

They All Played The Tiger Rag



42ND STREET, NEW YORK CITY, 1929, PHOTO BY WALKER EVANS

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

FOLKWAYS RECORDS RBF 48

They All Played The Tiger Rag

SIDE ONE

1. Jelly Roll Morton demonstrating
2. Jelly Roll Morton performing
3. Original Dixieland Jazz Band
4. New Orleans Rhythm Kings
5. Bix Beiderbecke & The Wolverines
6. Earl Hines
7. Paul Howard's Quality Serenaders
8. Charles Dornberger's Orchestra

SIDE TWO

1. Bennie Moten's Kansas City Orchestra
2. Fletcher Henderson & his Orchestra
3. Duke Ellington & his Orchestra
4. Louis Armstrong & his Orchestra
5. Benny Goodman Trio
6. Ozzie Nelson & his Orchestra
7. Art Tatum

CREDITS

Compiled & Annotated by DAVID A. JASEN
Remastering by Carl Seltzer

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COMPILED & ANNOTATED BY DAVID A. JASEN

DESCRIPTIVE NOTES ARE INSIDE POCKET

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THEY ALL PLAYED TIGER RAG

RBF - 48

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DAVID A. JASEN

The history of TIGER RAG is a fascinating one.

It has not only become a classic and a standard part of the dixieland repertory, but is probably the most well-known composition, used throughout the years as a marching tune, a dancing one-step, a show-stopping display piece, down to helping to sell gasoline on television commercials.

It was known during the first decade of this century in New Orleans variously as "Number Two Blues" and "Play Jack Carey," but it wasn't until Jelly Roll Morton told about its antecedents that we learned it originally was a French quadrille which was then transformed into the syncopated tune we know and love today. Of course, Jelly Roll claimed that he was the one who gave it its present name and who transformed the quadrille (which was a set dance in four parts, each with a separate series of dance steps - this one also having an Introduction).

It is an historical fact that the Original Dixieland Jazz Band made the first recording of it on August 7, 1917 (they were to make five recordings of it in their career), and that it was copyrighted in their name on September 8, 1917 by Leo Feist, Inc. who published it as part of a series of their compositions entitled "Latest Jazz Numbers Composed and Played by The Original Dixieland Jazz Band."

This album brings together the most famous jazzmen

of their time and the bands who made jazz history during the heyday of Dixieland jazz and the succeeding Swing era. Because of its intrinsic worth as well as its continuing popularity, each generation of jazz musicians has been able to find its own way with this exciting number. There isn't another jazz standard which has lasted for as long a time in so many differing interpretations as TIGER RAG.

SIDE ONE

Jelly Roll Morton (1885 or 1890-1941) (see RBF-47, JELLY ROLL MORTON PIANO CLASSICS, 1923-24), was by far the most versatile jazzman of his time. In addition to creating a unique piano style, he was a masterful and original composer, band leader, arranger and vocalist. In May, 1938, as part of his discourse on the history of jazz and his place in it, he recorded at the Library of Congress his recollection of how jazz started. His talking about TIGER RAG with illustrations at the piano is part of the most remarkable autobiography in music. The second track gives Jelly's transformation of the quadrille into the composition with which we are so familiar.

The ODJB (Original Dixieland Jazz Band) is given collective credit as the nominal "composer" of this tune, as they were the first to record and copyright it. Its cornetist, Dominic James "Nick" LaRocca, claimed that he created it in 1912. The ODJB, like Jelly Roll, were all born and spent their formative years in New Orleans. So that its music was common currency, available for all to take and use as they saw fit. This recording, their second but most well-known, was recorded on March 25, 1918.

It was so well distributed that it became the recording which all other jazz bands used to first learn the piece and then adapt to their own inclination. This performance illustrates ensemble playing at its finest. Certainly, there have been no more spirited recordings than this one, with each member contributing fully to the total overall sound. The band consisted of Nick LaRocca, cornet; Eddie Edwards, trombone; Larry Shields, clarinet; Henry Ragas, piano; and Tony Sbarbaro, drums.

The NORK (New Orleans Rhythm Kings) were an eight piece group, most of whom grew up in New Orleans and who started professionally in Chicago at the Friar's Inn. This version was included in their first recordings on August 30, 1922. Notice how they play the Introduction and then go directly to the last and most familiar theme. Their performance is the more interesting in that they ignore for the most part the ODJB recording, while adapting what they had remembered at first-hand while they were at home. Their pianist, Elmer Schoebel (1896-1970), was from Illinois and became a fine composer of pop tunes throughout the twenties. Their unusual instrumentation gave them a more relaxed sound, as contrasted with the exuberance of the ODJB. This recording, under the name Friars Society Orchestra, included Paul Mares, cornet; George Brunies, trombone; Leon Roppolo, clarinet; Jack Pettis, C-melody Saxophone; Elmer Schoebel, piano; Lew Black, banjo; Arnold Loyacano, string bass; Frank Snyder, drums.

The Wolverine Orchestra was led by its pianist, Dick Voynow. The band members, from various parts of the mid-west, at first came together in Chicago, listening intently to the

NORK live and the ODJB on records. The obvious star in the group was Bix Beiderbecke (1903-1931), whose golden bell-like tones soared through his inspired and inspiring cornet lead. Nowhere is his driving and crisp playing heard to greater advantage than in this recording, where Bix plays practically non-stop - at first in the ensemble, then as soloist, and finally leading the entire band until the finish. It is said that Bix's great influence was the ODJB's Nick LaRocca, but as we can hear, Bix created his own inimitable sound and developed the Wolverines band sound far differently than any other jazz band. This tune was made on June 20, 1924, part of their third recording session, and consisted of Bix Beiderbecke, cornet; Jimmy Hartwell, clarinet; George Johnson, tenor saxophone; Dick Voynow, piano; Bob Gillette, banjo; Min Leibbrook, sousaphone; Vic Moore, drums.

Earl Hines (1903-) made at least two recordings of this famous number, the first time calling it PANTHER RAG and the next, 57 VARIETIES. It is the earlier solo we reproduce here, made at Long Island City on December 7, 1928. In fact, it was one of eight such solos, nearly matching Jelly Roll's historic session of June 9, 1924 when he recorded nine solos that day (see RBF-47). Hines was an incredibly creative musician, way ahead of his musical times, as this entry conclusively proves.

Paul Howard (1895-), leader of the Quality Serenaders, his little-known group, worked and recorded in the Los Angeles area. Their recordings are interesting as they seem to be a cross between the larger slick dance band arranged-sound and a small improvised-sound dixieland jazz band. This eight piece group recorded the clever Charlie Lawrence arrangement on

April 28, 1929, a time usually dominated by the larger 12-piece sound. The Quality Serenaders included George Orendorff, trumpet; Lawrence Brown, trombone; Charlie Lawrence, clarinet-alto saxophone; Paul Howard, tenor Saxophone; Harvey Brooks, piano; Thomas Valentine, banjo; James Jackson, tuba; Lionel Hampton, drums.

Charles Dornberger's Orchestra was a dance band which recorded from 1922 to 1932. This particular tune was arranged by C. C. Borland and was recorded by the band on April 27, 1927. It is a far from typical performance and is without doubt the hottest and fastest version made by a dance band. The 10-piece group had Max Connett & George Hall on trumpets; Thurlow Cranz, trombone; Charles Dornberger, clarinet-alto saxophone; C. C. Borland, clarinet-alto saxophone; George Gammon, tenor saxophone; Russ Carlson, piano; Perry Dring, banjo; Bob Hill, tuba; and Carl Skinner, drums.

SIDE TWO

Bennie Moten (1894-1935) had the most outstanding band in Kansas City, Missouri. From the beginning in 1922, he enjoyed a solid reputation as leading a distinguished territory band from as far away as Oklahoma. But from 1929, his Kansas City Orchestra had established and maintained a nationwide reputation. He had been a fine ragtime pianist, lead a great dixieland band and then had the foresight to make brilliant arrangements for a larger band. He composed almost all of the tunes he recorded but there were several notable exceptions. From an unknown 1931 session, his fine orchestra recorded this magnificent arrangement of TIGER RAG. This is its debut on disc!

The members are Ed Lewis, Booker Washington & Oran "Hot Lips" Page, trumpets; Thamon Hayes, trombone; Eddie Durham, trombone & guitar; Harlan Leonard, clarinet-alto saxophone; Jack Washington, clarinet-alto saxophone-baritone saxophone; Woody Walder, clarinet & tenor saxophone; Count Basie, piano; Buster Moten, accordion; Leroy Berry, banjo; Vernon Page, tuba; and Willie McWashington, drums.

Fletcher Henderson (1897-1952) was the pioneer dance and jazz band arranger who broke up the band into sections and used them for tonal contrast. Over the years, his band members constituted a Who's Who of great jazzmen. For this March, 1931 session, they included Russell Smith, Rex Stewart & Bobby Stark, trumpets; Benny Morton & Claude Jones, trombones; Russell Procope, clarinet-alto saxophone; Harvey Boone, alto saxophone; Coleman Hawkins, tenor saxophone; Fletcher Henderson, piano; Clarence Holiday, guitar; John Kirby, tuba & string bass; Walter Johnson, drums.

Duke Ellington (1899-1974), another all-time great leader and arranger, spent a record 50 years making records. And when he decided to record this marvelous standard, he did it in two parts, which we combined into a unified whole. On the January 8, 1929 session, his band consisted of Bubber Miley, Arthur Whetsel & Freddy Jenkins, trumpets; Joe Nanton, trombone; Johnny Hodges, clarinet-soprano-alto saxes; Harry Carney, clarinet-alto-baritone saxes; Barney Bigard, clarinet-tenor saxophone; Duke Ellington, piano; Fred Guy, banjo; Wellman Braud, string bass; Sonny Greer, drums.

Louis Armstrong (1900-1971) was considered to be the most well-known and greatest jazzman of all. He was a prolific recording artist whose bands changed with the times. When he went to Paris, France, and recorded this tune in October, 1934, he had the following sidemen with him: Louis Armstrong, Jack Hamilton & Leslie Thompson, trumpets; Lionel Guimaraes, trombone; Pete Ducongé, clarinet-alto saxophone; Henry Tyree, alto saxophone; Alfred Pratt, tenor saxophone; Herman Chittison, piano; Maceo Jefferson, guitar; German Arago, string bass; Oliver Tines, drums.

Benny Goodman (1909-) created quite a stir when he formed his Trio. The famous clarinetist from Chicago had made it big with Fletcher Henderson arrangements and on December 2, 1936, he, Teddy Wilson on piano and Gene Krupa on drums recorded this lively improvisational concoction.

Ozzie Nelson (1906-1975) had a lengthy show business career. Later known for his radio and television shows which he helped write and produce, he originally started out as a singing bandleader. While his fine dance band usually didn't play the more snappier numbers, they did do some (also see LATE BAND RAGTIME, RBF-39). On June 23, 1935, his 14-piece swing band included Harry Johnson, Holly Humphreys & Bo Ashford, trumpets; Elmer Smithers & Abe Lincoln, trombones; Charlie Bubeck & Bill Stone, clarinets-alto saxophones; Bill Nelson, clarinet-tenor saxophone; Sid Brokaw, violin; Harry Murphy & Chauncey Gray, pianos; Sandy Wolf, guitar; Fred Whiteside, string bass; Joe Bohan, drums.

Art Tatum (1910-1956) is generally credited with being the first of the modern jazz pianists. His influence has certainly been felt from his first recordings on March 21, 1933 until his death. If you listen carefully, you can tell that his major influence was James P. Johnson (see also THE

ORIGINAL JAMES P. JOHNSON, Folkways FJ-2850). It is rather nice to learn that his version of TIGER RAG was among those recorded on his first historic session. Truly, an awe-inspiring performance, a peer among these all-stars.

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Long Playing Non-Breakable Micro Groove 33 1/3 RPM

THEY ALL PLAYED TIGER RAG

Compiled & Annotated by
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SIDE ONE

RF 48 A

1. JELLY ROLL MORTON DEMONSTRATING
2. JELLY ROLL MORTON PERFORMING
3. ORIGINAL DIXIELAND JAZZ BAND
4. NEW ORLEANS RHYTHM KINGS
5. BIX BEIDERBECKE & THE WOLVERINES
6. EARL HINES
7. PAUL HOWARD'S QUALITY SERENADERS
8. CHARLES DORNBERGER'S ORCHESTRA

Total Time — 24:53

Remastering by Carl Seltzer

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SIDE TWO

RF 48 B

1. BENNIE MOTEN'S KANSAS CITY ORCH.
2. FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCH.
3. DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCH.
4. LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCH.
5. BENNY GOODMAN TRIO
6. OZZIE NELSON & HIS ORCH.
7. ART TATUM

Total Time — 23:59

Remastering by Carl Seltzer
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