

Preservation hall jazz band



**ASSIGN
BUSTER**

The chosen band for this assignment is the Preservation Hall Jazz Band based out of New Orleans. The band's name comes from Preservation Hall in New Orleans where music is played every Wednesday and Saturday nights. The band is comprised of: Wendell Brunious playing trumpet.

David Grillier playing the clarinet. Frank Demond playing the trombone. Narvin Kimball on the banjo. Benjamin Jaffe strumming the upright bass. Joseph Lastie on the drums. Rickie Monie at the piano.

The songs that I chose are off the Preservation Hall Jazz Band CD title "Because of You". It was recorded in December 1995 at the Ultrasonic Studios in New Orleans. Sony released it under the Sony Classical Listening Station label in 1998. The songs that I will use for my discussion are: "You Can Depend on Me" a tune written by Charles Carpenter, Louis Dunlap and Earl Hines. "Mama Don't Allow It" by Sammy Cahn and Charles Davenport. "Petite Fleur" by Sidney Bechet.

The first song "You Can Depend on Me" uses the smooth vocals of Narvin Kimball the banjo player of the band. It appears that the song uses a rhythm section comprised of the drums, upright bass and banjo using 4/4 rhythm with a steady medium tempo. The trumpet is playing the melody and the clarinet playing a countermelody on the first chorus. When the vocals start, the piano starts to play around the melody with what appears to be a muted clarinet possibly doing some call and response to the vocals. The next chorus gives rise to a solo by the trombone bending notes up and down. After the trombone solo, the trumpet solos with a bright flowering sound.

The last chorus repeats the vocals. The music has a feeling of the early New Orleans jazz on the 1920s. The next song is “ Mama Don’t Allow It” with Wendell Brunious doing the vocals. The song is a very light fast tempo, 2/4 rhythm song with solos of all the instruments. The words to the song describe, “ Mama don’t want no ... playing around here.” The vocalist uses a call and response to prepare the instrument for a solo. After the word verse is over the instrument named plays a solo that has an improvisation feel.

Each solo keeps the melody of the song, however, it includes embellishments and their own timbre. Again, the feeling of New Orleans jazz comes to mind when listening to this piece. The last song used is “ Petite Fleur” by Sidney Bechet. The song employs instruments only with a 4/4 rhythm by the drums and upright bass with a slow deliberate tempo and a feel of a slow tango. The clarinet plays a smooth mellow melody with the piano playing a counter melody and adding embellishments.

Before the end of the chorus, the clarinet and piano end on an upbeat. Then, between choruses, a break is employed to build up tension, which is released by the clarinet in the next verse by bringing a downbeat. The tune has a feel of familiarity that I believe is early jazz, however it is probably better placed as a ballad or popular song. Listening to the Preservation Hall Jazz Band selections in this paper shows the versatility of the band. Depending on your mood there is a song for that feeling. The upbeat song of “ Mama Don’t Allow It,” begs for a fun light-hearted atmosphere while hearing the solos of each instrument and how they contribute to the band as a whole.

The steady and flowing “ You Can Depend on Me,” provides a great background for relaxing and enjoying smooth listening sounds. Both these songs reinforced many concepts learned in class as to the form and style of New Orleans jazz and even today sound fresh without compromising the traditional sound of early jazz. The last song “ Petite Fleur,” is a timeless classic that sounds refreshing and new even today. The tune conjures up images of a small little nightclub of eloquence where couples went to drink and slow dance. I can recommend listening to the Preservation Hall Jazz Band if you are looking for early jazz styles while using today’s sophisticated recording techniques. A good sound system and this band playing on CD can bring back a feel of being there with the great performers of the early part of the century.