



# The Riverwalk Jazz Project

Documenting the Roots of America's Music, 1900-1950

## History of the Organization

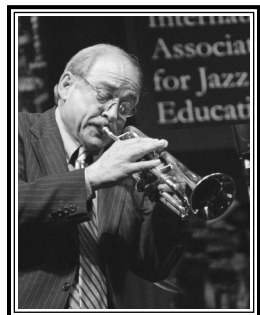
*Riverwalk Jazz* was created in 1989 as a project of Texas Public Radio. A National Advisory Board was created to assist with *Riverwalk Jazz* fund-raising and promotion. Beginning with three broadcast specials on 60 stations, the series grew from 26 broadcasts per year in 1997 to 39 broadcasts per year in 1998, and expanded in 1999 to a 52-week hourly series.

On February 1, 2005, *Riverwalk Jazz* began operating as a stand-alone 501(c)(3) not-for-profit Texas corporation. The mission of the project has remained the same, but in addition to the production and distribution of the radio series, the scope of the project has broadened to include the development of an education outreach curriculum for children.



## Radio

***Riverwalk Jazz* is an educational resource.** The radio series draws on the resources of universities and libraries around the country, and scholars and archivists worldwide contribute to the body of knowledge in the series. Each program focuses on the contribution of a particular composer, performer or an era in jazz history, bringing the music to life through live performance combined with historical recordings.



The program series captures the fast-disappearing generation of jazz greats in new music performances and interviews exploring the almost-forgotten era of music they helped define. Jazz icons showcased in live performance on the series include: Lionel Hampton, Benny Carter, Jay McShann, Harry "Sweets" Edison, Doc Cheatham, Milt Hinton and Joe Williams. The Jim Cullum Jazz Band and guests such as Dick Hyman, Shelly Berg and Duke Heitger demonstrate the evolution of jazz styles and entertain with anecdotes in interviews with co-host David Holt. The distinguished Broadway and Hollywood actor Vernel Bagneris offers portrayals of historical figures including Sidney Bechet, Jelly Roll Morton, and Duke Ellington in original scripts based on oral histories.

Entertainment writer John Berlau wrote in the May 21-27, 2006 *American Profile's* "Jazzing the Airwaves:" "Cullum's popular radio program, along with the work of top-selling jazz artists like trumpeter Wynton Marsalis and singer Diana Krall, is among the factors credited for a renewed interest in classic jazz throughout the country."

## The Jim Cullum Jazz Band

"At the program's core," according to NEA Jazz Master Nat Hentoff, "is The Jim Cullum Jazz Band, which plays swinging traditional hot jazz." Jim Cullum has made the study of classic jazz his life's work. Now in its 45th year, his band is a seven-piece, acoustic ensemble utilizing historically-accurate instruments and instrumentation: cornet, clarinet, trombone, guitar/ banjo, piano, bass and drums. Bill McFarlin, Executive Director of the International Association of Jazz Educators notes: "The Jim Cullum Jazz Band is one of the nation's premiere ensembles."

## Education

Currently in production, The Jim Cullum Jazz Video Curriculum, teaching 2nd through 5th graders to play jazz on the recorder, is to be implemented in the YMCA of San Antonio after-school programs.

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