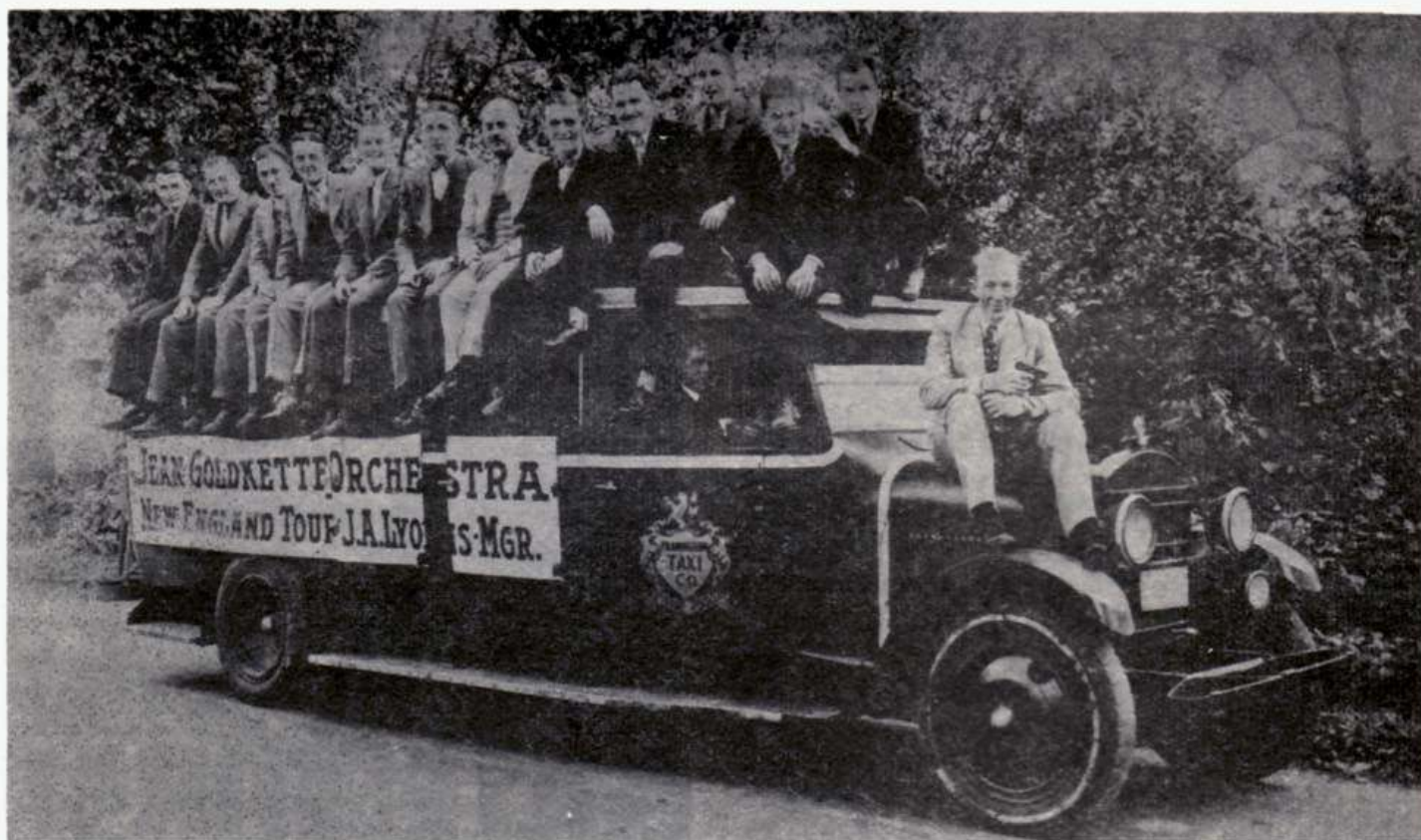


# A BAND LIKE NOTHING YOU EVER HEARD PART 2

## Stanley 'Doc' Ryker & the Goldkette Band



(In Storyville 12, "Doc" Ryker recalled that Bix and Trumbauer, sometime during their sojourn with the Jean Goldkette Orchestra, participated in a recording date at the Edison Studios. It is well known that a group of American collectors has been following up the same lead from another source. Any pooling of resources and efforts across the Atlantic to track down this and other elusive "lost" Bix recording sessions or masters should be encouraged. Ed.).

WITH A few words of recollection, "Doc" Ryker found himself returned

through three decades, and reliving the Goldkette Orchestra's moments of once-in-a-lifetime glory.

"They talk a lot about battles of music, you know." He pointed out a photograph of himself between Don Murray and Frankie Trumbauer in a faded magazine advertisement for Conn saxophones.

"Sometimes we played opposite bands like Henderson's, but I really don't remember much of it - it was while we were on tour. When we weren't at the Greystone, the McKinney's Cotton Pickers played there."

"Now THAT was a band! They were a great entertaining band and very

L to R: Challis, Wilcox, Riskin, Bix, Murray, Quicksell, Ryker, Morehouse, Farrar, Ludwig, Rank, Trumbauer, Brown (on bonnet).

danceable, sometimes more so than we were. As I've said, our band was full of guys who loved to cut up - sometimes too much. Bix and Murray and the rest, they'd start playing corn, just fooling around - the people didn't always like that."

"The people loved the McKinney's band - you could get them much cheaper, too. We'd be out on the road for several weeks on the college prom. circuit; while we were gone, they'd have other bands....like the Orange Blossom Band, you know, the Casa Loma as they later called themselves.

Norma laughed. "Oh yes....did you know that Spike Knoblach - Glen Gray as he later called himself - filled in for Stanley with the Goldkette band the night we got married?"

A high spot in every midwest tour was Indiana University, with its near-fanatical corps of Bix admirers headed by Hoagy Carmichael.

"What a screwy person he was then!" Ryker recalled. "He'd played a lot around, listened to all the records and things.....loved Bix and the fellows. Ha....somebody'd take a hot break he liked, and you could never tell what he was going to do. He'd roll around on the floor or throw a chair or most anything....and he had all those kids in school copying the things he did."

"They were all crazy down there. We'd play there and he'd go wild over some of Bix's breaks - and all the others would follow suit."

"As much as he drank on and off stand, Bix was never too drunk to play. He was a pretty consistent drinker - he and Pee Wee. Like we used to say: they drank their breakfast every day, then lunch and supper. But he was never totally out of control of himself. I never heard him miss a note, he always hit the good ones."

"He liked concert music as well as dance music. He used to go hear the Detroit Symphony every Sunday.

Victor Kohler, the concert master, and he were very good friends, it seemed. Bix liked things like Stravinsky's "The Firebird". I remember when we came to New York the first time he went down to Carl Fischer Music Company to see this composer Eastwood Lane, who worked there....(Lane's ADIRONDACK SKETCHES were reputed to be favourites of Beiderbecke's. - Ed.).

"How did he think of himself as a musician? He was really modest....he always seemed a bit surprised that people admired him so....used to say 'I ain't got much technique, but I sure have a lousy tone....'"

But it was inevitable that the band should break up. "The fellows were just too temperamental...there was too much musicianship, as funny as it sounds. And before you knew it, the end was in sight. It was a pity then and it's a pity now, because it was a band like nothing you've ever heard...."

"After the band broke up, I heard George Gershwin was looking for three saxes for his musical FUNNY FACE. I went into the show, while Bix and some of the others went first into the New Yorker Club with Adrian Rollini and then to Whiteman."

"I spent some time during 1937 working for Horvath in Cleveland - not in music, though; but the next year I rehearsed for a little while with Roy Smeck, the banjo man. That didn't materialise, so I taught for a while, but most of my students went off to war."

"So I sold my instruments, and never went back. I play a bit of piano and guitar now for my own amazement - that it is sometimes - but that's about all. One rainy day I found my old baritone sax in the basement - it was the first time in eighteen years that I'd played a saxophone...."

"So long ago; all of it....but what a band that was...like nothing you've ever heard...."