



Frisco Cricket

Published Quarterly by the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

WINTER 1998

CLANCY HAYES BANJO RESTORED

Restoration Made Possible by Foundation Member's Gift

The banjo played by Clancy Hayes in the 1950s has been restored to its original condition, thanks to a generous gift from Foundation member Lue D. Cramblit.

This banjo is a Bacon Peerless model made by Bacon & Day, probably in the late 1920s. Like all the banjos Clancy played, it is a six-string, or guitar-banjo. It is tuned just like a guitar and has a noticeably different sound from the more standard four-string tenor and plectrum banjos.



Photo by Unknown

Clancy playing his Bacon Peerless at Hambone Kelly's ca. 1950

Clancy began using this banjo around 1950 after his previous banjo, a Bacon & Day Montana No. 4, was stolen. The Bacon Peerless banjo is the instrument heard on Clancy's recordings with the early '50s Yerba Buena Jazz Band, Bob Scobey's Frisco Jazz Band (for Good Time Jazz) and his own album, *Swingin' Minstrel*.

In the 1960s Clancy put away the Bacon banjo in favor of two others, a Vega and a Weymann, which he used with the World's Greatest Jazz Band and at Earthquake McGoon's.

The banjo was a gift to the Foundation from Pete Clute, who had received it from Clancy's son's widow. It was on display during a concert by the South Frisco Jazz Band in November 1995 in the hope of soliciting funds for its restoration. At that time Mr. Cramblit generously came forth with the entire amount. The work was done by Larry Cohea of El Cerrito.

The Foundation has a number of other famous instruments in its collection. It is hoping to eventually restore them all to their original playing condition, beginning with Jack Crook's bass saxophone.



Photo by William Carter

Clancy's banjo after its restoration

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Jack Buck: 1911 - 1997

by Griff Harries

Jack Raymond Buck, a San Francisco trombonist and pianist who worked with Bob Scobey and Pat Patton as well his own Jack Buck Jazz Band, died December 7, 1997 at the age of 86. He is survived by his son Tom.

Jack was born in Keokuk, Iowa, on October 6, 1911. He began playing the piano when he was six years old. By the age of seven he was playing organ at the community church.

As a high school freshman Jack played baritone horn. He took third place at a statewide brass competition by displaying his virtuosity on all types of brass horns. Listening to the many bands playing on Mississippi riverboats solidified Jack's desire to become a jazz player.

The Buck family moved to Oakland, California, in 1928 and Jack attended his senior year at Oakland Technical High. Exercising his option of enrolling in either the band or ROTC, he met with band director Herman Trutner who told him that he really needed a trombone player. Jack bought a trombone, taught himself the "positions" from the piano, and joined the Tech High Band. Shortly thereafter he began playing with a high school Dixieland band which included clarinetist-turned-vocalist Tony Martin. Somewhere he even found time to play on summer cruises.

Following high school Jack hired on with the Griff Williams Band for a couple of years and then the Ellis

Kimball Band as trombonist and arranger. Mary Ann Harris was singing with Kimball's band and, in 1935, agreed to marry Jack.

In 1939 Jack started playing with Pat Patton's [Original] Frisco Jazz Band featuring Red Gillam (and later, Eddie Smith), Jack Crook, Buck, Ray Jahnigen, and Gordon Edwards.

About 1950, following the breakup of both the Frisco Jazz Band and Lu Watters' Yerba Buena Jazz Band, Jack got together with Bob Scobey to form Alexander's Jazz Band (Scobey's middle name) including Scobey, Buck, Pat O'Casey, Burt Bales, Squire Girsback, Bill Dart and Bill Newman. Soon afterwards the recording company changed the name to Bob Scobey's Frisco Band. The band now featured Scobey, Buck, George Probert, Wally Rose, Dick Lammi, Freddy Higuera and Clancy Hayes. Jack stayed with the band for twelve years, playing locally as well as traveling throughout the United States.

When Scobey moved the band permanently to Chicago, Jack wanted no part of its cold, windy winters and returned to the Bay Area where he fronted his own group. But times had turned tough for musicians and in order to support Mary and his family -- Nina, John, Tom and Christina -- Jack found a "day job" in real estate where he became quite successful.

It was during this time that Jack was elected to membership in the prestigious Bohemian Club of San Francisco as well as invited to play piano with Red Gillam's Danville Hotel Jazz Band, providing jazz for dinner and dancing in the Silver Dollar Banquet Room of the old Danville Hotel up until Red's passing in 1970.

A 1971 jam session at Bob Ulsh's newly-completed backyard pool proved to be the official birthplace of Jack Buck's Jazz Band when the owner of the Bow and Bell in Oakland's Jack London Square hired the group on the spot to play at his waterfront restaurant. Under Jack's leadership and Ulsh's management the band performed Monday nights for more than four years, until 1975, when the Oakland Port Authority condemned the building and the club was forced to close.

The band moved into the newly-renovated Danville Hotel in 1976, playing first Sunday afternoons to SRO crowds for many years.

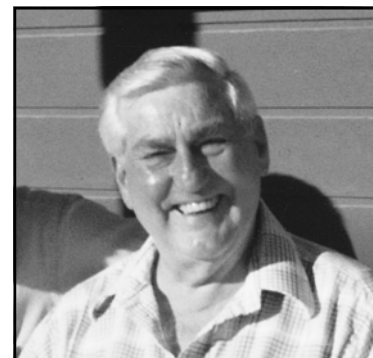


Photo by Jim Goggin

The Frisco Cricket

Issue No. 3

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

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Imagining Buddy Bolden

by Dave Radlauer

After presenting classic jazz on public radio for 15 years, I at long last decided to tackle the difficult challenge of preparing a radio documentary about Buddy Bolden, the first band-leading "King" of New Orleans trumpeters active about 1900-06. To this day Bolden is an enigma shrouded in legend. I wanted listeners to *imagine* Bolden's music through the words of those who had actually heard or known him and to play recordings of the trumpeters most likely representative of his rough, unschooled but inspiring sound.

I was first moved to this task by reading a gripping fictional biography of Bolden, *Coming Through Slaughter*, 1976 by *The English Patient* author, Michael Ondaatje — a superb attempt to penetrate the legend, personality, and eventual insanity of jazz music's most shadowy and possibly most innovative character. Ondaatje has given us a most spirited and inspired tribute to the first, self-invented jazzman. Bolden was the first to play blues for dancing, the first to lead a real jazz band, the first to live a flamboyant larger-than-life existence as "King" of the jazz tribe and "call the children home" with his horn which could be heard for miles around the Crescent City at the beginning of the Jazz Century. However, Ondaatje's spine-tingling novel is marred by such longstanding fictions about Bolden as that he was a barber by trade and that he published a salacious scandal sheet called *The Cricket* (of which no copy has ever surfaced).

Ondaatje's book appeared a few years before the definitive, *In Search of Buddy Bolden: First Man of Jazz*, 1978 by Donald Marquis, which is surely the most authoritative work on Bolden, painstakingly researched for over 15 years by means of interviews, articles, books about jazz and New Orleans, and an exhaustive search of documentary records in and around Louisiana. A work carefully reasoned and cautious in its conclusions, *In Search of Buddy Bolden* guided my attempt to document on radio what can be reliably told of Bolden's life, sound, musical repertory, and eventual insanity.

Marquis provides indispensable leads to dozens of sources of oral histories, autobiographies and monographs: books by

Sidney Bechet, bassist Pops Foster, guitarist Danny Barker, Jelly Roll Morton's recollections ("the most powerful trumpet player in history") as told to Alan Lomax. He also gives us clues to Bolden's actual sound. Thus, by having the words of eyewitnesses read by actors and radio voices, reliable descriptions of horn players closest in sound to Bolden, and his repertory, I had all the elements for a documentary audio montage.

LIN PATCH

(1953 - 1997)

Reedman Lin Patch passed away unexpectedly on December 16, 1997, leaving his wife, Nancy, and their two young children, James and Katherine.

Lin was a charter member of the popular Royal Society Jazz Orchestra, formed in 1975. He had also worked with many other Bay Area bands over the past two decades.

Besides being a fine player on all the reeds, Lin was also a talented music teacher as well as a skilled woodwind repairman.

Born in Virginia but raised in Menlo Park, California, Lin grew up with a love of music inspired by his parents, both musicians. Lin's mother, Helen Morgan, encouraged him to take up the tenor sax. Lin played in local bands during his high school years and eventually enrolled at San Jose State as a music major. During his senior year in 1975, he met fellow music student Don Neely and subsequently joined him as a charter member of the RSJO.

Lin's main inspiration was Coleman Hawkins, followed by Ben Webster and Lester Young. He especially loved

the music of the black bands of the 1920s and 1930s and had his own radio program, "Radio Rhythm", featuring this music, on station KALW-FM in San Francisco in the 1980s.

Lin died of pneumonia resulting from complications of leukemia. A memorial service was held in Menlo Park on December 20. His family welcomes donations in his name to the Leukemia Society or American Cancer Society.

Carla Normand, vocalist with the RSJO, contributed to this article.



Photo by Rob Thomas

Lin Patch in 1989

BOLDEN

Bolden's Music

By all accounts Bolden did play exceptionally loud, he played almost everything in the key of B-flat, and though musically untrained and lacking technique his improvisatory embellishments, especially his expressiveness playing blues, deeply affected all who heard him. According to musicians Kid Ory, Bud Scott and Mutt Carey Buddy's fame came in part from his ability to "fake." Ory said that "if he forgot a passage he would introduce embellishments that his listeners often enjoyed more than the music originally written."

Trombonist Roy Palmer agreed: "Buddy would never bother with written music, he faked all the time." He in fact may have been able to read music, but not very well and in any case he played from his head. But Bolden's greatest contribution was that he played blues and stomps for dancing leading an ensemble band that enthused the populace of New Orleans regardless of class, race or position. (Marquis, 1978)

Before Bolden New Orleans music was still ragtime, after him it definitely became jazz. Creole clarinetist George Baquet vividly recalled hearing Bolden's music the first time and its impact:

All of a sudden, Buddy stomps, knocks on the floor with his trumpet to give the beat and...they played "Make Me a Pallet." Everybody rose and yelled out "Oh, Mr. Bolden, play it for us Buddy, play it!" I'd never heard anything like that before. I'd played "legitimate" stuff. But this, it was something that pulled me in. They got me up on the stand and I played with them. After that I didn't play legitimate so much.

(Marquis, 1978, p. 99)

And when the occasion called for less stimulating fare his repertory included waltzes, ragtime, slow drag, spirituals and hymns, and the occasional Joplin rag. Still, we can only imagine what Bolden actually sounded like because he never recorded. We can only speculate on how the history of jazz could have differed – and know that a Bolden recording certainly would have demonstrated an early alternative to Louis Armstrong's relatively schooled sound and virtuoso soloing. Instead, that contrast remained unnoted until the New Orleans revival of the 1940's brought forth rougher, more primitive sounds, initially heard by the public from Bunk Johnson.

And while Bunk knew how to sound like King Bolden and even recorded an invaluable medley of Bolden variations he is not where to look for imagining

Bolden's sound. While rich and brilliant, Bunk's music derived from a proper schooling in ragtime. Furthermore, Bunk has been soundly de-bunked on the general subject of Bolden.

Traces of Bolden

Freddie Keppard (1890 - 1931), who followed Bolden as "King" of the horn playing band leaders both in lifestyle and in rough, loud, blues-based improvisational lead horn, is probably a closer approximation to Bolden's general approach, though still a bit more refined than Bolden, according to contemporaneous ear witnesses. Unlike Bolden, Keppard struck out on the road with his Creole Jazz Band, even visiting the West Coast before he settled in Chicago in the World War I era. Unlike Bolden, Keppard made records, though legend probably has it right that he had lost most of his power and brilliance when he finally recorded. Keppard's Chicago recordings of 1926-27 do reveal glimpses of what must have been a very convincing blues-for-dancing power trumpet sharing Bolden's outlook. (See discography)

Before Bolden New Orleans music was still ragtime, after him it definitely became jazz

Other trumpeters can serve as reliable guides in helping us imagine the Bolden sound. **Wooden Joe Nicholas** (b. 1883), who was recorded in the 1940s, learned to play cornet by listening to Bolden, his all-time favorite, and followed him wherever he played. Wooden Joe's sound is heard and described in *Bill Russell's American Music Book/CD*. He manifests the raw soulfulness reported by those who actually heard Bolden. Nicholas' recordings of *Tiger Rag* and *Sugar Blues* – popular New Orleans fare at the turn of the century – bring us very close to Bolden's music.

Trumpeter **Lee Collins** (b. 1901) was called "a boy with beautiful tone; he is between Buddy Bolden and Bunk Johnson..." by no less than John Robichaux, Bolden's leading band competitor at the time. This, according to Collins' autobiography, *Oh Didn't He Ramble: The Life Story of Lee Collins*, 1974.

Even more recent trumpet/cornet players seem to have emulated Bolden's general approach in their sound: **Wingy Manone** in the 1930s, **P. T. Stanton** in the 1950s, and even **Clint Baker** today, seem to be possessed by the spirit of Bolden's brash, rough, blues-for-dancing, stomp, and slow drag lead horn that heralded a new music nearly a century ago.

Bolden's Insanity

BOLDEN

Buddy Bolden's end — after some 25 years in a Louisiana insane asylum — was tragic. He was hospitalized after he had band troubles, became erratic, more than usually quarrelsome, and bedridden. An incident in which he struck his mother, who was tending his bedside, with a water pitcher, began the series of events leading to his lengthy internment in the Jackson Insane Asylum in 1906. During his years at the asylum he was not considered dangerous; he was free to move about and work at the hospital. He was even known to have played his horn a bit, though never with the occasional bands formed by patients. (Marquis, 1978)

But Buddy's condition gradually deteriorated. Eventually he became uncommunicative. After twenty years he walked around ritually touching objects and had, according to hospital staff:

...a string of talk that is incoherent. Hears voices of people that bothered him before he came here...does no work, and spends his time waving his hands about in the air and talking with imaginary voices. (Marquis, 1978, p. 129)

Donald Marquis rules out alcohol or syphilitic dementia which have been suggested as possible causes of Bolden's madness. He suggests "doubts and frustrations," the difficulty of balancing equal weight among his simultaneous roles as idol, husband, father, lover, band leader, teacher and pupil, noting that Bolden's

...lack of a complete musical education left him vulnerable.... What he wanted he was not capable of fully achieving. Neither was he prepared to cope with the overwhelming fame that came early in his adult life. (Marquis, 1978, p. 125)

Finally, by returning to Michael Ondaatje's fictional

"Imagining Buddy Bolden," heard in September 1997 as part of the series "Jazz Rhythm," produced for KALW-FM, San Francisco, California from 1984 until December 1997.

DISCOGRAPHY

All are tunes known to have been performed by Bolden, except where noted.

Baker, Clint, "Panama," "Just a Little While to Stay Here" [recorded in California, 1992], *In the Groove* (CD), Burgundy Street Productions.

Celestin, Papa, with Original Tuxedo Jazz Orchestra, "Careless Love" [New Orleans, 1/23/25], *Oscar "Papa" Celestin/Sam Morgan* (CD), Jazz Oracle BDW 8002.

Collins, Lee, with the Jones and Collins Astoria Hot Eight, "Damp Weather," "Tip Easy Blues" [New Orleans,

(Continued on page 8)

Buddy Bolden in *Coming Through Slaughter* where my inspiration for "Imagining Buddy Bolden" started, we may be able to more deeply penetrate the inner conflicts of what Ondaatje depicts as Buddy's "mad dignity." He conjectures that Bolden was exhausted by the effort of sustaining the "King" persona he had invented for himself, living outside conventional roles and rules that others had to hold themselves together or fall back on. Bolden's insanity took him away from the grasp of others' demands to a place with no history and no parading:

...reputation made the room narrower and narrower, till you were crawling on your own back, full of your own echoes, till you were drinking in you own recycled air. (Ondaatje, 1976, p. 86)

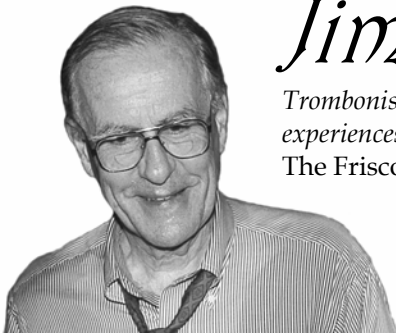
Air — and its fleeting alchemical transformation into music by breath — is Ondaatje's fitting metaphor for Bolden's inventiveness, brilliance and madness, as suggested in Jelly Roll Morton's "I Thought I Heard Buddy Bolden Say":

I thought I heard Buddy Bolden shout,
Open up that window and let that bad air out,
Open up that window and let that foul air out,
I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say.

The air of the Twentieth Century has been much enlivened by the breath of inspiration that emanated from turn-of-the-century New Orleans. Those breaths which became magical notes still reverberate today as we try to imagine Buddy Bolden and the origin of our most unique American art form.

Discography and Bibliography

Following are discographic and bibliographic materials for this article and sources which provided the music and readings for the radio documentary,



Jim Remembers...

Trombonist, author, and teacher, James Leigh shares his 55-year experiences of the Traditional Jazz Revival in an exclusive series for The Frisco Cricket.

Part Two: Becoming Turk Murphy

The first week of 1952 I caught a Pacific Southwest shuttle from Los Angeles to San Francisco with Turk Murphy. He was 36 and in his musical prime, I was 21. On Sunday, January 6, Turk and a band reassembled with difficulty for the occasion would play a concert christening the basement of the Italian Village nightclub on Columbus Avenue, and I couldn't miss it. (That concert is available on the SFTJF's CD-11) It was my first plane ride, the roughest I've ever had, but that was a small price to pay for the glimpse I would get of Turk's life, which was the life I craved: grey skies, damp weather, and, inside a snug flat, an affectionate wife (named Grace) All that, and to be Turk Murphy, too!

For the truth is that since listening to Turk's band nightly for six weeks the previous year in L. A., I had wanted to become Turk Murphy. This amiable dementia would last me pretty well through the 1950s, which were my 20s. Though he never stammered when singing or announcing, Turk fought all his life against that speech impediment, and before the mid-50s I would develop a stammer myself; causing a close friend to say, "You're just lucky Turk isn't blind or one-legged."

Within a few weeks of that concert Turk would be leading a quintet in the Village basement five nights a week, with Bob Helm, Wally Rose, Dick Lammi on banjo and Bob Short doubling tuba and cornet. This project was initiated by jazz enthusiasts Bill Mulhern and Charles Campbell (presently the owner of a San Francisco art gallery and an SFTJF board member). I had returned to my job in Southern California after the January 6 concert, and for me that cellar on the North Beach had taken on the magnetism of Mecca for a Muslim. Nine months later I finally made the move north.

When I arrived, Turk as good as adopted me. He found me a place to stay — the kitchen of Charles Campbell's flat on Chestnut Avenue (Lammi already had the spare bedroom). He found me a job, warehousing for a record distributor on Sixth Street. He even wrote me a trombone exercise, a sort of arabesque through the twelve keys which I still play today.

After a couple of weeks on the Campbell kitchen floor, I began sharing Turk's flat, one building north of Charles'. Turk and Grace had come to a parting of the ways. For half the \$50 rent I got the back bedroom and the privileges of the house. Responsibilities, too:

not merely my share of cleaning and tidying — Turk ran a tight ship — but what would soon become a demanding sideline as Turk's social secretary.

In the old phrase, Turk was candy to women, and the feeling was mutual. Ex-girlfriends frequently called — his name was in the book — as well as women not yet on his string. Perhaps most problematically, there were the current girlfriends. Except for grumbling at odd moments about one or another, and not always by name, Turk did not keep me posted. When the phone rang I was on my own:

May I speak with Turk? This is Jeanie (or Mary Ann, or Catherine, or Polly, Yolanda, Betty, Pam or Kate or Renee or Sue).

Sorry, he's not here right now.

Well, where is he?

Don't know. Sorry. You want to leave your number?

When are you going to see him?

I don't know. He's in and out.

Well. it's important. I mean, I've got to talk to him.

Leave your number.

Who is this?

This is Jim.

Do I know you?

I don't think so.

Well, what are you doing there?

I live here. Look, I'll leave your number where he'll see it.

No. No. Listen, when you see him, you tell him, first thing, say "Call Jeanie, it's urgent!" Jeanie! Skyline 13226 You got that?

Got it.

And tell him I'll be home the rest of the day. And tonight.

That version is very much abbreviated, and the names have been changed to protect the innocent: not many days passed on which I didn't have to field two or three such calls. So I was that much gladder to have a home away from home, around the corner in the village basement. It seemed to provide me with everything I needed, even a wife-to-be, Carol, later to cut a considerable swath as a singer. When I first laid eyes on her, that autumn of '52, she was dancing a solo Charleston in front of the

bandstand. Afterward, Charles sat her down at the table I was sharing with the artist Lom Le Goullon, and told us, "Don't let her drink anything alcoholic." She was 18, it turned out. Until then I hadn't even known I was looking for a jazz girl. Carol certainly filled the bill; forty-five years later she is still a jazz girl. Still, it would be months before we finally shared a roof.

I was still getting used to sharing a roof with my idol. Turk acknowledged having been impressed with Jack Teagarden before converting to the earlier music, after which he credited Kid Ory as an influence (Turk labeled his album of the Crescent 78s "FATHER ORY"). He actually preferred Roy Palmer. Except for traces, he sounded like neither: for a traditional musician he was, like Bob Helm, very much a stylistic original.

It is next to impossible to say precisely what I learned from Turk *musically* as a result of my close friendship with him, except that I was in what might be called a Total Imitation mode. He was a success as a band leader, but none of that rubbed off on me when I tried to lead a band. The truth was rather that he was a son of three-ring circus as a man, and I was a spellbound spectator.

He loved all forms of parade and circus music. Once I heard him debate a friend about the most desirable bedroom music. The friend said, "Segovia." Brandishing a large fist, Turk said, "Wrong. J-J-John Philip Sousa!" His Spike Jones collection was complete, and he revered the great film comedians past and present. (He was the first person who pointed out to me Buster Keaton's superiority to Chaplin, and my first week in town he took me to see Jacques Tati's *Fête du Jour*, which he had already seen twice. When Turk laughed, it was hard not to laugh with him; he laughed a lot, so it seemed fair enough to be expected in share his daily grief.

That was his word, as in, "So-and-so's giving me a lot of grief." Grounds for complaint were as necessary in Turk's life as fiber in a healthy diet. Complaint needs two things: a cause, real or imagined, and a sympathetic ear. Women and his band — not necessarily in that order — were his causes. His perfectionism guaranteed that some member of the band had to be a source of grief at any given moment. The only person who came away blameless, as long as I knew Turk, was Wally Rose. (Later, when I played gigs for Wally — a perfectionist himself — I understood why; Wally was professionally punctilious; he was also good-natured and very kind.)

Then as now it seemed to me that Turk and Lu Watters were the most successful composers in San Francisco jazz, and I find Turk's tunes more varied and adventuresome than Lu's. Turk wanted at least three strains, and a degree of harmonic intricacy. I still think that his best-known

composition, the challenging *Trombone Rag*, in five flats, is also his best. He told me once that he had written it during the war, when Bill Bardin, then 17, was doing a creditable imitation of Turk in the band replacing the Watters crew at the Dawn Club. Turk was not so busy serving his hitch in the Navy that he didn't find time to put Bardin in his place: "I said, 'Let him try to play that!'"

Among earlier jazz composers, Turk most admired Jelly Roll Morton; he wanted his own tunes, like Morton's, to have a recognizable stamp. Once, when I was foolish enough to mention a harmonic similarity between Turk's *Five Aces* and Benny Goodman's theme song, *Let's Dance*, Turk shot me a dirty look and said nothing.

That first time in San Francisco I would stay less than a year, but my life seemed very full and exciting, though not without its frustrations. As a fledgling musician I needed people to play with, but I wasn't good enough, and all the chairs were taken. When Freddie Crewes, a raggy pianist from Seattle, moved into the Entella Hotel, next door to the Italian Village, I had some company in my misery. Freddie was blind, but asked no favors, and swore he hated seeing-eye dogs because they smelled bad.

On occasion, clarinetist Bob Helm would take us with him after the gig to the virtually soundproof flat of a friend out on Clay Street. There until morning we would drink and play records, and sometimes even try a few tunes — Bob and Freddie and my timid self. I recall one particular morning shortly after Thanksgiving. Helm was in the kitchen, judiciously adding white wine to his turkey soup. Mellowed out from a few drinks, I was stretched on the living room carpet, eyes closed, listening to Louis accompany Bessie's *St. Louis Blues*. This was at least part of the life I'd come north to find. In the process I had learned a lot about how to listen to jazz, and about how ensemble play worked; without that understanding, my hopes of ever playing it would have been nil.

But then I lucked into meeting some young co-religionists in the San Jose area, and clarinetist Rowland Working, with whom I'd played in Southern California, came home from Korea and settled in Berkeley. I thought I could discern the makings of a band. Carol lived down that way, too, in Menlo Park — a powerful added incentive. Turk sold me one of his discarded Conn 32H trombones for \$50 (it would last me many years). For another \$50 Helm sold me a topless but runnable 1941 Plymouth convertible. I attached a do-it-yourself black ragtop from Sears, and felt myself fairly well kitted-out for whatever life might offer now. I was even secretly considering college. So, in the spring of 1953 I loaded up the Plymouth — it didn't take long — and headed for the Bayshore Highway. I had no troubles that I didn't trust

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Dave Radlauer has prepared an imaginative audio production based on his research into the life and music of Buddy Bolden. This CD, a record of Radlauer's Buddy Bolden show as broadcast on KALW, features readings of fact and fiction plus original live and recorded music by Robbie Schlosser, Humphrey Lyttleton & others, demonstrating the style of the "first man of jazz" per all known remembrances.

Members, send us a postcard for your free copy OR, sign up a friend and receive two copies.

Western Connection with Traditional Jazz Benefited Both

by Hal Smith (adapted from an article in the AFCDJS Jazz Rambler)

In the past I have played and recorded Western Swing numbers with my band and also with John Gill's and Chris Tyle's groups. Western tunes work very well in a San Francisco-style jazz band. But occasionally some audience members have made disparaging comments when these numbers are announced. They have indicated that the tunes are "not jazz" and should not be played.

But many "Western" numbers are in fact popular songs which happen to have been recorded by Western musicians. *San Antonio Rose* is considered "Western," but it became one of the most popular tunes of all time after being recorded by Bing Crosby. The traditional jazz repertoire has always included popular music. If a vintage pop tune sounds good played by a trad band, does it matter if the composer is Bob Wills instead of Fats Waller? (To anyone who remains unconvinced: listen to the 1951 Good Time Jazz recording of *San Antonio Rose* by the Firehouse Five Plus Two. Then tell me that's "not jazz.")

It is no accident that recordings by Bob Wills' Texas Playboys are often eagerly sought by hard core traditional

Western - Jazz Connection

There is a definite connection between Western Swing and jazz. Many of Bob Wills' recordings, in particular, have an equal amount of "jazz" and "western" content. His repertoire always included standards like *South, Darktown Strutters' Ball, Basin Street Blues*, and *Trouble in Mind*. Several of his sidemen, including pianist Al Stricklin, guitarist Eldon Shamblin, reedman Wayne Johnson and Woody Wood and trumpeter Tubby Lewis played straight-ahead jazz.

So did the musicians who played non-traditional jazz instruments, such as steel guitarists Leon McAuliffe and Herb Remington, violinists Jesse Ashlock, Louis Tierney and Joe Holley, and mandolinist Tiny Moore. It is no accident that

recordings by Bob Wills' Texas Playboys are often eagerly sought by hard core traditional jazz collectors.

One of Bob Wills' sidemen is largely responsible for the cross-fertilization of Western Swing and traditional jazz. In 1941, Wills hired a young trumpeter named Benny Strickler, who had graduated from working with Southwestern territory bands to playing with "names" -- Ben Pollack, Joe Venuti, Wingy Manone and Seger Ellis. Strickler's idols included Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke and Lu Watters and in turn he became a major influence on Danny Alguire and Alex Brashear, his Texas Playboys trumpet sectionmates.

Strickler introduced the Playboys to trad tunes and composed Wills' theme, *Let's Ride With Bob* (based on Kid Ory's *Savoy Blues*). Strickler's positive jazz contributions are most evident on Wills' Columbia recording of *Ten Years*. This side features a small-band jam chorus led by Strickler's take-no-prisoners trumpet. It shows that the Texas Playboys could play first-rate Dixieland, comparable in quality to Bob Crosby's Bobcats.

When World War II broke up the Wills band, Strickler went to San Francisco to lead the wartime version of the Yerba Buena Jazz Band. After bringing traditional jazz tunes to the Texas Playboys repertoire, Strickler reversed the process by playing Western tunes with the Yerba Buenans. (Later, Danny Alguire continued the practice, playing in Strickler's style and introducing

Western numbers to the Firehouse Five.) This swapping of Western and jazz numbers continues today in a number of bands.

The "Western Connection" reciprocity has benefited both Western music and jazz by augmenting the repertoire and talent pool of each style. Hopefully, after

reading this article, those who dismiss Western Swing will want to find out what they have been missing. They are in for a treat when they hear vintage "cross-over"



Photo by Unknown

Benny Strickler

SFTJF CALENDAR OF EVENTS

Sunday, February 8, 1998, 3 PM to 7 PM – South Frisco Jazz Band in Concert

7th Note Showclub, 915 Columbus Avenue, San Francisco (415) 921-CLUB

\$15 General Admission, \$10 for Foundation Members

Tickets available only at the door, first-come-first-served. Door opens 2 PM

A limited amount of free parking is available

Sunday, April 5, 1998 –

Wally Rose Ragtime Festival

7th Note Showclub, 915 Columbus Avenue,
San Francisco (415) 921-CLUB

Performers and details to be announced later, but
mark your calendars now!

Bunk Johnson Letters

As an added benefit of Foundation membership, we are pleased to provide along with this issue of *The Frisco Cricket* a short publication containing personal letters from New Orleans trumpeter Bunk Johnson to San Francisco pianist Burt Bales. Written between 1945 and 1947, these letters provide insight into Bunk's life and his involvement with San Francisco traditional jazz.

By such occasional, quality publications we hope to present fresh aspects of San Francisco and regional jazz history to our members.

Sunday, June 28, 1998 –

San Francisco Jazz at the 7th Note Showclub

Details to be announced later, but mark your
calendars now!

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)(2).

SF Jazz on the Web

The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation now has a Web site! The site includes sound files and photos of Lu Watters, Turk Murphy and other San Francisco jazz figures from the '30s to the present. You can find us at www.sftradjazz.org.

SAN FRANCISCO TRADITIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION

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JOIN US!

Join the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation today to begin taking advantage of reservations to special events, discounts on selected jazz books and recordings, and a year's subscription to *The Frisco Cricket*. If you are already a member, give the gift of Foundation

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The Frisco Cricket

Winter 1998

SOUTH FRISCO JAZZ BAND IN CONCERT FEBRUARY 8 AT ITALIAN VILLAGE SITE

The San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation is pleased to announce a series of concerts in 1998 at the site of the Italian Village, where the Turk Murphy Jazz Band had its famous residency in the early 1950s.

The first concert, featuring the South Frisco Jazz Band of Southern California, will take place Sunday, February 8, 1998, from 3 PM to 7 PM. General admission is \$15; *admission for Foundation members is only \$10*. Tickets will be available only at the door on a first-come-first-served basis. The door opens at 2 PM. A limited amount of free parking is available.

Still located at 915 Columbus Avenue in San Francisco (near Lombard), but now known as the

7th Note Showclub, the venue once known as the Italian Village had been unused for many years until just recently when it re-opened under new management.

The concert will be held on the club's ground floor, a spacious room with a large 1920s-vintage dance floor. Food and drink will be available for purchase.

Other Foundation Concerts Scheduled

Besides the February 8 concert, the Foundation is also planning to have at least two other concerts at this venue. See our calendar on page 10 for the dates and mark your calendars now!