

A Tour of the Institute of Jazz Studies

With Dan Morgenstern

Dan Morgenstern, Director of the Institute of Jazz Studies offers a tour of the facilities, on the campus of Rutgers University in Newark, NJ.

Welcome to the Institute of Jazz Studies. When you come in you know it looks a lot like a library, which in part it is, and well you see certain things like that famous photo by Bob Parent of the [“Open Door”](#). What a band! And Roy Haynes is the only one who's still with us. What you see here, along the wall, are vertical research files. In there are clipping files and they're loaded with stuff taken from newspapers, general interest magazines. We have a used collection of periodicals, jazz periodicals, so then not necessarily all clipped, because they're here and you know bound volumes or loose copies. But lots of stuff – press releases, publicity, personal papers as well. Although the originals are stashed away and are properly archived. So in some cases, these are named files, so there are thousands of names. In some cases, like with Louis Armstrong, or Ellington, Miles Davis, and Wynton Marsalis, you get, you know, loads of stuff. But with other people there may only be a couple of items. So it varies with there a lot of obscure people in there. All practically are musicians, but there are people like John Hammond, and Norman Granz, and you know, Stanley Crouch, whatever, but 95% musicians.

This is all Benny Carter. Benny favored us by leaving us a lot of his best stuff. Our Associate Director, Ed Berger, is very close to Benny, actually worked with his late father on Benny's biography. [Benny Carter: A Life in American Music](#) which was published in 1981. Ed's father was a famous professor at Princeton. He was a sociologist but he had a lifelong interest in jazz and he met Benny Carter and they became friendly. And he suggested to Benny, “You should do a biography!” And Benny had resisted that, but he accepted it from [Morroe Berger](#) and then Ed helped his father with doing research in all kinds of things. He became friendly with Benny.

This is rare. That's the Esquire Award, you know, the “Esky.” You don't see too many of those, not in that nice condition. That “C” melody saxophone, which is a real genuine antique. They don't make them anymore. Benny played that in a movie. And this wonderful car here. They don't make them like that anymore, either. Benny and a good friend of his in Chicago, in 1934, I think.

Here we have reference works, standard things like the [Grove](#) and [Music Index](#), which is very Useful. It's now online, but not from the start, only from more recent years. And lots of bibliographies and discographies. And discography, boy! I always like to tell people that when I started collecting records in my teens, which is a long time ago, all there was... was this thing here. was the [Delaunay “Hot Discography”](#). Okay? That, and that was it! So now we have reams and reams of stuff.

And we start with the periodicals. They're arranged alphabetically by title. And you will see things that you would expect, like All About Jazz, and [Allegro](#), which is the 802 publication. But there are also many more obscure things.

There are British magazines. There are Swedish, Dutch - [Doctor Jazz](#). Down Beat! We're the only place actually in the United States that has a complete run of Down Beat. The earliest issues from '34 and '35 are exceedingly rare, in very bad condition, mostly. And ours are on their microfilm.

And there are listening booths [that] people can use. Some of them...they vary. This is the only one that has a 78 turntable. But then it has cassettes and CD and other stuff. But they all vary. The DVD, and video tape, and cassette, and CD, and LP, and whatever. So these are places [for] people. Then we have another one that's got reel-to-reel.

A small section of music, stuff which is again, most of the music is in the stacks. But these song collections: now [Jelly Roll \[Morton\]](#)'s complete piano music, and Duke [Ellington], and so on. And more run of the mill stuff like Gershwin and Berlin and some. And fake books! We've got a big collection of fake books. The library is interesting because we not only try to have every book published on jazz, including no obscure languages, and so on. But also, our founder was [Marshall Stearnes](#), who was one of the first really serious jazz scholars. He was a pioneer in that respect, born in 1908. He was a professor of English. He was a [Chaucer](#) specialist. but his avocation was jazz. He founded the Institute on the basis of his wonderful collection in 1952, because he felt that there should be a place where people could do jazz research. It didn't exist at the time. Marshall died suddenly of a heart attack in 1967, and that's when stuff came to Rutgers because he had willed it to Rutgers. Before nobody expected him to die so soon. It was only...Marshall was only 58.

There are more files here. These are clipping files, again arranged by topics. And all this stuff relates to record labels. It's supplements, disco-graphical information, catalogs, and all kinds of things. This is one of our rare magazines. Actually it's a duplicate. So this is that, the "Belgian Music," and it is Armstrong coming to Belgium in 1934.

This is where we input recordings in different formats. They get put into what we call a computerized shelf list. It's...for many, many years we did this according to a system that was designed for us in the early days of computers, a thing called [Paradox](#) which is long since obsolete. So we were unable to do it other than in-house. In-house, we can access our record collection by label, by artist, by keyword.

Our guy who does all this inputting, John Clement, (there he is), he started this Bag Collection. So we now have a collection of bags from record stores all over the place, many of which are now out of business. Wonderful [Dobells](#) in London which is really one of the great jazz record stores in history.

This is “the stacks,” and what you see first are all these periodicals, more ephemeral periodicals, including some very rare things. We have the best collection of jazz periodicals anywhere.

We make a little detour here. In this room we have Oral Histories. There was a major project funded by the National Endowment for the Arts from 1972 to 1983 interviewing older jazz musicians. They had to be past 60. The reason why that was done was that older musicians were not going to apply for fellowships, you know, to study with somebody, or composition grant, or whatever. So to give them some kind of equal opportunity, it was decided to do these interviews. And there are many wonderful ones. They were kind of, you know, life histories and had to be of a certain length. All of these things are on archival quality CD and including reference copies. And so it's an easy way to access this. There are a hundred and twenty of those interviews that were done during those eleven years, and everybody's gone now. The last one to leave us was [Lee Young](#). He was the last survivor, Lester's brother. So now they're all gone. But it's wonderful to have their voices.

Marshall thought that the Institute should have every reproductive device for recorded music starting with phonograph cylinders. And so we do. In addition to the periodicals there's lots of music here. This we have Marshall Brown's collection. Marshall collected big-band arrangements. Mary Lou Williams: we got Mary Lou Williams' wonderful archive. There was 70 boxes of stuff that came to us from Mary Lou, posthumously. And lots of music, lots of correspondence, and scrapbooks, and ephemera. She saved everything.

These are the transcriptions. These are not unique to us. But [Andrew White](#) who was a very interesting saxophonist and multi reed player from Washington transcribed all of Coltrane's recorded solos, transcribed all of Charlie Parker's recorded solos and does a beautiful job of that.

These are the sound recordings: are arranged by format. So these are 16-inch transcriptions that were done for radio use. They were mostly done as early as the early '30s, in 33 1/3 [rpm] which was not available to the public but was used on radio. Here for instance is the Treasury Department. It's a thing to sell savings bonds. This is from the '50s. And it's Benny Goodman.

This is a special cabinet where we have our “Big Band in the Sky.” We've got a big trumpet section. It grew most recently with [Dick Sudhalter](#)'s horns. we have [Joe Newman](#). We have [Buck Clayton](#). We have [Cootie Williams](#). Cootie's: this beautiful horn. This is a [Conn “Connstellation”](#) And it was fairly new. That was the last horn he had. It's in great shape and it's a beautiful instrument. But we have [Bobby Hackett](#). We have, did I mention [Joe Newman](#)? We have a cornet that [Kid Ory](#) played. He played cornet as well as trombone. [Ruby Braff](#), [Roland Kirk](#)'s baritone. That thing here that [James Moody](#) most recently...James gave us a flute. And [Roy Eldridge](#)'s horn, not his best horn. He gave this to us while he was still alive, god bless him. But it's a cute horn because it has a rhinestone studded mouthpiece, somebody made for him. So many of these things have gone on exhibit in Japan, and other parts of the US, and in Europe. Right now one of our best items which is [Lester Young](#)'s horn that he used with [Basie](#), which he

still, that came from [Marshall Stearns](#). He gave that to Marshall. That is part of the new [Grammy Museum](#), which just opened recently in LA. We have [Ben Webster's](#) horn. We have [Don Byas's](#) tenor, which has a “snake” octave key.

[[Louis Armstrong](#)]

At this time he favored green ink, so here he goes. And “[Lily](#)” [[Armstrong](#)] had a very good hand. And when he wasn't sure that his alias, ...he was really, ... no, we know that Louie was a great writer. But this is wonderful to have. It has been published in a book called [In His Own Words](#), Louis Armstrong's, if we made it available. But ,of course, there's only one original, original manuscript here.



Nowadays we go to the beach and take our iPod, or whatever. But, in the 1920s, if you, wanted to take music with you is a little compact. There's a turntable. It could accommodate a 10-inch 78, and there's, you know, the horn. I don't want to take it apart now, but it's cute. You could take that to the beach, and do the “[Charleston.](#)”

Here's a kind of fun thing here, that belonged to [Ella Fitzgerald](#). Things that we have of Ella's, we have a wig. And we have a pair of broken sunglasses that belong to her. But this is fun. She had this on her mantelpiece. It's made of forks and spoons, and she dug it.

Some people may think that the real heart of our collection is the recordings, and there we have, by format, 12-inch LPs, and CDs, and it keeps growing, of course. We have, upward 90-odd thousand twelve-inch LPs. The CDs, by now, must be nearing the 25,000 mark. 78s,, which are still in demand for reissues, you know, you go back to the source because the technology keeps improving for taking that information. About over 50,000 78s, 10-inch LPs, further down. This is temperature-humidity controlled, which is necessary. There are 12-inch 78s, and acetates, and test pressings .There's some film. Most of the film has been converted. It's terrible! Technology keeps improving. [We] converted all our film to videotape. But now we should convert the video tape to DVD. And who knows what's next?

So, that's, I guess that's about it as far as the walkthrough is concerned.

— Dan Morgenstern

(annotations by Hank Hehmsoth)