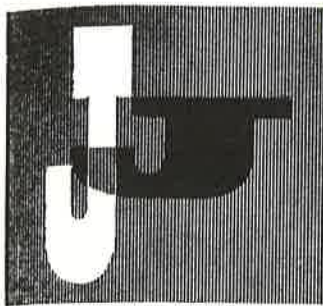


RL 921
CE. (e) DeLuzas
(Wabeltor)



JAZZ

JAZZ JOURNAL, LTD.

Phone: SHEpherds Bush 2372

JOURNAL

Published Monthly

The Cottage, 27 Willow Vale,
London, W.12

Editor: Sinclair Trail

Subscription Rates: 26/- per year 13/- per half year 6/6 per quarter 2/2 single copies



WILBUR DE PARIS AND HIS NEW NEW ORLEANS JAZZ

GEORGE W. KAY

Wilbur de Paris, fifty-four year old bachelor who neither drinks nor smokes, presents an impressive picture of a dignified, clear-thinking, articulate leader, composer and arranger. A native of Crawfordsville, Indiana, Wilbur started his career working with his father in one of his plantation shows. He played peck horn (alto saxhorn) in tent shows, circuses, carnivals and vaudeville (TOBA circuit) and at the age of sixteen, heard his first jazz in New Orleans as a member of a summer tab show that played the Lyric Theatre. There he met and sat in with Louis Armstrong at Tom Anderson's (Wilbur played C melody sax) as well as with Armand J. Piron, whose orchestras played the leading Crescent City social functions for over a decade. In the early thirties Wilbur was holding his own as a first rate trombonist in many big bands of the era. His name appears on many 1930 sessions for Victor by Morton's Hot Peppers, and in the late forties he spent many musically enriching months with that unsurpassed teacher, Duke Ellington. His section can be heard on many Ellington Victors and on Duke's tremendous Musi-craft session (recently reissued by the World Record Club).

EXPERIENCE

It is the culmination of years of experience with all types of groups that Wilbur has evolved his original and characteristic style. His high, dry, melodic tone contrasts with his expressive "burry" low register growl, recalling somewhat the late Jimmy Harrison or Holton Jefferson. Never one to hog a solo spot, Wilbur builds successive choruses with such skill that his long trombone solos seem to melt unobtrusively into the ensemble framework of the supporting instruments.

Sidney de Paris is probably better known than his brother Wilbur. Recognized as the unchallenged master of the mute, Sidney's biting, impassioned trumpet can be heard on countless jazz classics. A few of the numerous recordings featuring Sidney in large and small groups, include those by Fletcher Henderson, Charlie Johnson, McKinney's Cotton Pickers, Sidney Bechet, Jelly Roll Morton, Art Hodes and Tommy Ladnier. An excellent example of his direct, ex-

plosive attack can be found on Art Hodes' Decca recording, "Liberty Inn Drag" and his adroit, ingenious manipulation of mutes is unsurpassed in his two superb solos in "The Martinique" (Felsted EDL 87010). Recently Sidney directed his talents to the tuba, an instrument he blows with uninhibited delight. His pleasant, bouncing tuba solo on "Hot Lips" (Atlantic 1219) provides a rollicking, joyful twist to this nostalgic old standard. One of the greatest fundamental jazz trumpeters of all time, Sidney de Paris represents a tremendous force in both traditional and mainstream jazz.

OMER SIMEON

Omer Simeon is considered by many to be the world's greatest living New Orleans' clarinetist. Born in New Orleans in 1907, he made his name in Chicago during the 1920's with Charles Elgar, Jelly Roll Morton, King Oliver, and Luis Russell. Later he was associated with the big bands of Earl Hines and Jimmy Lunceford. Some of his best efforts can be heard with his brother's present band; his beautiful and enthralling solos on "Prelude In C Sharp Minor" (Felsted EDL87010), "Shreveport Stomp" (Atlantic 143), and "In A Persian Market" (A440) are all extremely hot. On the latter he "takes off" on the heels of a short, off-key piano interpolation by Fitzpatrick, and that musical device popularized by Jelly Roll—the break—is restored with all its emotional impact. Simeon literally soars on this freely improvised "dirty toned" solo, punctuated by the stop-time-beat by the entire band. Jelly Roll would have placed his unreserved stamp of approval on this performance.

The rhythm section of the de Paris band has changed several times since 1951. Wilbur insists on a loose, flexible, swinging rhythm section, as contrasted with the more rigid ragtime beat of most revival groups. Currently Sonny White, who has played with Willie Bryant, Bechet, Benny Carter and Billie Holiday, is on piano; Lee Blair, banjo, who played with Jelly Roll Morton, Luis Russell and Louis Armstrong; and George Foster who has played drums with Fess Williams, Ovie Alston and Chick Webb.

The new Wilbur de Paris 12 in. LP

Over at Jimmy Ryan's on West Fifty Second Street, Manhattan, the East Coast's **Number One** New Orleans traditional jazz band is entering its fifth straight year at this famous jazz spot. The phenomenal success of Wilbur de Paris and his band comes as no surprise to their enthusiastic followers, but it is nevertheless worthy of a little analytical study. The reasons are simple.

First, the de Paris aggregation believe in good stage presence and every man puts his best foot forward to faithfully interpret the repertoire of over 300 tunes in the true tradition and spirit of Morton and Oliver. The jazz they play is not a watered, synthetic substitute for the real thing. This is swashbuckling, swinging jazz that rares back and kicks out. Yet, unlike the early groups of Morton and Oliver, the terminology, "Wilbur de Paris and his New New Orleans Jazz", is just what the name implies. Wilbur's arrangements provide ample solo space, which, coupled with distinctive polish and compelling swing, give the music a happy, bright stylization unique in traditional jazz.

The other reason for the success of the de Paris band is the front line—Wilbur, leader and trombone, brother Sidney de Paris, trumpet and tuba, and Omer Simeon, clarinet. The loss of any one of these stalwarts would drastically effect the entire orchestral makeup. That Wilbur, Sidney and Omer comprise an invaluable, smoothly integrated team, perfected only through years of close association with each other, is an established fact. A glance into the musical bibliographies of this superb trio will reveal the cogent, underlying factors leading to the band's success.

NOTICE: THIS MATERIAL MAY BE
PROTECTED BY COPYRIGHT LAW
(TITLE 17 - U.S. CODE)

on Atlantic 1219, is the fourth of a series by the present band and Wilbur feels, with justification, that it is his best. Recorded in New York in April 1955, Wilbur used in addition to the already mentioned musicians, Wendell Marshall, bass, with Adolphus Cheatham, trumpet, being added for "Mardi Rag", "Milenberg Joys" and "Hot Lips". The other tracks are "Are You From Dixie", "Yama Yama Man," "Flow Gently, Sweet Aston," "Madagascar" and "March of the Charcoal Grays" (a parody on the bustling young Madison Avenue junior executives in their gray flannel suits). The entire set represents an array of excellently played rags and stomps (no blues numbers) abounding in good solos and perfect ensemble cohesion.

NANNY GOAT VIBRATO

The fine liner notes by Whitney Balliett deserve special comment. As Balliett states, there have been inevitable comparisons of the de Paris band's style with that of Turk Murphy. Wilbur de Paris, as quoted by Balliett, has this to say: "Playing old numbers doesn't make jazz. . . . For instance, my playing of Jelly Roll's "The Pearls" is slow. Turk Murphy plays it faster. Jelly had to confine it to 3:15 time limit when he recorded it, so he had to speed it up from its original tempo. The motivation of my playing and Turk's playing is not the same. He had to go by the record. I knew Jelly well. I lived right next to him in New York. We've got an institution for that music. Murphy's band is recreating but we are playing exactly as the earlier musicians would be playing if they were alive today. It does not stand to reason that with the technical advances we have they would have the nanny-goat vibrato today they had then".

In an interview with Wilbur at his

*Photographs by Duncan Schiedt and Robert Parenti
T. Fight: Wilbur De Paris; Be'ow: Sidney De Paris;
Omer Simeon: Page 1. Geo Kay and De Paris beside
the Jazz Journal Poster outside Ryans.*

Greenwich Village apartment. I further questioned him on this subject. Here are some of his reflections:

"What I said about Turk's music, as reported by Balliett, is true in my opinion. I don't mean to convey that Turk Murphy's band does not play lively and good jazz, but it is **not** the same kind of jazz we play. I first heard Turk when he was playing with Lu Watters on the West Coast. I was out there on two occasions, once with Ella Fitzgerald's band and later with Duke. I enjoyed

their music at that time and I enjoy Turk's present band. But what they play is ragtime, basically, and not the kind of jazz our bands play". **Duke Ellington:** "I went with Ellington just to see what made him tick. It was a lasting and invaluable musical experience for me. Actually, Duke's music is a kind of Dixieland in an advanced form; free, imaginative, emotional jazz. Ellington builds his band around the individual artist and he brings out the very best in

concluded on page 31

