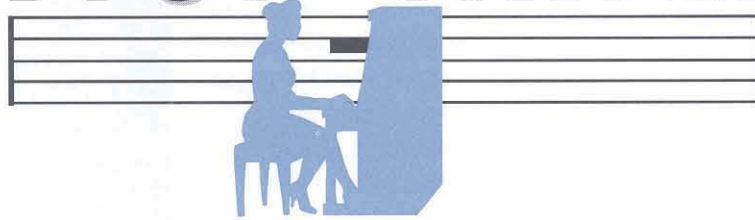


STOP-TIME!



Fall 2000 Tracing U.S. Black Vernacular Musical Styles

Center for Black Music Research, Columbia College Chicago

Chicago Jazz Musicians and Commercial Dance Bands: A Relationship

BY CHARLES A. SENGSTOCK JR.

By 1920, as jazz music was beginning to take root on Chicago's South Side, a dynamic working relationship developed between the new jazz players and the older, more established commercial danceband leaders and theater orchestra conductors. It came about tentatively at first, then moved forward a bit more aggressively as the new jazz music began to capture the fancy of more and more people.

New Orleans Jazz Musician in Chicago

Curious about the new music from New Orleans, both white and black musicians became regular visitors to the city's South Side cabarets and small

clubs where many New Orleans musicians played. By 1922, when Joseph "King" Oliver had brought young Louis Armstrong north to play second cornet alongside him at Lincoln Gardens, a group of younger Chicago musicians came to listen, slack-jawed, to the marvelous sounds emanating from Oliver's Creole Band.

The Sunset and Plantation Cafes on 35th Street became the preferred after-hours hangouts for musicians by the mid-1920s, and it was not long before a few of the more adventurous band-leaders realized that adding a jazz musician or two to their bands could widen audience appeal. Not surprisingly, some of the black commercial lead-



Danceband leader Charles Cook was among the first to augment his band with jazz players. Photograph courtesy of the Vivian G. Harsh Research Collection of Afro-American History and Literature, Chicago Public Library.

ers were among the first to augment their bands with jazz players. By 1923, Charles Cook, most commonly known as "Doc Cook," had added New Orleans musicians Jimmy Noone and Freddie Keppard to his West Side Dreamland Ballroom band. Noone was the fluid-styled clarinetist and Keppard, the hulking and powerful cornetist who, ten years earlier, had earned the title "king" of the trumpeters in the Crescent City. John Wycliffe, another early black bandleader in Chicago and the first to take a black band into a Loop hotel—the Morrison in 1919—also hired Freddie Keppard early in the New Orleans cornetist's tenure in Chicago.

A few years later, Keppard was hired

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King Oliver and his Dixie Syncopators, ca. 1925. Photo from the Paul Eduard Miller Collection, CBMR Library and Archives. Used by permission of Bonnie Miller Barnes.

