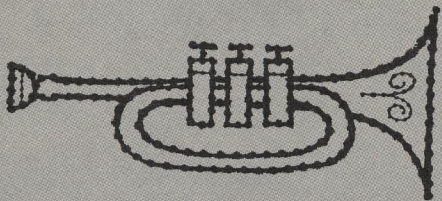


K.C. JAZZ 1965



JAZZ in K.C. (A BRIEF HISTORY)

GORDON STEVENSON

Kansas City is situated slightly left of the right end of what has been called the "Southwest Jazz Belt." This musical Southwest includes both more and less than the geographical Southwest. Working its way Northeastward from West Texas, it reached out to include not only Nebraska, Iowa, and Missouri, but, according to some jazz authorities, extended on into Illinois. It is a vast, sprawling area, rich in many jazz traditions. Still largely undocumented and unexplored, it is of tremendous musical and historical significance.

Some of the above is written in the past tense, not because the current K. C. jazz scene is unimportant (it is important), but because the Jazz Belt as a significant musical entity is for the most part a closed chapter in the history of jazz. The Jazz Belt is a new historical concept, but a necessary one if we are going to get out of the "birth of jazz" syndrome that has jazz invented by a dozen or so men at a specific time and place (the "up-the-river-from-New-Orleans" school of jazz history). There was jazz in K. C. before the 1920's and after the close of the 1940's, but the concept of "K. C. Jazz" as a musical style (rather than merely a geographical designation) can only be derived from the type of music that evolved in K. C. and the Southwest during two central decades. The heyday of the Jazz Belt started in the mid-1920's, reached a climax in the 1930's, and was on the wane in the 1940's. Within the Jazz Belt, Kansas City was a major jazz center. For three decades a thousand musicians touched or were touched by the musical life of Kansas City. But before noting the history of jazz in K. C., let's take a brief look at jazz in general and the Southwest in particular.

First, be it noted that this is Blues country. At the moment we are thinking not so much of the City Blues (such as those of Ma Rainey and Bessie Smith) as of the Country or Rural Blues (such as the blues of Lemon Jefferson and Leadbelly). This type of folk jazz found one of its richest flowerings in the Southwest. When, in the 1930's, John Lomax took his recording equipment into the Negro prison farms of the Brazos River basin, he brought to light a great unknown tradition of folk blues. Even before the pioneer work of Lomax, the commercial recording companies discovered the tremendous market for the so-called "race records," and out of the Southwest came the music of dozens of men like Lightnin' Hopkins and Blind Willie Johnson. This feeling for the blues influenced the development of jazz in K. C. and the Southwest well into the 1930's.

The Blues were not the only type of Negro folk music that contributed to jazz. Work songs, field cries, and even lullabies and children's singing games were harbingers of the new music. Equally important was gospel music—authentic recordings of early gospel music show it to be something quite different from the type of ar-

ranged concert music that has been perpetuated as the spiritual. Then there were "skiffle" bands—these were odd agglomerations of often homemade instruments, sort of folk jazz "combos" that were a part of Negro folk music. The skiffle band included such instruments as the jug, the kazoo, a washboard, and a psuedo-double bass made of an old wash tub, a string and a broom handle.

These are several of the strands that were to be woven into the music that was eventually to be known as jazz. There are many others. Urbanization, industrialization and shifts in population created here and there in the Jazz Belt significant pockets wherein germinated the seeds of a later urban jazz. Riverboats plied their way up the muddy Missouri to K. C. bringing popular entertainers and musicians. Medicine shows, carnivals, and minstrel shows followed civilization into the Southwest and in time these became the vaudeville circuits. By 1896, Sedalia, Mo., was a railroad center, and about the same time became a hotbed of ragtime music.

Without even trying to sort everything out, let's also take note of other strands: Research has shown that the American rhythmic synopation could already be found in minstrel show music of the mid-19th century. Certain forms of popular music, the Cakewalk, the Two-Step (and even some marches) had in them the seeds of ragtime. Army bands scattered musical instruments all over the country by the end of the Civil War. Shortly thereafter we find brass bands in almost every hamlet—many of these bands played ragtime and were incipient jazz combos and most of the musicians improvised their parts. In saloons and honky-tonks the old upright piano in the corner had its own history (from ragtime to stride piano to Boogie Woogie). And in time ballroom dancing gave way to a more earthy dance step and became tied up with one type of urban popular music influenced by and related to jazz.

Folk instruments were very popular. In the 1890's, Jenkins' Music Store manufactured mandolins and guitars. According to a story published in the Kansas City Journal on Dec. 13, 1898, the Jenkins' factory could turn out 5,000 musical instruments a year. "Music in distant lands from Kansas City instruments," the story went. The readers of the Journal were assured that virtually the entire civilized world, and much of the uncivilized world, danced and sang to Kansas City musical instruments: "In the Sandwich Islands . . . guitars and mandolins manufactured by J. W. Jenkins' Sons furnish music and amusement to thousands . . . If it is your desire to see Kansas City forge ahead and at the same time secure for yourself the best mandolin or guitar in the world, buy a . . . etc." This, mind you, was published in 1898.

Other commercial enterprises were directly or indirectly related to jazz and popular music. Sedalia will live forever in the annals of music, for it was there that the greatest of all ragtime composers, Scott Joplin, met his music publisher, John Stark. A few years earlier Joplin had made an unsuccessful attempt to sell his "Maple Leaf Rag" in Kansas City. He had no luck, but did sell his "Original Rag" to the K. C. music publisher, Carl Hoffman. At least a half dozen other K. C. publishers, including Jenkins, printed ragtime piano music.



Though Scott Joplin went East to St. Louis, Kansas City was the home of many ragtime composers, and at least two of them were second only to Joplin. There was James Scott, considered by many to be one of the great composers and performers of his time, and Charles L. Johnson. Mr. Johnson composed a lot more than ragtime and was well known as a composer of popular ballads, waltzes, parlor piano music, and all forms of popular music. When John Philip Sousa visited K. C., he performed a special band arrangement of Johnson's "Doc Brown's Cake Walk," but the composer's finest rag was probably his "Dill Pickles Rag" which was published by J. W. Jenkins in 1899.

When Charles L. Johnson died at the age of seventy-five in 1950, Frank Lott, then President of musicians Local 34, A.F.M., recalled that he and Charley Johnson had been members of a five-piece band as early as 1901. The band was led by William Deveney and included a piano, violin, trombone, clarinet, and cornet.

As a footnote to jazz history it is worth mentioning that, besides Sedalia and Kansas City, there is evidence that either jazz (the real thing) or some of its peripheral forms of popular music was well known shortly after the turn of the century in such unlikely Missouri hamlets as: Carthage, Platte City, St. Joseph, and Mound City. We have seen published music (ragtime, cakewalks, etc.) dating from between 1900 and 1910 from each of these cities. Most fascinating is James Scott's "A Summer Breeze" (his first published composition), which was brought out by the Dumars Music Co., of Carthage, Mo., in 1903.

What happened between 1917 (the beginning of the end of ragtime) and the emergence of real hot jazz in the early 1920's is still obscure. It is generally believed that it was at this time that New Orleans jazz had its greatest impact—in the case of Chicago there is no doubt about this for it has all been documented on early phonograph records. But so many things happened in such a few short years that the picture is confusing. In New Orleans the city authorities closed down the biggest, wide-open red light district in the U. S., and the exodus from Storyville began—this was in 1917. And in the very same year, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band opened in New York and cut its first Victor record, and the good word was soon spread all over the U. S. The word "jazz" entered the vocabulary of millions of Americans. By 1920, other events, social and economic, played their part in speeding up the history of jazz to an unprecedented rate.

After years of dogged work the Anti-Saloon League of America achieved, so it would seem, a measure of success, and the Eighteenth Amendment did as much for K. C. jazz as it did to accelerate the consumption of hard liquor. The "Jazz Age" had arrived, and with raccoon coats and hip flasks we were going . . . Where? Well, no one was quite sure, but we were on our way, Hell bent for leather. Jazz (the real thing) had hardly survived its birth pangs before it had to learn to live with a popular form of jazz—the music of men like Paul Whiteman, Ted Lewis, Jean Goldkette, and Rudy Vallee. And what is and what is not jazz has been debated ever since. This side of K. C. jazz was early represented by the Coon-Sanders band that stayed together from 1918 to 1932. Towards the end of World War I, Joe Sanders and Carleton Coon got together in K. C. and formed their "Nighthawks." The band achieved nation-wide fame through its series of nighttime broadcasts from the Muehlebach Hotel over station WDAF.

We will leave it to the political historians to describe the almost unbelievable corruption that was the rule in Kansas City during the regime of Tom Pendergast. The moral decline that was the aftermath of World War I, the rise of gangsterism, prohibition and the subsequent flowering of a new form of night life in the speakeasy, bootleg hooch, prostitution, the "protection payoff"—all this, and more, under the aegis of the Pendergast machine, came to Kansas City, and we became second to none as a wide-open city. Everywhere people lived it up, just like doomsday was scheduled for the next week. But for musicians these were good years, some of the best years. In fifty-odd nightclubs on 12th and 18th streets there was always work for musicians, always an audience.

By the mid-1920's Kansas City was in full swing. It was an incubator, a jazz breadbasket for the Southwest. According to musicians who lived and worked here between 1925 and World War II, it must have been one long twenty-year jam session. Some of the best known bands of this period were those of Paul Banks, George E. Lee, Jesse Stone, Bennie Moten, Walter Page, Harlan Leonard, Jay McShann, Andy Kirk, and Count Basie. According to Frank Driggs, "when

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KANSAS CITY JAZZ, INC.

1. Is a nonprofit corporation.
2. Is a group formed to re-establish Greater Kansas City as the Midwest Mecca for the live performance of jazz on a continuing basis.
3. Desires to achieve the stature of the Starlight Association and the American Royal for the benefit of Greater Kansas City economically and culturally.
4. Desires to create a Jazz Hall of Fame for a museum place and performing hall.
5. Desires to create a National League of Jazz along with such cities as New York, San Francisco, Los Angeles, Chicago and New Orleans. We would hear their "teams" on a scheduled basis and they in turn would hear ours.
6. Has no preference on what constitutes "Jazz"—the public will decide this.
7. Is not primarily a producer but rather an encourager of live performance by the process of suggestion, expedition and subsidization.

program

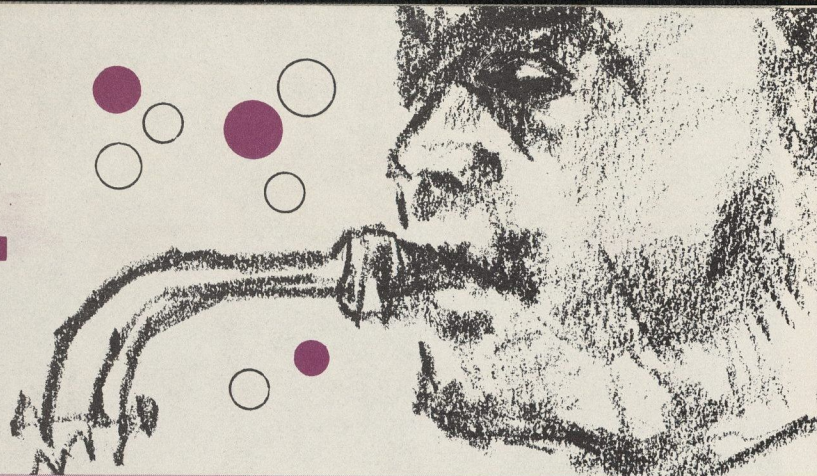
KANSAS CITY JAZZ

- 2:40 - 3:00 **Baby Lovett**
introduced by George Stump, KCMO-fm
- 3:00 - 3:20 **U.M.K.C. Jazz Drummers**
introduced by Chuck Davis, KCMO-TV
- 3:20 - 3:40 **Mike Ning Trio**
introduced by Jim Newman, KCMO-TV
- 3:40 - 4:00 **Al Cohn, New York City — Tenor Sax; with George Salisbury**
introduced by John Pearson, KMBC-fm
- 4:00 - 4:20 **Bob Simes Band**
introduced by Don Burley, KMBC
- 4:20 - 4:40 **Jay McShann's Band**
introduced by Wayne Stitt, KMBC
- 4:40 - 5:00 **K. C. Chicago Trio + 2**
introduced by Jim Gammon, KMBC
- 5:00 - 5:20 **Raytown South High School Stage Band**
introduced by John Bilyeu, KMBC-TV
- 5:20 - 5:40 **Dick Ruedebusch & The Underprivileged Five — Milwaukee**
introduced by Allen Shaw, WHB
- 5:40 - 6:00 **Topeka Jazz Lab Band**
introduced by Martin Gray, WDAF
- 6:00 - 6:20 **Steve Miller Latin Jazz Combo**
introduced by Richard King, KCMO
- 6:20 - 6:40 **Don Rice Jazz Workshop Band — Omaha**
introduced by Jim Lantz, KMBC-TV

K.C. JAZZ FESTIVAL

m

'65



- 6:40 - 7:00 Pete Eye Trio**
introduced by Don Warnock, KCMO
- 7:00 - 7:20 Willie Rice's Big Band**
introduced by Fred Everett, WDAF
- 7:20 - 7:40 The Clare Fischer Trio — Los Angeles**
introduced by Lynn Higbee, KCMO
- 7:40 - 8:00 Kansas City Kicks Band with Harold Henley**
introduced by Mark Foster, KMBC
- 8:00 - 8:20 Frank Smith Trio**
introduced by Gene Davis, WDAF
- 8:20 - 8:40 Buddy DeFranco with the Warren Durrett Orchestra**
introduced by Dave Butler, KPRS
- 8:40 - 9:00 Marilyn Maye & The Sammy Tucker Trio**
introduced by Murray Nolte, WDAF-TV
- 9:00 - 9:20 K. U. Festival Winners**
introduced by Chuck Moore, KPRS
- 9:20 - 9:40 Bettye Miller and Milt Abel**
introduced by Dan Henry, WDAF
- 9:40 - 10:00 George Winn's Storyville Seven**
introduced by Ron Martin, WHB
- 10:00 - 10:20 Jean Trevor — St. Louis Gaslight, with Vince Bilardo**
introduced by Jack Elliott, KCMO
- 10:20 - 11:00 Count Basie & His Band**
introduced by Tom Reed, KPRS

L MARCH 28, '65

2ND ANNUAL K.C. JAZZ FESTIVAL

Produced & Directed by — William J. Brewer
Musical Coordinator — Sherman Gibson
Sound by — Ed Roach
D. J. Coordinator — George Stump
Promotion Director — G. Richard Challinor
Promotion Coordinator — Inez Kaiser
Ushers Furnished by — Kansas City Junior Chamber of Commerce
Usherettes — The Wendy Ward Girls
Pianos Furnished by — Jenkins Music Company

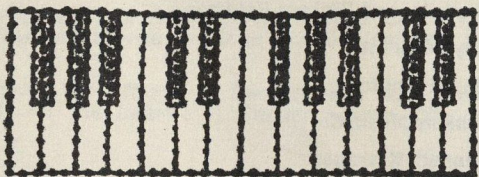
UNDERWRITERS & GUARANTORS

Bohart Music Co., Inc.
Burstein-Applebee
Cole Music Co.
Sherman Gibson
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Bayard Grant
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Moten organized his big band in 1926, jazz was all but dead in New Orleans, dying in Chicago, and undergoing changes in New York and other parts of the country"—in K. C. it was very much alive and kicking. This period saw the transition from two-beat to four-beat jazz, a crystallization of the standard dance band instrumentation, the development of written-out arrangements, and ended as the "swing" era.

Out of the K. C. social and jazz milieu of the late 1930's came the tragic genius of Charlie Parker. In his formative years Parker played in the bands of George E. Lee, Lawrence Keyes, Harlan Leonard, and Jay McShann. He left McShann's band for the last time in 1942. By 1945 he was a major influence on the contemporary scene and a new era had begun. As Leonard Feather wrote: "From the mid-'40s on, it was almost impossible for any new jazzman anywhere in the world to escape reflecting to some degree, consciously or unconsciously, a Parker influence . . ." What else is there to say about the man? Before Bird was freed from his earthly prison (he died ten years ago this month, on March 12, 1955) he did what few men have ever done. He opened up new vistas and with his music made himself immortal.

Here we have not done justice to the many individuals—there are hundreds of them—who have played a part in the Kansas City jazz story. Some of them are known to jazz lovers all over the world (musicians like Mary Lou Williams and Pete Johnson, to mention only two), others have moved on to New York or Chicago, but the greater number have worked quietly here in Kansas City and they have been and are the backbone of Kansas City jazz.



It would hardly be correct to say that jazz declined in K. C. after World War II—the audience for jazz declined and that sense of excitement and urgency that had characterized previous periods may have been lost, but most of the musicians stayed. The change was probably not symptomatic of a local trend—the big band business was in trouble all over the U. S. Nor was the change a result of inherent musical factors. Rather it was simply that the times had changed, and jazz has always been intimately tied up with the events of the society out of which it has developed. It was inevitable that a new type of jazz would come out of the post-World War II decades, and just as inevitable that its relationship to its public would have to change and adjust to the times. But was there ever a time when jazz was not changing?



Basie is shown here with Lester Milgram, a director of Kansas City Jazz, Inc., as he received a scroll as the first member of the Kansas City Jazz Hall of Fame.

COUNT BASIE

and K.C. JAZZ by JAMES W. SCOTT

Basie is back for the 1965 Kansas City Jazz Festival. This means that the Arena of the Municipal Auditorium will ring with world-famous sound—music that is identified intimately with Kansas City.

Andre Hodeir, the French critic, writes: "The Count and his men are giving us a wonderful lesson in classicism, better still, they have managed not only to last as an orchestra but to develop as well . . . This is what makes them unique." Says Joachim Berendt, a German writer and jazz authority: "Count Basie retains the Kansas City blues-riff formula but he has made much more than a formula of it. In it he finds the substance which gives his music its power down to this day. In the meantime, everything brought forth by the evolution

of big-band jazz has come together in Basie's music." Thus learned Europeans analyze and define the music of Count Basie.

A member of the Basie band, who was once asked to describe the leader's piano style, was not so scholarly but he may have come closer to explaining the mystery: "Count don't play much, but it sure sounds good."

William Basie was born in Red Bank, N. J., in 1904. He studied piano with his mother, worked in New York as a youngster and admired Fats Waller. Traveling with the Gonzel White vaudeville show, Basie found himself stranded in Kansas City when the outfit folded.

After a stint at a silent movie house he joined the Walter Page Blue Devils and later, the Bennie Moten band. After Bennie Moten's death, many of the Moten men gravitated to Basie's new group at the old Reno club on Twelfth street.

Out of this evolved the band that made musical history in America. In fact, Berendt, the German critic, sees Count Basie as "the backbone of the entire development of modern jazz" with his tenor sax star, the late Lester Young, and another Kansas Citian, Charlie Parker, who died in 1955, as dominating influences.

If you play the first records Basie made for Decca in 1937 (many are in a new LP, "The Best of Count Basie"), the music is surprisingly close to the sound Basie produces today—and the sound that most other big bands have tried to capture the past 30 years.

Part of the secret is contrast. Usually the Basie piano is a simple, single-finger exercise—although he occasionally falls into a Harlem stride. Basie noodles along—not playing much—with the powerful, floating rhythm section billowing beneath him. Then, Wham! Up comes the brass in a tornado with equally strong saxes in counterpoint.

But the main reason that old Basie records sound modern today is that big-band jazz, to a large degree, has followed the paths that Basie opened up in the 1930's.

Of course the band has changed. Freddy Green remains on guitar but long gone are Lester Young, Herschel Evans, Buck Clayton, Dickey Wells, Jimmy Rushing, Jo Jones, Walter Page, and the great soloists who became household names in jazz. The Band today is a well-oiled machine with few, if any, superstars. It has brilliant soloists, but the emphasis is on the compositions and arrangements from a stable that includes Neal Hefti, Billy Byers and Quincy Jones.



City of
KANSAS CITY, MISSOURI

ILUS W. DAVIS
MAYOR

PROCLAMATION

WHEREAS, Kansas City has long carried a reputation as being a "cradle of Jazz;" and

WHEREAS, in her youth, Kansas City was well known as a "swinging town"; and

WHEREAS, Kansas City has had the distinct pleasure of being the "Stompin Ground" for many great Jazz artists; and

WHEREAS, Kansas City has continued her avid interest in and support of Jazz activities; and

WHEREAS, today in Kansas City, we are proud to claim many local artists in all fields of Jazz, with fine reputations in the entertainment world; and

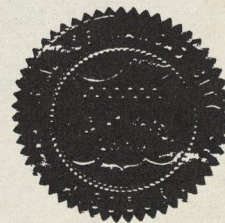
WHEREAS, to further the interest of all peoples in this community and the surrounding areas in Jazz and to showcase the talents of the fine artists appearing regularly in Kansas City:

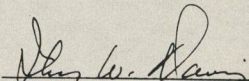
NOW, THEREFORE, I, ILUS W. DAVIS, Mayor, do hereby say "Go, Man, Go" and do proclaim the days of March 24 thru March 28 as:

JAZZ WEEK IN KANSAS CITY

and urge all peoples of this community to participate in the events being offered during this time such as the JAZZ MOTORCARAVAN; APPEARANCES OF ARTISTS IN THE DEPARTMENT STORES; RESTAURANTS AND HOTELS; and especially by attending the Sunday Evening windup of JAZZ FESTIVAL running continuously Sunday, March 28 in the Municipal Auditorium.

Done this 18th day of March, 1965.




ILUS W. DAVIS Mayor

1014 McGEE
Downtown

55th & BROOKSIDE
South side



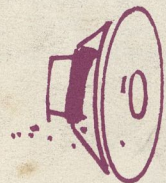
75th & METCALF
Johnson County

STORE HOURS:

Metcalfe Mon. thru Fri. 12 to 9 p.m., Sat. 9 to 6 p.m.
Brookside Mon. thru Fri. 11 p.m. to 8:30 p.m., Sat. 9 to 6 p.m.
McGee Mon. thru Fri. 8:30 to 5:15 p.m., Sat. 8:30 to 12:30 p.m.

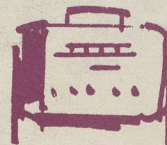
This Kansas City Jazz Festival program is yours with the compliments of B. A. High Fidelity. We are proud to do our part in helping to promote Jazz in Kansas City. And we hope you, too, will lend your support in making Kansas City the Jazz Mecca of the World. We hope you enjoy the festival.

B. A. High Fidelity has been selling quality equipment to Kansas Citians since 1927. Many of you already know of us and have even bought some sound equipment from us. However, there are some who don't know the entire line of products B. A. High Fidelity sells. So, here are a few of them . . .



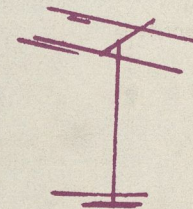
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There's a tape recorder to fit your needs at B.A. We have recorders from portables to studio models, priced from less than \$50 to more than \$1,000.



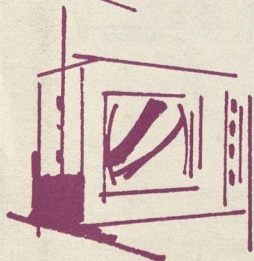
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You can browse through one of the largest selections of albums and recorded tapes in the midwest at B. A. Our record selections go from children's albums to classical.



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Hobbyists love to deal with B. A. because we carry a big line of precision tools. And handymen like to deal with B. A. because we also have unusual tool values on portable electric saws, drills and sanders.