UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
OUR NINETY-FIRST PROGRAM

ED POLCER
& the
CONDON
CONNECTION

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

8 PM MONDAY
MAY 3, 1993
STRAFFORD ROOM
MEMORIAL UNION BUILDING
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE
ED POLCER & THE CONDON CONNECTION

Question from a student: "What's a Condon?". Comment from a bystander: "There's a word spelled wrong on this poster!". Ah, the ravages of time on cultural memory. The writer of this page recalls his high school days in the mid-1940's when he took a bus from Dover to Portsmouth once a week for a piano lesson, and fortuitous scheduling permitted a visit to Sessions Record Shop on Daniels Street and a perusal of the Commodore 78rpm inventory, with its multifarious groups led by a salty Chicago-style guitarist of ostensibly modest musical skills but with a remarkably entrepreneurial approach to the so-called Dixieland idiom.

Dipping further into seldom-tapped residual recollection, it emerges that our once innocent youthful ears were first seduced by the aural elegance, excitement, and individuality of Bobby Hackett, Wild Bill Davison, Pee-Wee Russell, Ed Hall, Bud Freeman, Vic Dickenson, George Brunis, Sid Catlett, George Wetling and numerous others from performances organized and "led" by this non-soloing rhythm player named Eddie Condon. And not only did he spread the good word to the provinces via recordings, but he actually invaded such "classical" bastions as Town Hall and Carnegie Hall, the former on a quite regular basis, and was utilizing television as early as 1948.

Condon's jazz was not the structured big band stylization of the Goodman-Ellington axis, or the often esoteric post-World War II search for new directions. Rather it was essentially what we would now call "trad" jazz, but minus any quasi-scholarly historicism; the music simply continued with unabashed conviction and pride the improvisatory idiom which had first flourished in New Orleans and then renewed itself geographically and generationally with regularity.

Eddie Condon was born in Indiana in 1905, musically nurtured in fertile Chicago in the 20's, and later centered in New York, where along with his performing activities he opened a famous club in Greenwich Village in 1945; it later moved uptown, and in 1985 became another one of the dozens of small jazz rooms to be squeezed out of the city by the forces of economic progress. (Ironically, visitors often comment on how Portsmouth's Press Room reminds them of treasured times past in Manhattan.) Condon himself passed away in 1973, and one of those who strove to maintain both the music and the club in substance and spirit was an alumnus of the Benny Goodman orchestra and Princeton University named Ed Polcer.

From 1975 to 1985 Ed managed Eddie Condon's, and now he continues to keep the musical legacy alive with groups of players from several generations who are drawn to the centrality, renewability and pure joy of the idiom, and whose quality of performance is recognized on an international scale. Forty years ago some in the jazz intelligentsia would have derided them as "moldy figs" attached to a dying art; today UNH warmly welcomes them as keepers of a living, precious and eternal flame.
TRADITIONAL JAZZ SERIES

THE CONDON CONNECTION

ED POLCER - cornet
ALLAN VACHÉ - clarinet
TOM ARTIN - trombone
JEREMY KAHN - piano
FRANK TATE - bass
JOE ASCIONE - drums

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

October 5   Summit Reunion: Bob Wilber and Kenny Davern
November 2  Mike Markavarich
November 30 Harold Ashby
February 1  Paradise City Jazz Band
March 8     Donna Byrne Quintet
April 5     Jimmy Mazzy, Eli Newberger and Friends
May 3       Condon Connection: Ed Polcer and Red Balaban