



President's Message

We have passed the midway point of the 2019-2020 season. Thus far things are going well. We have had fine performances from the Dirty River Dixie Band, the Rock Step Revelators, Ron Fink and the Rowdies, and the New Orleans Jazz Band of Austin. The 18th Annual ATJS Jam Session drew 180 attendees and 28 participants, and produced some lovely jazz. We look forward with confidence to our remaining four concerts, split evenly between terrific out-of-town bands and stalwart Austin ensembles.

The metric the ATJS Board looks at most closely is concert attendance. We are running a bit behind last season, but good turnouts in January and February have brightened the outlook. I have often stated that in a metropolitan area with over two million residents the Society should be able to find 200 people that would like to attend monthly traditional jazz concerts. The ATJS Marketing Committee works very hard at looking under flat rocks, but our members are important partners in promoting the Society's activities and concerts. Bring friends to concerts, either the free Jam Sessions in January or by using your free passes for other events.

This season's schedule includes two bands that once upon a time would have merited special concerts requiring ticket sales for all. The two bands, Riverwalk Alumni and Shake 'Em Up Jazz Band of New Orleans, are instead being offered as regular concerts. Guest admissions help cover the cost of these concerts, but we are heavily indebted to our contributors for helping to close the gap. Please be assured that donations to the Society are helping to bring the best traditional jazz your Program Committee can assemble. In short, I urge anyone who can, to join others in contributing to our Austin traditional jazz scene.

Folks, it's not like this in most other cities. The Austin Traditional Jazz Society is the only traditional jazz society of its kind in Texas. Other jazz societies offer a mix of musical styles, or concentrate on a yearly festival.

Our Society - your Society - helps to support local musicians (and we have some fine jazz artists), but they also need your support at the club gigs. Please follow our Local Events broadcasts and website postings, and support traditional jazz wherever you find it.

Finally, check out the last page of this newsletter. It offers a way for ATJS members to volunteer! Print the page. Fill out the form. Bring it to a meeting. Give it to a member of the ATJS Board of Directors or to one of our volunteers. Become a volunteer yourself!

- Dave Stoddard

Thanks to our Poster Hosters

Every month, the Society puts up posters for its concerts. Here are our current poster venues. Our thanks to the folks at all of these locations!

Starbucks (several places)

Leander Public Library and Round Rock Public Library

Music & Arts

Round Rock, TX

Cedar Park, TX

Premier Music Academy

1400 E. Old Settlers Blvd.

Austin, TX

Half-Price Books

Round Rock, TX (occasionally additional stores)

Strait Music Company North

13945 Research Blvd.

Austin, TX

Strait Music Company South

2428 W. Ben White Blvd.

Austin, TX

Sam Bass Music

801 Brandi Lane
Round Rock, TX

Capital Music Center
6101 N. Burnet Rd.
Austin, TX

Austin's Musical Exchange
6015 Burnet Rd.
Austin, TX

Westbank String Shop
6301 Manchaca Rd.
Austin, TX

Atria at the Arboretum
9306 Great Hills Blvd.
Cedar Park, TX

Better Than New Band Repair
1402 Chisholm Trail
Round Rock, TX

Lakeline Oaks Retirement Center
1905 S. Lakeline Blvd.
Cedar Park, TX



Fletcher Henderson (1897-1952)

by Dave Stoddard

Fletcher Henderson was a black jazz pianist, bandleader and arranger. The son of a high school principal, Henderson was born in Cuthbert, Georgia. He studied classical piano as a youth beginning at age six. In 1920 Henderson graduated from Atlanta University with a degree in chemistry. He went to New York to pursue a master's degree at Columbia, but either because his savings would not last through the fall term, or, more likely, there was no place for a black chemist in 1920, Henderson became a song demonstrator for a music publisher.

In 1921 Fletcher Henderson became music director for Black Swan, the first black-owned record label. He accompanied many vocalists, either as a solo pianist or as the leader of small groups. In 1923 Henderson formed his own band, and it quickly settled into the Club Alabam in Harlem. In 1924 the band shifted to the Roseland Ballroom, Fletcher Henderson's home base for the next ten years.

The Henderson band was one of the great big bands of the Twenties, featuring such stars as Louis Armstrong, Joe Smith and Tommy Ladnier on trumpet, Buster Bailey, Coleman Hawkins and Don Redman on reeds, and Benny Morton, Jimmy Harrison and Charlie Green on trombone. The conservatory-trained Redman became a top arranger. Despite the talent, the security of the long-term job at the Roseland and plenty of recording opportunities, the band was curiously inconsistent. Much of this could be attributed to Henderson, who was an indifferent businessman and a lax disciplinarian. The original band broke up in 1929 while working on a show in Philadelphia.

Henderson re-formed the band and by 1931 it was playing good jazz again. New stars included Rex Stewart on trumpet and Claude Jones on trombone. In the absence of Don Redman, Henderson turned to doing his own arrangements and showed greatness. In fact, it was as an arranger that he was to leave his greatest mark on jazz. Henderson's arrangements were clean and economical, and became classics. Meanwhile his band broke up again.

In 1934 Fletcher Henderson became the chief arranger for the Benny Goodman Orchestra, then just another modestly successful dance band. In July 1935, however, the band became a national sensation during a tour in California, and the Swing Era was born. During the early days of the swing craze, the Goodman Orchestra was by far the most influential, and much of its distinctive sound could be

laid to its Henderson arrangements. Goodman himself was quick to credit Fletcher Henderson for the contribution he had made to the band's success.

With big bands firmly in popular demand Henderson returned to bandleading. He quickly assembled first-rate talent including Roy Eldridge on trumpet and Dickey Wells on trombone. The new band shared many of the characteristics of the previous ones: great talent, indiscipline and less commercial success that might otherwise have been expected.

Henderson proved to be his own enemy in many respects. He seemed to have no sense of timing and could not exploit popular recordings. Only the prodding of his wife seemed to get him to pay enough attention to business to make a comfortable living.

By the late thirties Henderson had largely stopped playing and leading, and was concentrating on arranging for Goodman and others. His creative output slowed during the 1940s, largely because his eyesight was failing and writing arrangements had become very difficult. He continued to work until 1950 when he suffered a severe stroke. Henderson never regained his health and died in 1952.

Fletcher Henderson was one of the chief architects of the swing style. He showed great ability in three areas: as an arranger (one of the best ever), as a musical director (whatever his faults as a disciplinarian, his men often played their best for him) and as a judge of talent. Virtually every black jazz star of the 1930s played for him at one time or another, and he discovered many of them. He was never rich or famous, but popular music owes Fletcher Henderson a great debt.

You can get acquainted with Fletcher Henderson and his Orchestra on YouTube, and CDs are available.

Copenhagen, October 30, 1924 <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tnQW4RtBQSA>

Shanghai Shuffle, November 7, 1924 long solo by Louis Armstrong
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=qsF1_wlfJ3w

Clarinet Marmalade, December 8, 1926
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fZNW3IlnY28>

Stockholm Stomp, January 22, 1927

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MLT9EoSb2uY>

Down South Camp Meeting, 1932

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8ZgY-XAW-bY>

Swing before the Swing Era had arrived!

Current ATJS Board of Directors

Dave Stoddard	President
Nancy-Jane Griffith	Director
Tom Strauss	President Emeritus
Becky Maddox	Director
Wes Lokken	Treasurer
Johnny Serrano	Director
Don Denzin	Recording Secretary
Bill Troiano	Director

Remaining 2019-20 Schedule

May 17	La Grosse Tete
June 14	Shake 'Em Up Jazz Band of New Orleans

All concerts will be from 1pm to 3:45pm at Cap City Comedy Club, 8120 Research Boulevard, Austin, TX (US 183 at Anderson Square).



History of the Valve Trombone

by Dave Stoddard

The origins of the slide trombone go back to the Middle Ages. An early version called the sackbut had a movable slide very similar to today's trombone slides. The slide allowed for chromatic playing (notes within a half-tone of each other) in all registers. Other brass instruments either had to be played very high in their natural scales (rather like playing a bugle at the top of its range) or had finger holes which tended to reduce volume and/or tone quality. In the early 19th century, some brass instruments such as the ophicleide (a tuba ancestor) had keys rather like a saxophone.

In the 1830s the invention of the valve wrought a profound change in the development of brass instruments. Valves allowed for chromatic playing in all registers without loss of tone quality.

Many valved brass instruments were developed during the 19th century. The saxhorn enjoyed a brief period of popularity in the mid-19th century, being prominent in band music of the period. The valve trombone came along at this time. Unlike the saxhorn, it found an enduring following, and today has some popularity among European trombone players.

When jazz began in the 1890s, band music was one of the popular music forms of the day. Both slide and valve trombones were plentiful as used instruments and were adopted by dance orchestra and jazz musicians. The very first jazz band led by New Orleans trumpeter Buddy Bolden had Willie Cornish on valve trombone. Kid Ory played valve trombone as a youth. Gradually slide trombones began to predominate in jazz, and most jazz trombonists played them. In the United States, many valve trombonists have been trumpet and cornet players who wanted to play trombone and did not want to master the slide.

However, a small number of jazz trombonists have persevered with the valve trombone. Brad Gowans played and recorded with nationally-prominent jazz bands between 1926 and 1954. Juan Tizol played valve trombone with the Duke Ellington Orchestra. The leading modern jazz valve trombonist was Bob Brookmeyer, who played with Gerry Mulligan and Jimmy Giuffre and received six nominations for Grammy Awards. Trumpeter Maynard Ferguson doubled on valve trombone and a valve-slide hybrid called a Superbone.

Latter day traditional jazz players have included Don Ingle, Parke Frankfield, Dick Cramer and yours truly. I played cornet, trumpet and flugelhorn from 1961 to 1973. I switched over to tuba and played it exclusively from 1973 to 1980. That put me firmly in the valve ranks. I can play a little on a slide trombone, but not a lot. I acquired my beloved Conn Victor in 1980 and have been exploring its possibilities ever since. Valve trombones are capable of playing very clean lines. Quick valve actions don't quite result in a glissando, but come close. I have found my best results when I let my Conn do what it does best, and do not try to imitate a slide trombone. The valve trombone is its own instrument, and in capable hands a welcome addition to a jazz band.



Member Volunteer Form

ATJS Member's
Name(s) _____

Address _____

Note: Please put * beside e-mail or telephone number if you prefer a certain way to be contacted. Thank you!

E-mail _____ Telephone Number(s)

Please indicate task(s) for which you would like to volunteer:

___Distributing flyers and promotional materials

___Locating contacts and providing information to Board of Directors for education outreach

___Assisting staff at ATJS concerts

___Notifying staff about potential grant or funding opportunities

___Other _____

We greatly appreciate your support of the Austin Traditional Jazz Society! You will be contacted about assignments. Thank you!

Date submitted_____

If you wish to volunteer, print and fill out this form. To submit your form:

1. Give it to any ATJS Board Member or staff member at an ATJS concert
2. Email a pdf to info@atjs.org
3. Mail it to Austin Traditional Jazz Society, PO Box 27694, Austin TX 78755-7694

The Austin Traditional Jazz Society is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Please consider making [a tax-deductible donation.](#)