

PERCY HUMPHREY BAND
REEL I
Feb. 29, 1972

Also present: PH, Ernest Roubleau,
Cie Frazier, Jim Robinson, Joseph
Riesner, George Mallinson, [?] (Mrs.
George) Mallinson, Oliver Miller,
Richard B. Allen

Transcript: Ralph Adamo

PH: . . .They'd have a popular number come out. By me playing popular music or what-not. They'd have rehearsal. First thing, they say, "Percy, how does such-and-such a thing go?" And I'd go ahead and play it. I'd commit it to memory, and I'd go ahead and play it. And the whole eight, ten--at that time we had about fifteen or twenty men in the rehearsals. And they would all chop in.

The other men--if they know how to read--the most of them put their music--here's one used to tear-up their music.

JR: I didn't tear it up. . . (some laughter)

PH: He didn't want the music. You know what he said? "That don't sound good, you can't say what you want." And he wouldn't-- wouldn't--he forget he had the music. Willie Cornish, the man I was playing with--(hesitation). . .what used to work with Buddy Bolden--Cornish would buy the music. Had Joe Gabriel playing bass.

ER: That's very true.

PH: Walter Preston on--on banjo.

CF: Banjo, yeah.

PH: One man reading music.

JR: Well, sure, that's right.

PH: I was the only--

JR: Same old bunch.

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PH: --one reading music. (Someone chuckles.) See--they didn't want to play the way the man had put it down on the table.

CF: Orchestration.

PH: They wanted to play it--

CF: (low) Their own ideas--

PH: --the way they felt it.

JR: Wasn't it right, wasn't it right?

PH: And when they played it the way they felt it--

JR: They were right too. [Laughs]

PH:--they played it the way they felt it--

JR: [Unintelligible]

PH: --that was it.

ER: They played it more beautiful than what was on the paper.

JR: [Unintelligible], Dick. [Unintelligible], Dick.

JR PH: Let-let-let me tell him this, Percy. Dick, you heard of the Superior Band, eh?

RA: Um.

[End of segment]

JR: [Unintelligible. . .] years ago.

RA: What did Buddy Bolden play? From a--you know--I hear he is one of the early ones.

JR: Buddy Bolden was in this man's daddy's [age?] class [i.e., PH's

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father's class.] I don't--this--I-I was a small kid.

CF: [Percy'll _____?] give you the history on Buddy Bolden. (Laughs)

JR: But Percy can tell you about--he's got the understanding. His
daddy's class.

PH: (low) I don't know too much about Buddy--I mean--

JR: He was tough.

PH: (low, not in response): I know--I know the man--

JR: --he was really rough, he was.

PH: (low)--that man I worked with said he was a real--

JR: He's rough.

ER: I heard he was tough.

PH: (low) a real good--

JR: He's rough, he's rough.

ER: I heard he was tough. I heard.

PH: I don't know if he--

ER: Course I--I never saw Buddy Bolden myself.

JR: I was a small kid from just out of the country. My brothers
[we're] older than me; I'm the youngest one in the family.
They know'd him well, understand, but I didn't know him--I
was small.

PH: I don't know if he played--

JR: They tell me he was rough. (laughs)

PH: Scott Joplin's music or what--

GM: What do you mean, "He was rough?"

JR: Eh?

CF: Mean--he played good.

JR: He played good.

PH: He played jazz, he played jazz.--Good jazz.

JR: Played good jazz, man.

CF: The slang the jazz musician use [mean?] good jazz.

PH: Good jazz.

CF: Good jazz, yes.

GM: I was just thinking maybe he used a horsewhip on you.

Everyone: No. Oh, no, no, oh no, no. (laughter)

PH: He was a good jazz man, good jazz man, you know?

JR: Yeah, he--

PH: One of the best. One of the best they had.

JR: --stick out. That trumpet--he gonna play it, don't you worry.

RA: You heard him, huh?

JR: Oh, no, I was too small, Dick--was about this--my brothers---

PH: He was--[From?] what I could understand, he was exceptionally loud with the horn. And [he could be heard] it for miles and miles.

RA: Do you know any of his numbers that he played?

JR: I heard--I--

PH: [Unintelligible]

JR: About "King Bolden" or so-and-so that--remember.

Everyone
talks
at once,
excited

Over-
lapping

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ER: Yeah.

JR: 'member?

ER: --thought I heard "King Bolden Say"

JR: Bolden

ER: That's his number all right.

JR: I don't want to say the words. That's the way they were (laughs).

ER" That's his number.

JR: [Laughing] yeah.

GM: What, "King Porter"?

Several: No, no.

JR: "King Bolden."

ER: That's the name of that--that song he put out.

Mrs. Mallinson: I'm out of coffee--how about [?]

CF: No, ma*m, I got plenty enough. Thank you very much though.

Drink a little water.

Mrs. M: . . .The dark one and the one with bourbon.

RA: Let me pass this over to you.

___: Uh?

RA: Do you want the dark one or the light one?

[PH?]: He wants the dark one.

Several: [Unintelligible]

JR: [5 or 6 words, unintelligible] (laughs)

Several: [Unintelligible]

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CF: "I thought I heard Buddy Bolden say?" (Laughs)

JR: "Funky Butt, Funky Butt (slurred), Take it away." (Laughs)

___: Boy, that's--he--

CF: That's one of his old numbers.

JR: But-but, see Percy's daddy used to play with them people, man.

He was in their class, you know?--Willie Cornish, Willie played
in the band with you, Percy.

PH: [and Bob Lyons, both. I used play with them both of them.

[.] 'Ti' the bass--Boy, too, 'Ti' Boy was one of his bass
players. ['Ti' Boy was Eddie Giomore's nickname. See Clarence
Vincent,,reel I (Nov. 17, 1959?), p. 3 of digest.]

JR: Willie Cornish and what-you-call-him--Buddy Bolden. Boy, he
[Willie Cornish] was playing the valve trombone.

CF: Valve trombone.

JR and others: [Unintelligible.]

JR: I said, 'Ooo boy.'

___: Gentlemen, uh, don't worry about Mrs. Mallinson--she's heard
me say everything in the business--what really did 'funky butt'
mean?

(Mrs. M. laughs.)

CF: Take it away.

___: (General muttering and laughter.)

JR: I don't like that stuff--now go ahead--jus'--jus' (general
laughter)

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GM: You better go outside. (General laughter)

GM: It won't bother her; we were just wondering. (Laughter)

[CF]: Well, that's, that's some of the words [of ?] that number--

JR: That's the words that's just put there.

CF: Some of the lyrics, yes--

JR: 'Cause we don't like to put-put them things down like that.

ER: (Laughs) That was his [?]. He played the number. That was his words in singing it. He had those words himself in singing it.

JR: "King Bolden Say." [unintelligible] them words. See, Dick, know all that kind of old stuff? (Laughs)

RA: Did you work with Lorenzo Staulz?

JR: Who, me? --No. I didn't work with him.

CF: Lorenzo Staulz? No, I never worked with him.

RA: Did you work with him, anybody?

CF: Lorenzo Staulz? I never did work with him, Dick, no.

RA: They say he sang a lot with Buddy Bolden.

CF: Oh, yeah.

JR: Them fellows had good musicians, man, years ago; them people used to get them things and tie them together and--would go over big too, tell you. [Probably talking about advertising wagons.]

CF: Yeah.

ER: I never seen Buddy Bolden personally, but my father knowed him.

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My father knowed Buddy Bolden all right.

JR: I didn't know him, but my brothers knowed him, my oldest brothers.

[ER?]: Put out that number and another number they put out called
again "Come and Share Your Life with Me." [i.e., "Sweet Babby
Doll"]

[END OF SEGMENT]