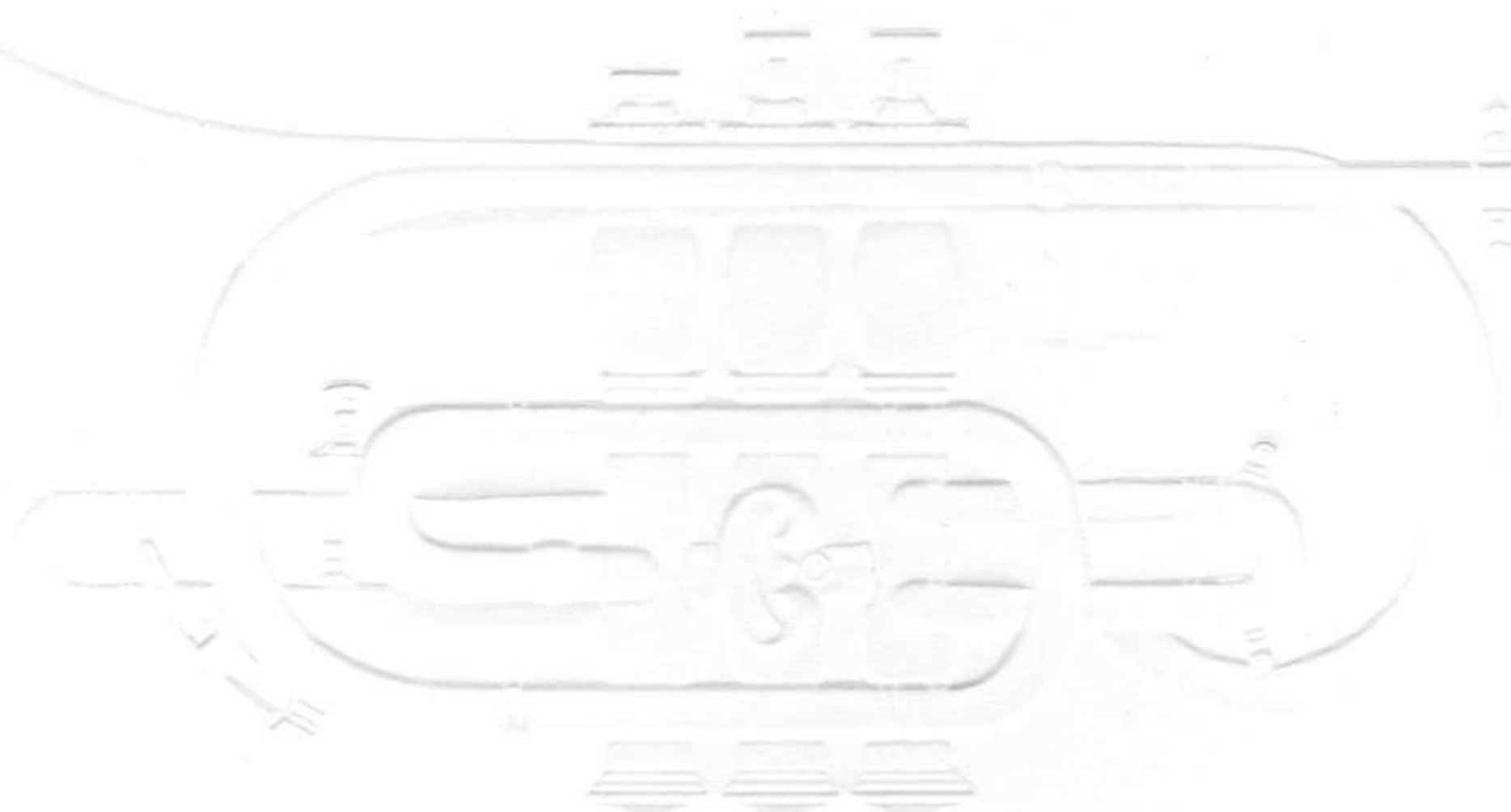


**Bix Beiderbecke
Memorial
Jazz Festival
1972**



Schedule for 1972 Bix
Beiderbecke Memorial
Jazz Festival

3 August Thursday

8:00 p.m. Friends of Bix
Cocktail Party,
Blackhawk Hotel,
Gold Room

4 August Friday

12:00 till 5:00 p.m.
First Concert,
LeClaire Park
8:00 till 1:00 a.m.
Second Concert,
LeClaire Park

5 August Saturday

12:00 till 5:00 p.m.
Third Concert,
LeClaire Park
8:00 till 1:00 a.m.
Fourth Concert,
LeClaire Park

6 August Sunday

9:00 a.m. Memorial
Concert at Oakdale
Cemetery.
Rev. Robert Meyers
St. Marks Lutheran
Church



BIX BEIDERBECKE: THE MAN, THE MUSICIAN, THE LEGEND

"I respected him and loved him at his best, and I leave the enigma of the inner Bix Beiderbecke for others to figure out if they can. But I don't think the searchers will find much more."

Thus Hoagy Carmichael sums up the glory and the tragedy that marked the short, productive life of his friend, Leon Bismark (Bix) Beiderbecke who, in his 28 years of life, created a legend that still stirs the hearts and souls of jazz fans everywhere.

Many of the legends are false, and the picture of Bix as a man, a musician, and a human being has often been distorted. But the true picture, as remembered by the friends who shared his triumphs and his sorrows and unanimously revered his genius, shows him more than worthy of the mantle of musical immortality.

Born in Davenport, Iowa in 1903, Bix died in New York on Aug. 6, 1931 at the age of 28. In that short span of time, he created musical history. He was born to make music. Just before his 16th birthday, Bix bought an \$8 second-hand cornet and was soon

playing simple melodies.

"Don't imagine that he just picked up a horn and started playing it. He played badly at first; we all played badly," a friend from those early days recalls. Bix made his first public appearance at a high school vaudeville show, improvising on the cornet for a tap dance routine. In 1920, he made his first semi-professional appearance working weekends with a four-piece band in Delavan, Wis. His first fulltime, professional playing job was with the famed Wolverines, which he joined in 1923.

At this time, Bix began to develop and refine his clear, pure tone and infuse it with the spirit and gusto of a carefree Dixieland style. But his interest extended beyond jazz to include the music of Debussy, Ravel, Stravinsky and Tschaikowsky.

He achieved fame in 1926 and 1927 with the Jean Goldkette Band, and assured his legend when, along with Frankie Trumbauer he joined Paul Whiteman's great band. From 1924 to 1930, Bix traveled the United States with different bands, his genius and style developing, his respect

among fellow musicians growing constantly.

Long after his death, Bix was elected by Downbeat Magazine, which polled musicians around the country, to the Hall of Fame. The plaque designating him for that honor is displayed in the "Bix Beiderbecke Room" at the Davenport Public Library, along with other Bix memorabilia.

"When jazzmen of the thirties needed a hero, they chose Bix, the high school dropout, the self-taught musician, who had been part of the two most successful bands of the twenties," noted Jim Grover, a representative of the Miami University Radio Station, which taped a series of 19 half-hour interviews with people who had known and loved Bix. Copies of those tapes were donated to the Davenport Library and may be played in the Bix Room.

"Bix played unique music, always distinctively his. He pursued his quest for the expression of new musical ideas. He left the world only a few recordings and five piano compositions. But he also left the legend created

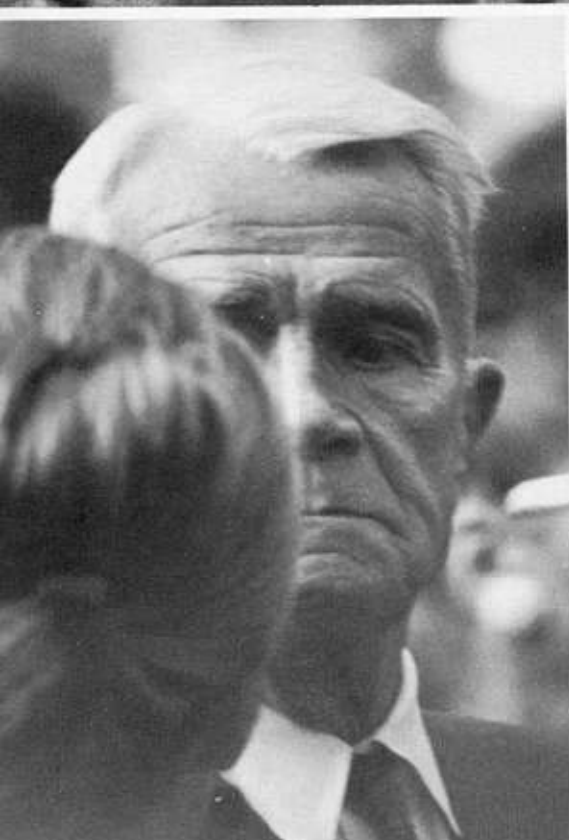
around him and he was a landmark in the most American of art forms—jazz," Grover said.

Some of Bix greatest recordings were with Jean Goldkette, Frankie Trumbauer, Jimmy Dorsey and Bing Crosby.

Recalling Bix in his book *"Sometimes I Wonder,"* Hoagy Carmichael says, *"In Harlem, in Hollywood, in the Chicago South Side, in Le Jazz Hot joints in Paris where the city folks come to listen to his records, they still talk of Bix Beiderbecke."*

"He seemed to live in a world of his own, and that world was music," a girl Bix once dated remembers. Though he gained fame in his lifetime, Bix never forgot his hometown. At the time of his death, his membership in Davenport's Local 67, American Federation of Musicians, was paid up. One of his most famous compositions, "Davenport Blues," was written in honor of his birthplace. He has been called by many *"the greatest jazz musician of all time."*

"It is his gentleness that is lost in the legends," Carmichael says, *"his*



BIX BEIDERBECKE MEMORIAL SOCIETY

ability to charm, to hold friends, to make one feel that it was still possible to know and need—and be known and needed—by another human being."

Carmichael recalls that his first meeting with Bix was not impressive—"a slight, extremely young kid in a belted pile coat, with cracked patent leather shoes." But he soon discovered that, "he was a fine extemporaneous artist. He could play a counter harmony to a waltz melody (with someone playing the lead) that was as exciting as 'Copenhagen' to my now experienced ear."

The friendship between the two men deepened and Carmichael feels Bix had a lasting impression upon his own music. "He was making good money, but he was a saver. His tuxedo trousers had gone shiny and were giving out and I doubt if he had more than one pair of shoes. But he never let the customers down if the mood was on him," Carmichael says.

As Bix's life neared its short and tragic conclusion, Carmichael noted, "I could see the tragic note deep in him. He had a kind of despair about him even

then. He was our golden boy—doomed to an untimely end."

Paul Whiteman recalls, "Bix was not only the greatest musician I have ever known, he was also the greatest gentleman."

"He had a sure instinct for musical perfection and he took the perfect, wherever he could find it, and made it his own. His music was completely effortless, wholly subdued," another colleague has said.

"He had command of an absolute brilliance of playing technique, but he kept it under wraps most of the time. Only rarely did he let it flash forth and the impact was thus greater."

"In a Mist," "Flashes," "Candlelights," "In the Dark"—these and other Beiderbecke creations are timeless, thrilling modern audiences as much today as they did when they were first heard in the twenties. In recognition of his genius, Bix fan clubs flourish today in all parts of the world and the respect for the man and his music continues to flourish.

The Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society, which is presenting the first of what is hoped will become an annual festival to perpetuate the legend of Bix, was born of a touching tribute to the great jazzman on the 40th anniversary of his death.

For several years a group of professional east coast musicians, playing together as the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Band, met annually to honor Bix's memory. In August, 1971, they came to Davenport to play for services at Bix's grave in Oakdale Cemetery, to visit the places he had once played, and to honor his memory. The group was led by E. William (Bill) Donahoe, a Long Valley, N.J. business executive.

Though the event had little advance publicity, it attracted interest and public participation past all expectations. Thousands of persons of all ages jammed the cemetery as the band softly played Bix's "Davenport Blues" over the grave, while the Rev. C.H. Meyer, pastor of St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Davenport, delivered a brief, but stirring, eulogy.

Earlier, the musicians, met by members of Local 67 of the Davenport Musician's Union and many persons who had played with Bix, had met for breakfast and reminisced about the days when jazz was in its infancy and Bix had begun to command world attention.

Though the tribute to Bix was fitting and solemn, a happy atmosphere prevailed nonetheless. The musicians traveled in caravan to the cemetery, preceded by several antique autos of Bix's era.

The cemetery ceremonies over, the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Band, accompanied by an entourage of area musicians, press, radio and TV, and interested members of the public, visited the Davenport Public Library where 19 half-hour taped interviews relating to Bix's life were presented for use in the newly-established "Bix Beiderbecke Room."

A nostalgic stop was the old Danceland Ballroom where Bix had once played. Band members stood reverently in the great hall for several minutes, envisioning it as it must have been when

...ABOUT THE MUSICIANS

Bix was on stage.

The band next boarded a river excursion boat for a tour of the Mississippi River, rendering a musical salute to Bix and his hometown from the time the boat left the pier until it docked two hours later. All of the events were given wide coverage by the media, and requests for coverage came from such scattered publications as the New York and London Times.

A jazz session was scheduled for that evening at the Holiday Inn, Davenport, but no one anticipated the number of people who would attend. At least 2,500 jammed every available inch and stayed until the concert ended in the early morning hours. Major traffic jams developed on the highway in front of the hotel, and hundreds had to be turned away. The entire tribute to Bix had been staged by Davenport band leader Don O'Dette, Esten Spurrier, a close musician friend of Bix, and Robert Cook, president of Local 67.

Many Davenporters had urged for years that a fitting tribute be paid to Bix, possibly in the form

of a Dixieland jazz festival. The interest demonstrated by the public indicated there would be no better time than the following year, again on the anniversary of Bix's death.

A non-profit organization known as the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society was formed with O'Dette as president. The aims of BBMS were to organize an annual festival to perpetuate the legend of Bix, and through the festival to raise money for a memorial to Bix in LeClaire Park on the banks of the Mississippi River, to provide scholarship funds for deserving young jazz musicians, and eventually to purchase Bix's boyhood home as a Bixiana museum.

There followed many months of hard work and planning. There were 1001 details to be handled. An office with a special telephone was set up in O'Dette's home. The Society adopted the New Jersey group's "Bix Lives" slogan as its motto.

Membership cards were offered for sale, along with "Bix Lives" bumper stickers and pins.

Efforts to secure financial help from the community were not too successful, though the Musician's Local did make a donation. Members volunteered their time and efforts to make the two-day festival a success. City officials cooperated, and LeClaire Park, with its outdoor bandshell, was made available, along with promises of police and fire protection, and permits to sell beer and refreshments on the grounds.

Interest around the United States, and even in foreign countries, was phenomenal and the Davenport BBMS headquarters was flooded with inquiries and requests for membership cards. Periodically, the Society mailed detailed newsletters to each member to keep him abreast of the latest festival developments.

It has been a massive, often unrewarding job, but a labor of love for those resolved to keep the memory of Bix alive.

The musicians you will hear during the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival in Davenport were carefully selected from among the nation's top Dixieland bands. The style in which they play most closely approximates that of the bands performing during the Bix Beiderbecke era.

Below is a brief synopsis of each band:

SAMUEL DENT MEMORIAL JAZZ BAND:

In the turbulent days following the Civil War, a runaway slave named Samuel Dent made his way north to the sleepy village of Lake Forest, Illinois, where he opened a livery stable, and lived his life out in such a manner that after his death, the townspeople, in fond remembrance, erected a fine tombstone over his grave. Every year, on Memorial Day, the Samuel Dent Memorial Jazz Band gathers for an emotion-packed concert on this site. With one exception, music is not the basic occupation of the members of this awesome group. Band member Brooks Smith says, "We play traditional music



in an interpretive Dixieland idiom to make both performing and listening a more meaningful experience."

THE AL CAPONE MEMORIAL JAZZ BAND:

The hideout of this band is the Village Tavern in Long Grove, Ill., a few miles northwest of Cicero. The fat harmony and the variegated beat, which resulted when a certain five rhythmists accrued occasionally at the Village Tavern bandstand intrigued Don Gibson. Some test runs satisfied him that the subtle elegance of this section could be recorded clearly, that they could provide a clear unison, and that as free agents they'd supply the surprises in accents and syncopations and those other titillations that other jazzmen do. It was apparent that the hornmen up front felt the good feel, too, felt that here was a canvas of broader harmonic span, guttsy, dynamic—inviting their boldest strokes.

BIX BEIDERBECKE MEMORIAL JAZZ BAND: This group of east coast musicians has the honor of

providing the impetus for this, the first Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival. It was their very successful appearance in Davenport to mark the 40th anniversary of Bix's death that sparked the idea for this festival. Headed by E. William Donahoe of New Jersey, the members are all devoted Bix buffs and play in toe-tapping Dixieland style. To them also goes the credit for originating "Bix Lives—" the slogan of the Memorial Festival.

"DOC" EVANS BAND: The Doc Evans band is highly respected by musicians everywhere. "Doc" attended college at Carleton, Minneapolis, and took graduate studies at the University of Minnesota. His first big job was playing at Jazz Limited, Chicago, in 1947. Prior to that he had played at Mitch's Club, Minneapolis. He has since recorded 36 albums. He is conductor of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra in Minneapolis and has composed classical music. He is also vice president of the musician's local in Minneapolis.

"They call me a Jekyll

and Hyde because I switch from Dixie to classical," Doc says. "I like the form and structure of traditional jazz.

He admits to being torn between Bix and Louis Armstrong and says he has adapted parts of each to his own playing. "I now only conduct concerts in parks and do jobs for fun," he admits.

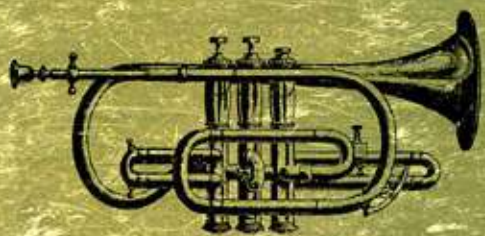
THE SALTY DOGS JAZZ BAND: This talented group first began to play together while they were high school students in Chicago. Lou Green, the cornetist, is their leader. They first began to attract serious attention in the late 1940's and early 1950's, playing in the general vicinity of Chicago. They have played the big Summer Festival in Milwaukee and many jazz concerts around the Midwest.

THE DAVENPORT JAZZ BAND: Some fine musicians are included in this group, which includes as leader, Don O'Dette, president of the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Society. The group, which adheres strictly to traditional Dixieland style, has been much in demand

throughout the Midwest. They also alternated with the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Band of New Jersey in the very successful concert during the salute to Bix in Davenport in 1971.

SMOKEY STOVER AND THE DIXIELAND FIREMEN: This is a busy, much-in-demand Dixieland band that keeps a full schedule of engagements from coast to coast. It is headed by Robert (Smokey) Stover, a trumpet player whose performances have drawn rave notices in leading music publications. The Firemen and Stover have appeared in many of the nation's leading nightclubs and hotels. Stover, who makes his home in Coal Valley, within a horn's blow of Bix's hometown, has also done much in his travels to publicize the first Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Jazz Festival.

GUEST ARTISTS AND FRIENDS: Wingy Manone, Bobby Hackett, Hoagy Carmichael, Bill Rank; Chauncey Morehouse, Bill Challis, Paul Mertz, Gene Pendergast, Spiegel Wilcox, and Bill Krenz."



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