

= Bix Beiderbecke =

Leon Bismark " Bix " Beiderbecke (March 10 , 1903 ? August 6 , 1931) was an American jazz cornetist , jazz pianist , and composer .

With Louis Armstrong and Muggsy Spanier , Beiderbecke was one of the most influential jazz soloists of the 1920s . His turns on " Singin ' the Blues " and " I 'm Coming , Virginia " (both 1927) , in particular , demonstrated an unusual purity of tone and a gift for improvisation . With these two recordings , especially , he helped to invent the jazz ballad style and hinted at what , in the 1950s , would become cool jazz . " In a Mist " (1927) , one of a handful of his piano compositions and one of only two he recorded , mixed classical (Impressionist) influences with jazz syncopation .

A native of Davenport , Iowa , Beiderbecke taught himself to play cornet largely by ear , leading him to adopt a non @-@ standard fingering some critics have connected to his original sound . He first recorded with Midwestern jazz ensembles , The Wolverines and The Bucktown Five in 1924 , after which he played briefly for the Detroit @-@ based Jean Goldkette Orchestra before joining Frankie " Tram " Trumbauer for an extended gig at the Arcadia Ballroom in St. Louis . Beiderbecke and Trumbauer joined Goldkette in 1926 . The band toured widely and famously played a set opposite Fletcher Henderson at the Roseland Ballroom in New York City in October 1926 . He made his greatest recordings in 1927 (see above) . In 1928 , Trumbauer and Beiderbecke left Detroit to join the best @-@ known and most prestigious dance orchestra in the country : the New @-@ York @-@ based Paul Whiteman Orchestra .

Beiderbecke 's most influential recordings date from his time with Goldkette and Whiteman , although they were generally recorded under his own name or Trumbauer 's . The Whiteman period also marked a precipitous decline in Beiderbecke 's health , brought on by the demand of the bandleader 's relentless touring and recording schedule in combination with Beiderbecke 's persistent alcoholism . A few stints in rehabilitation centers , as well as the support of Whiteman and the Beiderbecke family in Davenport , did not check Beiderbecke 's decline in health . He left the Whiteman band in 1930 and the following summer died in his Queens apartment at the age of 28 .

His death , in turn , gave rise to one of the original legends of jazz . In magazine articles , musicians ' memoirs , novels , and Hollywood films , Beiderbecke has been reincarnated as a Romantic hero , the " Young Man with a Horn " . His life has been portrayed as a battle against such common obstacles to art as family and commerce , while his death has been seen as a martyrdom for the sake of art . The musician @-@ critic Benny Green sarcastically called Beiderbecke " jazz 's Number One Saint , " while Ralph Berton compared him to Jesus . Beiderbecke remains the subject of scholarly controversy regarding his true name , the cause of his death , and the importance of his contributions to jazz .

= = Early life = =

Beiderbecke was born on March 10 , 1903 , in Davenport , Iowa , the son of Bismark Herman and Agatha Jane (Hilton) Beiderbecke . There is disagreement over whether Beiderbecke was christened Leon Bismark (and nicknamed " Bix ") or Leon Bix . His father was nicknamed " Bix " , as , for a time , was his older brother , Charles Burnette " Burnie " Beiderbecke . Burnie Beiderbecke claimed that the boy was named Leon Bix and subsequent biographers have reproduced birth certificates to that effect . However , more recent research ? which takes into account church and school records in addition to the will of a relative ? has suggested that he was originally named Leon Bismark . Regardless , his parents called him Bix , which seems to have been his preference . In a letter to his mother when he was nine years old , Beiderbecke signed off , " frome your Leon Bix Beiderbecke not Bismark Remeber [sic] " .

Beiderbecke 's father , the son of German immigrants , was a well @-@ to @-@ do coal and lumber merchant , named after the Iron Chancellor of his native Germany . Beiderbecke 's mother was the daughter of a Mississippi riverboat captain . She played the organ at Davenport 's First Presbyterian Church , and encouraged young Bix 's interest in the piano . Beiderbecke was the youngest of three children . His brother , Burnie , was born in 1895 , and his sister , Mary Louise , in

1898 . He began playing piano at age two or three . His sister recalls that he stood on the floor and played it with his hands over his head . Five years later , he was the subject of an admiring article in the Davenport Daily Democrat that proclaimed : " Seven @-@ year @-@ old boy musical wonder ! Little Bickie Beiderbecke plays any selection he hears . "

At age ten , his older brother Burnie recalled that he stopped coming home for supper , instead hurrying down to the riverfront and slipping aboard one or another of the excursion boats to play the Calliope . A friend remembered that the plots of the silent matinees Bix and his friends watched on Saturdays didn 't interest him much , but as soon as the lights came on he would rush home to see if he could duplicate the melodies the accompanist had played during the action .

When his brother Burnie returned to Davenport at the end of 1918 after serving stateside during World War I , he brought with him a Victrola phonograph and several records , including " Tiger Rag " and " Skeleton Jangle " by the Original Dixieland Jazz Band . From these records , Bix first learned to love hot jazz ; he taught himself to play cornet by listening to Nick LaRocca 's horn lines . Beiderbecke also listened to jazz music off the riverboats that docked in downtown Davenport . Louis Armstrong and the drummer Baby Dodds claimed to have met Beiderbecke when their New @-@ Orleans @-@ based excursion boat stopped in Davenport . Historians disagree over whether that is true .

Beiderbecke attended Davenport High School from 1919 to 1921 . During this time , he sat in and played professionally with various bands , including those of Wilbur Hatch , Floyd Bean and Carlisle Evans . In the spring of 1920 he performed for the school 's Vaudeville Night , singing in a vocal quintet called the Black Jazz Babies and playing his horn . He also performed , at the invitation of his friend Fritz Putzier , in Neal Buckley 's Novelty Orchestra . The group was hired for a gig in December 1920 , but a complaint was lodged with the American Federation of Musicians , Local 67 , that the boys did not have union cards . In an audition before a union executive , Beiderbecke was forced to sight read and failed . He did not earn his card .

On April 22 , 1921 , a month after he turned 18 , Beiderbecke was arrested by two Davenport police officers on a charge brought by the father of a young girl . According to biographer Jean Pierre Lion , " Bix was accused of having taken this man 's five @-@ year @-@ old daughter into a garage and committing on her an act qualified by the police report as ' lewd and lascivious . ' " Although Beiderbecke was briefly taken into custody and held on a \$ 1 @,@ 500 bond , the charge was dropped after the girl was not made available to testify . According to an affidavit submitted by her father , this was because " of the child 's age and the harm that would result to her in going over this case . " It is not clear from the father 's affidavit if the girl had identified Beiderbecke . Until recently , biographers have largely ignored this incident in Beiderbecke 's life , and Lion was the first , in 2005 , to print the police blotter and affidavit associated with the arrest . He dismissed the seriousness of the charge , but speculated that the arrest nevertheless might have led Beiderbecke to " feel abandoned and ashamed : he saw himself as suspect of perversion . "

Beiderbecke 's parents enrolled him in the exclusive Lake Forest Academy , north of Chicago in Lake Forest , Illinois . While historians have traditionally suggested that his parents sent him to Lake Forest to discourage his interest in jazz , others have begun to doubt this version of events , believing that he may have been sent away in response to his arrest . Regardless , Mr. and Mrs. Beiderbecke apparently felt that a boarding school would provide their son with both the necessary faculty attention and discipline to improve his academic performance . His interests , however , remained limited to music and sports . In pursuit of the former , Beiderbecke took the train into Chicago to catch the hot jazz bands at clubs and speakeasies , including the infamous Friar 's Inn , where he listened to and sometimes sat in with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings . He also traveled to the predominantly African @-@ American South Side to listen to what he called " real " jazz musicians . " Don 't think I 'm getting hard , Burnie , " he wrote to his brother , " but I 'd go to hell to hear a good band . " On campus , he helped organize the Cy @-@ Bix Orchestra with drummer Walter " Cy " Welge and almost immediately got into trouble with the Lake Forest headmaster for performing indecorously at a school dance .

Beiderbecke often failed to return to his dormitory before curfew , and sometimes stayed off @-@ campus the next day . In the early morning hours of May 20 , he was caught on the fire escape to

his dormitory , attempting to climb back into his room . The faculty voted to expel him the next day , due both to his academic failings and his extracurricular activities , which included drinking . The headmaster informed Beiderbecke 's parents by letter that following his expulsion school officials confirmed that Beiderbecke " was drinking himself and was responsible , in part at least , in having liquor brought into the School . " Soon after , Beiderbecke began pursuing a career in music .

He returned to Davenport briefly in the summer of 1922 , then moved to Chicago to join the Cascades Band , working that summer on Lake Michigan excursion boats . He gigged around Chicago until the fall of 1923 , at times returning to Davenport to work for his father .

= = Career = =

= = = Wolverines = = =

Beiderbecke joined the Wolverine Orchestra late in 1923 , and the seven @-@ man group first played a speakeasy called the Stockton Club near Hamilton , Ohio . Specializing in hot jazz and recoiling from so @-@ called sweet music , the band took its name from one of its most frequent numbers , Jelly Roll Morton 's " Wolverine Blues . " During this time , Beiderbecke also took piano lessons from a young woman who introduced him to the works of Eastwood Lane . Lane 's piano suites and orchestral arrangements were both self @-@ consciously American and influenced by the French Impressionists , and it is said to have greatly influenced Beiderbecke 's style , especially on " In a Mist . " A subsequent gig at Doyle 's Dance Academy in Cincinnati became the occasion for a series of band and individual photographs that resulted in the most famous image of Beiderbecke ? sitting fresh @-@ faced , his hair perfectly combed , his horn resting on his right knee .

On February 18 , 1924 , the Wolverines first recorded at Gennett Records in Richmond , Indiana . Their two sides that day included " Fidgety Feet " , written by Nick LaRocca and Larry Shields from the Original Dixieland Jazz Band , and " Jazz Me Blues . " Beiderbecke 's solo on the latter suggested something new and significant in jazz , according to biographers Richard M. Sudhalter and Philip R. Evans :

Both qualities ? complementary or " correlated " phrasing and cultivation of the vocal , " singing " middle @-@ range of the cornet ? are on display in Bix 's " Jazz Me Blues " solo , along with an already discernible inclination for unusual accidentals and inner chordal voices . It is a pioneer record , introducing a musician of great originality with a pace @-@ setting band . And it astonished even the Wolverines themselves .

The Wolverines recorded 15 sides for Gennett Records between February and October 1924 . The titles revealed a tough and well @-@ formed cornet talent . His lip had toughened from earlier , more tentative years ; on nine of the Wolverines ' recorded titles he proceeds commandingly from lead to opening solo without any need for a respite from playing .

Beiderbecke made his first recordings 21 months before Armstrong recorded as a leader with the Hot Five . Beiderbecke 's style was very different from that of Louis Armstrong according to The Oxford Companion to Jazz :

Where Armstrong 's playing was bravura , regularly optimistic , and openly emotional , Beiderbecke 's conveyed a range of intellectual alternatives . Where Armstrong , at the head of an ensemble , played it hard , straight , and true , Beiderbecke , like a shadowboxer , invented his own way of phrasing " around the lead . " Where Armstrong 's superior strength delighted in the sheer power of what a cornet could produce , Beiderbecke 's cool approach invited rather than commanded you to listen .

Where Armstrong emphasized showmanship and virtuosity , Beiderbecke emphasized melody , even when improvising , and ? different from Armstrong and contrary to how the Bix Beiderbecke of legend would be portrayed ? he rarely strayed into the upper reaches of the register . Paul Mares of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings insisted that Beiderbecke 's chief influence was the New Orleans cornetist Emmett Hardy , who died in 1925 at the age of 23 . Indeed , Beiderbecke had met Hardy

and the clarinetist Leon Roppolo in Davenport in 1921 when the two joined a local band and played in town for three months . Beiderbecke apparently spent time with them , but the degree to which Hardy 's style influenced Beiderbecke 's is difficult to know because Hardy never recorded . In some respects , Beiderbecke 's playing was sui generis , but he nevertheless listened to and studied the music around him : from Armstrong and Joe " King " Oliver to the Original Dixieland Jazz Band and the New Orleans Rhythm Kings to Claude Debussy and Maurice Ravel .

Soon , he was listening to Hoagy Carmichael , too . A law student and aspiring pianist and songwriter , Carmichael invited the Wolverines to Bloomington , Indiana , late in April 1924 . Beiderbecke had met Carmichael a couple of times before and the two became friends . On May 6 , 1924 , the Wolverines recorded a tune Carmichael had written especially for Beiderbecke and his colleagues : " Riverboat Shuffle " .

Beiderbecke left the Wolverines in October 1924 for a spot with Jean Goldkette in Detroit , but the job didn 't last long . Goldkette recorded for the Victor Talking Machine Company , whose musical director , Eddie King , objected to Beiderbecke 's hot @-@ jazz style of soloing ; it wasn 't copacetic with the commercial obligations that came with the band 's recording contract . King also was frustrated by the cornetist 's inability to deftly sight read . After a few weeks , Beiderbecke was bounced from the Goldkette band , but soon arranged a recording session back in Richmond with some of its members . On January 26 , 1925 , Bix and His Rhythm Jugglers set two tunes to wax : " Toddlin ' Blues " , another number by LaRocca and Shields , and Beiderbecke 's own composition , " Davenport Blues " . Beiderbecke biographer Lion has complained that the second number was marred by the alcohol consumed by the musicians . In subsequent years , " Davenport Blues " has been recorded by musicians from Bunny Berigan to Ry Cooder to Geoff Muldaur .

The following month , Beiderbecke enrolled at the University of Iowa in Iowa City , Iowa . His stint in academia was even briefer than his time in Detroit , however . When he attempted to pack his course schedule with music , his guidance counselor forced him instead to take religion , ethics , physical education , and military training . It was an institutional blunder that Benny Green described as being , in retrospect , " comical , " " fatuous , " and " a parody . " Beiderbecke promptly began to skip classes , and after he participated in a drunken bar fight , he was expelled . That summer he played with his friends Don Murray and Howdy Quicksell at a lake resort in Michigan . The band was run by Goldkette , and it put Beiderbecke in touch with another musician he had met before : the C @-@ melody saxophone player Frankie Trumbauer . The two hit it off , both personally and musically , despite Trumbauer having been warned by other musicians : " Look out , he 's trouble . He drinks and you 'll have a hard time handling him . " They were inseparable for much of the rest of Beiderbecke 's career , with Trumbauer acting as a father figure to Beiderbecke . When Trumbauer organized a band for an extended run at the Arcadia Ballroom in St. Louis , Beiderbecke joined him . There he also played alongside the clarinetist Pee Wee Russell , who praised Beiderbecke 's ability to drive the band . " He more or less made you play whether you wanted to or not , " Russell said . " If you had any talent at all he made you play better . "

= = = Goldkette = = =

In the spring of 1926 , Trumbauer closed up shop in St. Louis and , with Beiderbecke , moved to Detroit , this time to play with Goldkette 's headline ensemble . They played the summer at Hudson Lake , a resort in northern Indiana , and split the next year between touring , recording , and performing at Detroit 's Graystone Ballroom . In October 1926 , Goldkette 's " Famous Fourteen " , as they came to be called , opened at the Roseland Ballroom in New York City opposite the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra , one of the East Coast 's outstanding African American big bands . The Roseland promoted a " Battle of the Bands " in the local press and , on October 12 , after a night of furious playing , Goldkette 's men were declared the winners . " We [?] were amazed , angry , morose , and bewildered , " Rex Stewart , Fletcher 's lead trumpeter , said of listening to Beiderbecke and his colleagues play . He called the experience " most humiliating " .

Although the band recorded numerous sides for Victor during this period , none of them showcases Beiderbecke 's most famous solos . Much of Goldkette 's money was made through these records ,

but they were subject ? as Eddie King had well understood ? to the forces of the commercial market . As a result , their sound was often " sweeter " than what many of the hot jazz musicians would have preferred . In addition to their sessions with Goldkette , Beiderbecke and his friends recorded under their own names for the Okeh label . For instance , on February 4 , 1927 , Frank Trumbauer and His Orchestra recorded " Trumbology " , " Clarinet Marmalade " , and " Singin ' the Blues " , all three of which featured some of Beiderbecke 's best work . Again with Trumbauer , Beiderbecke re @-@ recorded Carmichael 's " Riverboat Shuffle " in May and delivered two of his best known solos a few days later on " I 'm Coming , Virginia " and " Way Down Yonder in New Orleans " . Beiderbecke earned co @-@ writing credit with Trumbauer on " For No Reason at All in C " , recorded under the name Tram , Bix and Eddie (in their Three Piece Band) . Beiderbecke switched between cornet and piano on that number , and then in September played only piano for his recording of " In A Mist " . This was perhaps the most fruitful year of his short career .

Under financial pressure , Goldkette folded his premier band in September in New York . Paul Whiteman hoped to snatch up Goldkette 's best musicians for his traveling orchestra , but Beiderbecke , Trumbauer , Murray , Bill Rank , Eddie Lang , Joe Venuti , Chauncey Morehouse , and Frank Signorelli instead joined the bass saxophone player Adrian Rollini at the Club New Yorker . When that job ended sooner than expected , in October 1927 , Beiderbecke and Trumbauer signed on with Whiteman . They joined his orchestra in Indianapolis on October 27 .

= = = Whiteman = = =

The Paul Whiteman Orchestra was the most popular and highest paid band of the day . In spite of Whiteman 's nickname , " The King of Jazz " , his was not a jazz ensemble , but a popular music outfit that played bits of jazz and classical music according to the demands of its record @-@ buying and concert @-@ going audience . Whiteman was perhaps best known for having premiered George Gershwin 's Rhapsody in Blue in New York in 1924 , and the orchestrator of that piece , Ferde Grofé , continued to be an important part of the band in 1928 . At three hundred pounds , Whiteman was huge both physically and culturally ? " a man flabby , virile , quick , coarse , untidy and sleek , with a hard core of shrewdness in an envelope of sentimentalism , " according to a 1926 New Yorker profile . And many Beiderbecke partisans have turned Whiteman into a villain in the years since .

Benny Green , in particular , derided Whiteman for being a mere " mediocre vaudeville act , " and suggesting that " today we only tolerate the horrors of Whiteman 's recordings at all in the hope that here and there a Bixian fragment will redeem the mess . " Richard Sudhalter has responded by suggesting that Beiderbecke saw Whiteman as an opportunity to pursue musical ambitions that did not stop at jazz :

Colleagues have testified that , far from feeling bound or stifled by the Whiteman orchestra , as Green and others have suggested , Bix often felt a sense of exhilaration . It was like attending a music school , learning and broadening : formal music , especially the synthesis of the American vernacular idiom with a more classical orientation , so much sought @-@ after in the 1920s , were calling out to him .

The education that Beiderbecke did not receive from the University of Iowa , in other words , he sought through Whiteman . In the meantime , Beiderbecke played on four number @-@ one records in 1928 , all under the Whiteman name : " Together " , " Ramona " , " My Angel " , and " Ol ' Man River " , which featured Bing Crosby on vocals . This accomplishment says less about the jazz excellence of these records than it does about the tastes of the largely white , record @-@ buying public to which Whiteman (and Goldkette before him) catered .

For Beiderbecke , the downside of being with Whiteman was the relentless touring and recording schedule , exacerbated by Beiderbecke 's alcoholism . On November 30 , 1928 , in Cleveland , Beiderbecke suffered what Lion terms " a severe nervous crisis " and Sudhalter and Evans suggest " was in all probability an acute attack of delirium tremens , " presumably triggered by Beiderbecke 's attempt to curb his alcohol intake . " He cracked up , that 's all , " trombonist Bill Rank said . " Just went to pieces ; broke up a roomful of furniture in the hotel . "

In February 1929 , Beiderbecke returned home to Davenport to convalesce and was hailed by the local press as " the world 's hottest cornetist . " He then spent the summer with Whiteman 's band in Hollywood in preparation for the shooting of a new talking picture , The King of Jazz . Production delays prevented any real work from being done on the film , leaving Beiderbecke and his pals plenty of time to drink heavily . By September , he was back in Davenport , where his parents helped him to seek treatment . He spent a month , from October 14 until November 18 , at the Keeley Institute in Dwight , Illinois .

While he was away , Whiteman famously kept a chair empty in Beiderbecke 's honor . But when he returned to New York at the end of January 1930 , the renowned soloist did not rejoin Whiteman and performed only sparingly . On his last recording session , in New York , on September 15 , 1930 , Beiderbecke played on the original recording of Hoagy Carmichael 's new song , " Georgia on My Mind " , with Carmichael doing the vocal , Eddie Lang on guitar , Joe Venuti on violin , Jimmy Dorsey on clarinet and alto saxophone , Jack Teagarden on trombone , and Bud Freeman on tenor saxophone . The song would go on to become a jazz and popular music standard . In 2014 , the 1930 recording of " Georgia on My Mind " was inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame .

Two years earlier , Beiderbecke had influenced another Carmichael standard , " Star Dust " . A Beiderbecke riff caught in Carmichael 's head and became the tune 's chorus . Bing Crosby , who sang with Whiteman , also cited Beiderbecke as an important influence . " Bix and all the rest would play and exchange ideas on the piano , " he said .

With all the noise [of a New York pub] going on , I don 't know how they heard themselves , but they did . I didn 't contribute anything , but I listened and learned [?] I was now being influenced by these musicians , particularly horn men . I could hum and sing all of the jazz choruses from the recordings made by Bix , Phil Napoleon , and the rest .

Following the Wall Street Crash of 1929 , the once @-@ booming music industry contracted and work became more difficult to find . For a while , Beiderbecke 's only income came from a radio show booked by Whiteman , The Camel Pleasure Hour . However , during a live broadcast on October 8 , 1930 , Beiderbecke 's seemingly limitless gift for improvisation finally failed him : " He stood up to take his solo , but his mind went blank and nothing happened , " recalled a fellow musician , Frankie Cush . Whiteman finally let Beiderbecke go . The cornetist spent the rest of the year at home in Davenport and then , in February 1931 , he returned to New York one last time .

= = Death = =

Beiderbecke died in his apartment , No. 1G , 43 @-@ 30 46th Street , in Sunnyside , Queens , on August 6 , 1931 . The week had been quite hot , making sleep difficult , and late into the evenings , Beiderbecke had played piano , both to the annoyance and to the delight of his neighbors . On the evening of August 6 , at about 9 @.@ 30 pm , his rental agent , George Kraslow , heard noises coming from across the hallway . " His hysterical shouts brought me to his apartment on the run , " Kraslow told Philip Evans in 1959 .

He pulled me in and pointed to the bed . His whole body was trembling violently . He was screaming there were two Mexicans hiding under his bed with long daggers . To humor him , I looked under the bed and when I rose to assure him there was no one hiding there , he staggered and fell , a dead weight , in my arms . I ran across the hall and called in a woman doctor , Dr. Haberski , to examine him . She pronounced him dead .

Historians have disagreed over the identity of the doctor who pronounced Beiderbecke dead . The official cause of death , meanwhile , was lobar pneumonia , with scholars continuing to debate the extent to which his alcoholism was also a factor . Beiderbecke 's mother and brother took the train to New York and brought his body home to Davenport . He was buried there on August 11 in the family plot at Oakdale Cemetery .

= = Legend and legacy = =

At the time of his death Beiderbecke was little known except among fellow musicians , and for

several years critics paid little attention to his music . As Jean Pierre Lion has pointed out , " The only serious and analytical obituary to have been published in the months " after his death was by a Frenchman , Hugues Panassié . The notice appeared in October 1931 and began with a bit of hyperbole and an incorrect fact , two hallmarks of much of the subsequent writing about Beiderbecke : " The announcement of Bix Beiderbecke 's death plunged all jazz musicians into despair . We first believed it was a false alarm , as we had heard so often before about Bix . Unfortunately , precise information has been forthcoming , and we even know the day ? August 7 ? when he passed away . "

The New Republic critic Otis Ferguson wrote two short articles for the magazine , " Young Man with a Horn " (July 29 , 1936) and " Young Man with a Horn Again " (November 18 , 1940) , that worked to revive interest not only in Beiderbecke 's music but also in his biography . Beiderbecke " lived very briefly [?] in what might be called the servants ' entrance to art , " Ferguson wrote . " His story is a good story , quite humble and right . " The romantic notion of the short @-@ lived , doomed jazz genius can be traced back at least as far as Beiderbecke , and lived on in Glenn Miller , Charlie Parker , Billie Holiday , Jaco Pastorius and many more .

Ferguson 's sense of what was " right " became the basis for the Beiderbecke Romantic legend , which has traditionally emphasized the musician 's Iowa roots , his often careless dress , his difficulty sight reading , the purity of his tone , his drinking , and his early death . These themes were repeated by Beiderbecke 's friends in various memoirs , including *The Stardust Road* (1946) and *Sometimes I Wonder* (1965) by Hoagy Carmichael , *Really the Blues* (1946) by Mezz Mezzrow , and *We Called It Music* (1947) by Eddie Condon . Beiderbecke was portrayed as a tragic genius along the lines of Ludwig van Beethoven . " For his talent there were no conservatories to get stuffy in , no high @-@ trumpet didoes to be learned doggedly , note @-@ perfect as written , " Ferguson wrote , " because in his chosen form the only writing of any account was traced in the close shouting air of Royal Gardens , Grand Pavilions , honkeytonks , etc . " He was " this big overgrown kid , who looked like he 'd been snatched out of a cradle in the cornfields , " Mezzrow wrote . " The guy didn 't have an enemy in the world , " recalled Beiderbecke 's friend Russ Morgan , " [b] ut he was out of this world most of the time . " According to Ralph Berton , he was " as usual gazing off into his private astronomy , " but his cornet , Condon famously quipped , sounded " like a girl saying yes . "

In 1938 , Dorothy Baker borrowed the titles of her friend Otis Ferguson 's two articles and published the novel *Young Man with a Horn* . Her story of the doomed trumpet player Rick Martin was inspired , she wrote , by " the music , but not the life " of Beiderbecke , but the image of Martin quickly became the image of Beiderbecke : His story is about " the gap between the man 's musical ability and his ability to fit it to his own life . " In 1950 , Michael Curtiz directed the film *Young Man with a Horn* , starring Kirk Douglas , Lauren Bacall , and Doris Day . In this version , in which Hoagy Carmichael also plays a role , the Rick Martin character lives .

In *Blackboard Jungle* , a 1955 film starring Glenn Ford and Sidney Poitier , Beiderbecke 's music is briefly featured , but as a symbol of cultural conservatism in a nation on the cusp of the rock and roll revolution .

In 1971 , on the 40th anniversary of Beiderbecke 's death , the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival was founded in Davenport , Iowa , to honor the musician . In 1974 , Sudhalter and Evans published their biography , *Bix : Man and Legend* , which was nominated for a National Book Award . In 1977 , the Beiderbecke childhood home at 1934 Grand Avenue in Davenport was added to the National Register of Historic Places .

Beiderbecke 's music was featured in three British comedy drama television series , all written by Alan Plater : *The Beiderbecke Affair* (1984) , *The Beiderbecke Tapes* (1987) , and *The Beiderbecke Connection* (1988) . In 1991 , the Italian director Pupi Avati released *Bix : An Interpretation of a Legend* . Filmed partially in the Beiderbecke home , which Avati had purchased and renovated , Bix was screened at the Cannes Film Festival .

At the beginning of the 21st century , Beiderbecke 's music continues to reside mostly out of the mainstream and some of the facts of his life are still debated , but scholars largely agree ? due in part to the influence of Sudhalter and Evans ? that he was an important innovator in early jazz ; jazz cornetists , including Sudhalter (before his death in 2008) , and Tom Pletcher , closely emulate his

style . In 2003 , to mark the hundredth anniversary of his birth , the Greater Astoria Historical Society and other community organizations , spearheaded by Paul Maringelli and The Bix Beiderbecke Sunnyside Memorial Committee , erected a plaque in Beiderbecke 's honor at the apartment building in which he died in Queens . That same year , Frederick Turner published his novel 1929 , which followed the facts of Beiderbecke 's life fairly closely , focusing on his summer in Hollywood and featuring appearances by Al Capone and Clara Bow . The critic and musician Digby Fairweather sums up Beiderbecke 's musical legacy , arguing that " with Louis Armstrong , Bix Beiderbecke was the most striking of jazz 's cornet (and of course , trumpet) fathers ; a player who first captivated his 1920s generation and after his premature death , founded a dynasty of distinguished followers beginning with Jimmy McPartland and moving on down from there . "

= = Music = =

= = = Style and influence = = =

Bix Beiderbecke and Louis Armstrong were among jazz 's first soloists . In New Orleans , jazz had been ensemble playing , with the various instruments weaving their parts into a single and coherent aural tapestry . There had been soloists , to be sure , with the clarinetist Sidney Bechet the best known among them , but these players " lacked the technical resources and , even more , the creative depth to make the solo the compelling centerpiece of jazz music . " That changed in 1924 when Beiderbecke and Armstrong began to make their most important records . According to the critic Terry Teachout , they are " the two most influential figures in the early history of jazz " and " the twin lines of descent from which most of today 's jazz can be traced . "

Beiderbecke 's cornet style is often described by contrasting it with Armstrong 's markedly different approach . Armstrong was a virtuoso on his instrument , and his solos often took advantage of that fact . Beiderbecke was largely , although not completely , self @-@ taught , and the constraints imposed by that fact were evident in his music . While Armstrong often soared into the upper register , Beiderbecke stayed in the middle range , more interested in exploring the melody and harmonies than in dazzling the audience . Armstrong often emphasized the performance aspect of his playing , while Beiderbecke tended to stare at his feet while playing , uninterested in personally engaging his listeners . Armstrong was deeply influenced by the blues , while Beiderbecke was influenced as much by modernist composers such as Debussy and Ravel as by his fellow jazzmen .

Beiderbecke 's most famous solo was on " Singin ' the Blues " , recorded February 4 , 1927 . It has been hailed as an important example of the " jazz ballad style " ? " a slow or medium @-@ tempo piece played gently and sweetly , but not cloyingly , with no loss of muscle . " The tune 's laid @-@ back emotions hinted at what would become , in the 1950s , the cool jazz style , personified by Chet Baker and Bill Evans . More than that , though , " Singin ' the Blues " has been noted for the way its improvisations feel less improvised than composed , with each phrase building on the last in a logical fashion . Benny Green describes the solo 's effect on practiced ears :

When a musician hears Bix 's solo on ' Singing the Blues ' , he becomes aware after two bars that the soloist knows exactly what he is doing and that he has an exquisite sense of discord and resolution . He knows also that this player is endowed with the rarest jazz gift of all , a sense of form which lends to an improvised performance a coherence which no amount of teaching can produce . The listening musician , whatever his generation or his style , recognizes Bix as a modern , modernism being not a style but an attitude .

Like Green , who made particular mention of Beiderbecke 's " amount of teaching , " the jazz historian Ted Gioia also has emphasized Beiderbecke 's lack of formal instruction , suggesting that it caused him to adopt " an unusual , dry embouchure " and " unconventional fingerings , " which he retained for the rest of his life . Gioia points to " a characteristic streak of obstinacy " in Beiderbecke that provokes " this chronic disregard of the tried @-@ and @-@ true . " He argues that this stubbornness was behind Beiderbecke 's decision not to switch from cornet to trumpet when many other musicians , including Armstrong , did so . In addition , Gioia highlights Beiderbecke 's precise

timing , relaxed delivery , and pure tone , which contrasted with " the dirty , rough @-@ edged sound " of King Oliver and his protégé Armstrong , whose playing was often more energetic and whose style held more sway early in the 1920s than Beiderbecke 's . Gioia further wonders whether the many hyperbolic and quasi @-@ poetic descriptions of Beiderbecke 's style ? most notably Condon 's " like a girl saying yes " ? may indicate that Beiderbecke 's sound was muddled on recordings .

Eddie Condon , Hoagy Carmichael , and Mezz Mezzrow , all of whom hyperbolically raved about his playing , also saw Beiderbecke play live or performed alongside him . Condon , for instance , wrote of being amazed by Beiderbecke 's piano playing : " All my life I had been listening to music [?] But I had never heard anything remotely like what Beiderbecke played . For the first time I realized music isn 't all the same , it had become an entirely new set of sounds " " I tried to explain Bix to the gang , " Carmichael wrote , but " [i] t was no good , like the telling of a vivid , personal dream [?] the emotion couldn 't be transmitted . "

Mezzrow described Beiderbecke 's tone as being " pickled in alcohol [?] I have never heard a tone like he got before or since . He played mostly open horn , every note full , big , rich and round , standing out like a pearl , loud but never irritating or jangling , with a powerful drive that few white musicians had in those days . "

Some critics have highlighted " Jazz Me Blues " , recorded with the Wolverines on February 18 , 1924 , as being particularly important to understanding Beiderbecke 's style . Although it was one of his earliest recordings , the hallmarks of his playing were evident . " The overall impression we get from this solo , as in all of Bix at his best , " writes the trumpeter Randy Sandke , " is that every note is spontaneous yet inevitable . " Richard Hadlock describes Beiderbecke 's contribution to " Jazz Me Blues " as " an ordered solo that seems more inspired by clarinetists Larry Shields of the ODJB and Leon Roppolo of the NORK than by other trumpet players . " He goes on to suggest that clarinetists , by virtue of their not being tied to the melody as much as cornetists and trumpet players , could explore harmonies .

" Jazz Me Blues " was also important because it introduced what has been called the " correlated chorus " , a method of improvising that Beiderbecke 's Davenport friend Esten Spurrier attributed to both Beiderbecke and Armstrong . " Louis departed greatly from all cornet players in his ability to compose a close @-@ knit individual 32 measures with all phrases compatible with each other " , Spurrier told the biographers Sudhalter and Evans , " so Bix and I always credited Louis as being the father of the correlated chorus : play two measures , then two related , making four measures , on which you played another four measures related to the first four , and so on ad infinitum to the end of the chorus . So the secret was simple ? a series of related phrases . "

Beiderbecke plays piano on his recordings " Big Boy " (October 8 , 1924) , " For No Reason at All in C " (May 13 , 1927) , " Wringin ' and Twistin ' " (September 17 , 1927) ? all with ensembles ? and his only solo recorded work , " In a Mist " (September 8 , 1927) . Critic Frank Murphy argues that many of the same characteristics that mark Beiderbecke on the cornet mark him on the keyboard : the uncharacteristic fingering , the emphasis on inventive harmonies , and the correlated choruses . Those inventive harmonies , on both cornet and piano , eventually helped point the way to bebop , which abandoned melody almost entirely .

= = = Compositions = = =

Bix Beiderbecke wrote or co @-@ wrote six instrumental compositions during his career :

" Davenport Blues " (1925)

" In a Mist (Bixology) " (1927)

" For No Reason at All in C " (1927) with Frank Trumbauer

" Candlelights " (1930)

" Flashes " (1931)

" In the Dark " (1931)

" Candlelights " , " Flashes " , and " In the Dark " are piano compositions transcribed with the help of Bill Challis but never recorded by Beiderbecke . Two additional compositions were attributed to him

by two other jazz composers : " Betcha I Getcha " , attributed to Beiderbecke as a co @-@ composer by Joe Venuti , the composer of the song , and " Cloudy " , attributed to Beiderbecke by composer Charlie Davis as a composition from circa 1924 .

= = = Major recordings = = =

Bix Beiderbecke 's first recordings were as a member of the Wolverine Orchestra

" Fidgety Feet " / " Jazz Me Blues " , recorded on February 18 , 1924 , in Richmond , Indiana , and released as Gennett 5408

" Copenhagen " , recorded on May 6 , 1924 , and released as Gennett 5453B and Claxtonola 40336B

" Riverboat Shuffle " / " Susie (Of the Islands) " , recorded on May 6 , 1924 , and released as Gennett 5454

As Bix Beiderbecke and his Rhythm Jugglers

" Toddlin ' Blues " / " Davenport Blues " , recorded on January 26 , 1925 , in Richmond , Indiana , and released as Gennett 5654

With the Jean Goldkette Orchestra in 1926 ? 1927

" My Pretty Girl " / " Cover Me Up with Sunshine " , recorded on February 1 , 1927 , in New York and released as Victor 20588

" Sunny Disposish " / " Fox Trot " from " Americana " , recorded on February 3 , 1927 , in New York and released as Victor 20493B

" Clementine " , recorded on September 15 , 1927 in New York and released on Victor 20994 " Jean Goldkette and his Orchestra " .

With Frankie Trumbauer and His Orchestra and guitarist Eddie Lang

" Clarinet Marmalade " / " Singin ' the Blues " , recorded on February 4 , 1927 , in New York and released as Okeh 40772

" Riverboat Shuffle " / " Ostrich Walk " , recorded on May 9 , 1927 in New York and released as Okeh 40822

" I 'm Coming , Virginia " / " Way Down Yonder in New Orleans " , recorded on May 13 , 1927 , in New York and released as Okeh 40843

" For No Reason at All in C " / " Trumbology " , recorded on May 13 , 1927 , in New York and released as Okeh 40871 , Columbia 35667 , and Parlophone R 3419

" In a Mist " / " Wringin ' an ' Twistin ' " , recorded on September 9 , 1927 , in New York and released as Okeh 40916 and Vocalion 3150

" Borneo " / " My Pet " , recorded on April 10 , 1928 , in New York and released as Okeh 41039

As Bix Beiderbecke and His Gang

" At the Jazz Band Ball " / " Jazz Me Blues " , recorded on October 5 , 1927 , in New York and released as Okeh 40923

" Royal Garden Blues " / " Goose Pimples " , recorded on October 5 , 1927 , in New York and released as Okeh 8544

" Sorry " / " Since My Best Gal Turned Me Down " , recorded on October 25 , 1927 , in New York and released as Okeh 41001

" Wa @-@ Da @-@ Da (Everybody 's Doin ' It Now) " , recorded on July 7 , 1928 in Chicago , Illinois and released as Okeh 41088

" Rhythm King " , recorded on September 21 , 1928 in New York and released as Okeh 41173

With the Paul Whiteman Orchestra

" Lonely Melody " [Take 3] / " Mississippi Mud " [Take 2] , with Bing Crosby , the Rhythm Boys , and Izzy Friedman , recorded on January 4 , 1928 , in New York and released as Victor 25366

" Ramona " , recorded on January 4 , 1928 in New York and released as Victor 21214 @-@ A. No. 1 for 3 weeks

" Ol ' Man River " (From Show Boat) , recorded on January 11 , 1928 in New York and released as Victor 21218 @-@ A and Victor 25249 with Bing Crosby on vocals . No. 1 for 1 week

" San " [Take 6] , recorded on January 12 , 1928 in New York and released as Victor 24078 @-@

A

" Together " , recorded on January 21 , 1928 in New York and released as Victor 35883 @-@ A. No. 1 for 2 weeks

" Mississippi Mud " [Take 3] / " From Monday On " [Take 6] , with vocals by Bing Crosby , recorded on February 28 , 1928 , in New York and released as Victor 21274

" My Angel " , recorded on April 21 , 1928 in New York and released as Victor 21388 @-@ A. No. 1 for 6 weeks

" My Melancholy Baby " , recorded on May 15 , 1928 , in New York and released as Columbia 50068 @-@ D

" Sweet Sue " , recorded on September 18 , 1928 , in New York and released as Columbia 50103 @-@ D

As Bix Beiderbecke and His Orchestra

" I Don 't Mind Walking in the Rain " / " I 'll Be a Friend with Pleasure " , recorded on September 8 , 1930 , in New York and released as Victor 23008

With Hoagy Carmichael and His Orchestra

" Barnacle Bill , the Sailor " / " Rockin ' Chair " , with vocals by Carson Robison , recorded on May 21 , 1930 , in New York and released as Victor V @-@ 38139 and Victor 25371

" Georgia on My Mind " , with Hoagy Carmichael on vocals , recorded on September 15 , 1930 , in New York and released as Victor 23013

= = Grammy Hall of Fame = =

Bix Beiderbecke was posthumously inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame , which is a special Grammy award established in 1973 to honor recordings that are at least 25 years old and that have " qualitative or historical significance . "

= = Honors = =

1962 , inducted into Down Beat 's Jazz Hall of Fame , critics ' poll

1971 , Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society established in Davenport , Iowa ; founded annual jazz festival and scholarship

1977 , Beiderbecke 's 1927 recording of " Singin ' the Blues " inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame

1979 , statue presented at LeClaire Park , in Davenport , Iowa

1979 , inducted into the Big Band and Jazz Hall of Fame

1980 , Beiderbecke 's 1927 recording of " In a Mist " inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame

1989 , Asteroid 23457 Beiderbecke named after him .

1993 , inducted into the International Academy of Jazz Hall of Fame

2000 , statue dedicated in Davenport

2000 , ASCAP Jazz Wall of Fame

2004 , inducted into the inaugural class of the Lincoln Center 's Nesuhi Ertegun Jazz Hall of Fame

2006 , the 1927 recording of " Singin ' the Blues " with Frankie Trumbauer and Eddie Lang was placed on the U.S. Library of Congress National Recording Registry .

2007 , inducted into the Gennett Records Walk of Fame in Richmond , Indiana

2014 , the 1930 recording of " Georgia on My Mind " by Hoagy Carmichael and His Orchestra , featuring Beiderbecke on cornet , inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame