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*"I've always preferred the New Orleans style. That's what real jazz is as far as I'm concerned." — Earl Scheelar
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HERE'S TO THE FUTURE

By SFTJF Board of Directors



THE SAN FRANCISCO TRADITIONAL JAZZ FOUNDATION ONLINE

"It is an historical irony that the city that put 'jazz' in jazz doesn't rate a mention in most history books. " Tom Stoddard in *Jazz on the Barbary Coast*. Though New York, Chicago and Kansas City are far better known today for their contributions to jazz history than San Francisco, the 'City by the Bay' has held its own in the evolution of jazz from the earliest days of jazz on the Barbary Coast in the 1900s. Working to right this oversight in jazz history has long been the mission of the San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation (SFTJF). The Foundation has its roots in a unique trove of materials collected over decades by many individuals, beginning with boxes amassed by Jim Goggin, containing items from Lu Watters, Turk Murphy, Bob Scobey and musicians associated with their bands. Along the way, members have devoted great energy and enthusiasm in presenting concerts, publishing commercial recordings and continuing to expand the extensive archive into a unique collection of never-before published recordings, photographs, posters, musical arrangements and instruments and scrapbooks.

Now a major, new step has been undertaken to secure the legacy of the Foundation for generations to come. Speaking at this summer's Board of Directors meeting, Chairman Bill Carter presented a thoughtful retrospective, captured here in a brief excerpt from the meeting minutes:

...Music has been the magic that has brought us all together, and has infused us with passion and a willingness to donate our time to enjoy and preserve Traditional Jazz. Mr. Carter mentioned that Pete Clute, John Matthews, Bill Tooley and he were at Stanford at the same time in the early to mid-1950s, although they had no idea then that the music they had championed would come full circle at Stanford again...

Beginning in 2014, the Board launched a significant fundraising campaign to underwrite an online media project to house the SFTJF archive collection. In light of his outstanding service, the Board of Directors moved to recognize Chuck Huggins by naming the online presence, The Charles N. Huggins San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation Collection.



The purpose of the project is to bring to life the story of Traditional Jazz in San Francisco for a wide audience through an extensive online presence. A new world-class website, created in partnership with Stanford University, will paint a vibrant picture of Traditional Jazz scenes at Bay Area venues through the decades. The new website will offer a comprehensive portrait of this seldom explored and uniquely San Francisco facet of the city's history, utilizing....

- Rare streaming audio of first person accounts by jazz artists on the scene in 20th century San Francisco, such as Barbary Coast bandleader Sid LeProtti and master of the slap bass Pops Foster, among many others.
- Streaming audio of radio 'airshots' with performances by jazz greats, such as: Turk Murphy, Lu Watters, Kid Ory, Eubie Blake, Jack Teagarden and more captured at the Club Hangover, Hambone Kelly's, Earthquake McGoons, The Dawn Club and more....
- Historical film clips, and slide shows incorporating photographs, posters and programs from the Foundation's remarkable collection of San Francisco jazz ephemera.

We are pleased to announce that sufficient funds have been secured to begin the hands-on work of the project. An academic archivist has been hired by Stanford University to catalogue materials in the collection, and former Foundation archivists Clint Baker and Hal Smith will work with the university archivist to identify and select materials for the website.

Jerry McBride, head of the renowned Music Library and Archive of Recorded Sound at Stanford University commented on the Huggins Project:

"From the Foundation's valuable collection, the most important materials will be digitized and made available on the Internet. Digitized items will include unique recordings from lacquer discs, videos, innumerable recordings from reel-to-reel tape and cassettes, hundreds of newsletters and booklets, thousands of photographs, hundreds of documents, posters, blueprints, show bills, and more. Imagine perusing the writings of your favorite musicians, letters, music manuscripts, business and legal documents, contracts, awards, certificates, concert programs, promotional materials (flyers, pamphlets, and posters), booking records, appointment and address books, news clippings, fan buttons, memorabilia, and photographs right in your own home. This will be the most comprehensive website found anywhere for information about traditional jazz as it evolved in the Bay Area."

The Board of Directors has moved to wind down the Foundation's usual activities as it raises the final funds needed to support work to catalogue the archive and produce the new website. In this transition, there will be a final 'farewell' edition of the Frisco Cricket newsletter published in December 2016/January 2017. Cricket editor Scott Anthony promises a rich retrospective of music and photographs with highlights of the 'best of' previous Cricket issues. Also, look for a letter from Chairman Bill Carter. The existing San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation

website (www.sftradjazz.org) will stay live at least through 2017.



Young Lu Watters (left) and Turk Murphy (right), one of the many previously unpublished photos that will be digitized and become part of the online archive.

This makes us all a bit wistful for days gone by.... and, excited about a future, in which our children, grandchildren and great-great grandchildren may continue to enjoy and learn about Traditional Jazz in San Francisco.

To that end, we invite all current and past members —and Traditional Jazz fans everywhere— to join us in supporting this permanent online venue to preserve and promote San Francisco Traditional Jazz for all generations, anytime and anywhere in the world.

After so many years of supporting the Foundation, we are sure you will want to continue your support and see the fruit of the Foundation's work memorialized in this unique and lasting way.

Donations of all amounts are welcome—and much needed to earn a \$100,000 matching grant now pending from a generous anonymous donor.

Be a part of the final \$25,000 match!

Make checks payable to: San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation and include Huggins Project in the Memo line.

Please send your donation to:

San Francisco Traditional Jazz Foundation
3130 Alpine Road, #288 PMB 187
Portola Valley, CA 94028

Or click on the button below to donate online

Donate



(All donations are 100% tax deductible in the US)

We are deeply grateful to our long-time, loyal Foundation members and encourage you all to support this momentous project to preserve and promote San Francisco's own Traditional Jazz—our legacy for generations to come, around the world.

EARL SCHEELAR WILL SURPRISE YOU

By Dave Radlauer



"I've always preferred the New Orleans style. That's what real jazz is as far as I'm concerned." — Earl Scheelar

Cornet and clarinet player [Earl Scheelar](#) is a bandleader, distinctive cornet player and master clarinetist playing in or leading revival jazz ensembles since the 1950s. In recent years I've come to know Earl and been granted generous access to his personal tapes, memories and photos. Scheelar was at or next to the center of Bay Area revival jazz since the mid-1960s, running jazz bands that fit no pre-existing mold: Earl's New Orleans House, Funky New Orleans and Zenith Jazz Bands.

I've been continually surprised by his many remarkable skills, stylistic range, and ability to play several instruments very well, his broad talent, steady dedication over six decades and quiet independence. All modestly concealed by his taciturn demeanor.

In case you are unaware Scheelar plays or has played: cornet, clarinet, soprano and alto saxophones, baritone horn, tuba and country fiddle. All are presented here, drawn from four decades of Scheelar's personal tapes, and at the new [Scheelar tape archive](#). In addition he sings, plays banjo and formerly played guitar. Scheelar's little-known, largely unexamined remarkable sessions from the 1960s with some of the Bay Area's finest jazz musicians are surprising.



SCHEELAR'S CORNET, EARL'S HOT FIVE, THE HONEYBUCKET 1956

Scheelar is an eloquent classic jazz horn player. Forthright and full-voiced, his heartbreaking tone is steeped in the Classic Blues. Playing with expression and fire, he imitates no one and has the rare ability to deliver the full impact of the blues on cornet.

These talents were already manifest in 1956 when he briefly led Earl's Hot Five during the regular band's absence at [The Honeybucket](#) in San Francisco. Notably, the strong clarinet part was supplied by Pete Allen, soon better known as

one of the Bay Area's best string bass players, with Le Sharpton (trombone), Dick Oxtot (banjo) and Art Nortier (piano).

Earl's Hot Five, The Honeybucket, 1956:

St. Louis Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/St_Louis_Blues_Honeybucket_2.56_Scheelar_Allen%20clt_%20Oxtot_B.mp3

I Found a New Baby

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/I_Found_a_New_Baby_Honeybucket_2.56_Scheelar_Allen_clt_Oxtot_B.mp3

Melancholy

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Melancholy_Honeybucket_2.56_Scheelar_Allen%20clt_%20Oxtot.mp3

Shake That Thing

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Shake_That_Thing_Honeybucket_2.56_Scheelar_Allen_clt_%20Oxtot.mp3

Note: *With Scheelar's approval I've selected music that represents his early years: a musician still developing his craft, chops and style. Recorded at informal gigs and jam sessions these performances are offered as historic artifacts despite flaws, missed notes and technical shortcomings. Except where noted all photos are from Earl's personal library.*

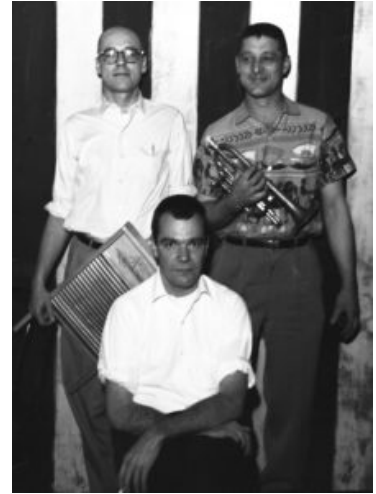


Scheelar in a trio with Bill Erickson (piano) and Bret Runkle (washboard) 2/62. Note the clarinet on the low table to Earl's right. Photo by William Carter.

EARL'S INDEPENDENCE

Scheelar strikes me as fiercely but quietly independent. If local ensembles didn't hire him or meet his fancy, he started one. And in the 1960s when circumstances offered no favorable music venue he launched his own: Earl's New Orleans House.

Though never a full-time music professional, Scheelar has maintained an unbroken series of ensembles since 1966. Aside from leading his own groups he's been a key player in the Bay Area bands of: Frank Goulette (Original Inferior, Monterey Bay Classic JB), Ted Shafer (Jelly Roll JB), P.T. Stanton (Stone Age JB), George Knoblauch (Black Diamond JB), Jerry Kaehele (Good Time Levee Stompers) and [Dick Oxtot](#) among others.



In a 1962 trio setting Scheelar demonstrated considerable potency on both cornet and clarinet accompanied by Bill Erickson (piano) and Bret Runkle (washboard). Photo by William Carter.

DOUBLING ON CORNET AND CLARINET: BILL ERICKSON TRIO, MONKEY INN 1962

I've been told "doubling" on different kinds of instruments is difficult, that is switching between brass and reed embouchures during performance. Earl seems to have mastered it early, and was in fine fettle at [Monkey Inn](#) in the early 1960s with Bill Erickson (piano) and Bret Runkle (washboard).

Earl is now critical of this performance complaining that he'd not yet fully learned his instruments. Nevertheless he had a clear voice and relaxed charm. The basic elements of his horn style were already established: a rich tone saturated with the blues, and a pronounced vibrato. Scheelar's originality is notable, "I certainly didn't copy anybody. [My style] has always been distinctive. Both clarinet and cornet."

Earl doubling on cornet, Monkey Inn 1962:

Wild Man Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Wild_Man_Blues_Erickson_Scheelar_double_Monkey_1.62.mp3

Cakewalkin' Babies

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Cakewalkin_Babies_Erickson_Scheelar_double_Monkey_1.62.mp3

I Aint Gonna Give Nobody None of my Jelly Roll

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/I_Aint_Gonna_Give_Nobody_None_of_Erickson_Scheelar_double_Monkey_1.62.mp3



Earl with singer Barbara Dane and friends at Monkey Inn, before c. 1959. L to R: Scheelar (clarinet), Barbara Dane, Le Sharpton (string bass), Sam Charters (banjo), Dick Oxtot (cornet). Meilke collection.

SCHEELAR'S CLARINET, SAM CHARTERS CLARENCE WILLIAMS PROJECT, 1957-58/2009

Like many, I was surprised, and in fact sorely disappointed when mid-career Scheelar seemed to drop, or de-emphasize cornet in favor of clarinet. But like most I was forced to admit that he's unquestionably a very fine clarinet player. Earl is a strong proponent of the [Johnny Dodds](#) manner, and more broadly the Louisiana Creole clarinet style as it was adapted for the gritty urban south side of Chicago of the 1920s.

Scheelar takes great pride in this early example of his clarinet sound; the unfinished 1957-58 [Clarence Williams](#) project. It was produced under the auspices of the late Sam Charters featuring songs written or recorded by Williams. In 2009 Earl published this long unfinished title in cooperation with Merry Makers Records (MMRC-33). Wrote Earl:

"The recordings were done at several sessions at my house . . . Unfortunately the original tapes were lost when Stan Page's house burned in the 1991 Oakland Hills Fire, however I had made copies of the tapes. Sam Charters, the organizer, washboard and banjo player on these recordings, went on to write extensively about music and produce recordings . . . and has written several books on jazz."

Besides playing clarinet, behind the scenes Earl and pianist/arranger Bill Erickson did a lot of organizing for the session. Other personnel were Dick Oxtot (cornet), Bob Mielke (trombone), Bill Erickson (piano), Walter Yost (tuba), and Sam Charters (washboard and banjo).

Sam Charters Clarence Williams session 1957-58:

Cushion Foot Stomp

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Cushion_Foot_Stomp.mp3

Log Cabin Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Log_Cabin_Blues.mp3

Sweet Emmaline

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Sweet_Emmaline.mp3

Candy Lips

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Candy_Lips.mp3

Nervous Breakdown

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Nervous_Breakdown.mp3



Scheelar 1960s. Like the man, Earl's improvisations are thoughtful, deliberate and passionate. His eloquence and natural affinity for the blues bring depth of emotion; his solos are consistently delivered with poise and grace.

ORIGINAL INFERIOR JAZZ BAND C. 1955-1963

Early on Scheelar fell into playing clarinet with the bands of cornetist Frank Goulette at [The Honeybucket](#). Goulette's Original Inferior Jazz Band was a romping single-horn Lu Watters-influenced Trad Jazz outfit with a rhythm section of piano, banjo (occasionally two) and hard-driving tuba. Loud, fun and raucous, it never made any albums though many recordings survived, made mostly by music collector Ed Sprankle, one of their (occasionally two) banjo players.

In the mid-1950s, Original Inferior also played a few months at [Burp Hollow](#) in Frisco's North Beach. It was run by a mafia figure, "Milio Militti, came to The Honeybucket, talked to Frank Goulette about playing weekends at Burp Hollow. And so we played there Friday and Saturday nights. We opened it; after that everybody played at Burp Hollow," says Scheelar.

Recovered audio confirms these musicians were anything but inferior, fine performers all: Bill Bardin, Tony Lanphier or Fred Bjork (trombone), Art Nortier (piano) and others. Auditioning these audio fragments, Earl concludes: "It's me [clarinet]. It's not Bardin, so it probably is Fred Bjork [trombone]. Piano is probably Art Nortier. My guess is it was recorded between 1956 and 1959."

Original Inferior Jazz Band:

Sweet Georgia Brown (fragment)

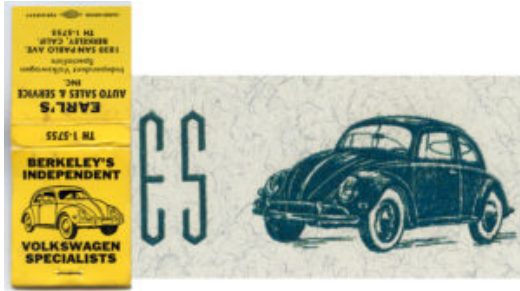
http://jazzhotbigstep.com/ORIGINAL/Sweet_Georgia_Brown_frag_MIELKE_Cass_012_Original_Inferior.mp3

Georgia Camp Meeting

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/ORIGINAL/Georgia_Camp_Meeting_MIELKE_Cass_012_Original_Inferior_JB.mp3



Earl playing horn at Burp Hollow. L to R: possibly Tony Landphier (trombone), Charlie Clark (clarinet), Scheelar, probably Art Nortier (piano), late 1950s. Photo by Tony Standish.



Matchbook advertising for Scheelar's VW garage and personal letterhead, 1960s.

WILD SESSIONS AT EARL'S RUMPUS ROOM 1960s

Through the 1960s Scheelar recorded dozens of excellent sessions above his VW shop in Berkeley, at The Albatross bar, or the basement of a place he rented. The spacious 'rumpus room' above his Berkeley Volkswagen repair shop was popular for jam sessions, and Bill Erickson practiced piano there.

Earl says there were lively parties and memorable feasts, "One Thanksgiving we had a big dinner and served a whole roast pig with an apple in its mouth." Which was promptly torn apart and consumed in a "feeding frenzy" by more than two-dozen revelers. Fortunately, a couple of roast turkeys were also on hand, if slightly undercooked.



John Boland with Scheelar in Earl's New Orleans House Band. Late 1960s, location unknown.

Several Rumpus Room sessions stand out for spontaneity and enthusiasm, such as this party tape made by Earl's friend Dave Greer around 1960. Scheelar doubled on cornet and clarinet alongside John Boland (clarinet) and Ernie Carson (trumpet). "Weary Blues" and "Cakewalkin Babies" feature Earl's cornet duets with Carson, and his clarinet duets with the rarely recorded Boland. Other personnel were Tony Landphier (trombone), Bill Erickson (piano), and in places probably Dick Oxtot (banjo), Pete Allen (string bass), Walter Yost (tuba), Bret Runkle (washboard) and others.

Earl's Party, c. 1960:

Weary Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Weary_Blues_GREER_TAPES_6_Earls_Party_4.60.mp3

Cakewalkin' Babies (from Home)

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Cakewalkin_Babies_GREER_TAPES_6_Earls_Party_4.60.mp3

Earl wryly told me, "Ernie Carson got drunk that night. And I caught him trying to leave with a half-gallon jug of wine." With Carson out, Earl led one of his cornet showcases, "Mama's Gone, Goodbye" with lots of 'trading fours' until everyone jumped in for a monster out-chorus.

Earl's Party, c. 1960:

Mama's Gone, Goodbye

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Mamas_Gone_Goodbye_GREER_TAPES_6_Earls_Party_4.60_+3.0.mp3



Earl restored several vintage English automobiles including this 1933 custom-bodied Austin Arrow.

MECHANICAL MR. SCHEELAR

Earl is quite talented as a craftsman, carpenter, house builder and skilled mechanic. Anyone acquainted with Scheelar knows he's willing and eager to lend a helpful hand in myriad ways: home or auto repairs, metal work and carpentry, you name it. Even today this working-class polymath maintains both a working woodshop and fully equipped metal-working shop.

Automobiles have long attracted Earl's mechanical attentions. For many years he's restored, maintained and owned vintage English cars, mainly 1920s British Austins. VW camper vans appear frequently in his personal photos of travels to mountains, deserts and isolated Western coasts.

During the 1960s Scheelar's VW garage, a partnership with his close long-time buddy Sam Blood, did a "quite successful" business repairing and selling used Volkswagens in Berkeley. Long-time friend and admirer Dave Greer recalls once seeing Earl stripped to the waist, cutting torch in hand dividing up a junked beetle, oblivious to the shower of sparks he stood in.



Memorialized on a US Postage Stamp in 2014, Janis Joplin had an unmistakable passion for the blues.

DICK OXTOT-JANIS JOPLIN SESSIONS (CLARINET, BANJO) 1963-64

It was not unusual for Earl to attend jams, rehearsals or recording sessions at Dick Oxtot's Berkeley home, including one with future rock star, Janis Joplin. Dick Oxtot had a talent for discovering female singers who were diamonds-in-the-rough destined for greatness in other genres: Barbara Dane, Terry Garthwaite, Laurie Lewis and Janis Joplin. The [Joplin-Oxtot sessions](#) were part of his attempt to groom the future diva for local jazz gigs.

The horn solos heard here were excised from the tracks issued on the gold-selling (500,000) 1975 album, *Janis*. In these early sessions Joplin's commitment to the blues transcended the rawness and technical limitations of her voice. Earl Scheelar played clarinet on "Walk Right In" and banjo on another sessions alongside clarinetist [Frank "Big Boy" Goudie](#). Unfortunately, Janis was dead within a decade from drugs and alcohol.

Janis Joplin with Dick Oxtot, 1963-64:

Walk Right In

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/JOPLIN/Walk_Right_In_Janis_Joplin_reel.mp3

River Jordan

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/JOPLIN/River_Jordan_Janis_Joplin_reel.mp3



Pete Allen (bass) and Peter Berg (guitar). Earl and Allen joined Berg, an archaeologist for the state, at a dig in rural California.

THE RUMPUS ROOM ABOVE EARL'S VW SHOP 1966

Many of the sessions taped at the rumpus room above Earl's VW shop were fine settings for soprano (and tenor) saxophone player John Smith, a follower of [George Probert](#). Smith was from Southern California, in the military and stationed at nearby Oakland Army Base. His soprano and tenor sax were a delightful addition to Scheelar's sessions. However, I must confess bafflement regarding occasional criticism by fellow musicians of his style and technique. Sadly, when Earl picked Bob Helm rather than Smith for his 1972 LP album the result was a permanent rift between the two.

Besides John Smith and Scheelar on cornet, personnel were John Farkas (trombone), English pianist Cyril Bennett, Karl Walterskirchen (banjo) and Peter Berg (guitar). Dick Oxtot plays an E-flat tuba. Earl's heart-rending horn tone and soulful vibrato are breathtaking.

VW Shop, 1966:

Someday Sweetheart

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Someday_Sweetheart_Scheelars_4.66_Smith_Farkas_Bennet_Oxtot.mp3

I Can't Give You Anything But Love

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/I_Cant_Give_You_Anything_But_Love_Scheelars_4.66_Smith_Farkas_Bennet_Oxtot.mp3

My Bucket's Got a Hole in It

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/My_Buckets_Got_a_Hole_in_It_Scheelars_4.66_Smith_Farkas_Bennet_Oxtot.mp3

Everybody Loves My Baby

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Everybody_Loves_my_Baby_Scheelars_4.66_Smith_Farkas_Bennet_Oxtot.mp3



Earl with his father, Ben.

VIOLIN AND FIDDLE MUSIC 1960s

Growing up in Oregon Earl's father played country fiddle and he learned too. From time to time Scheelar returned to his rural musical roots and picked up a violin. On special occasions or just feeling experimental he'd play hillbilly fiddle or semi-jazz violin in an unadorned straightforward manner. In one recovered tape Earl was rehearsing for a gathering of the New Orleans Jazz Club of Northern California, accompanied by Dick Oxtot (piano or banjo) and Dick Bowman (trombone).

Earl Scheelar, violin:

That's a Plenty

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Thats_a_Plenty_T1_Scheelar_Violin.mp3

Just Because

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Just_Because_Scheelar_Violin_Oxtot_Bowman.mp3

Farewell Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Farewell_Blues_Scheelar_Violin_Oxtot_Bowman.mp3

Other times Earl reprised tunes his father had played: waltzes, schottisches and country favorites. "When You Wore a Tulip" was from a party around 1960 when he was backed by Bret Runkle (washboard) and an unknown mandolin and string bass player.

Earl Scheelar, fiddle:

Oklahoma Hills

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Oklahoma_Hills_OXTOT_41_Scheelar_violin_session.mp3

San Antonio Rose

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/San_Antonio_Rose_OXTOT_41_Scheelar_violin_session.mp3

When You Wore a Tulip

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/When_You_Wore_a_Yellow_Tulip_GREER_TAPES_6_Earls_Party_4.60.mp3



L to R: Earl Scheelar, Bob Meilke, Dick Oxtot, Jim Cumming, 1960-ish. Mielke collection.

SCHEELAR-JACKSON HOT FIVE I, EARL'S BASEMENT 1964-65

"For my money, this is one of the very best sessions ever recorded in the East Bay," says traditional jazz drummer Hal Smith. I'm calling the spirited band on these long unheard tapes the Scheelar-Jackson Hot Five, recorded in Berkeley at The Albatross bar and the basement of Earl's rental.

Bob Jackson was an excellent cornet player who came to Berkeley regularly visiting his mother. In later years he played in Grand Dominion Jazz Band, probably Vancouver, Canada's best revival jazz band. I concur with Earl that his and Jackson's horn styles were remarkably similar in tone and outlook.

These informal ensembles embody something of the spirit of the sunset years of Watters' Yerba Buena band at Hambone Kelly's in the East Bay. During the 1960s Scheelar's music drew from a broad stylistic palette and stellar roster of associates. His ensembles took on the flavor of the personnel and character of moment, looser and more spontaneous than his later more formally organized bands.

Besides Jackson and Scheelar (clarinet) this lineup included Bob Mielke (trombone), Dick Oxtot (banjo) and Walter Yost (tuba), who was never in better form supporting this ensemble without piano or drums. Earl served up a rich clarinet gumbo for some high steppers and a lowdown blues.

Scheelar-Jackson Hot Five, Earl's Basement 9/19/65:

You Tell Me Your Dream

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/You_Tell_Me_Your_Dream_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3

You Always Hurt the One You Love

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/You_Always_Hurt_the_One_You_Love_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3

Salty Dog

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Salty_Dog_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3

When You Wore a Tulip

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/When_You_Wore_a_Yellow_Tulip_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3



Bob Mielke, 1960s. "I've heard Mielke play things that would make you cry," declares Earl. Mielke collection.

EARL AND BOB MIELKE, SCHEELAR-JACKSON HOT FIVE II, EARL'S BASEMENT 1965

Earl's performance tapes from the 1960s often included trombonist [Bob Mielke](#). Scheelar is convinced there was no more imaginative trombone player in the Bay Area. But Mielke wasn't as consistent or reliable as others who worked for Earl, like John Farkas, Mike Starr or Bill Bardin, says Earl:

"There were a lot of good [trombone] players, but not imaginative players. They didn't have the background that Mielke and Bardin did. The others were very good musicians, always right, never wrong, but never played anything very exciting.

Mielke had a distinct style; you can pick him out of a crowd any time. He had his own licks that he played a lot; he didn't copy anybody. I've heard Mielke play things that would make you cry. But he was never the consistent player that Bardin was."

I hear echoes of Mielke's Bearcats in this session with Jackson (cornet) and Scheelar (clarinet). Bob's trombone and vocalizing are distinctive on "I'll Be Glad When You're Dead," as is Oxtot's singing for "There'll Be Some Changes Made." There was no better rhythm banjo player in the Bay Area at the time; Dick swung the whole band in this two-man rhythm section with Walter Yost (tuba).

Scheelar-Jackson Hot Five, Earl's Basement 9/19/65:

I'll be Glad When You're Dead (You Rascal You)

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/III_Be_Gald_When_Youre_Dead_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3

There'll Be Some Changes Made

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/There'll_Be_Some_Changes_Made_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3

The Blues my Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/The_Blues_My_Naughty_Sweetie_Gives_to_Me_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3

Don't You Leave Me Here

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Dont_You_Leave_Me_Here_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3

Cakewalkin' Babies (from Home)

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Cakewalkin_Babies_Earls_Basement_9.19.65_Scheelar_Jackson.mp3



*Scheelar associates with Oxtot. L to R:
Don Marchant, Bill Bardin, Bob Mielke, Dick Oxtot,
Jim Goodwin, Jim Cumming, early 1970s. Oxtot
collection.*

SCHEELAR-JACKSON HOT FIVE III, THE ALBATROSS 1964-65

Sessions from this era show the imprint of [P.T. Stanton](#) on Scheelar's leadership, particularly the use of riffs. Riffing was two or more horns playing simple repeated figures behind soloists. It was a key feature of East Bay revival jazz, and among the techniques P.T. helped to introduce.

Listening back a half century later Earl commented, "*I had no idea this session was that good.*" On this occasion Earl sounds a little like Bob Helm, one of his favorite musicians. "Should I?" shows clever use of riffs in both the foreground and background.

This is the so-called Scheelar-Jackson Hot Five without trombone, instead John Smith played tenor sax. The Albatross was (and still is) a pub on San Pablo Avenue in Berkeley where Earl and others played in the mid-1960s.

Scheelar-Jackson Hot Five, The Albatross 4/23/65:

Should I?

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Should_I_voxedit_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Oxtot_Albatross_4.23.65.mp3

Just a Little While to Stay

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Just_a_Little_While_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Oxtot_Albatross_4.23.65.mp3

Everybody Loves My Baby

[http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Everybody_Loves_my_Baby_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Oxtot_Albatross_4.23.65.m
p3](http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Everybody_Loves_my_Baby_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Oxtot_Albatross_4.23.65.mp3)



Dick Oxtot, purveyor of "Vintage music with Style." Oxtot collection.

SCHEELAR-JACKSON HOT FIVE PLUS ONE IV, THE ALBATROSS 1964-65

Scheelar was associated with Dick Oxtot for more than forty years. Dick is present on more tunes in this article than any other musician, playing banjo, tuba, singing or band leading. The two-man rhythm duo of Oxtot (banjo) and Pete Allen (string bass) provided rhythmic locomotion with unbeatable drive, accuracy and swing as they had in the Bearcats.

This session had a fourth horn in the front line (the plus one): John Smith's tenor sax that came across beautifully. Inventive head arrangements and riffing added harmonic complexity and rhythmic drive, especially with a riffing specialist like Bob Mielke on hand. Smith and Mielke's well-blended horns made for a startling diesel-powered 'section' effect on "Gettysburg March."

Scheelar-Jackson Hot Five Plus One, The Albatross 1964-65:

Tishomingo Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Tishomingo_Blues_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Mielke_Oxtot_Albatross_64-65.mp3

Bye, Bye Blackbird

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Bye_Bye_Blackbird_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Mielke_Oxtot_Albatross_64-65.mp3

Gettysburg March

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Gettysburg_March_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Mielke_Oxtot_Albatross_64-65.mp3



Like Earl, Dick Oxtot also played baritone horn. Mielke collection.

BARITONE HORN AND TUBA, SCHEELAR-JACKSON HOT FIVE V, 1965 & 1969

Earl regards his proficiency with baritone horn and tuba as natural extensions of his interest in the cornet; they are essentially the same instrument scaled up in size, down in pitch. He notes that the baritone horn occupies the same tonal range in the brass family as trombone. He's played trombone, but only as a novelty, *"One time Mielke was late to the bandstand after intermission. I was bothered that he was at the bar chatting up a fan or something, so I picked up his trombone and started playing. Bob was there in a shot."*

During this 1965 performance at The Albatross Earl switched to baritone horn for a few tunes. Besides Scheelar, personnel were Bob Jackson (cornet), John Smith (soprano sax), Dick Oxtot (banjo, vocal) and Pete Allen. The fourth item on this list, "Someday You'll Be Sorry" is from a 1969 session with Jim Goodwin (cornet) and Ray Skjelbred (piano) detailed below.

Scheelar baritone horn, 1965 and 1969:

Salty Dog

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Salty_Dog_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Oxtot_Albatross_9.23.65.mp3

L-O-U-I-S-I-A-N-I-A

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/L-O-U-I-S-I-A-N-I-A_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Oxtot_Albatross_9.23.65.mp3

I Ain't Gonna Give Nobody None of my Jelly Roll

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/I_Aint_Gonna_Give_Nobody_None_of_My_Jelly_Roll_Scheelar_Jackson_Smith_Oxtot_Albatross_9.23.65.mp3

Someday You'll Be Sorry

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Someday_Youll_Be_Sorry_Session_Earls_Oct_1969_Scheelar.mp3



Earl in New Orleans sitting in at Fritzel's, c. 1989.

Scheelar was eager you should also hear some of his tuba playing. The date and location of this session when he blew some tuba for kicks is uncertain. It's probably at the Albatross in 1966 with John Smith (soprano), Farkas (trombone) and Karl Walterskirchen (banjo).

Scheelar tuba, 1966:

Nobody's Sweetheart

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Nobodys_Sweetheart_Scheelar_tuba_Smith_Farkas_c_1966.mp3

I'm Gonna Sit Right Down and Write Myself a Letter

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Im_Gonna_Sit_Right_Down_and_Write_Myself_a_Letter_Scheelar_tuba_Oxtot_cor_Smith_Farkas_c_1966.mp3



Bill Bardin was, "the finest trombone player the Bay Area produced" according to Earl. Photo by Bill's widow, Mili Rosenblatt-Bardin.

BILL BARDIN AND SCHEELAR

Trombone player [Bill Bardin](#) (1924-2011) was an essential element of Scheelar's bands during four decades. A

deeply skilled and inspired musician, Bill was second to none in the Frisco crowd, ranging easily between swinging four-beat, gutty New Orleans stomps, or the blues. A key player in many bands, he was the only sub for Bob Mielke in the Bearcats. Says Earl:

"Bill Bardin was the finest trombone player the Bay Area produced. I've always thought that. Even when there was this big debate going on: Bardin or Mielke?"

Mielke was never the consistent player that Bardin was in terms of listening and playing things that made everything else swing. [I hired Bill] every time I could, he's on all the recordings. Bardin was my trombone player."



Earl's New Orleans House and Jazz Band, 1966-67.

EARL'S NEW ORLEANS HOUSE VENUE AND JAZZ BAND 1966-67

In 1966 Scheelar created a spacious restaurant and dance hall serving Louisiana food and music in Berkeley. With a high ceiling and large wooden dance floor, Earl's New Orleans House was intended to fill a gap. The Bay Area was lacking regular venues for revival jazz, increasingly displaced by Rock music. And he felt the need for an ensemble dedicated to New Orleans-style jazz, staffed by the area's best musicians. *"I recorded almost every night, that's why there's so much tape. The placement of the mics was right up in front of the band. You heard myself and Helm very well."*

As a business New Orleans House lasted only about six months during 1966-67. Earl handed management to a good friend, Kitty Griffith. She ran it as a successful "electric rock" venue for a few years. But Scheelar retained access to the premises for occasional Sunday afternoon events or recording sessions into the mid-1970s.

Many fine musicians played in Earl's New Orleans House band led by Scheelar's fine blues-infused cornet: John Boland (clarinet), John Farkas (trombone), [Burt Bales](#) (piano), Karl Walterskirchen (banjo), Peter Berg (guitar), tuba player Walter Yost, and most notably Bob Helm (clarinet and soprano sax). Earl released a large batch of these recordings in 2013 issued jointly on Merry Makers CD50 and Trad Jazz Productions TJP15.



New Orleans House Jazz Band was Earl's first formally organized outfit: "I was extremely fortunate that Bob Helm was available at that time as he was in his prime."

Earl's New Orleans House Jazz Band, 1966-67:

Wild Man Blues

<http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR/Wild%20Man%20Blues.mp3>

The Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives to Me

<http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR/The%20Blues%20My%20Naughty%20Sweetie%20Gives%20To%20Me.mp3>

Winin' Boy Blues

<http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR/Winin%20Boy%20Blues.mp3>

When You Wore a Tulip

<http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR/When%20You%20Wore%20A%20Tulip.mp3>



Bob Helm in a reed duet with Jacques Gauthé at Fritzel's when he was staying with Earl in New Orleans, late 1980s.

FOUR DECADES WITH BOB HELM, SCHEELAR-HELM NOJC SESSION, MARSHALL, CA 1969

Earl deeply admired and loved reed player [Bob Helm](#), his music and the man saying,

"Helm was to my way of thinking THE musical genius of the Bay Area. There were good players around but nobody with the kind of talent that Helm had, his chord sense and rhythmic sense. In a solo he'll bury himself in a hole and then dig his way out better than anyone I've ever, ever, heard."

In later years Bob was Scheelar's guest in New Orleans. They jammed and became great friends with bandleader [Jacques Gauthé](#). "No matter what somebody was playing he could hear that and play around it, his ability to create around other people. He was totally creative," states Earl.

This was pretty much Earl's New Orleans House Band on the way to becoming Funky New Orleans Jazz Band. Scheelar was in fine form on cornet and trombonist Farkas sounded great. The rhythm section was Oxtot (banjo), Skjelbred (piano) and Cumming (string bass). Earl's fulsome heartbreaking tone was on full display, in close formation with Bob Helm, then at the height of his powers — potent, spicy and brash - playing clarinet and soprano sax.

Scheelar-Helm NOJC, Marshall, CA 1969:

Willie the Weeper

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Willie_the_Weeper_OXTOT_31_Scheelar_Marshall_1969.mp3

Tishomingo Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Tishomingo_Blues_OXTOT_31_Scheelar_Marshall_1969.mp3

You Always Hurt the One You Love

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/You_Always_Hurt_the_One_You_Love_OXTOT_31_Scheelar_Marshall_1969.mp3

Someday Sweetheart

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Someday_Sweetheart_OXTOT_31_Scheelar_Marshall_1969.mp3

Just Because

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Just_Because_OXTOT_31_Scheelar_Marshall_1969.mp3



Scheelar, 1970s.

HORN INFLUENCES, FUNKY NEW ORLEANS JAZZ BAND 1971-72

Scheelar's remarkable originality aside, there are a handful of horn-playing bandleaders whose influence he will proudly acknowledge, primarily [Papa Celestin](#) (New Orleans 1915-25) and [P.T. Stanton](#) (Berkeley and East Bay c. 1950-80). With secondary inspiration from horn men [Freddie Keppard](#) (New Orleans and Chicago, 1910-20) and [George Mitchell](#) (Chicago, late-1920s).

The 1972 Funky New Orleans Jazz Band LP, *Make Me a Pallet on The Floor* was the first under Scheelar's name. Earl produced and edited the project himself for Herwin Records, and had Marshall Kent record it at New Orleans House and write liner notes. Notably it was the only non-reissue, live band recording ever published by Herwin, a point of pride for Earl.

Playing cornet Scheelar led his dream team: Bob Helm (reeds), Bill Bardin (trombone), Dick Oxtot (banjo), Pete Allen (string bass) and Don Marchant (drums). He titled the reissued CD after Papa Celestin's tune "Give Me Some More" (MMRC-CD- 5, 1988) and reprised the original horn solo from Celestin's rarely performed "[My Josephine.](#)"

Funky New Orleans Jazz Band, 1971-72:

My Josephine

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/My_Josephine.mp3

Give Me Some More

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Give_Me_Some_More.mp3



Scheelar associates Goodwin and Skjelbred, probably late 1960s. Mielke collection.

JIM GOODWIN-RAY SKJELBRED BASEMENT SESSION, 1969

The searing horn of [Jim Goodwin](#) (1944-2009, Portland, OR) served as focal point for this swinging session in the basement of Earl's Berkeley rental. "Kid" Goodwin's personal horn style was muscular and confident in the manner of Henry "Red" Allen, "Wild Bill" Davison or Louis Armstrong. And Jim was a fine jazz piano player.

All parties rose to the occasion and trombonist John Farkas was at his very best. The grandeur of "Red Roses for a Blue Lady" shows Earl's great skill and warmth in the low register of the clarinet saturated with Louisiana Creole flavor.



L to R: Bob Helm, Kid Goodwin, Diane Holmes, Dick Oxtot, Ray Skjelbred early 1970s. Oxtot collection.

Ray Skjelbred (b. 1940, Chicago, IL) rarely sounded better in this session ranging from swinging sophistication to raucous barrelhouse. His nuanced piano fills and solos were picked up nicely, but barely adequately for his vocal on "Glad Rag Doll."

Scheelar's clarinet provided a finely wrought architectural framework for the front line. Earl says that whenever possible he hired the former rhythm section of Mielke's Bearcats, Dick Oxtot (banjo), Don Marchant (drums) and the ubiquitous Pete Allen (string bass). The East Bay crew took pride in finding unusual repertoire from diverse sources: popular song, the blues and Tin Pan Alley. For instance, Earl and Oxtot share a vocal duet on "Just Because" from the country string band tradition.

Goodwin-Skjelbred basement session 1969:

Glad Rag Doll

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Glad_Rag_Doll_Session_Earls_Oct_1969_Scheelar.mp3

Red Roses for a Blue Lady

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Red_Roses_for_a_Blue_Lady_Session_Earls_Oct_1969_Scheelar.mp3

Just Because

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Just_Because_duet_Session_Earls_Oct_1969_Scheelar.mp3

Make Me a Pallet on Your Floor

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Atlanta_Blues_Pallet_OXTOT_31_Scheelar_Marshall_1969.mp3

Blues at Earl's

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Blues_at_Earls_Session_Earls_Oct_1969_Scheelar.mp3



Alto saxophone might have been Scheelar's most outgoing and extroverted musical persona.

EARL PLAYS ALTO AND SOPRANO SAXOPHONES 1971

It's neither well known nor appreciated that Scheelar played very good alto and soprano saxophones. He had fine technique and style on each, hinting at many influences but imitating none. With some pride he recently issued a CD of his soprano and alto music recovered from a Jam Session Above Earl's VW Shop 1971 (available directly from Earl).

Often doubling, switching between soprano and alto, Earl's jaunty effervescence is delightful; his alto sound was big, fat and fun. Trumpeter Goodwin is relaxed and focused, nicely supported by Ray Skjelbred (piano). Luder Ohlwein is terrific alternately playing banjo or a soprano four-string guitar, or tiple. On "Marie," Bob Mielke joined in, the entire ensemble skillfully trading fours. "Give Me Your Telephone Number" evokes the earliest soprano heard on a jazz record, Sidney Bechet with the Clarence Williams Blue Five, 1924-25.

Scheelar soprano and alto saxophones, 1971:

Yellow Dog Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Yellow_Dog_Blues.mp3

What's the Reason I'm not Pleasing You

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Whats_the_Reason_Im_Not_Pleasin_You.mp3

Marie

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Marie.mp3

Give Me Your Telephone Number

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Give_Me_Your_Telephone_Number.mp3



Dick Oxtot, 1979. Beyond his stellar banjo playing and charismatic singing it's easily overlooked how much great jazz was presented under Oxtot's leadership. Photo by Ed Lawless, Oxtot collection.

DOUBLING ON ALTO SAX AND CLARINET WITH ANDY STEIN AND DICK OXTOT, THE ORDINARY 1975

Hot violinist [Andy Stein](#) was then playing locally with a band called Commander Cody and the Lost Planet Airmen that fused Rockabilly and Western Swing. Stein went on to national success on radio in the Prairie Home Companion house band and with the Saturday Night Live orchestra on television.

Something about the alto brought out the wild man in Scheelar, particularly around 1975 at Dick Oxtot's rolling jam sessions at [The Ordinary](#). This lively, casual Oakland nightspot drew a rather younger, hipper (and Hippie?) crowd. It was the first place trombonist Bill Bardin saw unisex bathrooms. Notably, Oxtot is the only musician present on more than two thirds of the recordings presented here. This lively session fulfilled the slogan on his business card and letterhead, "Vintage music with Style."



Scheelar doubled on alto and clarinet in this barely salvageable audiocassette. Stein switched between bluesy jazz fiddle and baritone sax. Bill Bardin played trombone and Walter Yost tuba, cornet on "Sunday."

Scheelar alto and clarinet, The Ordinary with Stein and Oxtot, 1975

L-O-U-I-S-I-A-N-I-A

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SHEELAR_Archive/L-O-U-I-S-I-A-N-I-A_Scheelar_Cass_4_The_Ordinary_1975_Sheelar_Stein_Bardin_Oxtot_Yost.mp3

Mama's Gone, Goodbye

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SHEELAR_Archive/Mamas_Gone_Goodbye_Scheelar_Cass_4_The_Ordinary_1975_Sheelar_Stein_Bardin_Oxtot_Yost.mp3

Sunday

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SHEELAR_Archive/Sunday_Scheelar_Cass_4_The_Ordinary_1975_Sheelar_Stein_Bardin_Oxtot_Yost.mp3



There's no better example of Scheelar's clarinet style than Stone Age Jazz Band. L to R: Bill Bardin, P.T. Stanton, Paul Boberg, Earl Scheelar, Pete Allen, Peter Berg.

P.T. STANTON'S STONE AGE JAZZ BAND 1975

Scheelar's clarinet was a principal voice in P.T. Stanton's Stone Age Jazz Band (1974-78). Horn man [P.T. Stanton](#) (b. Berkeley, CA 1923-1987) was a gifted instrumentalist and bandleader who created an odd but distinctive personal style and ensemble sound.

Earl and P.T. were close musical friends. His influence on Earl's leadership is evident from the well-voiced riffing and emphasis on the clarinet and trombone as primary soloists in these ensembles. Buried in Earl's rich horn palette one might hear echoes of Stanton's expressive tone heavily modified by mutes. Earl responded to P.T.'s outlook saying:

"His cornet style was so sparse, so laid back, but he would punctuate and syncopate and do things that made other people respond. P.T. was the most understated back-in- the-background player. But he had the ability to goose people and get the best out of them. And that's very evident in the Bearcats, and in the Stone Age."



Earl in Stone Age with Stanton and Duffy.

Scheelar was constantly weaving a dense musical line, his distinctive voice providing a firm structural armature for the band, and Bill Bardin's fluid trombone was an eloquent and broadly supportive voice. Recorded at New Orleans House in June 1975 by Marshall Kent, these are newly recovered outtakes from their eponymous Stomp Off LP (SOS

1128, 1992).

Stone Age Jazz Band 1975:

The Old Spinning Wheel

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/PT_Stanton/The_Old_Spinning_Wheel_B_Stone_Age_JB_6.75.mp3

1919 March

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/PT_Stanton/1919_March_Stone_Age_JB_6.75.mp3

Swanee River

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/PT_Stanton/Swanee_River_Stone_Age_JB_6.75.mp3



Stone Age Jazz Band, date and location unknown. Earl rarely strayed from his part in the ensemble and was always ready with a piquant solo or a tasteful chorus of the blues.

It was Scheelar who suggested the unorthodox rhythm format of Stone Age utilizing banjo AND guitar with a string bass but no drums or piano. On this session regular guitarist Peter Berg was replaced by Melissa Levesque (now [Melissa Collard](#)) and the banjo player was Karl Walterskirchen. Officially, Peter Allen was string bass player though the late Mike Duffy often subbed for him in rehearsals and his alternate, Walter Yost, played tuba on many recordings, including most of the album tracks. Yost was the rare tuba player skilled enough to blend delicately with the two plucked instruments.

“Earls Blues” (aka “Stone Age Blues”) and “Tiger Rag” were on their one album. Like the unissued “Girl of my Dreams” and tracks above, they’re remixed from the original tapes.

Stone Age Jazz Band 1975:

Girl of My Dreams

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/PT_Stanton/Girl_of_My_Dreams_Stone_Age_JB_6.75.mp3

Earl’s Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/PT_Stanton/Earls_Blues_Stone_Age_JB_6.75.mp3

Tiger Rag

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/PT_Stanton/Tiger_Rag_Stone_Age_JB_6.75.mp3



Scheelar sitting-in at Fritzel’s in New Orleans, late 1980s with L to R: Jacques Gauthe, Tom Saunders, John Gill, unknown piano player.

DRIFTING SOUTH, NEW ORLEANS 1989-2005

Earl's music ensembles and life in general drifted steadily South toward Louisiana. In fact, Scheelar and wife Alice moved to New Orleans, living there part-time from 1989 to 2005: *"We bought a 3 story, six-unit, brick building with wrought-iron balconies in one of the nicest parts of the French Quarter. We spent 6 to 8 weeks a year building an apartment in the attic, before selling the building, just before Hurricane Katrina in 2005."*

Scheelar also started a small foundation distributing musical instruments to local youngsters. In New Orleans Earl befriended the local jazz musicians, sitting in with Jacques Gauthe and his eight-piece, Lu Watters-style Creole Rice Jazz Band at the prestigious Meridian Hotel, as did Helm, *"For several years Bob Helm was my guest, played at the French Quarter Festival, sat in with the locals, and recorded with Gauthe's band. Bob and Jacques became very good friends."*



The Scheelar's French Quarter apartment building.

DAVE WALKER'S ALL STARS, BOB HELM AND BURT BALES, NOJC 1974

Walker's All Stars was an exquisite jam band assembled from the usual suspects for a session of the New Orleans Jazz Club of Northern California. Club president Dave Walker selected the "All Stars," musicians who'd been friends for decades: Scheelar (cornet), Bob Helm (clarinet and soprano), Bob Meilke (trombone), Burt Bales (piano), Dick Oxtot (banjo) and Walter Yost (tuba). Identity of the drummer remains unknown.

Dave Walker's All Stars, NOJC 1974:

Oh, Didn't He Ramble

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Oh_Didnt_He_Ramble_Walkers_All_Stars_Helm_Scheelar_Mielke_Bales.mp3

Willie the Weeper

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Willie_the_Weeper_Walkers_All_Stars_Helm_Scheelar_Mielke_Bales.mp3

The Waltz You Saved for Me

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/The_Waltz_You_Saved_for_Me_Walkers_All_Stars_Helm_Scheelar_Mielke_Bales.mp3

Dippermouth Blues

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Dippermouth_Blues_Walkers_All_Stars_Helm_Scheelar_Mielke_Bales.mp3



Zenith Jazz Band with Jacques Gauthe and Bob Helm. L to R: Bill Bardin, Earl Scheelar, Pete Allen, Bob Helm, Frank Tateosian, Jacques Gauthe and Henk Wagner. Santa Rosa, CA early 1990s. Photo by Alice Scheelar.

ZENITH JAZZ BAND 1980s & '90s

As a bandleader Earl gradually imposed a defined format on his formally organized ensembles beginning with New Orleans House Jazz Band and continuing in Funky New Orleans, *"I've always preferred the New Orleans style. That's what real jazz is as far as I'm concerned."*

His trend Southward was even more pronounced in Zenith Jazz Band, and its sister Zenith New Orleans Parade Band, an eleven-piece New Orleans-styled marching band. Zenith Jazz Band made a studio recording with Scheelar (clarinet), Bob Helm (reeds), Robert Young (cornet, reeds), Frank Tateosian (banjo), Peter Allen (string bass), Henk Wagner (drums), Jenny Haley (vocals) and Tom Barnebey (guest pianist).

Zenith Jazz Band, 2000:

Oriental Man

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Oriental_Man.mp3

Messin' Around

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Messin_Around.mp3

Panama

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Panama.mp3

Livin' High

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Livin_High.mp3



Earl with his late wife Alice at the Pebble Beach vintage car show displaying his restored 1926 Austin Seven.

A MAN FOR ALL SEASONS

In many respects Earl's hot bands of the 1960s embodied the spirit of Lu Watters' small bands and quintets during

the late-1940s sunset years of Yerba Buena at Hambone Kelly's. Working closely for years with Burt Bales and decades with Helm, Scheelar engaged with the deepest roots and traditions of west coast jazz.

Plainly a man of many parts, aside from making all this music Earl has been a resourceful craftsman, businessman, homebuilder and licensed real estate agent. Surprisingly, despite his broad proficiency and polymathic musical skills Earl was never a "reading musician." Additionally, Earl plays banjo, sings and formerly played guitar. Almost all the fine recordings restored for this article were originally made, produced, dubbed or edited by Earl, either with his own reel-to-reel or by Marshall Kent who had access to an Ampex deck and fine European microphones.

Though now retired Scheelar still plays music and has elaborate enthusiasms. For many years he's collected, restored and maintained vintage English automobiles; likewise for player pianos.

Visiting Earl recently I heard his three player pianos, each a different system. Watching the keyboard responding to the ghostly gestures of Jelly Roll, Joplin, Johnson and Waller, I asked how many piano rolls he owned.

"About four thousand," he guessed.

Only to be corrected by his companion, Margaret, *"More like seven thousand isn't it?"*

"Yes, but I've got quite a few for sale." As I said, Earl Scheelar will surprise you.



EARL SCHEELAR CHRONOLOGY

1929: Born in Tillamook, Oregon, July 9, 1929.

1950: Moved to Bay Area. Married first wife, Elaine Hay (divorced 1961).

Late 1950s-early 1960s: With Frank Goulette and Original Inferior Jazz Band at [The Honeybucket](#) and [Burp Hollow](#) in San Francisco.

1957-58: Sam Charters sessions and played occasionally in Berkeley clubs.

1962-67: Scheelar often played cornet, clarinet or banjo at [Monkey Inn](#) with Bill Erickson and at Berkeley casuals.

1961-72: Earl's VW Garage and 'Rumpus Room' era; Oxtot bands.

c. 1964-75: The Albatross and LaVal's (Berkeley) with Bob Jackson, John Smith, Oxtot and Allen; Earl's informal bands at his Rumpus room and elsewhere in Berkeley.

1966-67: Earl's New Orleans House (band was extant to early 1970s).

1970s: Dick Oxtot bands at The Point and casuals.

1971-72: Formation and recording of Earl's Funky New Orleans Jazz Band.

1974-78: P.T. Stanton's Stone Age Jazz Band.

1975: Oxtot bands at [The Ordinary](#).

1974-88: Monterey Bay Classic Jass Band (Frank Goulette).

1970-'90s: Scheelar's Funky New Orleans; Oxtot bands at The Point, Oakland A's Swingers, jazz festivals and casuals.



Bill Bardin (1970s) worked thirty years with Earl.



Zenith New Orleans Parade Band: L to R: Bill Bardin and Jim Klippert (trombones), Earl Scheelar (clarinet), unidentified, Dave Richoux (tuba), Jim Borkenhagen and Clint Baker (trumpets).

1980-90s: Zenith Jazz Band and Zenith New Orleans Parade Band; jazz festivals and casuals.

1986: Marriage to Alice McClesky (died 2009).

1989-2005, New Orleans: Part-time residence in New Orleans. Jams and gigs with Jacques Gauthe and Bob Helm. Sponsored the Jazz Education Foundation.

1990s: Good Time Levee Stompers, Black Diamond Jazz Band, jazz festivals and casuals.

1992-93: President, New Orleans Jazz Club of Northern California.

1999-2016: Ted Shafer Jelly Roll (1999-2014), Mission Gold (2010-14), Zenith and Funky New Orleans reunions and casuals (2014-16).



L to R: Bill Bardin, Earl Scheelar, Carl Lunsford, Dick Oxtot c. 1980.

LAGNIAPPE: ZENITH JAZZ QUARTET, TOM BARNEBEY (CORNET) 1991

Here's a little something extra; previously unissued music taped with care by Marshall Kent at the Brass Rail in Alameda, CA 6/16/91. Since around 1990 Scheelar has worked extensively with Tom Barnebey, a cornet, piano, banjo, trombone and tuba player, singer and bandleader; and he still does today. Jim Cumming (string bass) and Frank Tateosian (banjo) were friends and associates of Earl since before 1960.

Zenith Jazz Quartet, 1991:

New Orleans Shuffle

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/New_Orleans_Shuffle_Zenith_Quartet_6.16.91.mp3

Way Down Yonder in New Orleans

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Way_Down_Yonder_in_New_Orleans_T1_Zenith_Quartet_6.16.91.mp3

Someday Sweetheart

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Someday_Sweetheart_T2_Zenith_Quartet_6.16.91.mp3

Do You Ever Think of Me

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Do_You_Ever_Think_of_Me_Zenith_Quartet_6.16.91.mp3

Isle of Capri

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Isle_of_Capi_Zenith_Quartet_6.16.91.mp3

Lady Love

http://jazzhotbigstep.com/SCHEELAR_Archive/Lady_Love_T3_Zenith_Quartet_6.16.91.mp3



Salvaged image of Earl with bassist Red Honore, probably at a jam session in the 1950s. Honore passed shortly afterwards.

This article is based on interviews, correspondence and discussions with Earl Scheelar who checked the facts. It's supported by interviews, correspondence and discussions with Bill Bardin, Bill Carter, Dave Greer, Richard Hadlock and Bob Mielke. Thanks to Earl for use of his memories, tapes and photos. And to Dave Greer and Hal Smith for assistance.

A more complete [Earl Scheelar tape archive](#) is available at the [JAZZ RHYTHM](#) website. Watch for the best of Scheelar's music to be available on CD/download from [Frisco Jazz Archival Rarities](#).

For copies of Funky New Orleans or Stone Age Jazz Band long-playing vinyl albums, contact Dave Radlauer at Dradjazz@Gmail.com. Dedicated to Ladylove, Rosalyn.

