



# Frisco Cricket

Published Quarterly by the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

JULY 1997

## TURK MURPHY COLLECTION PACES LANDMARK YEAR

by William Carter

With this inaugural issue of *The Frisco Cricket*, your Foundation announces the most important gift in its sixteen year history.

The Turk Murphy Collection is his personal treasure of recordings, arrangements, sheet music, photographs, instruments and memorabilia, amassed over half a century by a leading figure in the San Francisco traditional jazz revival. This spring, Turk's widow, Harriet, donated this invaluable resource to our growing archive. She deserves the sincere thanks of all those who, both now and in the future, value preservation and enjoyment of the original styles of this most American of art forms.

Turk Murphy burst onto the scene as the highly innovative and influential trombonist of the pioneering Lu Watters Yerba Buena Jazz Band. He went on to become, as well, a widely known composer, bandleader and vocalist. The Murphy style blended historical accuracy with originality, entertainment values, stylized arrangements and tight musical discipline. Turk's perseverance and energy brought his band full-

time professional continuity and success, spanning some four decades, to a degree which helped set it apart from the great majority of revival bands.

Years will be needed to fully plumb this remarkable trove of material. Soon, however, your Foundation hopes to make available some first fruits: CDs of previously unknown takes, sparkling with the verve of Turk's best players at their most relaxed and creative – *absent* the tensions of the recording studio. Stay tuned!

Due to staff limitations, a long time has elapsed since we last communicated with you, our SFTJF members, via the *Up/Date* and *Jazz Notes* letters. Replacing them, with the help of an anonymous grant, *The Frisco Cricket* will now appear quarterly, edited by that fine pianist and bassist, Marty Eggers.

Please help the Foundation, traditional jazz and yourself by renewing your \$25 yearly membership when due – and encourage others to join!



Photo Credit: Ed Lawless  
Turk Murphy in 1955 while on tour with his band, which included ...



Photo Credit: Ed Lawless  
...young Wm. Carter.

### CONTENTS

<b>TURK MURPHY COLLECTION PACES LANDMARK YEAR</b> by William Carter	1
<b>WALLY ROSE MEMORIAL CONCERT A SUCCESS</b>	2
<b>WHAT IS A FRISCO CRICKET?</b>	2
<b>SAN FRANCISCO STYLE DRUMMING</b> by Hal Smith	3
<b>RUSS GILMAN: PIANO GENIUS SURFACES</b> by William Carter	7
<b>JAMBALAYA + GOLD DUST</b> October 26, 1997, Herbst Theater, San Francisco	8
<b>SFTJF MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION &amp; PRODUCT LIST</b>	9
<b>JIM CULLUM JAZZ BAND AT STANFORD</b> July 30, 1997, Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University	10

# WALLY ROSE MEMORIAL CONCERT A SUCCESS

The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation presented a free ragtime concert in honor of the recently deceased Wally Rose Sunday, April 13 at Julie Ring's Heart and Soul on Clay Street in San Francisco. The restaurant/night club, which seats about 200 in two tiers, was full for most of the performance, which ran from 2:00 to 8:00 PM.

Several fine ragtime pianists were on hand to play, including Pete Clute (with banjoist Carl Lunsford), Robbie Rhodes, Marty Eggers, Virginia Tichenor and Gloria Isaeff (with the group Rags, Strings and Bones). Interspersed among the piano-based sets were a Turk Murphy alumni band and a rare reunion of the Chrysanthemum Ragtime Band, which broke up in the late '80s.

The Murphy alumni band played two sets during the concert. The personnel were Leon Oakley, cornet; Bill Carter, clarinet; John Gill, trombone; Clute, Lunsford and Jim Brennan, tuba. The band played a number of rags as well as jazz pieces, plus a spiritual dedicated to Wally, *If We Never Meet Again (This Side of Heaven)*.

The Chrysanthemum band was able to perform only a single set due to time commitments of some of its members. Though missing a number of original members, the band (with help from John Gill on trombone, plus Pacific Coast Ragtime Orchestra members Mike Hart, tuba; Lloyd Connors, clarinet and Chris Wampole, flute) gave a superb show, complete with unique attire, title cards and encore. The band

partially dedicated its set to its members who had died of AIDS.

Among the listeners were a few nice surprises. Dick Zimmerman, a fine ragtime pianist who co-founded the Maple Leaf Club in Los Angeles; edits its newsletter, the Rag Times; directs the Scott Joplin Ragtime Festival in Sedalia, Missouri and issues scores of long-lost ragtime pieces, stopped by to pay his respects. Neil Daniels, son of ragtime pioneer Charles N. Daniels (who also wrote many pop hits under the pseudonym "Neil Moret"), was also present, accompanied by his cousin, Nan Bostick, who is writing a biography of her famous relative. Daniels the younger is a noted composer and scholar in his own right in modern classical music circles.

Thanks to all who came to listen, perform or otherwise honor the memory of Wally Rose, and to

---

## WHAT IS A FRISCO CRICKET?

Some of you may be wondering if we discovered a new species of grasshopper while poring through the Foundation archive. Well, the truth is not quite that exciting, but the Frisco Cricket does have its origins in the world of traditional jazz.

Tradition has it that pioneer New Orleans cornetist Buddy Bolden, besides operating a barbershop and being a leader in the development of jazz, also published a neighborhood newspaper called *The Cricket*. Though this is by no means an established fact, the legend alone is strong enough that the name came to mind when we were trying to come up with a name for our own newsletter. We wanted a name that would illustrate the our commitment to traditional jazz. What better way than with a title associated with the music's very origins?

As for the "Frisco" part of the name, its long history of use in West Coast jazz band names made it a natural for our consideration. The way it sounds with the word "Cricket" pretty much decided the issue. By the way, we have heard an explanation of the term's origins, not as an impure shortening of "San Francisco," but as a nautical term from another language referring to the type of sheltered harbor which coincidentally exists here.

We will use our "Cricket" to let you know what we have been able to accomplish with your support, to inform you of jazz-related events and products (many available only to our members), and to present articles about traditional jazz. Unfortu-

## The Frisco Cricket

Issue No. 1

Published quarterly by the  
**SAN FRANCISCO TRADITIONAL JAZZ  
FOUNDATION**

650 California Street, 12th Floor  
San Francisco, CA 94108  
Phone: (415) 522-7417, FAX: (415) 922-6934

Editor: Marty Eggers

John R. Browne III	Stan Chapman	Charles Huggins
Charles Campbell	Thomas Ford	Leon Oakley
William Carter	John Gill	William Tooley

Directors

# SAN FRANCISCO STYLE DRUMMING

by Hal Smith

The elements which make up "San Francisco Style" drumming can be heard on nearly any dance band or jazz band recording from the World War I era to the late '20s. However, the percussive devices heard on early discs were used because of limitations in recording technology. When these same techniques were used with Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band or Turk Murphy's Jazz Band they were played at the behest of the bandleaders. The three basic components of San Francisco style drumming are:

- \* Woodblock: syncopated patterns are played on a large woodblock, usually in an ensemble passage or behind "lighter" instrumental solos such as clarinet or piano.
- \* Choked Cymbal: the second and fourth beats of each measure are accented on a hand-dampened cymbal; usually played during an ensemble outchorus or behind brass solos.
- \* Chinese Tom-Tom: the second and fourth beats are accented behind, say, a trombone solo; syncopated patterns (similar to those used on the woodblock) may be played behind a clarinet solo.

New Orleans/Chicago snare drum rolls and ride cymbal playing are heard from time to time in San Francisco jazz, but these devices are not heard on the archetypal SF-style recordings made by the Yerba Buena Jazz Band between 1941 and 1950 (in a 1946 article for *Record Changer* magazine, Neshui Ertegun noted that members of the Yerba Buena band thought that "playing on the snare would create a muddied sound").<sup>1</sup>

\* \* \*

The most influential San Francisco-style drummer was **William J. "Bill" Dart** (1915-1988). His mastery of the techniques described above has influenced traditional jazz percussionists to the present day. Dart began drumming at age eight and taught himself by playing along with records. This intense study of '20s drumming techniques must have helped Dart

immeasurably when he joined the YBJB in 1940.

Most drummers of the '40s played gleaming modern kits with small bass drums, streamlined snares, tunable tom-toms and bright-sounding cymbals. By contrast, Dart's set was a true rattletrap, with a dusty, oversized bass drum, a deep, low-pitched snare, Chinese (non-tunable) toms, dull-sounding cymbals and several woodblocks of varying size and pitch. Despite its unprepossessing appearance, this was the perfect outfit for playing the YBJB's music.

Dart is best remembered for his woodblock work, as heard on the many YBJB sides made for the West Coast label.<sup>2</sup> He wrought an amazing variety of sound from the collection of blocks mounted on his bass drum. This was the perfect compliment to the 4/4 banjo, the steady two-beat of the tuba and the ragtime piano. It was especially effective during opening ensembles and behind Wally Rose on the piano-and-rhythm rags.

If overused, or played in the wrong spot, the Chinese tom-tom can drag the proceedings down miserably. But Bill Dart played them with animation and always in just the right spot. Occasionally he even played them on an outchorus,<sup>3</sup> as Andrew Hilaire did on Jelly Roll Morton's recording of *Black Bottom Stomp*.<sup>4</sup>

When Turk Murphy, Bob Scobey and finally Harry Mordecai left the Watters band at Hambone Kelly's, the rhythmic feel changed. Dart, Wally Rose and Dick Lammi stayed on, but the driving 4/4 of Mordecai's banjo was gone. Recordings made during this period usually feature slower tempos than those played by the two-trumpet band and there is a more pronounced two-beat feel.<sup>5</sup> Perhaps at Watters' insistence, Dart was limited to playing afterbeats on the

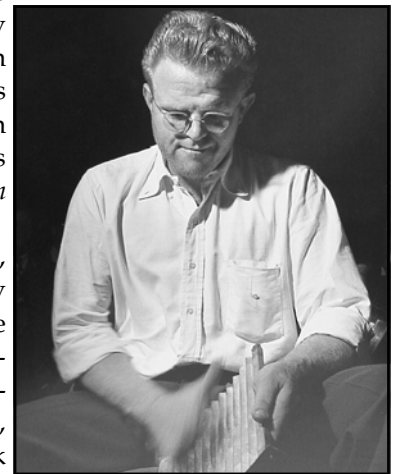


Photo Credit: George Fletcher

<sup>1</sup>Neshui Ertegun, "The Lu Watters Band", *Record Changer*, April, 1946.

<sup>2</sup>Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, Good Time Jazz 4GTJCD-4409-2.

<sup>3</sup>"Weary Blues" and "Trombone Rag", Disc Four, Good Time Jazz 4GTJCD-4409-2.

<sup>4</sup>Jelly Roll Morton, *Birth Of The Hot*, Bluebird CD 07863 66641-2.

<sup>5</sup>Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band At Hambone Kelly's, 1949-50, Merry Makers MMRC CD-10.

## SF DRUMMERS

choked cymbal. On the Down Home and Mercury 78s recorded by Watters in 1949 and '50, this is the predominant percussive device.<sup>6</sup>

At one point in the late '40s, Watters reduced Dart's kit to a piece of plywood covered with woodblocks!<sup>7</sup> This was the last straw for Dart and he temporarily left the YBJB to join Bob Scobey's fledgling "Alexander's Jazz Band." The Bay Area correspondent for the *Record Changer* noted that Dart was "at last able to play the kind of drumming he is capable of" with Alexander's JB.<sup>8</sup> Scobey was anxious to record this group before the 1948 AFM recording ban took effect and his first sides as a bandleader were done for the Trilon label in December, 1947.<sup>9</sup> Dart, Wally Rose, Harry Mordecai and bassist Squire Girsback were in the rhythm section and the session sounds very much like a one-trumpet version of the Yerba Buena Band. However, Dart did sound somewhat looser on the sides, playing press rolls which would not have been allowed with the YBJB.

While Dart was away from Hambone Kelly's, the percussion chair changed frequently. Fred Higuera, Stan Ward and Harry Green<sup>10</sup> filled in at various times. Banjoist Clancy Hayes and Watters himself played washboard when no drummer was available.

In 1949, Dart returned to the YBJB. He may have reached an agreement with Watters concerning the drumming, as live recordings from Hambone Kelly's in 1950 show Dart playing more and more snare drum — even ride cymbal!<sup>11</sup>

When the Yerba Buena Jazz Band disbanded in 1951, Dart freelanced, playing with Scobey, Jack Sheedy's Jazz Band, the Barbary Coast Stompers, the Superior Stompers and dixielander Pete Daily. Gradually, he edged out of the music business, returning to it only infrequently. Dart's musical associates from the '50s have compared his drumming to Paul Barbarin, Andrew Hilaire and George Wettling.<sup>12</sup> Live recordings bear out these comparisons and illustrate that Dart was more versatile than his playing with Lu Watters would indicate. Still, the rollicking sound of his woodblocks and the metronomic choke cymbal remain Dart's most important legacy.

\* \* \*

**Gordon "Gramps" Edwards** was one of the most admired Bay Area percussionists. His association with Lu Watters actually predated Bill Dart's, as he was one of the drummers in Watters' Sweet's Ballroom Orchestra in the late '30s.



Photo Credit: Unknown

He also played briefly in the 1940 version of the Yerba Buena Jazz Band before Dart joined as a full-time member. No biographical information has come to light on Edwards, but by virtue of his nickname, we may assume that he was older than the other drummers who were active during the 1940s revival.

Clarinetist Bob Helm says that Edwards was influenced by the drumming of Ray McKinley. One can also hear echoes of Ray Bauduc, Dave Tough, George Wettling and Nick Fatool on Edwards' recordings. Despite playing a more swing-oriented style, he apparently fit in well with the Yerba Buenans on the occasions where he subbed for Bill Dart. He was in his element in Pat Patton's Frisco Jazz Band — a swinging mid-'40s combo patterned on Eddie Condon's bands. Edwards was certainly in familiar territory playing with Condon himself, when the latter brought a touring band to Hambone Kelly's for a guest shot in 1949.

It is worth the listener's efforts to seek out Gordon Edwards' unique drumming: on several acetates by the Sweet's Ballroom Orchestra, numerous 78s by Pat Patton's Frisco Jazz Band and the 1950 "Frisco Footwarmers" sides by Bob Scobey (reissued on Good Time Jazz).<sup>13</sup>

<sup>6</sup>Lu Watters' *Yerba Buena Jazz Band*, Vols. 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, Homespun LPs H-101, H-102, H-103, H-104, H-106; GHB BCD-97, BCD-119.

<sup>7</sup>Albert Otto, *Record Changer*, January, 1949.

<sup>8</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>9</sup>Bob Scobey's *Alexander's Jazz Band*, Cadillac/Dawn Club LP DC-12004.

<sup>10</sup>Bob Helm to author, September, 1992.

<sup>11</sup>"You Can Depend on Me", *Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band Live At Hambone Kelly's: 1950*, GHB BCD-93.

<sup>12</sup>Bob Mielke; Gene Mayl; George Probert, conversations with the author.

<sup>13</sup>Private recordings of Sweet's Ballroom Orchestra in author's collection; *Frisco Jazz Band Featuring Clancy Hayes*, Cadillac/Dawn Club LP DC-12005; *Bob Scobey's Frisco Band*, Good Time Jazz GTCD-12032-2.

## SF DRUMMERS

Another important San Francisco drummer was **Fred Higuera** (1909-1983). His father was a professional drummer and young Fred was a quick study. He was turned on to jazz as a teenager, after hearing recordings by percussionist Vic Berton with Red Nichols' Five Pennies. It is likely that he heard some of the great drummers of the day in person at various Bay Area venues. In the late '30s, Higuera worked frequently with pianist Paul Lingle in what he later described as "Chicago-style" bands (most likely modeled on the Condon groups). He played briefly with Jimmy Dorsey's Orchestra and Seger Ellis' Choirs of Brass and also alternated with Gordon Edwards in Lu Watters' Sweet's Ballroom Orchestra.<sup>14</sup> Despite the sketchy personnel listings, the acetates by this group leave no doubt as to which drummer is playing. Where Edwards plays a light two-beat in the Ray McKinley mode, Higuera's thundering breaks and fills are reminiscent of Gene Krupa.<sup>15</sup>

Higuera did not subscribe to the rhythmic approach of the Yerba Buenans, or with limiting the drummer to playing woodblocks. He also disagreed with the theory that the drummer should be "felt but not heard." He liked to use the entire drum set and play *out* (he once told this writer to "Aim for the bottom head when you hit the top head"! ). Even though he seemed to be at odds with the YBJB's ideas on drumming, he successfully filled in for Bill Dart on a number of occasions in the late '40s. Wire recordings of the band with Higuera show that he was able to approximate Dart's sound perfectly.<sup>16</sup> In later years, he mentioned that he had learned this style from his father, in the '20s!

Higuera worked exclusively with Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band in the early '50s and appeared on his best-known recordings for Good Time Jazz. Sides like *That's-A-Plenty*<sup>17</sup> and *Big Butter and Egg Man*<sup>18</sup> are excellent examples of Higuera's dynamic, powerful drum-

ming and it is easy to hear why he was so highly regarded by his musical associates. *Hindustan*<sup>19</sup> is a textbook study of how to play Latin drums; it sounds like multiple drummers are performing! *South*<sup>20</sup> illustrates his familiarity with the traditional lexicon and the recently-reissued *Panama* demonstrates Higuera's mastery of modern jazz drumming, in an unusual three-chorus *brush* solo.<sup>21</sup>



Photo Credit: Unknown

After leaving Scobey, he continued to freelance with commercial and Latin bands in the Bay Area and Sacramento. In the '70s he worked regularly with Phil Howe and Devon Harkins in the Basin Street Trio. In 1979, at age 70, his playing was just as exciting and impressive as on his recordings from the '50s. I had the privilege of meeting Fred Higuera in '79 and was able to "talk shop" with him at length. I will never forget his remark that "Nobody plays 'stop-and-gos' anymore!", referring to the nearly-forgotten Chicago device of 50 years previous.

Higuera's drum licks can easily be traced to a number of different styles. A close study of his playing reveals many similarities to his favorite drummers, including Ben Pollack, Baby Dodds, Zutty Singleton, Gene Krupa, Buddy Rich and modern jazzmen Shelly Manne and Max Roach. Fred Higuera can be heard on many recordings with Bob Scobey (Good Time Jazz, Verve, Jansco, Jazzology) and on the privately-circulated acetates of the Sweet's Ballroom Orchestra. Additionally, he may possibly be the drummer with the Seger Ellis Choirs of Brass, both on commercial 78s and transcriptions.<sup>22</sup>

\* \* \*

**Clarence "Clancy" Hayes** (1908-1972) is best known as a banjoist and vocalist, but was also a fine guitarist and an excellent drummer. He came from a musical family and took up drums while in the third grade. He was playing professionally by the early '20s and wound

<sup>14</sup>Private recordings; author's collection.

<sup>15</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>16</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>17</sup>*Bob Scobey's Frisco Band, The Scobey Story Vol. 1*, Good Time Jazz CD GTCD-12032-2.

<sup>18</sup>*Bob Scobey's Frisco Band, The Scobey Story Vol. 2*, Good Time Jazz CD GTCD-12033-2.

<sup>19</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>20</sup>*Bob Scobey's Frisco Band, The Scobey Story Vol. 1, op. cit.*

<sup>21</sup>*The Great Bob Scobey And His Frisco Band Vol. 1*, Jazzology JCD-275.

<sup>22</sup>*Seger Ellis' Choirs Of Brass, 1937*, Alamac LP QSR-2408.

<sup>23</sup>*Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, Disc Two*, Good Time Jazz 4GTJ CD-4409-2.

## SF DRUMMERS

up in San Francisco in 1926. He was then playing banjo and guitar and was also kept busy as a crooner in big bands and on radio. He joined the prewar Yerba Buena Jazz Band as banjoist and vocalist, but switched back to drums with the Benny Strickler version of the YBJB at the Dawn Club. He can be heard on transcriptions of the band's August, 1942 broadcast.<sup>23</sup> Later, he played and recorded with Bunk Johnson, when the latter fronted the remnants of the Yerba Buena band at C.I.O. Hall.<sup>24</sup> Hayes' drumming on both of these



Photo Credit: Unknown

sessions is very similar to Dart's, with a heavy concentration of woodblock and choked cymbal work. Later, Clancy Hayes was in the rotation of drummers who played in Bob Scobey's Frisco Band, alternating with Dart, Gordon Edwards and Fred Higuera. A 1963 Good Time Jazz recording, "Swinging Minstrel," probably illustrates how Hayes played with Scobey's band.<sup>25</sup>

\* \* \*

Trombonist/bandleader Turk Murphy was notoriously critical of drums and drummers. He claimed, correctly, that a drummer had the power to wreck a carefully-balanced ensemble sound and was also concerned that the monotone note of the bass drum would interfere with the moving lines of the tuba or bass.<sup>26</sup> Subsequently, Murphy's bands were most often drumless, though he did hire some excellent percussionists over the years...

**Stan Ward** was a versatile drummer who worked with Nick Esposito's commercial band, Wingy Manone's Jazz Band (at Club Hangover) and was one of Bill Dart's substitutes in the Yerba Buena Jazz Band. He was with

the Turk Murphy "Circus Jazz Band" at the Cinegrill and the Garden of Allah, both in Hollywood.<sup>27</sup> He made both of Turk's 1950 sessions for Good Time Jazz<sup>28</sup>, playing more or less a '20s dance band drum style. The unusual beat he played on *Ragtime Dance*<sup>29</sup> made a tremendous impression on bandleader Murphy.<sup>30</sup>

**Johnny Brent** followed Stan Ward in the Murphy band drum chair. He was a studio percussionist in Los Angeles before joining Turk. He played the Clayton Club in Sacramento and toured in Colorado with the band. He was also present on the 1951 GTJ recording sessions which produced such Murphy classics as *Little John's Rag*, *Minstrels of Annie Street*, *Mesa 'Round*, *He's Just a Cousin of Mine* and the Murphy theme *Bay City*.<sup>31</sup> He played a light, easygoing style with lots of afterbeats on the woodblock, similar to the approach used by Bennie Moten's drummers in the early '20s.

**Thad Vandon** (Wilkerson) came from a show business background and was drumming, hoofing and singing at an early age. He first worked with Turk's band in 1955 and would be in and out of the band for the next 13 years. Though he was more of a show drummer than a jazz player, he played very good time and could play convincingly in any style from ragtime to rock.<sup>32</sup>

**Harold "Smokey" Stover** (19??-1974) was one of Turk Murphy's favorite drummers.<sup>33</sup> He worked with the Orrin Tucker Orchestra in the '30s and wound

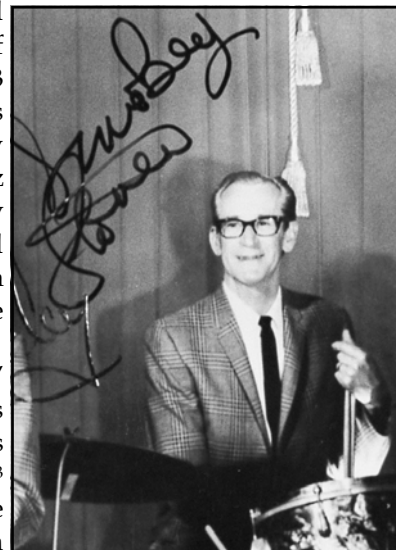


Photo Credit: Unknown

up in Los Angeles, where he played with Ted Vesely's Jazz Band and also with Jess Stacy. Next, he moved to San Francisco and landed the job as house drummer at Club Hangover. There he played with Marty Marsala,

<sup>24</sup>Bunk & Lu, Good Time Jazz GTCD-12024-2.

<sup>25</sup>Clancy Hayes, *Swingin' Minstrel*, Good Time Jazz GTCD-10050.

<sup>26</sup>Turk Murphy, conversation with the author.

<sup>27</sup>Turk Murphy's Jazz Band at the Cinegrill, Vols. 1, 2, Fairmount LPs 111, 112.

<sup>28</sup>Turk Murphy's Jazz Band Favorites, Vols. 1, 2, Good Time Jazz FCD-60-011, FCD-60-026.

<sup>29</sup>*Ibid.*, Vol. 1

<sup>30</sup>Jim Goggin, *Turk Murphy: Just For The Record*, San Leandro, San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation, 1982, p.19.

<sup>31</sup>Turk Murphy's Jazz Band Favorites, Vols. 1, 2, *op. cit.*

<sup>32</sup>Turk Murphy's Jazz Band, Motherlode LP-0103, 0104; *The Many Faces Of Ragtime*, Atlantic LP SD-1613.

<sup>33</sup>Goggin, *op. cit.*, p.147.

# RUSS GILMAN: PIANO GENIUS SURFACES

by William Carter

"Two bars of music and you know it's him," says trombonist Jim Leigh, who met the fabled Russ Gilman in the late forties.

Indeed, traditional jazz history holds few if any parallels to the near-mythic status of this gifted pianist.

Almost as remarkable as the Gilman phenomenon itself is the fact that a fine CD of his solo playing, *Back to the Barrelhouse*, has just been issued on the Echoes label through the faith and generosity of Ed Sprankle and others (you can order it from the Foundation — see our

---

## SF DRUMMERS, *Concluded*

Joe Sullivan, Lee Collins and Lizzie Miles, among others. He was in Los Angeles again in the '60s, working with Wild Bill Davison and with Burt Wilson's Silver Dollar Jazz Band, with an occasional trip to Virginia City to play with Merle Koch's combo. He followed Thad Vandon into the Murphy band in 1968 and stayed two years.

Stover was a thoughtful, accomplished percussionist who always played with good taste, grace and wit. His choked cymbal playing on the outchorus of *Coal Cart Blues* was letter-perfect, as was the exaggerated, *sforzando* vaudeville drum roll on the "D" strain of *Original Rags*.<sup>34</sup> He was one of the few Murphy drummers to be given solo features. Stover's *Weary Blues* was nothing short of sensational; he could play as many hot choruses as Turk would throw his way.<sup>35</sup>

Unfortunately, the only commercial recordings of Smokey Stover are a few Tom-Tom 78s by Ted Vesely and a Riverside LP by Joe Sullivan's trio.<sup>36</sup> Some Club Hangover broadcasts by Lee Collins were briefly available on the Rarities label, but they are now out of print.<sup>37</sup> It is hoped that the live recording of a 1970 Los Angeles concert by the Murphy band — with Stover in peak form — will be issued on CD in the near future. He was surely one of the best San Francisco drummers, but was woefully under-recorded.

\* \* \*

The generation following Bill Dart produced some notable traditional jazz percussionists: **Lloyd Byassee** (Bay City JB, Great Pacific JB, Turk Murphy, South Frisco JB), **Wayne Jones** (Original Salty Dogs, Turk Murphy, Bob Schulz), **Tom Hyer** (Dixieland Rhythm Kings, Gin Bottle Seven) and **Bob Thompson** (Red Onion JB, Turk Murphy). Two decades hence, San Francisco-style drummers **John Gill** (Turk Murphy, Minstrels of Annie Street,

current products on page 9). Recorded from 1949 through 1995, sixteen of the twenty-six tracks are of Russ' own highly original compositions, mostly in the blues idiom, with the balance being pop and jazz numbers.

For over four decades Russ Gilman has been a Nevada resident, often working as a miner and prospector. Though the album notes report that he played his last professional piano gig at a Reno casino in 1965, he never, in truth, worked as a musician with any regularity. Yet his rollicking freshness of sound and personality, and his mysterious appearances and disappearances, remain emblazoned on the hearts of those of us "moldy figs" lucky enough to have played with or heard him.

He was known for doing things like walking five miles up a mountain to a rehearsal, therefore arriving at midnight; or playing one intermission at Hambone Kelly's and then vanishing into the night, prompting players like Bob Helm to ask about him for years thereafter.

A member of the first Conrad Janis Jazz Band in Los Angeles, which won the *Record Changer* "Amateur Jazz Band Contest" in 1949 and went on to fill in for Kid Ory at the Beverly Caverns, he made irregular appearances with Jim Leigh's El Dorado Jazz Band in the mid-fifties, and later with groups including other self-taught stylists as Ray Ronnei and Tom Sharpsteen.

For nearly half a century Russ has been playing, mostly for his own amazement, in a style seemingly sprung full-blown fifty years before that, featuring florid chord clusterings and sharply lurching rhythms punctuated with left hand judo cuts. Although he claimed to have changed his style completely after 1960 on hearing Thelonius Monk, no such change is evident. More likely, Gilman had simply been moved to discover a musical genie as offbeat as himself.

It's rare indeed, in our era of mass communications and endlessly derivative Dixieland festivals, for a true original like Russ to suddenly emerge from a closet of his own making.

According to Gilman's friend and producer, Ed Sprankle, "Russ is a private

---

<sup>34</sup>Private recordings, author's collection.

<sup>35</sup>*Ibid.*

<sup>36</sup>Joe Sullivan, *New Solos By An Old Master*, Riverside RLP-12-202.

<sup>37</sup>Lee Collins/Ralph Sutton *Jazzola Six, Vols. 1, 2*, Rarities RLP 31,

# “JAMBALAYA + GOLD DUST”

October 26, 1997

Herbst Theater, San Francisco

The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation will present an original musical production, scripted and narrated by William Carter, on Sunday, October 26, 1997. Entitled “Jambalaya + Gold Dust”, it will trace the evolution of classic jazz from New Orleans to San Francisco by way of Chicago and New York. The performance will be held at Herbst Theater in San Francisco from 1:30 to 4:00 PM.

### Dick Hyman Among the Performers

The show will highlight celebrated pianist Dick Hyman with

several cameo spots. It also features a stellar lineup of local musicians: Clint Baker (cornet/tuba), Bill Carter, Marty Eggers (piano/bass), John Gill, Jason Hansen, Carl Lunsford and Bob Schulz, plus the members of Rex Allen’s Swing Express (Leon Oakley, Jim Rothermel, Rex Allen [trombone/vibes], Al Plank and Dave Black). The performers will be grouped into bands representing the various styles of early jazz.

### For Foundation Members Only

Although the concert is free to the public, it is expected to be a

“sell-out.” In anticipation of this and as a service to its members, the Foundation is making 200 ticket reservations available to its members only.

The reservations will be available two to a member, first-come-first-served, by mail only. Reserved tickets must be picked up at the box office before 1:00 PM on the day of the performance. At 1:00 PM any unclaimed tickets will be released to the general public on a first-come-first-served basis.

To make reservations, Foundation members should send a note or postcard with their name and the

## ABOUT THE SAN FRANCISCO TRADITIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION

### What is the Foundation?

Created in 1981 as an archive of several thousand items relating to the jazz revival begun in San Francisco about 1939, the Foundation now seeks to enhance that collection and extend its uses. A wider aim is to help foster live, high quality traditional jazz, regionally and worldwide.

### What does the Foundation do?

Current activities include archival preservation, supporting live events and broadcasts, collaborating with other jazz and educational institutions, and developing new products and media applications.

Although the Foundation lacks the funding to open its archive to the general public, other means are being found to make its resources available. For example, historic recordings and documents are being made available to radio stations; and consumer products such as posters, books and tapes are being publicly offered.

### Who is involved?

You are. Membership is \$25 per year. Benefits

include this quarterly newsletter, invitations to special events and availability of Foundation products (often at exceptionally low prices).

### Donations welcomed

The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation accepts gifts and grants in many forms, including historical items which shed further light on the history of traditional jazz on the West Coast, including (but not limited to) recordings, music, newspaper clippings, photos and correspondence. Contributions of materials or funds are tax-deductible under IRS ruling status 509(a)

**SAN FRANCISCO TRADITIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION**  
Membership Application

Name \_\_\_\_\_  
Address \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Please enclose check or money order for \$25 payable to  
**San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation, 650 California Street,**

# SAN FRANCISCO TRADITIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION

Product Order Form

Name \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

	Members	Non-Members	Quantity	Amount
<b>Compact Discs</b>				
<b>Turk Murphy's Jazz Band</b> <i>At the Italian Village with Claire Austin (MMRC CD-11)</i>	\$12.99	\$15.99	_____	_____
<b>Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band</b> <i>At Hambone Kelly's 1949-50 with Clancy Hayes, etc. (MMRC CD-10)</i>	\$12.99	\$15.99	_____	_____
<b>Bob Helm's Jazz Band – Hotter Than That</b> (Stomp Off CD1310)	\$12.99	\$15.99	_____	_____
<b>Russ Gilman – Back to the Barrelhouse</b> (Echoes 2001)	\$12.99	\$15.99	_____	_____
<b>Books</b>				
<b>Jazz West 2</b> by K. O. Eckland, published by Donna Ewald <i>"The A-to-Z Guide to West Coast Jazz Music"; a unique source</i>	\$12.00	\$15.00	_____	_____
<b>Preservation Hall</b> by William Carter <i>Lavish 315 pp. hardbound. Drew rave national reviews autographed on request</i>	\$25.00	\$33.00	_____	_____
<b>Emperor Norton's Hunch</b> by John Buchanan <i>The story of Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band</i>	\$25.00	\$35.00	_____	_____
<b>The Great Revival</b> by Pete Clute & Jim Goggin <i>The story of the San Francisco jazz revival</i>	\$10.00	\$15.00	_____	_____
			Shipping (\$2.00 per item)	_____
			California residents add 8% sales tax	_____
			Total Enclosed	_____

## ARE YOU A FOUNDATION MEMBER?

If not, join today to begin taking advantage of the special prices on selected jazz books, recordings and events. Your membership also includes a year's subscription to *The Frisco Cricket*. Use the membership application on the facing page.

# *The Frisco Cricket*

SAN FRANCISCO TRADITIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION  
650 California Street, 12th floor  
San Francisco, CA 94108

NONPROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE PAID  
SAN FRANCISCO, CA  
PERMIT NO. 3981



*The Frisco Cricket*

*July 1997*

## **JIM CULLUM JAZZ BAND AT STANFORD**

*July 30, 1997*

*Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University*

The Jim Cullum Jazz Band, hosts of the popular *Riverwalk, Live from the Landing* radio show on National Public Radio, will present a *A Tribute to the Original Dixieland Jazz Band* Wednesday, July 30 at 7:30 PM at Dinkelspiel Auditorium, Stanford University. The concert is presented under the auspices of the Stanford Jazz Workshop. **All proceeds from the concert will go to the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation.** Ticket prices are \$15 and \$12 and are available at the door or by calling (415) 725-ARTS. Cullum's many recordings, including his newly released *Fireworks! Red Hot & Blues, Vol. VI.*, will be available.

### **Other Local Appearances**

As part of the Stanford Jazz Workshop, Cullum will host a Classic Jazz Symposium Saturday, August 2 from noon to 6 PM at Braun Music Center, Stanford University. You can be a participant in the symposium for \$100, or a spectator for \$20. Call (415) 386-8535 for more information.

On Sunday, August 3, Cullum's band will appear at the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Celebration at Todos Santos Plaza in Concord. Sponsored by See's Candies, this all-afternoon event is free to the public and will feature many fine local bands as well.