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BENNY GOODMAN AND THE SWING ERA

The dawn of the swing era falls on 1935–1945. Many researchers call the year 1934 the starting point of the popularity and, literally, the general fascination with swing. In March of the same year, Benny Goodman and his brother Harry organize a highly professional team, and at the end of the year they regularly appear on the radio in the "Let's Dance" program. With the help of a wealthy businessman, a big fan of jazz, Goodman orders an arrangement from Fletcher Henderson, so daring compared to the sweet pieces of the time, which is noticeably different in a harder sound (sound), that Fletcher himself and his orchestra did not dare to play them. But the public still paid attention to Goodman's orchestra. In the future, this determined the orchestra's playing style. Inspired by his success, he decides to go on a tour of the United States. At the end of this not very successful tour, as it turned out later, the musicians arrived in Hollywood, in the most famous Palomar dance hall on the West Coast, where a huge queue was already waiting for them. The performance began with popular tunes, but the audience remained indifferent to them. And then Goodman decided: to die - so with the music, but with the one they wanted to play [1].

And real jazz came, which captivates true connoisseurs of this musical direction to this day. Therefore, the relevance of the article is undeniable.

The purpose is to showcase the focus and drive of Goodman's compositions, which shaped the swing era, giving the clarinet a new leading role in jazz and popular music that spanned a generation.

Benny Goodman (1909–1986) did for the clarinet what Louis Armstrong did for the trumpet, giving it a virtuoso leading role in the jazz ensemble. Benny's Band was the most popular dance band of the swing era, making some 5,000 commercial recordings and selling more than 100 million records, the definitive statement of 20th century American pop culture. During the swing era, Benny was the golden and undisputed "King of Swing".

With his nimble, melody-focused improvisations, Benny rarely played an improvised passage the same way twice with total confidence. In his youth he created an incomparable clarinet style, stylistically drawing on the best elements brought from the north by the New Orleans clarinetists who moved to Chicago, adding his own amazing ingenuity and extraordinary precision. He was in numerous dance bands, put on gigs and recorded when he could, but mostly he acted on his own whims. By the early 1930s, Benny was just one of many hot jazz clarinetists working only on the outskirts of Chicago and New York, though he was certainly one of the most talented.

In 1934, Goodman thought seriously about performing jazz. He landed a "hot music" part on the network radio program "Let's Dance," which was aired on over 50 stations. It was his first national show and "the biggest thing that ever happened to me,"

Benny said. He remembered dance music sizzling on Saturday night broadcasts from coast to coast. Because of the three-hour time difference, his eastern evening shows were aired in prime time west of the Rocky Mountains [2].

In the Pacific time zone, Goodman was considered the breakout star of Let's Dance. His band was wildly popular among teenagers and the favorite soundtrack for Saturday night dance parties in front of the radio lounge. But neither Benny, nor the group, nor the booking agencies realized how popular his music was in the West.

His legendary breakthrough performance took place at his final destination in Los Angeles, at the popular Palomar Ballroom. On a rather serendipitous national tour in 1935, Goodman and his band were met with wild enthusiasm on the West Coast, playing to large and enthusiastic crowds in San Francisco and Oakland. Much to their surprise, they had tremendous success with the Jitterbug and Lindy-Hoppers young dancers at The Palomar Ballroom. There were many other very good white dance bands in that era, especially the Casa Loma Orchestra. But Goodman's particular brand of Swing suited youth tastes more precisely than its competitors, embodying the loyalty and love of a generation whose courtship rituals centered on the Fox Trot [2].

By 1937, Goodman's orchestra and combo were the biggest thing in the music business, selling millions of records and playing prestigious venues. The press dubbed him the "King of Swing", although he initially disliked the moniker. His orchestra appeared in Hollywood films, and Benny's autobiography, *Kingdom of Swing*, was published just a month before his 30th birthday.

One possible clue to understanding Benny's rise was that he performed with female singers. He employed this strategy early on, starting with the then very attractive jazz-influenced Helen Ward. Her warm, direct manner was very popular with college-aged men. She was followed by singers Helen Forrest, Martha Tilton and Peggy Lee, who had huge hits with Goodman.

It should be noted that the arrangers at that time were decisive for the success of swing orchestras and, in particular, for Goodman directly. The circle of talented arrangers that emerged faced the new and difficult task of organizing musical forces and Benny hired the best. With little or no formal training, these newly recruited scribes invented a score technique and arrangement of four to five saxophones, three to four trumpets, two or more trombones, and four rhythm instruments, typically piano, guitar, bass, and drums. The most skilled arrangers managed to preserve the melodic themes and motifs moving in the instrumental parts of the orchestra, offering shifts in timbral contrasts and highlighting the soloists, while maintaining the rhythmic drive. Skillful mastery of these delicately interconnected tasks was (and remains to this day) not an easy task [3].

Benny commissioned song charts from the most creative and exciting new composer/arrangers, black and white: Jimmy Mundy, Edgar Sampson, Spud Murphy, Benny Carter and Mary Lou Williams. First among them were Fletcher Henderson and his brother Horace, who charted some of Benny's biggest hits, including "King Porter Stomp."

Goodman's arrangers found the perfect balance between dance beats, jazz improvisation, tightly written ensemble work and that elusive but essential ingredient called swing. His orchestra was staffed with the finest musicians who could play

complex written arrangements with precision, yet unleash fiery solos on demand. At its best, swing was more than just good dance music with catchy beats. It was jazz with increased harmonic complexity and greater visceral kinetic impact than had previously been seen in popular music [3].

Goodman continued to perform and record throughout the 1940s and 1950s, energetically restarting orchestras, groups and combos, commissioning new music and touring the world. The Benny Goodman Story, a biopic released in 1955, was a major motion picture and notable for its star-studded roster both on screen and on the soundtrack. Little appreciated, however, is that he also became a renowned classical virtuoso on the clarinet, performing with the best symphony orchestras and chamber music ensembles, while simultaneously pursuing an instrumental career beginning in the 1940s.

In the decades that followed, Goodman gave private lessons and collaborated with Yale University, where he held workshops for jazz musicians and performers. Today, their archives contain a huge archive of scores, works, awards, ephemera and audio recordings donated by him. From this legacy, the Yale Library Benny Goodman Project has produced a dozen excellent audio anthologies.

Thus, Benny Goodman, born to poor Jewish immigrants in Chicago, formed his own band, and thanks to his brilliance, he shaped an entire era - the swing era, giving the clarinet a new leading role in jazz and popular music that lasted an entire generation. And who to this day rightfully holds the honorary title of the undisputed "King of Swing".

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