



THE GREAT ESCAPE!*

****“Anything that is good jazz is a great escape. When you’re involved in playing or listening to great jazz, no one can get to you.” -Woody Herman**

Issue No. 7 March/April 2008

Our First Anniversary “Swing into Spring” Edition-see page 8

www.dixieswing.com

My Brief Encounter with “The Vagabond Lover”

By Bob Knack

Apparently, I’ve had a brush with immortality I didn’t know about.

While chatting with a radio station executive acquaintance of mine recently he asked if I had ever heard the famous “cult” cassette recording going around of Eddie Hubbard’s interview with an inebriated Rudy Vallee. I told him I not only heard it, I was there!



Rudy Vallee

Radio legend [Eddie Hubbard](#) had recently left his longtime radio DJ gig with WGN and was filling some career “down time” by doing a local celebrity interview show recorded in the lower level of a north side Chicago restaurant for later broadcast on a small suburban station. I was working for a TV/Radio/Record production company and we were “plugging”, at the time, a song written by bandleader Al Trace called “That Great Big Friendly Town, Chicago”. If you missed it,

you were not alone. It was an hour show and I was to bring Trace around to be interviewed on the second half. The first 30 minutes was to feature “The Vagabond Lover”, Rudy Vallee.

Vallee was one of the original “crooners”. He used a megaphone to amplify his voice that became one of his trademarks. Bringing a “preppy” look direct from Yale in 1928, he formed a dance band called “The Connecticut Yankees” and in the next few years had over 70 hit records. Before there was a Frank Sinatra, Tom Jones or Elvis, it was said that women would throw their underwear up on stage as he performed.

He also was a big hit in radio, beginning in 1928 and extending through the 1940’s. Vallee made his first movie in 1928 called “The Vagabond Lover”, and considered to be a pretty fair actor; he made 33 films in all. At the time of this interview, however, he was in his late 70’s and mostly out of the limelight.

Eddie, his engineer, Trace and yours truly arrived at the same time and as we descended the stairs, we spotted Vallee, who must have been there quite a while, along with his chauffeur, propped up at the bar complimenting the bar keep on his methods of mixology, especially in the arena of Margaritas.

The soundman set up shop in a couple of booths in a secluded area of the restaurant. After making certain he had secured a refill, Vallee made his way over to the table on unsteady legs.

What followed must have been the most anxious 30 minutes of Eddie Hubbard’s illustrious radio career. What didn’t

come out of Vallee’s mouth slurred came out salty. One of his anecdotes started out as a lengthy explanation of why drinking hot coffee ruins your vocal chords and ended with a rather vicious diatribe aimed at Bob Hope.

After the coast was clear with Vallee and his driver exiting, most likely for nightcaps, Hubbard asked me if Trace could do the whole hour as the portions of what Vallee said during his interview that actually were intelligible wouldn’t pass FCC muster. In retrospect, maybe Rudy missed a chance to become the original “shock jock”.

This turn of events was a fortuitous one for us as now we had a chance to not only plug the new song for the entire hour but also reminisce about Traces’ career.

Bandleader/Drummer/Composer Al Trace formed his first band for an engagement at France’s “Streets of Paris” Pavilion during the 1933 Chicago World’s Fair. When the Fair closed, he began a long engagement at the Blackhawk Restaurant in Chicago known as “Al Trace and His Silly Symphonists, This was followed by three years at the Sherman Hotel. Once, following another personal appearance at Daley Plaza in downtown Chicago circa 1980, I found Trace sitting on a bench at Clark and Randolph Streets longingly looking up at the Sherman as it was being demolished to make way for a new state government building. “I used to play there”, lamented Al.



Al Trace

Trace composed over 300 songs, some alone and others as a collaborator. His most successful recording, “You Call Everybody Darlin”, was a #1 hit in 1948. Also, tunes such as , “Brush Those Tears From Your Eyes”, and “If I Knew You Were Comin’ I’d’ve Baked a Cake” were kind to Al . Although he’s often credited for writing his hit “Mairzy Doats”, Al told me he actually bought the song for one dollar and “considerations” from another composer because only Trace felt the song had potential. Some of Al’s tunes that didn’t make it so big were “Where Is The Banjo Player”, “Monkey Doodle Doo”, “Mini-Skirt Minnie”, and “French Fries and Ketchup”. Al said Sammy Davis Jr. did that last one, but we couldn’t find it. All of this made for a good interview and Al saved Eddie’s program; at least for that week.

This encounter was many years ago, and I had pretty much forgotten about it until that radio exec brought it back to mind. As for that cassette tape, I didn’t ask for a copy. I can always re-run the one that’s in my head.

Swing band...

FOR RENT



Ted Butterman's Neo-Passé Quintet: Ronnie Baron, Ted, Russ Phillips, Scott Black and Dave Elias

Specializing in swing music of the 30s and 40s, ala Benny Goodman the group is versatile and their repertoire reaches back to the 20s and onward to the 50s, 60s, and some later, excluding rock.

The band performs at any kind of function limited only by your imagination. This includes picnics, Bar-B-Qs, pool parties, Mardi Gras, conventions and wedding receptions. The band consists of piano, bass, drums, rhythm guitar and features a variety of horn players on different occasions including reed players, trumpets, trombones, vibes, and other instrumentalists from time to time. Expect guest artists to sit in occasionally!

[Check out the Ted's song list here! They know 'em all!](#)

To book the Neo-Passé contact Ted at
TBBands@dixieswing.com

A Quick Laugh...

If you haven't seen it yet, this one has been going around. It's from Bill Crow's Band Room column in a recent edition of the Local 802 publication, Allegro:

I had just finished officiating a wedding ceremony. After congratulating the couple, I went into the dining room to return the DJ's microphone, which I had borrowed for the ceremony. I was impressed with the D.J. He was probably half my age, and handled himself and his equipment in a very professional manner. As I was standing there, the bride's father walked over and asked, "Do you have any Cole Porter?"

The young man politely replied, "I'm the D.J., sir. The bar is over there."

Ketter's Corner

By Browser Warren Ketter

More Chicago Memories

On summer evenings taking our dates to the parking lot outside the Lincoln Tavern in Morton Grove, where bandleader, pianist, songwriter and arranger Earl Burnett was playing. Since the Lincoln Tavern had no air conditioning, the windows were wide open, so the music of Burnett's fine band with Art Jarrett as vocalist was free of charge and delightful (Jarrett was the first husband of Olympic swimmer Eleanor Holmes). At a later date, Burnett was playing the Trianon Ballroom when he became ill. Tragically, at the age of 39, he passed away from a serious infection of peritonitis.

We had the good luck to get a piano side seat at an Art Tatum concert, promoted by the Chicago bandleader, Phil Levant. Art had appeared in clubs around town, The Three Deuces being one, but this was the first one that had come to my attention. A big crowd was in attendance and because of Art's vision problem, he had to be guided to the piano. Later, I learned that Tatum was blind in one eye and had only slight vision in the other. Once Art began to play, vision wasn't a problem because his fingers served as his eyes. His national anthem was "Tea for Two" a rendition that is still cherished along with his "Tiger Rag".

Our February, 1934 Lakeview High School senior Prom was held at the Medinah Athletic Club, with music rendered by Eddy Allen and his orchestra. After the prom, our gang went to the Bismarck Hotel to listen and dance to Ted Weems and his band. It was a fun evening with the cover charge being a two-drink minimum. The waiter served us both drinks at the same time, which gave us the feeling that Bismarck, himself, wanted us in and out as soon as possible. Little did I know that some years later, Parker Gibbs (Piccolo Pete), a Weems band member and I would be working together. Parker became a producer at NBC where we were both part of the Dave Garroway Radio and TV gang.

Warren's Tid-Bits

♪ Dizzy Gillespie used various recording pseudonyms during his career including John Burk, B. Bopstein, Gabriel, Hen Gates and Izzie Goldberg.

♪ Jazzman Jack Sheldon, concerned about his weight, claims to have tried the 21-Day Drinking Man's Diet and he lost three weeks.

♪ Gene Krupa, Jack Jenny, Jack Teagarden and Frankie Carle, were among the greats who played in the swinging band of Boston's Mal Hallett.

♪ In the Broadway musical "The Band Wagon" Fred Astaire not only danced, he played the accordion.

♪ After being a sideman in the bands of Les Brown, Harry James and Jimmy Dorsey, Si Zentner started his own band in the early fifties when many big bands were calling it quits.

What is a Browser?

Editor's note: We mention The Browsers a lot here and it occurred to us that we should occasionally offer an explanation for the benefit of new readers. Here is an abbreviated definition written by the late and truly missed Browser Joe Sperry:

A Browser is a dedicated devotee of the truly American art form known as the Big Band. Some years ago, Phil Holdman, founder, often visited record shops seeking rare examples of LP's and 78's to add to his extensive collection. Here, he also met other collectors who sought similar discs or tapes. Phil's wife, Alberta, named the group "The Browsers" because "they are always browsing in record shops."

Meetings were held first in members homes, and then in friendly tavern/restaurants. The roster of Browsers brought to the group a wealth of experience in the fields of music & broadcasting. (**Editor's note:** The boys also did a national radio show for 20 years on the ABC network with Eddie Hubbard). Browsers have played or sung with Tommy & Jimmy Dorsey, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Jan Savitt, Tiny Hill, Claude Thornhill and many more.

Big Bands and the Movies

A Fond Musical Memory

By Browser Dick Parker

The years 1939 and 1940 served up four of what would become some of my all-time favorite movies. For '39, the pictures were "Beau Geste" and "Gunga Din", both terrific adventure films. The next year, it was two comedies: "The Bank Dick" (In what I believe was W.C. Fields' funniest film.) and "The Great McGinty", a timeless picture about political corruption, its attendant absurdities and ultimate character redemption.



Counterclockwise: Sonja Henie, Angela Blue(?), Joan Davis, Milton Berle. Photo and poster source: www.glennmillerorchestra.com

However, the following year on Christmas Eve at our Chicago Lakeview neighborhood theater, the Essex, I saw a picture that was to serve as my introduction to the lifetime enjoyment of the big band era. That movie was "Sun Valley Serenade." While the principal leads were ice skating champion Sonja Henie, John Payne and Lynn Bari, the absolute stars of the movie were Glenn Miller and his then top-of-the-charts band.

The story, in fairness, was little more than a frothy piece with a love triangle, interspersed skating and skiing segments and some lightweight humor. The comic relief, such as it occurred, was provided by a youngish (32 at the time) Milton Berle who, a decade later, was to rule the roost of TV comedy as "Mr. Television" and, more endearingly, "Uncle Miltie". To me the funniest line in the picture came from Comedienne Joan Davis. She is strolling by Milton Berle who has emerged from the train that has transported the principals from New York to the fabled winter resort at Sun Valley, Idaho. He is wearing a preposterously bulky fur coat and inspires Davis to remark "Say, when that thing has pups, can I have one?" Yuk, yuk.

But for me, (an impressionable lad of nine) the highlights of the film, from beginning to end, were the Miller band's splendidly choreographed numbers starting with back-up for Lynn Bari's vocal (ghosted by Pat Friday) on the Mack Gordon and Harry Warren tune "I Know Why (And So Do You)". The band shortly thereafter takes center stage for a rousing "In the Mood" (Better than the Bluebird Records studio version of two years prior, methinks). It was played on closing night at a New York club before the junket to Sun Valley. Not to

be overlooked was the Academy Award nominated cinematography which provided some lively skiing and skating sequences but more so, the highlighting of the band at work with close-ups of all the group.

Among the band's line-up were trumpeters Billy May (of later, greater success as an arranger) and Ray Anthony, who was just 19 at the time. The sax section included "Tex" Beneke, Hal McIntyre and Ernie Caceres. Maurice "Moe" Purtill did the drum work and an animated Herman "Trigger" Alpert was on bass. The band also performed a spirited "It Happened in Sun Valley" as awaiting horse drawn sleighs deliver the entourage from the train depot to their lodgings. A bit more than halfway into the film, the rehearsing of "Chattanooga Choo-Choo" supplied the best of production numbers showcasing not only the band with the fine vocal group "The Modernaires" and Paula Kelly, but the amazing Nicholas Brothers dance

team and a very young (17) Dorothy Dandridge. They also sang the tune and danced in awesome style. The "Choo-Choo" number runs over seven minutes and, it too, was nominated for an Academy Award for 1941's best song.

The picture ends with the love triangle getting resolved and with a grand finale ice skating turn by Sonja. I'm recalling that, in all, the picture was worth far more than the \$.25 ticket price charged, and coming up with that fee took some doing.

The Miller band made one more film, "Orchestra Wives", in 1942, before Glenn went into the Army. He perished when his plane disappeared over the English Channel December 15, 1944.

By the way, the Essex Theatre, at 717 West Sheridan Road, between Broadway and Pine Grove Avenues, in Chicago, also known over the years as the Pine Grove, Panorama, the Little Theatre and the Guild was demolished in the 1970's. An apartment complex now stands on the site.

Sun Valley Serenade has been released on video but not as yet on DVD. Wholeheartedly recommended.

The Cast

Actor/Actress	Role
Sonja Henie.....	Karen Benson
John Payne.....	Ted Scott
Glenn Miller.....	Phil Corey
Milton Berle.....	Jerome K. 'Nifty' Allen
Lynn Bari.....	Vivian Dawn
Joan Davis.....	Miss Carstairs
Dorothy Dandridge.....	Herself
The Nicholas Brothers....	Themselves
Glenn Miller Orchestra....	Themselves
The Modernaires.....	Themselves

Cast list source: <http://en.wikipedia.org>



I Get Along Without You Very Well

By Browser Joe Carlton

Malcolm Laycock is one of Britain's very finest disc jockeys. He has a weekly radio program on BBC 2 carried all over that country. On one of his programs, he told this very interesting story.

In the late '20s, somebody put a scrap of paper into the hand of Hoagy Carmichael when he was a student bandleader at Indiana University. It had a poem scored on it, starting with the line "I get along without you very well". And it was signed "J.B.". Now move on to 1939 when Hoagy composed a tune to the poem and tried to track down who had written it. He even put out appeals to national newspapers and on the radio to find "J.B."



The BBC's
Malcolm Laycock

But, without success. So, he published it with the credit "words inspired by a poem written by J.B.". And two days later, on the 20th of January just as Dick Powell sang the song for the first time on national radio, J.B. was found. She was Mrs. Jane Brown Thompson and she died the night before.

Malcolm's outstanding radio program, consisting of our kind of music from 1930 right up until today is carried over the Internet. If you are interested in listening to it, type in Google: www.BBC.co.uk/radio2. Click "BBC Radio 2 home. Then click on "Shows a-z and then click on Malcolm Laycock. Finally, click on "Listen again to this show" and there you are

It is streaming, which means that anytime you contact it, it starts from the beginning of this week's program. I have a cassette player connected to my computer and tape each week's program. I am sure if I were more computer literate, I could copy it on a CD also.

Editor's Note: Author and quizmaster Joe Carlton has written an excellent book, "THE BROWSERS AT LARGE: Phil Holdman's Tall Tales and True." This book containing lots of stories by Phil and other Browsers, along with many, many photos, is still available. Phil and his cadre of big band experts aired a popular big band trivia show on the ABC network with Eddie Hubbard for over twenty years. If interested, please send your check for \$17.00 made out to Joe Carlton, 317 Cottage Avenue, Glen Ellyn, IL 60137 and your copy will promptly be mailed to you.

The Jazz Clubs Present...

The Illiana Club of Traditional Jazz: presents excellent concerts monthly at the Glendora Ballroom, 10225 S. Harlem Avenue, Chicago Ridge, Illinois. 219/923-6775. Sunday, March 9, - 2 pm to 5:30 pm Jazz-O-Maniacs from Germany. Sunday, April 20, 2PM to 5:30 PM John Burnett Orchestra www.illianajazz.com

The St. Louis Jazz Club: <http://www.stlouisjazzclub.org>

An outstanding web site and club with lots of events and info. March 3, Bob Ceccarini and the River Boat Ramblers, April 20, Cornet Chop Suey.

Bring The Excitement of "That Championship Season" to Your Next Party...



Pictured: T. Bartlett E. Wilkinson T. Butterman J. Kuncl J. Blegen

The Cubs Dixieland Band has been playing the 'friendly confines' of Wrigley Field for over a quarter of a century. Our foot-tapping aggregation consists of Trumpet, Trombone (or Tenor Sax), Clarinet, Banjo, and Tuba. We have appeared on TV hundreds of times over the years on many local and nationally broadcast programs.

The band performs at any kind of function, limited only by your imagination, including picnics, Bar-B-Qs, pool parties, Mardi Gras, conventions and wedding receptions. We have even performed at five funerals. We appear in Cubs uniform unless otherwise specified. There's no off-season for the Cubs Band!

Contact Ted at TBBands@aol.com for details.

[Click here to see the Cubs band in action!](#)



Mission Statement

This newsletter, created by Bob Knack and friends, remembers The Browsers on the ABC network, Bob's radio shows on WJG-AM 1530, Elmhurst, Illinois; and contains articles for all aficionados of big band, swing and traditional jazz worldwide. It is an attempt to fill the void left when periodicals such as the Browser's Notes ceased to publish. We will concentrate on, but will not be limited to, fun-to-read articles on the music from "back in the day". Initially, we intend to publish as an E-letter only. Letters, articles, suggestions or any help whatsoever is appreciated. Send inquiries to bobknack@hotmail.com, or PO Box 642012, Chicago, Illinois 60664. Printed copies of past and this current issue are also available in booklet form for \$2.00 each from the above PO Box.

We wish to acknowledge the many contributions made by readers to help defray expenses.

"I don't know anything about running a newspaper; I just try everything I can think of."

-Charles Foster Kane

How to End Up With A Million \$ Doing A Jazz Radio Show (Part Two)

By Bob Knack

In our last issue appearing at www.dixieswing.com, we talked about the past joys of broadcasting our weekend big band program on WJGG-AM1530 in the Chicago suburbs. We now continue:

As an added attraction, I began inviting a group of fellow record collectors into the studio each week to feature an hour of their rare LP's, accompanied by our banter about the tunes. Most of them had attained semi-celebrity status as regulars on an ABC network big band show called "Eddie Hubbard and the Browsers." We called the new segment "Collector's Corner." It made for some wonderful radio, although I never dug the title. There must be a thousand "Collector's Corners" on the radio covering everything from saltshakers to Barbie Dolls, but it's what we used.



Bob behind the Microphone at WJGG-AM (Note: We think he got the shirt at a Chuck Norris garage sale!

Phil Holdman and Warren Ketter guested and recreated the magic of the Browser broadcasts. Nick Nardella, a fan of the Jolson, Crosby and Cantor era brought in an unusual John Dankworth record called "Experiments with Mice". It was a rare 45-RPM disc featuring the song "Three Blind Mice" performed in the styles of various name bandleaders. Very cool! Jazz collector Art Hymes brought in a Peggy Lee LP that he claimed once went at auction for ten thousand dollars. John Macek, with a 14,000 LP collection at home, burst Art's balloon with the news he found a copy at a garage sale for a buck and a half. "Rowdy" Ron Richter, a real high energy and musically hip guy would do two hours with me. Along with being a jazz aficionado, he owned a car repair shop. He would ask jazz trivia questions and offer free oil changes as a prize. One especially knowledgeable listener won so many times, he stockpiled enough free oil to make OPEC blush with envy.

Quite often, a guest would bring in a very rare recording and ask me to be extremely careful with it. I had a "canned" sound effect at my disposal of a needle dragging viciously across a record. I would often play this effect through the guest's earphones while cueing up his vinyl treasure and gleefully watch the blood drain from his face.

The program's longest burst of spontaneous laughter came when Larry Maloney, an expert on big band theme songs played "City Nights", bandleader Jack Jenny's megamelancholy, opening theme. Coming out of this morose little ditty, author Joe Carlton, the morning's other guest asked, "Who did the vocal on that one, Bela Lugosi?"

One of the proudest moments of my tenure was when former WGN Radio broadcaster, Len Johnson, came on as a guest. Len was a great DJ and newsman, and was Wally Phillips' sidekick on his morning show for many years. It was, at the time, the highest rated independent morning show in the nation. Johnson, who also was a Chicago Cubs play-by-play announcer, spun some records he never could on WGN-AM

720...like Harry James belting out "Sweet Jenny Lou", Anita O'Day singing "I Used to be Color Blind" or Irene Daye warbling "Manhattan Transfer" with the Krupa band. Len, who was a very dignified broadcaster, took the opportunity on my show to "loosen up" and employ his rather creative sense of humor. Here's what Len had to say right after I introduced him to our listeners: "Bob and I, perhaps we should explain to you people, go back a long way with each other--we were in the army together in World War I—down in Laredo, Texas--permanent K.P.'s six days a week. They used to give us Sundays off and we'd go out and chase scorpions--that was our recreation. After the war, we came back to Chicago, and we got jobs in a speakeasy, Bob was the bouncer and I handed out towels in the men's room. One night, he threw out some guy he shouldn't have and the next morning at 9:00AM, the joint burned down! So, we decided we had to do something, we were desperate, so we got into radio and we've been in it ever since." Whew! We miss you, Len.



Len Johnson
www.wnggold.com

We also thought it would be fun to have "listener's nights" where those of us on the air might "hang out" with the growing fan base. But would anyone come? We selected one of my sponsors, a restaurant that featured a jazz group known as "The Neo-Passé Band". As we had no budget to help us succeed, the leader, guitarist Ted Butterman, graciously paid for extra musicians out of his own pocket. We heard such big-name players as sax man Eric Schneider, who toured with Earl Hines and Count Basie, clarinetist Kim Cusack from the "Salty Dogs" band, or trumpeter Warren Kime, who sold tons of records on the Command label with his band, "Brass Impact". Guest vocalists started dropping in like Buddy Hughes, Jack Hogan and Gloria Van, who sang with Krupa and Hal McIntyre. My partner, the effervescent and ever-present Carol, and I did all the promotion. We soon did turn away business for the restaurant...but the program still lost money.

On an earlier show, we had a question regarding Stan Kenton's 1940's hit of "Shoo-Fly Pie and Apple Pan Dowdy". Some of you might remember the lyrics:

SHOO FLY PIE AND APPLE PAN DOWDY (Words : Sammy Gallop / Music : Guy Wood)

*If you wanna do right by your appetite,
If you're fussy about your food,
Take a choo-choo today, head New England way,
And we'll put you in the happiest mood with:
Shoo Fly Pie and Apple Pan Dowdy
Makes your eyes light up,
Your tummy say "Howdy."
Shoo Fly Pie and Apple Pan Dowdy
I never get enough of that wonderful stuff.*

This resulted in a discussion of "what exactly are these". At one of our events, listener's Marlin and Mary arrived with a big cardboard box containing enough of these homemade Pennsylvania Dutch delicacies to feed the entire crowd of over 125 along with the recipes...A wonderful gesture by two very nice people. The recipes follow elsewhere in this issue.

Story continues on page 8...

A Must for Your Collection!

Ted Butterman's Neo-Passé Band Live At The Village Tavern



Pictured L to R: Russ Phillips, Scott Black, Dave Elias, Ronnie Baron, Ted Butterman
© 2001 dixieswing.com
CD Baby Price: \$15.00

Order now, supplies are limited!

Four rhythm; piano, bass, guitar and drums, and one of four different world-class horn players on each track .

The over 73 minutes of music includes:

1 When You're Smilin', 2 The One I Love, 3 Sweet Georgia Brown, 4 China Boy, 5 On The Alamo, 6 I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me, 7 After You've Gone, 8 These Foolish Things, 9 Rosetta, 10 Undecided, 11 Let Yourself Go, 12 Three Little Words, 13 It All Depends On You, 14 Some Of These Days, 15 Lester Leaps In

Ted's band, with a four-man rhythm section, and a rotating horn player, usually stays in a mellow relaxed swing mode. The group, particularly with a clarinet lead, often has the sound of a small group Benny Goodman session.

Ted recorded the band over several weekends between February and June of 2001 and thus captured the best of four Chicago area musicians on the front line. With 15 standards featured over a generous 73+ minutes, the average tune plays for over five minutes, affording the horn players ample room to show their talents.

Eric Schneider, well known around Chicago, played with Basie for a couple years in the early 80's. A wonderful. Perhaps underrated talent, Eric has the ability to take a tune and swing hard with seemingly little effort. Featured on six of the tunes on the CD, Eric takes "Three Little Words" at a nice mid-tempo on the tenor and just rolls with it in very much a Chu Berry style. On "China Boy", he switches to soprano and can be compared favorably to Sidney Bechet. Kim Cusack, long time veteran of the Salty Dogs, plays clarinet on three tunes while Stu Genovese is the featured tenor on "Sweet Georgia Brown" and "These Foolish Things". Russ Phillips, son of Russ, Sr. who played trombone with Louis Armstrong's All-Stars after Teagarden left, capably offers a change of pace with his trombone on three titles notably, "Undecided".

With a rock solid rhythm section, this band cooks. Highly recommended for lovers of small group swing.

--Perry Huntoon

International Association of Jazz Record Collectors Journal

www.cdbaby.com for ordering info or
[Click to See the Neo Passé Band in Action!](#)

Musical Highlights

By Browser Joe Carlton

I imagine everyone has musical highlights in their lives, times that stick in your mind of when you heard some outstanding music. Maybe it was a love song with that special girl or boy; maybe a swing dance (jitterbugging) song or other music that completely absorbed you into the music.

If you do remember some of those times, we'd be happy to hear about them. Here are a few that come to my mind. Benny Goodman was always a musical hero for me and as I was awaiting overseas assignment at Fort Dix, NJ, I saw that Benny and his orchestra was playing in New York City.

I couldn't find anyone to go with me that night so I went alone. Pianist Joe Bushkin took me under his wing and I got to meet and chat with Benny. What a thrill for an 18-year-old Army private.

About ten years later, I heard the Glenn Miller Orchestra for the first time. The band, under the direction of Ray McKinley was playing at the Willowbrook, one of the last remaining old dance pavilions in the US. As we walked in, the hair on the back of my neck stood up as I heard one of the famous old Miller songs. What was the name of that song? I don't remember its name but do remember the effect that song and the evening had on me.

Another time, I listened to the Woody Herman Thundering Herd -- which one I don't remember but Bill Chase was one of the trumpeters then. It played at a nightclub in Lisle, IL by the name of King's Palace. The ceiling was only eight feet high and Woody at the time was carrying five trumpets and five trombones. Well, you can imagine the sound when they played "Four Brothers"!

Lastly, one time in St Petersburg, FL during the 1970s, my wife and I were returning with family from dinner and as we passed a small bar, a banner outside proclaimed "One Night Only -- the Count Basie Orchestra". I said, "Let us out right here; we'll figure out later how to get home." I asked Count to play "Poor Butterfly" which was played perfectly with the lead by a white trumpet player and I am ashamed to say I cannot remember his name. As the kids today say, the evening on me was "awesome"! It was a small place; maybe held 125 people but Count played like there were thousands out there.

Let's hear from you. What are some of your musical highlights?

Mary's Shoo-Fly Pie

1 - 9" Unbaked Pie Crust
1 Cup Flour
1/3 Cup Soft Butter
3/4 Cup Light Brown Sugar
Mix flour, butter, sugar to make crumbs.
Liquid - add ingredients in order listed:
1/2 Cup Grandma's Molasses (mild flavor)
1 Cup Warm Water
Stir in 1 Teaspoon Baking Soda - it should foam
Add 1 teaspoon Vinegar

Put half the crumbs in the pie crust, Carefully spoon liquid over crumbs. Gently add remaining crumbs on top of liquid. Bake 15 minutes at 450 degrees, reduce heat to 325 and bake for 25 minutes.



Letters, E-mails, etc...

Bob,

Another great issue of "The Great Escape." Two quick comments.

1. Your article on whistlers brought back memories of Fred Lowery's whistling on Leroy Holmes' cover version of "The High and the Mighty" from that mid-fifties John Wayne flick. That was a classic rendition. A serious omission in the article, however, was any mention of Bing Crosby who effectively whistled on many of his famous hits over the decades.

2. Walt Andrus refers to the recording session with the Buddy Morrow directed Tommy Dorsey Orchestra that he personally financed that resulted in twelve vocals and four instrumentals. However, the CD issues only include the vocals, resulting in a very short CD. What ever happened to the four instrumentals? Incidentally, the CD refers to the band as the Buddy Morrow Orchestra. Walt told me this was because Tommy's widow, Janie, would not give permission for the band to record under the Dorsey name. One wonders why.

Perry Huntoon

Dear Great Escape:

Really enjoy your newsletter. How are all The Browsers doing? Any way to find out? We miss their show.

**Best Regards,
Lee and Zee Perlinn**

Dear Lee and Zee,

Perry Huntoon has kindly submitted the following to answer your question:

BROWSER UPDATE

Despite being off the radio for a few years now (except for the occasional rerunning of old shows on individual stations), the Browsers are still active and meet on the last Friday of every month for beer, pizza and good conversation at Dino's Restaurant on Chicago's Northwest side. In addition, DJ 'Rowdy' Ron Richter welcomes all Browsers to a Glenview restaurant the second Sunday of every month to play our kind of music for the audience. Between these two monthly events, the Browsers have thereby maintained a continuity of kinship and love of the Big Band era that has long outlasted the radio show and the Browsers Newsletter.

While Phil Holdman has been in an assisted care facility for over a year, and Dick Parker is recovering nicely from open-heart surgery, everyone else is still perking along. Ray Krysl never misses the annual Glenn Miller Birthplace Society Festival in Clarinda, Perry Huntoon is busy finishing the copy editing of a bio-discography on jazz great Bunny Berigan, Karl Kountz is still playing Dick Todd, Johnny Macek is always looking for more reissues of big band material from the '50s, Jack Hogan still sings, Nick Nardella is still accumulating the complete Bing Crosby on CD, etc. It's business as usual for the Browsers.

Keep those cards and letters coming folks. I know you're out there, I can hear you breathing.

Recommended Chicagoland Happenings...

"The Browsers", experts in the big band era, meet the last Friday of every month @ 6:30 PM "for pizza, beer and good conversation". The group is pleased to announce their new headquarters: Dino's, at 7004 W. Higgins, Chicago. Dues are six dollars and include a share of the pizza. Details subject to change.

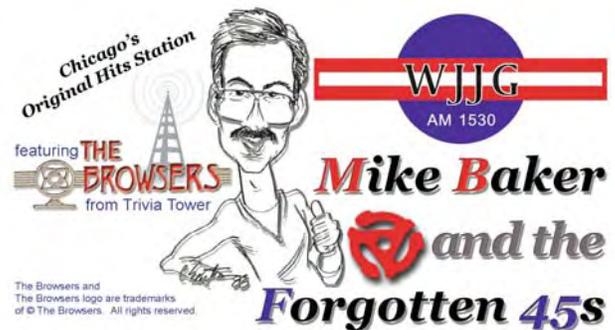


Disc Jockey "Rowdy"

Ron Richter plays big band and jazz the second Sunday of every month at his new location, Gusto Italiano Ristorante, 1470 Waukegan Road, Glenview, IL 60025 Tel: (847) 729-5444 Fax: (847) 729-5447 4:00 PM - ? Attendees are invited to bring a favorite CD to play and comment on. Call ahead. Details subject to change.

On the Radio: Carousel Bandstand: (Thursday 10 to 11 a.m.): "Ken Meyer draws from his own vast, personal music library to present an hour of the best of the big bands, standards and great vocals of that golden era of music. Ken also presents many of the big band radio shows from the Aragon, Waldorf Astoria, and network radio studios.

[WEPS-FM 88.9, Elgin, Illinois.](#)



March: Saturdays 5-6pm CST and 5-7pm CDT.
April, Saturdays 5-7:30pm. Watch for The Browsers vignettes to return on Sundays this summer!

Mary's Apple Pandowdy



9" Pan
1 Quart Sliced Apples
1 Cup Brown Sugar
¼ Cup Flour
½ Teaspoon Salt
1 Tablespoon Vinegar & ¾ Cup Water
1 Teaspoon Vanilla

1 Tablespoon Butter

Combine sugar, flour, salt, vinegar & water, bring to a boil and cool two minutes. Remove from heat, add butter and vanilla. Cool. Pour cooled syrup over apples.

Topping

1-1/2 Cups Bisquick or Jiffy Mix

½ Cup Milk

1 Egg

3 Tablespoons Melted Shortening

Stir until wet. Drop topping by spoonfuls over apples. Bake at 400 for 35 minutes.

Ronnie Kole's Day in the Crescent City

By Bob Knack

New Orleans Jazz piano great, Ronnie Kole, will be honored with his own life-sized statue in that city's Music Legend's Park on April 11.

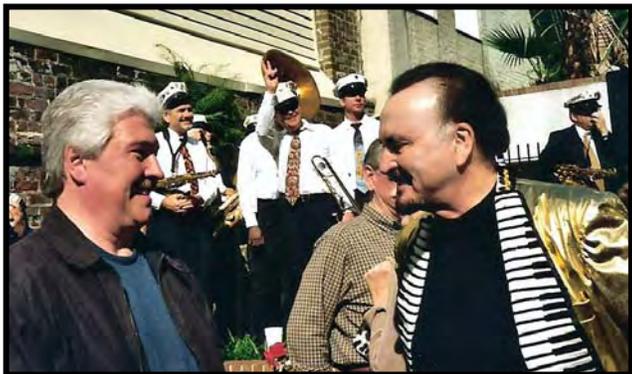


Ronnie Kole with Pete Fountain (background) on the day Fountain's statue was unveiled in Music Legends Park.

Kole will be the fifth jazzperson so honored with Al Hirt, Pete Fountain, Fats Domino and Chris Owens preceding him. It was Hirt who some years ago convinced Kole to relocate to New Orleans.

"Needless to say, that is going to be one of the most important days of my career," says Kole, about the Friday, April 11, 2008 unveiling. Following a 9AM press conference and the unveiling, there will be a parade down Bourbon Street to Jackson Square where Kole will kick off the 25th annual French Quarter Festival. www.fqfi.org. The parade will amble seven blocks down the street on the way to

Jackson Square. The marchers, along with many colorful floats and brass bands, will wend its way past the strip clubs and the tee-shirt shops, a store displaying the world's largest praline, and legendary clubs like the Famous Door, Maison Bourbon and the Old Absinthe House. The French Quarter Festival features three days of local musicians on 17 stages.



Bob Knack chats with Ronnie Kole in Music Legends Park in 2005.

A former Chicagoan, Kole, the consummate pianist, composer and arranger is the man behind the festival. "There is a comfortable feel about The Quarter during the French Quarter Festival...safe...unhurried...friendly," relates Kole. "Twenty-five years ago, I was asked to be part of a 10 man committee to start the festival by Mayor "Dutch" Morial as a fun way to get the New Orleans citizens back to The Quarter, as the sidewalks had been under construction for almost a year in readiness for the Worlds Fair." "After a day of sampling foods at the World's Largest Jazz Brunch and music on 17 plus stages in the Quarter," continues Kole, "we'll follow that with our Musical Legends Dinner and Gala." It will be held in The Royal Sonesta Hotel, 300 Bourbon Street. On April 12, Kole and his septet will perform in Jackson Square at 3PM. Ronnie's world-class group handles everything from boogie-woogie and show tunes to a brilliant New Orleans legends medley. You can find their CD's at www.ronniekole.com.

"It has been a labor of love these many years" concludes Kole.

"Radio" continued from page 5...

Also in attendance at those events was our youngest listener, Matthew, who started calling in when he was a pre-teen. Does he know something about Big Bands? He phoned in with the right answer to many of our trivia contests. His favorite bands were Teddy Powell and Orville Knapp. I recently heard from his dad who tells me that Matthew graduated recently from North Park University in Chicago with a degree in trumpet performance. He currently plays locally with the Mount Prospect Community Band led by Ralph Wilder and the Skokie Valley Orchestra. He recently played his first wedding. His goal, says his proud papa, is to play the trumpet full time. Ya know, there may be hope for our music yet!

Teo Macero

Teo Macero, born Attilio Joseph Macero, producer of many innovative albums for Miles Davis and others, died after a long illness Feb. 19. He was 82.

Macero, who was also a saxophonist and composer, began working in 1953 with Charles Mingus' Jazz Composers Workshop as saxophonist. He was hired by Columbia Records in 1957 and became a staff producer two years later. There, he worked with Davis, heavily editing Miles performances to come up with influential albums like "Bitches Brew," "In a Silent Way" and "Get Up With It". Mr. Macero also worked with Dave Brubeck, creating the landmark and the best-selling album "Time Out", and Charles Mingus, Gerry Mulligan, Mose Allison, Johnny Mathis, Duke Ellington, Thelonious Monk, Carmen McRae, Woody Herman, Maynard Ferguson, Tony Bennett and many others. He also recorded under his own name.



Mississippi Rag News

Leslie Johnson, editor of the Mississippi Rag informs all of us: The Mississippi Rag, now in its 35th year as "The Voice of Traditional Jazz and Ragtime," is now free on its website, www.mississippirag.com, in a very user-friendly format. The latest transformation of the RAG took place in January 2008. For the year prior to that, the RAG was online but in a PDF format available only to subscribers. Now it is free to anyone who logs onto the above web site. Readers are encouraged to write to editor@mississippirag.com if they want to be notified each month when the new issue is available.



"Swing into Spring" was a 1941 Columbia recording by Goodman and a April 1959 television special sponsored by Texaco Oil and starring Benny, Ella Fitzgerald, Lionel Hampton and Peggy Lee. In a future issue, we're going to recall some of those amusing Benny Goodman

stories big band fans have been hearing for many years. If you would like to share your favorite BG story. Send it to bobknack@hotmail.com or PO Box 642012, Chicago, Illinois 60664.