UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OUR ONE HUNDRED AND SIXTEENTH PROGRAM

CLASSIC JAZZ EPOCHS
THE MUSIC OF
W. C. HANDY AND
JELLY ROLL MORTON

SPONSORED BY
THE DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC
AND THE NEW HAMPSHIRE
LIBRARY OF TRADITIONAL JAZZ

8 PM MONDAY
FEBRUARY 10, 1997
STRAFFORD ROOM
MEMORIAL UNION BUILDING
DURHAM, NH
THE ARTISTS

CLASSIC JAZZ EPOCHS

To be direct (for a change!), this is a most unusual program. It is clearly the first in our entire series to be comprised completely of music emanating from men born in the 19th century; moreover, it is performed by a unique duo of piano and multiple brass instruments. Jim Fryer and Jeff Barnhart describe themselves as bringing "a broad eclecticism, a healthy eccentricity, and a fresh youthful energy to the early masters of jazz," and the qualities identified in this accurate self-analysis are certainly prerequisite to such a special endeavor.

The historical personalities in our spotlight this evening are William Christopher (W. C.) Handy (1873 - 1958), and Ferdinand LaMenthe, better known as Jelly Roll Morton (1890 - 1941). Our guests will have much to say about each of them as the program unfolds, but the rarity of its concept and content provokes a few observations from the perspective of our series at large.

Along with its rhythmical flavor, jazz tends to touch us through singularity of voice; we identify performers through their "sound," the personal peculiarities of style and expression which set them apart one from another. This is usually not an analytical process but one tied to immediacy of communication (even from recordings), yet its power of attraction can lead us into deeper realms. W. C. Handy and Jelly Roll Morton are big names in the books, but given the public emphasis on later artists, how many of us have a sense of just how they sounded - or really what they did to justify their fame? Most know that Handy had something to do with the blues, and that Morton gambled and talked a lot, even professing that he "invented" jazz, but the clarity and directness of their actual contributions are murky. The fact is that even in these early cases we must go directly to the "deeper realm," that of composition.

The lure of improvisation is so compelling that it is easy to overlook the importance of the underlying melodic, harmonic, and organizational schemes; sometimes we react as if they were not there at all. Thus it is illuminating to confront the significance of two widely-traveled musicians from two different decades prior to Duke Ellington who in their individual ways assimilated diverse strains of the African-American culture which so variously surrounded them and transformed these elements into specifically written-down and publishable compositions. Moreover, Handy, a cornetist and band leader, himself actually became a publisher and for a short time a record producer; he was deeply engaged in the cultural and political life of Harlem from the teens to the '30s. (This writer recalls hearing him perform on a live radio broadcast as late as the 1940's!) As a pianist, Morton was central in developing the swing feel of the stride style out of the rigidity of ragtime, even though his own style didn't seem to achieve the identity of an Earl Hines, Fats Waller, or Art Tatum. But beyond this and the importance of his own printed works (and oral recollections!) was his capacity to integrate the planned and spontaneous in his ensemble recordings in a truly "compositional" manner. Thus jazz as "formal" composition became emergent.
Jim Fryer is as versatile a musician as one is apt to find anywhere, playing in big band, modern combo, salsa, blues, rock, Broadway show, and symphonic idioms. Jeff Barnhart has degrees in English Literature, Music, and Education, and 4000 performances behind him. Both are active teachers in their home state of Connecticut, and Classic Jazz Epochs has made a half-dozen festival tours of the United Kingdom.

During Black History Month we are proud to note that over the years the UNH Traditional Jazz Series has brought more than fifty African-American artists to campus, and we are equally proud tonight to honor two other African-Americans and their impact on our total culture through this inspired exploration of their music by this devoted and gifted duo.

Tape recorders and cameras are not permitted due to contractual arrangements. Your cooperation is requested.
THE SERIES

The UNH Traditional Jazz Series began in 1979. It promotes the enjoyment and understanding of the art through concerts featuring musicians of regional, national, and international prominence. The program represents a unique endeavor to expand interest and honor outstanding talent and achievement.

Musicians wishing to do so are encouraged to offer their recordings for sale or mail order during intermission; a brief announcement may be made. The sponsors have no financial interest in such sales beyond offering a courtesy service to the artists and the public.

Program Notes -- Paul Verrette
Production -- David Seiler

THE SCHEDULE

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<td>September 16</td>
<td>Frank Wess Octet with Carol Sloane (Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center)</td>
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<td>October 21</td>
<td>Benny Waters with Howard Alden and the Tom Gallant Trio</td>
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<td>December 2</td>
<td>Billy Novick’s Shades of Swing (Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center)</td>
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<td>February 10</td>
<td>Classic Jazz Epochs: Jelly Roll and W.C. Jim Fryer and Jeff Barnhart</td>
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<td>March 10</td>
<td>Tommy Flanagan Trio (Johnson Theatre, Paul Creative Arts Center)</td>
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<td>April 14</td>
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<td>May 5</td>
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(Concerts in Strafford Room of the Memorial Union Building exception noted)