

**Call of The Freaks**

**Luis Russell & Louis Armstrong**

**Musical Pals**

**An Illustrated History**

By

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## Abstract

Luis Russell was a pioneering pianist, orchestra leader, arranger, and composer, and a seminal figure in the creation of both jazz and swing. Russell became a pivotal player in a succession of musical milieus; from cabarets and casinos in Colon, Panama, to early 1920's New Orleans small groups, to large black Orchestras and middle size recording ensembles in mid 1920's Chicago, to leading his own Orchestra in late 1920's New York City, to moving the New Orleans polyphonic style forward into propulsive swing arrangements with his Orchestras of 1928-1935, to directing one of the most successful Big Bands of the Swing Era, billed as Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, which was Louis Armstrong fronting The Luis Russell Orchestra, from 1935 into the 1940s, to having his leadership stripped and becoming merely the piano player with Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra as it embraced muscular Swing charts under the direction of Joe Garland from 1940-1943, to creating a new Luis Russell Orchestra for the era of jump blues, Rhythm n' Blues, Bebop, and crooning vocalists, from 1944-1950.

Luis Russell might be the most important figure in the history of jazz, that you've perhaps never heard of. He may lay claim to an odd achievement; gaining great visibility during the three decades he was musically active (the 1920's through the 1940's), while being reduced to invisibility today. Until now, there has never been a full length biographical treatment of Luis Russell. With an extensive family archive at my disposal, Luis Russell's story will be told from an insider's

perspective, attempting to demystify and debunk some of what's already been written. At the heart of the story are Luis Russell's collaborations and friendship with his musical pal, Louis Armstrong. Their collaborations are among the foremost pinnacles of Louis Armstrong's career.

## Acknowledgements

There are many people who have helped, assisted, and inspired this study. First and foremost, I'd like to acknowledge and thank family members. Catherine Russell, Luis Russell's daughter and my wife since 2004, and partner since 2000, provided steady and valuable encouragement, support and love, as well as astute musical and historical insights. Carline Ray, Catherine's mom, Luis Russell's wife, and my mother-in-law, was a pioneering musician, educator, and example of excellence and pride in her accomplishments, who freely shared her knowledge and insights. My mom and dad, Dr. Ethel Kahn Fleischman and Bernard Kahn, who instilled in me, from an early age, a love of learning and a broad appreciation of the Arts.

Dr. Lewis Porter, my thesis advisor and professor of Jazz History and Research, came up with great suggestions. One of Lewis's novel ideas is that if you are researching a subject, "listen" to everything! Another one of his pearly words of advice, in picking a subject for your research project, choose something that you'll enjoy! I've followed both suggestions and have to confess, listening to the entire recorded works of Luis Russell (including his recordings with King Oliver, Henry Red Allen, Louis Armstrong, and as a leader) has resulted in, not only, an appreciation of his work, but also sheer enjoyment.

I'd also like to thank Rutgers professors, Dr. Henry Martin and Krin Gabbard, for inspired teaching and writing. In addition, the works of many writers and historians have been particularly helpful, including, John Szwed, Allen Lowe,

Nat Hentoff, Jeffrey Magee, Barry Mazor, Franz Hoffman, John Chilton, Peter Carr, Gary Giddins.

I'm grateful to have received two research awards; from the Morroe Berger-Benny Carter Jazz Research Fund at the Institute of Jazz Studies, and a Milt Gabler Scholarship, providing financial support for my research. I'd like to thank Walter Fred Kasten for giving me the opportunity to present my research at the symposium at Satchmo Summerfest in New Orleans. I've visited archives and research centers, which have all been invaluable, including, the Jazz Archive at Smithsonian in Washington, D.C., The Hogan Jazz Archive at Tulane University in New Orleans, The Institute of Jazz Studies at Rutgers University in Newark, New Jersey, the Louis Armstrong Archive at Queens College in New York City. In addition, I visited the Collections of jazz historians who are also fine musicians and bandleaders; Vince Giordano in Brooklyn, New York and Philippe Baudoin in Paris, France. Both shared generously from incredible knowledge and personal archives.

I'm indebted to Luis Russell and Louis Armstrong, musical pals, and my heros, for lifetimes of inspiration, entertainment, and revelations. Ricky Riccardi, the great Louis Armstrong historian, has provided endless inspiration, knowledge, and entertainment, through his writings and presentations, and through his friendship, welcoming me into the extended Louis Armstrong family of admirers of Pops. For generously sharing their friendship, knowledge, passion, and expertise, I'm indebted to Michael Cogswell, Dan Morgenstern, Mick Carlon,

Al Vollmer, Jack Bradley, Doug Pomeroy, Michael Feinstein, Ted Fox, Danny Peary, Will Friedwald, Barry Singer, Chuck Folds, Eddy Determeyer, Elizabeth Surles, Lynn Abbott, Bruce Raeburn, Connie Fredericks, Jim Malone, Jim Cullum, Margaret Pick, Leslie Haynes, Roy Haynes, Frank Anderson, Deena Anderson, Danilo Perez, Patricia Zarate, Robin Tomchin, René Goiffon, Robina Young, Sarah Folger, Mark Shane, Matt Munisteri, Tal Ronen, and many others who may have been inadvertently omitted.

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## Introduction

The theater lights dimmed as I slid into a slightly wobbly seat in a half-filled art house, popcorn in hand. The year was 2013. A new Woody Allen film, “Blue Jasmine,” was about to begin. As it started, I heard the strains of New Orleans jazz.

“Wait a minute,” I said to myself. “That sounds like “Back O’ Town Blues,” a classic of the Louis Armstrong repertoire.” I wasn’t aware going in that this tune would be in the film. I was astonished and pleasantly surprised, while still slightly skeptical. I needed confirmation, and while I enjoyed the film, I was anxious to get to the music credits. As the film ended, the credits rolled, and there it was; “Back O’ Town Blues” performed by Louis Armstrong and written by Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell.

Who is Luis Russell? In addition to being a pioneering jazz orchestra leader, pianist, arranger, and composer, Luis Russell is my father-in-law. Luis’s daughter, Catherine Russell, was 7 years old when her father died in 1963. He and I have never met, yet I’ve come to know him as family.

I first met Catherine Russell on a recording session, in the year 2000. I was managing the soul, gospel, blues trio, The Holmes Brothers, and was looking for a creative way to jumpstart their recording career. I invited their longtime friend and admirer, the singer, Joan Osborne, to produce them. And while Joan was just coming off her multi-platinum, major label debut album,



“Relish,” she had never been asked to produce another artist and she loved The Holmes Brothers, and to our delight she accepted. Joan had worked with vocalist Catherine Russell in the New York City scene, and called her in to be part of a harmony, old school gospel, backing vocal trio, which we later called “The Precious Three,” which consisted of Joan Osborne, Catherine Russell, and Maddie Miles. The idea was to make a contemporary “spiritually” themed album. We spent a week at an idyllic, pastoral scene; the rolling, hilly farmlands of central Massachusetts, where Longview Farm recording studio became our refuge.

Catherine and I discovered shared interests: mandolin and old timey music, and we were soon playing fiddle tunes on two mandolins. After the sessions, we continued to see each other. I was living in Newton, Massachusetts and Catherine was commuting weekly from her home in New York City to teach at Berklee College of Music in Boston. One morning, we met for coffee. Catherine was choosing material for an upcoming project, her first recordings in a jazz context, as featured vocalist in a group led by legendary lefty bassist, the late Earl May. She mentioned that one song she wanted to record, “Back O’ Town Blues,” was co-written by her father, Luis Russell, who had worked with Louis Armstrong. “What?!?,” I said while trying not to spill my coffee. She suggested that I look him up, and I quickly found a reissue collection, *Louis & Luis: Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell 1929-1940*. I wasn’t aware of Luis Russell up until that point. I considered myself to be well versed in jazz history and the history of American roots music. How was it that I had missed him? Why

had I never heard of him? Truth be told, Catherine Russell had me from “Hello,” but the deal was sealed, and she really had me from the words “Louis Armstrong.”

Born in the month of August, a young black musician cut his musical teeth in a Caribbean port city with a famed red-light district. He played in groups accompanying silent films. He moved to Chicago to work as a sideman with King Oliver, recorded as a leader in Chicago, and eventually moved to New York City, where he would find his greatest success and a home base for the rest of his life. He accompanied female blues singers, and worked as a sideman in an established jazz orchestra, before recording as a leader. An infectious smile was part of his persona, and a trademark of his on-stage personality. He was obsessed with music, having few hobbies outside of music, except for collecting and archiving his own history, and swimming. His professional rise was aided by and sometimes threatened by mobsters, until finding the guidance of a personal manager of Russian and Jewish ancestry. This description applies to both Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell. They were born a year apart, and traveled from New Orleans to Chicago, Armstrong going first in 1922, followed by Russell in 1924, with two years of separation. The famed red-light district for Louis Armstrong was Storyville in New Orleans, for Luis Russell it was in Colon, Panama and then New Orleans.

I needed answers so I began to explore. Luis Russell's journey was as improbable as it was mind boggling. He was born in Bocas Del Toro, Panama in

1902. A winning lottery ticket, of all things, preceded a move, along with his mother and sister, to New Orleans, in October 1921. Soon after his arrival, Russell held down the piano chair in a popular New Orleans venue, Tom Anderson's Cabaret, in a band which included Albert Nicholas and Barney Bigard on reeds, and Paul Barbarin on drums, musicians who would travel to Chicago along with Luis Russell to form the nucleus of the band of Joe "King" Oliver, all later to become legendary figures. And years later, Luis Russell was leading his own Orchestra, with these same New Orleans musicians, making popular records, and soon thereafter, tearing up the scene in Harlem as a seminal figure in the creation of both jazz and swing in the musical center of the universe, New York City.

With an active recording career starting in 1926 and lasting for two decades, Luis Russell left behind a significant body of work, still available to today's listener, some as a sideman, but much of it as an orchestra leader, pianist, and composer. He collaborated extensively with two icons of the jazz pantheon; Joe "King" Oliver and the greatest of them all, Louis Armstrong. He recorded with many greats, including Oliver, Armstrong, Sidney Bechet, Barney Bigard, Henry Red Allen, Hoagy Carmichael, Lonnie Johnson, J.C. Higginbotham, Roy Haynes, George "Pops" Foster, Jelly Roll Morton, Victoria Spivey, W.C. Handy, Albert Nicholas, Paul Barbarin, Rex Stewart, Coleman Hawkins, Chu Berry, Sid Catlett, and many others. Reissues of Luis Russell recordings, on both major labels and by collector oriented independent record labels, have appeared, and reappeared. In addition to the reissues, his

recordings are also readily accessible on streaming services like Spotify, and on YouTube.

Luis Russell led an orchestra, which in a window of time in 1929 and 1930, rivaled the orchestras of Duke Ellington and Fletcher Henderson for supremacy among African-American bands. And from 1935 to 1943, Louis Armstrong took over the Luis Russell Orchestra, and rode it to fame through the Swing Era, through Radio, Recordings, Hollywood Films, and Extensive Touring, as Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, with Luis Russell on piano, and from 1935 to 1940 as musical director and sometimes arranger.

Despite all of this, Luis Russell's name had slipped under my radar. Perhaps his renown was just a notch below where it would have needed to be to enter my consciousness. As I explored, I came to realize that Luis Russell is one of the truly monumental figures in the history of jazz. At the same time, he's been woefully neglected and ignored, and sometimes dismissed, by many jazz historians.

Luis Russell was a pioneer and an innovator. He was one of the original creators of musical vocabulary, repertoire, style, and recording technique. With a knack for often being on the cutting edge, his contributions helped to define what was happening in the development of three distinct musical genres; jazz, swing, and rhythm and blues. Russell joined the flowering of the notion that a "jazz" musician be considered a professional category, as opposed to a leisure pursuit or a hobby, which took hold in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century, based on the ability to earn

a living wage. Creole musicians in New Orleans, from the turn of the century, were tradesman who worked with their hands and who held “day” jobs outside of music; as cigar makers, cabinet makers, blacksmiths, bricklayers, and longshoremen.

Luis Russell was a musician, first and foremost. He swam in musical waters where excellence was highly prized, and where higher education, formal training, and mentorship, were valued and viewed as indispensable tickets to success, especially for African Americans. These elements were building blocks which enabled him to establish, solidify, and sustain meaningful relationships throughout his life. He succeeded first as a sideman and band member, quickly made the transition to being a leader, and then seamlessly segued between the two roles, before settling on leadership. And throughout, he provided music for dancing, for celebration, and for listening pleasure.

During his career, Luis Russell amassed an impressive array of “firsts,” using the term first with caution and subject to further scrutiny. He was the first Panamanian jazz star, and a hero in Afro-Caribbean circles. He embodied the immigrant experience, which he shared with many of his collaborators. Allegedly, he was first to lead an orchestra where members stood to take their solos. He arranged and played piano with his orchestra on perhaps the first interracial recorded vocal duet, “Rockin’ Chair,” sung by Louis Armstrong and Hoagy Carmichael in 1929. He revolutionized recording technique, by introducing a musical fade at the end of a performance (by gradually playing more softly,

before the introduction of mechanical studio “faders”), in his 1929 recording on his original composition and theme song, “The New Call of The Freaks.” In 1930, Luis Russell was the first black artist to record the George and Ira Gershwin composition “I Got Rhythm.” His trailblazing took an unexpected twist, as he became the first and perhaps the only successful black orchestra leader to “sell” his band (most likely for zero compensation), and be taken over by a bigger name, star front man, when Louis Armstrong rebranded Luis Russell and his Orchestra as Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra, in 1935. Together, Russell and Armstrong further broke racial barriers by becoming the first African American orchestra to be featured on a nationally sponsored and syndicated radio show, in 1937. And after leaving Louis Armstrong in 1943, Luis Russell helped to invent the cross marketing of music and sports as entertainment, when his reformed orchestra becoming the first musical group to tour extensively with a major sports figure and celebrity, joining forces with heavyweight champ, Joe Louis, sharing billing on a national tour.

While recognized in the eras of their inception, Luis Russell’s recorded works haven’t been properly given their due since the two-decade span (1926-1946) of their creation. Which calls to mind one of Mae West’s more memorable lines in the 1934 movie *Belle of The Nineties*, where she nonchalantly brushes off male suitors by saying dryly, “I’d rather be looked over than overlooked.” Sadly, Luis Russell, as the subject of jazz historian’s affection, has been more overlooked than looked over. One of the missions of this study is to place Luis Russell’s story in its’ proper historical and cultural context, bringing to bear his

hitherto unknown and under recognized contributions, to not only remedy omissions from the past, but to allow his incredible achievements to unfold as his life unfolded, as an astonishing journey, filled with entertaining and unexpected details, and with fun and inspiring music.

Starting in the year 2000, I embarked upon a voyage of exploration and discovery, searching out whatever I could find about Luis Russell. At that point, I had worked professionally in the music business for over 20 years, first as a musician and songwriter, and then as the founder of a music booking agency, management company, and music publishing company. This background enabled me to filter Luis Russell's story through the prism of my own experience of booking tours, managing artists, negotiating recording contracts, and the myriad of the practicalities of making a living in music. The journey included a visit to the Justice of The Peace in 2004, when I married Luis's daughter, Catherine Russell, on his birthday, August 5. It has taken us to Panama, where we visited his birthplace on Careening Cay in Bocas Del Toro in 2008. It has taken us to San Antonio, Texas, where in 2010, Catherine recorded a one hour concert dedicated to Luis Russell, for the nationally syndicated Public Radio show, Riverwalk Jazz, singing her dad's tunes accompanied by piano legend Dick Hyman and the Jim Cullum Jazz Band. And in 2015, I enrolled in a unique Master's program in Jazz History and Research at Rutgers University in Newark, under the guidance of noted jazz historian, musician, and the program's founder, Dr. Lewis Porter, to gain valuable context for my research into Luis Russell's career. My Master's thesis forms the basis for this work.

And along the way, the journey in search of Luis Russell has taken me to his recordings. By simply reading the liner notes to various reissues, written by jazz collectors, aficionados, and historians, a literature of Luis Russell began to come into view, which while fascinating in and of itself, serve to frame his vast body of musical creations.

The “Classics” label from France issues the complete works of each chosen musician, with the aim of keeping them always in print. Three separately packaged cds, titled *The Chronological Luis Russell and His Orchestra*, were released, (1926-1929) and (1930-1934) appearing in 1991, and (1945-1946) appearing in 1999, each with liner notes by the knowledgeable Swiss based English teacher, Anatol Schenker, who maintains that “By 1930, this band had reached its artistic peak, ranking second only to the Duke Ellington Orchestra!”<sup>1</sup>

The now defunct “ASV Living Era” imprint, from England, released *Louis and Luis: Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell 1929-1940* in 1992, and followed in 2007 with *Luis Russell & His Orchestra, Saratoga Shout, 25 original mono recordings 1929-1934*. British critic, Vic Bellerby, wrote notes for both collections, observing about Russell “his arrangements always stimulated a band which drove furiously and without compromise. Henry “Red” Allen, J.C. Higginbotham,

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<sup>1</sup> Anatol Schenker, liner notes to Luis Russell, *1930-1934*, Classics 606, 1991, compact disc.



Charlie Holmes, and Albert Nicholas were great soloists in a truly swinging front line.”<sup>2</sup>

In the year 2000, an excellent compilation was released on “Retrieval” from The Netherlands, *The Luis Russell Story 1929-1934*, with 48 tracks on two CDs, perhaps the best single collection of Luis Russell currently available, with a terrific booklet including a well-researched history by the late musician and historian, Richard M. Sudhalter, who claimed that Russell’s records (at the time of their release) “represent a kind of ‘hot dance’ band new to New York listeners; ten pieces able to play with the flexibility and verve of five, while generating the firepower of fifteen.”<sup>3</sup> This superb collection, with excellent sound quality thanks to the skills of remastering guru, the late John R.T. Davis, presents Luis Russell’s complete recordings as a leader in chronological order (except for his pre-1929 recordings made in Chicago). A stunning aural experience awaits anyone who cares to listen to this collection from beginning to end, either on this double cd set, or on Spotify, where the entire collection resides.

Before the cd era, there were vinyl reissues of Luis Russell on major labels. On eBay, I picked up the Columbia Records - John Hammond Collection double LP from 1974 titled *Luis Russell and his Louisiana Swing Orchestra*, lovingly produced by the late Frank Driggs, who also contributes an extensive

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<sup>2</sup> Vic Bellerby, liner notes to Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell, *Louis and Luis 1929-1940*, ASV Living Era AJA 5094, 1992, compact disc.

<sup>3</sup> Richard M. Sudhalter, liner notes to *The Luis Russell Story 1929-1934*, Retrieval RTR 79023, 2000 & 2005, 2 CD compact discs.

essay. Driggs compares “Luis Russell’s band and that of Count Basie’s a decade later. They both had the greatest rhythm section of their day, sections that worked as a man, with a pianist that fed chords and worked up solid backgrounds for a team of brilliant soloists.”<sup>4</sup>

And from the collection of my mother-in-law and Luis’s wife, the late Carline Ray, I found a vinyl LP reissue, not dated but possibly from 1969 on E.M.I. Records in Great Britain under the Parlophone label (rendering Luis Russell a label mate of The Beatles), titled *The Luis Russell Story 1929/30*, with notes by the English jazz discographer Brian Rust. Upon Rust’s death in 2011, *The New York Times* obituary headline read, “Brian Rust, Father of Modern Discography” and calls Rust “a discographic detective who compiled comprehensive guides to recorded jazz.” No less an expert than Brian Rust, in his liner notes to the Parlophone reissue, calls Luis Russell and His Orchestra “one of the greatest in the entire history of jazz.”<sup>5</sup>

And for fans of the work of Louis Armstrong while fronting the Luis Russell Orchestra, a couple of incredible recent reissue releases have surfaced. Newly discovered recordings of Louis Armstrong’s national radio broadcasts from 1937, sponsored by Fleischmann’s Yeast, were issued in 2008 on the tiny “Jazz Heritage Society” label. And for Armstrong-Russell fans, the holy grail dropped

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<sup>4</sup> Frank Driggs, liner notes to *Luis Russell and his Louisiana Swing Orchestra*, Columbia KG 32338, 1974, double vinyl LPs.

<sup>5</sup> Brian Rust, liner notes to *The Luis Russell Story 1929/30*, Parlophone PMC 7025, vinyl LP.

from heaven in 2009, in the form of a “Mosaic Records” Box Set, *The Complete Louis Armstrong Decca Sessions (1935-1946)*, a seven CD collection, containing a whopping 169 tracks. Both the Fleischmann’s Yeast Shows and the Mosaic Box are accompanied by essays by jazz historian and Louis Armstrong expert, Dan Morgenstern, (his notes on the Mosaic Box won a Grammy Award) who comments that Russell’s band, on its own, before becoming Louis Armstrong’s backing Orchestra, had “been responsible for a string of brilliant discs with a unique quality combining the spirit of New Orleans’ polyphony with the punch of a swinging larger ensemble.”<sup>6</sup> On August 4, 2017 (Louis Armstrong’s birthday), much of the material on the Mosaic Box was released digitally on Spotify, iTunes, and Amazon, as *The Decca Singles, 1935-1946, Louis Armstrong*, making it readily available as streaming or downloads.

Despite my initial ignorance, I can now clearly appreciate how Luis Russell’s music has endured, and continues to reappear, again and again, in sometimes surprising settings. His music has reached beyond a strictly “jazz” context, to the realm of the hipster music fan, connecting the dots between many musical genres, including blues, old time country, rhythm n blues, spirituals, and rock n roll. For instance, Joe Bussard, a renowned collector of 78 rpm records, created a buzz in 2003 with the release of *Down In The Basement: Joe Bussard's Treasure Trove of Vintage 78s 1926-1937*. Described as “a collection of “24 Rare Gems From The King Of Record Collectors - String Bands, Blues,

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<sup>6</sup> Dan Morgenstern, liner notes to *The Complete Louis Armstrong Decca Sessions (1935-1946)*, Mosaic MD7-243, compact disc 7CD box set, p.3 of booklet.

Jazz, Country, Cajun, Gospel,” the old-timey leaning collection includes “The (New) Call of The Freaks by Luis Russell and His Orchestra,” alongside tracks by artists like Grand Ole Opry Star, Uncle Dave Macon and cowboy singer, Gene Autry. From the annotated discography contained with this collection’s liner notes: “A series of stellar recordings for Okeh in 1929 and ’30 place the Luis Russell Orchestra in the top tier of New York bands at that time. “The New Call of The Freaks,” with its nonsensical chorus, was written by percussionist Paul Barbarin and served as the band’s theme song.”<sup>7</sup> (In fact, Luis Russell is listed as a co-writer, with Paul Barbarin, and according to their band mate and saxophone player on the session, Charlie Holmes, this was Luis Russell’s composition.)

Apart from early country music and jazz sharing the 1920’s and the 78rpm record as launching pads, these emerging genres were cultivated and nurtured sharing music publishers, repertoire, record company A&R men, record labels, and instrumentation. Studio musicians floated freely between recording sessions in the 1920’s, not stopping to inquire if they were playing on a jazz or country record; as they played in string bands with banjos, guitars, violins, and horns, with a sense of swing. When music writer and culture critic, Nick Tosches, published his first of many books in 1977, titled *Country: The Twisted Roots of Rock ‘N’ Roll*,” he makes an explicit connection between country and jazz, in a chapter titled “Cowboys and Niggers,” writing, “Luis Russell was crazy, and

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<sup>7</sup> Marshall Wyatt, liner notes to *Down In The Basement, Joe Bussard’s Treasure Trove of Vintage 78s 1926-1937*, Old Hat RCD-1004, 2002, compact disc.

great...the record ("The New Call of The Freaks") ended with a fade-out effect, the world's first. It all seemed satanic, and very funny."<sup>8</sup>

And recently, on April 24, 2015, the highly regarded nationally syndicated radio show *Sound Opinions* from WBEZ in Chicago, hosted by pop/rock critics and taste makers Jim DeRogatis and Greg Kot, produced an entry titled *A Rock Fan's Guide to Jazz*. They enlisted jazz writer John Corbett to suggest jazz recommendations for rock listeners, and among his top 6 choices, there alongside Miles Davis, Sonny Rollins, Ornette Coleman, and Duke Ellington, we find "Luis Russell & His Orchestra: The (New) Call of The Freaks."<sup>9</sup>

Along with Luis Russell's recorded work, his contribution and importance are discussed in books on the history of jazz, by writers like Gunther Schuller, Humphrey Lyttelton, John Chilton, Albert McCarthy, and Eddy Determeyer. And yet, with a fair amount of myth and mystery still surrounding Luis Russell's story, there has never been an in-depth treatment of his life's journey, which in many ways, soon to be demonstrated, is a tale of epic proportions.

By now, the period in which Luis was active musically (roughly 1917 through his death in 1963), has been picked over, chronicled, and extensively dissected by jazz historians, critics, and an emerging writer class, decades in the making. Luis Russell has been described as overlooked, underappreciated,

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<sup>8</sup> Nick Tosches, *Country: The Twisted Roots of Rock 'N' Roll*, (New York, NY: Da Capo Press, 1977). 206-207.

<sup>9</sup> Archived Radio Broadcast, WBEZ, 14 April 2015, <http://www.soundopinions.org/show/491>.

anonymous, a “missing” link, deserving of greater recognition, 40 years behind the times, obscure, not particularly distinctive, capable without being particularly noteworthy, and not strikingly original. His orchestra has also been described as “one of the greatest in the entire history of jazz,” by Brian Rust. My research will attempt to illuminate the context which gave rise to these statements, explain the discrepancies in perception, and shed new light on his importance, debunking some commonly held beliefs, while hopefully creating a more balanced and nuanced view of his significant contributions.

Luis Russell gave journalists several interviews both during his career and after his retirement from full time band leading in 1950. Many of the musicians he worked with left us with their memories. Luis Russell’s inner circle of musical collaborators have published autobiographies with the support of co-writer/interviewers/editors (Barney Bigard, Pops Foster, Clyde Bernhardt, Bill Coleman, Lee Collins). Others have given extensive interviews or been the subject of oral history projects, leaving their recollections on the record (Paul Barbarin, Albert Nicholas, Bob Shoffner, Bud Scott, Charlie Holmes, J.C. Higginbotham, Bessie Dudley, Jelly Roll Morton, Alberto Soccaras, and Roy Haynes). Still others have been the subject of book length biographies (Henry Red Allen, Jimmy Archey). In one unique case, Austin Lawrence, who played trombone with Luis Russell’s Orchestra in the middle 1940s, later wrote a biography of Duke Ellington, inspired by having worked with Luis Russell and by Russell’s friendship with Ellington. I’ve conducted oral history interviews with two musicians who are still with us as of this writing; drummer Percy Brice, who

worked with Luis Russell in his post Armstrong Orchestra in 1945, and pianist Frank Anderson, who worked at a club managed by Luis Russell and played piano and fronted a band playing Luis Russell charts in the '50s. I've interviewed Luis Russell's second wife, the late Carline Ray, and his daughter (who is also my wife,) Catherine Russell. And of course, Louis Armstrong, Luis Russell's lifelong friend, inspiration, and prime musical collaborator, was a prolific writer and correspondent, and the subject of more than two dozen biographies, three autobiographies, and a myriad of interviews and specialized scholarly studies. Armstrong's great hobby was acting as his own archivist, chronicling his career by avidly building a collection of music, tape recordings, memorabilia, and original collages. As Bruce Boyd Raeburn points out, "Armstrong studies continues to be a growth industry...it remains a truism that the more we learn about Louis Armstrong, the more we want to dig deeper to fully understand him."<sup>10</sup> To date, no one has told Louis Armstrong's story from a Luis Russell perspective, and using this slant, I aspire to dig deeper and add to our understanding. Luis Russell collaborated with an expansive and celebrated cast of characters, and an understanding of who these musicians were and where they came from is highly relevant. I'll attempt to provide thumbnail sketches of many of his key sidekicks, with the realization that I won't be doing them justice. With a desire to provide veracity in my accounts, perhaps "your honor, may I approach the bench," should be the motto of this study. I'm content to let the

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<sup>10</sup> Bruce Boyd Raeburn, review of *Louis Armstrong, Mater of Modernism* by Thomas Brothers, in *American Music Vol 32, Number 3* (Fall 2014): 356.

reader be the judge, knowing that where I've missed the mark, corrections are always welcome.

By accessing the recollections of Luis and of the musicians who were there with him, pictures emerge, which are often at odds with the blithely accepted conclusions of historians and critics. One can see a swath of jazz history as bunk or myth, which the recollections of musicians who were intimately involved serve to debunk and demystify. Jazz historiography separates what's been left behind, artifacts which are unalterable, like recordings, and contemporaneous accounts, like newspaper articles, from what's been said and written about them. And often, what's been said or written enters a sort of echo chamber where a conclusion is drawn, sometimes erroneously, and is then repeated until it becomes taken on faith as the truth. Here are some of the myths about Luis Russell that I'll address; his piano playing wasn't distinctive or particularly noteworthy; he was too easy going and too popular with his sidemen to become successful; his career ended just as the Swing era came into fruition; the Depression and lack of bookings forced him to give up his Orchestra to Louis Armstrong; his Orchestra was the worst ever fronted by Louis Armstrong; his final Big Band in the 1940s played a few gigs and then quietly broke up. These statements are debatable and as I hope to demonstrate, very far from the truth.

In addition to oral histories, another hugely valuable resource in researching his era is the African-American press. With opportunities for blacks severely restricted by racism and Jim Crow segregation in the first half of the



20th century, African Americans developed their own institutions, their own social clubs, colleges, sports leagues, and newspapers. A press developed which was owned and operated by African Americans. Newspapers like *The Chicago Defender*, *The Pittsburgh Courier*, *The Baltimore Afro-American*, *New York Age*, and *New York Amsterdam News*, became a mouthpiece for writers who chronicled developments in the arts, politics, and sports, from diverse perspectives of interest to the growing black communities in Northern cities, fueled by great migrations from both the Southern U.S. and The Caribbean, with national editions gaining distribution to communities nationwide. Miles Davis recalled one of his first jobs while growing up in East St. Louis was as a “paper boy” delivering the national edition of the *Chicago Defender*.

With the notable exception of the black press, the world of black entertainment was a world apart. Apart and below. The music was often promoted in racist and segregationist terms. Race records were intended for sale to black record buyers. The portrayal of blacks in advertisements for records, or on sheet music covers, was demeaning, enforcing stereotypes which rose from minstrelsy and an earlier era of coon songs, mammy songs, and corked faces. In many instances, sheet music covers of songs written by black composers or performed by black artists, substituted photos of white artists. With few exceptions, where blacks appear, the figures are caricatures, exaggerated and unflattering, with bulging eyes, enlarged lips, and flamboyant clothes. Black bodies are exceedingly skinny or plump, and might appear alongside the portrait of an idealized white face, found within an inlay, so that the separation is clear.

Coverage in the African-American press served to promote pride in the accomplishments of musicians of color, often touting economic milestones, like box office and attendance successes. Also highlighted were areas where creativity and business acumen merged, like recording, music publishing and songwriting. News about developments and changes in artist management and booking appeared with regularity. Luis Russell received significant press coverage, which help in tracing his moves and evaluate his standing in the African-American community and in white spheres as his career unfolded.

On August 5, 2004 (the month and day of Luis Russell's birth), Catherine Russell and I were married. I gradually became aware of the fact that I had married into jazz royalty. Catherine's mother, Luis's second wife, Carline Ray, was still actively performing, and we spent quality time together. Although Luis and Carline didn't meet until the mid 1950's, and she was 23 years his junior, Carline's career in some ways paralleled the career of Luis Russell. Carline worked in Big Bands, as guitarist and vocalist with the International Sweethearts of Rhythm and with Erskine Hawkins Orchestra during the 1940's, often playing the same venues as the Luis Russell Orchestra, sometimes a week apart! She shared her recollections of Luis Russell with me on many occasions, including a recorded oral history. Carline told me that Luis Russell was reserved when it came to sharing his feelings and thoughts. This may have been a function of both professional ethics and personal aesthetics. Luis didn't share a lot with Carline in his later years about his career, being content to focus on family life and raising their daughter. Carline passed away in July of 2013 at 88 years young. Luis and

Carlina were guardians of their music, and of their legacy, to whom history, accomplishment, and preservation, were paramount. They saved virtually everything; photos, letters, contracts, itineraries, home movies, recordings, music publishing statements, artifacts, business correspondence, and more. Catherine inherited an incredible archive. The photographs saved by Luis and Carlina, some autographed, and many quite rare, the bulk from the 1920s through the 1940s, provided clues for avenues of research, as well as a visual component to the story. Including many of these photographs does indeed make this an illustrated history. I've credited photos and documents inherited from the Russell family as being from the "Catherine Russell Collection."

As so, with a heap of joy, a dollop of trepidation, and I hope with a healthy dose of humility, I'm able to access rare source materials from the Russell family archive, along with the resources available to the professional historian, to tell the Luis Russell's story from both an insider's perspective, while placing him in a broader context.

The arc of history places us according to seemingly random and sometimes inexplicable laws. How else could we find ourselves at this intersection of time and place?

## Chapter 1 – Bocas Del Toro to Colon

### Panama 1902-1921: “Next Door To Heaven”

Luis Russell was born on August 5, 1902 on a small island, Careening Cay (Isla Carenero), which is very close to the larger Island of Colon, part of an Archipelago of islands known as Bocas Del Toro, located in the Province of Bocas Del Toro in Panama, in the Northeastern part bordering Costa Rica, encompassing a part of the mainland as well as the Archipelago of Islands. The largest Island within the Archipelago, named Isla Colon, shares the name, Colon, of the port city on the Atlantic and Caribbean side, the entry point of the Panama Canal. The main town on the Island of Colon is referred to as Bocas Town or simply as “Bocas.”



Map of Bocas Del Toro [in relation to Panama in insert]

Four centuries earlier, in 1502, Christopher Columbus, while on his 4<sup>th</sup> voyage, visited the island where Luis was born. Columbus used the sheltered

waters to careen his ships, tilt them on their sides, for repairs, and to scrape barnacles from the hulls, leading to the name “Careening” Cay. The main nearby Island was named Colon for “Columbus,” with the adjacent Almirante Bay, also named for “Admiral” Columbus.

A geographic location can serve as a lightning rod, attracting forces which alter the course of history. Panama, by nature of being a narrow Isthmus in Central America, long attracted interest as a potential crossing point from the Atlantic to the Pacific. Seeking a new route to India’s spices, Columbus set in motion a search for wealth and profits. In the ensuing centuries, colonies and empires were built. The exploitation of natural resources, depending on the labor of enslaved Africans, gave the Americas and The Caribbean a unique character, mixing European and African cultures, with the cultures of native peoples. By the time Luis Russell came along, ghosts from earlier centuries roamed the islands and surrounding waters; native peoples, European explorers and colonists, Africans, pirates, and freaks.

The attempt to answer a simple question: how to get from here to there, is at the heart of the Luis Russell story. And in all its manifestations, one answer serves us well; follow the money.

From the time of Luis Russell’s birth, through his childhood and formative years growing into young adulthood, two enormously impactful developments engulfed Panama, with global implications. The United States had a hand in both. The construction of the Panama Canal and the development of the United

Fruit Company were parallel enterprises, launched at the start of a new century and coming of age along with Luis Russell. The allure of globalization, expanding trade opportunities, and finding a quicker, more efficient way to get from here to there, informed both enterprises.

A book about The Panama Canal, published in 1913, described the place of Luis Russell's birth, where he spent his youth.

On the Atlantic coast, only a night's sail from Colon, is the port of Bocas del Toro (The Mouths of the Bull), a town of about 9,000 inhabitants, built and largely maintained by the banana trade. Here is the largest and most beautiful natural harbor in the American tropics, and here some day will be established a winter resort to which will flock people from all parts of the world. Almirante Bay and the Chiriqui Lagoon extend thirty or forty miles, dotted with thousands of islands decked with tropical verdure, and flanked to the north and west by superb mountain ranges with peaks of from seven to ten thousand feet in height.<sup>11</sup>

The Panama Canal was completed in 1914, and the banana trade was in full bloom. The stage was set for another truly global commodity to make an impact -- jazz.

In January 2008, Catherine Russell and I visited Panama in search of Luis Russell and family history. Our journey began in Panama City, where Catherine and her band performed at the Panama Jazz Festival, a major international event, founded by Panamanian pianist and composer, Danilo Perez.

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<sup>11</sup> Willis J. Abbot, *Panama and The Canal*, Syndicate Publishing Company, New York, 1913. Excerpt reprinted on CZbrats.com, Aug 28, 2001.

On our first day in Panama City, we met Ernesto Crouch, a Panamanian music historian and drummer, and founder of a “Luis Russell Foundation” in Panama, who offered his perspective on the family’s history.

Luis Russell was born into an important and highly respected family in Bocas Del Toro. His father, Felix Alexander Russell, came to Panama from Jamaica to work an administrative post in the corporation formed to build the Panama Canal. “Outside his work, he quickly won respect as a pianist, organist, choir director and music instructor.”<sup>12</sup> Ernesto Crouch added, “We found that Luis Russell’s grandfather, he was a captain for an American company. He bought a huge piece of land in Careening Cay. They bought a house from United Fruit Company & they lifted, put it on a boat to take it from Colon Island to Careening Cay. And it was known as a yellow house.”<sup>13</sup> According to Crouch, the Russell family was aristocracy in Bocas and at that time, Bocas was the center and Panama City was a jungle. On Luis’s mother’s side of the family, the family was named Machure, involved in shipping, and his grandfather was a ship captain. Luis’s mother, Edith, also known as Judith, was Columbian or Indian.

On the final day of the Panama Jazz Festival in 2008, Catherine and her band performed before 10,000 people at the outdoor Plaza Central in the old “Casco Viejo” part of Panama City. It was a powerful “homecoming” for the daughter of Luis Russell to sing for Panamanians on his native soil. As she came off the stage, she was enthusiastically greeted by Jaime Ellis, a cousin from her

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<sup>12</sup> Richard Sudhalter, liner notes to *The Luis Russell Story 1929-1934*, compact disc .

<sup>13</sup> Ernesto Crouch, interview by the author, 24 January 2008, Panama, video recording.



grandmother's side of the family, who she was meeting for the first time. Jamie is a successful salsa singer who leads a band in Panama, and many years ago, spent time caring for Catherine's grandfather, Luis's father, Felix Alexander Russell. Our plan was to visit Bocas del Toro following the Festival, and Jaime offered to come along and serve as our guide, telling us what he knew about the family history along the way. On January 28, 2008, we flew from Panama City to Bocas Town, a 55-minute flight aboard a two-engine propeller driven airplane.

Once in Bocas Town, we sat with Jaime in a restaurant, and he filled us in on the family tree. Jaime told us that the family was very closely knit, and that everyone on his side of the family were educated in the United States, and were well educated. Jamie's full name is James Anthony Ricardo Ellis Lopez Machure. On the Machure side of the family, Luis Russell's mother's side, Marcelona Lopez Machure (Gigi) and Edith Machure (Antin), were sisters, who also had two brothers, Pete Machure, who was a soldier/pilot, and Sam Machure, who was a ship captain. Edith Machure (Antin) or Judith, was Luis's mother, and Catherine's grandmother. Gigi had two daughters, Laura Lopez and Estelle Lopez. A member of the Lopez family was a Governor of Bocas. Gigi's father, Catherine and Jaime's great grandfather, was an Indian from Salvador who had lots of money. As dusk fell over Bocas Town on the evening of the day of our arrival, the streets came to life with sounds of percussion. Many groups, some in uniform, marched and danced through the streets playing drums and hand-held percussion instruments in a nonstop cavalcade of Afro-Caribbean sound. We were witnessing a musical tradition known as Comparsa, in this case, a rehearsal

for Carnival, which would take place in February. And in our hotel, a strolling guitarist and singer named Joseph told us that he had a group based on the nearby Bastimentos Island called the Bastimentos Beach Boys. As a solo, he regaled the guests with covers of tunes by The Beatles and Harry Belafonte, until we realized that he had an entire repertoire of racy and hilarious calypso tunes. His lyrics quickly pivoted from the tourist friendly “Banana Boat Song” to ask the question, “If your mother and wife were drowning, who would you save?” to another about a woman and a monkey who drank too much rum. Any doubts about music being alive in Bocas del Toro were quickly put to rest.

The next day we took a water taxi, a short ride, from Bocas Town to Careening Cay, to see the house where Luis Russell was born and where he grew up. Jaime recalled, “Catherine’s grandfather, they called him Teacher Russell. He was a teacher and the Best! He played piano, played trumpet...you can mention any instrument...a very respected man. As a matter of fact, he built the Methodist church in Bocas. So when he got sick & I was a kid, I used to take care of him, bring him breakfast and also supper, bath him. I learned a lot of things from him.” Jaime talked about meeting Luis Russell and taking a picture with him, saying he was impressed by his dress. And he reminisced about what Careening Cay meant to him, recalling Black Rock, Red Rock, going fishing and that Luis Russell’s uncle owned an Island and had cows. He summed it all up as being “next door to heaven.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>14</sup> Jaime Ellis, interview by Catherine Russell, 28-29 January 2008, Bocas Del Toro.

An island can be a place of isolation, and of spiritual solace inspired by nature. It can also be a place of adventure. The environment of Luis Russell's upbringing was a mixture of pastoral and urbane. The land was lush and fertile, palm and lime trees gently swaying in the breeze. The waters were bountiful, filled with schools of fish, and the nearby Bocas Town, five minutes away by water taxi, was electric with commerce. Being surrounded by water, every coming and going needed to be plotted in advance, giving rise to contemplation along with planning and direct action. Luis was known as "mayor" since he was a kid. He liked to give orders and was a natural leader. He would swim the channel from Careening Cay to Bocas Town on Isla Colon (recounted to Ernesto by a man in Bocas in 1996, who was told this by Luis Russell during his visit to Panama in 1959).

When Luis Russell pulled himself out of the water onto terra firma of Bocas Town, he walked into a bustling commercial hub, the center of the banana business, and a major port city with five consulates and several newspapers. As one historian noted,

At its heyday in the early 20th century, the UFC (United Fruit Company) managed its affairs from Bocas Town, a wood-built port perched on the tip of Columbus Island (today known by its Spanish name, Isla Colón). It was the epicenter of a thriving multi-cultural milieu. English and French-speaking labourers were shipped en-masse to the steamy Bocatorean shores from Caribbean colonies like Barbados, Jamaica, Haiti, and French Guadalupe. In total, more than 50 nationalities were represented. It was a swinging time, when modernity burst onto the scene with staggering new advances in technology. The company established the Tropical Radio Telegraph Company, signaling a bold new age of mass communication in Central America. Three newspapers were distributed around town, keeping the population abreast of news and social functions. There were movie theatres, horse-races, cricket, baseball, and polo matches.

Off-shore, the company's "Great White Fleet" plied the oceans with their bounty, delivering cheap, sweet bananas to a mass market for the first time in history. On the mainland, new infrastructure was erected: railroads, bridges, and the impeccably attired port of Almirante. There was the sense that man's ingenuity and spirit of enterprise could overcome any obstacle.<sup>15</sup>

With all its diversity of population, Boca del Toro was primarily a British dominion, with settlers from the British West Indies predominating. Luis grew up in an English-speaking environment and all education was in English. Both sides of his family included successful and accomplished professionals; leaders in a community which was an important center of commerce and culture.

Luis's father, a trained organist, choirmaster, school teacher, and school principal, became known around Bocas as "Teacher" Russell. He was highly respected and admired and there is a road in the area named "Teacher Russell Highway." Today there is a street in Bocas named "Avenida Luis Russell;" like father, like son. Luis learned the basics of music from his father, "Teacher" Russell, including instruction on guitar, violin, organ, and piano. A photographer's portrait of Felix Alexander Russell reveals a handsome, sharply dressed, mustachioed gentleman sitting in a white wicker chair with Panama hat resting by his side.

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<sup>15</sup> Richard Arghiris, *The Fruit of Empire in the Banana Republics*, [perspectivetravel.com/issues/0813/panama](http://perspectivetravel.com/issues/0813/panama).



Felix Alexander "Teacher" Russell (Catherine Russell Collection).

At age 15, Luis decided to concentrate on piano, finding work playing for silent movies in Bocas Town. Accompanying silent movies was a major source of employment for instrumentalists. Films screened in smaller towns were

accompanied by a pianist or organist, who either read sheet music or improvised. In some cases, written scores came along with the film. Either way, Luis had the opportunity to hone his skills. Simply riffing off images on the screen, the silent film accompanist became an instant musical storyteller, composing on the spot, inspired by the cinematic goings on, as they unfolded. The musicians helped to drown out the whirring noise of the film projector.

From the turn of the century, musicians from the Caribbean to the U.S., got started playing in movie houses. In addition to Luis Russell in Panama, three greats of stride piano, Willie “The Lion” Smith, James P. Johnson, and Thomas “Fats” Waller, all found early work as ticklers playing in cinemas in the New York City area. In Manzanillo, Cuba, a young musician and flute player, Alberto Socarras, received training in solfege and music theory from his mother from an early age. He recalled that when a silent film came to town, in 1920, a musician would come along with the picture carrying sheet music. Socarras played flute in a 7-piece orchestra in the movie theater pit, saying that an afternoon rehearsal was scheduled for an 8pm screening.<sup>16</sup> Socarras would later become an Orchestra leader in Harlem, where he often shared billing with Luis Russell at the Caribbean centric Renaissance Ballroom and at the Apollo Theater.

Careening Cay, from the time of Luis’s birth to the time of this writing, has no roads, and is only accessible by boat. The Russell family home at the time of his youth was the only two-story building on the cay, emblematic of his family’s

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<sup>16</sup> Alberto Socarras, interviewed by Oral History Collection, 16 January 1983, Institute of Jazz Studies, Newark, NJ.

elevated status in the community. “Teacher” Russell provided Luis with solid training and a strict upbringing.

Luis recalled his early years when interviewed by George Hoefer for a feature in *Downbeat* in 1962. “My father was Mr. Music down there, and besides he was one of the area’s few school teachers. When I was 15, I decided to concentrate on piano because the local silent movie house always had a pianist.” Luis, even in his formative years, was a pragmatist. He based this choice, to make the piano his primary instrument, as he would base many later decisions, on what he needed to do to work. “I got a chance to play for the movies when the regular piano player, a man named Blackwood, took sick one night.” Russell explained. “He had a drummer and a horn player accompanying him, and when I took over, they took off in disgust. They didn’t like my short pants.”<sup>17</sup>

Short pants were the wardrobe of youth and adolescence in the Caribbean and in the U.S., where countless musicians describe the progression from short pants to full length trousers as a rite of passage; a sign of acceptance as a grown up. While his dress at this youthful stage didn’t impress, his musical ability did the talking. “Well, I must have done a good job because Blackwell never did come back, and his two helpers came to me to ask for their jobs back.”

After a year of playing piano in a movie house in Bocas Town, Luis sought to expand his horizons. In 1918, at the age of 16, Luis moved to the port city of Colon, the entrance point to the Panama Canal on the Atlantic side. He started

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<sup>17</sup> George Hoefer, “Held Notes: Luis Russell,” *Downbeat*, November 1962.

playing in a cabaret, where he had to put on his first pair of long pants “to be allowed to sit in the band with men.”<sup>18</sup> By the time Luis Russell arrived in Colon, the music scene there had become an amalgam of influences. Howard Reich, jazz writer for the Chicago Tribune, visiting Panama in 2005 around the Panama Jazz Festival, filled in some historical context, drawing parallels between New Orleans and Colon:

“...the history of this country [Panama]--which didn’t become an independent nation until 1903 -- hauntingly echoes the origins of America’s first city of jazz, New Orleans. Just as the cultures of Spain, France, Africa and North America shaped the music of Louisiana, so too did these same influences converge in Panama.

The Spanish conquerors of centuries ago left behind their language, architecture and European musical traditions, while English traders who brought slaves here provided a critical element in the emergence of a distinct Panamanian music: the mystical, ancient sounds of Africa, borne of men and women in chains.

The arrival of the French in the 1880s, to attempt to build a canal (a failed venture that cost 22,000 lives and nearly bankrupted France) and the Americans in 1904, to construct the Panama Canal, completed the picture. Like Louisiana, Panama at the dawn of the 20th Century was poised to create a nascent jazz.

But with the exception of the music of Luis Russell, a Panamanian jazz genius who moved to New Orleans in 1919, at age 17, [he moved in 1921 at age 19] the first chapter of Panama jazz may totally have escaped documentation. If we are to judge the accomplishments of Russell -- who famously collaborated with such first-generation New Orleans jazzmen as clarinetist Albert Nicholas, drummer Paul Barbarin and the great Satchmo himself -- the initial wave of Panamanian jazz artists was formidable.

That a Panama-trained musician such as Russell, one of many Panamanian jazz pioneers, could hold his own alongside the first great jazzmen of New Orleans suggests that the Central American country may have been at the forefront of the music.

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<sup>18</sup> Luis Russell, “Jazz Encyclopedia” Questionnaire, submitted to Leonard Feather, Institute of Jazz Studies, Newark, NJ.



“Even by the ‘30s, there were no recordings,” says Francisco Buckley, a Panamanian music scholar (selling copies of his recent book “The Salsa Music of Panama and Other Matters,” available only in Panama)...But the people who heard this music, they remember,” adds Buckley, who interviewed scores of musicians and listeners for his volume. In addition, he cites yellowed newspaper clippings that reference the jazz scene that thrived in the Panamanian provinces of Colon and Boca del Toros (*sic*). For Centuries, Africans concentrated here, on the side of Panama facing the Atlantic and the U.S., the city of Colon emerging as the capital of a recognizably Central American brand of jazz.”<sup>19</sup>

One of those yellowed newspaper clippings, from a Panamanian newspaper from Bocas del Toro, discovered in Luis Russell’s scrapbook, describes his progression, with two different entries, seemingly a week apart. Here is an excerpt from the first entry, titled – “In The Musical World,” is dated June 5, 1926.

“We the residents of this Province can feel justly proud of the marked distinction Bocas del Toro has taken in the musical world. In the issue of last Wednesday we clipped from a popular Chicago Journal that Mr. Luis Russell, and his Orchestra has just signed on the dotted lines to record exclusively for the Brunswick Record Company of Chicago. In that article it is noted that the young man has in him great musical ability, and to further his study on harmony of the art, he is now a student serving a term at the Chicago Conservatory of Music. At present his musical ability as Pianist, Composer and Writer is classified with such men as professors Copin (*sic*), Rachmaninoff, Straus, Wagner (*sic*) or Beethoven. It will be remembered that the young gentleman is eldest son of our local music teacher and day school teacher, Mr. F Alex. Russell of this city. Luis of course before leaving this Province showed signs of his talent, but none of his companions expected him to startle the musical world abroad.”

The issue of “last Wednesday” mentioned above, also appears in the scrapbook with this excerpt:

”Five years ago as a lad, he was pianist at the Piavé Hotel and Broadway Theatre at a Salary of \$7.50 U.S, Cy and \$11.50 per month respectively. Removing to Colon he came in touch with the best musicians of that city

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<sup>19</sup> Howard Reich, “A culture with a lost past,” *Chicago Tribune*, 6 March 2005.

and organized an Orchestra increasing his pay to \$5.00 gold per night. In 1921 he went to New Orleans where he distinguished himself...We wish this young Panamanian success. All honour to those who try.”

Luis Russell's economic advancement aligned with early 20<sup>th</sup> century migrations across the Caribbean, as islanders from Jamaica, Barbados, the Windward and Leeward Islands, and Trinidad, moved to Bocas Del Toro to work in the banana trade, and to Colon to work on the construction of The Panama Canal. Both locations afforded opportunities for their diverse and growing populations to earn a wage, and have the where with all for leisure pursuits. For those going to the movies or listening to music in cabarets, bars, brothels, and casinos, Luis Russell played piano, as he also honed his skills as a bandleader. After arriving in Colon, he first got a job playing with a clarinetist at the Casino nightclub, and soon expanded to six pieces and became very popular with American soldiers and sailors. He recalled, “I'd ask the Americans for the names of the popular tunes in the United States and order sheet music from the Feist publishing house in New York City. We used to have long rehearsals as I taught American hit songs to my band.”<sup>20</sup>

One of the tunes for which Luis Russell ordered sheet music, “Tiger Rag,” had been recorded in New York City on August 17, 1917 by a quintet of white musicians from New Orleans, the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, as part of a series of recordings by the group over the winter, spring, and summer of 1917. These recordings, commencing with “Livery Stable Blues” on February 26, 1917,

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<sup>20</sup> George Hoefer, *Downbeat*, *ibid*.

a novelty where the instrumentalists imitate barnyard animals, created an international sensation and have been canonized in jazz histories as the first “jazz” records.

While enjoying his time in Colon, Luis Russell purchased a ticket in the newly established Panama Lottery. It turned out to be a winning ticket, a prize of \$3000, worth around \$40,000 today. With an ability to read music *and* tea leaves, and with a keen sense to explore the latest trends, the young pianist was on his way. His next stop would be New Orleans.

## Chapter 2: New Orleans – 1921-1924

*“The critics and guys who write about jazz think they know more about what went on in New Orleans than the guys who were there. They don’t know nothing. They’re wrong most of the time.” - Pops Foster*

Louis Armstrong was born a year and a day earlier than Luis Russell, on August 4, 1901, in the Back O’ Town section of New Orleans, in the “very heart of what is called The Battlefield because the toughest characters in town used to live there, and would shoot and fight so much.”<sup>21</sup> Louis Armstrong’s family situation was chaotic when compared to the relative stability of Luis Russell’s upbringing. When Louis was born, his mother and father lived with his grandmother, but their quarrelling led them to move away, his father leaving to live with another woman, and his mother to live in a neighborhood filled with cheap prostitutes, lower in stature than Storyville. Despite his mother’s struggles, he recalled fondly that “everybody from the church folks to the lowest roughneck treated her with the greatest respect. She was glad to say hello to everybody and she always held her head up. She never envied anybody. I guess I must have inherited this trait from Maryann.”<sup>22</sup>

Young Louis was sensitive and impressionable, and took to heart instructions from the women who raised him, his grandmother and his mother. He was grateful for receiving a strict upbringing. “Ever since I was a baby I have had a great love for my grandmother. She spent the best of her days training me,

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<sup>21</sup> Louis Armstrong, *Satchmo, My Life in New Orleans*, (New York: Prentice Hall, 1954, New York: Da Capo Press paperback, 1986.) 7-8.

<sup>22</sup> Ibid. 8-9.

and teaching me right from wrong. Whenever I did something she thought I ought to get a whipping for, she sent me out to get a switch from the big old Chinaball tree in her yard. "You have been a bad boy," she would say. "I am going to give you a good licking." With tears in my eyes I would go to the tree and return with the smallest switch I could find. Generally, she would let me off. However, when she was really angry she would give me a whipping for everything wrong I had done for weeks. Maryann must have adopted this system, for when I lived with her later on she would swing on me just the same way grandmother did."<sup>23</sup>

From his great grandmother, who "lived to be more than ninety," and who Louis remembered well, "From her I must have inherited my energy."

Louis went to church regularly, and he recalled his great-grandmother and grandmother as "Christian women," who "between them, they kept me in school, church, and Sunday school. In church and Sunday school I did a whole lot of singing. That, I guess is how I acquired by singing tactics." He recalled that "...even when I was very young I was conscientious about everything I did. At church my heart went into every hymn I sang."

As a youth, Louis spent some time in a household shared by an Uncle, Ike Miles, who was father to a "crowd of cousins," and Mama Lucy, his grandmother. His mother would disappear for days on end and dump him with his Uncle, who worked, though not steadily, on the levees unloading boats. When Louis was being raised by Maryann, he remembered a succession of "stepfathers," at least six, one who beat her, one who was nice but drank too much, and one named

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<sup>23</sup> Ibid. 10-11.

Gabe, who while not as “highly educated or smart as the others, but he had good common sense. That was what counted for me in those days. I liked Gabe a lot.”

Common sense and pragmatism were cornerstones in the upbringing of both Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell. While Luis Russell had strong role models on both sides of his family, Louis Armstrong, absent a father figure in his life, nonetheless approached challenges by being conscientious and respectful. Each adopted a values system, learning the golden rule in church, and from family. And while Luis Russell’s father, Felix Alexander, would be his most important “teacher,” in musical realms, Louis Armstrong, at a very young age, was surrounded by music. He heard music outside of honky tonks like the Funky Butt. When he was too young to enter, bands would play on the street to attract customers, and he was immersed in the cornet sounds of Buddy Bolden and of Bunk Johnson. He was discerning, and listened for subtlety of playing. “Of course, Buddy Bolden had the biggest reputation, but even as a small kid I believed in finesse, even in music.”

Louis Armstrong took a fancy to one trumpet player who was, in his estimation, the best of all, and who would become a mentor and father figure to him; Joe Oliver. “The King of all musicians in New Orleans was Joe Oliver, the finest trumpet player who ever played in New Orleans. No one had the fire and the endurance Joe had. Almost everything important in music came from him. Musicians from all over the world used to come to the Lincoln Gardens in Chicago, and he never failed to thrill them. I was just a punk kid when I first saw

him, but his first words to me were nicer than everything that I've heard from any of the bigwigs of music."<sup>24</sup>

"Maryann enrolled me at the Fisk School...I was an active youngster and anxious to do the right thing, and I did not stay in the kindergarten long but was soon in the second grade. I could read the newspaper to the older folk in my neighborhood who helped mama to raise me. As I grew older I began to sell newspapers so as to help mother to make both ends meet. By running with the older boys I soon began to get hep to the tip."<sup>25</sup>

Louis sang on the streets in a quartet, along with lead singer, Little Mack, baritone Redhead Happy Bolton, both of whom would later become drummers, and bass singer, Big Nose Sidney. "...I was the tenor. I used to put my hand behind my ear, and move my mouth from side to side, and some beautiful tones would appear. First I must explain how our quartet used to do its hustling so as to attract an audience. We began by walking down Rampart Street between Perdido and Gravier. The lead singer and the tenor walked, followed by the baritone and the bass. Singing at random we wandered the streets until someone called us to sing a few songs. Afterwards we would pass our hats and at the end of the night we would divvy up. Most of the time we would draw down a nice little taste. Then I would make a bee line for home and dump my share into mama's lap."<sup>26</sup>

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<sup>24</sup> *ibid.* 24.

<sup>25</sup> *ibid.* 25.

<sup>26</sup> *ibid.* 34.

One of the most often repeated fallacies about Luis Russell concerns the year of his arrival in New Orleans. Countless jazz histories, newspaper and magazine articles, some including interviews with Luis Russell, state that he arrived in New Orleans in 1919. A search of immigrations records reveals that Luis Russell, his mother Judith, and his younger sister Thelma, sailed from the port of Cristobal, C.Z. (Cristobal was the point of departure from the city of Colon and C.Z. stood for Canal Zone) on October 12, 1921, and arrived in New Orleans days later; with the Head Tax certified stamped and signed by U.S. Immigration Service on October 17, 1921. All three are listed under “Nationality (Country of which citizen or subject.), Race or people” as “Panamanian-African,” and “Last permanent residence.” Is listed as Bocas Del Toro. They sailed aboard the ship, S.S. Atenas, which was one of a fleet of ships operated by The United Fruit Company, dubbed “The Great White Fleet” by Theodore Roosevelt because of their heat deflecting white color. This fleet transported both fruit and passengers from the Caribbean to New Orleans, New York City, and to ports in Europe. “Not only did the banana business employ scores of thousands of workers on plantations, rail lines, and docks, but the “Great White Fleet” that cycled fruit to northern consumers ensured continuous service between ports for first-class passengers and cut rate “deckers” alike. One cluster of routes ran from Panama northward along the Central American coast to New Orleans and back via Havana...”<sup>27</sup> Luis, along with his mother and sister, traveled in first-class cabins

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<sup>27</sup> Lara Putnam, *Radical Moves: Caribbean Migrants and the Politics of Race in the Jazz Age*, (Chapel Hill, NC: The University of North Carolina Press, 2013), 27-28.



aboard the Atenas, which built in 1909 and weighing just under 5000 tons, was one of the premier ships in the entire fleet.

Unbeknownst to Luis Russell, prior to his journey aboard the S.S. Atenas, the ship had anonymously taken on iconic status by capturing the imagination of an American painter, William Woodward (1895-1939), considered the most important painter in New Orleans and the Gulf Coast during the early part of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. Flush with money from two decades of successful expansion across the Caribbean, the United Fruit Company spared little expense in building a new headquarters, a million-dollar, 11 story building located at 321 St. Charles Avenue in New Orleans, completed in 1920. Woodward was commissioned to paint a 15-foot round canvas mural for the ceiling of the entrance rotunda of the building, which he completed in 1921. Woodward, accompanied by his wife Louise, was known to have traveled aboard the “Atenas.” They enjoyed a two-week cruise, visiting Havana, Kingston, Bocas Del Toro and Cristobal, Panama, during which time Woodward made oil studies to aid him in the creation of the large United Fruit Company mural. In addition to providing passage for Luis Russell and other Caribbean travelers, and hauling fruit, the Great White Fleet was marketed as a Caribbean cruise vacation for Northerners. The Woodward mural depicts an unidentified ship moored at Havana Harbor, and received favorable reviews.

The 1921 mural made quite an impact when it was completed...The mural description by the July 1921 New Orleans' Illustrated News described it as “a riot of glorious color toned down to the aristocracy of harmonious good

taste.” A review in the December 1921 *Item Magazine* described it as “a wonder of flashing blues and scarlets and golds hailed from the tropics.”<sup>28</sup>

While the mural was later removed, partially damaged, and placed in storage, a 30-by-24-inch oil painting by Woodward, probably a finished study for the mural, surfaced and was put up for auction in 2011 by Neal Auction Company, with a value estimate of \$75,000 – 125,000. As promotion for the auctions, a press release in *ArtfixDaily Artwire* sheds light on how the painting clears up the mystery of the ship’s identity on the mural, as the name on the ship in the painting S.S. Atenas is clearly visible.

“One of the most notable differences in William Woodward’s two renditions of the same scene, aside from shape and size, is the assignation of the prominent great white ship’s name. The ship pictured in the United Fruit Company mural does not bear the Atenas name, nor has any Woodward scholar previously identified that painting’s massive ship. Neal Auction Company’s easel painting stands alone on its own merits...”<sup>29</sup>

The painting sold at auction in November 2011 for a winning bid of \$89, 625. The ship had come to epitomize something of great value, a symbol worthy of artistic exaltation. For Luis Russell and his family, it was their means of travel from Panama to New Orleans.

Most jazz histories are off by two years in pinpointing Luis Russell’s arrival in New Orleans as 1919 rather than 1921. In addition, the implication that his lottery win enabled him to bring his mother and sister to New Orleans, may too be off base. No doubt, a \$3000 windfall in 1919, the year of his lottery win, was

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<sup>28</sup> Eric Bradley, “Woodward painting of the United Fruit Company’s SS Atenas may sell for \$75,000,” *Antique Trader*, 7 November 2011.

<sup>29</sup> Press Release, “Old Havana Harbor Scene by William Woodward a Highlight of Neal Auction’s Nov. 19 Sale,” *ArtfixDaily.com*, 2 November, 2011.

helpful in covering moving expenses in 1921. However, the narrative that his lottery win precipitated the move has become Luis Russell folklore, allowing and possibly stoking an image of an impoverished Panamanian rescued by a stroke of luck. As Luis Russell explained it when interviewed in 1957, “My mother went to school in the States as a girl and wanted to return. So I came to New Orleans...”<sup>30</sup> In fact, immigration records reveal that Luis’s mother, Judith Russell, his uncle Sam Machore (*sic*), and a daughter named Hildred Russell (perhaps Luis had two sisters), traveled from Panama aboard another Great White Fleet ship, the S.S. Sixaola, sailing from Bocas del Toro to Colon on September 19<sup>th</sup>, 1913 with a final destination of Atlanta, Georgia.

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<sup>30</sup> Felix Manskleid, “Luis Russell Re-Visited,” *Jazz Monthly*, April 1957, p.11.



“SS Atenas Moored at Old Havana Harbor” c. 1920-21, Woodward painting

Discovering that Luis Russell’s mother journeyed from Panama to the U.S. as “a girl, to study,” and that her wanting to return was his reason for coming to

New Orleans, is somewhat of a bombshell of a revelation. A matriarchal society thrives in Panama among the native Kuna Indians, where women are primary breadwinners of the household. Luis's mother traveled abroad, while his Father, Felix Alexander, remained at home in Bocas, attending to his teaching and looking after their eleven-year old son. A model of an independent woman, striving for self-advancement, was provided by Luis's mother. Much later, his view of women, as reflected in his songwriting, and life choices, came from the role models of his youth. Luis revered and respected woman.

Traveling to Atlanta in 1913, Russell family members, Luis's mother, uncle, and sister, had the means to travel. After arriving in Atlanta, Judith spent years in the States and then returned to Panama. Luis's mother brought her son and daughter to New Orleans in 1921, traveling aboard a luxuriously appointed company liner for the United Fruit Company, the S.S. Atenas. A son of the Russell-Machure clan, a leading family in Bocas del Toro, a tightly knit group of teachers, ship pilots, land owners, and professionals, was about to make his mark on the Crescent City. When he arrived in New Orleans in 1921, Luis Russell was still a teenager, and although he had gained valuable experience in making connections and living on his own in Colon, it may have been helpful to arrive in the U.S. for the first time with family support, and with maternal guidance, his mother having been there before, knowing what to expect.

What Luis Russell might not have expected, was how quickly he was able to find top level work as a pianist in New Orleans. A feature on Luis Russell in the

June 1949 issue of *Playback*, described the scene in New Orleans upon his arrival.

At that time, there were only three or four good pianists in the Crescent City, so he was immediately in demand. He recalls playing in bands there in which the other men couldn't read a note of music; he had to teach one trumpet player new tunes by playing the melody from the sheet music on his piano.<sup>31</sup>

Luis Russell's reading abilities stood him in good stead. In the years leading up to his arrival, a variety of band formats were popular on the streets of New Orleans which did not include a piano; there were brass bands and string bands with violin, guitar and bass fiddle. The piano wasn't mobile and had been played as a solo instrument in the brothels. Storyville as the center of sporting houses came to an end in November 1917. By the turn of the century, pianos and sheet music had proliferated in American homes as Ragtime took off in popularity, original African American piano based compositions, which gained broad appeal, and formed one of the bases for the developing jazz repertoire. Apart from the solo pianists working in brothels, many New Orleans bands didn't have a piano. They played for parades, picnics, funerals, and social functions of every type. Drummer Paul Barbarin recalled that in the early days, before he started working with Luis Russell, pianos weren't used in dance halls. Bass and guitar or banjo were used instead. Bands played in palaces, like choir lofts, near the ceilings of dance halls, not on the main floor bandstands, as later became the practice. A band might line up in this order; bass, guitar, clarinet, cornet, trombone, drums. Barbarin felt odd when he first played in a band having a

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<sup>31</sup> Walter C. Allen, "Luis Russell," *Playback*, June 1949.



piano. Pianos were used in the red-light district, at places such as Pete Lala's, the 101 Ranch, Buddy Fewclothes', Henry Ponce's, and Rice's.<sup>32</sup>

For the working band in New Orleans, having a residency in an established venue, made it feasible to have a piano in the group. When Luis arrived in New Orleans, Piron's New Orleans Orchestra was a top orchestra of high musical standards with a home base at Felix Tranchina's Restaurant at Spanish Fort on the lakefront outskirts of New Orleans. Led by a light skinned Creole violinist, Armand J. Piron, the orchestra included a pianist named Steve Lewis. Luis Russell realized that he needed to be proficient at both reading and getting off the page, which meant developing skills of listening, improvising, and playing with feeling. He started to take piano lessons from Steve Lewis.

Gradually he picked up the knack of improvising; he credits Steve Lewis, pianist later with Piron, as his teacher and inspiration during this period. He also recalls that Udell Wilson was another fine pianist there.<sup>33</sup>

In finding Steve Lewis and the Piron Orchestra, Luis Russell fell into a scene that involved some of the key movers and shakers in a nascent music business; African American entrepreneurs, composers and music publishers, who pioneered the practices of promoting and financially exploiting their own works, and appropriating the works of others. Russell also found highly valued teachers and avenues of instruction; folks of color who were artistically accomplished and who knew how to make money plying their art. Armand J.

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<sup>32</sup> Paul Barbarin, interview by Richard B. Allen, William Russell, Robert Campbell, 27 March 1957, Hogan Jazz Archive Oral History Collection, Tulane U., New Orleans, LA.

<sup>33</sup> Walter C. Allen, *Playback*, *ibid.*

Piron, exemplifying business savvy, launched, in 1916, the Piron and Williams Publishing Company at 1315 Tulane Avenue, in partnership with New Orleans pianist and songwriter Clarence Williams. By 1919, Piron and Williams had tweaked a composition by the 16-year old Louis Armstrong, "Take Your Feet Off Katie's Head," and claimed authorship of the company's first hit and best seller, "I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate." (Louis Armstrong later told interviewer and TV host Dick Cavett that he gave the tune to Williams and Piron before learning the copyright and music publishing ropes). In December of 1923 Piron's New Orleans Orchestra had traveled to New York City to record for Columbia Records, a first for New Orleans creoles. Steve Lewis is listed as co-writer on several of the compositions. They recorded three different versions of one of the groups set pieces, a composition with co-writers listed as Edgar Dowell, Spencer Williams, and Clarence Williams, titled "West Indies Blues." One version, released on Okeh, features a vocal by Esther Bigeou, with a lyric sung in feigned patois, about "I'm gwine home, won't be long...got no time to lose...got the West Indies Blues...I'm 'gwine to Jamaica." The song is a good example of a dance tune, not a blues tune, using "Blues" in the title, to tap into the blues craze of the early 1920s, and "West Indies" to appeal to both a growing Caribbean immigrant market. None of this was lost on Luis Russell, now in the Steve Lewis and Armand Piron orbit. Russell would build his own solid career based on blues based compositions and dance tunes, sometimes with a decided but subtle Caribbean flavor.



Armand Piron organized and led orchestras in New Orleans starting around 1908. Players who came through his ranks included trumpeter Freddie Keppard, who was replaced with Joe Oliver when Keppard moved to the west coast in 1912. Sidney Bechet played alongside Joe Oliver. Luis Russell would later work with Freddie Keppard and Joe Oliver in Chicago, though in different bands, and he would record with Sidney Bechet in New York City.

Following the formation of Williams and Piron Music Publishing Co. in 1915, the nucleus of Piron's New Orleans Orchestra began to coalesce with Peter Bocage on trumpet and Lorenzo Tio Jr. on clarinet. Lorenzo Tio Jr., who was considered one of the best in the city on clarinet, came from an important musical Creole family. Lorenzo's uncle, known as Papa Tio, in addition to being a fine clarinetist and a cigar maker, led a music academy, which selectively took in young students and drilled them in music theory and reading for two years before allowing them to play an instrument. Another young Creole clarinet player, Albert Nicholas, who would soon become a key figure in Luis Russell's career, idolized Lorenzo's playing. Albert Nicholas, some ten years younger than Lorenzo Tio, decided to study with Papa Tio, at his academy.

"He ran his school in a most unorthodox fashion; he had from five to ten students but none of them had to pay for instruction. Those who showed promise were accepted into the school and only those who worked hard and improved to Papa's satisfaction could stay on. For the first two years, Papa did not allow his pupils to play an instrument. He taught them musical theory, reading and singing in harmony. Only when they had completely mastered the elements of music could they move up to the advanced classes where they could play an instrument."<sup>34</sup>

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<sup>34</sup> Neshi Ertegun, "Clarinet A La Creole," *Clef*, June 1946.

Albert Nicholas studied with Papa Tio from age nine, and at age 11 Albert started to play clarinet. Papa Tio taught Albert to read ahead, Albert noting “we all do that.” Albert Nicholas later studied clarinet with Lorenzo, his idol. Albert Nicholas remembered “Lorenzo Tio was a good teacher. He had a different style, especially on Eb clarinet. He could transpose anything on sight.”<sup>35</sup>

Soon after Luis Russell arrived in New Orleans in 1921, he landed a job playing at the Cadillac Club in a band led by drummer Arnold Depass. “At one point Arnold Depass rehearsed the Olympia Band which consisted of Big Gaspar, trombone; Albert Nicholas, clarinet; Willie Santiago, guitar; Albert Glenny, bass; Arnold Depass, drums; and me (Lee Collins) on cornet.”<sup>36</sup>

Albert Nichols recalled how he came to hire Luis Russell. “Luis Russell came in from Panama as a kid. It was Arnold Dupas’s (*sic*) job, and I was the one who asked Luis Russell because I heard he was a young pianist and I heard him play. Then he came and joined with us.”<sup>37</sup>

Albert Nicholas was born on May 27, 1900 in New Orleans, in the Creole Section, French Quarter, Seventh Ward. His uncle, Wooden Joe Nicholas, a trumpet and clarinet player of considerable repute, was his greatest influence,

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<sup>35</sup> Albert Nicholas, interview by Richard B. Allen, 26 June 1972, transcript, Hogan Jazz Archive Oral History Collection, Tulane U., New Orleans, LA.

<sup>36</sup> Lee Collins as told to Mary Collins, *Oh Didn't He Ramble, The Life Story of Lee Collins*. (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1974), p.45.

<sup>37</sup> Roger Richard, “Roger Richard Talks to Albert Nicholas,” *Storyville*, Feb-March 1975.

who got Albert started on the clarinet and sent him to study with Papa Tio. Albert came up alongside a bevy of New Orleans clarinet heavyweights who were slightly ahead of him; Johnny Dodds, Jimmy Noone, and Sidney Bechet. He recalled, "Sidney gave me a lot of inspiration, because heard him in knee trousers and fourteen years old, Sidney was playing with men."<sup>38</sup>

A wayward spirit, Albert Nicholas was perhaps the most peripatetic soul in early jazz. He loved to travel. After playing with Buddy Petit, Joe Oliver, and Manuel Perez, in various bands around New Orleans, he enlisted in the Navy in November 1916. He started as mess attendant, but ended up in a Navy band when it was discovered that he was a musician, and he played in various Navy bands until his discharge. His first nine months of service took him to Cuba, Haiti, Santo Domingo, Puerto Rico, and Panama. He was stationed in Cuba when war broke out on April 7, 1917. Returning to New Orleans for a few weeks, his ship was then sent to Gibraltar, and worked on convoys in the Mediterranean until 1919, a year after the Armistice. Starting in 1926, Albert Nicholas's clarinet would take him on a two-year jaunt, literally around the world, working in China and Egypt, before passing through Europe on his way back to New York City.

At the start of 1920, there was one more significant stop for Albert Nicholas, joining the band of trumpet player Buddy Petit, which lasted for almost a year, and he recalled that there was no piano in the band. Then Nicholas met

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<sup>38</sup> Albert Nicholas, *ibid.*

Luis Russell, a new arrival from Panama, during a short engagement with drummer Arnold Depass at the Cadillac Café.

Next came a major break-through for both Albert Nicholas and Luis Russell. Albert Nicholas was given a plumb opportunity, to lead a band at Tom Anderson's, a highly sought-after job in one of the showplaces of New Orleans. Tom Anderson had been a big man in Storyville when it was the red-light district, a proprietor of several businesses, and an elected member to the state legislature of Louisiana. "After the district closed in 1917, Anderson moved his focus to a larger place on Rampart Street, just outside of the former district, that was sometimes described as a "legitimate" hotel." There he carried on all the various traditions of the district---prostitution, music, and gambling."<sup>39</sup>

Nicholas took a six-piece band into Tom Anderson's, including Luis Russell (piano), Barney Bigard (tenor sax), Paul Barbarin (drums), Arnold Metoyer (trumpet), Willie Santiago (banjo), and himself on clarinet and alto. The cornet player at Tom Anderson's when Luis Russell joined the band, Arnold Metoyer, was an excellent older musician of Creole lineage, who had also played with the Tios. Albert Nicholas had risen quickly through the hierarchy of New Orleans musicians, and the Panamanian newcomer had risen even more quickly.

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<sup>39</sup> Thomas Brothers, *Louis Armstrong's New Orleans*, (New York: W.W. Norton, 2006), 261.



Pictured l to r, Paul Barbarin, Albert Metoyer, Luis Russell, Willie Santiago, Albert Nicholas, at Tom Anderson's, New Orleans, 1922. (Barney Bigard, who was also in the band, is not in the photograph.)

Barney Bigard wrote of this photo in his autobiography, "Somewhere there is a photo published that I saw of that band. The funny thing is that all my horns are right there on the bandstand but I must have been in the men's room or something. I can see my tenor and clarinet up there, but not me."<sup>40</sup> Three of the members of this band, the drummer Paul Barbarin (soon to be Luis Russell's songwriting partner), tenor sax player and clarinetist Barney Bigard, and Albert Nicholas, were New Orleans Creole musicians who would become integral

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<sup>40</sup> Barney Bigard, edited by Barry Martyn, *With Louis and the Duke*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), 25.

players in Luis Russell's career. They traveled to Chicago in the fall of 1924 to join King Oliver, and eventually each spent time in Luis Russell's New York City based Orchestra.

Paul Barbarin was born in New Orleans on May 5, 1901 into a family of musicians. His father, Isadore, was a noted cornet and brass player, and his uncle, Louis Arthidore, a fine clarinet player, played together at one time in the Onward Brass Band, before Manuel Perez was the leader. Three of Paul's brothers were musicians, and his nephew, Danny Barker, became a noted banjo and guitar player, and a jazz historian. Paul grew up in a rich milieu. He heard Buddy Bolden play as a youth, and he attended the Al G. Fields minstrel show at Tulane Theater. His first instrument was the clarinet, and he always admired clarinetists, but he couldn't execute fast enough, so he took up drums. He was self-taught on drums, playing on knives and forks in the kitchen, until he acquired a first drum set. That same day he was hired to play the first job of career, a ballyhoo for a political rally. The pay was a dollar-and-a-quarter.<sup>41</sup> Paul Barbarin became Luis Russell's primary songwriting partner and the drummer in his orchestras.

Albany "Barney" Bigard was born on March 3, 1906 in New Orleans, and lived at 1726 Villere Street in the 7<sup>th</sup> Ward. He described his family as "creoles of color," a mixture of French and Spanish. Barney's older brother Alex was a drummer, and their uncle, Emil, was a noted New Orleans violinist. Emil had

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<sup>41</sup> Paul Barbarin, Hogan Oral History, *ibid*.

studied violin with A.J. Piron, and when Barney was young he heard his uncle practicing from a method book. Barney was there when Emil called a rehearsal at the house for a band he was leading called “Kid Ory’s Creole Ragtime Band.” In addition to Emil as leader on violin, the band had Mutt Carey (trumpet), Johnny Dodds (clarinet), Kid Ory (trombone), Wilhelmina Bart (piano), George “Pops” Foster (bass) and Henry Zeno (drums). Bigard remembered:

They played nice and soft which was just what the people wanted to hear at that time. Like schottisches, waltzes and even some Scott Joplin pieces. You see what made my uncle leader was that most of the guys in the band couldn’t read worth beans. A couple of them could “spell” a little and so when a new tune would come out usually the violinist, who had more musical knowledge than most of the others, would go and buy the sheet music and call a rehearsal. The violin would play the straight lead for them and keep on until the trumpet player got it. When the trumpet had it down then the rest of the band would fall in with their parts. A lot of people talk about those early “New Orleans” bands, or “Dixieland” bands, but they all forget that most of the bands had a violinist as leader.<sup>42</sup>

Following in the footsteps of Albert Nicholas, though six years his junior, Bigard aspired to be a musician and studied clarinet with Lorenzo Tio, Jr. first, and later with Papa Tio, who he had first encountered while working making cigars at Ulysses Cigar Factory. His clarinet studies were valuable, but Barney decided to focus on the saxophone, specializing in the Albert system. After playing around New Orleans with various bands, Barney recalled that “Albert Nicholas, who I knew from being another Lorenzo Tio pupil, came to see me and offered me a job at Tom Anderson’s place on Rampart and Canal.”<sup>43</sup> Bigard would join King Oliver in Chicago, acquiring the job based on Luis Russell

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<sup>42</sup> Barney Bigard, *ibid.* p.10-11.

<sup>43</sup> *ibid.* p. 21.

recommending him to Oliver. Barney Bigard and Luis Russell were band mates in New Orleans, recorded together in Chicago, becoming fast friends. The 1930 census showed the Russell and Bigard families living in adjacent apartments at 147 West 145<sup>th</sup> Street in Harlem, a red brick five story building with period art deco inlays around the windows, just a few blocks from the East River. Luis and Barney were next door neighbors several years after Bigard left Russell to join Duke Ellington, and on the census Albany “Barney” Bigard listed his place of employment as “Cotton Club.” Years later, Barney’s son, Barney Bigard, Jr., joined Luis Russell’s final orchestra in 1948-1950.

Canal Street in New Orleans served as a line of demarcation, a line drawn of race and class between lighter skinned Downtown Creoles and darker skinned Uptown Negros. Creole musicians, like Barbarin, Nicholas, Bigard, Prion, and the Tios, were schooled in European traditions, the French Opera House, and drilled in solfege and classical music techniques. From the other side of Canal Street came arrivals from rural areas and surrounding plantations, whose musical training came on the streets, from oral traditions, from Africa, and from the blues. Louis Armstrong walked into Tom Anderson’s from the Uptown side as a young cornet player, a year older than Luis Russell. Earlier, Armstrong had played Tom Anderson’s in a little band led by Creole violinist Paul Dominguez, “who was of the generation of Lorenzo Tio, Jr., well trained in the downtown tradition.”<sup>44</sup> Albert Nicholas remembered Louis Armstrong sitting in with his band at Tom Anderson’s, which may have been when Armstrong and Luis Russell first made

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<sup>44</sup> Thomas Brothers, *ibid.* p. 261-2.



music together. Nicholas had been playing in bands that were all reading music, playing arrangements from the “red book and the green book of music.” Louis Armstrong had learned to read music while working on a riverboat with Fate Marable’s band, and when he sat in Albert Nicholas was amazed that Armstrong read through the “red book” and didn’t miss a note.<sup>45</sup> The “red book” to which Albert Nicholas referred were copies of *Fifteen Standard High Class Rags*, all by composers from the St. Louis school, published by Scott Joplin’s publisher John Stark, and circulated among musicians in red covers.

And now comes an important realization in terms of where Luis Russell fits in and how he assimilated the musical forces that were swirling around him. After arriving from Panama, where Russell’s musical training was more akin to the lighter skinned New Orleans Creoles, he landed in a band made up of players, Nicholas, Bigard, Barbarin, and Metoyer, who solidly rose from a musical world based on reading music, in the European tradition. Into the picture, from the other side of Canal Street, walks Louis Armstrong, and earlier Joe Oliver, who play the blues, are considered “barrelhouse” players, from the “ratty” side of town, where the skin tone is darker, the people are poorer, and the spirit is in the feeling rather than on the page. An interesting melding takes place when these two musical approaches aspire to meet each other, as the Creoles see the success and appeal of the way the Uptown negroes “rag” their music, and the unschooled players, like Louis Armstrong, teach themselves to read, and harmoniously join predominantly Creole musical aggregations, exerting a huge

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<sup>45</sup> Albert Nicholas, Hogan Oral History, June 26, 1972 *ibid*.

influence. As Thomas Brothers points out, in his book “Louis Armstrong’s New Orleans,” the Uptown side of town in the 1910s was flush with a kind of “freak” music, played by cornetists Chris Kelly, Joe Oliver, and others.

Oliver established himself as a great blues cornetist, perhaps the best since Bolden. He was especially admired for a subspecialty of the blues known in New Orleans as “freak music.” Freak music depended on manipulation of the instrument’s tone; in the classical tradition, one would say manipulation of *timbre*. People flocked to hear Oliver using an array of objects to bend his cornet in the imitation of a human voice. He was not the only player on the scene doing this, but in the mid-1920s he was one of the best. Beer buckets, toilet plungers, glasses, derby hats, coconuts, and kazoos combined with half valving, flutter tonguing, fake fingering, vibrato, growls, and subtle changes of tension to the lips to produce a creative array of vocalized effects...The practice of timbral manipulation came ultimately from Africa...<sup>46</sup>

Joe Oliver wasn’t adept at reading music, so he evolved a conception as band leader that focused on the sound of the ensemble, which he further developed in Chicago in the 1920s, immortalized by a series of recordings which introduced Louis Armstrong to the world, by King Oliver and His Creole Jazz Band. As those recordings were being made in 1923, Luis Russell was in New Orleans at Tom Anderson’s, where he made a conscious decision to throw his hat in the ring with “freak music” and the blues players, and singers.

Although we’ll discuss in greater detail in the portion of the study about Luis Russell’s arrival in New York City, it bears introducing now, and later repeating, that he developed a theme song, recording multiple versions, titled “Call of The Freaks,” which he co-wrote with Paul Barbarin. It appears that Luis’s call was a declaration, made by a Panamanian, to join the fray on the side of the

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<sup>46</sup> Thomas Brothers, *ibid.* p. 121-122.

blues, but filtered through his upper-crust Panamanian musical training. It may also reveal an awareness of where opportunities would be most fertile for Negro musicians, as he developed repertoire, as a recording artist and bandleader, with a strong nod towards the blues and towards black songwriters and composers, and towards his own original compositions. His “Call of The Freaks,” was a call towards blackness, in a time when African-American jazz was marketed as “Jungle Music.” It was his ongoing effort to contextualize racial identity, with pride and without succumbing to stereotype, that began in New Orleans at Tom Anderson’s, and continued throughout his career.

New Orleans was a competitive scene. Nicholas remembered that there were no battles of music in Chicago, the battles were in New Orleans. Kid Rena and Sharkey Bonano, two band leaders, used wagons on Sunday afternoon to advertise for that night. They would get the people in the neighborhood to follow them in a second line.<sup>47</sup> Barney Bigard recalled, “It’s a funny thing about New Orleans. The bands and musicians are always trying to out-do one another or do something real different from anyone else. That’s really why Nick hired me I guess. We were the only group in town with that instrumentation, two saxes.”<sup>48</sup> Paul Barbarin felt that the younger Bigard wasn’t very good, when Bigard first started working with the band at Tom Anderson’s, but Barbarin encouraged him to continue.<sup>49</sup> Eventually, the combination of Albert Nicholas and Barney Bigard,

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<sup>47</sup> Albert Nicholas, Hogan Oral History, *ibid.*

<sup>48</sup> Barney Bigard, *ibid.* p. 25.

<sup>49</sup> Paul Barbarin, Hogan Oral History, 28 January, 1960.

working up breaks on two saxes, became a formidable musical combination. The take away for Luis Russell, which would serve him well as an orchestra leader in New York City, was the value of coming up with an original sound, with something that no one else had. Harmonized and arranged parts played by reeds would become an innovative feature of later Luis Russell bands in both Chicago and New York City. Wrote Bigard:

Our music was going good at Tom Anderson's. Nick and I were quite a team. We had worked out a whole load of tight breaks on the two saxes and got some stuff together that no-one else in the city was doing. In fact sometimes the sax section of Fate Marable's band would come in and sit and listen to us play to pick up ideas. We had a lot of fun in that band. They were some real fine guys to work with.<sup>50</sup>

By the time Luis Russell arrived in New Orleans in late October 1921, many of the early jazz greats from the Crescent City had left the city pursuing work opportunities. Two musicians who were to play a major role in his career, cornet player Joe Oliver and pianist Richard M. Jones had already departed for Chicago. Pianist composer Clarence Williams based himself in Chicago and then in New York City, and the great Creole clarinetist Sidney Bechet was touring in Europe before 1920. Others with whom Luis Russell would later connect, Jimmy Noone, Freddie Keppard, Jelly Roll Morton, Bud Scott, Lonnie Johnson, Kid Ory, Johnny St. Cyr, and George "Pops" Foster, all had departed New Orleans for work in Chicago, New York City, California, in traveling minstrel shows, and on riverboats. Musicians would leave New Orleans, and some would return, and then leave again.

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<sup>50</sup> Barney Bigard, *ibid.* p. 24.

At some point after joining the band at Tom Anderson's, Luis Russell took a band to Alexandria, Louisiana, 200 miles to the northwest of New Orleans. He stayed for a while, the exact duration is unclear. Albert Nicholas came with him and then quit and returned to Tom Anderson's, at which point another fine piano player, and one of Luis Russell's favorites, Uddell Wilson, joined the Tom Anderson band. In some fashion, a woman was involved in Russell's trip. Willima or Willie Mae Womak was a light skinned mulatto dancer, who met Luis either in New Orleans or in Alexandria, Louisiana. In January of 1923, Luis traveled to Alexandria and was married to Willie Mae (b. Bunkie, Louisiana, May 17, 1907). On November 27, 1923, Willie Mae gave birth to the couples' first child, a son, Luis Russell, Jr. Two years later, on December 6, 1925 in Chicago, a daughter followed, Sadie or Penelope K. Russell was born. Luis and Willie Mae married young and started a family in their youth. With Luis keeping a jazz age musicians' schedule, late nights, touring, and sometimes barely at home, and with Willie Mae working as a dancer, and later even touring Europe in this capacity, it fell on Luis's mother, Judith, to raise their young children.

Luis Russell, like other musicians in his New Orleans sphere, was keenly aware of the opportunities for recording and performing in Chicago and in New York City. While Russell was at Tom Anderson's, the Piron Orchestra traveled to New York City and made recordings for Columbia Records, before returning. As early as 1918, Paul Barbarin went to Chicago, hoboing on a freight train part of the way. Barbarin stayed at the home of his sister at first, and began working in the stockyards, moving from one packing house to another as he disliked each

job. By word of mouth, he learned of a band that needed a drummer, and he was hired. Following a brief stint, Paul Barbarin joined the band at Royal Garden, led by trombonist Eddie Vinson, with Bill Johnson (bass), Jimmie Noone (clarinet), and Lottie Taylor (piano). The band first sent to New Orleans for Buddy Petit, who couldn't join, so Barbarin told them about Joe Oliver, who accepted the job. Barbarin remembered the Royal Garden as a large dance hall and bar, where the band worked from 9pm to 4am, playing tunes like "Darktown Strutters Ball," and "Some of These Days." Not only did Paul Barbarin play a role in Joe Oliver coming to Chicago, but he was there on Joe Oliver's opening night, when he was crowned "King." They played a blues, "I'm Not Rough," that was played in Kid Ory's and Oliver's band in New Orleans and Oliver, using a Conn mute, made his horn talk, his specialty, and the people enjoyed it so much they threw their hats away. The announcer, acting as master of ceremonies, was a West Indian named King Jones, crowned Joe Oliver "King."<sup>51</sup> Here, a Caribbean tradition of giving nicknames made an early mark on jazz. Barbarin returned to New Orleans around 1921, and for the rest of his career and his life on the road with Luis Russell, King Oliver, and Louis Armstrong, he always maintained his ties to New Orleans and returned there between jobs.

With many New Orleans players finding work in Chicago, it didn't take long for Luis Russell to succumb to the pull of the Windy City. Creole clarinetist Jimmy Noone was an early emigré to Chicago, but came back to New Orleans for Mardi Gras, heard the Tom Anderson band, and was impressed. He told Joe

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<sup>51</sup> Paul Barbarin, Hogan Oral History, *ibid.* p. 13-14, reel IV.

Oliver in Chicago about the band. Joe Oliver first sent for Albert Nicholas, who made a two-week tour in Indiana in 1923, before returning to New Orleans.<sup>52</sup>

Luis Russell took over leadership of the band at Tom Anderson's when Nicholas went out on tour. Noone had also been impressed by Luis Russell. Noone recommended Russell to Chicago orchestra leader Charles Cook, who was looking to add a second piano player and he sent for Russell. Luis Russell left New Orleans in the fall of 1924, Chicago bound.

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<sup>52</sup> Albert Nichols, Hogan Oral History, *ibid.* reel 1, p. 2.

### Chapter 3 – Chicago: 1924-1927 “Everyone Wanted Jazz”

Charles L. “Doc” Cooke led one of the largest Negro orchestras in the world, billed as Doc Cook’s Dreamland Orchestra for their residency at Paddy Harmon’s Dreamland Ballroom, a black dance band playing at a white dance hall on the West Side of Chicago. Cooke was a pianist and arranger, who earned a doctorate of music at the Chicago College of Music. While orchestra leaders often took on the nickname “fess” for professor, “Doc” was, in fact, a Doctor of Music. At one point his orchestra included 18 pieces, 16 instrumentalists and 2 drummers, and his run at the Dreamland Ballroom lasted from 1922 through 1927. Cooke led one of the first large black orchestras to record, cutting musically interesting and futuristic sides for Gennet in Richmond, Indiana in January 1924 and for Okeh and Columbia in Chicago in June and July of 1926.

The Doc Cook Dreamland Orchestra included New Orleans players, Freddie Keppard on trumpet and Jimmy Noone on clarinet, who appear on the groups’ recordings. Luis Russell joined though he never recorded with them.

For the June 1926 sessions on Okeh, Doc Cook brought a smaller 6-piece group, billed as Cookie’s Gingersnaps, which featured hot jazz played by Keppard and Noone, along with Fred Garland (trombone), Joe Poston (alto & tenor saxes and vocal), Kenneth Anderson (piano), and Johnny St. Cyr (bj). Years later, in September 1929, Luis Russell recorded in New York City under



the name Lou and His Gingers Snaps, proving that with the proper amount of spice, a cookie becoming a band name might have a durable shelf life.

Freddie Keppard is an interesting case. Born in New Orleans on February 15, 1889, the Creole cornet player was front man and co-leader of one of the first New Orleans bands to tour nationwide, The Original Creole Orchestra, traveling to Los Angeles in 1912, and working a circuit which included stops in Chicago and New York. Though not documented, jazz history lore has it that Keppard was offered a recording contract by Victor before the white musicians in Original Dixieland Jazz Band made their breakthrough recordings in 1917, and could have, as a black artist, made the first jazz records. However, he turned down the opportunity, falling prey to one or more of the following judgments, or mis-judgments. First, he thought the money being offered wasn't enough. Recording was new territory, and he may have been afraid that other musicians would steal his licks if they heard him on recordings. Another hesitancy had to do with fear that if people could hear him on recordings, they wouldn't come to see him live.<sup>53</sup>

New Orleans musicians arriving in Chicago had to adjust to a new climate. In winter, the change in weather was like going from the tropics to the north pole. And the weather wasn't the only inhospitable element. Chicago had two musician unions, one white and one black, and the new arrivals often had to deal with a waiting period to clear union regulations and be allowed to work. Luis Russell recalled that after Charlie Cooke asked Russell to come, "I had to wait about

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<sup>53</sup> Dr. Lewis Porter, class notes taken by author, Historiography, Rutgers University.

three to four months to take the job due to union difficulties. Charlie couldn't get rid of his pianist."<sup>54</sup> By another account, Russell faced rough scuffling for about six weeks, unable to work until the union waiting period was over, and it was during this time that King Oliver asked Russell to come with him, and, on Russell's recommendation, sent for Barbarin, Bigard, and Nicholas. Albert Nicholas recalled, "We didn't want to let the union know that Joe Oliver had sent for us either, because that's trouble. They were jealous of the New Orleans musicians in the Chicago local, and King...every time...he was replacing his men with New Orleans musicians. All of us could play. Chicago musicians didn't have no scheme...they were playing Mickey Mouse jazz...they could read, but they couldn't jazz."<sup>55</sup>

Finally, Luis Russell got to join Doc Cook. When Albert Nicholas and Barney Bigard arrived in Chicago they went to check out bands where their home boys were playing.

Like Charlie Cooke's band that was playing at Harmon's Dreamland — Freddie Keppard! . . . we heard him in the first few days we arrived in Chicago . . . me and Barney, because we wanted to hear the thing, and Cooke had a great band . . . Jimmy Noone featured on clarinet. He had a full reed section with all his saxophones, and two trumpets and two trombones — a seventeen-piece band. Cooke played organ and Russell played vibraphone with the band . . . he was waiting to come with Joe Oliver, you see . . . he was keeping it quiet.<sup>56</sup>

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<sup>54</sup> Felix Manskeld, "Luis Russell Re-Visited," *Jazz Monthly*, April 1957, p.11.

<sup>55</sup> Roger Richard, "Roger Richard Talks to Albert Nicholas," *Storyville*, Feb-March 1975.

<sup>56</sup> Roger Richard, *ibid*.

Arriving in Chicago, and back home in New Orleans, musicians had to hone and improve their skills in highly competitive environments. Through a system of apprenticeship, aspiring younger players sought out mentors. In New Orleans, Luis Russell relied on Steve Lewis as his mentor, and Louis Armstrong relied on Joe Oliver. The new arrivals in Chicago sought out gigs by other players and by competing bands. Albert Nicholas and Barney Bigard, pals and band mates from New Orleans, who ran together and entertained ladies together, went to see Doc Cook to check out Jimmy Noone. King Oliver trumpet player Bob Shoffner recalled that later, Nicholas and Bigard would go hear Jimmy Noone every night at the Apex Club, and that Noone caused Bigard to take up the clarinet.<sup>57</sup>

When Luis Russell arrived in Chicago in the fall of 1924, Louis Armstrong had just completed a two-year stint in Chicago with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band, having made a series of recordings which captured a transplanted style of New Orleans music, an exhilarating polyphonic improvised music at its peak, with kinetic and telepathic energy. Heralding to the world the arrival of an astounding new talent, Louis Armstrong would go on to shatter all norms and expectations. As efficiently as he had conquered Chicago, Louis Armstrong was off to New York City in 1924, where he became a star member of Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra, and an in demand freelance player on recording sessions organized

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<sup>57</sup> Bob Shoffner, interviewed by William Russell, 9 September 1959 in Chicago, transcript, Hogan Jazz Archive Oral History Collection, Tulane U., New Orleans, LA.

by New Orleans pianist, composer, and music publisher, Clarence Williams, mostly under the name Clarence Williams' Blue Five. Louis Armstrong also recorded with many female blues singers; Bessie Smith, Clara Smith, Trixie Smith, and Clarence Williams' wife, Eva Taylor.

Luis Russell and his New Orleans pals, Barbarin, Nicholas, and Bigard, scuffled during their first months in Chicago. Apart from the union waiting period, the place they were supposed to play with Joe Oliver, the Royal Gardens, burned down two days before New Year's Eve, leaving the band without a job. They obtained a few gigs through family and friends. Barney Bigard had a cousin in Chicago, and Jimmy Noone and Richard M. Jones helped him with a few gigs. The secretary of the Musicians Union sent little jobs, and sometimes the job wouldn't want two reeds, so Bigard and Nicholas, who were rooming together, would flip a coin, and whoever would take the gig would split whatever money towards food and rent.<sup>58</sup>

It was during this stretch that Albert Nicholas first met Jelly Roll Morton. Jelly Roll had a big name, and his early recordings, piano rolls and jazz, had impressed Nicholas when he first heard them. And Jelly Roll Morton had a reputation as a composer, being paid as a staff songwriter by Chicago based Music Publishers, The Melrose Brothers. Jelly didn't have a regular band, and was freelancing. He would pick up musicians for recording sessions and gigs. Jelly needed a band to play with him at two public balls at a large auditorium, and

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<sup>58</sup> Bigard, *ibid.* p 27-28.

he hired Albert Nicholas, Barney Bigard, and Paul Barbarin to play the gig, with George Mitchell on trumpet. Not needing a piano player, he paid Luis Russell to stay home, a trick that would be repeated when Luis Russell's orchestra was in its prime in New York City around 1930, and Jelly needed a band to tour with him in Pennsylvania. In Chicago, Albert didn't ask Jelly about the pay for the jobs, and was surprised when Jelly paid him \$50, expecting to have to split it as he had made \$35 a week plus tips at Tom Anderson's in New Orleans. Jelly told him that he paid his musicians well, and so Albert and the boys worked 2 gigs at \$50 per man per gig.<sup>59</sup>

The development of jazz on the south side of Chicago in the 1920s involved a coming together of musical forces; immigrant musicians from New Orleans and an influx of recent college trained African Americans from southern and Midwestern states mingled with established "Race" orchestral players who worked in the pits of musical theater, movie palaces, and on the stages of concert halls. Dave Peyton (Aug 19, 1889-April 30 1955) was a pianist, songwriter (he co-wrote the standard "I Ain't Got Nobody"), arranger and orchestra leader and music contractor, who perhaps made his greatest contribution as a journalist, writing a regular opinion column, "The Musical Bunch" for the *Chicago Defender*, which chronicled developments in Chicago's music scene during the period of Luis Russell's stay in Chicago. Part gossip columnist, part promoter (Peyton would plug his own gigs referring to himself in the third person, along with boosting and endorsing gigs of others), and part

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<sup>59</sup> Albert Nicholas, Hogan Oral History, *ibid.* 1972 transcript, Reel III, p.2.

music critic, his column provided a soap box for a running commentary which chronicled the scene for a growing national African American readership. Dave Peyton was a relentless advocate for professionalism in music and for the value of education and of a solid grounding in the European classical music traditions of reading musical notation and drilling down on the rigors of harmonic structure and compositional technique. He was less kind towards the “jazz” which was springing up in dance halls and cabarets on Chicago’s south side, yet like the Creoles in New Orleans who couldn’t deny the brilliance of musicians like Joe Oliver and Louis Armstrong, who first appeared and impressed without the benefit of formal musical training, Dave Peyton recognized that Joe Oliver and Louis Armstrong possessed something special and worthy of his endorsement.

Historian William Howland Kenney, in his book *Chicago Jazz: A Cultural History, 1904-1930*, delineates the sometimes-contentious relationship between Dave Peyton and Joe Oliver:

The struggles between Dave Peyton, the composer, *Chicago Defender* columnist, and theater orchestra leader, and jazzband leader Joseph Oliver, illustrated the cross-cultural synthesis at stake in Chicago during the twenties. The outspoken advocacy of European concert music found in Peyton’s weekly column marked the farthest extreme in the assimilationist interpretation of South Side music. Peyton, who directed the pit band at Grand Theater, advised all South Side musicians to abandon the “gut bucket” cabaret music with its “squeaks, swawks, groans and flutters”; Peyton insisted that a “jazz crazed public” and the “hip liquor toter” had created the demand for such “novelty,” “hokum” music, leading race musicians to abandon concert hall instruments like the violin for louder, more vulgar instruments, like the banjo. The day was coming, he felt sure, when race orchestras would break into the vaudeville and movie theaters throughout the city as regular contracted pit bands; he called

upon all musicians to prepare themselves by studying theory, harmony, and proper instrumental technique.<sup>60</sup>

Dave Peyton was leading a ten-piece band at the Plantation Café in Chicago, billed as Peyton's Symphonic Syncopators. Jazz cornetist Lee Collins described a later version of Dave Peyton's orchestra as "a stage band, not a real jazz orchestra. The played a lot of overtures and things like that and didn't swing."<sup>61</sup> Peyton, who was not a cabaret musician, hired Joe Oliver, needing the cornet star to help him appeal to dancers and jazz fans. By February 1925, Joe Oliver took over the Symphonic Syncopators and renamed them the Dixie Syncopators. Luis Russell replaced Dave Peyton on piano, and the group expanded into Joe Oliver's second great Chicago based ensemble, with a home base at the Plantation Café, issuing a series of recordings in 1926-1927 which represented a sea change in style and approach from the earlier King Oliver Creole Jazz Band recordings with Louis Armstrong on cornet and with Lil Hardin Armstrong on piano. King Oliver and His Dixie Syncopators included, in addition to Joe Oliver as leader on cornet, the core of the band from Tom Anderson's in New Orleans, with Luis Russell on piano, Barney Bigard on saxes, Albert Nicholas on clarinet, and Paul Barbarin on drums, plus Bob Shoffner on trumpet or Thomas "Tick" Gray on cornet, George Filhé and later Kid Ory on trombone, Bud Scott on banjo, and Bert Cobb on tuba, and a rotating cast of reed players

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<sup>60</sup> William Howland Kenney, *Chicago Jazz, A Cultural History, 1904-1930*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1993), 56-57.

<sup>61</sup> Lee Collins as told to Mary Collins, *Oh Didn't He Ramble, The Life Story of Lee Collins* (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1989), 66.

(Billy Paige, Stump Evans, Johnny Dodds, Omer Simeon, and Darnell Howard) filling out the ten-piece format. Albert Nicholas described the scene at The Plantation by saying, “King Oliver’s band played all types of music. There was a lot of dancing. The music was bouncing, slow, medium, and fast. No waltzes were played there; everyone wanted jazz.”<sup>62</sup>



King Oliver's Dixie Syncopators Chicago 1926, l to r, George Filhé, Bert Cobb, Budd Scott, Paul Barbarin, Darnell Howard, Joe Oliver, Albert Nicholas, Bob Shoffner, Barney Bigard, Luis Russell

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<sup>62</sup> Albert Nichols, IBID. Hogan Oral History, transcript Reel III, p. 3.



King Oliver's final recording with his earlier Chicago aggregation which introduced his pupil Louis Armstrong to record buyers, dubbed the Creole Jazz Band, took place on October 15, 1923. Two and a half years intervened before his next sessions as leader of the Dixie Syncopators in March of 1926. His new band, which by the accounts of some of its members wasn't very good at first, had a chance to coalesce and find its footing before stepping into the recording studio. The new sound was light years away in conception and execution from the earlier Creole Jazz Band incarnation. How did the creative process develop, and as the new piano player, what role did Luis Russell have in contributing to compositions and arrangements during this period?

King Oliver sidemen, Trumpet player Bob Shoffner, Barney Bigard, Albert Nicholas, and Luis Russell, all shared memories with interviewers, regarding working with Joe Oliver. Bob Shoffner remembered, "Joe Oliver was easy to work with; he always tried to joke and tell funny stories to obtain good humour in the band. He would have the band play a number until they were relaxed about it, then later he'd call the number again. Oliver would compose numbers on the band stand; he would begin playing and the others would join in one by one. "Snag It," "West End [Blues]," "Doctor Jazz," "Beaukoo Jack," "Canal Street Blues," "Sugar Foot [Stomp]" and others were composed in that manner."<sup>63</sup> Barney Bigard agreed with Shoffner, writing in his memoir, "Joe as a band leader

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<sup>63</sup> Bob Shoffner, Hogan Oral History, *ibid.* Reel 1, p.6.

was really a great guy that could get the best out of his men. There was no pressure with him...The guys in those days were getting a salary, which incidentally was the same amount for everyone in Joe's band, and they respected the leader for that pay...And Joe was good financially too, Whatever he told you, you would get, that's exactly what you would get."<sup>64</sup> Young sideman Luis Russell may have already known the correct etiquette in acting as band leader in terms of paying players fairly and honestly. No doubt this was reinforced by observing how Joe Oliver treated his men, and later, Luis Russell, once he became a leader, would pay his sidemen equally.

Paul Barbarin said that the Dixie Syncopators band didn't use scores, and he never remembered seeing written music on the bandstand. He didn't remember Luis Russell arranging for Joe Oliver, and said that Oliver had his own ideas. However, Albert Nicholas, remembered Luis Russell and banjo/guitarist Bud Scott doing arrangements for the band. This would make sense as piano and guitar were the two chording instruments in the band, and Bud Scott, like Luis Russell, was a schooled musician. Bud Scott was born in New Orleans in 1890, and before hooking up with the Dixie Syncopators, he had amassed an impressive resumé in New Orleans, New York City (performing at Carnegie Hall with James Reese Europe), and Chicago (recording with the King Oliver Creole Jazz Band). Bud Scott studied music theory with Walter Damrosch and earned a degree from Peabody School of Music. Bud Scott and Luis Russell each had the musical training to contribute arrangements, and Luis Russell is often credited

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<sup>64</sup> Bigard, *ibid.* p. 29-30.

with arranging “Someday Sweetheart,” which became one of the band’s most popular records, including a standout tuba solo, an unusual feature.

Reading between the lines, the composing and arranging in King Oliver’s new enlarged band was a collaborative effort. The leader wasn’t a strong reader and his band performed without written scores. Working from the “head” and the ears, rather than from the page, there must have been an interchange of musical ideas between band members, and we might assume that Luis Russell, who had received musical training along the lines championed by Dave Peyton, contributed to both compositions and arrangements. Luis Russell sought to further his musical education while in Chicago, enrolling in classes in Harmony and Counterpoint at the Chicago Conservatory of music, along with trumpet player Bob Shoffner. Dave Peyton, in his *Chicago Defender* columns, praised them for studying music theory: “These young men play all night in Chicago and are making the sacrifice of sleep by getting up early twice a week to take their lessons.” Such diligence would help guard against “discordant playing,” in which “so-called jazz artists...[ruin] the composition by injecting figures that have no relation to the basic harmonic setting.” “To improvise requires art in the player,” said Peyton. “He should be acquainted with both counterpoint and harmony.”<sup>65</sup>

Luis Russell’s success in Chicago with King Oliver received notice back home in Bocas, where a local paper noted, “We publish below a clipping from a Chicago paper with the Caption “King Oliver’s Syncopators.” In this Orchestra

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<sup>65</sup> Brian Harker, *Louis Armstrong’s Hot Five and Hot Seven Recordings*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2001), 75.

which consists of ten of the best coloured (*sic*) musicians in Chicago, there appears the name Luis Russell pianist. This young musician is the son of Teacher Russell of this town. He received from his father thorough instruction in the fundamentals of music and sedulously pursued his studies.”<sup>66</sup>

Dave Peyton opened his column of July 24, 1926 with a long diatribe advising musicians to be smart with their money. He counsels that saving money for later in life, having insurance, and keeping track of living expenses are important, in light of the good salaries paid musicians:

The average musician earns a handsome salary. It will be surprising to know that musicians receive today more than twice the salary by workers in any trade line in the country. In Chicago where the highest salaries in the world for musicians prevail, the minimum is about \$40 a week and the maximum no limit. Many players are paid for their distinctiveness, and I know of many who receive as high as \$250 a week.<sup>67</sup>

In the same column, Peyton covers his usual wide array of topics, including praising orchestra leader Erskine Tate, calling him a genius, extolling King Jones for his work directing the Orchestra and acting as “master of all” at Dreamland [the same King Jones who earlier dubbed Joe Oliver “King”], plugging his own gig in the third person (“Dave Peyton and his orchestra will open at the Grand Theater Chicago, Sept 6, after an absence of two years...”), both admonishing “my good friend Richard” and promoting Richard M. Jones, who had to settle a law suit after double booking himself at a college club, but concludes, “Richard is

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<sup>66</sup> Luis Russell scrapbook clipping, unidentified newspaper dated 5 June 1926.

<sup>67</sup> Dave Peyton, “The Musical Bunch,” *Chicago Defender*, July 1926.

the recording manager for the Okeh Record company in Chicago, looking after the Race records.” The columns final entry, under the title “Writes Hit Song” read as follows:

Paul Barbarin, the trap drummer of Joe Oliver’s Jazz orchestra, has written a new song that looks like a winner. The title of the song is “Don’t Forget To Mess Around While Doing The Charleston.” It has been recorded on Okeh records and is now being released. In an interview with an official of the Okeh company I was told that the number looked bigger than anything previously published under the Okeh label.<sup>68</sup>

In a single column, Dave Peyton identifies themes and players that contribute in crucial ways to Luis Russell’s career. The “hit” song written by Paul Barbarin (Luis Russell’s songwriting partner), was recorded by Louis Armstrong for Okeh. By signaling what many musicians knew, the profession was better paying than most, the unspoken context was that the music profession, unlike many, was open to African Americans. Pioneering pianist and orchestra leader, Fletcher Henderson, aspired to be a chemist, but found the profession closed to blacks, so he pursued a career in music instead. Unlike many, who arrived at music by default due to racist exclusion imposed on other professions, Luis Russell arrived by preference; from his earliest days always had one profession in mind; being a musician. The same was true for Louis Armstrong. They took the financial benefits in stride, and when looking back on his compadres, Luis Russell noted “They played naturally for money, but more for kicks, more for the real pleasure. It doesn’t look like that anymore today.”<sup>69</sup> Not only was the profession lucrative for musicians, there were also opportunities on the business

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<sup>68</sup> Dave Peyton, *ibid.*

<sup>69</sup> Felix Manskeld, “Luis Russell Re-Visited,” *Jazz Monthly*, April 1957, p.11.

side, where New Orleans piano player, songwriter, and music publisher, Richard M. Jones, made his mark in Chicago, on behalf of Luis Russell and many others.

Paul Barbarin and Richard M. Jones, both mentioned in Dave Peyton's column, were a part of the recording session, on February 22, 1926, where Luis Russell made his very first appearance on a record. However, Luis doesn't appear on piano or in any capacity as a musician. The occasion was the second ever recording session by Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five (Armstrong had recorded three titles on November 12, 1925), and on his second session a single tune was recorded, "Come Back Sweet Papa," written by Paul Barbarin and Luis Russell. It's telling that Luis Russell would make his first recorded appearance as a songwriter. Composing would become a cornerstone of his creative output throughout his life. In 1925 and 1926, at least nine copyrights were filed with the Library of Congress by Luis Russell of his songs, including five which were co-written with Paul Barbarin, including "Come Back Sweet Papa," filed May 1, 1926. Six of these copyrights were never recorded, which gives us a sense that from the beginning, Luis Russell's originals which appeared on recordings may have been the tip of an iceberg, as fully two thirds of his initial output remained submerged and unheard. The title of one of Luis Russell's originals, "Plenty of Fun," described his musical philosophy. That title was never recorded or released, but many others tunes by Luis Russell and his orchestra were imbued with "fun." Another never recorded title, "If you like it we will have some more," could have been a motto for the 1920s. One title, which was recorded and released in November of 1926, "Plantation Joys," no doubt referred to the "joys"

of working at the Plantation Café, rather than on the Plantation where blacks had worked as slaves and later as poorly paid field hands. Later, in New York City, Russell's compositions often heralded the venues where he worked; "Savoy Shout," "Saratoga Shout," "Saratoga Drag," (for the Savoy Ballroom and the Saratoga Club), or from whence he came, "Louisiana Swing."

Sweet Muntaz; melody, J. Oliver, of U. S., arr. Luis C. Russell. © 1 c. June 8, 1925; E 616496; Joseph Oliver, Chicago. 12409

SWEET MUMTAZ; m Joseph Oliver, arr. Louis C. Russell. © 6Jun25, E616496. R96004, 9Jun52, Mrs. Joe Oliver (W)

Plenty of fun; by L. C. Russell and P. Barbarin, both of U. S.; pf. © 1 c. Oct. 26, 1925; E 628049; Louis C. Russell and Paul Barbarin, Chicago. 20372

Come back sweet papa; melody by L. C. Russell and P. Barbarin. © 1 c. May 1, 1926; E 637450; Luis C. Russell and Paul Barbarin, Chicago. 8917

Plantation joys; melody L. C. Russell. of U. S. © 1 c. Oct. 26, 1925; E 628048; Louis C. Russell, Chicago. 20362

If you like it we will have some more; melody by P. Barbarin and L. C. Russell. © 1 c. Sept. 11, 1926; E 650024; Paul Barbarin and Luis C. Russell, Chicago. 17397

Baby don't you leave me; by L. C. Russell, of U. S.; pf. © 1 c. Nov. 5, 1925; E 626564; Luis C. Russell, Chicago. 22065

Ruffells; melody by L. C. Russell; 1st trumpet. © 1 c. June 12, 1926; E 641623; Luis C. Russell, Chicago. 11609

Sitting at the window; melody by L. C. Russell and P. Barbarin. © 1 c. Aug. 19, 1926; E 643741; Paul Barbarin and Luis C. Russell, Chicago. 16312

Puppy love; by L. C. Russell, of U. S.; pf. © 1 c. Nov. 5, 1925; E 626563; Luis C. Russell, Chicago. 24912

Dolly mine; melody by L. C. Russell and P. Barbarin. © 1 c. Aug. 19, 1926; E 643742; Luis C. Russell and Paul Barbarin, Chicago. 15190

Copyrights filed 1925 & 1926 of Luis Russell original songs or co-writes



Richard M. Jones, born in Donaldsville, Louisiana on June 13, 1889, came to Chicago from New Orleans in 1918 to organize a Chicago branch of Clarence Williams music publishing company. Before that, Jones had played piano in a variety of New Orleans based ensembles, including Armand Piron's. He began composing in 1915, and one of his first tunes, "Lonesome Nobody Cares" was recorded by Sophie Tucker. His best-known composition, "Trouble In Mind," became a veritable standard of jazz, blues, and popular song. As promoter of Race records for various labels, including Okeh, Vocalion, and Brunswick, Jones also had a hand in publishing the original compositions that he recorded, under the banner of Consolidated Music Publishing House, which represented the Paul Barbarin and Luis Russell composition, "Come Back Sweet Papa." As a pianist, Jones recorded charming small group sides, backing vocalists as well as producing intimate instrumental trio recordings under the name Richard M. Jones Three Jazz Wizards. He used both Albert Nicholas and Barney Bigard on one of his sessions in November of 1924, soon after their arrival in Chicago.

1926 was a year of significant advancement for Luis Russell in Chicago. First, his co-write was recorded by Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five. Then, before he recorded with King Oliver, he made his first ever recordings as a leader for Vocalion on March 10, 1926, under the guidance of Richard M. Jones, under the name Russell's Hot Six. On the same date, Russell recorded two sides backing blues singer Ada Brown, as a sideman. Albert Nicholas recalled that King Oliver's show at the Plantation Club included a revue with singers, dancers, and tumblers, with a new show every two weeks. "There was a blues singer, Ada Brown, from St. Louis [actually born in Kansas City on May 1, 1890], who sounded like and was big like Bessie Smith."<sup>70</sup> According to historian Derrick Stewart-Baxter, "The voice of Ada Brown was full rich and very mellow. It had that vibrant quality that distinguishes artists. Yet she seldom recorded."<sup>71</sup> Despite leaving few recordings, Ada Brown later appeared in the 1943 Hollywood film *Stormy Weather*, singing the blues "That Ain't Right," with Fats Waller.

Two titles were released under the name Ada Brown, "Panama Limited Blues" and "Tia Juana Man," with Ada's vocals backed by Luis Russell (piano), George Mitchell (cornet), Albert Nicholas (alto sax and clarinet), Barney Bigard (tenor sax), and Johnny St. Cyr (banjo). "Panama Limited Blues" was written by a leading black music entrepreneur, J. Mayo "Ink" Williams, a graduate of Brown University who excelled as an athlete, becoming one of the first African-

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<sup>70</sup> Albert Nicholas, Hogan, reel I, p.2, June 26, 1972.

<sup>71</sup> Derrick Stewart-Baxter, *Ma Rainey and the classic blue singers*, (New York, NY: Stein and Day, 1970), 83.

Americans, along with Paul Robeson, to play in the National Football League. In addition to writing songs, Mayo Williams held an executive position, taking charge of the race recording program for Paramount Records from mid-1923 through mid-1927. Stepping into the recording studio for the first time, Luis Russell had the benefit of collaborating with recording company intermediaries who happened to be black; Richard M. (Myknee) Jones, who was promoting Luis Russell, and Mayo Williams, a “race records” executive at Paramount Records, a competing label, and writer of “Panama Limited Blues,” recorded on the very first session with Luis Russell on piano.

Significantly, Luis Russell’s first recording session involved backing Ada Brown, a blues singer. Looking back on his time in New Orleans and the period when he lived in Panama, he told an interviewer, “I listened to a lot of American records, especially the blues singers like Mamie Smith and Sarah (sic) Martin. There was one of Sarah’s I was particularly fond of --- ‘Sugar Blues.’ I not only listened to the singers but also to the groups that accompanied them.”<sup>72</sup> What makes his first recordings more interesting is that the subject matter, probably not by coincidence, are connected to his Panamanian roots. It’s been erroneously repeated that jazz traveled up the Mississippi River from New Orleans to Chicago; a geographically flawed cliché in that the Mississippi passes Chicago 150 miles to the west. It might be more accurate to say that jazz traveled by railroad, on the Illinois Central, from New Orleans to Chicago, as direct rail service provided New Orleans musicians with a ready means of getting

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<sup>72</sup> Felix Manskleid, *ibid.*

to Chicago. In the early 1900's the Illinois Central premier train on the New Orleans to Chicago route was the *Chicago and New Orleans Limited*. In 1911, the train was renamed the *Panama Limited* in anticipation of the opening of the Panama Canal, which would be completed in 1914, capturing the imagination of the masses, but also serving as the link for Chicagoans who might be thinking of a trip to Panama, or Cuba, or Jamaica, by taking the train to New Orleans and traveling aboard a ship of the "Great White Fleet." Many years later, Illinois Central rebranded the train once known as *Panama Limited* as *City of New Orleans*, which was immortalized in a song of the same name by Chicago based singer-songwriter, Steve Goodman.

On the same date as the Ada Brown sessions, Luis Russell recorded his first titles as a leader, under the name "Russell's Hot Six," including a composition, "Sweet Mumtaz," which names Russell as the composer on the 78rpm record, but for which the copyright was filed by Joe Oliver, listing Luis Russell as the arranger. A second title, "29<sup>th</sup> and Dearborn," was a blues tune written by Richard M. Jones, who recorded his own version with his Three Jazz Wizards on November 6, 1925, a remake of "Riverside Blues," which was recorded by King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band in 1923 with Louis Armstrong. I suspect that Richard M. Jones was the writer of "Riverside Blues." Joe Oliver had played with Jones in New Orleans. Somehow, the copyright to "Riverside Blues" ended up being filed by Thomas A. Dorsey on July 17, 1923, though Dorsey never recorded the tune and listed on the copyright is unpub. [unpublished]. When Richard M. Jones died in 1946, his obituary in *The Melody*

*Maker* detailed his accomplishments as a musician and record producer, and then concluded, "But jazz lovers will best remember Richard Jones as the composer of some real blues evergreens. "Riverside Blues"...[five more titles are then listed] are a few of his early tunes. Jones was one of the few Negro jazz writers to achieve membership to obtain membership in A.S.C.A.P., and he regularly complained of plagiarisms."<sup>73</sup> By remaking "Riverside Blues" into "29<sup>th</sup> and Dearborn," and then recording it twice, once with his Three Jazz Wizards and then a more arranged and heavily promoted version by Russell's Hot Six, Jones may have sought to remedy the "plagiarisms" of having let the copyright to "Riverside Blues" slip away.

The following day, on March 11, 1926, Luis Russell recorded his first sides with King Oliver's Jazz Band, including "Too Bad" and "Snag It" (with vocal contributions by Richard M. Jones), and two songs backing female blues singer Teddy Peters. In advertising these recordings as "better and cleaner race records," top billing is afforded to "Sweet Mumtaz" and "29<sup>th</sup> and Dearborn." The ad reads, "When Sweet Mumtaz – that Creole doll from New Orleans --- does her stuff to the snappy strains of RUSSELL'S HOT SIX, the crowds just simply go wild with joy. You will too when you hear this new sizzling record. On the other side, RUSSELL'S boys play "29<sup>th</sup> and DEARBORN," a big hit in itself. Get this record today." In smaller print, these titles are grouped as "Dance Selections"

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<sup>73</sup> "Richard Jones New Orleans Pianist Passes," *The Melody Maker*, 9 February 1946, p. 2.

along with two by King Oliver and His Dixie Syncopators. The Ada Brown titles are listed as "Vocal Selections," comedienne with piano, banjo, saxophones.



When Sweet Mumtaz—that Creole doll from New Orleans—does her stuff to the snappy strains of RUSSELL'S HOT SIX, the crowds just simply go wild with joy. You will too, when you hear this new sizzling record. On the other side, RUSSELL'S Boys play "29th and DEARBORN," a big hit in itself. Get this record today!

## Ask Your Dealer to Play These Big Vocalion Hits

### Dance Selections

Sing It—Slow Fox Trot	King Oliver and His Dixie Syncopators	1007
Ten Bad—Fox Trot		75c
Sweet Mumtaz—Fox Trot	Russell's Hot Six	1010
29th and Dearborn—Fox Trot		75c
All Night Shags—Fox Trot	Piano-Clarinet-Banjo	1008
Put Me in the Alley—Fox Trot	The Chicago Hottentots	75c
F Minor Blues—Fox Trot	Banjo-Piano-Clarinet	1004
Chicago Back Step—Fox Trot	Three Jolly Miners	75c
Pig Alley Stomp—Fox Trot	Banjo-Piano-Clarinet	1003
Ridiculous Blues—Fox Trot	Three Jolly Miners	75c
Plantation Blues—Fox Trot		1000
Chicago Breakdown—Fox Trot	Sonny Clay's Plantation Orchestra	75c

### Vocal Selections

Panama Limited Blues	Comedienne with Piano	1009
Tia Juana Man	Banjo and Saxophones	75c
Georgia Man	Singing Comedienne with Piano, Banjo, Clarinet and Cornets	1006
What a Man		75c
Charleston Blues	Singing Comedienne with Piano	1002
South Street Blues	Violin, Cornet Viola McCoy with The Dixie Trio	75c

### Inspiring Sacred Selections

I'm Gonna Shout All Over God's Heaven		1001
We'll Be Ready When the Great Day Comes	Male Quartet with Piano by Perry Bradford	75c
Lord, I've Done What You Told Me To	Male Quartet	1005
Golden Slippers	with Piano by Perry Bradford	75c

## BETTER AND CLEANER RACE RECORDS

### Attention Music Dealers!

# Vocalion

Mail  
this  
Money

The Brunswick-Balke-Collender  
623 South Wabash Ave.  
Chicago, Ill.

Please send me full particulars

In 1925, Louis Armstrong returned to Chicago from New York City. King Oliver with Luis Russell in his band was at The Plantation, while Louis Armstrong, working across the street, at the Sunset Café, was just beginning to make his first recordings as a leader, the fabled Hot Five. One can see how Richard M. Jones was pursuing a marketing thread, following the lead of his New Orleans associate Clarence Williams, who had great success with his Blue Five recordings in New York City. Williams Blue Five, Armstrong's Hot Five, Russell's Hot Six; all were small group constructs for the recording studio, five to six pieces, designed to sell to the African American "race records" market, during an era where the standard size of orchestras performing in dance halls, night clubs, and theaters, was usually much larger. To further illustrate the close link between them, two of the members of Russell's Hot Six, Kid Ory on trombone and Johnny St. Cyr on banjo, were also members of Armstrong's Hot Five. Richard M. Jones saw potential in Luis Russell to join the ranks, as a leader, of commercially successful artists. Jones entrusted Russell, a young up and coming pianist, composer, and arranger, to remake one of Jones' own compositions, and to record a new original, and to be given headline billing in advertising to boot. Luis Russell had fond memories of hearing Louis Armstrong during this period, telling one interviewer, "I liked Armstrong most during the 1925-'26 period...when Louis played at the Sunset Café he played better things than he ever recorded. Those are the things that should've been taped! No wonder that everything he plays today he tapes himself. People came from all over the country to hear him.



Benny Goodman, Jimmy and Tommy Dorsey, Gene Krupa, Red Nichols would sit in listening.”<sup>74</sup>



Louis Armstrong's Hot Five, Exclusive Okeh Record Artist (l to r, Louis Armstrong, Johnny St. Cyr, Johnny Dodds, Kid Ory, Lil Hardin) signed "To Louis Russell (sic) from Louis"

<sup>74</sup> Felix Manskeld, *ibid.* p. 30.

“29<sup>th</sup> and Dearborn” was written by Richard M. Jones, though its origins, like many compositions in early blues and jazz, are less than clear cut. The authorship of “Sweet Mumtaz,” the other tune recorded by Russell’s Hot Six that day, is also a bit of a mystery. In March of 2014, Catherine Russell received the following email from jazz researcher Dick Baker:

I'm working to refine the catalog of Stomp Off Records, which has been publishing early jazz and ragtime music since the 1980s (contemporary recordings, not reissues). There's always been a lot of confusion as to the correct titles, and especially the correct composers, of early jazz tunes.

Which brings me to "Sweet Mumtaz," which your father recorded twice: 10 March 1926, on Vocalion 1010, and again 17 November 1926, on OKeh 8454. Both the record labels cite your father as composer, so I was amazed to discover this copyright at the Library of Congress:

Sweet Mumtaz; melody, J. Oliver, of U.S., arr. Luis C. Russell.  
© 1 c. June 6, 1925; E 616496; Joseph Oliver, Chicago.

I'm guessing that Oliver wrote it and your dad did the arrangement (as he did for several other Joe Oliver compositions) in 1925; for some reason, Oliver never recorded it, so your dad did so himself. Perhaps the record companies just presumed that he'd written it (a) since they'd never heard of it before and (b) he was known as an accomplished composer in his own right, or (c) they confused arranger and composer credit (I've seen that mistake made several times). My only other evidence for suspecting that Oliver really wrote it is that your dad had four tunes copyrighted in 1925 and another five in 1926, but this was conspicuously not among them. Obviously he knew about copyrights and how to file them, but didn't claim this one.

Is there any chance you'd have some historical records that would shed light on this?

As Dick Baker pointed out, Joe Oliver filed a copyright for the tune on June 6, 1925 and he never recorded the tune under his own name. The copyright lists Joe Oliver as writer and Luis Russell as arranger. Ten months later, in March of 1926, Luis Russell recorded "Sweet Mumtaz" and he recorded it again in November of 1926, with both versions commercially release.

While I didn't have a good response for Dick Baker at the time we received his inquiry, I delved into the historical weeds and got deep into the thicket in trying to respond. There was nothing in Luis Russell's archive to shed light on the authorship. I did find a couple of mentions of Luis Russell having written the tune. Dave Peyton, in his column of June 5, 1926 mentions "Little Russell, the composer of "Mumtez" (*sic*) a hot number recorded on Vocalion..."<sup>75</sup> Barney Bigard, in his autobiography, spoke about his time in Luis Russell's band in New York City in 1927, writing, "I can remember that he (Russell) used to feature some of his own stuff. Mumtaz was one of his own compositions that we played a lot at The Nest."<sup>76</sup>

While it's possible that Dave Peyton and Barney Bigard assumed Luis Russell's authorship from the writer credit written on the original 78rpm recording, it's also possible that Russell was the sole writer of the tune. This is conjecture on my part, but Russell may have deferred to his "boss" Joe Oliver in giving up part of the writing credit. It was a common practice for horse trading to go on regarding copyrights, with more established, better known "names" taking credit

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<sup>75</sup> Dave Peyton, "The Musical Bunch," *Chicago Defender*, 5 June 1926.

<sup>76</sup> Bigard, *ibid.* p. 41.

for songs written by their underlings, and in 1925, Russell was a sideman in Oliver's band. In June of 1925, Russell was a young newcomer in Chicago, and his boss Oliver may have filed this copyright with Russell's knowledge and agreement.

Perhaps part of the tradeoff was that Luis Russell got to record as a leader while he was a sideman with Joe Oliver. Oliver wasn't happy with the arrangement, and may have put the kibosh on further Luis Russell led recording dates. Richard M. Jones aspiration to create another "hot" recording unit led by Luis Russell, was derailed.

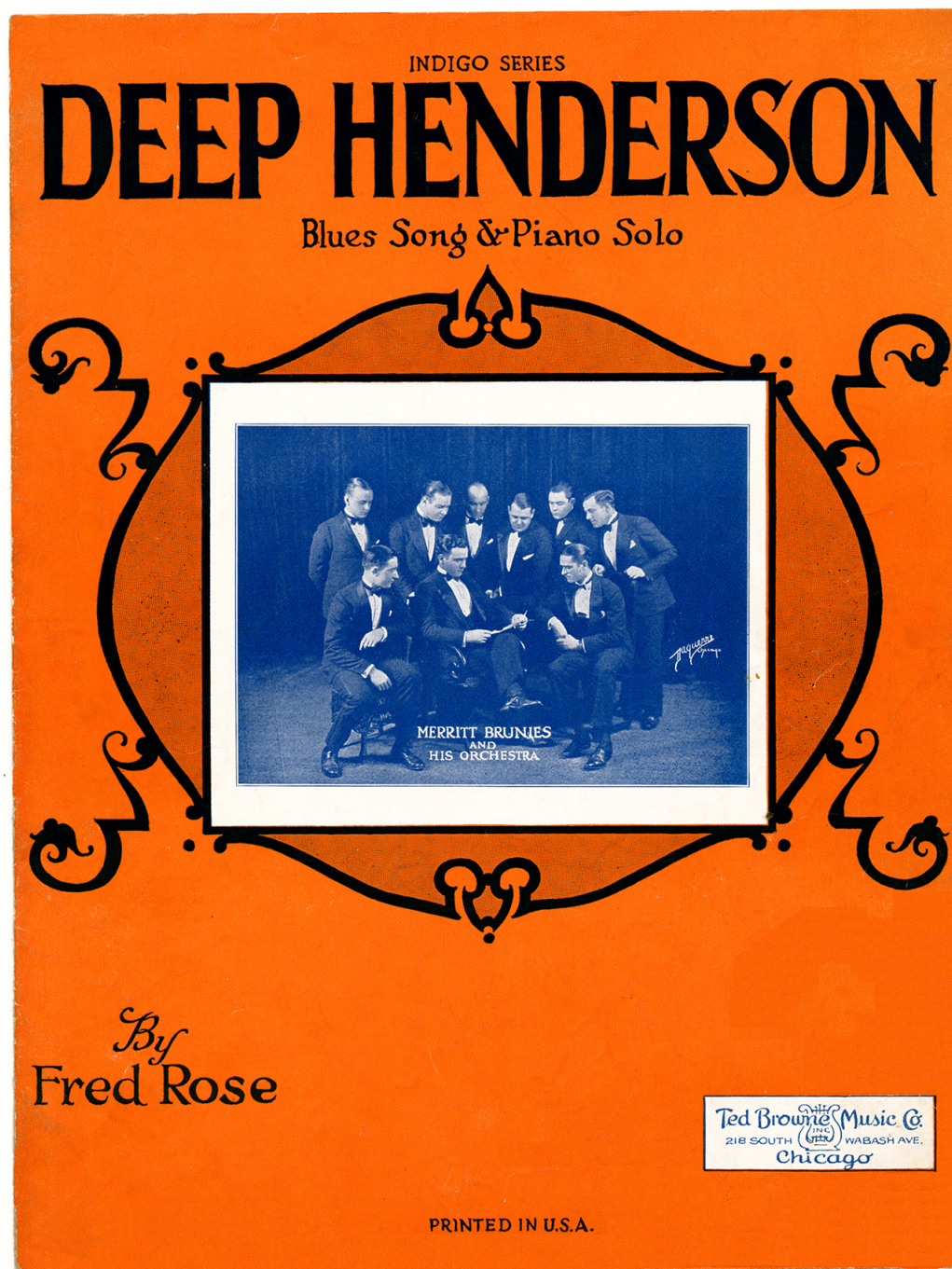
This didn't stop Jones from taking new and untried steps to promote the music of OKeh artists and their publishing interests. One of his more audacious stunts took place on Saturday night June 12, 1926, when he promoted a huge event "At The Big Main Coliseum;" twenty-one orchestras performing, with the main attraction, Louis Armstrong and His Hot Five recording a live version of "Heebie Jeebies Dance" right on stage. The advertisement which ran in the *Chicago Defender*, lists seven featured titles to be performed, along with OKeh release numbers, including "Come Back, Sweet Papa," by Paul Barbarin and Luis Russell, missing a release number. The banner across the lower portion of the ad lists "Consolidated Music Publishing House," the music publishing arm of OKeh distribution subsidiary, "Consolidated Talking Machine Company." The entire event was designed to help OKeh dealers, who sold tickets at discount with record purchases, to promote OKeh stars and sales, while also benefiting

the black Local 802 of the musicians' union. Louis Armstrong's Hot Five stole the show.

With a fortuitous launch to a recording career in Chicago, Luis Russell settled in as piano player and sometimes arranger with King Oliver's Dixie Syncopators, having been given a boost by highly influential Chicago pianists and songwriters, Richard M. Jones, and Dave Peyton. There were six recording sessions with King Oliver over the spring and summer of 1926. The band had developed a cohesive and highly arranged style, able to relax into a laid back or mid-tempo groove, get greasy on a slow blues, or romp out on faster numbers.

On April 21, 1926, a single title, "Deep Henderson," was recorded by King Oliver and His Dixie Syncopators, with an adventurous arrangement that takes the Fred Rose composition through colorful variations with humor and panache. An eight-bar intro jumps into an interplay between reed and brass, with Paul Barbarin percussion hits and a cornet step out setting up a 16-bar opening strain with Barney Bigard's slap-tongue sax playing the melody while Bert Cobb on tuba, Bud Scott on banjo and Luis Russell on piano are having a ball nudging him along. Next the band drops out and Luis Russell takes an eight-bar piano step out with Paul Barbarin egging him on, saying "Ah play it Mr. Russell." From there, the arrangement really takes off, with unexpected twists and neat variations, weaving brass and reed backgrounds cleverly into the mix. Fred Rose recorded "Deep Henderson," as a piano roll, but King Oliver and his musicians' orchestration of the tune gives it added depth and dimensions.

Fred Rose, born in Evansville, Indiana on August 24, 1897, was an aspiring songwriter who moved to Chicago, New York City, and eventually to Nashville. It's worth noting that Rose became a major force in country music.



# LISTEN!

*At the Big Main  
Coliseum*

## SATURDAY NIGHT JUNE 12th

You Are Going to Have an Opportunity to See How  
It Was Done

**Louis Armstrong**  
AND HIS HOT FIVE

Will Actually Make an Okeh Record Right on the  
Stage of

**Heebie Jeebies Dance**

(Okeh Record No. 8300)

THE BIGGEST SELLING RECORD EVER KNOWN

**Sweet Little Mammy**

(The Greatest Song Hit Since "Mother")

Will be sung by the Golden-Throated Tenor, the MYSTERIOUS MR. X. The mammoth assembly of 25,000 people will join in the chorus. Watch the back page of program.

All of the TWENTY-ONE ORCHESTRAS TO BE  
FEATURED WILL PLAY

CORNET CHOP SUEY ..... By Louis Armstrong  
Okeh Record No. 8320

SWEET LITTLE MAMMY ..... By Richard Jones  
Okeh Record No. 40591

HEEBIE JEEBIES DANCE ..... By Boyd Atkins  
Okeh Record No. 8300

COME BACK, SWEET PAPA .....  
By Paul Barbarin and Luis Russell

MUSKRAT RAMBLE ..... By Kid Ory  
Okeh Record No. 8318

ORIENTAL STRUT ..... By Johnny St. Cyr  
Okeh Record No. 8299

MY LITTLE SWEETIE .....  
By Melvin Johnston and Clarence Jones

Ask Your Music Dealer for These Numbers on Sheet Music, Rolls  
and Records—All Published by

# Consolidated Music Publishing House

229 W. Washington St.

Chicago, Ill.



While in Chicago, Luis Russell had one more opportunity to record as a leader, and on November 17, 1926, he recorded four new sides for Okeh as the six-piece Luis Russell's Heebie Jeebie Stompers; including a remake of "Sweet Mumtaz," and two new originals, "Plantation Joys," and "Dolly Mine." The band on this recording date included Luis Russell (piano, leader), Bob Shoffner (cornet), Preston Jackson (trombone), Darnell Howard (clarinet, alto sax), Barney Bigard (tenor sax), and Johnny St. Cyr (banjo). "Dolly Mine" begins with a four-bar introductory interlude, followed by a second twelve bar interlude, which lead up to a 32 bar Luis Russell piano solo, featuring a lilting syncopated statement of the main themes, a stylistic mix of ragtime, stride, and swing. The entire ensemble next takes a crack at the 32 bar themes, played in a polyphonic jam, this time with a stop time break for a trumpet solo, then repeated with a stop time break for a clarinet solo, concluding with a call and response between the reeds, playing arranged, flowing cascading passages, and the brass, who punch back with short bursts. The overall effect is almost a history lesson of King Oliver inspired Chicago jazz, from his earliest days through the present, condensed into one original Luis Russell arrangement and composition. To further illustrate the tightly knit nature of the Chicago scene, and the proximity of Luis Russell to Louis Armstrong during this period, the day prior, on November 16, 1929, Louis Armstrong recorded one of his early hot selling breakthroughs, a vocal duet titled "Big butter and egg man," with cabaret singer, May Alix. After bouncing around Chicago and recording with groups led by Jimmy Noone and Walter Barnes



through the end of 1930, May Alix resurfaced in New York City in 1934 as female blues singer working with Luis Russell's orchestra.

Towards the end of 1926, the situation in Chicago deteriorated for King Oliver. He was dealing with an ongoing medical problem, which would eventual bring an end to his playing. Joe Oliver suffered from a chronic gum ailment, known then as pyorrhea, an advanced stage of periodontal disease. Some nights his teeth would loosen to the point where he couldn't blow his trumpet. Luis Russell recalled, "It was King Oliver that really got me interested in jazz, though he was on the downgrade when I first met him."<sup>77</sup>

The Dixie Syncopators were still popular and were pulling in a crowd at The Plantation, drawing business away from The Sunset, where Louis Armstrong was in residence, located across the street. Joe Glaser, later to become manager for Louis Armstrong, who ran the Sunset, was tied in with gangsters. In March of 1927, the mob had bombs planted on the roof of The Plantation. When the bombs went off, people were scrambling to get out and debris started falling everywhere. After the Plantation was bombed, Joe Oliver was further discouraged about his chances to get ahead in Chicago, because the head of the white local of the musicians' union, James Petrillo, was also tied into the gangsters. There were boundaries where Negroes couldn't work. And if King Oliver wanted to take a job in a white place, Petrillo would send for the mob, who would tell the owner, we're going to bomb you all out.<sup>78</sup> King Oliver found a

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<sup>77</sup> Felix Manskeld, *ibid.* p. 11, 30.

<sup>78</sup> Bigard, *ibid.*

booking agent who offered to set up a string of engagements to get the band to New York City. While some band members were reluctant to make the trip, Oliver found replacements where needed, and along with Luis Russell, Barney Bigard, and the rest, the band was New York City bound.



Portrait of young Luis Russell, Chicago, (Catherine Russell Collection)

## Chapter 4 – New York City: 1927-1935 “Feelin’ The Spirit”

Luis Russell arrived in New York City in the spring of 1927 as a member of King Oliver’s Dixie Syncopators; a 25-year-old veteran of the burgeoning jazz world, who had recorded his own compositions as a leader, and performed as a sideman alongside such luminaries as Jimmie Noone, Freddie Keppard, Barney Bigard, Kid Ory, Johnny St. Cyr, Albert Nicholas, Paul Barbarin, Bob Shoffner, Johnny Dodds, Bud Scott, and Omer Simeon.

The journey from Chicago to New York had been a torturous one. Bigard recalled, “We didn’t have any band fund or much personal money so we got there the cheapest way we could, by train, boxcar style.” What was intended to be a tour, opening in St. Louis, turned into a nightmarish scenario as the booking agent for the tour turned out to be a crook and “took off with all the money after the job closed. Joe had to break it to the guys in the band that there was no payroll coming.”<sup>79</sup>

Confident that things would improve in New York City, the band made its way east “on the hard-times train again” until arriving in the Big Apple. On May 19, 1927, King Oliver and The Dixie Syncopators opened in New York City with a two-week engagement at The Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. The place was packed and the band was well received. Joe Oliver received an offer to return to the Savoy, along with an offer for a long-term residency at The Cotton Club. He turned down both, feeling that the money wasn’t sufficient. Duke Ellington moved

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<sup>79</sup> Bigard, *ibid.* p.32.

into The Cotton Club, instead, where he would make an indelible mark on jazz history. Without a steady gig, Oliver was forced to travel out of town for work, and ended up getting stranded in Baltimore. At that point, Barney Bigard had enough, and as much as he loved Joe Oliver, Bigard, with a family to support, turned in his notice and accepted an offer to join Charlie Elgar's band in Milwaukee, following in the footsteps of Omer Simeon, who had earlier left Oliver for Elgar. King Oliver returned to New York City, without steady work, and his band scattered, with his men, including Luis Russell, taking whatever jobs they could find.

Luis Russell sat in one night at The Nest Club, located at West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street, where the band was led by drummer George Howe, who offered Russell the piano chair. The Nest was a tiny but popular after-hours joint. Work might start for the band around ten pm and last until six or seven am in the morning, and sometimes until noon or early afternoon the following day. Perhaps related to the long hours, band leader George Howe developed the unfortunate habit of falling asleep on the bandstand. Johnny Carey, the owner, fired George Howe, and with the agreement of the other sidemen, installed Luis Russell as the leader. In addition to now leading his own band at The Nest, Luis Russell was put in charge of the subsidiary band at Small's Paradise, where Charlie Johnson led the main band.<sup>80</sup> Given the chance to lead his own group in late summer of 1927, Luis Russell called on former band mates and began to methodically

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<sup>80</sup> Bigard, *ibid.* p.40-43.

assemble personnel; creating what would become, in a short time, one of the top orchestras in New York City.

One of Luis Russell's first moves was to write to his pal, Barney Bigard, who had left King Oliver and was now working with Charlie Elgar's orchestra in Milwaukee, with an invitation to come join him at The Nest, which Bigard accepted, remembering:

When I got to New York, Russell was real glad to see me and I soon fell in with what they were doing. Paul Barbarin was also in the band at the time I was, so there were three of us from our first little band at Tom Anderson's in New Orleans. Luis and Paul had done alright for themselves in the business, for like me they had both gone to play with King Oliver, and here they were doing good business and making nice money in New York.

Luis was the same beautiful man to work with or for. I've never seen a nicer man to work for in my life. He was always smiling and never, but never, got angry over anything. He didn't have any big ideas of his own importance. He was a terrific piano player too, and a great musician. He knew music, I guess from his studies. I mean he never needed an arranger, like for instance, Charlie Elgar did. Luis Russell always did his own stuff for his band. With his own playing, well, he always liked to "feed" a man with chording, and always the correct chords at that. He liked to give a man good rhythm. He might make a little figure, you know, but none of this running all over the piano the way I know a lot of pianists do. I mean he chorded you all the way round. He never cared much about taking solos either.<sup>81</sup>

Everyone came to The Nest to hang out; show girls from the Cotton Club where Duke Ellington was working would bring their boy-friends. People would come to Harlem from Broadway shows, celebrities, big shots, and famous entertainers all came by; Fanny Brice, Helen Morgan, Bill "Bojangles" Robinson, and Al Jolson. The salary for members of Luis Russell's band at The Nest was

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<sup>81</sup> Bigard, *ibid.* p. 40-41.

\$84 dollars per week, which was more than respectable, yet Bigard recalled, “My salary didn’t mean a thing, I’d make more money than my salary, we’d come out there and make \$70-\$80 dollars tips, from these people, in just one night, one day.”<sup>82</sup>

The salad days at the Nest would continue into the fall of 1927. As Luis Russell sought out the best men for his new band, he had to contend with an ongoing hazard for all band leaders in the highly competitive New York scene. Top sidemen would often have multiple offers for engagements in competing orchestras. Shortly after joining Russell at The Nest, Small’s Paradise tried to lure Barney Bigard into leaving Russell to go with them, but Bigard, noting that the salary was the same at both places and the tips at the Nest were were tremendous, opted to stay with his pals from New Orleans, Russell and Barbarin, who he knew and enjoyed working with at The Nest. The pressure on Bigard to leave Russell continued, when, one night, another New Orleans musician, Wellman Braud, walked into The Nest. Though Bigard hadn’t known Braud in New Orleans, Braud was now playing bass with Duke Ellington, who was looking for a clarinet player to replace Rudy Jackson, and Braud sounded Bigard on joining Ellington. Apparently, Rudy Jackson had brought a tune to Ellington called *Creole Love Call*, which Ellington liked and recorded, later claiming authorship. It turns out that Rudy had borrowed the song from King Oliver, who called the tune *Camp Meeting Blues*, and Oliver was suing over the matter. King Oliver had

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<sup>82</sup> Barney Bigard, Oral History interview, 22 April 1976, tape recording transcribed by author, Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University, Newark, NJ.

recorded *Camp Meeting Blues* with his Creole Jazz Band in 1923 with Jimmie Noone playing clarinet. Ellington wasn't happy about the hassle of being sued, so he fired Rudy Jackson. Lawsuits over competing copyright claims were common in early jazz, and indicate an awareness among the players of the significant financial stakes involved.

Duke Ellington liked to frequent another after hours joint in Harlem, known as Mexico's, which was a popular musicians' hang out, with jam sessions and a weekly cutting contest, each week devoted to a different instrument. Barney Bigard remembers, "Duke was always hanging around Mexico's. In fact, the first time I played there, Luis Russell, bless his soul told me, "We're going down there one night and you are going to break them up." With Russell's encouragement, Bigard wowed them at Mexico's, and word got back to Duke Ellington, who also snuck into The Nest to hear Bigard, which eventually led to an invitation to come over to Duke's apartment, where Bigard was offered to join Duke Ellington at The Cotton Club. Although the money being offered by Duke was less than with Luis Russell at The Nest, Bigard was impressed by Ellington's ambition and by the potential. He accepted the offer. "Anyway, I went to my job at The Nest that night and told Luis Russell what had happened. He was such a great guy. He wasn't mad that I was giving notice or anything like that. He was just glad for me to get such a good break. I guess he sensed that Duke would be going places."<sup>83</sup>

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<sup>83</sup> Bigard, *With Louis and The Duke*, *ibid.* p. 44-45.



One of the clichés about Luis Russell often repeated in the jazz history echo chamber, was that he was too easy going to get ahead. Barney Bigard saw it differently: “That band leading isn’t no easy thing. I mean Russell was a bandleader that everyone in the band loved and respected. He didn’t argue with you. He just told you what he wanted and he always got what he wanted.”<sup>84</sup> Unfazed by the departure of his friend Barney Bigard, Luis Russell kept on an even keel, and proceeded as any great manager would, when losing a valued member of the team. He kept his focus on replacing departing men with the next best option, viewing it as an opportunity to strengthen the unit, rather than as a loss. Russell brought in Omer Simeon, a top New Orleans creole clarinetist, who had worked with both Bigard and Russell in Chicago, and added trumpet great Louis Metcalf, who had worked with Duke Ellington and others, before joining Russell.

Back in Chicago, Dave Peyton continued to keep his national readership abreast of developments, and in his column of May 26, 1928, he wrote under the headline, **Russell Writes:**

Luis Russell, pianist, formerly with Joe Oliver’s orchestra, writes that he has his own orchestra at the Nest Cafe in New York city and that he is doing well. His boys are good players and under Russell they must be. I have always admired the manners and ambition this young man displayed around Chicago and have predicted that someday he would make good. Here he is. Russell would be pleased to hear from his many friends at 313 West 119th Street New York.”<sup>85</sup>

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<sup>84</sup> Bigard, *ibid.* p. 41.

<sup>85</sup> Dave Peyton, “The Musical Bunch,” *Chicago Defender*, 26 May 1928, p. 10.

Self-publicity was an avenue available to musicians with the inclination to take advantage of relationships with writers in the Afro-American press, and Luis Russell successfully cultivated his relationship with Dave Peyton, and with other writers, throughout his career. Luis's canny ability to balance "manners and ambition" stood him in good stead. He was raised correctly by "Teacher" Russell, and given an appreciation that one can advance oneself, without having to climb over or step on someone else to do it.

The next few years brought Luis Russell into the forefront as an orchestra leader, songwriter, and recording artist. For the balance of 1928, the lineup of the Luis Russell Orchestra continued to gel and solidify, with the addition of several star soloists. Moving from The Nest to Club Harlem at Lenox and 130<sup>th</sup> street, the horns now included Louis Metcalf from St. Louis on trumpet, J.C. Higginbotham from Social Circle, Georgia on trombone, Charlie Holmes from Boston on alto sax, and Teddy Hill from Birmingham, Alabama on tenor sax. With Paul Barbarin still on drums, and Will Johnson added on banjo and guitar, the band could stomp, swing out, and play the blues; keeping the atmosphere loose, informal, and fun, for both dancers and listeners. Their next venue was the famed Savoy Ballroom, where they cut the competition. Charlie Holmes recalled, "We played opposite Chick Webb, and this was his home ground. We ran him right out of the Savoy, and I mean he had his own crowd and everything. It got so bad that no other band wanted to be booked against us. We never lost a battle there."<sup>86</sup>

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<sup>86</sup> Frank Driggs, liner notes to *Luis Russell and his Louisiana Orchestra*, Columbia double LP, *ibid.*



Luis Russell And His Burning Eight (l to r. standing, Bass Moore, J.C. Higginbotham, Paul Barbarin, Will Johnson, Ven/Len Fields, seated Louis Metcalf, Luis Russell, Teddy Hill)

Charlie Holmes was born in Boston on January 27, 1910. In his youth, he heard fellow Bostonian Johnny Hodges play the saxophone and was smitten by the sound and style of the future Duke Ellington saxophonist to whom Holmes would often later be compared. Charlie studied music with Joseph Wagner and played oboe with the Boston Symphony Orchestra in 1926.

On March 9, 1927, at the age of 17, Charlie Holmes, along with a Boston pal and fellow sax player, Harry Carney, decided to visit New York City, recalling, “like everyone else in the world wants to do...It’s such a great city to me, I’ve been here ever since.” Their first move upon arriving in New York, was to hear Chick Webb at the Savoy Ballroom, where Johnny Hodges was on sax. Happy to see his friends from Boston, Hodges introduced Holmes and Carney to Chick Webb. Holmes describes what happened next in a BBC interview:

“...we went by a place called the Bandbox, where all the musicians hung out, and around the corner there were a couple of bars on the corners which were open, in them days, of course it was Prohibition Time, the bars were open 24 hours a day, and they didn’t have no locks on the doors at all. And we met a lot of people in show business, and musicians, and different things, so they had what they called “cutting contests,” where the musicians would get together and get their horns out, nowadays it’s called a “Jam,” them days it was a cuttin contest, I’ll take my horn out and I’ll cut you, and so the three of us walked in there and Johnny knew everybody, Harry Carney and I were strangers, you know, and so Johnny introduces us around, and so, Greely Walton was playing saxophone, tenor, when we come in, and I hadn’t heard no saxophone played like that before in my life, you know, it was real great, and then after Greely got through playing, Coleman Hawkins played, well, when Coleman Hawkins got through playing tenor, nobody else wanted to play. So somebody got an alto sax out and gave it to Johnny and put it in his hands, Johnny played, and then he gave the horn to Harry Carney, and he played, and then Harry handed the horn to me, which I didn’t want to play cause I was too nervous, too scared, cause I hadn’t heard this kind of saxophone, I had only been playing about a year, and uh, I was too amazed at what I was hearing to want to play, cause I didn’t consider myself that great or anything, but

when I got through playing, the fellas were kidding Johnny Hodges about, “your buddy plays more than you do,” (Laughs).

You know, so Johnny, we all had a good laugh about it. So Chick Webb, the next day, we go around the corner, it’s about 3 o’clock in the afternoon, everybody gathers around, and Chick Webb, he was around braggin about these two fellas from Boston, and how one of em cut Johnny Hodges, and oh man, run him out of the place. Well, he boosted my stock way up, cause anytime Chick Webb would put a label on you, you were made from then on. Cause Chick didn’t know anything but the best.<sup>87</sup>

With the endorsement of Chick Webb, and with his confidence newly boosted, Charlie Holmes found immediate work around New York City, from Harlem to a long residency in Brooklyn and then back to the Savoy. Holmes next joined George Howe’s band at The Nest and was there when Luis Russell was appointed leader. As Luis Russell formed his orchestra, Charlie Holmes came on board as a featured sax soloist, and would continue with Russell, with a brief detour into Mills Blue Rhythm Band, through 1940. With beautiful tone and versatility on several instruments (alto and soprano saxes, clarinet, oboe), Charlie Holmes was an exciting improviser and strong section player, who helped define the sound of the Luis Russell Orchestra.

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<sup>87</sup> Charlie Holmes, interview by Steve Allen, BBC radio, 1973, recording courtesy of Ricky Riccardi, Louis Armstrong Archive, Queens College, NY, NY.



Charlie Holmes (Catherine Russell Collection)

A most important player from Luis Russell's past was about to come back into the fold; by taking the long way around. While in the King Oliver residency at

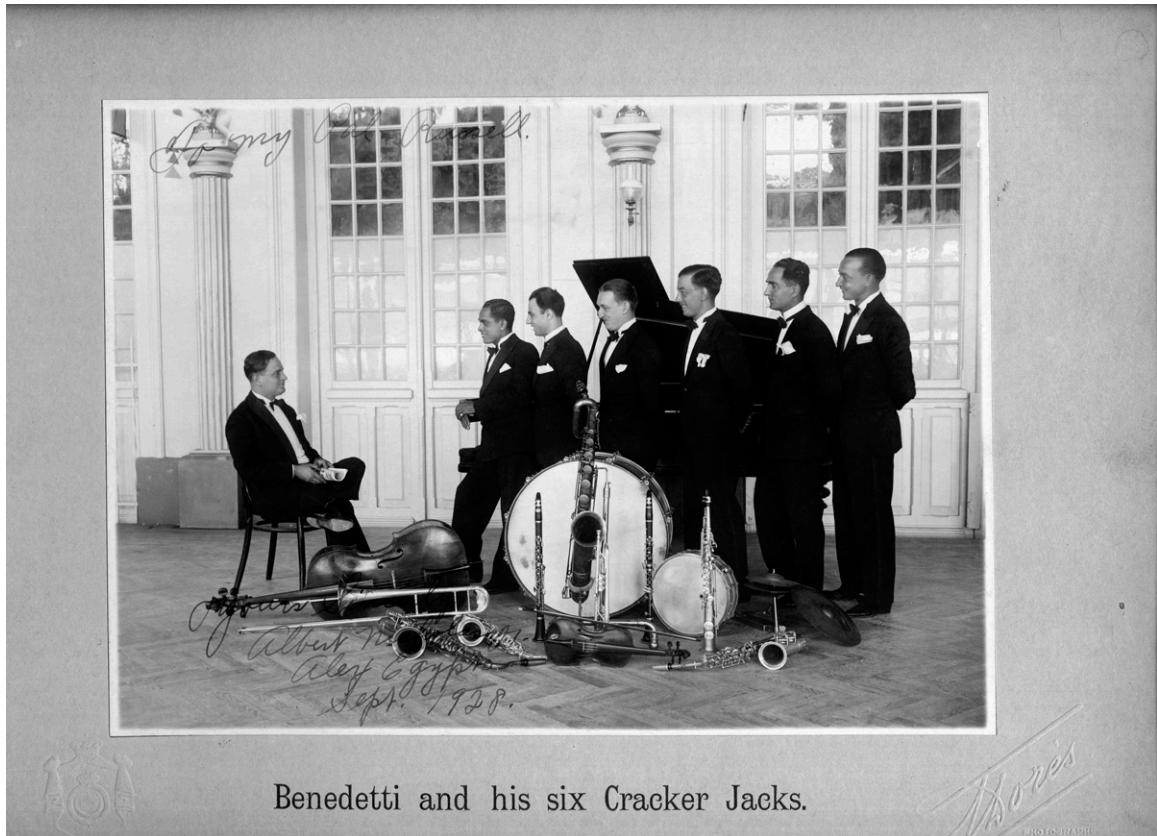
The Plantation in Chicago, Albert Nicholas left Chicago in August of 1926 and embarked on a two plus year journey, literally around the world, playing music and taking in the sights. He traveled by train to San Francisco, and then by ship to Hawaii, Japan, and finally, to Shanghai, China, where he joined a black band led by drummer Jack Carter at the Plaza Hotel. He traveled with Valaida Snow, a well-known female trumpet player and singer, and pianist Teddy Weatherford, one of Luis Russell's piano influences. After 14 months in Shanghai, Albert, along with banjoist Frank Etheridge, moved to the Raffles Hotel in Singapore, and then, after globetrotting through Java, Sumatra, and India; they arrived in Egypt. A cosmopolitan atmosphere prevailed and Nicholas played in nightclubs in Cairo in bands made up of musicians from many countries. When audiences heard jazz added to bands playing stock arrangements of popular tunes, they wanted more and Albert and Frank were in demand, leading to an offer to play in Alexandria, where Albert stayed for six months, playing with Benedetti and His Six Crackerjacks. He recalled, "I enjoyed Alexandria. The weather was beautiful...the ocean and breeze, swim every day, live in the hotel, room and board paid for, eat in the main dining room – it was a beautiful atmosphere, so I stayed there."<sup>88</sup> Musicians at various hotel bands in Alexandria even formed a forty-piece symphonic orchestra, giving concerts of classical music on Sundays, and Albert played second clarinet.

Sensing the pull of home, Nicholas traveled to Marseille, Berlin, London, and Paris (where he saw old friend Sidney Bechet), before boarding a ship and

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<sup>88</sup> Roger Richard, "Roger Richard Talks to Albert Nicholas," *Storyville*, Feb-March 1975.

arriving in New York on October 28, 1928. He met Luis Russell, and agreed to join Russell's Orchestra, which by the fall of 1928 was developing into a highly successful band.



Benedetti and his six Cracker Jacks.

Benedetti and his six Cracker Jacks, Albert Nicholas second from left, Alexandria, Egypt, signed "To My Pal Russell, Albert Nicholas, Alex Egypt, Sept 1928" (Catherine Russell Collection).

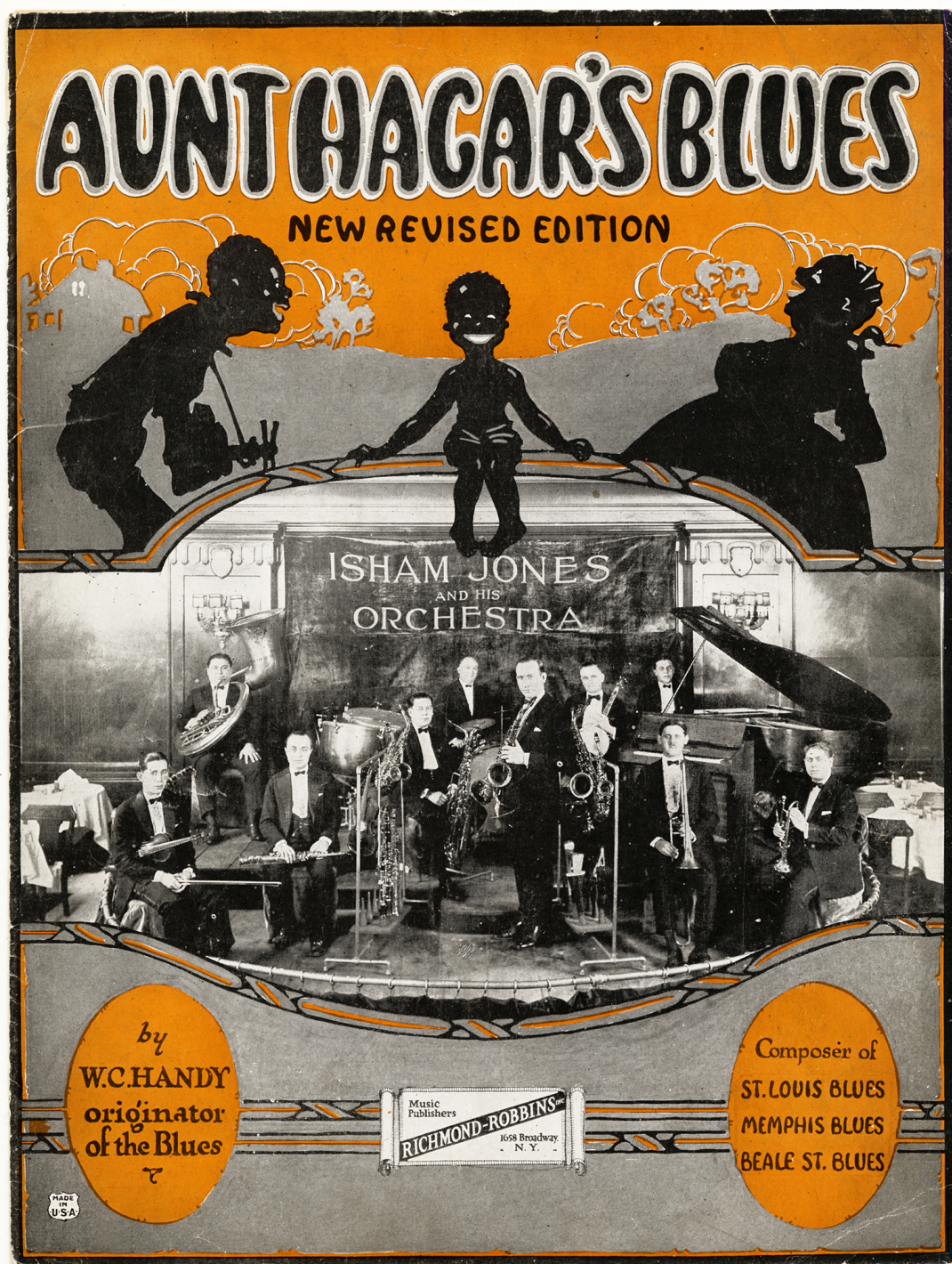
A "world music" element in the orchestra led by Panamanian Luis Russell was about to be expanded, many decades before the term gained traction as a marketing concept to describe music from other than prevailing "western" culture. Not only had Albert Nicholas absorbed musical ideas from the "orient," in Paris he heard bands with four basses, plus cornet, playing South American "typique,"



alongside Creole sounds in the Latin Quarter. Already a top clarinetist playing in a classic style taught in New Orleans by the Tio Family (who had spent time in Mexico), Albert Nicholas now might, at will, insert oriental sounding melismatic playing into a solo. With his Clark Gable-esque mustache and sharp looking demeanor, and having recently conquered the globe with his clarinet, Albert Nicholas was an undeniable asset.

In 1928, another key addition to Luis Russell's band arrived in the person of trombonist J.C. Higginbotham. Born on May 11, 1906 near Atlanta, Georgia, he never knew exactly what the middle initial C. stood for, but his first name was Jay. Coming from a musical family, J.C. was given his first horn by a sister, and played in the school band at Morris Brown University in Atlanta, playing for three years before learning to read music. J.C. considered working as a tailor, and after moving to Cincinnati to receive some training in tailoring, drifted towards playing trombone in various bands, settling in Buffalo. On a visit to New York City to see his mother in September 1928, he stopped by the Savoy and sat in for a few choruses with both Chick Webb's and Willie Lynch's bands, knowing men in both bands. Luis Russell, on the lookout to expand his own group, heard Higginbotham, and with a keen ear for talent, hired him on the spot. On September 10, 1928, they went into the studio to lay down two sides under the name and direction of King Oliver, recording "Speakeasy Blues" (a tune written by Joe Oliver and Clarence Williams, taken at a slow and greasy tempo and featuring an exceptional Luis Russell piano solo), and "Aunt Hagar's Blues," (an instrumental version of the W.C. Handy composition, featuring a languid, bluesy

12 bar trombone solo). In addition to Luis Russell, the band included Paul Barbarin, Omer Simeon, and Barney Bigard. Two additional recording dates took place in 1928, under King Oliver's name, two days later on September 12 with the same personnel, and then on November 14, with the additions of Charlie Holmes, Louis Metcalf and Teddy Hill, and minus Barney Bigard, Omer Simeon, and Ed Anderson.



"Aunt Hagar's Blues," by W.C. Handy, sheet music cover courtesy Philippe Baudoin.

1929 and 1930 were watershed years for Luis Russell in New York City.

Gunther Schuller offered this assessment of Luis Russell's recorded work during these years:

Russell was a gifted composer and a constantly explorative arranger, rarely content to fall back on established formulas. His arrangements—whether those of his own compositions or others', at least in the late twenties and early thirties—almost always contained interesting things to hear, without ever going outside jazz traditions. Russell's "Feeling the Spirit," "Jersey Lightning," "Louisiana Swing," are all impressive compositions, especially the last, with its entirely original bridge changes. Russell also appreciated his star soloists and gave them—especially Allen and Higginbotham—plenty of solo space. Though some of the performances have as many as nine and eleven separate and quite individual solos, there is considerable stylistic coherence; and Russell knew how to frame the solos in unifying and supportive settings.<sup>89</sup>

On February 12, 1929, George "Pops" Foster, the great New Orleans bass player, joined The Luis Russell Orchestra. George Foster was born on a plantation in McCall, Louisiana on May 18, 1892, and his family moved to New Orleans when he was 10, around the time Luis Russell was born. Foster took up string bass and tuba, and by 1906, he was working in what would become a succession of bands and musical milieus; joining Magnolia Orchestra, Kid Ory, The Tuxedo, The Eagle, Armand Piron, and Joe Oliver. He worked for Fate Marable on riverboats from 1918 to 1921, for a time alongside Louis Armstrong, traveled to Los Angeles and played in dance halls on the West Coast, and then settled into jobs in St. Louis, working for bandleader Dewey Jackson. Trumpeter

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<sup>89</sup> Gunther Schuller, *The Swing Era*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1989), 187.

Louis Metcalf heard Foster in St. Louis and told Luis Russell about him. Foster remembered:

Luis Russell sent me a telegram wanting me to join him in New York. Jesse Johnson got the telegram and kept it from me for three weeks before he gave it to me. Jesse did all the booking for bands and entertainments around St. Louis and was a good friend of Dewey's and didn't want to see me go.<sup>90</sup>

Fortunately for Luis Russell, Foster finally received the telegram, and described his arrival in New York in his Autobiography: "We played the Savoy Ballroom from February, 1929 into the summer. Then we went into the Roseland Ballroom and took Fletcher Henderson's job away from him. We were really romping then, really bouncing."<sup>91</sup> He continued, "We worked seven days a week and loved it...Russell's band was romping so good in twenty-nine we had everything sewed up around New York." Foster's description is intriguing, highlighting two threads. The competitive nature of the scene is the subtext of describing how Russell's band "took Fletcher Henderson's job away from him," delivered with more than a hint of hubris. Foster was clearly proud to be part of a rhythm section, along with Luis Russell on piano and Paul Barbarin on drums, that romped its way to supremacy. Further reinforcement of the bands' supremacy came in Walter Barnes, Jr.'s column in *The Chicago Defender* of June 6, 1931: "Luis Russell walked off with the honors as the result of the battle of music held recently between Russell and Chick Webb at The Savoy

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<sup>90</sup> George Pops Foster as told to Tom Stoddard, *The Autobiography of Pops Foster New Orleans Jazzman*, (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1971), p. 133.

<sup>91</sup> George Pops Foster, *ibid.* p. 139.



Ballroom...Russell is now at the Arcadia Ballroom, 52nd and Broadway, New York City."



George "Pops" Foster (Catherine Russell Collection)

Dave Peyton wrote in his column in the *Chicago Defender* of February 2, 1929:

“The great King Menelik (Louis Armstrong) will leave in a week or so to fill a two-night engagement at the Savoy ballroom in New York. A big fat figure has been offered to the king of jazz just to play two nights with Luis Russell’s orchestra at the New York ballroom.”<sup>92</sup>

On March 5, 1929, Louis Armstrong recorded two sides in New York City backed by Luis Russell’s band, billed as Louis Armstrong and His Savoy Ballroom Five (Armstrong plus nine musicians, Russell’s men augmented by Eddie Condon on banjo and Lonnie Johnson on guitar, yet still billed as “Five,” to be included in the Hot Five series); “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love,” and “Mahogany Hall Stomp.” The session was a milestone. It was the first time Armstrong and Russell recorded together. The recordings also represented a kind of turning point in Armstrong’s career, and is cited by several historians as the point at which Armstrong started going commercial and selling out. Rather, what Armstrong was doing, as pointed out by Ricky Riccardi on a facebook post, was transcending jazz and taking on the world of American popular music. It was around this time that Tommy Rockwell “decided to take Armstrong off their “Race” series and put him on the Pop side. Some purists still haven’t gotten over that move but now, beginning in 1929, Armstrong found himself competing with white singers and bands and recording the same pop tunes they were performing. What he did with them, beginning with ‘I Can’t Give You Anything But

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<sup>92</sup> Dave Peyton, “The Musical Bunch,” *Chicago Defender*, 2 February 1929.

Love,' turned the music world upside down and nothing has been the same since."<sup>93</sup>

Luis Russell's role, together with Louis Armstrong, in developing and expanding the jazz repertoire bears examination. Luis Russell had an affinity for covering material written by black songwriters, and for adding to the canon with his own compositions. What may be less understood is his role in introducing and popularizing compositions drawn from the Broadway theater, and from white and often Jewish composers, the Gershwins, Dorothy Fields, and Jerome Kern. In so doing, Luis Russell became an early exponent of what we now call the Great American Songbook. From the start, he defined and championed the Great African American Songbook.

Let's take the case of "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," composed by Jimmy McHugh (music) and Dorothy Fields (lyrics). The song was introduced by Adelaide Hall at Les Ambassadeurs Club in New York in January 1928 in Lew Leslie's *Blackbird Revue*, which opened on Broadway later that year as the highly successful *Blackbirds of 1928*, running for 518 performances, where it was performed by Adelaide Hall and popularized by Aida Ward. Who introduced the song to Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell? Was it Tommy Rockwell, who was known for having a tin ear? A photo of Aida Ward, found in Luis Russell's collection, offers a clue and a possible answer.

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<sup>93</sup> Ricky Riccardi facebook post, March 5, 2018.





Aida Ward, signed "To Bessie, With my Best Wishes for your career. Aida Ward Paris 1929" (Catherine Russell Collection)

Luis Russell was rumored to be romantically involved with Cotton Club dancer Bessie Dudley. Several photos in his collection, including the one of Aida Ward, are signed “To Bessie.” Aida Ward was known as the “prima donna” of the Cotton Club in Harlem, where she succeeded Florence Mills as featured vocalist with the Duke Ellington and Cab Calloway orchestras. Ward appeared in New York, London and Paris in “Blackbirds” in 1926-27, and later shared star billing in *Blackbirds of 1928* with singer Adelaide Hall. Luis Russell was tied into what was happening in both Harlem and in midtown theatrical productions, and having a personal connection to the vocalist most associated with the tune, makes him a possible suspect in bringing “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love,” into the recording session. But then again, the tune had been recorded before Armstrong and Russell took a stab at it, including twice by Duke Ellington Orchestra, and a large selling hit version, by Cliff Edwards, also known as Ukulele Ike, for Columbia Records.

By summer of 1929, Henry “Red” Allen, from New Orleans, came aboard on trumpet. Luis Russell’s orchestra became a sort of “house band” for both the OKeh and Victor labels. In addition to a steady stream of recording sessions, they performed virtually every night for two years without a break, holding down residencies at the best venues in New York City (Roseland, Saratoga Club, Savoy Ballroom, Arcadia Ballroom, Connie’s Inn), touring regionally outside of New York City. In addition to recording his own originals as Luis Russell and His Orchestra (“Call of The Freaks,” “Feelin’ The Spirit,” “Jersey Lightning,”

“Louisiana Swing,” and others) for Okeh, during 1929-30, Luis Russell and His Orchestra recorded many sides backing up and relinquishing billing to Louis Armstrong, Henry Red Allen, Jelly Roll Morton (minus Luis), and with the contortionist, clarinetist, Wilton Crawley. Henry Red Allen’s first recordings as a leader in 1929, backed by Russell, were a move by Victor to create a trumpet star of their own to compete with the huge success of Louis Armstrong (both Russell and Armstrong were at the time signed to the Okeh label, Victor’s arch rival).

Henry “Red” Allen, Jr. was born in New Orleans on January 7, 1908. His father, Henry Allen, Sr worked as a longshoreman on the Mississippi River Docks, while also becoming a fine trumpet player and leader of one of the city’s finest brass bands, the Allen Brass Band. Like Luis Russell, Red Allen received musical training from his father. Red also studied with trumpeter Manuel Manetta. The family base was across the river from New Orleans, in Algiers, Louisiana, which writer Martin Williams described as being removed from “the poverty of the uptown Negro section of New Orleans, and from the particular snobberies of the colored Creole section.”<sup>94</sup> Red’s father held band rehearsal at the family’s home, and as a youth, Red heard many of the greats who came through the band’s ranks; Buddy Bolden, Joe Oliver, Big Eye Louis Nelson, Louis Armstrong, and many others. After finishing his schooling, Red was reluctant to leave home, but

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<sup>94</sup> John Chilton, *Ride Red Ride, The Life of Henry “Red” Allen*, (New York: Cassell, 1999), 5. Quoting *Jazz Masters of New Orleans* by Martin Williams.

after a few years of gigging in various bands around New Orleans, he saw that greater opportunities involved travel.

When King Oliver decided to leave Chicago in April of 1927, several in the band wouldn't sign on, and King Oliver, on the recommendation of Paul Barbarin, sent a message to Red in New Orleans inviting him to meet the band in St. Louis. Red joined King Oliver in St. Louis, and along with Luis Russell, Paul Barbarin, Barney Bigard, made the ill-fated journey to New York City together by train. Red was part of the King Oliver Band's successful opening at the Savoy in May of 1927, but as opportunities for Oliver deteriorated, Red became homesick and returned to New Orleans. Having worked around New Orleans on steamboats run by the Stefeckus Steamer Company, whose headquarters were in St. Louis, Red soon joined the orchestra led by pianist Fate Marable, and he worked on the Mississippi riverboats in 1928 and into 1929, when he received a letter from his pal, Paul Barbarin, who was drumming with Luis Russell's band. Red recalled, "Paul told me in his letter that I only needed to make the journey and a job in Luis Russell's band was mine. This was quickly followed by an offer to join Duke Ellington's Band, where another friend of mine, Barney Bigard, was playing."<sup>95</sup>

Around the same time, during one of the Marable Band's two day stop overs in Memphis, Red was heard by Loren L. Watson, a record distributor, freelance talent scout, and occasional A&R man for Victor. Aware of the impressive sales Louis Armstrong was enjoying on the rival OKeh label, Watson

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<sup>95</sup> John Chilton, *Ride Red Ride, The Life of Henry "Red" Allen*, (New York: Cassell, 1999), 33.

offered Red the opportunity to record under his own name in New York City for Victor. Red was torn, but eventually he decided to join Luis Russell over Duke Ellington, because more of the New Orleans contingent that he knew were in Russell's band; Paul Barbarin, Pops Foster, Albert Nicholas, and Russell himself.<sup>96</sup>

By the time Red arrived in New York City, Luis Russell had established a residency in one of the top venues in New York City, the Roseland Ballroom, located at 1658 Broadway at 51<sup>st</sup> street in midtown Manhattan. Tenor saxophonist Teddy Hill met Red at the train and took him straight to the gig. Red recalled, "That first week in New York was scary...I was to learn it was the kind of band that hung out like family. It had a brotherly love going. It was also the most swinging band in New York. It put audiences in an uproar. Russell did most of the arrangements and whenever you took a solo there was a lot of fire up and down the band."<sup>97</sup>

With a fully realized and solidified line up, Luis Russell and His Orchestra were ready to take on all comers with their own brand of hot music, as exemplified by their recordings of this period. An analysis of one of his originals follows:

**Jersey Lightning (Luis Russell) Sept 6, 1929 New York (OKeh)**

***Luis Russell And His Orchestra*** : Henry "Red" Allen, Bill Coleman (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb,vcl) Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (as,sop) Teddy Hill (ts) Luis Russell (p,dir) Will Johnson (bj,g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

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<sup>96</sup> John Chilton, *ibid.*, 33-24.

<sup>97</sup> John Chilton, *ibid.*, 35, quoting Hogan Archive Oral History of 24 March 1972.

### 32 Bar Song Form (AABC) Fox Trot

A 00:1 - 0:13 The tune opens with the brass and reeds stating a theme made up of five scale step hits, ascending then descending on the one chord in stop time with clarinetist Albert Nicholas improvising freely over the spaces delineated by Pops Foster's slapped bass, followed by the same pattern on the 4 chord, followed by another stop and clarinet break, followed by single chord stops on the 5 chord, 4 chord, with the last 2 bars consisting of four syncopated hits on the 2 chord, and one hit on the 5 chord, with flowing clarinet lines throughout filled with trills and varied interpretations of the theme.

A 0:14 - 0:28 repeats the above, except the last 2 bars the horns play a descending line which resolves back to the 1 chord followed by an ascending line which caresses along into an anticipatory transition

B 0:29 - 0:41 into a rare Luis Russell piano solo accompanied by only drums, with Barbarin riding his hi-hat, and Luis pounding out a stride boogie woogie variation which introduces the B section for 8 bars

B 0:42 - 0:55 the horns start romping on the newly introduced B section theme, over a heavy rhythmic groove with Pops Foster's slapped and snapping bass predominating, as a foreshadowing of what's to come next.

AA 00:56 - 1:23 The first two 16 bar sections are repeated with the same basic chords and stop time format, except now, the flowing clarinet is replaced by Pops Foster pumping out snapping bass improvisations mostly in descending & ascending thirds, to fill the spaces between staccato chordal hits by the horns/brass, leading up to the next transition when it's off to the races as in comes Henry Red Allen!

C 1:24 - 1:50 Red Allen blows solos with surprising dexterity and unexpected resolutions, over a hard swinging section, with Luis feeding chords, Pops Foster snapping his bass, Will Johnson chording on banjo or guitar, and Barbarin riding his hi hat. After some crazy lead riffing at 1:42-44, Red lands on his final note 1:49, and Luis does a nifty turn around on the piano 1:50-51 which leads nicely into the next surprise.

C 1:51 - 2:17 The reeds, Nicholas, Charlie Holmes, and Teddy Hill, take over and repeat C with the clarinet and two saxes harmonizing a lovely 16 bar worked out arrangement, filled with syncopation and glissandos 2:10-11, stopping together on a dime.

2:18 - 2:47 J.C. Higginbotham growls and slides through his turn at soloing, for 16 bars, passing the baton to Charlie Holmes who swings out for 8 bars on the bridge, returning to J.C. for the final 8 bars.

2:48 - 3:20 The full band is chording now, with Red Allen and Charlie Holmes each stepping in for 8 bar solos, until a ritard leads into a final landing beneath Red Allen's ascending coda punctuated by Barbarin's hit of the cymbals.



Henry "Red" Allen, signed "Hello Luis Russell from your friend Henry Allen, Jr. Jan 31, 1930, N.Y. City" (Catherine Russell Collection)

In November of 1929, Jelly Roll Morton recorded four titles for Victor billed as Jelly Roll Morton and His Red Hot Peppers, which was actually Jelly plus Luis Russell's core sidemen (Red Allen, J.C. Higginbotham, Albert Nicholas, Will Johnson, Pops Foster, and Paul Barbarin). At one point in 1930, Jelly Roll Morton, looking for musicians who could properly capture his music and its New Orleans flavor, approached Luis Russell with a proposition. Jelly wanted to use Luis's band on brief tours of towns in eastern Pennsylvania, and he offered to pay Luis to stay home. While Luis Russell had a paid break, his band was on the road with Jelly Roll Morton.

During this same period, Luis Russell made an important connection; one that he shared with Fats Waller and Andy Razaf. Joe Davis was a musician and song plugger, who in launching his music publishing company, Triangle Music, opened a Tin Pan Alley office on 1658 Broadway. Joe Davis (along with Irving Mills and Ralph Peer) was a white music publisher who saw dollar signs and artistic value in the works of African American composers. Davis signed Fats Waller and Andy Razaf to a publishing deal, and retained them as staff writers, each drawing a salary to write songs for Triangle Music, a better than usual arrangement for African American songwriters during this era. Noteworthy Triangle Music published tunes recorded by Luis Russell & His Orchestra, include the Waller / Razaf composition "Blue Turning Grey Over You" (recorded in Feb 1930 with Louis Armstrong fronting and released as Louis Armstrong &



His Orchestra), and “On Revival Day” written by Andy Razaf and featuring Razaf on lead vocal, and recorded by Luis Russell and His Orchestra in May of 1930.

A.H. Lawrence wrote, “Luis Russell told me, “When I came to New York in ‘27, the first thing I learned was, you could take songs downtown and sell them to the publishers. If nobody was buying there was always Mills (Irving Mills), he was good for fifteen or twenty dollars most of the time.”<sup>98</sup>

Joe Davis published songs by Luis Russell, and one song, “Call of The Freaks” and later rerecorded as “New Call of The Freaks,” an eerie modal blues which became Russell’s theme song, included a riff which insinuated itself into the recordings of other orchestras. Fats Waller recorded four sides on Dec 18, 1929, as Fats Waller and His Buddies, an edition of his Buddies comprised mostly of Luis Russell’s sidemen, including the title “Ridin’ But Walking,” a blues tune with an opening vamp sounding like a “Call of The Freaks” knock off. A recording by Fletcher Henderson and arranged by his brother pianist Horace Henderson, from March 19, 1931, a bluesy number titled “Hot and Anxious,” opens with a riff highly reminiscent of “Call of The Freaks,” before morphing into the riff which later became the basis for the Glenn Miller’s Swing Era smash hit “In The Mood,” which was later credited to Joe Garland, who ironically replaced Luis Russell as the musical director of Louis Armstrong’s Orchestra, in 1940. “Call of The Freaks” even appears in the Betty Boop cartoon, *Any Rags*, in 1932, performed by an uncredited orchestra.

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<sup>98</sup> A.H. Lawrence, *Duke Ellington and His World, A Biography*, (New York: Rutledge, 2001), 34.

Luis Russell, with his recording “Call of The Freaks” and its follow up “New Call of The Freaks”, brought the term “freaks”, perhaps for the first time, into a cultural, musical, social, and racial context. The recordings were popular and became known as his “theme” song. When Jelly Roll Morton was interviewed by Alan Lomax for the Library of Congress in 1938, to musically demonstrate and define the origins of jazz, Morton devotes a full portion of his delivery to talking about Luis Russell and demonstrating “Call of The Freaks” on the piano to go along with his narration. Here is a transcription of Jelly Roll Morton’s interview with Alan Lomax from 1938:

A. Lomax: ....Play it like you played it.

JRM: All right....(unintelligible)....it goes like this.....  
This is one of the tunes...

(listening to the sound of the clacking percussion instrument) That sounds like a drum... (laughs)

Uh, this is one of the tunes that ... Luis Russell played...  
Luis Russell was a Panamanian. He got his learning....in New Orleans.

AL: When?

JRM: Uh, he came to New Orleans...I'm not quite sure, but....I would say....around 1916.

'Course these are all New Orleans riffs....

(speaking of the riffs he is playing) ...making 'em there....that's the way we used to make 'em there....

AL: (Unintelligible, but serving to prompt JRM to state the title to the song.)

JRM: Uh, the name of this number is “Call of the Freaks.”

Luis Russell came to New York some years ago after playing with King Oliver's band from the Plantation....in Chicago....(clearing throat)  
Ahem!.....That whiskey is lovely!.....

They invaded New York with a terrible band in spite of the fact that they had some..some of the very best musicians in the world....in the Jazz music.

Luis Russell is not considered a jazz piano player because he cannot play jazz.....

I'm playing this in the typical jazz tempo.....

But he's a very good musician...and he can 'knock the bird's eyes down!'....

He invaded New York with this thing and happened to get a job after King Oliver...

had failed with these great musicians....and had to leave town.....(he even stole a few men of mine when he left for Chicago.)

(Continuing to speak about Oliver...) He didn't know that it was better to have some..some fellows that could play together than to have a bunch of 'stars' that couldn't. So he failed and his trip to New York at the Savoy Ballroom----

Luis Stayed. Finally got a job at a place in New York called 'The Nest'....run by...Johnny Carey.

He wrote this number as a kind of theme and named it.....

AL: (unintelligible, but digging for gossip about Russell's sexual orientation...)

JRM: No. No, Luis Russell is not a sissy....

He wrote this number and called it 'Call of the Freaks' accounting there were so many freaks in the city of New York who were so bold, they would do anything for a dollar-and-a-half. (Laughter)

When he start to playin' this thing....why, they would start walkin'.....they all becomes in order, too.... and throw their hands way up high in the air and keep astride of the music.....and walkin'...

The 1932 Betty Boop cartoon, *Any Rags*, is a semi surrealistic urban fantasy which uses a rerecorded version, by uncredited musicians, of “New Call of The Freaks”, as part of its soundtrack. *Any Rags* was the first time Betty Boop appears as a human character, being the character of a dog in earlier cartoons. An illusion is made to homosexuality, when a clown is thrown a prize, and

referred to as “the man in the red tie”. The clown speaks in a “gay” voice, and the “red tie” is a reference to homosexuals. Jelly Roll points out to Alan Lomax that Luis Russell “ain’t no sissy”, just to clear up any suspicion on that score.

Having ruled out homosexuality as what Luis Russell was referencing as “freaks,” we can look for other clues in tracing the origin of the term. Jelly Roll Morton suggests that Russell “wrote this number...accounting there were so many freaks in the city of New York who were so bold they would do anything for half a dollar.” Jelly Roll conjures up an image of hustlers and pimps, without being explicit. Another possible explanation; “Freaks” as used in the song title may have been a reference to black people.

In nineteenth century America, starting around 1840 and lasting for a century, through the time of Russell’s recordings, Sunday visits to freak shows, where human oddities and abnormalities were on display for amusement and profit, were common practice among all social classes.

Sociologist Elise Lanz, reviewed the book, “What a Show It Will Be: Freak Shows and American Society,” when it was translated into French, after first appearing in 1988.

“Originally published as *Freak Show: Presenting Human Oddities for Amusement and Profit*, this book has been translated into French twenty-five years after it first appeared in 1988. Through a detailed study of the ways in which freak shows functioned, Robert Bogdan traces the development of American society from 1840 to 1940 in terms of its relationship to social norms and difference.

The “exotic register” reassured spectators of their superior position, emphasizing the gulf between viewers and the inherently inferior freak.

Thus it was the spectators' own cultural identity which shaped the way freaks were presented. This subtle relationship between the individual traits displayed in freak shows and contemporary morals could be readjusted over the course of a freak's career. At the end of the period covered by the book, as it became increasingly difficult, for ethical reason, to continue putting individuals with disabilities on display, "artificial freaks" were created. The display of foreigners, including "savages," "exotic" natives, "Circassian beauties," and tattooed men, who were transformed into freaks by nothing more than promoters' racist words, allowed the business to continue. The major exhibit on "Black Africa" at the Chicago World's Fair in 1933 and 1934 was the occasion for one of the last such exhibitions, which confirmed Americans' pro-slavery and colonialist views. The inferiority and primitiveness of black people, first demonstrated by tetralogy, was appropriated and promoted by fairground showmen."<sup>99</sup>

Luis Russell musically references "Call of The Freaks" in his later recordings, including "New Call of The Freaks," "Ghost of The Freaks," and "Primitive." The tune was so successful, he wanted to carry it forward whenever possible, and he continued to use it as his theme song throughout his career, as revealed by unissued radio broadcasts from the Savoy Ballroom in 1945.

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<sup>99</sup> Elise Lantz, « "What a Show It Will Be!" Freak Shows and American Society », *Books and Ideas*, 19 March 2015.



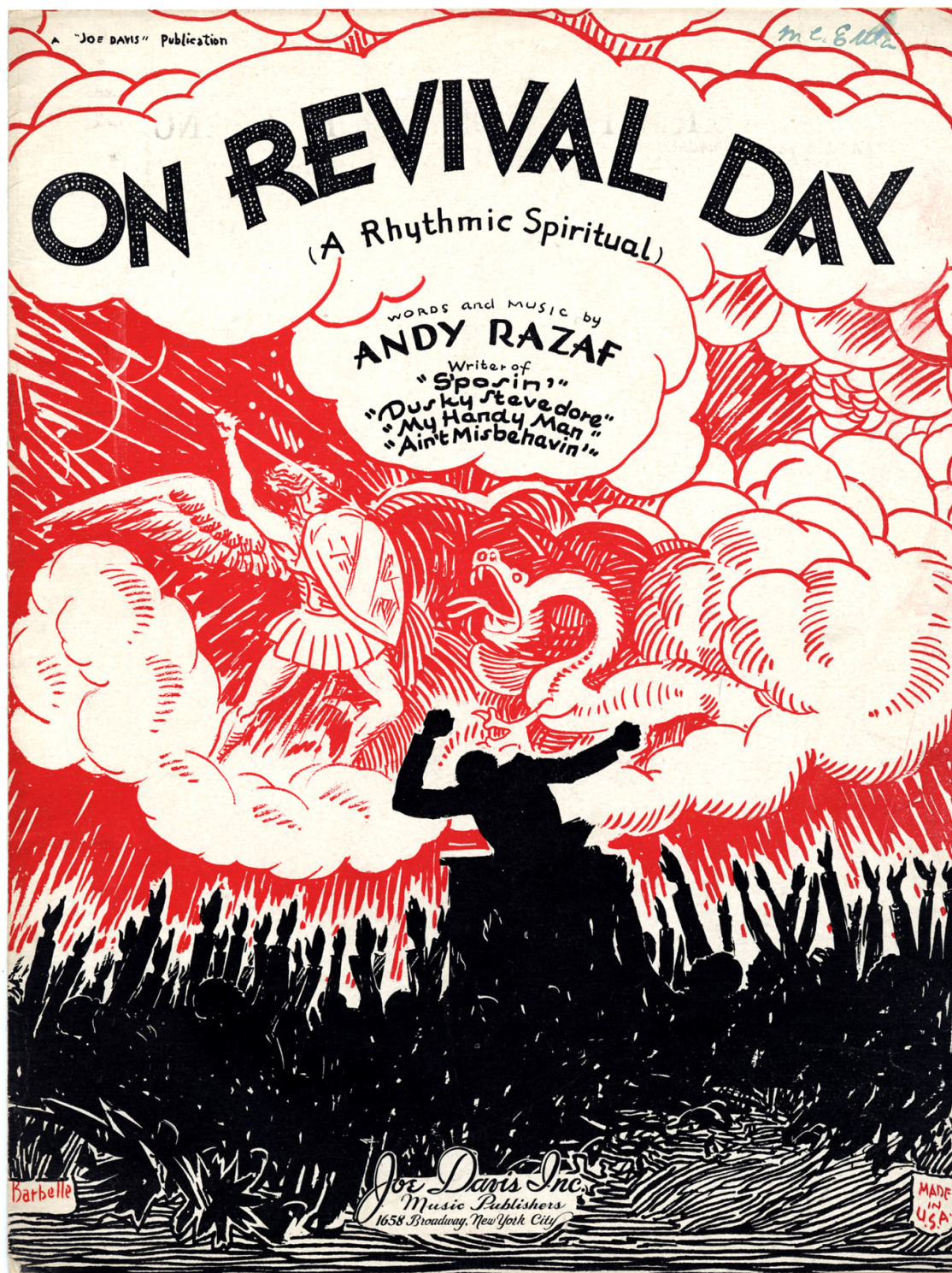
Joe Davis, signed "With sincerest wishes to my good friend Luis Russell, Joe Davis 8/12/30" (Catherine Russell Collection)

It's often said that jazz and all American popular music has African-American origins. Yet, concepts like "the black community," or "African" influences, are easily oversimplified, as if there could be a single point of view defined by race or by continent of origin. To understand how globalism and cultural diversity can quickly confound simplified assumptions, take the case of Luis Russell's collaborator, songwriter, poet, and lyricist Andy Razaf. Luis Russell and his orchestra recorded one of Razaf's compositions, "On Revival Day," on May 29, 1930, with music, lyrics, and lead vocals by Andy Razaf.

Razaf is African-American, and on one side of his family, he shares some background with descendants of slaves brought from West Africa to the Americas. His grandfather, John L. Waller, was an African-American born to enslaved parents in Missouri in 1850. Waller would rise to become a lawyer, politician, business leader, and eventually the U.S. Consul to Madagascar, an island nation off the east coast of Africa, with its own language, customs, and flora and fauna, geographically removed from the western African societies and cultures which fueled the slave trade. While in Madagascar, Waller's teenage daughter, Jennie, wed Henri Razafkieriefo, the nephew of Queen Ranaivalona III. Here the cultural affinities become complicated, as a French invasion of Madagascar left his father dead, and forced his pregnant mother to flee to the U.S., where in Washington, D.C., Andy was born in 1895. His birth name was Andriamanantena Paul Razafinkarefo, soon to be shortened to Andy Razaf, the son of Henri Razafinkarefo, nephew of the Queen of Madagascar, and Jennie (Waller) Razafinkarefo, the daughter of John L. Waller.

Andy Razaf, a descendant of a Malagasy Queen became a poet and leading lyricist in Harlem. He became a writer and contributor to *Negro World*, a newspaper founded in 1918, which was the voice of the UNIA (Universal Negro Improvement Association and African Communities League), both founded by Marcus Garvey. Of the two major organizations advocating for the rights and advancement of black folks during the 1920's, UNIA was militant, defending black sovereignty, while the NAACP was by comparison, assimilationist, working towards the goal of integration and equality.





"On Revival Day" Sheet music cover, Joe Davis Inc., courtesy Philippe Baudoin



Albert Nicholas, signed "With best wishes to Luis from Nick 7/2/30" (Catherine Russell Collection)





J.C. Higginbotham, signed "To Lou, The best boss I ever had. Sincerely J.C. Higginbotham 5/30/37" (Catherine Russell Collection)

In December of 1929 and January of 1930, Louis Armstrong was back in the recording studio in New York City, recording landmark sessions on four dates using Luis Russell's orchestra and releasing the titles as Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra on Okeh. Included in this mix were "I Ain't Got Nobody," "Dallas Blues," "St. Louis blues," "Rockin' Chair," and "Song of the islands."

"Rockin' Chair" was recorded without planning when a fan of Louis Armstrong's, a young rising songwriter from Indiana, Hoagy Carmichael, dropped by the studio with his song. Luis Russell came up with an arrangement on the spot to accompany a vocal duet between Armstrong and Carmichael on "Rockin' Chair," perhaps the first ever interracial vocal recording. A genesis of The Great American Songbook occurred when Armstrong and Russell decided to record a work by a relatively unknown, white, songwriter, Hoagy Carmichael, who hailed from the heartland, born in Bloomington, Indiana. Carmichael was part of a Midwest gang of early white jazz players who idolized Armstrong. Hoagy would later write tunes especially for Armstrong, including "Ev'ntide," and "Jubilee," which would be featured and recorded for Decca, in 1936 & 1937 respectively, by Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, with Luis Russell on piano. Carmichael's stature continued to grow, as he became one of the most revered and iconic songwriters of all time, whose standards like "Star Dust," and "Lazy River," were recorded by Louis Armstrong and countless others.

On February 1, 1930, Louis Armstrong recorded with Luis Russell's orchestra for what would be their final session together, before reuniting in October of 1935. Two songs were cut, "Bessie Couldn't Help It," and "Blue Turning Grey Over You." Both performances reveal a Louis Armstrong at the peak of his powers, playfully teasing his way through Luis Russell's mid-tempo dance grooves, emblematic of an early imagining of swing and of the interplay between Louis and Luis, which would become enhanced in the Swing era from 1935 onward. Both recordings exhibit a "Muggin' Light," feel. The origins of each title; the writers of one are white and of the other are black, and the manner they are interpreted, show artists and songs entering the realm of the mainstream.

"Bessie Couldn't Help It" was written by Charles Bayha, Jacques L. Richmond, and Byron H. Warner, and would later be recorded by Hoagy Carmichael and His Orchestra, on September 15, 1930. The tune was originally recorded on August 24, 1924 in Atlanta for Okeh, by a band under the name, Warner's Seven Aces, which included the composers. Jack Dalton, aka Jack Kaufman, and His Seven Blue Babies recorded the tune, complete with verse, in NYC in August 1929 for Edison. With roaring 20's clichés, it's a novelty tune about having sex with a willing flapper named Bessie, in an automobile, a "Buick" no less. The song has it all; brand placement, foreplay, and an implied going all the way.

On "Bessie Couldn't Help It," Russell's piano backgrounds behind Armstrong's vocalizations, create a supportive counterpoint, inventive without distracting from Satchmo's fun loving vocal improvisation. Section writing for the

reeds, another Russell Orchestra feature, hum along in a harmonized fashion, arranged but not over arranged. To add to the comedic value of the performance, when Armstrong describes the wonders of Bessie's affections, he scats about it, and when he gets to the moment of scoring with Bessie, he slurs an unintelligible phrase, to describe Bessie's delight. Russell's arranging chops are on full display, and Higginbotham contributes a stand out trombone solo.



"Bessie Couldn't Help It," sheet music cover, courtesy Philippe Baudoin.

“Blue Turning Grey Over You,” a Fats Waller-Andy Razaf composition, might have been pitched to Luis Russell by Joe Davis, who at the time was handling music publishing for all three songwriters, Russell, Waller, and Razaf. Interestingly, the tune, which wouldn’t be recorded by Waller himself until the mid 1930’s, first as a piano solo in 1935, and then in 1937 with vocal in his small swing band “Fats” Waller and His Rhythm,” would become one of his tunes often covered by other artists (Billie Holiday, Charlie Barnet, Harry James, Earl Hines, and others). The alluring chord changes and harmonic structure and haunting melody give ample fodder for instrumental interpretation, while the weighty Razaf lyrics appeal to vocalists in search of a good story, telling of love gone awry...not only did you leave me feeling blue, but you also turned my hair grey. At the point when Armstrong and Russell waxed the tune in 1930, it was successfully being pitched as a pop tune to white artists. As was the convention of the day, despite the tune being written by black songwriters, Joe Davis’s Triangle Music sheet music for “Blue Turning Grey Over You,” pictures a white artist on the cover.





"Blue Turning Grey Over You," sheet music cover courtesy Philippe Baudoin

A few weeks before Armstrong and Russell recorded the tune for Okeh, a major label female singer, Lee Morse, recorded the tune for Columbia, with a small group including young, relatively unknown, session players, Benny Goodman, Tommy Dorsey, Manny Klein, and Eddie Lang, and billed as Lee Morse and Her Blue Grass Boys. With no relation to Kentucky or Bill Monroe or Bluegrass music, Lee Morse was a commercially successful singer in the 1920s, along with Cliff Edwards (Ukulele Ike), who had a hit with “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love.” Lee Morse and Cliff Edwards rose through the recording ranks as top sellers for the Brooklyn, NY based independent label Pathé, before moving on to sign with major labels.

*The Talking Machine World* ran a feature story on Lee Morse in their January 15, 1925 issue:

**Headline: Miss Lee Morse Pathé Records Widely Popular, Young Artist’s Recordings Are Among the Best Sellers in the Pathé List**

The Pathé Phonograph & Radio Corp., Brooklyn, N.Y., has found in Miss Lee Morse one of the most popular recording artists in the history of the organization. Miss Morse is a singer of blues, mammy songs, ballads, old plantation songs and old minstrel numbers. Lee Morse started singing in public when very young. She earned the reputation of “the little girl with the big voice” and often introduced in her recordings a yodeling effect.

Lee Morse has an inborn sense of syncopation and puts her whole heart and soul into her singing. It is said she can run the whole gamut of emotions from the meanest blues to the most touching heart song.<sup>100</sup>

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<sup>100</sup> “Miss Lee Morse Pathé Records Widely Popular,” *The Talking Machine World*, 15 January 1925. p.106.

After a string of top selling records for Pathé, Lee Morse moved to Columbia Records in 1929, where she was often accompanied by the cream of young white jazz musicians cum session players, including The Dorsey Brothers, Frank Signorelli on piano, Eddie Lang or Karl Kress on guitar, Adrian Rollini on bass sax, Benny Goodman, and other soon to be luminaries.

The yodeling effect might have been borrowed from early country singers like Jimmie Rodgers and Gene Autry, who employed a blue yodel to great commercial affect. And not long after recording “Blue Turning Grey Over You,” Louis Armstrong found himself in Los Angeles, himself now a sideman blowing trumpet accompanying, along with Lil Armstrong on piano, Jimmie Rodgers recording of “Blue Yodel #9.”

Lee Morse’s reading of “Blue Turning Grey Over You,” is straightforward and heartfelt. Still, there is nothing that either Morse or her stellar sidemen convey with the Waller – Razaf tune, that prepares us for the depth of expression in the Armstrong – Russell version. Russell kicks off the tune with an 8-bar intro, using harmonized reeds to construct a stop time treacly statement appropriate as a lead in to a sentimental love song. Trying to describe what happens next reveals the limitations of writing about music. Words on a page can only begin to approximate the experience, so I implore the reader to seek out this recording and listen. Against Pops Foster’s bowed bass fiddle, Barbarin’s belly rubbin’ shuffle, and Russell’s chording, all an invitation to grab a partner and step onto the dance floor, Armstrong’s trumpet launches into a fanciful re harmonization of the full melody, lasting for 32 bars, reaching, cajoling, imploring, and finally

passing the baton to Russell for a brief piano interlude, before Louis take his turn at vocally deconstructing the lyric. Armstrong steps up as a singer, vocal improviser, and creator of a universally recognized and understood language, which I'll call "Armstrongese," where he takes the opportunity, at the end of a lyrical phrase, to go crazy making stuff up. For instance, when describing the loving wiles of the gal he misses, "and the wonderful things that you do," those things morph into "doo-doo-doo-doo-baba-doba-dida-whadeeee." Armstrong and Russell were now competing with white popular music, and nothing would be left off the table.

To further explore Luis Russell's role in expanding the "jazz" repertoire, consider one of the greatest jazz and popular music standards of all time, "I Got Rhythm," written by George Gershwin, music, and Ira Gershwin, lyrics, for the Broadway musical *Girl Crazy*, which opened at the Alvin Theater in New York City on October 14, 1930. To identify new material from the musical theater which might be suitable for a jazz orchestra to perform and record, and to ascertain a tune's commercial appeal and potential dance-ability, these curatorial judgments, might take some time to sort out. Yet, in the highly competitive New York scene, there was no time to waste. As Luis Russell learned from first becoming a bandleader at The Nest, replacing drummer and leader George Howe who fell asleep on the job, you snooze you lose.

Ten days after *Girl Crazy* opened, on October 24th, 1930, Luis Russell and His Orchestra stepped into the recording studio, and recorded "I Got Rhythm," becoming the first black orchestra to ever record the tune. And still,

Russell was beaten out by white orchestras by several days in getting there first; Fred Rich and His Orchestra recorded the tune on October 20th, and Red Nichols and The Captivators (the pit band for *Girl Crazy*), did the same on October 23rd, using Dick Robertson on vocals. Luis Russell's version, cut the next day, also featured Dick Robertson's lead singing. The flood gates were now open. Everyone started recording "I Got Rhythm," and it became a veritable jazz standard. The tunes' chord progression became known as the "rhythm changes," forming the basis for countless jazz compositions to follow, and a well-worn bed for improvisation. A little over a year later, on November 6, 1931, Louis Armstrong recorded "I Got Rhythm" for the first time, backed by his Chicago based orchestra led by trumpeter, arranger Zilner Randolph. And after reuniting with Luis Russell's orchestra, the tune appeared in the Armstrong-Russell orchestra repertoire, and was performed on national radio, on a Fleischmann Yeast broadcast from Chicago on May 21, 1937, this version later issued on the Jazz Heritage Society collection. If anyone doubts the quality of the Armstrong-Russell Orchestra, or their ability to deliver hard charging, riff based, big band arrangements, and if I had only one tune to direct listeners to experience this band in all its' glory, it would be the "live" radio version of "I've Got Rhythm," from 1937, which may have been arranged by Chappie Willet.

Returning to Chicago after his New York City recording sessions, Louis Armstrong sent Luis Russell a handwritten letter, dated Feb 17, 1930:

“Chicago, IL Feb 17<sup>th</sup> 1930 Hello Russell old boy. Whatcha say pops? I’ve been trying to write ever since I’ve been here but I just couldn’t that’s all. They had me so busy here going to parties etc. how’s all the boys? I sure miss you all. Of course I break it up everywhere I play but still I miss my old back ground. These cats here in this town Can’t swing. Lill – Mr Flashnick and I talk about you all all the time. It’s a wonder your ears don’t burn you. Hows doings down at the Club? Are you still keeping in touch with Mr. Rockwell. Of course I’ll see you next Wednesday. The people here are crazy about me. Gee they are about to banquet me to death. Ha ha. Tell my boys how I miss them And will be Oh so glad to be back to them. I’m playing St. Louis Sat & Sun so I guess I’ll be there by next Wednesday sure. Will tell you All About my trip when I get there. My regards to all From your boy Louis Armstrong pss I’m just about ready to go on – will see you Wednesday.”<sup>101</sup>

The letter is rife with interesting commentary on music *and* the music business. We get the distinct sense that Louis Armstrong is tearing it up in Chicago and being feted (“they are about to banquet me to death,”) but he misses the Luis Russell orchestra musicians (“the boys”) many of whom were from New Orleans (“my old background”), adding “the cats here in this town [Chicago] can’t swing.” This is a high compliment for Russell & Company, as Armstrong was working with top musicians in Chicago. The letter reveals Louis Armstrong’s savvy about business goings on, and that he saw Luis Russell as a confidant in this area, willing to be taken in along with his other trusted business advisor, Armstrong’s wife Lill Hardin Armstrong (“Lil, Mr. Flashnick and I talk about you all the time...are you still keeping in touch with Mr. Rockwell.”) Mr. Rockwell [Tommy Rockwell] was both Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell’s contact at OKeh Records, who was involved in Armstrong’s recent recording

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<sup>101</sup> Louis Armstrong, Chicago, to Luis Russell, New York, NY, 17 February 1930. Transcript in the hand of Louis Armstrong, Catherine Russell Collection.

sessions with the Luis Russell orchestra. Rockwell exploited the exposure that OKeh recordings afforded his artists by also running a booking and artist management company, Rockwell-O'Keefe Artists, and Luis Russell was both on his label and in his booking stable. Who was Mr. Flashnick [correct spelling Fliashnick] referenced by Armstrong in his letter? Sam Fliashnick was undoubtedly working with Tommy Rockwell, who was Louis Armstrong's manager at this time. Tommy Rockwell was also Luis Russell's quasi manager. Fliashnick's name surfaces later as Luis Russell's manager.

To fully appreciate the achievements of Luis Russell over the two-year span from 1929 through the end of 1930, it's helpful to look at his astonishing recorded output, and to listen to all the recordings - a whopping 74 titles were issued – as if they were one band. Not counting alternate takes, many of which were later issued, 23 titles came out under Luis Russell's name, six titles under King Oliver, nine under Louis Armstrong, 16 under Henry "Red" Allen, 12 under Victoria Spivey or her sister Sweet Peas Spivey, six under Wilton Crawley, two under J.C. Higginbotham. Indeed, all these titles were by one band under the direction of Luis Russell, regardless of the billing, and they bear his artistic imprint.

Agreements between the Victor Talking Machine Company and Henry Allen, Jr. and Wilton Crawley provide some interesting financial perspective. Signed on July 8, 1929, Victor contracted trumpet player Henry Red Allen for a one year period, with an option to extend for an additional year, to record eight instrumental masters at a rate of \$25.00 per master. On June 6, 1930, Allen and



Victor agreed to have RCA Victor exercise the option. The Victor Talking Machine Company was now called RCA Victor (Radio Corporation of America). On July 30<sup>th</sup>, 1929, Victor contracted clarinet player and contortionist Wilton Crawley to record 6 instrumental masters at the rate of \$112.50 per master.<sup>102</sup> Both artists used the Luis Russell orchestra, then signed to Okeh records, as accompaniment. Perhaps as a reflection of popularity, Victor paid a novelty artist four and a half times what they paid a trumpet player who they hoped would be the next Louis Armstrong.

Luis Russell may have been the greatest enabler in the history of jazz, who in the process of enabling musicians in his band to excel and play at their peak, also lent his band to Louis Armstrong and Henry Red Allen, two great trumpet players, at tipping points in their careers. Henry Red Allen was literally launched as a recording artist using Luis Russell's Band. Record collectors, jazz historians, and musicians around the world, to this day marvel at the Red Allen "Victors" and the Luis Russell "Okehs" of this period. And Louis Armstrong, having conquered the "race records" market, took a huge step towards universal stardom and crossover acclaim, at the helm of Luis Russell's band. Keep in mind that all of this recording transpired during a period when the Luis Russell orchestra didn't have a day off, meaning they were gigging, sometimes until dawn, and then making 9am morning recording sessions, and then heading back to the bandstand. If at times they sounded a bit sluggish, those moments were rare. The recordings sound predominantly like a band in the pink from steadily

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<sup>102</sup> Copies of the original Victor recording agreements provided by Vince Giordano.



playing, a band that could quickly adapt, whip up parts, and perform like a living, breathing organism. Russell's arrangements gave his men the opportunity to swoop, stomp, and frolic together, in bursts of musical gymnastics. They were a marvel. While experiencing the elation of seemingly a new conquest every day, on October 29, 1929, the Stock Market crashed.

Over the next five years, Luis Russell kept his orchestra working and he continued to draw audiences and receive positive notices, while the band business was undergoing major adjustments. By the end of 1930, record sales were slumping, and recording opportunities dwindled. By this time, a huge shift in the music listening habits of Americans, away from recordings and towards radio broadcasts, a shift which had started in the mid 1920s, continued to intensify:

The Great Depression began in 1929. The recording companies were devastated (although record sales had been falling since 1925, mainly owing to competition from radio). Only two major companies, of the many existing before the Crash, survived by 1932. In 1921, some 100 million records were sold in the United States; by 1932, the figure was 6 million. Radio broadcasting, on the other hand, had grown increasingly important after the improved technology of the early 1920s, and then *flourished* during the Depression. From 1926 through 1930, the number of radio-equipped homes increased from a little more than 5 million to approximately 12 million. By 1935, even after several years of Depression, the number of radios had increased to 22 million, or approximately two-thirds of all homes in the nation.<sup>103</sup>

Luis Russell understood the demands of both the recording studio and of radio; and they weren't the same. At the start of 1929, his orchestra became the

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<sup>103</sup> Paula Lockheart, "A History of Early Microphone Singing, 1925-1939: American Mainstream Popular Singing at the Advent of Electronic Microphone Amplification," *Popular Music and Society* (Vol. 26, No. 3, 2003): 374.

house band at the new Saratoga Club at 575 Lenox Avenue. A crucial feature at some nightspots, including Saratoga Club, were live remote radio broadcasts direct from the stage, which had a wire transmitting the show. The exposure from live broadcasts helped Luis Russell and other bands gain followers and notoriety, which led to touring and higher fees. Though Russell was successful in cultivating radio hook ups throughout his career, he blew an opportunity at the Saratoga Club. He recounted, "We lost the job because Metcalf and I were out romancing a couple of girls during air time."<sup>104</sup> Fortunately, the band was in such demand that they quickly landed at the Savoy Ballroom, followed by Roseland Ballroom that summer.

By the end of the summer, Casper Holstein, a numbers runner who owned the Saratoga Club, wanted Luis Russell back, and Saratoga Club became the bands home base for the next two years. Running the club was a hobby for Casper Holstein, who at one point tried to "gift" the club to the musicians, who quickly turned it back over to him, having no interest in running a nightclub. Charlie Holmes described this period with Russell to BBC interviewer, Steve Allen:

CH: Well, like I say, he started in The Nest club, which was a little cabaret. Then he went to the Savoy Ballroom. From the Savoy Ballroom, he went to The Roseland, downtown. And we come back from The Roseland, and a fellow opened up a nightclub, he was what you call a "number banker." And he opened up a nightclub, and he liked Russell's band, so he wanted Russell's band in his place. That was the Saratoga Club. The fellow who run it, he didn't no more care about the nightclub than the man in the moon, it was a hobby with him. He would always pay off with brand new money, and if nobody was in the place, he didn't care. He'd come in at

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<sup>104</sup> George Hoefer, *ibid.* p.44.

night, and there'd be nobody in there, and he'd call us around, and he'd sit down, and he'd tell stories, you know, he'd just want us to listen to his stories. Well, the only time the club really had a crowd in it, was on Sunday afternoon, a Sunday matinee, when it was rented out to another club, and they had their own crowd. Well that was really the only time the Saratoga Club had a crowd in it, unless it was on a Saturday night.

SA: What did this guy do? Where did he get his money from?

CH: He was a number banker. He was a millionaire. You know, he was a gambler, he was banking the numbers.

SA: This was like the lottery that used to go on?

CH: Well, some people call it the lottery, it's numbers, you know. Still illegal, but that's where he made his money. He didn't care nothing about the club. He kept it, he kept it for years. And he decided to give it up. He gave it to the band. "It's your club." Now what are we gonna do with a club? I think we kept it open for about a week or so, or two weeks. He had a million dollars and couldn't run it. We didn't have ANYTHING. We was all a bunch of kids, we weren't thinking about business or anything like that.<sup>105</sup>

Casper Holstein was born in St. Croix, Danish West Indies (now the U.S. Virgin Islands) in 1876 of African and Danish descent. A mobster who owned respectable businesses and gave generously to charitable causes during the Harlem Renaissance, Holstein was emblematic of Afro-Caribbean accomplishment and political activism, using his "numbers racket" fortune to support artists, poets, black colleges, and musicians. In a sense, Luis Russell won the lottery twice, once as a youth in Panama, and for a second time in Harlem in having the financial backing of a fellow Caribbean businessman,

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<sup>105</sup> Charlie Holmes, interview by Steve Allen, BBC radio, 1973, recording courtesy of Ricky Riccardi, Louis Armstrong Archive, Queens College, NY, NY.

Casper Holstein, who used his enormous wealth from “numbers lotteries” to give the band a secure home.

With Saratoga Club as his base, Russell had the flexibility to play other venues in New York City, and over the next few years Luis Russell orchestra played all the top New York venues, including Connie’s Inn, Alhambra Ballroom, Arcadia Ballroom, Rockland Palace, Renaissance Casino, Lafayette Theatre, and the Apollo. They also toured a New England circuit, a Loew’s Theatre circuit, and hit regional venues like Pittsburgh’s Pearl Theatre, The Howard Theatre in Washington, D.C., & The Strand or Earle Theater in Philadelphia, often billed as Luis Russell and His Saratoga Club Band or His Saratoga Club Orchestra and Review.

For two weeks in March 1931, Luis Russell and his Saratoga Club orchestra spent two weeks in Philadelphia playing at The Standard Theatre, which showcased talented black performers and jazz musicians culled by owner, John T. Gibson, a black man who envisioned affordable entertainment for his own race. Luis Russell had played the Standard in December 1929 backing Louis Armstrong.<sup>106</sup> In 1931 he returned with his own orchestra, sharing the evening with a different “talking picture” each week, and held over for the second week “By Popular Demand” with an all new stage show. While in Philly, Russell

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<sup>106</sup> Wikipedia entry, *Standard Theatre (Philadelphia)*, quoting James Lincoln Collier, *Louis Armstrong: An American Genius* (Oxford: University of Oxford Press, 1993), 241.

played a dance at the Strand Ballroom on March 12<sup>th</sup>. The Philadelphia Tribune wrote:

**Headline: Strand Lures Luis Russell, Public Demand Brings Back Famed Saratoga Club Band Mar. 12**

The Public demands that Luis Russell and his great Saratoga Club Orchestra appear at the Strand Ballroom, Philadelphia's Palatial Dance Paradise. Next Thursday night, March 12, this famous orchestra will present another dance treat. Oh Boy, What music and how!<sup>107</sup>

Russell's two week run out from New York City to Philadelphia was quite successful, playing two venues. Soon after he appeared at the Standard, Gibson sold the theatre due to losses from the Great Depression.

In January 1932, Luis Russell snagged a feature story in a leading black newspaper, *Pittsburgh Courier*, written by Floyd G. Nelson in his "The Harlem Limited Broadway Bound" column, an appreciation, under the headline, **Luis Russell:**

Dance fans at the Acadia Ballroom, 53<sup>rd</sup> and Broadway, New York, think that Luis Russell and his orchestra is the last word in music, especially when he fascinates them with gliding over the beautiful smooth floor of the Arcadia. If you haven't had the pleasure of hearing this band, I advise that you get a Victor record and hear his interpretation of "You Rascal You," and "Say The Word" from "Third Little Show," or and Okeh "Panama" and the "New Call of The Freaks," or a Brunswick and hear "Ease on Down" and the "Saratoga Drag."

This orchestra is directed by Henry Allen, Jr., a "hot" trumpet player that knows just what it's all about, who is the coming Louis Armstrong of the profession. The others include William Dillard and Wm. J. Coleman, trumpet; James Archey trombone; Albert Nicholas, Henry Jones and Greely Walton, saxophone and clarinet; Wm. K. Johnson, banjo; George Foster, tuba and bass violin; Joseph Smith, drums.

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<sup>107</sup> "Strand Lures Russell," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 5 March 1931.

They are now on tour of the Loew's vaudeville circuit. Played last week at Loew's State on Broadway. Recently scored a great success on tour of New England states, playing the Hotel Statler in Boston; Nutting-on-the-Charles at Waltham, Mass; Cocoanut Grove at Manchester, N.H. and other select engagements.

[After giving Luis's NYC credits and history in Panama, New Orleans, and Chicago, the article continues]

It's a sizzler all the way with Russell and ten boys in a hot musical aggregation and specialties from three boys –hoofers deluxe and a corking "shouter" the plump Mae Alix, at Loew's State this week. This act also ran first position in the weekly theatrical and vaudeville handicap.

The boys in the band have formed a quartet consisting of Messrs. Dillard, Johnson, Coleman, and Allen, and they put over very credible vocal numbers, which are an outstanding feature of their entertainment.

Luis Russell and his orchestra gained considerable recognition last year when they conducted a city-wide "Lindy Hop" contest at the Roseland ballroom. Fifteen teams of expert dancers competed for the prize, as city champions...His snappy music had much to do with the success of the contest.

Mr. Russell is a quiet, affable young man who wears a smiling face of sunshine and has a pleasing personality. He is well liked by members of the profession and the dance fans are always glad to request their favorite numbers, as he finds it a pleasure to abide by their requests without hesitation.

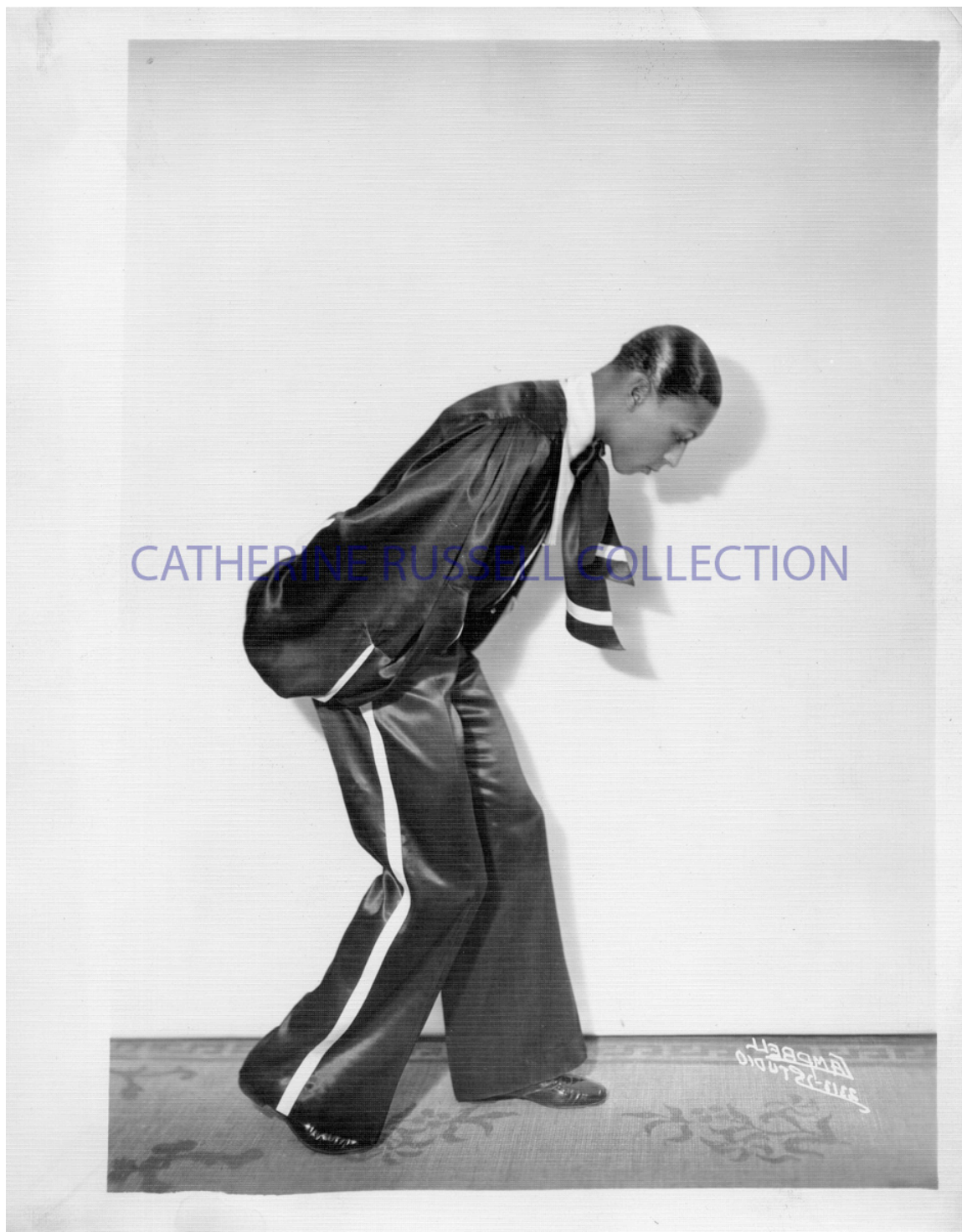
He is married and has a wife and two lovely children, and they reside at 233 West 135<sup>th</sup> street, New York City.<sup>108</sup>

The *Pittsburgh Courier* feature offers a glimpse into the versatility and direction of Luis Russell at the outset of 1932. "Dance fans" are referenced in the opening and again in the last paragraphs, indicating that a prime function for the orchestra was playing for and pleasing dancers. Along with the "hot musical aggregation" are "specialties;" additional elements for audiences in vaudeville

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<sup>108</sup> Floyd G. Nelson, "Luis Russell," *Pittsburgh Courier*, January 1932.

theaters as well as dance halls. Four members of the orchestra step out for vocal quartet numbers, the requisite plump female “shouter,” and three dancers, “hoofers deluxe,” are all part of the show. Audiences expected more than dance music alone, and comedians, featured singers, tap dancers, and novelties of all types were a part of the entourage which Luis Russell featured on tour. His collection of photographs is filled with dancers, many unidentified, who appeared as a part of his shows or on shared bills.



unidentified dancer (Catherine Russell Collection)



Luis Russell's calendar filled in nicely for the balance of 1932, with a week at Loew State Theatre in New York City starting on January second, followed by a Loew's tour, New York City shows at the Alhambra and Arcadia Ballrooms, and week-long run outs to Pittsburgh's Pearl Theatre and Washington D.C.'s Howard Theater in March. On Friday April 22<sup>nd</sup>, Luis Russell and Don Redman bands played a morning Farewell Party for The Mills Brothers, given by Tommy Rockwell, at Connie's Inn, an event involving key Rockwell-O'Keefe clients.

Luis Russell began a career long relationship with Frank Schiffman, who opened The Lafayette Theater in Harlem in 1932, and who would open The Apollo Theater in 1934. Schiffman kept ledgers of what he paid each artist, which provides a window into the relative drawing power and hence business value to a key promoter, as reflected in weekly fees in a legendary venue where everyone of note appeared. From March 26 – April 1, 1932 Luis Russell Orchestra shared a bill with the 4 Mills Brothers at Lafayette Theatre. When Luis Russell's band (with Billy Banks and Mae Alick) returned to the Lafayette Theater for a week, from July 16-22, 1932, their fee was \$600. When the Apollo Theater opened in

1934, Luis Russell played for a week and was paid \$1250. He became a regular at the Apollo throughout his career, and with a dozen or more weekly bookings, his fees rose to \$1400 through 1938, and peaked at \$3500 in 1947 & 1948.<sup>109</sup>

Typical bookings for Luis Russell in 1932 included playing a Breakfast Dance for employees of the Savoy Ballroom, featuring four bands, Fletcher Henderson, Luis Russell, Chick Webb, and Teddy Hill, on June 25. Being in the same booking stable as Don Redman, it's not surprising that Luis Russell replaced Don Redman at Connie's Inn when Redman went on tour during the summer, and when James P. Johnson opened his new show "Harlem Hotcha" at Connie's Inn on September 25<sup>th</sup>, he used Luis Russell's band. In January of 1933, the show crossed the river to New Jersey and the headline read **Connie's Revue at Loew's Jersey City** describing how Luis Russell and his orchestra and a cast of 50 (including "Snakehips" Tucker, Bessie Dudley, Roscoe Sims, Four Fools, Louis Cook and a chorus of fast steppers) performed "special music and lyrics written by Andy Razaf and James Johnson."<sup>110</sup>

Continuing to build up his own revue, Luis Russell carried vocalists, who have a feature as part of each show. The addition of vocalist and showman Tiny Bradshaw in mid-1933 made a big hit with audiences and critics. One writer likened Bradshaw to Cab Calloway, but with a style all his own. On September

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<sup>109</sup> Frank Schiffman Apollo Theatre Collection, 1935-1973, Smithsonian Institution Jazz Collections, Washington, D.C.

<sup>110</sup> "Connie's Revue at Loew's Jersey City," *New York Amsterdam News*, 18 January 1933.

23, 1933, a notice in *New York Age* read, “The Luis Russell Orchestra, now at Roseland in Manhattan, has blossomed into an excellent aggregation and with Tiny Bradshaw, the yodeler, are upholding the reputation of the bands that have made Roseland famous as a dance hall.”<sup>111</sup> Tiny Bradshaw would continue with Luis Russell until July of 1934, when Bradshaw departed to lead his own orchestra, and was soon signed to Decca Records, releasing 8 sides in September and October of 1934. Luis Russell’s association with Tiny Bradshaw was prescient, as Bradshaw as a leader and vocalist exhibited a musical leaning towards rhythm and blues, also demonstrating early on how Cab Calloway like scatting would become a precursor to the smaller group jump blues. Tiny Bradshaw’s recordings of the late 1940’s and early 1950’s became pioneering examples of how black rhythm and blues melded into rock n’ roll. Once again, Luis Russell, in his musical associations, was ahead of the curve. Russell replaced Tiny Bradshaw with vocalist Sonny Woods, who would continue as featured male vocalist with Russell and be held over with Louis Armstrong, into the 1940’s.

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<sup>111</sup> Peter Carr, *Jimmy Archey, The Little Giant of the Trombone*, (New Orleans: Jazzology Press, 1999), 48., quoting *New York Age*, 23 September 1933.



Unidentified Dance or Novelty Trio (Catherine Russell Collection)

Radio played an important role in Luis Russell's career, and during the 1930s he cultivated Radio as a growing avenue of exposure and promotion as record sales were shrinking. In December of 1933, a fortuitous opening came along when the popular Claude Hopkins Orchestra, featured on the weekly CBS radio show, "Harlem Serenade," went out on the road. Luis Russell Orchestra was called upon to sub for Claude Hopkins on the Thursday night broadcasts, making an immediate and highly favorable impact.

Luis Russell received a letter dated December 8, 1933 from Ralph J. Wonders, a manager at Columbia Artists Bureau, the booking division of Columbia Broadcasting System. The letter is addressed to Luis Russell, Roseland Ballroom, 51<sup>st</sup> St. & Bway, New York City.

Dear Mr. Russell: I listened to your orchestra on the Harlem Serenade program last night and thought you did an excellent job. You might also tell Tiny Bradshaw that his number Dark Town Strutter's Ball was a sensation.

Thanking you for your cooperation, and assuring you that your orchestra was one of the best we have had on a program of that type. Sincerely,  
Ralph J. Wonders, manager COLUMBIA ARTISTS BUREAU, INC.<sup>112</sup>

Not one to squander an opportunity, Luis Russell jumped at the chance he'd been given. By the end of the month, on New Years' Eve, Sunday Evening

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<sup>112</sup> Ralph J. Wonders, to Luis Russell, New York, NY, December 1933, Catherine Russell Collection.

December 31, 1933, a Battle of Music was held at Star Casino in New York City, with 4 bands competing, including Claude Hopkins and Luis Russell, who was now billed as “Luis Russell and his CBS Orchestra with Tiny Bradshaw.”<sup>113</sup> By the start of January of 1934, Russell was billed as “Radio’s Newest Sensation” on his booking at Harlem Opera House along with 16 Blackbird Beauties direct from Broadway, “held over by popular demand.”<sup>114</sup>

By the end of January, a feature on Luis Russell appeared in the *Chicago Defender* national edition under the headline: ***Ex-Thirty-Dollar-Musician Now Employs Thirty People***, which chronicles Russell’s rise from making \$30 a month in Panama to playing long runs at the Savoy and Roseland Ballrooms, along with “every big house in vaudeville for RKO and Loew’s, and now has a band of 13 pieces second to none in the metropolitan district. The rhythmic unity has risen to fame chiefly on Russell’s compositions and his great finger dexterity at the piano, now famous as a dance outfit besides being known as monarchs of the air...”<sup>115</sup>

Following a record-breaking engagement in March at the Cotton Club in Philadelphia, which was broadcast nightly over the Dixie Network of the Columbia Broadcasting System, Luis Russell and his orchestra with Tiny Bradshaw headlined an “Easter Parade” show at the new Apollo Theatre back in

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<sup>113</sup> *New York Amsterdam News*, 27 December 1933, p. 5.

<sup>114</sup> *ibid.*, 10 January 1934, p.7.

<sup>115</sup> “Ex-Thirty-Dollar-Musician Now Employs Thirty People,” *Chicago Defender*, 27 January 1934, p.5.

New York City.<sup>116</sup> The show was held over for a second week at the Apollo, and promoter Clarence Robinson gave the audience a whole new theme, “April in Paris.”

Frank Schiffman’s Apollo Theater pay ledgers for 1934-35 provide some sense of the relative popularity, at least in one Harlem venue, of competing black orchestras and entertainers.<sup>117</sup> The Apollo format was always a week-long engagement with 9 or 10 paid attractions sharing the bill, usually with one headliner, and MC, comedians, dancers, and novelty acts. An orchestra or musical attraction was most often the headliner and the highest paid. One stretch in ’34 into ’35 reveals weekly pay by orchestra:

1934 Week of

March 30<sup>th</sup> Luis Russell & Orch with Tiny Bradshaw 1250.00 net

April 6<sup>th</sup> Luis Russell & Orch with Tiny Bradshaw 1250.00

For the next 3 weeks the headliner is Turners Arcadiens 750.00 net and week of April 27<sup>th</sup> Ada Brown receives 400

May 11<sup>th</sup> Claude Hopkins Orch. 1900.00 net

May 18<sup>th</sup> Don Redman & Orch. 1375.00 net

May 25<sup>th</sup> Luis Russell Orch 1250.00 net

June 1<sup>st</sup> Fletcher Henderson Orch. 1150.00 net

June 8<sup>th</sup> Eubie Blake Orch. 812.50 net

June 15<sup>th</sup> Teddy Hill Orch. 750.00 net

June 22<sup>nd</sup> Chick Webb Orch 750.00 net

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<sup>116</sup> *New York Amsterdam News*, 31 March 1934, p.6.

<sup>117</sup> Frank Schiffman Apollo Theatre Collection, 1935-1973, Smithsonian Institution Jazz Collections, Washington, D.C.

July 6<sup>th</sup> Willie Bryant Orch 775.00 net

Nov 16<sup>th</sup> Benny Carter & Orch 800.00 net

Nov 20 Luis Russell Orch 1200.00 net, Snakehips Tucker 175.00

Dec 7<sup>th</sup> Duke Ellington & Orch. 4000.00 net

Dec 21<sup>st</sup> McKinneys Cotton Pickers 1250.00

Dec 29<sup>th</sup> Luis Russell & Co. 1200.00 net

In 1935, the pattern continued with the following weekly headliner fees:

Jimmy Lunceford (1750.00)

Lucky Millinder (2250.00)

Vernon Andrade (850.00)

Mills Bros. (3000.00)

Thomas "Fats" Waller (1600.00)

Luis Russell's fees as a reflection of his popularity and drawing power place him in the middle of the overall pay scheme, with most receiving between 750.00 and 1900.00, and only The Mills Brothers, and Irving Mills' clients Duke Ellington and Lucky Millinder greatly exceeding the norm in pay.

Favorable notices continued regarding Luis Russell's new line up, which in addition to vocalist Tiny Bradshaw, now included star trumpeter Rex Stewart, who Russell brought in to replace Red Allen.

Luis Russell with Tiny Bradshaw packed Westchester County Center. Everyone was anxious to meet Tiny Bradshaw. They came from every direction. He really did clown enough to make them like his singing. Professor Russell says that he has that famous second Louis Armstrong, none other than Rex Stewart, cornet player.<sup>118</sup>

Another notice about one month later:

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<sup>118</sup> Peter Carr, *ibid.*, p. 49, quoting *New York Age*, May 5, 1934.



Down at Roseland Ballroom on Wednesday evening to visit Luis Russell and his famous band, directed by famous personality Tiny Bradshaw. My opinion is that he has the outstanding band of the negro race. His style of playing is original. – Marcus Wright<sup>119</sup>

A trend towards national touring had begun around 1930, representing a shift away from bands staying in residence at one location. Several factors contributed to the shift. Historian Thomas Hennessey explains:

The switch to sound films beginning with the 1927 release of “The Jazz Singer,” hurt both vaudeville and theatre bands. From 1929 on, many movie houses and vaudeville theaters began replacing their local house bands with national touring bands that could play a week or two and then move on. Many ballrooms and nightclubs around the country also began to shift from continuous extended engagements by local bands to appearances by national touring bands ranging in duration from one night to two weeks.<sup>120</sup>

Hennessey further explains that improvements in automobiles and the highway made the road more practical. Following the money, with records sales and recording opportunities diminished, and with Radio expanding, it became more lucrative for bands to travel a newly developing circuit rather rely on residencies, which were rapidly shrinking opportunities. By the 1930-31 season, the major radio networks, including CBS, became aware of their increasing power, and set up booking bureaus to compete with the big booking agencies, many of which had been developed by artist managers in conjunction with record labels. Luis Russell had been managed by Tommy Rockwell, and booked by Rockwell-

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<sup>119</sup> Peter Carr, *ibid.* quoting *New York Age*, 2 June 1934.

<sup>120</sup> Thomas J. Hennessey, *From Jazz to Swing, African-American Musicians and Their Music, 1890-1935*, (Detroit: Wayne State University Press, 1994), 128.

O'Keefe, but after being boosted by his CBS Radio broadcasts starting in late 1933 into 1934, he was about to make headlines, reflecting the new business realities. At first glance, it looks as if Luis Russell signed with Columbia Records. Only upon closer examination, does it become evident that his move had nothing to do with a record deal, rather it was a change in booking representation.

Headline: From A Harlem Note Book, Baltimore Afro-American, June 30, 1934

By Allan McMillan

### **Luis Russell For Columbia**

The break between Tommy Rockwell and Luis Russell came as a big surprise to most of the musicians. Russell has a fine orchestra and the consensus of opinion has been that the flashy piano picker was steadily climbing the ladder of fame under the capable guidance of the Rockwell-O'Keefe Artist, who incidentally are the managers of the Mills Brothers, Claude Hopkins, Glen Gray's Casa Loma Orchestra, Bing Crosby, Ruth Etting and others.

First there came news that Tiny Bradshaw, the peppy leader of the Russell aggregation was to leave for the purpose of building up his own organization. The direct cause of the under-current has not been determined at this writing, but Luis Russell charges that the Rockwell-O'Keefe combine were extracting more than the legal commission from their theatre and dance contracts.

It is whispered around that Don Redman broke with the Rockwell-O'Keefe combine, also, and for the same reason as Mr. Russell. Now Luis has been signed by Columbia Broadcasting Company as one of their exclusive attractions, bringing the orchestra in tact with the addition of Sonny Woods as vocalist.<sup>121</sup>

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<sup>121</sup> Alan McMillan, "Luis Russell for Columbia," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 30 June 1934

Two weeks later, the Chicago *Defender* weighed in with a similar news piece.

**Headline: Luis Russell To Columbia With His Ten**

New York City, July 13.—Luis Russell, the celebrated pianist, and his famous orchestra will begin a long tour of theatre and dance engagements beginning July 4, under the direction of the Columbia Broadcasting Company's *Artist Bureau*. The Russell organization was signed two weeks ago as an exclusive CBC attraction following their walk-out on the Rockwell-O'Keefe combine.

In an interview with representatives of the press, the orchestra leader claimed that the Rockwell-O'Keefe Artist Bureau were extracting more than their share as commission. Mr. Russell asserts that the commission taken from them was so much until it hardly left a living salary for the members of the orchestra, and that he deemed the exploitation unfair and greatly detrimental to the morale of his fellow musicians.

And under a photo of Luis Russell, the following caption: Following the split with Rockwell-O'Keefe Artist Bureau, Luis Russell, the much talked of pianist and his talented group of musicians, have packed bag and baggage and moved over to the Columbia Broadcasting Company as an exclusive attraction. They are making preparations now for a long tour which will take them to the middle western states.<sup>122</sup>

The story of Luis Russell breaking with Rockwell-O'Keefe to join Columbia Artist Bureau dispels bunk about Luis Russell that's floated around for years in the jazz history echo chamber. We've already alluded to the myth that Luis Russell was too easy going to become successful, yet in making this move he defended himself and his musicians, and is unafraid to break with a major booking agency. Facing financial pressures, Luis Russell refused to accept a situation where his band members were "hardly left a living salary...he deemed the exploitation unfair and detrimental to the morale of his fellow musicians."

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<sup>122</sup> "Luis Russell to Columbia with His Ten," *Chicago Defender*, 12 July 1934.

It's often been advanced that during the first years of the 1930s, Luis Russell's band went downhill as he lost key personnel due to lack of bookings and from impacts of the Depression. Several of his sidemen said they jumped ship to join other orchestras because his calendar dried up, or because he changed his style. One plausible explanation is that he expanded the size of his orchestra to accommodate the demands of playing larger venues, to come across more effectively to listeners tuning in to their radios at home, as well as those who experienced his orchestra in person. Coming off a stretch in 1929 through early 1931 where he worked for virtually two years without a day off, the realities of having one to two-week and one night engagements, rather than longer residencies, did mean an increase in gaps in his calendar, yet he continued to keep his orchestra together, throughout, never folding his tent as happened to other organizations.

One puzzlement about Luis Russell's history is that he never toured with his orchestra outside of the U.S., except for dates with Louis Armstrong in Canada. Luis Russell never visited Europe as a performer. Despite the Depression and the financial challenges of bringing a large entourage overseas during the fame of his orchestra in the 1930s, rival black orchestra leaders, all under the management of Irving Mills, successfully crossed the big pond with full personnel, including orchestras led by Duke Ellington, "Lucky" Millinder, and Edgar Hayes. Louis Armstrong created a sensation in Europe working with local musicians in England, Scandinavia, and France. Luis Russell records were being released and promoted in England as part of the "Rhythm Style" series on

Parlophone, as evidenced by an ad including his original “Jersey Lightning” in *The Melody Maker* in October of 1930. And yet, with a growing audience for jazz in England and Europe, with record sales and reviews creating a demand, Luis Russell never made the jump overseas as a “live” attraction, either as an orchestra leader, or with his famous boss from 1935 to 1943, Louis Armstrong. A world-wide Depression gave rise to unrest and political instability, creating additional challenges to touring during the 1930s and in the period leading up to World War II, and later in the 1940s, during the war itself. By 1940, a nostalgia for the original jazz creators, resulted in an entire new market for a revival of New Orleans jazz, and though Luis Russell had been seated at the table with those originators, he never participated in the rich European touring opportunities over the following decades.

Luis Russell never made it overseas, perhaps due to ineffective management. Management or lack thereof may have been a contributing factor to why he was under recognized throughout his career. What can be ascertained about Sam Fliashnick, the name most often mentioned as Luis Russell’s manager. The 1930 census lists Samuel B. Fliashnick, 43 years old, married, living as a Hotel guest at 51<sup>st</sup> Street and Seventh Avenue, born in Russia of Russian parents, immigrating to the U.S. in 1891, with a current occupation of Theatrical managing director. As is often the case when comparing vital records, dates don’t always align. His WWII Draft registration card from 1942 lists his age as 53, date of birth April 13, 1889, born in Russia, now living in Forest Hill L.I. New York and working as “Traveling Manager” for employer, Gale Inc., which

would have been booking agent Moe Gale. Over the years, Fliashnick worked as an underling for three of the top guns in artist management and booking of African-American orchestras and attractions, Tommy Rockwell, Irving Mills, and Moe Gale. Fliashnick's name was associated with Duke Ellington, The Ink Spots, Luis Russell, and others. In 1931, he appears in a photo with Duke Ellington in the *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, above a caption which read, "During his recent engagement in Washington, D.C., Duke Ellington, Harlem's aristocrat of jazz, was invited to call at the White House and meet President Herbert Hoover. Duke is the first colored entertainer ever to be received by the chief executive of the nation."<sup>123</sup> Fliashnick blurred the distinction between tour manager and "manager." He was tour manager for high profile engagements on the road, and his name appeared in the *Chicago Defender* as manager of Duke Ellington in August of 1934, though he was tour managing [Irving Mills was Duke's manager]. By 1935 Fliashnick was president of a management company, Fliamill Enterprises, presumably working with Luis Russell, and signing a duo of tap dancers, Timmie and Freddie. He would go on to manage or tour manage for the Ink Spots, and work as a "one night booker" for Moe Gale's agency. The Gale Agency booked the Luis Russell Orchestra after Russell left Armstrong in 1943. In Sam Fliashnick, Luis Russell had found his "Broadway Danny Rose." Fliashnick was the number two guy to the top tier managers, who aspired to be a top dog in the business, and along with Luis Russell, never quite got all the way there.

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<sup>123</sup> *Norfolk Journal and Guide*, 31 October 1931.



**NEW "RHYTHM-STYLE" RECORDS**

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 { No. 41. Walkin' the Dog, Fox-Trot.  
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**FRED HALL'S SUGAR BABIES**  
 With Vocal Refrain.  
 { Harmonica Harry, Fox-Trot ("The Harmonica King").  
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The Melody Maker (The Gramophone Review); October, 1930

Towards the end of 1934, rumblings began to appear in the press about Luis Russell going to Russia, and Europe, and planning was in the works for a year-long tour anchored around dates in Soviet Russia, with stops in European capitals and in London. The *Pittsburgh Courier* ran a publicity photo of a smiling Luis Russell sitting at the piano, under the heading “Ol’ Man River.” Below the photo, it read:

Headline: **Luis Russell** This talented pianist, whose Ol’ Man River orchestra has returned to Broadway after a highly successful tour to appear at the popular Empire Ballroom, is now being besieged with offers to tour Europe. He’d like it too, for his heartache, Bessie Dudley, is in deah ol’ London with “Blackbirds” company.<sup>124</sup>

In addition to revealing European offers, a bit of gossip is also revealed. Luis Russell and Bessie Dudley appear to be more than professionally acquainted. Luis is missing his “heartache,” who is in London on tour as a cast member of Lew Leslie’s *Blackbirds* of 1934, which opened on August 25, 1934 and ran for 193 performances. Bessie Dudley was a Cotton Club dancer, who rose to star billing as one of the top dancers of the day, often appearing with dance partner Earl “Snakehips” Tucker, who were both part of Luis Russell’s entourage in January of 1933. In May of 1933, Bessie was filmed in the Paramount short of Duke Ellington and His Orchestra, “Bundle of Blues,” dancing along with Florence Hill to “Bugle Call Rag.” She sailed to England as a part of a Cotton Club revue which toured with the Duke Ellington Orchestra on their

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<sup>124</sup> “Luis Russell,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 27 October 1934, p. A8.



extensive European tour in the summer of 1933. A signed photo of Duke Ellington discovered in Luis Russell's collection corroborates their involvement with Bessie Dudley.



Duke Ellington portrait, signed "To That Grand Little Artist "Bessie" Snake hipistically In Appreciation, Duke" (Catherine Russell Collection)

When Bessie Dudley traveled to England with Duke Ellington in 1933, crossing the Atlantic on the R.M.S. Olympic, she roomed with vocalist Ivie Anderson, who had the bottom birth. Ellington tried to get in Bessie's bed, but she wouldn't let him. Juan Tizol tried to get in her bed; they both made passes, but according to Bessie, couldn't get anywhere.<sup>125</sup>

The sexual politics of being a band leader or musician or dancer in the jazz age received a lot of commentary in oral histories. Soon after arriving in New York City, Luis Russell and his wife Willie separated, although they continued to be listed at the same address, through their eventual divorce around 1940. They had married young; she may have been 15. Romantic and sexual involvement between male musicians and female chorus girls, vocalists, and dancers, was part of the scene. Bessie Dudley's choreography, which she made up as she went along, was sexually charged and performed in the skimpiest of tight short shorts, showing off her flexibility and snake hips dance. Louis Armstrong's fourth wife, Lucille, caught his eye as a Cotton Club dancer. Apart from photos signed by Duke Ellington, Aida Ward, and others, "to Bessie," ending up in Luis Russell's collection, suggesting that they hung out together for a while and he inherited these photos, little more is known about Luis's relationship with Bessie.

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<sup>125</sup> Bessie Dudley interviewed by Bob O'Meally, June 1992, Smithsonian Institution Jazz Oral History Program, Washington, D.C.

Towards the end of 1934, another notice appeared in the press, announcing plans for an extensive tour for Luis Russell in Soviet Russia and Europe.

Headline: **Luis Russell Band To Tour Soviet Union** Luis Russell has accepted a proposition to tour Soviet Russia with his Old Man River Orchestra. The tour will take place in the summer of 1935 and may also include an all colored grand opera company. After his Russia appearances Mr. Russell and his Orchestra will play featured dates in the main European capitals including a 12-week engagement in a London night club. He doesn't expect to return to the U.S. for one year<sup>126</sup>.

Several months later, a surprising announcement appeared in the mainstream press, in the entertainment trade magazine, *Billboard*. Luis Russell, along with his manager Sam Fliashnick, were being sued for breach of contract, and one component of the suit was an effort to compel Luis Russell and his Old Man River Orchestra, to honor bookings in Russia, that had allegedly been arranged by the managers, Shipper and Bakchy. While the eventual dispensation of the lawsuit is a subject for future research, apart from appearing for couple of weeks without his name being advertised, perhaps an effort to lay low while the lawsuit was in progress, Luis Russell quickly resumed working and being billed.

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<sup>126</sup> Peter Carr, *ibid.*, p.50., quoting "Luis Russell Band To Tour Soviet Union," *New York Age*, 15 December 1934.

Billboard May 4, 1935

Headline: **Luis Russell Band In Contract Suit**

New York, April 27 –Luis Russell, director of the *Old Man River* Orchestra at Connie's Inn, is being sued for \$25,000, on a charge of breach of contract, by Sam D. Shipper and Boris Bakchy. Shipper and Bakchy claim they signed Russell September 24, 1934, to a personal management contract and that they built him up, only to have him jump his contract and go under the management of Sam B. Fliashnick.

Shipper and Bakchy, who are suing thru Attorney John L. Backer here, have also filed suit for \$25,000 against Fliashnick, claiming he "induced Russell to break terms of existing contract." Fliashnick is with the Tommy Rockwell Office. Backer also threatens to seek an injunction against Russell to compel him to accept bookings in Russia already arranged by Shipper and Bakchy.<sup>127</sup>

Towards the end of May, Luis Russell appeared at Connie's Inn, and having previously added male vocalist, Sonny Woods, to his show, he now added a "girl singer," Bobbie Caston. He played a week at the Apollo in early June before heading out on a National Tour. With a lawsuit behind him, Luis Russell had weathered an unexpected storm, and one which may belie the myth that his band was hurting for work and about to fold. After all, lawsuits over conflicting songwriting claims were common, from the very beginnings of recorded jazz. One might assume that some significant amount of money should be involved for parties to go through the hassle and legal expenses of going to court. To be the subject of a lawsuit over competing management claims, with one of the grievances being a potential loss of income from a tour of Russia, might indicate that the subject, Luis Russell, and his manager, Sam Fliashnick, had a viable and financially significant orchestra in mid-1935. Both Luis Russell

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<sup>127</sup> "Luis Russell Band In Contract Suit," *Billboard*, 4 May 1935.

and Sam Fliashnick would soon make headlines again, but this time for a very different reason, involving Louis Armstrong.

## Chapter 5 – Louis & Luis, “Swing That Music” 1935-1943

### Headline, *Chicago Defender* Oct 26, 1935: **Armstrong and Russell Combine**

New York, Oct. 25—Sam Fliashnick, manager of Luis Russell, has recently consummated a deal with Joe Glazer, manager of Louis Armstrong, whereby Armstrong and Russell combine their talents. The new combination will open at Connie's Inn late in October, and will be known as Louis Armstrong and his orchestra, featuring Luis Russell at the piano.<sup>128</sup>

For Luis Russell, a monumental turning point in his career took place in October 1935. On the surface, what happened is well documented. Louis Armstrong had recently returned from a long European tour, where he had blown out his lip. He didn't have a band and he needed a rest to give his lip a chance to heal. Armstrong hadn't recorded since a studio date in Paris, France in early November of 1934. Enter Joe Glaser, who Louis had known since his earliest days in Chicago, when Joe Glaser ran the Sunset and helped to promote the rising young trumpeter. Fast forward to 1935. Glaser and Armstrong both were broke, and Louis had troubles with former managers, with alimony payments, and was being chased by mobsters. Louis asked Joe Glaser to be his manager and to take care of his business, and the two men entered a handshake agreement which would last until their final days. Glaser efficiently set about clearing up Louis's nagging loose ends, and after extricating his new client from a myriad of troubles, Glaser plotted a future course for the new partnership.

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<sup>128</sup> “Armstrong and Russell Combine,” *Chicago Defender*, 26 October 1935.

One of Glaser's first moves was signing Louis Armstrong to Decca Records, which would be their recording home for the next decade. Needing to find an orchestra, steps were taken, which eventually ended with Louis Armstrong taking over the Luis Russell Orchestra.

While the press announcement of the Armstrong – Russell merger is straightforward, the back story isn't widely known. To this day, there is room for speculation regarding the motives of the players involved, especially regarding Luis Russell's rationale in making the move. *New York Age* published ongoing commentary on the developments in the fall of 1935, revealing that attempts were first made to sign Teddy Hill and his Orchestra to back Armstrong. "Louis Armstrong has about closed a contract with Teddy Hill...Louis will have Teddy's band as a background to display his trumpet ability."<sup>129</sup> The following week, "Teddy Hill reports expected merger with Louis Armstrong has collapsed. Teddy has worked years to bring his organization to the heights it commands today and if he allowed his name to be submerged to another individual, no satisfaction for Teddy could be reached, so he says, and refused to sign a contract." The next announcement in *New York Age* is a reprint of the press release issued in the *Chicago Defender* about Armstrong and Russell joining forces and opening at Connie's Inn. A final entry on the subject reports the Connie's Inn opening, with a bit of sarcasm, editorializing and questioning the move:

Luis Russell, beg pardon, Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra, opened Tuesday, October 29 at Connie's Inn on Broadway. Russell Wooding has written and arranged the music for the show, making a trip to Philadelphia

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<sup>129</sup> Peter Carr, *ibid.* p.53. quoting *New York Age*, 28 September 1935.

last week to get a reading from Russell's Orchestra which was filling an engagement there. Luis Russell has submerged his identity to the Orchestra he fostered and built up for years to first class caliber. In other words, Luis Russell is allowing Armstrong to bill his orchestra as Louis Armstrong's, and getting no credit in the billing. It happened this way: Louis Armstrong wanted a Grade A orchestra to back up his artistic ability. Louis tried to get Willie Bryant and his band. Willie balked at contract time when he discovered his name would be discarded. Russell, thinking of his musicians, perhaps, decided to accept all conditions demanded by Glaser. Thus it is that we have Luis Russell's band working with the sensational international trumpet player, and advertised as "Louis Armstrong and his celebrated orchestra..."<sup>130</sup>

The *New York Age* writer is clearly troubled by Luis Russell's decision to go along with terms that both Teddy Hill and Willie Bryant had rejected. So why did Luis Russell go along with the offer? Was he "thinking of his musicians" in going along with Glaser's demands? An explanation often repeated in the jazz history echo chamber is that Luis Russell was rescued by Louis Armstrong, who saved his band, and in exchange Russell gave up billing, because many bands were folding as the Depression deepened. Take, for instance, one attempt to summarize the historiography on the subject:

"Many jazz historians bemoan the fact that Russell "sold out" and chose to support Armstrong, rather than developing his own distinct style, but we should remember that all of this happened at the height of the Depression, when so many great African-American musicians were forced to leave the music business altogether."<sup>131</sup>

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<sup>130</sup> Peter Carr, *ibid.*

<sup>131</sup> Scott Alexander, "Luis Russell and his Orchestra", *The Red Hot Jazz Archive, A History of Jazz Before 1930*, [www.redhotjazz.com/lro.html](http://www.redhotjazz.com/lro.html).



Did Luis Russell make a Faustian bargain with the devil, Joe Glaser, and agree to compromise his art to keep himself and his musicians afloat? Here is how Charlie Holmes described how and why the merger came about:

Well, I tell you. They was trying days back in the '30s. There was a Depression on here. And it was TERRIBLE. Well, Russell's band wasn't doing too good. It wasn't doing no worse than anybody, but it wasn't doing no better than anybody, either. So Joe Glaser, Louis Armstrong's manager, he knew Russell, you know. He brought Louis here from Chicago with another band, which wasn't so good either. So Joe Glaser wanted to change Louis's band, so he got in touch with Russell. Well, here's a big name, Louis Armstrong, (Glaser), which he wasn't too big a name then, I mean he was big amongst musicians (CH) so he wanted to put Pops with Russell's band. Well, it was alright with the band, I mean, we weren't making any kind of money anyway. So Joe Glaser lined up the work that he had for us, well the first six months, and he's talking about working by the YEAR. And the work we were getting, if we were lucky, we'd get a couple of days this week, and we'd travel about 1700 miles and we might get another date, that's what we had been doing. Now here's somebody saying "for the first six months we'll be in The Cotton Club, and the next six months we'll be doing so and so, and your salary is this that and the other...well that sounded pretty good. That sounded VERY good. That's how it started. So, instead of going in The Cotton Club, we went into what they called Connie's Inn, it was downtown, on Broadway. And we stayed there six months, and we come out, and we did a whole lot of one night stands. The hardest one night stands I ever did in my life, you talk about traveling.<sup>132</sup>

While there were pragmatic considerations in play, there is ample evidence to support a more holistic, artistic, and perhaps even spiritual explanation. Luis Russell and Louis Armstrong were musical yin and yang, Russell a reserved, supportive anchor, who created an unobtrusive backdrop, and Armstrong, a flamboyant dandy and charismatic front man who dazzled with

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<sup>132</sup> Charlie Holmes, interview by Steve Allen, BBC radio, 1973, recording courtesy of Ricky Riccardi, Louis Armstrong Archive, Queens College, NY, NY.

brilliant trumpet playing, singing, and showmanship. Together, they were unstoppable, a complimentary team. Luis Russell loved and admired Louis Armstrong and realized the transcendent nature of his talent. If given credit for nothing else, and Luis Russell's artistry has sometimes been disparaged by jazz historians, all agree that he possessed great skills as an organizer and recognizer of talent. Russell and Armstrong had played together at Tom Anderson's in New Orleans, worked across the street from each other during Chicago's jazz heyday, recorded and performed together in 1929-1930 in New York and then toured together. Luis Russell knew deeply, from first-hand experience, that Louis Armstrong was a cut above everyone else. This realization made his decision easy.

As a practical matter, and on a business level, the move also made sense for Luis Russell. He was joining forces with a leading front man. Louis Armstrong was a star, with clout and drawing power. Luis Russell had accomplished a lot since forming his orchestra at the Nest in 1927. He could tour half of the country, bringing his orchestra to New England, through the Midwest, as far west as St. Louis, throughout the mid-Atlantic states and into the South. He hadn't been able to crack the west coast. His live shows were often broadcast locally via radio wires, direct from the venues, helping to build his audience, but a true national hook up had eluded him, as it had eluded all black artists up until that point in time. His original song, "Call of The Freaks," appeared in a Betty Boop cartoon, a first for jazz in 1932, though Russell wasn't featured as prominently, and as a featured artist, as were Louis Armstrong, Don Redman, and Cab Calloway, by

Max Fleischer studios. By all business metrics, and to use a baseball analogy, Luis Russell was a mid-level everyday player, while Louis Armstrong was a major league leading home run hitter. In the eight years following the merger, the Armstrong-Russell combine would become the first black artists with a national radio hook up, in 1937. Their touring made them a true “national” act, with hugely successful forays into all parts of the U.S. and Canada, including many visits to the west coast. They enjoyed film opportunities in Hollywood. The swing craze was intertwined with both radio and movies. Sound film conveyed the full spectrum of elements, derived from vaudeville, which translated a musical art form in commercial and visual terms; dance, movement, and rhythm.

The term “swing” in the context of jazz history appears first as an attempt to describe a musical value, a way of playing or of placing rhythm. The term appears in the 1920’s and eventually by the middle 1930’s, comes to define an era, the Swing Era, and a musical genre, Swing, the dominant commercial form of popular music in America, and across the globe. Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell invented “swing” during the 1920’s, and they again joined forces in 1935, at the dawn of the Swing Era. The Russell-Armstrong combination in one important way broke the mold of what was the norm for this era. They conformed in performing music for dancing in a Big Band setting, with written arrangements, including intricate riff based interplay between brass and reed sections, fueled by a propulsive rhythm section. The best known and most commercially successful Orchestras of the Swing Era, both white and black, created hits out of riff based instrumentals, like Benny Goodman’s “Sing, Sing, Sing,” Glenn Miller’s “In The

Mood,” Count Basie’s “One O’Clock Jump,” and Duke Ellington’s “Take The A-Train.” The leading orchestras were led by instrumentalists, and while they carried vocalists for featured step out numbers, the unsung star of the band was often the arranger. Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra during the Swing Era were unique in one important aspect; the band’s star instrumentalist, Louis Armstrong on trumpet, was also the band’s star vocalist! Louis Armstrong’s singing was equal to his trumpet playing, in terms of inventiveness, originality, sheer brilliance; and most importantly, inhabiting and defining “swing.” One served as an extension of the other. Luis Russell’s role, as orchestra leader, was to make a supportive and unobtrusive bed, against which a super star talent, Louis Armstrong, could most effectively ply his wares. Louis Armstrong, as both an exceptional player and singer, stood apart from other instrumental virtuoso band leaders of the Swing Era.

Louis Armstrong taking over the Luis Russell Orchestra may have been a first in jazz history. Perhaps, for the first time, a leading star and front man took over a successful orchestra, and rebranded it under his own name. Jazz historians haven’t been kind to what happened, nor have they properly recognized its significance, or addressed its racial component. In 1935, jazz was segregated along racial lines. Cracks were starting to appear, when Billie Holiday toured with Artie Shaw, and when Roy Eldridge joined Gene Krupa. A lot has been made of the move by Luis Russell’s fellow pianist, orchestra leader, and arranger, Fletcher Henderson, joining forces with Benny Goodman. Top black artists joining a white organization was both met with hostility and hailed as a

laudable breakthrough. How then, should we process a top black artist, Louis Armstrong, merging with a leader of the same race, Luis Russell?

Tokens of the high esteem with which Luis valued his friendship with Louis can be found throughout his archive and his interviews. Russell had a photo of them together turned into a woodblock rubber stamp, which could be reproduced by pressing it on an ink pad and then stamping it on paper, transforming the photo into a home-made printing press. And when interviewed in 1957, 14 years after he had last performed with Armstrong, Luis Russell “pulled out an index file and said, “See this? I do this every year for Louis. There are about 2,000 names listed here and I send them New Year greeting cards on behalf of Satchmo.”<sup>133</sup>

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<sup>133</sup> Felix Manskleid, *ibid.*



Louis and Luis photo, woodblock rubber stamp (Catherine Russell Collection)

To understand Joe Glaser's complex relationship with his many clients, begin with the fact that Louis Armstrong was his first management client and priority #1. Joe Glaser traveled with Louis Armstrong, sat close to the stage with an entourage at important engagements, hired and fired musicians, negotiated recording, radio, and film deals, and took care of all of Armstrong's finances, including paying his taxes. Just as Louis Armstrong was a pioneering artist in jazz, Joe Glaser was a pioneer in creating a business model for artist representation and booking. Glaser parlayed his relationship with Louis Armstrong, which began in Chicago in the 1920's, into representing Armstrong starting in 1935, and then adding other artists, like Billie Holiday, and finally helming a leading agency for the representation of African American talent, and eventually representing white stars as well. Glaser's aim for Armstrong was to reach the largest possible audience, which necessitated reaching both an African-American and a white audience. He understood and exploited a multi-media approach, deftly employing the power and reach of Radio and Hollywood for his clients.

The autumn of 1935 marked the debut of the new Louis Armstrong with Luis Russell's Orchestra both in the recording studio for Decca and "live." Setting the pace for what would become years of non-stop activity, on October 29, 1935, the show opened at Connie's Inn, which had moved from Harlem to Midtown and was located on West 48<sup>th</sup> Street between Broadway and 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue. During the grand opening at Connie's Inn, they performed at a fundraiser for the Radio

Division of the Federated Jewish Charities at the Waldorf Astoria. The event was the lead story on November 30<sup>th</sup> in Allan McMillan's "Theatre Chat" column in the *Baltimore Afro-American*:

Louis (Satchmo) Armstrong, heralded on Broadway and elsewhere as the world's greatest trumpeter, finds himself in the midst of a busy schedule.

Last Sunday night, along with other celebrities, including Rudy Vallee, Ethel Waters, Abe Lyman and Ben Bernie, the great jazz-dazzler was guest-starred at the \$100-a-plate dinner...

The invitation was extended to Armstrong by Walter Winchell, Ed Sullivan and members of the committee, but the acceptance was wired in by Armstrong's manager, Joe Glaser, who sees to it that Louis doesn't appear at phonies.

Other than doing three shows nightly at Connie's Inn, broadcasting five times a week (two of which are coast-to-coast hook-ups via C.B.S. Tuesday and Friday nights at 11:00) for thirty minutes each, making an average of ten recordings every seven days and filling benefits for Christmas funds (not counting rehearsal periods), Mr. Armstrong has all the rest of the time to himself.<sup>134</sup>

In their "free time," the Armstrong-Russell combine set out to conquer North America, one show, one city, one state, one radio broadcast, one review, one Hollywood movie, and one box office record, at a time. The revue at Connie's Inn, in addition to Louis Armstrong fronting Luis Russell's Orchestra, also included two vocalists who were a part of Russell's organization, Sonny Woods and Bobbie Caston, plus up and coming singer Billie Holiday, a recent signing by Joe Glaser. The newcomer, Billie Holiday, had been smitten upon first hearing Louis Armstrong's recording "West End Blues," as a young girl in

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<sup>134</sup> Allan McMillan, "Theatre Chat," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 30 November 1935.



Baltimore, and she often cited Louis Armstrong and Bessie Smith as the artists who most influenced and inspired her singing style. Billie Holiday became ill in January of 1936 and had to leave the Connie's Inn show, and, ironically, she was replaced by Bessie Smith.

At the end of February and into March, Luis Russell spent three weeks at The Apollo, the first two billed as Luis Russell Orchestra (without Armstrong), and the week of March 6-12, 1936, billed as Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra. Over the next 5 years, Luis Russell would continue to perform and front his Orchestra under his own name, while Armstrong was in Hollywood filming or otherwise engaged. After the Apollo, the new combine headed for Boston for a week-long engagement, previewed in the *Pittsburgh Courier*.

**Headline: Louis Armstrong Goes To Boston For New "High;" Gets \$8000 Per, King of Trumpet Players to Open Metropolitan Theater In Hub City at Record Figure.**

Boston, Mass, March 12 –When Louis Armstrong, King of trumpeters, opens at the Metropolitan Theatre here Friday, he will become the highest priced colored star ever to appear at the spot. The famous "Satchmo" of the trumpet, whose record-breaking performances all over the country have stamped him as the outstanding drawing card of the year, comes here direct from an engagement at the Apollo...an engagement which brought out the S.R.O. signs for the first time in many a month.

#### **Gets \$8000 For Week**

Armstrong is being guaranteed \$8,000 for the week, which sets a new high. Previous to this figure, Cab Calloway and Duke Ellington, who were each guaranteed \$7,500 for a week's work, jointly held the record.

Incidentally, Armstrong's popularity seems to be increasing. With Luis Russell's band, including Sonny Woods and an all-star revue, he created the biggest sensation of the year on Broadway, appearing at Connie's Inn.

There it was that the cream of Park Avenue as well as the “big name” of Hollywood were wont to gather and pay him tribute.

Since leaving Connie's, his only other theatre engagement, aside from the Apollo, was at the Lincoln Theatre in Philadelphia, where even on the last day, he was forced to do seven shows, while crowds stood in line outside the theatre, waiting for hours to get in.

A limited dance tour is being contemplated by Joe Glaser, his dynamic manager, and the man who has made the country “Armstrong conscious.”<sup>135</sup>

By the end of May of 1936, Louis Armstrong had completed 8 session dates in the recording studio for Decca Records, backed by Luis Russell's Orchestra. Their openings in New York City and Boston had been wildly successful. Over a holiday weekend, back in New York City, they went into the Paramount Theater, on Broadway and 43<sup>rd</sup> Street. Under the headline, “Lou Armstrong Polls Big on Broadway,” the following article appeared on June 6, 1936:

New York—Louis Armstrong, the king of trumpeters, established a new record at the Paramount Theatre on Broadway, topping all orchestras which have played the house in a popularity poll.

Armstrong, up to Saturday, had polled 13,242 with Fred Waring trailing with 13,002. The rest of the line-up follows: [a few of the polling scores listed among others, Paul Whiteman, 10,905, Rudy Vallee, 8,844, Benny Goodman, 8,930, Eddie Duchin, 7, 423]

Armstrong, with Luis Russell at the piano is breaking house records at the Paramount and played to a packed house on Decoration Day with the standing room only sign out all day.

He is ably assisted in a riotous dance by Sonny Woods, Bobby Caston, Bessie Dudley, Chuck and Chuckles, and the Three Lang sisters.

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<sup>135</sup> “Louis Armstrong Goes to Boston for New ‘High’,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 12 March 1936.

A pattern of winning polls and smashing box office records was being established, and would continue unabated. After the Paramount engagement, the band headed to the Midwest for dates in Cleveland, Detroit and Chicago.

While Armstrong went to Los Angeles the summer of 1936 to film “Pennies from Heaven” in Hollywood with Bing Crosby, Luis Russell and his Orchestra performed and worked radio broadcasts on their own, without Armstrong. They reunited in September for a week at the Apollo, followed by a week at the Howard Theater in Washington, D.C. starting on Friday October 16<sup>th</sup>, 1936.

There is a huge myth concerning what went on with Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell during the Swing Era, which has been amplified in the jazz history echo chamber, and needs to be debunked. The bunk goes something like this: The Luis Russell Orchestra was an inferior band, the worst to ever accompany Louis Armstrong, and their time together represented the nadir of Armstrong’s career. Russell “sold out” and worked in an anonymous role.

For example, Armstrong biographer Lawrence Bergreen described the critical reaction to the Armstrong – Russell combination in the harshest terms.

“Most (critics) said this was the worst band Louis Armstrong ever fronted and that his years with Luis Russell, which covered most of the thirties, represented the nadir of his career.”<sup>136</sup>

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<sup>136</sup> Laurence Bergreen, *Louis Armstrong: An Extravagant Life* (New York: Broadway Books, 1997), 379.

One might call Bergreen's credibility into question simply due to his erroneous statement that Armstrong and Russell worked together for most of the 1930's. They worked together in 1929 into early 1930, and reunited in October of 1935, so hardly most of the '30s. There were critics and subsequently historians who bemoaned the fact that Armstrong "sold out," recording all types of music for Decca, and thereby diluting the "purity" of a narrow definition of jazz. Nonetheless, when Armstrong decided to re-record some of his signature tunes from the 1920's, the wrath of Bergreen is equally harsh and misguided.

"His journey into the past led him to record swing versions of his Hot Five classics, such as "West End Blues" and "A Monday Date" ---- songs ingrained into the cerebral cortex of every jazzman. But Luis Russell's orchestra couldn't hope to emulate the velocity and dazzle of Hot Five musicians, and Louis's solos came off as poor imitations of his brilliant originals. He seemed to lack both musical inspiration and the ability to make his horn pulse with life and emotion. Those famous cadenzas, once razor-sharp, now sounded limp, vague, tired. Rather than reigniting interest in his old hits, the new Decca recordings furnished disturbing evidence of his decline."<sup>137</sup>

Bergreen may have lost track of the fact that Luis Russell and some of his musicians overlapped the very same Hot Five musicians who recorded with Armstrong in Chicago and New York, and who dazzled back in the 1920's. Luis Russell's first recording session as a leader, as Russell's Hot Six, on March 10, 1926, included two of the musicians, Kid Ory on trombone, and Johnny St. Cyr on banjo, who were also members of Armstrong's Hot Five. And let's not lose

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<sup>137</sup> Bergreen, *ibid.*, 398.

sight of the fact that “West End Blues” was written by King Oliver, who recorded it a week before Louis Armstrong in Chicago in 1928. King Oliver re-recorded “West End Blues” soon after arriving in New York City in 1929, with Louis Metcalf playing the trumpet leads including the opening cadenza, with Luis Russell on piano. By the time Armstrong re-recorded “West End Blues” in a Big Band version for Decca, playing a crisp opening cadenza, supported by a deep blue big band arrangement, and a Luis Russell a la Earl Hines piano interlude, his original recording had been out of print for a decade. And if the Decca recordings didn’t reignite interest in his old hits, then why did the very first jazz “reissue” project of early recordings, launched by George Avakian at Columbia Records in 1940, feature Louis Armstrong’s Hot Fives and Sevens!

Saxophonist Charlie Holmes, who played and recorded with Russell and Armstrong in 1929 and then again during the Decca years of 1935-1940, when interviewed by the BBC in 1973, offered an assessment quite at odds with that of Laurence Bergreen. Holmes recalled the Decca years:

That was the BEST BAND Louis ever had musically speaking. Russell’s band was the best band he ever had musically speaking. Cause all these other little groups Louis had, to me they sounded terrible. And I knew Louis since 1929. I mean, I read a lot of the write ups on Louis and I read a lot of the bad ones of the time with Russell’s band...but I still got the records. And the records speak for themselves.<sup>138</sup>

The British jazz historian, Albert McCarthy, in his coffee table size monumental book, *Big Band Jazz*, writes extensively about Luis Russell’s

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<sup>138</sup> Charlie Holmes, interview by Steve Allen, BBC, 1973, courtesy of Ricky Riccardi, Louis Armstrong House Archive, Queen, NY.

orchestra, often in glowing terms. However, he demolishes Russell's work with Armstrong from 1935 onward.

"When Armstrong started recording for Decca in the autumn of 1935 his regular band was Luis Russell's, but it bore little relationship to the superb Russell band of 1929-30 and on record sound worse than mediocre."<sup>139</sup> -

Albert McCarthy dismisses Luis Russell's collaboration with Louis Armstrong, due to Russell playing a "purely supporting role." Incredibly, a major study of big band jazz, refuses to lend weight to these works, or give them their proper due. Part of Luis Russell genius was that he excelled at and relished playing a supporting role.

"The records that the Russell band made with Armstrong relegate it to a purely supporting role, and, as such have not been considered here."<sup>140</sup>

The Louis Armstrong / Luis Russell Orchestra broke box office and attendance records from coast to coast from 1935 through 1943, receiving rave reviews, making great recordings for Decca, pioneering on the Radio, while Louis Armstrong made many Hollywood feature film appearances. During this period (especially from 1936-40), Luis Russell continued to headline (while Armstrong was on location in Hollywood) and do radio broadcasts as Luis Russell Orchestra, and received featured billing in advertisements while appearing with Armstrong. Both garnered extensive and favorable press and media coverage. Despite being undervalued or ignored in histories of The Swing Era, the

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<sup>139</sup> Albert McCarthy, *Big Band Jazz*, (London: G.P. Putnam's Sons, 1974), 271.

<sup>140</sup> *ibid*, 84.

collaboration with Luis Russell from 1935 - 1943 was, in reality, another pinnacle of Armstrong's career.

In October of 1936 Luis Russell and Paul Barbarin made headlines in Chicago, for writing a new tune, "Everybody's Swingin' in Bronzeville," which will have to now be added to their catalogue of "lost" compositions, tunes that were never recorded or released. The *Chicago Defender* of October 17, 1936 ran a photo of Russell and Barbarin, under the headline, **Writes Bronzeville Song**, with a caption that read in part:

The boys have written many tunes, and at one time were the ace men in "King" Joe Oliver's Orchestra, when Oliver directed his band at Plantation Café.<sup>141</sup>

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<sup>141</sup> "Writes Bronzeville Song," *Chicago Defender*, 17 October 1936, p.29.

## WRITES BRONZEVILLE SONG



Pictured above are Louis Russell and Paul Barbarin, the two classy members of Louis Armstrong's orchestra, who have written a swell swing tune entitled "Everybody's Swinging in Bronzeville." The number was written after the band had played an all-night engagement for the Mayor of Bronzeville grand election ball Saturday night at the Savoy Ballroom. The boys have written many tunes and at one time were ace men on "King" Joe Oliver's orchestra when Oliver directed his band at the Plantation Cafe.

CD: 17.10.36 p29



In November of 1936, when Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra returned to Chicago to play at the Savoy Ballroom on Sunday night November 15<sup>th</sup>, the Chicago *Defender* headline read, **‘Old Satchmo’ Will Swing Till Dawn for ‘Chi Cats’ Louis Russell and Paul Barbarin Will Introduce New Bronzeville Tune.**

The popular tunesmiths will invade Chicago after playing a long successful tour, covering many states East as well as in Dixie, breaking records wherever they stopped. Armstrong has been a solid sellout in theatres and ballrooms for the past two years. More than 7,000 persons are expected at the Savoy November 15<sup>th</sup>.

“Ol’ Satchmo,” in his unassuming way, commands his orchestra with ease, and the men love to obey his every wish. Each member of the band, under the direction of Luis Russell, is an artist...Cats will trek from all parts of Bronzeville to hear the high “C’s” as only “Ol’ Satchmo” can dish.<sup>142</sup>

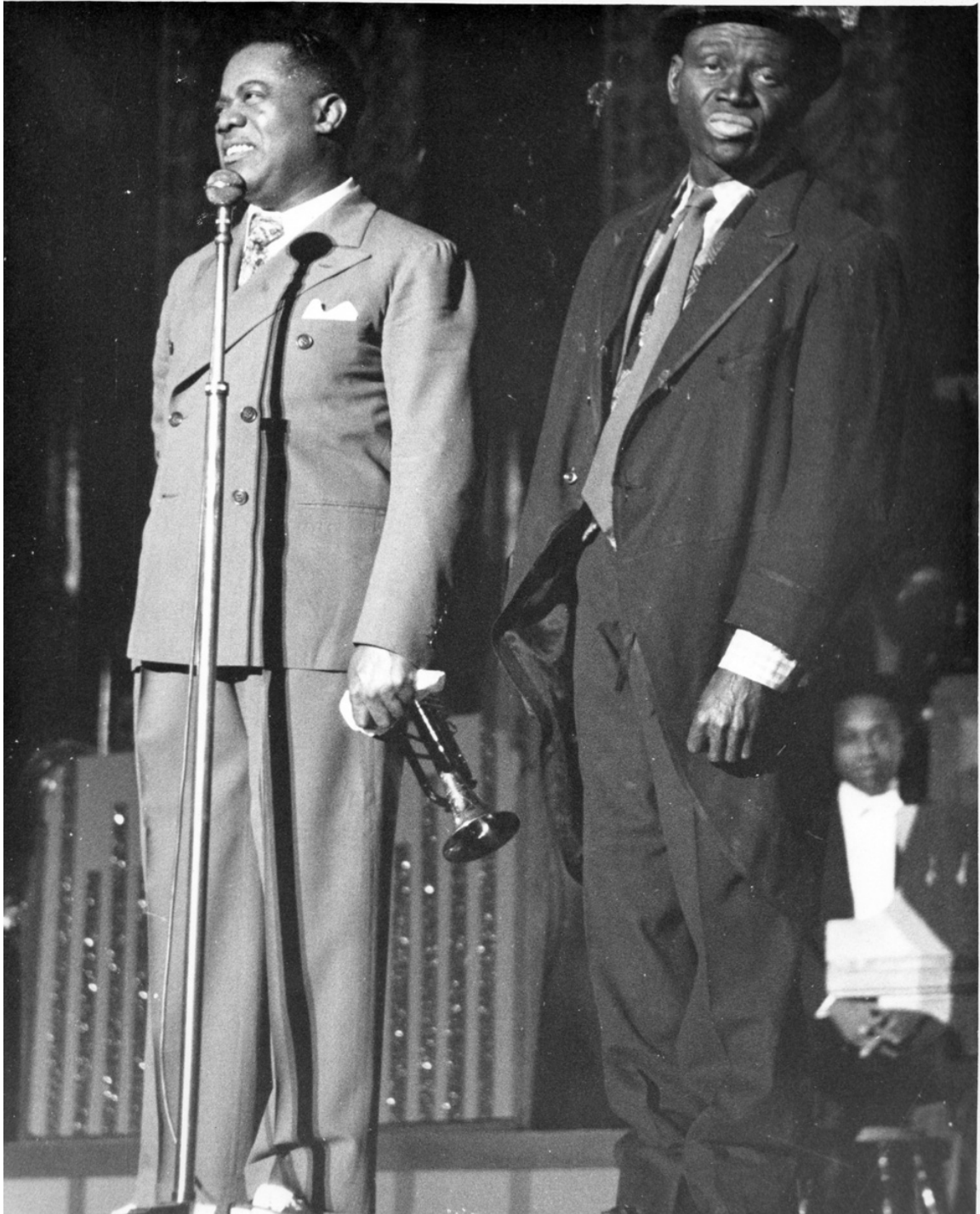
Louis Armstrong had minor throat surgery at the start of 1937. He had healed in time for a February 20<sup>th</sup> appearance at the Alhambra Ballroom in New York City. Returning to the Metropolitan Theater in Boston from February 25<sup>th</sup> through Sunday March 7<sup>th</sup>, Louis Armstrong’s new musical aggregation of 1937 with Luis Russell and his Orchestra, also included a revue of dance, singing, and comedy, with Saunders, Weaver & Coles Trio of Dancers, Gordon and Rogers, Sonny Woods, Bobbie Caston, the Two Zephyrs George McLennon, and tap dancer Billy Adams (husband of Victoria Spivey). 17,000 fans attended.

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<sup>142</sup> “Old Satchmo Swing Till Dawn,” *Chicago Defender*, 15 November 1936.



Dance & Comedy Duo, The Two Zephyrs, in action. (Catherine Russell Collection)



Louis Armstrong, comedian & clarinet player George McLennon in blackface, Luis Russell seated at the piano. (Catherine Russell Collection)



Dancers Maze and Morrison, Luis Russell at piano (Catherine Russell Collection)

In April and May of 1937, the Louis Armstrong- Luis Russell combination captured a national radio audience in a first for African American artists, when they were featured on weekly half hour broadcasts over NBC Blue network on the Fleischmanns Yeast Show. The full story is examined in fascinating detail by Louis Armstrong historian, Ricky Riccardi, in a July 14, 2008 entry to his [Dippermouth Blog](#), which serves to not only exonerate the Luis Russell Orchestra's reputation but also to correct the myth of the inferiority of Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra during the Swing Era.

Every Friday night for two months the band hit the airwaves, starting on April 9, 1937. From Wednesday April 14<sup>th</sup> through Tuesday May 4<sup>th</sup>, during their national radio run, the band returned to the Paramount in New York City for three weeks, garnering a rave review in the black press:

**Headline: Armstrong's Band Wows Patrons of Paramount Theatre**

"All during the week at every performance Louis Armstrong and his band with all-star billing romped on the stage of the Paramount Theatre before a crowded house.

Maze and Morrison, a girl dance duo, in red satin Egyptian pajama-like costumes just did everything. They tapped, they cart-wheeled and their eccentric twistings were eye-openers.

[ the review praises vocalists Bobbie Caston and Sonny Woods]

The Two Zephyrs, comic duo, presented a poem in slow motion pantomime. Of course a crap game figured in it but it was done with such finesse that the crap part almost slipped our minds.

George McClennon will long be remembered by us for his clever and funny, Clean jokes. He was in black face, dreary and somber to look at, but hysterical to listen to.

Now for "Satchmo." He solidly laid out on "When the Skel'ton in the Closet Rattles His Bones." Even the audience was rompin. They stomped and shreked and "Ole Man Mose" came forth.

The rejuvenated band with Luis Russell at the piano really swung. New blood had been added and you really knew it."<sup>143</sup>

**Headline: "Ol' Satchmo" Breaks Record at the Paramount Theatre on Broadway – Attendance Tops Goodman and Eddie Duchin**

The trumpet king will play Theatre dates in Chic in May. "Louis Armstrong, the Trumpet King of Swing and his Orchestra broke every existing record for gross attendance and receipts during their first week at the Paramount Theatre here...surpassing Benny Goodman and Eddie Duchin...held over for asecond week. The orchestra ensemble features Luis Russell at the piano, "Red Allen" as hot trumpeter and J.C. Higginbotham, the trombonist, now recognized as one of the foremost in America."<sup>144</sup>

Joe Glaser worked up a formula that became a model for creating a star, built on a table with four legs; recordings, Hollywood, radio, and touring. In 1936, Armstrong appeared in the film "Pennies from Heaven" performing the musical number "The Skeleton in The Closet," then recorded a single by the same title for Decca, performed the song on his radio broadcasts, and on his "live" shows. In 1937, he replicated the formula to perfection. This time it involved Louis Armstrong departing from Chicago to Los Angeles immediately after the Fleischmanns Yeast NBC broadcast from the Regal Theatre on May 20<sup>th</sup>, and spending a week in Hollywood to appear in the film "Artists and Models," with

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<sup>143</sup> "Armstrong's Band Wows Patrons of Paramount Theatre," *New York Age*, 4 April 1937.

<sup>144</sup> "Ol' Satchmo Breaks Record at the Paramount Theatre," *Chicago Defender*, 24 April 1937.

Martha Raye. During the week of May 21 through 27, while Armstrong was in LA, Luis Russell Orchestra featuring Henry Red Allen toured the Midwest and East working their way from Chicago back to New York City, where they rejoined Armstrong for the next NBC radio broadcast, from the Apollo on Friday May 28<sup>th</sup>. On July second, Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra went in the studio for Decca and recorded “Public Melody Number One,” the song that Armstrong performed in “Artists and Models.” With the Joe Glaser publicity machine firing on all cylinders, and with Armstrong’s charm, personality, and musical chops seducing his growing audience, the Armstrong-Russell band packed theaters and set attendance records.

A year earlier, in 1936, Louis Armstrong contributed another first. To coincide with the release of six new Decca recordings, all laid down in one fruitful session in New York on May 18, 1936, including an up-tempo barn burner titled, “Swing That Music,” an autobiography of Louis Armstrong was published, the first instance of a jazzman telling his own story, also titled *Swing That Music*. In the book, Armstrong describes first teaming with Luis Russell, writing, “Lew is one of the greatest swing pianists. His is a very subtle and very sensitive musician who hates tin-pan jazz as much as Mr. Jascha Heifitz (sic) or Mr. Toscanini would.”<sup>145</sup>

Armstrong’s choice of words in describing Russell is revealing of a keen and cutting sense of humor, as well as a light-hearted yet serious slap at the critics. Armstrong and Russell had been catching flack for expanding the jazz

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<sup>145</sup> Louis Armstrong, *Swing That Music*, (New York: Da Capo Press, 1936, paperback edition unabridged republication, 1993), 94.

repertoire to include “tin-pan jazz,” tunes like “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love,” “I Got Rhythm,” and “I’m In The Mood For Love,” from Tin Pan Alley songwriters. In the highbrow vs lowbrow culture wars, classical music (admired by both Russell and Armstrong), and the likes of Mr. Toscanini, the great Italian conductor who was also symbolically anti-Mussolini and opposed to the rising fascist tide, were considered highbrow, while tin-pan jazz, also a Russell-Armstrong specialty, was decidedly lowbrow. It’s as if Armstrong is saying to the critics, you can’t have it both ways, because, in the same facetious way Russell and Toscanini hate the so called “tin-pan jazz,” we (Lew and Louis) love both.

Armstrong goes on to staunchly defend the Luis Russell Orchestra, writing:

I’m sure this is one of the finest aggregations of colored swing players, all in one band, that you will find in the world today, and this is largely due to Lew Russell’s wonderful musicianship, and patience with his men. When I am swinging my trumpet out in front of them, with my back to them, I always know that however far I swing away from the music we are playing, wherever the trumpet carries them, they will be right in there, following close, hot and sure of their rhythm, and never losing their way for one second – it’s just as though they could see through my back and know what’s coming next, almost as soon as I do. This is the band you hear over the radio when I play.<sup>146</sup>

Apart from being a beautiful description of the mystery of musical telepathy, Armstrong gives a full-throated endorsement of his newly acquired Orchestra and of its’ leader, Luis Russell. He makes no apologies about being “colored,” yet the fact that race is mentioned, is a sign of the times, where a black

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<sup>146</sup> *ibid.* 94-95.



man had to be careful not to be too uppity or try to upstage the white man, or risk the consequences. In a way, Armstrong is saying “we are the finest,” and at the same time we understand our “place,” and our place is on the Radio!

With a growing chorus of critics praising and denigrating Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, a black man having huge success and breaking racial barriers in white America, made Louis Armstrong a target, criticized even by his own people, as he shattered attendance records, scaled financial heights, and took to the national radio airwaves. Having insults hurled by the white press was one thing, but consider a story which appeared on April 17, 1937, in the *Philadelphia Tribune*, the oldest continuously published African-American newspaper in America:

**Headline: Would Boycott Satchmo Program**

New York, April (ANP) --While a Pittsburgh paper was launching its campaign for 100,000 letters of praise to assure the continuation of the first all-colored variety commercial show, Will Marion Cook, nationally known composer, was this week urging every Negro to protest the same program and boycott the sponsors.

The program in question made its bow Friday night over the National Broadcasting company's blue network stations. Featured performer is Louis Armstrong, world's greatest trumpet player, who is supported by Luis Russell's orchestra. Eddie Green and Gee Gee James are the comic stars in skits written by Octavus Roy Cohen. Amanda Randolph, Harlem night club star, was the female vocalist in the inaugural broadcast. The half-hour show is being sponsored by Fleischmann's Yeast.

Said Mr Cook in telegrams sent to Negro newspapers and leading individuals:

“Negros should enmasse boycott the Fleischmann's Yeast and National Broadcasting Company for disgraceful Louis Armstrong program Friday night WJZ. The Jews of Hollywood, the stage and NBC only exploit the worst and basest of my race. Let's stop it now. Heil Hitler.”

This paper, in a front-page editorial last week commenting on the first chance given a large array of colored talent for an extended

commercial air program, printed its letter sent to Fleischmann's Yeast company which said:

"We want to commend you for the enterprise and initiative you have shown in sponsoring the radio broadcast of Louis Armstrong."

The most pretentious air show previously using colored stars was one for a soap company a few years ago featuring the Mills Brothers and Don Redman's orchestra.<sup>147</sup>

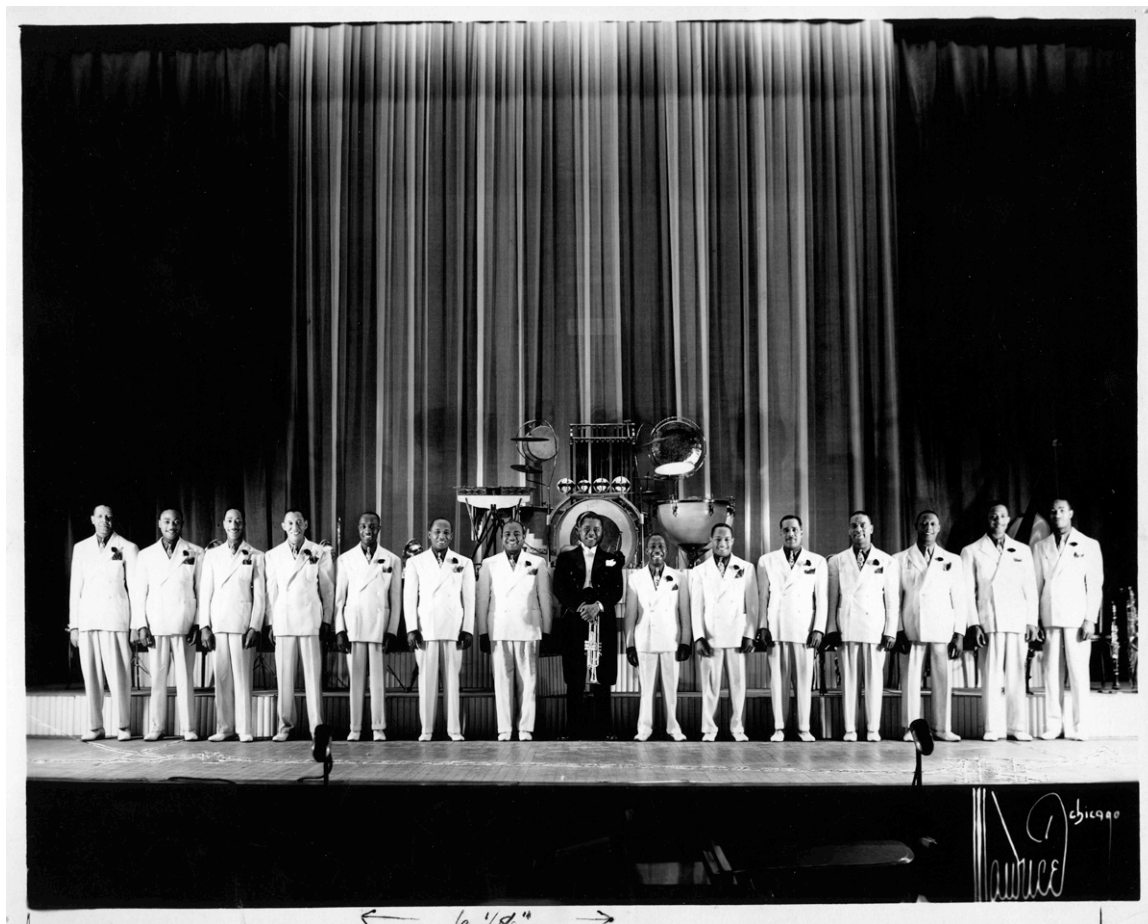
Will Marion Cook, born in 1869, was a light skinned African-American composer and violinist, who was conservatory trained, and studied with Antonin Dvorak, before launching his own successful career as a touring musician and pioneer of black musical theater in New York City. Cook was among the first to bring jazz and ragtime overseas, where his New York Syncopated Orchestra, including New Orleans creole clarinetist Sidney Bechet, performed for King George V in England in 1919. As highbrow as they come, Cook poured salt in old wounds that Louis Armstrong had suffered as a youth in New Orleans, when he was hoodwinked by light skinned creole, Armand Piron, who had a big hit with Armstrong's "I Wish I Could Shimmy Like My Sister Kate." With fascism on the rise in Europe in 1937, the last thing Armstrong and Russell needed was for a respected member of their race to try to organize a boycott of their national weekly radio show, just as it was getting off the ground, and to be condemned in pro Hitler and anti-Semitic terms. Fortunately, there was push back, as the African-American press on the whole embraced the Fleischmann's Yeast broadcasts as a true milestone of black accomplishment. Armstrong and Russell took their case directly to the people, of all races, by simply continuing to ply the

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<sup>147</sup> "Would Boycott Satchmo Program," *Philadelphia Tribune*, 17 April 1937.

art that they loved. By necessity, Louis Armstrong developed a thick skin and an ability to ignore criticism, which sometimes came in the form of professional jealousy of highbrows of his own race, as well as from the mainstream white press.

Promotional Collage for Louis Armstrong & His Orchestra 1937 produced by Joe Glaser (Catherine Russell Collection)



Louis Armstrong & His Orchestra, Regal Theater Chicago May 1937, left to right: Henry "Red" Allen – trumpet, J.C. Higginbotham – trombone, Louis Bacon – trumpet, George "Pops" Foster – bass, George Washington - trombone, Luis Russell – piano, Shelton Hemphill – trumpet, Louis Armstrong, James Archey – trombone, Charles Holmes – Alto Sax, Albert Nicholas – Alto & Clarinet & Tenor Sax, Paul Barbarin – drums, Bingie Madison – tenor sax, Pete Clark – alto sax, Lee Blair – guitar. (Catherine Russell Collection)



Luis Russell at Piano with Louis Armstrong Orchestra sax section  
(Catherine Russell Collection)

The pattern of weaving radio, touring, recording, and Hollywood, continued through the summer and fall of 1937, with Luis Russell orchestra touring both with and without Louis Armstrong. During one run out together, the band covered New England, the East Coast and the South, in route to the eventual destination, Los Angeles. At a stop in Savannah, Georgia, they ran into Joe King Oliver, who was down on his luck and now working outside of music. They were all happy to see each other, and Satchmo along with Luis Russell and some of his boys who had worked with King Oliver all reached into their pockets and gave their mentor Papa Joe some cash to help tide him along.

Arriving in Los Angeles in November of 1937, Luis Russell hit the West Coast for the first time in his career, in a context, as Louis Armstrong's piano player and orchestra leader, that was as high profile as it could get. The band set up a residency at The Vogue in Los Angeles, initially for a month, and then held over. Once again, the black press had the story.

**Headline: Ol' Satchmo Band Hits at Coast Niterly – Trumpet King is Topping All Records at L.A. "New Vogue"**

"More than five times as many persons attended the big premiere as the hall has hithertofore draw." Breaking the ice for Race artists. Contract for 4 weeks, already planning a 4 week hold over.<sup>148</sup>

While on the West Coast, the San Francisco Bay area based promoter, Byron "Speed" Reilly, spoke with *The Pittsburgh Courier* comparing Louis Armstrong's drawing power with other artists.

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<sup>148</sup> "Ol' Satchmo Band Hits at Coast Niterly," *Chicago Defender*, 27 November 1937.

Headline: **“Louis Armstrong Best Box Office Draw, Says Reilly”**


Who’s the greatest box office attraction among Sepia Artists? Byron “Speed” Reilly, who has presented more top notch attractions than any other individual on the Coast during his nine years in the promotion game, answered the question without hesitancy. “Louis Armstrong is the best b.o. Draw, right now with Ella Fitzgerald and Jimmy Lunceford following closely,” Reilly said. The impresario made the above statement on the basis of his successful presentations of such aggregations as Duke Ellington, Earl Hines, Cab Calloway, Lionel Hampton, Fletcher Henderson. “There is more enthusiasm over Armstrong’s appearance in Oakland,” the promoter added, “than Joe Louis aroused when presented and 7000 people turned out, half of them white.”<sup>149</sup>

“Speed” Reilly was more than just a music promoter. Reilly was a renaissance man, wearing many hats; newspaper journalist, sports editor for multiple newspapers, organizer and president of the Berkeley International League (a semi-pro baseball league), and booking agent and producer for major musical and variety acts that came through the Bay Area. He was a mover and shaker who made things happen. Joe Louis, at the close of 1937, had recently claimed the World Crown as boxing’s heavyweight champ and was a major celebrity and a hero in the African American community. Louis Armstrong’s appearance stirred even more interest than that of Joe Louis, according to the man who promoted both, “Speed” Reilly. Years later, Luis Russell’s post Armstrong orchestra mounted a national tour with the by then iconic super star, Joe Louis, a first in cross marketing music and sports in a national tour.

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<sup>149</sup> “Louis Armstrong Best Box Office Draw, Says Reilly,” *Pittsburgh Courier*, 25 December 1937.



<p>THE KING is COMING</p> <p>Byron "Speed" Reilly Takes Pleasure in Presenting—</p> <p>THE GREATEST OF ★ ATTRACTIONS ★</p> <p><b>LOUIE ARMSTRONG</b></p> <p>WITH HIS ORIGINAL FAMOUS ORCHESTRA</p> <p><b>MON. DEC. 20</b></p> <p><b>Sweet's Ballroom</b> Franklin at 14th St., Oakland, Calif.</p> <p>ADM. \$1.00 DANCE 'till 2</p> <p>DOORS OPEN — 8:30 p.m.</p>	<p><b>In Person</b></p>  <p>The Trumpet The Personality The King Himself With Songs and Hot Tunes</p> <p><b>Louie Armstrong</b></p>	<p>DOORS OPEN — 8:30 p.m.</p> <p>Oh Boy!—What a night An A Galaxy of Stars</p> <p>★ Maestro <b>LUIS RUSSELL</b> AT THE PIANO</p> <p>★ Miss <b>Bobbie Caston</b> HOW THIS BABY SINGS</p> <p>★ Henry "Red" Allen "SATCHMO'S" UNDERSTUDY</p> <p>★ <b>Sonny Woods</b> YOU'LL LIKE HIS SONGS</p> <p>18 ARTISTS IN ALL 18 SEE and HEAR THEM with</p> <p><b>Louie Armstrong</b> "KING of the TRUMPET"</p> <p>AT <b>SWEET'S</b> <b>Monday Dec. 20</b></p>
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Byron "Speed" Reilly's Flyer for Oakland, CA appearance 12/20/37 Sweet's (Catherine Russell Collection)

Having conquered California during the fall of 1937, Louis Armstrong returned to Chicago for a triumphant homecoming, opening a six-week engagement at the New Grand Terrace on January 28, 1938. A story in the *Chicago Defender* on January 29<sup>th</sup> announced the opening, accompanied by a photo of Sonny Woods, Bobbie Caston, and Luis Russell, under the headline "In Town With Satchmo's Band." The story read, in part, "With his orchestra, "Satchmo" has been breaking records at every house or café where he appeared

and judging from the reservations that are coming in, the Terrace will not hold the crowd on opening nor any other night of the engagement.”<sup>150</sup> A week later, on February 5<sup>th</sup>, the headline read, “Satchmo’s Premier Packs Grand Terrace, Turns Hundreds Away Even at \$3.50 Per.” Excerpts from the review, under the by line by James J. Gentry, provide insight into the high esteem in which Armstrong is held, decidedly reverential. We also gain a window into the set list, and the varied sources drawn upon in constructing the show.

Ole Satchmo the “happy genius” came through with a peach of a premiere at Ed Fox’s Grand Terrace café Friday night, with a full house of mixed patrons in formal attire.

Every age is known to produce one or two geniuses to the musical world, but Louis Armstrong is by far the greatest ever recorded as a trumpeter in the past quarter century. It is interesting to notice how the famous “tooter” sprang up in the stage world under every possible disadvantage and worked his solitary but irresistible way through a thousand obstacles.

With his golden trumpet under his arm, the king bowed and acknowledged greetings until he was nearly dizzy. The first group of songs played by the band was “Jammin,” “My Cabin of Dreams,” “Ida,” “Confessing,” “I’ve Got Rhythm,” “Blossoms on Broadway,” “Ain’t Misbehavin’,” “They All Laughed,” “Algiers Stomp,” “Rockin’ Chair” and “Muskrat Ramble.”

Satchmo worked hard on this night doing his utmost to blow the tip end of his cornet off. His singing was far better than heretofore and his general physical appearance is pink. His band under the guidance of Smiling Luis Russell played with grace and ease, despite the fact that they rehearsed all through the day up until near the opening hour.

Joe Glaser, Louis’ manager and Ed Fox, proprietor of the Terrace, were comfortably seated near ringside with friends, acknowledging the congrats both in person and telegraphic.<sup>151</sup>

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<sup>150</sup> “In Town With Satchmo’s Band,” *Chicago Defender*, 29 January 1938.

<sup>151</sup> “Satchmo’s Premier Packs Grand Terrace,” *Chicago Defender*, 5 February 1938.

To place the \$3.50 Per ticket price in context, one month earlier, when Benny Goodman played his historic concert at Carnegie Hall in New York City on January 16, 1938, the top priced seat was \$2.75. With Joe Glaser's Chicago roots, and both Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell having spent formative musical years there, the satisfaction of returning to Chicago as a top national attraction, took on added weight.

Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra were broadcast from the New Grand Terrace in Chicago in early 1938, and four aluminum discs of radio broadcasts were recently discovered in Luis Russell's collection. These recordings, along with the Fleischmann's Yeast recordings which were preserved in Satchmo's archive, reinforce a new understanding and appreciation of Swing Era Louis Armstrong.

The set list as described in the *Chicago Defender* review of opening night, reveals a savvy mix of Armstrong signature tunes ("Rockin' Chair," "Muskrat Ramble," "Ain't Misbehavin'"), and new compositions plucked from the hit parade and the latest Hollywood big screen offerings. In the latter category, we find the Gershwin tune "They All Laughed," which Ginger Rogers and Fred Astaire used as a vehicle to delight audiences in the 1937 film *Shall We Dance*. "Blossoms on Broadway" was culled from the Paramount musical comedy film of the same title, which had just been released in November of 1937, launching the song to #3 on the Your Weekly Hit Parade survey, recorded by Dick Robertson and His

Orchestra, the same Dick Robertson who sang “I Got Rhythm” on Luis Russell’s *and* Red Nichols’s one-day-apart 1930 recordings. “I Got Rhythm,” a tune with which both Russell and Armstrong have history, is in the set, as is “Jammin’,” which gained traction for Tommy Dorsey during 1937. “Algiers Stomp,” is a Henry “Red” Allen signature tune, which he had recorded as a leader in 1936, a catchy riff based dance tune, titled to pay homage to his home town, Algiers, Louisiana. The set list is color blind, celebrating diversity and quality, with tunes from African-American writers like Fats Waller, Andy Razaf, and Kid Ory, and from white composers, like the Gershwins and Hoagy Carmichael.

The four Luis Russell aluminum discs from radio recordings made at the Grand Terrace in Chicago, most likely during the February 1938 run, contain additional titles, some of which Armstrong and Russell never recorded as studio versions, including “Mr. Ghost Goes to Town” (recorded by both Mills Blue Rhythm Band and Louis Prima), the Mary Lou Williams composition “Riffs,” also known as “Dunkin’ A Donut,” and the Chappie Willet composition “Blue Rhythm Fantasy.” These radio broadcasts solidify that the Armstrong – Russell Orchestra excelled at riff based dance oriented instrumentals, written by African-American composers/arrangers Mary Lou Williams and Chappie Willet.

An unsung hero of the Swing Era, Chappie Willet was an accomplished composer and a highly sought-after arranger. Luis Russell gave Willet his first break, hiring the newcomer to arrange for his Orchestra’s engagements at The Apollo Theater in 1934, and in the fall of 1935, brought him into the Louis

Armstrong fold. A feature on Chappie Willet in the *New York Amsterdam News* on March 21, 1936 provides the narrative:

**Headline: Youth Creates for Armstrong: Willet, Hot Tune Writer, Holds Music Degree---Russell Aided Him**

Possibly the youngest and most successful of our current popular arrangers and composers is Chappie Willet, who writes music for the world's greatest trumpeter, Louis (Satchelmouth) Armstrong...

Born in Philadelphia, Chappie received his B.S. in music at West Virginia State, where Clarence Cameron White, famous violinist, encouraged him to study music. Although he excelled in both basketball and track, Chappie found time to organize a school orchestra in 1929 which later made no little reputation over the Columbia Broadcasting chain as the Graystone Orchestra.

Coming to New York in 1934, Willet made his first orchestrations for the Apollo Theatre where he met Luis Russell, who gave him his first chance to prove his skill. He made good, and when Luis and his band were engaged for Connie's Inn on Broadway, he continued with him. His compositions, "Jungle Madness" and "Blue Rhythm Fantasy" were featured regularly from that spot.

He has just finished orchestrations for "Keep Your Fingers Crossed" and "I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music," which Louis Armstrong will record for the Decca company. Chappie finds it necessary to work fifteen hours out of twenty-four so that such bands as Paul Whiteman, Bennie Goodman, Ozzie Nelson and Fred Waring may be able to play "Swing" music in the Negro manner ---thanks to his arrangements. --U.C.C.<sup>152</sup>

Cognizant of how he'd been given breaks as a young newcomer in New Orleans, Chicago and New York, once he became a leader, Luis Russell returned the favor, seeking out and cultivating young talents, like Chappie Willet. Although Russell himself was an arranger, he welcomed new blood. Rather than

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<sup>152</sup> "Youth Creates For Armstrong," *New York Amsterdam News*, 21 March 1936.

viewing Willet as a threat, Luis Russell sought to strengthen his unit and was more than happy to have assistance in the arranging department.

In March of 1938, *Downbeat* ran a full-page feature on Louis Armstrong under the headline, **“Satchelmouth” Symbol of Best Negro Music – Has Been Idol of Swing Music Disciples For Many Years**, with a photo of Louis under the caption, “The First King Of Swing.” While favorable acknowledgement in the mainstream white music press was more than welcome, it also comes across, in hindsight, as a sort of double edged sword, cutting into the notion that Swing belonged exclusively to white chart-topping artists, yet granting Armstrong his due with compromised legitimacy, as a symbol of “Negro” music, and not of the “Best” music regardless of race. The music being performed and recorded by the Armstrong – Russell orchestra at the time came from both black and white composers. Perhaps unintentionally, categorizing their music as “Negro,” defining music by skin color, and by style, comes across (looking back with the hindsight of the eighty years which have transpired since) as limiting, and even racist.

Armstrong is symbolic of the kind of swing which Negroes play so well. It strikes a gay mood most of the time, even in the blues which are played with such feeling by Armstrong.

Otherwise, the piece is overwhelmingly enthusiastic about the collaboration between Armstrong and Russell.

The present Armstrong organization merges two lines of leadership. The traditions and techniques of both Armstrong and Luis Russell meet in this new band, and each contributes much to the high quality of performance of which the band is today capable. With commercial success already attained, this new combination has the potentialities for giving swing fans top-notch performances of the best hot jazz, and indeed, when they swing

out on a Negro blues, or a stomp, or some other standard number, some of the finest soloists in jazz, as well as Satchmo himself, get the opportunity to tear loose on truly inspired renditions.<sup>153</sup>

The piece contains biographical sketches of each orchestra member, asking each to identify their favorite band and favorite soloist. More than half of the members, including Luis Russell, chose Duke Ellington as favorite band. Russell chose Teddy Wilson as favorite instrumental soloist, adding that Armstrong influenced him most. Many chose Armstrong as favorite instrumentalist. Albert Nicholas picked Ellington as his favorite band, and Barney Bigard, now with Ellington and his old pal from the Tom Anderson band in New Orleans and King Oliver's band in Chicago, as favorite instrumentalist.

Under the sub heading, "Politics and Management:"

Booked by Rockwell, O'Keefe, the Armstrong band is under the personal management of Joe Glaser, former owner of the Sunset Café. Luis Russell is the band's musical director, and it is his job to hire and fire, to arrange, and to take general charge of the band for public performances and rehearsals. Broadcasts are frequent over local stations, and the network wire is used whenever the band is on a chain spot. Recordings are for Decca.<sup>154</sup>

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<sup>153</sup> "Satchelmouth Symbol of Best of Negro Music," *Downbeat*, March 1938.

<sup>154</sup> *ibid.*

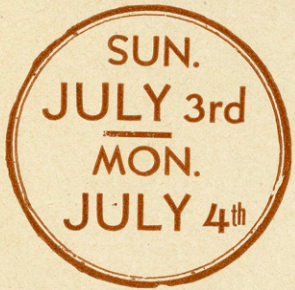




Following their triumphant six-week engagement at the Grand Terrace in Chicago in February and March of 1938, female vocalist Bobbie Caston, turned in her notice and left the Armstrong – Russell orchestra. Stories of fighting between Bobbie and male vocalist, Sonny Woods, also her husband, preceded her departure. Sonny remained as featured male vocalist. Caston was replaced by the highly-regarded Midge Williams, whose resumé included recordings as vocalist with Teddy Wilson orchestra, Miff Mole orchestra, and as a leader. By the end of March, the revamped Armstrong – Russell band were back in New York City, as reported in Lillian Johnson’s “Strictly Jive” column in the *Baltimore Afro-American*, “Louis Armstrong and Orchestra will open at Loew’s State Theatre on Broadway Thursday with Nicodemus, Alma Turner, The Two Zephyrs, and Midge Williams.”

In May of 1938, a pair of recording sessions took place for Decca, featuring Louis Armstrong with a scaled-down 10-piece orchestra, including Luis Russell on piano. Following these sessions, Armstrong and Russell wouldn’t record again for eight months, and for the balance of 1938, went off in different directions. Armstrong was involved in a variety of projects; recording with The Mills Brothers, recording spirituals with a choir under the direction of Lyn Murray, and filming *Going Places* in Los Angeles, performing the song “Jeepers Creepers.” Luis Russell worked shows without Armstrong, including two days at the Alhambra Ballroom in Harlem, on a co-bill with Erskine Hawkins, on July 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>.

Two Great Days - Two Sensational Attractions



SUN.  
JULY 3rd  
MON.  
JULY 4th

**LUIS RUSSELL**

AND HIS  
CONNIES INN ORCHESTRA

ALSO

**BAMA STATE COLLEGIANS**

DIRECT FROM  
MONTGOMERY ALABAMA

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*Alhambra Ballroom*  
7th Ave at 126th St.

**BARGAIN PRICES**

3	to	4	-	20c.
4	to	5	-	25c.
5	to	6	-	30c.
6	to	Closing		40c.

show flyer July 3-4, 1938 (Catherine Russell Collection)

The week of August 26, the Luis Russell Orchestra returned to headline The Apollo Theater in Harlem, for a fee of \$1400. The following month, a huge Swing Music Festival was held at Randall's Island in New York City, and the Luis Russell Orchestra closed the event, which featured an all-star assemblage of black talent, including Count Basie, Hot Lips Paige, Willie Bryant, Cab Calloway, John Kirby, Roy Eldridge, and Erskine Hawkins. On his Randall's Island set, Luis Russell performed one of his newer originals, a co-write, titled "At The Swing Cat's Ball," which would soon be covered by Louis Jordan on his first recording session as Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five, in March of 1939.

A "professional copy" of the sheet music, found in Luis Russell's collection, lists Words and Music by Luis Russell and William Campbell,

Published by The Braun Music Co., Copyright 1938 by Hubert J. Braun, Chicago, Illinois, and listing office addresses in both Chicago and New York City. A recently discovered radio aircheck, from an acetate in Luis Russell's personal collection, finds what is most likely Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra without Louis, hence the Luis Russell Orchestra, performing "At The Swing Cat's Ball," most likely in 1938, although they never released a studio recording of it. Six months before Louis Jordan recorded the tune, on Thursday September 15, 1938, a Festival of Swing Music took place on Randall's Island in New York City. On Saturday September 17, a review of the Festival appeared in the New York Amsterdam News, written by Charles W. Edgar, under the headline: "Jitterbugs At Randall's Are Sent By Bands -- Nine of Leading Orks in Big Festival of Swing Music on Island." The event featured the cream of African-American Orchestras, the review began "...there gathered at the stadium at Randall's Island nine of the leading colored orchestras in the country. All the cats and jitterbugs who attended were satisfied." The Orchestras included those of Cab Calloway, Hot Lips Page, Claude Hopkins, Count Basie, Willie Bryant, and Luis Russell, who continued performing his own shows without Louis Armstrong, whenever possible, and in this case, closing the Festival. The review continued, "Last but by no means least came Luis Russell and his famous band. George Dewey Washington and Sonny Woods gave their usual brilliant performances."

After the Festival, musicians gathered at Alhambra Grill, where the the writer, Charles W. Edgar, concluded his review by saying he "overheard George

Dewey Washington talking with a friend and he seems to think that the number, “Swing Cats Ball” written by Luis Russell, is headed places.”<sup>155</sup>

No doubt, Russell performing his tune and getting a press shout out, helped to build the buzz. “At The Swing Cats Ball” was ahead of the curve. Luis Russell’s radio recording features an arrangement which is as much a jump blues as a swing tune, with the saxes at one point mimicking a boogie woogie blues piano lick.

By December, Armstrong and Russell were reunited. On December 10, 1938, *Billboard* ran a review of a concert at Pia-Mor Ballroom in Kansas City, excerpted here:

One of the few real pioneers of today’s dance music, Louie and his gold trumpet are listed highly by musicians and dancers. Aside from his musical ability – which no one questions – Armstrong is a natural showman and has a knack of scoring with all types of audiences.

Louis has had many bands in his day. Currently, the one he calls his own is Luis Russell’s and includes six brass, four each of sax and rhythm. And with Satchmo himself blasting out the high notes 40 per cent of the time the band is in action, it makes a wild and woolly seven-way brass group that’s featured more than the other sections. An amplifying system is just extra baggage for the Armstrong crew.

His flash horn work and infectious vocal style rightfully dominate most of the offerings, but Satch is no slouch in allowing his mates to take over the stand for solo instrumental and vocal contributions. Luis Russell, pianist, Henry (Ride, Red, Ride) Allen, trumpeter, and Paul Barbarin, drummer, handle most of the hot passages, and vocals are by Midge Williams and Sonny Woods.<sup>156</sup>

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<sup>155</sup> Charles W. Edgar, “Jitterbugs at Randall’s Are Sent By Bands –Nine Leading Orks in Big Festival of Swing Music on Island.” *New York Amsterdam News*, 17 September 1938, Section A, p.9.

<sup>156</sup> Dexter, “Louis Armstrong (reviewed at Pia-Mor Ballroom, Kansas City),” *Billboard*, December 19.

In January of 1939, Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra, with Luis Russell at the helm, opened a two-week engagement at The Strand Theater in New York City. The bill was notable due to the addition of Bill “Bojangles” Robinson, who by that time had starred in movies and was a major headliner, and was equally billed with Armstrong. One flyer advertising the show has Bill Robinson’s name above Armstrong’s, while also billing Rogers & Gordon, Nicodemus, Midge Williams, Henry (Red) Allen, Sonny Woods, Luis Russell, and special added attraction, The Dandridge Sisters.



BILL ROBINSON LUIS RUSSELL STRAND THEATRE N.Y.





Bill Robinson & Luis Russell, Strand Theatre, NYC Jan. 1939 (Catherine Russell Collection) above, Grand Finale, below





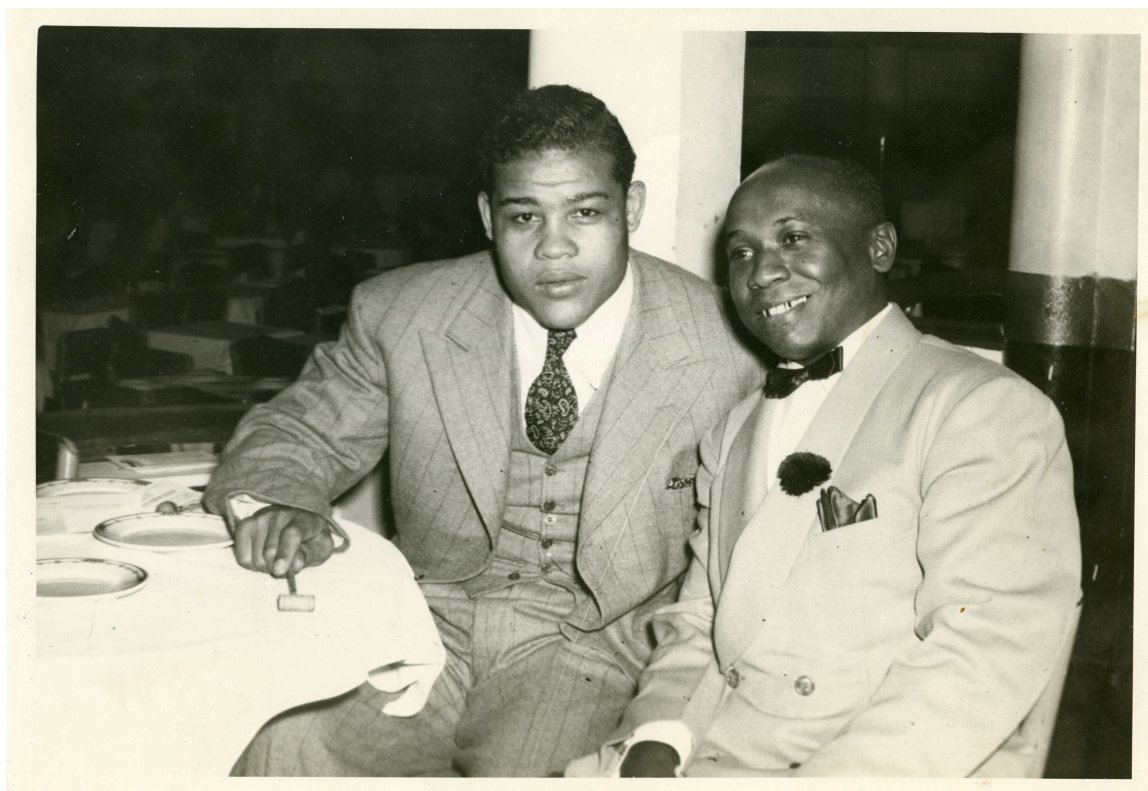
Louis & Luis at The Strand, NYC, Jan 1939 (Catherine Russell Collection)





Promotional photo of Paul Barbarin, signed "To my Favorite singer Midge Williams with Lots of Luck Paul" (Catherine Russell Collection)

Following a two-week engagement at The Strand in New York City in January, 1939, the band headed out on tour, playing a succession of one night engagements across the South, East, and Midwest from January through the end of August. They then began a 7-month residency at the new midtown version of The Cotton Club, which would become their new home base while in NYC.



Joe Louis and Luis Russell, Dec 10, 1939, The Cotton Club, NYC (Catherine Russell Collection)

Luis Russell kept a date book with itineraries showing the day by day touring schedule of Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, intense road work which took them from coast to coast and to Canada, traveling almost non-stop. There

was one hiccup for Luis Russell, which ended his tenure as musical director, with a news announcement on May 15, 1940.

**Headline: Satchmo Fires Six Men**

New York – Louis Armstrong put six men on notice last week, including Luis Russell, Charlie Holmes, Lee Blair, Pops Foster, Bernard Flood and Bingie Madison. The split with Russell was big news inasmuch as Satchmo had been using Russell's original band since 1935.

John Williams succeeds Foster on bass, Eddie Heywood, the Benny Carter pianist takes Russell's chair. Armstrong first recorded with Russell's band in early 1930 on OKeh 41350, *St. Louis Blues*. Then after a trip to Europe, Armstrong returned and reunited with Russell.<sup>157</sup>

A follow up story appeared several weeks later, on June 1, 1940

**Headline: Joe Garland New Leader; Russell Stays**

New York – New plans for the revamping of Louis Armstrong's lineup have Joe Garland as the new leader. The tenor sax man, best known for his jive opus *In The Mood*, replaces Luis Russell in this capacity, but Russell will, after all, remain with the aggregation as pianist. Charlie Holmes, also slated to leave, has been reinstated in his alto chair.

Red Allen, Higginbotham, Sidney Catlett, and Scad Hemphill are others unaffected by the reorganization. New men include Johnny Williams, bassist from the Coleman Hawkins band, and Lawrence Lucie, Hawkins' guitarist, who took Lee Blair's chair. A trumpet and tenor are still to be added.

Luis Russell continued as piano player, but was no longer leading the orchestra. He filmed four soundies with Louis Armstrong in Los Angeles on April

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<sup>157</sup> "Satchmo Fires Six Men," *Downbeat*, 15 May 1940.

20, 1942, including “I’ll Be Glad When You’re Dead You Rascal You,” “When It’s Sleepy Time Down South,” “Shine,” and “Swingin’ On Nothing.” The touring continued. On April 23, 1943, back in Los Angeles, Luis Russell filmed “I Can’t Give You Anything But Love” with Louis Armstrong for the Hollywood feature, “Jam Session.” It would be Luis Russell’s final recording with Louis Armstrong. He handed in his notice, and was once again, New York City bound.

## Chapter 6 – Luis Russell Orchestra 1943-1950 “Savoy”

When Luis Russell handed in his notice to Louis Armstrong, he was announcing his intention to leave what had been his home for the past seven and a half years. He was looking ahead, planning to return to leading his own orchestra. The odds against him were long. The band business had undergone major changes and was continuing to shift under his feet. He contemplated an audacious move. The audience for Big Bands was fragmenting. Big Bands were populated with both veteran players who had come from New Orleans, Chicago, Atlanta, Pittsburgh, Philadelphia, Cincinnati, Nashville, St. Louis, Kansas City, and from across the U.S., joined by a young crop of college educated musicians, infiltrating the ranks of the established orchestras. Both the veterans and the newcomers were dissatisfied with the staid straight jacket of commercial arrangements which gave little room for individual self-expression. A youth movement was emerging from within of boppers, who would soon be breaking away from Big Bands and starting to perform and record in smaller groups. They were turning off the audience who wanted to dance to Swing; who were not interested in a new art that was difficult to comprehend, and required serious listening. Another faction, which had coalesced into a movement by 1940, were interested in returning to the original New Orleans jazz, and to Dixieland. With Big Bands folding due to shifting taste and economic pressures, and smaller groups taking diametrically divergent paths of “bebop” versus “moldy figs,” Luis Russell saw an alternative, which appealed to a young audience. With traction in the black community, and with excitement for both dancers and listeners, Rhythm

n' Blues and Jump Blues were new genres, the next incarnation of "race" records, though not billed that way, starting to make a mark. Bands like Louis Jordan and His Tympany Five and Joeiggins and His Honeydrippers exemplified the trend towards a fun, upbeat, and danceable hybrid, performed with five or six pieces, able to successfully tour with a smaller footprint and lower overhead. At the same time, crooning vocalists and Swing band singers, who had served in Big Bands, given a brief "feature" within a larger show, were starting to emerge as headliners, capable of selling records and theater tickets under their own name.

Luis Russell watched with interest as his inner circle, the players he had known from New Orleans, Chicago, and who had come through his orchestras, began to find work, and recording and touring opportunities, based on their pedigree and history, in the new world of the revivalism of New Orleans jazz. Albert Nicholas, Paul Barbarin, and Pops Foster were landing in new situations. Red Allen and J.C. Higginbotham had become a team, leading a small group. Kid Ory was spearheading the New Orleans revival on the west coast. Artists like Bunk Johnson and George Lewis were being "discovered." Collectors, promoters, and fans, were forming a supportive network in Europe. The New Orleans revival route could have been an easy path for Luis Russell, but it wasn't one that interested him. He preferred to return to the format which had allowed him success in pursuing his artistic passions; creating fun music for dancing and listening, accompanying vocalists, writing original songs and arrangements, and anchoring a Big Band with his piano.

Luis Russell's relationship with Joe Glaser broke with convention. Russell exited the Louis Armstrong Orchestra, and remained in Glaser's good graces. In 1943, eight years after Joe Glaser took over the Luis Russell Orchestra to have Russell serve as Louis Armstrong's Orchestra leader, musical director, arranger, and pianist, Luis Russell gave his notice, and announced his intention to reform his own Orchestra. At first, after leaving Armstrong, Luis Russell worked through The Gale Agency, one of Glaser's competitors, achieving noticeable success. Moe Gale, was a part owner of the Savoy Ballroom in Harlem, the leading Swing Era dance hall. The Savoy would become a home base for the new Luis Russell orchestra.

A press release hit the wire services, and appears in different iterations in the July and August of 1943, copies saved in Luis Russell's scrapbook.

Stopping off in Chicago for a week's rest before boarding a fast train to New York, Luis Russell, famed bandleader whose name is synonymous with swing music and whose versatility in handling a musical aggregation can be classed as the major attribution to the success of one of our leading trumpet players, revealed his plans for a new band immediately upon arrival in New York City.

In building his new band, Russell avowed that his new music would be styled in the realm of sweet, swing and hot, rounded out and styled for old and young dancers Alike. To further the popularity of his new outfit, plans have been worked out extensively to introduce young talent which probably has been overlooked by famed-wreched "name band leader."

And another scrapbook entry.

According to the late reports received from orchestral headquarters of Luis Russell, it was learned that his new orchestra should be ready to "hit" by the middle of September.





Luis Russell Orchestra on Stage Savoy Ballroom 1943, l to r. Luis Russell, Eddie Gibbs, Nora Blunt, Bass Hill, Chick Morrison, George Dorsey, Howard Callander, Johnnie Buggs, Lem Johnson (Catherine Russell Collection)

Appearing with Luis Russell at the Savoy in 1943, a novel instrument played by guitarist Eddie Gibbs, an electra-harp, an early version of a pedal steel guitar.



# AT THE SAVOY BALLROOM

COOTIE WILLIAMS

AND HIS ORCHESTRA

PLUS

LUIS RUSSELL

AND HIS ORCHESTRA

BEST MUSIC IN TOWN



CATHERINE RUSSELL COLLECTION



EDDIE GIBBS

Meet Eddie Gibbs and his Electra-Harp, currently featured with Louis Russell's Orchestra at the Savoy Ballroom nitely. The Electra-harp is a difficult instrument to master, as there are no instruction books, so you have to "bring it from scratch."

This instrument is a combination of organ, guitar, and harp, and is manipulated by six pedals which gives different chord changes.

Luis' outfit has already made a name for itself, and is one of the highlights of the Savoy. The unique and original arrangements played in the typical Russell manner make going to the Savoy a *Must* on your list.



Unknown, Luis Russell, Savoy Ballroom? (Catherine Russell Collection)

After spending two months at the Savoy in early 1944, Luis Russell hit the road with his Orchestra, appearing as part of a package tour with singer Lil Green and The Deep River Boys. Lil Green was enjoying popularity based on her hit record, "Romance In The Dark," and the pairing gave Luis Russell a great opportunity to reach a new audience.

The tour with Lil Green ended with the Harlem debut of Luis Russell's new orchestra, with a week at the Apollo beginning Friday July 21, 1944. In August, there was a location gig at Club Plantation in St. Louis, a bill of Luis Russell, Ella Fitzgerald, Nora Blunt, and Clyde Bernhardt. Back at the Apollo for the week beginning September 1<sup>st</sup>, Luis Russell shared the bill with the Four Ink Spots, new vocal sensations, who were managed by Moe Gale.

In 1945, Luis Russell was back at the Savoy in NYC with a radio wire. Several 12" glass discs of these broadcasts, never released, were discovered. He continued to build up his new orchestra, and in August hired a young drummer from Boston, Roy Haynes, who replaced Percy Brice. As of this writing, both Roy Haynes, age 93, and Percy Brice, age 95, are active and still performing, and I've spoken to both about their stints with Luis Russell in the 1940's.

Roy Haynes was born in Boston in 1925, and was a 20-year-old drummer working around New England when he received a letter from Luis Russell.

New York, Aug. 22, 1945

Dear Roy,

I am writing in reference to you joining my band. You were recommended to me by Charles Holmes. I do hope that you will consider coming with us. I have a very good band now, and really going places. We are opening the Apollo Theatre here this Friday and have quite a few theatres following. Now here is my offer as salary goes. In theatres I will pay you \$125.00 per week and on one nighters \$18.00 per night. We will have to get together on salary for location because some location jobs the scale is rather low, jobs like Savoy Ballroom or Club Riviera St. Louis. I would appreciate an answer from you right back.

Yours truly

Luis Russell

566 - W. 159 St Apt 71

New York, N.Y.<sup>158</sup>

Roy was rightly impressed and thrilled to receive an invitation that included important details, especially, the pay. Such consideration for his side men stood Luis Russell in good stead throughout his career, gaining him admiration and respect.

An extensive tour followed with heavyweight champ, Joe Louis, as well as vocalist Betti Mays, and actor Ralph Cooper.

With recordings in 1946 for Apollo Records and the addition of young vocalist Lee Richardson, the new Luis Russell Orchestra was taking off in a big way, with records hitting the juke box charts. Extensive touring followed, including sharing bills with the Nat King Cole Trio, Nellie Lutcher, Dinah Washington, Louis Jordan, Ruth Brown, and Johnny Moore's Three Blazers.

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<sup>158</sup> Luis Russell, New York, NY to Roy Haynes, Boston, MA, 22 August 1945. Transcript in the hand of Luis Russell, courtesy of Roy's daughter, Leslie K. Haynes.



Luis Russell Orchestra 1946 with Roy Haynes on drums (Catherine Russell Collection)





Elate Ballroom, Philadelphia, Oct 10, 1946, Johnny Moore's Three Blazers and Luis Russell, l to r. policeman, Eddie Williams – b. Luis Russell, Johnny Moore – guitar, Charles Brown – p, John Hopkins (Catherine Russell Collection)



Luis Russell and Lee Richardson, Elate 10/10/46 (Catherine Russell Collection)



Luis Russell directing recording session





Luis Russell, Roy Haynes (in rear seated), Lee Richardson (receiving scroll for Most Popular Vocalist 1946) (Catherine Russell Collection)

**Headline: Lee Richardson Most Popular Vocalist of 1946 Receives Scroll As N.Y. Press Attend In Body**

New York, (IPS.) ---"Harlem's Apollo Theatre on last Saturday midnight was the scene of "big doings" as Lee Richardson, brilliant romantic baritone singer with Luis Russell's Orchestra, was named the "Most Popular Vocalist of 1946" and received a Scroll (pictured above).

The honor bestowed upon the newcomer (as stated by Ted Yates, IPS. Editor-in-Chief as he presented the scroll) "because of the ever-increasing demand for his voice on Apollo Records and the popularity he has brought and is still bringing to Luis Russell's Orchestra --a truly great musical aggregation--has by leaps and bounds become the biggest name in the Negro entertainment field," is the sepia counter-part of Bing Crosby, Frank Sinatra, Perry Como and Jean Sablon."

Survey of Independent Press Service, Attending, editors Amsterdam News, N.Y. Age, People's Voice, Associated Negro Press, Rhythm Magazine.

**Headline: Luis Russell Band Plus Lee Richardson, Singer, Are Apollo's Standouts** "The finest musical surprise in years --Luis Russell's new band will appear on the stage of Apollo Theatre next week...Russell has amazed and delighted his friends of the theatre-going public by bringing forth a really sensational swing orchestra.

The climax in the band's sudden rise to fame came last week when the band appeared at the Paradise Theatre in Detroit and smashed by many hundreds of dollars the record established by Count Basie!

A poll which was just completed by 154 newspapers throughout a country wide survey comprising the Negro press has resulted in the selection of Luis Russell as the outstanding male vocalist of 1946.

Reviews by Ralph Emmett of "The Cash Box" Week of July 29, 1946, Disk O'The Week "The Very Thought Of You" Luis Russell Orchestra (Apollo 1012), now No 1 on the Harlem Hit Parade Week of Aug 12, 1946 Burning the Jukes in Harlem



l to r. Luis Russell, Rex Ingram (star of stage, screen radio, Oscar Moore – g., Nat Cole, Johnny Miller – b. Dusty Fletcher (comedian), Earle Theater, Philadelphia Jan 16, 1947 (Catherine Russell Collection)

Nat Cole and Luis Russell (Catherine Russell Collection)



Press clippings from Luis Russell's scrapbook (Catherine Russell Collection)

Philadelphia Inquirer Sat Jan 11, 1947

Headline: **King Cole Trio Tops Bill on Earle Stage** by Mildred Martin

"It's a wonder, though, the customers had enough breath left to greet this popular trio with a whisper, let alone with wall-shaking howls, for they had been steadily whooping it up all through the all-Negro show, featuring Luis Russell and his band, reaching something of a new high in yelling, moaning, shrieking approval of Lee Richardson, a sepia Sinatra if there ever was one."

Headline under photo of Lee Richardson: **Doing Phillytown** -- "Making his first theatre date here this wee at the Earle Theatre, young Lee Richardson, romantic baritone with Luis Russell's orchestra, is the counter-balance on the fast show featuring King Cole Trio, Dusty Fletcher, and Edwards Sisters. The screaming female patrons are demanding the tunes Lee and Luis made popular on Apollo records in the past year, and the gents are obliging them."

Philadelphia Daily News Sat Jan 11, 1947

Headline: **King Cole Trio, Luis Russell featured on stage at the Earle**

"A new singing star in the making at the Earle theater and it looks like Lee Richardson, male vocalist with Luis Russell's band, is the hottest thing to come to the fore since Billy Eckstine catapulted to fame. He gets a Sinatra-like reception that makes you sit up and listen to his four numbers..brings shrieks from the females in the audience and approval from the males."

Sat Jan 18, 1947, Philly Paper, Headline: **Cole Trio, Russell's Ork, Dusty Are Earle Clicks** by Nat Middleton, Jr. "Anything about or by the King Cole Trio is hardly "old hat," but those three gentlemen who have definitely arrived are being eclipsed to some degree in screaming acceptance by young Lee Richardson, romantic baritone with Luis Russell's greatly rejuvenated band...

Richardson, a Washington D.C., youth who says Aug 6, 1922 is his birthdate, rose into recorded prominence when he scored on the Apollo label singing Ray Noble's "The Very Thought of You," with Luis Russell's band. Since then he had repeated his discographic triumph with "Don't Take Your Love From Me," and the one to which is added his own lyrics, "Sad Lover Blues," conceived during a trip by train to join Russell, when all the GIs around him had girls and he had only empty arms. This is not his only attempt at lyrics but someone else adds the music."



Luis Russell and Lee Richardson visit Record Shop (Catherine Russell Collection)

In 1946 Glaser signed the Luis Russell Orchestra to Associated Booking Corp., which produced a 12- page promotional packet, feeding Russell's history and talking points to promoters with pitch sheets and sample press releases.

Having the clout of Joe Glaser and ABC working on his behalf, Luis Russell's calendar filled up in 1947 and 1948, additionally aided by the success of his Orchestra's recordings featuring a young vocalist in a Billy Eckstine mold, Lee Richardson. During this same time period, Glaser pivoted Louis Armstrong from fronting a Big Band, to touring and performing with a smaller unit, billed as his All-Stars, which became Armstrong's touring format for the rest of his career. Glaser had it both ways, bringing in great fees for Louis Armstrong and His All-Stars, with a much lighter footprint in terms of road expenses, while also booking the 16 piece Luis Russell Orchestra featuring a rising star vocalist, Lee Richardson, in tune with the shifting tastes of the times. One can imagine the one night bookers in Joe Glaser's office, on the phone with promoters, meeting resistance to booking Louis Armstrong without his Orchestra, and being asked to pay a higher fee for a smaller band and a new and untested format. They might have said, we have just the thing for you, the piano player with Louis Armstrong's Orchestra, now leading his own 16-piece band.

Press sheet in the ABC Luis Russell packet excerpt:

COME ON IN - THE MUSIC'S FINE!

Luis Russell is coming to town with a band that is the swing sensation of the nation. He brings you a carload of entertainment, featuring Lee Richardson, the Baritone who is the MAN in ROMANCE.

But don't take our word for it. Come out to hear Luis Russell and his band, featuring Lee Richardson ("The Very Thought of You" and "Don't Take Your Love From Me") who will be at

\_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ and judge for yourself. We guarantee you'll come away saying you've witnessed the greatest entertainment in years.

Another page read in part:

#### LUIS RUSSELL AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Few bands have risen to paramount heights in such a short space of time as has Luis Russell's Orchestra. In less than a year this maestro has become a favorite with the bobbysock crowd and the older-folk as well.

Many remember Russell as the featured pianist with the 'original' Louis Armstrong Orchestra. They also remember a hit tune that was very popular back in the Roarin' Twenties, "The Call of The Freaks," which was composed and first successfully introduced by Russell.

Russell has a great musical aggregation, (N.Y. critics acclaim it, "his best --a triumphant hit success")

Russell co-starred with the King Cole Trio as the 1947 season opened. He is the top-favorite in the band world with vocalist Lee Richardson coming in for rousing applause.

When Luis Russell, the composer, of many popular tunes, comes to \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ he will introduce his Celebrated Orchestra.

The full booklet provides in depth insights into the publicity and promotion effort by ABC and Joe Glaser on behalf of the new Luis Russell Orchestra, and is included here:



LUIS RUSSELL

and his Orchestra

*featuring*

LEE RICHARDSON

*"America's Outstanding Male Vocalist"*



---

ASSOCIATED BOOKING CORP.  
Joe Glaser, President  
745 Fifth Avenue  
New York, N.Y.

#### FEATURE STORY

In the not so long ago Luis Russell assembled a group of musicians and told them that they were destined to become a great combination.

Russell knew that time would tell.

He knew what he wanted and he got the right talent together and immediately went about the task of creating "a band with a new kind of rhythm."

#### A HOLDOVER

Playing the Apollo Theatre in New York, the Howard in Washington, D.C., the Royal Theatre in Baltimore, and the Regal Theatre in Chicago, Russell established himself as a crowd-pleaser. A great composer himself and a recognized pianist the maestro had labored diligently to make his band a tremendous success. Newspaper writers and feature writers on magazines went "all out" for this great big new band.

It was after a series of theatre dates that Russell was booked by Associated Booking Corporation to play Washington D. C.'s Club Louisiana. The fact that Russell's Orchestra was the first musical aggregation to be presented at the new and popular nitery in the nation's capital was indeed an honor. The choice was a select one, for Russell pleased so well that he was a holdover.

The same thing happened at the Club Plantation in St. Louis. Oddly enough in the Mound City Russell (even when he played with Louis Armstrong's Band) has always been a favorite, but this time he outdid his popularity. After an extended engagement of eight weeks the band was called back two months later for another extraordinary long run. Such popularity must be deserved.

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PRESS SHEET:

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Russell has a great musical aggregation, (N.Y. critics acclaim it, "his best--a triumphant hit success")

Russell co-starred with the King Cole trio as the 1947 season opened. He is the top-favorite in the band world with vocalist Lee Richardson coming in for a rousing round of applause.

\* \* \* \* \*

LUIS RUSSELL, THE COMPOSER

HAS A CELEBRATED ORCHESTRA TOO

When Luis Russell, the composer, of many popular tunes, comes to the \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ for \_\_\_\_\_ he will introduce His Celebrated Orchestra. Russell who has written "Call of the Freaks", "In Old Chicago" and many other popular numbers, organized his band about a year ago. He assembled a number of 'pick musicians and one of them, John Swan, is considered one of the best trumpet players in the country today--bar none.

\* \* \* \* \*



## LUIS RUSSELL'S ORCHESTRA

PERSONNEL  

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TRUMPETS

John Swan  
George A. Scott  
James Kearney  
James Thomas

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TROMBONES

Luther Brown  
Thomas Brown  
Charles Stovall

---

SAXOPHONES

Clarence C. Grimes  
Samuel Lee  
Esmond Samuels  
Howard Roberson  
Troy Stowe

---

Drums -- Roy Haynes  
Guitar - Ernie Williams  
Bass -- Leslie Bartlett  
Piano -- Howard Biggs

---

VOCALIST

Lee Richardson

---

ARRANGERS:

Courtney Williams  
Howard Biggs and  
Luis Russell

---

COME ON IN -- THE MUSIC'S FINE!

Luis Russell is coming to town a band that is the swing sensation of the nation. He brings to you a carload of entertainment, featuring Lee Richardson, the Baritone who is the MAN in ROMANCE. The "Blues Department" is handled by Troy Stowe and George "Scotty" Scott, a Tenor and a Trumpet man, respectively. Both of them can sing and shout the blues the way they should be sung and shouted.

This Band enjoys working, and you'll enjoy hearing it, because the boys pour their enthusiasm into their blowing. When they start jumpin' you'll have to start riding right with them. This is the music you'll love to dance by--that "just right" bounce tempo that puts you in the 'buggin' groove and keeps you there till the last chord is hit.

But don't take our word for it. Come out to hear Luis Russell and his band, featuring Lee Richardson ("The Very Thought Of You" and "Don't Take Your Love From Me") who will be at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_ and judge for yourself. We guarantee you'll come away saying you've witnessed the greatest entertainment in years.

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## BACKGROUND SKETCH OF LUIS RUSSELL

"Home Boy Makes Good" is Panama's version of Luis Russell's rise to fame. Born in Bocus del Toro, he was nicknamed "Major" by his playmates of whom he was leader and organizer, early displaying the qualities which have helped to make him a great band leader. He studied with his father, an accomplished pianist and school-teacher, and while still a child, was hired for his first night club job. Fellow-musicians refused to play beside him until he discarded short pants for more adult garb. From Colon to New Orleans at the age of 17 was Luis' first progression toward the goal he had set for himself. A determined and talented youngster, he soon became locally famous and was called to Chicago by King Oliver who was then in the height of his fame.

It was not long before Russell migrated to New York to form his own band composed of Jazz "Greats". He played the foremost theatres across the nation, including the Paramount, N.Y.C., and the most exclusive night clubs. The owner of Saratoga Club was so impressed by the band after they had played a long stand there that he gave the club to the band. However, the boys soon tired of running the Cabaret and returned to their first love, music. Many musicians have risen to fame under Russell's guidance. Henry "Red" Allen and Jay C. Higginbotham gained their renown as members of Russell's Hot Band of the thirties. He has given his musicians opportunity to display their talents and afforded a musical background for the expression of their art. Louis Armstrong did one of his best recordings using Russell's arrangement and band.

Luis Russell formed a new band in 1943 which has been in demand from New York to California, playing return engagements again and again. Besides featuring his side men, he himself is spotlighted at the piano as never before. Russell recently met with great acclaim when he toured with Joe Louis and his "Champion" Headliners.

Background Sketch of Luis Russell (2)

"The Genial Genius of the Keyboard" continues to study and practice, exemplifying the truth that no musician, however talented, can maintain, without diligent work, the standard that Russell himself has retained. He is constantly on the alert for new ideas, talent, and musical vistas to probe. His interest in youngsters with ambition is well known, his most recent find being 21 year old Lee Richardson, who recorded "The Very Thought of You" and became Apollo Records' Juke Box sensation of 1946.

Hear Luis Russell's sensationally entertaining band, with Lee Richardson, which will be presented at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_.

\* \* \* \* \*

LUIS RUSSELL IS A SONG WRITER TOO  
HIS TUNE SELECTED AS RECORD OF THE MONTH BY METRONOME

Music lovers have come across many Luis Russell recordings on Decca, Victor, Columbia, Musicraft, Hub, and Apollo Platters. Already popular because of his great selection of tunes written by himself and played by his own orchestra, Russell has also been successful in hearing his tunes played by other artists on wax. For example: "Let Me Miss You" is featured by Henry (Red) Allen, and "Back Of Town Blues" by Louis Armstrong both on RCA Victor. Incidentally, the latter number was selected by Metronome Magazine as the record of the month.

\* \* \* \* \*



## ROMANCE IN RHYTHM - LEE RICHARDSON

Smoothest of the crop of new ballad singers is Lee Richardson, a young athlete from Washington, D. C. Lee's mother, who is his greatest inspiration, says, "Lee was just born to sing, I guess he's hummed everything from Nursery Rhymes to Opera since he first heard music." Lee's first appearance as an amateur was at the Crystal Caverns in Washington where he was instantaneously a singing success and stayed on as a professional vocalist. After a three week stand with Benny Carter, he was chosen by Luis Russell to make his debut with Russell's band in Detroit. Lee Richardson packed the Paradise Theater with his singing "The Very Thought of You" and immediately received a flood of mail from Fan Clubs which were organized there to honor him. When he recorded "The Very Thought of You" he skyrocketed to fame as the nickels filled the juke boxes to play his record.

A handsome, neat boy, Lee might have become a professional athlete had not his success as a singer beckoned him into the field of music. He received many awards for his athletic prowess while in school; now he keeps himself in condition by playing short stop on the "Russell Nine", a baseball team composed of members of Luis Russell's band.

Hear Lee Richardson, the Romantic Baritone, at \_\_\_\_\_ on \_\_\_\_\_, and join the enthusiastic thousands who name him the greatest young singer of all times. His life story is an inspiration to all aspiring youngsters, for, as one of them, he has emerged from anonymity to his place as No. 1 vocalist of 1946, while only 21 years of age.

\* \* \* \* \*

## A BAND AND A SHOW - ALL IN ONE

## COME OUT TO HEAR LUIS RUSSELL WHO WILL APPEAR AT/ON

You'll rave as you romp to the Russell rhythms. Do you sigh and cry over those ballads you love to hear? Then Lee Richardson, the "Sad Lover Blues" man, is your man. Are you strictly a blues addict? George "Scotty" Scott will growl you some fine down home blues on his trumpet and sing them in his inimitable style. Luis Russell himself, at the piano playing "Boogie in the Basement" will put that bounce in your "bugging". For Saxophone solos to start you shoutin', Esmond Samuels will fill the bill. Esmond is one of the most talented youngsters ever to tromp on a tenor. Do you clamor for the Calypso? You can't keep your hips from swaying as you listen to Luther Brown's singing backed by the authentic rhythms of the West Indies and South America. If you're a square, the boys will send you with a waltz. Russell and his band will serve up any musical treat you may desire.

What more can you ask for? -- Nothing! Because there's nothing more to be heard in the way of entertainment than Luis Russell, whose band is a whole show in itself.

Russell's latest recordings on Apollo label includes:

"The Very Thought of You"	(Lee Richardson vocal)
"Sad Lover Blues"	(Lee Richardson vocal)
"Don't Take Your Love From Me"	(Lee Richardson vocal)
"Sweet Memory"	(Lee Richardson vocal)
"1280 Jive"	
"I Need Your Kind of Lovin'"	(George Scott vocal)
"I've Got a Gal Whose Love Comes C. O. D."	
"Mr. X plays the Blues"	

and many others. Get them and hear what a treat is in store for you when you see Luis Russell and his band in person.

\* \* \* \* \*

## LUIS RUSSELL - STAR MAKER

The Maestro who has featured his musicians and made them stars in their own rights is back with a new find, Lee Richardson. Before forming their own combination, Jay C. Higginbotham (the repeated winner of Esquire trombone awards) and Henry "Red" Allen (the torried trumpeter from New Orleans) were members of the Russell organization.

Again Russell presents a young genius, this time in the vocal department. Lee Richardson set the country agog with his recording of "The Very Thought of You" followed by "Don't Take Your Love From Me". In New York, bets were placed as to who this new baritone was, for until he became Russell's protege, Lee was an unknown.

Besides having a knack for spotting dormant talent, Luis Russell is adept in the field of composition and arranging. Hear for yourself this popular pianist who is equally at home in the field of classics as in modern swing. He's been dubbed, "The Smile at the Steinway" by the many fans to whom he has endeared himself by his pleasing personality and genial manner.

Get with it -- it's right to rave about Luis Russell and Lee Richardson. Join the gang and romp to the Russell Rhythms at/on.

\* \* \* \* \*

L U I S   R U S S E L L

A N D   H I S

O R C H E S T R A

R E C O R D

E X C L U S I V E L Y

F O R

A P O L L O

R E C O R D S

For Latest LUIS RUSSELL Records

Write: APOLLO RECORDS, INC.

342 Madison Avenue

New York 17, N. Y.

Vanderbilt 6-2326



Nov 23, 1948, l to r, Barney Bigard, Jr., Louis Armstrong, Evelyn, Luis Russell, Earl Hines, Barney Bigard, Sr. NYC (Catherine Russell Collection)



## Chapter 7 - Back O' Town Blues: "Never mistreat your woman," Luis Russell's songwriting

When Luis Russell is remembered and recognized, it's usually in his capacity as an Orchestra leader, piano player, and arranger. The most overlooked aspect of his artistry was equally important; his role as songwriter, composer, and writer or co-writer of Luis Russell originals. His original tunes, which he recorded and performed spanning over two decades starting in 1926, have been covered by Louis Armstrong, Bob Crosby, Red Nichols, Louis Jordan, Van Morrison, Catherine Russell, and even Betty Boop! The *Chicago Defender* of October 4, 1947, in writing about an appearance of The Luis Russell Orchestra at Detroit's El Cino Club, noted, "For long now, the genial Panama-born maestro has drawn the admiration and recognition of the country for his celebrated orchestra and piano accomplishments. Many Russell fans, however, do not know that the maestro is also one of the country's leading composers."<sup>159</sup>

The final phase of Luis Russell's music career was also one of its earliest phases, writing songs and composing. The *Chicago Defender* article from 1947 continued, "Luis Russell commenced writing music while still in knee trousers. At 17, he was playing with big-time orchestras in New Orleans. Today, some of the biggest-selling songs, notably many on the Apollo record label, were written by Russell."<sup>160</sup> [he began playing in New Orleans at age 19] He was a songwriter

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<sup>159</sup> "Luis Russell Scores at Detroit Casino," *Chicago Defender*, 4 October 1947, p.27.

<sup>160</sup> *ibid.*

pushing his own tunes from the time he arrived in Chicago in late 1924, continuing into the early 1960's, for more than a full decade after he retired from touring and full-time Orchestra leading at the end of 1950. Songwriting was an endeavor which he pursued in earnest throughout his music career until the end of his life. For one of many examples of Luis filing a copyright on a song that today is unknown and may never have been recorded, on February 16, 1951, a copyright was filed with the Library of Congress on a composition titled "Can It Be True" co-written by Gillespie Nicholas Anderson (words) and Luis Carl Russell (music).<sup>161</sup> From the mid-1950's onward, Luis worked with two women, recording song demos at home on reel to reel tape. One woman, Theresa M. Dempsey, served as his co-writer, usually contributing lyrics to Luis Russell's melodies. The other woman, his second wife, Carline Ray, whom he married in 1956; was an accomplished professional vocalist who sang on the demos, accompanied by an organist who played the Hammond C3 organ which resided in the Russell-Ray apartment. The organ on the demos was most likely played by either Russell or by a fellow Panamanian, named Frank Anderson, originally from Bocas del Toro, who still resides in Brooklyn.

In the fall of 2011, Catherine Russell and I visited the Louis Armstrong Archive at Queens College, at the behest of the archivist there, Ricky Riccardi, who wrote to us that there were some materials in Armstrong's collection that we should check out; songs that Luis Russell had submitted to Louis Armstrong as

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<sup>161</sup> "Can It Be True," Copyright Transcript, Library of Congress, 16 February 1951, Catherine Russell Collection.

demos in 1961, in the hope that Armstrong would record them. We settled into our visit, and Ricky said, "I have something to play for you. Can you help us identify the vocalist?" After strains of an organ introduction, a contralto voice intoned the opening lyric, "Dreamy, sentimental, that's the way you make me feel..." "That's my mother, Carline Ray," Catherine exclaimed! We were quite excited to discover that Luis Russell had sent Louis Armstrong three demos, featuring Carline Ray as vocalist, accompanied by handwritten scores and a cover letter, which read in part:

New York, May 12, 1961

Hi Pops, Here are three numbers that we put together. Please try them out and see if you can do something with them. I have many more which I am saving for later.

If we can get going on a few good ones A.S.C.A.P will take care of us in our old age. Play them over on your tape recorder.

[the rest of the letter discusses Russell not being able to join the All-Stars to replace Billy Kyle when Billy became ill.]

Sorry I couldn't help out personally when Billy became ill, but I recommended a good man in Nicholas Rodriguez. I hope he did OK. I hope to see you at Basin Street.

Regards to Lucille, Pal Luis Russell 528 West 187th Street, New York City<sup>162</sup>

The cover letter and accompanying charts are revealing in several aspects. Luis Russell was both an artist and an astute businessman. He recognized, from past experience, the potential financial rewards of having Louis Armstrong record one of his songs. Income from live performance dissipates when the performer ceases to appear live. His pitch in the letter reminds Armstrong that the income derived from even a moderately successful copyright,

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<sup>162</sup> Luis Russell, New York, NY to Louis Armstrong, Queens, NY, 12 May 1961. Transcript in the hand of Luis Russell, Louis Armstrong Archive, Queens College, New York City.



with the help of a performing rights organization like A.S.C.A.P (The American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers), “will take care of us in our old age.” And when Luis Russell wrote, “I have many more which I am saving for later.” that was no idle boast. In addition to these three demos, Luis left behind another batch of recorded demos, sung by Carline Ray to organ accompaniment, which we recently discovered and had digitized.

New York  
May 12, 1961

Hi Pops,

Here are three numbers thet we put together  
Please try them out and see if you can do  
something with them, I have many more  
which I am saving for later.

If we can get going on a few good ones  
A.S.C.A.P. will take care of us in our  
old age. Play them over on your Sape  
Recorder. Sorry I couldn't help out personally  
while Billy was sick but I recommended a  
good man in Nicholas Rodriguez.  
I hope he did O.K. I hope to see  
you at Basin Street.

Regards to Lucille  
Bal

Luis Russell  
528 West 187 St.  
New York City



Luis Russell and Lucille Armstrong at Louis Armstrong House, Queens, NY, home movie still circa 1960, (Catherine Russell Collection)

The charts on two of the demos list Theresa M. Dempsey as lyricist, and Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell as writers of the music. The third demo, “Lucille,” was accompanied by a trumpet lead sheet, which Luis Russell sent to Louis Armstrong along with the cover letter and demo, listing three writers; “by Louis Armstrong, Teresa M. Dempsey and Luis Russell.” This time no lyricist is listed. In the process of researching the tune “Lucille,” I made a surprising discovery that Luis Russell filed a copyright for “Lucille” on March 25, 1941,

before he was co-writing with Teresa M. Dempsey. This might explain why no lyricist is listed on the lead sheet submitted to Louis Armstrong. Perhaps Luis Russell was the lyricist. Carline Ray renewed the copyright on March 26, 1968.

Most likely, Luis Russell was being deferential to Joe Glaser, in listing Armstrong as a co-writer, because Russell knew that Glaser wouldn't allow Armstrong to record new material without insisting on his client receiving a share of the songwriter credit, regardless of Armstrong having any role in the song's creation. The most appealing of the three demos from a songwriting perspective, "Lucille," grabbed Catherine Russell's fancy, so much so, that Catherine would record her own version. Commissioning arranger Andy Farber to write a six-horn chart based on the demo, Catherine performed "Lucille" at Jazz at Lincoln Center in 2012, and later recorded a studio version, exposing the tune to a worldwide audience in 2014 when the tune was included on Catherine's fifth studio album, *Bring It Back*.



Luis Russell left at wedding of Louis Armstrong & Lucille Wilson October 1942, St. Louis (Louis Armstrong House Museum)

Here are the lyrics to “Lucille” as written on the lead sheet:

Dreamy sentimental that's the way she makes you feel  
She is such an angel  
That's my darling Lucille  
Lucille you make my day begin  
Whatever mood I'm in  
Depends on you Lucille  
It's real the way you make me feel  
What is this mad appeal  
That makes my heart a steal  
Oh How could I ever let you know  
How much I love and need you so  
Lucille please keep this flame aglow  
My heart is burning so  
For you just you Lucille



LUCILLE

BY  
LOUIS ARMSTRONG  
TERESA M. DEMPSEY  
AND  
LUIS RUSSELL

LEAD (TRUMPET)

DREA-MY SEN-TI-MEN-TAL THAT'S THE WAY SHE MAKES YOU FEEL  
SHE'S SUCH AN AN-GEL THAT'S MY DAR-LING LU-CILLE LU-CILLE YOU  
MAKE MY DAY BE-GIN WHAT EV-ER MOOD I'M IN DE-PENDS ON YOU LU-  
CILLE IT'S REAL THE WAY YOU MAKE ME FEEL WHAT IS THIS MAD AD-  
REAL THAT MADE MY HEART A STEAL OH HOW COULD I EV-ER  
LET YOU KNOW HOW MUCH I LOVE AND NEED YOU SO LU-  
CILLE PLEASE KEEP THIS FLAME A-GLOW MY HEART IS BUR-NING SO FOR  
YOU JUST YOU LU-CILLE

Lead Sheet for "Lucille," Armstrong Archive, Queens College, NYC

Luis Russell wrote a love song, a paean to devotion and fealty, most likely intended to be delivered and sung by Louis Armstrong to his wife, Lucille Armstrong. When Louis Armstrong married Lucille Wilson in October of 1942, Luis Russell was standing by their side in St. Louis, on an off day in the midst of a Louis Armstrong Orchestra tour. Luis Russell was intimately acquainted with the couple, and uniquely qualified to imagine feelings from Louis to Lucille in a song.

In 1943, Luis Russell's final year as pianist with Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, Russell placed one of his originals in Satchmo's repertoire, a song co-written by Louis and Luis. The song, "Back O' Town Blues," like "Lucille," deftly employed a leap of imagination in giving Louis Armstrong an autobiographical lyric, telling a story that Armstrong had lived and could relate to and make his own. In an odd way, "Lucille" can be seen as a sort of companion piece exploring the relationship dynamic, man vs. woman. "Back O' Town Blues" tells the story of the man mistreating and running around on his woman and coming to regret it, while "Lucille" portrays a man at the mercy of his feelings of affection for a woman. In "Back O' Town," a slang term for the rough and tumble section of New Orleans where Louis Armstrong grew up, and in "Lucille," Louis Armstrong's fourth and final wife, Luis Russell chose topics with potential for his boss to lend vocal and instrumental interpretation.



Ultimately, Armstrong never recorded “Lucille.” The lyric might have been a stretch too far. Coming from a background where women weren’t exactly placed on a pedestal, Louis might have been more likely to record the song if “Lucille” was the name of his trumpet, rather than his wife. Louis was clear that his horn came first, and his marriage to Lucille worked famously because she understood his priorities, and gave him the space he needed. They understood each other.

“Back O’ Town Blues” is cautionary tale which could have been autobiographical for either Louis or Luis, about finding a good woman in New Orleans, who though she treats her man right, he has to run around, and his woman leaves him. Then realizing the folly of his ways, he searches the world over trying to get his woman back, but it’s too late. A cautionary tale, with a moral, “never mistreat your woman, or it’s liable to bounce right back on you.” a twist on the biblical “you’re gonna “reap what you sow,” an unusual, almost “proto-feminist” blues lyric for its’ time, where the man does the woman wrong, and feels remorse and regret. Pops seizes on the unusual lyrical twist and makes it his own, advancing the story with the band as his Greek chorus. It’s a serious message, as he assures us with the aside “this is no stage joke.”

Armstrong started performing “Back O’ Town Blues” in early 1943, while Luis Russell was still on piano in Armstrong’s 15-piece Orchestra, surviving on a

radio broadcast from an unknown location, and issued on cd.<sup>163</sup> The song became a staple of Satchmo's live shows and recorded repertoire for the decades which followed, and Armstrong performed it on many of his highest profile appearances, as he transitioned from a Big Band format to His All-Stars. While initially launched in a Big Band format, "Back O' Town Blues" was one tune which would soon become emblematic of the trend away from Big Bands towards smaller groups, and the pressure to abandon larger Swing arrangements in favor of a revival of the New Orleans sound.

On January 18, 1944, Esquire magazine assembled a group, billed as the Esquire All Stars, for a concert and radio broadcast from the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City, including Louis Armstrong on trumpet and vocals, Roy Eldridge on trumpet, Jack Teagarden on trombone, Barney Bigard on clarinet, Coleman Hawkins on tenor, Art Tatum on piano, Al Casey on guitar, Oscar Pettiford on bass, and Sid Catlett on drums. Louis Armstrong's features included "Back o' Town Blues," "I Can't Give You Anything But Love," and "Muskrat Ramble."

Almost exactly a year later, on January 18, 1945, Esquire launched a series of 3 concerts, all broadcast, "this time making it a three-city extravaganza: Louis Armstrong in New Orleans, Benny Goodman in New York and Duke Ellington in Los Angeles, along with small groups and celebrities such as Jack

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<sup>163</sup> *Louis Armstrong – Volume 10 – "1939-1943,"* Ambassador CLA 1910, 2005, compact disc.

Benny and Danny Kaye.”<sup>164</sup> Louis Armstrong performed on this date at the Municipal Auditorium in New Orleans, billed as Louis Armstrong’s Jazz Foundation Six, accompanied by Sidney Bechet, J.C. Higginbotham, James P. Johnson, Ricard Alexis on bass, and Paul Barbarin on drums. Both Esquire concerts, 1944 & 1945, featured Louis Armstrong with small groups, during the era when he was still “toting his big band around,” and on both concerts, which were precursors to the All Stars, he featured “Back O’ Town Blues.” In New Orleans, Armstrong performed a relatively abbreviated version, “with Sidney Bechet (forced into subservience by Armstrong’s brilliance)...their leader plainly revels in the fresh waters of the small group situation here, producing a formative “Back O’ Town Blues” - minus all (bar one) of the stage-gags that clung to later versions like likeable limpets!”<sup>165</sup> What stands out about Louis Armstrong’s performance at the Municipal Auditorium in New Orleans is his vocal; he’s in extremely good voice and delivers a smooth and sweetly crooned version of the blues, which doesn’t prepare us for the audience reactions to the songs final stanza, “Never mistreat your woman or it’s liable to bounce right back on you.” Upon hearing Armstrong deliver this denouement, the crowd goes completely bonkers.

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<sup>164</sup> Ricky Riccardi, “Armstrong vs. Bechet: The Final Round – 1945 Esquire Concert,” Dippermouth Blog, 21 January 2010.

<sup>165</sup> Digby Fairweather, liner notes to *Louis Armstrong & the All-Stars*, Avid Entertainment AMSC 870, 2006, two compact discs.

A lead sheet to "Back O' Town Blues," written in Luis Russell's hand, was deposited with the Library of Congress on April 14, 1946, solidifying the copyright.

70 APR 14 1946

BACK O' TOWN BLUESby  
LUIS RUSSELL

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

© Cl E unpub 17126

I HAD A WO-MAN LI-VING WAY BACK O' TOWN  
 OH SHE TREATED ME RIGHT NE-VER LET ME DOWN BUT I  
 WASNT SATIS-FIED I HAD TO RUN AROUND NOW SHE'S  
 GONE AND LEFT ME IM WORRIED AS CAN BE OH IVE  
 ARCHER THIS WORLD ALL OVER WOND'RING WHERE SHE COULD BE I MUST  
 ASK HER TO FOR GIVE ME MAY-BE SHE'LL COME BACK TO ME NOW IM  
 LONE SOME AND BLUE WELL IVE LEARNED A THING OR TWO OH FELLAS  
 HERE IS A TIP IM GONNA PASS ON DOWN TO YOU NEV'ER  
 IS TREAT YOUR WO MAN CAUSE IT GONNA BOUNCE RIGHT BACK ON YOU

Copyright 1946

INTERNATIONAL MUSIC, INC. NEW YORK

Armstrong recorded his first studio version of “Back O’ Town Blues” for RCA Victor on April 27, 1946 with an 18-piece band, as Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra. On February 8, 1947, Louis Armstrong appeared at Carnegie Hall in New York City on a concert “that turned the tide for Armstrong on his postwar career. The second half was his usual big-band line-up, but the first half boasted a slim 6-piece aggregation that harkened the demise of the Orchestra and the emergence of the All-Stars.”<sup>166</sup> While Armstrong performed “Back O’ Town Blues” with his big band on this night, the writing was on the wall for his big band, but not for “Back O’ Town Blues.” The tune was included, on May 14, 1947, when the transition to the All-Stars format was consummated with a concert at Town Hall in New York City, and “Back O’ Town Blues” reappeared when Armstrong and the All Stars appeared triumphantly at Carnegie Hall on November 15, 1947, and again at Symphony Hall in Boston on November 30.

For Luis Russell, and for his estate, “Back O’ Town Blues,” in addition to becoming, in Armstrong’s hands, a classic of the New Orleans jazz and blues repertoire, became the gift that kept on giving. On September 28, 1955, Louis Armstrong and His All-Stars recorded both “Mack The Knife” and “Back O’ Town Blues” for Columbia Records. In 1956, a Louis Armstrong single was released with his rendition of the “Mack The Knife,” a song composed by Kurt Weill with

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<sup>166</sup> Michael Minn, “The Louis Armstrong Discography: The All-Stars (1946-1956),” <http://michaelminn.net/discographies/armstrong/all-stars/index.html>.

lyrics by Bertolt Brecht, entering the hit parade, reaching No.20 on the charts in America, an enormous smash success. On the flip side was "Back O'Town Blues." From the royalties generated by the hit single, Luis Russell walked into Wilford Auto Sales, Inc. on June 26, 1956 and purchased a brand new two tone blue Mercury four-door automobile. Catherine remembers, "we were pre-owned car people until then."

Carline Ray recalled, "Joe Glaser would call the house now and then...if like for instance if my husband needed any money or anything like that. This was particularly when Louis Armstrong made the recording Mack The Knife, and on the back of that was "Back O' Town Blues."....and money was coming in that's how we happened to buy a brand new 1956 Mercury. It was the only brand new car i ever bought (laughs). Joe Glaser liked my husband, Lu, very much. And then of course he would advance money to my husband because of Mack The Knife and Back O Town Blues, he would advance royalties. Louis Armstrong and Lucille came by the house once too. They had come by after a recording date that Louie had. and they came by the house that night. Must have been around....i don't know....10 o'clock at night after the date. and they stayed a nice little while. Daddy was in bed. and they had a nice little chat and so forth....and i was just listening, i wasn't involved in their conversation. But just in case he needed something or wanted something i was on hand.

PK: was he ill at that point?

CR: yeah.....and so.....when they got ready to leave, Louis Armstrong shook Lu's hand, and when they left, Lu felt Louis Armstrong put something in his hand. and when he opened his hand it was a one- hundred dollar bill. So that was the kind of person he was. Louis Armstrong was loyal to the people that ever worked with him and toured with him, you know. Even though Louis Armstrong fronted the band, Luis Russell took care of all the business. Because Louis Armstrong didn't like to take care of business. He just wanted to be out front doing his thing. and then, too, a lot of the tunes that Luis Russell wrote, especially "Back O' Town Blues," had Louis Armstrong's name on it. and i said to Daddy one night, "how come Louis Armstrong's name is on there when it's your composition?" He said in order to give the composition that much more recognition, put Louis Armstrong's name on it. And Louis Armstrong agreed to have his name put on it and that's how the business worked.

PK: That's how the business worked then.....but in fact, they didn't write it together...

CR: ...no.....it was my husband's composition but Louis Armstrong agreed to put his name on it to give it more recognition. and as you said, the way

things were done back in those days.....maybe things are still being done that way.<sup>167</sup>

I was somewhat surprised to hear Carline tell of questioning her husband about sharing the writing credit on “Back O’ Town Blues” with Louis Armstrong. Carline wasn’t aware of Joe Glaser’s vice like grip over publishing matters, and she unwittingly revealed a possibility about the songs authorship; was it solely written by Luis Russell? Did Luis happily agree to share the writing credit with Armstrong, though he had no choice in the matter?

Historically, there have been several rationales for a songwriter giving up part of the writer credit to have a tune covered by a well-known artist. One scenario condones consciously giving up a share, because in many cases in early jazz and blues, the entire copyright was ascribed to, and in some cases consciously stolen, by a non-writer. We might consider this the “lesser of two evils” reasoning, giving up a piece rather than the whole. Today, the greater of two evils, giving up the whole, is frowned upon and viewed as being politically incorrect, unnecessary, and a form of thievery, pure and simple. A more palatable explanation, goes along the lines of what Carline ascribed to Luis; gaining more recognition and exposure for the title, with value further added by the musical interpretation of the well-known artist, which is transformative to the extent of be deserving of a share of the song. Again, today, an interpretation of a song, no matter how compelling and original, isn’t viewed as an aspect of authorship. If ever there was an artist who, by the very force of interpretation,

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<sup>167</sup> Carline Ray, interview by the author, 18 September 2007, New York, tape recording.



deserved a songwriting credit, it would be Louis Armstrong for his version of “Back O’ Town Blues,” without whom, the song is an interesting if somewhat unconventional 12 bar blues, but with whom, the song becomes a tragicomic morality play.

We can only guess about the exact contribution of each of the listed co-writers of “Back O’ Town Blues,” and perhaps, in the end, it doesn’t really matter. We can trace with certainty, however, many significant and high-profile appearances which this song continued to make. While Louis Armstrong was on tour in Europe with the All Stars in 1965, BBC-TV broadcast their June 3rd concert from London “in it’s entirety as “Back O’ Town Blues,” then repeated it, edited into two “Satchmo” installments of *Show of The Week*, on October 7 and 16.”<sup>168</sup>

If all that Armstrong contributed to “Back O’ Town Blues” were the ad libs which he and the band included, with variations, to uproarious audience laughter and approval, that alone should be worth a songwriting credit.

The lyrics, (with sample ad libs) read:

I had a woman (band member: I had five, LA: braggin’)  
 Livin' way back o' town  
 Yeah she treated me right  
 Never let me down  
 But I wasn't satisfied (band member: what did you do?)  
 I had to run around (band member: that’s just like you Pops, LA: muggin)

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<sup>168</sup> Scott Allen Nollen, *Louis Armstrong: The Life, Music and Screen Career*, (North Carolina: McFarland & Copany, Inc., 2004), p.173.

Now she's gone and left me  
 I'm worried as can be  
 Oh I've searched this world all over  
 Wonderin' where she could be (band member: try that..., LA: No!)  
 I would ask her to forgive me  
 And maybe she'll come back to me (LA: But I doubt it)  
 I'm lonesome and blue  
  
 And I've learned a thing or two  
  
 Oh fellas here's a tip  
  
 I'm gonna pass on down to you (band member: Tell 'em everything Pops,  
 Tell 'em everything)  
  
 Never mistreat your woman  
  
 Cause it's gonna bounce right back on you (LA: That Ain't No Stage Joke)

In the fall of 1965, Louis Armstrong landed an acting role in a dramatic film, *A Man Called Adam*, in which he plays an elder statesman musician, named Willie "Sweet Daddy" Ferguson, in a star-studded cast with Sammy Davis, Jr. in the lead role of a talented but troubled young trumpet player, also starring Ossie Davis and Cicely Tyson. Released in 1966, the film includes a scene of Louis Armstrong & The All Stars performing "Back O' Town Blues," ad libs and all, in a packed nightclub, to the delight of the patrons.

Interestingly, with all of the impressive successes on its way to becoming a signature piece in Louis Armstrong's repertoire, from a Big Band studio recording, to performances at Carnegie Hall, Town Hall, and Symphony Hall in

the late 1940's, to a new studio recording with the All Stars appearing on the flip side of a huge selling hit record in 1956, to major television and film exposure in 1965-66, no evidence can be found of Luis Russell ever performing or recording "Back O' Town Blues" under his own name. Despite having a vehicle in the reformed Luis Russell Orchestra, created in 1944 just after "Back O'Town Blues" entered Armstrong's repertoire, Russell, in typical restrained and modest Luis Russell fashion, chose not to promote or promulgate the tune in any way that might be construed as competing with his former boss and friend. This has proven to be a wise call. Louis Armstrong's versions on their own have ensured longevity and continued exposure for "Back O' Town Blues" into the 21st Century.

In 2001, the British pianist and Orchestra leader, Jools Holland, host of the influential TV show *Later with Jools Holland*, released a major label collection on Warner Brothers titled *Jools Holland his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra and friends, Small World Big Band*, with 22 guests each contributing one tune. The guests, who couldn't be more high profile, include Sting, George Harrison, Eric Clapton, Dr. John, Steve Winwood, Taj Mahal, Mark Knopfler and more.<sup>169</sup> One member of this iconic line up, the brilliantly erratic Irish singer songwriter, Van Morrison, joins Jools Holland for a rendition of "Back O' Town Blues." The Van Morrison / Jools Holland Orchestra version uses alternate chords, and while creative in its approach, sounds a bit jarring to anyone expecting the songs usual, as written,

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<sup>169</sup> *Jools Holland his Rhythm & Blues Orchestra and friends, Small World Big Band*, Warner Music UK Ltd., 2001, compact disc.

chord changes, bringing a new audience to the tune nonetheless. Being generous, this approach can be seen as in the spirit of Louis Armstrong. While Satchmo was a master at taking liberties with the melody of a composition; he didn't mess with chord changes or harmonic structure to make something his own.

Woody Allen licensed a Louis Armstrong recording of "Back O' Town Blues" as the opening track in his critically successful and high grossing 2013 film, *Blue Jasmine*, which spawned an Academy Award for Best Actress for Cate Blanchett. The sync license fee paid to the publisher for using "Back O' Town Blues" was \$50,000.<sup>170</sup> Luis Russell's 25% writer share equaled \$12,500, and this along with performance and mechanical royalties related to *Blue Jasmine* screenings, DVD sales, and soundtrack album sales, created income for Luis Russell's estate exceeding \$25,000, in the few years following the release of *Blue Jasmine*.

In the fall of 1961, Luis Russell having just pitched "Lucille" and others of his tunes to Louis Armstrong, received a handwritten letter dated September 7, 1961, from his old pal and songwriting partner, Paul Barbarin. Now living in New Orleans, Barbarin, unlike other New Orleans musicians who worked with him in the Luis Russell orchestra, never severed his ties to the Crescent City, and would return there between forays to Chicago, New York, and the road, never giving up New Orleans as his home. Louis Armstrong, Pops Foster, Barney Bigard, and

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<sup>170</sup> Luis Russell Royalty Statement, Music Sales Corp. Jan-June 2013, Catherine Russell Collection.

Albert Nicholas, would end their days in New York City, San Francisco, Los Angeles, and Switzerland, respectively. In 1937, when listing his address in the AF of M local 802 directory of the New York City musicians' union, Barbarin gave the Rhythm Club, a musicians' social gathering place with pool hall as his point of contact, rather than an apartment address. All the other members of the then Louis Armstrong fronted Luis Russell Orchestra gave New York City addresses, except for Armstrong himself, who listed a Chicago address. Luis Russell hadn't forgotten his and Barbarin's joint songwriting efforts, and neither had Paul Barbarin. The letter read:

New Orleans, Sept 7th 1961

Hi Fess, I know you will be surprised to hear from me. Well I've been putting off for a long while. So here it is. Hope you & family are enjoying the best. My wife and I are well. Thank God for that. Now Fess it's a lot of Loot we've never gotten. And Leeds is not fair I'm sure to us. That is why I offered Harrison Smith 25 percent on every dollar he gets for me. Because he knows the score. That is the most money I ever got on (Come back sweet papa) And there's a lot more to get. Every record collector in the world has a record of the tune. It is just about 30 companies selling our tune and Leeds won't do anything about it. Well to tell you the truth. I rather have something than have nothing coming in. I'm supposed to join Papa Bue's band for 3 weeks concert over in Copenhagen (*sic*) Denmark some time in the future. I will find out all I can if I go there. Papa Bue recorded (Come back sweet papa. And it was a big seller I heard. Bob Crosby's band and many other bands. I hope you go down to Leeds office and let them know what is happening. I have a contract with Leeds on (Sweet papa) or if you don't get results have a good talk with Harrison Smith. It is a shame the way some publisher does. Well Fess if I come to N.Y. this year I will look you up. My best to you P.B.<sup>171</sup>

Frustrated by the lack of royalty income from "Come Back Sweet Papa," co-written with Luis Russell which had been recorded by Louis Armstrong Hot Five in 1926, and perhaps feeling he lacked the resources or connections to properly track down the missing money, Barbarin had hired a New York based

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<sup>171</sup> Paul Barbarin, New Orleans, to Luis Russell, New York, NY, 7 September 1961, Transcript in the hand of Paul Barbarin, Catherine Russell Collection.

music publisher named Harrison Smith for 25% of whatever Smith might collect. Contained in the envelope along with Barbarin's letter to Russell were copies of correspondence between Harrison Smith and Leeds Music and various record labels, plus a royalty statement from Leeds Music to Paul Barbarin for the period ending 12/31/60 for .22 cents, and stamped on the statement:

"THIS AMOUNT IS DUE YOU BUT SINCE IT IS NOT OUR CUSTOM TO PAY ROYALTIES ON TOTALS OF LESS THAN \$1.00, WE ARE HOLDING THIS AMOUNT CREDITED TO YOU, UNTIL THE NEXT ROYALTY PERIOD."

Luis Russell had promptly replied to Barbarin's letter, and received a follow up postcard, postmarked September 24, 1961, which read:

Dear Pal Luis: I was really happy to get your letter. You can talk it over the phone with Joe. He got the money for Red for Mop Mop and you can do as you see fit to do. Don't wait do it as soon as can. Glad you and family are well & happy. Expect to see you this year. Pal P.B. Regards<sup>172</sup>

In an unrelated matter, Barney Bigard helped Kid Ory track down significant missing royalties to Ory's composition, "Muskrat Ramble." Although "Come Back Sweet Papa," was from the same vintage as "Muskrat Ramble," both early Louis Armstrong, the chore of tracking down royalties from small collector oriented record labels, didn't reap a lot of returns for Barbarin and Russell on "Come Back Sweet Papa," yet reaped significant returns for Kid Ory on his more widely covered "Muskrat Ramble." Regardless, it was great that old pals Russell and Barbarin were back in touch, and not giving up the ghost of songwriting past, ghosts which have a way of reappearing in surprising and sometimes lucrative fashion. In December 2015, "The New Call of The Freaks"

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<sup>172</sup> Paul Barbarin, *ibid.*

appeared in the Emmy, Golden Globe, and Screen Actors Guild Award winning, highly rated cable TV series, the FX TV Series *American Horror Story*, in the episode “The Ten Commandments Killer,” watched by 2.31 million people.

“The New Call of The Freaks” has proven to be a composition with legs. The original 1929 recording by Luis Russell and His Orchestra continues to attract interest. In 2017, independent filmmaker, writer, and director, Ari Gold premiered a new feature film, *The Song of Sway Lake*, at film festivals in Los Angeles, Woodstock, NY, Minnesota, Nevada, Mexico, and Spain. I wrote to Ari Gold and thanked him for using Luis Russell’s tune in his movie, and the filmmaker quickly emailed a reply:

Hi Paul - Holy moly! I LOVE that song! I had to fight to get \$ to get it cleared for the movie (all the songs were hard, and dozens had to be replaced and re-replaced) but that was one I refused to give up on, all the way to the end! That is so cool. It plays loud and clear - actually, Chris Douridas, famous taste-making radio and party DJ (KCRW), who came to my LA screening, immediately asked me the name and artist of that particular song of all the songs in the movie. He said he’d play it on his next radio show.<sup>173</sup>

In October 2017, the veteran blues guitarist and singer Duke Robillard released an album titled *Duke Robillard and His Dames of Rhythm*, where he pays homage to 1920’s and 30’s jazz and swing, with guest vocalists including Maria Muldaur, Madeleine Peyroux, Catherine Russell, and more. The album closes with an instrumental version of “Call of The Freaks.” By now, the song has become something of a cult classic, with ongoing appeal to Film and TV music directors, radio programmers, and musicians.

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<sup>173</sup> email from Ari Gold to the author, October 6. 2017.

## Chapter 8 – Piano Man, Luis Russell’s piano style.

“Luis Russell played that good New Orleans piano’ very *Lusty* and *Swingy*. Being from N.O. he had to be good along with all the competitions’ that were around in those days. Nothing but Hellions, meaning the Best of the piano players, such as *Fats* Waller - *Willie* (The Lion) Smith - James P. Johnson, etc. *All* greats.” -Louis Armstrong<sup>174</sup>, Open Letter to Fans (June 1, 1970)

Discussing Luis Russell’s piano style, it would be difficult to find a more fascinating jumping off point, than the unexpected assessment of a lifelong musical pal, collaborator, and astute observer of all things swing, Louis Armstrong. The context is almost as surprising as the content. Written on June 1, 1970, Armstrong was at home recovering from heart and kidney ailments. He penned a lengthy “Open Letter to Fans,” looking back over his life and career, singling out highlights and whatever else struck his fancy. Luis Russell had been deceased for over six years, having passed away in December of 1963, twenty years following 1943, the last time the two men performed together. Louis

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<sup>174</sup> Louis Armstrong, edited by Thomas Brothers, *Louis Armstrong In His Own Words*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 1999), 183.



Armstrong himself was approaching his final days. He would pass away a little over a year later, on July 6, 1971.

Of his many celebrated collaborators spanning five decades, including Lil Hardin Armstrong, Fletcher Henderson, Earl Hines, Oscar Peterson, and Billy Kyle, Louis Armstrong chose to recall Luis Russell, who worked by his side, nearby, or backing him for nearly two of those decades, ending a lengthy touring and recording collaboration in 1943. Luis Russell shared over 60 recording sessions with Satchmo, roughly the same number as Earl Hines, who spent years in the All-Stars, while Russell was leading his own Orchestra post Armstrong. Russell stepped into the recording studio with Louis Armstrong more times than Fletcher Henderson, King Oliver, Lil Armstrong, and countless others. Their friendship continued until Russell's death in 1963.

Until Armstrong's letter, few had singled out Luis Russell's piano playing for such over the top praise, much less comparing him to the three greatest Stride pianists, James P. Johnson, Willie "The Lion" Smith, and Fats Waller, calling them "ALL greats." In fact, the historiography on Luis Russell's piano playing reveals a near unanimous consensus; Russell was a capable pianist who seldom took solos, whose playing was not particularly distinctive, original, or noteworthy. This assessment came from a variety of sources, and sometimes from major writers and historians who were otherwise admirers of Luis Russell. The narrative that Luis Russell was not an outstanding pianist entered an echo chamber where it became amplified and repeated.

From a Who's Who in Jazz Biography series which appeared in the UK publication, *The Melody Maker*, on December 21, 1940, written by British born pianist, composer, producer, and journalist, Leonard Feather, the entry on Luis Russell states that Russell though "...prominent as a composer and arranger, his numbers included "Call of The Freaks," "Feelin The Spirit," etc....Has seldom taken solos on records, is not an outstanding pianist, and is mainly important for the men who worked under his direction."<sup>175</sup> At the time, Luis Russell held down the piano chair in Louis Armstrong's Orchestra. Feather greatly admired Luis Russell, sending a condolence letter to his wife, Carline Ray, upon Luis's passing, writing "Luis was a fine man and I have happy memories of him many years ago when I first met him with Louis Armstrong. I know he will be missed by musicians and his music-loving admirers all over the world."<sup>176</sup> Feather appreciated Russell the composer, arranger, and band leader, but the piano player...not so much! In his critique, Leonard Feather was not alone.

Another Luis Russell advocate, British jazz historian, Albert McCarthy, in describing Russell's recording "High Tension," writes "It includes a rarity, a Luis Russell piano solo, which is capable without being particularly noteworthy."<sup>177</sup>

Another British critic, wrote, "Luis' piano playing was rhythmically effective, if not

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<sup>175</sup> Leonard Feather, "Who's Who in Jazz," *The Melody Maker*, 21 December 1940.

<sup>176</sup> Leonard Feather, Los Angeles, CA, to Carline Ray, New York, NY, 19 December 1963, typewritten letter, Catherine Russell Collection.

<sup>177</sup> Albert McCarthy, *Big Band Jazz*. (London: Carter Nash Cameron Limited, 1974), 83.

strikingly original and his arrangements always stimulated a band which drove furiously and without compromise.”<sup>178</sup>

The late Humphrey Lyttelton, a British trumpet player, bandleader, and broadcaster (he presented BBC Radio 2's *The Best of Jazz* for forty years, also writing a book of the same title), devoted an entire chapter in his book to Luis Russell. Lyttelton heaps praise on the Luis Russell band for its exciting approach and overall excellence, even crediting Russell and his 1929-30 Orchestra as the “missing link” between New Orleans style jazz and Swing. To Lyttelton, once Russell arrived in New York City, he made huge strides over his work with King Oliver and The Dixie Syncopators, noting, “In Chicago in the Twenties, he (Luis Russell) spent several years in the rather cumbersome band which Joe Oliver led after the break-up of the Creole Jazz Band, showing himself on records to be an indifferent pianist whose solos had a disconcerting habit of parting company with the rest of the rhythm section and running uncontrollably downhill. His talents clearly lay in organization.”<sup>179</sup> British trumpet player and historian, John Chilton, echoed the party line, writing “Luis Russell...was not an outstanding jazz pianist, but (like Fate Marable) was a fine organizer and popular with everyone who ever worked for him.”<sup>180</sup>

Frank Driggs, the tireless jazz history researcher, writer, collector of photographs, and Luis Russell proponent, had this to say, in his liner notes to the

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<sup>178</sup> Vic Bellerby, liner notes to Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell, 1929-1940, *Louis & Luis*, ASV Living Era AJA 5094, 1992, compact disc.

<sup>179</sup> Humphrey Lyttelton, *The Best of Jazz* (London, UK: Robson Books, 1998), 192.

<sup>180</sup> John Chilton, *ibid.*, p. 34.

1974 Columbia Records double LP reissue, *Luis Russell and his Louisiana Swing Orchestra*: “Russell was short and compactly built with a friendly disposition, not an outstanding soloist, but a good orchestra man and also a competent arranger.”<sup>181</sup>

These observations, appearing in long out of print sources available to the astute researcher, may have set in motion like-minded opinions in the digital age. On the web site *AllMusicGuide*, we find a similar conclusion about Luis Russell’s piano playing, where historian Scott Yanow calls Russell “a decent but not particularly distinctive pianist” though he goes on to say Russell “was part of one of the top rhythm sections of the era...”<sup>182</sup>

Which brings us back to the words of Louis Armstrong in his Open Letter to His Fans in 1970. How can we explain Satchmo’s enthusiasm for Luis Russell’s piano playing when jazz critics and historians hardly agreed? Perhaps Armstrong was simply waxing nostalgic, his memory suffering from the ravages of the many interim nights on the road, and clouded by father time? Were there corroborating opinions expressed by Armstrong in an earlier era?

One need look no further than Louis Armstrong’s autobiography, *Swing That Music*, published in 1936. “Lew (Russell) is one of our greatest swing pianists,” wrote Armstrong. “He is a very sensitive and very subtle musician who hates Tin-pan jazz as much as Mr. Jascha Heifetz or Mr. Toscanini would. ...I had Lew’s band with me in Connie’s Inn, which is now down on Broadway, and

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<sup>181</sup> Frank Driggs, *ibid.*

<sup>182</sup> Scott Yanow, Luis Russell Artist Biography, [www.allmusic.com/artist/luis-russell](http://www.allmusic.com/artist/luis-russell) .

I'm taking the boys on tour with me this summer. I'm sure this is one of the finest aggregations of colored swing players, all in one band, that you will find in the world today, and this is largely due to Lew Russell's wonderful musicianship and patience with his men."<sup>183</sup>

It would be possible to discount Armstrong's placing of Luis Russell on a high pedestal, by the fact that Louis Armstrong, in writing *Swing That Music*, had an Orchestra to promulgate and a story to promote; the autobiography was partly an act of promotion and self-publicity. Yet given Armstrong's statements lauding Luis Russell over a long period, from a personal letter sent to Russell in 1930, when he wrote "These cats here in this town [Chicago] Can't Swing...", to his autobiography in 1936, to an open letter to his fans in 1970, one can safely conclude that his affection and admiration was sincere, heartfelt, and based on musical considerations.

Were there other musicians, other longtime collaborators of Luis Russell, who shared Armstrong's enthusiasm? Towards the end of his career, and near the end of his life, Barney Bigard reflected back on a remarkable journey, which following his time working with Luis Russell from 1923 through 1927, included lengthy and celebrated stints with Duke Ellington's Orchestra and later with Louis Armstrong's All Stars. Having no particular axe to grind, Bigard remembered Luis this way: "He didn't have big ideas of his own importance. He was a terrific piano player too, and a great musician. With his own playing, he always liked to "feed"

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<sup>183</sup> Louis Armstrong, *Swing That Music*, 1936, p.94.

a man chording, and always the correct chords at that. He liked to give a man a good rhythm.”<sup>184</sup>

Other musicians who worked with Luis Russell shared Bigard’s enthusiasm. Trumpet player Henry “Red” Allen, who traveled to New York City in 1929 to join the Luis Russell Orchestra, recalled “It was the most swinging band in New York. It put audiences in an uproar.”<sup>185</sup> Saxophonist Charlie Holmes described his stay with Luis Russell to the writer Stanley Dance, as “the happiest days of my life. It was a different type of music to me altogether. They’d been playing the stuff for years, and it was born in them.”<sup>186</sup> (perhaps referring to the New Orleans natives) Clearly, Luis Russell was well liked and admired by his sidemen.

Is there a way to resolve this conundrum regarding Luis Russell’s piano playing? The opinions of writers and historians seem to differ drastically from the musicians who worked by his side and relied on him musically. Were there jazz cognoscenti to pull these disparate threads of opinion together, and wrap up the by now confusing musical enigma of Luis Russell’s piano playing? Record producer, John Hammond, wrote in *The Melody Maker* in 1932, “Luis Russell’s band is actually good these days led by Henry Red Allen Jr....it is a pretty exciting organization with a good brass section. Russell, as a pianist, seems to

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<sup>184</sup> Bigard, *ibid.* p. 40-41.

<sup>185</sup> John Chilton, *ibid.* p. 35.

<sup>186</sup> Chilton, *ibid.*, p-35-36.

have undergone the helpful influence of Earl Hines.”<sup>187</sup> John Hammond’s observation was perceptive, as Luis Russell himself later cited Earl Hines as one of his favorite piano players. Henry Red Allen Jr didn’t lead Luis Russell’s band, but was rather out front as a lead soloist in a band led by Russell. By failing to make this distinction, John Hammond, perhaps unwittingly, contributes to the undervaluing of Luis Russell, which reappears in different forms in the historiography. In filling out a questionnaire for his entry in Leonard Feather’s *Encyclopedia of Jazz*, Luis Russell cites Steve Lewis, Earl Hines, Teddy Weatherford, and “Art Tatum, of course,” as among his primary piano inspirations.

The jazz scholar and enthusiast, the British writer Brian Rust, upon his death at age 88 in 2011, was called by *The New York Times*, the “Father of Modern Discography.”<sup>188</sup> After compiling his groundbreaking book, *Jazz Records A-Z 1897-1931*, and many follow up editions, Brian Rust could lay claim to an exhaustive knowledge of jazz recordings. Commissioned by Parlophone / EMI Records to write liner notes to a Luis Russell LP reissue in 1967 (rendering Luis Russell a label mate of The Beatles, even if posthumously), Brian Rust wrote: “Here, incidentally (speaking of the recording “Jersey Lighting”), we have a rare glimpse of the leader’s piano work, a fine amalgam of Harlem stride and Jelly

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<sup>187</sup> John Hammond, “Meet John Hammond Our New American Correspondent. Slashing Comments On American Bands.” *The Melody Maker*, February 1932. Vol VIII No.74, p.151.

<sup>188</sup> Margalit Fox, “Brian Rust, Father of Modern Discography, Dies at 88,” *New York Times*, 25 January 2011.

Roll Morton ragtime (on “Savoy Shout,” there are traces of Earl Hines, by the way, but Russell was no flagrant copyist. Had he been, his whole band would surely have lacked the superb individualism that made it one of the greatest in the entire history of jazz).<sup>189</sup>

In Louis Armstrong’s letter to his Fans, he opens by saying “Luis Russell played that good New Orleans piano, very lusty and swingy.,” which reminds us that the two had first met and played together at Tom Anderson’s cabaret in New Orleans in the early 1920’s. Steve Lewis’s piano style, as exhibited on recordings of Piron’s New Orleans Orchestra (check out the 1924 non vocal take of “West Indies Blues”), exhibits a rollicking two fisted approach which echoes the same amalgam of ragtime and stride that Brian Rust alluded to in describing Luis Russell’s style. As Barney Bigard recalled in his memoir, Luis Russell took him to the piano night cutting contest at the after-hours Harlem joint, Mexico’s, where Fats Waller, Willie “The Lion” Smith, and James P. Johnson went at each other, and where Duke Ellington liked to hang out. Luis Russell was a serious observer of the stride piano greats, and a student of their styles, so much so, that years later, A.H. Lawrence mentions in his biography of Duke Ellington, “Luis Russell always maintained that Ellington’s piano style was an amalgam of Johnson’s and Smith’s. “Whenever I listen to Duke I hear The Lion in his left hand, and James P. in his right,” quoting Luis Russell.<sup>190</sup>

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<sup>189</sup> Brian Rust, *ibid.*

<sup>190</sup> A.H. Lawrence, *ibid.* p.22



A most surprising discovery, recently unearthed and never released recordings, give further insight into Louis Armstrong comparing Luis Russell to “Nothing but Hellions, meaning the Best of the piano players, such as *Fats* Waller - *Willie* (The Lion) Smith - James P. Johnson, etc. *All* greats,” in Armstrong’s open letter to his fans. While he was piano player with Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra, in February of 1940, Luis Russell, with the help Chappie Willet Recording Studio, recorded four solo piano pieces, all in the grand tradition of Harlem ticklers, including three titles written by Willie The Lion Smith, “Rippling Waters,” “Echo of Spring,” and “Fussing,” and one written by Luckey Roberts, “Moonlight Cocktail.” Regardless of Russell’s intention in recording these never issued selections, they reveal a previously unknown aspect of his piano playing; his interest in performing solo stride piano. The recordings themselves most likely weren’t intended for commercial release, and contain a few flubs and imperfections in execution, while still revealing a highly accomplished piano stylist tackling difficult to play compositions.

In December of 1936, a bit more than a full year after Louis Armstrong took over the Luis Russell Orchestra, Russell returned to The Apollo Theater in Harlem without Armstrong, as the week-long headliner. A reviewer wrote, “Luis Russell at the piano sways off in fine style. He plays to perfection his original *Rippling Waters*.”<sup>191</sup> Although the assumption that *Rippling Waters* was Russell’s original was incorrect, Luis Russell was turning heads performing Willie The Lion

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<sup>191</sup> Peter Carr, IBID., quoting *New York Age*, 26 December 1936.

Smith's tune while headlining under his own name, on a break from his primary gig as Louis Armstrong's musical director and band leader. And while sheet music for *Rippling Waters* first appeared in 1934, The Lion didn't get around to recording it himself until January of 1939! Luis Russell's four stride piano demos shed new light on Louis Armstrong's comments in his Open Letter to His Fans. No doubt, Armstrong was aware of Luis Russell's ability to perform in a solo stride style, which lends further credibility to his placing Luis Russell alongside the three greats of stride piano.

Louis Armstrong was a consistent booster of Luis Russell. He advocated for his friend until the end of his life. Yet, despite Armstrong's advocacy, Luis Russell fell off the radar and never gained the same renown as other stride piano greats and piano playing orchestra leaders. One possible explanation is that, from early on, jazz has come to be defined in the public consciousness primarily as a soloists art. Musicians from the 1920's onward agreed, often equating job satisfaction with being given solos. The trumpeter, Bill Coleman, who worked on and off with Luis Russell's Orchestra starting in 1929, describes how he decided to leave Russell and join a competing Orchestra over being dissatisfied with the amount of solos in a band which also included trumpeter Henry Red Allen. "After about six weeks with Russell, I began to feel the effects of not having a first part to play and only two solo spots, because we did not play "Broadway Rhythm," where I had an eight-bar solo."<sup>192</sup> In jazz history, and back in the day, the star soloist was heralded, while collective creativity, the contributions of arrangers,

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<sup>192</sup> Bill Coleman, *Trumpet Story*, (Boston, MA: Northeastern University Press, 1991), 67.

composers and piano playing orchestra leaders, all primary roles for Luis Russell, were less highly valued, and given less weight by most jazz historians.

We might find clues about how Luis Russell himself conceived of the role of the pianist during the era in which he came up, from an observation made by Lil Hardin [Armstrong] as told to interviewer Studs Terkel in 1957 of her experience on joining King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band: "That was the beginning of 1923, I was supposed to play chords and only support the band. Whenever I'd get to feeling good and run up and down the piano and want to make to make some runs, or something like that, they'd say 'Just a minute lady, we have a clarinet player in the band.' So I'd have to go right back to chording again."<sup>193</sup>

Luis Russell followed Lil Armstrong in holding down the piano chair with King Oliver. Gender bias aside, Lil being told "Just a minute lady" does not negate that the piano, whether played by a man or a woman, was called upon to feed chords and anchor the rhythm section (which sometimes lacked drums or bass), and to let others step out and solo, especially the clarinet player in the mid-1920's and increasingly the trumpet, trombone, and saxophone. Luis Russell's aesthetic was informed by the musical milieu of his ascendancy. He viewed his role as being in service of the orchestra, by establishing a rhythmic groove in support of its soloists. Luis Russell confided to one interviewer in looking back over his career, "I consider myself a rhythm man and take few solos. I prefer to step aside in order to provide for a better band."<sup>194</sup>

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<sup>193</sup> Studs Terkel, *And They All Sang*, (New York: The New Press, 2005), 173.

<sup>194</sup> Manskleid, *ibid*.

A.H. Lawrence (a trombone player with Luis Russell's Orchestra in the mid-1940s post Armstrong) wrote a biography of Duke Ellington, *Duke Ellington and His World* (2001), opens the Acknowledgments by writing, "This book would never have been written had Luis Russell not hired a seventeen-year-old high school graduate who was bound and determined to earn a living playing in a dance band." He goes on to write, "When I joined Russell's band in 1944, one of the thrill was being in the presence of a man (Luis Russell) who had been there at the beginning of American jazz. He had played with King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Kid Ory, and Johnny Dodds. He considered Fletcher Henderson, Benny Carter, Duke Ellington, and Count Basie his close friends." Lawrence credits Luis Russell with introducing him to Duke Ellington, and to encouraging him to do "a study of Harlem musicians that ultimately turned into this book (his Ellington biography)."<sup>195</sup>

Luis Russell as a piano soloist was not on par with Willie The Lion Smith, Fats Waller, and James P. Johnson, who each possessed astounding technical wizardry which set them apart. With a tendency to shave the pocket while soloing, Luis Russell's time and rhythmic concept was forward leaning and sometimes less than rock solid. Yet his informal "feel" at the piano always returned to his unique and highly danceable concept of "the groove." He was fortunate to work with drummers who were excellent time keepers, from Paul Barbarin, to Big Sid Catlett, to Roy Haynes, and to be a part of stellar rhythm

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<sup>195</sup> A.H. Lawrence, *ibid.*

sections. As a songwriter, Luis Russell was prolific, though his compositions never became as widespread as those of Fats Waller, James P., and Ellington, in terms of the volume of his known catalogue or its' celebrity. Russell's distinctive style, as a pianist, orchestra leader, songwriter, and arranger, was in creating a fun atmosphere and a loose, informal, rhythmic groove, designed to be inviting, to keep a dance floor packed, and to out swing the competition. He introduced subtle polyrhythms befitting his Panamanian roots, and was an initiator of the Caribbean tinge, that key element of early jazz described by Jelly Roll Morton as the Spanish tinge. His piano style was constructed to anchor the orchestra, to help define the arrangements and compositions with correct chording, and to complement and support, without hogging the spotlight.

Luis Russell relished backing singers, which was a skill unto itself. As an orchestra leader, Luis Russell lovingly plunked piano behind the most original and influential singer of the 20th Century; Louis Armstrong. In addition, Luis Russell accompanied a wide array of singers including Ada Brown, Victoria Spivey, Tiny Bradshaw, Sonny Woods, Bobbie Caston, Midge Williams, Milton Buggs, and Lee Richardson. Russell's longtime bass man Pops Foster reminisced about this skill set, saying, "Jelly (Jelly Roll Morton) couldn't play good behind someone's singing. There's a whole lot of piano players who can't do that. Earl Hines, as great as he is, can't play with a singer. Guys like Jelly and Hines are too much for themselves, they're so busy playing for themselves, you

can't hear the singer for what the piano player's doing. Jelly was a good man by himself or in one of those whorehouses."<sup>196</sup>

Luis Russell and his piano playing, historiography aside, can be placed in the grand scheme of Jazz history, based on the recordings themselves, those 3 minute 78rpm pressings on shellac, that he and others left us. I've compiled a playlist of Luis Russell recordings, from 1926 through 1940, with notes and my comments below each selection, paying particular attention to his piano playing.

Chicago, March 10, 1926

***Panama Limited Blues*** (J. Mayo "Ink" Williams)

***Ada Brown*** (vocals), George Mitchell (cornet), Albert Nicholas (cl,as), Barney Bigard (ts), Luis Russell (piano), Johnny St. Cyr (banjo)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tc-lvJHrRLw>

Luis Russell's very first recording, features his blues piano accompanying vocalist Ada Brown, on a song written by black songwriter J. Mayo Williams.

There is no piano solo, but the subject is revealing, as the Panama Limited was, in 1911, the newest train between Chicago and New Orleans, and was named for the Panama Canal, which was completed in 1914. Throughout his career, Luis Russell chose to record songs written by African American composers ("Panama" by William H. Tyers 1912 and "Darktown Strutters Ball" by Shelton Brooks 1917), and writer/publishers, W.C. Handy, Clarence Williams, Spencer Williams, J. Mayo Williams, and Richard M. Jones. On the same date, Luis

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<sup>196</sup> George Pops Foster, *ibid.* p. 97.

Russell recorded for the first time as leader, as “Russell’s Hot Six,” laying down two titles, “Sweet Mumtaz” (likely his original though claimed by Joe Oliver) and “29th and Dearborn” (by Richard M. Jones).

Chicago, April 21, 1926

**Deep Henderson** (Fred Rose)

**King Oliver And His Dixie Syncopators** : King Oliver (cnt) Bob Shoffner (tp) Kid Ory (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl,sop,as-1) Billy Paige (cl,sop-1,as) Barney Bigard (cl-2,sop,ts) Luis Russell (p-1) Bud Scott (bj) Bert Cobb (tu) Paul Barbarin (d, vocal break)

:32 to :41 Luis Russell piano steps out, Paul Barbarin says “ah play it Mr. Russell”

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=M2zER0jmrps>

The song was also released as a piano roll by Fred Rose, in 1926, which King Oliver and his musicians, including Luis Russell, cleverly orchestrated. The writer, Fred Rose, went on to become a key figure as a Nashville songwriter and music publisher, partnering with country music great and Grand Ole Opry star, Roy Acuff to create Acuff – Rose Music.

Chicago, November 17, 1926

**Dolly Mine** (Paul Barbarin, Luis Russell)

**Luis Russell's Heebie Jeebie Stompers** : Bob Shoffner (cnt) Preston Jackson (tb) Darnell Howard (cl,as) Barney Bigard (ts) Johnny St. Cyr (bj) Luis Russell (piano)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=7076VwUZ2gg>

Piano solo :25 to 1:04, provides an early example of Luis Russell’s piano style stepping out from a polyphonic New Orleans feel with a bit of stride piano, then adding band solos and arranged parts towards the end, over stop time breaks.

New York, September 10, 1928

***Speakeasy Blues*** (Clarence Williams, Joe Oliver)

***King Oliver And His Dixie Syncopators*** : King Oliver (cnt) Ed Anderson (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Omer Simeon (cl,as) Barney Bigard (cl-1,ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Will Johnson (bj) Bass Moore (tu) Paul Barbarin (d) Benny Waters (arr)

Piano Solo 1:25 to 1:51

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HlDqielqbc0>

Featuring a tremendous, facile piano solo. Russell himself cites his approach as “a la Fatha Hines.” This recording appears in the soundtrack for Woody Allen’s 2013 film, *Blue Jasmine*.

New York, September 6, 1929

***The New Call of The Freaks*** (Paul Barbarin, Luis Russell)

***Luis Russell And His Orchestra*** : Henry "Red" Allen, Bill Coleman (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb,vcl) Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (as,sop) Teddy Hill (ts) **Luis Russell (p,dir)** Will Johnson (bj,g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d) vocal trio (1) only (Henry Allen, J.C. Higginbotham, Louis Metcalf).

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LiZfYRF5NVA>

An early example of a modal and eerie blues, a precursor to hugely successful modal jazz and blues compositions like Miles Davis’s “So What?” and Willie Dixon’s “Spoonful.” With a double entendre lyric and a fade at the end, “The New Call of The Freak” became Luis Russell’s theme song.



New York, September 6, 1929

***Jersey Lightning*** (Luis Russell)

***Luis Russell And His Orchestra*** : Henry "Red" Allen, Bill Coleman (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb,vcl) Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (as,sop) Teddy Hill (ts) Luis Russell (p,dir) Will Johnson (bj,g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

Piano Solo :27 to :39

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=uWR5qBcMV9w>

Luis Russell's original compositions, like "Jersey Lightning," "Feelin' The Spirit," and "Louisiana Swing" can be viewed as having the elements of ragtime and stride (intros, strains, and interludes) translated to orchestral expression as a backdrop for hot soloists to take turns.

New York, February 1, 1930

***Blue Turning Grey Over You*** (Waller, Razaf)

***Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra*** : Louis Armstrong (tpt,vcl) Henry "Red" Allen, Otis Johnson (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) William Thornton Blue, Charlie Holmes (cl,as) Teddy Hill (cl,ts) Luis Russell (p,ldr) Will Johnson (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZS\\_SzbhboQ](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gZS_SzbhboQ)

Luis Russell Orchestra sets the atmosphere and a danceable beat for Armstrong to display his utter genius in reharmonizing the melody with improvisations on trumpet and vocally.

New York, September 5, 1930

***High Tension*** (David Bee)

***Luis Russell And His Orchestra*** : Henry "Red" Allen, Bill Coleman (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (as,sop) Greeley Walton (ts) Luis Russell (p,dir) Will Johnson (bj,g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d) David Bee (arr)

Parlophone Release, New Rhythm Style Series, Fox Trot

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Xe2mI70C8GY>

Listen for the Interesting Piano solo at 2:02, with the left hand doing an ascending run while the right hand is block chording, and great polyrhythmic

underpinning in the rhythm section, including a Caribbean tinge, which becomes pronounced behind Higginbotham's trombone solo.

New York, November 21, 1935

**Old Man Mose** (Louis Armstrong, Zilner Randolph)

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Louis Bacon, Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken (tp) Harry White, Jimmy Archey (tb) Henry Jones, Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison (cl,ts) Greely Walton (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nyZtPGZRWpc>

From the top, Luis Russell and Paul Barbarin lay down a strong swing groove, with the piano anchoring throughout. The song was a set piece and show stopper in Armstrong's live shows during the late 1930's.

New York, December 18, 1935

**Solitude** (Ellington, DeLange, Mills)

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Louis Bacon, Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken (tp) Harry White, Jimmy Archey (tb) Henry Jones, Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison (cl,ts) Greely Walton (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JGShheNa4Uo>

Listen for the piano backgrounds, an excellent example of Luis Russell killin' it behind Armstrong's lead vocal. The Orchestra sets the atmosphere, conveying a feeling of being lonely and alone in a haunted house!

Further analysis: Key of Db

The performance opens with the band striking a single C7 chord, followed by a solo trumpet passage, featuring a descending pattern of thirds through :07 ending on a C, followed by an ascending chromatic passage landing on the C an octave higher :10, then jumping in 3rds to a high C at :16, where the piano enters underneath the trumpet with a C7 chord, followed by chromatically descending bass lines and arpeggiated

chords landing on Bb7 then Ab7, before Louis starts to sing the melody. The three descending chords conjure up a haunted house feeling, which perfectly complements the lyric, about being alone and haunted by dreams of days gone by. "In my solitude, you haunt me."..sings Louis, while Luis Russell plays arpeggiated runs and fills on piano. The reeds swing sweetly behind the vocal with written out harmonized parts.

At 1:36 the band hits two chords which modulate the tune into the Key of F at 1:40, vibraphone or celeste adding another spooky element, before Louis confidently plays through the tune on trumpet, with improvisations through stop time accompaniment 2:17-2:30, quoting from "Struttin' With Some BarBeQue" as a segue back into straight time then a gradual ritard 2:35 with a grand build up, ending on a climactic high F as the band closes punctuated by a Paul Barbarin cymbal crash.

New York, Feb 28, 1940 (unissued)

**Luis Russell Solo Piano recorded by Chappie Willet**

Rippling Waters (Willie The Lion Smith)

Echo of Spring (Willie The Lions Smith)

Fussing (Willie The Lion Smith)

Moonlight Cocktail (Luckey Roberts)

Audio for these tracks shared upon request

Luis Russell is one of the pioneers of jazz piano, and a master of two crucial variants in all their manifestations: blues and swing. He was friends with preeminent pianist-orchestra leaders, including Earl Hines, Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Count Basie, Teddy Wilson, and Edgar Hayes. He crossed paths and hung out with Willie "The Lion" Smith, Fats Waller, James P. Johnson, and Jelly Roll Morton. Above all, Luis Russell was an assiduous student of jazz, blues, and swing piano styles. His first piano teacher in New Orleans, Steve Lewis, plied the ivories while Louis Armstrong roamed nearby. Luis Russell cited

two players as prime influences, Earl Hines and Teddy Weatherford, who each played with Louis Armstrong during the heyday of Chicago jazz in 1926, while Luis Russell was there working with King Oliver. Luis Russell's inspirations invariably circle back to Louis Armstrong. And when the Luis Russell orchestra appeared on radio broadcasts from the Savoy Ballroom in New York City in 1945, the announcer introduced "Luis Russell, his piano, and his orchestra." Surprisingly, the piano came before the orchestra. In his approach to the piano, Luis Russell was a minimalist. If he was kicking off a tune on the piano, or taking a piano interlude as a transition in a big band arrangement, or taking a solo, he said what he needed to say, without extraneous flights of ego or grandstanding, always in service of the overall tune, the band, and the arrangement.

His recordings endure. Underappreciated and sometimes flying under the radar, the recordings allow the listener to experience his style and artistry, and to be enriched and entertained.

## Chapter 9 – Later Years, 1950-1963

A letter from Joe Glaser to Luis Russell dated October 20, 1951 demonstrates Glaser's nuanced and heavy-handed power of persuasion. Luis Russell had retired from full time band leading and had started a new business running a greeting card and convenience store in Brooklyn. Pianist Earl Hines, unhappy about having his 75% billing with Louis Armstrong's All-Stars eliminated by Glaser, had just given his notice, and Glaser wrote to Luis Russell to convince him to accept the just vacated piano chair in the All-Stars, which Russell had just turned down turned down in a letter to Joe Glaser, who replied:

### **Letter from Joe Glaser to Luis Russell, Oct. 20, 1951**

Dear Luis, Received your letter of Oct. 18 and am certainly happy to know that you are getting along so well in your business. However, Luis, I am sure when you sit right down and stop to think, you will agree with me that it is a wonderful opportunity that I am giving you, especially in view of the fact that when Earl Hines joined Louis Armstrong approximately three years ago, he was over \$20,000 in debt, and since he is going to leave on Nov. 11 to form an organization of his own, he doesn't owe a single penny to anyone, plus the fact that this very same situation practically existed with Jack Teagarden. So if of course, if you should change your mind within the next month, don't hesitate to write and let me know as I am definitely not going to make arrangement to put anyone with Louis for at least four weeks as he reports to MGM in Culver City on Nov. 12 for a period of at least six weeks. Hoping that your business continues to be good and that you and your family are enjoying the best of health, with kindest regards, I remain  
Sincerely,  
Joe Glaser<sup>197</sup>

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<sup>197</sup> Joe Glaser, New York, to Luis Russell, New York, NY, 20 October 1951. Typewritten letter, Catherine Russell Collection.

The meaning is pretty clear, especially to Luis Russell, who had worked with Joe Glaser and Louis Armstrong for decades. Glaser is saying, sign up now to make real money and return to a world which includes Hollywood and crossover possibility. Coming across as slightly patronizing, Glaser wouldn't succeed in convincing Luis Russell to join the All-Stars. This wouldn't be the last invitation extended to Luis Russell to rejoin Louis Armstrong. In the spring of 1961, pianist Billy Kyle fell ill, and Joe Glaser, needing a replacement, tried again to hire Luis Russell. As part of his letter to Armstrong of May 12, Luis wrote:

Sorry I couldn't help out personally when Billy became ill, but I recommended a good man in Nicholas Rodriguez. I hope he did OK. I hope to see you at Basin Street.<sup>198</sup>

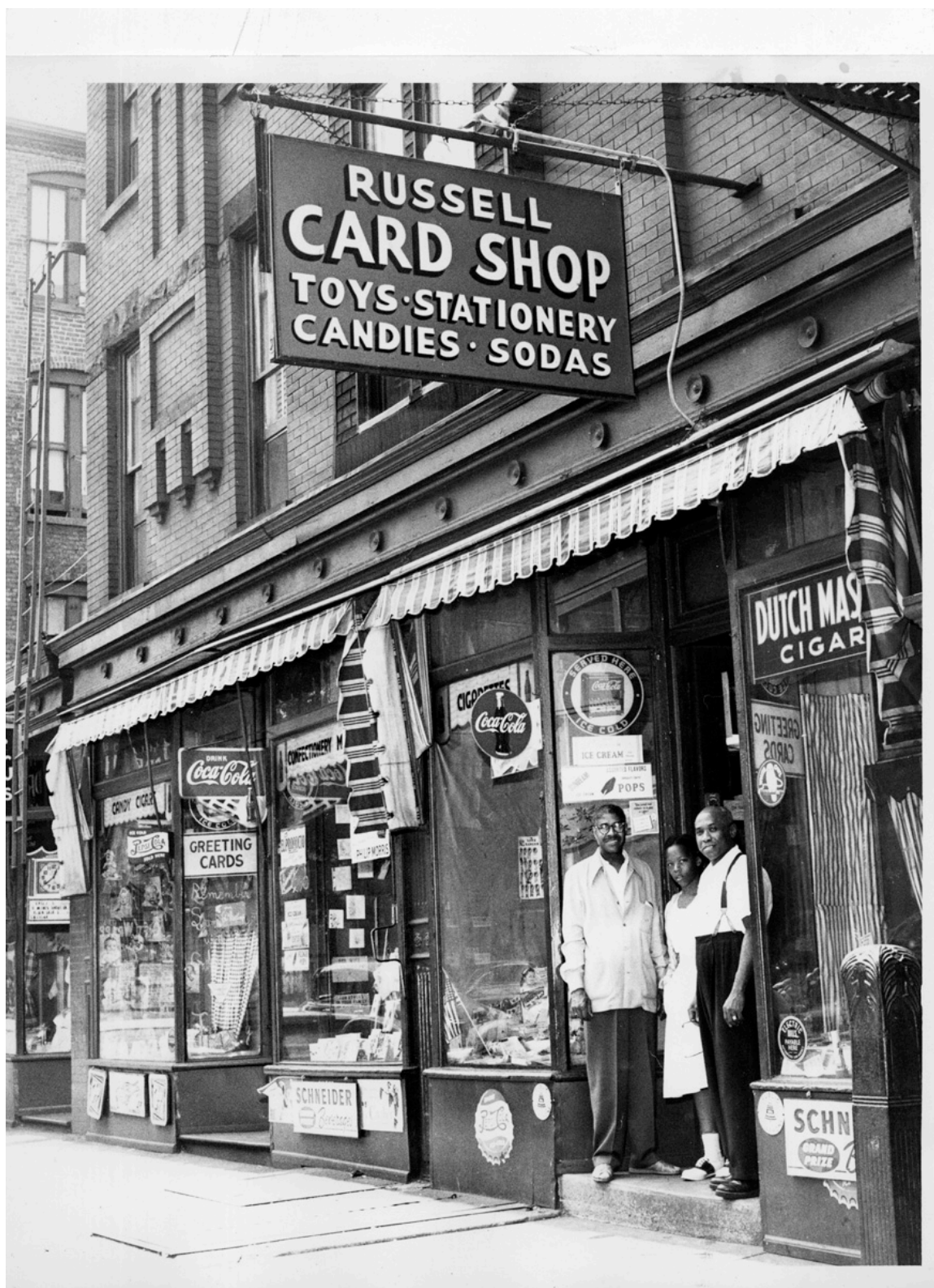
Nicholas Rodriguez was a fellow Panamanian, born in the Canal Zone in 1906, arriving in New York City on August 7, 1928. Rodriguez recorded in the 1930s with the orchestras of Benny Carter and Don Redman. Mario Bauza played trumpet on one of the Redman sessions in 1938. Rodriguez accepted the spot with Armstrong's All-Stars, and recalled the experience as one of his career highlights. After his stint with the All-Stars, Rodriguez and Luis Russell went to see Louis Armstrong perform at the club, Basin Street, in Manhattan, a reunion of old friends.

Having left the full-time band business in 1949, Luis Russell explored new business opportunities. He bought a candy store located in the Bedford-

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<sup>198</sup> Luis Russell, New York, to Louis Armstrong, Queens, NY *ibid*.

Stuyvesant section of Brooklyn, and worked there seven days a week from 5am to 9pm while still finding time to play jobbing dates with his band on weekends. He sold the store and tried going back into the band business, but the work was sporadic. He tried returning to shop owning, this time selling greeting cards and gifts, but this time he was forced to sell at a loss.



Luther Brown, unknown, Luis Russell (Catherine Russell Collection)





Neighborhood Children with Luis Russell at his gift shop in Brooklyn (Catherine Russell Collection)

The early 1950's saw a couple of aborted attempts to bring his orchestra on tour. An old bill mate from the Apollo Theater days in the 1930s and 40s, comedian Pigmeat Markham, headlined a tour of the TOBA circuit, and Luis Russell signed on as part of Pigmeat's large variety show. Unfortunately, Russell didn't receive payments contractually due him, and ended up filing a claim against Pigmeat with the musician's union, Local 802, in New York City. Luis won the claim and received small settlement checks from the Union. He took his

orchestra to St. Louis to share a bill with Ruth Brown at his old haunt The Riviera. But apart from those exceptions, his touring days were over.

In 1955, a lawyer friend needed help managing a very nice music showroom and nightclub located in Brooklyn, called Town Hill. Luis signed on, and handled all administrative details, booking talent, taking care of payroll, and ordering supplies. He shied away from booking “name” acts, and managed to keep the place running, with two music rooms sometimes going side by side. In one room, he brought in a trio of female musicians, alumnus of the all women big band, The International Sweethearts of Rhythm, led by bassist Edna Smith. The trio also included Carline Ray on piano, and drummer Pauline Braddy, and all three were singers. The other room featured an organ trio led by organist and pianist, and fellow Panamanian, a native of Bocas Del Toro, Frank Anderson.



Publicity Photo, Edna Smith Trio, l to r. Edna Smith, Carline Ray, Pauline Williams, signed "To Mr. Russell a grand guy, and by Carline "To One of the nicest people I've ever met" (Catherine Russell Collection)

The Edna Smith Trio was booked into Town Hill for a two-week engagement. They made a big hit, and ended up being held over, staying for six months. Carline Ray recalled the first time she met Luis Russell, when he helped her load into the club.

“Now i’d heard alot about Luis Russell, but i’d never met him, didn’t know what he looked like. Until the day that he came to help us get our stuff out of my car, and uh-ruh, .....and actually, what happened was that uh, he helped us get all the stuff, Pauline’s drums and things out of the car,uh when he was bringing the stuff in i said to the bartender (it was early in the day and the bartender was on duty) i said to the bartender, “Who’s that little man’s been helping us in here with all this stuff?” He said, “oh, that’s Luis Russell.” And i said, “Oh THAT’S Luis Russell!.” Cause my sister and i used to buy alot of records back in those days, it was uh, back in the days when Luis Russell....his first big band was very famous. Actually, he began to get into the spotlight when he had Lee Richardson singing with him, who was a very fine baritone. And he had quite a few hits with Luis Russell and his Orchestra. He was from Washington, DC. and so my sister and i used to buy alot of records and so forth, and so we had all of his hit records at home. But i had never seen what the man looked like but he used to play the Apollo quite a bit. But i never had any kind of pocket change or enough allowance, to allow me to go to the Apollo very often, you know.... mm-hmm.....now.....what i liked about Mr. Russell was that any time you mentioned his name you’d get a smile from somebody. He was very highly respected. Musicians respected him, he knew how to handle himself, he knew how to do business with people.”<sup>199</sup>

Carline would sometimes visit Luis at his home on Patchen Avenue in Brooklyn, where he would cook her dinner, Panamanian style which she described as a combination of Spanish, Panamanian, and West Indian, raving about one of his signature dishes, a “very tasty mix” of peas and rice. She continued:

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<sup>199</sup> Carline Ray interviewed by the author, *ibid*.

So one night (laughs) he asked me he says, ‘well you know you can...if you ever need to...stay over if the weather’s bad or something like that...,’ because this was in the Fall and going on in to Winter, so “if you ever want to stay over some nights if the weather’s bad and you don’t want to go home....” in those days, when it snowed it snowed covering half way up the hubcaps.... up the wheels of your car. So I used to drive out there all the time and I’d pick up Edna and Pauline and bring them out there with me. So one night I decided I would stay over. So I didn’t tell him when I was gonna do it. So I uh had a little suitcase, and I put the necessary things in it, you know....and I went to the club, parked the car....and I let him....Lou was talking to somebody at the bar. I didn’t say anything, I just put the suitcase down right by where he was standing. and he looked at me and he noticed the suitcase right by this foot. and the smile that he gave me was worth a million dollars. He had a beautiful smile, and we didn’t say anything, I just smiled at him and he gave me this great big million dollar grin. so that was his answer to his question (laughs). and uh....things happened and Cathy came along (laughs) this was in ‘56 actually. She was conceived in January....December of ‘55 or January of ‘56. but anyway, uh....so she was born on September the 20th, 1956.<sup>200</sup>

Luis Russell and Carline Ray were married in June of 1956. Their daughter, Catherine Russell, was born on September 20<sup>th</sup>, 1956. Luis would now devote his time to raising his daughter, writing songs and producing demos of his originals, and supporting his new wife’s musical ambitions, centered around the development of her contralto voice for concert work. Luis told *Downbeat* in 1961, “The old man didn’t make it to Carnegie Hall, but it just might be she’ll do it.”<sup>201</sup>

In addition, he became an avid home movie buff, spending hours splicing and editing footage of family gatherings, trips to Bear Mountain and Coney Island, and West Indian parades and social functions. The royalties from “Back O’ Town Blues” appearing on the flip side of “Mack The Knife” bought the family

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<sup>200</sup> Carline Ray, interviewed by the author, *ibid*.

<sup>201</sup> George Hoefner, *ibid*.

a new car. A visit to a party at Louis Armstrong's home in Queens, attended by Carline, four-year-old Catherine, plus Louis, Lucille, and members of the All-Stars and wives, became one reel of his home movie collection. The affection between Luis Russell and Barney Bigard, now a member of the All-Stars, is a reel highlight. Another touching scene shows Russell and Satchmo looking over papers, likely music related, with young Catherine looking on. Another home movie reel documents a colorful summertime West Indian parade, snaking through Harlem, with floats bearing calypso musician Claude Fats Green and his orchestra, who was scoring with 45's on the independent CAB and Camille labels, and another float with Calypso pianist Daphne Weeks.

When Louis Armstrong needed a sub in the All-Stars in 1961, Luis Russell declined, instead recommending Panamanian Nicholas Rodriguez, who ended up taking the job. Carline Ray recalled,

Louis Armstrong had asked him to come back to the band because Billy Kyle took leave and they needed a piano player. He said, "I'll tell you what I'll do. I'll recommend somebody to you....." So he recommended one of his fellow Panamanians who was an excellent pianist. And but he wasn't going to leave Cathy. He wanted to be around to see Cathy grow up some.....cause we were his second family. I was his second wife. In fact, I'm about the same age as his daughter from his first marriage.<sup>202</sup>

In 1958, Luis Russell was hired by Yeshiva University as a chauffeur for University president, Jules Belkin. The position gave the Russell family security, as University housing came along with the job. Luis dotted over his family and

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<sup>202</sup> Carline Ray interviewed by the author, *ibid*.

deepened his ties to the Panamanian and West Indian communities in Harlem and Brooklyn. Luis kept current with Panamanian musicians, including former Colon nightclub players, Clinton Thorbourne and Frank Anderson, and Panama City musicians Luther Brown and Eduardo Alvarez, who were all now based in New York City and working with his orchestra.<sup>203</sup> Pianist Frank Anderson remembered that calls still came in for the Luis Russell orchestra, and he'd carry the band charts and lead and play the Luis Russell book, sometimes in Newark and sometimes in Harlem. One night, when loading in to a job in Harlem, with his car double parked so he could unload mic stands and equipment, when he returned to his car, the Luis Russell charts had been stolen.

In August of 1959, Luis traveled to Bocas Del Toro to visit his father and mother, his first return visit to Panama since leaving for New Orleans in 1921. While there, he gave a piano concert, performing a mix of classical and popular songs, including, according to a local newspaper, "Mendelssohn's Scherzo in E Minor, a waltz from Chopin, the very catchy "Tico Tico" and a good old pasillo." He was treated as returning royalty by family members and by the locals, bringing along his movie camera to document the proceedings. His film of the water taxi ride from Bocas to Careening Cay look similar to the footage taken by a videographer who accompanied Catherine and I on the same boat ride in 2008. Little had changed in 50 years. Following the visit, Luis returned to New York City, to resume his family life.

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<sup>203</sup> *Panama Tribune*, 22 August 1959, p.15.

By the start of 1963, Luis Russell was ill. His time was occupied with hospital visits and treatments. Letters of concern came in, from family and friends in Panama, and from musicians. He was suffering from Prostate cancer, which progressed rapidly. He lost weight, and was in declining health. Luis Russell passed away on December 11, 1963.

On December 14, 1963, the New York *Times* ran the following obituary.

**Headline: Luis Russell, 61, Jazz-Band Pianist, Organizer of a Group Led by Louis Armstrong Dies**

Luis Russell, a leader of jazz bands, composer and arranger, died of cancer Wednesday at his home here. He was 61 years old and lived at 528 West 187<sup>th</sup> Street.

Mr. Russell, as a pianist during the era of big bands in the nineteen-twenties and thirties, led an orchestra that played in the Club Harlem, Connie's Inn and the Savoy, Arcadia and Roseland Ballrooms. He organized and played in an orchestra that was nominally headed by Louis Armstrong. His friendship with Mr. Armstrong began in 1921 when the two musicians played in a small band in Tom Anderson's club in New Orleans.

The Armstrong-Russell orchestra that played in New York included such jazz performers as Henry (Red) Allen, trumpeter; J.C. Higginbotham, trombonist; Joe Garland, saxophonist, and Paul Barbarin, drummer.

The group flourished in competition with the bands of Duke Ellington, Fletcher Henderson, Chick Webb, Claude Hopkins and Lucky Millinder.

Once, when Mr. Armstrong was in Chicago, he wrote to Mr. Russell in New York, saying: "Come out here and play for me cause these Windy City cats can't swing that old New Orleans jive." The letter was signed, "Red Beans and riceingly yours."

In the mid-twenties, Mr. Russell was playing in Chicago with the band headed by King Oliver. One of their engagements ended abruptly when the nightclub was bombed. Mr. Russell said later, "Our bosses in those days played some pretty rough games."

Among the numbers written by Mr. Russell were "Hot Bricks," "Russell's Boogie," "Boogie in the Basement" and "After Hours Creep."



In the late nineteen-forties his band went on a theater tour with Joe Louis, the boxer.

Born in Careening Cay in the province of Bocas del Toro, Panama, Mr. Russell learned to play guitar, violin and piano when he was a boy. His teacher was his father, who was a church organist and choir leader.

Mr. Russell became a piano player in a Panama movie house when he was 15. Two years later he won \$3,000 in a lottery. With the money he moved to New Orleans with his mother and sister.

For the last five years, in semi-retirement as a musician, he worked as a chauffeur for the president of Yeshiva University.

Surviving are his widow, a concert singer known professionally as Carline Ray, and a daughter, Catherine.<sup>204</sup>

Luis Russell's funeral was held on Sunday December 15<sup>th</sup> at 2pm at North Presbyterian Church at 155<sup>th</sup> Street between Amsterdam and Broadway in Harlem. The church was packed. Musicians, family, and business associates were among those who called and signed the guest book, including Charlie Holmes, Howard Johnson, Billy Cobham, Luther Brown, George Scott, Joe Glaser, Mr. and Mrs Jack Bradley, Mr. and Mrs Bingie Madison, Henry Red Allen, Frank Anderson, Noble Sissle, Alberto Socarres, Nicholas Rodriguez, Mr.and Mrs. Louis Armstrong, "Dizzy" Gillespie, Clyde Bernhardt, Greely Walton, Mr.and Mrs. Don Redman, Laurence Lucie, sister-in-law Irma Sloane, and father-in-law Elisha M. Ray.<sup>205</sup>

Another obituary, saved in the family scrapbook, appeared under the headline: **Luis Rusell's Ashes To Sea**, and read in part, "The body of Luis

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<sup>204</sup> "Luis Russell, 61, Jazz-Band Pianist," *New York Times*, 14 December 1963.

<sup>205</sup> Luis Russell Funeral guest registry, December 1963, Catherine Russell Collection.

Russell, 61, noted jazz pianist, and one of the last of the big band leaders during the jazz era of the 1930s, was cremated this week following funeral services Sunday at the North Presbyterian Church, 525 W. 155<sup>th</sup> St. His widow, concert singer Carline Ray, said one of his last requests had been to have his body cremated and his ashes thrown out to sea.<sup>206</sup>

Ironically, two artists who had often shared a billing with Luis Russell, passed away during the same week, Dinah Washington and Susie of Butterbeans and Susie fame. Ralph Matthews' "Thinking Out Loud" column in the Baltimore Afro-American of Dec 28, 1963, appeared under the headline, "**Death of Dinah only one of 3 stars who passed last week.**" Much of the column includes loving anecdotes and appreciations of Dinah and Susie. He concludes with a send-off to Luis Russell.

Luis Russell, a brilliant and talented musician, never really reached the heights which he richly deserved because he chose to serve as a satellite to the more famous Louis Armstrong, who really never liked to be bothered with a band of his own.

Millions of theatre goers who packed the theatres of the nation to hear Satchmo never realized that it wasn't the latter's band they were listening to at all.

The band was Luis Russell's, which Louis Armstrong hired to back him up. But that's show business.

So long Dinah, Luis and Susie. The world was a much better place because the three of you passed this way.<sup>207</sup>

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<sup>206</sup> "Luis Russell's Ashes To Sea," *New York Amsterdam News*, 21 December 1963, p. 21.

<sup>207</sup> Ralph Matthews, "Death of Dinah Only One of Three Stars Who Passed This Week," *Baltimore Afro-American*, 28 December 1963.

With Luis Russell's passing, a truly remarkable journey had run its' course. We are left with a legacy which is immortal, and with his music. "Teacher" Russell outlived his son, and was 92 at the time of Luis's death. From inauspicious beginnings in Bocas del Toro, to leading the most famous and successful orchestra in the world, at the end, Luis Russell would return to nature, and to the sea he loved.

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235: Joe Louis and Luis Russell, Dec 10, 1939, The Cotton Club, NYC (Catherine Russell Collection)

241: Luis Russell Orchestra on Stage Savoy Ballroom 1943, l to r. Luis Russell, Eddie Gibbs, Nora Blunt, Bass Hill, Chick Morrison, George Dorsey, Howard Callander, Johnnie Buggs, Lem Johnson (Catherine Russell Collection)

242: Appearing with Luis Russell at the Savoy in 1943, a novel instrument played by guitarist Eddie Gibbs, an electra-harp, an early version of a pedal steel guitar.

243: Unknown, Luis Russell, Savoy Ballroom? (Catherine Russell Collection)

246: Luis Russell Orchestra 1946 with Roy Haynes on drums (Catherine Russell Collection)

247: Elate Ballroom, Philadelphia, Oct 10, 1946, Johnny Moore's Three Blazers and Luis Russell, l to r. policeman, Eddie Williams – b. Luis Russell, Johnny Moore –guitar, Charles Brown – p, John Hopkins (Catherine Russell Collection)

248: Luis Russell and Lee Richardson, Elate 10/10/46 (Catherine Russell Collection)

249: Luis Russell directing recording session

250: Luis Russell, Roy Haynes (in rear seated), Lee Richardson (receiving scroll for Most Popular Vocalist 1946) (Catherine Russell Collection)

252: l to r. Luis Russell, Rex Ingram (star of stage, screen radio, Oscar Moore – g., Nat Cole, Johnny Miller – b. Dusty Fletcher (comedian), Earle Theater, Philadelphia Jan 16, 1947 (Catherine Russell Collection)

253: Nat Cole and Luis Russell (Catherine Russell Collection)

255: Luis Russell and Lee Richardson visit Record Shop (Catherine Russell Collection)

258 - 269: Luis Russell Orchestra Promotional Book, Associated Booking Corp.

270: Nov 23, 1948, l to r, Barney Bigard, Jr., Louis Armstrong, Evelyn, Luis Russell, Earl Hines, Barney Bigard, Sr. NYC (Catherine Russell Collection)

275: Letter from Luis Russell to Louis Armstrong, Armstrong Archive, Queens, NY

276: Luis Russell and Lucille Armstrong at Louis Armstrong House, Queens, NY, home movie still circa 1960, (Catherine Russell Collection)

278: Luis Russell left at wedding of Louis Armstrong & Lucille Wilson October 1942, St. Louis (Louis Armstrong House Museum)

280: Lead Sheet for "Lucille," Armstrong Archive, Queens College, NYC

286: "Back O' Town Blues" lead sheet, 1946

321: Luther Brown, unknown, Luis Russell (Catherine Russell Collection)

322: Neighborhood Children with Luis Russell at his gift shop in Brooklyn (Catherine Russell Collection)

324: Publicity Photo, Edna Smith Trio, l to r. Edna Smith, Carline Ray, Pauline Williams, signed "To Mr. Russell a grand guy, and by Carline "To One of the nicest people I've ever met" (Catherine Russell Collection)

## **Appendix 1: Unissued Recordings from Catherine Russell Collection**

### **Radio Broadcasts:**

Louis Armstrong and His Orchestra, February-March 1938, New Grand Terrace, Chicago, IL, Four sided aluminum discs containing performances of "I've Got A Heart Full of Rhythm," "Them There Eyes," "Jammin'," "Dunkin A Doughnut aka Riffs," "Blue Rhythm Fantasy," "After You've Gone," "Mr. Ghost Goes To Town," plus others.

Sonny Woods, Louis Armstrong Orchestra WABC, December 17, 1939, Medley: "Lilacs In The Rain," "Melancholy Lullaby," Chappie Willet Recording Studios.

Sonny Woods, Louis Armstrong Orchestra WABC, February 25, 1940, Medley: "Gotta Go Home," "Top Rail," Chappie Willet Recording Studios.

Luis Russell Orchestra (without Louis Armstrong) perhaps in 1938 or 1939. Two Presto green label discs, including performances of "At The Swing Cat's Ball," "Heebie Jeebies," (Midge Williams vocal), "Ol' Man River," (Sonny Woods vocal), "Algiers Stomp."

Luis Russell Orchestra, WOR "Live from the Savoy Ballroom," 1945, six two sided glass 12" discs containing performances of "Call of The Freaks," "Begin The Beguine," "Bolero," "Chippys Playground," "Andy's Idea," "Into Each Life Some Rain Must Fall," "Saint Louis Holiday," "Broadway Jump," "Exactly Like You," "Boogie In The Basement," "Move In That Groove," "I Need Your Kind of Loving," "Moon Love," and others.

Luis Russell Orchestra WJZ, July 1, 1945, "It Might Have Been You."

Luis Russell Orchestra WZJ, September 25, 1945, "After Hours Creep."

Luis Russell Orchestra, November 20, 1945, "I Can't Get You Out of My Mind," Rockhill Recording.

### **Additional Recordings, not radio broadcasts:**

New York, Feb 28, 1940 , Luis Russell Solo Piano recorded by Chappie Willet, including  
"Rippling Waters," "Echo of Spring," "Fussing," "Moonlight Cocktail."

Late 1950's in New York City, Demos of Songs written by Luis Russell and Teresa M. Dempsey, performed by Carline Ray and Frank Anderson, including "My Heart," "Seven Days," "Honey Dear," "Vegas Moon," "Lucille," "Teenagers

Code," "Midnight Mist," "Listen To The Beat," "Where Will I Find A Heart," "Loving You," "Who Is To Care," and others.

## Appendix 2: Luis Russell Discography on Tom Lord Discography

[www.lordisco.com](http://www.lordisco.com)

### [B13360] Ada Brown

Ada Brown (vcl) acc by George Mitchell (cnt) Albert Nicholas (as-1,cl-2) Barney Bigard (ts-1) **Luis Russell (p)** Johnny St. Cyr (bj-2) unknown speech -

**Chicago, IL, March 10, 1926**

E-2624/5 Panama limited blues Voc 1009

E-2626/7 Tia Juana man -

Note: Johnny St. Cyr played p, bj, sax according to the labels.  
Both above titles also on Document (Au)DOCD-5489 [CD].

### [R7093] Luis Russell

**Russell's Hot Six** : George Mitchell (cnt) Kid Ory (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl,as,sop) Barney Bigard (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Johnny St. Cyr (bj) Richard M. Jones (speech-1)

**Chicago, March 10, 1926**

E-2620/1 29th and Dearborn Voc 1010, Swag (Aus)95, Coral (F/G)94212, Historical HLP6, VJM (E)VLP54, Family 694, Herwin 112, Classic Jazz Masters CJM40, Best of Jazz (F)4023 [CD], Classics (F)588 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA039 [CD]

E-2622 Sweet Mumtaz Classic Jazz Masters CJM40, Neatwork (Au)RP2022 [CD]

E-2623 Sweet Mumtaz (1) Voc 1010, Swag (Aus)95, Coral (F/G)94212, (F)98002, (G)97032, Historical HLP6, VJM (E)VLP54, 694, Herwin 112, Classic Jazz Masters CJM40, Classics (F)588 [CD]

Note: Neatwork CD liner notes show mx. 2633 instead of E-2622.  
VJM (E)VLP54 titled "Feelin' the spirit".  
Historical HLP6 titled "Rare bands 1926-1931"; rest of LP by others.  
Best of Jazz (F)4023 [CD] titled "Kid Ory - The Swing Era"; rest of CD by others.  
All above titles also on Collector's Classics (Dan)COCD7 [CD] titled "The Luis Russell Collection, 1926-1934"; see flwg sessions to August 8, 1934 for rest of

CD.

Classics (F)588 [CD] titled "Luis Russell and his Orchestra 1926-1929"; see flwg sessions to December 17, 1929 for more titles; rest of CD by Ada Brown, Jungle Town Stompers, Victoria Spivey.

Fremaux & Associates (F)FA039 [CD] titled "Jazz New Orleans 1918-1944"; see September 5, 1980 for one more title; rest of CD by others.

### [O722] King Oliver

**King Oliver's Jazz Band** : King Oliver (cnt) Bob Shoffner (tp) Kid Ory (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl,sop,as-1) Billy Paige (cl,sop-1,as) Barney Bigard (cl-2,sop,ts) **Luis Russell (p-1)** Bud Scott (bj) Bert Cobb (tu) Paul Barbarin (d) Richard M. Jones (vcl break,p-2)

#### Chicago, March 11, 1926

E-2632W	Too bad (rmj vcl,1)	Voc 1007, V-1009, Br 80082, A-181, Swag (Aus)23, 821, De 31027, Coral 94251, (F)CVM40002, LRA10020, MCA 7396, (F)510118, CJM (Swd)19, AoH (E)AH91, Br BL58020, Joker (It)SM3808, Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4023 [CD], Classics (F)639 [CD], Topaz (E)TPZ1009 [CD], Jazz Classics RPCD607 [CD]
E-2633W	Too bad (rmj vcl,1)	Br (G)A-181, CJM (Swd)19, Swag (Aus)821, Neatwork (Au)RP2022 [CD]
E-2634W	Snag it (rmj vcl,2)	Voc 1007, 15503, Br 80039, (G)A-181, A-250, Swag (Aus)23, 821, Br 58026, De DL79246, Coral COPS1955, CJM (Swd)19, Joker (It)SM3808, MCA 1309, Giants of Jazz (It)LPJT21, Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD], Classics (F)639 [CD], Topaz (E)TPZ1009 [CD], Jazz Portraits (It)14547 [CD]
E-2635W	Snag it (rmj vcl,2)	Voc 1007, Swag (Aus)JCS33779, 821, Coll Clas (Dan)CC42, Family (It)FR696, MCA (F)510118,

CJM (Swd)19, Neatwork  
(Au)RP2022 [CD]

Note: Topaz (E)TPZ1009 [CD] incorrectly lists Mx. E2633 for Vocalion 1007.  
 Personnel & instrumentation from "King Oliver (revised)" by Laurie Wright.  
 Decca DL79246 titled "Papa Joe".  
 CJM (Swd)19 titled "King Oliver, 1926-1931, Vol. 1".  
 Joker (It)SM3808 titled "The King Jazz Story Collectors edition : King Oliver Vol 1"; the track labelled "Snag it (take 1)" plays matrix E3848; the track labelled "Snag it (take 2)" plays matrix E2634.  
 MCA 1309 titled "King Oliver's Dixie Syncopators 1926-1928 "Papa Joe""; see various flwg sessions to September 9, 1928 for rest of LP.  
 Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD] = MCA GRP16162 [CD], both titled "King Oliver and his Dixie Syncopators : Sugar foot stomp"; see flwg sessions to June 11, 1928 for rest of CD.  
 Best of Jazz (F)4023 [CD] titled "Kid Ory - The Swing Era"; see May 29, 1926 for 2 more titles; rest of CD by others.  
 Topaz (E)TPZ1009 [CD] titled "King Oliver 1926-1931".  
 One take of "Snag it" also on MCA (G)7396, Jazz Antholgy (F)157612 [CD].  
 One take of "Two bad" also on BBC (E)RPCD787 [CD].  
 All above titles also on Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD] titled "Complete Vocalion/Brunswick Recordings 1926-1931"; see flwg sessions to April 15, 1931 for more titles; rest of this 2 CD set by Teddy Peters, Irene Scruggs.  
 All above titles also on King Jazz (It)KJ113FS [CD].  
 All above titles also on Frog (E)DGF34 [CD] titled "King Oliver, Vocalion & Brunswick recordings, volume 1"; see flwg sessions to April 27, 1927 and Teddy Peters, Irene Scruggs for rest of CD.

**[P3130] Teddy Peters**

Teddy Peters (vcl) acc by King Oliver (cnt) prob. Bob Shoffner (cnt) prob. Billy Page (as) **Luis Russell (p)** Bud Scott (bj) or prob. Johnny Dodds (cl)

**Chicago, March 11, 1926**

E-2636/7	Georgia man	Vocalion 1006, Jay 1, MCA (F)510118, Classics (F)639 [CD], Village (G)VILCD012-2 [CD], Affinity (E)AFS1022-2 [CD], Frog (E)DGF34 [CD]
E-2638/9	What a man ! (tp,jd,lr only)	Vocalion 1006, Jay 1, Affinity (E)CDAFS1023-3 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2012 [CD], Frog (E)DGF39 [CD]

Note: Affinity (E)AFS1022-2 [CD] titled "King Oliver - Complete Vocalion/Brunswick recordings"; rest of CD by King Oliver, Irene Scruggs.  
 Affinity (E)CDAFS1023-3 [CD] titled "Johnny Dodds 1926-1940, Part One"; a 3 CD set.  
 Villlage (G)VILCD012-2 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong with King Oliver, Vol. 2"; rest of CD by others.  
 Classics (F)639 [CD] titled "King Oliver, 1923-1926"; rest of CD by King Oliver, Irene Scruggs.  
 Neatwork (Au)RP2012 [CD] titled "Johnny Dodds, 1926-1929, The Alternate Takes"; rest of CD by Johnny Dodds and others.  
 Frog (E)DGF39 [CD] titled "New Orleans Stomp".

Both above titles also on Raretone (It)RTR24001, Document (Au)DOCD5516 [CD].

**[O723] King Oliver**

**King Oliver And His Dixie Syncopators** : same pers. except Paul Barbarin (d,vcl break) Richard M. Jones out

**Chicago, IL, April 21, 1926**

E-2892W Deep Henderson (pb vcl) Voc 1014, OFC (Arg)2, AoH  
(E)AH34, De AM79246,  
Coral COPS1955, MCA  
1309, 7396, CJM (Swd)19, Swag  
(Aus)821, Joker  
(It)SM3808, Decca DL79246,  
Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD], BBC  
(E)RPCD787 [CD],  
Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2  
[CD], Classics (F)639  
[CD], King Jazz (It)KJ135FS  
[CD], Frog (E)DGF34  
[CD], Topaz (E)TPZ1009  
[CD], Jazz Classics RPCD607  
[CD]

Note: Only For Collectors (Arg)OFC2 titled "King Oliver".  
King Jazz (It)KJ135FS [CD] titled "The complete Joseph "King" Oliver, Vol. 3";  
see flwg sessions to November 18, 1927; rest of CD by Irene Scruggs,  
Clarence Williams.

**[O724] King Oliver**

Georgia Taylor (vcl) added

**Chicago, April 23, 1926**

E-2914W Jackass blues (gt vcl) Voc 1014, MCA 1309, Coral  
94211, Swag (Aus)23,  
821, OFC (Arg)2, AoH  
(E)AH34, De DL79246, Coral  
COPS1955, CJM (Swd)19, MCA  
7396, Joker (It)SM3808,  
Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD], BBC  
(E)RPCD787 [CD],  
Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2  
[CD], Classics (F)639  
[CD], King Jazz (It)KJ135FS  
[CD], Frog (E)DGF34  
[CD], Jazz Archives (F)159202  
[CD], Jazz Classics  
RPCD607 [CD]

Note: Jazz Archives (F)159202 [CD] titled "Albert Nicholas Story 1926-1947".

**[S3556] Irene Scruggs**

Irene Scruggs (vcl) acc by King Oliver (cnt) Kid Ory (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl-1,sop-2) **Luis Russell (p)** Bud Scott (bj) Paul Barbarin (d)

**Chicago, Illinois, April 23, 1926**

E-2916 Home town blues Voc 1017, CJM (Swd)CJM19, Swaggie  
(2) (Aus) 821

E-2918 Sorrow valley blues – – –  
(1)

Note: (2) This title also on Parade (E)PAR2302 [CD] titled "King Oliver/Jelly Roll Morton"; rest of this 2 CD set by others.  
Both above titles also on Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD] titled "King Oliver - Complete Vocalion/Brunswick recordings, 1926-1931"; rest of CD by King Oliver, Teddy Peters.  
Both above titles also on Village (G)VILCD012-2 [CD] (titled "Louis Armstrong with King Oliver, Vol. 2"), Classics (F)639 [CD] (titled "King Oliver 1923-1926"), King Jazz (It)KJ135 [CD], Document (Au)DOCD5373 [CD].  
Both above titles also on Rhapsody (E)RHA6032, Raretone (It)RTR24001, RST Blues Documents (Au)BD2095, Frog (E)DGF34 [CD].

**[O725] King Oliver**

King Oliver (cnt) Bob Shoffner (tp) Kid Ory (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Billy Paige (cl-2,as) Barney Bigard (cl-2,ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Bud Scott (bj,vcl break-1) Bert Cobb (tu)Paul Barbarin (d)

**Chicago, May 29, 1926**

E-3179W Sugar foot stomp (1) Voc 1033, Br 80081, Coral  
94112, COPS1955, AoH  
(E)AH91, CJM (Swd)19, Br  
BL58020, Swag (Aus)25,  
821, De DL79246, Folkways  
FP63, FJ2805, Decca  
GRD616 [CD], GRD2-641  
[CD], Best of Jazz (F)4023  
[CD], Topaz (E)TPZ1009  
[CD], Jazz Classics RPCD607  
[CD]

E-3181W Wa wa wa (2) Voc 1033, Coral  
94112, COPS1955, AoH  
(E)AH34, OFC  
(Arg)2, CJM (Swd)19, Franklin  
Mint GJR018, Swag  
(Aus)25, 821, De  
DL79246, Decca GRD616  
[CD], Best  
of Jazz (F)4023 [CD], ASV  
Living Era (E)CDAJA5148



[CD], Topaz (E)TPZ1009  
 [CD], Jazz Classics RPCD607  
 [CD]  
 E-3182W Hobo's prayer (unissued)  
 E-3183W Hobo's prayer –

Note: Decca GRD-2-641 [CD] titled "Black legends of jazz"; rest of this 2 CD set by others.

Both issued titles also on Joker (It)SM3808, MCA 7396, 1309, Giants of Jazz (It)LPJT21, BBC (E)RPCD787 [CD], Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD], Classics (F)639 [CD], King Jazz (It)KJ135FS [CD], Frog (E)DGF34 [CD], Jazz Portraits (It)14547 [CD].

### [O726] King Oliver

Darnell Howard (as) replaces Billy Paige, Stump Evans (sop) added

Chicago, July 23, 1926

E-3553W Someday sweetheart (unissued)  
 E-3554W Messin' around –  
 E-3555W Tack Annie Voc 1049, Meritt 24, CJM  
 (Swd)19, Affinity  
 (E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD], King  
 Jazz (It)KJ135FS [CD],  
 Classics (F)639 [CD], ASV  
 Living Era (E)CDAJA5148  
 [CD], Frog (E)DGF34 [CD]  
 Voc 1049, Swag  
 E-3556W Tack Annie (Aus)24, 821, AoH  
 (E)AH34, MCA  
 (G)7396, (F)510118, Joker  
 (It)SM3808, Decca/GRP  
 GRD616 [CD], Affinity  
 (E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD],  
 Neatwork (Au)RP2022  
 [CD], King Jazz (It)KJ135FS  
 [CD], Frog (E)DGF34  
 [CD], Topaz (E)TPZ1009 [CD]

Note: Meritt 24 titled "Collector items 1925-1933"; see January 16, 1929 & February 25, 1929 for more titles; rest of LP by others.

### [O727] King Oliver

King Oliver (cnt) Bob Shoffner (tp) Kid Ory (tb) Johnny Dodds (cl-1) Stump Evans (sop-2,as-3) Darnell Howard (cl-4,as-5) Barney Bigard (cl-6,ts-7) Luis Russell (p) Bud Scott (bj) Bert Cobb (tu) Paul Barbarin (d)

Chicago, September 17, 1926

E-3843WSL Someday sweetheart (1,3,5,7) Voc 1059, Br 80082, MCA  
 7396, (F)510118, Coral

94112, LRA10020, (F)CVM40002, Swag  
 (Aus)24, 821,  
 AoH (E)AH34, Br BL58020, CJM  
 (Swd)19, Time-Life  
 STL-J26, BBC  
 (E)REB589, REB589, CD589 [CD],  
 Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD], Affinity  
 (E)CDAFS1023-3  
 [CD], ABC (Aus)836181-2  
 [CD], Village  
 (G)VILCD005-2 [CD], Best of Jazz  
 (F)4014 [CD],  
 Classics (F)618 [CD], Topaz  
 (E)TPZ1009 [CD]

E- Dead man blues  
 3845WSL (2,3,4,5,6,7) Voc 1059, Coral 94211, Swag  
 (Aus)24, 821, AoH  
 (E)AH34, MCA 7396, (F)510118, CJM  
 (Swd)19, OFC  
 (Arg)2, Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD], BBC  
 (E)RPCD787  
 [CD], Classics (F)618  
 [CD], Timeless (Du)CBC1-027  
 [CD], Jazz Classics RPCD607 [CD]

E- New wang wang  
 3847WSL blues (3,5,7) Voc 1049, MCA  
 7396, (F)510118, Swag  
 (Aus)24, 821,  
 AoH (E)AH34, CJM  
 (Swd)19, Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD],  
 Classics (F)618 [CD], ASV Living  
 Era (E)CDAJA5148  
 [CD]

E- Snag it (2,4,5,6,7)  
 3848WSL Br 3361, AoH (E)AH91, MCA  
 (F)510118, Swag (Aus)48,  
 822, CJM (Swd)19, Classics (F)618  
 [CD], ASV Living  
 Era (E)CDAJA5148 [CD], Jazz  
 Classics RPCD607 [CD],  
 Cities Of Jazz CTJZ1001 [CD]

E- Snag it (2,4,5,6,7,\*)  
 3849WSL Br 3361, BL58020, 80081, Coral  
 94206, LRA10020,  
 (F)CVM40002, Family (It)FR696, CJM  
 (Swd)19, Coll

Clas (Dan)CC42, MCA  
 (F)510118, Swag (Aus)24, 822,  
 Franklin Mint GJR018, Decca/GRP  
 GRD616 [CD],  
 Neatwork (Au)RP2022 [CD]

Note: On Brunswick 80081 "Snag it" appears as "Snag it no 2".  
 Affinity (E)AFS1023-3 [CD] titled "Johnny Dodds"; rest of CD by others.  
 ABC (Aus)836181-2 [CD] titled "Jazz Classics in digital stereo, Vol. 2, Chicago";  
 rest of CD by others.  
 Village (G)VILCD005-2 [CD] titled "Johnny Dodds 1927-1928"; rest of CD by  
 others.  
 Classics (F)618 [CD] titled "King Oliver 1926-1928"; see flwg sessions to  
 Septembe 10, 1928 for rest of CD.  
 One take of "Snag it" also on MCA (G)7396, BBC (E)RPCD787 [CD].  
 All titles, except (\*), also on Joker (It)SM3808.  
 All above titles also on Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD], King Jazz (It)KJ135FS  
 [CD], Frog (E)DGF34 [CD].

#### [R7094] Luis Russell

**Luis Russell's Heebie Jeebie Stompers** : Bob Shoffner (cnt) Preston Jackson  
 (tb) Darnell Howard (cl,as) Barney Bigard (ts) Luis Russell (p) Johnny St. Cyr (bj)

Chicago, November 17, 1926

9903-A	Plantation joys	Okeh 8424, Col C3L32, CBS 62235
9904-A	Please don't turn me down	—
9905-A	Sweet Mumtaz	8454
9906-A	Dolly mine	—, Historical HLP20

Note: Columbia C3L32 titled "Sound of Chicago - Jazz Odyssey Vol. 2"; rest of this 3  
 LP set by others.  
 Historical HLP20 titled "Collector's Items 1925-1929"; rest of LP by others.  
 All above titles also on Columbia KG32338 (titled "Luis Russell and his  
 Louisiana Swing Orchestra"), CBS (F)88029, GAPS (Du)030, VJM  
 (E)VLP54, Collectors Classics (Dan)COCD7 [CD], Classics (F)588 [CD].

#### [O728] King Oliver

King Oliver, Thomas "Tick" Gray (cnt) Kid Ory (tb) Omer Simeon (cl,sop-  
 1,as) Barney Bigard (cl-2,ts) Luis Russell (p) Bud Scott (bj) Bert Cobb (tu) Paul  
 Barbarin (d)

Chicago, April 22, 1927

C-802	Doctor Jazz (1)	Coll Clas (Dan)CC42, De DL79246, MCA 7396, (F)510034, CJM (Swd)20, Swag (Aus)JCS110, 822, MCA 1309, Coral (G)COPS1955 Voc 1114, Coral
C-804	Showboat shuffle (2)	94206, (G)COPS1955, Swag (Aus)25, 822, OFC (Arg)2, AoH (E)AH34, De DL79246, MCA

- 1309, (F)510034, CJM  
(Swd)20, Giants of Jazz  
(It)LPJT21, Jazz Portraits  
(It)14547 [CD]  
Voc 1114, Swag  
C-807 Every tub (1)  
(Aus)25, 822, OFC (Arg)2, AoH  
(E)AH34, De DL79246, Coral  
(G)COPS1955,  
(Swd)20, MCA  
7396, 1309, (F)510034  
Voc 1112, Br 80079, Coral  
C-809 Willie the weeper (1,2)  
94112, LRA10020,  
(F)CVM40002, AoH (E)AH34, De  
DL79246, Swag  
(Aus)23, 822, Coral  
(G)COPS1955, MCA 7396, 1309,  
(F)510118, CJM (Swd)20, Br  
BL58020, Topaz  
(E)TPZ1009 [CD], Jazz  
Archives (F)157752 [CD]

Note: Mx. C802 was scheduled for Vocalion 1113, but cancelled before release.  
CJM (Swd)20 titled "King Oliver, 1926-1931, Vol. 2".  
Swaggie (Aus)JCS110 titled "King Oliver And His Dixie Syncopators"; a 7" LP.  
Last 3 titles also on Joker (It)SM3808D].  
Last 3 titles also on Jazz Classics RPCD608 [CD] titled "King Oliver - Great  
Original Performances 1927-1930, Volume Two".  
All above titles also on Decca/GRP GRD616 [CD].  
All above titles also on BBC (E)RPCD788 [CD] titled "King Oliver, Volume Two,  
1927 to 1930"; see flwg sessions to 1930 for more titles; rest of CD by Clarence  
Williams.  
All above titles also on Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD], Classics (F)618  
[CD], King Jazz (It)KJ135 FS [CD], Frog (E)DGF34 [CD].

### [O729] King Oliver

King Oliver, Thomas "Tick" Gray (cnt) Kid Ory (tb) Omer Simeon (sop) Barney  
Bigard (ts) Luis Russell (p) unknown (bj) Junie Cobb (tu) Paul Barbarin (d)

St. Louis, Missouri, April 27, 1927

- C-835 Black snake blues  
Voc 1112, Br 80079, Coral  
94251, LRA10020,  
(F)CVM40002, (G)COPS1955, Swag  
(Aus)24, 822, AoH  
(E)AH91, CJM (Swd)20, De  
DL79246, MCA 7396, 1309,  
(F)510034, Br BL58020, Joker  
(It)SM3809, Decca/GRP  
GRD616 [CD], BBC (E)RPCD788  
[CD], Affinity

(E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD], Classics  
 (F)618 [CD], King  
 Jazz (It)KJ135FS [CD], Frog  
 (E)DGF34 [CD], Topaz  
 (E)TPZ1009 [CD], Jazz Archives  
 (F)158862 [CD],  
 Jazz Classics RPCD608 [CD]

Note: Personnel as listed in "King Oliver" by Laurie Wright.  
 Joker (It)SM3809 titled "The King Jazz Story Collectors Edition : King Oliver  
 Vol.2".

### [O739] King Oliver

**King Oliver And His Dixie Syncopators** : King Oliver (cnt) Ed Anderson (tp) J.C.  
 Higginbotham (tb) Omer Simeon (cl,as) Barney Bigard (cl-1,ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Will  
 Johnson (bj) Bass Moore (tu) Paul Barbarin (d) Benny Waters (arr)

**New York, September 10, 1928**

E-28185- A/B	Speakeasy blues	Voc 1225, Coral 94251, LRA10020, (F)CVM40002, COPS1955, AoH (E)AH91, De DL79246, Swag (Aus)48, 823, MCA 1309, (F)510034, CJM (Swd)21, Br BL58020, Topaz (E)TPZ1009 [CD]
E-28186- A/B	Aunt Hagar's blues (bw arr)	Voc 1225, Coral 94211, LRA10020, (F)CVM40002, COPS1955, De DL79246, AoH (E)AH91, CJM (Swd)21, MCA 1309, (F)510034, Swag (Aus)25, 823, Br BL58020, Franklin Mint GJR018, Jazz Archives (F)157752 [CD]

Note: Both above titles also on Br 80080, MCA 7396, Joker (It)SM3809, Giants of  
 Jazz (It)LPJT21, Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2 [CD], Classics (F)618 [CD], Village  
 (G)VILCD018-2 [CD], Frog (E)DGF35 [CD], Jazz Portraits (It)14547 [CD].

### [O740] King Oliver

**New York, September 12, 1928**

E-28203- A/B	I'm watching the clock	Br 4469, Swag (Aus)JCS110, 823, AoH (E)AH91, Coral COPS1955, De DL79246, MCA 7396, 1309, (F)510034,
-----------------	------------------------	---

(Swd)21, Joker  
 (It)SM3809, Classics (F)607  
 [CD],  
 Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2  
 [CD], Village  
 (G)VILCD018-2 [CD], Frog  
 (E)DGF35 [CD], Topaz  
 (E)TPZ1009 [CD], Jazz  
 Portraits (It)14547 [CD]

E-28204- Janitor Sam (unissued)  
 A/B

Note: Classics (F)607 [CD] titled "King Oliver 1928-1930"; see flwg sessions to  
 January 28, 1930 for rest of CD.

### [O741] King Oliver

King Oliver (cnt) Louis Metcalf (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes  
 (as,sop) prob. Teddy Hill (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Will Johnson (bj,g) Bass Moore  
 (tu) Paul Barbarin (d)

#### New York, November 14, 1928

E-28757- Br 4469, AoH (E)AH91, CJM  
 A/B Slow and steady (Swd)21, Swag (Aus)823,  
 MCA 7396, Joker  
 (It)SM3809, Classics (F)607  
 [CD],  
 Affinity (E)CDAFS1025-2  
 [CD], Village  
 (G)VILCD018-2 [CD], Frog  
 (E)DGF35 [CD]

Note: Personnel as listed in "King Oliver" by Laurie Wright.

### [R7095] Luis Russell

**Luis Russell And His Burning Eight** : Louis Metcalf (tp) J.C. Higginbotham  
 (tb) Charlie Holmes (cl,as) Teddy Hill (ts) **Luis Russell (p,dir)** Will Johnson  
 (bj,g) Bass Moore (tu) Paul Barbarin (d) Walter "Fats" Pichon (vcl)

#### New York, January 15, 1929

401532 Savoy Okeh 8760, Phil 436004, VJM (E)VLP54  
 -A shout  
 The call  
 401533 of the 8656, - -  
 -A,B freak  
 s  
 It's tight  
 like  
 401534 - , Od XOC145, VJM (E)VLP54, CBS 63  
 -A that 721  
 (wfp  
 vcl)

Note: All above titles also on JSP (E)308 [CD] titled "Luis Russell, 1929-1930"; see flwg sessions to September 5, 1930 for more titles; rest of CD by Jungle Town Stompers, J.C. Higginbotham, Louis Armstrong.  
 All above titles also on Village (G)VILCD018-2 [CD] titled "Luis Russell and his Orchestra 1927-29"; rest of CD by King Oliver, Louis Armstrong, Jungle Town Stompers.  
 All above titles also on Columbia KG32338, CBS (F)S88039, Parlophone (E)PMC7025, Swaggie (Aus)828, Classics (F)588 [CD].  
 All above titles also on Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD] titled "The Luis Russell Story, 1929-1934"; see flwg sessions to August 8, 1934 and other leaders for rest of 2CD set.

**[O742] King Oliver**

**King Oliver And His Orchestra** : Louis Metcalf (cnt) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes (as) Teddy Hill (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Will Johnson (bj) Bass Moore (tu) Paul Barbarin (d) Walter "Fats" Pichon (vcl) King Oliver (dir)

**Liederkrantz Hall, New York, 10am-1:10pm, January 16, 1929**

	Freakis	
BVE49649	h	
-1/2	light (unissued)	
	blue	
	s	
	West	
BVE49650	End Meritt 24, JSP (E)CD348 [CD], Neatwork	
-1	blue (Au)RP2022	
	s	
	[CD]	
	West	
BVE49650	End Vic V38034, "X" LVA3018, EVA11, RCA	
-2	blue (F)430592,	
	s	
	730557, 130276, PM42411, (Jap)RA5317, Cam	
	den	
	CAL446, Joker (It)SM3810, Halcyon	
	(E)HDL106, RCA	
	(Jap)RA-1/RA-8, RA-3, JSP (E)CD347	
	[CD], Village	
	(G)VILCD018-2 [CD], RCA Bluebird 6753-2-	
	RB [CD],	
	Classics (F)607 [CD], Jazz Portraits	
	(It)14547	
	[CD]	
	I've got	
BVE49651	that	"X" LVA3018, EVA11, RCA
-1	thing (wfp	(F)130276, 430592, 730557,
	vcl)	

(Jap)RA5317, Joker (It)SM3810, RCA  
 (Jap)RA-1/RA-8,  
 RA-3, JSP (E)CD348 [CD], Village  
 (G)VILCD018-2  
 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2022 [CD]

I've got  
 BVE49651 that Vic V38521, RCA (F)FXM1-  
 -2 thing 7061, PM42411, Family  
 (wfp  
 vcl)  
 (It)FR694, Halcyon (E)HDL106, JSP  
 (E)CD347 [CD],  
 Village (G)VILCD018-2 [CD], Classics  
 (F)607 [CD]

Note: RCA (F)FXM1-7061 titled "King Oliver/Dave Nelson".  
 Joker (It)SM3810 titled "The King Jazz story collectors edition : King Oliver Vol. 3".  
 Halcyon (E)HDL106 titled "King Oliver and his Orchestra, Vol. 1 : Sweet like this"; see flwg sessions to January 28, 1930 for rest of LP.  
 JSP (E)CD347 [CD] titled "King Oliver, Volume One 1929-30"; see flwg sessions to March 18, 1930 for rest of CD.  
 JSP (E)CD348 [CD] titled "King Oliver, Volume Two 1929-30"; see flwg sessions to September 19, 1930 for rest of CD.  
 One take of each issued title also on RCA (Eu)ND89770 [CD] titled "King Oliver and his Orchestra 1929-1930"; see flwg sessions to September 19, 1930 for rest of this 2 CD set.  
 All issued titles also on Frog (E)DGF64 [CD] titled "Call Of The Freaks"; see various flwg sessions to January 15, 1930 for rest of CD.  
 All issued titles also on Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD] .

### [O743] King Oliver

Louis Metcalf (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes (cl-1,sop-2,as) Teddy Hill (cl-3,ts) Luis Russell (p) Will Johnson (bj-4,g-5) Bass Moore (tu) Paul Barbarin (d) King Oliver (dir)

New York, 2-5:20 pm, February 1, 1929

48332-1,2,3	Easy going	(unissued)
48333-1	Call of the freaks	RCA (F)741055, Historical HLP33, Family (It)FR694, JSP (E)CD348 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2022 [CD]
48333-2	Call of the freaks	Vic V38039, Bluebird 7705, HMV (E)7EG8039, RCA (F)130276, 430592, 730557, Cam (Arg)CAL2957, Family (It)FR694, RCA (F)PM42411, Joker (It)SM3810, Halcyon (E)HDL106, RCA (Jap)RA-1/RA-8,



- 48334-1 The trumpet's prayer RA-3, JSP (E)CD347  
[CD], Classics (F)607 [CD]  
Vic V38039, Bluebird 7705, HMV  
(E)7EG8039, RCA  
(F)130276, 430592, 730557, FXM1-  
7061, Cam  
(Arg)CAL2957, Family  
(It)FR694, Joker (It)SM3810,  
Halcyon (E)HDL106, RCA (Jap)RA-  
1/RA-8, RA-3, JSP  
(E)CD347 [CD], Classics (F)607  
[CD]  
48334-2 The trumpet's prayer RCA (F)PM42411, Deja Vu  
(It)DVLP2085, JSP  
(E)CD348 [CD], Neatwork  
(Au)RP2022 [CD]  
49649-3 Freakish light blues "X" EVA11, LVA3018, RCA  
(F)130276, 430592, 730557,  
(Jap)RA5317, Joker  
(It)SM3810, JSP (E)CD348 [CD],  
Neatwork (Au)RP2022 [CD]  
Vic V38521, "X"  
49649-4 Freakish light blues EVA11, LVA3018, RCA (F)FXM1-  
7061,  
PM42411, (Jap)RA5317, Halcyon  
(E)HDL106, RCA  
(Jap)RA-1/RA-8, RA-3, JSP  
(E)CD347 [CD], Classics  
(F)607 [CD]

Note: "The trumpet's prayer" mistitled "The trumpet player" on Joker (It)SM3810.  
Historical HLP33 titled "Jazz from New York 1928-1932"; rest of LP by others.  
One take of each issued title also on RCA (Eu)ND89770 [CD].  
All issued titles also on Village (G)VILCD018-2 [CD], Frog (E)DGF64  
[CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD].

### **[A5631] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Savoy Ballroom Five** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) J.C.  
Higginbotham (tb) Albert Nicholas, Charlie Holmes (cl,as) Teddy Hill (ts) Luis Russell  
(p) Eddie Condon (bj) Lonnie Johnson (g) George "Pops" Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, March 5, 1929**

- I can't give  
you  
401690(al anythin Jazum 8, CBS (F)65251, JSP (E)315  
t) g but [CD], King Jazz  
love (la  
vcl,\*)

(It)KJ151FS [CD], Columbia Legacy  
 C4K63527 [CD],  
 Neatwork (Au)RP2020 [CD]  
 I can't give  
 you  
 anythin Ok 8669, 41204, UHCA36, Col  
 401690-C g but 38052, 38221, ML4386,  
 love (la  
 vcl)  
 (E)33S1069, Parl (E)R753, PMC7045, CBS  
 (Eu)RM52027, 66247, Od  
 (F)165683, 7MOE2011,  
 OS1080, OSX143, (G)284474, A286021, Phi  
 l  
 (Eu)429098BE, 429218BE, Swaggie  
 (Aus)S1267,  
 Disques Swing SW8451, Musica Jazz  
 (It)2MJP1056,  
 Classics (F)570 [CD], Disques Swing  
 CDXP8450 [CD],  
 JSP (E)315 [CD], Columbia CK46148  
 [CD], C4K57176  
 [CD], Columbia Legacy C4K63527  
 [CD], Saville  
 (E)198 [CD], Radio France (F)211752  
 [CD], Music  
 Club (E)50134 [CD], Black & Blue  
 (F)59.226-2 [CD]  
 Mahogany  
 401691-B Hall Ok 8680, Voc 3055, Jolly Roger  
 stomp J7001, Col 35879,  
 C3L-30, Parl  
 (E)R571, PMC7019, PMC7098, Font  
 (Eu)TFE17073, 467063, 662024TR, Od  
 (F)7MOE2011,  
 OS1080, OSX143, (G)A286008, 041049, Swa  
 ggie  
 (Aus)1229, CBS  
 (Eu)BPG62232, RM52377, Amiga  
 (G)850070, 850070, Time-Life STL-  
 J01, Columbia  
 G30416, CK46148 [CD], Columbia Legacy  
 C4K63527

[CD], ProArte CDD439 [CD], JSP(E)315  
 [CD], Indigo  
 2035 [CD], Jazz Archives(F)158132 ? ? ?  
 ? [CD],  
 (F)158722 [CD], Classics (F)557  
 [CD], Best of Jazz  
 (F)4037 [CD], Living Era (E)CDAJA5094  
 [CD], Tring  
 (Eu)VAR042 [CD], HRM 6002 [CD], Black &  
 Blue  
 (F)59.226-2 [CD], Pulse (E)PLSCD136  
 [CD], Prism  
 Leisure PLATCD712 [CD], Saga Jazz  
 (F)981064-2 [CD]

Note: Disques Swing SW8451 titled "Satchmo Style"; see flwg sessions to February 1, 1930 and Jack Purvis for rest of LP.  
 Disques Swing CDXP8450 [CD] titled "Louis and the Big Bands 1928-1930"; see flwg sessions to May 4, 1930 and Carroll Dickerson for rest of CD.  
 Classics (F)557 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra 1929-1930"; see following sessions to May 4, 1930 for rest of CD.  
 Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD] titled "J.C. Higginbotham - His Best Recordings 1929/1940".  
 Saville (E)198 [CD] titled "Mahogany Hall Stomp"; see flwg sessions to January 25, 1932 for rest of CD.  
 Living Era (E)CDAJA5094 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong and Luis Russell 1929-1940"; see flwg sessions to November 16, 1941 for rest of CD.  
 JSP (E)315 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - volume 4"; see flwg sessions to April 5, 1930 for rest of CD.  
 Tring (Eu)VAR042 [CD] titled "The Louis Armstrong Collection 2"; see flwg sessions to July 27, 1967 for rest of CD.  
 Neatwork (Au)RP2020 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Volume 1, 1926-1935, The Alternative Takes"; see various flwg sessions to December 19, 1935 for more titles; rest of CD by Erskine Tate, Lil's Hot Shots, Seger Ellis, Jimmie Rodgers. All titles, except (\*), also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1355 [CD], Columbia Legacy 88697-94565-2 [CD].  
 All above titles also on Essential Jazz Classics (Sp)EJC55563 [CD], EJC55690 [CD].

### **[J6018] Jungle Town Stompers**

Louis Metcalf (tp) Henry Hicks (tb) Charlie Holmes (cl,as) Charlie Grimes (ts) **Luis Russell (p,cel)** Elmer Snowden (bj) Henry "Bass" Edwards (tu,perc,effects-1) Kaiser Marshall (d-1)

#### **New York, April 15, 1929**

401797-C	African jungle	Okeh 8686, Par (E)2212, IAJRC 12, JSP (E)CD308 [CD]
401798-B	Slow as molasses (1)	Okeh 8686, IAJRC 1, JSP (E)CD308 [CD]

Note: The above 2 titles also on CBS S88039, Family (It)694, and also on Columbia KG32338 titled "Luis Russell and his Louisiana Swing Orchestra".  
 JSP (E)CD308 [CD] titled "Luis Russell 1929-1930"; rest of this CD by Luis

Russell, J.C. Higginbotham.

Both above titles also on Hermes (E)HRM6004 [CD] titled "Hot Jazz - New York & Chicago 1928-29"; rest of this CD by others.

Both above titles also on Classics 588 [CD] titled "Luis Russell 1926-1929"; rest of this CD by others.

Both above titles also on Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD] .

**[A2846] Henry "Red" Allen**

**Henry Allen & His New York Orchestra** : Henry "Red" Allen (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (cl,sop,as) Teddy Hill (ts) **Luis Russell** (p,celeste,arr) Will Johnson (bj,g,vcl) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d,vib)

**New York, July 16, 1929**

55133-1	It should be you	Raretone 24006/7, RCA (F)FXM1-7060
55133-2	It should be you	"X" LVA3033, Jass 601, RCA (F)FXM1-7060
55133-3	It should be you (*)	Vic V38073, BB B10235, HMV B6487, K6949, K8524, RCA (F)430602, FXM1- 7060, Folkways FP67, FJ2807, RCA Victor LPV556, Cam (Arg)CAL3054, Time-Life STL-J16, RCA Victor (E)RD8049, RCA (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, Classics (F)540 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD], Retrospective RTR4248 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)159202 [CD]
55134-1	Biffly blues	"X" LVA3033, Jass 601, RCA (F)FXM1-7060 Vic V38073, RCA
55134-2	Biffly blues (*)	(F)430602, FXM1-7060, RCA Victor LPV556, (E)RD8049, RCA (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, Time-Life STL-J16, Classics (F)540 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4031 [CD]

Note: RCA Victor LPV556 titled "Henry 'Red' Allen".  
 "X" LVA3033 titled "Ridin' with Red Allen".  
 Time-Life STL-J16 titled "Giants of Jazz - Henry 'Red' Allen".  
 Classics (F)540 [CD] titled "Henry 'Red' Allen & His Orchestra, 1929-1933"; see  
 flwg sessions to November 9, 1933 for rest of CD.  
 Best of Jazz (F)4031 [CD] titled "Henry Red Allen - His Best Recordings 1929-  
 1941".  
 Retrospective RTR4248 [CD] titled "Henry Red Allen - Ride, Red Ride!: His 44  
 Finest, 1929-1962"; a 2 CD set.

All titles, except (\*), also on Neatwork (Au)RP2031 [CD] titled "Henry 'Red' Allen - The Alternate Takes, Volume 1"; see flwg sessions to April 17, 1941 and Buster Bailey for rest of CD.

All above titles also on Raretone (It)24006/7.

All above titles also on JSP (E)2CD-3403 [CD] titled "Henry 'Red' Allen and his New York Orchestra, 1929-1930"; see flwg sessions to July 15, 1930 and Luis Russell for rest of 2 CD set.

All titles from JSP (E)2CD-3403 [CD] also on JSP (E)CD332 [CD], CD333 [CD].

### [A2847] Henry "Red" Allen

Henry "Red" Allen (tp,vcl) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl) Charlie Holmes (sop,cl,as) Teddy Hill (ts,cl) **Luis Russell (p,celeste)** Will Johnson (g,bj,vcl) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d,vib)

#### New York, July 17, 1929

53929-1	Feeling drowsy	"X" LVA-3033, RCA Victor LPV556, Jass 601, RCA (F)FXM1-7060
53929-2	Feeling drowsy	Raretone 24006, RCA (F)FMX1-7060, RCA Victor (E)RD8049
53929-3	Feeling drowsy (*)	Vic V38080, BB B10702, HMVB4970, BD103, RCA (F)FXM1-7060, EA2908, 430602, Cam CAL3054, RCA (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, Time-Life STL-J16, Classics (F)540 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4031 [CD], Retrospective RTR4248 [CD], RCA Bluebird 6753-2-RB [CD], Properbox (E)155 [CD]
53930-1	Swing out	"X" LVA-3033, Jass 601, Historical 33, RCA (F)FXM1-7060, Bluebird 9583-2-RB [CD]
53930-2	Swing out	BB B10702, RCA (F)FXM1-7060
53930-3	Swing out (*)	Vic V38080, HMV B4970, B6500, EA2908, Elec (G)EG3090, BG3707, RCA (F)430602, FXM1-7060, Cam (Arg)CAL3054, RCA Victor LPV-556, (E)RD8049, RCA (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, Time-Life STL-J16, Classics

(F)540 [CD], Best of Jazz  
 (F)4037 [CD], Jazz  
 Archives (F)158862 [CD]

Note: RCA Victor LPV556 lists Mx 53929-2 but the Red Allen discography lists Mx 53929-1, which is believed to be correct.  
 All above titles also on Raretone (It)24006/7; see flwg sessions to July 15, 1930 for rest of this 2 LP set.  
 All titles, except (\*), also on Neatwork (Au)RP2031 [CD].  
 All above titles also on JSP (E)2CD-3403 [CD].

**[R7096] Luis Russell**

**Luis Russell And His Orchestra** : Henry "Red" Allen, Bill Coleman (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb,vcl) Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (as,sop) Teddy Hill (ts) **Luis Russell (p,dir)** Will Johnson (bj,g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d) vocal trio (1) only (Henry Allen, J.C. Higginbotham, Louis Metcalf)

**New York, September 6, 1929**

402938-C	The new call of the freaks (1)	Okeh 8734, Col 35680, Od (G)SMS12, VJM (E)VLP54, Col C3L33, Time-Life STL- J16, Best of Jazz (F)4031 [CD], Memoir (E)CDMOIR507 [CD], ASV Living Era (E)AJA5088 [CD]
402939-C	Feelin' the spirit (jch vcl)	Okeh 8766, Col KG32338, VJM (E)VLP54, CBS (F)S88039, Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD], Red Allen (G)RA-CD-12 [CD], Masters of Jazz (F)MJCD801 [CD], Properbox (E)165 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)157822 [CD], Properbox (E)155 [CD]
402940-B	Jersey lightning	Okeh 8734, Col 35680, KG32338, VJM (E)VLP54, CBS (F)S88039, Od (G)SMS4, Time- Life STL-J16, Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD], Retrospective RTR4248 [CD]

Note: Columbia 35690 lists date of this session as September 9, 1929.  
 "Feelin' the spirit" reissued on Vocalion 3480 as "Savoy stomp".  
 ASV Living Era (E)AJA5088 [CD] titled "Swinging the blues"; rest of CD by others.  
 Memoir (E)CDMOIR507 [CD] titled "Harlem joys"; rest of CD by others.  
 Jazz Archives (F)157822 [CD] titled "Bill Coleman 1929/1940".  
 All above titles also on Swaggie (Aus)1217, (Aus)828, CBS 63721, Parlophone

(E)PMC7025, Od (F)XOC145.

All above titles also on BBC (E)REB ZCF685 [CD] titled "Henry Allen 1929 to 1936"; rest of CD by others.

All above titles also on CBS 63721, Swaggie (Aus)1217, 828, Parlophone (E)725, VJM (E)TJ-J16, Classics (F)588 [CD], JSP (E)308 [CD], BBC (E)CD685 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD] .

**[R7097] Luis Russell**

**Lou And His Ginger Snaps** : same except Paul Barbarin (d,vib)

**New York, September 13, 1929**

- |        |                                  |   |
|--------|----------------------------------|---|
| 9006-1 | Broadway rhythm                  | Ban 6536, Ristic 20, Hist HLP19, CBS (F)S88039, Col KG32338, Family (It)694, VJM (E)VLP54, Classics (F)588 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)157822 [CD] |
| 9007-1 | The way he loves is just too bad | Ban 6540, Cameo 9320, Jewel 5729, Rom 1108, Family (It)694, VJM (E)VLP54, Classics (F)588 [CD]  |
| 9007-2 | The way he loves is just too bad | Cam 9320, Oriole 1726, Ristic 20, Hist HLP19, Col KG32338, CBS (F)S88039, Family (It)694, Neatwork (Au)RP2022 [CD]                            |

Note: Historical HLP9 titled "New York Jazz 1928-1933"; rest of LP by others.  
First and third titles reissued on Oriole as by "Dixie Jazz Band".  
All above titles also on Antipodisc AD14449, Collectors Classics (Dan)COCD7 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD] .

**[A2848] Henry "Red" Allen**

Victoria Spivey (vcl) and the The Four Wanderers (vcl quartet) added : Herman Hugues, Charles Clinkscales, Maceo Johnson, Olivier Childs (vcl) added

**New York, September 24, 1929**

- |         |  |  |
|---------|--|--|
| 55852-1 | Make a country bird fly wild (tfw vcl) | "X" LVA 3033, Cam (Arg)CAL3054, RCA (F)FXM1-7060, Neatwork (Au)RP2031 [CD] |
| 55852-2 | Make a country bird fly wild (tfw vcl) | Vic V38107, RCA (F)430602, FXM1-7060, 760-0000, (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82       |
| 55853-1 | Funny feathers blues (vs vcl,*)        | "X" LVA-3033, RCA (F)86358, (F)FXM1-7060                                   |

- 55853-2 Funny feathers blues (vs vcl,\*) Vic V38088, BB B6588, RCA (F)FXM1-7090, (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82 "X" LVA-3033, Cam
- 55854-1 How do they do it that way ? (vs vcl,\*) (Arg)CAL3054, RCA (F)FXM1-7090
- 55854-2 How do they do it that way ? (vs vcl,\*) Vic V38088, RCA (F)430602, FXM1-7090, (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82 "X" LVA 3033, RCA
- 55855-1 Pleasin' Paul (E)86358, (F)FXM1-7090, Bluebird 9583-2-RB [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2031 [CD], Giants of Jazz (It)CD53016 [CD]
- 55855-2 Pleasin' Paul Vic V38107, 760-0000, BB B10235, RCA (F)FXM1-7090, (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, BBC (E)REB588, CD588 [CD], Jazz Portraits (It)14534 [CD]

Note: BBC (E)REB588, CD588 [CD] titled "Jazz Classics in Digital Stereo, Volume One, New Orleans"; rest of CD by others.  
 All -2 matrices also on Classics (F)540 [CD].  
 All above titles also on Raretone (It)24006/7, JSP (E)2CD-3403 [CD].  
 (\*) This title also on Document (Au)DOCD5317 [CD].  
 One take of mx. 55855 also on Victor LEJ-1 titled "The RCA Victor Encyclopedia of Jazz"; rest of LP by others.

### [S10824] Victoria Spivey

Victoria Spivey (vcl) acc by Henry "Red" Allen (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes (sop) Teddy Hill (ts-1) **Luis Russell (p)** Will Johnson (g) Pops Foster (b,tu-2)

**New York, October 1, 1929**

- 56732-1 Bloodhound blues (1) Vic V38570, BB B8619, RCA LPV534, (G)LPM534, (E)RD7840, Best of Jazz (F)4031 [CD]
- 56733-2 Dirty T.B. blues (1) Vic V38570, Albatros (It)VPA8474, Red Allen (G)RA-CD-5 [CD]
- 56734-1 Moanin' the blues (1) Vic V38546, BB B8619, RCA LPV534, BBC (E)REB683, CD683 [CD], CDS Records (G)RPCD630 [CD], L'Art Vocal (F)7 [CD], Living Era (E)AJA5092 [CD]



56735-1 Telephoning the blues Vic V38546, Spivey LP2001  
(2)

Note: Mx. 56734-1 also on RCA (F)PM42039, ABC (Aus)L38695, 836.046-1, RCA (E)RD7840.  
Living Era (E)AJA5092 [CD] titled "Ladies sing the blues"; rest of CD by others.  
L'Art Vocal (F)7 [CD] titled "Female singers : La selection 1921-1939"; rest of CD by others.  
CDS Records (G)RPCD630 [CD] titled "The blues - Great original performances 1923 to 1933"; rest of CD by others.  
All above titles also on Classics (F)588 [CD] titled "Luis Russell and his Orchestra"; rest of CD by Ada Brown, Jungle Town Stompers.  
All above titles also on Bluebird 66065-2 [CD] titled "Better boot that thing - Great women blues singers of the 1920's"; see flwg session for one more title; rest of CD by Alberta Hunter, Ida May Mack, Bessie Tucker.  
All above titles also on Document (Au)DOCD5318 [CD] titled "Victoria Spivey, Vol. 3 (1929-36)"; see flwg sessions to July 7, 1936 for rest of CD.  
All above titles also on HMV (E)7EG8190, RCA (F)75693, (F)FXM1-7090, JSP (E)2CD-3403 [CD].

**[C10016] Wilton Crawley**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Wilton Crawley (cl,vcl) Charlie Holmes (as) unknown (ts) Luis Russell (p) Will Johnson (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, October 3, 1929**

56747-2 Snake hip dance (wc vcl) Vic V38094, RCA (F)FXM1-7090  
56748-2 She's drivin' me wild (wc vcl) - -

Note: Both above titles also on Jazz Crusade JCCD-3019 [CD] titled "Wilton Crawley & Fess Williams - Crazy Clarinets, Raucus Reeds"; see flwg sessions to June 3, 1930 for more titles; rest of CD by Fess Williams.  
Both above titles also on Red Allen (G)RA-CD-2 [CD], Jazz Oracle (Can)BDW8020 [CD].

**[S10804] Sweet Pease Spivey**

**Sweet Peas** : Sweet Pease Spivey (vcl) [real name Addie Spivey (vcl) sister of Victoria Spivey ] acc by Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Charlie Holmes (as) Luis Russell (p) Will Johnson (g)

**New York, November 25, 1929**

57554-1 Day-breaking blues Vic 23361, RCA  
[Day-dreaming blues] (F) 86586, (F)FXM1-7090  
57555-1 Heart-breaking blues -  
[Heartless blues]  
57555-2 Heart-breaking blues V38565, - -  
[Heartless blues]  
57556-1 Leaving you, baby 23361, - -  
57556-2 Leaving you, baby - -  
57557-1 Longing for home V38565, - -

Note: All above titles also on RST (Au)JPCD1506 [CD] titled "The Spivey Sisters"; see July 7, 1936 for two more titles; rest of CD by others.  
All above titles also on JSP (E)2CD-3403 [CD].

**[C10017] Wilton Crawley**

**Wilton Crawley and his Orchestra** : 2 unknown (tp), one of whom may be Henry "Red" Allen (tp) unknown (tb), Wilton Crawley (cl) Charlie Holmes (as) Jelly Roll Morton, Luis Russell (p) unknown (bj,g), Pops Foster (b) prob. Sonny Greer (d)

**New York, December 2, 1929**

57565-2 You oughta see my gal Vic V38136, RCA  
LPV546, LPM546  
57566-1 Futuristic blues - , Jass 602  
57567-2 Keep your business to Vic V38116, RCA  
yourself LPV546, LPM546, RCA (E)RD7914  
57568-1 She's got what I need - , Gannet 5552

Note: All above titles also on Classics (F)627 [CD] titled "Jelly Roll Morton 1928-1929"; rest of CD by Jelly Roll Morton.  
All above titles also on RCA (F)741070, Joker SM3556, Masters of Jazz (F)MJCD80 [CD], Jazz Crusade JCCD-3019 [CD], Jazz Oracle (Can)BDW8020 [CD].

**[A5638] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Otis Johnson, Henry "Red" Allen (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Albert Nicholas, Charlie Holmes (cl,as) Teddy Hill (cl,ts) Luis Russell (p,ldr) Will Johnson (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, December 10, 1929**

403493- I ain't got Ok 8756, Voc 3102, Jolly Roger  
A nobody J5008, Parl  
(la vcl)  
(E)R1261, PMC7045, Od  
(F)7MOE2259, XOC174,  
(G)A286065, 083262, ASV Living Era  
AJA5049,  
Swaggie (Aus)S1267, Disques Swing  
SW8451, CDXP8450  
[CD], JSP (E)315 [CD], Col CK46996  
[CD], Classics  
(F)557 [CD], ASV Living Era (E)5049  
[CD],  
Red Allen (G)RA-CD-1 [CD]  
490014- I ain't got Col CK46996 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2020  
A nobody [CD], Red  
Allen (G)RA-CD-12 [CD], King Jazz  
(It)KJ153FS [CD]  
403494- Dallas blues Ok 8774, Voc 3025, Jolly Roger  
C (la vcl) J5008, HJCA HC110,  
Col C3L30, Parl (E)R973, PMC7045, Font  
(Eu)TFE17073, 467063TE, 662024TR, Od  
(F)279465,  
OS1115, XOC174, OSX144, (G)A286040, CBS

(Eu)BPG62232, Swaggie  
 (Aus)S1267, Biograph BLP-C5,  
 Time-Life STL-J01, Disques Swing  
 SW8451, CDXP8450  
 [CD], ? ? ? [CD], CDXP8450 [CD], Col  
 CK46996 [CD],  
 Classics (F)557 [CD], L'Art Vocal (F)2  
 [CD], Best  
 of Jazz (F)4004 [CD], JSP (E)315  
 [CD], ASV Living  
 Era (E)5094 [CD], Red Allen (G)RA-CD-2  
 [CD], Saga  
 Jazz (F)066567-2 [CD], Properbox (E)155  
 [CD]  
 4900015- Dallas blues Col CK46996 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2020  
 A [CD], Red  
 Allen (G)RA-CD-1 [CD], King Jazz  
 (It)KJ153FS [CD]

Note: Col CK46996 [CD] (= CBS (Eu)467919 2 [CD]) titled "Louis Armstrong, volume  
 6 - St Louis Blues"; see flwg sessions to October 9, 1930 for rest of CD.  
 ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong with Luis Russell"; see flwg  
 sessions to November 16, 1941 for rest of CD.  
 All above titles also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1355 [CD], Columbia  
 Legacy 88697-94565-2 [CD].

**[A5639] Louis Armstrong**

Hoagy Carmichael (vcl) Paul Barbarin (d,vib-1) rest same

**New York, December 13, 1929**

St. Louis  
 403495 blues Ok 41350, Voc 3008, Conq 9124, Col  
 -B (la 2727D, HJCA  
 vcl)  
 HC90, Jolly Roger J5014, Parl  
 (E)R618, PMC7045,  
 CBS (Eu)RM52027, Od  
 (F)165975, 7MOE2011, OS1080,  
 XOC175, OSX144, (G)A286013, 041049,  
 Amiga(G)850070, Amiga (G)850070, Columbia  
 G30416,  
 CSP C310404, Swaggie (Aus)S1267, BBC  
 (E)REB597,  
 Disques Swing SW8451, CDXP8450 [CD], Col  
 CK46996  
 [CD], ProArte 0CDD439 [CD], Classics  
 (F)557 [CD],

Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD], L'Art Vocal  
 (F)2 [CD],  
 JSP (E)315 [CD], HRM 6002 [CD], CDS (E)618  
 [CD],  
 Jazz Archives (F)158132 [CD], 158722  
 [CD], ASV  
 Living Era (E)5094 [CD], ABC (Aus)36184  
 [CD],  
 Columbia CK65039 [CD], Tomato 700702  
 [CD], CBS  
 (G)CDCBS24060 [CD], Tring (Eu)VAR042  
 [CD], Black &  
 Blue (F)59.226-2 [CD], Red Allen (G)RA-CD-  
 2 [CD],  
 Essential Jazz Classics (Sp)EJC55628  
 [CD], Pulse  
 (E)PLSCD136 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)158862  
 [CD],  
 Prism Leisure PLATCD712 [CD], Saga Jazz  
 (F)981064-2 [CD]  
 490016 St. Louis Col CK46996 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2020  
 -A blues [CD], Red  
 Allen (G)RA-CD-1 [CD], King Jazz  
 (It)KJ153FS [CD]  
 490016 St. Louis Col CK46996 [CD], C4K57176 [CD], Neatwork  
 -B blues (Au)RP2020 [CD], Red Allen (G)RA-CD-12  
 [CD], King  
 Jazz (It)KJ153FS [CD]  
 Rockin'  
 403496 chair Meritt 19, JSP (E)315 [CD], King Jazz  
 -A (la,hc (It)KJ154FS  
 vcl,1,\*  
 )  
 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2020 [CD], Red Allen  
 (G)RA-CD-4 [CD], King Jazz (It)KJ153FS  
 [CD]  
 Rockin'  
 403496 chair Ok 8756, Voc 3039, Col 2688D, C3L30, Jolly  
 -C (la,hc Roger  
 vcl,1)  
 J7001, Parl (E)R785, PMC7006, PMC7045, Od  
 (F)7MOE2259, XOC175, (G)A286023, O83262, C  
 BS

(Eu)BPG62232, Amiga (G)850070, Swaggie  
 (Aus)S1267,  
 ASV Living Era (E)AJA5049, Disques Swing  
 SW8451,  
 CDXP8450 [CD], HRM 6002 [CD], Col CK46996  
 [CD],  
 Classics (F)557 [CD], ASV Living Era  
 (E)5049 [CD],  
 5094 [CD], Saville (E)198 [CD], King Jazz  
 (It)KJ154FS [CD], JSP (E)315 [CD], 918  
 [CD], ASV  
 Living Era (E)AJA5345 [CD], Red Allen  
 (G)RA-CD-1  
 [CD], Avid (E)AMBX150 [CD], Timeless  
 (Du)CBC1-011  
 [CD], Pulse (E)PLSCD136 [CD]

Note: One take of "Rockin' Chair" also on Music Club (E)50134 [CD].  
 Odeon (F)XOC175 (= CBS (F)62475) titled "Louis Armstrong V.S.O.P. Volume  
 6"; see flwg sessions to July 21, 1930 for rest of LP.  
 King Jazz (It)154FS [CD] titled "Hoagy sings and plays Carmichael"; see flwg  
 sessions to November 5, 1931 and other artists for rest of CD.  
 CBS (G)CDCBS24060 [CD] titled "Satchmo '85"; see flwg sessions to May 26,  
 1970 for rest of CD.  
 Tomato 700702 [CD] titled "C'est Si Bon"; see flwg sessions to July 26/27, 1967  
 for rest of CD  
 ASV Living Era (E)AJA5345 [CD] titled "Hoagy Carmichael - Sometimes I  
 Wonder"; rest of CD by Carmichael, Cotton Pickers, Paul Whiteman.  
 JSP (E)918 [CD] titled "Hoagy Carmichael - The First of the Singer Song  
 Writers"; see flwg sessions to January 28, 1933 for more of 4CD box set.  
 All titles, except (\*), also on Columbia Legacy 88697-94565-2 [CD].  
 All above titles also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1355 [CD].

**[R7098] Luis Russell**

**Luis Russell And His Orchestra** : Otis Johnson (tp) replaces Bill Coleman, rest  
 same

**New York, December 17, 1929**

403524-C Doctor blues Okeh 8766, Voc 3480, Par  
 (E)PMC7025, Od (F)XOC145,  
 Col KG32338, CBS  
 (F)S88039, Swag  
 (Aus)1217, 828,  
 CBS 63721, 66403, VJM  
 (E)VLP54, Parlophone  
 (E)7025, BBC (E)REB590, CD590  
 [CD], Classics  
 (F)588 [CD], Best of Jazz  
 (F)4037 [CD], JSP (E)308

[CD], ABC (Aus)836182-2  
 [CD], BBC (E)CD590 [CD],  
 Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD]

Note: ABC (Aus)836182-2 [CD] titled "Jazz Classics in Digital stereo Vol. 3 - New York"; rest of CD by others.

**[A5640] Louis Armstrong**

Paul Barbarin (vibes) with unknown drummer (actually band's valet) and three unknown violins added

**New York, January 24, 1930**

403681-A Song of the islands (la vcl) Ok 41375, Voc 3026, Jolly Roger J5008, Parl (E)R909, PMC7045, OD (F)238995, 7MOE2259, XOC175, (G)A286035, 083262, Font (C)467004TE, 662024TR, Amiga (G)850070, Swaggie (Aus)S1267, Book of the Month Club 21-6547, Disques Swing SW8451, CDXP8450 [CD], Col CK46996 [CD], C4K57176 [CD], Classics (F)557 [CD], Saville (E)198 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1355 [CD], JSP (E)315 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79037 [CD], Columbia Legacy 88697-94565-2 [CD]

**[R7099] Luis Russell**

**New York, January 24, 1930**

403680-A Saratoga shout OKeh 8780, Folkways FP69, FJ2808, Time-Life STL-J16, Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)159202 [CD]  
 403682-C Song of the Swanee OKeh 8780, Od (G)SMS12, Franklin Mint GJR093, Retrospective RTR4248 [CD]

Note: Matrix 403681 was issued as by Louis Armstrong with same band but with three violins & Louis Armstrong (t,vcl) added.  
 Both above titles also on Classics (F)606 [CD] titled "Luis Russell and his Orchestra, 1930-1934"; see flwg sessions to August 8, 1934 for more titles; rest

of CD by J.C. Higginbotham, February 5, 1930.

Both above titles also on Swaggie (Aus)1217, (Aus)828, VJM (E)VLP54, CBS (F)63721, S88039, Col KG32338, Parlophone (E)PMC7025, Odeon (F)XOC145, JSP (E)308 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD] .

### **[A5641] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tpt,vcl) Henry "Red" Allen, Otis Johnson (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) William Thornton Blue, Charlie Holmes (cl,as) Teddy Hill (cl,ts) **Luis Russell (p,ldr)** Will Johnson (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

#### **New York, February 1, 1930**

- 403714-B Bessie couldn't help it Ok 8774, Voc 3025, Jolly Roger  
(la vcl) J5008, Parl  
(E)R698, PMC7045, Od  
(F)279465, 7MOE2012, XOC175,  
OSX144, OS1081, (G)A286017, Font  
(Eu)467004TE,  
662024TR, Swaggie  
(Aus)S1245, Book of the Month  
Club 21-6547, Disques Swing  
SW8451, CDXP8450 [CD],  
JSP (E)315 [CD], Col CK46996  
[CD], Classics (F)557  
[CD], ASV Living Era (E)5094  
[CD]
- 403715-B Blue turning grey Ok 41375, 4678, Voc 3124, Parl  
over you (la vcl) (E)R1494, PMC7045,  
Jazz Cl 536, Od  
(F)238995, 7MOE2259, XOC175,  
(G)A286072, 083262, Swaggie  
(Aus)S1267, GOJ  
(It)LPJT53, Disques Swing  
SW8450, CDXP8451 [CD],  
Classics (F)557 [CD], JSP (E)315  
[CD], Saville  
(E)198 [CD], Col CK46996  
[CD], CK64927 [CD],  
ASV Living Era (E)5094  
[CD], Giants of Jazz  
(It)CD53088 [CD], Naxos Jazz  
(Eu)8.120609 [CD],  
Red Allen (G)RA-CD-4 [CD]

Note: Naxos Jazz (Eu)8.120609 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong, Vol. 2 - I've Got the World on a String"; see various flwg sessions to April 26, 1933 for rest of CD.  
Both above titles also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1355 [CD], Columbia Legacy 88697-94565-2 [CD].

**[S10825] Victoria Spivey**

Victoria Spivey (vcl) acc by Luis Russell (p) Will Johnson (g)

**New York, February 4, 1930**

59142-1	New York blues	Vic V38584, Blues Doc (Au)BD-2079
59143	Lonesome with the blues	Vic V38598, Document (Au)DLP590
59144-2	Showered with the blues	V38584, -
59145-2	Haunted by the blues	Vic V38598, Blues Document (Au)BD-2079

Note: All above titles also on Document (Au)DOCD5318 [CD].

**[H5846] J.C. Higginbotham**

**J.C. Higginbotham And His Six Hicks** : Henry "Red" Allen (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes (as) Luis Russell (p) Will Johnson (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, February 5, 1930**

403736-B	Give me your telephone number	Okeh 8772, Jass 601, CBS 88039, Col KG32338, Family (It)694, VJM (E)VLP57, CBS (F)63721, Time-Life STL-J16, Classics (F)606 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD], JSP CD308 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD]
403737-C	Higginbotham blues	Okeh 8772, Jass 601, CBS 88039, Col KG32338, Family (It)694, VJM (E)VLP57, Font (Du)682073TL, Classics (F)606 [CD], JSP CD308 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)158862 [CD]

Note: Classics (F)606 [CD] titled "Luis Russell 1930-34"; remainder of this CD by others.

**[A2849] Henry "Red" Allen**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp,vcl) Otis Johnson (tp-1) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) William Thornton Blue, Charlie Holmes (cl,as) Teddy Hill (cl,ts) Luis Russell (p,arr) Will Johnson (bj,g,vcl) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, February 18, 1930**

58581-2	Sugar Hill function	Vic V38140, Time Life STLJ16, Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD], Masters of Jazz (F)MJCD805 [CD]
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58582-2	You might get better, but you'll never get well (wj vcl)	Vic V38140, Camden (Arg)CAL3054, RCA 430602, Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD]
58583-2	Everybody shout (1)	Vic V38121
58584-2	Dancing Dave	Vic V38121, Camden (Arg)CAL3054, RCA 430602, RCA Victor (E)RD8049, Retrospective RTR4248 [CD]

Note: All above titles also on RCA (F)FXM1-7192, RCA (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, Raretone (It)24006/7, RCA (Arg)AYLT3000, Classics (F)540 [CD], JSP (E)2CD-3403 [CD].

**[R7100] Luis Russell**

Jesse Cryor (vcl-1) Andy Razaf (vcl-2) rest same

**New York, May 29, 1930**

404047-A	Louisiana swing	Okeh 8811, Par (E)PMC7025, Od (F)XOC145, Col KG32338, CBS (F)63721, 88039, Swag (Aus)1217, 828, VJM (E)VLP54, Col C3L30, Od (G)SMS5, Time-Life STL-J16, Classics (F)606 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4031 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD], Retrospective RTR4248 [CD]
404047-C	Louisiana swing	Okeh 8811, Par (E)PMC7025, Swag (Aus)1267, 828, Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD], Col KG32338, CBS (F)S88039, Neatwork (Au)RP2022 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD]
404048-C	Poor li'l me (1)	Okeh 8830, Par (E)PMC7025, Od (F)XOC145, Col KG32338, CBS 63721, S88039, Swag (Aus)1217, 828, VJM (E)VLP54, Classics (F)606 [CD], (F)24 [CD],

- 404049-A On revival day (ar vcl,2,\*) Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD]  
Okeh 8811, Od (F)XOC145, Swag  
(Aus)1217, 828, Col  
KG32338, CBS  
63721, S88039, Family  
(It)694, Best  
of Jazz (F)4037  
[CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023  
[CD]
- 404049-B On revival day (ar vcl,2) Okeh 8811, Par (E)R-2186, Col  
KG32338, VJM (E)VLP54, Col  
KG32338, VJM (E)VLP54,  
Classics (F)606  
[CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023  
[CD]
- 404049-C On revival day (ar vcl,2) Okeh 8811, Swag  
(Aus)1267, 828,  
CBS (F)S88039, Neatwork  
(Au)RP2022 [CD]

Note: First pressing of Classics (F)606 [CD] omits mx.404048-C in error.  
Neatwork liner notes suggest that mx. 404049-A and 404049-C are identical.  
VJM (E)VLP54 and Columbia KG32338 both list Matrix 404049-B but some  
sources give 404049-C.  
All titles, except (\*), also on JSP (E)308 [CD].  
One take of Mx. 404049 also on Par (E)PMC7025.

### **[A2850] Henry "Red" Allen**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp,vcl) Otis Johnson (tp) Jimmy Archey (tb) J.C. Higginbotham  
(tb-1) poss.replaces Archey, Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (sop,as) Greely  
Walton (ts) **Luis Russell (p,arr)** Will Johnson (bj,g) Pops Foster (b) Ernest "Bass" Hill  
(tu) Paul Barbarin (d)

#### **New York, July 15, 1930**

- 62343-2 Roamin' (hra vcl) Vic 23006, RCA (F)FXM1-  
7192, Camden (Arg)CAL3054,  
RCA Victor  
LPV446, (E)RD8049, RCA  
(Jap)RA-82/89,  
RA-82, Time-Life STL-J16, BBC  
(E)REB/CD/ZCF685  
[CD], Classics (F)540 [CD]
- 62344-1 Singin' pretty songs RCA (F)FXM1-7192, Camden  
(Arg)CAL3054, Neatwork  
(Au)RP2031 [CD]
- 62344-2 Singin' pretty songs Vic 23338, RCA (F)FXM1-  
7192, Camden (Arg)CAL3054,

- (E)RD8049, RCA (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, Classics (F)540 [CD], BBC (E)REB/CD/ZCF685 [CD], Retrospective RTR4248 [CD]
- 62345-2 Patrol wagon blues (hra vcl,1) Vic 23006, RCA (F)FXM1-7192, RCA Victor LPV556, (E)RD8049, RD8049, RCA (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, Classics (F)540 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4031 [CD], Red Allen (G)RA-CD-5 [CD], BBC (E)REB/CD/ZCF685 [CD], Retrospective RTR4248 [CD], Properbox (E)155 [CD]
- 62346-1 I fell in love with you (hra vcl) RCA (F)FXM1-7192, BBC (E)REB/CD/ZCF685[CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2031 [CD]
- 62346-2 I fell in love with you Vic 23338, RCA Victor LPV556, RCA (F)FXM1-7192, (Jap)RA-82/89, RA-82, Masters of Jazz (F)MJCD802 [CD], Classics (F)540 [CD], RCA Victor (E)RD8049

Note: BBC REB/CD/ZCF685 [CD] titled "Henry Allen 1929 to 1936"; see January 23, 1935 for other tracks; rest of CD by Luis Russell, Spike Hughes, Horace Henderson, Benny Morton, Mills Blue Rhythm Band.  
All above titles also on Raretone (It)24006/7, JSP (E)2CD-3403 [CD].

**[R7101] Luis Russell**

Greely Walton (ts) replaces Teddy Hill, David Bee (arr) added

**New York, September 5, 1930**

- 404428-B Muggin' lightly Okeh 8830, Od (G)SMS7, VJM (E)VLP57, Best of Jazz (F)4037 [CD]
- 404429-A Panama Okeh 8849, Par (E)PMC1195, VJM (E)VLP57, Od (G)SMS7, Time-Life STL-J16, Best of Jazz (F)4031 [CD], Fremaux & Associates (F)FA039 [CD]
- 404430-B High tension (db arr) Okeh 8849, Od (G)SMS9, VJM (E)VLP57, Odeon

(G)054-06315

Note: VJM (E)VLP57 titled "Luis Russell & his Orchestra, 1930 to 1934".  
 All above titles also on Swaggie (Aus)1217, 828, CBS (F)63721, S88039, Col  
 KG32338, Parlophone (E)PMC7025, Odeon (F)XOC145, Classics (F)606  
 [CD], JSP (E)308 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD] .

**[R7102] Luis Russell****New York, c. October 15, 1930**

E-34924 You're lucky to me (unissued) Br

**[R7103] Luis Russell**

Henry "Red" Allen, Otis Johnson (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Albert Nicholas  
 (cl,sop,as) Charlie Holmes (sop,as) Greely Walton (ts) **Luis Russell (p,dir)** Will  
 Johnson (bj,g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d,vib) Dick Robertson (vcl)

**New York, October 24, 1930**

E-35024 You're lucky to me (dr vcl) (unissued)

E-35025 I got rhythm  
 Mel M12000, Antipodisc  
 AD14449, Br (F/G)87094,  
 Coll Classics (Dan)CC34, VJM  
 (E)VLP57, Collectors  
 Classics (Dan)COCD7  
 [CD], Classics (F)606 [CD],  
 JSP (E)2CD-3403  
 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023  
 [CD]

E-35026 Memories of you (dr vcl) (unissued)

Note: Classics (F)606 [CD] titled "Luis Russell and his Orchestra 1930-1934"; see  
 December 17, 1930 for more titles.

**[R7104] Luis Russell**

unknown (tp) added Vic Dickenson (vcl) added

**New York, December 17, 1930**

E-35758-C Saratoga drag  
 Voc 1579, Coll Classics  
 (Dan)CC34, Antipodisc  
 (Aus)AD14449, VJM  
 (E)VLP57, Br BL58024, 80038,  
 9-7014, (F/G)10301, Coral  
 (F)ECV18040, MCA-GRP  
 2629-1/1 [CD], Decca GRD2-629  
 [CD]

E-35759-C Case on dawn [Ease on down]  
 Voc 1579, Coll Classics  
 (Dan)CC34, Antipodisc  
 (Aus)AD14449, VJM  
 (E)VLP57, Br BL58024, 80038,

9-7014, (F/G)10301, Coral  
 (F)ECV18040, Time-Life  
 STBB20, Best of Jazz (F)4037  
 [CD], Bear Family  
 (G)BCD16340 [CD]  
 E-35760 Honey, that reminds me Br 6046, VJM (E)VLP57, Coll  
 (vd vcl) Classics (Dan)CC34,  
 Retrospective (E)RTR4294 [CD]

Note: Although Mx E-35759 is actually titled "Ease on down" it was issued on Brunswick 80038 it was issued on Brunswick 80038 (as part of a 4 78rpm set titled "Harlem Jazz 1930") as "Case on Dawn".  
 Coral ECV18040 titled "Luis Russell/Andy Kirk"; an EP release.  
 Brunswick 6046 as by "The Savannah Syncopators".  
 Time-Life STBB20 titled "Uptown !"; rest of this LP by others.  
 Decca GRD2-629 [CD] titled "Anthology of big band swing 1930-1955"; rest of CD by others.  
 Collectors Classics (Dan)CC34 titled "Luis Russell and his Orchestra".  
 Retrospective (E)RTR4294 [CD] titled "Vic Dickenson - Nice Work - 1930-1961"; a 2 CD set.  
 First two titles also on Swaggie (Aus)49.  
 All above titles also on Collectors Classics (Dan)COCD7 [CD], Classics (F)606 [CD], JSP (E)2CD3403 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD] .

### [R7105] Luis Russell

**Luis Russell And His Orchestra** : Henry "Red" Allen (tp,vcl) Robert Cheek, Gus Aiken (tp) Dicky Wells (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl,as) Henry Jones (as) Greely Walton (ts) Luis Russell (p,dir) Will Johnson (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d,vib) Chick Bullock (vcl)

**New York, August 28, 1931**

You  
 rasc  
 70195 al Vic 22793, VJM (E)VLP57, Antipodisc  
 -1 you (Aus)AD14449  
 (ha  
 vcl)  
 Goin' to  
 70196 town 22789, -  
 -1 (cb ,  
 vcl)  
 RCA (F)PM43259, Time-Life STBB18  
 Say the  
 70197 word Vic 22789, VJM (E)VLP57, Antipodisc  
 -1 (cb (Aus)AD14449  
 vcl)  
 70198 Freakis 22815, -  
 -1 h ,  
 blues ,  
 RCA (F)PM43259, RCA 2128560-2 [CD]

Note: Time-Life STBB18 titled "On the road"; rest of LP by others.  
 RCA 2128560-2 [CD] titled "Victor Jazz History Vol. 6 : Harlem Jazz (1928-33)";

rest of this CD by others.

Second title also on Bluebird B-7367 as The Southern Serenaders.

All above titles also on Timeless (Du)CBC1-010 [CD] titled "Harlem big bands, 1925-1931"; rest of CD by others.

All above titles also on RCA (F)86585, Collectors Classics (Dan)CC34, RCA (F)FXM-7192, Collectors Classics (Dan)COCOD7 [CD], Classics (F)606 [CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD].

### [H8875] Spike Hughes

Henry "Red" Allen, Leonard Davis, Bill Dillard (tp) Dicky Wells, Wilbur DeParis, George Washington (tb) Benny Carter, Howard Johnson (cl,as) Wayman Carver (cl,as,fl) Coleman Hawkins (cl,ts) Chu Berry (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lawrence "Larry" Lucie (g) Ernest Hill (b) Sidney Catlett (d) Spike Hughes (arr,dir)

**New York, May 18, 1933**

- |         |                    |  |
|---------|--------------------|--|
|         |                    | De F3639, AoC  |
| 13352-A | Arabesque (p out)  | (E)ACL1153, Classics (F)522 [CD],<br>Saga Jazz (F)066442-2 [CD]                                      |
|         |                    | De F3639, AoC  |
| 13353-A | Fanfare (*)        | (E)ACL1153, Classics (F)522 [CD],<br>Black & Blue (F)BLE59230-2 [CD], Masters of Jazz (F)MJCD23 [CD] |
|         |                    | De F5101, AoC  |
| 13354-A | Sweet sorrow blues | (E)ACL1153, Time-Life STLJ16, Classics (F)522 [CD], BBC (E)CD685 [CD],<br>Retrospective RTR4248 [CD] |
|         |                    | De F3836, AoC  |
| 13355-A | Music at midnight  | (E)ACL1153, Classics (F)522 [CD],<br>Masters of Jazz (F)MJCD23 [CD]                                  |

Note: (\*) This title also on Franklin Mint GJR093.

Black & Blue 59230-2 [CD] titled "The Various Facets of a Genius 1929-1940"; rest of CD by others.

BBC (E)CD685 [CD] titled "Henry Allen 1929 to 1936"; see flwg tune; rest of CD by others.

All above titles also on Jasmine (E)2012, London LL1387, Decca (Swd)LK4173, Decca (G)158002, London (Jap)SLC-369, Retrieval (Du)RTR79005 [CD], Largo (G)5129 [CD].

### [R7106] Luis Russell

Rex Stewart (cnt) Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken (tp) Nat Story, Jimmy Archey (tb) Henry Jones (as) Charlie Holmes (as,cl) Bingie Madison, Greely Walton (ts,cl) Luis Russell (p,dir) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d,vib) Sonny Woods, The Palmer Brothers (vcl)

**New York, August 8, 1934**

15571-1	At the darktown strutters ball (sw vcl)	Ban 33179, Hist HLP35
15572-1	My blue heaven (sw vcl)	33399
15573-1	Ghost of the freaks (tpb vcl)	33367, Perfect 16086
15574-1	Hokus pokus	-
15575-1	Primitive	33399
15576-1	Ol' man river (sw vcl)	33179, Hist HLP35

Note: Historical HLP35 titled "Black Bands 1927-1934"; rest of LP by others.  
All above titles also on Antipodisc AD14449, Collectors Classics  
(Dan)CC34, Columbia KG32338, CBS (F)S88039, VJM (E)VLP57 (titled "High  
tension"), Collectors Classics (Dan)COCD7 [CD], Classics (F)606  
[CD], Retrieval (E)RTR79023 [CD].

### [A2856] Henry "Red" Allen

Henry "Red" Allen (tp,vcl) Pee Wee Erwin (tp) George Washington (tb) Buster Bailey  
(cl) Luis Russell (p) Danny Barker (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, January 23, 1935**

16671-1	Believe it beloved (hra vcl)	Ban 33337, Mel M13304, Or 3087, Per 16071 Romeo 2461, Coll Cl CC13, Tax (Swd)S32 [CD]
16671-2	Believe it beloved (*)	Epic LN3552, Time-Life STL- J16, Neatwork (Au)RP2031, Red Allen (G)RA- CD-12 [CD]
16672-1	It's written all over your face	Ban 33337, Mel M13304, Or 3087, Per 16071 Romeo 2461, Franklin Mint GJR089
16673-1	(We're gonna have) Smooth sailing (hra vcl)	Ban 33355, Per 16080, Mel M13322, Tax (Swd)S32 [CD]
16674-1	Whose honey are you ? (hra vcl)	Ban 33355, Per 16080, Mel M13322, Tax (Swd)S32 [CD], BBC (E)REB/CD/ZCF685 [CD]

Note: All titles, except (\*), also on Collector's Classics (Dan)CC13, Classics (F)551  
[CD].  
All above titles also on Collector's Classics (Dan)COCD2 [CD].

### [A5674] Louis Armstrong

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Louis  
Bacon, Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken (tp) Harry White, Jimmy Archey (tb) Henry  
Jones, Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison (cl,ts) Greely Walton (ts) Luis Russell  
(p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d,orch. bells)

**New York, October 3, 1935**

60021

-AA,A

I'm in the

-E,F,G

mood for  
love (la  
vcl)

De

579, 3796, DL9248, (E)F5785, M30382, Br  
80107,(F)A505025, (G)A9902, (F,G)87529LPBM, Sw  
ag

(Aus)JCS33761, 701, MCA

(F)510151, (E)MCL1822,

Coral (G)COPS3803, Decca GRD2-638

[CD], L'Art

Vocal (F)2 [CD], Time-Life STBB-22, Time  
LifeR960-15 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547 [CD], Avid  
(E)574[CD], Decca GRP 9872 [CD], MCA (G)2292-  
57202-2[CD], Verve 543 699-2 [CD], Naxos Jazz  
(Eu)8.120676 [CD]60022 You are my  
-A,E,G lucky star  
(la vcl)De 580, DL9248, (E)F5785, M30382, Br  
80107,(F)A505025, (G)A9902, (F,G)87503LPBM, MC  
A

(F)510151, (E)MCL1822, Swag

(Aus)JCS33781, 701,

Coral (G)COPS3803, Time-Life STBB-  
22, Time LifeR960-15 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547 [CD], Avid  
(E)574[CD], MCA (G)2292-57202-2 [CD], Naxos  
Jazz

(Eu)8.120676 [CD]

60023 La  
-E,G Cucarach  
a (la vcl)

De 580, (E)F5835, Br

(G)A9930, (F,G)87529LPBM,

Swag (Aus)JCS33761, 701, MCA

(F)510151, Coral

(G)COPS7009, Book of the Month Club 21-  
6547, Ex

Libris (Swi)GC341, Avid (E)574

[CD], Jazz Archives



- (F)ZET731 [CD], 159692 [CD], Saga Jazz  
(F)981063-5  
[CD]
- 60024 Got a bran' Decca GRD649 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2029  
-A new suit [CD]  
(la vcl) (\*)
- 60024 Got a bran' De 579, DL9248, (E)F5863, Br  
-B,E,G new suit (F)A505032, (G)A9931,  
(la vcl) (F,G)87529LPBM, Swag  
(Aus)JCS33761, 701, MCA  
(F)510151, Coral (G)COPS3803, Naxos Jazz  
(Eu)8.120676 [CD]

Note: All take number groups listed above have been found to be identical except the take for title (\*).

Time-Life STBB-22 titled "Big Bands: Louis Armstrong"; this is a 2 LP set.

Decca GRD2-638 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Decca Highlights"; see following sessions to January 25, 1957 and "Johnny Dodds", "Lil's Hot Shots", "Fletcher Henderson" for rest of 2CD set.

Jasmine (E)2547 [CD] titled "Louis sings, Armstrong plays"; see flwg sessions to April 17, 1942 for rest of CD.

Avid (E)574 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Thanks A Million"; see flwg sessions to May 1, 1940 for rest of CD.

Jazz Archives (F)ZET731 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Swing That Music"; see flwg sessions to April 25, 1939 for rest of CD.

MCA (G)2292-57202-2 titled "The Wonderful World Of Louis Armstrong"; see flwg sessions to August 16, 1967 for rest of 2CD set.

Decca GRP9872 [CD] titled "Priceless Jazz - Louis Armstrong"; see flwg sessions to July 23, 1968 for rest of CD.

Decca GRD649 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong and his orchestra - volume 3 - Pocketful of Dreams"; see sessions from January 13, 1938 to June 24, 1938 for rest of CD.

Verve 543 699-2 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - The Ultimate Collection"; see flwg sessions to July 23, 1968 and Fletcher Henderson, Erskine Tate, Johnny Dodds, Jimmy Bertrand for rest of this 3 CD set.

Neatwork (Au)RP2029 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong (1935-1944), The Alternate Takes, Vol. 2"; see various flwg sessions to May 27, 1940, V-Disc All Stars for rest of CD.

All titles, except (\*), also on MCA 1304 titled "Louis Armstrong 2 - Back in New York - 1935"; see following sessions to December 19, 1935 for rest of LP.

All titles, except (\*), also on MCA (F)LA-10 titled "Louis Armstrong Complete Recorded Works 1935-1945"; a 10 LP Box containing MCA 510151 to MCA 510160; for rest of set see flwg sessions to January 14, 1945.

All titles, except (\*), also on MCA (Jap)3063, part of a 10 lp set (3063 through 3072); for rest of set see flwg sessions to August 9, 1944.

All titles, except (\*), also on Decca GRD602 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Rhythm Saved The World"; see flwg sessions to February 4, 1936 for rest of CD.

All titles, except (\*), also on Classics (F)509 [CD].

All titles, except (\*), also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1357 [CD]; this CD incorrectly lists mx 60024A for Decca 579.

All titles, except (\*), also on Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - The Complete Decca Studio Master Takes, 1935-1939"; a 4 CD set.

All titles from Decca GRD649 [CD] also on GRP (Eu)16492 [CD] titled "Louis

Armstrong and his Orchestra - Volume 3 - Pocketful of Dreams"; see sessions from January 13, 1938 to June 24, 1938 for rest of CD.  
 All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1901 [CD] (second edition) titled "Louis Armstrong - volume 1 - 1935"; see flwg sessions to December 19, 1935 for rest of CD. The first edition of this CD omits title (\*).  
 All above titles also on Mosaic MD7-243 [CD] titled "The Complete Louis Armstrong Decca Sessions (1935-1946)"; see various following sessions to January 18, 1946 for rest of this 7 CD set.

**[A5676] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Louis Bacon, Leonard Davis, Gus Aiken (tp) Harry White, Jimmy Archey (tb) Henry Jones, Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison (cl,ts) Greely Walton (ts) **Luis Russell** (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, November 21, 1935**

- I've got my  
 60155- fingers De (E)F5869, Meritt 19, Neatwork  
 A crossed (la (Au)RP2029 [CD]  
 vcl,\*,#)
- I've got my  
 60155- fingers De 623, DL9248, (E)F5869, Br (G)A9946,  
 D crossed (la  
 vcl)  
 (F,G)87529LPBM, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS33761, 701,  
 Coral (G)COPS3803, Pol (It)A61109  
 MCA 1304, (F)510016, (Jap)MCA3063  
 Classics (F)509 [CD], Decca GRD602 [CD]  
 Avid (E)574 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547 [CD],  
 Naxos Jazz (Eu)8.120676 [CD]
- Old man  
 60156- Mose De (E)F5895, Br (G)A9962, MCA  
 A (la,band 1334, (F)510115,  
 vcl,#)  
 Time-Life STBB-22, R960-15 [CD], De  
 GRD602 [CD],  
 Neatwork (Au)RP2020 [CD], Avid (E)574  
 [CD], King  
 Jazz (It)KJ153FS [CD]
- Old man  
 60156- Mose De 622, DL8327, DL9248, Br  
 D (la,band (F)A505044, A505265,  
 vcl)  
 Pol (It)A61080, MCA Coral  
 (G)COPS3803, (Jap)3063,  
 MCA 1304, (F)510016, Br  
 (F,G)87529, Swag

- (Aus)JCS33761, 701, Ex Libris  
 (Swi)GC341, L'Art  
 Vocal (F)2 [CD], MCA MCAD10121  
 [CD], Naxos Jazz  
 (Eu)8.120676 [CD], Classics (F)509  
 [CD], Fremeaux  
 & Associates (F)FA001 [CD], King Jazz  
 (It)KJ153FS  
 [CD]
- 60156- Old man  
 E Mose (la vcl,#) Decca 622, GRD602 [CD], GRD2-638 [CD],  
 Neatwork (Au)RP2020 [CD]
- 60157- I'm shooting  
 C high (la vcl) De 623, DL9248, (E)F5869, Br (G)A9946,  
 (F,G)87529LPBM, Pol (It)A61109, Swaggie  
 (Aus)  
 JCS33762, 701, Coral  
 (G)COPS3808, (Jap)3063,  
 MCA 1304, (F)510016, Decca GRD602 [CD],  
 Classics (F)509 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547  
 [CD],  
 Avid (E)574 [CD], Naxos Jazz  
 (Eu)8.120676 [CD]
- 60158- Falling in love  
 D with you (la vcl) De 622, DL9248, (E)F5961, Br  
 (F,G)87529LPBM,  
 Swaggie (Aus)JCS33762, 701, MCA 1304,  
 (F)510016, Coral  
 (G)COPS7009, (Jap)3063,  
 Avid (E)574 [CD], Classics (F)509 [CD],  
 Decca GRD602 [CD], Naxos Jazz  
 (Eu)8.120676 [CD]

Note: Mx. 60155-A may possibly have appeared on Decca 623 but copies of this take have never surfaced.  
 MCA MCAMD10121 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Best of Decca volume 2 - the composer".  
 All titles, except (\*), also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510151.  
 All titles, except (#), also on Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD]; this CD lists Mx. 60156-E for "Old man Mose" but the master take is -D.  
 All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1901 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1357 [CD].

**[A5677] Louis Armstrong**

Paul Barbarin (d,vibes-1)

New York, December 13, 1935

- 60227-A Red sails in the sunset (la vcl) De 648, (E)F5835, Br (G)A9930, Reader's Digest 3962 [CD], MCA (G)2292-57202-2 [CD]
- 60228-A On treasure island (la vcl,1) De 648, (E)F5836, Br (F)A505032, (G)A9931, MCA Coral CB20027, Verve 543 699-2 [CD]

Note: Both above titles also on Decca DL9248, Br (F,G)87529, MCA 1304, (F)510016, (F)LA-10, (F)510151, (Jap)3063, Coral (G)COPS3803, Swaggie (Aus)JCS33762, 701, Ambassador (Swd)CLA1901 [CD], Decca GRD602 [CD], Classics (F)509 [CD], Avid (E)574 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1357 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].

**[A5678] Louis Armstrong**

**New York, December 18, 1935**

- 60249-A Thanks a million (la vcl) De 666, DL9225, (E)F5868, M30387, Br (F)A505034, (G)A9926, (F,G)87529LPBM, Coral (E)CP1, MCA 1304, (F)510016, 510151, (Jap)3063, Swaggie (Aus)JCS33762, 701, Classics (F)509 [CD], De GRD602 [CD], GRD642 [CD], ASV Living Era (E)CDAJA5094 [CD], Avid (E)574 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)ZET731 [CD], Verve 534 699-2 [CD], Naxos Jazz (Eu)8.120676 [CD]
- 60249-B Thanks a million (la vcl,\*) De 666, DL9248, Pol (It)A61071, Coral 3803, MCA (F)510151, Coral (G)COPS3803, Neatwork (Au)RP2020 [CD], King Jazz (It)KJ153FS [CD]
- 60250-A Shoe shine boy (la vcl) De 672, DL8327, DL9248, (E)F5936, Br (F)A505049, (G)A9978, (F,G)87505LPBM, 87529LPBM, Swag (Aus)JCS33762, 701, MCA 1304, (F)510016, 510151,

(Jap)3063, Coral (G)COPS3803, Affinity  
 (E)1024, Ex  
 Libris (Svi)GC341, De GRD602 [CD], L'Art  
 Vocal  
 (F)2 [CD], Classics (F)509 [CD], Jazz  
 Archives  
 (F)158132 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547  
 [CD], Avid (E)574  
 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)ZET713 [CD], Naxos  
 Jazz  
 (Eu)8.120676 [CD]  
 60251-Solitude (la De 666, MCA (F)510151, Neatwork  
 A vcl,1,\*) (Au)RP2029 [CD],  
 King Jazz (It)KJ153FS [CD]  
 60251-Solitude (la De 666, DL9248, (E)F5868, M30387, Br  
 B vcl,1) (F)A505034,  
 (G)A9926, Swag (Aus)JCS33774, 701, Coral  
 3803, MCA  
 1304, (F)510016, 510152, (Jap)3063, GOJ  
 (It)LPJT53, Coral (G)COPS3803, Affinity  
 (E)1024,  
 Time-Life STBB-22, Avid (E)574 [CD], De  
 GRD602  
 [CD], GRD2-641 [CD], Classics (F)509  
 [CD], Decca  
 GRP9872 [CD], Radio France (F)211752  
 [CD], Naxos  
 Jazz (Eu)8.120676 [CD]  
 60251-Solitude (la Meritt 8, Franklin Mint GJR002, Musica  
 C vcl,1,\*) Jazz  
 (It)2MJP1056, De GRD602 [CD], Neatwork  
 (Au)RP2029  
 [CD], King Jazz (It)KJ153FS [CD]  
 I hope  
 60252- Gabriel De 672, DL9248, (E)F5936, Br  
 B likes my (F)A505049, (G)A9978,  
 music  
 (la vcl,1)  
 (F,G)87503LPBM, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS33774, 701, MCA 1304,  
 (F)510016, 510152, (Jap)3063, Coral  
 (G)COPS3803,  
 Affinity (E)1024, Decca GRD602  
 [CD], Classics

(F)509 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA001 [CD],  
 Avid (E)574 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)ZET731 [CD],  
 Naxos Jazz (Eu)8.120676 [CD]

I hope

Gabriel  
 60252- likes my De 672, Meritt 19, Neatwork (Au)RP2029  
 C music [CD]  
 (la  
 vcl,1,\*)

Note: Date previously listed as December 19, 1935 but has been corrected to December 18, 1935 from Mosaic MD7-243 [CD] liner notes.  
 MCA (F)510151, 510152 are in MCA (F)LA-10.  
 Decca GRD2-641 [CD] titled "Black Legends Of Jazz"; rest of 2CD set by others.  
 Decca GRD642 [CD] titled "The Legendary Big Band Singers"; rest of CD by others.  
 All titles, except (\*), also on Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD]; this CD lists date of this session as December 19, 1935 (see note above).  
 All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)1901 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1357 [CD].

**[A5679] Louis Armstrong**

**New York, January 18, 1936**

60362-A The music goes 'round De 685, (E)F5895, Br  
 and 'round (la vcl) (F)A505044, A9962,  
 (F,G)87529LPBM, MCA  
 1334, (F)510115, (Jap)3064,  
 Swag  
 (Aus)JCS33744, 701, Coral  
 (G)COPS7009,  
 Time-Life STBB-22, Ex Libris  
 (Swi)GC341, Decca  
 GRD602 [CD], Classics (F)509  
 [CD], Time Life  
 R960-15 [CD], Naxos Jazz  
 (Eu)8.120676 [CD]

60363-A Rhythm saved the world De 685, 824, (E)F5961, MCA  
 (la vcl,\*) (Jap)3064,  
 De GRD602 [CD], GRP9872  
 [CD], Neatwork  
 (Au)RP2029 [CD], Naxos Jazz  
 (Eu)8.120676 [CD]



Ambassador (Swd)CLA1902  
 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD],  
 Fremeaux & Associes (F)FA1357  
 [CD], Definitive  
 (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD]

**[A5683] Louis Armstrong**

**New York, May 18, 1936**

- 61106 Lyin' to  
 -A myself De 835, DL9225, (E)F6040, Br (F)A505067,  
 (la vcl)  
 (F,G)10147EPB, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS33783, 702, Coral  
 (G)COPS7009, (E)CP1, MCA  
 1312, (F)510038, Affinity  
 (E)1024, ASV Living Era (E)AJA5049, L'Art  
 Vocal  
 (F)2 [CD], De GRD620 [CD], Jazz Archives  
 (F)ZET731  
 [CD], Avid (E)AMBX150 [CD]
- 61107 Ev'ntide  
 -A (la vcl) De 835, DL9225, (E)F6040, Br (F)A505067,  
 (F,G)10147EPB, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS33783, 702, Coral  
 (G)COPS7009, (E)CP1, MCA  
 1312, (F)510038, Affinity  
 (E)1024, ASV Living Era (E)AJA5049, L'Art  
 Vocal  
 Vol 2 [CD], ASV Living Era  
 AJA5049, Phontastic  
 (Swd)Nost7662, L'Art Vocal (F)2 [CD], De  
 GRD 620  
 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4004 [CD], Musica  
 Jazz  
 (It)MJCD1129 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)ZET731  
 [CD],  
 Verve 543 699-2 [CD], Avid (E)AMBX150 [CD]
- 61108 Swing  
 -A that De 866, DL9225, (E)F6066, Br  
 music (F,G)10147EPB, Swag  
 (la vcl)  
 (Aus)JCS33783, 702, Coral  
 (G)COPS7009, (E)CP1, MCA



1312, (F)510038, (E)MCL1861, Affinity  
 (E)1024,  
 1024, Franklin Mint GJR002, GOJ  
 (It)LPT53, Living  
 Era (E)AJA5049, 5094 [CD], De GRD620  
 [CD], Best of  
 Jazz (F)4004 [CD], MCA MCAMD10121  
 [CD], Jazz  
 Archives (F)ZET731 [CD], Music For  
 Pleasure EMI,  
 (E)CDMFP6056 [CD], Giants of Jazz  
 (It)CD53088  
 [CD], Radio France (F)211752 [CD], Jazz  
 Roots  
 CD56030 [CD], Properbox (E)165 [CD], Saga  
 Jazz  
 (F)981064-2 [CD]  
 61109 Thankful De 866, DL9225, (E)F6066, Br  
 -A (la vcl) (F,G)10147EPB, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS33784, 702, Coral  
 (G)COPS7219, (E)CP1,  
 MCA 1312, (F)510038, ASV Living Era  
 (E)AJA5049  
 61110 Red nose De 1049, Br  
 -A (la vcl) (E)02514, (F)A505265, (G)A81095,  
 Swag (Aus)JCS33784, 702, Coral  
 (G)COPS7219,  
 MCA 1322, (F)510069, ASV Living Era  
 (E)AJA5049  
 61111 Mahogan De  
 -A y Hall 824, 3793, 25154, DL5225, DL8284, (E)F6324  
 stomp ,  
 Br (E)OE9189, De (E)BME9189, Br  
 (F,G)10151EPB,  
 MCA 1312, (F)510038, AoH (E)AH7, Affinity  
 (E)1024,  
 Swag (Aus)JCS33741, JCS33784, 702, Coral  
 (G)  
 COPS1006, (G)COPS7219, ASV Living Era  
 (E)AJA5049,  
 (E)5094 [CD], Decca GRD620 [CD], GRD2-641  
 [CD],  
 MCA MCAD42328 [CD], Avid (E)574 [CD], Jazz

# Archives (F)ZET731 [CD]

Note: MCA MCAD42328 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong of New Orleans"; see flwg sessions to April 27, 1950 for rest of CD.  
 Music For Pleasure EMI (E)CDMFP6056 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - The Great Entertainer"; see flwg sessions to August 16, 1967 for rest of CD.  
 All above titles also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510152, (Jap)3064, ASV Living Era (E)5049 [CD], Classics (F)512 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1902 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1357 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].

## [A5688] Louis Armstrong

**Norge Presents Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Henry "Red" Allen, Louis Bacon, Russell Smith (tp) J.C. Higginbotham, Snub Mosely (tb) Henry Jones, Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison, Greely Walton (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

pre-recorded radio show "Norge Program #21", New York, early January 1937

753700-A	The song is ended (brief program theme) (*)	Shoestring SS-103
	When it's sleepy time down south (brief theme)	—
	St. Louis blues	Shoestring SS- 103, Collector's Classics (Dan)CC26, Ave Int (E)1006
	Skeleton in the closet (la vcl)	Shoestring SS- 103, Collector's Classics (Dan)CC26, Ave Int (E)1006

Note: "Skeleton in the closet" on Collector's Classics (Dan)CC26 lists recording date incorrectly as 1936.  
 Shoestring SS-103 titled "3 Complete 15 Minute Radio Shows With Guests".  
 Both titles from Collector's Classics (Dan)CC26 also on Hot 'n Sweet (F)FDC5101 [CD].  
 All titles, except (\*), also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1903 [CD], Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1357 [CD].

## [A5689] Louis Armstrong

**Norge Presents Aunt Jemima And Louis Armstrong's Orch.** : same with Tess Gardella (vcl) added

pre-recorded radio show "Norge Program #34", New York, early January 1937

753969-A	The song is ended (brief program theme)	(unissued)
	When it's sleepy time down south (brief theme)	—
	Dinah	Collector's Classics (Dan)CC26, Avenue

International (E)1006  
 Hallelujah, things look (unissued)  
 rosy now (tg vcl)  
 Can't help lovin' that -  
 man (tg vcl)  
 Swing that music (la vcl) Avenue International  
 (E)1006, King Akwa (G)00851

Note: Both issued titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1902 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1357 [CD].  
 The King Akwa LP mis-identifies this as the "Aunt Jemima Floor Show".

### [S10834] Victoria Spivey

Victoria Spivey (vcl) acc by Sidney DeParis (tp) or poss. Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Garvin Bushell (cl) or poss. Albert Nicholas (cl) unknown as, poss. Charlie Holmes (ts) Porter Grainger (p) or poss. Luis Russell (p) poss. Pops Foster (b)

New York, March 12, 1937

20793-One hour Voc 03505, Meritt 13, Red Allen (G)RA-CD-8  
 1 mama [CD]

20794-Harlem  
 1 Susie- Meritt 13, Red Allen (G)RA-CD-7 [CD]  
 Q

20795-Give it to - , Murray Hill P3.15996, Red Allen  
 1 him (G)RA-CD-7 [CD]

20795-Give it to Spivey LP2001, Meritt 13, Red Allen (G)RA-  
 2 him CD-8 [CD]

20796-Got the Voc 03505, Meritt 13, Red Allen (G)RA-CD-8  
 1 blues so bad [CD]

Note: Above personnel has not been settled on but Charlie Holmes has stated that he and Red Allen were present, not Sidney DeParis who is listed on the Spivey LP liner.  
 All above titles also on Document (Au)DOCD5319 [CD].

### [A5691.10] Louis Armstrong

**Louis Armstrong and his Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl,host) Leonard Davis, Henry "Red" Allen, Louis Bacon (tp) Snub Mosley, Jimmy Archey, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Pete Clarke, Charlie Holmes (as) Albert Nicholas (cl,ts) Bingie Madison (cl,ts,bar-1) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

NBC radio "Fleischmann Yeast Show", New York,  
 April 9, 1937

When it's sleepy time  
 down south (theme)  
 Pennies from heaven (la Jazz Heritage Society 5289147  
 vcl,1) [CD], Fremeaux &  
 Associates (F)FA1357 [CD]  
 Them there eyes (la vcl) Jazz Heritage Society 5289147  
 [CD], Fremeaux &  
 Associates (F)FA1357 [CD]

Tiger rag                      Jazz Heritage Society 5289147  
[CD], Fremeaux &  
Associés (F)FA1357 [CD]

When it's sleepy time      Fremeaux & Associés (F)FA1357  
down south (closing  
theme)                      [CD]

Note: Jazz Heritage Society 5289147 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong Fleischmann Yeast Shows, 1937"; see flwg sessions to May 28, 1937 for rest of disc 1 of this 2CD set. (Disc 2 is Louis Armstrong spoken word reminiscences recorded in the 1950s and 1960s).

**[A5691.20] Louis Armstrong**

J.C. Higginbotham (tb) replaces possibly Shelton Hemphill (tp) replaces Leonard Davis

**NBC radio "Fleischmann Yeast Show", New York,  
April 16, 1937**

When it's sleepy time  
down south (theme)

Dinah (la vcl)                      Pumpkin 109, Ambassador  
(Swd)CLA1903 [CD],  
Fremeaux & Associés (F)FA1357  
[CD]

Skeleton in the closet (la  
vcl)

Note: This broadcast is incorrectly identified on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1903 [CD] as a Norge show.

**[A2869] Henry "Red" Allen**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp,vcl) Glyn Paque (cl) Tab Smith (as) Harold Arnold (ts) Luis Russell (p) Danny Barker (g) Johnny Williams (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, April 29, 1937**

21070-1	Sticks and stones (hra vcl)	Voc 3564
21071-2	Meet me in the moonlight (hra vcl)	3574
21072-1	Don't care what anyone says (hra vcl)	—
21073-1	A love song of long ago (hra vcl)	3564

Note: All above titles also on Collector's Classics (Dan)CC54, COCD15 [CD], Classics (F)590 [CD].

**[A5691.30] Louis Armstrong**

**NBC radio "Fleischmann Yeast Show", New York,  
April 30, 1937**

When it's sleepy time      Jazz Heritage Society 5289147  
down south (theme)      [CD]

Heart full of rhythm (la vcl)	-
You rascal you (la vcl)	-
On the sunny side of the street (la vcl)	-
After you gone (la vcl)	-
(clsg theme)	Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD]

Note: All above titles also on Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD] titled "Integrale Louis Armstrong volume 8, Public Melody No. 1, 1937-1938"; this is a 3 CD set.

**[A5691.40] Louis Armstrong**

definitely Leonard Davis out, George Washington (tb) replaces Snub Mosley  
**NBC radio "Fleischmann Yeast Show", Chicago, May  
 7, 1937**

When it's sleepy time down south (theme)	Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD]
Rhythm jam	Jazz Heritage Society 5289147 [CD]
That's what I like (la vcl)	-
Memories of you (la vcl)	-
Chinatown my Chinatown (la vcl)	-
(theme clsg)	Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD]

Note: All above titles also on Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD].

**[A5691.50] Louis Armstrong**

The Mills Brothers (vcl)  
**NBC radio "Fleischmann Yeast Show", Chicago. Ill,  
 May 14, 1937**

When it's sleepy time down south (theme)	Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD]
Ida (la vcl)	Jazz Heritage Society 5289147 [CD]
Darling Nellie Gray (mb vcl,1)	-
The love bug will bite you (la vcl)	-
Lazy river (la vcl)	-
Washington and Lee swing	-
(clsg theme)	Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD]

Note: (1) Louis Armstrong (tp), Mills Brothers (vcl), Bernard Addison (g) only.  
 All above titles also on Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD].

**[A5691.60] Louis Armstrong**

George Matthews (tb) replaces Jimmy Archey, Bobbie Caston, Louis Bacon (vcl)

**NBC radio "Fleishmann Yeast Show", Chicago, Ill,  
May 21, 1937**

When it's sleepy time	Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1358
down south (theme)	[CD]
I got rhythm	Jazz Heritage Society 5289147
	[CD]
Boo hoo (bc vcl,*)	
I know that you know (ra	
tpt featured)	-
Rockin' chair (la,lb vcl)	-
Sugar foot stomp	-
(clsg theme)	Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1358
	[CD]

Note: All titles, except (\*), also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1358 [CD].

**[A5692] Louis Armstrong**

Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl,host) Henry "Red" Allen, Louis Bacon, Shelton Hemphill (tp) J.C. Higginbotham, "Big" George Mathews, George Washington (tb) Charlie Holmes,Pete Clarke (as) Bingie Madison, Albert Nicholas (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**NBC radio "Fleischmann Yeast Show", New York, May  
28, 1937**

When it's sleepy time	Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1358
down south (theme)	[CD]
Bugle blues (ra tpt	Jazz Heritage Society 5289147
feature)	[CD]
Hustlin' and bustlin' for	
baby (la vcl)	-
Shoe shine boy (la vcl)	-
Will you do a stomp	-
When it's sleepy time	
down south (theme)	-

Note: Personnel from "Louis Armstrong Festival Discography" (Phil Schaap, 1980).  
All above titles also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1358 [CD].

**[A2870] Henry "Red" Allen**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp,vcl) Bingie Madison (cl) Tab Smith (as) Charlie Holmes (as-1) Harold Arnold (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Danny Barker (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, June 19, 1937**

21275-2	Till the clock strikes three (hra vcl)	Voc 3609
21276-2	The merry-go-round broke down (hra vcl,1)	3594

- 21277-1 You'll never go to heaven (hra vcl) -
- 21278-1 The miller's daughter Marianne (hra vcl) Voc 3609, Time-Life STL-J16

Note: All above titles also on Collectors Classics (Dan)CC53, COCD15 [CD], Classics (F)628 [CD].

### [A5695] Louis Armstrong

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton Hemphill, Louis Bacon, Henry "Red" Allen (tp) "Big" George Matthews, George Washington, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Pete Clarke, Charlie Holmes (as) Albert Nicholas (ts,cl) Bingie Madison (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Lee Blair (g) George "Pops" Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)Chappie Willett (arr)

**New York, July 2, 1937**

- 62328-A Public melody number one (la vcl) De 1347, (E)F6540, (F)MU60497, Br (F)A505118, (G)A81383, Pol (It)A61158, MCA 1312, (F)510038, De GRD620 [CD], ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD]
- 62329-A Yours and mine (la vcl,poss. cw arr) De 1369, (E)F6540, (F)MU60497, Br (F)A505118, (G)A81383, MCA 1312, (F)510038, De GRD620 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)158132 [CD]
- 62330-A Red cap (la vcl) De 1347, (E)F6583, Br (F)A505260, (G)A81400, MCA 1326, (F)510084, Franklin Mint GJR002

Note: All above titles also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510154, (Jap)3066, Coral (G)COPS7219, Swag (Aus)JCS33794, 703, Classics (F)515 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1903 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1358 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].

### [A5696] Louis Armstrong

**New York, July 7, 1937**

- 62335-A She's the daughter of a planter from Havana (la vcl) De 1353, (E)F6493, Br (G)A81290, Swag (Aus)JCS101, 703, De GRD2-638 [CD]

- 62336-A Alexander's ragtime band (la vcl,cw arr) De 1408, (E)F6583, F49017, Br (F)A505260, (G)A81400, (G,F)87095LPBM, Pol (It)A61111, Swag (Aus)JCS101, 703, GOJ (It)LPJT53, Franklin Mint GJR002, MCA (G)2292-57202-2 [CD], De GRD620 [CD], Reader's Digest 3962 [CD]
- 62337-A Cuban Pete (la vcl) De 1353, (E)F6493, Br (G)A81290, Swag (Aus)JCS101, 703, Pol (It)A61111
- 62338-A I've got a heart full of rhythm (la vcl) De 1408, (E)F6915, Br (G)A81904, Pol (It)A61183, Hi (G)H619, Swag (Aus)JCS101, 703, Coral (G)COPS7504, De GRD620 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)159202 [CD]
- 62339-A Sun showers (la vcl) De 1369, Swag (Aus)JCS101, 703, Time-Life STBB-22, De GRD 620 [CD], Time Life R960-15 [CD]

Note: All above titles also on MCA 1326, (F)510084, (F)LA-10, (F)510154, (Jap)3066, Coral (G)COPS7219, Classics (F)515 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1903 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].

### **[A5698] Louis Armstrong**

Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Red Callender (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**Los Angeles, November 15, 1937**

- Once in  
DLA1084- a De  
A while 1560, 28306, (E)F6613, M30376, (F)M60774,  
(la  
vcl) Br (G)A81410
- On the  
DLA1085- sunny De  
A side 1560, 3794, DL8327, (E)F6613, M30376, Br  
of the  
street



(la  
vcl)

(G)A81410, (F,G)87503LPBM, GOJ  
(It)LPJT53, Hi  
(G)H619, Time-Life STBB-22, Time Life  
R960-15  
[CD], ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD], Jazz  
Archives  
(F)158132 [CD], Giants of Jazz  
(It)CD53088 [CD],  
Radio France (F)211752 [CD], Masters of  
Jazz  
(F)MJCD806 [CD]

Note: mx. DLA1085-B has been reported on Decca (Can)3794 but a survey of  
Canadian collectors has failed to produce evidence of a copy.  
Both above titles also on MCA 1326, (F)510084, (F)LA-10, (F)510154, Coral  
(G)COPS7239, Swag (Aus)JCS102, 703, Classics (F)515 [CD], De GRD620  
[CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1903 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547 [CD], Verve 543 699-  
2 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1358  
[CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].

#### [A5699] Louis Armstrong

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton  
Hemphill, Louis Bacon, Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Wilbur DeParis, George  
Washington, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Pete Clarke, Charlie Holmes (as) Albert  
Nicholas, Bingie Madison (cl,ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul  
Barbarin (d) Georgie Stoll, Chappie Willett (arr)

**Los Angeles, January 12, 1938**

Satchel

DLA1132- Mouth De 1636, 3794, (E)F7428, M30353, Br  
A swing (la (E)A505246,  
vcl)

MCA 1326, (F)510084, LA-  
10, 510154, (Jap)3066,  
Swag (Aus)JCS102, 703, GOJ  
(It)LPJT53, Ex Libris  
(Swi)GC341, De GRD 620 [CD], MCA  
MCAMD10121 [CD],  
Giants Of Jazz (It)CD53088 [CD], Jazz  
Roots  
CD56030 [CD], Fremaux & Associates  
(F)FA1358 [CD]

DLA1133- Jubilee (la De 1635, DL9225, (E)F6765, M30354, Br  
A vcl, poss.  
cw arr) (F)A505141,  
(G)A81718, Swag (Aus)JCS102, 703, Hi  
(G)H619, MCA

1312, (F)510038, LA-  
 10, 510155, (Jap)3066, Coral  
 (E)CP1, Time Life STLJ01, Affinity  
 (E)1024, Ex  
 Libris (Swi)GC341, De GRD620  
 [CD], GRD2-638 [CD],  
 Radio France (F)211752 [CD], Verve 543  
 699-2 [CD],  
 Avid (E)AMBX150 [CD], Fremeaux &  
 Associes  
 (F)FA1358 [CD]

Struttin' with  
 DLA1134- some De  
 A barbecue 1661, 3795, DL9225, (E)F6814, M30375,  
 (cw arr)  
 (F)MU60496, Br (G)A81986, A81782, Pol  
 (It)A81986,  
 Coral (E)CP1, MCA 1312, (F)510038, LA-  
 10, 510155,  
 (Jap)3066, Phontastic  
 (Swd)Nost7662, Time-Life  
 STBB-22, Ex Libris (Swi)GC341, Time  
 Life R960-15  
 [CD], MCA MCAD42328 [CD], (G)MCD18347  
 [CD], De  
 GRD620, GRD2-638 [CD], GRP9872  
 [CD], ASA Living  
 Era (E)5094 [CD], Time Life R960-15  
 [CD], Jazz  
 Archives (F)ZET731 [CD], Fremeaux &  
 Associes  
 (F)FA1358 [CD]

Struttin' with  
 DLA1134- some  
 B? barbecue Mosaic MD7-243 [CD]  
 (cw  
 arr,\*,#)

The trumpet  
 DLA1135- player's De  
 A lament (la 1653, (E)F6814, M30375, (F)MU60496, Br  
 vcl, poss.  
 gs arr)  
 (F)A505155, (G)A81782, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS102, 703, MCA

1326, (F)510084, LA-  
10, 510155, (Jap)3066,  
Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD]

The trumpet  
DLA1135- player's  
C lament (la Decca GRD649 [CD]  
vcl, poss.  
gs arr,\*)

Note: Some references list Red Callender (b) instead of Pops Foster for some of the Los Angeles sessions.  
MCA (G)MCD-18347 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - My Greatest Songs"; see flwg sessions to September 5, 1955 for rest of CD.  
All titles, except (\*), also on Coral (G)COPS6697 titled "Louis Armstrong 1938-1942 - Back In L.A. Vol. 2".  
All titles, except (\*), also on Coral (G)6.22150, Classics (F)515 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].  
All titles, except (#), also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1904 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Volume 4 - 1938"; see flwg sessions to June 14, 1938 for rest of CD; note that Mx. DLA1135-C not on first edition.  
All above titles also on Mosaic MD7-243 [CD].

#### [A5700] Louis Armstrong

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison (ts,bar-1) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d,vib-2)

#### Los Angeles, January 13, 1938

DLA1136-I double dare you	De
A (la vcl,1)	1636, (E)F6619, DL9225, M30353, Br
	(F)505130,
	(G)A81451, Swag
	(Aus)JCS103, 704, Br
	(F,G)87503LPBM, Coral
	(E)CP1, (G)COPS6697, MCA
	1312, (F)510038, LA-
	10, 510155, (Jap)3067, New
	World NW274, Book of the Month
	Club 21-6547,
	Phontastic
	(Swd)Nost7662, PHONT9308
	[CD], Classics
	(F)515 [CD], Best of Jazz (F)4037
	[CD], Jasmine
	(E)2547 [CD], Fremaux & Associes
	(F)FA1358 [CD]
DLA1136-I double dare you	Decca GRD649 [CD], Neatwork
B (la vcl) (*)	(Au)RP2029 [CD]
DLA1137-True confession (la	De 1635, (E)F6619, Br
A vcl,2)	(G)A81451, (F)A505130,

- A505141, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS103, 704, MCA (F)510104,  
 LA-10, 510155, (Jap)3067, Coral  
 (G)COPS6697,  
 Time-Life STBB-22, Classics (F)515  
 [CD], Time Life  
 R960-15 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates  
 (F)FA1358 [CD]
- DLA1137-True confession (la Decca GRD649 [CD], Neatwork  
 B vcl,2,\*) (Au)RP2029 [CD]
- DLA1138-Let that be a lessonDe 1661, (E)F6655, Pol  
 A to you (la vcl) (It)A61142, Br (F)A505140,  
 (G)A81520, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS103, 704, MCA (F)510104,  
 LA-10, 510155, (Jap)3067, Coral  
 (G)COPS6697,  
 Classics (F)515 [CD], Best of Jazz  
 (F)4037 [CD],  
 Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1358 [CD]
- DLA1138-Let that be a lessonDecca GRD649 [CD], Neatwork  
 B to you (la vcl,\*) (Au)RP2029 [CD]
- DLA1139-Sweet as a song De 1653, (E)F6655, Pol  
 A (la vcl) (It)A61142, Br (F)A505140,  
 (G)A81520, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS103, 704, MCA (F)50104,  
 LA-10, 510155, (Jap)3067, Coral  
 (G)COPS6697,  
 Classics (F)515 [CD], Fremeaux &  
 Associates  
 (F)FA1358 [CD]

Note: Some sources list Albert Nicholas (cl,as) and Red Callender (b) for Pops Foster.  
 All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1904 [CD]; titles (\*) not included  
 on first edition.  
 All titles, except (\*), also on Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD]; date for this  
 session incorrectly listed as January 12, 1938.  
 All above titles also on GRP Decca GRD649 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD].

### **[A5701] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton Hemphill  
 (tp) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Rupert Cole (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison  
 (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

**New York, May 13, 1938**

63775 So little De 1822, (E)F6716, Br  
 -A time (so (F)A505161, (G)A81632, Pol  
 much to

- do) (la  
vcl)
- (It)A61157, Swag (Aus)JCS103, 704, Book of  
the  
Month Club 21-6547, MCA (F)510104, Time-  
Life  
STBB-22, Time Life R960-15 [CD]
- 63776 Mexican  
-A swing  
(la vcl) De 1822, (E)F7428, Swag  
(Aus)JCS103, 704, MCA  
(F)510104, Ex Libris (Swi)GC341, Avid  
(E)574 [CD]
- As long as  
you live
- 63777 you'll be  
-A dead if  
you die  
(la vcl) De 2230, (E)F7056, M30334, Br (F)A505203,  
(G)A82057, Swag (Aus)JCS104, 704, MCA  
(F)510104,  
Fremaux & Associates (F)FA001 [CD]
- When the  
saints
- 63778 go  
-A marchin  
g in (la  
vcl) De  
2230, 25153, DL5225, DL8284, (E)F7056, M30  
334,  
(F)MU60665, Br  
(E)OE9189, (F)A505203, (G)A82057,  
A82759, (F,G)12021NB, 10112EPB, 87035LPBM,  
87002LPBM, LA8528, Hi (G)H619, Swag  
(Aus)JCS104,  
704, JCS33741, Coral  
(G)COPS1006, (E)CDL8024, MCA  
1312, (F)510038, (E)MCM1001, Time Life  
STLJ01,  
Time-Life STBB-22, AoH (E)AH7, MCA  
(G)MOPS8271,  
MCAD42328 [CD], ASV Living Era (E)5094  
[CD], Best  
of Jazz (F)4037 [CD], Time Life R960-15  
[CD],  
Reader's Digest 3962 [CD], Jazz Archives  
(F)158132  
[CD], Masters of Jazz (F)MJCD807 [CD], MCA

(G)MCD17750 [CD], 2292-57202-2 [CD], MCD-18347

[CD], Verve 543 699-2 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates

(F)FA001 [CD], Saga Jazz (F)066436-2 [CD]

Note: Some references list Red Callender (b) instead of Pops Foster for this session.  
MCA (G)MCD17750 titled "Louis Armstrong - The Collection"; see flwg sessions to July 24, 1968 for rest of CD.

All above titles also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510155, (Jap)3067, Coral (G)COPS7504, Classics (F)515 [CD], Decca GRD649 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1904 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1358 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].

**[A5702] Louis Armstrong**

**New York, May 18, 1938**

On the

- 63809 sentiment De  
-A al side (la 1841, (E)F6780, F49016, (F)MU60495, Pol  
vcl)  
(It)A61187, Br (G)A81726, Swag  
(Aus)JCS104, 704,  
MCA (F)510104, LA-10, 510155, Time-Life  
STBB-22,  
Time Life R960-15 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547  
[CD]  
De  
63810 It's wonderful  
-A (la vcl) 1841, DL9225, (E)F6780, F49016, (F)MU604  
95,  
Pol (It)A61187, Br (G)A81726, Swag  
(Aus)JCS104,  
704, MCA 1312, (F)510038, (F)LA-  
10, (F)510155,  
Coral (E)CP1, Jasmine (E)2547 [CD]  
63811 Something  
-A tells me  
(la vcl) De 1842, (E)F6765, Pol (It)A61172, Br  
(G)A81718,  
Swag (Aus)JCS104, 704, MCA  
(F)510104, LA-10,  
510155, Time-Life STBB-22, Time Life  
R960-15 [CD],  
Avid (E)574 [CD]  
63812 Love walked  
-A in (la vcl) De 1842, (E)F6716, Br  
(G)A81632, (F)A505161, Pol  
(It)A61157, Swag (Aus)JCS104, 704, GOJ  
(It)LPJT53,

Book of the Month Club 21-6547, MCA  
 (F)510104,  
 LA-10, 510156, Time-Life STBB-  
 22, Jasmine (E)2547  
 [CD], Time Life R960-15 [CD], Giants of  
 Jazz  
 (It)CD53088 [CD]

Note: All above titles also on Classics (F)523 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong 1938-1939"; see flwg sessions to April 5, 1939 for rest of CD.  
 All above titles also on MCA (Jap)3067, Coral (G)COPS7504, Decca GRD649 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1904 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1358 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].

**[A5705] Louis Armstrong**

***Louis Armstrong With The Decca Mixed Chorus directed by Lyn Murray*** : Louis Armstrong (vcl) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d,orch. bells,xyl,vib) The CBS Choir (vcl) Lyn Murray (dir,arr)

**New York, June 14, 1938**

63982 Shadrack De 1913, 25150, DL8327, (E)F6835, Br  
 -A (la vcl) (E)OE9310,  
 LAT8638, (F)A505205, (G)A81799, (G,F)10074  
 EPB,  
 MCA (F)510104, (E)MCL1600, (Jap)3068,  
 Swag (Aus)33793, Coral  
 (G)COPS7504, COPS3803,  
 Book of the Month 21-6547, L'Art Vocal  
 (F)2 [CD],  
 Best of Jazz (F)4004 [CD], Avid (E)574  
 [CD],  
 Verve 543 699-2 [CD]

Going to  
 shout  
 all

63983 over De 2085, (E)F6912, (F)MU60312, Br  
 -A God's (E)OE9310,  
 heave  
 n (la  
 vcl)

(G)A81884, A82566, (G,F)10074EPB, Pol  
 (It)A61191,  
 Swag (Aug)JCS33793, MCA  
 1306, (F)510030, (Jap)3068

Going to  
 shout

63983 all Mosaic MD7-243 [CD]  
 -B over  
 God's

heave  
n (la  
vcl,\*)  
Nobody  
knows  
the De 2085, (E)F6912, (F)MU60312, Br  
63984 trouble (E)OE9310,  
-A I've  
seen  
(la vcl)  
(G)A81884, A82566, (G,F)10074EPB, Pol  
(It)A61191,  
Swag (Aus)JCS33793, Coral (G)COPS7504, MCA  
1306,  
(F)510030, (Jap)3068, L'Art Vocal (F)2  
[CD], Saga  
Jazz (F)981064-2 [CD]

Jonah  
and  
63985 the De 1913, 25150, (E)F6835, Br  
-C whale (E)OE9310, (F)A505205  
(la vcl)  
(G)A81799, (G,F)100074EPB, Swag  
(Aus)JCS33793,  
MCA (F)510104, Book of the Month Club 21-  
6547,  
L'Art Vocal (F)2 [CD]

Note: On mx. 63984-A the rhythm section is out.  
All titles, except (\*), also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510156, Classics (F)523  
[CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1904 [CD], Fremeaux & Associes (F)FA001  
[CD], Fremeaux & Associes (F)FA1358 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].  
All above titles also on Mosaic MD7-243 [CD].

### [A5710] Louis Armstrong

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong, Louis Bacon (tp) or Otis Johnson, Shelton Hemphill, Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Wilbur DeParis, George Washington, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Rupert Cole, Charlie Holmes (as) Bingie Madison (ts) Albert Nicholas (ts,cl) **Luis Russell (p)** Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Paul Barbarin (d)

soundtrack, "News of the Day", New Orleans,  
October, 1938

The skeleton in the closet	King Akwa (G)00851
Swing that music	—
Confessin' that I love you (ending only)	—

Note: includes brief narration dubbed in for an obituary tribute to Louis.

### [A5713] Louis Armstrong



**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton Hemphill, Otis Johnson, Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Wilbur DeParis, George Washington, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes, Rupert Cole (as) Albert Nicholas, Bingie Madison (ts) **Luis Russell (p,cond)** Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Sidney Catlett (d)

**New York, January 18, 1939**

64907-A Jeepers creepers (la vcl) De 2267, DL8327, DEA 7-1, (E)F6990, Br (F)A505216, (G)A82031, (FG)87503LPBM, Pol (It)61248, Phontastic (Swd)Nost7662, Time-Life STBB-22, Phontastic (Swd)PHONT9308 [CD], Decca GRD2-638 [CD], 088 112 225-2 [CD], Time Life R960-15 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547 [CD], Avid 541 [CD], (E)574 [CD], EMI (E)831779-2 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)158132 [CD], Verve 543 699-2 [CD]

64908-A What is this thing called swing ? (la vcl) De 2267, (E)F6990, Br (F)A505216, (G)A82031, Pol (It)A61248

Note: EMI (E)831779-2 [CD] titled "The Pure Genius Of Louis Armstrong - We Have All The Time In The World"; see flwg sessions to October 28, 1969 for rest of CD.

Both above titles also on MCA (F)510108, (F)LA-10, (F)510157, (Jap)3068, Coral (G)COPS7505, Swaggie (Aus)JCS106, 705, Historia (G)H619, Affinity (E)AFS1024, Classics (F)523 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1905 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD], Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1359 [CD] .

**[A5715] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton Hemphill, Otis Johnson, Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Wilbur DeParis, George Washington, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes, Rupert Cole (cl,as) Joe Garland (cl,ts,arr) Bingie Madison (cl,ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Sidney Catlett (d) poss.Midge Williams (vcl break-1)

**New York, April 5, 1939**

Hear me  
talkin'  
65344 to ya De 2405, DL8284, (E)F7110, Br (F)A505222,  
-A (la vcl,jg  
arr,1)

(G)A82125, (G,F)87503LPBM, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS105, 705,  
 Classics (F)523 [CD], MCA MCAMD10121 [CD],  
 Avid 541 [CD], Verve 543 699-2 [CD]

Save it

65345 pretty  
 -A mam De 2405, 3516, 25155, DL5225, (E)F7110,  
 a (la  
 vcl)

Br  
 (G)A82125, (G,F)10151EPB, (F)A505222, (E)OE  
 9190  
 Swag (Aus)JCS106, 705, Classics (F)523 [CD]

West

65346 End  
 -A blues De 2480, 3793, 25154, DL5225, (E)F7127,  
 (la  
 vcl)

Br (E)OE9189, (G)A82208, (G,F)10151EPB,  
 Pol (It)A61275, Swag (Aus)JCS107, 705, Hi  
 (G)H619  
 Book of the Month 21-6547, Classics (F)615  
 [CD],  
 MCA MCAD42328 [CD], ASV Living Era (E)5094  
 [CD],  
 MCA (G)2292-57202-2 [CD], Verve 543 699-2  
 [CD]

65347 Savoy De 2538, (E)F7177, Br (F)A505228, Hi  
 -A blues (G)H619,  
 Swag (Aus)JCS107, 705, Br (F,G)87503LPBM,  
 Classics (F)615 [CD], ASV Living Era  
 (E)5094 [CD],  
 Verve 543 699-2 [CD]

Note: Classics (F)615 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong 1939-1940"; see flwg sessions to  
 May 1, 1940.

All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906 [CD] titled "Louis  
 Armstrong - Volume 6 - 1939-1940"; see following sessions to March 14, 1940  
 and Benny Goodman session of October 14, 1939 for rest of CD.

All above titles also on Decca DL8284, MCA (F)510064, (F)LA-  
 10, (F)510157, (Jap)3069, Coral (G)COPS1006, COPS7505, AoH  
 (E)AH7, AH1006, Swag (Aus)JCS33741, Jazz Archives (F)ZET731  
 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD], Fremaux &  
 Associes (F)FA1359 [CD].

**[A5716] Louis Armstrong**

Bernard Flood (tp) replaces Otis Johnson

**New York, April 25, 1939**

- 65460-A I'm confessin' (la De  
vcl) 2615, 3795, 28306, DL8327, (E)F7213,  
(F)MU60774, MCA  
(F)510108, (E)MCL1822, Time-Life  
STBB-22, Decca GRD2-638 [CD], 088  
112 225-2 [CD],  
ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD], Jasmine  
(E)2547 [CD],  
Time Life R960-15 [CD], Music For  
Pleasure  
(E)CDMFP6056 [CD], Avid 541  
[CD], Radio France  
(F)211752 [CD], Jazz Archives  
(F)158132 [CD],  
Verve 543 699-2 [CD]
- 65461-A Our Monday date De 2615, DL8284, (E)F7213, Br  
(la vcl) (F,G)87503LPBM, MCA  
(F)510064, AoH (E)AH7, Coral  
(G)COPS1006, 62062,  
ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD], Jazz  
Archives  
(F)ZET731 [CD]
- 65462-A If it's good then I De 2480, (E)F7127, Br (G)A82208, Pol  
want it (la vcl) (It)A61275,  
MCA (F)510108
- 65463-A Me and Brother De 2538, DL8327, (E)F7177, Br  
Bill (la vcl) (F)A505228,  
MCA (F)510108
- TNY755 Happy birthday to Family (It)SFR-DPP655, Windmill  
Bing (la vcl,\*) (E)190, Essential  
Jazz Classics (Sp)EJC55477 [CD]

Note: (\*) A Decca test pressing exists for this tune.  
All titles, except (\*), also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510157, (Jap)3069, Swaggie  
(Aus)JCS107, 705, Coral (G)COPS7506, Classics (F)615 [CD], Definitive  
(Sp)DRCD11171 [CD].  
All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243  
[CD], Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1359 [CD] .

**[A5718] Louis Armstrong**

**New York, June 15, 1939**

- 65824-A Baby won't you please De 2729, DL8327, (E)F7388, Br  
come home (la vcl) (F)A505247, MCA  
(F)510108, LA-10, 510157, Ex  
Libris (Swi)GC341,

ASV Living Era (E)5094  
 [CD], Reader's Digest 3962  
 [CD]  
 65825-A Poor old Joe (la vcl) Od (Arg)284649, OFC 45, MCA  
 (F)510113, (F)510157  
 De  
 65826-A Shanty boat on the 2729, (Arg)284649, (E)F7388, Br  
 Mississippi (la vcl) (F)A505247,  
 MCA (F)510064, (F)LA-  
 10, (F)510158

Note: All above titles also on Swaggie (Aus)705, MCA (Jap)3069, Coral  
 (G)7506, Classics (F)615 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906 [CD], Mosaic MD7-  
 243 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD], Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1359  
 [CD] .

**[A5719] Louis Armstrong**

same pers.

**Carnegie Hall, "ASCAP Benefit Concert", New York,  
 October 2, 1939**

When it's sleepy time Collector's Classics  
 down south (la vcl) (Dan)CC18  
 Old man Mose (la,ens Collector's Classics  
 vcl) (Dan)CC18, Oscar Disco OS038,  
 Saga 6931, Fox Am Retro  
 MF208/5, Windmill (E)215  
 What is this thing called Collector's Classics  
 swing ? (la vcl) (Dan)CC18

Note: Date given above confirmed by Franz Hoffman research. Previously listed as  
 October 6, 1939.  
 Collector's Classics (Dan)CC18 titled "Carnegie Hall Concerts, October 1939".  
 All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906 [CD], Fremaux &  
 Associates (F)FA1359 [CD] .

**[A5719.10] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong & His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Bernard  
 Flood, Shelton Hemphill, Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Wilbur DeParis, George  
 Washington, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Rupert Cole, Charlie Holmes (as) Joe  
 Garland, Bingie Madison (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Sidney  
 Catlett (d)

**Broadcast, "The Cotton Club", New York, December  
 11, 1939**

When it's sleepy time Doctor Jazz (Du)DJ-010-I-II  
 down south [CD]  
 Sugar foot stomp -  
 You're just a no account -  
 (la vcl) -  
 Jammin' -

**[A5720] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Bernard Flood, Shelton Hemphill, Henry "Red" Allen (tp) Wilbur DeParis, George Washington, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Rupert Cole (cl,as) Charlie Holmes (as) Joe Garland (ts,bar,arr) Bingie Madison (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Sidney Catlett (d)

**New York, December 18, 1939**

- 66984 Poor old De 3011, Swag (Aus)705, OFC 45, MCA  
-A Joe (la (F)510113,  
vcl) (Jap)MCX9
- 66985 You're a De  
-A lucky 2934, DL9225, (E)F7567, (F)MU60810, Swag  
guy (la (Aus)  
vcl) 706, Coral (E)CP1, MCA 510064, (Jap)MCX 9,  
ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD], Avid (E)574  
[CD],  
Verve 543 699-2 [CD]
- 66986 You're  
-A just a De 2934, (E)F7567, (F)MU60810, Swag  
no accoun (Aus)706,  
t (la  
vcl) MCA (F)510113, (Jap)3069, Avid (E)574 [CD]
- 66987 Bye and De  
-A bye 3011, 3946, 25153, DL5225, DL8284, (F)MU60  
(la,ban 665,  
d vcl) Br (E)OE9189, (F,G)12021NB, 10112EPB, AoH  
(E)AH7,  
Swag (Aus)JCS33741, 706, Coral  
(G)COPS1006, GOJ  
(It)LPJT53, MCA (F)510064, (Jap)3069, ASV  
Living  
Era (E)5094 [CD], Fremaux & Associes  
(F)FA001  
[CD]

Note: All above titles also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510158, Coral  
(G)COPS7506, Classics (F)615 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906  
[CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11171 [CD], Fremaux &  
Associes (F)FA1359 [CD] .

**[A5721] Louis Armstrong**

same pers.

**radio broadcast "Cotton Club", New York, December 18, 1939**

When it's sleepy time down south (theme)	Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906 [CD], CLA1910 [CD]
Harlem stomp (la vcl)	Collector's Classics (Dan)CC26, Jazz Anthology (F)JA5238, Avenue International (E)AVINT1006, Milan (F)A271, Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906, CLA1910 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1359 [CD]

Note: Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong, Live At The Cotton Club, 1939/40"; see flwg broadcasts to April 4, 1942 for rest of CD.

**[H1560] W.C. Handy**

**W.C. Handy's Orchestra** : W.C. Handy (cnt,vcl) J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Edmond Hall (cl) Bingie Madison (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Pops Foster (b) Sidney Catlett (d)

**New York, December 26, 1939**

US1223-1 St. Louis blues	Varsity 8163, Davis DA22, Elite 5039, Philharmonic FR81
US1224-1 Loveless love (wch vcl)	Varsity 8162
US1225-1 Beale Street blues	8163
US1226-1 'Way down south where the blues begin (wch vcl)	8162

Note: All above titles also on Jazz Crusade JCCD-3088 [CD] titled "Rare Cuts - Well Done, Volume 5"; rest of CD by Henry "Red" Allen, Punch Miller.  
All above titles also on RST (Au)JPCD-1515 [CD] titled "Jazzin' the blues (1936-46)".

**[A5722] Louis Armstrong**

same pers

**New York, March 14, 1940**

67321-A Hep cat's ball (la vcl)	De 3283, (E)F7700, Coral (G)COPS7506, MCA (F)510113, Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906 [CD], Saga Jazz (F)066484-2 [CD]
67322-A You've got me voodoo'd (la vcl)	De 3092, (E)F7598, Coral (G)COPS7507, MCA (F)510113, Ambassador (Swd)CLA1906 [CD], Saga Jazz (F)066436-2 [CD]

- 67323-A Harlem stomp (la vcl) De 3092, (E)F7598, Coral  
(G)COPS7507, MCA  
(F)510113, De (F)MU60811, Br  
(F,G)87089LPBM,  
Ambassador (Swd)CLA1907 [CD]  
De
- 67324-A Wolverine blues 3105, DL8284, (E)F8099, Coral  
(G)COPS1006,  
7507, Swag (Aus)JCS33742, Br  
(F,G)87503LPBM, AoH  
(E)AH7, GOJ (It)LPJT53, MCA  
(F)510064, Time-Life  
STBB-22, Franklin Mint  
GJR094, MCA (F)MCAD42328  
[CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1907  
[CD], Time Life  
R960-15 [CD], Decca GRD2-638  
[CD], ASV Living Era  
(E)5094 [CD], Giants of Jazz  
(It)CD53008 [CD],  
Jazz Archives (F)158732  
[CD], Verve 543 699-2  
[CD], Jazz Roots CD56030 [CD]
- 67325-A Lazy 'Sippi steamer (la vcl) De 3283, (E)F7700, Coral  
(G)COPS1006, 7507, MCA  
(F)510113, Ambassador  
(Swd)CLA1907 [CD], MCA  
MCAMD10121 [CD], Saga Jazz  
(F)066436-2 [CD]

Note: Some copies of Mx. 67321, 67322 and 67325 carry a -AA take letter, however, it is the same as -A.  
Ambassador (Swd)CLA1907 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Volume 7 - 1940-1941"; see flwg sessions to March 10, 1941 for rest of CD.  
Jazz Archives (F)158732 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Back O' Town Blues"; see flwg sessions to January 14, 1945 and "V-Disc All Stars" and "Esquire All Stars" for rest of CD.  
All above titles also on Definitive (Sp)DRCD11172 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - The Complete Decca Studio Master Takes, 1940-1949"; a 2 CD set.  
All above titles also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510158, (Jap)3070, Swaggie (Aus)706, Classics (F)615 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1359 [CD] .

**[A5723] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : same pers.

radio broadcast "Cotton Club", New York, March 22, 1940

(Theme & ) Keep the  
rhythm going

Everybody 's  
EV3006, Ambassador  
(Swd)CLA1907 [CD],  
CLA1910 [CD], Red Allen  
(G)RA-CD-11 [CD], Fremeaux  
& Associates (F)FA1360 [CD]

Note: Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD] titled "Integrale Louis Armstrong, 10 -  
Radio Days 1941-1944"; a 3 CD set.

**[A5723.10] Louis Armstrong**

same pers.

radio broadcast "Cotton Club", New York, March 24,  
1940

Confessin' (la vcl)

Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910  
[CD], Fremeaux & Associates  
(F)FA1360 [CD]

**[A5723.20] Louis Armstrong**

same pers.

radio broadcast "Cotton Club", New York, April 9,  
1940

Darling Nellie Gray (la  
vcl)

Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910  
[CD], Fremeaux & Associates  
(F)FA1360 [CD]

**[A5726] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton  
Hemphill, Henry "Red" Allen, Bernard Flood (tp) Wilbur DeParis, George  
Washington, J.C. Higginbotham (tb) Charlie Holmes (as) Rupert Cole (as,cl-1) Bingie  
Madison, Joe Garland (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops Foster (b) Sidney  
Catlett (d)

radio broadcast "Cotton Club", New York, April 15,  
1940

Lazy river (la vcl)

Everybody 's  
EV3006, Ambassador  
(Swd)CLA1907 [CD],  
CLA1910 [CD]

Struttin' with some  
barbecue (1)

Everybody 's  
EV3006, Ambassador  
(Swd)CLA1907 [CD],  
CLA1910 [CD], Fremeaux &  
Associates (F)FA1360 [CD]

When it's sleepy time  
down south (few bars)

Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD]

**[A5726.10] Louis Armstrong**



same pers.

**radio broadcast "Cotton Club", New York, April 1940**

Song of the islands (la vcl) Ambassador (Swd) CLA1910  
[CD], Fremeaux & Associes  
(F)FA1360 [CD]

**[A5727] Louis Armstrong**

Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) prob. Shelton Hemphill (tp) prob. J.C. Higginbotham  
(tb) Charlie Holmes (as) Joe Garland (ts,bar) Luis Russell (p) Lee Blair (g) Pops  
Foster (p)Sidney Catlett (d)

**New York, May 1, 1940**

67648- Sweethearts  
A on parade De 3235, 25440, DL5191, DL8327, DL8250,  
(la vcl)  
Br  
(E)OE9085, LA8567, (G,F)87503LPBM, Swag  
(Aus)  
S1280, MCA (F)510113, Classics (F)615  
[CD],  
ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD], Avid 541  
[CD],  
(E)574 [CD], Verve 543 699-2 [CD]

67649- You run your  
A mouth, I'll  
run my  
business  
(la vcl)  
De 3204, (E)F7849, MCA  
(F)510113, Classics (F)615  
[CD], ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD]

67650- Cut off my  
A legs and  
call me  
shorty (la  
vcl)  
De 3235, (E)F8099, MCA (F)510113, GOJ  
(It)LPJT64,  
Classics (F)685 [CD], Giants of Jazz  
(It)CD53008  
[CD], Jazz Roots CD56030 [CD]

67651- Cain and Abel  
A (la vcl)  
De 3204, (E)F7849, (F)MU60811, MCA  
(F)510064, Ex  
Libris (Swi)GC341, Classics (F)685  
[CD], Fremeaux  
& Associes (F)FA001 [CD], Avid (E)574  
[CD], Jazz  
Archives (F)158732 [CD]

Note: Personnel from Mosaic MD7-243 [CD] liner notes.  
(1) on Mosaic MD7-243 [CD] includes a pre run-on groove warm-up by the  
band.

Classics (F)685 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - 1940-1942"; see flwg sessions to April 17, 1942 for rest of CD.

All above titles also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510159, (Jap)3070, Coral (G)COPS7507, Swaggie (Aus)706, Ambassador (Swd)CLA1907 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11172 [CD], Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1359 [CD] .

### [A5728] Louis Armstrong

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Claude Jones (tb) Sidney Bechet (cl,sop) **Luis Russell (p)** Bernard Addison (g) Wellman Braud (b) Zutty Singleton (d)

**New York, May 27, 1940**

Perdido

67817 Stree De  
-A t 18090, 25099, DL8244, DL8283, (E)M30314, Br  
blues  
(F,G)87003, (G)82540, (G,F)10068EPB, (E)031  
64,  
OE9287, LAT8124, LAT8146, (G)87003LPBM, Fon  
it  
(It)1180, Swag (Aus)S1215, Masters Of Jazz  
(F)R2CD8003 [CD], Decca GRD2-638  
[CD], GRP9872  
[CD], ASV Living Era (E)5094 [CD], Jazz  
Archives  
(F)158732 [CD], Radio France (F)211752  
[CD], Verve  
543 699-2 [CD], Properbox (E)18 [CD], Saga  
Jazz  
(F)066436-2 [CD]

2:19

67818 blues De 18090, 25099, DL8283, (F)M30314, Br  
-A (la (G)A82540,  
vcl)  
10068EPB, (E)03164, OE9287, LAT8146, GOJ  
LPJT64,  
Swag (Aus)S1215, Fonit (It)1180, Time Life  
STLJ01,  
Jazz Archives (F)158765 [CD], 158732  
[CD], ASV  
Living Era (E)5094 [CD], Verve 543 699-2  
[CD],  
Saga Jazz (F)066482-2 [CD]

Down in

67819 honk  
-A y De 18091, (F)AU30558, Br (E)03165, Swag  
tonk

town  
(\*)

(Aus)JCS33759, MCA 1334, (F)510115, Jazz  
Archives  
(F)158732 [CD], Neatwork (Au)RP2029 [CD]

Down in

67819 honk De 18091, 25100, DL8283, (F)M30317, Br  
-B y  
tonk (E)OE9287,  
town  
LAT8146, (F,G)10068EPB, Swag (Aus)S1215,  
GOJ (It)LPJT64, Franklin Mint GJR019

Note: Mx. 67819 was issued on Decca (F)AU30558 with -D in the wax. However, this  
-D is identical to -A.

All titles, except (\*), also on MCA 1306, (F)510030, (Jap)3071, Coral  
(G)COPS7507, Br (F,G)87508, Affinity (E)AFS1024, MCA MCAD42438  
[CD], Classics (F)685 [CD], Giants of Jazz (It)CD53008 [CD], Jazz Roots  
CD56030 [CD], Properbox (E)24 [CD], Music Memoria (F)30423 [CD], Definitive  
(Sp)DRCD11172 [CD], Universal (F)533616-7 [CD].

All above titles also on Masters of Jazz (F)MJCD100 [CD] titled "Sidney Bechet,  
1940"; for rest of CD see flwg session and Sidney Bechet.

All above titles also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510159, JSP (E)338  
[CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1907 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremaux &  
Associés (F)FA1359 [CD].

### [A5730] Louis Armstrong

**Louis Armstrong And His Hot Seven** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) George  
Washington (tb) Prince Robinson (cl) Luis Russell (p) Lawrence Lucie (g) John  
Williams (b) Sidney Catlett (d)

**New York, March 10, 1941**

67896-A	Ev'rything's been done before (la vcl)	De 3825, DL9225, (E)M30681, MCA (F)510064, Coral (E)CP1
67897-A	I cover the waterfront (la vcl)	De 3700, (E)M30719, Voc VL3851, MCA (F)510113, Jasmine (E)2547 [CD]
67898-B	In the gloamin' (la vcl)	De 3825, Br (E)04397, De (F)MU60504, MCA (F)510113
67899-A	Long, long ago (la,band vcl)	De 3700, Br (E)04397, De (F)MU60504, MCA (F)510113

Note: mx. 67898-A has been reported on some copies of Decca 3825.  
All above titles also on MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510159, (Jap)3071, Coral  
(G)COPS7508, Swaggie (Aus)706, Book of the Month Club 21-6547, Classics  
(F)685 [CD], Ambassador (Swd)CLA1907 [CD], Properbox (E)24 [CD], Mosaic  
MD7-243 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11172 [CD], Fremaux & Associés  
(F)FA1359 [CD].

### [A5731] Louis Armstrong

Prince Robinson (cl,ts)

**New York, April 11, 1941**

		De
68997-A	Hey lawdy mama (la vcl)	3756, DL9225, (F)MU60503, Br (E)04296, MCA (F)510064, LA- 10, 510159, Coral (E)CP1, Musica Jazz (It)2MJP1056, Jazz Archives (F)158732 [CD], Radio France (F)211752 [CD]
68998-A	I'll get mine by and bye (la,band vcl)	De 3900, (F)MU60503, Br (E)04296, MCA 1334, (F)510115, LA- 10, 510160, Fremeaux & Associés (F)FA001 [CD]
68999-A	Do you call that a buddy ? (la,band vcl)	De 3756, DL8327, Br (E)04297, MCA 1334, (F)510115, LA-10, 510160, Fremeaux & Associés (F)FA001 [CD]
69000-C	Yes suh ! (la,band vcl)	De 3900, Br (E)04297, MCA 1334, (F)510115, (F)LA-10, (F)510160

Note: All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1908 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - volume 8 - 1941-1942"; see flwg sessions to September 2, 1942 for rest of CD.

All above titles also on Swaggie (Aus)707, MCA (Jap)3071, Coral (G)COPS7508, Classics (F)685 [CD], Properbox (E)24 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11172 [CD], Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1359 [CD].

**[A5732] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton Hemphill, Gene Prince, Frank Galbreath (tp) George Washington, Norman Greene, Henderson Chambers (tb) Rupert Cole (cl,as) Carl Frye (as) Prince Robinson (ts) Joe Garland (ts,bassax) **Luis Russell (p)** Lawrence Lucie (g) Hayes Alvis (b) Sidney Catlett (d)

## Chicago, November 16, 1941

93787- When it's De  
A sleepy time 4140, 25156, DL5225, DL8284, (E)F8464,  
down south (F)MU60514, Br (E)OE9190, Coral  
COPS1006, Swaggie  
(Aus)JCS33742, AoH (E)AH7, MCA  
(F)510064, Ex

Libris (Swi)GC341, Decca GRD2-638  
 [CD], GRP  
 GRP9872 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates  
 (F)FA001 [CD],  
 ASA Living Era (E)5094 [CD], Jazz  
 Archives  
 (F)158132 [CD], 158732 [CD], Avid 541  
 [CD]  
 93788- Leap frog De 4106, (E)F8163, MCA 1334, (F)510115  
 A  
 93789- I used to love De 4106 (some pressings), Meritt 19  
 A you (\*)  
 93789- I used to love De 4106, (E)F8163, MCA 1334, (F)510115  
 B you  
 93790- You rascal you De  
 A (la vcl) 4140, 25156, DL5225, DL8284, (E)F8464,  
 (F)MU60154, Br  
 (E)OE9190, (F,G)87503LPBM, Swag  
 (Aus)JCS33742, Coral (G)COPS1006, GOJ  
 (It)LPJT64,  
 MCA (F)510064, AoH (E)AH7, Time-Life  
 STBB-22, Jazz  
 Archives (F)158132 [CD], 158732  
 [CD], Giants of  
 Jazz (It)CD53088 [CD], Decca GRD2-629  
 [CD], Time  
 Life R960-15 [CD]

Note: Decca GRD2-629 [CD] titled "Major Big Bands of the Swing Era"; rest of 2CD set by others.

All titles, except (\*), also on Swaggie (Aus)707, MCA (F)LA-10, (F)510160, (Jap)3072, Coral (G)COPS7508, Classics (F)685 [CD], Properbox (E)24 [CD], Definitive (Sp)DRCD11172 [CD].

All above titles also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1908 [CD], Mosaic MD7-243 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD].

### **[A5733] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : same pers.

**radio broadcast, "Grand Terrace", Chicago, November 17, 1941**

When it's sleepy time down south (#)	Ambassador (Swd)CLA1908 [CD]	
Basin Street blues (la vcl)	King Akwa (G)00851, Ambassador (Swd)CLA1908 [CD]	
Leap frog	-	
Exactly like you (la vcl)	-	-

Note: An alternative date of October 21, 1941 is cited for this broadcast by Phil Schaap from the label of the Jerry Newman acetate used as source material.  
All titles, except (#), also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1359 [CD] ,

**[A5734] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : same pers.

radio broadcast, "Grand Terrace", Chicago, November 27, 1941

When it's  
sleepy  
time  
down  
south

Swing  
that King Akwa (G)00851, Ambassador (Swd)CLA1908  
music [CD]  
(la vcl)

Harlem  
stomp

Song of  
the  
island Ambassador (Swd)CLA1908 [CD]  
s

Panama - , Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD]

When it's  
sleepy  
time -  
down  
south

Blues for  
second  
line  
(la vcl)

**[A5734.10] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Frank Galbreath, Shelton Hemphill, Bernard Flood (tp) George Washington, James Whitney, Henderson Chambers (tb) Rupert Cole, Carl Frye (as) Prince Robinson (cl,ts,talk) Joe Garland (cl,ts,bassax) Luis Russell (p) Lawrence Lucie (g) John Simmons (b) Sidney Catlett (d)

MBS broadcast "Casa Manana", Culver City, CA, April 1, 1942

In the mood (la out) Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD]

When it's sleepy  
time down  
south

(fragment under announceme nt)	360 [CD]	-	, Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1
Shine (la vcl)	360 [CD]	-	, Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1
Shoe shine boy (la vcl)	360 [CD]	-	, Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1
A zoot suit (la vcl,pr spoken intro)	360 [CD]	-	, Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1
Basin Street blues (la,band vcl)	360 [CD]	-	, Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1
I surrender dear (la vcl)		-	
You don't know what love is (la vcl)	360 [CD]	-	, Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1

**[A5734.20] Louis Armstrong**

same except Prince Robinson (cl-1,ts,bar-2) Joe Garland (cl,ts,bassax-1)

**MBS broadcast "Casa Manana", Culver City, CA, April 4, 1942**

Leep frog (1,2)	(unissued)
Coquette (la vcl)	Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD]
When it's sleepy time down south (closing)	-

**[A5734.30] Louis Armstrong**

same except Prince Robinson (cl,ts) Joe Garland (ts)

**MBS broadcast "Casa Manana", Culver City, CA, April 10, 1942**

(Get some) Cash for your trash (la vcl)	Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD], Fremaux & Associes (F)FA1360 [CD]
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**[A5734.40] Louis Armstrong**

same except Prince Robinson (cl-1,ts,bar-2) Joe Garland (cl,ts,bassax-1)

**MBS broadcast "Casa Manana", Culver City, CA, April 15, 1942**

I never knew (la vcl)	Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD]
Leap frog (1,2)	(unissued)

**[A5735] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton Hemphill, Bernard Flood, Frank Galbreath (tp) George Washington (tb.vcl) James Whitney,Henderson Chambers (tb) Rupert Cole (as) Carl Frye (cl,as) Prince

Robinson (cl,ts) Joe Garland (cl,ts,arr) **Luis Russell (p)** Lawrence Lucie (g) John Simmons (b) Sidney Catlett (d) Sy Oliver (arr)

**Los Angeles, April 17, 1942**

DLA2974-A	Cash for your trash (la vcl)	De 4229, (F)MU60272, Br (E)04044, MCA 1334, Jazz Archives (F)158732 [CD]
DLA2975-A	Among my souvenirs (la vcl)	De 4327, Br (E)04002, MCA 1334, (E)MCL1822
DLA2975-B	Among my souvenirs (la vcl,#)	Meritt 19, Voc VL3851, Music For Pleasure (E)CDMFP6056 [CD]
DLA2976-A	Coquette (la vcl)	De 4327, Br (E)04002, MCA 1334, Time-Life STBB-22, Time Life R960-15 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)158732 [CD]
DLA2976-B	Coquette (la vcl,*,#)	Mosaic MD7-243 [CD]
DLA2977-A	I never knew (la vcl)	De 4229, (F)MU60272, Br (E)04044, MCA 1334, Decca GRD2-638 [CD], Jasmine (E)2547 [CD], Jazz Archives (F)158732 [CD], Radio France (F)211752 [CD]

Note: All titles from MCA 1334 also on MCA (F)510115, (F)LA-10, (F)510160, (Jap)3072, Coral (G)6.22150, (G)COPS6697, Swaggie (Aus)707, Classics (F)685 [CD], Properbox (E)24 [CD].  
All titles, except (\*), also on Ambassador (Swd)CLA1908 [CD], Fremeaux & Associes (F)FA1360 [CD].  
All titles, except (#), also on Definitive (Sp)DRCD11172 [CD].  
All above titles also on Mosaic MD7-243 [CD].

**[A5736] Louis Armstrong**

**Soundies (short films)** : Velma Middleton (vcl)

**film soundtracks, R.C.M. Productions, Los Angeles, April 20, 1942**

Swingin' on nothing (gw,vm vcl)	Privateer (F)105
You rascal you (la vcl)	Privateer (F)105, Ristic (E)SAD, Storyville (Dan)101-8502 [CD]
When it's sleepy time down south (la vcl)	Privateer (F)105, Ristic (E)SAD, Collector's



Classics (Dan)CC26, Avenue  
(E)AVINT1006  
Shine (la vcl) Privateer (F)105, Ristic  
(E)SAD

Note: Some copies of "Shine" have been edited from approx 2:50 to approx 2:30.  
Filming took place two days later than above audio recording date, per Mark Cantor's Soundies' research ("Louis Armstrong on the screen", Stratemann, 1996).  
Storyville (Dan)101-8502 [CD] titled "Masters of Jazz Vol. 2, Louis Armstrong"; see June 19, 1947, December 11, 1948 & August 1, 1962 for rest of CD.  
All above titles also on Storyville (Dan)SLP6001, Ambassador (Swd)CLA1908 [CD], Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD].

**[A5736.10] Louis Armstrong**

same pers.

**MBS broadcast "Casa Manana", Culver City, CA, April 22, 1942**

Blues in the night (la vcl) Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910  
[CD], Fremaux & Associates  
(F)FA1360 [CD]  
Harlem stomp (la vcl) Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD]  
When it's sleepy time  
down south (closing) —

**[A5738] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong and his orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Shelton Hemphill, Frank Galbreath, Bernard Flood (tp) George Washington, Henderson Chambers, James Whitney (tb) Rupert Cole, Carl Frye (as,cl) Prince Robinson (ts,cl) Joe Garland (ts) Luis Russell (p) Lawrence Lucie (g) John Simmons (b) Chick Morrison (d) Ada Brown, Buck and Bubbles (vcl) Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman (mc)

**AFRS Jubilee Show 24, Los Angeles, March-April, 1943**

Jubilee theme (*)	Duke (It)D1021	
If I could be with you (la vcl,*)	—	, Rarities (E)50
Hip hip hooray (ab vcl)	—	
I ain't necessarily so (b&b vcl)	—	
I'm confessin' (la vcl,*)	—	—
In the mood (*)	—	—
I got plenty o' nuttin' (ab vcl)	—	
I can't give you anything but love (la vcl,*)	—	—
Jubilee theme	—	

Note: The above is one of a group of Jubilee shows on which Louis Armstrong appeared with his orchestra in this period. All the band recordings were made at "stockpile" recording session(s) and later dubbed into half hour shows.  
Personnel from Phil Schaap's interviews with Lawrence Lucie & Chick Morrison

(WKCR Louis Armstrong Festival Discography, 1980).

Charlie Mingus (b) has been suggested for this period but there is no confirmation.

(\*) These titles also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD].

**[A5739] Louis Armstrong**

**AFRS Jubilee shows 19 & 21, Los Angeles, March-April, 1943**

(Theme) (into)

Coquette (la Jubilee (Dan) 501-0006 [CD]

vcl)

Shine (la vcl) -

Lazy river (la vcl) -

One o'clock jump -

On the sunny side

of the street (la Jubilee (Dan) 501-1007 [CD]

vcl)

Leap frog - , Fremaux & Associates (F)FA  
1360 [CD]

Dear old

southland (la -

vcl)

Ol' man Mose - , Fremaux & Associates (F)FA  
(la,ens vcl) 1360 [CD]

Dear old

southland -

Comdey skit

(la,Rochester,J

ack -

Benny,Ernest

Whitman)

Note: Jubilee (Dan)501-0006 [CD] titled "The Jubilee Shows Vol. 6".

Jubilee (Dan)501-1007 [CD] titled "The Jubilee Shows, Vol. 7, No. 21 & 22".

Each Storyville CD contains two complete half hour shows; rest of CDs by others.

First 4 titles also on Fremaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD].

All above titles also on Mr. Music MMCD-7015 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - A Rare Batch Of Live Satch"; see flwg two sessions and August 17, 1943 for rest of CD.

**[A5740] Louis Armstrong**

Velma Middleton (vcl) replaces Ada Brown, The Mills Brothers (vcl) Barney Bigard (cl-1) Sonny Woods, Theresa Harris (vcl)

**AFRS Jubilee shows 26, 58, Los Angeles, April-May, 1943**

Ain't misbehavin' (la vcl) Rarities (E)50, Joyce  
1135, 2018, Jass JCD19 [CD],

	Jubilee (Dan)501-1008 [CD], Mr. Music MMCD-7015 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD]
Paper Doll (mb vcl,no orch)	Jass JCD19 [CD]
Rose room (1)	-
The peanut vendor (la vcl)	Rarities (E)50, Joyce 1135, 2018, Jass JCD19 [CD], Jubilee (Dan)501-1008 [CD], Mr. Music MMCD-7015 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD]
Slender, tender and tall (vm vcl)	Rarities (E)50, Jass JCD19 [CD], Mr. Music MMCD-7015 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD]
Coquette (la vcl)	Rarities (E)50, Joyce 1135, Jass JCD19 [CD]
One o'clock jump (faded after tenor solo)	Jass JCD19 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD]
Ain't that just like a man ? (th vcl)	Jubilee (Dan)501-1008 [CD]
You're everything I love (sw vcl)	-
Lazy river (la vcl)	-

Note: Lotz' Jubilee show listing indicates this show is a "dubbed" show mastered December, 1943 taking single selections from a number of previous Jubilee shows including the two titles marked (\*) which are from Jubilee show 26 as issued on a Starline cassette.  
The liner of Jass CD19 [CD] refers to Dexter Gordon as the probable tenor sax soloist on "One O'Clock Jump" but he did not join the band til mid May, 1944.  
Jubilee (Dan)501-1008 [CD] titled "The Jubilee Shows Vol. 8". This CD contains 2 complete half hour shows. Rest of CD by others

### **[A5740.10] Louis Armstrong**

Ann Baker (vcl) replaces Velma Middleton

#### **AFRS Jubilee Show 25, Los Angeles, March-April, 1943**

Baby don't you cry (la vcl)	Mr. Music MMCD-7015 [CD]
Murder he says (ab,gw,ens)	
Barrelhouse Bessie from Basin street (la vcl)	Rarities (E)50, Joyce 1135, 2018, Jass JCD19 [CD],

Mr. Music MMCD-7015  
 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates  
 (F)FA1360 [CD], Saga Jazz  
 (F)066436-2 [CD]

Harlem stomp (la vcl) Mr. Music MMCD-7015 [CD]

**[A5741] Louis Armstrong**

**AFRS Show "Downbeat" #16 & #38** : same except George Washington (tb,vcl)

**Los Angeles, Spring 1943**

When it's sleepy time down south	Joyce 2018
Coquette	Joyce 2018, Blue Ace (F)BA3603
I got a gal in Kalamazoo (la vcl)	Joyce 2018, Blue Ace (F)BA3603, Byg (G)6623.951, Monkey (F)MY40001
Slender, tender and tall (ab vcl)	Joyce 2018
Dear old Southland (la vcl)	Joyce 2018, Blue Ace (F)BA3603, Byg (G)6623.951
Lazy river (la vcl)	-
You can't get stuff in your cuff (ab,gw, vcl)	-
Brother Bill (la vcl)	-
On the sunny side of the street (la vcl,*)	-
Theme and closing	-

Note: This session is sometimes dated September 13, 1943 but this may be the mastering date of reissue program "Downbeat #38".  
 All titles from Blue Ace (F)BA3603 also on Joker (It)SM3082, SM3764/2, Byg (Jap)YX4007.  
 All titles, except (\*), also on Pix 5 titled "Louis Armstrong at the Winter Garden".  
 All above titles also on Moon (It)MCD056-2 [CD] titled "Louis Armstrong - Radio Days"; see August, 1945 (Jubilee #146) for rest of CD.  
 All above titles also on Fremeaux & Associates (F)FA1360 [CD].

**[A5741.10] Louis Armstrong**

**Louis Armstrong And His Orchestra** : Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Frank Galbreath, Shelton Hemphill, Bernard Flood (tp) George Washington, James Whitney, Henderson Chambers (tb) Rupert Cole, Joe Hayman (as) Prince Robinson, Joe Garland (ts) **Luis Russell (p)** Lawrence Lucie (g) Ted Sturgis (b) Chick Morrison (d)

**private broadcast recording, unknown location, early 1943**

Brother bill (la vcl,band vcl interventions)	Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD]
As time goes by (la vcl)	Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates

(F)FA1360 [CD]

**[A5741.20] Louis Armstrong**

same pers.

unknown source, probably a broadcast, unknown  
location, early 1943

On the sunny side of the street (la vcl) Ambassador (Swd)CLA1910 [CD]  
 Back o' town blues (la vcl) —

Note: Both above titles also on Fremeaux &amp; Associates (F)FA1360 [CD].

**[A5742] Louis Armstrong****Jam Session : (Feature Film) : same pers.**Film soundtrack "Jam Session", Hollywood, CA, April  
23, 1943

I can't give you anything Privateer (F)105, Extreme  
 but love (la vcl) Rarities ER1004, Cicala  
 (It)BLJ8041, Hollywood  
 Soundstage HS5014, 4007  
 [CD], Fremeaux & Associates  
 (F)FA1360 [CD]

Note: The definitive date of this session is given by Dr. Klaus Stratemann in his book  
 "Louis Armstrong on the screen" in which the actual recording sheet with date  
 and personnel is reproduced.  
 It is assumed that the above two personnel changes were just for this one  
 occasion only.

**[R7110] Luis Russell**

George Scott (tp) Nathaniel Allen (tb) Clarence Grimes (as) Esmond Samuels  
 (ts) Howard Robertson (bar) Howard Biggs (p) Nathan Woodley (b) Roy Haynes  
 (d) Luis Russell (cond)

New York, May 29, 1946

R1042-3	Sweet memory	Apollo 1020, Classics (F)1066 [CD]
R1043	Sad lover blues	1012, —
R1044	The very thought of you	— —
R1045-2	Don't take your love from me	1020, —

Note: Mx R1042-5 and R1045-9 also exist on same Apollo 1020 issue, but aurally  
 they sound the same as takes 3 and 2 respectively listed above.

**[R7111] Luis Russell**

John Swan (tp) James Thomas (tp) James Kearney (tp) Charles Stovall (tb) Luther  
 Brown (tb) Thomas Brown (tb) Samuel Lee (as) Troy Stowe (ts) added, Leslie  
 Bartlett (b) replaces Nathan Woodley, Nathaniel Allen out

New York, September 13, 1946

R1061	1280 jive	Apollo 1022, Classics (F)1066 [CD]
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R1062	I've got a gal	-	-
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**[R7112] Luis Russell**

George Scott, John Swan, Bernard Flood, Emery Thompson (tp) Nathaniel Allen, Luther Brown, Thomas Brown (tb) Samuel Lee, Clarence Grimes (as) Esmond Samuels, Troy Stowe (ts) Howard Robertson (bar) John Motley (p) Ernest Lee Williams (g) Leslie Bartlett (b) Roy Haynes (d) Lee Richardson (vcl) **Luis Russell (cond)**

**New York, October 19, 1946**

4101-2	You gave me everything but love (lr vcl)	Apollo 1072
4102	Walkin' slow	1079
4103	I've been a fool again (lr vcl)	1071
4104	Luke the Spook	1086
4106	I'm yours	1046
4110-E	Deep six blues	1072
4112	Gloomy Sunday	1071
4113-3	My silent love	1035
4114	A rainy Sunday	1139
4115	I'm in a lowdown mood (lr vcl)	1045
4116-2	All the things you are	1035

Note: All above titles also on Classics (F)1066 [CD].

**[R7113] Luis Russell**

similar pers.

**New York, late 1946**

AP3121	Gone (lr vcl)	Apollo 1086, Classics (F)1066 [CD]
AP3122	Remaining souvenirs	1079, -
AP3139	For you	1139, -

Note: Some of the above titles were issued as by "Lee Richardson acc by Luis Russell Orchestra".

