As jazz critic Gunther Schuller has commented, it is surprising to discover the “diverse regions of the country” from which jazz musicians have hailed. It is especially surprising that such musicians, with differing geographical, political, social, religious, ethnic, racial, and economic backgrounds, have been able to come together to perform a music that requires a very particular spirit, peculiar technical skills, and a sensitivity to and an appreciation for musical forms and traditions that owe their origins to conditions rarely endured by the musicians themselves. Few, if any, of the first black jazzmen, and certainly none of the early white jazzmen, had ever known the often inhuman servitude borne by those who sang the chants, spirituals, and blues that would form the basis of jazz from its beginnings right up to the present time.
The institution of slavery had, of course, divided the nation, and on opposite sides in the Civil War were the states of Wisconsin and Texas, both of which sent troops into the bloody, decisive battle of Gettysburg. Little could the brave men of the Wisconsin 6th who defended or the determined Rebels of the Texas Regiments who assaulted Cemetery Ridge have suspected that, one day, musicians of their two states would join to produce the harmonies of jazz that have depended so often on the blues form that was native to the Lone Star State yet was loved and played by men from such Wisconsin towns and cities as Fox Lake, Madison, Milwaukee, Waukesha, Brillion, Monroe, and Kenosha. Around the world, jazz has proven a force for the meeting of minds and the free exchange of musical ideas, whether through melancholy and fast-paced blues or the swinging, bopping, driving rhythms that have appealed to players and listeners in every corner of this country and those perhaps in every nation on earth.

By defeating the South in the Civil War, Wisconsin and the other Union states helped make possible in many ways the rise of blues, ragtime, and boogie woogie, forms of black music whose origins have been traced in part to the migration of freed slaves to Texas. The railroad lines in East Texas provided employment for men who had been able to do little more than labor away relentlessly as sharecroppers on the same southern lands where they essentially remained in bondage during the postwar Reconstruction. As Texas folklore scholar Alan Lomax has pointed out, more American music has referred to or been related to the railroad than any other form of musical inspiration. Certainly the railroad as a source of sound and sorrow is at the root of blues rhythms and lyrics and the chugging, swaying patterns of boogie woogie, as well as such a sophisticated jazz composition as Duke Ellington’s “Daybreak Express.” Songsters with their constant reference to a honey or monnna going away or a singer’s need to leave in the face of lost love are standard blues fare.

However, more important to the emergence of jazz was the fact that the railroad gave to blacks in Texas relatively more freedom to travel, to work at jobs that allowed for greater economic well-being and the ability to purchase instruments, to hear radios and recordings, and to develop their music in association with their fellow blacks who began to congregate in cities, such as Dallas and Houston. While the Deep South languished in a large degree under the burden of what William Faulkner refers to as a reliving of “the moment before Pickett’s charge, as if the outcome of Gettysburg could be changed,” Texas moved on and developed a cattle industry in the 1870s and then in the early 1900s an oil industry, both of which offered jobs and a peripatetic lifestyle for blacks that eventually led to their creation of jazz in many parts of the state. By 1918, black musicians from New Orleans had begun to migrate west and north, many ending up in Texas, California, and Chicago. Texas blacks had earlier followed the cattle trails north, but, in the 1920s, they also felt the magnetic pull of entertainment worlds in Kansas City and Chicago that catered to musicians who could perform the new music called jazz that had begun to crop up from New Jersey to Los Angeles, beholden to but superseding the guitar-accompanied country blues and the repetitive piano rags. The first jazz recordings had begun to appear in 1917, and, by 1923, classic jazz ensembles had begun performing in Kansas City, Chicago, and New York, led by such seminal figures as Bennie Moten, King Oliver, Fletcher Henderson, and Duke Ellington. Texans had been at the forefront of black music, beginning with Scott Joplin of ragtime fame and continuing with Blind Lemon Jefferson, the King of Country blues, and some of the earliest boogie woogie pianists who had recorded by 1924 in Chicago. Texas also were present on some of the earliest and most vital jazz recordings, including several made in 1923 by Bennie Moten, Jelly Roll Morton, and Fletcher Henderson.

At the end of the 1920s, two of the most important Wisconsin jazz musicians appeared on the scene: trumpet star Bunny Berigan of Fox Lake and clarinetist Woody Herman of Milwaukee. Around 1928, contact between Wisconsin and Texas occurred in jazz terms when Woody Herman reportedly toured the state of Texas with the Joe Lichten band, with which he had played during high school. This marked the first in a fascinating series of musical interconnections between Wisconsin and Texas, but rather than through musicians visiting one another’s states, it came primarily through their participation in recording sessions that took place elsewhere, usually in Chicago, New York, or Los Angeles. For at least five decades, from the 1930s into the 1970s, a number of Wisconsin and Texas sidemen worked together to create a wide variety of jazz, often based on the blues form. Indeed, during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s, Wisconsin and Texas jazz musicians would take part in recording sessions that produced outstanding examples of the prominent jazz styles of those periods, from swing to bop to the cool West Coast sound.

Although there were no Wisconsin musicians present—at least as far as I can tell—on a recording of “Bugle Call Rag,” made in Los Angeles in 1923 by the group called Jimmie’s Joys, this performance comes from the year of an outpouring of jazz recordings that included the first appearances on records of King Oliver and Louis Armstrong, and this piece is a remarkable example of jazz style and technique. Jimmie’s Joys was a group of musicians from Austin who regularly played for dances at the University of Texas, and their rendition of “Bugle Call Rag” already contains many of the characteristics of jazz, including the use of a well-known natural or manmade sound as the basis for a piece of music—in this case, a bugle call breaks, in which a soloist inserts a phrase or passage when the rest of the band stops playing; quotations from popular songs, here the
University’s anthem, “The Eyes of Texas,” and “Yankee Doodle Dandy,” the latter quoted by the trombonist; jazz techniques like flutter tonguing by the cornetist and smears by the trombonist; and some swinging group improvisation.

The breaks in this piece are taken by cornetist, saxophonist, trombonist, and pianist, with each contributing a brief solo or a quote from another tune, and such breaks derive largely from the blues, since at the end of each line of verse when the blues man or woman is not singing, an instrument fills in the remaining beats in a bar with comments on what has been sung, which is the origin of jazz improvisation. Eventually jazz solos could extend over the entire side of a long playing record, but on this cut of “Bugle Call Rag,” each solo break is quite brief, yet still represents an important aspect of any instrumental blues or jazz performance.

Leaping ahead twenty-one years to 1944, we find a recording of a live performance of the very same “Bugle Call Rag,” featuring members of the group billed as Jazz at the Philharmonic. On this date, the JATP musicians included tenor saxophonist Illinois Jacquet from Houston and guitarist Les Paul from Waukesha, Wisconsin. Just as in the 1923 recording, on which the trombonist quotes from “Yankee Doodle Dandy,” here bass player Red Callender quotes from the same song, which struck me as either a strange coincidence or some type of connection between the notes in “Bugle Call Rag” and those in “Yankee Doodle Dandy.” The musical link between the two pieces may be part of the explanation, but in fact on the first recording of “Bugle Call Rag,” made in 1922 by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (NORK), trombonist George Brunis quotes from “Yankee Doodle Dandy,” and it is clear that much of this 1922 jazz version was copied by Jimmie’s Joys the following year.10

However, why would an advanced group such as the JATP in the same year of the first Bebop recording session (reportedly organized by Texas Budd Johnson), resort to quoting a rather corny flagwaving tune such as “Yankee Doodle Dandy”? It seems unlikely that Callender would have imitated the NORK recording, since so much early jazz tended to be rejected as out of date by later practicing musicians. However, this could be unfair to Callender, who may well have been aware of a tradition established by NORK and carried on by Jimmie’s Joys.

In terms of the Wisconsin-Texas nexus, more to the point is the solo electric guitar work of Les Paul, who would later achieve his greatest fame in 1951 with singer-guitarist Mary Ford on their version of “How High the Moon,” which pioneered the use of overdubbing. Paul would have known the work of Texas-born electric guitarist Charlie Christian, which influenced every subsequent performer on the instrument. Certainly a number of Paul’s pinging notes and his guitar phrasing recall Christian’s sound and style. Following Paul’s break is Illinois Jacquet’s solo, which includes his suddenly playing a low note on his tenor that was, because of the Texan’s frequent use of this device, termed a “Texas honk.” Also typical of Jacquet’s saxophone playing are his patented wild shakes and squalls, which he almost single-handedly made a part of the jazz tenor style, in turn influencing many a saxophonist in later rock and roll bands. The all-out jam that concludes this version of “Bugle Call Rag.”}

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Budd Johnson on saxophone, courtesy of Franklin Driggs.
finds Paul's zinging, ecstatic electric guitar and Jacquet's screaming, high-pitched tenor combining to convert this ragtime tune into an updated JATP exhibition full of exhilarating sonic booms and a crowd-pleasing frenetic pace. Also significant here is the fact that JATP organizer Norman Granz broke the color line by writing into every contract that blacks and whites could attend the concerts together, just as black Texan Illinois Jacquet jammed with white Les Paul from Wisconsin.

Back up ten years to 1934, we find an early pairing of Wisconsin and Texas jazz artistry on recordings by the Adrian Rollini Orchestra. Two tunes, "Davenport Blues" and "Riverboat Shuffle," feature trumpeter Bunny Berigan and Texas trombonist Jack Teagarden of Vernon in something of a swing version of the Dixieland style. The first tune opens with Teagarden's smooth trombone sound, after which the various musicians of the group, which include Benny Goodman on clarinet and the Rollini brothers, Adrian and Arthur, on bass and tenor sax, respectively, take their turns at soloing. Berigan only appears briefly as a soloist, whereas Teagarden returns for a full-blown chorus, before the side ends with his opening theme statement plus a few variations that show off his incomparable tone. On "Riverboat Shuffle," Berigan can be heard ably leading the ensemble, but here again Teagarden enjoys the lion's share of the soloing, demonstrating as he does his virtuoso handling of his horn.

A more impressive coupling of Berigan and Teagarden occurred five years later when they formed part of an All Star Band that once again included Benny Goodman and Arthur Rollini. Here, on a piece entitled "Blue Lou," which is not really a blues but a very popular riff swing number written by black saxophonist Edgar Sampson, Berigan solos first with some of his spectacular high register work, after which Big T follows with one of his powerhouse breaks full of his robust but always relaxed swing. Berigan then returns for a second solo with more of his skyrocketing high notes. Both of these solos were certainly virtuosos on their instruments and influential on all subsequent jazz musicians who aspired to mastery of the trumpet and trombone. No matter what state they came from, each had learned the art of jazz and could "talk" the same musical language that would become universally understood and admired.

In 1935, Berigan joined forces with another Texas-born jazzman, pianist Teddy Wilson of Austin, for a recording entitled simply "Blues in E-Flat." This piece is a classic blues with fine extended improvisations, first by Red Norvo on vibes, then Bunny Berigan on trumpet, followed by Chu Berry on tenor, and finally Teddy Wilson on piano. Almost ten years before the JATP live recording, this studio performance is an example of a mixed black and white group creating together beautifully and movingly thirty years before the advent of racial integration. Berigan proves on this piece that he possessed a true feeling for the blues and could express it through his impeccable control of his horn in every register. Likewise, Teddy Wilson, who rarely recorded the blues, demonstrates his deep identification with the form and its often somber state of mind, even as he exhibits his piano artistry with its rippling runs and ringing tones. Both of these instrumentalists were better known for their renditions of pop songs, in Wilson's case when he worked with the Benny Goodman Trio and with singer Billie Holiday.

Berigan's most famous recording came in 1937, with his stirring version of "I Can't Get Started," which featured both his technically secure trumpet playing and his romantic vocal treat-ment of the song's fetching lyrics. A 1936 film clip with Bunny singing and playing the trumpet on the tune "Until Today," with the Freddie Rich Orchestra, does not make the same impact as hearing his rendition of "I Can't Get Started," but it does furnish a close-up of the handsome young musician in action, only five years before his premature death at age 33. Teddy Wilson would live until 1986, recording widely, including a session with bebop giants Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie in 1945. However, the 1935 date with Berigan and Wilson stands as an early example of the superlative, sophisticated jazz playing of two musicians, one from a Wisconsin farming community and the other Texas-born and Tuskegee educated.

On the 1937 recording of Berigan and his orchestra performing "I Can't Get Started," his star trombonist at the time was "the great Sonny Lee" of Huntsville, Texas, who "played both lead and jazz trombone." Since this piece was a feature for the trombonist-leader, Lee did not take a solo, but he would on two other tunes recorded by the Berigan orchestra in the same year. On "The Prisoner's Song," Berigan opens with a type of wa-wa mute, and later solos without the mute, bending, ripping, and shaking his notes in a typical jazz style, as does Sonny Lee on trombone, whose open solo shows that he had been listening to his fellow Texan, the "Big T." Lee's entrance is assertive swing of the kind that Teagarden trademarked from the late 1920s, with Lee romping and riding, just as Teagarden did, and echoing the latter's patented lip turns and some of his flexibility on
what, prior to Teagarden, had been considered a rather difficult instrument to manipulate. Also in 1937, the Berigan orchestra recorded “Mahogany Hall Stomp,” and again Lee takes a fine solo, although this time using a mute, which softens his sound, even though he still maintains his swing and shows off his considerable technical skill. Both of Lee’s solos demonstrate that he was a real pro, and obviously for this reason, he was spotlighted by the Wisconsin trumpet-leader in what at the time was one of the more popular swing-era orchestras. In 1936, before Sonny Lee joined the Berigan orchestra, he was a member of the first band—an eight-piece group—led by Wisconsin clarinetist Woody Herman. On a number entitled “Take It Easy,” Lee plays an obligato to Woody’s singing of the pseudo blues lyrics, with nice lip turns and a mellow sound, and then takes a short break toward the end of the song. A fuller example of Lee’s blues playing is found on the tune entitled “I’ve Had the Blues So Long,” where he works within a true blues groove. Here Herman again sings the lyrics and also takes up his clarinet for a few tasteful licks. On a piece entitled “Slappin’ the Bass,” Lee contributes a driving break on this up tempo tune, displaying more of his fine technical facility. Exhibiting Lee’s range is his warm, extended mute solo on the tune “Nola,” with the Texan’s flexible phrasing followed by Herman’s lilting clarinet. Lee’s most impressive outing comes on “Fan It,” where the trombonist shows that he could approach the level of Teagarden’s technical prowess, as Sonny trills, rips upward, leaps from low to high notes, and in general offers a swinging brand of 1930s jazz. The jam at the end of this piece has Herman’s clarinet wailing above and Lee blowing riffs below and tailgating in the best Dixieland manner. As the featured trombonist in both the Berigan and Herman bands of the late 1930s, Sonny Lee participated in the most popular recordings of the star trumpeter and was a member of the first of many bands that the clarinetist would lead, in which, as we shall see, a number of Texans would perform prominent roles.

In 1937, Herman’s band included Houston-born alto saxophonist and arranger Dean Kincaide, but this Texan did not solo in any of the performances of that year and was more important as an arranger in the Wisconsin leader’s rise as a big band star. Herman’s most famous number, entitled punningly “At the Woodchopper’s Ball,” was first recorded in 1939, with the first of the leader’s bands to be referred to as The Herd. Here, once again, a Texan played a central role on this first recording of a tune that ultimately sold five million copies, “one of the biggest big band monster hits ever.” The trumpet player who so solos using a wa-wa mute with hand effects to produce some excellent growls and syncopation is Horace “Steady” Nelson, who was born in Jefferson, Texas, in 1913, the same birth year as that of Woody Herman. Like much of Herman’s early material, “At the Woodchopper’s Ball” was based on a blues pattern, and in fact Herman’s outfit was known during this period as The Band That Plays the Blues. By this date, the Herman Herd was already a very swinging band, even before its more famous period after the war in 1945. The roaring open trumpet solo on “Big Wig in the Wigwam” is not identified but could be the work of Nelson. The same is true of “Dallas Blues,” on which of course it would be wholly appropriate if the Texas trumpeter were the one taking the solo that is as forceful as on the previous blues. It certainly does sound to my ear like the same trumpeter who solos on “Woodchopper’s Ball,” which has been credited to Nelson.

Another tune on which Nelson performs is “Blue Prelude,” from 1940, which served at the time as the band’s theme song. Once more Nelson plays a wa-wa response to the lyrics sung by Herman, with the trumpeter’s sound and style reminiscent of Cootie Williams, who at the time was doing his more famous wa-wa treatments for the Duke Ellington Orchestra. In 1941, Nelson returned to Texas, where in Houston he had first played in clubs on South Main before joining up with Herman. Nelson later moved to California, where he performed on the radio shows of Gary Moore, Dinah Shore, and Jimmy Durante, and also played with the bands of Jimmy Dorsey and Hal McIntyre. However, it was Nelson’s brief stay with Woody Herman that placed him at the beginnings of the Herd tradition and involved him in the recording of some of the Herman unit’s most vital blues numbers, “At the Woodchopper’s Ball” and “Blue Flame.”
In 1944, Woody Herman would, for the first time, record in the new bebop-influenced style of his bands of the mid to late 1940s, and on this occasion, too, a Texan—in fact two Texans—would form part of the Herman Herd that cut a tune entitled “Cherry.” Soloing on tenor saxophone is Budd Johnson, a black multi-reed musician from Dallas. Not soloing but present in the saxophone section is Mexican-American multi-reed musician Ernie Caceres from Rockport, Texas. Woody’s clarinet is in especially fine form on this rocking, bluesy tune, but it is Budd Johnson soloing on tenor who digs deeply into his emotive bag to come up with some tones and lines that were unusual for the Herman band and were the first black jazz inflections to be heard on the group’s recordings. Joop Visser even concedes that Johnson’s “happy synthesis of [the styles of tenor saxophonists] Lester Young and Coleman Hawkins . . . steals the show.”

Also, the combination of black and Mexican-American musicians was another first for the band, with a later version of the Herd briefly including black alto saxophonist Johnny Hodges and Cuban trombonist Juan Tizol, both from the Ellington Orchestra. Another tune on which Budd Johnson performs admirably is entitled “It Must Be Jelly (‘Cause Jam Don’t Shake Like That).” Although Herman and vocalist Frances Wayne sing the novelty lyrics for fun, Johnson’s tenor is not fooling around, as he once again digs in for some beautiful, serious jazz, filled with swooping phrases, bent notes, and a conversational style, followed by Herman’s pure, penetrating tone on clarinet. Instrumentally, the contrasting sounds and approaches of the two musicians complement one another and make for a fully satisfying performance.

Next to “At the Woodchoppers’ Ball,” probably the most famous number Herman recorded was “Four Brothers,” a composition and arrangement by Texas multi-reed musician and composer Jimmy Giuffre of Dallas. Giuffre’s arrangement for three tenor saxophones and a baritone established an identifiable bebop-era sound for the Herman Herd, which continued to employ the same saxophone set-up for several decades to come. The first recording of “Four Brothers,” made in December 1947, featured the four brothers of the title, which refers to saxophonists Zoot Sims, Serge Chaloff (on baritone), Herbie Steward, and Stan Getz, who solo in turn and conclude the piece with cameo breaks. Giuffre was not a member of the Herd at the time of this recording but would appear as a tenor saxophonist in the Herman band during 1948 and 1949.

One tune recorded in July, 1949, is entitled “Not Really the Blues,” of which it has been observed that the piece “happens to be one of the few jazz compositions with a totally apt title. It is the blues, but spread out over sixteen bars instead of the usual twelve.” One of the trumpets in the 1949 Herd was Shorty Rogers of Great Barrington, Massachusetts, and it was through the association of Giuffre and Rogers as alumni of the Herman band that they later worked together in Los Angeles, recording under the name of Shorty Rogers and His Giants. In 1955, Rogers and Giuffre recorded a stirring quintet version of “Not Really the Blues,” with Giuffre soloing to wonderful effect on
tenor, with his funky, down-home style in full tilt, and Rogers swinging away with his typical non-stop trumpet line.\textsuperscript{26}

Woody Herman was responsible for training and promoting innumerable sidemen who went on to success on their own, and Jimmy Giuffre was but one Texan who profited from working with the Wisconsin leader. Giuffre's own piano-less trio, formed around 1956, brought him the widest recognition, both for his playing and his writing talents. At the 1958 Newport Jazz Festival, Giuffre performed with his trio consisting at the time of Bob Brookmeyer on trombone and Ralph Peña on bass. A film of the Festival captures the Giuffre 3 performing one of his more famous compositions, the folksy tune entitled “The Train and the River,” written originally for his trio with Jim Hall on guitar.\textsuperscript{27}

Another Herman alumna from Texas was bassist Harry Babasin of Dallas, who was in the Second Herd of 1948, along with Giuffre and Rogers. Babasin participated in a recording session on May 12 that produced another version of Giuffre's band jazz.\textsuperscript{28} Babasin himself would, like Giuffre, end up in Los Angeles where, in 1952, he arranged for and performed on a recording session with Charlie Parker and Chet Baker, and, in 1953, he would form part of an historic recording on which jazz and bossa nova were first combined.\textsuperscript{29}

The next Texan to form part of the Woody Herman organization was Gene Roland, also of Dallas. A fellow student with Jimmy Giuffre and Harry Babasin at North Texas State University in Denton, Roland is credited with the idea of arranging for a sax section of four tenors, which Giuffre modified in writing and arranging his “Four Brothers” for the Herman Herd. Roland was the first important arranger for the Stan Kenton Orchestra in the mid 1940s but also arranged for a number of other bands, including that of Woody Herman, whose staff he joined in 1957 as chief arranger. In 1958, Roland arranged seven of the twelve tunes recorded by the Herman band for its album entitled \textit{Woody Herman ‘58}. In speaking of his arrangement of “Blue Satin,” Roland remarked that it was a “slow blues typically in the Woody Herman idiom,” which reveals that the Texan was well aware of Herman’s “language strongly influenced by Basie and Ellington,” and in fact Roland’s arrangement especially recalls the pulsing, unbrushed Kansas City swing of the Basie band.\textsuperscript{30}

In addition to the brass and reed sections, Roland’s arrangement features Bill Harris’s wistful trombone and Don Michael’s climactic percussion. Again, of his tune “Bar Fly Blues,” Roland reported that it was written especially for Herman, “Not the title, but for his particular type of slow blues alto playing.”\textsuperscript{31} Alto was Herman’s first instrument, rather than the clarinet, and this piece by Roland serves as a showcase for the leader’s
saxophone solo, punctuated in Roland’s arrangement by shakin’, muted brass. The loping piano motif, which is something of a Texan trait, sets the relaxed blues mood, with trombonist Bill Harris supplying some sad, sighing phrases. The title of another Roland arrangement, “Wallin in the Woods,” plays on the similar title of an early recording from 1941, “Woodsheddin’ With Woody,” on which Steady Nelson had formed part of the trumpet section, along with Wisconsin trumpeter Cappy Lewis of Brillion.22

How many Texans may have passed through the Herman big-band academy I am unable to say for certain, but will mention one other, trumpeter Dennis Dotson of Jacksonville, whose work with Herman in 1975 I have not heard but do know his performances on the 1990 recording, Return to the Wide Open Spaces, with fellow Texans James Clay and David “Fathhead” Newman.23

The 1975 aggregation was not Herman’s last, since he continued to lead groups up until his death in 1987, but even so, Dotson represents a long line of Texans stretching from Sonny Lee in Herman’s first group of 1936 through Steady Nelson, Dean Kincaide, Budd Johnson, Ernie Caceres, Jimmy Giuffre, and Harry Babasin in the 1940s to Gene Roland in the 1950s and to the final Texas musician that I will discuss, black drummer Gus Johnson of Tyler, who was with Herman in the 1960s.

The only recording by Woody Herman with a small group of himself, a piano, bass, and drums was made in 1962, and on this occasion Gus Johnson occupied the percussion seat. Budd and Gus Johnson (no relation) were two of the few blacks ever to record with the Herman Herds, but both were key players on the recordings on which they appeared. Titled The Woody Herman Quartet: Swing Low, Sweet Clarinet, the 1962 album consists almost entirely of standard jazz tunes, from “Rose Room” and “Don’t Be That Way” to two of clarinetist Artie Shaw’s famous features, “Begin the Beguine” and “Summit Ridge Drive.” The one more typical Herman piece is entitled “Pee Wee Blues,” apparently written by his pianist, Nat Pierce.

In speaking of the members of his quartet, Herman remarked that “The guys are the rhythm section that’s been with me for quite a while and we work well together.”24 This is perhaps most evident on “Sweet Lorraine,” which swings at any easy gait, with Johnson’s unobtrusive snare-drum licks just enough to keep things perking along nicely. After the waltz-time theme statement on “Begin the Beguine,” Johnson drives the piece expertly with his steady timekeeping and his rim-shot backbeats in four-four; his drum roll before the final section sets up a fine contrast for the tune’s conclusion. However, it is his haunting rhythmic pattern on the tom-tom and his subtle cymbal work for “Pee Wee Blues” that are a high point of his presence on this album, although his drumming on “Don’t Be That Way” is also outstanding, as it is on “Summit Ridge Drive.” All in all, Gus Johnson shows here why he was so successful as the percussionist for the Jay McShann Orchestra, the last of the great Kansas City big bands in the early 1940s, and for what was tagged the New Testament band of Count Basie in the early 1950s. Just as Woody Herman made authentic jazz with whites or blacks, Gus Johnson too could contribute to any type of ensemble, and both men from states with little in common in terms of weather, history, or cultural heritage could unite to create the harmonious, engaging sounds of swinging jazz.

In addition to Bunny Berigan and Woody Herman with their big bands and combos, one other Wisconsin jazz musician who teamed up with a Texan was bassist Buddy Clark of Kenosha. In 1956, Clark joined Jimmy Giuffre for a recording session with a sextet led by Lennie Niehaus, an alto saxophonist and composer who had made a name for himself by anchoring the sax section of the Stan Kenton Orchestra. In putting together his piano-less sextet, Niehaus brought together the special talents of the Wisconsin bassist in conjunction with drums and a front line of alto, tenor, and baritone saxes and trumpet, a rather unusual combination that proved refreshing in the best West Coast tradition. Clark reportedly toured Europe with a Giuffre unit in 1959, but I have thus far found no recordings for such a group.25

Fortunately, the Niehaus Sextet session allows a listener to hear these musicians from Wisconsin and Texas working as part of a superb ensemble, with the
music on Niehau’s album marked by the clean lines and crisp execution of so much of the West Coast music of this period.” Paired with drummer Shelly Manne, Clark drives the group with a round, full tone quality, and on the blues entitled “Elbow Room,” he takes an extended solo that shows off his warm sound and flowing notes. The pairing of Clark and Giaffire comes particularly on the tune entitled “Three of a Kind,” a type of jazz fugue in which at one point the combination of just string bass and baritone sax together achieves a rich tonal blend. On “Fond Memories” the moving lines of tenor, alto, and baritone saxophones and bass make for an especially touching effect, with the baritone and bass adding greatly to the lush overall sound. On “Knee Deep,” the bass and baritone are hand in glove as they swing together with a marvelous sense of unity. This album’s peculiar instrumentation is a perfect emblem for the kind of harmony that jazz has always made possible, in bringing together as it does musicians from different parts of the country and even the world, regardless of instruments, backgrounds, or personal styles.

In listening to the jazz recordings discussed here, one cannot necessarily identify the players as either from Wisconsin or Texas. Perhaps with a musician such as Jack Teagarden, whose trombone sound was so particular to him and has been described as similar to a Texas drawl, one may recognize a regional intonation or technique. However, in making jazz, musicians from these two regions of the country played the same notes, the same tunes, the same kind of syncopated rhythms, and with the same or at least a similar type of swing feel. If Texans leaned more toward blue notes, this could be an identifying mark, as in the case of Budd Johnson of Dallas. Yet as we have seen, Woody Herman and his early unit was billed as The Band That Plays the Blues, and Joop Visser even asserts that Herman had “a blues feeling that is not usually found in white performers, except Jack Teagarden.”

What distinguishes these musicians is, ultimately, less notable than what they have in common—a love of jazz that transcended regional boundaries and racial and cultural differences. Even if they created distinctive sounds on the same instruments, such sounds were not necessarily regional in nature but merely the result of different ways of approaching their horns, of holding them, or of positioning the mouthpieces on or between their lips and teeth. Without wishing to minimize the effect of differing backgrounds, I would emphasize the fact that, in jazz, any player can join with his fellows to produce happy or sad melodies and fast or slow rhythms that have appealed to listeners around the globe. Wisconsin and Texas, in this sense, are no different from Sweden or Japan, where jazz has also brought together peoples of differing races, religions, and geographical areas to find in music a common meeting ground for relieving the sorrow of loss and celebrating the joy of being alive. ■
NOTES
2. A shorter, preliminary version of this essay was presented at Lake- land College in Wausau, Wisconsin, on October 1, 2003. I wish to thank Karl Ender and Lakeland College for inviting me to speak as part of their Krueger Fine Arts Lecture Series. One of the first Wisconsin musicians that I was aware of hearing, without knowing it, was the native of Montello, Wisconsin, Joe Biergen, who had played with the early Dave Brubeck Quartet. I began my lecture at Lakeland College with "a bang not a whimper," to paraphrase T.S. Eliot, by playing Dodge's bass drum duet that opens "Take 'Em As I Trained" on Brubeck's 1954 Jazz Goes to College (Columbia Records, 45-4149). Although there was no connection between Dodge and Texas musicians that I know of, it was my own personal memories of listening with pleasure to Dodge and the early Brubeck Quartet that was my excuse for beginning the talk with an example of his typically "kicking" the bass drum in so many of the Quartet recordings. It was only after researching Wis- consin jazz musicians for the talk at Lakeland College that I discovered, over forty years after first hearing Dodge, that he was from the thirtieth state.
5. For a discussion of Texas boogie musicians in Chicago, see my Texas Jazz (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 74-81.
6. Robert Dupuis, in his Bunny Berigan: Elusive Legend of Jazz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), gives Berigan's place of birth as Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but Berigan grew up in Fox Lake. See Appendix E (n.p.).
8. For a discussion of Texas boogie musicians in Chicago, see my Texas Jazz (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 74-81.
9. Robert Dupuis, in his Bunny Berigan: Elusive Legend of Jazz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), gives Berigan's place of birth as Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but Berigan grew up in Fox Lake. See Appendix E (n.p.).
11. For a discussion of Texas boogie musicians in Chicago, see my Texas Jazz (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1996), 74-81.
12. Robert Dupuis, in his Bunny Berigan: Elusive Legend of Jazz (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1993), gives Berigan's place of birth as Milwaukee, Wisconsin, but Berigan grew up in Fox Lake. See Appendix E (n.p.).
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