

When the machine comes on, Mangiapane is telling about an insurance company show where the employees would get up and sing and a couple would dance. He overheard some guy talking to the piano player about wanting to play the bass but thought that he couldn't play it because the bass player, Sherwood Mangiapane, was left-handed. Jeff [Riddick] told him he could, too, and sent him to get the bass. He was surprised when Mangiapane gave him the bass, and it was tuned for a right hand man. Mangiapane just played it backwards. Didn't have to change a thing. Mangiapane's grandfather played all string instruments and when a fellow loaned Mangiapane a bass, his grandfather came over to show him how to tune it. Being right handed it never occurred to him to show Mangiapane how to string it up backwards. He just tuned it up and said here it is. Mangiapane just took it that way and put on a phonograph record and started picking on it. He had been playing the bass horn for a while then and he just went right on to the bass.

This recording was made at 634 St. Peter Street, the Starving Artist Shop.

Sherwood Mangiapane was born October 1, 1912, in New Orleans. This was on Dante and Oak and the house is still there. It was his grandfather's residence. It was in the old Carrollton section: two blocks off of Carrollton Avenue.

Mangiapane's grandfather was accomplished on just about all the string instruments: played the guitar, banjo, bass, and his specialty was violin. And he was the one who taught Mangiapane how to tune "this instrument" [string bass] and helped him to learn some of the basic things about it. Mangiapane started in music when he was about ten years old. He started on the drums; he was a drummer

for about three or four years and then in high school he had the desire to play a bass and there was a bass [is referring to sousaphone here--see next page] available, belonged to the school, and there was an old gentleman there by the name of Emile Tosso who was formerly the conductor at the Orpheum Theater and when they abandoned the stage shows, vaudeville, the orchestras were let out. So Tosso got a job as instructor at Samuel J. Peters Boys High School. Mangiapane was a student there and worked up enough nerve to ask Tosso to loan him "that little instrument." He took it upon himself to let Mangiapane take it home, and Mangiapane played around with it till he got some sounds out of it, and in a couple of weeks he was out playing jobs with a little orchestra in the neighborhood. Later on Mangiapane was playing with a fellow by the name of Joe Clesi who is well known to all the old timers around here. (Mr. Russell asks if he is the one who composed some numbers, but Mangiapane tells him that he is thinking of the man who composed "I'm Sorry I Made You Cry." That was N. J. "Nick" Clesi--Mr. Allen points out.) Mangiapane thinks that possibly he [N. J. Clesi ?] was a realtor, but he isn't sure at all. But Joe Clesi was the type of guy who would give you his shirt off his back, and he said to Mangiapane when Mangiapane was playing sousaphone: "Why don't you get a string bass?" Well, in those days you would play all night for three bucks and no one could afford two and three instruments. Mangiapane was paying for a bass horn at the time, and told Joe Clesi that he couldn't afford the string bass, and he didn't know if he would have to co-ordination as he had never tried it. It takes some co-ordination to play a string bass. Clesi said: "I have one. Come get it and take it home and keep it as long as you want." Joe Clesi was playing drums at the time, so Mangiapane took the bass

home and, as he said before, his grandfather came over and showed him how to tune it and then he went from there with it. He just started picking on it, not bowing. He never was accomplished with the bow at all. He never took any formal lessons. Mr. Tosso tried to teach him, but he never could get his heart in to learning the music; he just wanted to play music, to play jazz, and that was about it.

His grandfather liked such things as Vienese waltzes, German music. He was an old German gentleman. He told Mangiapane that it was a custom when he was young man to go around and serenade the girls: play outside the house and somebody would usually come out and give them some refreshments, liquid or otherwise. Sometimes they would give them a shower bath: toss something down on them and run them up the street. They would walk around with maybe a guitar, a banjo, and a violin.

Joe Clesi played bass, trombone, and drums, and if there were any others Mangiapane doesn't know. He had those instruments and Mangiapane saw him play them.

Mangiapane didn't hear any string trios playing around when he was a boy, that was a little before he was aware of music as he knows it today. He remembers hearing parades and funerals with colored bands marching and playing mournful dirges to the cemetery, and coming back they would be knocking it out, swinging. He doesn't remember the names of the bands, but thinks he remembers seeing [Papa] Celestin who was one of the first fellows that he can remember seeing and identifying, as well as a man by the name of [William "Bebe"] Ridgley. Mr. Russell says that he is still living. Ridgley, the last time Mangiapane saw him was crippled and must have had a stroke. Mr. Russell affirms this. Mangiapane remembered him, but

Ridgley didn't remember him, of course, as Mangiapane was just a fan. Mangiapane's father used to take Mangiapane to ball games on Sunday morning at the old ball park, Heineman Park. His father would take him and his second brother in the vicinity of the band, the [Original] Tuxedo Brass Band. His father could roam all over the park, but when he came back he knew he could find them because they would be right by the band. The same thing goes for the Steamer "Capital". There may have been other boats, but he doesn't remember the names of them. Fate Marable's band was playing, and Mangiapane's mother and father used to go on there to dance. They appreciated the music, too.

Mangiapane's mother played piano. His father didn't play any thing. They would take their small children on the boat and leave them by the band where they stayed all night just listening and watching these fellows play. Mangiapane remembers Fate Marable very well and [Henry] "Red" Allen, but thinks Louis [Armstrong] was a little before him. He remembers reading that he was on the boat, but he doesn't remember ever seeing Louis on the boat. The other fellows he doesn't remember.

Mangiapane collects Armstrong records and was able to get several from Mr. Russell. Louis Armstrong is the only one Mangiapane ever listened to; he heard the others, but he paid serious attention only to Louis. He was about nine or ten years old then.

Mangiapane has trouble remembering the bass players he liked when he was young. He thinks he remembers Frank Netto playing the two bits clubs. His only recollection of "Pops" Foster is being with Louis; he identifies him with Armstrong's band or with the Luis Russell band. He remembers having seen them here at different spots in New Orleans: The Coliseum, and others he can't remember [on trips

into town].

Mr. Russell asks him about the first dance music he heard: Mangiapane can remember bands like the Owls [Orchestra]. He was just a little boy and couldn't go to the dances, but he can remember hearing records. That was the early days of radio. Mangiapane had a little crystal set, and he used to tune in. He was looking for the music, nothing else interested him. There were some good bands such as the Owls. He can't remember others. He remembers bands like the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, the Halfway House Orchestra, and Johnny Bayersdorffer on records, but he would always go back to Louis whose early records were wonderful records. He has spent a lot of time listening to them, especially today, when you don't have anything but this rock-and-roll stuff.

Clesi band had in it a fine old bass player, strictly a faker, but he could really play, Philly Miller. His father was a one man band around here, used to be on Canal Street. He used to go around with a little outfit of drums and a kazoo, a banjo, and he played everything imaginable with his hands and feet at one time. Mr. Allen says he saw him down by the ferry. Another one in the family, you may have seen around Teddy, little fellow. Mr. Allen says he played with him about a block from there [where the recording is being made]. He lost his legs; he had a little platform he would ride. Mangiapane used to see him around the Famous Door when he was playing there on Sundays and Mondays.

["Let Bill Talk" etc. by Mitcham (deaf)]

The first band that Mangiapane remembers playing with was a little group that they had: His second brother was the saxophone player. It was a trio: Mangiapane played drums, his brother played saxophone, and another boy played banjo. He later went over to piano,

and they got another boy on the banjo. They used to play for all the functions in those days like weddings, King parties, birthday parties. It was customary then to have those parties in the homes, in the private residences. Today everybody had to go to hotels and places that specialize in things like that. In the old days a small combination like they had was adequate for a party in a residence because the places weren't too big and three or four pieces sufficed. Mangiapane was ten or eleven when he got paid for his first job. His brother was about eight or nine because there is three years difference between that particular brother and Mangiapane. Mangiapane was still playing the drums then. He started on the bass horn when he went to high school, when he was about fourteen.

When Mangiapane took up the string bass he was with Clesi, and he started playing it in Clesi's band. He played at the Woodmen of the World Hall and a place called the Circle which was an open air place: they played there four nights a week with Dutch Andrus's band, and he played "on the boat" ["President"] with Dutch a lot. He used to go over and play in Covington [Louisiana]: there was a boat that used to operate from New Orleans to Madisonville, and the name of the boat was the "Madisonville". At the same time, he thinks, there was one in operation called the "Susquehanna". Mr. Russell asks if there was a "Camellia", too. [See Alice Zeno or George Lewis, Reel _____] Mangiapane recalls that but not in the same connection. He thinks that was a boat that was rented out for parties, might have been a yacht. They used to go to Covington to play for private parties. People would hire them to come over, and as soon as they would get on the boat they would start playing out of the goodness of their hearts; they didn't expect any money; they didn't get any. The only money they got was when they got to Covington and played. The people would

meet them at Madisonville and take them to Covington in their automobile where they would play and stay at their home, and the next day they would get the boat back to New Orleans. There was dancing on the boat as soon as they unpacked the instruments, and on the way back there would be a repeat performance.

The King party is some custom they have here, and it might be elsewhere, but as Mangiapane knows it, it's in New Orleans. It is a party the kids have; they buy cakes at the bakery, and there is some kind of little china doll in the cake, baked in the cake. When they slice the cake up, whoever finds the doll either in his hand or mouth is obligated to give the next party: provide the refreshments and entertainment and the site.

A lot of the parties were little private parties that people gave just for the fun of it.

Mangiapane also remembers playing for Mayor O'Keefe when he was still a small boy. In those days they wore short pants and long black stockings. They couldn't get around because they didn't have any transportation, and his mother wouldn't let them go out and play unless whoever hired them to play would agree to come and pick them up and bring them back home. There was no such thing as little boys roaming the streets at 12:00 and 1:00 o'clock in the morning. Mr. O'Keefe would send his son to Mangiapane's house and take them to wherever the party was and then home again. In those days, the parties they gave were mainly stags, not like we know them today; in those days it was just eating and drinking. A bunch of men and no entertainment other than a little musical aggregation. The main course was the spaghetti, wine, and chicken, etc.

"Pops" Foster influenced Mangiapane's style: he always admired his playing. Mangiapane thinks some of the classic examples of his playing are in the Armstrong band which was actually the Luis Russell band, but Armstrong fronted the band, those records like: "Swing that Music," where his slapping really stands out. Some of the fine tunes like the one Louis composed: "If We Never Meet Again" his [Pops] bass just influenced him: he always listened for it and did whatever he could to try to sound like "Pops" Foster. He was able to get most of that from the record even though it wasn't reproduced as faithfully as it is today, and they didn't have the fine instruments like the hi-fi sets and stereo, but you could still hear him, he was heard all right.

Mangiapane remembers hearing [see 2:50 on records ?] Tom Brown's brother, Steve Brown. He was with Jean Goldkette, but Mangiapane didn't know who he was at the time; he only had the pleasure of meeting him in the last few years when he became associated with Tom Brown through the New Orleans Jazz Club. Not too many years before Tom passed away, his brother visited him here, and Mangiapane was able to meet him. He played that same style of slapping on the bass, and Mangiapane thinks he was given credit for being the man to start that [on record ?]. He read that in a publication of the International Musician. They made some award to Steve Brown for starting the style. Mangiapane never heard him in person as he was a little too young, but not too much because he remembers that he was with the Rhythm Kings. Mr. Allen affirms this. Mr. Russell says he was in Chicago, but that he had played here [before the 20's ?]. Mangiapane has one of their records: "She's Cryin' For Me Blues" and on the other side, he thinks [with prompting], is "Golden Leaf Strut". [Correct]

Today, Mangiapane's favorite bass players are Morty Korb and

especially Bob Haggart. There are some colored bass players in New York. One of them with the DeParis brothers comes through pretty good, provides a good beat in that band together with the drum and banjo. He can't remember his name.

Mr. Russell asks him: When he works in a band what kind of a rhythm section does he like: piano, guitar, bass, banjo--
Mangiapane gets along well with the guitar players, but especially likes the nice clean beat of the banjo and the way it cuts through the rhythm section: it can be heard well; it is very pronounced.

Mangiapane can't recall working with the old bands before they used piano all the time, except the groups he played with as a child. There weren't any piano players available; not too many people had the pianos to begin with. You had to depend on some other instrument: the banjo or the guitar for the rhythm [with] [which is] the drum and the bass.

He played on some of the trucks when they would advertise dances, etc. It was toward the end of those days. He remembers even playing on a wagon on one or two occasions. He played in parades with a brass band. One Carnival Day he played for an organization from across the river, not a well-known one, but they needed a band and we needed a job. It was in the hot sun, and before the thing started they passed out the spirits. He wished he had never seen it before the parade was over. They marched about 30 miles, and Mangiapane was carrying a big sousaphone in the boiling sun with the liquor trying to get out the best way it could. They used to play jazz in the brass band, that's all, and the people seemed to like it. They didn't play too much marching music. They thought they knew jazz, and they played it their way. They would be led by different ones; they were just pickup bands, no organized group that Mangiapane played with,

just a group of men who blew horns.

In response to question about his favorite bands that he heard in person in the early days, Mangiapane remembers going to some of these dance halls like the Fern Dance Hall, and he remembers hearing fellows like Buzzy Willoz who is dead, [Irving] Fazola. He played with Fazola when he was a little boy, too at the Woodman Hall. He played one job with Sidney Arodin, the fellow who was co-composer with Hoagy Carmichael of "Lazy River," after he came back from the North. He was a stand-out; you could recognize a man like that. Buzzy Willoz played guitar and banjo and sang some, was a fine rhythm man. He passed away at an early age. They were playing on a job, he thinks it was the Circle job for four nights a week, and he died in his automobile, at the wheel. He played straight four. Mangiapane doesn't remember early bands playing shuffle rhythm. The first band he remembers playing shuffle rhythm was the trumpet player, Henry Busse. The guys here just played four beats on a banjo or a stringed instrument. He doesn't recall ever hearing two beats. He just remembers a nice, flowing, easy beat, four beats. The speed depended on the tempo, they would change. They played some of the tunes as fast as today; we associate a speedy tempo with "Tiger Rag." He gets a kick out of Louis sometimes at the tempos he plays "Tiger Rag" in. He has three or four masters that he made, and they all are really going.

They played waltzes. Mangiapane always goes back and remembers the pretty tunes; he always loved ballads and pretty waltzes as well as the jazz tunes. He loves the jazz first, but he also likes to play ballads and pretty waltzes. In those days the emphasis was on that; they knew a lot about pretty music and how to play it. These bands in these two bits clubs, those fellows could really play that

jazz: "Clarinet Marmelade" and "Barataria" and all those fine old tunes. They had them all on records, and somehow through the years they have slipped away. For instance, the Halfway House Band made a lot of fine records. There were so many good ones in those days, such as the New Orleans Rhythm Kings.

Mangiapane remembers hearing the Brunies Brothers on the records, but he was too small to go in clubs then. Mangiapane worked on Bourbon Street once. He had a job that lasted about a year at the Famous Door: two nights a week, a jazz trio. They would relieve George Girard was one of the bands and the Dukes of Dixieland was the other. The union demanded that they get a night off, that would be a Sunday and a Monday. So when those bands were off, the club provided entertainment in the form of this jazz trio. The trio was composed of Jeff Riddick, Raymond Burke and Mangiapane, and they would play when the 6-piece band would be off at the intermission for twenty minutes out of the hour. The greatest problem was what to do in the forty minutes when they had to sit and listen to the other bands.

This tape was recorded on St. Peter Street the night the Coca-Cola TV program was being filmed. The person yelling out on the street was the director of the TV production.

END OF REEL I [of 1]