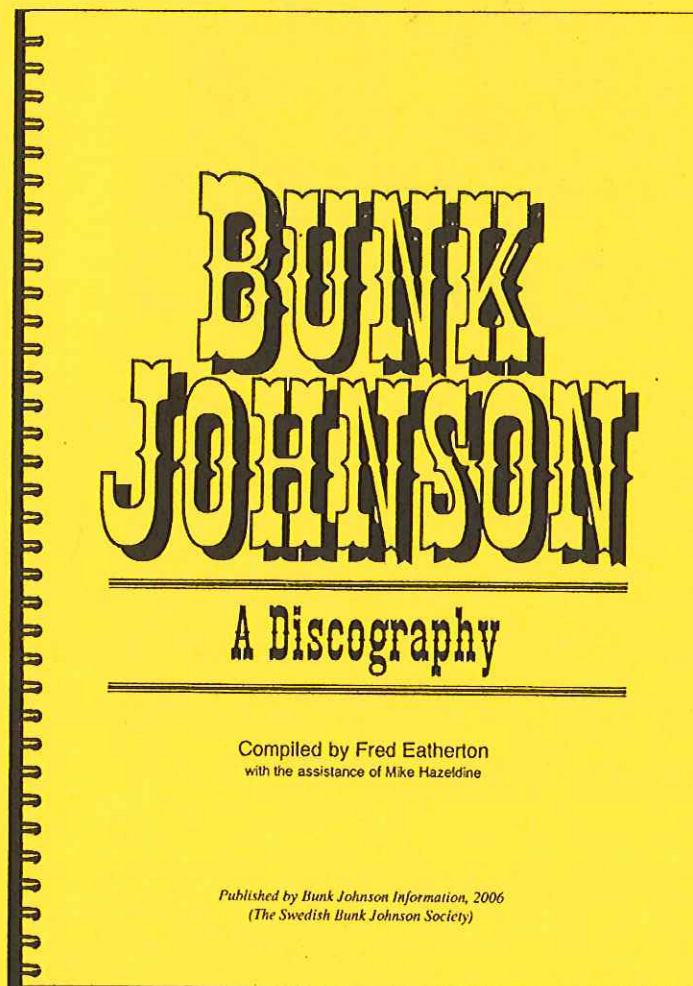




# Bunk Johnson. Information

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*The Swedish Bunk Johnson Society*



Compiled by Fred Eatherton  
with the assistance of Mike Hazeldine

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*Bunk Johnson.*

## THE ANNUAL MEETING 2007

The annual meeting started as usual with about half an hour's mingling until the President summoned the congregation for his welcome speech which as always was blessed short and mainly contained greetings from members that couldn't attend, mostly for geographical reasons. He ended with an invitation to get some nourishment before the intellectual part of the meeting would start. Again the food was made by the talented Sven Gustafsson, so the rush was considerable. If Emperor Ceasar had been present, he would have nodded encouragingly. The guys attacked the pots with total disregard of their waistlines.

After dinner it was time for the three guest speakers. First out was **Mike Pointon**. Here is how our President describes it:

Mike Pointon

Photo: H. Jansson



The topic of Mike's talk was "*My life long love of N. O. music & the people I have worked with*". Mike, musician, producer, author, you name it, gave a fascinating resume of his long career, starting in the late '50s and lasting up to this very day, when he is very much in demand as a diligent, devoted and highly competent trombone player. He is also an MC at a huge bunch of jazz festivals and concerts,

He talked about his many tours and co-operations with such eminent people as George Lewis, Barry Martyn, Ken Colyer, Cuff Billet, Bent Persson etc, starting in the middle of the '60s.

He illustrated his speech with some very good music, like Bunk Johnson's *Tiger Rag* from July 31, 1944 at San Jacinto Hall (AM212) and *Darktown Strutters Ball*, the Victor version from December 19, 1945 in New York. He also gave an example from the Mary Karoley collection with the solo version of *Maple Leaf Rag* recorded in New Iberia February 2,

1942 (AMCD-41) more than four months prior to the legendary Jazz Man session at Grunewald Music Store.



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Not only Bunk but also Kid Rena's *Low Down Blues* from the Delta session 1940 and an extremely good *Sleep, Come On and Take Me* (Victor 13875-1-Vo-2881) with Joseph Robichaux and his New Orleans Rhythm Boys from 1933, with the magnificent trumpeter (underrated to say the least) Eugene Ware, Many in the audience would have guessed Lee Collins or Punch Miller. (CR)

After Mike it was time for **Jack Stanley** to tell us about his encounters with Bunk. His speech is quoted below, it only needs to be said that Jack managed in his performance to communicate the deep impression Bunk made upon him.



**Jack Stanley**  
at SBJS annual meeting 2007  
Photo: Håkan Jansson

If my voice had not changed early I would have never met Bunk Johnson, and jazz would not have played such an important part in my life.

It was 1943. I was sixteen, just going into my final year in high school in my home town, Minneapolis. I was also the owner of a mature sounding baritone speaking voice and an ambition to be a radio announcer. Thanks to the draft, a large percentage of announcers were in the army, contributing to the ease with which I landed a job on a local station, WMIN.

The job was a teen-age music lover's dream. In addition to my regular announcing duties, I was given a three hour program in which I could play any music I liked. I called it "Jump Town" and played Tommy Dorsey, Harry James, Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman - the popular bands. That is, until the local appreciators of jazz latched onto me. They were led by John 'Jax' Lucas, a college professor and writer for 'Downbeat'. He had a

lady friend working in a record shop, who forced me to put my ear into a loudspeaker to compare the sounds of Harry James with those of Louis Armstrong. That, more than anything else did it. I was converted; changed the name of my show to 'Jazz Unlimited', playing only jazz, and learning about it in the process.

In 1945, having read about Bunk Johnson's stay at the Stuyvesant Casino in New York, I decided to make the trip during my Christmas break from the University of Minnesota. It wasn't easy to get to



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New Your. The train journey from Minneapolis to Chicago was smooth, on the streamlined Burlington Zephyr. Chicago to New York was a different story. Just about all the rail-coaches were being used to transport troops, and I was put on something that looked like it dated from the time of Abraham Lincoln's funeral. There were gaslight fixtures on the wall between every other window, and the windows themselves had frost and ice on the inside.

But the sound that greeted me when I climbed the old wooden stairs of the Stuyvesant Casino was anything but frosty. I'd never heard real New Orleans jazz in person, and Bunk, George Lewis, Jim Robinson, et al, lifted me to a new 'heaven'. The hall itself resembled what I imagined the old New Orleans dancehalls must have been like: the floor was crowded with dancers, and the entire wooden bandstand shimmied along with Baby Dodds, when he shook over his snares, bells and ratchets. I spent three wondrous nights at the Stuyvesant, managing to introduce myself to Bunk, who, though polite, didn't seem much in the mood for extended conversation.

Before leaving New York, I managed to get to Eddie Condon's new club in Greenwich Village, and Nick's, where George Brunis got me to stand on his chest while he played trombone. (I can't remember the name of the tune - I was too occupied with keeping my balance.) But I remember he called the manoeuvre 'footnotes from a shoehorn'.

The following year, 1946, I heard through friends that Bunk was in Chicago, and they gave me the names of a few people who could get me in touch. It worked. Bunk and Don Ewell invited me to join them 'on the town'. I experienced my first pizza, and then they prepared me for the next adventure, the Victory Club, by telling me that it was a 'pretty rough place'. That was an understatement: it resembled what 'barrelhouses' must have looked like: sawdust on the floor, a very long bar stretching down the poorly lit interior, crowded with noisy drunks and frequently departing-and-returning whores. At the far end was a small bandstand. The Bunk Jonson-trained New Orleans trumpeter, Lee Collins, had a trio there, and he and the drummer, 'Pork Chops' Smith, asked Bunk and Don Ewell to join them for an informal session.

Though the customers paid little attention, that session produced some of the most exciting jazz I've ever been privileged to hear: Bunk and Lee played what must have been two-trumpet playing to compare with Louis and King Oliver: both horns blazing for nearly three hours without a real break - not competing, but blending, harmonising, and never missing. And Don Ewell at the piano seemed transformed into Jelly Roll himself. By that time I'd heard some of the best recorded New Orleans jazz, and knew that this should have been included. Sadly, it wasn't recorded.

When I told my fellow Hot Club members at the University of Minnesota about my Chicago adventure, we decided to invite Bunk and Don to play a concert at the University. To our delight, they accepted. We arranged to get Doc Evans, the best local jazz band to join them. The concert was set for Friday afternoon, May 3rd, 1947 in the big auditorium of Coffman Memorial Union.

A few of us from the Hot Club met Bunk and Don at the train station when they arrived the day before the concert, and proceeded to the Radisson Hotel in downtown Minneapolis. Don signed the register first, and was given a room. When it came Bunk's turn to sign, the clerk said, "Oh, I'm afraid that was our last room!" We were thunderstruck! This was Minneapolis, not Alabama,



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Mississippi, or New Orleans. I remember placing my hand on Bunk's shoulder and asking if he'd like to stay at my house.

Naturally, I was pleased when he said, "I'd be grateful." And he was. He stayed with my family for the two days he was in Minneapolis. We had a finished playroom on the basement floor, where Bunk slept on a convertible sofa. When I came down in the morning, I found that Bunk had tidied up the entire room, along with the furnace room next door. He was like a member of the family, chatting with my mother, and being a perfect guest.

On concert day Bunk worked hard. His day started at 11 a.m., lecturing to Professor Tremaine Mac Dowell's class in American Studies on early New Orleans jazz and his part in it. He was a living, talking phenomenon out of a past the students had barely heard about. Bunk seemed to enjoy enormously the experience of talking to a university class. He had great respect for learning and academia; mentioning in the interview I conducted with him during the concert, that one of his daughters had two degrees. And he stressed his own musical schooling in New Orleans under a Professor Wallace.

There was little doubt that Bunk considered the Minneapolis experience a high-point, and he displayed great dignity and self-confidence at all times. He also seemed vigorous, and physically in command of his powers, musical and physical.

Those musical powers were well displayed in the concert, which was attended by a large, enthusiastic crowd, and covered by the press of Minneapolis and St. Paul newspapers. Doc Evans' Band accompanying Bunk and Don included Evans, cornet; Don Thompson, slide/valve trombones; Harry Blons, clarinet; Cliff Johnson, bass, Warren Thewis drums. I was asked to m.c. the concert, and was able to record it. Records were issued some years later on the Paragon and Purist labels. The interview I conducted on stage with Bunk during the concert appeared on the Paragon LP and three minutes of it were released on the American Music label.

The evening after the concert, Bill Charnley, one of the Hot Club members, threw a party at his home. Bunk and Don both hit the bottle(s) for the first time since their arrival in Minneapolis, and tried in vain to rehearse the tune, 'Heartaches'. While the results were far from successful, it remains vividly in my memory. It was recorded and some of you might have heard it.

Shortly following Bunk and Don's visiting Minneapolis, I changed jobs, winning a berth on the announcing staff of WCCO, one of the most powerful stations in the country. But alas, my jazz program could not accompany me. Also, my post-graduate studies occupied the rest of my time, until I got my master's degree in the autumn of 1950. I then decided to seek my future in radio on the West Coast.

I loaded the last stack of my precious old jazz records into the trunk of my new Chevy and hit the road West - Minneapolis to LA, with a passenger to help pay the gas - a born-again, tight-faced old-timer who says, 'I want to see the promised land before I die.'

The 'West' begins where Mt. Rushmore's blank presidential eyes stare out over empty brown



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canyons, and the road spools out - South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Utah, Colorado. Cold nights in dank wooden tourist cabins; griddle cakes, burnt bacon and overcooked coffee in faceless Main Street diners, with red-faced farmers in red flannel shirts and blue overalls.

Wyoming, and rain. A sudden mountain curve. The car careers out of control, swerves toward the precipice of a thousand-foot drop, orchestrated by the old man's scream, 'Lord Jesus, save us!' Time holds its breath until the edge of eternity.

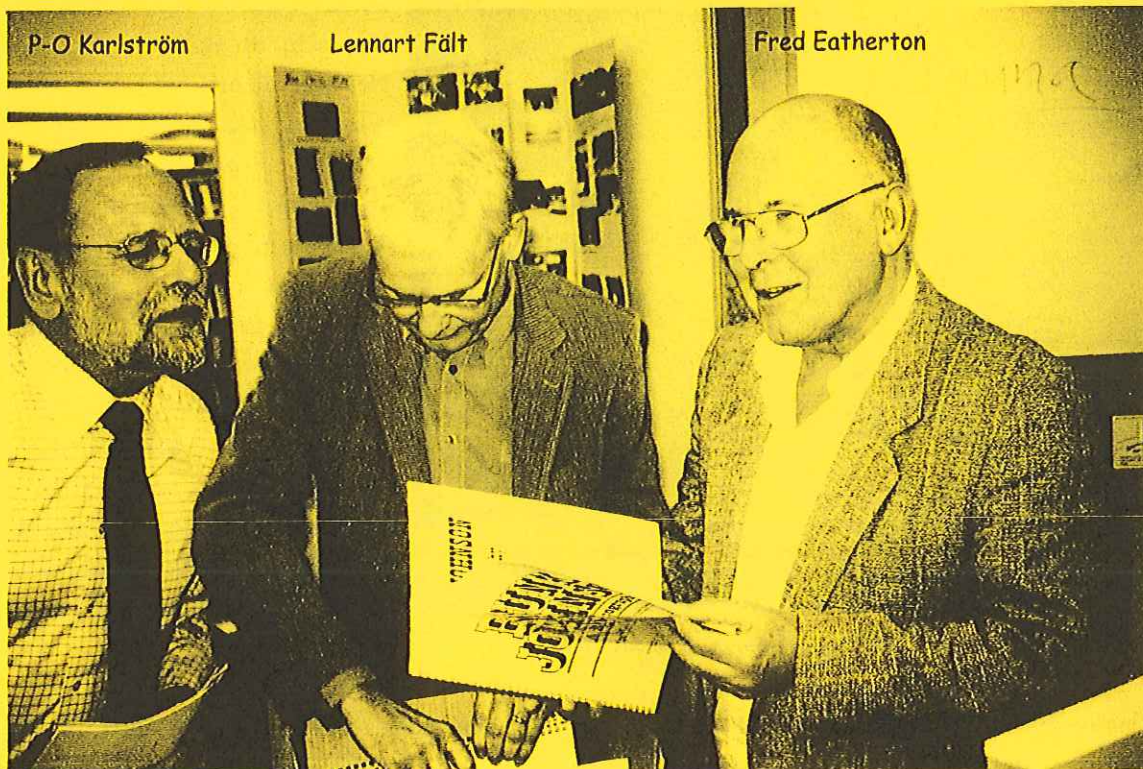
When the car stops rocking, I turn the key - and like a dutiful donkey, the Chevy soldiers on. Over mountain and river, canyon and desert - until a strange, sweet perfume caresses my dusty nostrils: orange blossom, wafting from the orchards of the valleys of California! I pull into a two-pump Mobil gas station, where emerging, I see my passenger down on his knees, giving thanks for our deliverance.

Only with effort do I refrain from saying, "You're right! We were delivered. By Satchmo, Jelly Roll, Bunk, Bessie, et al - a quarter ton of shellac ballast in the trunk."

\* \* \* \* \*

Thank you, Jack. A wonderful speech.

Finally it was time for **Fred Eatherton** to launch his Bunk Johnson discography, made with the assistance of Mike Hazeldine and produced in co-operation with Bunk.Johnson.Information and Blood & Tears Productions.



Fred told us about the whys and hows of his project and distributed books to the almost 60 members that had prepaid it in order to make the printing possible.



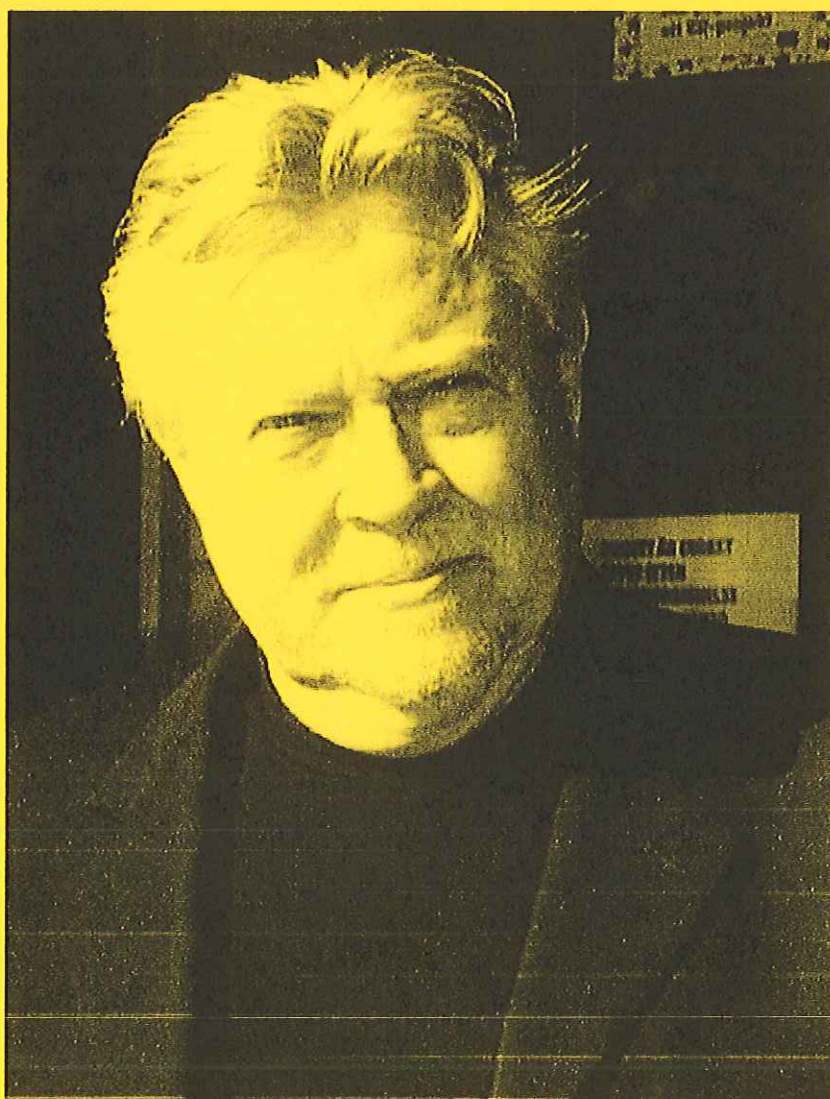
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More about the discography in another page.

The meeting closed following the usual formula; a quizz by Jan Lorentzon that puzzled all but the brightest followed by live music and beer. (HH)

## MEET A PROMINENT MEMBER

### ROLF "CARVAN" CARVENIUS



"How on earth did you get the idea to open up Jazzens Museum (The Museum of Jazz) in Strömsholm, a small village more than 130 kilometers west of Stockholm," I ask Carvan.

"Well as far as the place is concerned I moved from Stockholm to Strömsholm in the early 1970's, Carvan says. And the idea of a jazz museum I got when visiting the Museum of Music in Stockholm in the early 1990's. There was not even a trace of jazz to be found! So I started searching for jazz museums in Sweden as well as in Europe and found out that there was none on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. And then I thought we can't have it this way. There must be a place for documenting, archiving and researching this wonderful music. And at the same time visualize the music and the musicians as well as make younger generations

interested in the cultural heritage of genuine jazz music."

Carvan contacted a number of institutions and influential persons about the idea of a jazz museum. They were all very positive but to contribute with money.....no! Finally he got the local and regional authorities interested in contributing as well as the EU and a Swedish bank. Carvan got enough funds to buy an old rehabilitation center in Strömsholm and convert it into a functional jazz museum, Jazzens Museum, that opened up in May 1999. The museum consists of an exhibition



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space of about 600 m<sup>2</sup> divided into twelve separate rooms, an entrance with Charlie's Boogie Bar and about 50 seats. Charlie's Boogie Bar is named after the great Swedish piano player Charlie Norman (1920 - 2005), who often performed at the Jazzens Museum.

In the museum you'll find permanent exhibitions as well as temporary ones, primary on centenarians of jazz, e g George Lewis, Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke. The number of objects of the museum have now reached such an amount that an extension of the area would be suitable. It is possible to use the attic of the premises but then there is of course the question of money. Even if there is a lack of space for the moment, Carvan is very grateful for all objects that have been and will be donated to the museum. Sooner or later there will be space for everything.

Connected to the Jazzens Museum you find the Royal Garden Café where Carvan runs an extensive concert and restaurant business during the summer months. From the opening in 1999 he has arranged about 600 concerts and there are more to come. From June 27 to August 28, 2007 you can enjoy great Swedish and international jazz musicians five days a week at the café including a special Traditional Jazz Week in the end of July. And as usual the motto for all Caravan's music events this summer is "It must swing!".

- To run the Jazzens Museum is of course not a one man show, Carvan points out. The museum is run by a foundation with Benny Hegbart as chairman, Björn Bärnheim as vice chairman and Carvan as secretary. There is also a supporting society, Jazzmuseets Vänner (Friends Of The Jazz Museum), run by Björn. The efforts of the foundation and the supporting society is invaluable, Carvan says.

Then Carvan enthusiastically tells of one of the museum's latest projects - an Anita O'Day Scholarship. Lady Day, who died in 2006, is certainly one of the great ladies of jazz. The initiative to a scholarship was taken by two members of Jazzmuseets Vänner, Mona and Anders H Pers, who donated SEK 10 000. Then Jazzens Museum and Jan Ekendahl donated SEK 10 000 each, so now the fund for a scholarship is SEK 30 000 (Euro 3 400). And of course further contributions to the Anita O'Day Scholarship are welcome.

For his efforts in keeping the interest in good old fashioned jazz alive Carvan has gained not fortune but honor. In 2003 he was awarded the Swedish Event Academy's Jester Prize and in 2005 he was appointed "Årets Västmanlänning" (the person of the year in Västmanland) by the readers of the region's daily newspaper. And good old fashioned jazz certainly is Caravan's cup of tea. Some of the music that today is called jazz Carvan will not even call jazz, rather "contemporary modern music".

Carvan's interest in historical jazz dates back to 1955 when he in his early teens attended a concert with three of the best traditional jazz bands in Stockholm of those days: Hep Cats, Black Bottom Stompers and Storyville Creepers. Then his older brother borrowed a trumpet which Carvan tried without success. In 1956 he bought a clarinet painted blue for SEK 40 from a class mate and this turned out to be his instrument. In the late 1950's he founded his own band, The Lords, which lasted for about five years. With the Lords as well as his quartet Carvan had regular gigs at Nalen, the number one jazz place in Stockholm from the 1930's to the early 1960's. There he even got the chance to play with J C Higginbotham.



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Higgy said "I like that clarinet man" Carvan tells me with a smile. In the late 1960's there was not very much demand for traditional jazz bands so Carvan played in other surroundings, with the Rock n' Roll singer and accordion player Burken (The Can) and one of the most successful pop groups of Sweden in those days, the Shanes. He also made a tour with the singer Agnetha Fältskog, who later gained fame as one of the members of ABBA. In the 1970's and 1980's Carvan worked as an artist promoter and even started a production company with his friend Selle Fernholm. In those days he was also busy introducing English theatre in Sweden and even owned a third of the shares of a theatre in Stockholm. In 1986, shortly after the Prime Minister of Sweden Olof Palme was murdered, Carvan sold his shares and had to find a new way of living.

And a new way of living Carvan certainly found. He took his clarinet, went to the city of Örebro and persuaded a big food producing company to cooperate. Carvan's idea was to play clarinet in malls accompanied by a recorded rhythm and thus attract customers to the food stores buying the company's products. The idea worked so for a year he traveled around the country and made five performances a day. During these performances Carvan discovered that many youngsters were interested in the music he performed but totally unaware of that it was called jazz. So that's why one of the aims of the Jazzens Museum is to wake up youngsters' interest in jazz.

Later on Carvan extended his one man band show to a whole concept of New Orleans evenings for private parties, personnel meetings of companies and others. The concept included food, decoration and music, all genuine New Orleans style. Today Carvan still does his one man band show and the New Orleans concept now and then but most of his time is devoted to the Jazzens Museum, the Royal Garden Café and his orchestra of today, the Tuxedo Jazzband.

P-O Karlström

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## **NANCY RUCK**

**Interview** given by Nancy Ruck, Manuscripts Cataloguer at the Williams Research Center of the Historic New Orleans Collection, to Jens Lindgren, probably 22 May 2002, in which she discussed the William Russell Jazz Collection.

Transcribed by Fred Eatherton.

**Ruck:** My understanding, and Alfred [Lemmon] can fill you in on this a little more fully, is that he [William Russell] felt strongly that the material should stay in New Orleans.

He came to functions at the Collection, for example workshops on how to take care of your own personal papers, that kind of thing. So he had a relationship with the Collection and that pretty much made his choice. There are really only two places he could have left it in New Orleans [the Williams Research Center and the Hogan Jazz Archive], so he chose us.

The Smithsonian wanted the collection very badly but, as I said, and they had a lengthy correspondence which is in his papers with him about that, but he really believed that he was collecting information about New Orleans musicians only, and it belonged in New Orleans.

**Lindgren:** What kind of a collector was he, according to what you have seen?

**Ruck:** He was omnivorous. He collected everything he could about New Orleans musicians. There were certain musicians he was particularly interested in. He was particularly interested in Bunk Johnson who he helped to rediscover in the 1930s. He spent much of his life writing a book about Jelly Roll Morton. He also, because of his friendship with Warren and Johnny Dodds, had a lot of information about that and also a lesser known musician, Fess Manetta, who he was using as a source for information about jazz in Storyville because Fess Manetta had been a piano player in Storyville.

**Lindgren:** Did you ever meet him personally?

**Ruck:** Unfortunately I came to the Collection right after we got it, which was a couple of months after he died, so I just missed meeting him. Having seen pictures of him and having lived in the French Quarter, I know that I saw him on the street but I never met him, no. Alfred, as I said, had a sort of working relationship with him.

**Lindgren:** Had he treated the material well, according to you?

**Ruck:** As well as material can be treated in a non-professional atmosphere in a city that has frequently 90% humidity and it rains all the time; and the heat. So, yes, there are some things that have a bit of mildew. I don't think you could find a house in New Orleans that didn't have some things that had a bit of mildew. He kept things in boxes and bags. For example, he kept a lot of things in shirt boxes and also those bags. He would save those plastic bags that you use for vegetables in grocery stores which are not ideal. As I said though, he did come to workshops here to find out more about preserving his material.



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The records were kept in very good condition, the albums, because he was something of an authority on basically how to keep them. A lot of the paper was a little fragile from....

he didn't have an air conditioner. So, as I said, I mean, the weather in New Orleans does not lend itself to things holding up well.

**Lindgren:** Were there any problems in preserving the material?

**Ruck:** We had to get it fumigated to kill off the mildew and make sure there weren't any insects, but we probably have to do that with half the collections we have, that's not unusual.

**Lindgren:** Could you just mention one particular item or one part of the collection that sticks out one way or another?

**Ruck:** Oh, absolutely! This is my favourite thing in the entire Historic New Orleans Collection. There is an envelope that none of us has ever had the courage to open. It's stuffed about an inch thick and it says on the outside in red crayon 'Red brick voodoo dust.' [Laughter]

**Lindgren:** How did you treat something like that?

**Ruck:** We're just hoping no researcher gets it in their mind to try to open it because Lord only knows what's in there!

**Lindgren:** Thank you very much.

## **ALFRED LEMMON**

**Interview given by Alfred Lemmon, the Director of the Williams Research Center of the Historic New Orleans Collection and Curator of Manuscripts, to Jens Lindgren on 22 May 2002.**

Transcribed by Fred Eatherton

**Lindgren:** What I am mainly interested in is the jazz archive in here. You have one jazz collection in particular. Can you give me a little history of it?

**Lemmon:** Yes, we acquired the William Russell Jazz Collection in September of 1992 so it is nearly 10 years here. At the time of the acquisition we believed it had 16000 items in it, but now we know it has 56000 items in it and we have completed all the cataloguing. Our major challenge now is to put all of the catalogues on the internet so that researchers can access the material from wherever they are. It will better prepare researchers to come here to do research or to request information by mail.

**Lindgren:** So how do you feel about external researchers? Are you happy to have them here?



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**Lemmon:** We exist to serve external researchers. [Laughs] If we would not have them, we would be disturbed!

**Lindgren:** What kind of a collection was this according to you, the Bill Russell Collection?

**Lemmon:** It was a collection of exceptional value that we actually had began .... discussions with Mr Russell in 1984. We wanted it because it is a very finely assembled collection. Mr Russell was a very highly trained musician and he stayed focused his entire collecting career. So the combination of his being a very finely trained musician, he had a deeper understanding of the musical structure of jazz, the influences of jazz, than a person who had no musical training whatsoever, that was simply just a tremendous lover of jazz. Also by his being a private individual, he was able to stay focused exclusively on his particular collecting interests. In other words, if he had been working for a university he may have left the university and someone may not have succeeded him with the same interest. The president of the university may have changed and decided not to give money, so he was his own boss which made him not lose sight of the goals that he had.

**Lindgren:** This was his passion.

**Lemmon:** You could say that simply, it was more than a passion.

**Lindgren:** And besides, that's a standard complaint when it comes to jazz research that jazz research is mainly being done by amateurs and by enthusiasts who just want to prove their thesis or.....

**Lemmon:** Right, and that was the wonderful thing about his being a very highly qualified musician. He could understand better the musical structure of the music. It also gave him the insight to put everything in its proper context. You know, the importance of being able to understand the music in the time period that it was created.

**Lindgren:** Since you got the collection here, how has it been used by researchers?

**Lemmon:** Any number of ways. It's a wonderful jazz collection, but it's also a very wonderful document of the city of New Orleans. For example, he documented many things that were associated with jazz that we now have no image of whatsoever. For example, the trees on Claiborne Avenue; that was associated with people going there for picnics and listening to jazz. He documented the trees being cut down for the expressway to be put through, but as a result of his doing that to document a venue for jazz, that is some of the few images we have of something that was very important to the city.

Likewise he has photographs of the old train stations, they're all gone. So what we are finding is that do have the serious scholars that come here to use the Russell collection for jazz, but we also find many people that come here to use the collection not because of jazz but because of it containing so much information about New Orleans.

For example, he did many hours of interviews with Manuel Manetta in Algiers, across the river, and he went and photographed many of the buildings Manetta talked about. Now people are very much interested in restoring the historic district of Algiers and one of the few sources they have is the Bill



*Bunk Johnson.*

Russell Jazz Collection. Yet they're not using it for the study of jazz , they are using it for something else. But it only shows you how important it is as a tool for documenting the ongoing developing profile of New Orleans.

**Lindgren:** What is your personal role in this collection, were you the one who negotiated with him about getting it?

**Lemmon:** I first knew Mr Russell, he gave a lecture here, [and] he attended a lecture that I gave. Of course, he would sell records at Preservation Hall in the evening and for his 80th birthday, they did a retrospective of his work as a composer in New York City.

Of course Mr Russell was eccentric, he had no telephone. Here are these people trying to honour him and make better known his own musical compositions which were very significant. So they would call me up at 11 o'clock at night [and] I would go down to Preservation Hall and ask him all the questions that they had, and then I would call them back the next morning. So that is one way I knew Mr Russell.

About two years before his death, he introduced us to his brother, Dr William Wagner, and we remained in contact with his brother. Then about two weeks after Mr Russell's death, Mr Russell's brother , William Wagner, known in jazz circles as 'Brother Bill,' came and met with us and we therefore addressed the transfer of title of his collection to the Historic New Orleans Collection.

After that I became the person that sort of designed the formula for how we would present this collection to the public. But there were several people, particularly Nancy Rock and later Tad Hershorn, who is now the archivist for the Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers, who did most of the actual cataloguing along with Mr Richard Jackson, who is the retired curator of American Music at Lincoln Center who still comes to work for us three days a week.

**Lindgren:** As for you, do you have a personal interest in the music?

**Lemmon:** My personal interest in the music right now is that while I personally appreciate it, my personal interest is preserving this collection, making it more well known. At the same time, especially with the unpublished music, making it available to a larger audience, while at the same time respecting the rights of the musicians, the composers.

**Lindgren:** Is there any singular item in this collection that you appreciate more than the others?

**Lemmon:** I think that there's not one singular item, but I appreciate the most is Mr Russell as an individual. He made such conscious efforts to preserve everything he could, not to take advantage of the musicians. He would always pay them for anything he received from them, and I guess the item that impresses me the most is the spirit of Mr Russell.

**Lindgren:** Thank you.



*Bunk Johnson.*

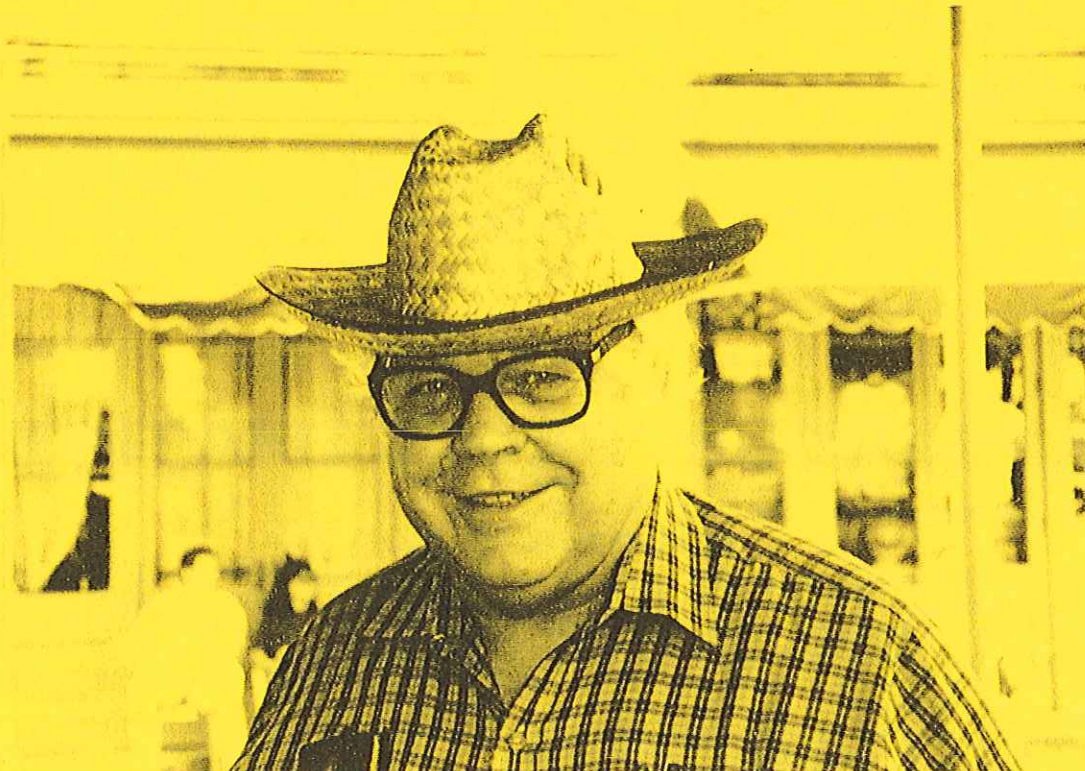
## **IN MEMORIAM - DICK ALLEN**

by P-O Karlström

On April 12, 2007 our distinguished member Richard B. "Dick" Allen passed away at the age of 80. After Bill Russell's death in 1992 Dick was second to none in the knowledge of New Orleans jazz. Born and raised in Georgia, Dick first visited New Orleans in 1945 when doing military service in Gulfport, Mississippi. Dick continued to visit New Orleans when studying psychology at the University of Georgia and got so fond of the city that he settled there for good in 1947. Dick then had two ambitions - to learn how to play the trombone and to get a psychology exam at Tulane University. Getting more and more involved in researching New Orleans jazz Dick changed his path and left those ambitions.

In the early 1950's Dick and Bill Russel began recording interviews with old New Orleans jazz musicians in an oral history project. In 1958 the project had grown into the William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane University. Dick was associate curator of the archive from 1958 to 1965 and curator from 1965 to 1980. After his retirement in 1992 Dick continued to write numerous articles, liner notes and program notes on New Orleans jazz. He was also a consultant, instructor, production adviser and curator or producer for many institutions, including the Smithsonian Institution.

Dick was one of the original founders of the New Orleans Jazz And Heritage Festival, still the number one jazz festival for all friends of traditional New Orleans music. In 2003 Dick had to leave New Orleans for health reasons and spent his last years in a nursing home in his native Georgia. Of course Dick, sadly missed by us all, now will take his rightful place in the Swedish Bunk Johnson Society's Hall of Fame.





*Bunk Johnson.*

## CHANGELIN' CHILD

About twenty years ago (1987) I sat talking with Bill Russell at his home on Orleans Street in New Orleans. We were talking about Bunk Johnson, not a very unusual topic when we met. When Bunk died July 7, 1949, in New Iberia, Bill got a huge suitcase filled with sheet music from Maud, Bunk's widow. He still had it in his possession, intact, and he showed it to me. The suitcase was filled with sheet music of the 30s & 40s, popular tunes and songs, old ragtime pieces etc. But also there were some songs and compositions of his own. Among them "Spicy Advice", to my knowledge the only tune he wrote himself and recorded (1944). He also got it published during his life time.

But right there among the piles of music there was a strange document: A tune Bunk must have composed around the beginning of the 30s. It was called "**Changelin' Child**" - and Bill had never heard it played. When I later talked to Harold Drob, he remembered he had heard Bunk and the pianist Don Kirckpatrick try to rehearse it backstage Styvesant Casino in New York 1946. But the band never played the tune in public.

Harold Drob said that Bunk tried to get Sidney Bechet interested in this tune before the (in)famous Boston tour in 1945 - but for some reasons unknown to Harold (and probably Bunk as well) Sidney turned it down.

According to Harold Drob, Bunk never played this tune in public.

And why this strange title "Changelin' Child"? Bill showed me some clippings from the New Iberia press at the time, early 30s. There was a movie with exactly the same title that was popular in Louisiana at the time. It could be possible that Bunk went to see that movie - and gave name to the tune after it. Any other explanation Bill Russell couldn't give me. Bill kindly gave me a xerox from the original - and that is what you can see here. With Bunk's own handwriting.

The only existing recording (so far, to my knowledge) of this tune was made some year after I got the copy from Bill. It was made by **Barfota Jazzmen** in Sundsvall, November 1991. (Barfota Jazzmen "If Ever I Cease to Love" FOTA-CDO03) All possible royalties from the recording were put to Emily Mae Evans, Maude Johnson's daughter (and Bunk's step-daughter), at Providence Place in New Orleans.

Claes Ringqvist

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## BARBEROUS PROCLAMATION!

Know all men by these presents, that I,

**GEORGE I.**

Emperor of all the Barbers in the South, do most solemnly decree that all men found with long beards and flowing locks shall appear before me at my sanctum, No. 149 Common street, opposite St. Charles Hotel, and then and there be divested of the obnoxious protuberances from the chin and superfluous locks, and be made by the magic touch of myself or assistants sufficiently genteel to appear in this most genteel of cities, New Orleans.

Given under my hand and seal this the eighteenth day of November, 1877.  
**BASHI BAZOUK**, Secretary to His Excellency. **GEORGE I.**, Emperor.

---



Bunk Johnson.

TRUMPET.

CHANGE-LIN, CHILD.

Handwritten musical score for Trumpet and Voice parts. The score is written on five staves. The first staff is labeled "TRUMPET." and the second staff is labeled "VOICE". The music is in 2/4 time, indicated by the "2." and "4." markings. The key signature is one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as notes, rests, and bar lines. The first staff (Trumpet) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The second staff (Voice) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The third staff (Chorus) begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat. The fourth and fifth staves continue the musical notation. The score is written in a cursive, handwritten style.

2. 4. 23

CHORUS.



*Bunk Johnson.*

## **WHY SHOULD I BUY THE DISCOGRAPHY?**

Because it is the perfect companion to "Bunk Johnson - Song of the Wanderer" by Hazeldine/Martyn.

Because it in all probability will be the final Bunk discography.

To help the Bunk Society to keep producing this publication. As from this number we have no longer access to a friendly copying machine and our costs will double. We need financial help.

## **WHAT DOES IT COST?**

For members:

SEK 200

GBP 15

EURO 25

USD 30

All prices include p&ep.

Non-members will have to pay a higher price. Information on request.

## **HOW DO I ORDER?**

Contact P-O Karlström,  
Storvretsvägen 105  
163 47 SPÅNGA, Sweden  
<per-olof.karlstrom@localnet.net>

## **HOW DO I PAY?**

Definitively NOT by personal check. Swedish banks do not accept foreign personal checks, and if they would the charges would be three times the value of your check. If you visit Sweden spend some time outside a bank. Sooner or later you will see someone enter to ask for some simple service. Wait awhile and you will see him exit with all pockets turned inside-out and with that glazed look that you get from being grabbed by your ankles and shaken as if you were a dry martini ordered by James Bond. The last thing they remember is the teller saying: "There will be a small charge".

The easiest way to pay is sending cash subtly hidden in an ordinary letter. If you think this is risky, contact your bank. Europeans can pay by EU payment (from your bank of your PC) to Mr Karlström's account. You will need the following information:

NDEASESS

IBAN SE46 3000 0000 0321 4003 8061.

\* \* \* \* \*

The discography will be continuously updated in Bunk.Johnson.Information. Here is what Fred has come up with for this number:



*Bunk Johnson.*

## **BUNK JOHNSON DISCOGRAPHY**

**Corrections and additions - by Fred Eatherton**

### **Corrections**

Page 42, 1.25, this is a two CD compilation called 'The Golden Era of Jazz - Volume 7.'

The index is correct.

Page 62, below 'Spicy Advice' add 'St Louis Blues' (fixed in 2nd printing)

Page 67, Disky D0250302 should read 'As Good As It Gets - Black Gospel.'

### **Additions**

#### **Cassette:**

6 December 1945 D5VB-888-1 Snag It also appears on BMG 56753-4 (mc).

#### **New CDs:**

**Title:** River Walk - Bring Back The Dixie - Vol. 1:

Label & No: *Weton-Wesgram KBOX 3468A-C*

This is a Dutch three CD compilation in a box-set. It contains the following title on Disc -C;

18 May 1945 900 Just A Little While To Stay Here

**Title:** The Dixieland Collection:

Label & No: *ZYX Music & Melody MUS10014-2*

This is a German two CD compilation in a box-set. Its packaging originally had a photograph of the ODJB on its outer sleeve. This sleeve has been redesigned and the illustration is now a paddle steamer. This compilation includes the following titles;

19 December 1945 D5VB-996-2 When The Saints

D5VB-998-2 Darktown Strutters Ball

D5VB-999-2 Franklin Street Blues

**Title:** History of Jazz Volume 2 - Okres Formatywny: New Orlean (The Formative Years-New Orleans):

Label & No: *Multimedia-Polska SDS JAZZ 002*

This is from a Polish 28 CD set called 'The History of Jazz,' an audio limited edition based on three books written by the Polish author Andrzej Schmidt. CD 2 includes;

2 October 1942 4660-4A Thriller Rag

**Title:** The Gospel Truth:

Label & No: *Castle Pulse PLSCD 387*

This CD is a compilation of gospel recordings and includes;

2 January 1946 D709 Where Could I Go But To The Lord

**Title:** New Orleans Festival:

Label & No: *ZYX 06127-2*

This German CD is a 17 track compilation that includes the following titles;

19 December 1945 D5VB-996-2 When The Saints

2. December 1947 151 (2A3) The Entertainer

**Title:** New Orleans Jazz Festival:

Label & No. *ZYX 110002*

This German two CD compilation is based on *ZYX 06127-2* above, but with nine additional tracks.

This compilation also includes;

19 December 1945 D5VB-996-2 When The Saints

2 December 1947 151 (2A3) The Entertainer

**Title:** That Devilin' Tune Volume 3 (1934-1945)

Label & No: *West Hill Radio Archives 6005*

This is a 9 CD boxed set based on Allen Lowe's book 'That Devlin' Tune' (sic), published by Music & Arts Programs of America, Berkeley, Cal 2006. CD 9 includes;

21 November 1945 W73149-B Alexander's Ragtime Band



## *Bunk Johnson.*

W73152-B You Always Hurt The One You Love

**Title:** The History of Jazz -100 Ragtime, Dixieland and Boogie Woogie Greats

Label & No: *Deja Vu DEJ5 032*

This is a five CD boxed set that includes just one Bunk track;

6 December 1945 D5VB-888-1 Snag It

**Title:** Dixieland Jazz - This Was The Jazz Age

Label & No: *Membran 222689-321*

This is a German ten CD box-set that includes on disc nine;

18 May 1945 900 Just A Little While To Stay Here

**Title:** Old Time Jazz

Label & No: *Membran 231144 MP3 CD*

This is a German MP3 CD and it is identical to *Membran 222689-321* above.

Thus it includes;

18 May 1945 900 Just A Little While To Stay Here

**Title:** Trésors New Orleans - Les Plus Grands Thèmes Du Jazz New Orleans

Label & No: *RCA Victor (Sony BMG) 82876676282*

This is a French four CD box-set that includes on disc three;

19 December 1945 D5VB-996-2 When The Saints



### **Bunk Johnson - A Discography**

Compiled by Fred Eatherton  
with the assistance of Mike  
Hazeldine. Published by "Bunk  
Johnson Information", 2006  
(The Swedish Bunk Johnson Society)

Ever since I was invited to become a member of the Swedish Bunk Johnson Society I have been impressed by the amount of fresh information they regularly unearth about this still controversial figure. They continue a noble tradition started by the Bunk Johnson Appreciation Society in Britain in the '50s which pressed rare material on its Purist label. If Graham Russell (a leading light of the society) was still around, he would have been delighted with this production. Their latest publication, following in the footsteps of Hakansson and Falt's pioneering work, promises to be a definitive one. It follows

Taken from  
New Orleans Music  
Vol 13 No.3

a familiar format and its 80 A4 spiral-bound pages provide a treasure trove of information covering everything Bunk recorded during his brief window of fame, from the first exploratory discs by Mary Karoley at his New Iberia home in February 1942 (available on AMCD-41) to his last interview in 1949 with Alan Lomax, which unfortunately appears to be lost. There are many black and white reproductions of labels interwoven with fascinating background notes to many of the sessions and some of Bill Russell's beautifully idiosyncratic AM LP sleeves are also illustrated. There is even one of Bill's studio floor plans taken from his notebook of the Decca session and details are given of his few - unfortunately silent - film appearances. Indices of musicians & tune titles are provided, together with those of CD releases.

Fred Eatherton is to be commended for meticulously bringing all this essential reference material together, drawn from such authoritative sources as Mike Hazeldine, the dedicated Swedish members of the Society, and its ever-supportive President, Claes Ringqvist.

As Fred rightly points out, discographies never stand still so he would be grateful if readers help keep things up to date but in the meantime this will certainly stand as a landmark in its specialist field. (A case in point here is the controversy mentioned on page 50 regarding the identity of the trumpet player on the 1947 Caravan Ballroom recording of *St Louis Blues*, which is left open. There is no doubt whatever that it is Bunk playing, just listen to his recording of it on the Bunk brass band sides. If you don't have these, see NOM 11.5, page 19. Ed)

Mike Pointon



*Bunk Johnson.*

# BUNK

*in*

# San Francisco

Part Two



*A further selection  
of press cuttings,  
newsletters, postcards  
and other ephemera  
reporting  
on Bunk's time in  
San Francisco  
1943*

The former CIO Hall today



*Bunk Johnson.*



Louis Armstrong and Bunk Johnson

Hot Jazz Society  
of San Francisco

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PETER TAMONY

*Invites you to*

# Sunday Afternoon JAZZ SESSIONS

Featuring

## BUNK JOHNSON

and his

## “Hot Seven”

(Former Lu Watters Stars)

in the

## CIO HJS CHAMBER JAZZ ROOM

150 Golden Gate Avenue

## EVERY SUNDAY 2:15 P.M.

Commencing July 11, 1943

193



*Bunk Johnson.*



Louis Armstrong and Bunk Johnson

## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

•

### *Sponsors:*

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"This is Jazz!" exclaimed moderator Rudi Blesch, as the mighty New Orleans creators of "le jazz hot" stomped the all-out chorus of Bunk Johnson's traditional "Down by the Riverside." San Francisco's Geary Theatre was packed that hot, lazy Sunday afternoon in May, and from coast to coast jazz enthusiasts were waiting to listen to the now historic program of jazz over the Blue Network. "Now don't you think," continued the moderator, "we ought to find a place in the right atmosphere for these artists to keep this, the real jazz, alive?" From the terrific response that greeted this happy thought, was born the "Hot Jazz Society" of San Francisco.

The "Hot Jazz Society" of San Francisco is extremely happy to announce that America's only original contribution to the arts—"jazz" will not die, for commencing 2:15 Sunday afternoon, July 11, and every Sunday afternoon thereafter, devotees of the "Hot Jazz Society" will have a place to sit, sip, dance, discuss and listen to the real jazz, played by its once legendary creator, Bunk Johnson and his "Hot Seven," many of whom were members of the erstwhile Lu Watters band. The "atmosphere" will be in the CIO HJS Chamber Jazz Room at 150 Golden Gate Avenue.

Only persons possessing a membership card will be admitted to the Sunday "jam sessions." Your name has been recommended as one who is interested in preserving this country's progressive folk jazz music, and the membership card entitles you to the privileges of the Society as outlined below. The charter membership fee of \$1.00 will entitle you to a membership card which also is good for one free admission. After this initial charter fee no dues will be collected. The first Sunday session opens July 11, 1943.

The "Hot Jazz Society" is intended to be exclusive—not open to the public in general—and catering to its members' non-commercial and artistic tastes. The membership drive may be closed after the first session. At any rate new members will be required to pay a substantially higher fee. The following is an idea of the general program of the "Hot Jazz Society," listing some of the privileges members enjoy:

- (1) Admission fee at each session to members only will be 75c.
- (2) Prize drawings will be held at each Sunday session. Valuable prizes will include the great books of jazz, "Jazzmen," by Ramsey and Smith and "This Is Jazz" by Rudi Blesch, as well as collectors' hot record albums.
- (3) Space for dancing will be provided for those members moved by the spirited rhythms.
- (4) Surprise guest artists will drop in from time to time and "sit in."
- (5) A part of the proceeds will be given to United Nation causes.
- (6) . . . last but not least, a word about the famed Bunk Johnson, teacher of Louis Armstrong, trumpet wizard. Armstrong recently said at the Warfield Theatre that "trumpet players may come and trumpet players may go, but no one can, or ever will, play a horn with the ideas and imagination of 'my boy Bunk.'" Bunk, the great inspirer of musicians and the once legendary man of jazz was found in New Iberia, La., and was brought out to San Francisco for the Geary Theatre concert. The rest is history that can be read in the pages of "Time" and "Down Beat," as well as in the columns of art and music critics.

But let the music sing out for itself. Remember! The opening session is Sunday afternoon, July 11, at 2:15 in the CIO HJS Chamber Jazz Room at 150 Golden Gate Avenue. Become a charter member of the "Hot Jazz Society" of San Francisco now, by filling out the enclosed instruction sheet and mailing in your charter membership fee today.

"This Is Jazz!"



Bunk Johnson.



Louis Armstrong and Bunk Johnson  
(Student) (Teacher)

## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

•

July 19, 1943

### Sponsors:

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SARAH SHERMAN  
PETER TAMONY  
VERNON WHITE

153

Dear Fellow Member -

The second session of the Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco is history -- or historic we should say -- and the exciting melody, rhythms and counterpoint that filled the Chamber Jazz Room at 150 Golden Gate Avenue showed that the genius of the horn, Willie "Bunk" Johnson, and his ex-Lu Watters' men have progressed as a unit. The improvement in the stomps, rags, drags, and blues assures us that future Sunday afternoon sessions can only bring more thrilling jazz.

Very apparent too was the improvement of the "atmosphere" in the Chamber Jazz Room, which came in for some nice comments from the assembled devotees. The addition of a P.A. improved the acoustics no end, and a new lighting effect next week will contribute even more to the necessary relaxed feeling.

Both our sessions were attended by the national press with representative photographers on hand to get pictures of Bunk, his "Hot Seven," and you. So look around and maybe you'll find your likeness between the covers of some pic mag. All this national attention showered upon our HJS Sunday afternoon sessions proves what many enthusiasts have been saying. That is, with Bunk in our midst the new jazz center of the United States - and that means the world - is right in our own Chamber Jazz joint. Visiting musicians have come to us to sing the praises of the remarkable Bunk and his "Hot Seven," and also have added that our sessions are not only more authentic than the jam sessions of New York, Chicago and Los Angeles, but the audience participation makes those other hamlets sound flat in comparison.

And before we sign off this week let's give credit to the selected personnel comprising the "Hot Seven" who surround Bunk. The inventive geniuses include: Ellis Horne, clarinet; Bill Barden, trombone; Al Jahnigen, piano; Squire Girsback, bass; Pat Patton, banjo; Bill Dart, drums. Also a mention of the nice stomp singing of Bob Best and the fine blues rendition of Stella Brooks - shades of Bessie. That man with the tight pants - U.S. Navy to you - who blows that imaginative tailgate horn, was Turk Murphy who has an enviable reputation as a trombonist.

Remember next Sunday afternoon's clambake again includes drawings of valuable collector's record albums and books. Count Basie who opens at the GG this week has written up from Los Angeles that he is anxious to see Bunk, and he and his jump men no doubt will be on hand to "dig" the master. And remember, show your membership card at the door to get into the Chamber Jazz Room at the member's reduced admission. We'll "dig" you Sunday.

uopwa 34



*Bunk Johnson.*



Louis Armstrong and Bunk Johnson  
(Student) (Teacher)

## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

July 20, 1943

### *Sponsors:*

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SARAH SHERMAN  
PETER TAMONY  
VERNON WHITE

152

Dear Fellow Member -

The Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco welcomes you into its select fold of devotees of the jazz hot. Your membership card now entitles you to enjoy each Sunday afternoon jazz session in the Chamber Jazz Room at 150 Golden Gate Avenue at the reduced admission price of six bits.

And speaking of last Sunday's opening session, no attempt at words is necessary to describe the exciting music that poured out of Willie "Bunk" Johnson and his ex-Lu Watters' stars---because of course, you were there! After hearing Bunk, the real man of jazz, it is easy to understand that chapter on Louis Armstrong from the book "Jazzmen" that quotes as follows:

"....and Louis had talked a lot about Bunk, his idol of earlier days, had tried to tell how beautiful Bunk's tone was, how intense his vibrato, and had sung phrases to Lil (Armstrong) to show the facile, imaginative way Bunk had of embellishing them. Somehow Louis had felt things the same way as Bunk, had the same inborn sense of beauty, the same melancholic and exuberant accents, and naturally adopted a similar mode of expression. A lesson of inestimable importance which Louis absorbed more than anyone else was the way Bunk had of hesitating, always a little behind the beat, a lazy yet most dynamic way of playing which is at the core of all hot jazz."

The inspired "Hot Seven" who jazz it up with Bunk, including former members of the renowned Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, are all record collectors and students of jazz, and talented enough to refuse enticing offers from overlarge name bands to play the real jazz that burns within them. Besides Willie "Bunk" Johnson, the personnel of the "Hot Seven" includes Ellis Horne, clarinet; Bill Barden, trombone; Ray Jahnigen, piano; Pat Patton, banjo; Squire Girsback, bass; Bill Dart, drums.

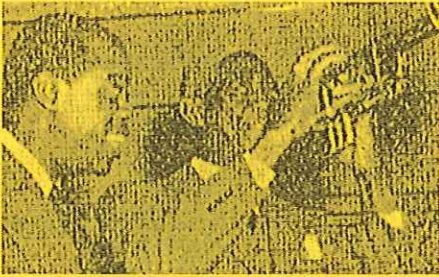
Bunk himself shared our "high" feelings after last Sunday's clambake, and the stomps, rags and blues of his "Hot Seven" satisfied him. "That was Jazz," said its creator Bunk, "but wait until a few more sessions and my boys will really do it up like gravy." And with this happy thought in mind, let's treat ourselves to the habit of being present at the next and every Sunday afternoon session for more and better jazz.

Lucky members again will win valuable prizes, including collector's record albums and books including "This is Jazz" by our own Rudi Blesch - a four bit must item that describes the music and is selling like mad at all the music counters. Your friends too are invited to become members of the Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco and enjoy the privileges of dancing, sipping, discussing and listening to "that genius" Bunk Johnson - as Louis Armstrong describes him. Bring them along with you and educate them to the righteous jazz, and if you want them to receive the general Hot Jazz announcement, mail their names to the Secretary, Hot Jazz Society, 1317 Grove Street, San Francisco, 17, California, and we'll be glad to do the rest. Also, your comments and criticism of our sessions are welcome.

Copy 34



*Bunk Johnson.*



Louis Armstrong and Bunk Johnson  
(Student) (Teacher)

## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

July 28, 1943

### *Sponsors*

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PETER TAMONY  
VERNON WHITE

153

Dear Fellow Member -

Last Sunday afternoon the "Jump King of Swing" sauntered from his five-a-day at the Golden Gate into the CIO HJS Chamber Jazz Room right smack into the middle of Willie "Bunk" Johnson's famous solo on "Sister Kate." Count Basie was agreeably startled and the expression on his face indicated that his ears had long been virgin to the real jazz that came out of Bunk's horn. This was the first time Basie had heard Bunk in 13 years, and Bunk's playing obviously brought back memories of a past era when Basie and other members of the Benny Moten band in Kansas City would at every opportunity cut out to the Yellow Front Cafe where the master Willie "Bunk" Johnson was blowing that same exciting trumpet.

"That Bunk hasn't lost a thing, and he was the best then," said the Count, "and to think of my young trumpet section always complaining of 'beat lips.' We can all stand a lesson from Bunk!"

And Basie was brought forward to the Chamber Jazz Room's podium where photographers were waiting to catch him and Bunk together. But then the theme "Down by the River" sang out, and the "Jump King" carried his tribute further to include the young jazz students who surround Bunk (the Messrs. Horne, Barden, Jahnigen, Girsback, Patton and Dart), and he concluded that in his wide travels there is no place - except in our own Chamber Jazz Room - where people can listen to a real authentic jazz band.

So thanks to Count Basie for adding his praise to the many other visiting musical notables who have been amazed by Bunk Johnson, his "Hot Seven" and the equally remarkable audience participation and appreciation.

And all this brings us to the unnecessary reminder that at 2:15 next Sunday and every Sunday you members are invited to "dig" more of Bunk, his inventive "Hot Seven" and more surprise guests. The record departments of The White House, Sherman Clay, and Rowlands at 38 Mason St. will again give valuable collectors' items to lucky members, as well as copies of Rudi Blesch's must book "This is Jazz" which describes the music Bunk plays.

Because press photographers have been taking shots all over the Chamber Jazz Room, many members have indicated a desire to get souvenir pictures of personalities in the Hot Jazz Society's historic sessions. Next Sunday members interested in securing pictures may buy them from the hat check room at 50¢ each.

Bring your membership cards for the reduced admission, and your friends too are invited to become educated into the real jazz as expounded by professor Willie "Bunk" Johnson - the great teacher and inspirer of such scholars as Louis Armstrong, King Oliver, Tommy Ladnier and the "Hot Seven."

uopwa 34



*Bunk Johnson.*



Louis Armstrong and Bunk Johnson  
(Student) (Teacher)

## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

August 4, 1943

### Sponsors:

BOB BEST  
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PETER TAMONY  
VERNON WHITE

193

Dear Fellow Member -

Your weekly jazz bulletin has been claiming that the Sunday afternoon jazz sessions featuring the great Willie "Bunk" Johnson and his now-famous "Hot Seven" like the vats of the choicest wines get better and better with age. You who witnessed last Sunday's session heard Bunk driving his horn with added rhythmic savagery and giving his surrounding jazzmen such inspiring kicks that when the theme "Down by the River" signaled the end of another historic session, the many devotees thronged around Bunk asking for "just one more!". That one, and many more, is the hope for the future that will be realized next and every Sunday afternoon at 2:15, in the Chamber Jazz Room at 150 Golden Gate Avenue.

Added last Sunday to the distinguished visitors who have attended our sessions was the son of the Egyptian Ambassador, Hosni Ertogun. Mr. Ertogun said "You people in San Francisco don't realize how lucky you are to have an artist like Bunk Johnson, and be able to listen to him backed by a pure jazz ensemble regularly in your grand Society. I had to travel 3800 miles to be here -- and it was worth it!" And sitting beside the foreign connoisseur was Harili Stuart who took a leave from her famous "Jazzmen Record Shop" in Los Angeles to join in the stomping and cheering for encores of "Bunk's Blues" and "Tiger Rag."

The guest stars that "sat in" included Turk Murphy easily recognizable by his "tight pants" and mad trombone; Johnnie Anderson, a pianist of no mean ability; and Pappy Van and Gene Williams kicking the band out on drums - the latter now leaving the navy to join Charlie Barnett's swing band.

Covering Count Basie's visit to the Chamber Jazz Room and quoting his generous slice of sincere praise, we overlooked in the last jazz bulletin a human interest yarn. It happened over 20 years ago during the golden era of jazz. The late King Oliver, fronting the then great jazz orch in the land, wanted a certain alto sax man in his section who was doing amazing things on his instrument in the south. The name of this sax star was Million Baker. The King wrote to "the best of 'em all," his friend Bunk Johnson, and asked him to locate Baker and send him up north. Bunk searched diligently but without result until finally - 20 years after - he caught up with Million Baker who came in from Kansas City to listen to Bunk in the Chamber Jazz Room! And you should have listened to those two reminisce - they did it up like gravy!

And the final reminder of this coming Sunday afternoon's session, which will include Freddie Slack, the boogie man who will leave his piano at the Golden Gate Theatre to "dig" and kick out with Bunk and his jazzmen. More valuable collector's prize items will be given by the record departments of Sherman Clay, The White House and Rowland's to lucky ticket holders. Bring your membership cards for the reduced admission - and your friends too, and let Bunk educate them to the righteous jazz.

uopwa 34



*Bunk Johnson.*



## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

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BILL COLBURN  
ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN  
RAY GERALDO  
DON HAMBLEY  
EMELIA HODEL  
TED LENZ  
HAL MCINTYRE  
H. IRVING ROSENBERG, JR.  
SARAH SHERMAN  
PETER TAMONY  
VERNON WHITE

Dear ~~Mr. Johnson~~ ~~Mr. Johnson~~ Johnson  
(Student) (Teacher)

Through no fault of ours, or Charlie Spivak's, the Hot Jazz Society "suffered" its first disappointment last Sunday in its long list of famous guests--Count Basie, Freddie Slack, Paul Robeson, Saunders King, Turk Murphy, and others--artists who have been attracted to the Hot Jazz Society Sunday afternoon sessions to see and hear Willie "Bunk" Johnson, the famous jazz creator, and his "Hot Seven."

Spivak, billed as the "sweetest trumpet player in the world" was an attentive member of the audience in the early part of last Sunday's session, but was interrupted by a messenger from the Golden Gate who advised him that the Sunday schedule had been altered to squeeze in an extra stage show. But gracious Charlie took time out to say "Allah be praised! That extra stage show probably is the best break I ever had. I heard and read a lot about Bunk, but you have to hear him to appreciate his great soul. I'm afraid had I been able to jam with him he would have cut me to the quick. Praise the six-a-day!"

Interesting to note that all our famous guests, without exception, single out for praise the Chamber Jazz Room audiences. They marvel at the large turnout compared to eastern jam sessions as well as the devotees easy recognition and response to such righteous tunes as "Shimesha wabble", "Sister Kate" and "Dippermouth." Why San Francisco has taken the place of New Orleans as the new mecca of the jazz hot can be attributed to a number of factors, but this week we want to make mention of one of our sponsors, who through his weekly two hour radio program, contributes to the Bay Area reputation as the "greatest 'hot' audience in the country." The mikeman is Vernon White who carries on each Saturday afternoon from 1:30 to 3:30. Just listen to this informative ad lib jazz show, and we know you'll like it.

The Hot Jazz Society with the great Willie "Bunk" Johnson was host last Sunday to three distinguished visitors. Darius Milhaud recognized as one of the three greatest modern classical composers was seen chatting with Rudi Blesch, and we wonder if Rudi was "digging" him for a "reaction" story for his column in the Sunday "World" section of the Chronicle. From Chicago came Horace Cayton of the Chicago Sun staff, and he said he came to do a feature about us. And Jim Moore, local radio personality, and record collector returned home on a furlough as Sergeant Jim Moore.

A letter from Ray Bauduc, famous New Orleans drummer, with the Bob Crosby band, reveals that Ray isn't sure he can get a pass from the 211th Coast Artillery this Sunday or the following one to sit in with Bunk. Bauduc, winner of many "Down Beat" polls, cut a myriad of records with the Crosby Bobcats, most notable being "Big Noise from Winnetka." We're looking for drummer Ray Bauduc either this Sunday afternoon or next as one of our most important guest stars--the other is Stan Kenton, noted orchestra leader.

Sherman Clay promises new valuable collectors albums to lucky ticket holders this Sunday afternoon, and if you drop into Sherman Clay you should note on the counters the best book that describes what all the shoutins' about,--the book "This is Jazz" by Rudi Blesch on sale at 50%. This intelligent and interesting item talks about the music you will hear Sunday afternoon in the Chamber Jazz Room, 150 Golden Gate Avenue, at 2:15.



*Bunk Johnson.*



LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND "BUNK" JOHNSON  
(Student) (Teacher)

## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

October 19, 1943

### *Sponsors:*

BOB BEST  
RUDI BLESCH  
HARRY BRIDGES  
BILL COLBURN  
ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN  
RAY GERALDO  
DON HAMBLEY  
EMELIA HODEL  
TED LENZ  
HAL MCINTYRE  
H. IRVING ROSENBERG, JR.  
SARAH SHERMAN  
PETER TAMONY  
VERNON WHITE

153

Dear Fellow Member -

Jazz commenced promptly at 2:15 last Sunday afternoon. Willie "Bunk" Johnson and his "Hot Seven" lost no time plunging into inspired jazz. It was remarkable that the "Hot Seven" without any "warming up" could play that first group of classics with so much spontaneity, rhythm and feeling. Brother Jack Carmody, who hasn't missed a session, wouldn't allow himself to enjoy that exciting group to its fullest, lamenting that he had no recording set to preserve the memorable music on wax.

We are all familiar with the special genius of Willie "Bunk" Johnson. The music that Bunk with his "Hot Seven" played last Sunday afternoon - and this Sunday - is the pure, unadulterated original jazz that he and other New Orleans men created to express the Negro heart, soul and hope, in a new music we now call "jazz." Jazz is a much misunderstood word meaning different things to different people. The spontaneous real jazz that was born in New Orleans at the turn of the century, and which is played now in the Chamber Jazz Room, is far different from the manufactured, pseudo-romantic swing tunes of Tin Pan Alley.

Comes this Sunday afternoon in the Chamber Jazz Room and you will listen to Bunk and his talented students playing more of the real jazz. The blues are the backbone of the repertoire. The instrumentation, you will note, is authentic with Bunk's great trumpet playing the lead, Ellis Horne's sensual clarinet, weaving, pushing, nudging around the melody, and the tailgate trombone of Bill Barden filling in with rhythmic and syncopated passages. The specialized rhythm section of Bert Bales, piano; Pat Patton, banjo; Squire Girsback, bass, and Billy Catalano, drums, strikes a relaxed, rhythmic beat that infuses the ensemble with emotions and ideas. The tunes too are important, for though following a simple but tuneful melodic line, are complex in structure, involving in the whole an intricate understanding of every instrument for the other - each artist creating something different, yet playing with imagination, relaxation, feeling and complete harmonic understanding. The real jazz shuns exhibitionistic high notes, repetitious riff passages, and tasteless flashes of technique. The best book on the subject is Rudi Blesch's "This is Jazz," a four-bit item that is receiving a brisk sale at Sherman-Clay's record department.

Last week's guest stars included Edith Griffin, piano-singing surprise, and the irresistibly moving voice of Sister Lottie Peavay. Space is the only thing that keeps us from digging into the dictionary for superlatives to match Sister Peavay's vocal renditions. The man who gave away the prize collector's record albums last week was Saunders King, who enjoys the enviable reputation of a brilliant singer, guitarist and bandleader. Saunders will be this Sunday's guest artist, and after his solo spot, will be around to give away copies of his own hit recording, "S.K. Blues," as well as other Sherman-Clay prize record albums.

So long until this coming Sunday afternoon, in the Chamber Jazz Room, at 150 Golden Gate Avenue, where jazz begins at 2:15, with the fabulous Willie "Bunk" Johnson, his famous "Hot Seven," Saunders King, added guest stars, and prize record albums.

uopwa 34



*Bunk Johnson.*



Louis Armstrong and Bunk Johnson  
(Student) (Teacher)

## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

November 2, 1943

### *Sponsors:*

BOB BEST  
RUDI BLESCH  
HARRY BRIDGES  
BILL COLBURN  
ALFRED FRANKENSTEIN  
RAY GERALDO  
DON HAMBLEY  
EMELIA HODEL  
TED LENZ  
HAL McINTYRE  
H. IRVING ROSENBERG, JR.  
SARAH SHERMAN  
PETER TAMONY  
VERNON WHITE

153

Dear Fellow Member -

In following these HJS jazz bulletins, you have noticed when the name of Willie "Bunk" Johnson is mentioned, we mince no words in referring to the jazz creator and teacher of Louis Armstrong as "great," "exciting," "imaginative," "genius." To the uninitiated, these superlatives, no doubt, are as meaningless as the commercial blurbs announcing a forthcoming super-colossal Hollywood production. For these skeptics, the best advice we can pass on is to listen attentively to Bunk's horn, and the music will speak for itself--it doesn't lie. However, if the non-believer must be further impressed we can refer him to national publications like "Time" and "Down Beat," as well as to the words of music critics, and musicians like Count Basie, Jimmy Dorsey, Louis Armstrong, King Oliver, etc., all of whom speak of Bunk as one of the few great jazz artists of all time.

And now, the Hot Jazz Society is proud to announce that Willie "Bunk" Johnson has been singled out for world-wide attention. He and the greatest REAL jazz band in the land, the "Hot Seven," will appear this Saturday afternoon, 2 to 2:30 p.m., over the NBC coast to coast Red network (KPO), as well as over the British Broadcasting Company net. The program, "An Englishman Looks at San Francisco"--the Englishman being Jeffery Bridson, writer and producer for the British Broadcasting Company. Mr. Bridson will attempt to cover all of San Francisco in half an hour, which obviously, will list it Bunk and his inventive students to possibly a chorus or two. However, Mr. Bridson managed to successfully convince the NBC executives that Bunk Johnson and the Hot Seven were indispensable to the broadcast. Reason: One Sunday afternoon a couple of weeks ago Mr. Bridson took time out from his search for material, and came down to the Chamber Jazz Room with Rudi Blesch to relax and listen to some real American jazz. The inspired music that poured out of the instruments of the Messrs. Johnson, Horne, Barden, Bales, Patton, Girsback and Catalano, aroused such enthusiastic response from Mr. Bridson that he made up his mind on the spot to secure Bunk and the Hot Seven for the worldwide broadcast.

Our guest star last Sunday afternoon, by popular demand, was Sister Lottie Peavay, who sang out with an almost unbelievable rich melodic feeling--quite a welcome contrast from some of the pseudo-sentimental ballads muttered by the Sinatra stylists.

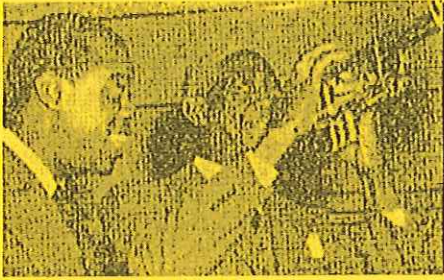
This coming Sunday afternoon our guest star will be Wade Whaley, who for this Sunday only replaces Ellis Horne in the clarinet chair. Very few white clarinet players can fill the shoes of Ellis Horne, noted for his improvisations on the Lu Watters records, and who has received the critical approval of Alfred Frankenstein, the Chronicle's famous music critic. However, the musician Ellis Horne greatly admires is Wade Whaley, and he should amply fill the clarinet chair to weave beautiful and imaginative New Orleans patterns around Bunk's solid horn. Of course, most of us remember Whaley as the Negro clarinetist and bandleader from New Orleans who played with Bunk and the other jazz greats at the historic Geary Theatre concert in May.

So we expect to see you again this Sunday afternoon in the Chamber Jazz Room, 150 Golden Gate Ave., where jazz with the fabulous Bunk Johnson and his famous Hot Seven stomps out at 2:15. Don't miss this chance to see the two New Orleans men, Bunk and Wade, playing together again. And of course, there are those valuable prize record collector's albums donated to lucky members by Sherman-Clay. The Sherman-Clay Record Dept. is featuring now a newly-arrived batch of that racy disc, "S. K. Blues" sung and played by Saunders King and his orch. And as a preview for this coming Sunday afternoon, listen Saturday p.m., 2 to 2:30, KPO, for a snatch of Bunk's theme - "Down By the River," which will be heard as well, by our troops and Allies in merrie olde England.

uopwa #34



*Bunk Johnson.*



LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND "BUNK" JOHNSON  
(Student) (Teacher)

## Hot Jazz Society of San Francisco

December 1, 1943

### Sponsors:

Bob Best  
Rudi Blesh  
Harry Bridges  
Bill Colburn  
Alfred Frankenstein  
Ray Geraido  
Don Hambley  
Emelia Hodel  
Ted Lenz  
Hal McIntyre  
Alice I. Rivers  
H. Irving Rosenberg, Jr.  
Sarah Sherman  
Peter Tamony  
Vernon White

The Hot Jazz Society has received a welcome letter of interest. The letter comes from William Russell, personal friend of Bunk Johnson, and probably the most noted authority on New Orleans jazz. Bill Russell is the author of the most vital and interesting portion of the best book written on jazz, "Jazzmen." It was also he, who with Bill Colburn, Hal McIntyre and Dave Stuart, made the famous pilgrimage to New Orleans to "rediscover" Willie "Bunk" Johnson, and check and affirm Louis Armstrong's statement that Bunk was "the greatest of 'em all."

Bill Russell writes: "Ever since July when Bill Colburn sent me the announcement of the Hot Jazz Society, I intended to send in a \$ for membership, even though I won't be able to hear any of your wonderful sessions until next year at the earliest. I never realized you were continuing your weekly news letters until Geo Hoefler mentioned it in his "Down Beat" column 2 weeks ago. I wonder if you have any spare copies of "back" letters. Since Bunk is in S. F., I really get hungry for news (and his music), although I have heard remarkable reports of the Sunday sessions. Thank ng you and wishing everyone the greatest success in your undertaking, sincerely, Bill Russell."

Note: Bill Russell has been supplied with jazz bulletins, his buck has been returned, and the HJS has presented the man who has exercised such a remarkable influence in jazz with a No. 1 honorary lifetime membership card.

The significance of Bill Russell's letter is that although eastern jazz centers are available for his enjoyment, he nevertheless is envious of any and all jazz lovers who are in listening radius of Bunk's horn, and that jazzband tagged the "Hot Seven." We received the same response too from other guests and visitors, including Count Basie, Paul Robeson, Earl Robinson, and Freddie Slack, who have registered surprise and extreme approval at the Sunday sessions. So hie you down, you lucky people, this coming Sunday afternoon to the Chamber Jazz Room—the only place in the land where the classic real N.O. jazz patterns are woven regularly.

Also this coming Sunday you will meet the entire swing orch of Saunders King, who will share the Geary Theatre stage with Bunk and the Hot Seven, in the sensashunal "Jazz vs. Swing" concert, Sunday afternoon, December 12. Saunders will also come on with a preview and give out with some of the lyrical blues that he has so successfully recorded. This will be also your last chance to get cho ce seats at members' reduced rates for the Geary clambake, where Sister Lottie Peavay's spirited singing will also add to shake the theatre's aristocratic walls. Moderators at the concert will be Vernon White, KSFO's disc jockey, whose Saturday afternoon "Hot and Swing Session" enjoys a tremendous "hot" audience, and the returning Ted WJive at Eleven-Five" Lenz.

At every Sunday session Sherman Clay's valuable prize collector's albums have been a feature, and this coming Sunday afternoon will be no exception. So we'll see you Sunday in the Chamber Jazz Room at 150 Golden Gate Avenue, where commencing at 2:15 Bunk will stomp out those joyful New Orleans sounds.



Bunk Johnson.

P.S. I only picked a few of our weekly jazz bulletins to send you, because they are more of a reminder to attend a session rather than comprehensive real jazz news.

D. Rosenbaum

San Francisco, California  
December 17, 1943

Dear Bill:- Enclosed please find life-time membership card in the HJS of SF, a returned buck and some literature. It was a real pleasure to hear from you, and we hope, as you no doubt will, be out here soon to visit with your boy Bunk.

We had a lot of fun at that Jazz vs. Swing thing, but Bunk it seemed had a little too much. During rehearsals Bunk's lip was up and his imagination and ideas drove the "Hot Seven" to produce the most beautiful music. Bunk, too, was all-serious about the concert--until the night before. I received a call from Bunk around 11 am on Sunday morning and Bunk's voice on the other end of the line muttered "Shay Dave, Dis ish Bunky-etc." The old man had been drinking all night! Well we got him to the Geary. He wouldn't take coffee but insisted he was going to play the greatest horn of his life. But Bunk was too happy to know what he was doing. He was mugging all over the stage; ran off threetimes and I was praying his fly would be closed when he returned; he played when he felt like it and stopped in the middle of a chorus; nobody knew when the all-outs were coming; he'd stomp one out in the middle of the moderator's announcement-----yet half of the house of 1500 people gave him a tremendous ovation and liked the jazz as well as the super-polished and sober King outfit. The old man is just the old man--there's no explaining him. Even now he thinks he wowed 'em when he was actually 80% off. Age and sentiment were really the only things that carried him through. And this week, to a much smaller crowd in the Chamber Jazz Room, Bunk no doubt will play the greatest horn in the world. You should hear him now. The reviews were very kind to New Orleans. They were written by two journalists who are partisan to the real jazz---and who ain't. However, all agreed that Bunk was under par. Because Bunk had a real chance to show <sup>he</sup> truly great is collective New Orleans improvisation to a multitude who have never been exposed to it--I bawled him out when he still felt he wowed 'em. I used his own arguments because he's always lecturing about how music and drinking don't mix, and that playing comes after the performance. But Bunk is Bunk and we've got our fingers crossed. Incidentally, Bill, if you write to Bunk I would keep the above confidential because he is very fond of you, and it would hurt him to have you know about the fiasco---that is a ~~fixxxxx~~ fiasco to me, although some people thought he was great. Incidentally Bunk said he was anticipating with eagerness a Scott Joplin book <sup>from</sup> See you and thanx for the letter. Sincerely David Rosenbaum, 1317 Grove St., S. F.



## BUNK JOHNSON'S HOT SEVEN

# Ellis Horne Emerges As Promising Hot Clarinetist

by GRAHAM WHEELER

A few weeks ago we said that some day the great Bunk Johnson would have to share the limelight of his exalted position in hot jazz circles with his young clarinetist, Ellis Horne. Now it looks as if the day is approaching even faster than we thought it would, for Ellis is fast becoming one of the greatest of hot clarinetists. We have written at length of the feats and musical exploits of Bunk, so let's deal for a few minutes with Ellis Horne, who plays with Bunk every Sunday at the CIO-HJS programs in the CIO building.

We heard Ellis for the first time when he was playing clarinet with Lu Watters at the Dawn Club. For a long time many of us thought, to put it bluntly, that he was the weak link in the band. He sounded pretty good in ensemble playing, which is somewhat of a distinction itself, for the clarinet is very important in the New Orleans ensemble, but his solos were unimaginative and thoroughly mechanical.

You can imagine our extreme joy and delight, when, one Sunday about three or four weeks ago, announcer Ted Lenz announced that Bunk and the boys would now play High Society. Sure enough, when the trio came, little curly-haired Ellis Horne stood up, pink cheeks glowing, and played that wonderful and difficult clarinet part without a hitch.

But this young man has other tricks too. He's developed into a wonderful blues clarinetist, with a deep, rich tone of the Johnny Dodds school. You will see what I mean when you hear him play Bunk's Blues, and Basin Street Blues.

Another artist who has come to our attention at the Sunday afternoon sessions, is Bob Best, a particularly heroic *heldentenor*. We are awfully glad that Bob decided to sing jazz instead of Wagner, because jazz is more of a going concern with us. Now this Bob Best is a real jazz singer, no "bedroom" stuff of the Sinatra type, no drooling, no crooning. He throws everything he's got into his singing, and we might add that he's got plenty.

### NO STARS

At first we thought that Bunk Johnson and the Hot Seven was going to be a small combination with one star, Bunk, and a bunch of guys to provide some background for his playing. But we see that we were quite wrong. Bunk is tops, all right, but the band he has around him is a cooperative affair, and they are all good. We never did care much for the star system in hot music; it led always to something like the bands of Harry James, Gene Krupa, and the like, with one big star, with a bunch of musical adolescents knocking themselves out while their hero was

in the spotlight. There is no room for this sort of thing in the small jazz group. I think jazz is reaching its latter-day pinnacle in San Francisco, with Bunk Johnson and the Hot Seven, in New York, with the small bands playing with Eddie Condon, and, no doubt, in Los Angeles, where Barney Bigard, Kid Ory, and Mutt Carey are distinguishing themselves.

It is no mere coincidence that there is a growing interest in jazz in America at the same time that the United States and the United Nations are growing in strength. "As a nation sings," says Warren D. Allen, "so is it." Allen points out in his new book, "Our Marching Civilization," that just before Pearl Harbor, the American hit tune was "I Don't Want to Set the World on Fire," a banal and defeatist tune if there ever was one. In the last year, however, there has been a remarkable growth of interest in folk music of all nations, and, particularly in such industrial centers as San Francisco, Los Angeles, and New York, a growth of interest in hot jazz.

### HEALTHY MUSIC

Jazz does not deal in tears of chagrin at unrequited passion. Quite the contrary, it is much more often involved in people which psychologists would find free of those neuroses which are rampant in the music of the popular dance orchestras.

It is not just an interesting coincidence that the Axis dictators include American jazz on their verboten lists. Jazz, remember, has flourished in the United States, and in England, France, and, in an archaic form, in Russia, and one great French-American composer, Darius Milhaud, has, as successfully as possible, incorporated jazz into the more "serious" forms of his ballet, "The Creation of the World".

We hope our readers will be among the newcomers to the Sunday afternoon sessions at the CIO building. There's always room for one more devotee.





The Chef and the Treasurer of The Swedish Bunk Johnson Society at Bunk's grave in New Iberia, April 2005. Photo Pelle Wistén.