Making the "Birthplace of Jazz": Tourism and Musical Heritage Marketing in New Orleans

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By J. Mark Southern

Heading southward through pine forests and worn-out cotton fields aboard the Southern Crescent in 1942, Sterling Brown, a traveling African American schoolteacher in search of New Orleans jazz, envisioned jazzmen Kid Rena and Louis Nelson "Big Eye Louie" DeLisle holding court in some musty dive on Basin Street. A black sergeant from New Orleans who boarded the train in Anniston, Alabama, assured Brown he would find Rena at the Fern Dance Hall on Iberville Street in the French Quarter and DeLisle in the vicinity of Derbigny and Kerlerec streets in neighboring Faubourg Tremé. Upon arrival, the eager tourist not only did not find the musicians, he found very little jazz of any sort. Basin Street was now North Saratoga, and the Lafitte Housing Project cast crisp, geometrical shadows that belied any image Brown might have conjured of the

*The author is currently an adjunct instructor of History at Tulane University. This article, which was awarded the 2001 Rankin Prize, is drawn from his larger work (currently under revision for publication) on the transformation of New Orleans tourism since World War II. The author wishes to thank Bruce Boyd Raeburn and Charles Chamberlain for facilitating his research in the William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane University, and Lawrence N. Powell, Randy J. Sparks, and Arnold R. Hirsch for their helpful comments.
steamy, tropical, jazz-filled nights of Storyville, New Orleans' famous red-light district. In one Afro-Creole family's apartment in the Lafitte project, Brown was treated to coconut cake and ginger ale as the sounds of Jimmy Dorsey's orchestra wafted from the radio. The visitor later recalled, "There were a few good jazz combinations in town, . . . but most of them were playing in white places where I could have gone only at the cost of problems." The disillusioned Brown concluded "that in New Orleans the feeling for jazz was nostalgic, commemorative, quite different from the force that sustained the young Louis Armstrong. . . . New Orleans gave jazz to the world; the world parcelled [sic] bits of it back over the turn-table and the air-waves."\(^1\)

Indeed, the city's modernization seemed to have crippled the advance of New Orleans' most famous art form. This article traces the revival of New Orleans-style jazz in the five decades after 1940, focusing on the renewal of local interest in a dying artistic tradition, the impact of tourism on jazz, the popularization of the Dixieland tradition through marketing, concerts, tours, festivals, the modern brass band movement, and the use of the music by various groups in shaping public memory and packaging it for tourist consumption. Like the preservation of the French Quarter, the resurrection of Dixieland triggered a contest for control over public memory, although in the case of jazz it took much longer for any degree of consensus on the value of the music to crystallize. The influence of tourism both set jazz apart from its cultural moorings and induced a renewed grassroots interest, eventually creating a sustainable cultural resource that enriched the community and fueled further tourism development. If the French Quarter's transformation into a "plastic" outdoor history shrine and freak show represented tourism run amok, the renaissance of local jazz reflected the power of tourism to pollinate and nurture the city's cultural heritage. The checkered effect of tourism on the revival of New Orleans jazz complicates the common scholarly assumption that tourism simply corrodes or adulterates local culture.\(^2\)

\(^1\)Sterling A. Brown, "Farewell to Basin Street," Record Changer (Fairfax, Va.), (December 1944): 7-9, 51, "World War Two and Jazz," Vertical File, Department of Special Collections, William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans (hereafter cited as HJA).

\(^2\)Tom Selwyn, ed., The Tourist Image: Myths and Myth Making in Tourism (Chichester, England, 1996). Selwyn, a British anthropologist, argues that the idea that tourism commodifies and damages local culture, has run its course. Social
The arrival of outsiders during World War II not only boosted tourism, it also stimulated local appreciation of New Orleans' rich heritage. The transition came in the midst of a crisis in which the city almost allowed one of its most recognizable cultural exports to die. New Orleans had long been known as the birthplace of jazz. Widely held to have sprung from the more primitive sounds accompanying African American dances in Congo Square in the nineteenth century, in the first two decades of the twentieth jazz matured in the famous Storyville red-light district, which lay adjacent to Congo Square and the French Quarter. With Storyville's designation as an official haven for prostitution in the early twentieth century, New Orleans created a year-round tourist draw that reinforced the image of a wild spectacle commonly associated with the carnival season. Attracting jazz musicians as well as gamblers and prostitutes, Storyville solidified among tourists the perception of what New Orleans was supposed to be. Jazz figured prominently in that image.

Prior to 1940, musicians found ample employment. Most played outside the city's identifiable tourist areas. One jazzman remarked, "Why, they used to hire bands for everything. If you gave a party you'd get a keg of beer and hire three or four pieces." Mardi Gras parades afforded the one sure way for jazz musicians to be paid for their work and for younger players to enjoy the spotlight. Prior to the war, "one parade was given over to the kids. In shorts and bright costumes they came down Canal Street, hundreds of them, with everything from kazooos to baritone horns." Any tourists who viewed such a spectacle doubtless assumed that New Orleans jazz continued to thrive.

Storyville's closure during World War I and the concurrent exodus of many African Americans seeking better employment and freedom...
from the harsher manifestations of racial prejudice set jazz music on a long decline. Prohibition and especially the Great Depression brought the demise of many clubs that maintained performing jazz bands, and by World War II jazz was moribund.4 In the 1940s few musicians could find steady employment. Although black societies and fraternal orders sporadically gave balls and vied with each other in hiring jazz bands, for many of the city's best musicians, leaving New Orleans afforded the only hope of realizing their potential.

Far from recognizing jazz as a potential tourist attraction, prominent white New Orleanians usually dismissed it as little more than a suitable dance music. Just as elite whites associated jazz with the Pendergast era in Kansas City, the Capone era in Chicago, and decadent Harlem in New York, upper-class New Orleanians connoted jazz with the crime, vice, and libidinous carousing that had characterized Storyville. Early twentieth-century accounts of jazz in the elite-controlled New Orleans press usually appeared only in the context of reports of knifings and shootings, and one *Times-Picayune* editorial in 1918 denigrated the music as one of the "manifestations of a low streak in man's tastes that has not yet come out in civilization's wash." Jazz scholar Charles Edward Smith remarked that "the people of New Orleans enjoyed and sustained the music without the music itself getting more than a passing nod from the local guardians of culture."5

Important trends in the second quarter of the twentieth century dealt a sharp blow to the continued vitality of jazz music. By World War II, New Orleans had the smallest proportion of African Americans of any major Southern city, paving the way for a dilution of black cultural forms that had roots in an earlier period when the Crescent City had a majority-black population. The war-induced transition from merchandising to manufacturing prompted a considerable influx of rural, Protestant Southerners into a city long dominated by Roman Catholics. Such newcomers often favored hillbilly music and had little regard for jazz or the permissive atmosphere in which it had flourished. No longer appreciated, jazz musicians usually had to take up other jobs to supplement meager

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earnings from performing. Club jobs typically demanded long hours and provided abysmal wages. In addition, increased attention to war and commerce lessened the city's traditional penchant for revelry. Mardi Gras parades, perennially a major source of income for the city's musicians, were suspended for the duration of the war. One of New Orleans' two steamboat lines offering moonlight excursions on the river also ceased activity, further undermining employment opportunities for jazzmen. Thus, a number of factors diminished the vitality of jazz in the 1940s.6

By World War II, jazz had practically disappeared from the areas of New Orleans most commonly frequented by tourists. The growing popularity of radio fostered the standardization of national popular music tastes, and French Quarter bars increasingly installed jukeboxes to save the expense of hiring local musicians. Leading New Orleans hotels had once employed local talent in jazz concerts, vaudeville acts, or programs such as "The Night in Dixie," a racist skit at the Grunewald Hotel's Cave and Lounge depicting to conventioneers "the life of the plantation darky." By 1940, national acts had almost thoroughly replaced local talent in New Orleans' primary hotels. To be sure, plenty of talented musicians continued to play jazz in New Orleans, but tourists were unlikely to find them. "It might well be true," Charles Edward Smith concluded, "that on an ordinary week end [sic] New Orleans would offer no more music than any other city its size."7

Although jazz appreciation stood at low ebb in the 1940s, the coalescence of eager jazz pilgrims from around the world with a cadre of local white elite jazz enthusiasts triggered a chain of events that eventually rendered the art form practically synonymous with New Orleans. Prior to that time, Crescent City bands seldom recorded their music in New Orleans, usually venturing north instead and recording in bands mixed with Northern musicians. Indeed, only three of six musicians in the famed New Orleans


Rhythm Kings were actually New Orleanians. With the exception of Baby Dodds, none of the city's biggest figures, including Louis Armstrong, Freddy Keppard, Jelly Roll Morton, Johnny Dodds, and Kid Ory, recorded in New Orleans. Not one New Orleans recording session in the 1930s featured African Americans. In fact, one 1936 Sharkey Bonano record constituted the entire repertoire of 1930s New Orleans jazz recording.⁸

By the Second World War, outsiders began taking an interest in encountering New Orleans jazz on its own turf. In 1940, Heywood Hale Broun, editor of the New York-based Hot Record Society's newsletter H.R.S. Rag, traveled to New Orleans in hopes of recording the remaining vestiges of traditional jazz before the old musicians died. He recorded trumpeter Kid Rena and clarinetists Alphonse Picou and Big Eye Louie at radio station WWL, initiating a wave of recording.

Other jazz enthusiasts in the World War II years also made pilgrimages to the "Cradle of Jazz." William Russell, a classically trained violinist, percussionist, and composer, was among the jazz scholars who came to the Crescent City beginning in the late 1930s to collect material for the pioneering book Jazzmen. Russell "discovered" trumpeter Bunk Johnson on a farm in New Iberia, Louisiana, approximately 150 miles west of New Orleans. After helping Johnson get a new set of teeth and a trumpet, Russell recorded him in 1942. Over the next ten years, Russell documented the work of many other elder jazzmen.⁹

The influx of servicemen during World War II also played an important role in stimulating interest in New Orleans jazz. Many soldiers stationed on bases around Louisiana, Mississippi, and Alabama, as well as industrial workers employed by Higgins Industries spent their weekends exploring the Crescent City's elusive and vestigial jazz scene. Remembering the transforming effect of wartime, one native later wrote of the years preceding World War II:

... it was one hell of a pleasant time. Boy, music was everywhere! We didn't even know it was jazz. Not until World War II brought all the soldiers and sailors, and the marine pilots on the lakefront, and people from other places to build Higgins PT boats. They talked about jazz like they talked about the people who, for a few


⁹Ibid., 60.
months into 1943, still carried blackberries on their head to sell from door to door. They talked about jazz like it was unusual—good, but unusual. We found out that all music wasn't jazz, but all jazz was music people loved.10

More often than not, these sojourners found less jazz than they expected, and some later returned to ameliorate the problem. Richard Binion "Dick" Allen contributed immeasurably to the city's jazz renaissance. Dick Allen, a Georgia native, discovered New Orleans jazz during World War II while serving in the Navy at nearby Gulfport, Mississippi. In his spare time, Allen went to New Orleans, where he befriended longtime drummer Monk Hazel, who introduced him to the city's music scene. Four years after the war ended, Allen moved to New Orleans and worked tirelessly for the cultivation of the city's living jazz traditions, eventually serving as the first curator of the William Ransom Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane University.11

The transformation of New Orleans jazz took about twenty-five years to accomplish. Jazz clubs, comprised mostly of the city's prominent citizens, along with foundations, museums, archives, and concert halls, initially provided the most effective vehicles for the jazz revival. The first New Orleans-based jazz club, the National Jazz Foundation (NJF), formed in May 1944 to preserve and promote the city's music. The NJF was a broad-based organization, but it tended to draw most heavily from the old elite. Among them, Dr. Edmond Souchon was a prominent surgeon and Pan American Life Insurance Company board member. Merlin "Scoop" Kennedy was a newspaperman for the New Orleans Item, while Myra Semmes Walmsley Menville's ancestral lineage included a Confederate senator, a Rex (King of Carnival), a Boston Club president, and a New Orleans mayor. The organization intended to stage concerts and band competitions as well as to open a jazz museum. It also assisted tourists who went to New Orleans in search of jazz music. At least one jazz pilgrim, with the aid of the NJF, attended a jazz funeral on South Claiborne Avenue in an uptown black

10August W. Staub and Kaye de Metz, "Jazz: First as Dance?" The Second Line (New Orleans Jazz Club), (Summer 1976): 18, HJA.

11Jennifer Quale, "Brass Band' Notes from the 'Curator of Jazz,'" New Orleans Times-Picayune, July 11, 1977.
neighborhood far from the beaten path most tourists followed. However, the organization focused more heavily on national performers than local musicians. Recalling his difficulties in getting support from the NJF, Crescent City jazzman Johnny Wiggs later wrote, "I learned that this fine group had no use for local musicians. No, they had to have big names like Benny Goodman, Condon, Louie. They spent thousands of dollars on these bands while the New Orleans musicians stayed buried under rocks." Although the NJF failed to start a museum and disbanded in April 1947, it set in motion a determined effort by some leading New Orleans to resurrect jazz.

Less than a year later, on Mardi Gras Day, a small group of jazz enthusiasts gathered along the Zulu parade route and decided to establish the New Orleans Jazz Club (NOJC) to continue the agenda of the defunct NJF. The founders called upon many former NJF members. Like its predecessor, the NOJC served primarily as a social vehicle for an upper-class group having in common a passion for jazz music, but it also furthered the resurrection of the art form through publicity and the employment of languishing musicians for concerts, festivals, and recording sessions. The club held its meetings in the St. Charles Hotel, during which jazz musicians performed. In the 1940s and 1950s the group failed to admit African Americans as members except as out-of-town correspondents, for doing so might have tarnished the NOJC's image in elite circles and hampered the delicate task of reversing decades of neglect of the indigenous music.

Just as jazz enthusiasts from around the world awakened well-positioned New Orleanians to the possibilities the music offered their city, the rise of tourism shaped the course of the jazz revival. What had started as a reinvigoration of a black music genre by jazz enthusiasts gradually became a cash cow for tourism promoters. The tourist trade fostered jazz in much the same haphazard fashion that the white business community had always treated the music, exploiting it with little regard for the musicians' welfare. Even after the recrudescence of jazz, it remained difficult for most musicians to find work more than three nights a week unless they were fortunate

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14Raeburn, "New Orleans Style," 300-01.
enough to sign on at one of the relatively few hotels or nightclubs that kept a house band or performer.

Although jazz had flourished through the constant replenishment of musicians with young talent, the tourist trade devoted inordinate attention to the oldest musicians. To be sure, for many years New Orleans jazzmen had left the Crescent City for cities such as Chicago and New York, where they built their reputation and signed record deals before returning to their home town in the twilight of their lives. Nevertheless, on Bourbon Street, which remained the city's most celebrated tourist attraction, nightclubs and bars sought old musicians because tourists "expect to hear an older black man, white shirt open at the collar, suspenders, simply cut trousers, plain black shoes, and legs crossed." In addition, jazz tended heavily toward New Orleans-style, or Dixieland, because that fit tourists' conception of what the music should be.\(^{15}\)

While the enthusiasm of outsiders and the formation of local clubs devoted to the furthering of jazz contributed heavily to the jazz revival by awakening native and tourist appreciation for the music, locally orchestrated dissemination of jazz music across the nation proved a similarly important catalyst for harnessing the art form to the city's tourist trade. For many years New Orleans passively exported jazz through the emigration of its most promising young musicians to such cities as New York, Chicago, Kansas City, and Los Angeles. There the music adapted to progressive, ever changing tastes while New Orleans remained more insular. Because New Orleans stood relatively isolated from mainstream American culture into the 1940s, its jazz music remained less changed than that played elsewhere. The city served as the cradle of music forms that evolved and developed after they left.

The retention of a distinctive, traditional New Orleans style seemed an ideal springboard for cultural tourism. Yet New Orleanians had failed to assert themselves for decades, allowing New York-based record labels to dominate the marketing of jazz music and cities. In the 1950s, New Orleans watched as cities like Newport, Rhode Island, began staging jazz festivals that attracted international attention. Furthermore, because jazz became exceedingly rare in New Orleans' main tourist areas by the 1940s, visitors seldom experienced New Orleans-style jazz. Before New

Orleans could lay claim to being the birthplace of jazz and become a Mecca for jazz pilgrims, it had to find a way of taking Mecca to the pilgrims.

A succession of local initiatives in the two decades following 1948 brought New Orleans jazz squarely into the national consciousness. Radio broadcasting, recording, and touring proved essential in stimulating the city's cultural tourism effort. Shortly after the New Orleans Jazz Club formed, the organization began sponsoring a weekly jazz show broadcast on radio station WWL, located in NOJC official Seymour J. Weiss's Roosevelt Hotel. WWL, a 50,000-watt clear-channel radio station, could be heard nationwide in the evenings. Jazzman Johnny DeDroit found when he toured the countryside in the Gulf South that many people had heard him on their radio. WWL also made a deep impression on Bob Morris, an Amarillo journalist, who then took a job with the New Orleans Item through which he promoted jazz.\(^{16}\) In 1950, radio station WDSU partnered with the United States Treasury and the American Broadcasting Corporation to feature a weekly jazz broadcast called "Dixieland Jambake" to help sell United States Defense Bonds during the Korean War. All ABC radio affiliates in the United States and Hawaii carried "Dixieland Jambake," giving New Orleans jazz another major boost. Crescent City Mayor deLesseps S. Morrison reported receiving many letters from all over the country as well as Canada and Hawaii in response to the program.\(^{17}\)

The establishment of traditional jazz as a major tourist attraction in the French Quarter has often been attributed to the founding of Preservation Hall, a jazz venue that opened in 1961 to reintroduce a number of old, long-forgotten jazzmen. Preservation Hall built its reputation not simply by providing an authentic atmosphere that appealed to Americans' growing nostalgia for an imagined past, but also by sending its musicians around the world on tours. Although Preservation Hall's promoters truly saw themselves as breaking new ground, the Preservation Hall model actually had its antecedent in the efforts of Joe Mares, Jr. Along with his brother, trumpeter Paul Mares, Joe Mares operated Mares Brothers Furs, purveyors of furs,


\(^{17}\)Two-minute Tape Recording for Mayor Morrison, First Anniversary Celebration of Dixieland Jambake Broadcast, Folder 25, Box 37, deLesseps S. Morrison Papers, Department of Special Collections, Manuscripts Division, Howard-Tilton Memorial Library, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana.
pelts, and alligator skins at 520 St. Louis in the French Quarter. In
1953, Mares started Southland Recording Studio and the Southland
Records label in the fur company building. While William Russell's
seminal recordings in the 1940s had enlightened a local audience,
Mares's Southland recordings found their way into national
distribution, putting the first real dent in the "colonial" co-opting of
local talent by New York and Chicago labels. Mares intended
Southland to give New Orleans musicians, passed over by outside
recording companies and unable or unwilling to leave the city, a
chance to be heard. Mares recorded many musicians who later
achieved national fame, including Pete Fountain, Al Hirt, Jack
Delaney, Johnny Wiggs, Sharkey Bonano, and Santo Pecora. 18

In addition to recording New Orleans musicians, Mares took them
to perform on the West Coast beginning in 1954, laying the
groundwork for what eventually became a favored tool of the city's
tourism officials for invoking interest in visiting the Crescent City.
Mares negotiated with producers Frank Bull and Gene Normand to
feature jazzman Johnny St. Cyr at the Dixieland Jubilee at Shrine
Auditorium in Los Angeles in 1954. Two years after his first music-
promoting trip, Mares took clarinetist Pete Fountain to California,
where he got his big break when television personality Lawrence
Welk discovered his talent. Trumpeter Al Hirt landed a job playing
in Las Vegas shows after the same trip. 19

By 1961, Mares's affiliation with the Dixieland Jubilee had led
entertainment tycoon Walt Disney to take notice. That year Disney
hired a six-piece New Orleans jazz band fronted by St. Cyr to play
aboard the stern wheeler Mark Twain as it plied the Disneyland River
in the Magic Kingdom, replacing the rather lackluster sounds of wild
animals and the crackling flames of a log cabin supposedly set afire
by Indians. Beginning the following year, Mares and his musicians
appeared in "Dixieland at Disneyland," which succeeded the annual
concerts at Shrine Auditorium. By 1964, Dixieland at Disneyland
featured several Dixieland bands in a floating Mardi Gras parade on
the Disneyland River. As each raft passed, a history of the
nationwide dissemination of jazz unfolded from the narrator's script.

18Joe Mares, Jr., interview by William Russell, April 8, 1960, taped interview digest,
2, HJA; Bruce Boyd Raeburn, conversation with author, January 3, 2001.

19Mares interview, April 8, 1960, 9; Joe Mares, Jr., interview by Walt Richter,
September 1966, taped interview digest, 9-10, HJA; The Second Line, (November-
December 1954): 29-30, HJA.
Sharkey Bonano and His Kings of Dixieland belted out the "Bogalusa Strut" and other tunes aboard a raft decorated to represent Bourbon Street. For the finale, all the musicians congregated on Tom Sawyer Island as the riverboat Mark Twain sailed in with more than two hundred park guests holding sparklers. Roman candles and other fireworks exploded in the night sky above the island as Louis Armstrong blew "When the Saints Go Marching In." After the show, various jazz bands played throughout the California theme park. Sweet Emma Barrett's band entertained at the Golden Horseshoe in Frontierland, while Sharkey's band jammed at the Tahitian Terrace in Adventureland. Kid Ory and the Young Men from New Orleans reminisced about their youth in "Storyville Memories," and Disney even staged a New Orleans fish fry. The New Orleans Jazz Club of California, one of several such West Coast organizations dedicated to Crescent City music, observed, "To jazz fans, this is like Mecca coming to the pilgrim." In 1966 Walt Disney opened New Orleans Square, a three-quarter scale replica of the French Quarter, in his Magic Kingdom, affording a more evocative setting for jazz music. The Disney shows in the 1960s reflected more than the personal tastes of Walt Disney, who acknowledged his fondness for the Crescent City. In addition, the shows reflected the growing popularity of New Orleans culture across the nation as the media made the Crescent City known in most every household. One newspaper noted in 1965 that several New Orleans-style restaurants and even an entire suburban subdivision with French Quarter-influenced architecture had recently sprung up in Los Angeles.

If Joe Mares, assisted by Disney, supplied the prototype of touring to market jazz to potential tourists, the founders of Preservation Hall brought the model to perfection. Although it would be an

20Paul Crawford, Notes on "Dixieland at Disneyland," September 1964, "Disneyland Jazz," Vertical File, HJA.


exaggeration to suggest that outsiders' enthusiasm for the city's musical legacy stirred New Orleanians from their apathy, there is some truth in such a statement. Just as the influx of servicemen and jazz devotees in the 1940s provided essential ingredients for the first wave of the jazz revival, newcomers determinedly provided an exception to the rule of the proliferation of strip shows and other cheap thrills in the French Quarter in the late 1950s and after. E. Lorenz "Larry" Borenstein, the son of Ukrainian immigrants to Milwaukee and grand-nephew of Leon Trotsky, came to New Orleans in 1941 on the heels of an early career in circuses and sideshows in the Midwest. Borenstein, an avid collector, opened a succession of small shops in the French Quarter and eventually started Associated Artists' Gallery in 1954 at 726 St. Peter, adjacent to famous Pat O'Brien's courtyard bar. Unable to leave his shop in the evenings to hear jazz shows, he encouraged musicians to play informal sessions in the back of his gallery. Borenstein supplied beer and passed a kitty\(^{25}\) to pay the jazzmen. Although he insisted he was simply a patron of the arts and expected no profit, Borenstein did use the concerts as a vehicle to make business contacts.\(^{26}\)

Borenstein's sessions evolved into Preservation Hall, essentially a jazz cooperative, which officially opened to the general public on June 10, 1961. Prior to that, Borenstein called it Slow Drag's Hangout, after bassist Alcide "Slow Drag" Pavageau, and then Authenticity Hall.\(^{27}\) Early audiences included mostly locals and Tulane University students, in contrast to the tourist traps on nearby Bourbon Street. Unlike the gaudy Bourbon Street clubs, Preservation Hall's interior was essentially unadorned except for a few Belgian paintings. The Hall served no drinks and provided only a few chairs for patrons. Advertisements billed the club as having "No Drinks—No Girls—No Gimmicks—Just Real Music!"\(^{28}\)

Although Preservation Hall failed to turn a profit in its first two years, it soon soared in popularity as tourists became its main clientele. In 1962 Borenstein turned the Hall over to Allan and

\(^{25}\) A can for tips.


\(^{27}\) Wilson, "A Real New Orleans Sound," 63.

Sandra Jaffe, jazz enthusiasts who had come to New Orleans from Philadelphia the previous year. Allan Jaffe, the son of a mandolinist and music teacher and grandson of a French hornist in a Russian Imperial Army band, was born in Pottsville, Pennsylvania, in 1935. After studying cornet and piano as a child, Jaffe settled on the tuba, which he played in the Valley Forge Military Academy marching band before enrolling in the University of Pennsylvania. He and his wife Sandra enjoyed listening to jazz phonograph records and decided to move to New Orleans to pursue their interest. After relocating to the Crescent City, Allan worked as assistant controller for the D. H. Holmes department store on Canal Street, while Sandra took a job at a local market research firm. They searched for good jazz in the evenings and were dismayed by the paucity of music they found. Jaffe later observed, "When we first came here, there was never a mention of jazz in the newspaper, or television." Disillusioned by the commercialized music catering to tourists on Bourbon Street, one night the Jaffes found themselves invited to Borenstein's gallery after a concert by the Eureka Brass Band outside the Cabildo, a couple of blocks away. They soon worked their way into Borenstein's circle and helped form the New Orleans Society for the Preservation of Traditional Jazz, whose key endeavor was promoting Preservation Hall.29

Immersing themselves in the timeless milieu of the French Quarter, the Jaffes moved into the former apartment of Pop Weitzel, a famed jazzman, on St. Peter Street near their jazz hall.30 Allan began sitting in on tuba, while Sandra passed the kitty. In the first year of official operation, the average donation amounted to a paltry thirteen cents.31 In the winter of 1962-63, the club finally broke even but again slipped into deficit when hot weather arrested the tourist traffic.32 Nevertheless, the club gradually caught on.


The Jaffes observed that tourists believed erroneously that Preservation Hall had been in operation since the halcyon days of jazz and that the musical style remained unchanged since that time. Understanding that perception often was more important than reality when building a tourist attraction, the Jaffes studiously avoided making any changes to either the building or the performances. Further, the couple wanted their jazz hall to provide an alternative to the many gaudy tourist traps then proliferating throughout the neighborhood. Indeed, the wilder the French Quarter became, the more authentic Preservation Hall seemed.33

Preservation Hall’s popularity relied not only on its perceived authenticity, but also on promotion through the news media and tours. Publications ranging from jazz journals to popular magazines and newspapers lavished praise on the jazz hall. An appearance on the nationally televised David Brinkley’s Journal on NBC perhaps gave Preservation Hall its most valuable billing. However, touring accomplished more than any news story, for it actually took the music to people across the country and around the world. Touring began in earnest in 1963 with a summer trip to Chicago by train. Shortly thereafter, the Jaffes took a Preservation Hall band on a three-month tour of Japan, playing ninety-two concerts for more than a quarter million people, including forty concerts in Osaka’s 3,000-seat Festival Hall. By the late 1960s, several different Preservation Hall bands were making regular tours. Through these tours, the Jaffes managed to plant Preservation Hall in people’s minds as a must-see New Orleans attraction.34

Preservation Hall’s greatest contribution to the jazz revival lay in providing steady employment to forgotten, downtrodden New Orleans jazz players, many of whom lived in dire poverty in the sunset of their lives. The Hall also provided an after-hours meeting place for civil rights lawyers and activists, although police sometimes raided the safe haven for allowing mixed-race sessions, often using the vague charge of “disturbing the peace.”35 Musician Harold Dejan

33Carter, Preservation Hall, 188, 199-202. French Quarter horse-and-buggy tour drivers sometimes contributed to the misconception by telling tourists that Preservation Hall was the birthplace of New Orleans jazz. See Don Marquis, "Preservation Hall: A Brief History," The Second Line (Summer 1987): 17, HJA.

34Carter, Preservation Hall, 184-87, 233-34, 245.

later observed that the Jaffes did a great service not only to jazz enthusiasts, who as late as 1983 still paid only a one-dollar admission, but also to musicians. "If you didn't have no horn, he'd [Jaffe] try to get you one. I don't know what would have happened to a lot of musicians without him."36

Preservation Hall might have had an even more dramatic impact on tourism in New Orleans had the jazz establishment joined ranks more completely. Instead, factionalism within the establishment—including among the NOJC, Preservation Hall, the Jazz Archive at Tulane University, and others—precluded the kind of cooperation that might have led to a more comprehensive cultural tourism marketing campaign. When David Brinkley came to New Orleans in 1962 to prepare his television digest on jazz, everyone with whom he spoke at the NOJC told him their organization was the city's only true guardian of traditional jazz. When Brinkley inquired about the role of the promoters of Preservation Hall, Dr. Edmond Souchon dismissed them as so many Communists.37

Even though jazz promoters did not always support Preservation Hall's mission, the jazz hall succeeded beyond its founders' wildest imagination. It fed off the spectacular rise in tourism beginning in the 1960s, the ascendant American penchant for seeking the nation's cultural roots, and the increasing rarity of old jazzmen. For many visitors, Preservation Hall provided as authentic an experience as they were likely to encounter. When 155 French youths visiting New Orleans told a representative of the New Orleans Jazz Club that they wished to see one of the city's famed jazz funerals, she first tried to explain that jazz funerals did not follow any set schedule and then recommended that they visit Preservation Hall instead.38

The Hall's success quickly led to spin-offs like Dixieland Hall and Southland Hall, although those clubs fizzled. Dixieland Hall, which opened in March 1962 on Bourbon Street, made a direct appeal to tourists by making its bands march around the club and by adding a clown and a singing dance trio. The Jaffes objected to such antics, preferring to let the music stand on its own.39 Preservation Hall proved so successful, in fact, that in later years young musicians,

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36Thompson and DeVore, "Keeping the Faith," 3.

37Carter, Preservation Hall, 216, 218-19.


who had come of age during the height of the civil rights struggle and associated Dixieland with segregation, hard times, and an Uncle Tom mentality, became inspired to take up the traditional style of playing. Preservation Hall was, perhaps, two decades ahead of its time, for only in the 1980s would New Orleans tourism promoters fully tap the potential of authentic heritage experiences to stimulate discretionary or leisure tourism.\footnote{Carter, Preservation Hall, 263. For a discussion of the growing American nostalgia for yesteryear in the second half of the twentieth century, see Michael Kammen, Mystic Chords of Memory: The Transformation of Tradition in American Culture (New York, 1991), especially chapter 16.}

The Jaffes operated under the assumption that they were helping traditional New Orleans jazz enjoy a dignified last stand before it sank into oblivion. In addition to his determination to provide a no-frills venue in which locals and tourists could enjoy Dixieland without being forced to observe an exorbitant drink minimum, Allan Jaffe supported another fading jazz tradition by sponsoring occasional Sunday afternoon French Quarter parades led by the Eureka Brass Band. In 1963 Jaffe confessed that he fully expected the revival to last only five to ten years because no younger musicians seemed to have an interest in the art form.

Jaffe was not alone in his belief that the revival of Dixieland jazz represented a golden opportunity for the world to experience New Orleans' unique cultural commodity before it died forever. Many others also sensed the passing of an era. Dr. Edmond Souchon of the NOJC observed, "The young Negroes don't want anything that smells of Uncle Tom or minstrelsy."\footnote{Wilson, "A Real New Orleans Sound," 133.} With the death of Onward Brass Band founder Paul Barbarin, one Tulane University student wrote, the city lost one more piece of its soul forever: "When the last New Orleans jazz musician blows the last dirge, a great era of American music will come to an end."\footnote{Barbara Pyle, "More a Reunion Than a Funeral, Barbarin Rites Reveal N.O. Culture," The Hubalado (Tulane University), April 18, 1969, "Olympia Brass Band, 1969," Vertical File, HJA.} On the occasion of an Olympia Brass Band performance in Houston's Old Market Square in 1969, a Houston journalist put it even more starkly:

The hot winds of New Orleans jazz—the thumping, groaning, belching sounds of old Storyville—will be blowing cold in a few short years. The Dixieland greats, who took the Crescent City and
the country by storm before World War II, are tottering one-by-one into their graves, replaced by a new cool syncopation and by the heady yowl of acid rock.43

By the mid-1970s, however, the city was sprouting a new crop of enthusiastic musicians eager to learn traditional jazz, leading Jaffe to conclude that Preservation Hall might remain a New Orleans cultural icon for many years to come.44

In the late 1960s, tourism officials began using jazz bands to promote New Orleans to visitors. The Louisiana Tourist Development Commission sponsored European tours by the Olympia Brass Band in 1967 and 1968 and sent the band to the National Association of Travel Organizations convention in Detroit in 1968. The commission also distributed an album featuring the music of Al Hirt, Ronnie Kole, and Louis Cottrell to visiting VIPs. The examples of Southland Records and tours by Preservation Hall bands, then, found their way into official tourism promotion policies.45

While Preservation Hall gave New Orleans a highly visible, year-round, jazz-related tourist attraction, the establishment of an annual jazz festival assured an influx of tourists into the Crescent City in the late spring, traditionally a slack time for tourism. In a city noted for Mardi Gras and the Sugar Bowl, a jazz festival would lend cultural pastiche and inform the world that New Orleans had more to offer than raucous nightlife. A festival not only would help reinforce the city's claim of being the birthplace of jazz, it would also draw attention to the music's continuing vitality in the Crescent City. What began as an unfulfilled part of the NOJC's mission in the 1950s turned into an event of international repute by the end of the next decade. However, the success of the undertaking awaited Crescent City leaders' realization of the necessity of working across racial lines. Whereas the NOJC, Southland Recording Studio, and Preservation Hall witnessed whites promoting segregated talent, the jazz festival ultimately would involve both races not only on stage, but also in planning.


The idea of staging a jazz festival in New Orleans originated in the New Orleans Jazz Club, which held a small event with eight concerts in Congo Square in both 1949 and 1950. By 1951 the format had evolved into one large concert with several bands playing in Municipal Auditorium. The NOJC reported that the event drew visitors from at least eleven states. Rather than building upon this promising start, however, the festival encountered difficulties for the rest of the decade. In 1953 the NOJC inadvertently scheduled the festival at the same time as a Nat King Cole concert. Unable to reschedule at the last minute, the NOJC canceled the festival. The following year the club partnered with the Crippled Children's Hospital and planned to give a portion of the proceeds to the institution. When the festival cleared only $890, an editorial in the NOJC's newsletter The Second Line quipped that the hospital's "infinitesimal cooperation...in no way helped ticket sales." Worse, the appearance of the Dixieland Rhythm Kings, a band from Dayton, Ohio, at the festival angered local bands when New Orleans newspapers gave them the lion's share of reviews. Band members also suffered physical assault in a seedy Bourbon Street bar and were threatened by police. The festival's ill fortunes continued in 1955. That year the NOJC entered an agreement with the cosmetic firm Helena Rubenstein to promote its "Hot and Cool Jazz" lipstick line. The cosmetics company asked the NOJC to represent the "hot" phase of jazz at the festival in return for national publicity in magazines. To the dismay of NOJC officials, only one 3/4-page advertisement ever appeared in print. Adding to the dashed hopes for national attention, the festival endured squabbles between NOJC and musicians and finally a tropical deluge that discouraged many people from venturing out.\(^{46}\)

Efforts to launch a jazz festival on sound footing foundered in the 1950s and into the 1960s largely because the NOJC tried to handle the event single-handedly. Broader civic cooperation was the essential missing ingredient. In 1958 a Times-Picayune editorial pointed to the Newport Jazz Festival in Rhode Island, then in its fifth year, and charged that New Orleans was missing the boat. In 1959, The Second Line editorialized that the festival should be just as

popular as the Sugar Bowl and Mardi Gras. The lack of an independent tourist commission before 1960 did not help matters. Instead, the New Orleans Board of Trade, the Chamber of Commerce, and the International Trade Mart—agencies whose charges extended far beyond simply promoting tourism—repeatedly held meetings trying to figure out ways of attracting tourists to New Orleans during the slack season. Apparently they never contacted the NOJC to learn how they might cooperate in promoting the jazz festival, and the editorial suggested that perhaps the NOJC itself had not been sufficiently aggressive in making overtures to these organizations.47

By the 1960s the jazz club was coordinating its annual jazz festival with the New Orleans Spring Fiesta Association's two-week festival.48 Significantly, this marriage of upper-class promotion of colonial and antebellum houses and gardens with twentieth-century jazz marked the first organized effort on the part of the city's ruling class to infuse the imagined romance of New Orleans' halcyon days of elite white influence with the flowering of black musical artistry. Ironically, no sooner had this meshing of cultural imagery been accomplished than the blue-blood conception of the city's proper packaging escaped their control. Indeed, the rising tide of jazz marketing combined with the rampant profiteering of entrepreneurs opening any sort of tourist-oriented business that could in any way embody the increasingly heterogeneous mixture of tourist images—including strip clubs, jazz halls, rock 'n' roll and rhythm and blues clubs, Creole eateries, and Mardi Gras-theme souvenir and trinket shops. As jazz and Mardi Gras assumed a higher position in the hierarchy of marketable tourist images, the more genteel image of moonlight and magnolias gradually retreated to a mere backdrop or stage set against which tourists simply came for sensory adventures.

The first broad-based civic effort to stage a major jazz festival in New Orleans ran aground as a result of a tense racial situation. In 1962 Harry M. England, president of the recently formed Greater New Orleans Tourist and Convention Commission, Olaf Lambert, general manager of the Royal Orleans Hotel, and Lester E. Kabacoff, a hotel developer and attorney, began discussing how to make the jazz festival realize its potential. In December 1964 a number of

47 Times-Picayune, September 4, 1958; Editorial: "Why Always 'Greener Pastures'?

The Second Line (March-April 1959): 11, HJA.

prominent business and civic leaders met to discuss a festival to be held in late May 1965, and within a month they had secured a producer, George Wein, who had launched the highly successful Newport festival.

On January 14, 1965, less than a week after the leaders announced that Wein would produce the show, backers suddenly tabled the event indefinitely, ostensibly because of the need for more thorough planning. However, extensive planning had been underway for three years, and the festival backers had raised $37,500 of the needed $50,000 in only two weeks. The real reason for the sudden reversal was an unfortunate incident that happened a few days prior to the postponement of the festival. On January 8-10, twenty-one African American pro football players in town for the American Football League All-Star Game suffered racial discrimination when they attempted to partake of French Quarter nightlife. Some of the players reported that they had been denied admittance to Bourbon Street clubs although their white teammates experienced no harassment. Most complained that they were denied taxicab service from Moisant Field (New Orleans International Airport) to their hotels and between the hotels and the French Quarter. At the airport some waited nearly an hour before a cab picked them up. Outside the Roosevelt Hotel, several taxis lined up along the curb, but their drivers walked away to avoid serving the blacks. One Oakland Raiders player said, "Finally, we stood in the middle of the street and a cab stopped rather than run us down." Refused entry at several Bourbon Street nightclubs, some players had to ask directions and walked back to their hotel after further difficulties hailing a cab.49

After the players' poor treatment, the AFL promptly rescheduled the game in Houston. Mayor Victor H. Schiro, insisting that "you cannot change human nature overnight," quipped that the players' complaints were unwarranted, for as "educated, college men," they "should have rolled with the punch." However, the city's efforts to attract a professional football franchise necessitated a quick response that demonstrated more responsibility. Accordingly, the New Orleans Hotel Association, a number of leading hostleries, the New Orleans Restaurant Association, and the city's largest taxicab company all agreed to serve all citizens and visitors in accordance with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Nevertheless, the disorder gave

jazz festival promoters second thoughts about the advisability of hosting an event that might be marred by a similar display of racism.50

The same civic and business leaders that had led the abortive effort to host a festival that year began planning for the 1968 New Orleans International Jazz Fest, which would coincide with the two hundred fiftieth anniversary of the founding of New Orleans. By the second half of the 1960s, New Orleans' public accommodations generally complied with the Civil Rights Act of 1964. Leaders were becoming more aware of the value of cultural heritage events like jazz festivals in promoting economic development, and festival backers finally acknowledged the need to involve the black community in planning the event. The festival promoters asked Larry McKinley, manager of WYLD-FM, and George "Tex" Stephens, a writer for Louisiana Weekly, to serve on the Planning Committee.51

In keeping with the festival's new name and broader goal of stimulating tourism, the event's promoters recruited internationally known talent to augment local musicians and marketed the event worldwide. Festival backers differed over whether to emphasize national acts, and they vacillated when considering two candidates to produce the event, both of whom felt that a mixture of national and local musicians was essential for success. Believing George Wein, longtime producer of the Newport Jazz Festival, was too interested in making a personal profit off Jazzfest, promoters chose Tommy Walker instead. Walker had built an illustrious career, producing Walt Disney's Wonderful World of Color and Dixieland at Disneyland, as well as halftime shows at New Orleans Saints football games. In addition to advertising Jazzfest in European cities, promoters emphasized the French influence on New Orleans music and worked with European travel agents to bring in foreign tour


groups. In cooperation with International House, the festival devoted exhibits to several countries.52

After the inaugural Jazzfest attracted about 20,000 people to its events and netted just over $3,000, the 1969 Jazzfest lost nearly $24,000. The event not only proved unsuccessful on the balance sheet, it also did not satisfy critics, who noted the tremendous wage disparities between outside and local bands as well as the lack of recognition accorded the local jazzmen. While most national acts received between $2,500 and $5,000 for their performances, New Orleans acts usually got only $50 to $500. Although a number of local musicians took part in the Jackson Square and Canal Street pageantry preceding the opening of the festival, "these men were being used to advertise the music of others coming in from far corners of the jazz world." Jazz critic Charles Suhor lamented that New Orleans musicians "have a way of turning up in the national media. And when their talents are adequately fossilized, their instruments museum pieces, and the musical forms they are creating safely a part of jazz history, they probably will show up on the cover of the [Times]-Picayune Sunday supplement." Clearly, token black involvement proved insufficient to safeguard the interests of local musicians, even after Louis Cottrell, president of the local black musicians' union, joined the festival's board of directors in 1969. More racially balanced control of Jazzfest awaited the liberal leadership of a racially inclusive city administration and the formation of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation in 1970. Like most tourist-oriented events in the Crescent City up to 1970, the jazz festival relied essentially on white entrepreneurs' exploitation of black talent to entertain white visitors.53

52 Minutes of Preliminary Planning Committee, March 24, 1967; Minutes of Talent Committee, December 1, 1967; Minutes of Joint Meeting of Jazz Planning and Talent Committees, December 15, 1967; Frank Gagnard to Durel Black, March 6, 1967; 250th Anniversary of the Founding of New Orleans, December 1967 Bulletin. All of the aforementioned documents are found in "International Jazz Festival, 1968," Vertical File, HJA.

In addition to stimulating a revival of recording, concerts, tours, and festivals featuring traditional New Orleans jazz, tourism helped resurrect the city's brass band tradition. New Orleans brass bands date to the antebellum period, when the German military band tradition, brought to the city during a wave of German immigration, fused with African musical traditions. For a number of years bands played from sheet music, only gradually shedding this formality. In the 1880s bands such as the Excelsior, Onward, and Reliance Brass Bands helped crystallize brass band repertoire, customs, appearance, and manner. The bands typically played dirges, marches, and hymns while marching through the city's streets.54

In predominately black neighborhoods such as Faubourg Tremé, on the fringe of the French Quarter, a number of social aid and pleasure clubs organized in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries as a form of mutual benefit society, in which a member paid dues to a fund used to assist any member who faced financial straits and to provide him a funeral with brass band accompaniment. Whenever a brass band played, a crowd customarily gathered around and danced as the band wended through the streets. This contingent, often carrying brightly festooned umbrellas and waving handkerchiefs, became known as the "second line," a term that gradually became conflated with the whole spectacle. Although brass bands might be heard at most any time, the primary second-line season occurred from September to December when many social aid and pleasure clubs held their own parades. Bands also played for picnics, family reunions, building dedications, and Mardi Gras parades. Prior to World War II, the custom remained largely unknown outside New Orleans, for it tended to occur beyond the precincts of the French Quarter, where most tourists congregated.

By the 1960s most brass bands represented self-conscious attempts by musicians to revive a fading tradition for show. The dwindling number of jazz funerals tended to serve as jazzmen's memorials to fallen brethren. In 1961 WDSU-TV filmed the Olympia Brass Band at jazzman Alphonse Picou's funeral, one of the station's first outdoor broadcasts.55 Tulane jazz archivist Dick Allen observed that the 1966 jazz funeral for Avery "Kid" Howard in Tremé drew even more


onlookers (four blocks densely packed) than Alphonse Picou's funeral, which had drawn many tourists in town for Mardi Gras. Tulane Jazz Archive staffer Eleanor D. Ellis watched another funeral in the following year that drew a racially mixed crowd that appeared to her to include many tourists. She wrote in her notes that she discerned an extra "put on" for the cameramen. Ellis also witnessed a jazz funeral in uptown New Orleans that had been advertised on a broad sheet in Preservation Hall. "A large and mostly tourist-looking" second line congregated in the cold outside the Zion Traveler's First Baptist Church or across the street in a corner grocery. She was appalled by the "many, many people with cameras, some of them... rolling around on the ground to get a good angle and other such antics." Allen, who attended jazzman and friend Paul Barbarin's funeral during the Carnival season of 1969, echoed Ellis's sentiments: "I marched along with the family. But because he was so well-known, the funeral was publicized to the extent that it became like a Mardi Gras parade. It wasn't quite right." Clearly, the injection of a tourist "second line" subtly altered the character and mood of the jazz funeral from an inward admixture of reverence, mourning, and jubilation, to an outward, self-conscious spectacle for consumption by an audience who could never fully comprehend the milieu from which the spectacle sprang.

Of all the new brass bands that formed concurrently with the rise of tourism, Olympia Brass Band became the most famous. Organized in 1960 by Harold Dejan, who in his earlier years had played aboard Mississippi riverboats, the predominantly black marching unit took its name from a series of earlier bands beginning with cornetist Freddy Keppard's Olympia Orchestra in the first decade of the twentieth century. Like many New Orleans jazz bands, Olympia counted both natives and newcomers among its


59Quale, "Brass Band' Notes."

60Joachim E. Berendt, text on cover of "Harold Dejan's Olympia Brass Band" album, "Olympia Brass Band, 1972-1973," Vertical File, HJA.
members. In contrast to the typical scenario, in which black musicians left the plantation South for a new life in New Orleans, Olympia took in outsiders drawn to the city purely to soak up its musical legacy. For instance, Olympia trombonist Paul Crawford, born in Atmore, Alabama, in 1925, moved to New Orleans at age twenty-six and joined the band after graduating from the prestigious Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Likewise, by the mid-1960s, Pennsylvania native and jazz pilgrim Allan Jaffe could be seen playing his helicon as Olympia strutted through the narrow, balcony-lined streets of the Vieux Carré.61

While Keppard's band and subsequent Olympia bands had played primarily for community functions, Olympia eagerly courted a tourist audience as well.62 In 1967, the band marched into Tulane Stadium (the Sugar Bowl) to play in the "Sights and Sounds of New Orleans" halftime show devised by former Disneyland producer Tommy Walker for the inaugural New Orleans Saints football game against the Los Angeles Rams. The spectacle of strutting, umbrella-toting second-liners and brass musicians drew "amused laughter and applause, [and] some comment that this was really Mardi Gras." The NAACP frowned upon the "carnival skit" after its leaders saw the televised halftime show.63 Less than three years later, millions of Americans saw "one of the greatest ads ever seen on television for New Orleans"—New Orleans' first Super Bowl. CBS televised the game's "Way Down Yonder" halftime show, again produced by Walker. This time trumpeter Al Hirt played "Streets of Dreams," the Southern University Marching Band from Baton Rouge performed a rendition of "South Rampart Street Parade," and "adopted natives" Lionel Hampton and Doc Severinson entertained. Following a mock

61 Notes on Paul Crawford, [n. d.], "Olympia Brass Band, 1970-1971," Vertical File, HJA; Allen, Notes on Howard Funeral. A helicon is a type of coiled marching tuba carried over the shoulder and first made in Vienna in the mid-nineteenth century. Most tuba players in New Orleans brass bands used a sousaphone instead because it better projected the sound forward.


Battle of New Orleans replete with cannon and cavalry, Walker trotted out the Olympia Brass Band in another staged jazz funeral.64

Indeed, by prostituting this black tradition to America via national television, tourism leaders stripped it of all meaning and rendered it nothing more than one more component in the effort to exude Mardi Gras atmosphere 365 days a year for tourists' benefit. Nevertheless, it is important to recognize the complicity of Olympia's musicians in this process, for they fully understood and clearly accepted their role as cultural ambassadors for their city. Much as the Jaffes viewed themselves as preservers of a dying custom, the musicians of Olympia billed themselves as one of the last two authentic Dixieland marching bands (along with Eureka Brass Band).65

Like Joe Mares's musicians and the Preservation Hall Jazz Band, the Olympia Brass Band also gained widespread attention through its touring. In 1966 and 1967, Olympia played in Washington, D.C., as part of the Smithsonian Institution's celebrations featuring American folk customs.66 In autumn of 1968, the band accompanied the Travel South U.S.A. mission to Europe, a delegation of tourism promoters from New Orleans and numerous other Southern cities sponsored by the United States Travel Service and the Southern Travel Directors Council.

In addition to appearances in Brussels, London, Paris, Rome, and other leading European cities, in West Berlin the Travel South U.S.A. delegation participated in the German-American Volksfest amid a makeshift re-creation of the Vieux Carré. The festival, sponsored by the New Orleans Chamber of Commerce, the Tourist and Convention Commission, the Board of Trade, and International House, featured New Orleans exhibits, a Creole restaurant, amusement park-type attractions, a Mardi Gras parade, and daily performances by Olympia.67 Paul A. Fabry, managing director of the International House, an organization interested in luring foreign trade and tourism to New Orleans, exclaimed at the Volksfest,


65Klaveness, "Hot Jazz Goes Cool."


"Everyone who has heard the Olympia Brass Band play here wants to come to New Orleans."

Noting the irony in the South's attempt to use African American culture as the centerpiece of its ploy to attract foreign travelers to a region shackled by the iron grip of institutionalized racism and apartheid, a London writer described how the Olympia Brass Band was

trouping all over Europe with a home-grown delegation of white chamber-of-commerce types who were trying to sell places like Mississippi, Alabama, and nine other Confederate states as tourist paradises, presumably on the assumption that Europeans don't read newspapers . . . . It makes a wonderful, horrendously funny, pitiable, sad contrast—these well-fed, pink-and-panchy white folks showing off their six li'l darkies. Only this week it's not 'Hey, BOY! Shine mah shoes,' but rather, 'Yes suh, Herr so-and-so, these FINE gentlemen are typical of the rich cultural heritage of our southern states . . .'.

If brass bands increasingly put on a show for growing hordes of tourists, occasionally they snubbed them in a demonstration that the music was not simply for outsiders' pleasure. The Olympia Brass Band, accompanying the Tremé Sports Social Aid and Pleasure Club's annual parade in 1967, was supposed to take a detour to Jackson Square to pick up a "second line" of tourists. From Jackson Square they would lead them to the Royal Orleans Hotel for a concert. However, the band never made it to Jackson Square, veering instead to the Caledonia Club in Tremé, where it played to a mostly local, black audience.

Despite its reputation as a leading cultural exponent of the city's tourism industry, the Olympia Brass Band did not simply forget the community from which the brass band tradition issued. On at least one occasion the band members used the jazz funeral as a vehicle for social protest. After several blocks of the Faubourg Tremé were razed for the city government's Cultural Center, part of a locally


funded urban renewal scheme designed to rid the inner city of impoverished neighborhoods, the Olympia Brass Band staged a mock jazz funeral to symbolize Tremé's untimely death. Recounting the experience later in the day, Dick Allen wrote, "The crowd was immense and unruly, making it dangerous, or at least unwise, to get too close." The band accompanied a crowd huddled around a casket containing a clearly visible dummy that apparently represented the Cultural Center. When the crowd reached the old Caledonia Inn on St. Philip Street, the pallbearers shoved the coffin through a high window of the club, from which a terrific ruckus could be heard as a crowd inside set upon the "body," beating it mercilessly. Soon children began hurling stones and bottles at the building, one of those slated for demolition. Finally, Allen fled the scene, for he "couldn't hear the music, and was afraid."71

As some tourists found out, venturing beyond the confines of the French Quarter to experience the second-line tradition did not come without certain risks. Tempers often flared in the crowds that gathered around the brass bands. The New Orleans Police Department, then a predominantly white force, sometimes practiced a draconian manner of crowd control, adding to blacks' distrust of them. On one occasion, a visiting reporter covering the Jolly Bunch Social Aid and Pleasure Club's parade in Tremé observed a number of white NOPD officers on horseback, "grim, unbending, clearly not enjoying the outing." They periodically rode their horses into the crowd with no regard for the people they trampled. When one child screamed after a horse stepped on her foot, the mounted officer hit her, and a second policeman roughed up another youth from atop his horse. Suddenly, on the fringe of the Lafitte Housing Project, a cop on horseback and brandishing a pistol chased a black youth through the street until he disappeared into the crowd. One witness told the reporter, "Ought to kill all the _____ cops." Shortly thereafter, a rumor circulated that a cop on Tulane Avenue had killed a boy. A stone-throwing match ensued that subsided only when the sounds of the Olympia band swept up the crowd once

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71 Allen, Notes on Caledonia Club, Olympia Brass Band, January 24, 1971, "Olympia Brass Band, 1970-1971," Vertical File, HJA. The Caledonia Club (previously known as Caledonia Inn) was forced to move to a new location to escape the ravages of urban renewal.
again. In another incident, a spectator shot a woman in the leg. An observer noted, "The white second line was small to begin with, and became even smaller after this." Racial tension in 1960s New Orleans, always festering just beneath the surface, could easily erupt whenever white policemen became overzealous in crowd control in black neighborhoods.

Typical of New Orleans' attempts to tame its wild side and package it as a commodity for tourist consumption, at least one show attempted to distill the ambience of second-line jazz from the rough streets of Tremé in a lively, safe setting. In the spring of 1980, the Olympia Brass Band starred in the musical comedy "Back-a-Town," co-produced by Edgar F. Poree, Jr., and Olympia trumpeter Milton Batiste. Locals often referred to the neighborhoods of Tremé, Central City, and portions of Mid-City as "Back-of-Town." This term may have reflected the lingering black notion of the areas toward the Mississippi River as white lands and the areas away from it as black lands, for the land situated in the great crescent of the river that gave New Orleans its nickname was once comprised of slender, pie-slice-shaped sugar plantations stretching far back into cypress swamps. In antebellum days, slaves often occupied these rear portions, occasionally fleeing into the swamp as maroons. Even in the latter half of the twentieth century, much of New Orleans remained a racial checkerboard in which whites often clustered along and near broad, palm- and oak-lined boulevards while blacks congregated in dilapidated shotgun houses and cottages on side streets in what geographer Peirce F. Lewis called "backswamp ghettos."

At any rate, the musical promised tourists a glimpse into this "Back-of-Town" neighborhood that tourism leaders warned against visiting. In the play, the character Elijah Conners sits on his front stoop and regales passing tourists with outlandish tales of old Tremé laden with racial stereotypes. In eight scenes, the play careens

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spatially and temporally among depictions of black life in "an African village deep in the Mother Country," a river plantation, a voodoo ritual, a parade by the "Boogie-Bunch Social Aid and Pleasure Club," and a jazz funeral for Madam Fast Sally, at which time the Olympia Brass Band fires up its second-line sounds. The play's producers apparently hoped to evoke a sense of exotic New Orleans in a safe, tourist-friendly setting, much as the New Orleans Progressive Union's depiction of the untamed, colorful French Market had done in the Grand Opera House eight decades earlier.

By the 1970s, the impact of tourism had shorn the declining brass band tradition of its original cultural milieu. While the Olympia Brass Band paraded on the beach at Ipanema in Rio de Janeiro, New Orleans' back streets stood increasingly silent. Jazz funerals became increasingly anachronistic as greater burial coverage by insurance policies rendered social aid and pleasure clubs less crucial. Such organizations often continued their charitable work, but focused more heavily on the component of revelry, often in conjunction with the growing popularity and proliferation of Mardi Gras parades. As outlying cemeteries became the norm, the tradition of brass band accompaniment could not bridge distances that required automobile processions. Further, the dwindling number of existing brass bands geared their activities more toward the paying public as their respective reputations grew.

Even as the custom receded, records and especially films helped spread the second-line tradition to a wide audience of potential tourists. In 1951, two Harvard students, Alden Ashforth and David Wyckoff, made the first sound recordings of a working New Orleans brass band, the Eureka Brass Band. Two years later, the Cinerama Film Corporation filmed a mock funeral featuring John Casimir and the Young Tuxedo Brass for a segment in its travelogue "Cinerama Holiday." In 1956, Frederick Ramsey, Jr., who co-edited Jazzmen, shot the Eureka Brass Band for the CBS television documentary

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76 Program: "Back-a-Town."
77 Joe Massa, "Olympia Brass Band Wows 'Em in Brazil," Times-Picayune, April 27, 1980. The band's appearance was part of a tourist promotion sponsored by Pan American World Airways, American Express of Brazil, and the Hotel Inter-Continental Rio. Such performances served as free advertising for the New Orleans tourism industry.
"Odyssey." In 1958 Atlantic became the first major recording company to record a brass band when it produced a record by the Young Tuxedo Brass Band. The second-line custom found its way into major Hollywood films as well. M.G.M. filmed Eureka for its long title sequence for the 1965 movie The Cincinnati Kid, and United Artists filmed a memorable scene for the 1973 James Bond film Live And Let Die, in which the Olympia Brass Band accompanied a jazz procession through the French Quarter. 79 Olympia also filmed television commercials for Budweiser beer, Toyota and Pontiac automobiles, and Hush Puppies shoes. 80 The effect of such massive international exposure to a tradition that had historically been largely sheltered from outside view in impoverished black neighborhoods cannot be overestimated.

By the 1980s, tourism paradoxically had contributed to the disengagement of traditional jazz from its historical socio-cultural milieu, yet it had also helped resurrect an art form that arguably would have died otherwise. In addition, tourism stimulated a revival of grassroots interest among young African Americans in New Orleans' inner-city neighborhoods in playing jazz by renewing older musicians' interest so that they might serve as role models for a new generation. The demands of tourism helped enshrine traditional New Orleans jazz in the tourist-frequented Preservation Hall, French Market, Café du Monde, and most notably at the annual New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival. Tourism also provided new milieus—conventions, football halftime shows, riverboat cruises, and festival marketplaces—in which the sounds of New Orleans brass bands might continue in the crucial years when little young talent stood ready to replace older musicians as they died.

The tourism-stoked jazz revival of the 1940s and subsequent decades, originally viewed by many enthusiasts as the final flowering of a soon-to-be bygone era, achieved something much more remarkable. More than merely arresting the demise of the music, it fertilized the soil in which a new jazz genre burst into full flower by the late 1980s. Concurrently with upsurges in the national popularity of Cajun and zydeco music, New Orleans produced two superstars, Wynton Marsalis and Harry Connick, Jr., who kept the Crescent City in the national and international spotlight. In addition

79 Knowles, Fallen Heroes, 244-46.
to performing their own brands of jazz worldwide, Marsalis and Connick ensured through their efforts back home that New Orleans remained a musical Mecca. While Marsalis headed the University of New Orleans Jazz Studies program, Connick founded the Krewe of Orpheus, a Mardi Gras parade organization that melded the city's Carnival and jazz images and directed them toward tourists.

Like Marsalis and Connick, the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Festival became immensely popular, achieving its first fiscal surplus in 1978. In 1985 the non-profit New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation inaugurated a grant program distributing $500 to $10,000 grants to cultivate the roots of jazz and other performing arts in a city increasingly dependent upon staging a spectacle for tourists. Some of the grant money helped fund new instruments, uniforms, city parade permits, and supplies for brass bands, social aid and pleasure clubs, and Mardi Gras Indian tribes. The Foundation also sponsored WWOZ 90.7 FM, a radio station broadcasting primarily Louisiana music, the Heritage School of Music, giving free music instruction to needy children, neighborhood festivals, concert series, subsidized Jazzfest tickets for the poor, Foundation internships for inner-city youths, seed money for music-oriented start-up companies, and medical care for aging musicians.81 Jazzfest, then, stood out as one of New Orleans' few postwar success stories, harnessing tourism to the city's culture at a time when the city's culture generally suffered the pressures wrought by over-reliance on the tourist trade.

In the wake of the 1985 oil bust, which set New Orleans' economy on a downward spiral, the city fell upon hard times, felt most acutely by the city's poorer African Americans. The municipal government, facing grave fiscal straits, latched onto tourism as never before in hopes of keeping its beleaguered ship afloat. It worked in a close public-private partnership with tourism interests, using jazz more and more frequently in marketing efforts. An epidemic of crack cocaine abuse ripped through Tremé and other black neighborhoods, claiming the lives of many black youths and leading to an escalation

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of street violence. In these hard times, the example of revitalized jazz provided a degree of solace and inspiration.

Symbolic of the rekindling of young African Americans' interest in jazz musicianship was the grassroots brass band movement that blossomed in the 1980s, most notably with the spectacular rise of Re-Birth Brass Band as both role models for a black underclass and the Crescent City's newest ambassadors of cultural tourism. In contrast to elite white use of black jazz to shape public memory of New Orleans' past for tourism promotion in the 1960s and 1970s, by the 1980s, African Americans had staked a new claim to brass band music as an authentic voice of black public memory and contemporary cultural expression. Formed in 1983 by tuba player Philip Frazier and trumpeter Kermit Ruffins, who lived in Tremé and attended Joseph S. Clark High School, the teenaged Re-Birth Brass Band members used the customary brass band instrumentation. Too young to play in Bourbon Street nightclubs, the youths worked the streets of the French Quarter, entertaining passing tourists. Ironically, in its formative period Re-Birth relied on being able to play on the streets, a custom that has been periodically under attack since the effects of the jazz revival and rising tourist foot traffic in the French Quarter began clashing with affluent white French Quarter gentrifiers' notions of who took precedence in the enjoyment of the Vieux Carré's Old World charm in the 1970s.82

Inspired by the innovative melding of traditional New Orleans jazz with progressive funk pioneered by the Dirty Dozen Brass Band in the 1970s and assisted by Olympia trumpeter Milton Batiste, the Re-Birth Brass Band set the streets afire with an energetic, rough-edged, high-octane fusion of jazz, funk, rhythm and blues, gospel, Caribbean, and even rap. While Re-Birth quickly positioned itself to take advantage of tourism, getting its first professional gig at a 1983 convention at the Sheraton Hotel and its first recording contract from a record company executive in town for Jazzfest in 1984, the band

remained quite attuned to the community from which it sprang.\textsuperscript{83} The crack cocaine crisis of the 1980s stimulated a resurgence of jazz funerals as distraught families of slain victims called upon the brass band to provide a musical tribute. In 1989 Frazier averred that Re-Birth had played at more than one hundred crack funerals since 1987.\textsuperscript{84} Re-Birth soon made the jump from playing only neighborhood gigs, at clubs such as the Little People's Place and Trombone Shorty's, to French Quarter and Uptown venues patronized by a mostly white tourist clientele and, increasingly, international tours and contracts to produce internationally circulated compact discs. The band's innovative adaptation of traditional brass band forms to fit the preferences of a younger generation, along with the efforts of other new ensembles like Soul Rebels Brass Band, New Birth Brass Band, Lil' Rascals Brass Band, and Tuba Fats and the Chosen Few, did more than simply preserve and enshrine a timeless New Orleans sound, as Olympia and the Preservation Hall bands had done. It served as both a wellspring for the city's ongoing legacy of jazz and a key component in increasingly savvy tourism marketing efforts to woo tourists seeking cultural distinctiveness rather than standardized experiences.

\textsuperscript{83} Jerry Brock, "ReBirth: Born-Again Teenage Horns," \textit{Wavelength} (New Orleans) (July 1984): 21, HJA.