

NOTES BY ALDEN ASHFORTH

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2856

# Doc Paulin's Marching Band

RECORDED BY ALDEN ASHFORTH & DAVID WYCKOFF, NEW ORLEANS, MAY 23, 1980



COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE



FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2856

SIDE ONE Total Timing 19:41

- 1—**BOURBON STREET PARADE** (Paul Barbarin) 2:42
- 2—**BABY FACE** (Tony Jackson) 2:35
- 3—**TULANE SWING** (attr. Allen-Sheafe) 3:13
- 4—**WHEN THE SAINTS GO MARCHING IN** (traditional) 3:13
- 5—**LET ME CALL YOU SWEETHEART**  
(Beth-Slater-Whitson-Freidman) 4:27
- 6—**BYE BYE BLACKBIRD** (Dixon-Henderson) 3:10

SIDE TWO Total Timing 22:42

- 1—**WE SHALL WALK THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY**  
dirge (trad.) 4:00
- 2—**WE SHALL WALK THROUGH THE STREETS OF THE CITY**  
march (trad.) 3:02
- 3—**JUST A LITTLE WHILE TO STAY HERE** (trad.) 3:14
- 4—**THE SECOND LINE** (attr. Joe Avery) 3:47
- 5—**PANAMA** (William H. Tyers) 2:56
- 6—**ALICE BLUE GOWN** (McCarthy-Tierney) and  
**BYE BYE BLACKBIRD** (Dixon-Henderson) 5:21

Ernest "Doc" Paulin, trumpet and leader  
Philip Paulin, trumpet  
Scott Paulin, slide trombone  
Jeffery Herbert, valve trombone  
Julius Schexnayder, alto sax  
Darryl Augillard, tenor sax  
Leon Aguilar, tenor sax  
Rickey Paulin, snare drum  
Aaron Paulin, bass drum  
Dwayne Paulin, sousaphone

Recorded by Alden Ashforth and David Wyckoff  
(New Orleans, May 23, 1980)

Engineering and production by Alden Ashforth and Steven Teeter

Notes and photos by Alden Ashforth

© 1982 FOLKWAYS RECORDS & SERVICE CORP.  
43 W. 61st ST., N.Y.C., 10023 N.Y., U.S.A.

# Doc Paulin's Marching Band

RECORDED BY  
ALDEN ASHFORTH & DAVID WYCKOFF,  
NEW ORLEANS, MAY 23, 1980

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

FOLKWAYS RECORDS FJ 2856



# Doc Paulin's Marching Band

## Recording Doc Paulin

Ernest "Doc" Paulin was almost seventy-four at the time of this recording session, celebrating fifty-eight years of playing in New Orleans. He was born in the Catholic Parish of Saint John the Baptist in Wallace, Louisiana, on June 26, 1906, but moved to New Orleans in 1922 and began playing at that time. Among the many bands with which he played in his early years was that of the legendary trombonist Jack Carey. Over the next three decades he played the wide variety of available engagements: churches, picnics, dances, road shows, vaudeville, and of course the marching jobs—funerals and parades. By the fifties he was active primarily as a marching band musician, frequently to be heard with the Gibson Brass Band. A 1952 photo of him marching in a pickup band appears on page 88 of William J. Schafer's *Brass Bands & New Orleans Jazz* (Louisiana State University Press, 1977); Paulin is not identified, but his walk and manner of holding the trumpet, held slightly downward, are unmistakable. The photo shown here, with the Gibson Brass Band, was taken by David Wyckoff in 1959. (Other photos by Alden Ashforth, May, 1980.)



Richard Baptiste, trumpet; Ernest Paulin, trumpet;  
unidentified clarinetist; A. B. Spears, tenor sax

Paulin formed his present band around 1975. David heard it a couple of years later, and in 1979 phoned from his home in Fairfield, Connecticut, to urge that we document its "rough-and-ready, driving" sound with a recording session. David and I had recorded the Eureka Brass Band in 1951; it was the first session with a "regularly organized" marching band (one with consistent personnel and engagements). At that time one could hear many such groups: in addition to the Eureka there were the Young Tuxedo, the George Williams, the Gibson, and the band led by the venerable Henry Allen, Sr. (familiarly called "Old Man Allen's Band"). Now the Olympia and Paulin's group are the two survivors.

Traditional dance band jazz has virtually vanished in New Orleans. The stylized neoclassicism of the white Dixieland bands playing the hotels and night clubs predominates, and even the surviving members of the older tradition who perform in Preservation Hall and on the far-ranging concert circuit are no longer playing for a native audience in the kind of grass-root engagements that formerly nourished the local music.

Stylistically, the surviving marching bands stand in sharp contrast: having rarely left the city, having never changed their means and modes of employment, still playing for the same sorts of occasions and audiences as always, they have maintained an unbroken line of musical continuity. The style has changed, to be sure, but much more gradually than in any other form of jazz; the change has been one of consistent internal evolution.

Paulin's repertory includes traditional march tunes, spirituals and pop standards, and emphasizes blues playing, especially a kind of fast, happy, sassy blues that is in ways similar to boogie-woogie and Kansas City swing but which more properly represents a parallel development with a distinct New Orleans flavor. **The Second Line** on this record is a classic representative of this exhilarating style, a style which has changed little in three decades, and which remains supremely popular with local parade followers.

The Paulin band does not play the old written marches from cards, as the Eureka used to, because its members don't read music very much. Paulin himself says revealingly: "Well, yes, we all read a little music, but you got to remember there's your *readin* music and your *playin* music. You *read* too much, you don't *play* good. Now we read some tunes to learn em. But then you chop em up and put em together the way *you* want."





*Jeffrey Herbert, valve trombone;  
Dwayne Paulin, sousaphone;  
Scott Paulin, slide trombone*

Nor does the band rehearse much. While Paulin does work out the sectional structure of the material, practice is—as with so many New Orleans groups—mostly on the job. Yet the band is very consistent stylistically, and as a whole bears the distinct imprint of Paulin's musical personality. According to clarinetist Michael White, who played regularly with the band several years ago, Paulin does not so much tell the men what to play as to correct them when they are "wrong". He has, however, worked extensively with his drummer sons Rickey and Aaron (who were 21 and 23 years old at the time of this session). Their superbly synchronized teamwork lays an essential rhythmic foundation for the band.

Another of the five Paulin sons in the group, slide-trombonist Scott (16) has obviously worked up a magnificent interplay with his friend, valve-trombonist Jeffrey Herbert (20); they include both traditional trombone licks and highly individual ones, lending an essential characteristic to the band's overall sound. Tenor sax player Darryl Augillard (21) and Leon Aguilár (22) also mesh as a pair to support the swing solo alto sax of Julius Schexnayder (48). The sousaphone (or "bass horn") playing of Dwayne Paulin (19) provides a solid fundamental bass, yet sometimes (especially in the fast blues) moves into the spotlight with explosive upward leaps and jagged rhythms in a style reminiscent of the late great Wilbert Tillman, backbone of the Young Tuxedo band in the fifties. Philip Paulin (14), the fifth and youngest son, does not always play with his father's ferocity (he is playing second trumpet, not lead), but he

plays with an almost identical style and tone. Often, for a chorus or two, he will spell Doc—who then rides back in with full power.

Doc Paulin's is a highly individual style that beggars comparison in melodic detail, but in terseness of line and intensity of timbre it recalls more than any other the late "Wooden Joe" Nicholas (whose model had been Buddy Bolden). In the later years of New Orleans jazz only Paulin and "Kid Thomas" Valentine continue this high voltage pointillistic way of playing a lead, punctuated with vibrant quivering tones yet capable of the light staccato touch, and always strongly vocal in expression. Kid Thomas left Jack Carey's band in the early twenties to form his own group; it was then that Paulin joined Carey, leading his own band only later in that decade.

The Paulin sound, brimful of personality, has what New Orleans musicians call "lots of tone"—it is very loud. A record may of course be played back at any level desired, but the listener should note that the whole Paulin band plays very, very loudly. Many musicians hold in reserve the *cui-vré* effect (a strenuous overblowing of the horn to make it shake with a vivid brassiness); Paulin and his men employ it as the norm. Then to emphasize the most important notes he adds an extra-wide vibrato—an unmistakable Paulin characteristic. Michael White observed that a jazz player's tone expresses his personality, and indeed the timbre Paulin produces is as individual as a signature.



I met Doc only the day before the session; David Wyckoff had made the preliminary arrangements by telephone. Arriving at his modest uptown home, 2232 Seventh Street, we found ourselves facing a large sign identifying the headquarters of The Property Owners Voters League. Like so many New Orleans musicians Paulin has a second vocation; for some twenty years he's been getting out the vote for those politicians who employ his services. Doc's native traits of affability, energy and acumen suit him well for such an occupation, as they do for leading and managing a jazz band.

He greeted us at the door with his characteristic deep gravelly chuckling voice. He is a short man, but he stands sturdily with a proud posture, shoulders back—a stalwart figure whose looks, like his playing, show no sign of age. After chatting amiably and discussing possible recording repertory, Doc drove us a short distance to the corner of Loyola and Second, not far from Buddy Bolden's old home on First Street. Opposite the venerable St. Francis DeSales Catholic Church stood its huge aging recreation hall, Paulin's choice for the recording session.

We had been particularly worried about the problem of an appropriate acoustical setting, but our fears quickly evaporated. The ground floor revealed a large rectangular space similar to many of the old dance halls, perhaps a hundred feet by thirty, with a twelve foot ceiling, fronted by a brick and wood bandstand. The relatively new acoustical ceiling tile seemed to round out just the right combination of liveness and spaciousness necessary to capture the power of a marching band in clear detail, without pronounced echo or boxiness—avoiding the problems inherent in either outdoor or studio recording situations.

And so the following afternoon Paulin picked us up in front of Bill Russell's house in the French Quarter. Bill was accompanied by Dick Allen—co-founders of the jazz archives at Tulane University. Steven Teeter had come along to help manage the tricky controls of the marvelous Nagra IV-S tape recorder, and the group was rounded out by two English devotees: Tim Newman, and Terry Dash, the editor of *Footnote*.

Upon arrival at the hall, Paulin and David Wyckoff went into an immediate huddle about financial arrangements, Terry Dash left in search of beer and soft drinks, while Steven Teeter and I got to work with equipment set-up. The musicians arrived shortly, wearing caps and ties for the engagement despite the heat

and humidity of the evening. They tuned up softly (and of course would be quite a bit sharper in pitch when playing at full volume. We had planned a test cut, and had hazarded conservative settings on the Nagra, with the two mikes placed a safe thirty feet from the bandstand. Lucky precautions!

The drums rolled and with a deafening wave of power the band launched into a stunning full-length performance of **Bourbon Street Parade**, Paulin's favorite opening number. So much for tests. These men were not studio musicians but marching players, and we realized quickly enough that this was not to be a recording session but a parade standing still.

As has so often been the case in New Orleans sessions with "warm-up" cuts, this turned out to be a high-point of the session. After the introductory triplet arpeggios, Paul Barbarin's grand old march has but a single strain; Paulin gives it a touch of his own by carrying over the triplet to embellish the main theme. Behind him the trombones blast out short riffs, sometimes in thirds but mostly in unison, ending the second chorus with a low growl. Doc drops out in the third chorus to let his son Philip take the lead, then announces his final showcase chorus by coming in a phrase early. He is even stronger now, and the final notes of each phrase quiver with intensity. As he rises to the traditional high tonic close, Philip climbs a third above that.

We tried the same number again, but as was usually to be the case, the back-up take lacked the exhilarating verve of the first. Happily the mikes had been optimally placed and levels had been close to ideal. Although we experimented briefly with the mikes during some subsequent takes, our final settings were close to the first.

The musicians had grouped themselves more or less in sections: the two trombones to the far right from the microphones' point of view, the saxes a bit right of center and the drums a bit left, with the sousaphone to the far left. Doc planted himself front and right, with Philip a bit left and further back. Later, in an effort to pick up the sousaphonist more prominently, we had him exchange positions with the trombones.

These placements are not consistently imaged to the record listener, as the musicians tended to point their instruments around in various directions, as they would on parade. Paulin would admonish them not to



do so, yet himself wander around the stage while playing, jauntily aiming his horn according to his fancy. But, as Dick Allen later observed, there can be no one "correct" recording placement for a marching band, as in the street the sonic locations and amplitudes of the different instruments will always be constantly changing from the listener's vantage point. In any event our recording philosophy was to reduce audio tampering to a minimum, hoping to produce a faithful document of a musical engagement rather than a studio engineer's conjecture of how the music "ought" to sound.

The second tune, **Baby Face**, was written by the fabled Storyville pianist Tony Jackson. Paulin takes the lead in all three choruses of the engaging thirty-two bar melody; at the start of the last chorus he growls a bit, then backs off to play lightly while Julius Schexnayder fancies it up on the alto sax, finally driving in to the close.

The next march is popularly known as **Tulane Swing** in New Orleans, but it derives from a number called **Washington and Lee Swing** up north. This piece also consists of a single thirty-two bar strain, although defining the number of bars in a New Orleans marching performance is always problematical. Because of the physical exigencies of marching, the bass horn emphasizes not every beat of four, as a string bass in a dance band would, but every other beat so as to conform to the marching footfall. Yet the resultant effect is discernibly not that of the mousey "dixieland" bands that dominate Bourbon Street today, with their "oom-pah

oom-pah" in 2/2 time. Rather it is an enlargement of the pulse into a 4/2 meter, subsuming two measures into one and thus preserving the even four beats characteristic of black jazz. Paulin's percussion section reinforces this rhythmic conception by giving a characteristic penultimate upbeat kick-off only after each four of the larger beats—Rickey with a quick last-beat press-roll, and Aaron with a bass drum stroke just before the next true downbeat.

Paulin begins **Tulane Swing** in a relaxed easy-going way for the first two choruses. As the trombone team increasingly cuts loose, Doc happily points his trumpet this way and that (on and off mike) as he would to a crowd. Motioning Julius Schexnayder to step forward, Paulin remains silent during an alto sax solo harmonized by swinging off-beat riffs on the trombones. Schexnayder's style features broad arpeggios embellished with conjunct curlicues. Paulin steps back in for a joyous conclusion with trombones wailing in support.

Talking with Paulin the previous day, David and I had initially objected to the inclusion of **When the Saints Go Marching In**. After all, this overworked hymn has become a cliché synonymous with the worst dixieland stereotypes, and most performances now sound pretty shopworn. But Paulin had been insistent about recording it, saying "We have our *own* ways with these tunes, you know."

And indeed they do! In the very first chorus Doc is already playing original variants of the melody; in the



*Julius Schexnayder, alto sax; Leon Aguilar, tenor sax; Darryl Aguillard, tenor sax; Philip Paulin, trumpet; Doc Paulin, trumpet*



Aaron Paulin, bass drum; Doc Paulin, trumpet; Darryl Aguillard, tenor sax; Rickey Paulin, snare drum (back to camera); Leon Aguilár, tenor sax; Philip Paulin, trumpet (partially hidden); Dwayne Paulin, sousaphone (back to camera)



second he is blazing away at the high tonic with a new motive. By the third, accompanied by triplets in the trombones, it becomes clear that he has a new tune of his own for each chorus: a kind of variation form. In the fourth chorus the music breaks into bluesy riffs despite the religious origin of the piece, while the new tune oscillates between the fifth and sixth degrees of the scale. The hymn tune does reappear over trombone riffs in the fifth chorus, then Schexnayder solos in arpeggios for a chorus and in conjunct melodic motion for another, with the drums once again accenting the upbeat to every eighth quarter-note. Doc reenters with a riff on the high tonic dipping to the third below and back, and then launches into his big descending obbligato for the final chorus; his son Philip supports him with a catchy climbing figure at the close.

The band eases off, turning to a piece from 1910, **Let Me Call You Sweetheart**. Paulin loves these old tunes from the days when he was "coming up" and always includes some in his parades. He states the melody boldly at first, but on repeating it allows the trombonists to come to the fore while he punctuates in a pointillistic style not dissimilar to that of Kid Thomas. When Schexnayder solos it is with the beautiful melody played unadorned, in the fashion of the old dance bands on a long night's gig. During these moments when he is not playing, Doc likes to swing his arms and hips, swaying to and fro with an infectious

dancing movement. Then he puts the trumpet back to his lips and reenters, at first with small dots of sound and later with the melody played straight while the trombones lay down some fine counterpoint in the seventh chorus. Doc surprises his men by signaling for yet one more chorus; in it he toys teasingly with the tune while the trombones add an extra bit of punch to their wailing.

Then the band moves to its theme-song, **Bye Bye Blackbird**, a pop tune from 1926. The first chorus is taken in a straightforward fashion, as if to relish the melody, with the trombones doubling the trumpet lead at the octave. At the start of the third chorus Schexnayder once again steps forward to begin a solo, but after a phrase Doc waves him away and points to his son Philip who, somewhat startled, finishes off the chorus. Schexnayder, now raring to go, struts it out in his best form, accenting the most important notes of the melody in his elaboration. When Paulin comes in for the final chorus the trombones split their attention between melodic doubling, harmonizing and counterpoint.

During a short break for refreshments we asked about what other tunes the band knew; Doc replied "We don't know nothin *but* tunes!" and added "We want to give you what *you* want"—the New Orleans musician characteristically trying to please the audience, please the customer. David and I explained that what we



really wanted was the numbers the band usually plays at parades. When Bill Russell suggested that we look to some of the old spirituals, we hit on the idea of doing a great local favorite in two ways: first as a funeral dirge and subsequently as a parade march. In the western United States this haunting melody is known as "Red River Valley" but in New Orleans it is sung to words that speak of the life hereafter:

We shall walk through the streets of the city  
Where our loved ones have walked before.  
We shall meet on the banks of the river:  
And from there we shall part no more.

With the musicians reassembled, the tape rolls and the snare drum rolls. With the ensuing thunderous and ceaseless slow beats on the bass drum the mood is instantly changed to that of a gravesite. This is not the public part of a funeral parade, but that most intimate and private ceremony, to which only the reverend, the family, and the musicians are attendant. It is a final moment of tragedy, as the coffin is lowered. Paulin knows the tradition well, playing so softly that a clergyman could speak above the music in the first chorus, as the trombonists accompany with the traditional chromatic descent. Then, like a gospel singer, Doc spaces his melody out in little gasps—with breaths between the words, or even between the syllables. Philip Paulin plays solo trumpet on the third chorus, while the trombones (who normally function as a team) split up into high and low registers, howling at the top, expressing grave despair at the bottom. In the final chorus the trombones increase this difference in individual sense of woe, both in extremity of range and in rhythmic counterpoint, as—over the ominous and omnipresent snare-drum roll—Doc Paulin plays his final peroration. Here the difference between the father and son, in terms of their ages and human experiences, become both obvious and touching. The son plays a quiet and reverent prayer; the father follows with an unchecked outpouring of uncontainable grief. The most astonishing thing about the performance, however, is not the individual emotion expressed in each repetition of the melody; it is the superb shaping of the form that is built up, heightened by the increasing emphasis on the large triplets of the percussion—a traditional symbol of tragedy. The piece moves inexorably from loss, to reverence, and finally to anguish. At the conclusion, himself moved by the success of the performance, Doc is heard expressing his approval with a long-drawn "yeah". We could have not dared a second take.

Quickly the spiritual is transformed to an upbeat march. Paulin remains as intense, but now with an emo-

tion of celebration for three choruses, as the trombones revel in their phrase fill-ins. In the fourth chorus they riff splendidly on single notes and then turn to octave melodic doubling. During the sixth and seventh statements of this eloquent melody (which even at the faster tempo retains a touch of ineffable sadness) the trombones start shouting in unison with their intoxicating ten-note figure, a riff built on three tones. Finally only the drums remain, rolling down an imaginary street.

The band then plays one more spiritual: **Just a Little While to Stay Here**. It's the quintessential post-funeral parade piece in New Orleans, almost always played at that occasion. The sentiment of the hymn demands a gentle quality of performance, and here the musicians allow the melody to sing the unspoken words simply for two choruses, before the trombones begin to sass it up moving between the fifth and sixth scale degrees. In the third chorus Philip Paulin states the tune softly while the rhythm section resolutely maintains its previously established level of loudness: a baroque contrast of dynamic plateaus found only in the black music of the city. Then the trombones take over the melody, soon replaced by alto sax elaborations; the effect is that of standing still at a parade while the sections of the band pass by. Paulin happily waves along with the sax solo like a conductor, finally joining to take the lead in the last chorus, while Philip plays a descant above in the traditional "parade second" style.

With a sharp change of pace, the band gives its all in a specialty of theirs: the hot marching blues. Paulin calls this one **The Second Line**, although a lot of musicians in the city call it "Joe Avery's Piece", in memory of that great parade trombonist who was so active and popular in the late forties and early fifties playing with the Tuxedo Brass Band. Avery would have loved this rowdy performance; it's sassy and spicy, full of pepper and garlic.

Doc plays his wailing introduction, with calls on the trumpet and responses from the drums. Then the rollicking tune begins, based for two choruses on rising arpeggiated chords. Most of the horns double the lead, but the trombones instead moan back and forth between the major and minor third. The third chorus begins with four measures of stop-time, then rocks on, followed by two more choruses, each with a new riff. Dwayne Paulin is hitting his stride now, running up and down the scale on his huge bass horn.

Paulin suddenly stops playing and waves at Philip who solos vigorously, joined afterwards by his father



for a chorus of trumpet unison. A whoop on the sousaphone kicks the trombones to the fore, and just at this point the door to the auditorium suddenly opens. Like an apparition, in comes a real second-line dancer, drawn from the street outside by contagious sounds. In T-shirt and cut-off shorts he whirls and twirls to the delight of all present—all save Paulin, who drops out for a chorus to shoo him out of the hall. Doc's trumpet is back on his lips for the next chorus, while behind him Julius Schexnayder starts sounding really hot—raring to go.

And go he does, soloing vibrantly for the next three choruses. Both trumpets join for the final two, playing first in counterpoint, then in unison, equally fierce in tonal intensity. Even in New Orleans no "commercial" jazz ever sounds like this; here is the essence of the black street sound. With another pair of calls and responses, hollered as a coda, the drums thunder to a close—followed surprisingly by squealing cheers. A bunch of neighborhood kids have crept in through the open door and are expressing their enthusiasm.

**Panama** follows, William H. Tyler's catchy 1911 tango which locally is always played as a rousing rag. Like most musicians these days, Paulin omits the opening strains, instead beginning in the subdominant with the last written strain, and alternating choruses with the unwritten variant that is traditional in New Orleans—climbing down the scale in repeated notes. Doc relishes this motive and plays it vibrantly.

**Alice Blue Gown**, from the immensely successful 1919 Broadway musical *Irene*, is similarly transfigured, from a slow sentimental waltz to a strutting march. The tune is clearly one of Paulin's pets; he plays swaying about the stand with obvious delight. It's the last piece on the recording agenda, and the men are eager to wind up the session.

But Doc has rigged a little surprise for us: *his* way of decisively winding up the session. Without pause he announces "That's it! *Blackbird*—da-da-da-da-da-da—our theme song!" And again they're playing **Bye Bye Blackbird**, with renewed vigor, and suddenly marching off the bandstand, shouting out the music, striding past the tape recorder (Steven Teeter glued to the meters, adjusting quickly). Past the microphones they march, Paulin and the saxes to the right, the bass horn right down the middle, the barking trombones and Philip followed by the drums on the left, punching it out to the end and delighting all. Doc at the distant door chuckles at the close of his little prank. The effect is both serendipitous and thrilling: the parade has passed us by, the parade has ended.

Alden Ashforth  
Music Department,  
University of California,  
Los Angeles  
January, 1982

Rickey Paulin, snare drum (left edge); Doc Paulin, trumpet; Aaron Paulin, bass drum; Jeffrey Herbert, valve trombone; Philip Paulin, trumpet; Leon Aguilar, tenor sax; Dwayne Paulin, sousaphone; Julius Schexnayder, alto sax; Scott Paulin, slide trombone





For Additional Information About  
**FOLKWAYS RELEASES**

of Interest

write to



**Folkways Records  
and Service Corp.**

43 WEST 61 ST STREET NEW YORK, NEW YORK 10023

