



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 #6 January/February 2008

*****“Little Jack Frost Get Lost” Edition**

Presented by: www.dixieswing.com

Where Have All The ‘Happy Whistlers’ Gone?

By Bob Knack

While browsing the other day, I came across a CD of Capital Records hits from 1956. I was delighted to find on it, *The Happy Whistler* (Capital 3391), by Don Robertson. I remembered this tune from my childhood and I have been whistling the snappy melody ever since whether at the office, walking down the street or in the shower.

This was Robertson’s only hit under his own name. “I just happened to hit on a little tune that caught on”, admitted the songwriter. He did write many other big hits including “I Really Don’t Want to Know,” “I Don’t Hurt Anymore,” and “Please Help Me, I’m Falling.” He was one of Elvis Presley’s favorite composers. *The Happy Whistler*, released April 2, 1956, made it to number six on the charts. While playing the tune for the umpteenth time, it occurred to me that nobody whistles anymore. As Andy Rooney might query, why is that?

As a big band fan, I was always fond of Elmo Tanner, the famous whistler and vocalist with the Ted Weems Orchestra. (He is not to be confused with Elmo Lincoln, who was the first movie Tarzan who didn’t whistle as much as he yelled.) They had a number one record with “Heartaches” (8-23-1938 Decca 25017). Tanner made a number of other ‘whistling records’ with Weems on Decca including “Nola”, “In My Little Red Book,” and “The Cute Little Hat Check Girl” all done in 1938. Back in the day, I’ll bet Weems fans whistled these catchy melodies ad infinitum.

Many of the Browsers have reminded me to mention Fred Lowery, “The Blind Whistler”, who lost his eyesight to scarlet fever at the age of two. He caught on sensationally with the Vincent Lopez band and later Horace Heidt, appearing on radio along with the Musical Knights His most remembered recordings are “Rose Marie” from the WWII years and “Indian Love Call”.

Another hit with whistling was born on the stage of Chicago’s famous Blackhawk Restaurant. In the spring of 1938, Bob Crosby’s Bob Cats were finishing a Sunday matinee. In attendance was a group of New Trier High School students from north suburban Winnetka. As the story goes, the band had just finished their last tune, “Big Crash From China”, and needed an encore. Ray Bauduc and Bob Haggart started ad-libbing with Ray beating on Bob’s Bass strings with his drumstick. When Haggart then whistled a catchy improvised melody into the mix, it all came together as “Big Noise From Winnetka”. Anyone good at whistling through their two front teeth had a field day with this one.

A famous whistle song I remember was the pre-game warm-up music of the Harlem Globetrotters...“Sweet Georgia Brown”. Later I learned the whistler featured on that record was a guy named Brother Bones. His real moniker was Freeman Davis and he was discovered while whistling and dancing to

records while working as a shoe shine boy in Alabama. The famous version by Brother Bones and his Shadows was recorded in the late 40’s on Tempo Records and picked up by the Globetrotters as a theme in the early 50’s. Also heard on the record was the wooden percussion instrument known as ‘the bones’ from where Brother derived his last name. I can’t tell you how many times we whistled that one in the schoolyard while playing a game of pick-up round ball.

We were whistling when we went to the movies, too. “The Bridge On The River Kwai” gave us “The Colonel Bogey March” and “The King and I” featured “Whistle a Happy Tune.” Disney (and Jiminy Cricket) scored with “Give A Little Whistle” and “Whistle While You Work” was from “Snow White.” I was a big fan of the trio of flicks made by funnyman Red Skelton in the early ‘40’s... “Whistling in the Dark”, “Whistling in Dixie”, and “Whistling in Brooklyn”.

Fans of old time radio in 1942 remember “The Whistler” mystery show. The programs opened with the voice-over...“I am the Whistler, and I know many things, for I walk by night”. It was accompanied throughout by the sound of footsteps and a haunting whistled theme. The whistling was actually performed by actress Dorothy Roberts. She wasn’t just “whistling past the graveyard.” That was a term often used when someone wanted to summon up courage.

In the early 80’s a jazz whistler named Ron McCroby made four albums on the Concord label. He also appeared on Merv Griffin’s Show, the Tonight Show and at the Monterey Jazz Festival. He copyrighted his instrument as a Puccolo-a cross between a piccolo and a pucker-and it was something he could carry with him anywhere. He claimed to “avoid violent kissing, didn’t get smart with people bigger than I and used caution going through revolving doors.”

If there is one thing all of the above music has in common, it’s a lot of melody. In the last few years, there have been no tunes with ‘whistleability’. They’re just not writing ‘em anymore. I defy you to enter the world of Rap music and find melody in the latest hits by Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Fives or The Bone Thugs.

continued next page...

**** “Little Jack Frost, Get Lost”** is an appropriate theme for this winter edition. This Al Stillman/Segar Ellis composition was recorded in 1947 by Frankie Carle and his orchestra with vocalist Marjorie Hughes, who was, in fact, Frankie’s daughter. Ray McKinley also recorded it with a “vocal refrain” by Jean Friley, and Bing Crosby and Peggy Lee did it as a duet in 1952.

'Happy Whistlers' con't

There is hope. The International Whistlers Convention (IWC) www.whistlingiwc.com is held annually every April in the historic town of Louisburg, North Carolina, the self-proclaimed world's whistling capital. The governor has declared a "Happy Whistlers Week" for citizens and visitors to honor the art of whistling by participating in the scheduled events.

Moreover, Swedish pop artists Peter Bjorn and John have an international hit single, "Young Folks" that prominently features whistling. The song has helped revive this lost pastime of whistling. The British website Teenfirst said, "For so long the whistle has been in decline. . . . Now the whole world whistles with Peter Bjorn and John." Have any of you heard it? It has been featured in commercials for AT&T, Napster, Budweiser, and American Eagle Outfitters and has been in heavy rotation on American dance formatted radio stations.

If there were ever a true motivation to keep whistling, however, it would be in recalling Lauren Bacall's invitation to Humphrey Bogart in "To Have and Have Not". "You know how to whistle, don't you...you just put your lips together and blow." No guy ever had a better reason to pucker.



More Whistle Tunes...

Don't Worry, Be Happy, Bobby McFerrin
Five O'Clock Whistle, Count Basie
I Love To Whistle, Fats Waller
Andy Griffith Show Theme, The Fishin' Hole, (whistled by Earle Hagen)
Walkin' & Whistlin' Blues, Les Paul
Whistle Stop, Woody Herman
Whistle-it-is, Carson Robison
Whistlin' Blues, Meade Lux Lewis
"The Whistlers Song", Al Trace
Whistlin' Joe from Kokomo, Hoosier Hot Shots

In addition, songs have been recorded allowing you to Whistle While You Work, Whistle While You Walk and Whistle While You Weep, we've had The Whistler and his Dog, The Whistler and his Cat as well as The Whistler and his Dog House. We've had Whistle Man, Whistlers Father and Whistlers Mother-in Law!

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.

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

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 Matty's Wayside Inn, 1727 Waukegan Road, Glenview, Illinois, in the lounge. (847) 724-1314 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. Sometimes if it sounds a little scratchy. It's because Ken plays much of the music from original 78 rpm records. [WEPS-FM 88.9, Elgin, Illinois.](http://www.weps.com)

Swing band...

FOR RENT



Ted Buttermen's Neo-Passé Quintette: 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

"The Saga of Sass and Brass"

by Denis DiBlasio

SASS AND BRASS was a one-night-only Jazz session and videotaping before a live audience, bringing together several world class musicians along with singing legend Sarah Vaughn at the famous Storyville Jazz Hall in New Orleans in 1986. Maynard Ferguson band saxophonist/composer/arranger Denis DiBlasio recalls an amusing incident from that evening.

Put Maynard, Dizzy, Al Hirt, Don Cherry, Chuck Magione, Herbie Hancock, Ron Carter, Billy Higgins and Sarah Vaughn together filming 'Sass and Brass' as we did in New Orleans at the club Storyville and you could have a book of its own. I don't even know where to start.

We (The Maynard Ferguson band) were all at the club. The guys in the band just watched everything too star struck to actually contribute to anything. Everybody mentioned above is up on the stage except Al Hirt. We flew in from Chicago, Chuck came from Kentucky somewhere, Herbie from LA. Everyone came from places all over the country. All were there except Hirt who lives a couple blocks from the club. It was funny.



So, it's time to start and the producer is getting nervous. He seems like a nice guy but doesn't get the loose jazz thing, which is another story. Anyway, it's like 15 minutes to start time and Al (Nickname: Jumbo) is still not there yet. The club is pretty big and kind of dark except for the stage. You had to be careful not to trip over anything if you where in a dark area. So, the producer is freaking, Dizzy and Boss (Maynard) are yakking, and none of the players seems

Maynard Ferguson greets his fans.

that Al isn't there. The young producer is running around as if he can solve something by running faster and faster. Nothing is happening.

So, someone yells out "WHERE IS AL?"

"Ah, keep your shirt on".

The response came from some dark corner of the club. We all turned around and in a dark recessed spot, Al Hirt is sitting next to this young good-looking girl eating a plate of crawdads! Boss sees him and yells "Hey Jumbo!". "Hey Fox" yells Al. He's just hanging back there watching all this mayhem unfold while slamming back crawfish. Oh, Man it was a riot! He didn't care! He wasn't getting a heart attack for anybody. So, Al takes his time walking up to the stage. The producer is trying to vibe Al but it's like the vibe isn't even entering Al's aura, it's just sort of bouncing off of it. Al gets on the stage, Boss and Dizzy hug Al, and now the producer's vibe power has been stripped from him like a court marshal or something.

There was so much electric in the air and energy being thrown around we all just sat there and took it all in. It was really interesting, all this star power with a producer who didn't get it.

Who's In Charge?

Now that Al is on stage you would think something would be happening. Well pros aren't always good at rehearsal, they're trained to give it up for the performance. So all these guys are on stage and nothing is happening. The producer is hovering around a mental breakdown.

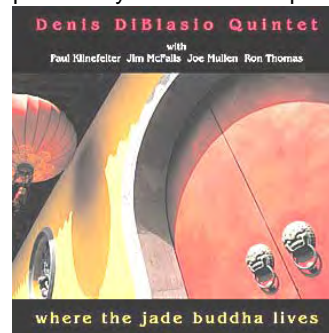


Jazz great Maynard Ferguson

So the producer goes to Chuck Mangione and asks "You're a leader...you have a band. Will you run this?" Well, Chuck made the smart move and said "No way". So, the producer goes to Boss. "Maynard you're a leader...you have a band, will you lead this?" And Boss says the best thing ever. He says "Ahh I don't think anybody up here is going to tell Dizzy Gillespie

what to do...sorry". OK. So, the producer goes to Diz and asks him to lead and Dizzy says, "We're all pros up here, nobody has to point fingers". Ha! The producer's face went white. All this talent and nobody will take charge, add a producer who knows nothing about jazz and he has to get Sarah Vaughn up there for her spot and nobody's going to touch that one.

This producer was so lost. He must have been used to dealing with kids or something. Here we are with a stage full of legends and all they want to do is talk and eat. The guys in the band were just watching it unfold. It was something. You could have put battery cables on this producer's ears and jump-started the bus he was so wired. The best part is, this producer is on the brink of losing it and no one has even played a note yet. Ha!



Editor's note: Thanks, Denis! We'd like to tell everyone about your latest CD: Denis DiBlasio Quintet- "Where the Jade Buddha Lives" Art of Life Records AL1030-2 CD

Joining Denis are Paul Klinefelter on acoustic bass, Jim McFalls on trombone, Joe Mullen on drums and Ron Thomas on piano. The album features seven songs composed by Denis specifically for this quintet in addition to Rimsky Korsakov's "Song of India" and "The Long Goodbye" which was written by the quintet.

To place your order online please visit the Art of Life Records web site at

<http://www.ArtOfLifeRecords.com>



"Some days you get up and put the horn to your chops and it sounds pretty good and you win. Some days you try, nothing works, and the horn wins. This goes on and on and then you die and the horn wins."

Dizzy Gillespie on playing the trump

My Favorite Theme Songs

By Browser Larry Maloney

It seems as though everyone is coming up with their favorite records. I have a list, too. However, these are my favorite theme songs. They are themes that make me happy every time I hear them.

1. **Moonlight Serenade** by Glenn Miller. This has instant recognition and stirs many pleasant memories.
2. **Sunset to Sunrise** by Art Mooney. It took me twenty-five years to obtain a copy and then, I found a second copy two weeks later.
3. **Let's Dance** by Benny Goodman. This ushered in the Swing Era.
4. **Smoke Rings** by Glenn Gray and the Casa Loma Orchestra. So Smooth and soothing.
5. **Strange Cargo** by Freddie Slack. Moody and Somber.
6. **Blues Stay Away From Me.** by Owen Bradley. A delightful blend of country and swing.
7. **Adios** by Enric Madriquera. He wrote it and his wife sings it.
8. **Snowfall** by Claude Thornhill. A superb arrangement.
9. **Sandman** by the Dorsey Brothers. (This is not "Mr. Sandman") Not well known. Used before their break-up.
10. **Body and Soul** by Coleman Hawkins. A textbook for tenor sax players to follow.
11. **Daydreams Come True at Night** by Dick Jurgens. Who, from Chicago, can ever forget the Aragon Ballroom.
12. **Goodnight Song** by the Korn Koblbers. A beautiful song unlike most of their selections.
13. **The Very Thought of You** by Ray Noble, The epitome of a romantic song.
14. **Cuban Love Song** by Edmundo Ros. I especially like his heartfelt vocal.
15. **Heart to Heart** by Elliott Lawrence. Smooth...so smooth.

I could listen to these themes, as well as others, twenty-four hours a day. Each one has wonderful memories.

When I put on a cassette of theme songs, I try to identify them without referring to my notes. Since I have over 800 themes, I am only successful about half the time.

Songs like **Moonlight Serenade** by Glenn Miller **Let's Dance** by Benny Goodman and **Sunset to Sunrise** are familiar are familiar. How many can recognize **Desert Serenade** by Jerry Gray, **Let's All Dance** by Louis Brown and **Sunrise to Sunset** by Jack Miller?

Some themes, at times, reflected the leaders' mood. Songs like **Sometimes I'm Happy** by Blue Barron, **Nightmare** by Artie Shaw and **City Nights** by Jack Jenny all showed the leaders personal feelings. The last one is a real downer. Fortunately, he changed his signature to **Stardust** after his great trombone solo with Artie Shaw.

Some bands used the same themes. Three orchestras had **When Summer is Gone**, it was first used by Hal Kemp, then Gay Claridge and finally Tony Barron. Two bands had **Bubbles in the Wine**. They were Lloyd Mumm and, of course, Lawrence Welk.

Some bands used more than one theme. Charlie Barnet had four. They were **Knocking on the Famous Door**, **I Lost Another Sweetheart**, **Make Believe Ballroom** and his most famous one "**Redskin Rumba** based on his great hit **Cherokee**. Glenn Miller used **Slumber Song** during the ASCAP strike. Most people know that **Rhapsody in Blue** was Paul Whiteman's theme, but few realize that his original one was **Peaceful Valley**.

I'm still looking for missing theme songs and probably always will because the list is endless.

Larry's Theme Song Quiz...

Hey, big band fans! Everyone probably knows Woody's **Blue Flame** and Tommy's **I'm Getting Sentimental Over You** but how many of the following bandleaders theme songs do you know.

- 1.) Desi Arnaz 2 Tony Pastor. 3.) Tiny Hill 4.) Phil Spitalny 5.) Ozzie Nelson 6. Xavier Cugat 7.) Ray McKinley 8.) Johnny Long 9.) Abe Lyman 10.) Al Trace

Answers later in the issue.

Ketter's Corner

Doc Cheatham and the Mystery of the Missing Cap

By Browser Warren Ketter

My last contact with trumpet legend Doc Cheatham was a few years ago at the Elkhart, Indiana Jazz Fest, where most of the activities took place at a motel in the busiest part of town. I met Doc in one of the motel hallways and noticed he looked upset, so I asked him if I could be of any assistance. He explained that he had lost one of his favorite caps and was headed for the motel restaurant to see if he had left it there.

Doc held my arm for support as we proceeded to the restaurant. We asked the cashier if anyone had turned in Doc's cap. No one had. My suggestion to Doc was to take it easy and I would conduct a search. He agreed, but a thorough search of the hallways, lost and found, the bar etc revealed no cap.

A few hours later, while going in to catch a jazz group at poolside, there was Doc wearing his cap as he listened to the music. Asking where in the world he found his cap, his reply was that he didn't find it; someone else had and wanted to return it to him personally. We both had a good laugh, but I still wonder if "the finder" had been aware of my search from the beginning. Doc Cheatham died June 2, 1997, one week before his 92nd birthday suffering a stroke shortly after an engagement at Washington's Blues Alley jazz club.

Warren's Tid-Bits

♪ The father of Adolphus Cheatham wanted his son to become a physician and not a trumpet player hence the nickname "Doc".

♪ Duke Ellington's sax player Otto (Toby) Hardwicke gave the tag "Tricky Sam" to trombonist Sam Nanton.

♪ What started out as the Billy Baer band in West Allis, Wisconsin eventually became the Eddy Howard Orchestra.

♪ They say chanteuse Mabel Mercer used a megaphone before Rudy Vallee.

♪ Drummer Louis Bellson came into this world as Luigi Paulino Alfredo Francesco Antonio Balassoni.

♪ Latin bandleader Xavier Cugat once was heard to say, "I would rather play Chiquita Banana and have my swimming pool than play Bach and starve."

♪ Bandleader Seger Ellis discovered the Mills Brothers.

♪ Irving Berlin's hit "Always" was cut from the Marx Brothers musical "The Coconut".

♪ Lionel Hampton appeared under the pseudonym of Ly N. Ell on a 1938 Eddie Condon Commodore session...

♪ and, when his doctor told Condon his next drink would be his last, Eddie changed doctors.

“The Browsers” Brain Teasers

Submitted by Joe Carlton

1. We all know there are many songs with girl's names in the title. But, how many songs can you name in which boys names are mentioned? And there are too many with "Joe" in the title so leave those out.
2. How many theme songs can you mention in which the leader or another vocalist often sang this song?
3. Here's a Frank Sinatra question. While with the Tommy Dorsey band in 1941, Frank was arrested. What for?"
4. What orchestras do you connect with the following songs? "Tonight We Love", "I'll Never Smile Again", "South Rampart Street Parade" and "A Shanty In Old Shantytown".
5. Can you name three bands that Helen Forrest sang with?
6. What were Duke Ellington and Count Basie's given first names?
7. Keeping in this same line of thought, who were Harry Finkelman and Doris Kappelhoff?
8. Can you fill in the blanks? _____ is there anyone finer; _____ never sends me pretty flowers; _____ sweet as apple cider and _____ the _____ she was a low-down hootchie koocher.
9. Can you identify the following: Mr. and Mrs. Swing; Tic Toc Rhythm, Hour Of Charm All Girl Orchestra and Rippling Rhythm.
10. Do you know who played some of these famous solos? piano solo on Andy Kirk's "Roll Em"; trombone solo on Artie Shaw's "Star Dust"; two tenor sax solos on Glenn Miller's "In The Mood" and piano solo on Benny Goodman's "Mission To Moscow"?

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, Feb. 17 - 2 pm to 5:30 pm Johnie Faren's Orient Express. Sunday, Mar. 9 - 2 pm to 5:30 pm Jazz-O-Maniacs from Germany www.illianajazz.com

The St. Louis Jazz Club: [http: www.stlouisjazzclub.org](http://www.stlouisjazzclub.org)

An outstanding web site and club with lots of events and info. The St. Louis Rag-Timers, January 6, 2008. Tom Whitelaw, February 10.

The Browsers, experts in the big band era, are in winter hibernation. Their radio vignettes will resume in March 2008. www.wjgam1530.com In response to your many requests: The Browsers theme song "Browsin' is available at www.ronniekole.com

Big Bands Today...Thilo Wolf

A Communiqué From Across the Pond...

Many thanks for the continued Big Band magazine that you send me. I enjoy reading it. I am pleased that you are still able to put it out on a regular basis.

We Big Band fans tend to look back to the Big Band era, listening to all those great bands. I want to tell you about a current big band from Germany, the Thilo Wolf Big Band. Thilo is only 39 years old and has been leading a Big Band for 15 years. He plays great piano, also the drums. He composes, arranges and plays. This is not a ghost or copy band. Thilo plays many of his own compositions and when he does play one of the old Big Band hits, it is always in his style and his arrangement. The band swings like the clappers. Most of the guys in the band can solo too.

I first met Thilo in 1992 when he had just formed his band. I introduced the band to the U.K. via a Big Band radio programme that I presented. I made my mind up then to try to get the band to England, to play.

I sent CDs to DJs, to jazz festival organisers; also videos. After 10 years, the band made it this year to play in "Wigin Jazz Festival" as the headline attraction. The concert was almost full. Most of the fans had never heard of the band but they were soon giving standing ovations. Everyone I spoke to at the concert really enjoyed the band. I am hoping after all of my efforts, this will be one of many concerts they will give in the U.K. in the future.

Thilo has lots of CDs available. I urge you to buy one and give a listen to a young, new band. This was one invasion that I looked forward to.

Best wishes,
Ernie Dodd
Derbyshire, England

Editor's note: While it seems like only yesterday, it was back in 1994 when we first met Thilo Wolf at the Syd Lawrence big band convention in England where he was a guest star. The buzz around the festival was that this young bandleader could not only play the piano like Oscar Petersen but also the drums akin to Buddy Rich. He did not disappoint.



The weeklong convention featured several evening performances by Syd Lawrence, known as "The English Glenn Miller", his orchestra, and his terrific drummer, Ronnie Verrell, formerly of Ted Heath's band. The shows were hosted by the famous English big band BBC DJ Alan Dell. It's shocking to realize that Lawrence, Verrell, and Dell are all gone now, but gratifying that the

young man at the piano is flying high with his newest CD **“In a Personal Mood.”**

One of my favorites on the session is "Why You" a John Bunch arrangement originally done for the Benny Goodman Orchestra. This swinger features outstanding solos by Thilo, trumpet and sax. The press release for the CD reads: "Thilo Wolf's new CD stands out by great musical variety and uninhibited joy of playing. You will hear Thilo Wolf as soloist on piano, as well as on piano with his Big Band and with his smaller formations, trio and quintet." You can visit Thilo at: <http://www.thilo-wolf.de>

How to End Up With a Million Dollars Doing a Local Jazz and Big Band Radio Show

*Answer: Start out with two million.

By Bob Knack©

I heard that advice somewhere and you know, it's true. Hard to believe it's been over seventeen years since I became a part-time, minimum wage, radio "week-end warrior" in the Chicago area. I began here in the summer of 1991 on Elmhurst's big band formatted WKDC, the nation's first stereo AM, with a local Saturday morning show of my own creation that came to be called "The Great Escape." I based the title on Woody Herman's philosophy that listening to big bands and jazz is a "great escape" from the troubles of the day. We played Miller, Goodman, James, Kenton, Basie, the combos, and the great vocalists, of course, and the jazz of today attempting to gather some younger listeners. All the tunes were from my own collection.

I had the Saturday morning sign-on shift. That means getting up at four AM, arriving at the station by five, taking transmitter readings, cueing up vinyl, slamming back a cup of coffee, and signing on at six for a four-hour broadcast. All this, of course, in addition to holding down my bill-paying weekday job. I boasted that we were "Coming to you from high atop beautiful downtown Elmhurst", an affluent western suburb of Chicago. The studio was, in fact, in an unheated second floor loft above an appliance store.

The studio equipment, illuminated by a bare overhead light bulb, was in such bad shape I often brought in my own to replace some of the broken stuff. Nonetheless, every Saturday I'd throw that switch, put on the National Anthem and for the next four hours I was playing big bands and jazz on the radio..."Top of the world, Ma!" The station manager of WKDC commented on what it was like broadcasting on a struggling small suburban station at that hour. "You might as well be talking into the doorknob instead of the microphone." My first day at the station, I walked towards the back and noticed a sign over a door that said "newsroom". Lest I became overly-impressed by the stations commitment to the public interest, upon further examination, I realized the sign was hanging over the entrance to the men's toilet.

If any listeners were out there at first, I wanted to make the show interactive. My ever-faithful companion, Carol, volunteered to join me and field the telephone requests. Initially, she was able to catch up on her reading, uninterrupted. The folks we did get were loyal listeners. Bernice from Schaumburg called at sunrise each week requesting the classic "You Made Me Love You" by Harry James. One week she called to tell us she had sold her home, was moving to Oklahoma, and sadly would no longer be able to hear the program. During this time, she, like all our listeners, developed a warm "phone friend" relationship with the ever-vivacious Carol. We all said our teary good-byes and moved on. A couple of weeks later, we received a call from Broken Arrow, OK with a request for Harry James. I went on the air saying we'd like to play a request for "You Made Me Love You" for Bernice in Oklahoma. She listened to the song over the telephone and the rest of the audience must have thought we went national.

This was before the era of I-Tunes and it was gratifying to help people find songs they had long been searching for. Listener Jerry desperately needed a copy of "When Your Old Wedding Ring Was New" by Frank Fontaine, which had been long out of print. With the help of Browser Nick Nardella, who had the tune in his collection, Jerry was able to play it at his sixtieth wedding anniversary.

We broadcast at a meager 760 watts. Even so, listeners hungry for the sound of the big bands would bend every effort to hear the show. One listener would string several coat hangers together and hang them out the window as a makeshift antenna. We had one gentleman, who didn't want to get up so early hook up a real Rube Goldberg contraption to tape the program. He wired together a car battery, VCR with a

timer, and a radio. He said it worked pretty good! Another fan took his morning coffee out to the garage and listened on his car radio, where the reception was better.

After awhile, the radio station was sold to famous local Chrysler automobile dealer Joe "The Baron" Gentile, a real Damon Runyon style character. He thought being on the radio would help him sell more new cars. *He was misinformed.* Now known as WJGG-AM (Joe's initials), we moved up the street into some very nice new facilities . . .right above Joe's home. Often, as we drove into the parking lot in the early AM, we'd see Joe, sporting shorty pajamas and a big black cigar sweeping his sidewalk. "Here come the midnight troubadours", chortled "The Baron".

By then, I was advised to broker the show. That is, buying the four hours of airtime outright from the station and trying to sell commercials to maybe make a little loot for myself. *I was misinformed.* I was flattered, however, that I was the only DJ Joe invited back from the old crew and he has always treated me kindly.

End of part one. In the next issue, the listenership grows, we get a little help from our friends, "The Browsers", and go out amongst you for our "Listener Nights".

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



Pictured: T. Bartlett E. Wilkinson T. Buttermann J. Kuncil 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!](#)



That Big Band Singer's Column

By **Walt Andrus**

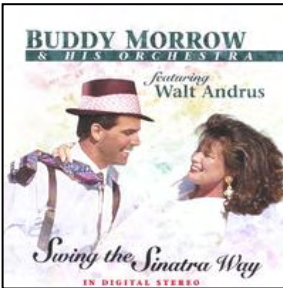


We did a lot of "hit and runs" when I was with Buddy Morrow and the Tommy Dorsey Orchestra. That is, playing a concert and getting right back on the bus and traveling to the next gig. The booking agent was the late Wayne Hutchinson who originally was with The Willard Alexander office in N.Y. City. The longest trip I remember was one where we did an afternoon show outdoors in Weehawken, New Jersey, with VERY hot summer weather. We finished the show, hopped on the bus and the next gig was in Pocatello, IDAHO! It was 21 hours of driving with a few stops for fuel and about an 8-hour rest for the bus driver at a motel but we made it to the gig on time!

The two BEST gigs we had were The Fairmont (formerly The Roosevelt) Hotel in New Orleans, Louisiana in The Blue Room where ALL the Big Bands and major acts worked, which was a 4-week gig with comp rooms, and 50% off at the restaurants. They had live "remote" broadcasts there in the 40's...

The other was a cruise we did with Buddy and The TDO on the Royal Viking Sun. Thirty-three days from San Francisco to Rome...through the Panama canal and across the Atlantic Ocean and to many ports of call! We just did our regular show on the ship...and enjoyed the amenities! The "boys in the band" would also OFTEN hit the late night lounge, sit in, and jam...

The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra was booked to record with Barry Manilow in New York City for his "Singin' With The Big Bands" album. I was not obligated to be there but I wanted to attend the session. The band was to record "I'll Never Smile Again" a la Sinatra and The Pied Pipers. We had to go to Manny's music store to get a "solo tone" mute for Buddy to play the trombone solo! They had authentic antique drums and ribbon mikes for the session. Artie Butler was one of the producers and transcribed the arrangement for the band...



We had just toured with Buddy Morrow and the TDO in Europe (Sweden, Switzerland, Germany, Holland etc.) for about 3 weeks. I decided to record the band in Bridgeport, Connecticut when we got back to the US (at my expense). So, we did two days of recording. We knocked out

twelve vocals and four instrumentals within just three hours per day...The CD is available at CD Baby.com "[Swingin' the Sinatra Way](#)" and was recorded "LIVE" in the studio no more than two takes per tune! Also available is my "[Love is a Song](#)"

Walt toured with The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra for many years and is a regular contributor to "The Great Escape"
Check out his web site at www.thebigbandsinger.com

Larry's Themes Answers...

1.) Desi Arnaz...**Cuban Pete** 2.) Tony Pastor...**Blossoms** 3.) Tiny Hill...**Angry** 4.) Phil Spitalny...**My Isle of Golden Dreams** 5.) Ozzie Nelson...**Loyal Sons of Rutgers** 6. Xavier Cugat...**My Shawl** 7.) Ray McKinley...**Howdy Friends** 8.) Johnny Long...**White Star of Sigma Nu**. 9.) Abe Lyman...**La Golondrina** 10.) Al Trace...**You Call Everybody Darlin'**

A Must for Your Collection!

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



Pictured L to R: Russ Phillips, Scott Black, Dave Elias, Ronnie Baron, Ted Buttermen
© 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!](#)

WE GOT LETTERS (and e-mails)...

I am an old friend of Ronnie Kole from when I lived in New Orleans and led the Dukes of Dixieland. He told me about your site. We are both into preserving that great big band sound, aren't we? Please also visit my nonprofit's website www.bigbandjazz.net. Great to find out about what you are doing.

Mike Vax

Editor's note: If you want to know what's up with the Mike Vax big band and others, visit the above site. It's terrific! **Note to Chicago metro readers:** Mike will be in the Chicago area at Fitzgerald's in Berwyn, Illinois with the Kenton Alumni big band on April 27th, 2008.

Thank you for your note about Bob Knack and do congratulate him for me, for carrying on the great work that all of you Browsers did for all of us old WWII vets and lovers of those super Big Bands we grew up with!! What a time that was for really, really great music and Glenn Miller always my favorite from 1938 when he found his "new sound" up to and including that big and super Air Force band.

I practiced medicine for 42½ years but am computer illiterate. (Editor's note: Dean was Johnny Carson's family doctor in Nebraska).

Stay well and thanks,
Dean D. Putzer
Brandon, MS

Hi:

I got a note from Joe Carlton not too long ago. He gave me this internet reference. I hope it ties up with you. The Saturday "Browser" shows were always a delight... 'specially the stumpers. I don't think I ever batted over .150 but I sure loved listening to all of you and your memories.

Best Wishes,

Dick Anderson

I was sorry to hear all the news (bad) about Phil. (Editor's note: The person referred to is Phil Holdman, President of the Browsers, who currently is suffering from ill health).Yes, I also heard about Eddie. (Eddie was Eddie Hubbard, famous radio broadcaster who died recently in an automobile accident.) I remember him on WIND radio in the late forties. "Atlas Prager's got it; Atlas Prager, get it".

My daughter got the first two issues for me of "The Great Escape". I really enjoy it very much. I see that Bob Knack is a big fan of "traditional" jazz. I am too and I have a lot of that stuff on cassette. I even have about 15 tunes of the Riverboat Five.

Again, I like "The Great Escape" and my daughter says she will send it every time.

Sincerely,
Andy Ganes
Hixson, TN

Dear Great Escape;

I'm an old bandman from way back...at the age of 17, I used to play 1st Trumpet on the Moonlight Cruises out of Baltimore on the Bay Belle during WW II and early 50's with Bob Craig's Band "The Melody Makers". I am now 80 years old and still have the Trumpet.

Owens Lee Pomeroy

Great edition of the newsletter again, Bob. One note: The New Year's Eve listing for '39 showing Edythe Wright & Jack Leonard with T. Dorsey is incorrect. (www.dixieswing.com/vol5.pdf) Both singers had already departed the band. Anita Boyer and Allan Dewitt were the replacements and may have been there for the New Year celebration prior to Connie Haines, Sinatra and the Pied Pipers coming on board in January.

I also did a double take seeing the name Jeanne Shirley mentioned in the Buddy Hughes article. I first thought it was a transposition as the name of Shirley Jeanne sang with the Dorsey Brothers in '55. But that gal was only 19 then and couldn't possibly have been with Thornhill in '46.

See you at the next Browsers meeting.

Perry Huntoon

I read your story on Al Hirt (www.dixieswing.com/vol5.pdf). There was one error. His club on Bourbon St. opened in April 1964. I know because I started to work there the day it opened as his lighting and sound guy. Ronnie Kole can confirm. Looking forward to your newsletter.

Jim Clark

Hello Bob:
Please add me to your mailing list. I've played Dixieland & Swing professionally for the past 60 years & am STILL working!

Bill Spilka

I think the Great Escape newsletter is the best thing for lovers of the Big Band.

Bill Treuden

Browser Quiz Answers

1. Jim, Bill, Ray (from "Moon Ray" --I'll accept this one); Yuba (from "When Yuba Played the Rhumba On The Tuba"); Benny from ("Benny Rides Again"); Daddy -- how many girls are called this?; Elmer (from "Elmer's Tune"); Gabriel (from "I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music"); and Mel (from "Mel's Idea").
2. Vaughn Monroe "Racing With The Moon"; Kay Kyser "Thinking Of You"; Eddy Howard "Careless" Dick Jurgens "Daydreams Come True At Night"; Alvino Rey's closing theme "Nighty-Night"
3. Frank was arrested for jaywalking in Hartford, Connecticut while on his way to a performance with the Dorsey band. T.D.'s manager, Bobby Burns had to pay a ten-dollar fine to "spring" Frankie. This according to the, March 15, 1941 issue of Downbeat.
4. "Tonight" - Freddy Martin; "I'll" - Tommy Dorsey; "South" - Bob Crosby and "Shanty" - Johnny Long
5. Artie Shaw, Benny Goodman and Harry James
6. Edward Kennedy Ellington and William Basie
7. Ziggy Elman and Doris Day
8. Dinah is there anyone finer; Bill never sends me pretty flowers; Ida sweet as apple cider and Minnie the Mocher, she was a low down.....
9. Red Norvo and Mildred Bailey were "Mr. and Mrs. Swing", Tic Toc Rhythm was played by Gray Gordon; Hour of Charm by played by Phil Spitalny and Rippling Rhythm was played by Shep Fields
10. Mary Lou Williams on "Roll Em"; Jack Jenny on "Star Dust"; Al Klink and Tex Beneke on "In The Mood" and Mel Powell on "Mission To Moscow".

The Browsers, experts in the big band era, are in winter hibernation. Their radio vignettes will resume in March 2008.

www.wjgam1530.com In response to your many requests: The Browsers theme song "Browsin'" is available at www.ronniekole.com