

Panel 01

Panel 02

# Playing the Changes: The Life and Legacy of Milt Hinton a traveling exhibition of the Oberlin Conservatory Library

## ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

### On the Road with Cab Calloway

In 1936 everything changed for Milt when he joined the world-famous Cab Calloway Orchestra. Cab's band did it all—holding residencies at New York's Cotton Club, playing on national radio shows, touring the country, and starring on the big screen.

Though they travelled on a private Pullman railway car and earned a great salary, the band still dealt with racism. Jim Crow was in full effect, and accommodations on the road were separate and anything but equal.

The Calloway band included some of the best players of the era: Dizzy Gillespie, Ben Webster, Chu Berry, and Illinois Jacquet, just to name a few. The musicians were stars, but by the 1950s big bands were losing their popularity, and Calloway was forced to break up his orchestra.

Milt returned to Queens, NY, where he and his wife had bought a home a few years earlier. With one brief exception, it would be decades before Milt would go back on the road.

*Background image:*  
Milt's weekly paystubs from Cab Calloway, 1947–1948

*Banner from left to right:*  
Three examples of Milt's touring schedule; two advertisements for Calloway performances; drink coaster from the Panther Room where Milt was performing, 1940s

### An Insider's Lens

Milt received his first camera as a gift in 1935, and he took over 60,000 photographs over the next six decades. His insider's view captured revealing moments about the life of a musician: on the road, in the studios, and in performance.

Milt Hinton, 1959  
Photo by Chuck Stewart, used with permission

Selections from the Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection  
Oberlin Conservatory Library Special Collections

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Panel 03

### Family Life

Milt first met Mona Clayton in Chicago in 1939 when she was singing in a church choir directed by his mother. The two quickly fell in love and were inseparable for the next sixty years. They became role models to many and were a legendary couple in the jazz community.

Mona began traveling with the Calloway Orchestra in the early 1940s—the only musician's wife or girlfriend to do so. She was a trusted confidant and a reliable financial advisor for many band members.

She also handled the family's finances, tracked Milt's freelance work, coordinated public relations, and even drove Milt to gigs (Milt stopped driving after a terrible car wreck he was in as a teenager). And she did it all while caring for their daughter Charlotte, who was born on February 28, 1947.

Milt also reconnected with his father in the 1940s. Though the two never grew close, they met up a time or two while Milt was on tour and exchanged a few letters over the years.

*Letter from Milt to Mona, 1940s*

*Letter from Milton Dixon Hinton to Milt, 1948*

*Upper banner from left to right:*  
Milt with Charlotte, ca. 1948; telegram from Titter to Milt, 1939; letter from Milt to Charlotte, ca. 1950; Milt Dixon Hinton (Milt's father), 1940

*Lower banner from left to right:*  
Mona, ca. 1936; newspaper clipping, 1946; Mona with Charlotte, ca. 1951; two telegrams from Milt to Mona, 1947; Milt and Mona's house in Queens, NY, ca. 1960

*Letter from Charlotte to Milt, 1954*

*Fate Mona Hinton With Baby Shower*

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Panel 04

[fifty black-and-white photographs by Milton J. Hinton, along with ten freestanding biographical panels]

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# Playing the Changes: The Life and Legacy of Milt Hinton

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## ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

### Touring with Louis Armstrong

Though Milt cherished time with his family in Queens, work was scarce as he established himself in the New York scene after years on the road. So when Louis Armstrong came calling in 1953, Milt took the job even though it meant going back on the road. He signed a one-year contract but stayed only eight months, touring with Armstrong across the U.S. and Japan.

An opening in the house band for the Robert Q. Lewis television show in New York motivated Milt to leave the Armstrong tour. Not even the discouragement he received from Joe Glaser, Armstrong's intimidating manager who was known to have ties to organized crime, could keep Milt from returning home to his wife and child.

Upper banner from left to right: Milt's datebook for January 15-18, 1954; Milt's publicity photograph for the Armstrong band; concert program selections for Armstrong's 1953-1954 Japan tour, including Milt's biography

Lower banner from left to right: Milt's reply to Joe Glaser's January 22 letter; Milt's datebook for January 27-30, 1954; January 15, 1954 telegram from Mona to Milt with advice on leaving the Armstrong band

Letter from Dr. A.J. Warren offering medical justification for Milt leaving the Armstrong band

Joe Glaser's response to Milt's initial request to be released from his contract

First page of a January 30 letter from Milt to Mona regarding leaving the Armstrong band

Selections from the Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection  
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Panel 05

### In the Studios 1

It was a chance encounter with the entertainer Jackie Gleason—someone Milt worked with when he was just starting out—that gave Milt his first big break in the New York studios. As a result, he became one of the few African Americans to play in the studios on a regular basis. His exceptional professionalism, musicianship, and reliability made him a trusted resource, and soon he helped other aspiring musicians like George Duvivier, Clark Terry, and Richard Davis follow in his path.

Milt's datebook for March 4-7, 1959; on March 4, in addition to a 2 pm session with Neil Sedaka that resulted in his top-ten hit 'Oh Carol' and a big band gig at 7 pm, Hinton recorded at 11 pm with Billie Holiday—one of her last studio sessions before her untimely death on July 17

LP cover for Billie Holiday, recorded with Milt in March 1959

Banner from left to right: Magazine clipping of Milt with Jackie Gleason, 1955; Milt with Homer Mensch, Jack Lesberg, and unknown bassist, New York City recording studio, ca. 1975; three of Milt's cabinet cards, 1950s; members of a string section, New York City recording studio, ca. 1962

Richard Davis, ca. 1965; and George Duvivier, ca. 1964; New York City recording studios, photos by Milt Hinton

Bernie Glow and Clark Terry, New York City recording studio, ca. 1956, photo by Milt Hinton

Milt with bass and camera, New York City recording studio, ca. 1955

### Seeing Sound

One of Milt's favorite times to take photographs in the studio was during playbacks since he could put his bass down and think about framing the shots. Many of his most revealing photographs were taken during these breaks, where Milt created insightful portraits of performers hearing and thinking about their own music.

Selections from the Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection  
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Panel 06

[fifty black-and-white photographs by Milton J. Hinton, along with ten freestanding biographical panels]

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# Playing the Changes: The Life and Legacy of Milt Hinton

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## ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

### In the Studios 2

By the mid-1950s Milt was a first-call bassist in the New York studio scene. He played on more than a dozen record dates each week, documenting them all in small datebooks he always carried in his shirt pocket. From historic sessions with jazz's greats to playing with some of pop music's biggest stars to making movie sound tracks and commercial jingles, the studios provided a range of musical opportunities for Milt.

Between sessions, when there was time to kill, Milt was a regular at Beefsteak Charlie's, a hangout for studio musicians in New York's midtown. On a rare day off, the hangout shifted to Milt's basement, where musicians ate together, made music, and recorded interviews with each other reminiscing about their experiences in music.

**Background image:**  
Milt with Brooke Benton and Dinah Washington, New York City recording studio, photo by Chuck Stewart

**Upper banner from left to right:**  
LP covers for recordings featuring Milt as a leader: Basses Loaded (1955), Milt Hinton (1955), The Rhythm Section (1956), and Bosses with Blue (1976)

**Lower banner from left to right:**  
Beefsteak Charlie's, New York City, 1958; Milt with Hank Jones and Osie Johnson, New York City recording studio, ca. 1957; Milt in his basement, ca. 1957

Selections from the Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection  
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COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Panel 07

### After the Studios

By the late 1960s studio work had dropped off in New York City, so Milt went back on the road. When he wasn't on tour with Barbra Streisand, Pearl Bailey, Paul Anka, or Bing Crosby, he gigged around New York at spots like Michael's Pub and Zinno's. He was a regular at Dick Gibson's famous jazz parties in Colorado, and he played with all-star lineups at top jazz festivals around the world.

Wanting to share his unique place in jazz history, Milt began teaching at Hunter College and Baruch College in the early 1970s, and he was often a guest artist at institutions across the country. As a 70th birthday present, family and friends set up an educational fund in his honor that provided scholarships to aspiring student bassists.

**Background image:**  
Collection of ephemera from festivals and concerts Milt played, 1970s-1990s

**Upper banner from left to right:**  
Programs for Milt's concerts at the Kennedy Center, 1971; the Newport Jazz Festival, 1972; the Bern International Jazz Festival, 1981; with the Syracuse Symphony, 1982; and Michael's Pub, 1974 and 1984

**Lower banner from left to right:**  
Article on Milt teaching at Hunter College, 1978; labels for Milt's reel-to-reel concert recordings of the New York Bass Violin Choir, 1970-1973; advertisement for a Bass Violin Choir concert, 1970; Milt's datebook for April 9-12, 1973

Selections from the Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection  
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Panel 08

[fifty black-and-white photographs by Milton J. Hinton, along with ten freestanding biographical panels]

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# Playing the Changes: The Life and Legacy of Milt Hinton

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### ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST

## A Respected Elder Statesman

By the 1990s Milt was revered as an elder statesman in jazz. In addition to seven honorary doctorates, he received awards from local, state, and national organizations—too many to count. The 1993 National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Master Fellowship was a highlight: the highest honor the U.S. could bestow on a living jazz musician.

Invitations to events at the White House were a regular part of Milt's life, and his musical contributions were memorialized through countless tribute concerts. When Milt died at the age of 90 on December 19, 2000, letters poured in from dignitaries, fans, and protégés whom Milt had inspired over the years. More than 2,000 friends and family attended the memorial service celebrating his life.

Milt's Honorary Doctorates from De Paul University, 1991; William Paterson College, 1987; Skidmore College, 1990; and Berklee College of Music, 1996

Milt receiving an Honorary Doctorate from Baruch College, 1996

At Milt's Place

The name of Milt Hinton, the late celebrated jazz photographer and bass player, lives on in the neighborhood of St. Albans, in Queens Borough President Helen Weisman. Hinton's grandfather, born in 1888, lived in the neighborhood. Hinton's grandfather, born in 1888, lived in the neighborhood. Hinton's grandfather, born in 1888, lived in the neighborhood.

Newspaper clipping from the renaming of 113 Avenue in Queens as Milt Hinton Place, 2002

Upper banner from left to right: Milt with President Jimmy Carter at the White House, and related letter; 1978 White House invitation from Presidents Nixon and Reagan; 1969 and 1981; Milt and Mona with President and Mrs. Bush, 1989; birthday greeting from President Clinton, 2000

Lower banner from left to right: Rehearsal for Milt's 80th birthday celebration at the JVC Jazz Festival, New York City, 1990; Tribute letters from bassists John Clayton, Rufus Reid, and Ray Brown

Selections from the Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection  
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**OBERLIN**  
COLLEGE & CONSERVATORY

Panel 09

## Milton Hinton's Legacy

Milt gave so much to so many. His music brought beauty and joy to those around him. His photographs documented an insider's view of his life in music. His devotion to educating young musicians helped pass the torch to the next generation.

Since 2014, Oberlin College has been proud to contribute to Hinton's legacy. Four of Milt's basses are now regularly played at Oberlin, and thirty-four of his most acclaimed photographs are in the collection of Oberlin's Allen Memorial Art Museum. The Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection in the Conservatory Library enables scholarly study of Milt's life and supports Oberlin's Milton J. Hinton Institute for Studio Bass.

Milt once described his work as an educator as "a solemn duty." As he put it, "I've always tried to help young people. If someone wants to improve, if they have a sincere desire to learn, I've always tried to be there to give them whatever I can." Through the expansive legacy he leaves behind, Milton John Hinton will continue to do just that.

Front cover of Milt's autobiography *Playing the Changes*, 2008

Advertisement for *Keeping Time*, an award-winning documentary film about Milt's life, 2002

Concert program from the Milton J. Hinton Summer Institute for Studio Bass, Oberlin College, 2014

Background image: Milt teaching in Indiana, January 1985

Upper banner: Milt and John Clayton performing at the Young Bassists' Concert, Interlochen, 1993

Lower banner: Promotional materials for exhibitions and books featuring Milt's photographs, 1965-2002

Selections from the Milton J. and Mona C. Hinton Collection  
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Panel 10

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**



Photo 01: Lammar Wright, Mario Bauza, Foots Thomas, Eddie Morton, Cab Calloway, and Bennie Payne, train station, Atlanta, c. 1940



Photo 02: Danny Barker and Dizzy Gillespie, train, c. 1940



Photo 03: Cab Calloway with winner of the Cab Calloway Quizzicale, Florida, c. 1941

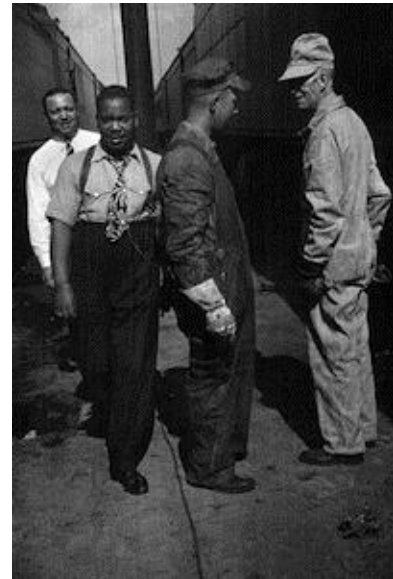


Photo 04: Quentin "Butter" Jackson, Jonah Jones, and railroad workers, New Orleans, c. 1941

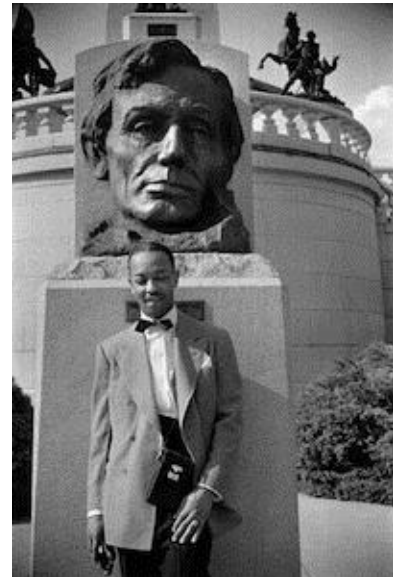


Photo 05: Danny Barker, Springfield, Illinois, c. 1945

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**

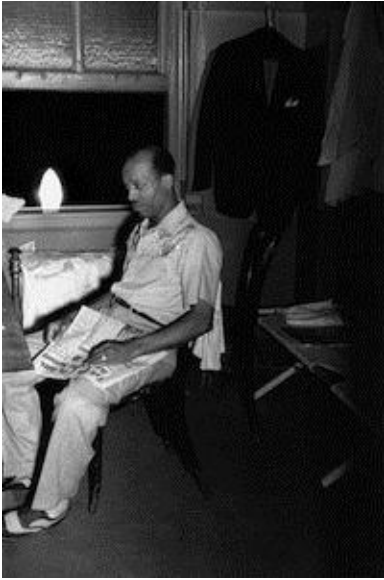


Photo 06: Jo Jones, backstage, New York City, c. 1951



Photo 08: Cab Calloway and Charlotte Hinton, Florida, c. 1951



Photo 07: Doc Cheatham, Mona Hinton, and Butch Thompson, Sir John Motel, Miami, c. 1950

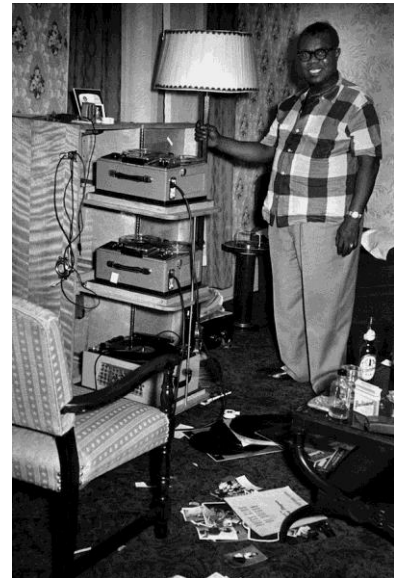


Photo 09: Louis Armstrong, hotel room, Seattle, 1954

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**

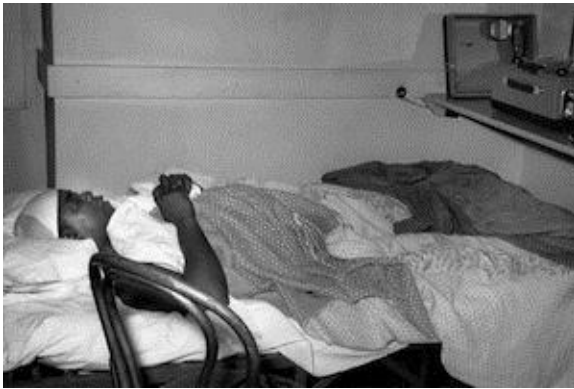


Photo 10: Louis Armstrong, hotel room, Seattle, 1954



Photo 11: Cannonball Adderley, recording studio, New York City, c. 1958



Photo 12: Bill Evans and Art Farmer, recording studio, New York City, c. 1959

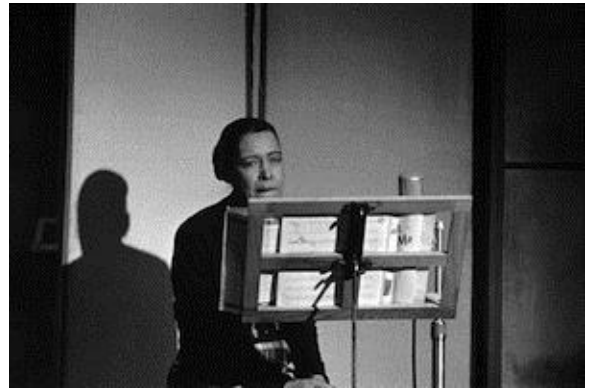


Photo 13: Billie Holiday, recording studio (her last recording session), New York City, 1959



Photo 14: Dinah Washington, recording studio, New York City, c. 1963



Photo 15: Danny Barker and Hot Lips Page (foreground) and other patrons including Barney Bigard, Willie "The Lion" Smith, Claude Jones, and Wellman Braud, Beefsteak Charlie's, New York City, c. 1954

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**



Photo 16: J.J. Johnson, Osie Johnson, and Miles Davis, recording studio, New York City, c. 1956

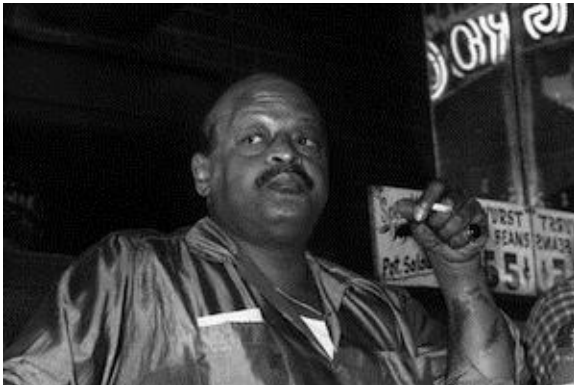


Photo 17: Ben Webster, Beefsteak Charlie's, New York City, c. 1960



Photo 18: Sam Cooke and Ernie Wilkins, recording studio, New York City, 1960



Photo 19: Joe Williams and Jimmy Jones, recording studio, New York City, c. 1960



Photo 20: Aretha Franklin, recording studio, New York City, c. 1961



Photo 21: Eddie Bert, Charles Mingus, and George Wein, rehearsal, New York City, c. 1963

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**



Photo 22: Marion Evans and Tony Bennett, recording studio, New York City, 1967



Photo 23: Barbra Streisand, recording studio, New York City, c. 1964



Photo 24: Willie "The Lion" Smith and Duke Ellington at the piano (Duke's 70th birthday party), the White House, Washington, D.C., 1969



Photo 25: Dick Gibson and jazz party musicians, including Larry Ridley, Ray Brown, Alan Dawson, Butch Miles, Kenny Davern, Bucky Pizzarelli, and Gus Johnson, Denver, 1972



Photo 26: Dizzy Gillespie, Grande Parade du Jazz, Nice, France, c. 1981



Photo 27: Sarah Vaughan, Pearl Bailey, and Ella Fitzgerald, rehearsal, television studio, Pasadena, 1979

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**



Photo 28: Wynton Marsalis, Frank Wess, and Todd Williams, rehearsal, Lincoln Center Classical Jazz Orchestra, New York City, 1989



Photo 29: Benny Carter and Marion McPartland, on tour in Europe, 1991



Photo 30: Roy Hargrove, recording studio, New York City, 1991

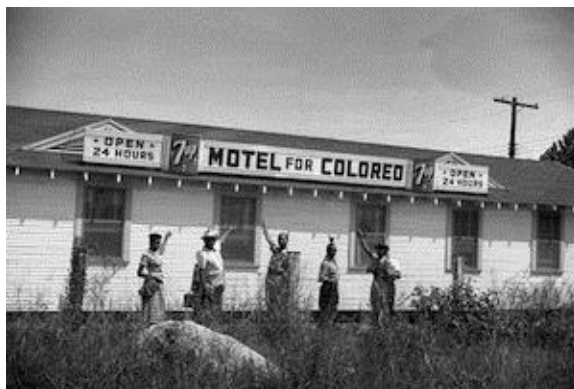


Photo 31: Mona Hinton, Ike Quebec, Doc Cheatham, Mario Bauza, and Shad Collins, Georgia, c. 1950



Photo 32: Jonah Jones and "Holmes" (Cab Calloway's chauffeur), Little Rock, Arkansas, c. 1941



Photo 33: Billy Taylor, Nat Hentoff, and Eddie Bert, recording studio, New York City, c. 1954

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**



Photo 34: Quincy Jones, recording studio, New York City, c. 1959



Photo 37: Ron Carter and Bob Cranshaw, recording studio, New York City, c. 1971



Photo 35: Jimmy Cleveland, Gerry Mulligan, Bill Crow, and Art Farmer, television studio, New York City, 1958



Photo 38: Bill Lee, Richard Davis, Ron Carter, Michael Fleming, and Lisle Atkinson, rehearsal, New York Bass Violin Choir, New York City, 1970



Photo 36: Benny Goodman, concert rehearsal, New York City, c. 1956



Photo 39: Branford Marsalis and Jeff "Tain" Watts, recording studio, New York City, 1988

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**



Photo 40: Eubie Blake, concert celebrating the 25th anniversary of the Newport Jazz Festival, the White House, Washington, D.C., 1978



Photo 43: Freddie Green and Jo Jones, television studio, "Sound of Jazz" rehearsal, New York City, 1957



Photo 41: Teddy Reig, Red Allen, Pee Wee Russell, Joe Wilder, Count Basie, and Lester Young. Background: Ed Jones, Rex Stewart, and Jo Jones, television studio, "Sound of Jazz" rehearsal, New York City, 1957



Photo 44: Thelonious Monk, Ahmed Abdul-Malik, and Count Basie, rehearsal, television studio, "Sound of Jazz" rehearsal, New York City, 1957



Photo 42: Lester Young, Earle Warren, Coleman Hawkins, and Gerry Mulligan, television studio, "Sound of Jazz" rehearsal, New York City, 1957



Photo 45: Jimmy Rushing, Scoville Brown, Maxine Sullivan, Joe Thomas, Coleman Hawkins, Oscar Pettiford, Marian McPartland, Emmett Berry, Dizzy Gillespie, Thelonious Monk, and Rex Stewart, "Esquire" magazine gathering, Harlem, New York City, 1958

**ILLUSTRATED EXHIBITION CHECKLIST**



Photo 46: Front row: George Wettling and Bud Freeman. Second row: Jo Jones, Gene Krupa, Sonny Greer. Third row: Miff Mole, Zutty Singleton, Red Allen, and Taft Jordan. Top row: Dickie Wells, Buck Clayton, Benny Golson, Art Farmer, Hilton Jefferson and Art Blakey, "Esquire" magazine gathering, Harlem, New York City, 1958



Photo 47: Lammar Wright, train, c. 1940

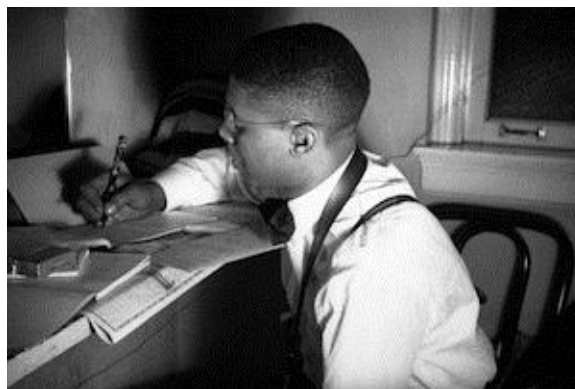


Photo 48: Walter "Foots" Thomas, backstage, New York City, c. 1940



Photo 49: Kai Winding and Tony Scott, recording studio, New York City, c. 1954



Photo 50: Willie "The Lion" Smith, Dizzy Gillespie, Eubie Blake, and Herman Leonard (with cameras), Newport Jazz Festival, Rhode Island, 1971