THE BIX - - HARDY STORY

By ARMAND HUG.

FOR musicians in New Orleans around 1925 there was always one place where they might be certain of meeting everyone they knew, and learning everything that was happening to music and musicians. This spot was Conn's music store on Carondelet Street. Almost every afternoon would find me there with Eddie Miller, talking with Monk Hazel who was employed there at the time. There was always something new or significant in the music world going on and plenty to talk about. For one thing, there were many great jazz records being made in those days and the store was the place to hear them as soon as they were released. Jelly Roll Morton was making history then, as were the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, and King Oliver was carving his niche in the hall of fame with Louis Armstrong playing beside him. Eddie and I spent many happy hours listening to the new records and analyzing the new and different styles pouring out of the old-fashioned phonographs. Once in a while Monk Hazel would tear himself away from his work to listen with us and tell us that, while the man we were listening to at the moment was great, we hadn't heard anything until we heard a fellow named Bix Beiderbecke who, at the moment, was playing with an outfit called the Wolverines. Eddie and I usually shrugged at Monk's enthusiasm. After all, we'd never heard Bix and didn't believe that anyone could be as great as Monk felt Bix was.

THE FIRST HEARING.

One day, however, while listening to records as usual, I heard a cornet played as I had never heard one played before. I stood stock-still, unable to move until the record was finished. I thought Gabriel had come to blow that last trumpet !

Just as soon as I could move, I dashed to the booth from which that wonderful sound had emanated. I found Eddie Miller there, as excited as I was. "Who was that cornet player ?" I managed to gasp "It's Bix Beiderbecke, the fellow Monk's been telling us about," said Eddie. We played the record over and over again and the music sounded more beautiful each time. It was *Jazz Me Blues* ; a record that is still one of my most cherished possessions to-day.

Whenever I visited the record shop after that I always went hoping for a new Bix release that day. And as always Monk and Eddie were there and we listened to that wonderful style and tried to guess what influences and what musicians had gone into its development. One could see that he admired the Original Dixieland Band yet he didn't sound like Nick

BIX BEIDERBECKE.

LaRocca. One could also hear the influence of King Oliver and Louis Armstrong (as well as a dash of the New Orleans Rhythm Kings) yet there was something in his playing which was entirely different from any of these styles. It seemed to us that there was no one who could have played with the individuality, the tone, phrasing and the pretty notes which came from Bix. His fame began to spread around New Orleans and I, for one, found myself having Bix for breakfast, lunch and dinner.

At a party at my home one afternoon about that time, the subject of Bix came up again. We had all concluded that no individual could be found who could have strongly influenced Bix and we were all surprised when Monk Hazel said, "Stop !" "There was one man who did influence Bix." "That was Emmet Hardy." "Who's Emmet Hardy ?" I asked, for I had never heard of him. And Monk told us. Monk was older than we were and had known Emmet very well. He told us all about him and concluded by telling us that Hardy had died that same year. Just to be certain I've got the facts straight, I asked Monk to tell me that old story again, a few days ago, and this is it, almost exactly word for word as Monk told it.

EMMET HARDY.

Emmet Louis Hardy was born in 1903 at Gretna, Louisiana, a little town just across the Mississippi from New Orleans. Monk was born the same year in the next town above Gretna on the Mississippi and Monk and Emmet attended the same school. Emmet's father was a musician and played in a band in New Orleans. His mother was a fine pianist and accompanied Emmet's sister who was a singer and an actress. His uncle, after whom Emmet was named, R. Emmet Kennedy, was a famous author of Negro folk songs and stories. Emmet's first music teacher was a M. Pasletti who believed in giving his pupils a thorough musical education. As a result before even being allowed to touch a cornet, Emmet was taught piano and guitar and also received a good grounding in solfeggio. Therefore by the time Emmet was allowed to study the cornet, he already had a complete knowledge of harmony and could read at sight. This left him nothing to do except to practice the fingering and acquire a "lip." He began playing professionally at the age of twelve, playing at dances, parades and other functions in New Orleans and the smaller towns up and down the river. Even at that tender age he was playing with such bands as Jack (Papa) Laine's, The Triangle Band, Brownlee's Band and many others.

Emmet's first trip away from home came when a famous music hall performer of that day, Bee Palmer, heard Emmet while he was playing for a dance at the old Grunewald Hotel in New Orleans and hired the entire orchestra to act as her accompanists while on tour. In the band with Emmet were Leon Roppolo, clarinet ; Santo Pecora, trombone ; Johnny Frisco, drums ; and Bee Palmer's husband, Al Seigal, piano. All went well for some time and then the band and Miss Palmer had difficulty agreeing on salaries, and Emmet and Roppolo left Miss Palmer while they were in Davenport, Iowa. Davenport was Bix's home and Bix heard Emmet there when Emmet joined Carlisle Evans' band and played at Rock Island, Illinois, which was just across the river. Bix idolized Emmet's style and would follow the Evans band around from engagement to engagement asking Emmet to show him how to develop that slurring legato style which was something completely new in those days. Emmet showed Bix how to use the third valve for rapid passages rather than the first and second which was the standard technique. Emmet was the first to use this method which was later used by Bix, and later by Andy Secrest who took Bix's place in Paul Whiteman's Orchestra. This style is now used by Bobby Hackett and many others.

N.O.R.Ks.

Emmet left Davenport after about eight months, (you have to put your foot in that

Mississippi Mud once in a while you know) and came home to New Orleans. Here he organized his own band, of which Monk was a member, but after a year or so this band disbanded and Emmet took a job on the river boat " Sidney " with the Burke-Lyons Orchestra, a Chicago group. Some time later he went to Chicago and joined the New Orleans Rhythm Kings. Playing with the N.O.R.K. then were Leon Roppolo, Paul Mares, George Brunis, Ben Pollock, Louis Black and others. Here Bix heard Emmet again and would hang around the bandstand listening until he became such a nuisance to some of the musicians that they ordered him to leave. Emmet, who liked the youngster and recognised his musical gifts, interceded for him and so it was agreed he could stay if he kept quiet. Shortly after this Emmet left Chicago after a disagreement with the musician's union and returned to New Orleans, where he became ill and was unable to play. For two years he was sick : Monk visited him very often and was told almost daily about this kid from Davenport who Emmet called " Leon."

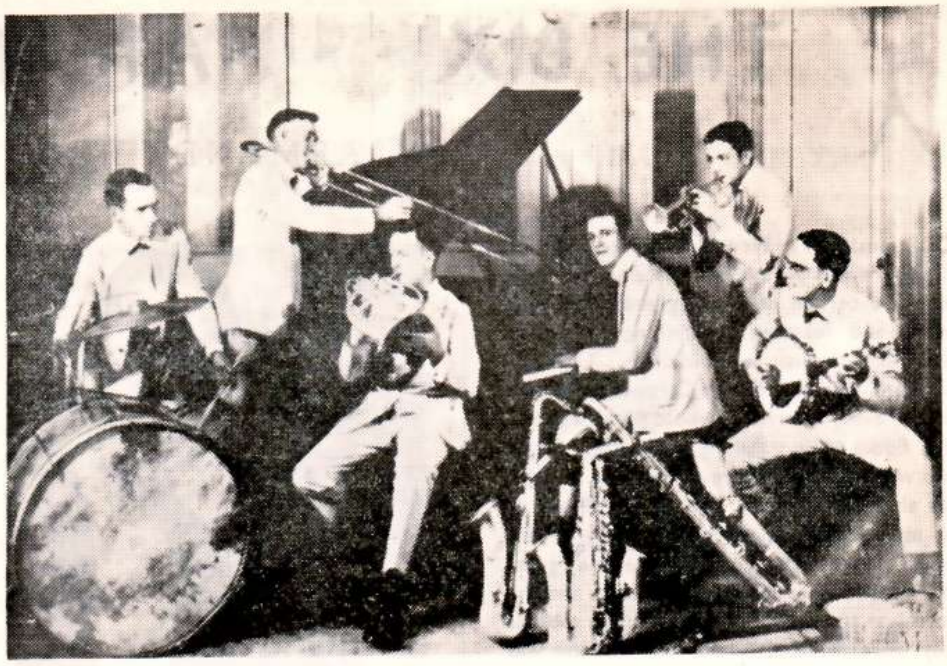
Emmet always felt that Bix would be famous some day. Monk recalls very well one day bringing Emmet a record of the Wolverines playing *Fidgety Feet*. The cornet solo was identical with Emmet's, note for note, and Monk told Emmet, " I bet you can't recognise who that is." " Why that's the boy from Davenport I've been telling you about for so long," said Emmet.

Emmet Louis Hardy died on June 16th, 1925, four days after his twenty-second birthday. He left his horn with Monk who kept it until it was destroyed in a night club fire in 1928.

That's the Emmet Hardy story as Monk Hazel gave it to me. I can't think of anyone who knew Emmet better than Monk and who could be considered a better source. There is no doubt that Emmet Hardy was one of the great conetists and it is one of the tragedies of jazz that there are no records from which to judge his prowess*. We can only rely on the memories of the old timers and, while they may differ about whose playing Emmet's most resembled, on the subject of his greatness, there is no disagreement. Santo Pecora who played with him in the N.O.R.K. says that he was far superior to any cornetist of the time. Steve Loyacano, my brother-in-law, played banjo with Emmet and agrees with the others. Another concurring opinion comes from Leon " Cy " Giraud who was in Chicago at the time the N.O.R.K. were playing at the Friar's Inn. " Cy " tells me that Bix told him that Emmet was a great inspiration to him. " Cy " is well known to all the old time musicians and his opinions always carry great weight and his word is accepted as authentic.

BIX BEIDERBECKE.

Bix Beiderbecke's early history can be found in any of the standard jazz reference books. Little is known about the influence which Emmet Hardy had on his playing, but Bix's lifelong tendency to rely on the third valve of his cornet, his disinclination to strain for high notes and his preference to remain in the normal range of the instrument are all characteristic of Hardy's playing. Bix was a very complex character and one could write about him for ever. He was, in every sense of the word, a musician's musician. All the stories which have been told about Bix's personal eccentricities, his love for good times, after-hour jam sessions, drinking bouts, etc., are not exaggerations. But they only show one side of the picture. Bix's soul was filled with beautiful music. His piano compositions, *In A Mist* and *Candlelight* reflect his sincerity and brilliance as a creator. Other examples are his cornet choruses on *Singing The Blues* and *Mississippi Mud*. Anyone who analyzes these choruses must find that the musical ideas expressed are completely original and quite individual.



BROWNLEE'S ORCHESTRA.
(ALONZO CRUMBY, Drums, GEORGE BARTH, Trombone, BILLY BRAUN, Melophone, NORMAN BROWNLEE, Piano, EMMET HARDY, Cornet and BILLY EASTWOOD, Banjo.)

I first met Bix in the fall of 1928. He had already left Frank Trumbauer and Jean Goldkette and had joined Paul Whiteman's Orchestra on a tour of the United States. When the Whiteman orchestra came to New Orleans, Monk Hazel, Eddie Miller and I went backstage to chat with Bix during the intermission. I can remember Whiteman passing while we were talking with Bix and Monk said, " Listen Paul, If you don't let Bix play more horn we're going to tear this place down." Whiteman smiled and very obligingly replied, " Don't worry, I'll let him take over when we go back on." During the rest of the programme we heard wonderful jazz.

After the concert we went to Paul Mares' home for a jam session and playing with, and listening to, Bix was a really great thrill. He sounded better in person than his records, if that was possible. Others who played in that session that evening were Snoozer Quinn who later joined the Whiteman orchestra, Frank Trumbauer, Izzy Friedman, Eddie Miller and Monk Hazel. Bix tired after we had played a while. He had to save his lip for the next show and Monk, who had been drinking, picked up Bix's cornet and said, " Bix, I'm going to play your chorus on *Singing The Blues* for you." I'm not going to say how it came out, and I'm sure that if Monk had been sober he could have played it quite well, but however it sounded Bix enjoyed it very much.

At that time Bix's piano composition *In A Mist* had not yet been published and I had been trying to learn it from the records. I'd been having some trouble with it and I asked Bix to show me how it went. Bix sat down next to me at the piano and began playing the parts with which I'd been having trouble. I shall remember that piano lesson as long as I live.

BIX WITH OLIVER.

I'm sure that Bix enjoyed being at Paul Mares' home that night as much as we enjoyed having him there. He had always had a great love for jazz as we played it in New Orleans and he listened to it as often as he could. " Cy " Giraud tells me that whenever the N.O.R.K. were playing at the Friar's Inn, Bix would come around and really enjoy it, and that he often sat in at the piano with them.

Another tribute to his genius came one evening when Bix sat in with King Oliver's Band at the Plantation Club. Lynn Harrell, of Dallas, Texas, who was present that evening says that tears rolled down Oliver's face and Oliver said that Bix was the greatest he had ever heard. Louis Armstrong who was playing second trumpet with Oliver at the time

was also high in his praises of the boy from Davenport.

On another occasion Steve Loyacano and a band from New Orleans went to Indianapolis, Indiana, to play at a convention. Included in the band were Chink Martin, Leo Adde, Charlie Hartman, Johnny Bayersdorfer, Johnny Miller and "Scag" Scaglione. To give the good citizens of Indianapolis an idea of the way things were done in New Orleans, the band embarked in an open lorry and were driven around the town playing as they went. A large crowd began following the band and someone began shouting "Hey! Chink." Chink looked around and saw Bix. It seems that Bix was playing at the Rainbow Casino Gardens where the convention was being held and had remembered Chink from the Friar's Inn in Chicago when Chink was with the N.O.R.K. Bix was so excited over the way the New Orleans Band played that it was with difficulty that he managed to play with his own band that night.

BIX ON RECORD.

Unfortunately those of us who only heard Bix on his records can have no real conception of the man's greatness. Lynn Harrell agrees with me that some of the greatest playing Bix ever did was unrecorded and was completely impromptu. He never played anything the same way twice. His voicing of chords and choice of notes is what makes him stand out most in my opinion. But there is still a great deal of pleasure to be found in listening to his records. I'm not going to attempt anything like a complete discography but would like to list some of my own favourites :

Jazz Me Blues (Gennet-Brunswick 02203)
Jazz Me Blues (OKeh-Parlophone R 2580)
Singing The Blues (OKeh-Parlophone R 1838)
Mississippi Mud (OKey-Parlophone R 2907)
Somebody Stole My Gal (Columbia-Parlophone R 161)
Sweet Sue (Columbia — with P. Whiteman 9572)
China Boy (Columbia — with P. Whiteman DC 177).

These are just a few that have made a deep impression on me although I don't think Bix ever made a bad record.

So ends my own recollections of two great musicians. One left a treasury of gems on wax and the other lives only in the memories of a few old-timers. But I am certain that Emmet Hardy's name will never be forgotten as the stories are handed down from generation to generation of jazz lovers. In looking around for any printed matter about Hardy I find that Dave Dexter had a splendid story about him in which he quoted many famous musicians on Emmet. The story ran in the 1st June, 1940 issue of DOWNBEAT. Bix was one of those quoted. After Emmet's death Bix wrote Emmet's mother in which he said, in part, "I will die happy if ever I can approach your son's greatness." Nappy LaMare, Ray Bauduc, Paul Mares, Ben Pollock, Benny Goodman, and Jimmy Dorsey are also among those who testify to Emmet's greatness and stated that they had often heard Bix speak of Hardy and how much Bix liked his playing.

To me Bix Beiderbecke was a great musician who loved music more than anything in this world. I can never speak his name with anything but reverence and admiration. You can imagine how I felt, on that seventh of August, 1931 when I received the telegram from Eddie Miller in New York saying that Bix had died.

There was one record supposed to have been made by Hardy. Monk says it was a crude home-made disc in cylindrical form for use on the ancient Edison machines. Ten years ago a search was launched for this rare record but to no avail. To-day it is still believed that someone may have it not realising its value. I have a few leads myself and if they should reveal something I will notify* **Jazz Journal *at once.*

LET'S GO JUNK-SHOPPING

By BRIAN RUST.

PROLOGUE.

IT is now three years since I wrote, in PICK-UP, the series of articles about junk-shop records, which series was based on the contents of that now-rare work, "Junk Shoppers' Discography." That series approached the subject from the point of view of the histories of the various labels, but it seems that in the past three years, a section of the collecting fraternity has sprung up that never saw either these 1947 writings of mine, or the booklet on which they were based. Therefore, at the invitation of the Editors, acting upon some kind suggestions from various young collectors, I am going to present month by month a new series of articles, designed to help the young and neophyte collector in his search through the junk shops of this country.

The difference will be mainly that, in the new series, I will attempt to guide the reader, by way of a few brief notes, into buying what might be termed interesting records, and rejecting those which, for all their tempting labels, are not of any jazz value. I am also going to be perhaps a little snobbish, and assume that while the term "jazz" covers anything from Buddy Bolden's mythical cylinder to Eddie Lang's masterly accompaniments to Ruth Etting's corny boop-a-doop, it will not include anything but American performers. I will take the labels in alphabetical order, and trust that the series will help to make interesting reading — and possibly even save the reader some shillings of hard-earned cash.

ART OR SCIENCE ?

But before I start next month on the A's, I would like to make a few comments on the whole art — or science, if you will — of junking. I started following this fascinating means of collecting records on February 18th, 1936, and I know very well that there are many famous collectors, all good friends of mine, who trod the path many years before that date. These articles are not addressed to them ; I am writing now for, and at the request of, those collectors whose means are limited, who feel their experience more limited still, some of whom were even in their cradles when I first extracted an ODJB from a huge mass of utter rubbish, on my second junk hunt.

I have often heard this hobby of ours derided by those who should know better, as a waste of time. Why do they consider it a waste of time ? Mainly, I think, because every time they have dropped in, quite casually, and not perhaps without a feeling of nausea, on their nearest junk shop, they have expected to find Black Pattis — or at least a few Johnny Dodds Victors or Bessie Smith flag-label Columbias, and have been disgusted to discover, in the tottering stack of wax atop some rickety whatnot, nothing nearer to jazz than a cracked copy of Jean Goldkette's *Forgetting You.* (The frequency with which this excellent record turns up is, of course, explained by the presence on the reverse of a lugubrious *Sonny Boy*).

OLD AND RARE.

When junking, it should always be remembered that the number of jazz discs, excluding the white New Yorkers who are *outré* now anyway, issued during the classic 'twenties, in England at least, was barely two hundred. These sold in relatively small numbers, were cut as a result from the catalogues by manufacturers who swore they would never repeat the error of issuing any more, and consequently they are very rare. But always bear in mind that firms such as H.M.V. and Parlophone, who put out the cream of good jazz between them, did not press in dozens, but thousands, and since even the fabulous purple Parlophone race series (so-called) was available from any dealer from March, 1927 until the end of 1931, a large percentage of the total pressed during five years must exist somewhere, and sooner or later it will be distributed, in ones and twos, to the junk shops and stalls of this country's less favoured districts, and you may be the lucky man who will find a nest of these very records, all in E or even N condition.

The Oriole buff-label series which followed during the summer of 1927 is very rare, mainly due to poor distribution, and bad reviews by one "Needlepoint" in the MELODY MAKER. He complained that the performances were hopelessly crude, and reminiscent of "nigger jazz" of ten years

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