

guest trumpeter got his shiny new silver horn out, pulled up a chair right next to Jim, and began playing loud, "Slickieland" stuff with his elbows almost hitting Jim in the face. The guy then moved his chair a couple of feet in front of Jim (just so the crowd could know how special he was), and played more loud jive, now wholly upstaging Jim. Jeff and I saw blood in Jim's eye, and saw Jim strap on the poker face that Jeff and I had seen a few times in similar situations. We both laughed nervously, as we knew this guy was in trouble.

The guy played the last notes of his meaningless solo, and Jim came in like a house on fire. I mean, like Wild Bill Davison on steroids. He played some incredibly high notes, all hit right on the nose (a la Roy Eldridge in his prime) and swung so hard the crowd automatically quieted down. Jim played a couple of beautifully-executed be-bop phrases that I had never heard come out of his horn, and finished his solo with a few arabesques worthy of Armstrong himself. In short, Jim handed the other trumpet player his head on a platter. The guy expected to show the American cornet player a thing or two, and suddenly found himself in the ring with Joe Louis. It was kind of like that. Jim cleaned his clock, man.

The crowd yelled and screamed their approval, but Jim barely acknowledged it. He just reached down for his glass of beer, muttering something like, "maybe now we can get back to playing some music around here."

Just as in a hackneyed Hollywood movie, the other guy put his horn in his case, and slunk off into the night. I'd like to think he learned something that night about music, and camaraderie, and soul and real jazz, but perhaps all he learned was "don't ever mess with an American named Jim Goodwin."

I have a duplicate of a beautiful old publicity photo of another legendary cornetist: Bix Beiderbecke. Bix inscribed it to a fellow musician named "Les." He wrote, "To Les: Musically 'n' personally, I think you're the nuts, and that's no east of Buffalo stuff."

That's the way we all felt about Jim Goodwin, musically and personally. There was only one, and there won't be any more like him.

And that's for damn sure no "east of Buffalo stuff." 🎵

Dan Barrett
Costa Mesa, CA
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JIM

by Richard Hadlock

Jim Goodwin was special. His was a gift of extraordinary musical ability and inspiration, which he usually expressed on cornet but also, especially in recent years, on piano. He seemed not to care about reading mu-

sic, conventional instrumental technique, chord symbols, quality or brand of horn, show business devices, reproducing classic jazz works or looking properly buttoned and polished on the stand.

To play next to Jim in a jazz band was pure joy. His authoritative, swinging lead and endless stream of original, appropriate ideas made the rest of us perform better than we thought we could!

He was sometimes called Kid Goodwin. In some ways he was our Bix, our Django, maybe our Pee Wee Russell. He had quite a rebellious nature, leavened with warm humor, barely concealed beneath his cloak of old-time gentlemanly manners. (About the strongest four-letter word I ever heard him utter was "twit.") He played golf surprisingly well with only a three-wood and a putter, upsetting the polyester guys with 14 matched clubs who could do no better. He might very well show up at a somewhat intellectual gathering wearing his James Joyce-type glasses, but there was no glass in them.

Jim was a free spirit with words as well, improvising on his typewriter as if it were a horn. Here's a bit of his tale (written to me on Christmas Day, 2007) of trying to connect with Bigfoot:

All attempts to attract the creatures failed. I tried not only the call of the fobbing elf-skinned flap dragon, but also those of the puny milk-livered mammet, idle-headed lewdster and ultimately, the supposed Sasquatch favorite -- the cry of the unmuzzled sheep-biting ratsbane.

Jim turned down a lucrative offer to tour with Freddy Martin, explaining to the shocked leader that he preferred staying in his basement room, drawing cartoons and playing old 78 RPM records. He also rejected straw hat Dixieland bands and he had very limited regard for blue blazer-and-tie jazz party all-stars. Yet, they all, from fundamentalist revivalists to open-minded modernists, loved and respected Jim. His upbeat outlook on life and his stunning talent would light up the room every time.

Jim knew he was special. Once, when asked to take part in a European festival which would reconstruct some of the music of trumpeter Red Allen — a longtime Goodwin hero — Jim declined. "There must be some mistake," he said. "There is already a Red Allen. I'm Jim Goodwin."

And so he was. 🎵

Richard Hadlock
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The next issue of the Cricket will have more about Jim Goodwin from some other special musician friends.