

# The Birth of Jazz



**THE MUSIC OF NEW ORLEANS  
RECORDED BY SAMUEL B. CHARTERS**

**VOLUME FOUR**

**FOLKWAYS RECORDS FA 2464**



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# The Birth of Jazz

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Buckets Got a Hole in It  
Buddy Bolden  
Maple Leaf Rag  
Red Rose Rag  
Blue Bells Goodbye  
Storyville  
Take Your Big Leg Off Me  
The Grunewald Burlesque  
Girl in the Purple Veil  
Milneburg  
Irish Channel  
Hernshire Canaries  
Too Much Mustard

Descriptive Notes are inside pocket



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# THE MUSIC OF NEW ORLEANS

## VOLUME IV

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# The Birth of Jazz



### A Downtown Orchestra

John Robichaux' Orchestra, 1913.

l. to r. Walter Brundy, Vic Gaspard, Andrew Kimball, Charlie McCurdy,

John Robichaux, Cochie Martin, Henry Kimball Sr.

Photograph from Vic Gaspard.



New Orleans in the 1880's and 1890's was a colorful, flamboyant city, lying in gaudy splendor in its muddy delta. Outside the city itself, on the lake front and on the south coast, were the great summer resorts. Clapboard hotels with sweeping verandas, dance pavilions, garden cupolas for the concert brass bands, and lush parks with fountains and flowered pathways. At Milneburg, on the lake, there were the dance halls and saloons on pilings over the water.

It was a city of tensions and scandals. There was racial tension as the white citizens eliminated the Negroes from any position of advantage they had gained during the years of Reconstruction. A weekly newspaper, The Mascot, continually disturbed the city. It was a four page newspaper published Friday afternoons. An inside sheet was filled with advertising, the back sheet with an engraving of a local beauty or a fight in the red-light district; the rest with vicious gossip. Adulteries and seductions were the most common items, and if the reporter happened to be present, as seemed to be often the case in the park at the West End resort, there was a more or less obscene account of the event. The persons involved were identified by descriptions and general addresses. No one could be sure that his name would not be in The Mascot on Friday afternoon. A bridegroom would find a story to the effect that The Mascot didn't like to bring such a thing to the attention of a blushing bride, but their honor as Southern gentlemen compelled them to say that her fiancé was a Negro. The retraction would appear three or four weeks later, on an inside page, with an assurance that they hoped he hadn't been embarrassed by their mistake.

In the Vieux Carre there was the romantic grandeur of the social life of the Creoles of Color, the French-speaking families of mixed blood. Their newspaper, The Weekly Pelican, each week described dozens of elaborate cos-

tume balls, suppers, musicales, and entertainments of the week before. Along St. Charles Avenue, in the American section, entertaining was almost as lavish. New Orleans was a city of visitors.

The "sporting life" of the city centered around the new restricted district, established in 1889, and promptly named Storyville after Alderman Story, who had suggested it. It was a district of brothels, saloons, and dance halls, one of the richest restricted districts in the country. The districts directory, The Bluebook, described girls as beautiful as Lillian Russell who could discuss mining engineering and sing like Jenny Lind. There were pictures of richly furnished entrances, descriptions of mirror rooms and champagne suppers. There was such an atmosphere of gentility in some of the houses that in a collection of photographs taken in the district about 1908 there is a photograph which may be of either the parlor of Lulu White's famous Mahogany Hall or the entrance lounge of the Jesuits Men's Club around the corner. Men who were in the district often are sure that it's one of the two, but they aren't sure which one it is.

Just outside the district, at Iberville and Dauphine, was the local Burlesque house, the Gruenwald Theatre. The singers and dancers were the toast of the district. After the performances they would often come into the saloons and give impromptu performances in the patios. The performances became so popular that many of the saloon keepers began paying entertainers and musicians, and turned their saloons into cabarets. There were dance halls in the district, and just at its edge were dance halls like Globe Hall, at the end of Basin Street, that played for a crowd that got rowdier and rowdier as the nicer families moved away from the district.

With this glittering life was the sound of music. Brass bands, string orchestras, string trios, pianists, singers, and, in the 1890's, orchestral groups later to be called "jazz bands". The picture was a confused and complicated one, but it seems natural that jazz music should come out of this exuberant New Orleans of the '80's and '90's.

Outside of New Orleans there were other Southern cities with a colorful sporting life using Negro orchestras, brass bands, and string groups for their society affairs and cabaret entertainment. The men in these orchestras were reading musicians, many of them studying music in public schools or orphanages. The Jenkins Orphanage Bands, from Charleston, South Carolina, were world famous. They toured Europe under the leadership of the perennially ten year old "Hotsie" Logan, and twice the teen-age trombone soloist, Amos Guilliard, was presented with a gold bell trombone by Queen Victoria. The bands were regular performers at the Atlantic City resorts, and Jenkins boys usually performed as the "Pickaninny Band" in the New York Uncle Tom spectacles.

There were dozens of excellent brass bands, like Bill Berry's fifty-five piece band touring out of St. Louis, and Eugene Michael's Cabbage Band, touring out of Jacksonville, Florida. After 1900 there was the large W. C. Handy band in Memphis, with its great cornet soloist, H. Qualey Clark. The circusses and minstrel shows used hundreds of Negro musicians. An ambitious young musician studied to become a member of bands like these. For a young white man a life as a traveling musician was not held in high regard, but for a young Negro it was a long step upward. There were rowdier bands playing in the saloons and dance halls, but the good musicians got out of them and went into better bands. There was never a musical development of the rougher styles from the cabarets.



H. J. Boiusseau, August, 1954

Photograph by S. B. Charters

#### A NOTE

During the years I was working in New Orleans no one was more kind and gracious than the late H. J. Boiusseau. His knowledge of the cities early sporting life was as invaluable as his piano playing was delightful. I hope that the few moments of his voice and music on this recording will stand as a small tribute to the memory of a very good friend.

Samuel Barclay Charters



The picture in New Orleans was different. The rough, strong music of the levee dance halls and the cabarets became an exiting, complex musical style that has left its mark on the music of both the United States and Europe.

There had to be something in New Orleans that was not present in any other Southern city. Some difference in the cities musical life. The difference in New Orleans was the large group of musicians from the Vieux Carre, the Creoles of Color.

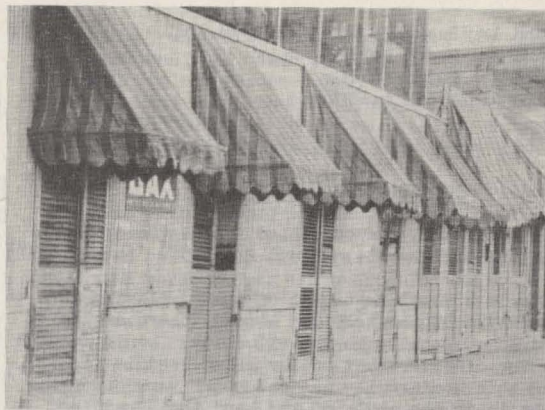
In the 1880's and 1890's there was an overcrowded tenement condition in the uptown Negro neighborhoods around Dryades Street as families moved into the city from country areas. Many of the younger men bought instruments and studied with the Creole musicians in the Vieux Carre. Studying was about as far as they got. The Creole musicians had every job in the city, except the jobs in the longshoremen's dance halls, jobs nobody wanted. The Creoles were superb musicians, highly educated, and they knew all the families that needed orchestras. They were so much a part of the cities social life they even eliminated the white orchestras. It wasn't until the years just before the first World War that a white orchestra leader, "Happy" Schilling, was able to break the Creole monopoly on society dance jobs, and he did it with an orchestra using Creole musicians known along St. Charles Avenue as "Schilling's Black and Tans".

The younger uptown musicians found themselves without jobs and they were angry and resentful. The situation was aggravated in 1894 by the enactment of legislative code 111, which included the colored Creoles in the restrictions of racial segregation. The two groups of musicians were thrown into even more intense competition, and the advantage was with the Creoles. Finally, on a summer night in 1894 or 1895, in Globe Hall, at the end of Basin Street, a young uptown cornet player named Buddy Bolden led his band through a fierce, "raggy", improvised popular song, and a new music - jazz - was born.

The uptown musicians reacted angrily against their Creole teachers. All of the men in Bolden's orchestra were good musicians, but they memorized arrangements of the new songs - some of them arranged by the clarinet player, Frankie Lewis - and bragged they " . . . couldn't read a note." For a musician to say something like this in the 1890's was a swaggering insult. The Creoles prided themselves on their delicate, pure tone; so the uptown musicians played as loud as they could. The earliest newspaper mention of an uptown band, in The Daily Picayune, February 22, 1898, mentioned the volume.

"The air was freighted with a pandemonium of sounds, in which the ceaseless clang of the trancars gong and the shrill music of a horrible cacophonius orchestra (??) domiciled on one of the wagons played no inconsiderable part."

Other colored musicians in the south were completely taken by surprise when they first heard New Orleans bands. A musician from the Excelsior Brass Band of Mobile, Alabama said that he could play a little by ear, but he would have been ashamed to play without his music in public. When he first went to New Orleans he had to spend months learning to improvise. One of the Jenkins Orphanage Cornet players toured the south with dozens of circusses and minstrel shows before the First World War, and he was stunned when he first heard a New Orleans Band playing in Houma, La., in the winter of 1916. New Orleans



A row of "cribs" on the street of harlots' houses in old New Orleans.

musicians, traveling with southern minstrel companies and circusses played their own style as much as possible. A veteran cornet player, Charlie Love, still remembers the look on the face of a young Kansas City cornet player, Harry Cooper, when Love's band won an informal band contest from Cooper's band by roaring through Bolden's song, If You Don't Shake, Don't Get No Cake.

The New Orleans music quickly spread throughout the south. As early as 1912 a New Orleans band led by Freddie Keppard was touring the country on the Colored Orpheum Vaudeville Circuit. Groups of young white musicians from the city, who had learned most of their music from the colored musicians began featuring the music in Chicago cabarets, and in 1917 five of them, called the Original Dixieland Jass Band, recorded for Victor Records in New York City. New Orleans music became more than just a part of the cities cultural heritage, it became part of a larger - an-American-heritage.



Roustabouts



## SIDE 1

Band 1: Bucket's Got A Hole In It  
 Band 2: Buddy Bolden  
 Band 3: Buddy Bolden  
 Band 4: Maple Leaf Rag

### Band 1. BUCKET'S GOT A HOLE IN IT -

Louis Keppard, unaccompanied voice. Recorded at 1017 N. Villere St., August 21, 1957. (time 4'35")

This is a vocal imitation of a band playing in the style of about 1910. Already there are solos and some emphasis on individuality. Louis Keppard is the older brother of the great Freddie Keppard, and this wonderfully musical vocal version of the tune is in the style of the band that Freddie and Louis played in together when they were both young men. Louis finishes with Freddie's famous horse imitation. The tune is usually credited to a guitar player named Lorenzo Stall or Star who sang it with the wine spilling out of the corners of his mouth. It has been a New Orleans standard since the days of Bolden's band.

In this early version there are two alternating strains, the first, a chorus with words; the second, an instrumental refrain. Keppard hums seven different versions of this refrain in the course of singing the song. The first refrain is an imitation of the entire band, the second of a duet between cornet and slide trombone, the third, clarinet, the fourth, the entire band, the fifth, guitar; the sixth, bass; and the seventh, the entire band again. The guitar player referred to, "Take it over, there, Louis", is himself; the bass player, "Johnny" is the fine bass player, Johnny Lindsay, who worked with Freddie for years.

This very different and exciting performance was completely spontaneous. Keppard was very anxious to describe how the band sounded and after a moments hesitation began singing. It was almost possible to imagine yourself in a noisy Iberville Street cabaret, with Freddie and the band sitting on kitchen chairs near the door, his cornet muted with an old derby, and the loafers standing around outside, shuffling a little in time to the music. When Louis had finished he sat for a moment, thinking about those warm nights, many years ago, then he looked over at me and said, "How you like that?"

"BUDDY BOLDEN WAS A TALL MAN . . ."

### Bands 2 and 3: BUDDY BOLDEN

Charlie Love and Harrison Barnes. Love's voice is the first. Love was recorded at his home at the corner of Thayer and Opelousas Streets, Algiers, La., February 25, 1958. Harrison Barnes recorded at 1019 Nunez Street, Algiers, La., August 26, 1957. (times 7' and 4'20")

Buddy Bolden was born on First Street, a tree lined street of one story frame houses, in 1868. He was a brown skinned child of mixed blood. He began playing sometime before 1892, and he and a crippled guitar player from the neighborhood, Charlie Galloway, seem to have worked out some of their music together. Men from Galloway's band played with Bolden, and Edward Clem, Galloway's cornet player, usually worked in Bolden's place when Bolden couldn't make a job. Bolden was 26 when his band "invented the hot blues." He was a tall, handsome man, with a strong personality.

Very little is known of Bolden's personal life. He drank heavily, kept several women. His



**BUDDY BOLDEN'S BAND.** The only known photograph of Bolden and his orchestra of New Orleans. The flaring lip of the Saxhorn (center foreground) indicates that the (string) bass player also used a horn, but preferred the bass for the photograph. Personnel: Bolden, cornet; Willy Cornish, valve trombone; Willy Warner, clarinet (standing); Frank Lewis, clarinet (seated); Brock Mumford, guitar; Jimmie Johnson, string bass and bass horn. (Photo from Jazzmen, courtesy Harcourt, Brace.)

first band was a quartet with himself, Frankie Lewis, clarinet; Brock Mumford, guitar; and Jimmy Johnson, base. The valve trombone player, Willie Cornish, came into the band about 1897. Bolden played everywhere, sometimes with more than one band going in a single night. He'd go from one band to the other, playing his specialties, the girls fighting to hold his coat. The repertoire of "hot blues" was very small, three or four little songs. The band played the standard mazurkas, polkas, two-steps, and quadrilles the rest of the night.

Bolden's riotous living finished him as a musician within a dozen years. Insanity was caused by tertiary syphilis. He was committed to the East Louisiana State Hospital on June 5, 1907, and died there in 1931. Buddy would probably have wanted no finer tribute than the girls Harrison Barnes remembered dancing in the streets as a band passed playing Buddy's tune, If You Don't Shake, Don't Get No Cake.

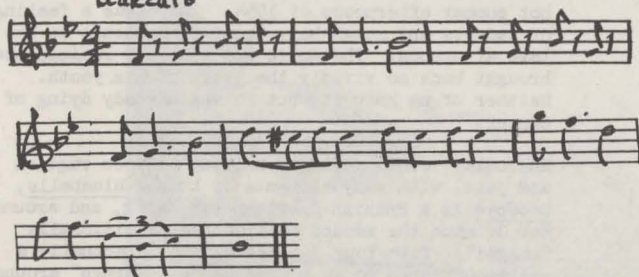
There has always been considerably confusion about how the Bolden Band played. Early research in New Orleans had to be done hurriedly, and the first writings emphasized "blues" and African musical characteristics. It was felt that Bolden's orchestra was trying to play white music and doing it unsuccessfully, with the result that musical "Africanisms" found their way, instinctively, into the music of this young city Negro of mixed racial parentage and with classical musical training. Not only Bolden's personal background but the music that the band played fail to confirm this idea.

It is interesting to compare Bolden's music to other examples of Negro music found in the United States. This illustration is the melodic line of Bolden's song, "If You Don't Shake", or, as it's sometimes called, P.I., which means pimp. 1.



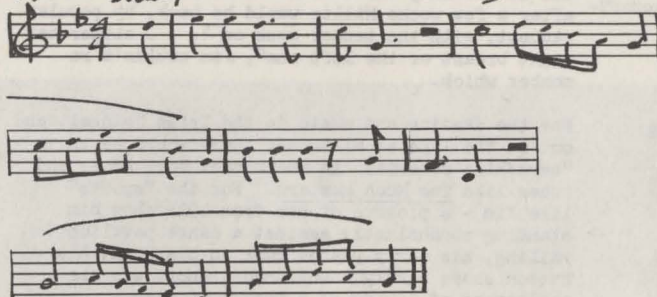
Ex. 1.

*marcato*

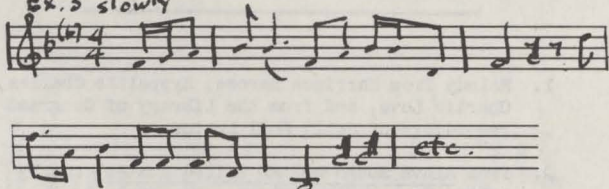


This is certainly an instrumental melodic line, disjunct, harmonically organized, and in a standard dance rhythm with simple syncopation. It does not even have complete words: The next two examples were taken from the large body of Negro melodic material collected in the United States, some of it as early as 1867. The first melody was described as, "A very good specimen, so far as notes can give, of the strange barbaric songs that one hears on the western steamboats." 2.

Ex. 2. *slowly*



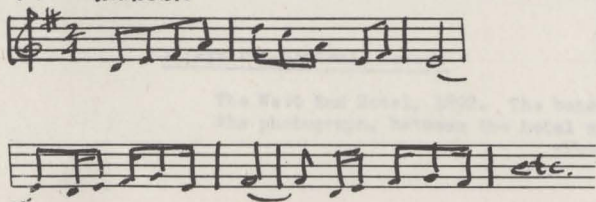
Ex. 3 *slowly*



These are more vocal in character. Conjunct, harmonically ambiguous, and with a chant-like rhythmic organization. They are very different from the Bolden melody. This leaves the question of the sources of Bolden's music, since it is not characteristic of typical Afro-American material.

The melodic source material for something like *If You Don't Shake* seems to be the very popular cakewalks of the times. The very latest rage. The cakewalks were supposed to be dimly derived from Negro dance music, but by the 1890's they were simply one of the standard clichés of the New York publishing houses. The melody quoted is from a late composition, Kerry Mills' *At A Georgia Camp Meeting*, published in 1897, but is typical of the style. 3.

Ex. 4 *marcato*



This line, with its disjunct figures, its snapping syncopations, and dance rhythm, is very similar in style to the Bolden melody. Melodic material of this kind - the latest thing, played with aggressive enthusiasm - seems much better to suit the personality of this young city Negro with some anger to work out.

The band didn't improvise in the sense that the word is used now. The tunes were rehearsed until everyone had worked out a part, and they played the same phrases over and over. The music is probably best thought of as "pre-jazz"; since there was very little room for individual creative expression, but in its emphasis on rhythm and excitement, and in its musical and instrumental organization, it was the basis for what was to come later, the band's little repertoire of three or four "hot blues" was the heart of the New Orleans jazz style.

Band 4: MAPLE LEAF RAG

Charlie Love, trumpet; Emile Barnes, Clarinet; Billy Huntington, banjo; Albert Jiles, drums, Albert Glenny, Bass. Recorded by Alden Ashforth and David Wycoff, Sept. 8, 1952. (time 4'38")

The instrumental rags were very important in reinforcing the style the Bolden band had developed several years before. Both musical styles developed at about the same time from similar source material, and the nationwide enthusiasm for ragtime seems to have confirmed the New Orleans musicians in their enthusiasm for their own style. This is one of the most popular rags ever written, Scott Joplin's "Maple Leaf", published in 1899. One of the musicians on this recording, Albert Glenny, played occasionally with the Bolden band, and two of them, Emile Barnes and Charlie Love, the same musician who reminisced about Bolden, were playing before 1910. Their long familiarity with ragtime is very evident in this charming, relaxed performance.



MUSIC OF NEW ORLEANS - VOL. 4

Vol. 4 - The Birth of Jazz

Side 2: New Orleans Sporting Life  
H.J. Boiusseau, voice and piano

BAND 1. Red Rose Rag

BAND 2. Tom Anderson's and Blue Bells Goodbye

BAND 3. Storyville

BAND 4. Take Your Big Leg Off Me

BAND 5. The Grunewald Burlesque and The Girl in the Purple Veil

BAND 6. Milneburg, Irish Channel, and Hernshine Canaries

BAND 7. Too Much Mustard

H. J. Boiusseau, piano and voice. Recorded at his place of business, 423 Gravier St., during the months of July and August, 1954.

This is the easy, carefree New Orleans of the years before the first World War. H. J. Boiusseau was a young man in 1910 and 1911, playing for fun in the cabarets of the cities red-light district, going to dances in the Irish Channel, listening to the bands at milneburg, growing up with the young jazz music that was growing up in New Orleans. He brings to life the backgrounds and environments in which jazz grew and flourished.

Boiusseau was born in the early 1890's, and began playing the piano as a boy. When he first began playing at little gatherings of his friends he found that "... they didn't want the classical stuff like Listening to the Mocking Bird, with Variations" so he began playing ragtime, and finally began roaming the streets of the restricted district. Jim was from a middle class family, and they were very opposed to any musical career for him. He played for the fun of it, trading off tunes with the cabaret pianists. In 1917 he became the assistant director of federal welfare in the state, and began to spend less time in the district. In August 1918, he went into business for himself, a direct-mail advertising business, and in 1929 he married a girl he had loved for many years.

His wife did not like him to play any of his music, so Jim almost stopped playing. As he grew older he became nostalgic about his younger days, and he



The Levee, 1892

Photograph from Mrs. M. K. Ferrier

put a small piano in a balcony in his place of business. He played occasionally for friends. The recordings were done on this piano, through the long, hot summer afternoons of 1954. There was a feeling of sadness and melancholy about these hours in the late afternoon. The music and the easy reminiscence brought back so vividly the years of his youth. Neither of us knew it, but he was already dying of cancer.

Musically, Jim's style is halfway between ragtime and jazz, with many elements of both. Bluebells, Goodbye is a Spanish-American war march, and around New Orleans the second section was traditionally "ragged". Take Your Big Leg Off Me is actually a medley of three songs played as "slow-drags" around Tom Anderson's. The second tune is I Wonder Where My Easy Rider's Gone, and the third, Mamma Don't 'Low No Music Playing Here. The "slow-drag" was a slow, shuffling two step, almost never done, as Jim says, "... in polite society."

The burlesque house just outside the district, the Gruenwald Theater, was one of the popular spots for the sporting crowd. Millie DeLeong was a local girl, and one of the star performers for years and years. Occasionally a citizen's league would complain about the show at the Gruenwald, and for two or three months the management would run newspaper advertisements to the effect that the show was now as lily-white as a church bazaar, but after a few weeks Millie would be back, by popular request, with the tender rose on "... either her right breast or the left one", Jim couldn't remember which.

For the dancing and music in the Irish Channel, and out on the lake at Milneburg there would be the "hernshine canaries" in their baby doll shoes and tunes like Too Much Mustard. For the "sports" like Jim - a picture of him from 1911 show him standing nonchalantly against a dance pavilion railing, his derby pushed back on his head, his button shoes partly unbuttoned - there was the excitement of living at a moment of easy laughter and high promise of a gracious future.

1. Melody from Harrison Barnes, Hyppolite Charles, Charlie Love, and from the Library of Congress recordings of Jelly Roll Morton.
2. from Slave Songs of the United States, ed. by Allen, Ware, and Garrison. New York, A. Simpson & Co., 1867.

from Library of Congress material collected by John and Alan Lomax. Example #1331 from Livingstone, Alabama, 1937.

3. from At A Georgia Camp Meeting by Kerry Mills. New York, F. A. Mills, 1897.

Historical and biographical information and two of the photographs are from the author's book, Jazz: New Orleans, 1885 to 1957. Published by Walter C. Allen, 168 Cedar Hill Avenue, Belleville, N. J.





The Viuex Carre. 1892

The Corner of Governor Nichols and Chartres

-Photograph from Mrs. M. K. Ferrier



A Lake Ponchartrain Resort

The West End Hotel, 1892. The band cupola is in the center of the photograph, between the hotel and the lake.

-Photograph from Mrs. M. K. Ferrier



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