

VOLUME 7

NEW YORK: 1922-34

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2807



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JAZZ NEW YORK: 1922-34 FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2807 EDITED BY FREDERIC RAMSEY, JR.

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I WISH I COULD SHIMMY LIKE MY SISTER KATE  
The Cotton Pickers (BR 2338)  
ORIGINAL DIXIELAND ONE STEP  
Miff Mole and His Little Molers (OK 40932)  
MISSISSIPPI MUD  
Frankie Trumbauer and His Orchestra (OK 40979)  
MAKIN' FRIENDS  
The Kentucky Grasshoppers (BA 6360)  
BASIN STREET BLUES  
The Louisiana Rhythm Kings (VO 15815)  
BEALE STREET BLUES  
Long-Venuti All Star Orchestra (VO 15864)  
JUNK MAN  
Jack Teagarden and His Orchestra (BR 7652)

PAPA DE-DA-DA  
Clarence Williams' Blue Five (OK 8215)  
SUGAR FOOT STOMP (DIPPERMOUTH)  
Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra (CO 395)  
THE CREEPER  
Duke Ellington and His Kentucky Club Orchestra (VO 1077)  
HARLEM RIVER QUIVER  
Duke Ellington and His Orchestra (FV 21284)  
YOU CAN'T DO WHAT MY LAST MAN DID  
James P. Johnson (FV 19123)  
HARLEM FUSS  
Fats Waller and His Buddies (FV 38050)  
KNOCKIN' A JUG  
Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra (OK 8703)  
IT SHOULD BE YOU  
Henry Allen and His New Yorkers (FV 38073)

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# Jazz Vol. 7

New York (1922-1934)

Introduction and Notes on the Recordings  
by Frederic Ramsey, Jr.

Until the arrival in New York from many parts of the United States of talented jazzmen, jazz had existed on a more or less regional basis. No style made up of the playing of many regions had evolved. Alone, the white men who grew up in New York and practiced a kind of jazz in the early twenties could not swing any kind of rhythmic suppleness or melodic beauty into their metronomic renditions of popular music. The best they ever gave us was razz-ma-tazz and vo-do-de-o-do. Out of hundreds of thousands of recordings of the early twenties performed by New York dance bands, very few carry more than the conviction that their performers had learned their lessons and were earning their bread. The 1922 recording selected for Band 1 of the New York volume is not much different from many similar efforts; possibly its echo of a lilt owes something to the tune under consideration, a New Orleans melody attributed to Louis Armstrong and Armand Piron. Its other echoes are of the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, the white New Orleans group that electrified New Yorkers at Reisenweber's Cafe early in 1917.

White New York musicians remained slaves to Dixieland far into the twenties (a good Dixieland recreation is the Miff Mole-Red Nichols recording of 1928 on Band 2, Side I), but by 1928, fresh talent was beginning to pour in. The Bix crowd, traveling first with Jean Goldkette, later with Whiteman, was a sort of musical dragnet, scooping up jazzmen who collided with the criss-crossed paths of its continental touring. Bix was from Davenport, Iowa; Bing Crosby, from Tacoma, Washington; Trumbauer from Carbon-dale, Illinois; Malneck from Denver, Colorado, and Kress, from New Jersey.

Along with the Bix-Trumbauer-Goldkette-Whiteman group, the white Chicagoans began to stream into New York. Some joined the Ben Pollack band, others free-lanced. According to Wingy Mannone, a Crescent City jazzman who hit New York at about the same time, a lot of the free-lancing was done at Plunkett's, a bar on Fifty-third Street close to Broadway and opposite the Arcadia Ballroom. "They started rolling in about noon every day," Mannone relates, "and hung around until they got something set. Big officials from the radio and record studios would go in to Plunkett's to line up their dates. They knew they could always find the men they wanted in there. . . . In Plunkett's I got acquainted with Frank Signorelli, Red Nichols, Adrian Rollini, Miff Mole, Benny Goodman, Artie Schutt, Frank Trumbauer, Tommy Dorsey, Bing Crosby, Harry Barris, Joe Venuti, Jimmy Dorsey, Phil Napoleon, Manny Klein, Al Rinker,

Eddie Condon, and the rest of the cream of the crop. . . Paul Whiteman, Mildred Bailey, Vincent Lopez, Jerry Colonna, Lenny Hayton, Phil Harris. . . . and B. A. Rolfe were in Plunkett's most every day."

Plunkett's, a bar on Fifty-third off Broadway and just across the street from a dance hall -- that was really the halfway stop, in the late twenties, for jazz.

Dance halls had sprung up, first on the West Coast in 1919, then spread across the country until they had, like mah jong and flagpole-sitting, become an American institution, and were doing a thriving business as late as 1928. As *Variety's* "Show Biz" notes, "By 1928, Broadway was going in for Tango Teas and adagio teams. A good percentage of the sex-and-liquor male patronage that drifted away from the cabarets with the coming of Prohibition, found its way to newly-mushrooming marts of amusement, the dance-halls. Hip-flask toters paid 10¢ a dance to hostesses of their choice."

All the way from 1919 to 1928, dance halls had been supporting jazz musicians. But by 1929 the business was far from thriving, and so were the musicians who had depended on it. The Jazzmen turned to radio and records as many dance halls lowered their rates (in 1932, 1¢ a dance ballrooms were operating along Broadway), and they hung out at a place called Plunkett's, waiting for a nod.

It wasn't much of a nod when it came. The talent-buyers couldn't tell a hot horn from a paper-hat virtuoso, and cared less. What they did care about was getting a plug tune on record or on the air, or building a stuffed-shirt bandleader into a big name with a big income, with the usual ten per-cent plus going to the builders.

So April, 1929, found one of the most talented of white jazz musicians, Jack Teagarden, singing into a small-record-company microphone, an old blues with a few new lines he might have dreamed up while making friends at Plunkett's:

"I'd rather drink muddy water, Lawd, sleep in  
a hollow log,

Than to be away up here in New York, treated  
like a dirty dog."

It's a wonder the piece ever got on record. It sold a few hundred copies, was forgotten, then came back when discographers started picking their way through the small labels (Banner, Romeo, Oriole, Cameo, Lincoln, Regent, Harmony) and sideshow band billings (Kentucky Grasshoppers, Lumberjacks, Whoopee Makers, Varsity Eight, Dixie Daisies, Toe Ticklers, and Collegians) to the stirring jazz performances of men like Teagarden, MacPartland, Goodman and Bauduc.

The date, April 4, 1929, is significant, in that it shows jazzmen were having a rough time of it before the news got to Wall Street. Then, months later,

the official depression hit them, and they took the count. "We didn't realize then how little chance we had in New York," Eddie Condon wrote later in his book, "We Called It Music." "Violins and soft saxophones were the fashion. Leo Reisman, Emil Coleman, Pancho, Meyer Davis, Mike Markel -- these were the prosperous band leaders. The only place we could play was in our rooms, at our own request."

Yet in the depths of the financial depression, things began happening to the music that seemed to indicate that jazz, fighting its way into the doldrums a bit before the national debacle, might fight its way out ahead of national recovery.

The evidence is clear enough in the recordings, even if it is not possible to tick off a precise moment and say, "It happened here." The out-of-town streams, enriched by the talent that kept turning up from almost every state in the union, began to merge. As this non-regional music of jazzmen in New York was beginning to jell, Jack Teagarden came up from Vernon, Texas. If his arrival had meant just another name to stick up on the roster of arrivals, departures, and availables at Plunkett's, the story might have been different. But Teagarden brought something else: a real love of blues, and, better still, a knowing sympathy for Negro jazz. Before Teagarden, not a single member of the entire white group congregating at bars and dance halls and playing for radio and records, could have sung a creditable blues vocal. And before Teagarden, there was no talent to equal the easy manipulation of the eloquent trombone that came the long way with him from the Lone Star State.

And so Teagarden, without any conscious pushing of a vogue, or a way of playing, became the bridge that took the white jazzmen into swing. The last four records of Side I, beginning in 1929 and passing slowly through an era that saw the earlier Rod Nichols-New York groupings superseded by men from all over the country, document the changes that brought New York up to the verge of swing, in 1934.

Something else that advanced everyone along the road to swing was the final sanctioning, after years of repression, of the "mixed" recording session. Aside from one mixed session of the early twenties (Jelly Roll Morton with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, an exception so notable in a morass of recording segregation as to prove a rule), the ban had been complete. Record executives generally had behaved as if anyone who got close to a needle dipped in the groove of a mixed-band recording had been exposed to an overdose of miscegenation. But early in 1929, it was revealed that white men and Negroes could collaborate successfully to make good records. Two of the outstanding by-products of this discovery can be heard on bands 6 and 7 of Side II.

But before white and Negro could sit down together to make jazz music, the Negro in New York had his own period of fumbling and uncertainty.

If we accept the fact that jazz first developed in New Orleans, then it becomes inevitable that Chicago

must have been a first port of call. During War I, everything -- new job opportunities for Negroes where white labor was depleted, direct travel routes, and the resulting low costs of transportation -- tended to bring Negroes from the Deep South (i. e., Alabama, Louisiana, parts of Mississippi, Texas, Arkansas) direct to Chicago.

The same factors operated to bring Negroes from the half-South (parts of Maryland, the Virginias, Kentucky, Tennessee, D. C.) and the seaboard South (North and South Carolina, Georgia, Florida) direct to New York. This would have provided Harlem with a large population from these states, but not of persons from the first group, the ones who went directly to Chicago from New Orleans. It would therefore seem possible that Negroes of New York were for the most part ignorant in the early twenties of the New Orleans way of playing jazz, and remained so until the arrival, from Chicago, of musicians pushing on from their first stop-over.

A careful study of Negro jazz recordings made in New York prior to 1924 seems to substantiate this. There are recordings of popular tunes by Negro artists, and there were large aggregations of Negro musicians, prior to 1924, playing in New York. There is in "Black Manhattan" an interesting account, by James Weldon Johnson, of a concert of music played by Negroes in New York City:

"The crowning artistic achievement of the Clef Club was a concert given at Carnegie Hall in May 1912. The orchestra for the occasion consisted of one hundred and twenty-five performers. It was an unorthodox combination -- as is every true jazz orchestra. There were a few strings proper, the most of them being 'cellos and double-basses; the few wind-instruments consisted of banjos, mandolins, and guitars. On this night all these instruments were massed against a background of ten upright pianos. In certain parts the instrumentation was augmented

by the voices. New York had not yet become accustomed to jazz; so when the Clef Club opened its concert with a syncopated march, playing it with a biting attack and an infectious rhythm, and on the finale bursting into singing, the effect can be imagined."

The effect can indeed be imagined, and we sincerely doubt if it in any way resembled the effect made by a New Orleans jazz band of from four to seven musicians, playing in the same or any other year.

When in 1924 the New Orleans pianist and arranger Clarence Williams invited young Louis Armstrong, fresh from Chicago, to join his group of recording musicians in a New York studio, something resembling New Orleans jazz came to that city. At that time, the Clarence Williams Blue Five also included Sidney Bechet, who had recorded as early as 1923 with Williams, in a band half-New Orleans, half-New York in composition. Comparison of the earlier Clarence Williams recordings, halfway to New Orleans in spirit, with his later records, of which the one included here, Papa De-Da-Da, is a lively sample, will show that the band made at least three

quarters of the musical distance when Armstrong came along with them.

Arriving in New York City from Cuthbert, Georgia, shortly after War I, Fletcher Henderson soon turned his facility at piano playing and arranging to leadership of a large dance orchestra which was booked in to the Roseland dance hall in 1919. Along with Duke Ellington, another piano-arranger (in passing, each record but one of Side II is of a band playing arrangements of its leader-pianist) who came to New York in 1922 from Washington, D. C., Henderson was a major personality in New York jazz. Each of the two pianists had a fine ear for music, undeniably great talent for arranging, and sensitive perception of others' musical abilities. Whereas Henderson seemed uncertain of the direction he wished his arranging to take, and was much influenced by each successive vogue of popular dance music, Ellington almost from the start seemed to be headed in a direction peculiarly his own.

Yet neither of these two gifted leaders produced much jazz of note until New Orleans musicians began to arrive in Manhattan. One has only to check discographies and early personnels, to see that the Henderson recordings, before the arrival of Armstrong, were of little interest. Two recordings that document that arrival, and the effect it had, are the one titled Copenhagen (Volume 9, side I band I) and the one included in this volume (Band 2, Side II) of Sugar Foot Stomp, or Dippermouth.

Prior to the sessions that produced The Creeper (Band 3, Side II of this volume), Duke Ellington and His Washingtonians had put 14 selections on record. Of these, all but a possible two were of commercial tunes, with titles like I'm Gonna Hang Around My Sugar, I'm Just Wild About Animal Crackers, Oh How I Love My Darling, and a parody of blues, I've Got Those "Wanna Go Back Again" Blues. The two exceptions were Georgia Grind, and Parlor Social Stomp, on a date in May, 1926, when Don Redman, of the Fletcher Henderson band, joined Duke and the Washingtonians for one session.

Then late in 1926, Duke added two Crescent City musicians to his orchestra. They were Rudy Jackson, a clarinet and tenor sax, who had played with King Oliver at the Plantation in Chicago, and Wellman Braud (or Breaux), string bass, who had been among the first musicians in Chicago out of New Orleans, playing with Lil Hardin and Sugar Johnny at the De Luxe Cafe circa 1917.

Results were immediately apparent. The Duke Ellington Orchestra did not become a New Orleans band, but it did break away from strictures of the ricky-ticky music it had been recording. Perhaps the New Orleans men acted as catalyst, precipitating a musical growing-up. Bubber Miley, who had been born in Aiken, South Carolina, and whose mother had sung to him the spiritual, Holy City (he was soon to incorporate this into his magnificent Black and Tan Fantasy Fantasy), composed East St. Louis Toodle-oo, and the whole band recorded it on November 29, 1926. Then just one month later, The Creeper and Immigration Blues were waxed. The Creeper is interesting,

because it catches Ellington at the almost exact instant that New Orleans music hit the Washingtonians; its last, free-for-all choruses are highly reminiscent of that Crescent City classic, Milneburg Joys. (cf. Volume 3, Side II, Band 3)

But Ellington didn't stop there; Ellington has never stopped at any one point. Only a year later, we find him pacing his band through a bouncy, sophisticated bit of jubilation called Harlem River Quiver. It's the kind of pacing that put him ahead, throughout the twenties and thirties, and brought hundreds of thousands of paying customers to the famous uptown Cotton Club, where he took his band in 1927. He had substituted at the last moment for Oliver, who had originally been engaged for the spot.

One instrument, the piano, offered New Yorkers engaged in playing dance music in the early twenties a unique opportunity to develop a style peculiar to their locale. In New Orleans, the piano, if included at all, had been relegated to the percussion section of a band. Jelly Roll Morton, who later became a band musician, was from New Orleans, but neither he nor any other pianist from that city had established an essentially New Orleans way of playing. That was because most pianists played in the sporting houses, and traveled a circuit that was national, even in the early nineteen hundreds. For them, ragtime had been the great and universal influence.

Yet by the middle twenties, a style developed for the most part by New York musicians, and on an instrument not featured in the New Orleans jazz band, had evolved.

Kenneth Bright, writing in 1940 in the Hot Record Society Rag, has described the "Parlor Social" which gave rise to this style. "The New York house-rent party arose out of a real estate problem. In 1909, Harlem was advertised to Negroes who lived in the 'jungles' -- 62nd and 63rd streets -- and 37th, 40th, and 52nd Streets -- as the 'Promised Land' because the flat idea was new and offered more opportunity to pack in paying roomers. The folks flocked to Harlem en masse, but this mad rush was not without its social and economic penalties to New York's lowest paid minority group. Rents went up sky high; the average income proved insufficient to meet 'de landlord' without more help from roomers. This situation brought about the transformation of the 'Church-Get-Together' into a party for personal profit which was called the 'Parlor Social'.....

"The music for these socials was professional and the piano-drum combination ruled supreme. This type of instrumentation introduced a piano style which is called 'Parlor Social' and is definitely a product of the New York area. The piano assumed full orchestral effects as much as possible in order to assist the dancers. There was considerably more use of chords than had previously been customary.

"James P. Johnson and Pete Welding were the biggest men in this field... Fats Waller, the 'boy organist' from the 134th Street Subway Baptist Church, played these parties after finishing his turns at the old Lincoln Theatre."

Still another pianist, Luis Russell, who came to New York from Panama via New Orleans, and in the good company of most of the musicians from the band that was first King Oliver's, then Louis Armstrong's, then Henry Allen's, and, occasionally, his own (for recording purposes, all these different "names" were used), had by 1929 caught so much of the mood of musical fusions then transpiring in New York that he could orchestrate the whole sound and fury into one driving expression. That it happened to sound like swing was no accident; in 1929, Russell and Henderson, Waller and Johnson, Teagarden, Goodman, Armstrong, and Ellington, were all pointing the way.

Joe Venuti, violin; Frank Signorelli, piano; Neil Marshall, drums. October 22, 1931. Vo 15864.

Band 7. (7 A 7): JUNK MAN, by Jack Teagarden and His Orchestra. Jack Teagarden, trombone, Benny Goodman, clarinet; Frankie Trumbauer, C melody sax; Bill Rank, Jack Fulton, trombones; Casper Reardon, harp; Charlie Teagarden, trumpet; Art Tatum, piano; Artie Bernstein, bass; Larry Gomar, drums. September 18, 1934. Br7652.

SIDE II (B) Negro Combinations, 1925-1929.

Band 1. (7 B 1): PAPA DE-DA-DA, by Clarence Williams' Blue Five. Louis Armstrong, cornet; Charlie Irvis, trombone; Sidney Bechet, soprano saxophone; Buster Bailey, soprano saxophone; Clarence Williams, piano; Buddy Christian, banjo. Eva Taylor, vocal. March 5, 1925. Ok 8215.

Band 2. (7 B 2): SUGAR FOOT STOMP (DIPPER-MOUTH), by Fletcher Henderson and His Orchestra. Louis Armstrong, Russel Smith, Joe Smith, trumpets; Charlie Green, trombone; Buster Bailey, clarinet; Don Redman, alto sax; Coleman Hawkins, tenor sax; Fletcher Henderson, piano; Charlie Dixon, banjo; unknown bass; Kaiser Marshall, drums. May 29, 1925. Co395.

Band 3. (7 B 3): THE CREEPER, by Duke Ellington and His Kentucky Club Orchestra. Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley, trumpets; Joe Tricky Sam Nanton, trombone; Rudy Jackson, clarinet and tenor sax; Otto Hardwick, alto sax; Harry Carney, bass sax; Duke Ellington, piano; Fred Guy, banjo; Wellman Braud, bass; Sonny Greer, drums. November 29, 1926. Vo 1077.

Band 4. (7 B 4): HARLEM RIVER QUIVER, by Duke Ellington and His Orchestra. Same personnel. December 19, 1927. FV 21284.

Band 5. (7 B 5): YOU CAN'T DO WHAT MY LAST MAN DID, piano solo by James P. Johnson. July 17, 1923. FV 19123.

Band 6. (7 B 6): HARLEM FUSS, by Fats Waller and His Buddies. Charlie Gains, trumpet; Charlie Irvis, trombone; Arville Harris, clarinet and alto sax; Fats Waller, piano; Eddie Condon, banjo. March 1, 1929. FV 38050.

Band 7. (7 B 7): KNOCKIN' A JUG, by Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra. Louis Armstrong, trumpet; Jack Teagarden, trombone; Happy Caldwell, tenor sax; Joe Sullivan, piano; Eddie Lang, guitar; Kaiser Marshall, drums. March 5, 1929. Ok8703.

Band 8. (7 B 8): IT SHOULD BE YOU, by Henry Allen and His New Yorkers. Henry Allen, trumpet; J. C. Higginbotham, trombone; Albert Nicholas, clarinet; Charles Holmes, alto sax; Luis Russell, piano, arranger; Will Johnson, guitar; George Pops Foster, bass; Paul Barbarin, drums. July 16, 1929. FV38073.

## RECORD DATA

SIDE I (A) White Assimilations and Adaptations, 1922-1934.

Band 1. (7 A 1): I WISH I COULD SHIMMY LIKE MY SISTER KATE, by The Cotton Pickers. Personnels varied, often interchangeable with that of the Original Memphis Five, another name given to this early New York group when it recorded for different labels. Phil Napoleon, trumpet; Miff Mole, trombone; Jimmy Lytell, clarinet; Frank Signorelli, piano; Jack Roth drums are among those most regularly heard in the various groupings. Probably early 1922. Br2338.

Band 2. (7 A 2): ORIGINAL DIXIELAND ONE STEP, by Miff Mole and His Little Molers. Red Nichols, Leo McConville, trumpets; Miff Mole, trombone; Fud Livingston, clarinet and tenor sax; Adrian Rollini, bass sax; Arthur Schutt, piano; Dick McDonough, banjo; Eddie Lang, guitar; Vic Berton, drums. August 30, 1927. Ok40932.

Band 3. (7 A 3): MISSISSIPPI MUD, by Frankie Trumbauer and His Orchestra. Bix Beiderbecke, cornet; Bill Rank, trombone; Izzy Friedman, clarinet; Frankie Trumbauer, alto sax; Min Leibbrook, bass sax; Matty Malneck, violin; Lennie Hayton, piano; Carl Kress, guitar; George Marsh, drums; Bing Crosby, Frankie Trumbauer, vocal. January 20, 1928. Ok40979.

Band 4. (7 A 4): MAKIN' FRIENDS, by the Kentucky Grasshoppers. Jimmy McPartland, cornet; Jack Teagarden, trombone and vocal; Benny Goodman, clarinet; Gil Rodin, alto sax; Larry Binyon, alto sax; Vic Briedis, piano; Dick Morgan, banjo; Harry Goodman, bass; Ray Bauduc, drums. April 4, 1929. Ba6360.

Band 5. (7 A 5): BASIN STREET BLUES, by The Louisiana Rhythm Kings. Red Nichols, trumpet; Jack Teagarden, trombone and vocal; Pee Wee Russell, clarinet; Bud Freeman, tenor sax; Joe Sullivan, piano; Dave Tough, drums. June 11, 1929. Vo15815.

Band 6. (7 A 6): BEALE STREET BLUES, by Lan-Venuti All Star Orchestra. Charlie Teagarden, trumpet; Jack Teagarden, trumpet and vocal; Benny Goodman, clarinet and saxes; Eddie Lang, guitar;