UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE

OUR THIRTY-FOURTH PROGRAM

RAY SMITH'S

DECADES OF JAZZ

Featuring:

JIMMY MAZZY ................. Banjo, Vocals
JEFF HUGHES .................. Cornet
JOHN BATTIS .................. Clarinet
RICHARD GIORDANO .......... Piano
AL EHRENFRIED .......... Bass
RAY SMITH ................. Drums

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

8 P.M. MONDAY
MARCH 11, 1985
STRAFFORD ROOM
MEMORIAL UNION
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE
RAY SMITH'S DECADES OF JAZZ

To the uninitiated, the nom de plume of tonight's ensemble might seem puzzling; despite the imaginative if seldom accurately descriptive designations attached to popular groups of today, it is hardly common to name a jazz combo for a time span. The secret, of course, lies in another of the multiple professional identities of its leader. Ray Smith's radio program, similarly titled, has been broadcast weekly on WGBH-FM in Boston for 13 years (Friday evenings at 6:30), following an equivalent number of years on suburban stations. It serves as a model of intelligent and interesting programming; jazz emerges as a diverse panorama of individual and collective efforts far richer in variety and detail than the star-conscious mentality of so many current presentations ever reveals. And Ray's primary source of material is his copious personal record collection, a resource he has been developing with love and wisdom since 1936.

Tonight's program will certainly be informed by the same breadth of perspective and good humor that is found in Ray's broadcasts, and his comments about each selection will illuminate us about the wealth of the heritage. Many of us will be hearing a majority of these pieces for the very first time, our experience thus being enhanced by newly confronting that which is really old under the sun.

Ray's experience as performer over several of the decades in question has kept him intimately involved with the living realities of traditional jazz in New England and elsewhere. For example, he was the original drummer with the New Black Eagles, played with the Yankee Rhythm Kings for some time, and appeared at UNH last fall with the Rent Party Revellers. The present group has been active as a unit only since 1983, although its members have performed together in various other combinations over many years, such being the not unhealthy fate of so many itinerant practitioners of the art.

Jimmy Mazzy is one of the most truly unique talents that an audience will ever encounter (no exaggeration). His taste in tunes and lyrics for his buoyant vocal style leads him to rare items that challenge even Ray's archival acumen, and his banjo playing can convert those who have succumbed to the heresy of guitar-oriented modernism. (An open and unbiased view of history shows us that the guitar is no more accurately thought of as a refined successor to the banjo than the piano is to the harpsichord. They are in fact different instruments with different purposes and potentialities.) Jimmy has appeared twice before on our series, in alternate settings, one of which generated the first recording issued by the New Hampshire Library of Traditional Jazz.

Jeff Hughes, like the remaining members of the ensemble, is making his first appearance here. A member with Jimmy of the New Yankee Rhythm Kings, his graceful and melodically imaginative cornet freshly evokes the spirit of Bix Beiderbecke, (no cliche in this case). Academics among us will note that Jeff is pursuing a doctorate in biology at the University of Rhode Island.
Clarinetist John Battis is a graduate of the Boston Conservatory, and has devoted his life principally to teaching. A native and resident of Newburyport, Mass., he has long been admired in the seacoast area for the scope and flexibility of his musical abilities.

Richard Giordano honed his style on the pianistic solidity of the James P. Johnson school, and is well-complemented by the superbly rhythmical bass of Al Ehrenfried, a Bobby Hackett alumnus.

Once again we enjoy the fruits of years of collective experience coalescing in a new exploration of tradition, not in the sense of comfortably reheashing the familiar, but much more in the spirit of a historical vitality which demonstrates that tradition is not a closed, single-volume book, limited edition.

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

September 17  Rent Party Revellers
October 15    Doc Cheatham and Clarence Hutchenrider — with the TJS Quartet
November 12   Dick Hyman: Historic Piano
December 3    White Heat Swing Orchestra
February 11   Jack Bumer: “No Easy Pieces”
March 11      Ray Smith’s Decades of Jazz
April 15      Ruby Braff — with the TJS Quartet
May 13        Original Salty Dogs with Carol Leigh