

The University Musical Society

The University of Michigan



Presents

Preservation Hall Jazz Band

WILLIE J. HUMPHREY, JR., *Clarinet*

JAMES EDWARD "SING" MILLER, *Piano*

NARVIN HENRY KIMBALL, *Banjo, Bass*

PERCY G. HUMPHREY, *Trumpet*

ALLAN JAFFE, *Tuba*

FRANK DEMOND, *Trombone, Banjo*

JOSEPH "CIE" FRAZIER, *Drums*

FRIDAY EVENING, OCTOBER 28, 1977, AT 8:30

HILL AUDITORIUM, ANN ARBOR, MICHIGAN

The Program

No printed program is possible with a spontaneous performance such as this one by the Preservation Hall Jazz Band. The musicians themselves don't know what they'll play, beyond perhaps the opening and closing numbers. As the evening progresses they will decide what comes next, based on their instinct for sizing up each audience—whether it's two hundred or twenty thousand, a college crowd or symphony subscribers. And because no two audiences are alike, no two concerts are the same.

Preservation Hall and its Music

Historic Preservation Hall, at 726 St. Peter Street in New Orleans, is an idea more than a structure—the building needs painting, floor boards are loose, the seats for listeners are old benches, loose cushions, and odd kitchen chairs. The same wicker basket which held donations in the early days of the hall is still in use. This is where New Orleans jazz is preserved, where the bands play when not on tour. Among the jazz lovers who flock to the place are young musicians from all over the world who come to learn how to play this driving, yet gentle, music. New Orleans jazz will live through these disciples when the great originators—some of whom are playing here tonight—are gone.

This sweet-sad-gentle-exuberant music came out of the turn-of-the-century street parades, saloons, and river boats, but most of all it was born in the hearts of people who worked and danced, laughed and cried. It is music played by men who worked the docks all day but weren't too tired to blow their horns most of the night. Preservation Hall jazz is not Dixieland, it's not funny "straw-hat" music, it's not written music. It is music that comes from the souls of the men who created a musical tradition in their own lifetimes.

Atlantic Records

The Musicians

FRANK DEMOND—"It took me about ten seconds." That's the time it took for Frank Demond to make up his mind to drop a successful house-designing career in Newport Beach, California, and go full time with Preservation Hall when he was made an offer six years ago. Frank was bitten by the New Orleans jazz bug in the late forties when he heard the Kid Ory group in Los Angeles. He later sat in with the New Orleans musicians every time they came near the Coast. He usually played both banjo and trombone, but after he came under the spell of the late, great trombonist, Jim Robinson, he has concentrated on polishing his New Orleans horn technique. Home or away, large or small concert, Frank says he looks forward to every performance as a chance to improve.

JOSEPH "CIE" FRAZIER—The angelic expression on Cie (pronounced Sy-ee) Frazier's face when he's playing masks a tiger when it comes to setting an authentic New Orleans jazz beat for the rest of the band. "Cie" bought his first set of drums in 1912 and by 1924 he was a professional playing with the Bush Hall Golden Rule Band. In 1927 he made his first recording with Papa Celestin's Tuxedo Orchestra. During the same period he played with the Idlewild steamer band which featured Ricard Alexis and Dwight Newman. He also played with the Lyric Theater pit band and with Sydney Desvigne's Orchestra. He was with the A. J. Piron Band from 1928 to 1932. In 1942 "Cie" joined the Algiers Navy Band and in 1945, while still in the service, recorded with Wooden Joe Nicholas. Since the '40s, "Cie" has been associated with almost every famous New Orleans jazz group and it is fitting that he is a permanent member of the Preservation Hall organization. "Cie" Frazier is the New Orleans jazz beat personified.

ALLAN JAFFE—Allan and his wife, Sandy, are indeed the preservers of Preservation Hall. He was born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, forty years ago—far from the delta. But after a varied and successful business, military, and musical career, he was drawn to New Orleans in 1960 by his life-long passion for that sweet, sad, yet joyful style of music called New Orleans jazz. They found Preservation Hall little more than an informal, history-stamped gathering place for the aging exponents of New Orleans jazz to keep their beloved style pulsing. The Jaffes not only kept Preservation Hall alive (without disturbing one loose, unpainted board), but have helped make the accomplished group of musicians world-famous through their global tours. Largely because of the Jaffes, efforts of the Preservation Hall bands are as acclaimed in Tokyo, Tel Aviv and Copenhagen as they are in the United States.

PERCY G. HUMPHREY—Percy Humphrey has firmly carved his niche in New Orleans jazz history. There's good reason why he is the leader of the Preservation Hall Band and the famous Eureka Brass Band. Percy comes from a family steeped in music. His grandfather was one of the most accomplished music teachers in the history of New Orleans and was a key figure in establishing New Orleans jazz. His father carried on the famous beat as a clarinetist and his two brothers, Willie and Earl, along with Percy, stoutly carry on the New Orleans tradition. Percy is a master of the sweet, sad, yet animated New Orleans trumpet. He's been a professional since the early '20s and had his own dance orchestra as early as 1925. Wise to the sometimes erratic economic existence of professional musicians, Percy established his own insurance business a number of years ago and now divides his time between the two careers. He has recorded on seven different labels and appeared several times on television.

WILLIE J. HUMPHREY, JR.—Willie was born at the turn of the century and was taught music by his grandfather, a gifted musician whom Willie envies to this day. Willie still approaches each concert with the will, and the capacity, to make it a "little bit better" than the last one. He's proud of his New Orleans phrasing which many have tried to imitate, but only he can execute. He's soft-spoken, articulate, a teacher of harmony and theory, successful musician from New Orleans to Chicago to Broadway and on the big river boats. By choice he returned to New Orleans in his mellow years to play his beloved style—New Orleans jazz.

NARVIN HENRY KIMBALL—Mastery of stringed instruments is in Narvin Kimball's blood—his father, Henry, was one of the all-time great New Orleans bass players. By the time Narvin was seventeen he was a professional aboard the famous Capitol steamboat playing with Fate Marable. When the boat docked for winter he stayed with the band and continued his education at the same time. In 1927 he joined Sidney Desvigne's Orchestra and later played with Papa Celestin's Tuxedo Orchestra. The Ink Spots recorded his composition, "Don't Let Old Age Creep Up On You." Narvin gave up music for five years during the depression because jobs were so scarce. In 1940 he got back into the business with the Desvigne group and stayed for several years. In 1947 he performed with jazz immortal Louis Armstrong. During the '50s and '60s he had his own band and was also in constant demand as a sideman. Today he's a solid and valued member of the Preservation Hall bands.

JAMES EDWARD "SING" MILLER—"Sing" Miller has carried his nickname since he was a tot surrounded by a family of musicians. His contribution to the family music was singing until he got his first instrument—a violin tuned like a ukulele. Later he mastered the banjo and string bass, and at sixteen got his first job as a banjoist at the Okeh Lounge in New Orleans. His piano career started in 1928 and "Sing" is self-taught, that is, if you discount a few organ lessons taken in school. He admits being influenced in his playing by Steve Lewis, Jeanette Kimball, Isadore Washington and Stack O'Lee, a neighbor who played blues piano. "Sing" is a superb musician who chose not to stray far from New Orleans—he's had all the work he could handle in this hotbed of the New Orleans beat. Through the years he played in most of the name clubs in greater New Orleans. After Joe James' death, "Sing" joined the Kid Thomas band which became the vehicle for his association with Preservation Hall.

UNIVERSITY MUSICAL SOCIETY

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