

TRANSCRIPT OF BOB MIELKE (trombone) interview regarding Frank Goudie.

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BM: He also was in Germany. I did learn that from him. And he was very impressed with, I think it was Munich, which he said was wonderful because it was a 24-hour city. You could go out at four in the morning or five in the morning and it was roaring. A very lively place he said.

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I don't think I'm being terribly helpful to you. Bit its partly due to my ignorance, I didn't know what to ask him. And now that I'm older and wiser I learn that he was on some of those recordings. I did not know that in those days.

DR: Why don't we talk about your personal experience with him.

BM: Yeah, OK. Actually I got to know him better somewhat later on than when he was in the Bearcats, because he joined Bill Erickson's quartet at the Monkey Inn, I believe around 1960, perhaps '61. We played weekly there on Thursday nights and I got to know him somewhat better. He was always a gentleman, actually very, very gracious. He had quote, 'continental manners' unquote with the ladies . . . and with other people too.

He had been a prize-fighter at one time in his life, and he was very physically fit. He was trim man, nearly seven feet tall and that's why they called him "Big Boy." And I was interested in getting into better shape myself and he actually came to my house and gave me some hints on how to tone up my muscles. And when I was talking to him at the Monkey Inn one night he was seated right next to me and he said, "Here, just tap my thigh." And I did. It was like hitting a table, the musculature was so hard. I was really astounded.

He was a delight to play with musically. Well, anyway he was a gas musically, we were always thrilled to be with him. He kept moving, his part kept moving around.

He could always find a good part to play if he wasn't playing the lead.

Many times on the recordings I think you can hear that he's playing the lead. We traded leads. There were just the two horns: clarinet, trombone and a drummer. We had several drummers. And then Bill Erickson on the piano. So, that's a brief rundown on the Monkey Inn scene.

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DR Some people will be familiar with that.

BM: It was on Shattuck Avenue near the Oakland line, actually the location was where La Pena is now. It just near Ashby, its just south of Ashby about two blocks.

DR: So this was a weekly residency, apparently somebody showed up with an Ampex tape recorder or something for a number of the sessions.

BM: Yes, Joan, and I can't remember her husband's name, the Bryant's. They were both engineers, not recording engineers, I think that's pretty clear. But they had a big bulky Ampex and they were good fans and devoted and they came quite often, yes.

["Alvin Bryant with his big Ampex and Telefunken mics." Earl Scheelar, DR.]

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BM: There's some damn good music if I say so myself. I was in a little over my head on some of that material. Erickson had a way of -- I realize in retrospect, of pushing me. He was a little more sophisticated musically than I was at the time and he like to be a kind of a catalyst, or push me.

So on a lot of these, the evidence on the tapes shows that sometimes when I solo or something, I shouldn't have taken that second chorus. I should have rested content with that second chorus. I get into alien territory and get in trouble.

DR: Nonetheless Bob, I must say there are some gorgeous extended solos on your part in many of these recordings. Bearing in mind this is only a quartet with the two horns carrying things along. On something like "Ring Dem Bells." You just carry the whole thing on through.

BM: Yeah. I remember that as particularly delightful. I always loved that tune, and everyone seems to have forgotten it. There's a tune that's very similar to it that jazz fans are familiar with: "Four or Five Times" is the same tune.

DR: There's some others in these sessions. In particular we're going to turn next to February 1962. Again this is you and FBBG leading a small quartet, probably it was Bill Erickson on piano, and probably Don Marchant on drums.

BM: He was at times.

DR: And this is a tune that you pull out a lot and not that many jazz people play called, "Joseph, Joseph."

BM: Right, yeah. I forget how come we started playing that but I think it became part of the repertoire of the Bearcats, and I think that PT Stanton suggested it.

We used to bring ideas to our get-togethers you know, and he suggested it.

The only known recording of it before we got interested in it that I'm familiar with is the Andrews Sisters had kind of a hit record with it. But I really believe it's some kind of folk melody, and I often tell audiences, "I won't tell you the title of this and we're not going to sing it but you'll recognize it, it's in everybody's subconscious because it's part of our folk tradition." Whether that's true or not musicologically, I'm not sure.

DR: There's also in this set a composition of another favorite of yours with the initials K.O. [*Kid Ory*], the tune is "Get Out of Here."

BM: Right. Is he given composer credit on that? The first time I ever heard the tune was from the Ory band that's correct but I think it's really a traditional New Orleans number. . . . It was the first band that most of the jazz people are aware recorded it and played it in public. Around here anyway. Outside New Orleans.

DR: Maybe you give me a little bit more the flavor of the Monkey Inn. It sounds like it's pretty lively, and I think I hear dancers even on some of the tapes.

BM: There actually wasn't a dance floor. But it was a student hangout for UC Students including Cal Bears football players and fraternity guys and so on, on their first beer bouts, and it could get pretty lively and at times a bit rough.

And it had sawdust on the floor. It was definitely a let your hair down kind of place. It was partly in memory of all that sawdust that I wrote a tune called "The Sawdust Blues."

One time the boys got a little rambunctious and a great big fellow came crashing into the bandstand. We were actually on a riser. And knocked Bill Erickson off the piano chair, and broke the chair. So this body was really movin'. But generally speaking it was peaceful and they're just kind of noisy. And what sounds like dancing, I think, is probably foot tapping of myself or Frank Goudie on the bandstand because the microphone was pretty close.

DR: Just for future reference we don't have anything with Jerry Blumberg on this particular set but perhaps you could say a word about about Jerry.

BM: Well surely . . . he was a young fellow. Jerry Blumberg was a dear friend of mine. I met him initially in New York when I was there in 1947 and '48. His home was in Baltimore but he lived part of the time in New York city. He was a trumpet player of course, trumpet and cornet. He joined Bob Wilbur's Wildcats and that's where I got to know him. He was a marvellous player. He was heavily under the influence of Bunk Johnson had actually taken lessons with him.

But there was another side to him that he developed over the years and by the Monkey Inn period, 1961 or '62 had developed into a very fine player capable of beautiful ballads in sort of a Bobby Hackett manner. And had his own style. He wasn't a Bunk clone or imitator. It was a delight when he could sit-in. He was out here.

He had come here to play with Turk Murphy -- and he was Turk's trumpet player for, I'm not sure just how long, it wasn't a long time -- it might have been two years, something like that. And then he quit and just sort of freelanced. And I played various jobs with him. He would come sit in at the Monkey Inn. I was a delight when he did.

DR: How would you characterize his playing in a band; was he a leader as a trumpet player? Was he more an ensemble player?

BM: Well, he was a somewhat delicate player I suppose. He was not a powerhouse player, that was not his style. But he played a beautiful lead that was fun to work around as a support instrument, trombone, in the ensemble. He was very inventive: he could come up with some really interesting stuff.

He was an intellectual musician. I keep using the word "was." Jerry eventually retired from music. . . oh in the mid-sixties, I guess or the late-1960s. And went to Sonoma State and he wanted to become a microbiologist and I think that's what he is now. I think he's probably on a faculty somewhere. He sort of walked away from his musical contacts. People have been looking for him as a matter fact, including Barry Martyn of the George Buck organization. He's doing detective work and thinks he's got a line on where he is.

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When I first got a hold of these recordings many, many years after the fact -- and I have to give my thanks to Earl Scheelar for having dubbed these from the originals because the Bryant's were moving to Texas and he realized that they were very valuable, and that I would treasure them, and I do. So when I first heard these after many years I was astonished by how good Erickson sounded. I knew he was a good player, but I didn't know he was that good.

He had two manners of playing. One was when there was a bass player present in the group, he played in one manner, and that was a light Teddy Wilson sort of style. But if there were no bass player present, then he came on like gangbusters with a strong left hand. And that's what's evident on these tapes from the Monkey Inn, that he was trying to be a real rhythm section unto himself. Its really strong and it surprises me, my memory wasn't that good on that. He was better than I thought he was, than I remembered him being.

DR: Were there any other bands or venues that he was associated with that you can recall?

BM: He had a varied career. He was resident at the Pier 23 Club for a quite a while with his own groups, he had trios there and so on. Frank Goudie played with him in those trios at times -- quite a bit. And that's also where one of the drummers that plays in the Monkey Inn quartet. A fellow by the name of Jimmy Carter, and New Orleans drummer. Bill Erickson used him . . . he was resident in San Francisco. A black man. And very fine New Orleans-style drummer; and he's on some of the hottest of the Monkey Inn items.

Bill Erickson also played as a sideman in various bands including a later version of the Bearcats. He also doubled on trumpet and so I was leader at times and used him in later Bearcat organizations on trumpet and/or trumpet. At one time he was associated with an entertainment

trio [*The Wharfcats*] that consisted of Barbara Dane singing, Dick Oxtot on banjo and singing, and Bill himself on piano. They played some waterfront club, I've forgotten the name of it. It was not the Pier 23, another one [*Jack's Waterfront Hangout*]. So he had kind of a varied career, and died prematurely in the mid-1960s.

DR: You mention Dick Oxtot. Apparently Goudie also jammed with Oxtot bands, and quite a few around this area.

BM: That's true. And Oxtot had a Sunday afternoon gig on Polk Street [*in San Francisco*] at one time and Goudie was in the band and I remember some marvellous sessions there. As a matter of fact I think Dick Oxtot has some tapes made of live sessions there.

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BM: Oh, I'm sure he played with Burt Bales. For one thing on our first interview show you did with me we played music from a Pier 23 radio broadcast with a band that was put together for those broadcasts, a short series. And Goudie was the clarinet player, and Bales was the pianist. And I think he was resident at the Pier at the time. Erickson followed him at the Pier or vice versa. They traded off as resident pianists at the Pier 23 club. So yes, Frank Goudie and Bales knew each other well.

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DR: Does the name Eddie Smith ring a bell?

BM: Indeed yes, I know Eddie. His real name is Edgar but everyone calls him Eddie. He was a fine trumpet player. He is a fine trumpet player. He still lives in San Francisco. And had a long, long career, and was the trumpet player, I think the last trumpet player of a series of guys who played in Earl Hines' dixieland band at the Hangover Club.

Then Eddie went out on his own and formed his own band, modelled sort of ... he grabbed some of the guys that had been in Earl's band when Earl disbanded that group. At the time it was Darnell Howard and he used me on trombone. But I wouldn't be surprised if in some other configuration that he might have used Frank Goudie. I didn't have personal knowledge of his knowing Goudie but he's a smart guy, he'd smoke out a good player like that.

DR: Goudie moved to the San Francisco Bay Area and apparently he ran his own business, he inherited a business from an uncle.

BM: I do know that he had a trade. He was a upholsterer, a furniture upholsterer. Perhaps that's that's the business that you're referring to. I never visited him there. Is the implication that he inherited that business from an uncle and that business was located in San Francisco?

DR: Yeah.

BM: That's probably it. I wasn't aware that he got around that much. Yeah I was going to mention I knew he was in Latin America.

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DR: Goudie seems to have had a quite distinct growl to his clarinet playing. Or a sharp timbre.

BM: OK, that's a better word I think. He did. Its quite distinctive, its a quite strong vibrato. I don't know if he actually ever growled. I wouldn't use that term.

DR: Well, let's say its a dirty tone. Its not a proper classical, conservatory tone.

BM: No, that part's true. Its very much a personalized voice, and which is quite characteristic of real New Orleans clarinet players. Each one of them -- the great ones -- has his own voice and you can recognize them when you get to know that voice, you can recognize them on recordings without reading the label. Like Albert Nicholas, or Omer Simeon, Frank Goudie. And another . . . I might not have the proper knowledge about Edmond Hall, but Edmond Hall was instantly recognizable also. I'm not sure he was a New Orleans clarinet player.

DR: [confirm Hall NOLA origin per Chilton]

BM: OK, so he's another major example of this. He did have a growl in his tone. Which I think some people found somewhat distasteful . . .

DR . . . when you say he, you mean Goudie or . . .

BM: No I'm talking about Edmond Hall. I wouldn't say that Goudie had a growl in his tone quality. But he did have a personal and rather strong vibrato.

DR: Did he ever express any preferences or admiration for clarinetists who he just thought highly of or maybe had influenced him.

BM: Well no, I don't recall that, but my memory is pretty bad. He did not as far as I know. I think I would have remembered if he had mentioned an artist that was his idol and that he tried early on to model himself after.

DR: Any other musicians in general that he admired, maybe not necessarily reed players.

BM: No. He was a musician's musician. He admired people who knew what they were doing and were well schooled and so on. He didn't mention preferences to me.

BM: He was more knowledgeable than a lot of people probably assumed. He had studied -- I'm not sure where, whether it was in the United States or later on when he was in Europe -- but he had studied solfege: which is do-re-me-fa-so-la, that sort of thing, extensively. It's really a method of ear training and it can get quite difficult.

There's two systems: moveable 'do' and fixed 'do.' If you're playing in the key of C, the note C is 'do' in solfege. Goudie could demonstrate that to you, he could sing a song in solfege. And know where those steps of the scale . . . what syllable to use, solfege syllable. I guess, I think he actually went to a conservatory and learned that. That's real old academic stuff.

DR: That's interesting because none of the biographical notes I have on him have noted any formal training.

BM: I must say he's gotta be one of the most cosmopolitan people I have ever met. Frank Goudie was a man of the world, with roots in the United States.

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BM: I'm aware of the Bill Coleman recordings, but I'm not aware of other recordings that Frank Goudie made while in Europe. Of course he recorded with Bill Coleman under Bill Coleman's name. And I'm aware of those recordings. He sounds wonderful on them.

DR: I was interested in your comment on Coleman.

BM: Well, I've always admired him. I call that mainstream music, mainstream jazz. One of my favorite trumpet players in that idiom. A very tasteful player.

I have a certain bag, category, I place him in: the same category as a very tasteful trumpet player by the name of Joe Thomas who I think was in New York, his main career was there. Anyway, Coleman was a marvellous sound: lyrical and beautiful. I really admired him.

I was thrilled when I first went to Breda, Holland back in 1976 I think it was, there was a big after show dinner or something, or welcoming dinner, and I sat down at a long table with Bill Coleman on the other side. I didn't get a chance to engage him in conversation, but at least I got introduced to him.

DR: He strikes me as another man probably who had that European manner you referred to.

BM: Frank Goudie had that suave, delightful manner, Parisian gentleman's manner, and he also wore a beret. So he cut quite a figure. Stood very straight, marvellous posture. Really an impressive man. And a man of the world as I was saying because he had roots in Latin America as well as Europe and the United States and Mexico.

DR: Did you ever see him play tenor or any of the saxophone family instruments?

BM: I never did, no. I'm not quite sure why. It would have been appropriate for him to use it in the Monkey Inn quartet for sure. Not appropriate in the Bearcats. I don't know even if he had the instruments any more.

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DR: Is there anything else you'd like to say about reminiscence of Mr. Goudie.

BM: Well I think I've covered it pretty well: it was a wonderful experience to get to know him and play beside him. I'm being kind of bland about that . . . but there's nothing more I can add really. Except someday I hope we that can do something with these recordings. There's a lot of interest in him and rightfully so.

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BM: It was a great experience that I could play along with him.

DR: I appreciate you taking the time Bob. Lets see if we can wrap this up in some 'up' way. Why don't you try again your comments, and just say it was tremendous or something like that.

BM: OK, let think a second.

DR: Take your time.

BM: OK I'm ready. Listen, you know playing with Frank Goudie was a marvellous experience. Discovering how wonderful he sounded when he first came to our Bearcat rehearsal, we were just all ecstatic . . . and that he was interested in working with us.

I learned a lot playing with him, both in the Bearcats and later, especially with the quartet of Bill Erickson's at the Monkey Inn. He was always supportive. He supported you personally and musically. It was a delightful and wonderful experience.

DR: Its always a delightful and wonderful experience talking to you Bob.

BM: Thank you Dave, I enjoyed it very much.

DR: Thanks so much and we'll hope to have you again on KALW fairly soon.