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THE SOLO STYLE OF JAZZ CLARINETIST  
JOHNNY DODDS: 1923 – 1938

A Monograph

Submitted to the Graduate Faculty of the  
Louisiana State University and  
Agricultural and Mechanical College  
In partial fulfillment of the  
Requirements for the degree of  
Doctor of Musical Arts

in

The School of Music

By  
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B.M., Eastman School of Music, 1984  
M.M., Michigan State University, 1990  
May 2003

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## ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to explore the personality, background, influence and playing style of Johnny Dodds (1892-1940), a New Orleans jazz clarinetist.

Jazz is an art form that has been passed down aurally for over a hundred years. Although the development of jazz and the performers who played it have been the subject for numerous jazz historians, there are still scant resources available for a musician to learn jazz clarinet style. The ease with which a musician can emulate an early jazz clarinetist depends on the amount of time devoted to listening and emulating whatever recordings are available. This study is an attempt to shorten this learning process by providing a series of transcriptions and analyses that identify and document specific melodic and harmonic traits that form the solo vocabulary of Johnny Dodds.

The infusion of blues-playing techniques that Dodds used gave his sound an emotional intensity and expressiveness uniquely his own. As a member of many of the finest New Orleans style jazz bands, he contributed to the early development of the classical New Orleans ensemble-style jazz.

The first chapter contains related prefatory material, including a brief history of jazz and its first recordings, an analysis of the difficulty in assessing particular clarinet jazz styles, and the need to provide written study materials for musicians who wish to learn early jazz clarinet styles. It concludes with reasons for picking



Johnny Dodds as the subject of this study and brief descriptions of the pieces that will be transcribed.

The second chapter focuses on Johnny Dodds. It describes how he grew up, how music and the clarinet became a part of his life, and the social, economic and educational influences that impacted his development as a musician,

The third chapter contains examples from the analyses of each of the six recordings noted chapter one. Each analysis contains details showing how Johnny Dodds gave this piece his own stylistic interpretation.

The fourth chapter contains a summary of the preceding three chapters. A transcription of the clarinet part from each analysis is contained in the appendix.

## CHAPTER 1

### INTRODUCTION

The clarinet as a prominent solo instrument in jazz has a history that began with clarinetists Lorenzo Tio, Jr. (1893-1933), Alphonse Picou (1878-1961), George Lewis (1900-1968), Jimmie Noone (1895-1944), Johnny Dodds (1892-1940), and Sidney Bechet (1897-1959) and continues into the current century. The styles adopted by these jazz artists are quite different, but they share one common element: all of these important jazz clarinet soloists developed their own musical vocabulary, which made their performances unique and identifiable. Each of these artists developed and matured his characteristic vocabulary using aural assimilation of previous artists' styles. Only through careful study and reflection can the solo style of any jazz artist truly be discovered. This project will, through transcription and analysis, identify and document specific melodic and harmonic traits of clarinetist Johnny Dodds during the period 1923 to 1938.

Early jazz clarinet style is difficult to assess; one reason is the general lack of resource materials for early jazz artists. No large body of recording exists before 1917. Known as ragtime in the 1890s, what is now known as "classic" jazz first came into prominence in 1917 with the issue of the first Original Dixieland Jazz Band recordings for Victor Talking Machine Company ("Livery Stable Blues" and "Dixieland Jass Band One-Step"). At the time of the recording, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band was made up of five white musicians, including cornetist Nick LaRocca, clarinetist Larry Shields, trombonist Eddie "Daddy" Edwards, pianist

Henry Ragas, and drummer Tony Sbarbaro (later Spargo). The Original Dixieland Jazz Band was considered one of the hottest white bands around.<sup>1</sup>

According to jazz bassist George Murphy “Pops” Foster (1892-1969), Freddie Keppard’s Creole Band was actually offered the chance to record first, but Keppard (1890-1933) was afraid that other musicians would “steal his stuff” and declined the offer.<sup>2</sup> The first black band to record was Kid Ory’s Creole Orchestra under the name of Spike’s Seven Pods of Pepper. This band recorded in 1922 in Los Angeles for the Sunshine label, run by John and Reb Spikes. Five thousand copies of this record were released, distributed through the Spikes brothers’ Los Angeles music store. King Oliver’s Creole Jazz Band recorded in 1923 for Gennet Records in Richmond, Indiana. This band was made up of the cream of New Orleans musicians, including King Oliver and Louis Armstrong on cornet, Johnny Dodds on clarinet, Warren “Baby” Dodds on drums, Honore Dutry on trombone, Lil Hardin on piano, and Bill Johnson on banjo. At the time of this recording session the Creole Jazz Band was playing in Chicago at the Lincoln Gardens and received rave reviews. Prior to leaving New Orleans in 1921, the Creole Jazz Band had the reputation of being the best jazz band in the city.<sup>3</sup>

When black bands started recording, five years after the first white recordings, many of them had migrated to cities such as Chicago, Kansas City, and

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<sup>1</sup> Tom Stoddard, *Pops Foster: The Autobiography of a New Orleans Jazzman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 52.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 54.

<sup>3</sup> Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff, *Hear Me Talkin’ To Ya* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1955), 42.

Los Angeles in search of better income, often changing their styles to appeal to different audiences. The Creole Jazz Band, as mentioned above, began in New Orleans. By 1921 Oliver had taken this band on the road as far as San Francisco, and by 1923 had relocated the band to Chicago, where they made their first recording. According to New Orleans Guitarist Dr. Edmond Souchon (1897-1968), once the Creole Jazz Band began working in Chicago they were “no longer playing pure New Orleans music. The tempos were sometimes faster and the arrangements more complex than one would expect to have heard in a New Orleans dance hall.”<sup>4</sup>

In order to record at all, black jazz musicians were often limited to creating the types of tunes considered marketable as “race records.”<sup>5</sup> One of the main companies to produce race records was the Okeh Recording Company, established in 1916 in New York by the General Phonograph Corporation. It was Ralph Peer of the Okeh Company who first coined the term “race record,” which was applied to phonograph recordings made especially for black listeners between 1921 and 1942.<sup>6</sup> In the summer of 1921, Okeh created the Colored Catalog. This series recorded only black artists and was marketed towards the black population. Gennet Records, another well-known recording company that was based in Richmond, Indiana, did not attempt to record black artists until 1923, when they started their own series. Although they never formally designated the series, they made sure that the text

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<sup>4</sup> Lewis Porter and Michael Ullman, *Jazz From Its Origins to the Present* (Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey: Prentice Hall, 1972), 41.

<sup>5</sup> Garvin Bushell, *Jazz From the Beginning* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 32.

<sup>6</sup> *The New Grove® Dictionary of Jazz* (1996), “Race record.”

“race record” was prominent on the record label. These recording companies assumed that race records would have no appeal to white audiences; therefore, they limited their marketing and distribution to areas populated mostly by blacks. In the South, these records were mainly distributed by mail order.

Making early jazz recordings was a difficult process. Often the recordings did not represent a jazz musician’s best work. The band gathered around a megaphone in a small room. Bass players and drummers were often further away from the recording device, because if they played directly into the horn the needle would often jump and ruin the recording. This setup resulted in a poor balance. Each recording was made using a wax cylinder and had to be a complete performance; editing did not exist. Any mistake meant that the first wax had to be replaced and the performers would have to start from the beginning. Rather than risk having to do multiple takes, the performers took great care to have their performances set. In the case of cornet player King Oliver (1885-1938), fellow trumpeter Mutt (Papa) Carey (1891-1948) said, “I’ll tell you something about Joe’s records. I haven’t heard a single one that comes close to sounding like Joe’s playing in person. I don’t know what it was, but I’ll tell you the truth, I don’t believe that is Joe playing on the records sometimes. It never sounded to me much like Joe.”<sup>7</sup>

Jazz is traditionally transmitted aurally, which has generally precluded the need for notation. Jazz artists, who were predominantly self-taught, often lacked

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<sup>7</sup> Tom Stoddard, *Pops Foster: The Autobiography of a New Orleans Jazzman* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), 42-43.

traditional notation skills.<sup>8</sup> Early jazz musicians absorbed the distinctive sounds of jazz and the specific techniques of jazz improvisation by listening to and mimicking the music. Jazz musicians have always made the assumption that certain musical conventions (melodic patterns, chord progressions, rhythmic devices) are known and shared by players and learned through imitation. Contemporary musicians are more aware that notation is a tool that assists with a basic understanding of a performer's musical vocabulary and the general rules of improvisation. In this way, the transcription facilitates analysis as well as performance. Therefore, I have created a series of transcriptions that will illustrate Johnny Dodds's solo vocabulary and will be a useful tool to today's musician.<sup>9</sup>

An examination of representative recordings of early New Orleans jazz clarinetists yields the names of three men who are often considered the best in their field: Johnny Dodds, Jimmie Noone, and Sidney Bechet. Of the three, Johnny Dodds is considered the leading clarinetist in the early classical New Orleans style, which to many he represented in its purest form. According to noted historian James Collier, "For many listeners Johnny Dodds's playing epitomizes the New Orleans clarinet style."<sup>10</sup> Dodds's playing was noted for its expressiveness and phrasing, and his blues style was emotionally powerful. Dodds had the ability to invent clear

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<sup>8</sup> Tom Stoddard, *Pops Foster*, 50.

<sup>9</sup> At the time of writing, I was able to find only a few published transcriptions of Dodds's work. These included Dodds's solo in "Gutbucket Blues," published as part of Williams Russell's article "Play That Thing, Mr. Johnny Dodds," *Jazz Information* (Aug. 23, 1940): 11, brief examples found in Laurie Wright's article "Dodds in Duo," *Storyville*, No. 41-50, ML5.S86, and two examples in Gunther Schuller's *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 200, 202.

<sup>10</sup> James Lincoln Collier, *The Making of Jazz: A Comprehensive History* (New York: Delta Publishing, 1978), 90.

and compelling countermelodies during collective improvisation. He was also one of the few players who could equal cornetist/trumpeter Louis Armstrong (1901-1971) both in power and inventiveness; thus he played a leading role in the development of Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven bands. Jazz historian Bill Russell (1905-1991) noted:

But above all Dodds's playing was expressive. I used to read in the orchestration textbooks that the clarinet was the most expressive of all the woodwinds, but although I went to all the symphony concerts, I never knew what they were talking about until I heard Johnny Dodds. Johnny's emotional tone (with his unusually wide vibrato, use of glissando, etc.) was not only expressive, but throughout the four [sic]<sup>11</sup> registers was probably the fullest and roundest tone ever produced on the clarinet. Johnny Dodds never needed a microphone and P.A. system to be heard even in the largest hall, or with the loudest of New Orleans' great cornetists blasting against him.<sup>12</sup>

Dodds was highly regarded by his colleagues. It has been noted that Albert Nicholas tried to emulate the Dodds sound in his solo on "Jackass Blues," recorded on April 23, 1926, as did Leon Roppolo (1902-1943) and, occasionally, Larry Shields (1893-1953) and Benny Goodman (1909-1986).<sup>13</sup> Omer Simeon (1902-1959), a New Orleans clarinetist who played with Jelly Roll Morton (1890-1941), said, "In those days Johnny Dodds was the well known clarinetist around Chicago. He influenced a lot of youngsters in the early twenties. In fact, I was influenced by Johnny's playing. He was a good blues man and for stomps, as we called them. He

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<sup>11</sup> The three registers of the clarinet are, from lowest to highest, the chalumeau, clarion and altissimo registers.

<sup>12</sup> William Russell, "Play That Thing, Mr. Johnny Dodds," *Jazz Information* (Aug. 23, 1940): 11.

<sup>13</sup> Brian Rust, "Blue Clarinet," *Universal Jazz*, Vol. 1, no. 3: 27-29. Rust refers to "Who?," recorded by Benny Goodman in 1925, published in 1925 by T.B. Harms Company in New York.

had drive and a really good conception of jazz.”<sup>14</sup> George Lewis, another well-known New Orleans jazz clarinetist, wrote to jazz fan and friend Ronnie Stearns: “Ronnie, tell me, do you really think I play that good? You know, Johnny Dodd was some man, I know him before he left here. Well pal, I hope I play something like him, because no one else does.”<sup>15</sup> Mezz Mezzrow (1899-1972), a Chicago clarinetist who played with Eddie Condon (1905-1973), said in his biography *Really the Blues*, “Joe Oliver and Freddie Keppard made me love the trumpet, but that wasn’t my instrument. The notes that kept singing in my head were the notes that came weaving out of Sidney Bechet’s curved soprano and clarinet, and the clarinets of Jimmy Noone and Johnny Dodds.”<sup>16</sup> Singer Tommy Brookins said, “As for Johnny Dodds ... I sincerely believe that he was the greatest clarinetist that ever lived and I’ve never heard any clarinetist play like he did in the lower register of his instrument.”<sup>17</sup> Jimmy McPartland (1907-1991), a cornetist with a group of Chicago jazz musicians who called themselves the Austin High School Gang (so named because the principal players in the band all went to Austin High School in the 1920s), was quoted as saying “... they used to take Benny and me over to hear Louis Armstrong, Lil Hardin, and the Dodds brothers playing with King Oliver.

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<sup>14</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style* (New Orleans: Jazzology Press, 1994), 201.

<sup>15</sup> Tom Bethell, *George Lewis: A Jazzman from New Orleans* (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1977), 155-156.

<sup>16</sup> Mezz Mezzrow and Bernard Wolfe, *Really the Blues* (New York: Citadel Underground, 1990), 49.

<sup>17</sup> Nat Shapiro and Nat Hentoff, *Hear Me Talkin’ to Ya* (New York: Rinehart & Company, Inc., 1955), 99.



This was just one thrill on top of another, hearing Louis and King and those New Orleans guys.”<sup>18</sup>

Jazz critic Hugues Panassie (1912-1974) described Dodds in his book *The Real Jazz*:

Nonetheless Johnny Dodds’s is a true clarinet style. In spite of his violence and harshness, his phrases sing and frequently he creates melodic lines full of charm. He plays the blues as very few jazzmen have, irrespective of instruments. His fire and strident power, and what one might call the “mean” quality of his playing, make his pure “blue” phrases magnificent – phrases so pure that Johnny Dodds should be cited as a perfect model for any clarinetist who wishes to play the blues well.<sup>19</sup>

The art of transcription is a very difficult process, especially with a form of music that has relied on aural transmission. There are no fixed rules for transcribing jazz, nor is there a universally defined set of symbols used to represent the jazz idiom.<sup>20</sup> It is incumbent upon the transcriber to listen intently, analyze, and not only notate the notes, but create a set of symbols that represent inflection, articulation, vibration, sound production, rhythmic deviation, and other expressive devices.

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<sup>18</sup> Ibid, 126.

<sup>19</sup> Hugues Panassie, *The Real Jazz* (New York: A.S. Barnes & Company, Inc., 1960), 112.

<sup>20</sup> The software package “Finale 2002” was used in creating the transcriptions in this study. The symbols used were part of the “Finale 2002” jazz symbol set.

Six transcriptions will be included in this project, representing Dodds's style from his earliest to latest recordings. One of the earliest transcribed recordings of Johnny Dodds to be included in this study is "Canal Street Blues", recorded by King Oliver and his Creole Jazz Band on April 6, 1923, in Richmond, Indiana. This recording is our best example of Dodds's jazz vocabulary in its early stages. It also represents a band of exceptional musicians who played in the early New Orleans ensemble style. For these reasons, "Canal Street Blues" is an ideal starting point in understanding Johnny Dodds's playing style.

"Wild Man Blues" was recorded by Johnny Dodds's Black Bottom Stompers on April 22, 1927. This transcription is an example of a popular song arranged for a small jazz ensemble.

The fourth transcription is "Weary Blues", recorded May 11, 1927, by Louis Armstrong's Hot Seven on the Okeh Label. Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven recordings are considered some of the most important recordings in early jazz history. The role of Dodds and others in this recording is less as ensemble player, where all players are equally important, and more as secondary soloist subordinate to Armstrong's position as lead soloist.

"Wolverine Blues" was recorded in Chicago by Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers on April 6, 1927. This transcription shows Dodds as he adapts to bandleader Jelly Roll Morton, who emphasized solo improvisation.

"Too Tight" was recorded by Johnny Dodds and his Orchestra in Chicago on July 2, 1929. Some have said that Dodds was at his best and most comfortable

when he was the leader of his own band. This transcription will show a style that is pure Dodds, unaffected by any other bandleader's influence.

The final transcription is "Melancholy", recorded by Johnny Dodds and his Chicago Boys in New York on January 21, 1938 (Dodds did not record from 1929 through 1937). "Melancholy" is one of Dodds's last recordings and will give an example of his mature style.

These recordings represent some of the more influential bands with which Dodds worked. They also span his recording career and provide a glimpse into the development of his style. The solo style of Johnny Dodds, like that of any musician, was influenced by his background (lower middle class), education (self-taught), and other factors that are addressed in the following chapters.

## CHAPTER 2

### BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Johnny Dodds had an innate, natural musical ability. He was largely self-taught and learned by following the examples of his peers. His talent was nurtured and defined by his environment: where he lived, his family and upbringing, the musicians and music he heard and the musical opportunities that came his way. In this chapter I will define what shaped Johnny Dodds into the musician we continue to admire today.

#### Early Family Life

Johnny Dodds was born on April 12, 1892 in New Orleans. His father, Warren Dodds, was a laborer. According to Baby Dodds, his mother Amy's family was Native American, though he does not specify which tribe.<sup>1</sup> It was not uncommon among southern black musicians to have parents who were part Native American. Bassist Pops Foster's mother was "nearly a full-blooded Cherokee"<sup>2</sup> and clarinetist George Lewis's father was half Choctaw.<sup>3</sup> Dodds had two older sisters, Rosie and Sally, an older brother William, and two younger brothers—Warren ("Baby"), who went on to become an accomplished jazz drummer, and Ada, who died in 1898.

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<sup>1</sup> Warren "Baby" Dodds, Interview by Larry Gara, from Larry Gara's original transcription of Baby Dodds's taped interviews for his autobiography *The Baby Dodds Story* (hereafter cited as "Gara Manuscript"), MSS 514, The Baby Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 11.

<sup>2</sup> Pops Foster, *Pops Foster, the Autobiography of a New Orleans Jazzman as Told to Tom Stoddard* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971), 5.

<sup>3</sup> Tom Bethell, *George Lewis, a Jazzman from New Orleans* (Los Angeles: University of California, 1977), 16-17.

The Dodds family lived in a section of New Orleans that bordered what is now known as the Garden district. Their first known residence was located at 506 Jackson (renumbered 2522 Jackson) Avenue<sup>4</sup>, which was considered to be uptown.<sup>5</sup> The Dodds family lived in one side of a double cottage, which they rented from an absentee German landlord. The neighborhood was a mixture of first- and second-generation European immigrants and black families. At the time of the 1900 census, they lived in a community of day laborers and semiskilled workers.<sup>6</sup> Listed in the census are Warren, Amy, Sally, Rosie, William, John, Warren (Baby) and Hattie. Johnny's mother Amy did not hire out as a laundress or seamstress to supplement the family income. This may suggest that the father Warren Dodds was relatively well-paid at his job as warehouseman. According to his son Baby, Warren taught himself to read and write while working at the warehouse.<sup>7</sup>

The Dodds family was very involved with their Baptist church and at one point Warren held the position of first deacon. All the children attended Sunday school, and then stayed for the service afterward. Both Amy and Warren brought music into the house. Amy was very religious and enjoyed church hymns. At home the family would sing religious tunes as a quartet, with Johnny singing the high

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<sup>4</sup> Gene Anderson, *Johnny Dodds in New Orleans*, American Music, Winter 1990, 411.

<sup>5</sup> Canal Street, running on a diagonal from northwest to southeast, was the dividing line between uptown and downtown. Northeast of Canal Street, in the area encompassing the French Opera House and the French Quarter, was considered downtown. This is where the Creoles lived. Blacks lived uptown.

<sup>6</sup> Gene Anderson original transcription of notes for article "Johnny Dodds in New Orleans" (hereafter known as "Anderson Manuscript"), MSS 515, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 6.

<sup>7</sup> Gara Manuscript, 13.

tenor part. Amy accompanied the singers on a kind of reed organ that was operated by pumping foot pedals.<sup>8</sup> Warren, who came from a musical family himself, sang, played the fiddle, harmonica, and quills (which were actually homemade bamboo panpipes<sup>9</sup>). Johnny and Baby also spent time standing outside the Opera House listening to classical music. As Johnny grew up, music permeated his life.

### New Orleans

With the exception of one year and a few summers, Johnny Dodds was raised in New Orleans and the influence of his native city on his musical career cannot be overstated. New Orleans was an atypical Southern town at that time and doubtless had a different impact on Johnny than another Southern town would have had due to its more liberal attitude towards blacks. That liberal Southern attitude was cultivated during the early stages of New Orleans' growth during both French and Spanish rule.

The history of New Orleans begins in 1718 when the city was founded within the French colony of Louisiana. The site was already a well-established trading post for several Indian tribes when Canadian Jean Baptiste Le Moyne, Sieur de Bienville, was named director general of the new colony. It took Bienville and fifty of his men several years to make the swampy area habitable. They were aided in their task by slaves, brought from Africa through the West Indies (by the

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<sup>8</sup> Anderson Manuscript, 11.

<sup>9</sup> Larry Gara, *The Baby Dodds Story* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1992), 2.

Company of the Indies, which held the 25-year charter for the colony<sup>10</sup>), to New Orleans in 1719. By 1721, the population of New Orleans had grown to 472, with 278 whites, 173 blacks (both slaves and free), and 21 Indian slaves<sup>11</sup>.

By the 1720s there were free people of color in New Orleans. These were often men and women who immigrated to America themselves or who were servants to French families who came from the West Indies. In 1724 a declaration of rights for free people of color and slaves was introduced into the city of New Orleans. This code, called the Code Noir or Black Code, was a revised form of the 1685 French policy toward slaves in the West Indies. It specified how masters should treat their slaves, when freedom should be granted, and the rights of slaves once freed. The Code Noir was indicative of how New Orleans differed from the rest of the South in its attitude towards slaves and people of color in general. It granted slaves the following rights: 1) religious education, 2) redress in the colonial court for mistreatment by a master, 3) the ability to hire oneself out for wages, 4) church recognition of slave marriages, 5) baptism in the church for slave children and 6) the guarantee that a family would not be separated by sale. Once freed, a person was granted full citizenship with the following exceptions: he or she could

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<sup>10</sup> John R. Kemp, *New Orleans: An Illustrated History* (Sun Valley, California: American Historical Press, 1997), 99.

<sup>11</sup> Gilbert C. Din, ed., *The Spanish Presence in Louisiana, 1763-1803*, vol. 2 of *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette, Louisiana: The Center for Louisiana Studies of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), 415.

not vote, hold public office, or marry a white person. Other rules, such as curfews and rules of dress, came and went according to the climate of the times<sup>12</sup>.

In 1763 Louisiana was transferred from French to Spanish rule. The Spanish began to make changes to the Code Noir that were more liberal than the French version of the Code. They allowed slaves to petition for freedom once they had lived independently of their master for ten years. A slave who performed services for the Spanish Crown was often given freedom as payment. Slaves married to free people were also freed. Slaves were also able to buy their freedom, even when their masters opposed the transaction.<sup>13</sup> There were rules forbidding the mistreatment of slaves and even a law that gave freedom to slaves whose masters had allowed them to be used as prostitutes. Free blacks were given rights that approximated those of whites, in that they were allowed to own property, including slaves of their own. Free people of color began to become more prosperous and more powerful. They also became more numerous. In 1771 there were 97 free people of color; by 1805 that number had grown to 1,566.<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>12</sup> Glenn R. Conrad, ed., *The French Experience in Louisiana*, vol. 1 of *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History* (Lafayette, Louisiana: The Center for Louisiana Studies of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), 176-180, 184.

<sup>13</sup> Gilbert C. Din, ed., *The Spanish Presence in Louisiana, 1763-1803*, vol. 2 of *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette, Louisiana: The Center for Louisiana Studies of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), 354, 374-375. Kimberly S. Hanger, *Bounded Lives, Bounded Places: Free Black Society in Colonial New Orleans, 1769-1803* (Durham: Duke University Press, 1997), 25.

<sup>14</sup> Gilbert C. Din, ed., *The Spanish Presence in Louisiana, 1763-1803*, vol. 2 of *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette, Louisiana: The Center for Louisiana Studies of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), 415.



The French may have begun the custom in New Orleans, but both French and Spanish explorers were accustomed to taking wives from the indigenous peoples they conquered<sup>15</sup>. The children of these relationships were often not easily distinguished as people of color, and as children of men of means and estates, often found themselves with both money and property upon their parents' death. This population, also known as Creoles (people descending from either French or Spanish parentage), began to have more and more influence through the 1820s. In this early period, there was very little distinction between Creoles of color and white Creoles.

However by the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century, the attitude in New Orleans was changing. Slave rebellions were becoming more commonplace and, in 1785, the new Spanish Governor Esteban Miro decided to change the Code Noir in order to tighten control over all people of color. In the Creole community, white Creoles began to remove themselves from association with the Creoles of color in order to avoid these new restraints and prohibitions. Some of the restrictions included limits on travel for slaves, prohibitions of labor allowed on Sundays, and bans on the sale of liquor to people of color. Public meetings and dancing among people of color was permitted only in Place des Negres (Congo Square).

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<sup>15</sup> Glenn R. Conrad, ed., *The French Experience in Louisiana*, vol. 1 of *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History* (Lafayette, Louisiana: The Center for Louisiana Studies of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), 526-527.

At the end of the century, Spain began to feel its resources were stretched too thin. The French Revolution was escalating, there was a massive slave rebellion in Santo Domingo, one of Spain's holdings in the Caribbean<sup>16</sup>, and the decision was made to leave America. Louisiana reverted to French possession, and was then purchased from France by President Thomas Jefferson in 1803. This upheaval was good for the local population, however. The years from 1813 to 1830 were considered the Golden Age of Creoles, who owned about one quarter of the real estate in New Orleans, worth approximately 2.5 million dollars.<sup>17</sup>

By the 1830s, the South was even more economically committed to slavery, and blacks were being subjected to another wave of repressive laws. Free people of color were required to keep identification on their person and were not allowed to enter Louisiana from other states. Those free persons of color who entered the state after statehood in 1812 were required either to register with the government or were given sixty days in which to leave<sup>18</sup>. The press was restricted from writing articles that were favorable to people of color. Blacks could no longer testify against whites in court and education for slaves was abolished. Light-skinned Creoles of color were tempted to pass over into white Creole society, and often did.

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<sup>16</sup> Gilbert C. Din, ed., *The Spanish Presence in Louisiana, 1763-1803*, vol. 2 of *The Louisiana Purchase Bicentennial Series in Louisiana History*, ed. Glenn R. Conrad (Lafayette, Louisiana: The Center for Louisiana Studies of Southwestern Louisiana, 1995), 267.

<sup>17</sup> Mary Gehman, *The Free People of Color of New Orleans, An Introduction* (New Orleans: Margaret Media, Inc., 1994), 62.

<sup>18</sup> *Ibid*, 67.

## Reconstruction

After the Civil War (1861-1865), the South was decimated by the war and lacked both food and goods. The period of Reconstruction implemented by Congress (1866-1877) was meant to reorganize the Southern states after the Civil War and define the means by which whites and blacks could live together in a non-slave society. Though everyone could now be considered free, that did not soften the hard fact that former slaves had virtually nothing, while Creoles both white and colored had property to fix up and land to restore. Blacks fought hard to get the right to vote, resulting in many demonstrations and many deaths during what has become known as the New Orleans Race Riot of July 30, 1866.<sup>19</sup> Congress finally passed the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment in 1866, which gave all American men, regardless of race, the right to vote. Louisiana was readmitted into the Union in 1868, at which time the state constitution was ratified to include civil rights and suffrage to blacks.

At the end of reconstruction, in 1890, the Supreme Court ruled that each state had the right to maintain separate but equal public facilities for the races. Following this proclamation came a flood of so-called Jim Crow laws. Until these laws were enacted, Creoles of color were still able to maintain their distance from blacks, and thereby retain their slightly elevated social standing. Once the Jim Crow laws were passed, anyone with any African blood was considered a Negro and subject to these new, constrictive laws. Creoles of color who had previously

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<sup>19</sup>James G. Hollandsworth, Jr., *An Absolute Massacre: The New Orleans Race Riot of July 30, 1866*, (Louisiana State University Press: Baton Rouge, Louisiana, 2001), 97-116.

believed themselves to be more white than black were suddenly pushed into closer association with blacks. They continued to struggle against this new classification by living downtown in the French Quarter, as opposed to the Blacks who lived uptown. They clung to the importance of passing education and culture to their children, and held on to a strict sense of morality. Creoles encouraged their children to study music, as the ability to play an instrument or sing was considered a sign of cultivation. However they discouraged their children from becoming musicians, a profession that was considered by all to be disreputable.<sup>20</sup>

This was the atmosphere into which Johnny Dodds was born in 1892. Despite growing unrest, Johnny's early years in New Orleans were good ones. According to Baby Dodds, their family was happy and everyone in the neighborhood got along. However, on July 23, 1900 whatever peace the neighborhood possessed was destroyed when the area erupted in violence, known now as the Charles Riot.<sup>21</sup> This event combined with a massive union strike in the summer of 1901 may have convinced Warren Dodds to try and find employment elsewhere, since it was at this time that the Dodds family began spending the summers in Waveland, Mississippi. Amy Dodds died of pulmonary edema in Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, not far from Waveland, when Johnny was just twelve years old (1904). Although neither Baby nor Johnny ever mentioned the impact their

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<sup>20</sup> Pops Foster, *The Autobiography of a New Orleans Jazzman*, 65.

<sup>21</sup> William Ivy Hair, *Carnival of Fury: Robert Charles and the New Orleans Race Riot of 1900* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1976), 119.

mother's early death had on them, Baby said "I had nothing to be ashamed of in my young life. Nothing. My dad tried to give us everything that he knew was possible, to make us happy."<sup>22</sup> By 1908, the Dodds family was living full-time in Waveland on a farm where Warren worked as a hired hand.

Johnny Dodds was named in the county school census of Waveland in 1908, when he was sixteen. His brother Baby is certain that Johnny finished grammar school, but went no further in his education. It is most likely that this period was the beginning of his musical career. At age seventeen, Johnny was given a clarinet by his father, to replace the tin whistle he had for years. Once he received the clarinet, he began playing a variety of small, low-paying jobs. This is substantiated by Baby Dodds, who said that Johnny was "playing 'round, different places, getting paid ice cream and cake."<sup>23</sup>

#### Dodds in New Orleans

Johnny Dodds moved back to New Orleans in 1909. There were many opportunities for young jazz musicians to play in New Orleans. Jazz musicians would often play for money at local family parties, picnics, fish fries, and parades. New Orleans parades always included a number of brass bands, which young aspiring musicians would follow to listen and learn from their favorite players. Brass bands came from a long and proud military tradition. The instrumentation of the early jazz ensemble was based on the brass band.

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<sup>22</sup> Gara Manuscript, 49.

<sup>23</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style* (New Orleans: Jazzology Press, 1994), 15.

A typical New Orleans brass band in the late 1890s, such as the Excelsior Brass Band or the Onward Brass Band, consisted of ten to twelve musicians, with instrumentation including at least one trombone, one tuba, one baritone horn, one alto, one or two cornets, one Eb clarinet, a snare drum, and a bass drum.<sup>24</sup> Early jazz bands were based on the brass band instrumentation but reduced for the more intimate setting of a bar or music hall. For instance, before adding a second cornet in 1922, King Oliver's Creole Orchestra was made up of cornet, clarinet, trombone, bass, piano and drums. This was the characteristic size and instrumentation of an early New Orleans jazz band.

According to Baby, when he and Johnny were kids they would “second line”<sup>25</sup> the parades in New Orleans.<sup>26</sup> Some of Dodds's favorite clarinetists when he was young were Big Eye Louis Nelson (1880-1949), who played with the Imperial Orchestra, the Golden Rule Orchestra and the Imperial Band, Alphonse Picou, who was the originator of the clarinet solo in “High Society” and played in the Tuxedo Brass Band, the Excelsior Brass Band and Papa Celestin's Original Tuxedo Orchestra, George Baquet (1883-1949), who played in the John Robichaux Orchestra and Lorenzo Tio, Jr., who played in Armand J. Piron's New Orleans Orchestra.<sup>27</sup> Whenever he could, Dodds would get up on the stand and sit behind one of these clarinetists while they were playing, in order to watch and learn from

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<sup>24</sup> Samuel B. Charters, *Jazz New Orleans: 1885-1957* (Belleville, NJ: Jazz Monographs, 1958), 14-15.

<sup>25</sup> Second liners are the people that follow the brass bands on the street.

<sup>26</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 15.

<sup>27</sup> Johnny Dodds, Interview by William Russell, Part I, MSS 515, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 1.

them. At the end of his life, when Dodds filled out a questionnaire for Decca records in 1940, he named Sidney Bechet as the first person to influence him.<sup>28</sup> It would seem logical that the four clarinetists first mentioned did indeed influence and perhaps mold the budding clarinetist's style, while Bechet, since he was younger than Dodds, was someone that Dodds came to admire later in life.

The popularity that various bands found in New Orleans at this time ensured that a promising player like Dodds would have a good chance to earn money. Pops Foster recalls an atmosphere in the early 1900s that is vibrant with music:

There were always twenty-five or thirty bands going around New Orleans. There was all kinds of work for musicians from birthday parties to funerals. Out at the lake they had some bands in the day and others at night; Milneberg was really jumping. There were a lot of string trios around playing street corners, fish fries [sic], lawn parties, and private parties. The piano players like Drag Nasty, Black Pete, Sore Dick and Tony Jackson were playing the whorehouses. In the District there were the cabarets, Rice's Fewclothes, Huntz & Nagels, and Billy Phillips who had the best bands. Some bands played dances in milk dairy stables and bigger name ones played the dance halls like the Tuxedo Dance Hall, Masonic Hall, Globes Hall, and the Funky Butt Hall. The restaurants like Galatoires on Dauphine Street had bands. On Chartres Street there was Jackson Square Gardens where they had two or three bands going. There were tonks like Real Tom Anderson's at Rampart and Canal, and Tom Anderson's Annex at Iberville and Basin Street. Out in the country, like Breakaway, Louisiana, or Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, you played dances, fairs, picnics and barbecues. We had plenty of fun together and there was music everywhere.<sup>29</sup>

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<sup>28</sup> Johnny Dodds, Interview by Charles E Smith for liner notes of "New Orleans Jazz," LP no. 144, June 5, 1940, MSS 515, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, hereafter known as "Smith Questionnaire."

<sup>29</sup> Pops Foster, *The Autobiography of a New Orleans Jazzman*, 18-19.

Although there were also many opportunities to play in Storyville (also known as the District), Dodds only substituted a few nights a week. He felt that the customers, most of whom were white, made insulting remarks. These remarks were probably racist, though Dodds does not specify.<sup>30</sup> Dodds observed that band musicians would generally make \$1.50 or \$2.00 a night, or about \$14.00 a week, working nights (8:00 P.M. until 4:00 A.M.) at one of the Storyville houses.<sup>31</sup> Baby Dodds corroborated this, adding that when he played the District they would often get an extra \$10 after passing the hat around, which would be split among the band members.<sup>32</sup> Band members would also get extra money to play audience requests.

The best information we have on how Johnny Dodds began his professional music career is from Pops Foster's autobiography:

I got Johnny Dodds his first job around New Orleans with Ory about 1909. Johnny was working at the rice mill and at noon they'd stop for lunch. He would come out on the road to sit and eat his lunch, and practice blowing his clarinet. I'd be driving by on a wagon and I'd stop to listen to him play. After I heard him several times out on the road, I asked him if he wanted a job playing in a band. He said he did, so I met him that night and carried him down to Globe's Hall where Ory was playing. He played with the band and Ory liked the way he did, so he hired him. Ory's band was the only one Johnny played with until he left New Orleans.<sup>33</sup>

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<sup>30</sup> Johnny Dodds, Interview by William Russell, MSS 515, File 15, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 1.

<sup>31</sup> Ibid.

<sup>32</sup> Gara Manuscript, 6.

<sup>33</sup> Pops Foster, *The Autobiography of a New Orleans Jazzman*, 52.



The date of 1909 for Dodds's first job is likely too early. Baby said his brother received his first clarinet in 1909 and Dodds himself stated that his first professional job began in 1912.<sup>34</sup> It seems most likely that Dodds was working at the rice mill in New Orleans for a few years before Pops discovered him. This would have given him enough time to make the transition from tin flute to clarinet. Regardless of when he started, a job with the Ory band was quite a fine beginning. Kid Ory's band, which eventually became known as Kid Ory's Creole Orchestra, was very popular at that time. Ory's first group of musicians was composed of Kid Ory on trombone, Alfred Lewis on bass, Louis "Chif" Matthews on cornet, Joseph "Stonewall" Matthews on guitar, Lawrence Duhe on clarinet, and Eddie Robertson on drums.<sup>35</sup> Dodds eventually took Duhe's place, and by 1914 the band's personnel had evolved to Ory on trombone, Ed Garland on bass, Dodds on clarinet, Mutt Carey on cornet, Johnny St. Cyr on banjo and guitar, Emile Bigard on violin and Henry Martin on drums.<sup>36</sup> The Ory band had a steady job four nights a week at Globe's Hall on St. Peter and St. Claude Streets in New Orleans. Johnny Dodds stayed with the Kid Ory band until 1918, on and off, during which he played with such future luminaries as Louis Armstrong and Joe "King" Oliver. It was during his time with the Ory band that Dodds met and married Bessie Munson on May 26,

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<sup>34</sup> Smith Questionnaire.

<sup>35</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 174.

<sup>36</sup> Anderson Manuscript, 23.

1915. Bessie was from a well-off Creole family from downtown. Her father was a contractor and her mother owned land in St. Francisville, Louisiana.<sup>37</sup>

It is during his stay with Kid Ory's band that Dodds began to set standards for both himself and others. Around 1914 Baby Dodds was gaining recognition as a musician and began to believe he should be able to play in some of the better bands. He would convince Ory to let him play a set, whereupon the other musicians would, one by one, leave the stage. Baby is certain this was instigated by his brother, who was determined not to let Baby play until he was good enough.<sup>38</sup>

Johnny worked with Oliver's Magnolia Band around 1916<sup>39</sup> and with the trumpeter Papa Celestin's Original Tuxedo Orchestra in 1918.<sup>40</sup> That same year he worked again with the Ory band when it played at Peter Lalas, a cabaret café on Rampart Street in New Orleans. Later that year, Johnny joined Billy and Mary Mack's Merrymakers Show, a popular vaudeville troupe, on a long tour, which included a stop in Chicago at the Monogram Theatre for six weeks. Chicago must have appealed to Johnny, because in 1920 when King Oliver sent for Dodds to replace Jimmie Noone, Dodds moved to Chicago and remained there the rest of his life. Prior to his move to Chicago, Johnny spent six months working on the SS Sidney, part of the Captain John Strekfus's riverboat line, with his brother Baby as

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<sup>37</sup> Frank K. Kappler, "Giants of Jazz: Johnny Dodds" (hereafter known as "Kappler Giants"), (Alexandria, VA: Time-Life Records, 1982), MSS 515, File 17, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 10.

<sup>38</sup> Kappler Giants, 7.

<sup>39</sup> Anderson Manuscript, 30.

<sup>40</sup> Johnny Dodds, Interview by William Russell, MSS 515, File 15, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 1.

part of pianist Fate Marable's Kentucky Jazz Band.<sup>41</sup> Many of New Orleans finest musicians spent months at a time playing on the riverboats as they sailed up and down the Mississippi. The pay was substantial (\$50.00 a week) and the musicians were given free room and board.

### Dodds in Chicago

In January 1920 Dodds moved to Chicago to join King Oliver's Creole Orchestra, with which he made his first recordings. The musicians included Baby Dodds on drums, Honore Dutrey on trombone, Bill Johnson on bass, Lil Hardin on piano, Johnny Dodds on clarinet, and King Oliver on cornet. According to "Baby" Dodds's description, this smaller ensemble was seated in a straight line to achieve a natural balance. The stage setup, from left to right, was as follows: drums, trombone, second trumpet, first trumpet, clarinet, piano, guitar or banjo, bass.<sup>42</sup> They called themselves the Creole Jazz Band and played at the Dreamland, at 55<sup>th</sup> and State Streets, usually until 1am, when they would then move to the Pekin Inn at 27<sup>th</sup> and State to continue playing.<sup>43</sup> On November 5, 1921 Johnny and Bessie had their first child, John.<sup>44</sup> Shortly thereafter, Oliver took the musicians to California where the Dodds family took up residence in San Francisco's Fillmore district.<sup>45</sup> The band played at a Market Street dance hall in San Francisco, then moved to Los

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<sup>41</sup> Kappler Giants, 10.

<sup>42</sup> Warren "Baby" Dodds, Interview by William Russell, Track 1, May 31, 1958, Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University, 3.

<sup>43</sup> Johnny Dodds, Interview by William Russell, MSS 515, File 15, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 2.

<sup>44</sup> John Dodds Jr., "Chicago Mess Around" liner notes (Milestone 2011, 1969).

<sup>45</sup> Ibid.

Angeles, before they returned to Chicago in 1922. Two other children, a daughter Dorothy and another son Rudolf, were born soon afterward.

While Dodds was growing up, his parents Warren and Amy Dodds did not want their children to have contact with downtown Creole folks, just as Creole families didn't want their children socializing with uptown black children.<sup>46</sup> Fortunately this prejudice that existed between Creoles and Blacks did not inhibit musicians of different backgrounds from coexisting amicably in the same band. Having Creole musicians may even have given a band a bit of an edge in drawing an audience, for Creoles were reputed to be more rigorously trained and could read music. Many of the early bands had the name Creole in their titles, though not necessarily because they had Creole musicians in the group. In the case of King Oliver's Creole Orchestra, this may have backfired. When the band was in San Francisco in 1921, and presumably somewhat of a novelty, the audience found out that there were no Creoles among the band members and "gave the band a hard time about it and called them 'niggers.'"<sup>47</sup>

In 1922 Oliver sent a telegram to Louis Armstrong, asking him to join the band in Chicago as second cornet. From 1922 until 1924 they played at the Lincoln Gardens at 459 East 31st Street, which was considered an unusually long period of employment. The band included Joe Oliver on cornet, Louis Armstrong on second cornet, Dodds on clarinet, Honore Dutrey on trombone, Bill Johnson on bass, Lil

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<sup>46</sup> Warren "Baby" Dodds, Interview I by William Russell, April 11, 1953, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 10.

<sup>47</sup> Gara Manuscript, 28.

Hardin on piano, and Baby Dodds on drums. At the height of their popularity, the band was getting paid about \$55.00 a week. According to Baby Dodds, however, the band members began to suspect that Oliver was not sharing all the money that was taken in. They were also dissatisfied to find out that Oliver was hiring other musicians for outside jobs and recordings.<sup>48</sup> When King Oliver left on a road tour in 1924, the band broke up. Lil Armstrong (Lil Hardin married Louis Armstrong on February 4, 1924) and Louis Armstrong went with Oliver, while the Dodds brothers, Dutrey, and Johnson decided to stay on at the Lincoln Gardens for another six months. In 1925, the Dodds brothers, Dutrey, and Johnson moved to Bert Kelly's Stables at 431 N. Rush Street, where they became the resident house band.<sup>49</sup> They were joined by cornetist Freddie Keppard, who led the band until 1926, when his drinking habit forced Johnny Dodds to take over. Dodds hired pianist Charlie Alexander and cornetist Natty Dominique (to replace Keppard) who, along with Baby Dodds, and Dutrey, resided at Kelly's Stables until it was closed due to a prohibition infraction in 1930.<sup>50</sup> Dodds said the band made about \$80.00 a week plus tips during their 6 year stay at Kelly's Stables.<sup>51</sup>

On November 12, 1925 Louis Armstrong and Lil Hardin Armstrong put together a band for a recording at Okeh Records. The band, called the Hot Five (a derivative of the nickname "Hot Miss Lil" that Lil Hardin had given herself early in

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<sup>48</sup> John Dodds Jr., "Chicago Mess Around" liner notes (Milestone 2011, 1969).

<sup>49</sup> There is no indication that this band had an official name.

<sup>50</sup> John Dodds Jr., "Chicago Mess Around" liner notes (Milestone 2011, 1969).

<sup>51</sup> Kappler Giants, 3.

her career) included Kid Ory on trombone, Johnny Dodds on clarinet, Johnny St. Cyr on banjo, Lil Hardin Armstrong on piano and Louis Armstrong on trumpet.<sup>52</sup> Two of the most important records to come out of this era, “Struttin’ with Some Barbecue” and “Hotter Than That,” featured Dodds on clarinet with the Hot Five. In 1927 the Hot Five became the Hot Seven, and Dodds was back in the Okeh recording studio playing clarinet with Lil Hardin Armstrong on piano, Louis Armstrong on trumpet, John Thomas on trombone, Johnny St. Cyr on banjo, Pete Briggs on tuba and Baby Dodds on drums.<sup>53</sup> Lil and Louis were able to expand the size of the group due to the new electrical system that Okeh had recently installed, which gave the recordings a much better quality of sound. Dodds also recorded with Jelly Roll Morton’s Hot Red Peppers, Lovie Austin’s Serenaders, several of Lil Hardin Armstrong’s bands, and numerous small bands of his own, among others.

Dodds was prudent with his money and, knowing how volatile the music industry was, invested in a Chicago three-story apartment building on South Michigan Avenue in 1927. Although this was perhaps a wise investment during these treacherous times, it also had the affect of keeping Dodds in Chicago. Johnny was able to complete payments on the apartment building, for which he received the deed in 1937.<sup>54</sup>

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<sup>52</sup> Kappler Giants, 18.

<sup>53</sup> Larry Gara, *The Baby Dodds Story*, 72.

<sup>54</sup> “Johnny Dodds,” *Jazz Information*, August 23, 1940

In 1930, Dodds, Natty Dominique, cornet and Baby Dodds moved into Mrs. Cohen's K-9 Club for a few months. As the resident band, they performed a wide range of music for a variety of acts, including pantomimes, performing dogs and female impersonations. The group split up briefly, before getting back together in 1935. Pianist Leo Montgomery joined the group when they moved to the Three Deuces for a year. It was at this time that Bessie's heart problems began to worsen. She died in September 1931.

In 1936 the two Dodds brothers, Natty Dominique and Leo Montgomery moved to Rocco Galla's 29 Club at 47<sup>th</sup> and State. Tubby Johnson took over on drums when Baby Dodds left the group to go back to the Three Deuces. Dodds stayed at the 29 Club until it was closed in 1938 after Gallo, the owner, shot and killed a customer. In 1938 Johnny married his second wife, Georgia Green, a schoolteacher eight years his junior.<sup>55</sup> That same year he formed a band that included Johnny on clarinet, Natty Dominique on cornet, Baby Dodds on drums, Lil Hardin on piano, Alonzo (Lonnie) Johnson on guitar, and Sudie Raymond on Bass. In 1939, according to a postcard written by Dodds on February 20 to William Russell, Dodds's was living at Apt. 3, 1365 E. 62<sup>nd</sup> Street, Chicago, Illinois.<sup>56</sup> Dodds also sent a letter with a return address of 4919 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago,

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<sup>55</sup> Kappler Giants, 25.

<sup>56</sup> Piece of an envelope postmarked, February 20, 1939, with note on it, and paper bag which contained it labeled "J. Dodds Notes and Letters", Folder 1 1939, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center.

Illinois to his friend Hoyte Kline on April 3 that same year.<sup>57</sup> In this letter Dodds was thanking Kline for the receipt of a new clarinet, which he may have used for his last recording session in 1940. Dodds and his group played at the Hotel Hayes until May 1939<sup>58</sup>, when Dodds suffered the first of two strokes. He spent the rest of the year recovering his health.

In January 1940 Dodds was able to go back to work, this time at the 9570 Club with a quartet comprised of himself on clarinet, Baby Dodds on drums, Natty Dominique on cornet, and Leo Montgomery on piano. William Russell received a postcard from Dodds on January 29, 1940 in which he talked about his decision to have his teeth extracted, the entire process was supposed to take about six weeks.<sup>59</sup> By February Dodds was back at the 9570 Club. On June 5<sup>th</sup>, 1940, Dodds made his last recordings for Decca, which included “Red Onion Blues” and “Gravier St. Blues.” The musicians at this session included Dodds on clarinet, Richard M. Jones, on piano, Preston Jackson on trombone, John Lindsey on bass, Natty Dominique on cornet and Lonnie Johnson on guitar.<sup>60</sup>

Dodds had a second, fatal stroke on August 8, 1940. Both colleagues and jazz enthusiasts alike were distraught to hear of Dodds’s death in the prime of his life. Sidney Bechet saw a chance to pay homage to his friend and wrote “Blue for you, Johnny” in collaboration with Milton Nelson and W.C. Barnes. Even Jimmie

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<sup>57</sup> Letter from Johnny Dodds to Hoyte D. Kline, April 3, 1939, File 3, Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center.

<sup>58</sup> Kappler, *Giants*, 25.

<sup>59</sup> Postcard from Johnny Dodds to William Russell, January 29, 1940, File 5, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center.

<sup>60</sup> Kappler, *Giants*, 26.



Noone, who never claimed a close friendship with Dodds, was quoted as saying “Johnny Dodds was one fine clarinet. ...He had a unique style which was very much his own, and which influenced other clarinets strongly, I know.”<sup>61</sup>

Dodds was well known and respected during his lifetime, yet his life and accomplishments were overshadowed by more flamboyant, colorful personages like Sidney Bechet, Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong. One reviewer noted “a great clarinetist in his own right, Johnny will be remembered more than anything else for his influence on other men and their music.”<sup>62</sup>

### The Clarinet

Two kinds of clarinets, each with its own arrangement of keys, were in existence when Dodds was learning to play. Most early New Orleans jazz players started out on the Albert system.<sup>63</sup> Eventually, each clarinet had its own group of adherents. Lorenzo Tio, Jr., Larry Shields, Johnny Dodds, Sidney Bechet, Barney Bigard (1906-1980), Omer Simeon, Edmond Hall (1901-1967), Jimmy Dorsey (1904-1957), Raymond Burke (1904-1986), Lawrence Duhé (1887-1960), George Lewis and Russell Procope (1908-1981) all used the Albert system. Players such as Benny Goodman, Frank Teschemacher (1906-1932), Albert Nicholas (1900-1973), Pee Wee Russell (1906-1969), Woody Herman (1913-1987) and Artie Shaw (b 1910) played the Boehm system.<sup>64</sup> Both systems came about as a result of different

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<sup>61</sup> Bob White, “Dodds’ Spirit Lives in Today’s Jazz”, *Down Beat*, September 1, 1940.

<sup>62</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>63</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 199.

<sup>64</sup> Leonard Feather, *The Book of Jazz: From Then Till Now* (New York: Bonanza Books, 1965), 87.

instrument makers trying to improve the thirteen-key mechanism built by Iwan Müller in 1812.

Müller based his own modifications on the six-key system developed by Jean Lefèvre (1763 – 1829) in 1790 to 1791. Besides including seven additional keys, Müller also added pads, a metal thumb rest and a metal screw-type ligature (previously made of string, the ligature holds the reed against the mouthpiece) to his model. However, the Müller clarinet was not approved by the committee of Paris experts for use at the Paris Conservatory and ended up with limited exposure.<sup>65</sup> Following is an overview comparing the Albert and Boehm systems.<sup>66</sup>

The Boehm system incorporated innovations by Louis-Auguste Buffet (d. 1885), a Parisian instrument-maker, and Theobald Boehm (1794-1881), a flute maker. Boehm contributed the long axle key (a long lever key), which he originally created in 1830 for the flute. Buffet contributed the needle spring, mounted on posts screwed directly into the wood of the clarinet. Hyacinthe Eléonore Klosé (1808-1880), a clarinet teacher at the Paris Conservatory, teamed up with Buffet in 1839 to create and manufacture a clarinet based on these innovations, which they patented in 1844.<sup>67</sup> To this clarinet they also added rings covering some of the holes which, when pressed, would simultaneously cover other complementary holes, allowing easier fingering and improved intonation. The seventeen-key, six ring Klosé-Buffet

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<sup>65</sup> Pamela Weston, *Clarinet Virtuosi of the past* (Sevenoaks, Great Britain: Novello & Co., Ltd., 1971), 159.

<sup>66</sup> For more information, the reader may wish to consult Lori Fay Neprud-Ardovino's dissertation

"The Jazz clarinet: Its evolution and use in the early jazz orchestras before 1920.

<sup>67</sup> Pamela Weston, *Clarinet Virtuosi of the past*, 237.

clarinet became what is now known as the Boehm system.<sup>68</sup> It was developed in 1843 in France and is today almost completely unchanged from the original design. The Boehm system is most often the system of choice among today's clarinetists.

Eugène Albert (1816-1890) was an instrument-maker in Brussels, Belgium, who used the Müller system clarinet as a base upon which to add his own alterations. The Albert system was pitched in various keys, most common of which were A, Bb, C, D, and Eb. Few Albert system clarinets may be found in America today, because the original Albert is not currently manufactured. However a system similar to the Albert, known as the "Oehler" system, is still used in Germany, Austria, Turkey and Greece today.

Photographs of jazz bands and other musical groups show no evidence of a Boehm-system clarinet until about 1928. When interviewed by William Russell, Omer Simeon said that "almost everyone was using [the] Albert system at that time, all through the early twenties."<sup>69</sup> Early jazz clarinetists liked the Albert system because of its bigger tone, due to its larger bore size (a typical Boehm system bore of 1890 was 14.7 as compared to the larger 15.0 millimeter-sized Albert of the same period).<sup>70</sup> They also had the perception that the Albert was easier to play, since it had only thirteen keys as opposed to the seventeen-key Boehm system.<sup>71</sup> This was an erroneous assumption, as the more numerous keys of the Boehm system often

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<sup>68</sup> David Pino, *The Clarinet and Clarinet Playing* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1969), 210.

<sup>69</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 199.

<sup>70</sup> Deborah Check Reeves, "Eugène Albert and the Albert System", Research paper presented in Ostend, Belgium, 1999 at the International Clarinet Association ClarinetFest, 2.

<sup>71</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 213.

made difficult passages much easier than when played on the Albert system.<sup>72</sup>

Players also liked the Albert system because it gave them a greater facility to “bend” notes, a blues-playing technique used to create “blue” notes. (The smaller bore size and smaller tone holes found on the Boehm system made it much more difficult to bend notes.) “Blue notes” are meant to sound off-pitch and fall slightly between notes.<sup>73</sup> The simpler Albert key system allowed the players to create blue notes, which were formed using a combination of embouchure and fingering, whereas the Boehm system’s more intricate and acoustically-correct key system made it difficult.

Another reason for using the Albert system was the fact that there were numerous inexpensive Albert clarinets available after the Civil War. The Albert system had a larger bore and mouthpiece, which created a loud, carrying tone, making it the ideal addition to the Civil War military band. Many instruments ended up in pawnshops when the war ended and they were no longer needed.

Albert system clarinets were made of wood, hard-rubber (resonite) or metal. The Eb clarinet was most often used in parades and brass bands, as it was a smaller, higher instrument and could cut through the sound of the brass in the band and carry over other outdoor noises. The A, Bb and C clarinets were favored when playing in bands and small ensembles. Often a musician would use the instrument which best fit the key of the piece in order to avoid transposing the music.

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<sup>72</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 213.

<sup>73</sup> James Lincoln Collier, *The Making of Jazz* (New York: Dell Publishing, 1978), 38.

All clarinets have three sections, or registers. The lowest, which Dodds often favored, was called the “chalumeau”, named after an early instrument that preceded and had basic similarities to the modern clarinet. The second, or middle register, is called the “clarion” register, which indicated the clarion trumpet-like sound that this register could achieve. The third, or high register, is simply called the “altissimo”, which means highest in Italian.

Dodds was known to use a very basic thirteen-key, Selmer model Albert system for most of his career. Nothing specific is known about the mouthpiece or ligature he used. Dodds kept his clarinets until they began falling apart, and often resorted to using rubber bands to try and keep a clarinet in one piece. In 1939 he received a new clarinet from his friend Hoyte Kline, which Dodds referred to as half Albert and half Boehm.<sup>74</sup> This was most likely Selmer’s late 1920s “improved” Albert system clarinet, which maintained a bottom section that was the same as the old Albert and a top section that was more similar to the Boehm system. The improved Albert’s top section had added ring keys on the F#<sup>1</sup> and the D<sup>1</sup>/A<sup>2</sup> keys. However the improved Albert system continued to use rollers on adjacent side keys instead of the long side lever keys common to the Boehm system.

This improved Albert was Selmer’s top of the line instrument, featuring six rings, four rollers, an articulated G# key, and an alternate D# key. Jimmy Dorsey<sup>75</sup>,

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<sup>74</sup> Letter from Johnny Dodds to Hoyte D. Kline, April 3, 1939, File 3, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center.

<sup>75</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 214.

Barney Bigard, Jimmie Noone and Omer Simeon<sup>76</sup> eventually changed instruments and moved from the simple Albert system to the “improved” Albert system.

#### Dodds and Noone: Two Clarinet Styles

New Orleans jazz clarinetists were generally separated into two categories based on the sound and style of their playing.<sup>77</sup> The first category represented the transition from blues to early classic jazz. The playing style was rough, slow, and had an emotional depth that gave the sound a hard edge. Johnny Dodds and Louis “Big Eye” Nelson belonged to this category. The second category created the bridge between classic New Orleans jazz and swing era jazz. This playing style was lighter, smoother, and more agile. Jimmy Noone (1895-1944) is a good example of this second category. Most jazz clarinetists made a partial or complete transition to the second category as time went on. Dodds was one of the few who retained the same style throughout his career. A comparison of the musical styles of Jimmy Noone and Johnny Dodds is informative, not only as a comparison of the two principal styles but also to understand the difference between Black and Creole musicians at that time.

Of similar ages, both musicians began their careers during the early development of jazz. The typical early New Orleans jazz band played an ensemble-style music, in which solos were used mainly to highlight the melody, weaving in and out of the rest of the piece. Hugues Panassie, a jazz enthusiast and writer of

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<sup>76</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 203.

<sup>77</sup> Hugues Panassie, “Johnny Dodds”, *Jazz Forum* #1, 1945, 24.

several jazz books, used the term “embroider” to define the role of the solo in these early jazz bands.<sup>78</sup> These early jazz solos were also not improvised, but carefully worked out in advance and duplicated time after time, for both live performances and recordings. It was only later during the migration towards the swing style that the solo became more of an improvisatory divergence from the melody.

The tempos used in the early New Orleans bands tended to be moderate. The introduction of the piece began forte, then after the first chorus began a decrescendo to piano. Often the solos would occur at this time and continue this soft dynamic. The second chorus would revert to mezzo-forte. The last chorus increased to forte, indicating that the piece was ending.

When Noone and Dodds started their careers in the early 1900s, the blues permeated jazz. However, according to Baby Dodds there was a distinct difference between the uptown, Negro blues and the downtown Creole blues. Negro blues was extremely slow and driven, similar to the work songs that originated from African folk music and made their way into both blues and gospel music. The Creole blues was a blend of Spanish and French styles, influenced by European classicism. It was smoother and more refined. These differences extended to the types of bands that played in different parts of town as well. Downtown bands were expected to play faster music more derivative of ragtime, whereas uptown bands favored the slower blues numbers mixed in with the standard jazz tunes. Sidney Bechet’s

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<sup>78</sup> Hugues Panassie, “Notes on the Ensemble Playing of the New Orleans Clarinettists.” *American Jazz Journal*, No. 1.

brother, Dr. Leonard Bechet, had a very definite opinion, from a Creole perspective, as to the difference between black and Creole playing styles.

You have to play real hard when you play for Negroes. You got to *go* some, if you want to avoid their criticism. You got to come up to their mark, you understand? If you do, you get that drive. Bolden had it. Bunk had it. Manuel Perez, the best ragtime Creole trumpet, he didn't have it.

See, thees [sic] hot people they play like they *killing* themselves, you understand? That's the kind of effort that Louis Armstrong and Freddy Keppard put in there. If you want to hit the high notes those boys hit, brother, you got to *work* for that.<sup>79</sup>

This fundamental difference in the way black and creole musicians played the blues was indicative of the contrast between the two cultures, epitomized by the backgrounds of Dodds and Noone.

Jimmy Noone was born only three years later than Johnny Dodds. Like Dodds, he died in his forties. Both men were raised in New Orleans and worked with many of the same musicians and bands when they were starting their careers. The craft of both men was deeply rooted in ensemble playing, which was a staple of the New Orleans jazz style. Both moved to Chicago and continued to be very successful. Neither received the acclaim that their talent warranted. However, that is where most of the similarities end.

Jimmy Noone was a Creole whose background favored a classically-based music education. While he was in New Orleans he took lessons with the famous musician and teacher Lorenzo Tio Jr., who also taught Albert Nicholas, Barney Bigard and Omer Simeon, among others. From Tio, Noone received ear training,

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<sup>79</sup> Alan Lomax, *Mister Jelly Roll* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 98.



music-reading skills, and a skilled technique acquired from studying exercises in published method books.<sup>80</sup> When he was in New Orleans, Noone also studied with Sidney Bechet. In Chicago, he studied with Franz Schoepp, a well-known teacher (former faculty member of the Chicago Musical College) and classical clarinetist, who also taught Benny Goodman and Buster Bailey. Noone was noted for his smooth, fluid, mellow sound and his sweet tone. His tone was dark and warm in the chalumeau register, bright with a solid round tone in the middle register, and very strong in the high clarion register. His rapid arpeggios, high-register climaxes and relaxed rhythmic feeling foreshadowed the clarinet style of the swing era. As a trained musician, Noone's vibrato was intentionally less pronounced unless used for special affects. His tone was much purer than that of Dodds. Another aspect of his classical training was that he favored a very marked staccato tonguing method, which was decidedly different from the legato of most of his colleagues.

Early in his career Noone broke away from the traditional New Orleans jazz ensemble to form a trio of his own. In 1916 this trio of clarinet, piano and drums played at the Pythian Temple Roof Garden in New Orleans. Noone also branched away from clarinet by taking up soprano and alto saxophone, which he played for six years with Charles "Doc" Cook's Dreamland Orchestra in Chicago starting in 1920. This was an inevitable move for anyone who was considering working for big bands. Noone began leading his own cabaret groups at the Apex Club on the

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<sup>80</sup> Charles E. Kinzer, *The Tios of New Orleans and Their Pedagogical Influence on the Early Jazz Clarinet Style*, Black Music Research Journal, 280.

second floor of 330 East 35<sup>th</sup> Street in Chicago from 1928 until 1930, when it was closed due to a prohibition infraction. Noone was the first to institute a shared lead of alto saxophone and clarinet (where the clarinet was not just a secondary player but shared the responsibility of playing the lead with the saxophone), which he maintained for many years in the Apex Club Orchestra that he formed and led. In the 1930s, Noone played various clubs in Chicago, unsuccessfully tried to establish himself in New York, then moved to California. Noone began to find success in California, where he appeared in a 1944 Monogram film and was featured on Orson Welles's Mercury Theatre radio broadcasts in 1944. This surge of activity was abruptly curtailed when he died suddenly of a heart attack on April 19, 1944.

Noone was noted for his masterful playing technique. He had the perfectionist's drive to excel, and honed his skills by learning from the best teachers and players of the day. He expanded his marketability by learning alto and soprano saxophone and emphasizing popular songs in his repertoire. He was not an emotional player, but was admired for his flair and technical mastery of his instrument.

Dodds has been reputed to have studied with Lorenzo "Papa" Tio Sr, but he never spoke of anyone except Charles McCurdy (c 1865-1933), with whom he briefly studied.<sup>81</sup> Both Lorenzo Tio Sr. and Charles McCurdy were well-known clarinetists and teachers who were themselves trained musicians. It seems logical

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<sup>81</sup> Johnny Dodds, Interview by William Russell, MSS 515, File 15, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 2.

that Dodds began his studies with someone local, perhaps in Waveland or Bay St. Louis, Mississippi, since he stated that after only five lessons he knew more than the teacher.<sup>82</sup> Although the Tios lived in Bay St. Louis at the same time the Dodds family lived in Waveland (a few miles away), neither Dodds, Lorenzo Tio Sr. nor any of Tio's students recall Dodds taking lessons. His studies with Charles McCurdy would have occurred later in his career when he realized that he needed better skills in order to broaden his playing opportunities. Pops Foster supports this theory:

Johnny Dodds didn't read so good [sic] and the only band he had played with was Ory's. When work got tough he was thinking about going to St. Louis or Chicago and wanted to know if I thought he could play with the other bands. I told him he should study and train himself to play with any band and not just one like he's done. I also told him that if he could play with a band in New Orleans, he could play with the bands up there. He said, "Yeah George, that's what I did wrong, I got wrapped up around one band and I sound funny with anybody else." After that he studied and could play with all bands.<sup>83</sup>

Baby Dodds has often spoken of his admiration for his brother's "perfect" tone, something Johnny did not have to work for but which happened naturally as soon as he picked up the clarinet. Dodds was particular about his pitch, and would avoid a register if he thought it was out of tune with the piano. He used a double-lip embouchure (as did Sidney Bechet) as opposed to the more common single-lip embouchure. In the double-lip embouchure both lips are covering the teeth as it grips the mouthpiece. According to his brother Baby, Dodds often cut and burned

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<sup>82</sup> Johnny Dodds, Interview by William Russell, MSS 515, File 15, The Johnny Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, 2.

<sup>83</sup> Pops Foster, *The Autobiography of a New Orleans Jazzman*, 50.

his reed to ensure the rigidity he favored.<sup>84</sup> Using a hard reed and a double-lip embouchure combination required very strong muscles in order to create a warm tone and accurate pitch, both of which Dodds demonstrated in his playing. Baby Dodds claimed that the reed was so hard that nobody else except Sidney Bechet could play it.<sup>85</sup> However, as both Dodds and Sidney Bechet demonstrated, once the technique was mastered the musician's endurance was phenomenal.<sup>86</sup> This setup also gave Dodds a hard, powerful tone and lessened his ability to execute more rapid series of complex note patterns. Humphrey Lyttleton, who had a weekly radio program in England called *The Best of Jazz*, wrote:

...the heavy tone which he [Dodds] cultivated, with its broad vibrato and incisive edge, did not lend itself to rapid runs over the full length of the instrument. Indeed, there are occasions in his recorded work when it seems as if he is loading the 'long-suffering' clarinet with more emotional weight than it can stand. But the ability suddenly to charge the most skittish of breaks with a sudden surge of passion amply compensates for any lack of pyrotechnics.<sup>87</sup>

This is not to say that he lacked the ability to play complex passages. It is just that the air required to support his tone and produce a sound made the production of that sound slower, thus reducing the speed of his execution. However, Dodds's affinity for the blues style allowed him to give emotionally captivating performances that more than made up for any perceived lack of facility on the clarinet.

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<sup>84</sup> Warren "Baby" Dodds, Interview by William Russell, May 31, 1958, Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University, 7.

<sup>85</sup> Gara Manuscript, 7.

<sup>86</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 155.

<sup>87</sup> Humphrey Lyttleton, *The Best of Jazz* (London: Robson Books, 1999), 7.

Dodds was the consummate professional. Most people who knew Dodds thought of him as quiet, serious and, unlike most musicians at the time, a man who drank very little (only a little beer, according to his son John<sup>88</sup>). He took care to maintain his 5'8," 210 pound frame, generally looking fit and trim in all his pictures. Dodds always considered himself first and foremost a musician. John Dodds II recollects:

Father impressed upon us by his personal care (chap-preventative to his lips; wearing gloves in the cold; and dieting to avoid unsightly bulges) that his occupation was *solely* that of a musician!<sup>89</sup>

John Dodds II recalls his father playing the clarinet, and sometimes the saxophone, every day at home. He often played records and tried variations on the passages he heard.<sup>90</sup> According to his son, Johnny Dodds refused to play music which made him feel “prostituted” and disliked what he called “hokum”, anything he considered gimmicky. Garvin Bushell (1902-1991), clarinetist and saxophonist, heard Dodds in Chicago and had the chance to speak with him. He came away with the impression that both Dodds and his brother Baby were very serious about their art.

They felt very highly about what they were playing, as though they knew they were doing something new that nobody else could do. I'd say they regarded themselves as artists, in the sense we use the term today.<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>88</sup> John Dodds Jr., “Chicago Mess Around” liner notes (Milestone 2011, 1969).

<sup>89</sup> Ibid.

<sup>90</sup> Ibid.

<sup>91</sup> Mark Tucker, *Jazz From the Beginning* (New York: Da Capo Press, 1998), 25.

Johnny never played in a large band. His style was more amenable to the smaller ensemble and he never modified that sound to suit the larger, swing-type bands that became popular. Dodds habitually played with anything from a three-piece to seven-piece ensemble.

#### Summary of Technique

Johnny Dodds was the epitome of a New Orleans ensemble player. He followed the traditional line, but was also able to alter his style in minute ways in order to adjust to the various musical personalities that comprised each band with which he played. Yet both his sound and style were always recognizable and was strongly influenced by the blues. Thus, his style became a bridge between blues and early jazz styles of clarinet playing.

By all accounts Dodds was extremely serious about his art and wanted nothing more than to work as a musician. Circumstances such as the depression, which limited the number of playing opportunities, could have forced him to other occupations in order to supplement the income he received renting his Chicago apartment building. However his talent was such that Dodds was able to continue to earn his living as a musician throughout his life.<sup>92</sup>

Jimmie Noone, on the other hand, was heavily influenced by swing and became a synthesis of the classic jazz and swing styles. However, even though he

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<sup>92</sup> Although Baby Dodds mentions that Johnny drove a cab in his brother William's cab company, Johnny's son refutes this (John Dodds Jr., "Chicago Mess Around" liner notes (Milestone 2011, 1969).

adapted and was considered to be a consummate musician and technician, both Noone and Dodds were overshadowed by the swing era's Benny Goodman.

Despite his low profile, many players sought Dodds out. John Dodds Jr. said "Our house was like Grand Central Station as far as musicians were concerned."<sup>93</sup> Benny Goodman used to listen to Dodds as well. After a dinner given in his honor, Goodman made a visit to Kelly's Stables in order to hear Dodds play. Before he became a commercial success it was said that he often sounded like Dodds.<sup>94</sup> Mike Casimir, an English jazz trombonist who led the New Orleans Stompers, a British revival band, was interviewed by Richard B. Allen on March 22, 1960. Allen and Casimir spoke of British revivalism in the late 1940's and early 1950's, when bands attempted to emulate the early 1920's New Orleans jazz bands. Casimir mentioned that the only band working (in the 1950s) was led by Cy Laurie (b 1926), an English clarinetist influenced by Johnny Dodds. In this interview Casimir says "that of course he likes Johnny Dodds, that Dodds was unique."<sup>95</sup>

Clarinetist and bandleader John Casimir (1898-1963) described how he used to "second-line" Dodds in an interview with Richard B. Allen in 1959.<sup>96</sup>

The real hero of the Creole Jazz Band was clarinetist Johnny Dodds (1892-1940), who was, after Morton and Bunk Johnson, one of the finest early jazzers. His playing was fluid and mobile, with little of the stiffness one hears in the work of Keppard, La Rocca, and Oliver. ...Indeed, Dodd's

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<sup>93</sup> Kappler Giants, 2.

<sup>94</sup> Gara Manuscript, 160.

<sup>95</sup> Mike Casimir, Interview by Richard B. Allen, March 22, 1960, The Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University, 41.

<sup>96</sup> John Casimir, Interview by Richard B. Allen, January 17, 1959, The Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University, 5.

acrid tone, affecting vibrato, and interesting configurations remained a jazz standard for years<sup>97</sup>

Danny Barker (b 1909), jazz guitarist and grandson of alto horn player Isidore Barbarin (1872-1960), commented about the musicians who began playing during the Dixieland Revival years in the 1940s: "...the majority of the youngsters ... don't have the finesse, technique, soul, and feeling of a Louis or a Joe Oliver or a Noone or a Dodds."<sup>98</sup> A look at the following analyses will give us a better understanding of how that style evolved.

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<sup>97</sup> Stephen M. Stroff, *Discovering Great Jazz: A New Listener's Guide to the Sounds and Styles of the Top Musicians and Their Recordings on CDs, LPs, and Cassettes* (New York: Newmarket Press, 1991), 15.

<sup>98</sup> Nat Hentoff and Nat Shapiro, *Hear Me Talkin' To Ya* (New York: Rinehart and Company, 1955), 402.



## CHAPTER 3

### ANALYSES

#### Introduction

Johnny Dodds has long been considered one of the best jazz clarinetists of his day. Unfortunately, all we have now to remind us of Dodds are the few recordings that are his legacy to us.<sup>1</sup> However with the help of this monograph and the accompanying transcriptions, a musician can assimilate more quickly the stylistic turns and phrasings of Johnny Dodds without going through the painstaking process of procuring and analyzing numerous recordings.

Though the process is tedious, transcribing is a valuable tool in the study of recorded jazz. This process is helpful in the following ways:

- Transcriptions ensure that an artist's stylistic interpretation is preserved.
- Transcriptions give new artists a basis of study to emulate without going through hours of study.

Transcriptions do have limitations. The traditional western European system of notation is insufficient to represent accurately what is really performed.

Therefore, transcriptions must be used in conjunction with the recordings.

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<sup>1</sup> There are only fourteen CDs that are readily available at this time. They are: "Johnny Dodds Blue Clarinet Stomp," "Johnny Dodds Great Original Performances 1923-1929," "Johnny Dodds Story 1923-1929," "Johnny Dodds 1927-1928," "Johnny Dodds New Orleans Stomp 1926-1927," "Wild Man Blues: 24 Clarinet Classics," "Johnny Dodds 1926-1929 – Alternate Takes," "Johnny Dodds: Myth of New Orleans," "Johnny Dodds 1926," "Johnny Dodds 1927," "Johnny Dodds 1928-1940," "Vol. 1 – Paramount Recordings," "Johnny Dodds 1923-1940 (Import)," and "Johnny Dodds 1926-1928 (Import)."

### Method of Selection

The six works selected for analysis span most of Johnny Dodds's recording career, which lasted from 1923 (the first Gennet Session with King Oliver) until 1940 (the final Decca recording session with the Johnny Dodds Orchestra). His copious output during this time numbered over 220 recordings. The bands included in the six selections reflect a wide range of playing styles and contain a diversity of well-known and talented musicians, such as Louis Armstrong, Lil Hardin, King Oliver, Johnny St. Cyr, Honore Dutrey, Jelly Roll Morton and Baby Dodds. Louis Armstrong's inclusion in the selections from 1923 and 1927 provides an opportunity for comparison of Johnny Dodds's and Louis Armstrong's stylistic growth.

The selections included represent the early, ensemble-jazz style ("Canal Street Blues," recorded in 1923), the ragtime element ("Wild Man Blues," recorded in 1927), the peak years of the classic New Orleans-style jazz period ("Wolverine Blues," recorded in 1927, "Weary Blues," recorded in 1927, and "Too Tight," recorded in 1929), and the migration toward the swing style ("Melancholy," recorded in 1938). The four bands represented range from small to medium-sized and are led by such luminaries as Joe "King" Oliver, Jelly Roll Morton, Louis Armstrong, and Dodds himself, all of whom were integral to the development of jazz. It is imperative that we use Dodds's own ensemble as a base-line analysis, since it is logical to surmise that he would have relaxed into his most comfortable playing style in a band he controlled. The variety of bands displays Dodds's ability to adapt his sound to fit both the size of the band and the style of the bandleader.

### Devices of the Music

Dodds's signature style will be determined through analysis. Various methods of analysis will be used, both formal and informal. Formal, theoretical-analysis vocabulary includes:

- Anticipation (ANT). An anticipation is created when a change in harmony is actually foreshadowed by a melody note that creates a form of suspension. The melody note is frequently dissonant with the sounding chord but is consonant with the upcoming change in harmony. The melody therefore predicts in advance the change of harmony. It is not uncommon for jazz soloists to create added tension by anticipating a change in harmony by as much as an entire measure. In traditional harmony, an anticipation typically occurs just prior to a strong beat and at a cadential point (point at which harmony reaches a permanent or temporary state of rest, usually on a minor or major chord). Jazz analysis usually allows a more liberal application of anticipation.
- Appoggiatura (APP). An appoggiatura is a non-harmonic tone that is approached by a leap and resolved by a step, usually in the opposite direction, to a chord tone. In classical music, the appoggiatura (non-harmonic tone) usually occurs on a strong beat. In jazz, this device is found in many places, on both strong and weak beats.

- **Escape Tone (ET).** An escape tone is a non-harmonic tone that is approached by a step from a chord tone and resolved to another chord tone by a leap in the opposite direction.
- **Leap.** Leaps are non-harmonic tones that do not move stepwise between chord tones.
- **Suspension (SUS).** Suspensions are tensions created by substituting a chord tone neighbor for the actual chord tone. The tension may be resolved by changing or resolving the suspended pitch to a chord tone (1, 3, 5) or by resolving the suspended chord by moving to another acceptable chord.
- **Upper Neighbor, Lower Neighbor (UN, LN).** A neighbor is a non-harmonic tone that exists as a momentary departure from and return to the same chord tone. As is the case with passing tones, neighbor tones can be diatonic or chromatic and can occur above or below the surrounded chord tone.
- **Incomplete Neighbor (IN).** An incomplete neighbor has only one stepwise connection with the main tone. Incomplete neighbors decorate either the preceding or the following tone.
- **Neighbor Group (NG).** A neighbor group is a group of non-harmonic tones derived from a combination of leaps and steps resolving to a chord tone.
- **Passing Tone (PT).** A passing tone is a non-harmonic tone that moves by whole or half step from one harmonic tone to another, used to link two different chord tones. Passing tones can be diatonic or chromatic; that is,

they can be extracted from the chord's parent key or occur as chromatically altered pitches outside the given chord/scale key.

- **Seventh Chord Types.** The symbols accompanying the individual harmonies in the transcriptions are representative of a widely adopted set of chord identifications used by practically all jazz and commercial musicians.

Chords marked “7” are designated as a major-minor seventh or “dominant-seventh.” The formula for building a dominant seventh chord is to allow the first, third, and fifth degrees to remain natural, but to let the seventh degree be flatted (lowered) one half step. The seventh chord is undoubtedly the most frequently encountered because, in the blues idiom, it serves as a chord of rest, or destination. This is a significant departure from the European period of common practice, where the dominant seventh must resolve.

Chords marked “min7” represent the minor-minor seventh or “minor-seventh.” The formula for building a minor seventh chord is to allow the first and fifth degrees to remain natural but to let the third and seventh degrees be flatted.

Chords marked “<sup>o</sup>7” = fully diminished seventh. The formula for building a diminished seventh chord is to stack intervals of a minor third.

- Smear. A smear is a decoration of the beginning of the tone by approaching the desired pitch from a pitch that is well above or below it.<sup>2</sup> Also known as a short glissando, or gliss, on wind instruments the smear is achieved by complex adjustments involving tightening and loosening of the embouchure in conjunction with swift movement through standard and false fingerings.
- Glissandi. A term used loosely to mean any slide in pitch up or down to or from a fixed note, or between two fixed notes; the range, speed, and duration of these effects vary greatly according to context.
- Blues form (commonly and hereafter referred to as 12-bar blues). The classic blues form is comprised of a repeated harmonic pattern of twelve measures' duration in 4/4 time. This twelve-measure period is divided equally into three four-measure phrases, the first in the tonic, the second in subdominant and tonic, and the last in the dominant and tonic (frequently the dominant slips back to the subdominant before resolving to the tonic in this final phrase).<sup>3</sup>
- Song form (AABA, ABAC). A song form is four eight-measure sections making up a 32-measure tune. The opening eight measures, called the "A" section, is repeated in the second section. The third part is the "B" section, sometimes referred to as the bridge, release, inside, or channel. The last eight measures bring back the material of the first eight. Although AABA is the

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<sup>2</sup> Mark C. Gridley, *Jazz Styles: History and Analysis*, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice Hall, 1988), 51.

<sup>3</sup> Frank Tirro, *Jazz: A History* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 119.

most popular song form, there are several other common song forms, including ABAC. As the three different letters imply, an ABAC tune contains three melodically distinct sections. The letter “B” in a song form does not automatically refer to a bridge section, as ABAC tunes have no bridge.

- **Bend.** Bending is defined as a variation in pitch, often microtonal, upwards or downwards during the course of a note.<sup>4</sup> Bending is not restricted to any particular scale degree. A “bent” note is produced by manipulating the embouchure and the force and direction of air.
- **“Blue” Note. (BN)** A “blue” note is a microtonally lowered third, seventh, or (less commonly) fifth degree of the diatonic scale. The pitch or intonation of “blue” notes is not fixed precisely but varies according to the performer’s instinct and expression. The “blue” note is created by manipulating the embouchure, air, and finger positions. Use of “blue” notes gives color to the sound. One of the benefits of using the simple Albert system clarinet is that it facilitates the creation of “blue” notes. Dodds is atypical in that he not only creates “blue” notes, but often bends them even lower, making the microtonal adjustment twice as strong.
- **Blues Scale.** A blues scale contains certain altered tones when compared to the major diatonic scale. These altered tones on the blues scale (the flatted

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<sup>4</sup> *The New Grove® Dictionary of Jazz* (1996), “Bend.”

third, seventh, and occasionally the fifth scale degree) give the music its essential personality.

- **Diminished Scale.** Also known as the octatonic scale, the diminished scale has been popular among many jazz soloists. It is useful and versatile because there are only three versions and the construction is based on a series of alternating whole and half steps. The diminished scale is used quite frequently in "Wolverine Blues." When jazz musicians use the "octatonic" scale, they commonly refer to it as a "diminished" scale.
- **Guide-Tone Lines. (GT)** A guide-tone line is an ascending or descending melodic line that emphasizes important target notes of adjacent chords.
- **Registers.** In technical writing about music, it is helpful to indicate the register in which a tone occurs. Middle "C" on the piano is known as "c<sup>1</sup>." "C" an octave above "c<sup>1</sup>" on the piano is notated as "c<sup>2</sup>." The octave above that is "c<sup>3</sup>," and so on. The octave below "c<sup>1</sup>" on the piano is notated as "c."
- **Stop Time (ST).** This is the solo break that allowed the soloist a measure or two to improvise without the aid of any accompaniment.<sup>5</sup>

Also included will be a comprehensive discussion of Dodds's performance style as influenced by the following elements: the genre of music he favored, the size of the bands, and the various styles of the musicians and bandleaders with whom he worked.

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<sup>5</sup> Those of the above definitions that are not separately footnoted have been taken from Richard J. Lawn and Jeffrey L. Hellmer, *Jazz Theory and Practice* (Los Angeles: Alfred Publishing Co., Inc., 1996), 18, 29, 31, 37, 59, 60, 71, 75-76, 77, 78, 120, 167-183.



### Signature Style

Of the jazz clarinetists born in the late nineteenth century, Dodds was one of the few who remained faithful to the traditional jazz style throughout the development of the swing idiom. Colleagues of Dodds, such as Jimmie Noone and Sidney Bechet, made the transition from early New Orleans jazz to swing, which was characterized by a more fluid, rhythmically relaxed, and soloistic style. Often those who did not alter their style to accommodate swing were not able to pursue their careers as successfully as they did during the traditional jazz years. Dodds not only retained his original sound but also managed to enjoy a successful career throughout his life. He was a major contributor to some of the great early New Orleans-style jazz bands, most notably Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven.

Dodds had an affinity for ensemble playing that was the key to early New Orleans jazz. He had the ability to lend strong support harmonically, creating figures based on arpeggios that embellished the third or fifth of the chord (as illustrated in "Canal Street Blues," Example 2a, measures 9 and 10). This was a technique typical of the early New Orleans ensemble player. Jimmie Noone used the same technique of embellishing the third and fifth of the chord. However the figures he used were much different, often resembling the exercises from books of clarinet studies with which he was familiar. Noone's figures emphasized his technical ability, while Dodds's were more expressive. Except when he was playing lead, Dodds infrequently played melody; rather, he developed his solos

harmonically and paraphrased the melody, reusing phrases common to his repertoire.

Dodds's primary talent was his playing of the blues. As Benny Goodman acknowledged, "His tone was clear and beautiful, his ideas exciting, his interpretation of the blues especially moving."<sup>6</sup> His performances were saturated with blues techniques, which enhanced his jazz style and allowed him to stand out among his colleagues. Though all the jazz clarinetists at that time played "blue" notes, Dodds also made free use of the technique of note bending on both "blue" notes and non-"blue" notes, often giving the "blue" notes greater emphasis by accenting them. The bending of notes gave Dodds's performances an extra poignancy, typical of blues.

Dodds infused his playing with both glissandos and smears, which are evident in most of his recordings. His glissandos are not merely a chromatic sequence of notes, as is often the case, but a barely audible series of triplet figures (as illustrated in "Wolverine Blues," Example 17). The smears he created were full and warm, slightly suggestive of a growl rather than just a decoration. His ability to bend notes and create strong and expressive smears came in part from his strong embouchure. As he approached the last pitch of the smear, he would often delay reaching the true pitch of that note, create anticipation by bending the goal note, then relieve the anticipation by bringing the note finally up to true pitch.

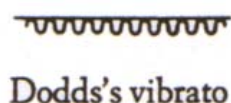
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<sup>6</sup> Anderson manuscript, 26.

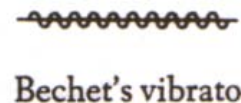
Dodds was one of the first players to use a pulsing vibrato. Other players such as Bechet and Noone used this technique, but their vibratos were narrower, less pronounced. Dodds's wide, pulsing vibrato became a distinguishing feature of his playing. Dodds's vibrato was slightly under pitch, a unique identifier that made his playing stand out, giving his sound a darker intensity than that of many other players, including Bechet.

Another Dodds characteristic was his method of using the pulsating vibrato almost as soon as he sounded the first tone. Both Bechet and Noone delayed before starting their vibratos. Following is a visual comparison of the vibratos of Bechet and Dodds.<sup>7</sup>

Example 1. Depiction of Dodd's and Bechet's Vibratos.



Dodds's vibrato



Bechet's vibrato

Attached is an audio file ([vibrato.wav](http://vibrato.wav)) comparing the vibratos of Dodds (“Wild Man Blues”), Sidney Bechet (“Blues in Thirds”) and Jimmie Noone (“Through”).

Dodds's playing was also notable in the depth of its contrasts. His attack was fierce and his sound harsh, more so than any of the other clarinetists at that time. He exploited the difference in his instrument's registers, often generating a shrill sound in the upper register, then quickly dropping down to the warm chalumeau register, which explored the expressivity of his sound so thoroughly.

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<sup>7</sup> Gunther Schuller, *Early Jazz: Its Roots and Musical Development* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1968), 202.

Despite its tendency toward harshness, Dodds's sound could also be fluid and legato, and his technical ability was impressive, even if it did not reach the virtuoso level of a musician like Noone.

### Analysis Section

The first analysis, and one of the first pieces that Dodds recorded, is "Canal Street Blues," an excellent example of Dodds's blues-playing technique and the typical early jazz-ensemble style as a whole. In an attempt to ascertain the impact that the atmosphere of the recording session had on Dodds's performance, included in each analysis is a listing of musicians and a discussion of the bandleader, including his leadership role and the methods he used to prepare the musicians for performances and recordings.

#### "Canal Street Blues"

"Canal Street Blues" was written by Joe "King" Oliver and published in 1923 by Universal MCA. It was recorded on April 6, 1923 for the Gennett Record Company in Richmond, Indiana. The band was called King Oliver and his Creole Jazz Band and included Louis Armstrong and Joe Oliver on cornet, Honore Dutrey on trombone, Johnny Dodds on Bb clarinet, Lil Hardin on piano, Bill Johnson on banjo, and Baby Dodds on drums. Not only was King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band comprised of some of the finest New Orleans jazz musicians, it also became representative of the early New Orleans classic jazz style.<sup>8</sup> In 1922 when the Oliver band was in residence at the Lincoln Gardens, not only did people come to dance

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<sup>8</sup> Martin Williams, *Jazz Masters of New Orleans* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 90.

and listen to the music, but other musicians, such as those from Paul Whiteman's band and Bix Biederbecke, came to listen and learn.<sup>9</sup>

Joe "King" Oliver was both a cornet player and the leader of various bands, the best-known being King Oliver's Creole Orchestra, of which Johnny Dodds was a member. He was easygoing until provoked, when he became vocally "mean."<sup>10</sup> Oliver always cut the names off of the tunes they played so that no one would know what they were playing and steal it.<sup>11</sup> He was a powerful player and used a mute, sometimes a rubber plunger as well. He was not above using mutes for various sound effects, such as the imitation of a baby crying, if it would please his audience.<sup>12</sup>

Oliver was a stern taskmaster. One story tells of Oliver stomping his foot to give the beat to the final chorus. When other members of the band started to ignore him and play through, he brought a brick to the next rehearsal to make his point.<sup>13</sup> He was not above displaying the gun that he kept in his case, either, if it kept the players in line.<sup>14</sup> Oliver expected his players to be professional, and for their stay at the Lincoln Gardens had them wear tuxedos when performing.

Oliver's performing style was to call out the name or the number of the tune. He would then either play a few pickup notes or stamp his foot indicating the beat.

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<sup>9</sup> Martin Williams, *Jazz Masters of New Orleans* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 92.

<sup>10</sup> Warren "Baby" Dodds, Interview by William Russell, Track 1, May 31, 1958, Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 2.

<sup>11</sup> Martin Williams, *Jazz Masters of New Orleans* (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1967), 80.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid, 84.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid, 82.

<sup>14</sup> James L. Dickerson, *Just For A Thrill: Lil Hardin Armstrong, First Lady of Jazz* (New York: Cooper Square Press, 2002), 86.

The band sat or stood in the typical New Orleans formation of a straight line, with the bass at one end and the drums at the other.

Oliver was a very talented musician and bandleader. In the early days of the band's existence, the group was more of a unit wherein everyone contributed ideas and no one member stood out. According to Baby Dodds, in the early days it was just "our band," but it became "Joe Oliver's band" once the band began to make money.<sup>15</sup> After the first recordings were made, Baby Dodds said that Oliver's band used special musical arrangements exclusively,<sup>16</sup> though he does not specify who created those arrangements. Prior to that each musician contributed his own ideas to the music.

The recording of "Canal Street Blues" that Dodds made with Oliver's Creole Jazz Band is notable for its demonstration of this early classic ensemble-jazz style. All parts are integrated with complete control into the music, as the individual players each contribute improvised melodies. Although the cornet or clarinet typically played lead, often several other instruments would have the chance to play short improvisatory solos before weaving back into the ensemble. Each player was keenly aware of what the others were playing. The early ensemble style was not a spontaneous improvisation. Rather the solos were largely worked out ahead of time and rehearsed so that each player knew what to expect.

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<sup>15</sup> Gara manuscript, 28.

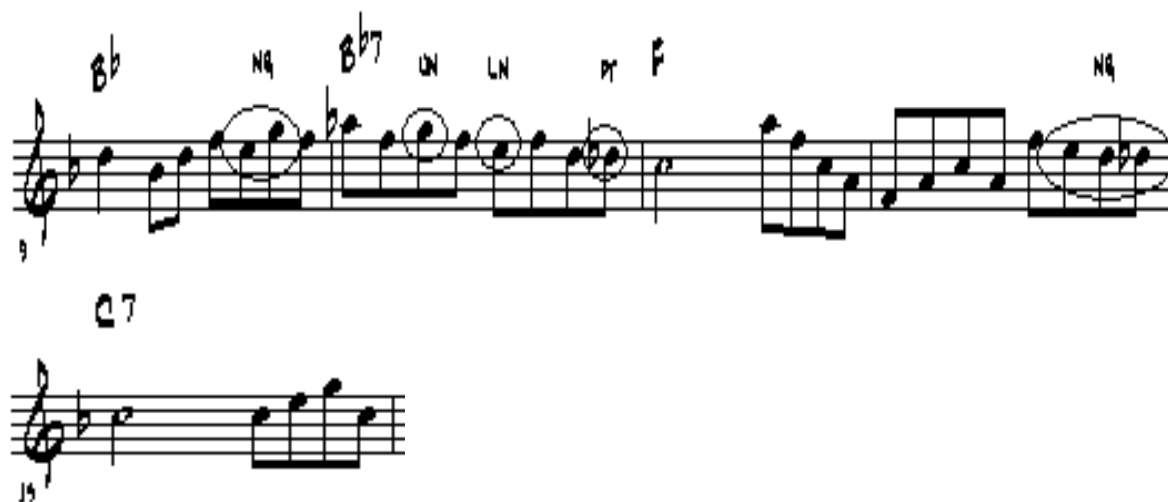
<sup>16</sup> Warren "Baby" Dodds, Interview by William Russell, Track 1, May 31, 1958, Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 6.

Dodds functions strictly as an ensemble player in this recording. The clarinet role of a support player is established very early in the piece through the use of chord outlining. Dodds weaves in and out of the chalumeau register, but plays predominantly in the clarion register throughout.

“Canal Street Blues” is written in the standard, 12-bar blues format. It begins with a four-measure introduction. After the introduction, Dodds outlines the chords by creating an 8th-note, arpeggio texture as he fills in behind the cornets of Armstrong and Oliver.

Repetition frequently provides cohesion among the various choruses. Measures 9 through 13 (Example 2a) are almost identical to measures 57 through 61 (Example 2b). Not only do they use the same rhythmic notation, but the pitches are almost the same. Dodds outlines many chords with non-harmonic tones, as indicated on Example 2a. He demonstrates the use of upper and lower neighbors, neighbor groups and a passing tone to ornament a simple line.

Example 2a. Measures 9 through 13, Repetition.



Example 2b. Measures 57 through 61, Repetition.



A common gesture in early jazz is the use of the rhythmic combination shown in Example 3a.

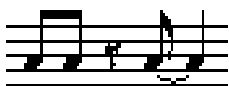
Example 3a, Jazz Style Rhythmic Combination.



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Performance practice dictated a short quarter note, which gave this rhythm its character. An alternative option is shown in Example 3b:

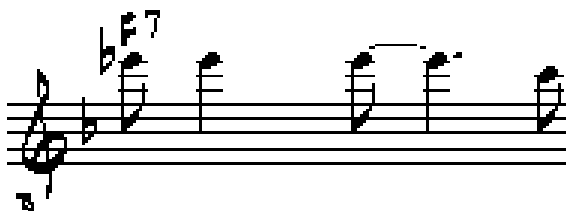
Example 3b, Jazz Style Rhythm.





Example 4 is the same rhythmic combination taken from “Canal Street Blues.”

Example 4. Measure 78, Rhythmic Combination.



The guide-tone line is an important element in all music forms, and Dodds used it to his advantage in Example 5. Of all the transcriptions, “Canal Street Blues” is the only one that contains these guide-tone lines. Dodds followed a descending line in measures 66 through 73, and placed the emphasis on each target note. These descending guide-tone notes ( $f^2$ ,  $eb^2$ ,  $d^2$ , and  $c^2$ ) allowed Dodds to outline the harmony. Dodds also used “blue” notes to great effect, placing greater emphasis on them by giving them an accented, half-note value.

Example 5 also includes a high “F” ( $f^3$ ) in measure 77, the highest note that Dodds played in “Canal Street Blues,” which signified the climax of the music. Continuity was again provided when Dodds repeated the  $c^3$  and  $d^3$  during the guide-tone line, then used the same  $c^3$  and  $d^3$  as preparation for the  $f^3$ . These two notes also appear in almost every other measure.

Example 5. Measures 66 – 77, Guide-Tone Lines.

### “Wild Man Blues”

“Wild Man Blues” was written by Louis Armstrong and Jelly Roll (Ferdinand) Morton. It was first published in 1927 by Edwin H. Morris & Company in New York. The recording used for this analysis was done by Johnny Dodds’s Black Bottom Stompers on April 22, 1927 for the Brunswick Record Company in Chicago, Illinois. The band in this recording included George Mitchell on cornet, Gerald Reeves on trombone, Johnny Dodds on A clarinet, Stump Evans on alto saxophone, Bud Scott on guitar, Quinn Wilson on tuba, Charlie Alexander on piano, and Baby Dodds on drums.

“Wild Man Blues” is a typical example of how popular song was used for a small jazz ensemble. Evidence that it originated from popular song is indicated by the 32-measure, ABAC form, grouped into four-measure phrases. Many

bandleaders included popular songs in their repertoire; Dodds was no exception. Baby Dodds said that his brother was familiar with the new songs of the day and would often buy them just for the purpose of creating arrangements for his band. Publishers often brought music to Dodds when it was first published, allowing him to try the music out before some of the other bands saw it.<sup>17</sup>

“Wild Man Blues” was one of Dodds’s favorite tunes. Dodds often favored the chalumeau register and demonstrates that predilection in “Wild Man Blues,” where he plays predominantly in that low register. It begins with an eight-measure introduction. Thirty-two measures are then devoted to a cornet solo. The second group of thirty-two measures, made up of four eight-measure sections, is solo clarinet, starting with a pickup to measure 41 (Example 6). This is the “A” section. The second eight-measure group (measures 49 through 56) is the “B” section. The third group of eight measures (measures 57 through 64), a second “A” section, paraphrases the melody. The last section, “C” section, is made up of eight measures (measures 65 through 72).

Again, Dodds uses repetition to maintain cohesion in measures 40 through 50. He takes control of the melody to fill in smoothly when the cornet solo ends in measure 40, providing continuity with a subtlety typical of a Dodds performance. Within this example Dodds also includes appoggiaturas, lower neighbors, a

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<sup>17</sup> Warren “Baby” Dodds, Interview by William Russell, Reel 8, side 1, MSS 514, F55, June 28, 1953. The Baby Dodds Collection, William Russell Jazz Collection, Williams Research Center, New Orleans, Louisiana, 171.

neighbor group and incomplete neighbors to decorate the melody and give it more variety.

Example 6. Measures 40 through 50, Repetition.

Example 6 shows three staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, spanning measures 40 to 50. The notation includes various chordal and melodic annotations:

- Staff 1 (Measures 40-43):** Labeled with a circled 'A'. Chords include F<sup>MIN</sup>, D<sup>b</sup>7, C7, and F<sup>MIN</sup>. Melodic lines are marked with 'LN' (Neighbor Note), 'APP' (Appoggiatura), and '3' (triplets).
- Staff 2 (Measures 44-47):** Continues the melodic development with annotations like 'LN', 'F<sup>MIN</sup>', 'D<sup>b</sup>7', 'C7', 'IN' (Incomplete Neighbor), and 'NQ' (Neighbor Quarter).
- Staff 3 (Measures 48-50):** Labeled with a circled 'B'. Chords include F7, B<sup>b</sup>7, and B<sup>b</sup>7. Melodic lines are marked with 'LN' and 'APP'.

Dodds's “stop time” solo passages consistently have a large number of “blue” notes, as seen in measures 65 and 66 in Example 7.

Example 7. Measures 65 through 66, Stop Time with “Blue” Notes.

Example 7 shows two staves of musical notation in 4/4 time, spanning measures 65 to 66. The notation includes the following annotations:

- Staff 1 (Measure 65):** Labeled with a circled 'A'. Chords include F7. The phrase 'STOP TIME' is written above the staff, followed by a dashed line. Melodic lines are marked with '2N' (Neighbor Note).
- Staff 2 (Measure 66):** Continues the melodic development with annotations like 'F7' and '2N'.

In addition to “blue” notes, Dodds also makes use of the blues device of bending a note. This subtle manipulation of the pitch changes the sonority of the music, giving it more depth. Measure 53 contains an example of Dodds bending a note, his use of that note in an appoggiatura, and an example of a leap.

Example 8. Measure 53, “Bent” Note.



### “Weary Blues”

“Weary Blues” (© 1915) was written by Artie Matthews and published by Edwin H. Morris & Company. The present analysis is based on a transcription of a recording by Louis Armstrong and his Hot Seven, recorded on May 7, 1927 for the Okeh Record Company in Chicago, Illinois. Band personnel consisted of Louis Armstrong on cornet, Lil Hardin Armstrong on piano, Johnny St. Cyr on banjo, Johnny Dodds on Bb clarinet, Peter Briggs on tuba, and Warren “Baby” Dodds on drums. This recording was produced on Okeh’s electrical system. The sound quality was better than records previously produced with the old megaphone and wax cylinder system.

Louis Armstrong’s method of rehearsal was typical in that he would dictate who was to take a solo and when. Any musical ideas that the band members had

would be worked out at the rehearsal. According to Armstrong, the recording sessions were very relaxed. Kid Ory recalled that the recordings he made with Armstrong's Hot Five were among the easiest he ever made.<sup>18</sup>

Although he did not have to have the ultimate control, Louis exerted his authority when he thought that anyone's performance was surpassing his own.

According to Pops Foster,

Louis is real jealous of other players who put out. If you play bad you won't be in the band, and if you play too good you won't be there. When I'd get to romping along on the bass, he'd yell at me, "Hey, man, if you want to play trumpet come on down here and play." I'd say, "Go on man and blow your horn." He's lucky he's lived so long. He works too hard because he don't want nobody to do nothing but him.<sup>19</sup>

"Weary Blues" is not a traditional blues piece. Although it begins with the standard 12-bar blues form in the key of F major, this lasts for only five choruses. The fifth chorus is followed by an eight-measure B section leading to the key of Bb. The new key begins with a pickup in measure 68, at which point the blues form is dropped. The piece continues for two, thirty-two measure sections, similar to a popular song form, until the end (measure 132). Dodds emphasizes this change in form by abruptly changing the texture and style of his playing exactly when the key changes with the pickup in measure 68, and does not bother with a more subtle modulation into the new key. The pattern that Dodds uses, starting in measure 68, contains a repeated pattern that he underscores by playing it staccato, giving the entire pattern a harshness rarely demonstrated by other players.

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<sup>18</sup> Humphrey Lyttleton, *The Best of Jazz* (London: Robson Books, 1999), 119.

<sup>19</sup> Pops Foster, *Pops Foster, the Autobiography of a New Orleans Jazzman as Told to Tom Stoddard* (Berkeley: University of California, 1971), 165-166.

Example 9. Measures 61 through 72, Repetition, Key Change.

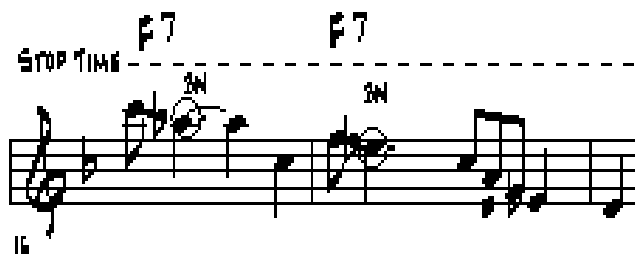
The musical score consists of three staves, each with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The first staff (measures 61-64) has a boxed 'B' above the first measure. Chords are indicated above the staff: F (measures 61-62), F (measure 63), F7 (measure 64), and Bb7 (measures 65-68). The second staff (measures 69-72) has a 'Bb' below the first measure. Chords are indicated: F (measures 69-70), C7(10) (measures 71-72), and a whole rest (measures 73-74). The third staff (measures 75-78) has a 'Bb' below the first measure. Chords are indicated: Bb (measures 75-76), F7 (measure 77), Bb (measures 78-79), and Bb (measures 80-81). The notation includes various note values, rests, and accidentals.

Measures 69 through 99 also feature Dodds's chalumeau register, which he uses as a means of focussing attention on a particular section of music. As usual, he maintains strict boundaries<sup>20</sup> and remains in the range of low “e” to “g<sup>1</sup>.”

<sup>20</sup> A boundary is the limitation that a performer voluntarily sets for himself with regard to range of pitch. When choosing a boundary, a musician takes into account the instrument's range, register, sound, and response.

Example 10 is an example of Dodds's use of "blue" notes within "stop time."

Example 10. Measure 15 and 16, "Blue" Notes in Stop Time.



### "Wolverine Blues"

"Wolverine Blues" (© 1915-1916) was written by Jelly Roll Morton (Ferdinand) Morton, Ben Spikes, and John Spikes. It was recorded on June 10, 1927 for the Victor Record Company in Chicago, Illinois, by the Jelly Roll Morton Trio. This band included Johnny Dodds on Bb clarinet, Jelly Roll Morton on piano, and Baby Dodds on drums. This is a thirty-two measure popular song (ABAC) with twelve eight-measure sections, ending with a two-bar tag.

Jelly Roll Morton was a pianist and composer who began his music career by playing music in the prostitution houses of Storyville. He had a high-profile career in the 1920s until Decca dropped him from the roster in 1930.

At the height of his popularity, Jelly Roll Morton's popularity ensured good money, which gave him the pick of any musicians he wanted for both recordings and bands. The numbers performed were usually Morton's own compositions and he was very particular about what he wanted from each player. He would rehearse each number until he was satisfied. Omer Simeon recalls that when he was part of



the band they “used to spend three hours recording four sides and in that time he’d give us the effects he wanted, like the background behind a solo – he would run that over on the piano with one finger and the guys would get together and harmonize it.... The solos – they were ad lib. We played according to how we felt.”<sup>21</sup>

Morton allowed the players freedom in how they played their solos, though he did not hesitate to take the solo away if a player could not play it to Morton’s satisfaction. Johnny St. Cyr recalls:

Now Jelly was a very, very agreeable man to cut a record with and I’ll tell you why.... He’s never give you any of your specialties, he’s leave it to your own judgment.... That’s what cause his records to have more variety than you find on Joe Oliver’s records, for an instance.

If you sounded good, all right. If you didn’t sound so good, he’s say ‘Wait a minute, that don’t sound so good, see if you can’t make something else.’

You’d try something else and get something that sounded good to him. Or, if you couldn’t get the idea right then, why he’d give the break to someone else.<sup>22</sup>

Morton had the tendency to be a tyrant as well. An anecdote has Kid Ory describing a recording session Morton had for the Okeh label in Chicago in 1923.

According to Ory:

Zue Robertson was on trombone, and he refused to play the melody of one of the tunes the way Morton wanted it played. Jelly took a big pistol out of his pocket and put it on the piano, and Robertson played the melody note for note.<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>21</sup> Alan Lomax, *Mister Jelly Roll* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2001), 194.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid, 195.

<sup>23</sup> Bill Crow, *Jazz Anecdotes* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1990), 109.

“Wolverine Blues” begins in the key of Bb. Of all the pieces transcribed, this has the fastest tempo, indicative of the ragtime from which it originates. Jelly Roll plays the first eighty-eight measures in stride piano, which is derived from the ragtime piano style. A description of stride piano from the New Grove Dictionary of Jazz is as follows:

While the player’s left hand kept strict time, alternating pedal notes with chords in the “oompah” manner of the marching band, the right hand played syncopated “raggy” figures, often derived from chordal hand positions, in the treble. The general left-hand approach, with its repeated leap from bass note to chord, formed the basis of the later jazz style known as stride.<sup>24</sup>

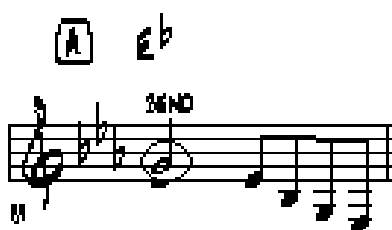
Morton anticipates a key change three measures prior to Dodds’s entrance. Upon Dodds’s entrance, the music modulates to Eb. Dodds plays the majority of the piece in the chalumeau register, and his ensemble-style playing is overshadowed by Morton’s more flamboyant, soloist style. Dodds does not quote the melody at all in this tune. Instead, he plays repeated arpeggios to outline the harmony throughout the piece, defining his role as a supportive player.

An interesting feature of this piece is how Dodds immediately gives it a blues style by starting his solo on a “bent” note (Example 11).

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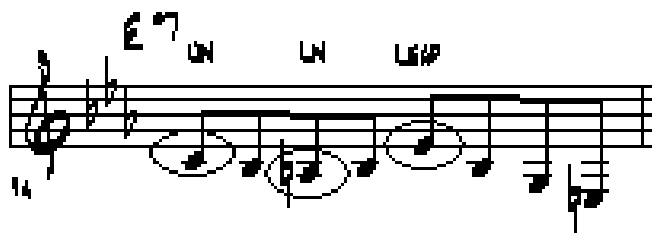
<sup>24</sup> *The New Grove® Dictionary of Jazz* (1996), “Piano.”

Example 11. Measure 89, “Bent” Note.



The diminished scale, also known as the octatonic scale, has been a popular choice of many jazz soloists. The chord of this scale, E diminished, poses an interesting chord-scale relationship. Dodds chooses to use two notes (C natural and E flat) from the E diminished scale. This pattern could be viewed as a C major seventh arpeggio. However, the accompaniment is clearly playing E diminished seventh. Example 12a (measure 94) shows Dodds's use of a figure containing an E diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chord, example 12b includes a C7(b9) and an E diminished 7<sup>th</sup> chord, and example 12c is an example of an E diminished scale.

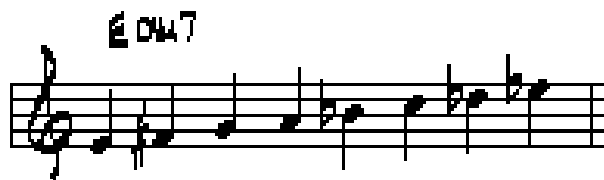
Example 12a. Measure 94, Diminished Figure.



Example 12b. Chords (C7b9 and E°7).



Example 12c. Diminished Scale.



The form of the piece has a structure similar to a March. It consists of a 4-measure introduction, a 32-measure verse, a 16-measure interlude, two 16-measure choruses, a second introduction, and a 4-measure introduction for the clarinet (measure 89). The thirty-two measure chorus played by the clarinet is repeated three times. There is a two-measure tag after the last chorus. This tune does not fit the thirty-two-measure AABA form. Both the “C” and the “B” sections differ from the “A” section. This is an ABAC form.

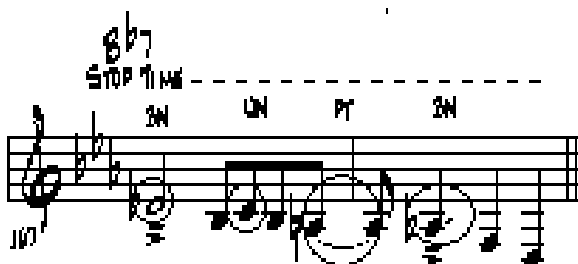
Dodds maintains a steady rhythmic pattern of alternating eighth and quarter notes, deviating very little from this pattern, with the exception of his use of an occasional half note for emphasis. A sample of this pattern, with the inclusion of a passing tone, is shown in Example 13.

Example 13. Measure 117, Rhythmic Pattern.



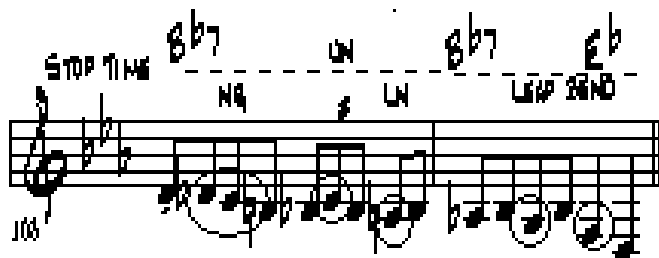
Measures 167 and 168 (Example 14) include a rhythm favored by Dodds (♩ ♩.). Similar to “Wild Man Blues”, Dodds again takes advantage of “stop time” to include “blue” notes, an upper neighbor and passing tone. In this example he uses both the flat 3 and flat 7 “blue” notes. This is the only instance in “Wild Man Blues” where Dodds includes “blue” notes.

Example 14. Measures 167 and 168, Stop Time, “Blue” Note.



Measure 103 (Example 15) includes an example of the blues device known as “bending” notes, as well as other rhythmic devices such as upper and lower neighbors, a neighbor group, and a leap, all contained within a “stop time.” Dodds again limits his range and sets a boundary of low “e” to “g<sup>1</sup>” in this piece.

Example 15. Measure 103, Stop Time, Neighbor Group, Upper and Lower Neighbor, Leap and “Bent” Note.



### “Too Tight”

“Too Tight” was written by Lil Hardin Armstrong and published in 1926 by MCA Incorporated. It was recorded for the Victor Record Company in Chicago, Illinois, on February 7, 1929, by the Johnny Dodds Orchestra. The personnel included Natty Dominique on cornet, Honore Dutrey on trombone, Johnny Dodds on Bb clarinet, Lil Hardin (Armstrong) on piano, Bill Johnson on string bass, and Warren “Baby” Dodds on drums.

As with “Wild Man Blues” and “Melancholy,” Johnny Dodds was the bandleader on this recording session. Dodds cultivated a serious professional demeanor throughout his career, both as a clarinetist and a bandleader. He was known to be strict but fair. He expected the musicians to be on time, to be sober, and to know their music. According to Baby, Dodds expected his band members to dress right, sit up straight, and do nothing that would reflect badly on the place where they were working.<sup>25</sup> Baby noted that the bands Dodds led played a wide

<sup>25</sup>Warren “Baby” Dodds, Interview by William Russell, Interview VIII, Reel 8, Side 1, June 28, 1953, Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University, New Orleans, Louisiana, 171.

variety of written music based on popular songs that Dodds would buy, then arrange, for his band.

As the leader of his own group, Dodds might be expected to have changed the approach to his playing, since he was in complete control. He still observed, however, much of the same performance practice as demonstrated in the previous analyses. He focused on the same rhythm (♩ ♩.), added “blue” notes, and made use of chord outlining. One notable difference between “Too Tight” and all the other pieces is that Dodds uses a much shorter eighth-note rhythm. The general style of this piece is very relaxed.

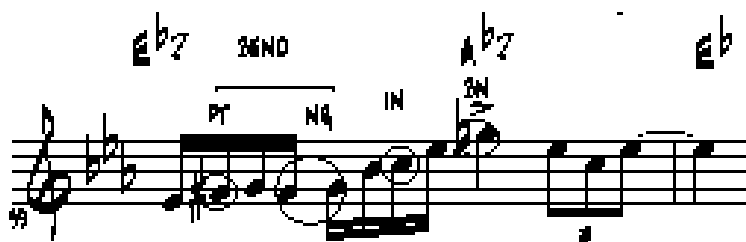
When “Too Tight” was recorded (1929), the musicians of the Johnny Dodds Orchestra had played together, off and on, for at least four years. They knew what to expect from each other and seemed very comfortable playing together in this recording. All of these musicians had their roots in the early jazz style, which might explain why Dodds is freer here in his use of “blue” notes, taking full advantage of his affinity for the blues and blues techniques. He emphasizes the “blue” notes with accents and places most of the “blue” notes consistently on the first and third beats.

“Too Tight” contains six choruses of 12-bar blues, preceded by a four-measure introduction. The first chorus, measures 5 through 16, features Dodds playing the first statement of the melody. The trumpet has the melody when the collective ensemble joins in for the second chorus (measures 17 through 28). This is followed by Dodds again playing lead (using countermelodies) in measures 29 through 40. The entire group again joins Dodds for three choruses. This three-

chorus section starts by featuring the trombone (measures 40 through 52). A “stop time” chorus begins (measures 52 through 64), during which the string bass, trumpet, trombone, and clarinet all have short solos, then join together in collective harmony. Measures 64 through 76 showcase the collective ensemble. The piece closes in measures 76 through 79 with a four-measure tag ending that imitates the introduction.

Dodds uses several musical devices to ornament measure 39 (Example 16), including passing tones, a neighbor group, incomplete neighbor, a “blue” note and a four-note group of “bent” notes. His use of sixteenth notes and triplets accelerates the movement toward the climax in this measure.

Example 16. Measure 39, Acceleration.



### “Melancholy”

“Melancholy” was written by Walter Melrose and Marty Bloom and published in 1927 by Edwin H. Morris & Company in New York. It was recorded on January 21, 1938, in New York, New York, at a session arranged by Lil Hardin for the Decca Record Company. The band was called Johnny Dodds and his Chicago Boys, and was comprised of Johnny Dodds on A clarinet, Charlie Shavers on trumpet, Lil Hardin Armstrong on piano, John Kirby on string bass, O’Neil



Spencer on drums, and Teddy Bunn on guitar. This was one of Dodds's last recording sessions (the final session was in 1940).

“Melancholy” is a popular song with eight-measure sections. It includes four, 32-measure sections in AABA form played in a relaxed swing tempo, which emphasizes a fast four-beat measure instead of the slower two-beat measure more common in early New Orleans jazz. The piece begins with a four-measure introduction played by the guitar. Dodds's melody lead enters in measure 5 and continues for the next thirty-two measures. The trumpet has a solo from measures 37 through 69, which is taken over by the guitar in measure 69. Everyone joins in for the final section from measure 101 through the end.

Dodds uses his registers to emphasize the different sections. He begins his first solo in the lower chalumeau register (measures 5 through 36). When all instruments have joined in for the last section (measure 101), Dodds switches to the clarion register, making it evident that the clarinet needs to stand out. This is reinforced by the subdued presence of the trumpet, guitar, piano, bass, and percussion, which function in a supportive capacity in this piece.

The rhythms that Dodds uses are reminiscent of the early jazz idiom, yet seem to indicate a subtle migration towards swing as well. His rhythms are more relaxed and have a faster pace. Dodds continues to use the traditional classic jazz rhythm ( ♩ ♩ ♩ and ♩ ♩ ♩ ) and chord outlining.

“Melancholy” is the only example in this group of transcriptions that includes glissandi (Example 17). Dodds uses triplets to create the glissandi, which has the effect of moving the tempo along. He treats the glissandi as if they were cadenzas.

Example 17. Measures 113 through 115, Glissandi.



Dodds plays “blue” notes for emphasis in his melody solo. He tends to use notes of longer value, such as whole and half notes, as he has been seen to do in the previous analyses. Example 18 is also an example of Dodds’s use of an accented half-note “blue” note and other non-harmonic tones such as an escape tone and an appoggiatura.

Example 18. Measures 5 through 7, Chalameau Register, “Blue” Note on an accented half note, Escape Tone, and Appoggiatura.



Measure 129 is another example of Dodds's manipulation of a non-harmonic note.

By manipulating the pitch of this incomplete neighbor, Dodds creates a “bent” note, adding variety to the music. Also included is an incomplete neighbor and an anticipation.

Example 19. Measure 129, “Bent” Note.



## CHAPTER 4

### CONCLUSION

Johnny Dodds had a natural musical ability that revealed itself at an early age. Influenced by his mother and father, who themselves were amateur musicians, Dodds taught himself to play the clarinet. While growing up in New Orleans, a focal point of early jazz music, Dodds was able to listen to and emulate some of the greatest musicians of the period. He became proficient enough to gain the attention of jazz bassist Pops Foster, who recommended him for his first job with Kid Ory's Creole Orchestra in 1909. From that point on, Dodds continued to play with a variety of bands, including Papa Celestin's Original Tuxedo Band, King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, Jelly Roll Morton's Red Hot Peppers, Louis Armstrong's Hot Five and Hot Seven, and various groups of his own, such as the Black Bottom Stompers, the Chicago Footwarmers, the Dixieland Stompers, Johnny Dodds Hot Six, the State Street Ramblers and the Washboard Band.

Unlike many, Dodds was able to remain employed as a musician throughout his life. As the style moved from traditional jazz to swing, many musicians found it necessary to fall back on other trades. Guitarist Johnny St. Cyr resumed work as a plasterer in 1930, presumably to supplement his playing with Armand Piron and Paul Barbarin.<sup>1</sup> Cornetist Natty Dominique left music in the 1940s to become a Redcap at the Chicago Airport, only returning to part-time performing in 1949.<sup>2</sup> In

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<sup>1</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style* (New Orleans: Jazzology Press, 1994), 63.

<sup>2</sup> Ibid, 140.

the 1930s and '40s Cornetist Johnny Wiggs worked as a teacher.<sup>3</sup> Trombonist Kid Ory left music in 1933 to run a chicken farm until 1940, when he returned to music to form his own band.<sup>4</sup> Even though Dodds never substantially changed his style, he was able to earn his living playing music until his death in 1940.

Dodds was well known for his ability to capture the essence of the blues. As defined by Yale University School of Music Professor Frank Tirro: ““Blues”” refers to a style of music, a type of performance, a musical form, and a state of mind.”<sup>5</sup> The type of performance that Dodds crafted was permeated with blues devices such as smears, “blue” notes, a pulsing vibrato, and note bending, all of which contributed to his blues style and his solo vocabulary. The “blue” notes gave his sound the flexibility and emotional intensity for which he was noted. Dodds gave his sound an edge by adding staccato to figures and accents to “blue” notes. He played with a fierce attack that many clarinetists have tried to emulate. This infusion of blues-playing techniques gave Dodds an expressiveness uniquely his own.

Dodds included frequent smears and used an intense vibrato that was situated slightly beneath the center of the pitch for additional effect. This vibrato placement was intentional. Dodds’s keen sense of pitch was notable and his control was such that he was adept at changing his intonation. He would often play slightly below pitch for effect during solo passages, then immediately return to correct

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<sup>3</sup> Ibid, 161.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid, 171.

<sup>5</sup> Frank Tirro, *Jazz: A History, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition* (New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1993), 51.

intonation in order to blend with the collective ensemble. Dodds's pulsing, wide vibrato was a unique feature of his sound and one that was rarely duplicated by other clarinetists of the period. Trained Creole musicians such as Lorenzo Tio Jr. and Jimmie Noone had a faster, narrower vibrato that they used intermittently. Perhaps the player who came closest to emulating Dodds was Sidney Bechet. Yet Bechet's vibrato was narrower than Dodds's; he delayed voicing it right away, and, unlike Dodds, it was centered in tune.

Dodds had a large sound, made somewhat heavy by the use of a hard reed and double-lip embouchure. His use of a large-bore, simple-system Albert clarinet for most of his career contributed to his big sound. The Albert system also gave him a greater ability to bend notes and create smears.

When playing with bandleaders such as Morton and Armstrong, Dodds was able to fulfill the role of supporting player, and add to the harmonic texture and rhythmic interest through chord outlining. Dodds was a strong supporting player, allowing others to dominate without becoming completely overshadowed. Such is the case in the recording of "Weary Blues" with Louis Armstrong. Rather than compete with Armstrong, he complemented him, as few others were able to do. Dodds tended to take the melody only when playing lead. At other times he created countermelodies by manipulating the harmony in various arpeggiated figures. The application of repetition was a common feature of classic New Orleans ensemble-style jazz, and was used to give continuity and predictability to the music. Dodds was able to create a continuous variety of interesting melodic and rhythmic patterns

while still remaining within the confines of the device of repetition. Also pervasive throughout these recorded examples are melodic devices that contribute in a significant way to his style. Embellishing tones, upper and lower neighbors, neighbor groups, passing tones, escape tones, and appoggiaturas are all common elements in improvised solos.

The analyses of several recordings with different bands have revealed that Dodds had a facile technique and the ability to blend with the variety of musicians with whom he played. With the Oliver band, he demonstrated his affinity for ensemble playing. It was with this band and small bands of his own that Dodds seemed most at ease. When he played with soloists such as Louis Armstrong, Dodds was able to subdue his style to become that of a supporting player, yet he also adapted well later to the role of bandleader and soloist. Although his style did not stray far from the early New Orleans ensemble jazz style, even when the current taste had turned to swing, his popularity continued.

Toward the end of his life Dodds expressed hopes of getting a job in New York.<sup>6</sup> Unfortunately his early death not only took away the chance to achieve the goal of relocating to New York, it also took away the opportunity he may have had to get involved in swing in New York. There is no doubt that Dodds had the technical ability to change to the swing style. Whether or not he would have wanted to do so is something we will never know.

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<sup>6</sup> Bill Russell, *New Orleans Style*, 160.

“Canal Street Blues,” the first transcription and Dodds’s earliest recording, is the definitive Dodds performance as he created a variety of interesting counter melodies, all the while adding “blue” notes. “Wild Man Blues,” one of the recordings made during the peak of Dodds’s recording career, is a fine example of Dodds playing in his chalumeau register. Dodds frequently added smears, accented “blue” notes, and bent notes to enhance the expressiveness of this piece.

“Melancholy,” performed with a smaller group of five musicians, shows Dodds later in life. His style remained virtually unchanged; he still had the same heavy sound with its notable vibrato. All the solos in this tightly knit ensemble flow cleanly from one to the next. Despite the fact that this is one of his last recordings, Dodds played with a relaxed exuberance that lent vitality to the entire performance.

All of these recordings are fine examples of a classic New Orleans jazz musician performing at his very best.



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APPENDIX A

CONCERT PITCH TRANSCRIPTIONS

# CANAL STREET BLUES

## SWING

### CONCERT PITCH

$\phi = 90^\circ$   
F7

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

**B♭ MIN6**

CONCEIT PITCH

1

C7 F UN F NG

F F7 PT LN PT Bb NG

7 S

Bb7 UN LN PT F NG

10

C7 C7 PT PT C7 APP F LN UN C7 APP

13

F PT F LN F PT LN

16

19

22

25

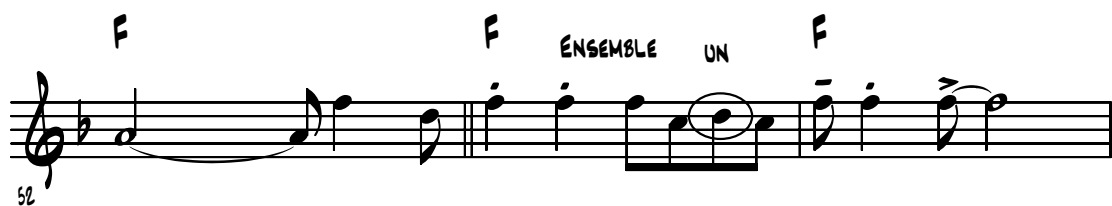
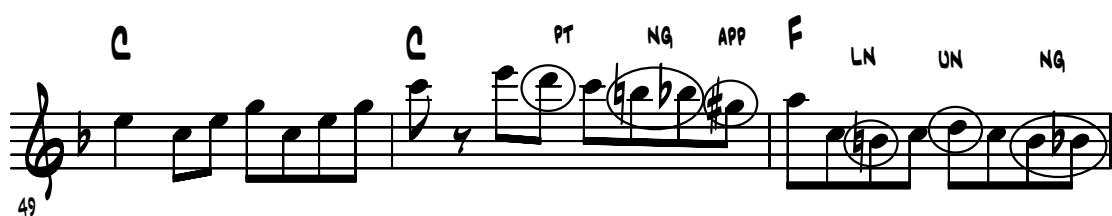
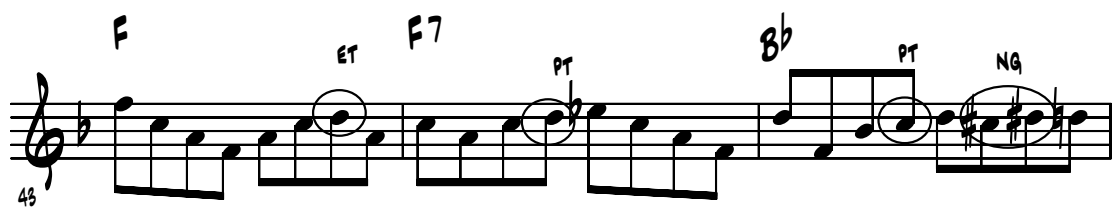
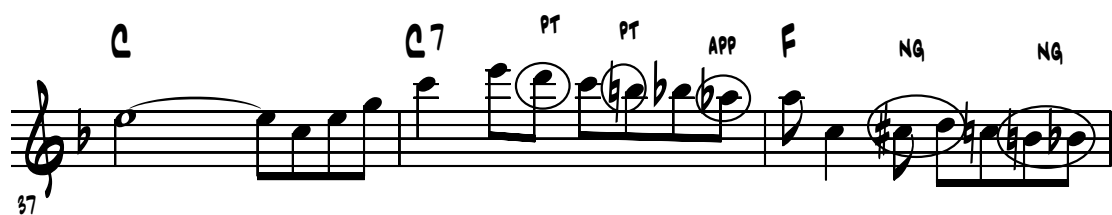
28

31

34

Chords: F, F7, B<sup>b</sup>, C7, B<sup>b</sup>7

Techniques: UN, LN, PT, ET, APP, NG



55

58

61

64

67

70

GUIDE-TONE LINE

GUIDE-TONE LINE

73

GT

NG

IN

F

76

IN

F

F7

79

F7

8N

8b7

UN

82

8b7

UN

LEAP

8N

F

PT

APP

85

NG

PT

F

88

LEAP

F

ENSEMBLE

UN

LEAP

F

Detailed description: This is a musical score for guitar, consisting of seven staves of music in G major. The score includes various annotations such as 'GT' (guitar), 'NG' (natural), 'IN' (in), 'F' (first), 'F7' (F major 7), '8N' (octave natural), '8b7' (octave flat 7), 'UN' (unbowed), 'LEAP' (leap), 'PT' (pizzicato), 'APP' (apogee), and 'ENSEMBLE'. Measure numbers 73, 76, 79, 82, 85, and 88 are indicated at the beginning of their respective staves. The notation includes treble clefs, a key signature of one sharp (F#), and various note values, rests, and articulation marks.

F UN LN F7 IN B<sup>b</sup> ET  
 91  
 B<sup>b</sup>7 NG F BN F  
 94  
 C C7 PT F IN NG NG  
 97  
 F TRANSITION F LEAP F  
 100  
 F UN LEAP F7 PT B<sup>b</sup> NG  
 103  
 B<sup>b</sup>7 UN F  
 106

109

C7 C7 F NG NG

112

F TAG UN NG B



# WILD MAN BLUES

SWING ♩ = 96

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

CONCERT PITCH **F7**

**Bb7**

The musical score for "Wild Man Blues" is written in F major (one sharp, F#) and 4/4 time. The tempo is marked as SWING with a quarter note equal to 96 beats per minute. The transcription is by Patricia Martin. The score is in concert pitch, with the key signature of F major indicated by a sharp sign (♯) above the staff. The initial key signature is F major, but the key signature changes to Bb major (two flats, Bb and Eb) for the remainder of the piece, as indicated by the Bb7 chord and the key signature change in the first staff.

The score consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a key signature change to Bb major (two flats, Bb and Eb) and a 4-measure rest. The second staff begins with a 4-measure rest, followed by a series of chords: Ab, Gb7 (NG), F7, Bb7, Eb7 (LN), and Bb7. The third staff begins with a 7-measure rest, followed by a series of chords: Ab, NG, APP, UN, PT, PT, and Bb7. The fourth staff begins with a 40-measure rest, followed by a series of chords: (A) LN, FMIN, Db7, C7, and Bb7. The fifth staff begins with a 43-measure rest, followed by a series of chords: FMIN, LN, FMIN, and Bb7. The sixth staff begins with a 46-measure rest, followed by a series of chords: Bb7, LN, C7, APP, IN, NG, IN, and LN.

Performance markings include: NG (Normal), APP (Appoggiatura), UN (Unaccented), PT (Piano), LN (Lento), and IN (In). The score also includes various musical notations such as rests, notes, and accidentals.

49 **(B)** F7 LN LN F7 Bb7 LN

52 Bb7 APP Bb7 BEND APP Bb7 LEAP

55 STOP TIME Eb7 NG LEAP NG Bb7 **(A)** FMIN BN

58 Db7 LN C7 APP LN IN LN

61 Db UN Db IN PT C7 LEAP LEAP

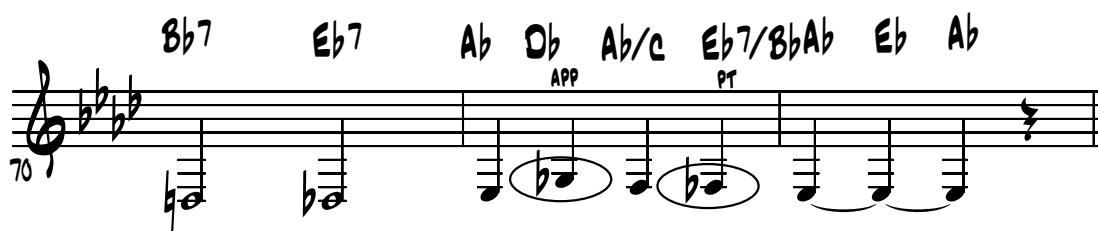
64 C7 **(C)** F7 STOP TIME BN BN BN

67 Bb7 Bb7 Ab UN PT F7

70

$Bb7$   $Eb7$   $Ab$   $Db$   $Ab/c$   $Eb7/BbAb$   $Eb$   $Ab$

APP PT



# WEARY BLUES

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

SWING  
CONCERT PITCH  $\bullet = 196$

4

7

10

13

16

19

107

22

C7 UN F7 NG NG F7

25

F F UN PT

39

F7 F7 Bb7

42

Bb7 UN F7 F7

46

C7 C7 UN F7

48

F7 F7

51

F7 Bb7 NG UN

54  $B^b7$  ET UN  $F7$  IN NG UN  $F7$  APP

57  $C7$  LEAP  $C7$  NG  $F7$  IN LN IN PT

60  $F$   $B$   $F$

63  $F7$   $B^b7$   $F$

66  $C7(\#9)$

69  $B^b$   $F7$   $B^b$

72  $B^b$  NG  $B^b$   $F7$

Detailed description of the musical notation: The page contains six staves of music. Staff 1 (measures 54-56) has a key signature of one flat (B-flat major) and a common time signature. Chords are Bb7, F7, and F7. Notes are circled and have lyrics: ET, UN, IN, NG, UN, APP. Staff 2 (measures 57-59) continues the key signature. Chords are C7, C7, and F7. Notes are circled and have lyrics: LEAP, NG, IN, LN, IN, PT. Staff 3 (measures 60-61) has a key signature of one flat. Chords are F, B (boxed), and F. Staff 4 (measures 62-64) has a key signature of one flat. Chords are F7, Bb7, and F. Staff 5 (measures 65-68) has a key signature of one flat. Chord is C7(#9). Staff 6 (measures 69-71) has a key signature of one flat. Chords are Bb, F7, and Bb. Staff 7 (measures 72-74) has a key signature of one flat. Chords are Bb, Bb, and F7. Notes are circled and have lyrics: NG.

Handwritten musical score on ten staves, measures 75-93. The score is in G minor (three flats) and includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and rests. Above the staves are handwritten chord symbols and performance instructions. Chord symbols include B $\flat$ , G7, F7, C $\text{min}$ 7, and E $\flat$ 7. Performance instructions include NG, PT, LN, ET, APP, UN, and LN. Some notes are circled, and there are double bar lines at measure 84.

Measures and Chords/Instructions:

- 75: B $\flat$ , B $\flat$ , NG
- 76: B $\flat$ , G7, PT, PT, C $\text{min}$ 7, LN, ET, E $\flat$ 7
- 77: B $\flat$ , F7, PT, B $\flat$ , APP, LN, NG
- 78: B $\flat$ , F7, B $\flat$ , F7, PT
- 79: B $\flat$ , APP, UN, B $\flat$ , NG, B $\flat$
- 80: B $\flat$ , APP, LN, NG, NG, UN
- 81: G7, G7, C $\text{min}$ 7, LN, LN

Handwritten musical score on two staves, featuring lyrics and chord symbols.

**Staff 1 (Top):**

- Chord symbols:  $E^{\circ 7}$ ,  $B^b$ ,  $F^7$
- Lyrics: IN PT NG UN NG PT
- Measure numbers: 96, 99
- Notes: The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes. A group of four notes (Bb, Ab, Gb, Fb) in the third measure is circled.

**Staff 2 (Bottom):**

- Chord symbol:  $B^b$
- Measure number: 99
- Notes: The staff contains rests for the first two measures, followed by a double bar line and the number 32, indicating a section change or rehearsal mark.



# WOLVERINE BLUES

SWING  $\text{♩} = 105$

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

CONCERT PITCH

STRIDE PIANO

88

**A**  $E^b$  BEND  $E^{\circ 7}$  APP APP  $B^b/F$  LEAP NG

89  $B^b 7$  NG PT PT  $E^b$  PT  $E^{\circ 7}$  UN LN LEAP

92  $B^b/F$  LN NG  $B^b 7$  UN LN **B**  $E^b 7$  APP

95  $E^b 7$  PT  $A^b$  PT  $A^b$  BEND LN  $G^b 7$

98  $F 7$   $F 7$  PT  $B^b 7$  STOP TIME NG UN LN

101 **A**  $B^b 7$  LEAP  $E^b$  BEND  $E^b$  APP  $E^{\circ 7}$  APP NG

104  $B^b/F$   $B^b 7$  NG LN  $E^b 7$  NG

107

110  $E^b7$   $A^b$  LN  $A^b$  LN 113

113  $A^b$  LN APP  $A^b$  LN PT APP  $E^b/B^b$  LN PT

116  $C7$  PT PT  $F^{MIN}7$  PT  $B^b7$  LN NG

119  $E^b$   $E^{\circ}7$   $B^b7$   $A$   $E^b$  LEAP

122  $E^{\circ}7$  APP  $B^b/F$  LEAP NG  $B^b7$  LN PT

125  $E^b$  IN  $E^{\circ}7$  ET  $B^b/F$  LEAP

128  $B^b7$  NG PT PT  $B$   $E^b7$  NG

131  $A^b$   $A^b$   $G^b7$   $F7$  LN

114

F7 PT

134

(A) Eb ET E°7 ET LN ET LEAP Bb/F Bb7

137

141

145

149

153

157

**[B]**  $E^b7$   $E^b7$   $A^b$   $A^b$   $G^b7$   
 APP APP APP LN LN  
 161  $F7$   $F7$   $B^b7$  STOP TIME  
 BN UN PT BN  
 165  
**[A]**  $E^b$   $E^o7$   $B^b/F$   $B^b7$   
 UN UN BEND NG  
 169  
 $E^b7$   $E^b7$   $A^b$   $A^b$   
 APP LEAP UN LN LN  
 173  
**[C]**  $A^b7$   $A^b$   $E^b/B^b$   $C7$   
 BN LN LN PT LEAP LN PT PT  
 177  
 $F^{MIN}7$   $B^b7$   $E^b$   
 LN PT LN APP APP APP APP NG  
 181  
 TAG APP APP APP NG  
 185

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

116

Handwritten musical notation on two staves. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The notation includes various chords and melodic lines with performance instructions.

**Staff 1 (Measures 37-44):**

- Measure 37: Chord  $Bb7$ .
- Measure 38: Chord  $Bb7$ , melodic line with a slur and a circled note marked  $BN$ .
- Measure 39: Chord  $Bb7$ , melodic line with a slur.
- Measure 40: Chord  $Bb7$ , melodic line with a slur.
- Measure 41: Chord  $Bb7$ , melodic line with a slur.
- Measure 42: Chord  $Bb7$ , melodic line with a slur.
- Measure 43: Chord  $Bb7$ , melodic line with a slur.
- Measure 44: Chord  $Bb7$ , melodic line with a slur.

**Staff 2 (Measures 39-44):**

- Measure 39: Chord  $Eb7$ , melodic line with a slur and a circled note marked  $BN$ .
- Measure 40: Chord  $Eb7$ , melodic line with a slur and a circled note marked  $BN$ .
- Measure 41: Chord  $Eb7$ , melodic line with a slur and a circled note marked  $BN$ .
- Measure 42: Chord  $Eb7$ , melodic line with a slur and a circled note marked  $BN$ .
- Measure 43: Chord  $Eb7$ , melodic line with a slur and a circled note marked  $BN$ .
- Measure 44: Chord  $Eb7$ , melodic line with a slur and a circled note marked  $BN$ .

**Performance Instructions:**

- $BN$ : Bend Note
- $PT$ : Pull the string
- $NG$ : Natural Harmonic
- $IN$ : In

# MELANCHOLY

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

SWING  $\bullet = 195$

CONCERT PITCH

**[A]**

G ET APP C7 BN

G E7 E<sup>b</sup>7 D7 G F7

PT APP NG

E<sup>b</sup>7 D7 **[A]** G G C7

NG PT IN UN BN

C7

APP NG NG APP

D7 D7 **[B]** G7

UN LN UN NG UN UN

C6 APP UN UN E7 NG UN

23

Handwritten musical score on page 119, featuring guitar chords and performance instructions.

**Staff 1 (Measures 27-30):**

- Chords: A7, G (circled in a box and labeled A), G.
- Instructions: LN, ET, NG, LEAP, UN.

**Staff 2 (Measures 31-33):**

- Chords: C7, C7, G, PT, ET.
- Instruction: BN.

**Staff 3 (Measures 34-36):**

- Chords: G, PT, NG.

**Staff 4 (Measures 37-39):**

- Chords: G (circled in a box and labeled A), G.
- Instruction: ENSEMBLE.

**Staff 5 (Measures 101-104):**

- Chords: G, NG, NG, A7, D7, G, NG, NG.
- Instructions: IN, UN, LN, PT, PT.

**Staff 6 (Measures 105-108):**

- Chords: D7, G (circled in a box and labeled A), G, G, NG, ET, C7.
- Instructions: LEAP, LEAP.



112 C7 E MIN7 UN A7

115 D7 PT PT LEAP [B] G7 IN

118 APP LEAP IN UN

121 E7 NG F7 IN E7 APP

124 IN NG [A] APP

127 UN LN C7 BEND ANT D ET IN

131 G NG UN NG

APPENDIX B

TRANSPOSED TRANSCRIPTIONS

SWING

$\text{♩} = 90$

# CANAL STREET BLUES

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

B-FLAT CLARINET

Chord progression: G7 C7 C MIN6 D7

1

5

9

13

17

The musical score is written for B-flat Clarinet in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). It consists of five staves of music. The first staff shows a whole-note chord progression: G7, C7, C MIN6, and D7. The second staff begins with a measure rest marked '1' and contains eighth-note runs. The third staff begins with a measure rest marked '5' and continues the eighth-note runs. The fourth staff begins with a measure rest marked '9' and continues the eighth-note runs. The fifth staff begins with a measure rest marked '13' and continues the eighth-note runs, ending with a double bar line. Measure numbers 1, 5, 9, 13, and 17 are indicated at the start of their respective staves. Chord symbols G7, C7, C MIN6, and D7 are placed above the first staff. Chord symbols G, C, C7, G, D7, and G are placed below the staves at various points.

21 C C7 G G

25 D7 D7 G G

29 G G7 G7

33 C C7 G

37 D D7 G

41 C C7 G G

45

49

D D G G

53

G ENSEMBLE G G G7

57

C C7 G G D7

62

D7 G G7 G7 C7

66

C7 D

70

D G G

74

Detailed description: This musical score is for guitar and ensemble. It consists of eight staves of music in G major (one sharp). The first staff (measures 49-52) features a guitar melody with chords D, D, G, and G. The second staff (measures 53-56) includes an 'ENSEMBLE' section with chords G, G, G, and G7. The third staff (measures 57-61) has chords C, C7, G, G, and D7. The fourth staff (measures 62-65) features D7, G, and G7. The fifth staff (measures 66-69) includes G7, G7, C7, and G7. The sixth staff (measures 70-73) has C7 and D. The seventh staff (measures 74-77) features D, G, and G. The eighth staff (measures 78-81) continues the guitar melody with a final G chord. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, half notes, and slurs.

78 G7 G7 G7 C7

82 C7 G D

87 G G ENSEMBLE G

91 G G7 C C7

95 G G D D7

99 G G TRANSITION G G

103 G G7 C C7

109

Detailed description: This musical score is for guitar, spanning measures 78 to 109. It is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#). The score includes various guitar-specific notations such as natural harmonics (indicated by 'n' and a natural sign), bends (marked with a 'b'), and slurs. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: G7, C7, G, D, and ENSEMBLE. The piece concludes with a double bar line at measure 109.

G D7 D7

107

G TAG

111

s

# WILD MAN BLUES

SWING ♩ = 96

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

A CLARINET

G#7

C#7

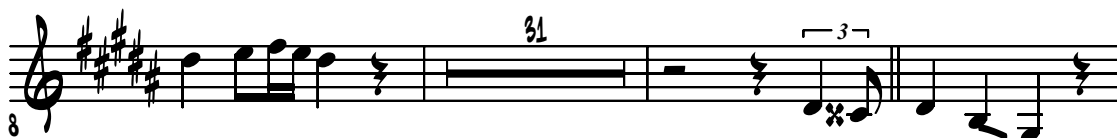


B A7 G#7 C#7 F#7 B



(A)

G#MIN



E7

D#7

G#MIN



G#MIN

E7

D#7



(B) G#7

G#7





C#7 C#7 C#7

51

C#7 STOP TIME F#7 F#7

54

(A) G#MIN E7 D#7

57

E E

60

D#7 D#7 (C) G#7 G#7 STOP TIME

63

C#7 C#7 B G#7

67

C#7 F#7 B E B/D# F#7/C# B F# B

70

SWING  $\text{♩} = 196$

# WEARY BLUES

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

B-FLAT CLARINET

The musical score is written for B-flat Clarinet in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. It consists of six staves of music. The first staff begins with a G major chord (G) and a half note G. The second staff begins with a G7 chord and a half note G. The third staff begins with a C7 chord and a half note C. The fourth staff begins with a D7 chord and a half note D. The fifth staff begins with a G7 chord and a half note G. The sixth staff begins with a C7 chord and a half note C. The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, as well as dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'f' (forte). A 'STOP TIME' section is indicated by a dashed line between the fifth and sixth staves. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

4

5

9

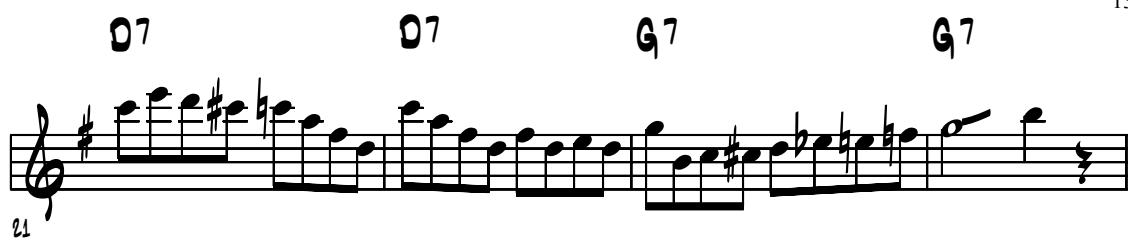
13

17

STOP TIME

21

D7 D7 G7 G7



25

12



37

G G G7 G7



41

C7 C7 G7 G7



45

D7 D7 G7



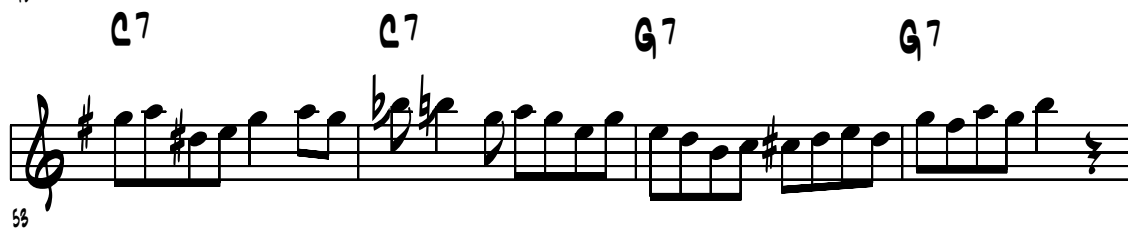
49

G7 G7 G7



53

C7 C7 G7 G7



57 **D7** **D7** **G7**

61 **B** **G** **G** **G7** **C7**

65 **G** **D7(#9)**

69 **C** **G7** **C** **C**

73 **C** **G7** **C** **C**

77 **A7** **A7** **Dmin7** **F#°7**

81 **C** **G7** **C** **C**

Handwritten musical score for guitar, featuring five staves of music. The notation includes treble clefs, various chords (G7, A7, Dmin7, F#o7), and a final measure with a 32-measure rest. Measure numbers 85, 89, 93, 97, and 101 are indicated at the start of each staff.

Staff 1 (Measures 85-88):  
Chords: C, G7, C, C  
Measure 85 starts with a measure rest.

Staff 2 (Measures 89-92):  
Chords: C, C  
Measure 89 starts with a measure rest.

Staff 3 (Measures 93-96):  
Chords: A7, A7, Dmin7, F#o7  
Measure 93 starts with a measure rest.

Staff 4 (Measures 97-100):  
Chords: C, G7, C  
Measure 97 starts with a measure rest.

Staff 5 (Measures 101-132):  
A single measure rest for 32 measures, starting at measure 101.

SWING  $\text{♩} = 105$

# WOLVERINE BLUES

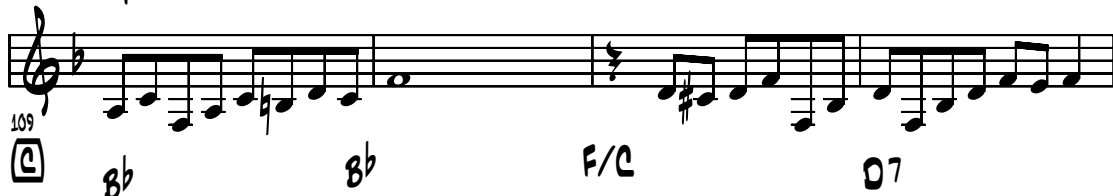
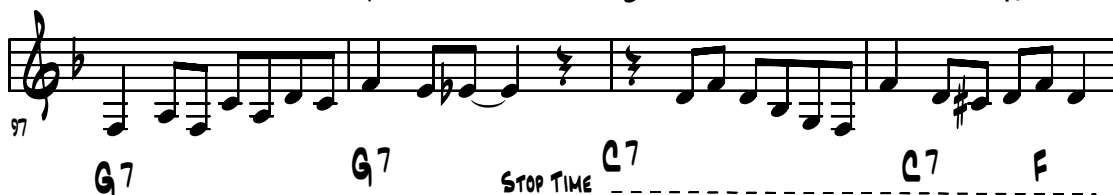
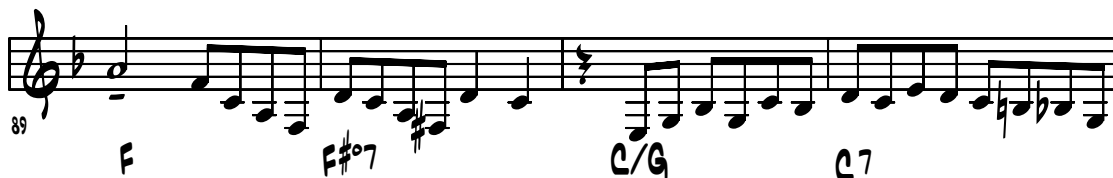
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B-FLAT CLARINET

STRIDE PIANO



[A] F F#°7 C/G C7



117 **A** G MIN7 C7 F F#°7 C7

121 F F#°7 C/G C7

125 **B** F7 B<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> A<sup>b</sup>7

129 G7 G7 C7

133 **A** F F#°7 C/G C7

137 F7 F7 B<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup>

141 **C** B<sup>b</sup> B<sup>b</sup> F/C D7

145

G MIN7                      C7                      F    F#°    C7

149

(A) F                      F#°7                      C/G                      C7

153

F                      F#°7                      C/G                      C7

157

(B) F7                      F7                      Bb                      Bb    Ab7

161

G7                      G7                      C7

STOP TIME -----

165

(A) F                      F#°7                      C/G                      C7

169

F7                      F7                      Bb                      Bb

173



177  $\text{B}^b7$   $\text{B}^b$   $\text{F}/\text{C}$   $\text{D}7$

181  $\text{G}^{\text{MIN}}7$   $\text{C}7$   $\text{F}$

185 TAG

Detailed description: The image shows a musical score for three staves. The first staff, starting at measure 177, contains a treble clef, a key signature of two flats (B-flat and E-flat), and a common time signature. The melody consists of eighth notes. Above the staff, the chords Bb7, Bb, F/C, and D7 are written. The second staff, starting at measure 181, continues the melody. Above it, the chords Gmin7, C7, and F are written. The third staff, starting at measure 185, is labeled 'TAG' and ends with a double bar line. The melody continues with eighth notes.

# TOO TIGHT

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

SWING  $\text{♩} = 56$   
B-FLAT CLARINET

## (12-BAR BLUES)

The musical score is written for B-flat Clarinet in 4/4 time, with a tempo of 56 beats per minute. It consists of 34 measures, organized into seven systems of five staves each. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as eighth notes, quarter notes, and half notes, along with slurs and ties. Chord symbols are placed above the staff: F, F7, Bb7, C7, and C#7. Measure numbers 1, 8, 11, 14, 17, 31, and 34 are indicated at the start of their respective staves. A '4' is written above the first measure, and a '12' is written above the 17th measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the 34th measure.

Musical score for two staves, measures 137-138. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The time signature is common time (C). The first staff (treble clef) contains measures 137 and 138. Measure 137 starts with a C7 chord. The melody consists of a half note B-flat, a quarter rest, a quarter note A, a quarter note G, a quarter note F, a quarter note E, a quarter note D, a quarter note C, and a quarter note B. Measure 138 starts with a C7 chord. The melody consists of a half note B-flat, a quarter note A, a quarter note G, a quarter note F, a quarter note E, a quarter note D, a quarter note C, and a quarter note B. The second staff (treble clef) contains measures 137 and 138. Measure 137 starts with an F7 chord. The bass line consists of a half note F, a half note E, a half note D, a half note C, a half note B, a half note A, a half note G, and a half note F. Measure 138 starts with an F7 chord. The bass line consists of a half note F, a half note E, a half note D, a half note C, a half note B, a half note A, a half note G, and a half note F. The score ends with a double bar line.

# MELANCHOLY

TRANSCRIBED BY PATRICIA MARTIN

SWING  
♩ = 195  
A CLARINET

4

**[A]**  $B^b$   $E^b7$

$B^b$   $G7$   $G^b7$   $F7$   $B^b$   $A^b7$

8  $G^b7$   $F7$  **[A]**  $B^b$   $B^b$   $E^b7$

12  $E^b7$

16  $F7$   $F7$  **[B]**  $B^b7$

19  $E^b6$   $G7$

23

Handwritten musical score for a single melodic line in treble clef, key of B-flat major (two flats). The score is divided into systems with measure numbers and chord changes.

**System 1:** Measures 27-30. Chords: C7, [A] Bb, Eb7, Eb7.

**System 2:** Measures 31-33. Chords: Bb, Eb7.

**System 3:** Measures 34-36. Chords: Bb, Eb7.

**System 4:** Measures 37-39. Chords: [A] Bb, Eb7, Eb7.

**System 5:** Measures 101-103. Chords: Bb, C7, F7.

**System 6:** Measures 105-107. Chords: F7, [A] Bb, Bb, Eb7.

**System 7:** Measures 108-110. Chords: Bb, Eb7.

**Annotations:**

- Handwritten measure numbers: 27, 31, 34, 37, 101, 105, 108.
- Handwritten chord symbols: C7, [A] Bb, Eb7, Bb, F7.
- Section marker: [A] ENSEMBLE (at measure 37).
- Section marker: 64 (at measure 37).
- Handwritten accents (^) above notes in measures 103, 107, and 110.

Handwritten musical score for guitar, measures 112-131. The score is written on seven staves in treble clef with a key signature of two flats (Bb and Eb). The notation includes various chords, melodic lines, and technical markings.

Measures and Chords:

- 112: Eb7
- 113: G MIN7
- 114: F7
- 115: GLISSANDO (marked with a box containing '8'), Bb7
- 116: G7, Ab7, G7
- 117: (marked with a box containing 'A')
- 118: Eb7, F
- 119: Bb
- 120: (no chord indicated)
- 121: (no chord indicated)
- 122: (no chord indicated)
- 123: (no chord indicated)
- 124: (no chord indicated)
- 125: (no chord indicated)
- 126: (no chord indicated)
- 127: (no chord indicated)
- 128: (no chord indicated)
- 129: (no chord indicated)
- 130: (no chord indicated)
- 131: (no chord indicated)

Technical markings include "GLISSANDO" and "GLISSANDO" written above the staff lines, indicating glissando techniques. Measure numbers 112, 115, 118, 121, 124, 127, and 131 are written below the staff lines.

## VITA

Patricia Martin is a native of Miamisburg, Ohio. She began studying the clarinet at age eight. She received her Bachelor of Musical Arts degree in performance from Eastman School of music, Master of Music Arts degree in performance from Michigan State University, and Doctor of Musical Arts degree in performance from Louisiana State University. Martin also attended Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music and The Manhattan School of Music for Master of Music studies in orchestral performance.

Martin has been Principal Clarinetist with the Baton Rouge Symphony since 1996. She has taught at Southeastern Louisiana University, Louisiana State University Music Academy and Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp in Michigan. She has been a featured soloist with the Baton Rouge Symphony Summerfest Orchestra, Columbus Symphony, and the Dayton Philharmonic Orchestras. She made her Carnegie Hall debut soloing with the Louisiana Sinfonietta in 1999. She has performed with the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Louisiana Sinfonietta, the Acadiana Symphony, the Timm Wind Quintet, the Grand Teton Music Festival Orchestra in Jackson Hole, Wyoming, the Loma Linda Summer Festival Orchestra in California, Festival of a Thousand Oaks, Nebraska, and the Cours International de Musique in Morges, Switzerland. Her teachers include Stanley Hasty, Michael Webster, Dr. Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr, Peter Simenauer and Steve Cohen.