



SWING DRUMMERS

J'AI entendu une foule de grands drummers, notamment Zutie, Tubby Hall, Baby Dodds, Gene Krupa, Walter Johnson. Mais « Old Man » Cottrell, du Piron's New Orleans Band était le meilleur et après lui venait Happy.

Le jeu de Cottrell était extrêmement doux. C'est le père de tous les drummers. On n'avait pas besoin de l'entendre pour savoir qu'il était dans l'orchestre, car on « sentait » sa présence par la manière dont l'orchestre jouait. Il avait un swing énorme et était aussi régulier qu'un métronome. Une fois qu'il avait établi un tempo, celui-ci ne variait jamais. Il ne s'amusait pas à jeter ses baguettes en l'air comme le font beaucoup de drummers; il ne s'occupait que de tenir solidement le tempo et de produire du swing! Il employait une formule appelée le « Shimmy beat ». À cette époque, la plupart des drummers employait une peau de banjo sur la caisse claire. Cottrell se servait de papier de verre lorsque l'orchestre jouait doucement.

Je parlais hier avec Zutie de « Old Man » Cottrell. Zutie me dit qu'il avait toujours voulu jouer comme Cottrell, qu'il avait étudié bien des fois avec la plus grande attention le jeu de Cottrell.

Black Benny était merveilleux à la grosse caisse. J'ai été témoin du fait suivant: quand Benny était en prison, pour une occasion importante des musiciens demandaient qu'on le leur prétât pour jouer; après quoi ils le ramenaient en prison. Croyez-le si vous

Maxey Leroy
Gene Krupa
Georges Wetling



voulez, Benny était capable de faire jouer avec swing un orchestre militaire interprétant de la musique de jazz. Il était avec Robechaux le meilleur drummer sur la grosse caisse.

Happy appartenait à la catégorie des drummers excentriques. Il avait autour de lui les ustensiles les plus divers, des sifflets, des trompes, des cloches, de la ferraille variée. Il savait se servir de tout et d'ailleurs ne perdait jamais le tempo. Zutie et Baby Dodds me rappellent souvent ce drummer.

Les meilleurs drummers jouant actuellement à Chicago sont Zutie, Tubby Hall, Wallace Bishop, André Hiliare et John Humphrey. Ce dernier est vraiment un des meilleurs, quoique ayant tendance à presser un peu de tempo. Mais c'est un jeune drummer, et il pourra aisément se corriger de ses fautes.

Je ne peux considérer Sonny Greer comme un véritable « swing drummer ». Très spectaculaire, il donne au public l'impression qu'il fournit un grand

rythme, mais les musiciens de l'orchestre ont des agonies ignorées.

J'ai oublié de mentionner Red Saundar, qui est vraiment terrifiant. Gene Krupa est un des meilleurs, mais je ne sais pas le considérer comme LE meilleur. Je n'ai jamais eu l'honneur de jouer avec lui, je ne sais donc pas exactement quelle est sa valeur. Un autre drummer de classe est Bill Winston.

Donnez-moi un rythme très soutenu et un jeu de cymbales dans le dernier chorus. Voilà ce qui me galvanise. Je pourrais écrire encore beaucoup sur les drummers, ils sont si importants mais je préfère les laisser jouer, et jouer avec eux. Jouons tous!

P A R



PRESTON

Speaking of swing drummers, I can say that I heard a lot of them, such as Zutie, Tubby Hall, Baby Dodds, Gene Krupa, Walter Johnson. But "Old Man" Cottrell, of Piron's New Orleans band was the best, and after him came Happy.

Cottrell was as smooth as they come. He is the father of all drummers. You didn't have to hear him to know that he was in the band, for you could feel it. He had a tremendous swing as was like a metronome. Once he set a tempo, there was not any varying. He did not throw his sticks in the air like a lot of drummers I've seen; all he did was to hold the tempo and swing! He used a lick called the Shimmy beat. At that time most drummers used a banjo head on the snare drums. Cottrell used sandpaper when the band was singing softly.

I was speaking to Zutie Singleton yesterday about "Old Man" Cottrell. Zutie said that he always wanted to play like Cottrell, also stating that he sat up many times looking at Cottrell playing.

During that time there were a lot of good drummers. There were Henny Zeno, Mack, Happy, Robechaux and Black Benny. Zutie, Baby Dodds and Paul Barbarin came up later.

Black Benny was a wonderful bass drummer. I have seen that, when Benny as in jail and the boys would have a parade to play, they borrowed Benny, and afterwards returned him to jail again. Believe it or not, he could swing a brass band playing jazz music. He and Robechaux were the best of bass drummers.

Zutie Singleton
Walter Johnson
Chick Webb



B Y

on the cymbals from start to finish, and that's wrong, for it become too monotoneously. A drummer should have a variety of licks.

The best swing drummers in Chicago are Zutie, Tubby Hall, Wallace Bishop, André Hiliare and John Humphrey, who is one of the very best, though inclined to run a little. But he is a young drummer and can easily correct these faults.

I can't see Sonny Greer as a swing drummer. He is a great showman. It looks great to the public but the musicians in the band suffer untold agonies.

I forgot to mention Red Saundar, who is terrific. Gene Krupa is one of the best, though I can't see him as the best. I never had the honour of playing with him, so I don't know how good he really is. Bill Winston is very good also.

Give me a lot of solid rhythm and the sock cymbals on the last chorus. That sends me!

I could write a lot more about drummers, they being so important. But I won't over do it. So I will let the cats swing on. I will swing. Let's all swing!

JACKSON



Happy was noted as an eccentric drummer. He used to have pots and pans, whistles, horns, cowbells and a lot of junk around him. He could hit everything, but never lost time. Zutie and Baby Dodds remind me of him.

Tubby Hall reminds me of Cottrell. Tubby is smooth and swings like nobody's business. Also Sidney Catlett is among the leaders, in fact he is one of the leaders. I have had the honour of playing with a lot of drummers, but Tubby is my choice. My opinion is that a swing drummer should stay on the snare drums as much as possible; the band is more solid then. Cymbals are all right in spots or on the last chorus. A lot of drummers lay

on the cymbals from start to finish, and that's wrong, for it become too monotoneously. A drummer should have a variety of licks.

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