

Sidney Bechet

Kyle Etges

Signature Recordings

I Found a New Baby. Recorded in New York in 1932 with trumpeter Tommy Ladnier, *I Found a New Baby* showcases Bechet's commitment to the older "New Orleans" style of playing. The piece begins with Ladnier and Bechet in their traditional roles, with Ladnier's roaring melody complemented by Bechet's flowing counterlines. Bechet's solo is the centerpiece of this recording, beginning with long musical lines flowing over multiple bars and eventually developing into his typical arpeggiated style of playing. Bechet truly shows off his technical capability in the last refrain, executing a beastly arpeggiated line under Ladnier with seeming ease. This recording stands as an excellent example of Bechet's mastery of the New Orleans jazz clarinet tradition typical in his early work, though he would later develop a more flowing, melodic approach to improvisation. This recording date was accompanied by a short residence by Bechet and Ladnier at the Savoy Ballroom, though unfortunately audiences' tastes were gravitating toward the big bands of the era. This letdown, exacerbated by the Great Depression, drove both musicians to leave the music business, though thankfully not permanently. The two frontmen are joined on this record by the rest of the New Orleans Feetwarmers, featuring Teddy Nixon on trombone, Hank Duncan on piano, Wilson Myers on bass, and Morris Morand on Drums.

Petite Fleur. Arguably Bechet's most notable contribution to the jazz repertoire, this beautiful composition was first featured alongside the Claude Luter Orchestra in Paris, France. Bechet eventually relocated to Europe, as many jazz musicians did during that time, and presented this incredible work in 1952. This piece has been performed by a wide variety of musicians throughout the latter half of the 20th century, including Harry Connick Jr., Woody Herman, and Rahsaan Roland Kirk. The original rendition has Bechet taking the helm through practically the whole piece, with a roaring, spirited soprano tone that soars over the ensemble. Several versions of this beautiful composition performed by Bechet exist throughout the 1950s, all recorded live in Paris. Members of the Claude Luter Orchestra include Benny Vasseur, Mowgli Jospin, and Bernard Zacharias on trombone, Michel Pacout on clarinet, Claude Philippe, Pierre Merlin, and Gilles Thibaut on trumpet, Christian Azzi on piano, François-Alexandre Galépidès (better known as "Mustache") on drums, and Roland Bianchini on bass.

Summertime. Considered one of Bechet's masterpiece recordings, this rendition of *Summertime* was first recorded in 1939 in New York City with Blue Note Records, and has since been redistributed through labels in France. This recording coincided with a revitalized interest in the history of jazz, and Bechet certainly gives a fine example of the old style, with seemingly no signs of personal degradation. If anything, Bechet's playing shows evidence of evolution as he presents a sublime interpretation of the melody, utilizing much more horizontally-oriented playing compared to some of his earlier work. Use of motivic development is also evident, as he

constantly refers to back to the melody and uses the ideas to logically develop his statement. Bechet caps off the piece with an impressive cadenza. One can hear the vast influence this statement has on future generations. Compare this cadenza, for example, to Sonny Stitt's cadenza at the end of his 1959 rendition of "Autumn in New York." The recording paid tribute to Bechet's long time friend and colleague Tommy Ladnier, who died four days prior to the recording date. Bechet is joined by Lux Lewis on piano, Teddy Bunn on guitar, Johnny Williams on bass, and Sid Catlett drums.

Educational Resources

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The Firehouse Jazz Band commercial dixieland fake book. (2002). Madison, TN: Louis Brown Publications.

Guided Listening Exercise

Texas Moaner Blues

Bechet and his contemporary, Louis Armstrong, were known to "butt heads" musically. In this session with vocalist Alberta Hunter, recorded in 1924, Armstrong and Bechet are featured trading blues choruses. After a subtle clarinet solo, the two musicians begin trading bouts.

1. Identify the form and instrumentation of the ensemble.
2. How does Bechet's soprano solo compare to Armstrong's?
 - a. From a rhythmic perspective?
 - b. From a melodic standpoint?
3. How do Bechet and Armstrong's differences as soloists reflect the New Orleans traditional styles of their respective instruments (assuming soprano saxophone follows the clarinet style)?
4. In the end, who gets the last word? That is to say, who plays on the coda break?

Jelly Roll Morton

Kyle Etges

Signature Recordings

Black Bottom Stomp. Recorded with the Red Hot Peppers in 1926 with Victor Records, Jelly Roll exhibits his sophistication as both a writer and an arranger on Black Bottom Stomp. From the very first opening notes, it is obvious that this will not stick fervently to the New Orleans tradition. George Mitchell's cornet is the first to break away from this tight-knit harmony, and the orchestrated voicings become pitted with Mitchell's stop time melodies. The piece then moves into a clarinet taking the lead over stop time figures, an unusual move in the New Orleans tradition. The cornet takes us into the Trio, where we are treated to some more traditional instrument roles, including some impressive clarinet acrobatics from Omer Simeon. For Jelly Roll's piano solo, the entire band cuts out to give him the floor. This arranging device has no predecessor in the New Orleans tradition, but Jelly Roll's clever utilization of this textural change has been imitated by countless jazz musicians over the years. We hear some nice features from Mitchell and banjoist Johnny St. Cyr before taking out the piece in the typical New Orleans fashion. Black Bottom Stomp was recorded at the Webster Hotel in Chicago, and also features Kid Ory on trombone, John Lindsay on bass, and Andrew Hilaire on drums.

The Crave. Recorded in Manhattan over a decade later than his Victor sessions, Jelly Roll released his solo piano work The Crave along other compositions under the name "New Orleans Memories" for General Records. Although made in 1939, this work is seemingly reminiscent of turn of the century ragtime pianists, employing a habanero style that was widely used at that time. The hard-hitting minor tonality is comparative to the opening theme of Fats Waller's "Viper's Drag," recorded in 1934. It's hard to say who influenced who, or if this was merely coincidence. On that same note, Jelly Roll seems to be hinting at the Harlem stride tradition with his playful left hand bass-chord comping. Unlike most stride compositions, Jelly Roll alters the texture throughout his piece, giving himself plenty of space for virtuosic solo breaks. About four minutes into the piece, Jelly Roll plays a rhythm in his left hand that is immediately recognizable as the boogie-woogie rhythm, imitated by so many piano players who came after him.

Dead Man Blues. I am delighted to admit that while many banters from the early 20th century have not held up over time, Dead Man Blues is a notable exception. Along with another Jelly Roll hit, "Sidewalk Blues," the tune employs some showmanship and antics typical of its time. This piece, recorded during the same Chicago session in 1926, begins with what can only be described as a reworked funeral dirge, harmonized almost like a chorale by Morton. The band immediately breaks into an up-tempo melody, presented with each instrument in their traditional New Orleans role. Omer Simeon is the first to solo, coming out of the gate with his fashionable clarinet arpeggios. George Mitchell's cornet solo on this cut strikes one as simple, yet elegant. Jelly Roll again proves his place in history as an arranging pioneer in the next section, featuring three clarinets in harmony pitted against the rhythmic hits of the brass and rhythm sections. This

compositional device is featured again in the Coda, where the clarinet chorale is capped off by the final rhythmic hit from the rest of the ensemble. The use of section pitting shows Jelly Roll as being truly ahead of his time, as the compositional technique is normally associated with Count Basie or Woody Herman. The Red Hot Peppers also featured Kid Ory on trombone, Johnny St. Cyr on banjo, John Lindsay on bass, and Andrew Hilaire on drums.

Educational Resources

Morton, J. R., Henderson, F. (arr.). (1924). *King Porter Stomp*. Retrived from <https://www.jwpepper.com/King-Porter-Stomp/2475172.item#>

- Instrumentation: Three Saxes, 3 trumpets, 2 trombones, guitar, piano, bass, and drums.
- Grade: MA

Morton, J. R., Hoefer, G. (ed.). (1949). *"Jelly Roll" Morton's famous blues, stomps, and ragtime*. New York, NY: Melrose Music Corp.

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Reich, H. (2003) *Jelly's blues: the life, music, and redemption of Jelly Roll Morton*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.

The Firehouse Jazz Band commercial dixieland fake book. (2002). Madison, TN: Louis Brown Publications.

Guided Listening Exercise

In this guided listening, we will observe how Jelly Roll Morton influenced the arrangement techniques of the big band era that came after him. Through three different examples of his work, listen for arrangement tools that are now synonymous with big band writing.

1. *Dead Man Blues*.
 - a. Identify the form and instrumentation.
 - b. After George Mitchell's cornet solo, what instruments present the melody?
 - c. What do the other instruments do during this feature?
 - d. What arrangement/instrumentation techniques does this predict for big band writers?
2. *The Chant*
 - a. Identify the form and instrumentation.
 - b. What musical device is on obvious display at the beginning of the piece?
 - c. Which instrument leads this device?
 - d. What arrangement/instrumentation techniques does this predict for big band writers?
3. *Smokehouse Blues*
 - a. Identify the form and instrumentation.
 - b. What does the rhythm section employ during the clarinet solo?
 - c. How does the band accompany Jelly Roll's piano solo?
 - d. What arrangement/instrumentation techniques does this predict for big band writers?

Django Reinhardt

Kyle Etges

Signature Recordings

I'll See You in my Dreams. This piece is seemingly more subdued than some of Django's other work. Unlike the other two signature recordings, this one was not written by Django Reinhardt. Isham Jones penned this standard in 1924, and it has since been performed by the likes of Paul Whiteman, Louis Armstrong, and Bing Crosby. The instrumentation suggests that *I'll See You in my Dreams* was recorded during the Hot Club years before 1939. The signature three guitars, violin and bass are unmistakably Django, his brother Joseph Reinhardt, Roger Chaput, Stéphane Grappelli, and Louis Vola respectively. Django Reinhardt's solo utilizes melodic sequencing to develop small ideas throughout his solo, solidifying his place in jazz history as an early virtuosic master of guitar. Reinhardt's version of this jazz standard was later imitated by Dick Hyman and Howard Alen, as part of the soundtrack to the Woody Allen movie *Sweet and Lowdown*, released in 1998.

Minor Swing. Django's classic composition is a seminal example of the gypsy jazz style. Everything from the instrumentation, harmony, playing technique, and compositional devices showcase gypsy jazz as a subgenre. Released in 1937, this recording showcases Reinhardt's Quintette du Hot Club de France during their residence at the Paris nightclub from 1934-39. Joining Django on this record are his brother Joseph Reinhardt and Roger Chaput on guitar, Stéphane Grappelli on violin, and Louis Vola on bass. Grappelli plays a blazing solo over some swelling guitar backgrounds, and Django proves his legendary status with his incredibly sophisticated solo work. Django's solo employs many devices now synonymous with the gypsy jazz idiom, such as the use of passing diminished chords between harmonies, and his ascending-descending phrase tendency. The coda of the piece recalls the introduction, though slightly more developed compared to its first presentation.

Nuages. Django's biggest hit throughout his career, *Nuages*, has been recorded by countless musicians inside and outside of the world of jazz. Biréli Lagrène, James Carter, and Willie Nelson are among the many different renditions of this tune. Django originally recorded it in 1940 with his classic Quintette, though Clarinetist Hubert Rostaing replaced Grappelli in the group, since the violinist remained in the United Kingdom during World War Two. The introduction to the piece sounds almost like a Duke Ellington creation, consisting of multiple clarinets in chorus. Eventually Rostaing's solo clarinet breaks from the pack into the first statement of the head. Django shows his usual sophistication and harmonic variety in his solo. Afterwards, the clarinet and guitar play a soli line in perfect unison, providing a welcome change in tonal color for the piece. While it was not unusual at this point in jazz history to experiment with tone combinations (Ellington being the foremost example), this particular combination is not often found in jazz writing, even today. Other members of the Quintette include Joseph Reinhardt and Roger Chaput on guitar, and Louis Vola on bass.

Educational Resources

Aebersold, J. (2011). *Volume 128: Django Reinhardt: Gypsy jazz* [CD]. Jamey Aebersold.

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Ellis, A., Jorgenson, J. (2011). *Demystifying the art of Django gypsy jazz guitar*. Retrieved from <http://truefire.com/blog/guitar-lessons/django-gypsy-jazz-guitar/>

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Reinhardt, D., Peters, M. (ed.) (1984). *Django Reinhardt anthology*. New York, NY: Goodman Group.

Guided Listening Exercise

Minor Swing

Analyze the varying elements of this composition, as well as Django's solo. These elements are vital to the sound and style of gypsy jazz.

1. Identify of form and instrumentation.
2. What chord quality is heavily utilized throughout the piece?
3. What substitution chords does Django Reinhardt employ to anticipate the next chord change?
4. In Reinhardt's solo, what typically follows his ascending melodic lines?
5. Would you consider Reinhardt to be a horizontally-oriented (scales) player, or vertically-oriented (arpeggios). Explain your answer.