africa or in the New World wherever African patterns of worship have been preserved.<sup>4</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>John Hope Franklin, From Slavery To Freedom (New York, 1947), p. 13.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 14.

<sup>3</sup>Melville J. Herskovitz, "African Gods and Catholic Saints in the New World Negro Belief," American Anthropologists, XXXIX, 635 (October-December, 1939).

<sup>4</sup>Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 223.

The curious beliefs of the West African concerning religion very likely are responsible for this under-the-surface retention. If conquered, Herskovitz explains, the gods of the conquerors, being then more powerful than their own, are accepted, but they do not replace the original gods. "This attitude...goes far towards explaining the readiness of the Negroes to take over the conceptions of the white man," suggests Herskovitz, "and this points the way...to an understanding how, though forms of worship have been accepted, not all African world view or ritual practice was lost."<sup>1</sup>

Death was especially significant in West African religion, since it "was devoutly believed that the spirit that dwelled in a relative was deified upon death," and that this spirit "continued to live and take an active part in the family of the deceased."<sup>2</sup> Such a conviction led to a great emphasis on the funeral, which was "the climax of life," therefore "extensive rituals were sacred obligations of the survivors."<sup>3</sup> "The principle that life must have a proper ending as well as a well-protected beginning," explains Herskovitz, "is the fundamental reason of the funeral in all Negro societies."<sup>4</sup> In the United States, this phase of the African past survived to a great extent. The funeral in New Orleans, for instance,

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 72.

<sup>2</sup>Franklin, *op. cit.*, p. 32.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>4</sup>Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 197.



was a gala affair and provided many of the early jazz musicians with work, for a man "was nothin' if he didn't hava a band"<sup>1</sup> at his funeral. The funeral marches were elaborate, providing entertainment for the entire neighborhood:

On the way out to tha graveyard, tha band played in dead-march time, with muffled drums, soft and somber dirges, including Frae As a Bird, When the Saints Go Marching In, Nearer My God to Thee, and the real funaral marches. But...when the body was interrred: "The mourning got over quick. Right out of the graveyard, the drummer would throw on the snares, roll the drums, get tha cats together and light out. The cornat would give a few notes, and then about three blocks from the graveyard they would cut loose."

The funerals and parades always had a "sacond line" which consisted of the kids who danced along behind. The bands had a way of strutting, of swinging thair bodies, and of turning corners in a spectacular fashion, and the boys who marched along on the sidewalk with them mimicked every action.<sup>2</sup>

"Jelly Roll" Morton as a boy in New Orleans, was a member of a singing quartet which used to visit all the homes in which someone had recently died for the purpose of singing spirituals for tha mourners. "The minute we'd walk in, we'd be right in the kitchen where the food was--plenty ham sandwichas and cheese sandwiches...and plenty whiskey and plenty of beer."<sup>3</sup> This was the pay for their services. "Jelly Roll" remembers also that at times the mourners concentrated so much on making it a successful funeral that the corpse was completely

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<sup>1</sup>Ramsay and Smith, Jazzmen, p. 26.

<sup>2</sup>Ibid., p. 27.

<sup>3</sup>Lomax, Mistar Jelly Roll, p. 15.

forgotten. In fact, "he'd [the corpse] would be by himself most of the time and couldn't hear nothing we was saying at all."<sup>1</sup>

### Dancing

Dancing was an inseparable part of the musical service which accompanied the many various rites of the West Africans. "Songs and dances: That is the key to West African music," claims Harris. "The song and dance were inseparable even as their language and their music were inseparable,"<sup>2</sup> and as such the two were transferred to America and as such they influenced the development of what we call jazz music today. Rudi Blesh considers "the Negro's dancing...a part of his whole musical culture,"<sup>3</sup> which agrees with Herskovitz' discovery of the amazing similarity between the Kwaside rites and the Charleston.

During the slavery period, quite often dancing was allowed on Saturday night, very probably because it was impossible to stop it. Innumerable accounts of ex-slaves tell of these Saturday night affairs in which dancing to the music of crude homemade instruments was the feature attraction:

So some of us young bucks just step up and say we was good dancers, and we start shuffling while the rest of the niggers pat. Some nigger women go back to the

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>2</sup>Harris, op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>3</sup>Blesh, op. cit., p. 204.

quarters and git the gourd fiddles and the clapping bones made outen beef ribs, and bring them back so we could have some music. We git all wormed up and dence like we never did dance before. I 'speck we invent some new steps that night!<sup>1</sup>

In the earliest jazz, the dance was as important as the music itself, as it had been in the African ceremony. The one moved and inspired the other. "It was, quite naturally, dance music from the very beginning," claims Pannassie. "As with primitive people, creation and interpretation were one, so with primitive people were music and dancing inseparable."<sup>2</sup> Sergeant also feels that, "jazz began dancing, and the dancing associated with it exhibits certain aesthetic and rhythmic similarities to the performances of its musicians."<sup>3</sup>

### Jazz

Some question has been raised as to the validity of the claim that jazz is a product of the Negro, specifically the Louisiana Negro, and that it originally finds root in Africa itself; however, those who claim jazz to be a white product have thus far found little evidence on which to base their beliefs. For the most part, historians, anthropologists and musicologists agree that jazz, though not purely an African product, can trace most of its most identifying features to

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<sup>1</sup>B. A. Botkin, Lay My Burden Down (Chicago, 1945), p. 114-115.

<sup>2</sup>Hugues Penassie, The Real Jazz, (New York, 1942), p. 10.

<sup>3</sup>Sergeant, op. cit., p. 21.

the Negro. Herskovitz, after extensive research on the similarities between the African and American Negro music, concludes:

The more technical musicological problems in the study of similarities and differences over this area cannot be discussed for lack of data. Yet, again, enough is known to justify the conclusion that in musical style and rhythmic treatment--to say nothing of the sociological problem of the cultural setting of the music--fundamental structure is everywhere similar.<sup>1</sup>

Musicologist Rudi Blesh shows several technical reasons why "we can trace the origin of jazz music back to the Negroes."<sup>2</sup>

1. "Jazz...is a manner of playing...traceable musically ...and historically from the first importation of slaves."<sup>3</sup>

Herskovitz also recognizes this difference in musical interpretation: "Not what he sings is so characteristic of his race, but the way he sings. This way of the Negro is identical in Africa and America and is totally different from the way of any other race."<sup>4</sup>

2. "The sliding, microtonal flattening of the third and seventh is a universal practice in all Afro-American music and gives the quality known as blue." "These," claims Blesh, "are precisely the intervals in all Negro music which are flattened indeterminately in degrees much less than the necessary half-tone."<sup>5</sup>

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<sup>1</sup>Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 85.

<sup>2</sup>Blesh, op. cit., p. 330.

<sup>3</sup>Ibid., p. 25.

<sup>4</sup>Herskovitz, The Myth of the Negro Past, p. 263.

<sup>5</sup>Blesh, op. cit., p. 45.



3. "The vocal vibrato is carried over from Africa into Afro-American singing." It is this vibrato, moreover, that Blesh suggests is used by the jazz instruments "as a rhythmic device that often furnishes in its timed oscillations, an inner-rhythm within the continuous tones."<sup>1</sup>

4. The tendency to increase the tempo is a trait of both early jazz and natural African music. This is not an observation of Blesh's, but rather of musicologist Alan Lomax, who footnotes "Jelly Roll" Morton's complaint concerning some of his early co-artists: "Most of these regtime guys," says "Jelly Roll," "especially those that couldn't play very well, would have the inspiration they were doing okay if they kept increasing the tempo during a piece." This increasing of the tempo, claims Lomax, "is a West African way of doing things. Here Jelly imposes the European metronome idea of tempo upon the more fluid African idea of beat, just as he imposed rigid and intricate European harmony upon a simpler folk pattern."<sup>2</sup>

These are but four of many convincing arguments in the same vein. Quite often such discussions become too involved musically to be of use in a thesis such as this, but more and more, valid research has tended to reaffirm the theory that jazz is predominately a product of an African past.

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<sup>1</sup>Ibid., p. 33.

<sup>2</sup>Lomax, op. cit., p. 62.

## African Speech Retention

Especially since Turner's study of the Gullah dialect, opinion regarding the possible retention of Africanisms in the area of language has received thorough revision. In place of the widely accepted theory that the Negroes have retained not a trace of native African speech, anthropologists have now concluded that survivals are possible in surprising amounts. Besides discovering some four thousand words of West African origin in the Gullah dialect, Turner uncovered much additional evidence concerning language similarities.<sup>1</sup> His major contribution, however, was to open a whole new field of study. Now it is believed that "it is probable that some speech forms of Negroes--and even some of whites--may be derived from an African cultural background."<sup>2</sup> Oma Stemley, in a study of the speech of the Texas Negro, detects "a goodly dash of African flavor," and claims that "many words...have been taken over by Southern whites and spread far beyond the area in which the plantation system flourished." A few of these words which have recently been listed as being native African are: "pinto (coffin), buckra (white man), goober, cooter (turtle), hoodoo, okra, gumbo, Geechee, jigger and

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<sup>1</sup>Lorenz Daw Turner, Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect (Chicago, 1949).

<sup>2</sup>E. Franklin Frazier, The Negro in the United States (New York, 1949), p. 10.

pofo (heron)."<sup>1</sup>

### African Survivals in the Jargon of Jazz

Because the evidence is convincing that much of his musical culture has been retained by the American Negro from his African past and because Turner has conclusively shown the survival of African terms in one American Negro dialect, it seems logical to inspect the basic vocabulary of jazz (which, as has been shown, is an American Negro music) for the existence of African survivals, since both the origin and development of jazz were presumably conducive to the retention of African terminology. Nine words, all of which are of uncertain etymology, are here examined for the purpose of suggesting possible African survivals. It is of some importance that these words are among the most familiar and basic in the jazz vocabulary: banjo, blues, boogie-woogie, hot, jazz, rag, shimmy and wang-wang.

In this section, as well as in the glossary in the following chapter, a code is used to allow reference to source material to be inserted in the text without the distraction of footnotes. An alphabetical key to the code may be found with the glossary. The record titles which accompany the

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<sup>1</sup>Oma Stemley, "The Relationship of the Speech of American Negroes to the Speech of Whites," American Speech, XXVI, 14-15 (February, 1951).

terms are, in each instance, believed to be the oldest titles known to have used the word in question, though, because of the difficulty of referring to Delaunay's discography chronologically, it is possible that in a few instances, these titles have been antedated by a few months. The second date which is given is the approximate date that the word came into common use; the first date refers to the day the record was made. It often happens that the words entered the language long before they were used in record titles; in such cases, the listing of the titles is a mere formality.

Banjo (As far as can be determined, "banjo" is not used as a part of any jazz record title.) Ca 1750 A stringed musical instrument having a neck like a guitar and a body like a tambourine. (WCD, Banjo). Though this instrument is often credited with either French or Spanish origin, the precise derivation is much in doubt, coming very possibly from a Senagambian word of like meaning, bania (Am.L, Banjo). Halliwell credits the Italians with the invention of this unusual instrument (DAPW, Banjo), but Thomas Jefferson, who owned several slaves, observes:

In music [the Negroes] are more generally gifted than the whites, with accurate ears for a tune and time, and they have been found capable of imagining a small catch.... The instrument proper to them is the banjar which they brought here from Africa (r, p. 50).

The belief that the banjo is an African instrument as well as an African word is shared by several others, anthropologists as well as musicologists. Anthropologist John H.



Franklin says, "When it comes to measuring...the persistence of African culture in the New World the problem becomes much more difficult. In the language one can see it in such words as yam, goosbar, canoe and banjo." (t, p. 40). "Musicologists are generally agreed that it [the banjo] is a genuine African contribution," says Winthrop Sargeant (m, p. 225).

Blues (Livery Stable Blues; Original Dixieland Band; New York, 24-26 February 1917; Vi 19255). Ca 1850 A state of mental depression, sadness. The preceding interpretation of the "blues" possibly comes from beluwa, a Swahili word which translates as: trouble, confusion or much difficulty (SSED beluwa). Though the N.E.D. lists "blue" as meaning "affected with fear, discomfort, an anxiety...depressed, miserable or low spirited," as early as 1550, not until 1883 is there a quotation which clearly conveys the idea of sadness or depression. This is significant, for "the Blues," a musical form which also reflects gloom and despair, sprang up "around the time of the Civil War" (r, p. 102). The possibility then exists that the Negro in his slavery sadness invented this music, which is itself usually "a slow, syncopated rhythm...characterized by an uncertainty of pitch between the major and minor third and seventh of the scale" (r, p. 102) and capable of very despondent sounds. This music may have been known as the beluwa, which, because of its close proximity to the English word "blue," has coalesced with it. (Bluss - genre), in the glossary.

Boogie Woogie (Pine Top's Boogie Woogie; Pine Top Smith; Chicago, 29 December 1928; Vo 1245). Ce 1920 A piano style which produces "rapid patterns with the left hand...against the ever-changing rhythms of the right hand, causing exciting crossrhythms." (o, p. 184).

The Boogie Woogie takes almost without exception the form of the 12-bar blues, repeated with endless variation, but always in the same key.... The melody may be widely separated from the bass and progress in contrary motion. Throughout there is an ignorance of conventional harmony which amounts to a most refreshing disrespect for all rules (o, p. 185).

Again, this is a word with an extremely obscure background, and in this case either or both of two African words may be the root:

1. Buki--A Swahili word meaning a kind of intoxicating liquor (SSED, Buki).

2. Buge-uge--A Hausa word meaning continued or repeated beatings (H.E.D., buge buge).

According to William Russell, the word "boogie woogie" came into use in Chicago's South Side before Prohibition. Once a month, when the rent fell due, many people would arrange a party in an effort to raise enough money to satisfy the landlord for another thirty days. The custom was called "pitchin' boogie," and it is conceivable that "a kind of intoxicating liquor" was an honored guest, as was an unusual piano styling which came to be known as "boogie woogie."

More probable is the theory that "boogie woogie" came from the Hausa word which crudely describes the sound of this

music, even as it is played today. In its beginning stages, the effect of "repeated beating" was probably more prominent. Such an authority as Herskovitz, tells us that "African drums have entirely disappeared in the United States, yet one who is familiar with African music in its original forms cannot hear 'boogie woogie' piano rhythms without realizing that there is little difference between the two except in medium of expression" (s, p. 142). Blesh, in defining the characteristics of "boogie woogie" also recognizes the similarity of the bass moving in "repeated cycles" and the African drums which form a groundwork for the chorus to improvise upon (r, p. 302). (Boogie Woogie - Genre).

Hot (Hot Stuff; Jimmy Blyths's Owls; 5 October 1927; Vo 1136). Ca 1920 Jazz which is syncopated, improvised and Negroid in style and tone

In many West African tongues the adjective "hot" refers to the mysterious trance-like state of passion, to the heated and inspired improvisation and the tonal qualities evoked at such a time, to the exciting over-all tonal-rhythmic texture of the music, and the emotional state which is superinduced. All of these meanings persist in Negro language throughout the Western Hemisphere. Their descriptive quality is too unique and their references too varied to permit the belief of any but an African origin of the term (r, p. 43).

In this case, the African word has not survived, but rather the meaning of the word. "Hot," up to the time the African influenced the English language, in no case was linked with music. As far back as 1500, "hot" in English was used in connection with sexual feeling (N.E.D. Hot), which is

undoubtedly closely allied with the African meaning of the word, but, as far as can be determined, it was not used to describe the "mysterious trance-like state," which is induced by and inseparable from, music. To describe "hot" music, or how one feels when he "gets hot," would be, as Rex Harris points out, "comparable to giving the wave lengths of the spectra in a dragonfly's wings in order to describe the darting beauty of its flight over a pond" (bb, p. 46). But probably "Fats Waller's remark to the lady who asked to explain jazz rhythm, puts it as well as possible: "Lady, if you got to ask you ain't got it" (y, p. 165). The fact that only the Negro's meaning of the word describes this feeling, shows once again that jazz is essentially an African music. (Hot - Adjective, Genre), in the glossary.

Jazz (At the Jazz Band Ball; Original Dixieland Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; Ae 1205). Ca 1910 The origin of this word is uncertain. Shipley believes that its origin "is in the name of the man that, down in Vicksburg around 1910, became world famous through the song...Alexander's Ragtime Band" (DWO, jazz). The reasoning behind this theory is that Alexander's first name happened to be Charles, or "Chazz," and "at the 'hot' moments, they called 'Come on, Jazz!'" whence, "jazz" music. This is a plausible explanation, but "jazz" is more generally thought to be an African word, though what African word it stems from is not agreed



upon. If Tom Brown's story of how the musical word originated is valid, the term originally had sexual significance. It was Brown who claimed the word was originally "jazz music" and that it was used "where the red lights glowed, but it wasn't about music." The term "jass" was supposed to have been whispered about by a conniving music union, in an effort to smear the band, but the plan backfired and the popular music became known officially as jazz (o, p. 46).

Brown's story tallies with Partridge's theory concerning the origin of "jazz," which claims that it was so named "because it was first played in the low dance halls and brothels where sex excitement was the prime purpose" (DU, jazz). Partridge also believes the word to be originally African, "adopted from the savage tribes in whose dances and sexual rites it played such a large part" (DU, jazz). The word may derive from either one or both of the following Malagasy words: manangan-jaza--to father, and mitoe-jaza--to conceive (D.E.M., jaza). Nor did the sexual significance in this country necessarily change with the advent of jazz. As late as 1927, it was used to refer to copulation (DA, jazz) and such a jazz title as Jazz Me Blues (Original Dixieland Band; New York, 3/26 May 7 June 1921; V1 18722) would also seem to indicate that it continued to have a sexual connotation.

Another theory concerning the origin of this word claims that it probably relates to an African word, "jasm,"

which means to hurry up (DA, jazz). Shipley also cites this possibility, though he is inclined to think the Alexander's Ragtime Band story more plausible (DWO, jazz). (Jazz - genre), in the glossary.

Rag (Tiger Rag; Original Dixieland Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; Ae 1206) Ca 1893 A music characterized by a strong syncopation in the melody without the eccentric or subtle varied orchestral coloring of jazz (ATS, rag). In 1899, Rupert Hughes wrote:

Negroes call their clog dancing "ragging" and the dance a "rag," a dance largely shuffling. The dance is a sort of frenzy with frequent yelps of delight from the dancer and spectators and accompanied by the latter with hand clapping and stomping of feet. Banjo figuration is very noticeable in ragtime music and division of one of the beats into two short notes is traceable to the hand clapping (q, pp. 103-4).

The fact that the word "rag" was used as early as 1899 by the Negro to refer to a dance, points quite strongly toward the possibility of African survival. Such a theory is further strengthened by the realization that there is an Arabic word, rakas, meaning "to dance" (EAV, rakas). Bear in mind also, that the Mohammedan religion was more than slightly known in West Africa, having been introduced during the eleventh century by a King Baramendana Keita (t, p. 14); and while the religion is not thought to have been very influential, the borrowing of some words is not impossible. There is, in fact, a Swahili word, "rakaa," which refers to the Mohammedan prayer period (SSED, rakaa); and so it appears that the African

changed the Mohammedan service from a solemn act of bowing towards Mecca, to a period of dancing. (Ragtime - genre), in the glossary.

Shimmy (Shimmo Shawabbe; New Orleans Rhythm Kings; March, 1923; Ge 5106). Ca 1920 A formerly popular jazz dance, somewhat like the fox trot, accompanied by stimulating shivering (DA, shimmy). There is, in Hausa, an adverb, "simi-simi," which means "slinkingly" (H.E.D., simi-simi). Recognizing that many of the African dances had sexual significance, and that the African word is quite close in sound to the American word, it seems possible that "shimmy" may have originally been an African word.

Wang Wang (Wang Wang Blues; King Oliver's Savannah Syncopators; 17 September 1923; Vo 1049). Ca 1920 All available data on "wang wang" point positively to African origin, though often only the very vague statement is made that the word is concerned with witchcraft and voodoo (DA, wanga) (ADD, wanga). Turner also lists the word as an African survival and translates it likewise as a "charm" or as having some vague connection with witchcraft (p. p. 177). Whether or not "wang wang" is used as a part of the present American Negro vocabulary is unknown, but the fact that it has appeared in the title of a jazz record indicates that it has had some significance and that possibly it is one of the Negro "code" words, carrying a message which only a member of the Negro race would understand.

## SUMMARY

✓

No other product of this country is more purely American than is jazz. Basically the music of the African who was enslaved here for one hundred and fifty years, jazz, as it contacted the many other folk musics found in southern United States, was influenced slightly by each, producing ultimately a music which was quite different from any which the world had yet heard. Since the first experimental wails of this music were heard, sometime close to the turn of the century, jazz has raised itself to a much more respectable level and is today heard and played in nearly every country in the world. In this country especially, jazz, or at least a music which resembles jazz to some extent, can be heard nearly every hour of the day, and today employs musicians by the thousands.

The extent to which jazz has made itself felt is apparent in the jazz jargon which the average American has assimilated. Such basic words as "jazz," "corn," and "boogie woogie" are at least recognized, if not used, by a great majority of Americans. And yet, the amount of study done on the jargon of jazz has been amazingly scanty. In some few cases, such as the recent slang dictionaries or the autobiographies of musicians, some information is available, but it is far from adequate, and in some cases, far from reliable. In no known instance has there been a thorough study made exclusively of the jargon of jazz. Realizing the importance of jazz in the United States



and the lack of historical research, particularly etymological study of the jargon which is associated with jazz, the writer attempted to list and define at least the more basic terms.

Because the jazz musician has developed such a large vocabulary, and one which varies to a great extent in various sections of the country, one of the problems was to limit the choice of terms to basic words alone. To accomplish this, terms were selected from the titles in Charles Delaunay's New Hot Discography, which lists only jazz records which have been made from the beginnings of recorded jazz to 1947. Such a restriction eliminated all but the most basic jargon since, in all probability, only terms which were well known were used on phonograph titles. The selection of terms was further restricted by limiting the terms to only those referring in some way to music, since many of the labels employed jargon which was more concerned with the private lives of musicians. Thus, the glossary listed only basic jazz jargon of a musical nature.

Before going into the glossary, it was thought advisable to give the reader some idea of at least the more important historical facts of the development of jazz in the United States. With this thought in mind, a chapter was devoted to the political and economic events affecting the growth and development of jazz, as well as the general geographic movements of its earlier days. To further promote an understanding of the historical development of jazz and to acquaint the reader with the environment of jazz in its period of adolescence, a chapter

was devoted to the place names of the cities of New Orleans, Chicago and New York which appear on jazz record titles. Also, this chapter was designed to demonstrate how often the jazz record title may tie up with the surroundings of the jazzman and how a study of these terms may often uncover facts which have been overlooked.

Having created for the reader a basic knowledge of the historical development of jazz in order to allow an appreciation of the frame of mind surrounding this music, the terms themselves were then presented. Before the main glossary, a chapter was devoted to some basic jazz terms which show signs of having had African backgrounds. To demonstrate the possibility of such etymological development, it was shown that the Negro has retained African cultural characteristics of a musical nature in surprising amounts. This, together with data showing that African language survivals are also quite possible in this country, tend to support the theory that these basic jazz words whose origins are obscure may very well be African in origin. Because of the speculative nature of the etymology, nine of these terms were separated from the glossary and examined for possible African roots.

Finally, the glossary itself was presented; it contained six separate sections, three containing terms of a general nature and three more technically musical. These terms, taken from Deleunay, were listed alphabetically within the sections, along with the title from which they were taken and the date

the record was made. The term was then defined and, wherever possible, the etymological and historical development of the term was given.

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## THE GLOSSARY

The following terms have been divided into six sections, the first three dealing with rather general musical terms; adjectives, nouns and verbs; and the last three dealing with more specific musical terms: genre, tempo and timbre. As in the case of the chapter on African survivals, this glossary will employ a code to eliminate the distraction of footnotes. Three separate keys to the code will be found on pages 96, 97, and 98. The key on page 96 is taken from Delaunay's discography and includes abbreviations of all commercial record companies cited in the glossary. Page 97 includes a key to the abbreviations of all dictionaries, while on page 98, a key to the abbreviations of all source material used in the glossary may be found.

Once again, each record title listed is believed to be the earliest to be found using the particular term in question, but because of the difficulty of referring to Delaunay chronologically, some few titles may be antedated by a short time.

In some instances, the titles use terms in a manner other than that indicated by the section in which they are included. For example, the same title: Georgia Swing, is used in both the section covering verbs and that covering genre, although obviously the word "swing" is not employed as a verb in this instance. However, in nearly all cases, a new term is almost immediately employed as many parts of speech, and for this reason, it seems unnecessary and of little value to undertake the task of tracing down an example of distinct usages for each section.

## KEY

## RECORD LABEL ABBREVIATIONS\*

Ae. . . . .	Aeolian
BB. . . . .	Bluebird
Br. . . . .	Brunswick
B & W . . . .	Black and White
Cap . . . . .	Capitol
Co. . . . .	Columbia
De. . . . .	Decca
Excel . . . .	Excelsior
Ge. . . . .	Gennett
Ha. . . . .	Harmony
HRS . . . . .	Hot Record Society
Ma. . . . .	Master
Nat . . . . .	National
PaE . . . . .	Parlophone (English)
Para. . . . .	Paramount
PatA. . . . .	Pathe Actuelle
Pe. . . . .	Perfect
Vars. . . . .	Varsity
VD. . . . .	V-Disc
Vi. . . . .	Victor
Vo. . . . .	Vocalion

\*Only the company to first issue the record is listed in the glossary.

## KEY

## DICTIONARY ABBREVIATIONS\*

- ADD. . . American Dialect Dictionary, Harold Wentworth
- AGD. . . Africanisms in the Gullah Dialect, Lorenz Daw Turner
- Am L . . . The American Language, H. L. Mencken
- ATS. . . American Thesaurus of Slang, L. V. Berrey and Melvin Van den Bark
- DA . . . Dictionary of Americanisms, M. M. Mathews, ed.
- DAE. . . A Dictionary of American English on Historic Principle, Sir William Craigie and James R. Hulbert
- DAPW . . . Dictionary of Archaic and Provincial Words, James O. Halliwell
- D.E.M. . . Diksiyary English sy Malagasy, Joseph Sewell
- DSUE . . . Dictionary of Slang and Unconventional English, Eric Partridge
- DU . . . A Dictionary of the Underworld, Eric Partridge
- DWO. . . Dictionary of Word Origins, Joseph T. Shipley
- EAV. . . English-Arabic Vocabulary, Socrates Spiro Bey
- H.E.D. . . A Hausa-English Dictionary and English Hausa Vocabulary, Rev. G. F. Bargery
- N.E.D. . . New English Dictionary, Sir A. H. Murray
- S.E.D. . . A Standard Swahili-English Dictionary, Frederick Johnson
- WCD. . . Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

\*For complete data, see the bibliography.



## KEY

## SOURCE MATERIAL ABBREVIATIONS\*

- a. "Thirty Years of Chicago Jazz," P. E. Miller, 1946 Esquire Jazz Book.
- b. "Chicago Jazz History," P. E. Miller and George Hoefler, 1946 Esquire Jazz Book.
- c. "Biographies of the Winners," P. E. Miller, 1946 Esquire Jazz Book.
- d. "An Analysis of the Art in Jazz," P. E. Miller, 1946 Esquire Jazz Book.
- e. "Hot Jazz: Prophet Without Honor," P. E. Miller, 1944 Esquire Jazz Book.
- f. "The Spirit of Jazz," Otis Ferguson, The New Republic, December 30, 1936.
- g. "The Slang of Jazz," H. Brook Webb, American Speech, October, 1937.
- h. "Jem in the Nineties," E. Simms Campbell, 1944 Esquire Jazz Book.
- i. "Swing is from the Heart," B. S. Rogers, 1944 Esquire Jazz Book.
- j. "Blues are the Negroes' Lament," E. Simms Campbell, 1944 Esquire Jazz Book.
- k. "Historical Chart of Jazz Influences," P. E. Miller, 1944 Esquire Jazz Book.
- l. The Real Jazz, Hughes Panassie.
- m. Jazz: Hot and Hybrid, Winthrop Sargeant.
- n. American Humor, Constance Rourke.
- o. Jazzmen, Frederic Ramsey, Jr., and Charles Edward Smith.
- p. Swing That Music, Louis Armstrong.
- q. They All Played Ragtime, Rudi Blesh and Harriet Janis.
- r. Shining Trumpets, Rudi Blesh.
- e. The Myth of the Negro Past, Melville J. Herskovitz.
- t. From Slavery To Freedom, John Hope Franklin.
- u. The Negro in the United States, E. Franklin Frazier.
- v. Lay My Burden Down, B. A. Botkin.
- w. An American Dilemma, Gunnar Myrdal.
- y. We Called It Music, Eddie Condon.
- z. Mister Jelly Roll, Alan Lomax.
- aa. Really the Blues, Milton Mezzrow and Bernard Wolfe.
- bb. Jazz, Rex Harris.

\*For complete data, see the bibliography.

## GENERAL ADJECTIVES

- BARREL HOUSE (Barrel House Blues; "Ma" Rainey; 1923; Para 12082). Ca. 1915. Music of the type generally heard in the barrel houses or honky tonks of New Orleans: loud, brassy, individualistic, "very African," having a "primal rhythmic urgency which is almost irresistible." (g, p. 182). Currently, any music having a loud, uncontrolled jazz style. (BARREL HOUSE - Timbre, Genre)
- CHICAGO (Chicago Breakdown; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Seven; 9 May 1927; Co 36376). Ca. 1920. Jazz played in the "Chicago" style. (CHICAGO - Genre)
- COOL (Cool Blues; Charlie Parker and Band; 19 February 1947; Dial 1015). Ca. 1945. Used to describe music not "hot," i.e., subtle, subdued, usually with a beat which is more felt than heard. Also used by musicians to describe objects or personalities. One who is "cool" is cool-headed, a "nice guy," a good musician, or one generally capable of meeting life. (BE-BOP - Genre)
- CORNY (Corn Fed; The Dixie Stompers [Fletcher Henderson]; 12 May 1927; Ha 545H). Ca. 1920. "Unexciting music is called 'corn,'" (DA, Corn). Generally music played in an antique style; having no feel for jazz. Used also to

describe personalities, events or objects. Not subtle;  
not sincere. (SQUARE - Adjective)

CRAZY (Krazy Kapers; The Chocolate Dandies; 10 October 1933;  
OK 41568). Ca. 1920. Having as little regard as possible  
for musical convention. Not derogatory. New, different,  
experimental. Used as general adjective by musicians,  
"crazy" denoted anything new which is thought good; also  
objects which are useful, different, of superior quality.  
(WILD - Adjective), (MAD - Adjective)

DIRTY (Dirty Rag; Brownlee's Orchestra of New Orleans; New  
Orleans, December 1924; OK 40337). Ca. 1920. "Describes  
a tone which is reedy or metallic gained by playing with  
an extreme vibrato" (ATS, Dirty). Usually used to de-  
scribe one who "plays with a raw, husky vibrato" (ATS,  
Dirty), but may be used to describe sound of the entire  
group. (LOW - Adjective), (GUT BUCKET - Genre)

DIXIE or DIXIELAND (Dixie Jass Band One-Step; Original Dixie-  
land Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; vi 18255). Ca.  
1910. Refers to a musician or group playing in a Dixie-  
land style. (DIXIELAND - Genre)

FRANTIC (Frantic Fantasy; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra;  
New York, 21 April 1945; VD 575). Ca. 1940. Technically

advanced; usually refers to arranged music rather than individual accomplishment. Often music which is played at a fast tempo or which harmonically tight. (WILD - Adjective)

GONE (Gone; Boots and His Buddies; San Antonio; 17 September 1937; BB 7956). Ca. 1920. Music which has succeeded in finding the musical "groove," where all the musicians are thinking and playing around one idea, creating a sort of hypnotic spell, often affecting the audience. Used also to describe able musicianship or effective arranging. Among musicians, anyone or anything which is admired may be referred to as "gone." (TO SEND - Verb)

GROOVY (Pick Up the Groove; Sam Donahue and His Orchestra; New York, 26 December 1940; BB 11285). Ca. 1930. When the band has found the beat and its members playing well together. Also, any object or person thought worthwhile. (SOLID - Adjective)

GUT BUCKET (Gut Bucket Blues; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five; Chicago, 12 November 1925; OK 8261). Ca. 1915. "...music characterized by 'low-down,' torrid phrasing." (ATS, Gut bucket). Term is synonymous with loud, rhythmic, primitive music which was played in the barrel houses of New Orleans. In these barrel houses or "bucket shops,"



a bucket "was placed under the barrels to catch the drippings or 'gutterings!' Whence the name "gut bucket."

(GUT BUCKET - Timbre)

HIP or HEP (Hip Chick; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; 4/9 August 2 September 1938; Br 8221). Ca. 1900. Musically speaking, a "hip" person is one who understands jazz (ATS, Hip). Used as a general adjective, "hip" means one who is "wise, alert, informed." Used by underworld as far back as 1912. (DU, Hep).

HONKY TONK (Honky Tonk Music; Jelly Roll Morton; Washington, May 7 1937; Jazzman 11). Ca. 1910. Style of piano playing prevalent in the New Orleans honky tonks. Much like "ragtime." (HONKY TONK - Genre), (RAGTIME - Genre)

HOT ( Just Hot; Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra; 28 June 1923; Vo 14691). Ca. 1900. Jazz which is improvised and which is essentially Negro in both style and tone (m, p. 128). Opposite of "sweet" (commercial) jazz. "Hot" jazz is usually unarranged, entirely improvised music, although the term is often not used in the strict sense and may be used in speaking of bands using fairly intricate written arrangements. (HOT - African Survivals - Timbre)

ICKIE (When Ickie Morgan Plays the Organ; Clark Randall's Orchestra; 15 March 1935; Br 7415). Ca. 1930. "Sweet," commercial; not in the jazz vein though probably in dance style. Also used to refer to an obnoxious or uninformed person. (SQUARE - Noun)

LOW or LOW DOWN (Doin' the New Low Down; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; 26 March 1928; OK 8602). Ca. 1915. "From barrelhouses and honky-tonks came many of the descriptive words which were applied to the music played in them, such as 'gully-low' meaning, as its name implies, low as a ditch or 'gully,' hence 'low-down,'" (o, p. 12). Can refer to either tone or style. Often blues with suggestive lyrics. (WICKED - Adjective), (MEAN - adjective)

MAD (Mad Moments; Claude Hopkins and His Orchestra; New York 24 May 1932; Co 2665D). Ca. 1925. Someone "wildly excited, infatuated" with the music" (N.E.D., Mad). (CRAZY - Adjective)

MEAN (Mean Blues; Clarence Williams Five; New York, November 1923; OK 40006). Ca. 1915. Used in describing music of the low dives. Used also to describe a degree of musical agility; e.g., "He plays mean piano," i.e., his piano playing is very fine. (LOW - Adjective)

MELLOW (A Mellow Bit of Rhythm; Andy Kirk and His Twelve Clouds of Joy; 26/27 July 1937; De 1579). Ca. 1930). Jazz which is arranged to assure a full, sweet sound. Very seldom used to describe "hot" jazz. Individual musicianship may also be "mellow."

NEW ORLEANS (Way Down Yonder in New Orleans; Frankie Trumbauer and His Orchestra; New York, 9 May 1927; OK 40843). Ca. 1910. Used to describe style of musician or band which plays in the style which originated in this city. (NEW ORLEANS - Genre)

NOWHERE (Nowhere; Charlie Barnet and His Orchestra; New York, 3 December 1940: BB B 11141). Ca. 1935. Music which is either pseudo-jazz or jazz played in bad taste. May refer also to persons or objects which are considered to be largely worthless. (CORNNY - Adjective), (SQUARE - Adjective)

PICK UP (Pick Up Boys; Auld-Hawkins-Webster Saxtet; New York, 19 May 1944 Apollo 754). Ca. 1935. An irregular jazz group composed of stray musicians who are not regularly employed at the time. Such groups usually do not rehearse before a job, but merely meet at the time and place appointed by the leader. Usually such groups, of necessity, play mostly improvised jazz based on "standard" tunes whose chords are familiar to all jazz musicians.

REET (Are You All Reet; Cab Calloway and His Orchestra; Chicago, 16 January 1941; OK 6035). Ca. 1939. Intentional mispronunciation of "right," possibly first used by Cab Calloway. "Reet" music is that which is satisfying to the jazz fan as well as the musician. (SOLID - Adjective)

ROCKING (My Daddy Rocks Me; Jimmy Noone Harlem Footwarmers; 24 May 1929; Vo 2779). Ca. 1915. A jazz rhythm with an exceptionally marked syncopation, usually fast. A "rockin'" band is one in which all the members are feeling the beat as one; a "swinging" band. The word probably had sexual significance. (ROCK - Verb), (SWINGING - Adjective)

SHARP (Sharp as a Tack; Harry James and His Orchestra; 7/28 April 1941; Co 36190). Ca. 1935. In jazz, that which is new and temporarily approved of. No longer in use as a musical term, it presently denotes good taste in clothes. "Adept or penetrating in intellect." (N.E.D., Sharp).

SOLID (That Solid Old Man; Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra; New York, 13 September 1941; V1 27617). Ca. 1930. "Music to perfection with all the musicians in perfect coordination" (ATS, Solid). Describes a player whose improvisation indicates that he is en rapport with the rhythm of the band. A very complimentary term. A band that is solid has a psychic unanimity of feeling, although each player



may be improvising every note that he plays. (ATS, Solid).  
Used also as a general remark of approval, though no longer in wide use among musicians. (GROOVY - adjective)

SQUARE (A Sheridan Square; Red Allen and His Orchestra; 17 April 1941; OK 6357). Ca. 1935. Originally meaning "not readily moved" (N.E.D. Square) because of their stubbornness as well as the apparent shape of their heads. In the present jazz sense, one who plays in a pseudo-jazz style; one who has no feeling for jazz. A "square" person may be one who is generally backward, ignorant, socially obnoxious. Seldom applied to objects. (ICKIE - Noun), (CORNLY - Adjective)

SWEET (Sweet Man; Tennessee Tooters; New York, 13 August 1925; Vo 15109). Ca. 1915. Direct opposite of "hot" jazz. Used in a derogatory manner by jazzmen to describe quasi-jazz which has little musical integrity, played only for financial reward. Music which is entirely arranged, having little or no improvisation; commercial music. (SWEET - Timbre)

SWINGING (Georgia Swing; Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers; New York, 11 June 1928; V1 V38024). Ca. 1915. An arrangement, band or musician which "swings." Also, any object or person the musician thinks praiseworthy may be referred

to as "swingin'" such as a "swingin'" car.

**TORRID** (Torrid Rhythm; Cliff Jackson and His Crazy Kate; about 1928; Radiex 951). Ca. 1924. Unusually "hot" jazz; usually fast, extremely syncopated. (HOT - Adjective)

**VOUT** (Vout Oreenee; Slim Gaillard and His Boogieereeners; 1945; Queen 4104). Ca. 1945. An all-inclusive term invented by Gaillard which became a part of the musician's jargon but has since fallen into general disuse. The term actually is meaningless and can be substituted for nearly any adjective.

**WICKED** (The Wicked /Dirty/ Fives; Hannah Sylvester; 1923; Para 12034). Ca. 1920. Music which has grown out of honky tonke and brothels of New Orleans. Jazz with the emphasis on volume and overwhelming rhythm rather than on tone or technique. (WICKED - Tempo)

**WILD** (Wild Waves; Earon Lee and The Blue Rhythm Band; 25 February 1932; Pe 15634). Ca. 1930. Jazz which is particularly unusual or unrestrained. Usually carries a good connotation. May also refer to an object which is new and thought superior. Women who are exceptionally attractive also may be referred to as "wild." (CRAZY - Adjective)

## GENERAL NOUNS

**AXE** (Grab Your Axe, Max; Kai Winding's New Jazz Group; New York; Savoy 590). Ca. 1947. An easily portable instrument. Probably derived from the expression "to cut" another musician, meaning to play superior jazz. Usually only wind instruments are known as "axes."

**BATTLE** (Battle of Swing; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; New York, 19 December 1938; Br 8293). Ca. 1900. A contest between musicians or bands, to determine either superior musicianship or endurance. In the case of musicians, the contest is usually more gentlemanly, each musician playing in his turn. The "battle for music" between bands as it took place in New Orleans was a vicious, blaring affair, however:

On Sunday afternoons, Washington Park, uptown on Carrollton Ave., was a popular meeting place for bands. Here at the ball games and balloon ascensions, bands fought it out until one emerged the victor. But the real battles occurred when two bands, out advertising in their wagons, locked wheels on some important corner.

Frequently, when there were two dances the same night, and the bands ran into one another, there was an honest-to-goodness cutting contest. They hitched on or locked wheels, so that neither band could escape, and went to it, blasting at each other until one band, exhausted, called for mercy. (o, pp. 28-29).

**BLACK BOTTOM** (Shske It Black Bottom; Sarah Martin; QRS 7009).

Ca. 1920. An early Negro dance "involving prominent movements of the hips," supposedly "constructed to simulate the movements of a cow mired in black bottom river mud" (DA, Black bottom).

BREAK (Somebody Stole My Break; Luis Russell's Orchestra; 28/29 April 1936; De 797). Ca. 1905. A "break" in jazz is a "broken phrase or an improvisation placed in the measures not occupied by the tune itself, or used as a transition passage from one chorus to another" (ATS, Break). Breaks can be utilized in solo piano playing by suspending the beat and filling in the measures with improvised phrases. "When you make the break," says "Jelly Roll" Morton, "all the band breaks but maybe one or two or three instruments--depends on how the combination is arranged--and as the band breaks, you have a certain given time, possibly two bars, to make the break" (Vol III, side 19 of Morton's Library of Congress Records). Morton emphasizes how vital the "break" is to jazz:

Without breaks and without clean breaks and without beautiful ideas in breaks, you don't even need to think about doing anything else, you haven't got a jazz band and you can't play jazz. Even if a tune hasn't got a break in it, it's always necessary to arrange some kind of spot to make a break (o, p. 63).

CAPER (Crazy Capers; The Chocolate Dandies; October 19 1933; OK 41568). Ca. 1930. A lively dance.



CAT (Swing You Cats; Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra; Chicago, 28 January 1933; BB 10225). Ca. 1930. "Musicians of a swing [or jazz] orchestra" (p, p. 135), or "members of the audience who are receptive to jazz music or who understand it" (g, p. 183). Term as often used by musicians is synonymous with "man."

CHARLESTON (Hey Hey and He He, I'm Charleston Crazy; Fletcher Handerson's Jazz Five; 18 February 1924; Vo 14770). Ca. 1920. "A form of dance in which the knees touch and the heels are lifted alternately out and back" (DAE, Charleston). At the height of its popularity, the Charleston (named for Charleston, South Carolina, where the dance probably originated) often was accompanied by a special jazz tempo which accented the first and last half of the second beats (ATS Charleston).

CHICAGOAN (Sugar; McKenzle and Condon's Chicagoans; Chicago, 9 December 1927; OK 410). Ca. 1920. Specifically, one who was in the record band, McKenzie and Condon's Chicagoans or Tha Chicago Rhythm Kings. More generally, one who plays "Chicago" style or a band playing this style. (CHICAGO - Genre)

CLAMBAKE (Clambake in B-flat; Capitol Jazzmen; Hollywood, 16 November 1943; Cap 10009). Ca. 1935. "An informal

meeting of musicians 'awinging,' and improviaing for their own amusement" (ATS, Clambake).

CRAWL (Alligator Crawl; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Seven; 7 May 1927; OK 8482). Ca. 1925. Movements accompanying dance of this period.

DOGHOUSE (Mutiny in the Doghouse; Pete Johnson's Housewarming; 26 January 1946; Nat 4008). Ca. 1935. "Bass fiddle (slapped, not bowed)" (g, p. 181).

DRAG (Strutter's Drag; Fletcher Henderson and His Club Alabama Orchestra; 21 May 1924; Vo 14828). Ca. 1920. Movements of dance of this period. Also, a situation which causes disappointment or deapendency.

END (The Beginning of the End; Buddy Clark; 1939; Vars 8233). Ca. 1935. The utmost in musical skill and ideas. Supposedly as far as is humanly posabile to develop. May refer also to any person or object which is thought superior for any reason. (GONE - Adjective)

GLIDE (Dicty Glide; Duke Ellington and His Cotton Club Orchestra; 7 March 1929; V1 V38053). Ca. 1925. Movements peculiar to a dance of the period.

**GRIND** (Georgia Grind; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five; 26 February 1926; OK 8318). Ca. 1920. Descriptive term for peculiar movements accompanying dance of the period.

**GROOVE** (Pick Up the Groove; Sam Donahue and His Orchestra; New York 26 December 1940; BB 11285). Ca. 1935.

When the perfect tempo has been found and the orchestra is playing with complete abandon producing an intense feeling of swing, it is said that the musicians are "in the groove." That notion conveys that there is a complete ease and perfection in the interpretation. A musician who is "in the groove," need make no effort in his improvising for his ideas flow naturally and easily (1, p. 40).

In a recording studio, an arrangement which has been rehearsed sufficiently to be able to make a nearly perfect recording is one which is "in the groove" (g, p. 184).

**HIPSTER** (Handsome Harry, the Hipster; Harry, "The Hipster" Gibson; 21 April 1944; Music 290). Ca. 1940. One who is obviously a jazz fan; very often a loud dresser. One who uses "hip" language of the jazzmen. (CAT - Noun), (HIP - adjective)

**HONKY TONK** (Honky Tonk Music; Jelly Roll Morton; Washington, May 7 1937; Jazzman 11). Ca. 1910. A low barrel house which supposedly was the scene of many of the early "jam sessions" in New Orleans, though honky tonks are not peculiar to that city alone. Music which is "honky tonk"

today is that which is loud, boisterous--reflecting the type of atmosphere found in such establishments. (HONKY TONK - Genre)

HOP (Alligator Hop; King Oliver's Jazz Band; Richmond, Indiana, November, 1923; Ge 5278). Ca. 1920. Descriptive term for peculiar movements accompanying dance of the period. Several hops became popular after 1923, the most famous of which was the Lindy Hop.

HUNCH (Stratford Hunch; Jelly Roll Morton; Richmond, Indiana, July 1924; Ge 5590). Ca. 1920. Movements accompanying dance of the period.

ICKIE (When Ickie Morgan Plays the Organ; Clark Randall's Orchestra; 15 March 1935; Er 7415). Ca. 1930. One having no feeling for jazz; especially a musician who plays pseudo-jazz. (SQUARE - Genre)

IDEA (Pete's Idea; Pete Brown Quartet; Chicago, April 23, 1944; Session 12012). Ca. 1935. A musical idea; a "riff" or simple melody upon which a jazz arrangement is based. (RIFF - Noun)

JAM SESSION--(SESSION - Noun), (JAM - Verb)



## JAZZ--(JAZZ - Genre)

JIG (Jig Walk; The Red Heads; June 1926; PatA 11134). Ca. 1560. Originally a sort of lively dance (N.E.D., Jig). Up until 1897, the piano style now referred to as "rag-time" was known as "jig" piano and the syncopated bands, like Joplin's were called "jig bands." "This term, taken from jig dances, even came a little later to be designation for the Negro himself" (q, p. 23).

## JIVE--(JIVE - Genre)

KICK (On a Blues Kick; Collector's Item Cats; 12 February 1940; CI 102). Ca. 1935. A mood or a specific pattern of playing in which the musician happens to be interested.

KICKS (Get Your Kicks on Route 66; King Cole Trio; Hollywood, 15 March 1946; Cap 256). Ca. 1940. Enjoyment, pleasure, stimulating excitement.

MESS (Gettin' Off a Mess; Seven Little Clouds of Joy; 15 July/9 October 1930; Br 7180). Ca. 1925. An impressive amount of well executed jazz.

MOOD (Mood Indigo; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; New York 30 October 1930; OK 8840). Ca. 1925. A specific disposition suggested by a jazz arrangement; usually blue, melancholy.

ONE-STEP (Dixie Jazz Band One-Step; Original Dixieland Jazz Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; vi 28255). Ca. 1913. Popular dance which grew out of the early jazz period.

RAMBLE (Muskrat Ramble; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five; Chicago, 26 February 1926; OK 8300). Ca. 1920. Movements accompanying dance of the period. Probably originated from a song, Didn't He Ramble? which was usually sung at Negro funerals in the South.

Didn't he ramble? He rambled  
 Rambled all around--  
 In and out of town;  
 Oh, didn't he ramble...ramble?  
 Rambled 'til the butchers cut him down.

"This song, a ballad of an aged and rambling long-horned ram, is known to have been a favorite plantation song of George Washington" (Quoted in the introduction of Vol II of "Jelly Roll" Morton's Library of Congress Records).

RIDE (Ridin' On a Blue Note; Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra; 2 February 1938; Br 8083). Ca. 1930. "An easy-going rhythm with a light accent on all four beats" (ATS Ride). (RIDE - Verb)

RIFF (Symphony in Riff; Benny Carter; 16 October 1933; Co 2898). Ca. 1920. A rhythmic figure played by one or more instruments, which fits harmonically into a solo and attempts to aid the inspiration of the soloist and to produce

ultimately an over-all well-knit rhythmic and harmonic pattern. Originally the riff was improvised, but modern arrangers have not left room for much imagination in riffs; therefore, they have become stereotyped and monotonous. Still, the riff is an essential part of jazz. As Louis Armstrong explains: "Most riffs got born...to make the harmony fuller and add the most colorful sequences" (aa, p. 341). "Riffs," says "Jelly Roll" Morton, "musically speaking, is figures" (Vol III, side 17 of Morton's Library of Congress Records). "A riff is something that gives an orchestra a great background and is the main idea in playing jazz.... Now the riff is what we call a foundation, like something you walk on. It's standard" (c, p. 63).

ROMP (Minor Romp; Emmett Berry's Hot Six; 8 January 1946; National 9002). Ca. 1940. A fast jazz rendition.

SESSION (A Jam Session at Victor; New York, 31 March 1937; Vi 25569). Ca. 1925. A collection of musicians playing for their own amusement and self-improvement. These sessions are always entirely improvised and originally were private affairs, only for the benefit of musicians or their friends. Currently, these affairs have been made public, even commercialized to the point where "jam sessions" are recorded or played on the concert stage. The origin of the term is uncertain, but "Mezz" Mezzrow claims "jam

ession" was first used by musicians in Chicago.

I think the term "jam session" originated right in that cellar The Deuces. Long before that, of course, the colored boys used to get together and play for kicks, but those were mostly private sessions, strictly for professional musicians, and the idea was usually to try and cut each other, each on trying to outdo the others and prove himself best. Those impromptu concerts of theirs were generally known as "outtin' contests." Our idea, when we got going at The Deuces, was to play together, to make our improvisation really collective, using an organ background behind the one taking a solo, to see could we fit together and arrive at a climax all at once. Down in that basement concert hall, somebody was always yelling over to me, "Hey Jelly, what you gonna do?"--they gave me that nickname, or sometimes called me Roll, because I always wanted to play Clarence Williams' classic, Jelly Roll--and almost every time I'd cap them with, "Jelly'a gonna jam some now," just as a kind of play on words. We always used the word "session" a lot, and I think the expression "jam session" grew up out of this playful yelling back and forth. At least I don't rightly remember ever hearing it before those sessions at The Deuces (aa, p. 149).

SHAG (All Night Shag; Chicago Hottentots; 1926; Vo 1008). Ca.

1920. A type of easy, rhythmic Negro dance which probably, in its basic form, goes back to the African sexual dances. There is record of the word "shag" being used as far back as 1788, meaning "to copulate" (DU, Shag). Very likely the sexual movements of some of the African dances were responsible for the use of "shag" to describe them. The sexual nature of many of the African dances is probably also responsible for the names of other recent American dances, such as the "shimmy" or "grind."



SHAKE (Memphis Shake; Dixieland Jug Blowers; December 1926; V1 20415). Ca. 1920. Movements accompanying dance of the period.

SHIMMY (I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate; Mary Straine; 1924; Para 12149). Ca. 1920. Movements accompanying dance of the period. "To shake a shimmy" is to "dance in a lively fashion" (DWO, Shimmy).

SHUFFLE (Shanghai Shuffle; Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra; 30 October 1924; Vo 14935). Ca. 1920. Movements accompanying dance of the period. "Shuffle" was used to describe a rude dance in England, 1659, though undoubtedly the American Negro dance was quite different (N.E.D., Shuffle).

SPECIAL (Big John Special; Mills Blue Rhythm Band; 20 November 1936; Co 3162D). Ca. 1930. An exclusive jazz arrangement (ATS, Special).

SQUABBLE (Kansas City Squabble; Benny Moten's Kansas City Orchestra; Chicago, 16/17/18 July 1929; V1 V 38091). Ca. 1920. A "battle" between two musicians in which each one plays a designated number of measures. (BATTLES - Noun)

SQUARE (A Sheridan House Square; Red Allen and His Orchestra;

17 April 1941; OK 6357). Ca. 1935. One not understanding jazz or attempting to play it by using the conventional musical techniques and interpretation. An obnoxious person. (ICKIE - Noun)

STOMP--(STOMP - Genre)

STRUT (Oriental Strut; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five; Chicago, 26 February 1926; OK 8299). Ca. 1920. "To dance with a proud gait and an erect head" (ATS, Strut).

SWING--(SWING - Genre)

TWIST (Turtle Twist; Jelly Roll Morton; 17 December 1929; V1 V38108). Ca. 1925. Movements in the dance of the period.

WOBBLE (Clarinet Wobble; Johnny Dodds; 21 April 1927; Br 3574). Ca. 1925. Movements of dances of the period.

## GENERAL VERBS

BE-BOP (Be Bop; Dizzie Gillespie and His All Star Quintet; 11 May 1945; Manor 5000). Ca. 1945. To play a be-bop style of jazz. (BE-BOP - Genre)

BOOT (No Voot, No Boot; Dinah Washington with Luck Thompson; 10/12/13 December 1945; Apollo 368). Ca. 1942. To play at a fast speed.

BRING DOWN (Onyx Bringdown; Joe Sullivan; New York, 26 September 1933; Co 2925D). Ca. 1930. To be disgusted with circumstances or persons. To be melancholy. "This job with its troubles (Union and boss) and unsatisfactory pay (low salary and rubber checks) brought Sidney down" (Mary E. Karoley, "Sidney Bechet," Jazz Information, X, 16 [6 July 1940]).

BUG (You're Buggin' Me; Joe Thomas; Melodisc 114). Ca. 1945. To aggravate, anger, agitate, provoke.

CAPER--(CAPER - Noun)

CRAWL--(CRAWL - Noun)

DIG (Dig Down Deep; Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra; 17 June

1942; V1 17941). Ca. 1935. To understand. Also, to look at or listen to. To pay attention to.

DRAG (Strutter's Drag; Fletcher Henderson and His Club Alabam Orchestra; 21 May 1924; V1 14828). Ca. 1930. To cause the tempo to slow down. To play behind the beat.

FLIP (Sherry Lynn Flip; Slam Stewart Trio; 7 September 1945; Manor 1012). Ca. 1940. To become excited about an unusual occurrence, particularly a musical one. Also, one who seems to have done something which is not thought rational is said to have "flipped" or to have "flipped his lid."

GO or GO TO TOWN (Yankee Doodle Never Went to Town; Benny Goodman and His Orchestra; 27 September 1935; V1 25193). Ca. 1930. To play with intensity; "to discard all formal orchestration and play in a truly hot style" (g, p. 182); to get in the mood or swing of the music.

HAVE EYES (I Have Eyes; Benny Goodman and His Orchestra; Chicago, 12/14 September 1948; V1 26071). Ca. 1945. To desire something or admire it. Applicable to places, persons, situations, or objects. For example, "I've got eyes for that record," means that the record is desirable.



HOP--(HOP - Noun)

HUNCH--(HUNCH - Noun)

JAM (Jammin'; Tommy Dorsey and His Orchestra; 17/20 March 1937; Vi 25553). Ca. 1925. To play in a "jam session."  
(SESSION - Noun)

JAZZ (Jazz Me Blues; Original Dixieland Jazz Band; New York, 3/26 June 1921; Vi 18722). Ca. 1910. To play jazz; also, to copulate. (JAZZ - Genre)

JIG--(JIG - Noun)

JIVE (Don't Jive Me; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five; 27/28 June 1928; Co 36376). Ca. 1925. To play jive or jazz music. To make fun of, hoax, deceive. (JIVE - Genre)

JUMP (One O'Clock Jump; Count Basie and His Orchestra; New York, 7 July 1937; De 1363). Ca. 1935. To play jazz at a fairly fast tempo. (JUMP - Genre, Tempo)

MOVE (Movin' Around; Errol Garner; 10 January 1945; B & W 16). Ca. 1940. To play jazz that inspires the others in the band. To play with rhythm and drive. An arrangement that is played at a fast tempo "moves."

MUG (I'se Muggin'; Stuff Smith and His Onyx Club Orchestra; New York, 11 February 1936; Vo 3169). Ca. 1930. "Improvising an introduction or background during which the musicians get the feel of their instruments and their colleagues" (g, p. 183). "Playing with a lot of antics and facial expressions" (ATS, Mugging). "To call the other musicians to 'swing'" (ATS, Mugging). "Mugging light: Soft staccato swinging;" "Mugging heavy: as above with heavier beat" (p, p. 136).

PICK UP (Pick Up Boys; Auld-Hawkins-Webster-Saxtet; New York, 19 May 1944; Apollo 754). Ca. 1940. To learn, understand, hear or see. Also, to increase the tempo. (DIG - Verb)

PUT DOWN (How Could You Put Me Down; Willie "The Lion" Smith; 29 September 1944; B & W 6). Ca. 1940. To criticize, censure or reject outright.

RAG--(RAG - Genre)

RAMBLE--(RAMBLE - Noun)

RIDE (Ridin' On a Blue Note; Duke Ellington and His Famous Orchestra; 2 February 1938; Br 8083). Ca. 1935. To play a solo. To play a solo "which carries its own rhythm integrated with the rhythm of the accompaniment but having

a different syncopation" (g, p. 182).

RIFF--(RIFF - Noun)

ROCK (My Daddy Rocks Me; Jimmy Noone; 24 May 1929; Vo 2779).

Ca. 1925. To cause a band or audience to feel the "swing" of the music. To play with great rhythm. To "swing."

(ROCKING - Adjective), (SWINGING - Adjective)

ROMP (Minor Romp; Emmett Berry's Hot Six; 8 January 1946;

National 9002). Ca. 1940. To play at a fast tempo. Very often refers to jazz which is spontaneous. (ROMP - Noun)

SEND (It Sends Me; Coleman Hawkins; New York, 8 March 1934;

PaE R1837). Ca. 1930. To "communicate...personal excitement to the listeners, so that they feel the same emotion that he feels" (g, p. 182). "To delight listeners" (ATS,

Send). Of drug addicts; when they reach a state of full contentment, they are "sent" (DU, Send). (GONE - Adjective)

SHAG--(SHAG - Noun)

SHAKE--(SHAKE - Noun)

SHIMMY--(SHIMMY - Noun)

SHUFFLE--(SHUFFLE - Noun)

STOMP--(STOMP - Genre)

STRUT--(STRUT - Noun)

SWING (Louisiana Swing; Louis Russell and His Orchestra; 19 May 1930; OK 8811). Ca. 1915. To play jazz with a lift, with a natural flow and rhythm. "When the notes began to hang together and the harmonic structure became a more important means to the effects, the boys would say it was beginning to swing in there--long before the word swing became a categorical noun for those who need a category before they can tell where they're at" (o, p. 222). (SWING - Genre)

TWIST--(TWIST - Noun)

WOBBLE--(WOBBLE - Noun)



## GENRE

BARREL HOUSE (Barrel House Blues; "Ma" Rainey; 1923; Para 12082). Ca. 1915. A style of jazz recognizable by its loud, brassy tone and general free style. Barrel house is often merely a strong upright piano (preferably out of tune), but may also include other instruments, played with equal enthusiasm; barrel house style has now nearly completely disappeared. (BARREL HOUSE - Timbre, Adjective)

BE-BOP; (Be-Bop; Dizzie Gillespie and His All Star Quintet; 11 May 1945; Manor 5000). Ca. 1945. A style which has developed since WW II, based on a flattened fifth instead of the conventional flattened third and seventh of blues. An experimental jazz, be-bop has emphasized technical skill rather than tone or feeling. Be-bop arrangers often take chordal structures of well-known tunes and build a virtually new tune from this. Be-bop has been the cause of much friction between musicians and has broken the jazz ranks roughly into two factions: the "hot" musicians and the "cool" school. Much has been attempted by way of large band arranging and experimental voicings in the name of "bop," raising the requirements for musicianship, especially in reading, to a great extent. The word "be-bop" comes from the unique sound which this jazz style produces. (COOL - Timbrs)

BLUES (Livery Stable Blues; Original Dixieland Jazz Band; New York 24/26 February 1917; V1 18255). Ca. 1900. The historical background and development of the blues as a musical form is nearly as vague as the etymology of the word itself. Blues are generally thought of as being of Negro origin, but New Orleans, the city out of which the blues evolved, was "full of all kinds of music besides Blues. There were French dances.... There were military marches, funeral marches, Spanish, Creole and Mexican songs, fragments of other folk music brought over from Europe" (Walter Sidney, "Blues in Disguise," Jazz Information, II, 12 [24 January 1941]). In all probability the blues were influenced some way by many of these other musical forms.

It is difficult to deal with the early Blues without referring to its cousin the Spiritual, but, whereas the former accepted foreign vocal influences from Creole songs, the latter drew largely from the English hymnal; both deriving to a certain from the English ballad. (bb, p. 34).

This is not to take the credit from the Negro in any way. He merely used the influences of other folk music to supplement a music which many critics believe he brought directly from Africa. Russell and Smith, for example, are convinced that "primitive African chants, some consisting apparently only of incessant moans, became the basis of the blues" (o, pp. 8-9). Musicologist Winthrop Sargeant sees that some of the constructions of the blues "are common to the folk idioms of several races, and there is some possibility that they have been borrowed by the

Negro. But the blues scale is his own product" (m, p. 188).

**THE BLUES SCALE** In the simplest possible terms, the difference between the blues scale and the regular scale is the intentional flattening of the third and seventh notes of the scale, which are often called "blue" notes because of the vagueness of their pitch.

A "blue" note may vary in pitch by more than the scope of a half-tone. Its intonation is usually higher than that indicated by the flat before the note--i.e., somewhere between flat and natural--though the player often alters its pitch during its passage, sliding up and down within the confines of this compass (m, p. 161).

**STRUCTURE** The blues always can be detected by the "blue note." In addition, the stanza of blues usually consists of twelve measures, though this may vary on occasion. The chordal structure of the blues is: three and a half bars of tonic chord, one half bar of tonic seventh, two bars of subdominant, two bars tonic (or a mixture of tonic and dominant seventh), two bars dominant seventh, and two bars tonic (including a traditional coda of tonic-tonic seventh-subdominant-tonic).

**LYRICS** In the usual twelve bar stanza, the typical lyrics follow a set pattern: the first four bars make a statement, the second four bars repeat the statement, improvising slightly on the words and rhythmic structure; the last four bars have different lyrics, but usually comment on the original statement, bringing the stanza to a definite

and logical conclusion. The following is a typical example of blues stanza:

Don't the moon look lonesome shinin' through the  
 trees  
 Oh, don't the moon look lonesome shinin' through the  
 trees?  
 Don't your house look lonesome when your baby pscks up  
 to leave?  
 (bb, p. 38).

The lyrics, furthermore, seem to fall into two broad categories: "self-preservation (eating, drinking, sleeping, keeping warm) and reproduction (finding a mate, making love)" (bb, p. 46). The first of these categories, however, is in the minority, while love has always been the central theme of much of the blues; not only the frank discussion of the sex act, but all the joys, problems, woes and intimacies of a man and his woman also find their way into these lyrics.

**IMPROVISATION** Improvisation is basic to African music and it is basic also to jazz. In blues, the improvisation is going on in several ways at the same time. First of all, the singer of blues has a wide range of possibilities. The second line, as was pointed out, is usually a repeat of the first line, though not word for word. By adding a word or removing one, the singer can change the entire sound by making the accent fall at different spots in each stanza. In the third line (the last four bars), the singer often plays with the "blue note," sliding skillfully from one note to the other, creating what Sargeant describes



as a "curious poignant or barbaric emotional quality" (m, p. 161). In the background, the accompanying musicians are also improvising with the rhythm and chordal structure, filling in between lines with "breaks" and creating a mood which is en rapport with the singer, but which is constantly changing--always improvising. (BLUES - African Survivals)

BOOGIE WOOGIE (Pine Top's Boogie Woogie; Pine Top Smith; Chicago, 29 December 1928; Vo 1245). Ca. 1920. A piano style which is based "almost without exception" on the "form of the twelve bar blues repeated with endless variation but always in the same key" (o, p. 185). "The left hand [bass] supplies rhythmic patterns in ascending and descending chords, singly moving up and down in scales or arpeggios. The treble [right hand or melody] may digress momentarily from melody into rhythmic chords and set up exciting...cross-rhythms with the bass" (r, p. 302). The bass is quite often played in eighth notes, or at least has eight notes to the bar, accented in various ways.

BOUNCE (Bouncin' In Rhythm; Adrian and His Tap Room Gang; 14 June 1935; Vi 25203). Ca. 1933. Jazz subdued in volume but with a definite, light syncopation, giving it a desirable quality. (BOUNCE - Tempo, Rhythm)

BREAKDOWN (Birmingham Breakdown; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; 28 February 1927; Br 3480). Ca. 1864. Originally a riotous country dance which was originated probably by the American Negro and later became popular in England, where it usually terminated the ball (N.E.D. Breakdown). Presently associated with a fast, rather loud type of jazz in which all the instruments are improvising at one time in a rather carefree manner.

CHICAGO (Chicago Breakdown; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Seven; 9 May 1927; Co 36376). Ca. 1920. A style of jazz which evolved from the Chicago area. This style of playing is generally associated with a group of white musicians who called themselves "The Chicagoans." Bud Freeman, who was a member of that organization, traces the influences of this style to the "New Orleans Rhythm Kings [white] who planted the seed, and then Joe Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Bix [Beiderbecke] Jimmy Noone...and Bessie Smith" (aa, pp. 350-351). The main difference between Chicago style and that of New Orleans is in the change which was made from trombone to the tenor saxophone. "Such a change considerably altered the balance of the ensemble, creating a more liquid...sound" (1, p. 51). The second change was brought about by the tremendous influence which "Bix" Beiderbecke, "the celebrated white cornet player had on a number of these musicians" (1, p. 51). Beiderbecke's style, though jazz,

concentrated more on tone and control than that of the Negro which had preceded.

COOL--(BE BOP - Genre)

DIXIELAND (Dixie Jass Band One-Step; Original Dixieland Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; V1 18255). Ca. 1910. This term has a wide latitude of interpretation, though usually it is associated with the style of the Original Dixieland Band, i.e., jazz played by a small group of musicians employing various combinations of instruments, usually three rhythm instruments and three wind instruments. The rhythm is two-beat, and the various instruments develop the theme or melody simultaneously. The above has many variations, however, "The white 'Dixieland' style was first developed by the small combination of musicians who played with Laine [Jack Laine's Ragtime Band]" (bb, p. 70).

The origin of the term "Dixieland" is much in question, there being three theories:

1. "The word preserves the name of a kind slave owner on Manhattan Island, a Mr. Dixie. His rule was so kindly that 'Dixie's Land' became famed far and wide as an Elysium abounding in material comforts" (DA, Dixieland).

2. "Dixie is derived somehow from Dixon of Mason and Dixon's Line" (DA, Dixieland).

3. "Many years before, a bank in New Orleans had

issued a ten dollar bill with the word Dix printed in large letters on one side. From this, the words 'Dixie' or 'Dixieland' meant New Orleans, long before the word was used as a general name for the South" (o, p. 39).

HONKY TONK (Honky Tonk Music; Jelly Roll Morton; Washington, May 7 1937; Jazzman 11). Ca. 1910. Music reflecting the noise and general boistrousness of the New Orleans honky tonks. Generally thought of as piano music played in the "ragtime" style of a piano having extremely loose action and in poor tune. However, honky tonk music may also refer to other instruments which play in a care-free, care-less style and with an unschooled tone.

The word "honky tonk" was first heard "in the songs of the California miners of the '50's" (DSUE, Honky tonk), but the exact origin of the term is unknown. As far as can be determined, a honky tonk always referred to a place of cheap vulgar entertainment (DSUE, Honky tonk).

HOT (Just Hot; Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra; 28 June 1923; Vo 14691). Jazz which is "purely Negroid, more purely improvisatory and comparatively independent of composed tunes" (m, p. 54). "Hot" when referred to jazz, implies that the music is in a style directly opposite to that of "sweet" jazz. Though having a wide latitude of interpretation, "hot" usually means that the music is



flowing rhythmically; that the musicians are improvising, at least to a large extent; and that the musicians are primarily concerned with personal musical improvement rather than with financial return. (HOT - African Survivals).

JAZZ (At the Jazz Band Ball; Original Dixieland Jazz Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; Ae 1205). Ca. 1900. A style of music thought to be primarily African in origin and played as a dance music for the most part. Today, a term with extremely wide boundaries. The lay interpretation of "jazz" includes any music which plays the popular songs of the day. The musician's definition is somewhat more limited, usually interpreted to mean "hot" jazz, i.e., music which is syncopated in a peculiar Negro fashion, improvised, and relatively uncommercial. Very often jazz is in the blues pattern, though this is no longer a prerequisite. Also, jazz is usually played in a major key and seldom modulates into other keys during the process of playing one tune (m, p. 154). One critic sets up this criterion for appreciation of jazz:

Appreciation...is dependent upon...comprehension of spontaneity--its sincerity. Of emotion--its intensity. Of technique--its facility. Of organization--its clarity. To apply this technique is to know jazz (d, p. 66).

(JAZZ - African Survivals, Tempo)

**JIVE** (Don't Jive Me; Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five; Chicago, 27/28 June 1923 Co 36376). Ca. 1925. Synonymous with "jazz". Origin of the term is obscure; probably from the Old English word jibe, meaning to speak unintelligibly (aa, p. 220). This term varies in meaning and some of the meanings are contradictory. (JIVE - Verb)

**JUMP** (One O'Clock Jump; Count Basie and His Orchestra; New York, 7 July 1937; De 1963). Ca. 1935. Jazz which is played at a fairly fast tempo. Usually associated with big band jazz. (JUMP - Tempo)

**MEMPHIS** (Memphis Maybe Man; Cook's Dreamland Orchestra; Richmond, Indiana, March 1923; Ge 5374). Ca. 1920. "Jazz music in which it is usual to take turns playing solos among the various instruments" (ATS, Memphis).

**NEW ORLEANS** (New Orleans Shout; King Oliver and His Band; 30 December 1929; Vi 23388). Ca. 1910. A style of jazz originating in New Orleans, generally associated with colored musicians and believed by many to be the actual base of all jazz. The genuine New Orleans style is copied today but probably quite different in sound from the original. Milton Mezzrow explains that the New Orleans jazz band had:

...six or seven pieces in it; a rocking rhythm section in the background, made up of piano sometimes, banjo, bass fiddle or tuba, and drums, with two or three wind instruments romping out in front, weaving together around the melody, the trumpet or cornet, the clarinet, and the trombone. The rhythm instruments just provided a solid, steady beat, never trying to fight their way into the lead as solo instrument. The trumpet laying down the basic riffs of the improvised melody. The trombone played more of a bass part, or, say, a bass and a sort of baritone mixed, which gave a solid foundation for the clarinet to keep weaving in and out, contrapuntally filling in the gaps. The banjo was strummed in a steady four-four, sometimes accentuating the after beat and in some cases using an after beat by itself, and the bass, drums and piano kept right in step. Those oldtime colored musicians who played the piano or banjo followed common harmony sequences with the correct inversions, using triads of the chords and adding the dominant seventh at the right time, so the various instrumentalists were given freedom to invent as they wanted.

New Orleans stayed close to fundamentals, relying on strong steady rhythm and soulful interpretation by wind instruments, on rich tonal effects, to give it power, instead of on a lot of complicated chords and fancy musical patterns. (aa, p. 342-3).

NEW YORK (Sidewalks of New York; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; New York, 24 December 1940; V1 27380). Ca. 1930. A jazz style which emphasizes technique, tone and a great deal of solo work. Instrumentation of the New York style generally includes drums, piano, bass, trumpet, trombone and tenor saxophone.

RAGTIME (Tiger Rag; Original Dixieland Jazz Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; Ae 1206). Ca. 1893. A style of music which, though not considered to be a form of jazz, is

definitely Negroid in character and most certainly was one influence upon jazz. Ragtime is essentially a piano style "characterized by a highly syncopated air played against a regularly accented beat in the bass. The rigidity of the beat was much more pronounced in the work of the northern rag pianists, who preserved a steady two beats in the bar for the left hand" (bb, p. 69). It was in the New Orleans area with such piano players as "Jelly Roll" Morton and Tony Jackson that the melody as well as the bass was syncopated, thus creating rhythms against rhythms, which may be described as "jerky and bolsterous" (m, p. 142), as is the case of the antique roller-type piano so familiar in the bar rooms of thirty years ago. One other important characteristic of ragtime piano seems to be the reliance on written music. Beginning with Scott Joplin's Maple Leaf Rag in 1899, the rag became extremely popular in all areas of the country, particularly among the whites, who eagerly bought up the sheet music versions of rags as written by Joplin, Thomas Turpin, Oatis Saunders and Scott Hayden (bb, p. 64). It was only when "Jelly Roll" Morton and some of the other piano men of the New Orleans area began improvising that jazz emerged, though ragtime continued to be popular until shortly after WW I (bb, p. 60). This lack of improvisation, along with the fact, of course, that ragtime is a piano music, also was a limiting factor. Ragtime was attempted by some of the



early white jazz bands, who attempted to imitate its jerky, staccato style, but these bands, for the most part, soon found their instruments ill-suited for this style of playing.

The basis of ragtime very probably is the "coon song" of the minstrel period, which was used by cork-blackened entertainers with a banjo accompaniment. This banjo rhythm, it would appear, is the real basis for the rhythm of ragtime, for ragtime piano was used "to exploit earlier banjo techniques" (bb, p. 60), and it was the rhythm of such popular dances as the "buck and wing, the Virginia Essence, the stick and sand dances and the soft shoe routines" from the early minstrel shows which later found their way to ragtime (bb, p. 60). The melodies of the rags often drew also from dance melodies of the day: cake walks, marches, quadrilles and polkas (r, pp. 168-169), so that the rag is really a combination of the minstrel banjo rhythms which were set to many of the popular dance tunes of the day. (RAGTIME - African Survivals)

SCAT SINGING (The Scat Song; Cab Calloway and His Orchestra; Chicago, February 1932; Br 6272). Ca. 1900. "Scat singing...consists of explosive rhythmic sounds, verbally meaningless, musically abstract and highly instrumental in feeling" (r, p. 104). According to "Jelly Roll" Morton, scat singing was first used by "a man from Vicksburg,

Mississippi, by the name of Joe Simms, an old comedian, and from that Tony Jackson and myself grabbed it in New Orleans and found it was pretty good for the introduction for a song" (bb, p. 67).

SHOUT (New Orleans Shout; King Oliver and His Band; 30 December 1929; VI 23388). Ca. 1910. A type of happy, rhythmic jazz which is designed to bring about the same sort of hypnotic, emotional experience as the religious "shout" so common in Negro services. The "shout," "a strongly rhythmic religious song, accompanied by patting and beating with the feet" (ATS, Shout), is itself quite similar to jazz in many ways. (Chapter IV, p. 77)

STOMP (Southern Stomp; King Oliver's Jazz Band; Chicago, March 1923; Para 12088). Ca. 1900. A jazz style usually played at a fairly fast tempo and with such syncopation as to cause the audience to dance and stomp their feet. "The term 'stomp,' used to designate a hot number of dynamic rhythm, was derived from New Orleans from the stomping of bare feet in the Bamboula and the Congo" (q, p. 166). "Jelly Roll" Morton says: "I don't know what the term 'stomp' means, myself. There wasn't really any meaning only that the people would stomp their feet" (o, p. 121).

SWING (Georgia Swing; Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers; New

York, 11 June 1928; V1 V38024). Ca. 1915. A style of jazz originated in the early 1930's and characterized primarily by big bands using carefully rehearsed arrangements and allotting improvised solos a small portion of the arrangement. Originally, "swing" was used primarily as a verb, meaning to play with a natural flow and rhythm. In the 30's, however, the term became commercialized and swing came to be identified with popular music in most any form. The "swing" bands very often were "highly disciplined aggregations who could churn out one arranged piece after another, each one meticulously rehearsed down to the last cymbal crash" (bb, 180). Such groups aroused the wrath of most genuine jazzmen, because examples of what they understood to be jazz was fast fading from the picture. According to "Mezz" Mezzrow, "swing" was a "gaudy label to plaster on an inferior adulterated product...there ought to be a pure-music law to regulate its use and abuse" (aa, p. 142). (SWING - Verb)

#### TEMPO

BACK BEAT (Back Beats; Mills Blue Rhythm Band; 25 January 1935; Co 3020D). Ca. 1930. The second and fourth beats of the measure which are syncopated or accented, thus creating one of the identifying features of the jazz rhythm.

BEAT (Back Beats; Milla Blue Rhythm Band; 25 January 1935; Co 3020D). Ca. 1910. In jazz, there are usually four beats to the measure, but more than in any other music, "the beat" is of vital importance. It should not slow down or speed up to any noticeable extent, and it is important that every member of the band feel "the beat" at all times, for often the rhythm section will stop or divert from the usual steady four beats to the measure. In the opinion of Rudi Blesh:

In all Negro music the rhythmic characteristic most difficult to define is "the beat." This is much more than the mere basic meter. It is a live and flowing pulse, percussive yet springy and supple, and at moments when strong polyrhythm or successive suspended (i.e., silent) beats enter, the beat is felt while it exists unheard. The beat is accurate but not heavy. White players who maintain an unvarying beat almost always produce a heavy one that, as the Negroes say, drags. The dragging beat is one retarded behind the actual--but merely sensed--one, often by a time interval infinitesimally small like a one-hundred-and-twenty-eighth note. Nevertheless it is felt as a brake on the momentum. It is the live beat in Negro music that all listeners feel and respond to, a thing often loosely described as "syncopation" or "that wonderful Negro rhythm" (r, p. 191).

BOUNCE (Bouncin' in Rhythm; Adrian and His Tap Room Gang; 14 June 1935; V1 25208). Ca. 1935. A light, medium-fast tempo with a light accent on the second and fourth beats (ATS, Bounce).

DIXIELAND (Dixie Jass Band One-Step; Original Dixieland Jazz Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; V1 18255). Ca. 1910.



Dixieland rhythm is usually thought of as being quite heavily accented on the third and first beats, though, like "jazz," "Dixieland" is a style the characteristics of which are difficult to limit. (DIXIELAND - Genre)

FRANTIC (Frantic Fantasy; Duke Ellington and His Orchestra; New York, 2 April 1945; VC 575). Ca. 1940. Often used to describe an extremely fast tempo. (FRANTIC - Adjective)

GROOVE (Pick Up the Groove; Sam Donahue and His Orchestra; New York, 26 December 1935; BB 11285). Ca. 1930. When the members of the band are all feeling the same tempo, they are said to be playing "in the groove." (GROOVE - Noun)

JAZZ (At the Jazz Band Ball; Original Dixieland Jazz Band; New York, 24/26 February 1917; Ae 1205). Ca. 1900. The rhythm of jazz is: "a rigid 4/4 beat (occasionally 2/3 or 3/8) combined with polyrhythms, or cross rhythms more commonly known as syncopation, and the use of free rubato" (d, p. 65).

JUMP (One O'Clock Jump; Count Basie and His Orchestra; New York, 7 July 1937; De 1363). Ca. 1930. A tempo which is either fast or medium-fast. (JUMP - Verb, Genre)

NEW ORLEANS (Way Down Yonder in New Orleans; Frankie Trumbauer

and His Orchestra; New York, 9 May 1927; OK 40843). Ca. 1910. "New Orleans stayed close to the fundamentals, relying on a strong, steady rhythm" (aa, pp. 342-343). "In resting on the strong beat [In New Orleans jazz] the cornet and other instruments made an intense appeal for an accent of the weak beat which surged forward an instant later from the snare drum and cymbal. Thus we can say that the accentuation of the weak beat is 'augmented'" (1, pp. 44-45).

PARADIDDLE (Paradiddle; Cab Calloway and His Orchestra; Chicago, 8 March 1940; Vo 5467). Ca. 1930. A fundamental exercise for a drummer designed to increase agility and control of the sticks. The exercise, beginning with the left stick, would be: LRLRLRR, etc., the idea being to increase the tempo without interrupting the established pattern.

RATAMAQUE (Ratamaque; Cab Calloway and His Orchestra; 20 February 1939; Vo 3700). Ca. 1930. A fundamental drum exercise which calls for four rapid beats with alternating sticks, thus producing a sound which resembles "ratamaque."

ROCK (My Daddy Rocks Me; Jimmy Noone; 24 May 1929; Vo 2779). Ca. 1925. A tempo which "rocks" is one which is usually fairly fast and which causes the other members of the band and the audience to feel the "groove" or "swing" of the music. (ROCK - Verb)

SWING (Louisiana Swing; Luis Russel and His Orchestra; 19 May 1930; OK 8811). Ca. 1915.

"The basis of swing is syncopated music in 4/4 time" (1, p. 20). Swing is that constant vibration, a delicate pulsation which enlivens a music with a regular tempo; prevents it from becoming monotonous; makes it alive just as the best of the heart regulates the life of the human body.

Although theoretically swing in the music can be distinguished from swing in the dance, actually a single and unique principle animates both--the swing of the music attracts the same swing in the dance, and vice versa (1, p. 36). (SWING - Genre)

WICKED (The Wicked /Dirty/ Fivewa; Hannah Sylvester; 1923; Para 12034). Ca. 1920. A "wicked" tempo is one which is nearly too fast for accurate execution.

#### TIMBRE

BARREL HOUSE (Barrel House Blues; "Ma" Rainey; 1923; Para 12082). Ca. 1915. A "barrel house" tone is one which is loud, brassy, careless; a sound recalling the type of establishment where such music was often heard. (BARREL HOUSE - Noun, Genre)

COOL (Cool Bluea; Charlie Parker and Band; 19 February 1944; Dial 1015). Ca. 1945. An emotionless, practically vibratoless tone which is associated with the be-bop school of jazz. (COOL - Adjective).

- DIRTY (Dirty Reg; Brownlee's Orchestre of New Orleans; New Orleans, December 1924; OK 40337). Ca. 1920. "A tone which is reedy or metellic gained by playing with an extreme vibrato. The dirty tone is usually essociated with music in 'Chicago' or 'Race' style" (g, p. 181). (LOWDOWN - Timbre), (GUTBUCKET - Timbre)
- GROWL (Growlin'; Cherlie Bernet and His Orchestra; New Orleans, 21 January 1934; BB B5816). Ce. 1925. "A vibrent, guttural tone" (ATS, Growl).
- GUT BUCKET (Gut Bucket Blues; Louis Armstrong and His Orchestre; Chicago, 12 November 1925; OK 8261). Ce. 1915. A strong, "barrel house" type tone. (GUT BUCKET - Adjective), (BARREL HOUSE - Adjective)
- HOT (Hot Stuff; Jimmy Blythe's Owls; 5 October 1927; Vo 1136). Ce. 1920. The tone of "hot" jezz is nearly elways associated with the vocal vibrato, which is thought to be "carried over from Africa." "It is e rhythmic device that often furnishes in its timed oscillements, an inner rhythm within the continuous tones. Beyond that, it is en intonative device used to produce regular variations in pitch" (r, p. 42).
- LOW or LOW DOWN (Doin' the New Low Down; Duke Ellington and His Orchestre; 26 Merch 1928; OK 8602). Ca. 1915. A "dirty"



tone; also a sort of slurred note style (g, p. 182). (LOW - Adjective), (DIRTY - Timbre)

NEW ORLEANS--(HOT - Timbre)

SWEET (Sweet Man; Tennessee Tooters; New York, 13 August 1925; Vo 15109). Ca. 1915. An artificial tone somewhat similar to a legitimate or symphonic tone. Such a tone is often termed "schmaltzy." (SWEET - Genre)

TAILGATE (Tailgate Ramble; Wingy Mannone and His Orchestra; Hollywood, 7 March 1944; Cap 10224) Ca. 1920. A gruff, "dirty" trombone tone usually associated with early New Orleans jazz.

In New Orleans it was customary to advertise smusement events such as prize fights, river excursions, and dances by having the band ride through the streets on a large furniture wagon and play at the main corners. They put the entire band, guitar, bass, and all, in the wagon, and the back end, the "tsil gate," was reserved for the trombone. There he could sit, with his feet dangling over the edge, and slip his slide up and down without any danger of poking another player. (o, p. 28-29).

WICKED--(DIRTY - Timbre)

THE JARGON OF JAZZ

by

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## ABSTRACT

No other product of this country is more purely American than is jazz. Basically the music of the African who was enslaved here for one hundred and fifty years, jazz, as it contacted the many other folk musios found in southern United States, was influenced slightly by each, producing ultimately a music which was quite different from any which the world hsd yet heard. Since the first experimental wails of this music were heard, sometime close to the turn of the century, jazz has raised itself to a much more respectable level and is today heard and played in nearly every country in the world. In this country especially, jazz, or at least a music which resembles jazz to some degree, can be heard nearly every hour of the day, and today employs musicians by the thousands.

The extent to which jazz has made itself felt is apparent in the jazz jargon which the average American has assimilated. Such basic words as "jazz," "corn," and "boogie woogie" are at least recognized, if not used, by a great majority of Americans. And yet, the amount of study done on the jargon of jazz has been amazingly scanty. In some few cases, such as the recent slang dictionaries or the autobiographies of musicians, some information is available, but it is far from adequate, and in some cases, far from reliable. In no known instance has there been a thorough study made exlusively of the jargon of jazz. Realizing the importance of jazz in the

United States and the lack of historical research, particularly etymological study of the jargon which is associated with jazz, the writer attempts to list and define at least the basic terms.

Because the jazz musician has developed such a large vocabulary, and one which varies to a great extent in various sections of the country, one of the problems is to limit the choice of terms to basic words alone. To accomplish this, terms are selected from the titles in Charles Delaunay's New Hot Discography, which lists only jazz records which have been made from the beginnings of recorded jazz to 1947. Such a restriction eliminates all but the most basic jargon since, in all probability, only terms which were well known were used on phonograph titles. The selection of terms is further restricted by limiting the terms to only those referring in some way to music, since many of the labels employed jargon which was more concerned with the private lives of musicians. Thus, the glossary lists only basic jazz jargon of a musical nature.

Before going into the glossary, it is thought advisable to give the reader some idea of at least the more important historical facts of the development of jazz in the United States. With this thought in mind, a chapter is devoted to the political and economic events affecting the growth and development of jazz, as well as the general geographic movements of its earlier days. To promote a further understanding of the historical development of jazz and to acquaint the reader with the environment of jazz in its period of



adolescence, a chapter is devoted to the place names of the cities of New Orleans, Chicago and New York which appear on jazz record titles. Also, this chapter is designed to demonstrate how often the jazz record title may tie up with the surroundings of the jazzman and how a study of these terms may often uncover facts which have been overlooked.

Having created for the reader a basic knowledge of the historical development of jazz in order to allow an appreciation of the frame of mind surrounding this music, the terms themselves are then presented. Before the main glossary, a chapter is devoted to some basic jazz terms which show signs of having had African backgrounds. To demonstrate the possibility of such etymological development, it is shown that the Negro has retained African cultural characteristics of a musical nature in surprising amounts. This, together with data showing that African language survivals are also quite possible in this country, tend to support the theory that these basic jazz words whose origins are obscure may very well be African in origin. Because of the speculative nature of the etymology, nine of these terms are separated from the glossary and examined for possible African roots.

Finally, the glossary itself is presented; it contains six separate sections, three containing terms of a general nature and three more technically musical. These terms, taken from Delaunay, are listed alphabetically within the sections, along with the title from which they are taken and the date the

record was made. The term is then defined and, wherever possible, the etymological and historical development of the term is given.