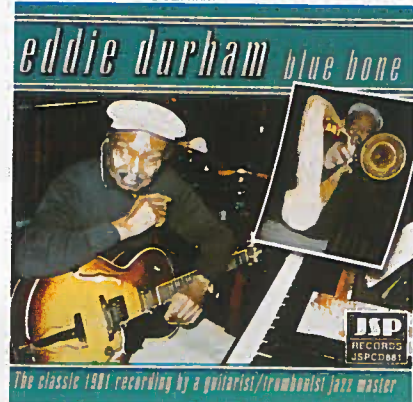


TEXAS MUSIC

ALL CDS COURTESY DAVE OLIPHANT



EDDIE DURHAM, ONE OF THE FIRST AND MOST INFLUENTIAL TEXANS IN JAZZ, HAS BEEN CREDITED IN PART WITH ONE OF THE MOST FAMOUS GLENN MILLER ARRANGEMENTS OF ALL, "IN THE MOOD."

The seeds of jazz were planted early on in Texas soil. The blues, one source of jazz, found some of its earliest exponents here, including Blind Lemon Jefferson (ca. 1880-ca. 1930) of Couchman. Likewise, ragtime, the other musical tradition from which jazz germinated, had its first great composer in Scott Joplin (1868-1917), who was born near Linden and moved to Texarkana as a boy. Joplin's 1899 "Maple Leaf Rag" became a landmark of ragtime, and his "The Entertainer," made famous by the 1973 movie *The Sting*, starring Paul Newman and Robert Redford, brought universal acclaim to Joplin's music, if not to his name and birthplace. To help listeners connect with Joplin's legacy, Texarkana has established an annual Jump, Jive & JamFest (April 23-25, 2004; see For the Road), beside the Joplin mural near the Perot Theatre downtown.

Other towns and cities have also begun paying tribute to their native musicians who were formative figures in the history of jazz. This past year, several events celebrated Texas jazzmen: In San Marcos, the city mayor proclaimed August 16 Eddie Durham Day; in Dallas, the Marshall Agency and the South Dallas Cultural Center presented the 5th Annual Jazz Legends Festival in June, whose inaugural fete honored native son Red Garland; in Fort Worth, the first annual Jazz by the Boulevard Festival took place in September, featuring the city's own jazz sax legend, Dewey Redman; and in November, Corpus Christi hosted its 43rd annual Texas Jazz Festival, with native Joe Gallardo among the lineup of state talent.

Other cities like Houston and Denton have also honored native musicians (Houston lays claim to the first jazz festival on record anywhere, held in 1922).

It would be impossible to mention every man and woman Texas-wide who has advanced the cause of jazz, but the six musicians reviewed here represent different parts of the state, and most of jazz's principal periods, from hot to swing and from bebop to harmolodics.

Eddie Durham (1906-1987) of San Marcos was one of the first and most influential Texans in jazz. A member of the Oklahoma Blue Devils that recorded in 1929, and of the Kansas City band of Bennie Moten during the late 1920s and early '30s, Durham was on Moten's milestone recording of 1932 ("Moten Swing") and helped create the riff style that became a fixture of the Swing Era.

A composer-arranger who had taken correspondence courses in music theory while a boy in San Marcos and who performed in groups with his brother Joe and his cousin Herschel Evans (1909-1939), Eddie Durham would play a central role in establishing the popular Swing Era style of the Jimmie Lunceford Orchestra from 1935 to 1936. Durham's



Eddie Durham made an indelible mark as a composer, arranger, and instrumentalist during the Swing Era of the 1930s.

COURTESY DURHAM FAMILY

COURTESY TEAGARDEN ESTATE



A giant and the colossus. Jack Teagarden and Louis Armstrong were musical minds for all time. In the '40s, Teagarden was a member of the Armstrong All-Stars.

arrangements of tunes like "Avalon" and "Pigeon Walk," and his own originals, like "Lunceford Special" and "Harlem Shout," won critical acclaim. From 1937 to 1938, he contributed classic arrangements to the Count Basie Orchestra, with tunes like "Topsy," "Blue and Sentimental," "Time Out," and "Swinging the Blues," the latter considered the epitome of the Basie style.

In addition to being a composer-arranger, Durham played trombone in the brass sections of the Moten, Lunceford, and Basie bands, as well as amplified guitar, the instrument that he pioneered and later introduced to electric-guitar great Charlie Christian (1916-1942) of Bonham (see Speaking of Texas and Up Front). In 1939, at the height of Glenn Miller's renown as a Swing Era celebrity, Durham wrote several fine musical charts for the Miller organization, including "Glen Island Special" and "Wham (Re Bop Boom Bam)." He has even been credited in part with one of the most famous Miller arrangements of all, "In the Mood."

Another revolutionary Texas jazzman was trombonist **Jack Teagarden** (1905-1964) of Vernon. Like Durham, "Big T," as Teagarden was called, belonged to a family of musicians (his brother Charlie was a superb Swing trumpeter). "Big T" was active in jazz circles in the state in the early 1920s, after which he made a huge splash in the big pond of New York jazz. Arriving largely unheralded, Teagarden unveiled to musicians in the East his phenomenal technical skills and his blues-tinged Texas voice with its languid, soothing lullaby of a drawl. His first recordings, in 1929, reveal him already as a master improviser, as he moves on "That's a Serious Thing" with seemingly effortless leaps from one register of his horn to another, tossing off ornamental turns as if the instrument were equipped with valves, when in fact he executed them entirely with his lips.

In the same year, when "Big T" recorded with Louis Armstrong, it was one of the first integrated recording sessions in jazz. In the 1940s, Teagarden would become a member of the Armstrong All-Stars, but before that, between 1934 and 1939, he was star soloist with the Paul Whiteman Orchestra. One of his most impressive performances came even earlier, in 1933, when he participated in the first recording session for jazz vocalist Billie Holiday. Teagarden's rip-snorting solo on Holiday's "Your Mother's Son-in-Law" has all the earmarks of his Texas open-range upbringing. His rendition of Johnny Mercer's "I'm an Old Cowhand" from 1936 is an example of his trombone virtuosity and of his

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