

### THE GEORGIA MELODIANS

Of the several obscure bands recorded by the Edison Company, the Georgia Melodians is one of more than passing interest, and not only for the quality of its recorded output. It has long been thought the band was no more than a "studio group", formed for recording purposes only. Far from it; they enjoyed steady work in New York for most of 1924 and had been in existence for about a year prior to that. The full story of the band is not yet known. A note in the Edison files states they were from Savannah, Georgia and the joint leaders were Ernie Intelhouse and Hill Hutchins. After two weeks of full-time rehearsal during the Spring of 1923, they took up a residency at a North Carolina coastal resort for the summer season, playing in a ballroom at nights and giving concerts at the beach on Sunday afternoons. After this engagement, the band played a series of college dates while working their way up the coast to New York, where they arrived in about February, 1924. The band broke up (for reasons unknown) towards the end of 1924, and they had apparently left the Strand Roof before Christmas of that year. Their last booking was a New Year's Eve Ball at the Hotel Alamac in New York. The Edison file for a recording by Dave Harmon's Orchestra on January 5th, 1925 carries a brief note "...the Georgia Melodians, for whom you selected this title is disorganized and owners out of town." Despite the break-up of the band, Edison continued to issue records under their name until April, 1926. Why he did so is not clear, but presumably Edison dealers requested further recordings by the group.

### FLETCHER HENDERSON

Fletcher Henderson led the most commercially successful of the African American Jazz bands of the 1920s. The smooth sound of this orchestra gave birth to the Swing style of the next decade.

Henderson was born in 1898 to a middle class family, went to College and earned a degree in chemistry from Atlanta University. He then moved to New York in 1920 intending to do post graduate work there while working as a chemist, but he found that jobs were closed to him because of his race. He instead found work demonstrating sheet music for W.C. Handy music publishing company. He left that company to become a manager at the Black Swan Recording Company, and organized a band to support Blues singer Ethel Waters. In 1922, Fletcher led a band at the Club Alabam, which later moved to the Roseland Ballroom where they stayed for the next ten years.

In 1924 he hired the up-and-coming trumpet player Louis Armstrong importing him from Chicago, where he had been playing with King Oliver's Creole Jazz Band. The Orchestra continued to tour and record until 1939 when it disbanded and he joined Benny Goodman Orchestra as pianist and arranger. This was the first time that a white band hired a black musician to appear on stage with an orchestra. Goodman even used the same arrangements that Henderson's Orchestra had used. The band went on to become one of the most popular of the Swing bands. In 1947, Henderson left Goodman's band to tour as an accompanist for Ethel Waters. In 1950 he suffered a stroke and was never able to play again. He died two years later at the age of 54.

### JOE HERLIHY

Though barely remembered today, the Joe Herlihy Orchestra is only known to record collectors and as with many dance orchestras of the 1920s, very little seems to have been written about them, even at the time of their popularity. The beginnings of the band seems to be in Boston around 1917. In the early 1920s, they were playing at the Roseland Jardin de Dance, and the Maplewood Pavillion in Maine. From 1923 through 1927, the Orchestra played several ballrooms, and Summer Dances, including a brief stay at the prestigious Roseland in New York. The band was probably heard by talent scouts for the Edison Company during their engagement there. In June of 1927, they were at the Edison Studios to cut the title heard here and another side ("Cornfed"). Despite the rarity of this recording today, it must have sold reasonably well enough as the band was called back to the studios in August and September to do some more work. The last listings for the band in the Edison Recording files show a date set for October 3 with a notation: "Could not get proper results - no masters made." The band was re-scheduled a week later where two titles were cut, but both were rejected. From this point on, the band appears to have gone back to working in the Boston area, and according to Joe Moore, probably disbanded sometime in 1929. Out of the great lineup of musicians, Jerry Colonna was the only one of the Herlihy personnel who seems to have gone on to greater things, as he was later well-known as a comedian.

### LOPEZ & HAMILTON - THE KINGS OF HARMONY

One does not normally associate Vincent Lopez with Jazz, but at the beginning of his career, he co-led with clarinetist Billy Hamilton a successful five-piece Jazz band that played at the Tokio Cafe in New York City. Emulating the Original Dixieland Jazz Band, they recorded many fine selections for Edison including the one heard here, and "Dixieland One-Step" (which can be heard on the Document CD "Jazz and Blues on Edison Records - Volume One" DOCD-1103). Like The Frisco Jazz Band, their popularity was short-lived...their last Edison Recordings being issued in 1921. Vincent Lopez; however went on to have a long and successful career as a musician, leading a band and writing arrangements well into the 1950s. Lopez died in 1975 at the age of 76.