



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**

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Quotable Jazzmen Vol. 2: Eddie Condon

By Bob Knack©

“As it enters the ear, does it come in like broken glass or does it come in like honey?” That was Eddie Condon, guitarist, bandleader and nightclub owner. He was born in Goodland, Indiana on November 16, 1905 and until his death on the fourth of August, 1973 remained one of the music world’s most quotable jazzmen.

Condon moved to Chicago and during the twenties played with the likes of Bix Beiderbecke, Frank Teschemacher, Jimmy McPartland, Bud Freeman, Dave Tough, Gene Krupa (“His drums went through us like a triple bourbon.”) and other members of the Austin High School Gang. Of Bix’s sound he once said, “Beiderbecke took out a silver cornet. He put it to his lips and blew a phrase. The sound came out like a girl saying ‘yes’.

He was not always complimentary of his fellow musicians. “Ted Lewis could make the clarinet talk. What it said was ‘put me back in the case!’” chirped Eddie. Paul Desmond once explained the sound he was trying to create on his alto was reminiscent of a dry martini. To Condon, he sounded “like a female alcoholic.”

Condon worked at Nick’s Jazz Club in New York for many years and then, following WWII ran his own on 3rd Street. Nick’s, known for it’s ‘sizzling steaks’ served on hot metal platters, was owned by Nick Rongetti. Although he attended Fordham Law School, Rongetti ended up owning a nightclub. “He didn’t pass the bar, he bought it,” explained Condon. The hot music played there became so popular, it was often referred to as “Nicksieland”.

It was not unusual for Eddie to “lay out” of many sets and simply hang out and drink with the customers. Once someone asked him why they didn’t feature more bebop at his club. “The boppers flat their fifths, we drink ours.” And drink them they did. Eddies cure for a bad hangover. “Take the juice of two quarts of whiskey.” Also a celebrated practical joker, Condon is sometimes credited as the guy who used to send one-armed trumpet player “Wingy” Manone one cuff link for Christmas.

His series of Town Hall concerts featuring the greatest names in Jazz, running throughout WWII, were

broadcast, and later issued on LP. I have all those records. As he introduced the band he once said, “We would now like to play our first set, and don’t worry folks, these boys won’t annoy you too much”.

On the June 24, 1944 broadcast, Condon announced, “Fred Robbins, our regular announcer, is out sick. He’ll be back next week with some new germs.” On another, as the band finished a conspicuously raucous arrangement of “The Lady’s in Love with You”, Eddie exclaimed, “That’s some pretty violent love, I might say!” As he was introducing Willie “The Lion” Smith to play a tune by Mussorgsky, Condon quipped, “Say, that sounds like it came from out of town.”

Did Condon think his Chicago-style Jazz was popular with the audience? “Someday we hope to have as many followers as the harpsichord.”

More Tasty Big Band Tid-Bits

Famous big band drummer Buddy Rich was an unrelenting prankster. The butt of many of his gags was his pal, “The Velvet Fog”, Mel Torme. In 1975, Mel was headlining Rich’s club, Buddy’s Place. As the singer was just beginning his set, Buddy walked on stage and hit Mel squarely in the puss with a custard pie, also splattering the front row of patrons. Another time, Buddy planned to hire a couple tough looking pals, have them pretend to be mob guys and kidnap Mel. The idea was to throw him in a car trunk and drive Melvin around New York for a couple hours before delivering him back from the “hit” in time for the show. It was Buddy’s wife Marie who talked Rich out of perpetrating this potentially dangerous stunt.

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, Chicago area; 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. All Rights Reserved. “Why isn’t there mouse flavored cat food?”

The Browsers Get Together...



Browsers Douglas Catling, Nick Nardella, and Dick Parker enjoy some libation and spirited big band conversation and camaraderie at a recent gathering. Photo courtesy of Perry Huntoon.



Sammy Cahn, My Kind of Guy

By Browser Jack Hogan

Reprinted from Browser's Notes No. 27

Sammy Cahn was born on New York's lower east side on June 18, 1913. Born with the name of Samuel Cohen, he had to undergo a couple of name changes before arriving at Sammy Cahn. There was a comic named Sammy Cohen working at MGM, so in order to prevent him from getting credit for his lyrics, Sammy changed to the last name of Kahn. Later, he discovered there was a successful lyricist by the name of Gus Kahn, so in order to prevent any embarrassment by getting some of Gus' royalties, Sammy, in a remarkable stroke of strategy, changed his name to Cahn. Thus, emerged one of American music's greatest talents. Sammy collaborated with so many marvelous musical minds, starting with Saul Chaplin, then with Julie Styne and Jimmy Van-Heusen, who with Sammy, turned out a remarkable productive volume of beautiful music and words.

During his prolific career, Mr. Cahn worked with Axel Stordahl, Paul Weston, Vernon Duke, Sammy Fain, Gene DePaul, George Barrie, Victor Young, Paul Anka and Nicholas Brodzky, all giants in the musical world. To list all of Sammy's hits would lend itself to another article but songs like "High Hopes", "My Kind of Town", "Let it Snow", "I'll Walk Alone", "I've Heard That Song Before", "Three Coins in the Fountain", "Teach Me Tonight", and "Time After Time", are a testament to this man's extensive talent.

I'm sure it can safely be said that Frank Sinatra, Sammy's favorite singer, embellished his great career by singing the marvelous Cahn poetry. As a personal note, I only knew Sammy for three short years. The world knows about his musical talent but I want to proclaim to everyone what a sincere, wonderful person he was. I was just a fan who approached him originally for an autographed picture. His response was immediate, personal and generous. We later met during his performance of his "Sammy Cahn-Words and Music" show and may I say that as good a lyricist as he was, he equally was a great performer. We even did lunch at Eli's in downtown Chicago. Our friendship continued after his last trip to Chicago, mostly through correspondence but was sadly brought to an end with his death in January 1993. Whenever I sing one of his songs, I just know he's up in heaven writing lyrics for the angels. Vocalist Jack Hogan has his own excellent CD available, "All About Love"...

"The popular song is America's greatest ambassador."

-Sammy Cahn



Saluting the Browsers

The Browsers, experts in the big band era, were the creators of an ABC Network big band radio trivia program, hosted by radio legend Eddie Hubbard for 22 years. They also produced a newsletter through most of that period. Some were big band singers or instrumentalists, a few were radio/TV people or journalists. Many were merely rabid fans of that great music and avid record collectors: Regrettably, some are no longer with us. Here they are; if I've forgotten anyone let me know and I'll update the list. Here's to the Browsers:

President Phil Holdman, Lynn Allison and Gloria Van, Joe and Jozan Carlton, Douglas Catling, Ned Coe, Paul Crum, Frank D'Urso, Dave Deezic, Allan Dewitt, Herb Fagen, Bob Garfinkle, Eddie Gold, Milt Heilbron, Jack Hogan, Buddy Hughes, Perry and Carol Huntoon, Len Johnson, Norbert Katarski, Warren Ketter, Bob Knack and Carol Lucchesi, Karl Kountz, Ray Krysl, Dick and Armeda Lieby, Ray Ludtke, John Macek, Larry Maloney, Dominick Marano, Paul and Evelyn McCurnin, Daniel Meccia, Tony Papaleo, Dick and Carol Parker, Ed Pedersen, Nick Polus, Ron and Val Richter, Lee Sash, Dick Scher, Chuck Sengstock, Joe Sperry, Ellis Stukey, Russ Swanson, Gus Tsouloufifis, Tias Udaeta, Bob Unterreiner, Mike and Mary Volino.

Playin' the Name Game

By Bob Knack

Along with the many other fun things we do at all our get-togethers is try to stump one another by asking, "What's their real name?" I've learned the following things over the years:

The singers got their names in many different ways. Chicagoan Anita Belle Colton changed her name to O'Day because in pig Latin, O'Day means 'dough' and she hoped to make plenty of it as a jazz and big band singer. Frances Wayne, that wonderful gal singer with Woody, Barnet and others came into the world as Chiarina Francesca Bertocci.

Sometimes the bandleaders would re-name their new singers. Another famous canary with an ultra-long moniker was born Yvonne Marie Antoinette Jamais. Harry James gave her the name Connie Haines when she joined his band in 1939. He said Haines rhymed with James, and anyway, her real name would never fit on a theatre marquee. Lionel Hampton changed his new warbler's name from Ruth Jones to Dinah Washington because said Lionel; "Ruth Jones just doesn't swing." Not to be outdone, Vicki Carr was born in El Paso in 1941 as Florencia Bisenta deCasilla Martinez Cardona. Whew!

Frankie Laine, was born Francesco Paolo LoVecchio on March 30, 1913. His parents hailed from Sicily and it is now widely reported that his father was at one time Al Capone's personal barber.

He attended Lane Technical High School, and when he went into showbiz, adopted the name of his old alma mater, adding an 'i' to give the name distinction. While in high school, he developed lungpower and breath control by participating in track and field and basketball. Laine died on February 6, 2007 in San Diego. He was 93.

How the jazzmen got their nicknames can make for fascinating sport also. The gent born into this world as Lester Polfus called himself Rhubarb Red early in his music career. Later, appreciative fans tabbed him "The Wizard of Waukesha". Most people know him as guitar great, Les Paul. The father of Adolphus Cheatham wanted his son to become a physician and not a trumpet player hence the nickname "Doc". Boogie Woogie piano great Meade "Lux" Lewis was born December 4, 1905 in Chicago as Meade Anderson Lewis. His nickname is short for Luxemborg. The dashing young stud named Spangler Arlington Brough drumming with Fred Gerwick's band later made it big in Hollywood as Robert Taylor.

We don't know exactly when Pierre Dewey LaFontaine Jr. became Pete Fountain. I'm sure at the Lawrence Welk show where Pete became famous appearing from 1957-1959 they thought it sounded snappier on the television. Pete was recently immortalized with his own statue dedicated on Bourbon Street in New Orleans' Jazz Legends Park. Pete's clarinet idol, Irving Fazola, got his name from the musical scale (Fa-So-La). He started out as Prestopnik.

Some of you might know that Spike Jones, that crazy song parodist and leader of "The City Slickers" was born Lindley Armstrong Jones. It may be news to hear that a Jones band member Doodles Weaver was Sigourney's Uncle and clarinet man Mickey Katz was Joel Grey's father.

The bands got their names in some interesting ways as well. An early big band named the Orange

Blossoms was scheduled to play in the ballroom of a Toronto, Canada castle. For some reason, the band never got to play there but was so impressed by the place; they renamed the band after it. From then on, we knew them as The Casa Loma Orchestra. The castle Casa Loma is still standing and they give tours daily. Louis Prima called his first big band of the 1940's "The Gleeby Rhythm Orchestra". The Penguin Encyclopedia of Popular Music described Louis' vocals with the band as "a nonsensical mixture of jive speak, Neapolitan slang and just plain bad English.

There's no real ending to this article. I'm sure at the next meeting some of the guys will come up with some more name game stumpers.

Trumpeter Ted Buttermann: From Riverboat Five to Wrigley

By Bob Knack©

Some of the most collectable LP's in my "classic jazz" bin are by The Riverboat Five, a straight-ahead Dixieland band born in the late 1950's. The group was Atlanta based, founded and led by clarinetist Ed Reed, and was originally called the High Society Five performing at the famous club, Hank & Jerry's, a converted garage. In 1957, the name changed to the Riverboat Five and they landed a 3-week gig in Las Vegas but were held over for 11 weeks, eventually signing for eight weeks each year at the Dunes Hotel. This success led to a contract with Mercury records.

Chicagoan Ted Buttermann, the cornetist with the band recalls, "The circumstance under which I was hired was sort of strange to begin with. In 1958, I was bartending at a cocktail lounge near Rush Street named Figaro's. (7 E. Oak St., Chicago). The juke box was full of jazz records and, when it wasn't busy, I would play along with them on an old silver cornet I had hanging from a nail behind the bar."

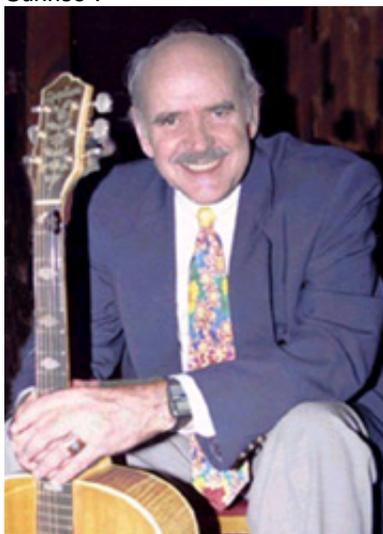
The Riverboat Five was in Chicago playing at the Preview Lounge on Randolph Street just west of State, where in the same decade, Louis Armstrong sat in with the Dukes of Dixieland, Artie Shaw appeared with his Gramercy Five and Bill Haley and the Comets were fired due to lack of business. The group's trumpet player, Sammy Duncan, was leaving the band and they were in search of a replacement. "Somehow my name reached the leader, Ed Reed," continues Buttermann, "and he and Dargan Fitch with banjo, came into Figaro's one afternoon, explained the situation, and auditioned me while I stood behind the bar playing my 1913 English Besson silver cornet." Ted was hired and met the band in Atlanta following their stint at the Preview. It was his first time on the road at the age of twenty-three. "I didn't "hang" with the "guys" much after the appearances, but chose to go back to my motel room and read instead," he confesses.

Following the tour, the band made two recording sessions for Mercury at Universal Recording, studio B, in Chicago. Universal was the location of many famous Jazz and Big Band recordings. It was said to be a favorite of Duke Ellington. The recording band consisted of cornetist Buttermann, trombonist Wray Thomas, pianist Keller Merck, banjoist Dargan Fitch, tuba and tenor sax player Ed Tedder, and drummer Jim Lunsford. Yes, the Riverboat

Five was actually a septet. This first effort resulted in the Mercury album "From Natchez to Mobile".

Butterman had not been on the band long enough to know all the arrangements and learned many of them minutes before the recordings. "'Colonel Bogey March' gave me a lot of trouble. I never paid much attention to the song even though I might have heard it in passing on the radio once or twice. There were lots of parts to learn."

According to the liner notes, all seven players recorded in a twelve-foot square to hear one another's playing, thus enhancing the tightness of the musicianship. "'Sing, Sing, Sing' was another one that took a lot of concentration. I remember having some trouble with 'Someday Sweetheart' when it came to the modulation from F to Ab. We managed to pull it off with only one take each as I recall, with the exception of the one that had the least amount of arranging, 'The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise'."



Jazzman Ted Butterman

famous New Orleans riverboat chugging down the Mississippi, but that's not so. "I do remember the photos taken for those albums were shot on a tug or utility boat on the Chicago River", continues Ted. "The photographer wanted shots of us playing so we played 'St. Louis Blues.'"

"In my opinion", offers Butterman, "the star of those records was Ed Tedder, a musician of the first rank. He played tuba, 2nd trumpet, and tenor saxophone, which most discographies erroneously attribute to Ed Reed. Tedder never touched a tuba before in his life and had to rent one for the gig. He was one of the best I've heard." The first

Riverboat Five album cover looks as though it might have been shot on a

The Riverboat Five recorded six records in all for Mercury. The second, also in 1958 was "Ma, They're Comin' Down the Street". About which, Chicago jazz drummer, Wayne Jones recalls, "Ted plays a wondrous 4-bar phrase to open his chorus on "If I Could Be With You". Two records were made at Universal with the original lineup. Two more were made in Los Angeles with added big names like Eddie Miller, Nappy Lamare, Ray Bauduc, Nick Fatool, Bob Havens and Dick Cathcart. The band recorded live in New Orleans in 1961. They also were a big hit in the "Big Apple", with a lengthy stay at the Bourbon Street club in New York.

Butterman left the group after the second LP and formed his own band, the former Chicago Stompers, that included Wayne Jones on drums. In 1963, Ted and his Gold Coast Jazz Band toured the country with Phyllis Diller. "I had to smile on stage at all times, even when I didn't feel like it".

The 1913 Silver Besson came up big once more in Buttermans' career when he was asked to sit in with "Little Brother" Montgomery. "I made a lamp out of that cornet but I had disassembled it and kept it in the trunk of my car. I had heard there was to be a recording session at Birdhouse in Chicago. Since I knew everyone, I merely went up there to listen when Brother asked me to sit in on 'Saturday Night Function'. I went to the car and brought in the horn in an old WWII khaki canvass nap sack. It took me about 3 or 4 minutes to learn the tune and then do the recording." I don't know whose decision it was to include me on all the tunes." The result was "Chicago: The Living Legends", a double disc sampler on Riverside #389/399. John S. Wilson of The New York Times called it "a gutty little band that features an exciting, biting trumpeter" in Butterman.

Ted currently is leader and guitarist of his Neo-Passé Swing Band that has recorded a notable CD "[Live at the Village Tavern](#)". The session features the cream of the Chicago Jazz crop like Eric Schneider, Russ Phillips, Kim Cusack, and the late Stu Genovese. Also, since 1982, he has been cornetist/leader of the Chicago Cubs Quintet appearing at "The Friendly Confines" of Wrigley Field during the Cubs home games. Over the years, the Cubs band has featured scores of local Jazz legends, including Chuck Hedges, Cy Touff, Mike Walbridge, Charley Hooks, Mike Bezin, John Bany, and Fred Runquist

"I still have the silver Besson", adds Butterman, "just in case".

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Recommended Chicagoland Happenings...

The Brookfield Jazz Society meets every Thursday in the Cottage at Irish Times, 8869 Burlington Avenue, Brookfield, Illinois (708) 268-7873, with live jazz and other happenings. www.brookfieldjazz.org

"The Browsers", experts in the big band era, meet the last Friday of every month @ the Villa D'Oro Restaurant, 5531 N. Milwaukee Avenue, Chicago, Illinois, and (773) 775-2820. Dues are six dollars and include a share of the pizza.

Disc Jockey "Rowdy" Ron Richter plays big band and jazz the second Sunday of every month at Matty's Wayside Inn, 1727 Waukegan Road, Glenview, Illinois, in the lounge. (847) 724-1314 at 4:00 PM - ? Attendees are invited to bring a favorite CD of the genre to play and comment on.

The Illiana Club of Traditional Jazz presents excellent concerts monthly at the Glendora Ballroom, 10225 S. Harlem Avenue, Chicago Ridge, Illinois.

On the Radio: "Mike Baker and the Forgotten 45's": Saturday evenings from 6 PM during the summer months on WJJG-AM 1530, Elmhurst, Illinois. www.wjjgam1530.com

On the Radio: Carousel Bandstand: Hosted by Ken Meyer Thursdays at 10:00am on WEPS-FM 88.9.

Remembering Eddie Hubbard...

First of all, from Eddies website:

www.eddiehubbard.com

It saddens us to inform you, his friends and listeners, Eddie Hubbard passed away Monday 3/26/2007.



Eddie and his wife Lill were in a car accident the prior week. Lill survived the accident and is recuperating with family members. His loving family surrounded Eddie at the time of his passing. Eddie Hubbard was a radio announcer most of his life. Starting his career

in Baltimore Maryland then moving to Chicago where he was with WIND/WGN/FM100/WJJD for many years. Eventually moving to Dallas/Fort Worth, Eddie joined ABC Radio Satellite Music Network. Eddie was loved by millions and will be extremely missed. A private memorial was held. In lieu of sending flowers, donate to your favorite charity in Eddie Hubbard's name.

And from his fans and colleagues...

-From Bud Buschardt

www.timelessmusiconline.com

Eddie's career began in his hometown of Baltimore, MD. He often joked about the talent fees he received for doing his first commercials. The spots were for a chiropractor and his pay was for free adjustments. At one time Eddie's show for Chesterfield Cigarettes was so popular it led him to a job on NBC in New York as announcer for "The Chesterfield Supper Club," a show featuring the Glenn Miller band. He once substituted on CBS Radio for the legendary radio-television personality Arthur Godfrey. He was also emcee for the first network variety show from Chicago on the ABC Television Network.

Shortly after Satellite Music Networks started the Stardust format in 1981 at studios right outside of Chicago, Eddie joined the staff and did the afternoon show. (Satellite Music Network eventually became ABC Radio Networks.) In addition, he hosted a Saturday specialty show that ran through the 1990's called "The Browsers." The show featured record collectors who would try to stump each other and the

listeners with music trivia questions.

Eddie and I often talked about rolling tape as I asked him about the early days of radio. Unfortunately, the only tape that rolled is the one that plays back in my head when I think about all the conversations we had throughout the past years. I loved hearing about the days when the disc jockey (in his coat and tie) was a true personality. He was looked up to in the community. He was in charge of his own show. He talked to the record promoters and artists. He decided what records he would play on his show. Eddie was the guy who gave many of Chicago's recording artists their big breaks by playing their records and interviewing them. He knew the big stars and they knew him because he helped so many of them along the way.

Charles Eddie Hubbard will be very much missed by this staff and his many fans. The family suggests that a donation to your favorite charity in Eddie's name will be appreciated.



The Browsers 'ham' it up before a broadcast. (L to R:) Erv Edell, Bob Knack, Warren Ketter, Eddie Hubbard, Phil Holdman, Nick Polus, Dave Adams and Joe Spery.

-From Browser Nick Nardella

We were doing a show on Bing Crosby and brought up the song "Crosby, Columbo and Valle", but no one had a copy of it. So, Eddie instantly sang it on the air, verse and all...no preparation or rehearsal, and sang it perfectly! Eddie was very easy to go on the air with. He made everyone comfortable. His sense of humor was always there. We lost a legend-The Browsers and his fans will never forget him.

-From Browser Joe Carlton-

Eddie was a long time favorite of thousands of radio listeners in Chicago and many other areas of the country. He was sharp enough to see that "The Browsers" had something to offer and "Eddie

Hubbard and the Browsers" radio show had over 300 outlets at one time. His congenial manner and constant chuckle helped to keep this program "light and bouncy". Personally, Eddie was very friendly to me and we often chatted over the phone. I am particularly distressed at his passing.

-From Ted Butterman-

www.dixieswing.com

My earliest remembrance of Eddie Hubbard was when I was in my 10s. I would lie in bed listening to The Chesterfield Club, a recorded music program, hosted by him. I would assimilate almost everything I heard, good and bad, which is probably why I know so many songs, some of which I play all the time and others I never hope to, thanks to Eddie.

Every Thursday night was "Dixieland Night" which I never missed. It was from that program that I acquired a taste for classical jazz, particularly Louis Armstrong. He would always include a few Hot Five records explaining that you should not look upon what might be perceived as "clinkers" in Louis' performance but to accept it as the price of his incredible inventiveness.

I will always be indebted to Eddie Hubbard for opening my eyes and ears to the wonderful world of jazz.

-From Browser Chuck Sengstock-

Eddie Hubbard and I go back to 1957, when I joined WGN's news department. Eddie was the morning man and I worked the over-night shift and prepared the newscasts interior to his 6 a.m. to 9 a.m. show. Eddie was the friendliest, most cooperative person I encountered in the radio business. Jack Brickhouse once said of Eddie, "He doesn't have a mean bone in his body and I have never heard him utter an unkind word about anybody." That is really a great tribute to anyone. But Eddie was one of those special people.

Eddie and I renewed our acquaintance when I began working on the Browsers shows in 1987 and it was if our friendship didn't miss a beat in the intervening 25 or more years. Most recently I have been in touch with him regarding his memoirs that he was preparing. He was a special friend and I'll miss him.

-From Browser Jack Hogan

I was truly sad to hear of the passing of Eddie Hubbard. I always received good vibes from him through the microphone as well as in person. After the cessation of the Browsers show as we knew it, I would look proudly at much of the memorabilia which included a photo from Ed inscribed "To My Pal, Jack". I'm sure he used that salutation for everyone but I cherish it personally. In the last few years, he wrote me

a couple of nice letters, one of which was to thank me for my CD which I had sent him. I could not believe it when he wrote to tell me that he had played a couple of cuts on his program. My reaction was that it could have endangered his radio career. What a guy! It was an honor and privilege to have participated in radio with him. My very first experiences sitting across from him on live radio were ones of awe. Time made me feel comfortable so I can always proudly say, "I was on the radio with Eddie Hubbard".



Phil Holdman and Eddie Hubbard

-From Ronnie Kole-

www.ronniekole.com

I remember listening to Eddie decades ago in Chicago long before I left the Windy City for the Big Easy...My wife Gardner and I stayed for a few days with Lillian and Eddie in their home in the 80's and I did a Browsers show from the south side studios with he and the Browsers...Much fun...I did a remote during one of the first President George Bush Inaugural Balls, which I was also performing at...At that time I had one of the first Motorola Cellular Phones, and man were they big and heavy...Unfortunately I couldn't get the President on the air, but we did hear some fine music and some interviews as I recall...He and Lil came down to visit us here in New Orleans, and we did the town up...and down...Of course he had his tape recorder and we did some interviews...Dorothy Lamour was one of the stars that was a part of a fundraiser that we were doing for Easter Seals...Fortunately we have these wonderful memories to relive the life of Mr. Radio, Eddie Hubbard...

-From Browser John Macek

For 23 years I had the special privilege of appearing on radio with Eddie Hubbard and my fellow Browsers. His easy relaxed style made the Browsers shows so enjoyable. Eddie made it possible for us to play the music of the big band era along with our trivia questions and the show was very popular. His 60 years on the air was a record in itself and he was still playing that great music Sunday nights in Dallas. He will not be forgotten by the Browsers. Thanks to Eddie, we enjoyed two big band cruises and two appearances at the famous Blackhawk Restaurant here in Chicago. My wife and I wish his wife Lill a speedy recovery and all good wishes. She was always at Eddie's side and a very nice person.

-From Browser Bob Knack-

Eddie Hubbard will always be one of my broadcasting heroes, although he always frowned slightly when I would tell him I grew up listening to him on the radio. Along with his weekday WGN morning drive shift, one of my favorite shows was "Brickhouse-Hubbard" where Eddie teamed with his pal and Cubs broadcaster Jack Brickhouse for a daily hour where the two would discuss things that appeared in that day's paper...the lively art of conversation sorely missing from radio today.

I had the great pleasure of working behind the scenes at WGN during the 1970's when Eddie was doing the "Music Unlimited" program weekday evenings. This is where I first got to know him personally. After that, when I was invited to be a regular panelist on "The Browsers", I really got to appreciate his talent first hand. What a thrill it was to share a microphone with him.

Nowadays, as advertising agencies have convinced their clients that slick and expensively produced commercials are the way to sell their wares, I repeatedly watched Eddie accomplish the same thing by just reading a 60 second piece of copy. Boy, was he good! Search the radio dial now and you soon realize, they're not making 'em like Eddie Hubbard anymore.



Eddie behind the microphone

-From Browser Karl Kountz

I was deeply saddened to hear of Ed's death. I consider myself very fortunate to have worked with Ed on our Browser shows. He will always be at the top of my list of people. I was proud to have known him during my lifetime. Goodbye, my friend.

-From Browser Perry Huntoon

It was with great sadness that I learned of Eddie's recent passing. It was more poignant because of the fact that I never met Eddie in person, but was scheduled to the day before his fatal automobile accident. I first heard Eddie back in 1988 when living in Michigan and tuning in the Browsers shows on Saturday mornings. Little did I know then that I would end up in Chicago and becoming an active member of the Browsers. But, by then, Eddie had moved to the Dallas area on behalf of ABC Radio Networks, so we did the show by long distance with Eddie emceeding from the Dallas studios while the Browsers were at the WLS studios in the Loop. As a result, for the several years I did the show, Eddie was only a voice at the other end of the line. But what a voice! He had the good fortune to maintain a voice that didn't age. He sounded the same decade after decade. But as time marched on and musical tastes evolved differently, ABC Radio finally pulled the plug on the Browsers show and that cost us our direct connection to Eddie.

Recently I noted a listing in the entertainment pages for a big band show together with a tribute to the Andrews Sisters on Sunday, March 18, at the Arcada Theater in St. Charles, IL, next to the Fox River. The Arcada was built in 1926 as a vaudeville theater and was still in operation. The attraction to me, however, was not the theater or the performers, but the fact that Eddie Hubbard was scheduled to emcee the show. I immediately purchased a ticket and e-mailed Eddie to let him know we could finally meet face-to-face. But his response dashed those hopes as he replied that ABC Radio had committed him to a weekend broadcast and that he would be unable to make it to St. Charles for that Sunday concert. The day after the concert, fate intervened and the accident occurred that took Eddie away. Had the radio commitment not been made (and ABC had pretty much severed its connection with Eddie by that time), Eddie might well have been out of harm's way in Illinois and I would have finally had the opportunity to meet him. As it is, I reassure the many hours of broadcast time we shared while bringing good music and big band trivia to an appreciative listening audience.

Lynn Roberts, Songbird Extraordinaire

By Perry Huntoon

Fame is often a matter of just being in the right place at the right time. Back in the days of the Swing Era, a good gal singer could find fame just by being attached to a popular band. Think of Helen Ward, Martha Tilton and Peggy Lee with Benny Goodman, Helen Forest with Harry James, Helen O'Connell with Jimmy Dorsey, Bea Wain with Larry Clinton, Jo Stafford with Tommy Dorsey and so many others. But other equally talented singers coming along after the crest of the Big Band wave were not so fortunate. Their names may be on many recordings, they may have been every bit as good as those on the aforementioned list, but the public taste had moved on and they toiled in relative oblivion and are little remembered.

Lynn Roberts falls into that category except for one notable fact. She is still out there singing and sounds better than ever! Born in 1935, she came along too late for the Swing Era, but started singing with Charlie Spivak's Orchestra at age 15 in 1950. Her inauspicious recording debut with Spivak of *Every Cat Has Nine Lives*, a mediocre tune, has fallen into well deserved obscurity. However, after a stint with Vincent Lopez, she joined Tommy Dorsey's band in late 1952 where, at that time, she could be heard on broadcast transcriptions made at the Blue Room of the Hotel Roosevelt in New Orleans performing the hits of the day like *Lullaby of Broadway* and *Jambalaya*. She made a few recordings with the band for Decca, but, by that time Dorsey records were no longer big sellers. The kids had moved on.

After Tommy's contract with Decca expired, he recorded some for the small Bell label. These were mostly 7-inch 78 rpm records and sold in drugstores and Five & Dimes. Listing for 39¢, I can remember buying them for as little as 19¢ each. Lynn recorded some fine tunes on those Bell recordings like *Wanted* and *The Man Who Got Away*, but they were strictly covers of the more popular recordings of those tunes. But for anyone who watched the *Stage Show* telecasts in the 1954-56 period, Lynn could be seen with her blonde hair and ponytail handling the few songs given to her with great enthusiasm and skill. Fired by Dorsey (something that happened to almost everyone in that band at one time or another), she rejoined in mid-1956 and could be heard on broadcasts the band made from the Café Rouge of the Hotel Statler in NYC, many of which were transcribed and thus preserved, by the Armed Forces Radio Service. After Tommy's sudden death on November 26, 1956, brother Jimmy fronted the band and Lynn stayed on through the fall/winter engagement at the Café Rouge, which ended January 3, 1957. She

sounds absolutely terrific on radio broadcasts from the period right up through New Year's Eve. Married to trumpeter Daryl "Flea" Campbell and then pregnant, she realized that this was not the time to go on the road with the band. They both left Jimmy and decided to stay home on Long Island.

Lynn sang on and off for the better part of a decade with Benny Goodman and later, several years with Harry James. I caught her with Benny at a Schaefer Music Festival in New York's Central Park in 1967. But with the outdoor venue, heavy crowds, a lot of Schaefer Beer and just the sheer excitement of seeing Benny, I could only see Lynn's beauty, but couldn't hear much of her voice. But that changed nearly a quarter century later.

PBS produced a tribute to Dorsey about 1990

(now available on DVD) that was largely performed live at the Indiana Roof Ballroom in Indianapolis with the current Dorsey band led by Buddy Morrow. Lynn was the featured guest vocalist. Sitting by the bandstand, I was utterly dazzled at how beautiful she looked and how good she still sounded after all those years. I had the chance to talk briefly with her there. Jump forward to 2005 and I discovered Lynn performing with a newly reconstituted Gene Krupa Orchestra at a high school in Pittsburgh. I drove from Chicago, was treated like a minor celebrity for driving so far for a local event, and ended up in the front row! Lynn was magnificent and, among other tunes,

performed *Opus #1*, a song recorded by the great Anita O'Day with Krupa back in 1945. Lynn's version made me forget all about Anita. Nobody in the audience could believe that Lynn was then 70. She looked no more than 55 and sounded like 35. After obtaining a photo of us together after the concert, I drove away on Cloud Nine.

As a postscript, I saw the Krupa band again in St. George, Utah in March, 2007 and, to my surprise, found Flea Campbell, who in recent years had been road manager for the Buddy Morrow led Tommy Dorsey band, sitting in the trumpet section. He had a new CD available "*I'm 81 and Having Fun*" and guess who the featured vocalist is? None other than Lynn still sounding as good as ever. Long divorced, they are still best friends. And the drummer on the date is their, then, 16-year old grandson! Lynn performs a beautiful version of *It's So Peaceful in the Country*, a tune she and Flea performed when both were with Spivak. Catch her on that CD as well as her 2-CD set titled "*The Men in My Life*" half of which features a tribute to Harry James, who she, unfortunately, never recorded with. Both CDs are available at <http://lynnroberts-sings.com>.

