

NEW ORLEANS JAZZ

AT THE KITTY HALLS

ARHOLLE
F1013



RECORDING DATA

SHAKE IT AND BREAK IT

Punch Miller's New Orleans Band: Punch Miller, trumpet; Israel Gorman, clarinet; Albert Warner, tuba; George Guesnon, banjo; Wilbert Tillman, tuba, and Alex Bigard, drums. Recorded August 31, 1962, by Ken Mills.

MAGGIE

Kid Thomas' Algiers Stompers: Kid Thomas Valentine, trumpet; Paul Barnes, clarinet; Emanuel Paul, tenor; Louis Nelson, trombone; George Guesnon, banjo; Sammy Penn, drums. Recorded July 3, 1960, by Bill Russell.

I AIN'T GOOD LOOKING

Billie and DeDe Pierce: Billie Pierce, piano and vocal; DeDe Pierce, cornet. Recorded June 3, 1960, by Ralph Collins.

PUT ON YOUR OLD GREY BONNET

Jane's Alley Six: Eddie Richardson, trumpet; Emil Barnes, clarinet; Eddie Morris, trombone; Fan Bourgeois, banjo; Carroll Blunt, bass; Henry Revel, drums. Recorded July 30, 1962, by Ken Mills.

HIGH SOCIETY

Kid Clayton's Happy Pals: Jimmy "Kid" Clayton, trumpet; Albert Burbank, clarinet; Bill Mathews, trombone; Charlie Hamilton, banjo; August Lanoix, bass; Alex Bigard, drums. Recorded September 19, 1962, by Ken Mills.

SHEIK OF ARABY

Kid Sheik's Storyville Ramblers: George "Kid Sheik" Colar, trumpet; Punch Miller, trumpet; Albert Warner, trombone; Steve Angram, clarinet; Harrison Verrett, banjo; Alcide "Slow Drag" Pavageau, bass; Alex Bigard, drums. Recorded August 6, 1961, by Ken Mills.

NELLY GRAY

Kid Howard's La Vida Band: Avery "Kid" Howard, cornet and vocal; Israel Gorman, clarinet; Eddie Summers, trombone; Emanuel Sayles, banjo; Louis James, bass; Josiah Frazier, drums. Recorded August 13, 1961, by Bill Russell.

SAVOY BLUES

George Guesnon's New Orleans Stompers: Kid Thomas, trumpet; George Lewis, clarinet; Jim Robinson, trombone; George Guesnon, banjo; John Joseph, bass; Josiah "Cie" Frazier, drums. Recorded August 28, 1962, by Ken Mills.

HINDUSTAN

John Handy's Louisiana Shakers: Jimmy "Kid" Clayton, trumpet; John Handy, alto; George Guesnon, amplified guitar; Dave Williams, piano; Sylvester Handy, bass; Alfred Williams, drums. Recording details unknown.

NOTES

Here is the real New Orleans jazz as played by the men who helped form and mould this style of playing many, many years ago. This is not the watered-down, exhibitionistic Bourbon St. noise—this is the music played by the Negro musicians of New Orleans who created it and who were raised with it. Where a "songster" like Mance Lipscomb (Arhoolie F1001) would supply the music for various social gatherings in a rural community like Navasota, Texas, a band like that led by Kid Thomas would perform at similar functions in the city of New Orleans. Dances, picnics, political rallies, advertising campaigns, private parties, etc., all called for music and in New Orleans a jazz band would traditionally supply it. Today most of these men still play for parades, funerals, and dances but due to changing trends most of their playing is done for white audiences at the various "Kitty Halls." This is really nothing new since many of the fine jazz bands of the past performed largely for white social gatherings. Papa Celestin, for example, played perhaps more society balls than any other group in the city, Negro or white. But most of the men playing today in the traditional style are perhaps much closer to the roots of the music than Papa Celestin ever was. While Papa Celestin was playing for the wealthy white patrons, most of the men on this record were playing for their own people at dances and in taverns.

Since Bourbon Street offers very little in the way of freedom to play as you wish, most sensitive musicians had either quit the street or conformed to the stifling and frustrating demands of the bar owners and the drunken patrons. A few good bands have held out, like that led by pianist Octave Crosby, but the situation became intolerable to a number of jazz fans who took it upon themselves to remedy the situation. To most Ne-

groes in the Crescent City the old jazz is no doubt something of the past even though the music is still well supported at parades, funerals, and other out-door events. Noticing the precarious existence of real New Orleans jazz, a few dedicated fans felt that well-presented, the music would attract jazz lovers from all over the world and so it was largely due to the efforts of Ken Mills that Preservation Hall was opened some years ago. His efforts and hard work made it possible for many fine bands and musicians of the old school to perform their art for an appreciative and attentive audience. Preservation Hall sells no drinks and has no strip-tease acts but the music there was and is perhaps the best ever heard in the city. Due to lack of conventional revenue the operators found it necessary to place a "Kitty" in front of the band stand or to pass a basket in order to pay the band for their efforts. Mr. Mills also began his own record label, Icon Records, inspired by the pioneer in New Orleans jazz recordings: Bill Russell, who led the way in the early 40s by recording such legendary men as Bunk Johnson, Wooden Joe Nicholas, Kid Thomas, George Lewis, Jim Robinson, etc., for his remarkable American Music label, which one of these days may again become available. Later Preservation Hall was taken over by Mr. and Mrs. Jaffe and it is today a very successful showcase for the real New Orleans jazz. Mr. Mills continued to record as much as his limited budget would permit and from time to time he held sessions at various other halls. By agreement with Icon Records I am proud to be able to present some of the bands which have recorded for that label and which can be heard to fuller advantage on the individual Icon LPs. The selections on this Arhoolie LP are largely alternate "takes" and for the most part do not appear on any of the Icon LPs.

Chris A. Strachwitz

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Recorded by: **KEN MILLS, BILL RUSSELL
AND RALPH COLLINS
IN NEW ORLEANS.**

Cover Photo: **CHRIS A. STRACHWITZ**

Layout: **WAYNE POPE**

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