

Preservation Hall Jazz band looks back

by M. J. Decker
Special to the DTH

A concert by a Preservation Hall Jazz Band is not like any other concert—it's a happening, featuring the creators of American jazz, the men who were playing when jazz was born, and are still playing the same music.

That music will fill Memorial Hall when the Percy-Sing Band from Preservation Hall performs at 8 p.m. Wednesday. Admission is \$2.50.

Jazz is one of those indescribable phenomena in music, combining several worlds of influence. It grew out of tribal dances from Africa and sophisticated Creole quadrilles, spirituals, ragtime and blues, and the unforgettable funeral marches that were long a part of the old French quarter of New Orleans.

Deceptively simple in technical terms, jazz is complex in performance, emphasizing ensemble playing, but with each instrument heard individually.

It may start out with trumpet playing melody, clarinet countermelody, the trombone coming in on harmony and piano playing the chords the whole thing is based on, with the rhythm section holding the tempo.

Then suddenly the melody moves to a different instrument, and the players improvise, changing everything.

Jazz, the original American music, is the soul and purpose of Preservation Hall, which for the past seven years has been sending bands on tour across the country, bringing the music of old New Orleans to audiences far from Basin Street.

Home base is an old building on Peter Street, at the entrance to the French Quarter. The building has been a house, a tavern, an artists' haven and an art gallery. In 1952 Preservation Hall offered rehearsal hall space for jazz musicians.

Eventually the music took over the building, the gallery moved next door, and Preservation Hall became a living museum of American jazz. Today it also houses a school for young performers.

An atmosphere of turn-of-the-century jazz clubs is scrupulously maintained. Benches line the picture-covered walls, and



Trumpeter Percy Humphrey appears with the Percy-Sing Band Wednesday night.

kitchen chairs are moved in when more seats are needed. At the front door stands a wicker basket "kitty" for the donations that are the only admission charge.

And nightly, the music of old New Orleans plays on.

Coles continue tradition of Seagrove potters

by Elizabeth Leland
Staff Writer

A low brick building near Seagrove, N.C. stands against the gray sky of a chill December morning. Inside, row upon row of pottery—glasses, mugs, plates, casseroles, pots—line the top of rough plywood tables. Outside, 10 carloads of prospective buyers wait for the door to open at 7:30.

By 7:45 the two-room building, home of Cole's Pottery, is alive with talk, the rustling of newsprint and the clink of pottery. What were well-stocked tables 15 minutes earlier, are virtually bare now.

Nell Cole Graves, her brother Waymond Cole and his daughter Virginia Shelton hurriedly wrap individual purchases of pottery in newsprint. These purchases—\$5e, \$1.54—are of an art that the Cole family has maintained for seven generations—that of pottery making.

7:30 a.m. usually finds Mrs. Shelton and Mr. Cole behind the potters wheel while Mrs. Graves mans the shop alone; except during the Christmas rush, when the three members of Cole's Pottery are all needed to make sales.

"Virginia spends most of her time at the wheel," Mrs. Graves said, while swallowing two anacin—"I need them (the anacin) to face the customers," she laughed. "I sometimes work at the wheel, though, making my specialty—wine glasses."

She and her brother are the fifth of seven generations of Coles in the pottery business. Their father, J.B. Cole, opened Cole's Pottery in 1923. He taught the craft to his two children. "I started making pots when I was 13-years-old," Mrs. Graves said. "Waymond was already making pots when I was trying to learn."

As father passed the art on to his son, so Waymond taught Virginia Shelton (his daughter) the traditional techniques of pottery making. Likewise, Mrs. Shelton taught her son—the fourth member of the Coles' team.

There are several steps in the process. Clay brought from Johnston County is beat in a

ball mill with stones. Excess water is removed by pressing the clay into sacks. The clay is then worked into manageable pieces for turning on the electric wheel. The use of the electric wheel instead of a kick wheel is the only modern technique the Coles have added to their pottery making process.

After completed pieces have hardened, they are fired in kilns. After a second firing, the pots are ready for sale.

The Coles are but one of many families of

Their own pottery, Jugtown, Inc., has achieved national fame for its replication of the craft. Those potters inspired by the Busbees cater mainly to a local clientele.

What distinguishes Cole's Pottery from the many other area potteries is that it is a little more isolated, a lot more rustic and its wares are considerably less expensive.

Driving to Cole's Pottery is a trip into beautiful rural North Carolina. After following secondary roads deep into the

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potters who ply their trade in this remote corner of the state. The local traditional of pottery-making began in 1750. In that year two potters from Staffordshire, England settled near Seagrove where they made utilitarian articles—jugs, jars, bowls, churns and candlesticks.

By the end of the 19th century about 50 potters were making a substantial income from the sale of jugs to distilleries and bar rooms. But when prohibition became law in 1908 most of the potters were forced to close shop.

The skilled craftsmanship of the potter was rescued from extinction by a Raleigh artist, Jacques Busbee, and his wife. The couple revived the dying tradition and encouraged local potters to return to their wheels.

heart of the country, the driver turns onto a pine-shaded gravel road. This road winds through cow pastures, opening into an area surrounded on one side by a stream and more pasture, on the others by low-level buildings. These buildings are where the pottery is made and sold.

The pottery at Cole's is not as refined as that of some of the other local potters. The buyer might not find a perfect match—the dishes have slight variations in shape—and the pottery might not be as authentic as the traditional forms of Jugtown. The Coles experiment with new styles as well as the traditional; but each piece of pottery has an individual beauty and artistry.

An air of the past lingers in the simplicity of Cole's. It is a past that is alive in each article turned on the wheel.

Correction

The February 14 story "Pizza—the stomach is a lonely hunter," was written by staff writer Bill Sutherland. The DTH regrets the omission of Sutherland's by-line.

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MISCELLANEOUS

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