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“Yamaha trombones are the most flexible, finely engineered and well-made instruments I have ever played. They allow my musical voice to be expressed beautifully every time I have a trombone in my hands.”

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World-renowned Bass Trombonist

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Take it, Big Chief!
An Appreciation of Russell Moore
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Take It, Big Chief!

Nobody saw it coming. The Beatles had arrived in the United States on February 7, 1964, riding a wave of unprecedented popularity. For fourteen weeks, one of their singles secured the number-one spot on *Billboard*’s chart: “I Want to Hold Your Hand” followed by “She Loves You” and “Can’t Buy Me Love.” The last thing John, Paul, George, and Ringo were doing was looking over their shoulders at a 62-year-old trumpet player whose career, some felt, was waning.1

But on December 3, 1963, Louis Armstrong and the latest incarnation of his All Stars entered a recording studio in New York City to record two songs for Mickey Kapp’s Kapp Records. Armstrong had not made a recording in over two years and Kapp was actually the fifth label that Armstrong’s manager, Joe Glaser, had approached to make the recording. Kapp took a chance with Armstrong and an even bigger chance with a tune Glaser wanted recorded, the title song from a musical that had not even made it to its Broadway opening, *Hello Dolly!*2

The release of Kapp’s “Hello Dolly!” single3 came on February 15, 1964, just a week after the Beatles’ now-legendary performance on the Ed Sullivan Show (February 9), and it entered *Billboard*’s single chart at number 75, benefiting from the opening of *Hello Dolly!* at Broadway’s St. James Theater in New York a few weeks earlier on January 16. On May 9, the unthinkable happened: Louis Armstrong’s “Hello Dolly!” pushed “Can’t Buy Me Love” out of *Billboard*’s number-one single spot, making him the oldest performer to secure *Billboard*’s top single ranking.

The surprising success of Armstrong’s “Hello Dolly!” single set off a scramble by Mickey Kapp to put together a full-length album in order to capitalize on its popularity. But that was easier said than done. Trummy Young, Armstrong’s trombonist since 1952, was exhausted from the grueling touring schedule of the All Stars and left the band after a concert in Puerto Rico on New Year’s Day 1964. Two weeks later, the All Stars were scheduled to play for four television appearances on the Mike Douglas Show in addition to maintaining a schedule of nightly stage performances; a new trombone player needed to be found quickly. In March, Armstrong was treated at New York’s Beth Israel Hospital for acute swelling in his right leg.4 But the band’s trombone chair was filled and Armstrong got back on his feet. Ten more tracks were recorded in Las Vegas on April 7, 9, and 11, 1964;5 and Trummy Young’s replacement was introduced on what became known as the *Hello Dolly!* album6 with the recording of Armstrong’s own composition, “Someday (You’ll Be Sorry).” As he finished up the song’s second vocal chorus, Armstrong is heard setting up a solo from his new trombone player, shouting, “...broken record... take it Chief, take it Chief, take it Chief, take it Chief, TAKE IT BIG CHIEF!”

With the help of trombonist Russell “Big Chief” Moore, the *Hello Dolly!* album rose to the number-one position on *Billboard*’s album chart on June 13 where it stayed for six weeks. Ironically, it was the original cast recording of *Hello Dolly!* that Armstrong and the All Stars knocked out of the top spot. “Big Chief” had made an impact and people were talking about him. Again.

*An Appreciation of Russell Moore*

by Douglas Yeo

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The area around the city we know today as Phoenix, Arizona, was inhabited in ancient times by indigenous people known as the Huhugam, or, as archaeologists call them, the Hohokam (“those who have gone before”). One group, the Akimel O’odham (“River People”), lived in the area around Arizona’s Gila River, successfully engaging in farming in the Sonoran Desert climate due to the regular flooding of the land by the river and development of an extensive irrigation system. Spanish colonists began having contact with these indigenous people by 1694 and they were dubbed “Pima.” This word was a corruption of the phrase that the Akimel O’odham would recognize today as “pi maach,” meaning “I don’t know,” which first was spoken in response to the Spanish by their O’odham relatives to the south in Sonora, Mexico.

The complex history of the conquest of this land first by Spain, then Mexico, and finally the United States is beyond the scope of this article. However, the confinement of Native Americans to reservations consolidated those populations in defined areas and dramatically changed their way of life. This process began for the Akimel O’odham in 1859 with the establishment of the first reservation in Arizona, the Gila River Indian Reservation (now the Gila River Indian Community). For these people, the change that had the greatest impact was the upstream damming and diversion of Gila River by white settlers as early as 1871 that deprived the reservation and its people of the water that was needed to continue their prosperous, ancestral work as farmers.

It was there, in an “olas kih” (a small, round house made of mud, willow and arrow weed grass), in a village called Gila Crossing, in the shadow of the Sierra Estrella—the mountains the Akimel O’odham call Komatk Doag (Komadk)—that Russell Moore was born on August 13, 1912. The native names of his parents, José (often called Josiah) Newton Moore (whose father was Josiah “Red Arrow” Moore) and Amy “Rose” Bending Moore, are no longer known. The reservation had been Christianized many years earlier by Catholic and Presbyterian missionaries and English names were the norm for members of the Community at that time. Russell Moore joined his older brother, Clark Newton (1898–1988), and sister, Florence Lee (1907–1954), at home; his younger brother, Everett Newton, was born eight years later. Two other siblings, Agnes (1900–1917) and Emmaline Newton (born 1914–1924) died at young ages.

Russell remembered being fascinated by music at an early age:

I've always been musical since first awakenings when I was about six years old when I used to go to an old man by the name of S-komad on the reservation. He was in his nineties, and a bunch of us kids would bring different gifts like maybe a sack of beans, corn, tobacco, and we'd go over and listen to him sing the chants of the Pimas . . . And to this day, in all these years, I can still hear old S-komad laying in his house on a blanket and treating us to his chants and his stories of Indian folklore. And that was my first awakening of music in my soul.

With no electricity on the reservation, radios and record players were unknown. Live music, whether in the form of homemade pipes and flutes like those that Russell Moore made himself, or the playing of the St. John’s Mission School band on the reservation, was an integral part of the Community’s musical life. In 1923, Russell attended Phoenix Indian School where, inspired by the playing of the Mission School band, he learned to play trumpet.

The death of Russell Moore’s father on July 4, 1924, caused a crisis in his family, and Moore and his younger brother, Everett, were sent to live with their uncle and aunt, William T. and Marie Moore, in Blue Island, Illinois. It was while living in this suburb on the south side of Chicago that William Moore, who worked for the telephone company but was a music teacher and bandleader as well, taught both brothers to play various instruments including piano, bass, horn, euphonium, and drums. Russell evidently kept up his piano playing and was fairly well accomplished. Clarinetist
an Appreciation of Russell Moore

Joe Daresbourg, who played with Moore in Louis Armstrong’s All Stars, remembered, “He was also a pretty good piano player, something like Meade ‘Lux’ Lewis.”14

While living in Blue Island, a mixed community of white, Latino, and African Americans, Russell Moore had his first encounters with racial prejudice. “I began to realize the prejudices that people have against one another,” he said. “I became aware of it and I didn’t try to be any different from what I was. My Indianness never left me.”15 During his life, Moore was color blind, and he moved, lived and worked comfortably in multi- and mono-racial musical groups. Nowhere was this more evident than in many of the bands in which he played—including the Ernie Fields Orchestra and Louis Armstrong Orchestra—where he was the only non-African American in the group. His great-nephew, Jacob Moore (grandson of Russell Moore’s brother, Josiah), related a story about this, as told to him by Russell Moore’s wife, Ida:

He was playing with Louie Armstrong’s band in the South during the Jim Crow era, and the story was that some military white guys came up to Russell during a break in the show and said, “What are you doing playing with these niggers?...” Russell said, “Come back after the show and I’ll tell you.” The way the story was told, that given a chance to respond, Russell started throwing blows with these guys and got into a fight with them and got thrown into jail and Louie Armstrong had to bail him out. The story is that this got back to Harlem, and when Russell Moore got back to New York from the tour he was treated like royalty because he earned a reputation among all of the blacks and musicians in the clubs in Harlem for fighting on behalf of blacks down in the South. The rest of the story was that Nipsey Russell had a club in Harlem and that whenever Russell walked into the club, Nipsey would always announce him and say, “Russell Moore has entered the building!”16

In 1929, having attended Blue Island’s Seymour Junior High School, Russell Moore left his uncle’s home and moved to Chicago where, in his words, he “roamed the streets trying to find myself and [figure out] how to get back to Arizona.” There he lived a challenging, peripatetic life, working odd jobs on Chicago’s south side. At this time he heard Louis Armstrong while standing on the sidewalk outside the Savoy Ballroom; at 16, he was too young to enter the building! At this time he heard Louis Armstrong while standing on the sidewalk outside the Savoy Ballroom; at 16, he was too young to enter the building!17 Moore recalled that “at that time I was beginning to see the dawn coming up... hearing this trumpet blowing through the walls. It looks like the wall’s gonna crumble.” That experience changed him: “When I heard Louie, that was the most beautiful—[well], I was more determined to be a jazz musician.”18

Musically inspired but without any money or immediate prospects, Russell Moore, like the Prodigal Son, returned to Chicago. His uncle bought Moore a train ticket so he could return to Arizona with the advice for him to continue going to school. The train’s first stop in Arizona was Tucson and Moore settled there for part of a semester, attending Tucson High School from September 9th to sometime in December 1929 where he learned to play the trombone because the school’s band did not have openings for any other instrument.19 At this point, determined to be a jazz musician, Moore applied to and was accepted to the Sherman Institute Indian School in Riverside, California, in 1930 where he played in the school band; his student records indicate he played “Elmer Miller’s old trombone.”20 He also played piano and accompanied singers at the school and in church;21 performed with local Mexican bands for dances, and graduated as the school’s “up and coming jazz man of the year” in 1933.22

Playing football at Sherman Institute resulted in a nerve injury to Moore’s face; he then developed his distinctive embouchure where he played out of the right side of his mouth.23 Trumpeter Henry “Red” Allen, who worked with Moore many years later and also positioned his mouthpiece on the side of his embouchure, recalled that Moore’s mouthpiece placement was anything but an impediment to his playing:

Those books, they say to play the trumpet one must place the horn right in the center of one’s mouth with so much upper lip showing here and so much bottom lip there. Well, that’s what I’ve read and while I have nothing against what it says, I know a trumpet player by the name of Oscar Celestin and a trombone player, Russell “Big Chief” Moore, who can only play their instruments from the side of their mouth—and they do pretty well at that.”24

Russell Moore stayed in the Los Angeles area after graduation, picking up work with various bands including the Jim Cruz Dance Band, the Max Melody Makers Band, and the Irving Brothers. His first big break came in 1935 when he joined Lionel Hampton’s band at the Cotton Club in Culver City. After Hampton disbanded his band and went to join Benny Goodman’s quartet in New York City, Moore stayed in Los Angeles—“Oh, Los Angeles was jumping during that era,” he remembered—until his money ran out and he returned to the reservation in Arizona. He latched on to Eli Rice’s Minneapolis-based band that was playing at the Riverside Ballroom in Phoenix and traveled with them through Texas and Louisiana. In 1937, after a dance in Monroe, Louisiana, the band returned to Minneapolis, but Moore stayed in Monroe where Oscar “Papa” Celestin’s band was playing.25 Ralph Berton related what happened next:

His luck was with him again: Papa Celestin’s Orchestra, from down in New Orleans, pulled into town for a gig at a local club, and Big Chief hung around there with his trombone case until Papa Celestin noticed him and invited him to sit in. When the band’s regular trombone player heard the Big Chief start to blow, he—in Chief’s words—“just sort of disappeared.” (“Maybe,” he adds charitably, “the cat was just homesick—I don’t really think I could have blown away anybody who was from New Orleans.”)26

Photo from the Douglas Yeo collection.

Sherman Institute Indian School, Riverside, California (ca. 1920).
Take It, Big Chief

Russell Moore remembered that Celestin’s trombonist told others what happened, that “when I got to New Orleans with Celestin, he said this big Indian guy, the Chief, drove that man out of Celestin’s band and run him back to New Orleans.” Moore was, indeed, a “big Indian guy,” and his weight and girth were frequent topics of discussion among colleagues and the media. Most sources have noted that his weight fluctuated between 250 and 350 pounds although Joe Darenbourg recalled, “The Chief didn’t really want to go on the road ’cause he was a little too heavy, it was uncomfortable for him to travel. He weighed like 350 to 400 pounds, believed in eating!” Wilbur “Buck” Clayton, who played with Moore frequently in the mid-1950s, said Moore was, “a big Pima Indian who made the trombone look small in comparison to his size.” Louis Armstrong biographer David Bradbury wrote, “[Armstrong] often looked frail next to his sidemen, particularly the enormous trombonist ‘Big Chief’ Russell Moore.” In writing about Moore’s appearance at Lou Posey’s “Frolics” in Columbus in 1953, Tom Harris described him as “the widest, thickest, heaviest Dixieland man to ever sound a blue note. In fact, The Chief is a ‘square.’ Anatomically, that is. He is little higher than he is wide, and his width doesn’t vary much over an inch from his shoulders on down.” The Toronto Star opened a 1960 article about Moore with, “Big Chief Russell Moore gets no argument when he describes himself as the biggest thing in Dixieland music. He weighs 340 [pounds],” and an advertisement for a concert in the Hartford, Connecticut, referred to, “The Talk of New York—Big Chief Russell Moore—300 Pound Trombone Sensation.” Whatever his weight, Russell Moore cut a striking figure. While at the Phoenix Indian School, he got the nickname “Muscle Roar,” a play on his name, but it was certainly appropriate for a youngster already big for his age. The name for which he became known, “Big Chief,” came when he was in New Orleans:

Well, most Indians that attain a certain amount of fame, things like that, they always called them “Chief.” They don’t know your name but they know you’re into—“Hey Chief, you know, that’s how—“Big Chief,” that’s how I was always known.

Others used Moore’s nickname as a humorous way to back out of trouble:

During the 1950s, while [saxophonist Jerry Packtor] was playing with Lester Lanin’s Orchestra, the band received an admonition from Lester about smoking. Jerry told

Russell Moore’s weight certainly would have made travel a challenge—on one occasion, members of Sidney Bechet’s band traveled to a concert by plane but Moore chose to travel by train—and it is no surprise that Moore suffered from diabetes. The Akimel O’odham historically have had a high number of obese members who have diabetes and this was a contributing factor to Moore being legally blind near the end of his life.

Despite the difficulties Russell Moore faced while traveling, he logged thousands of miles with bands during his career. From New Orleans he found his way to New York City where he logged thousands of miles with bands during his career. From New Orleans he found his way to New York City where he gigged out of the Rhythm Club in Harlem and worked with house bands and at taxi dances in Newark. In 1939, trombonist and bandleader Ernie Fields, an acquaintance from New Orleans, invited Moore to join his orchestra as lead trombonist and pianist, traveling first to Philadelphia, then to Chicago and ultimately to their base in Oklahoma. Moore then spent part of 1941 in Dallas and Houston working with vocalist Alberta Hunter and the Don Purcell Orchestra, only to be lured away to Kansas City to join Harlan Leonard and The Rockets where he took over the chair of trombonist Fred Beckett who had left the group to join Lionel Hampton’s band. While in Kansas City, Moore came to know saxophonist Charlie Parker, and when Leonard relocated The Rockets to California in 1943, Moore found himself once again back in Los Angeles. Leonard’s band played the Lincoln Theater and Moore came in for high praise for his work playing “It’s Time to Jump and Shout” despite reviewer Sam Abbott’s racist tone:

Russell (Big Chief) Moore, a 250-pounder, takes honors here, going to B-flat two octaves above middle C on trombone. General band work and Big Chief’s scalping of the tune put the sepians in the aisle.

When Harlan Leonard broke up his band in Los Angeles, Noble Sissle approached Russell Moore to join his orchestra. Sissle took the band up the west coast to San Francisco, Portland, Seattle and British Columbia before the group fell apart in St. Louis. It was there in late 1944 or January 1945 that members of Louis Armstrong’s Orchestra heard Moore playing with the Jeter-Pillars
Russell Moore played with the Armstrong Orchestra—a full-sized big band in which Moore played lead trombone—from January 1945 until it was disbanded in July 1947. He made over two dozen recordings with the group, and the Orchestra had an appearance backing up Billie Holiday on “The Blues Are Brewin’” in the movie *New Orleans* (1946). In what would be a favor paid forward, Moore recommended bassist Arvell Shaw—they had met earlier in St. Louis—to Louis Armstrong, and Shaw joined Armstrong’s Orchestra shortly after Moore joined the group. Nearly two decades later, Shaw would return the favor that led to Moore’s most celebrated musical moment.

After Armstrong’s Orchestra dissolved, Moore joined soprano saxophonist Sidney Bechet, who wanted a trombonist to front his quartet along with Sammy Price (piano) and Kansas Fields (drums). Moore was ambivalent about the possibility, and described Bechet’s perseverance:

“That’s how I got to traditional jazz because it was Sidney Bechet who hired me without even thinking. He didn’t know that I don’t know how to play traditional jazz and he came to me and said, “How would you like to work with me?” So I told him that I didn’t know traditional jazz like he did. “That’s all right, I like your tone. While I’m playing, I’ll give you your notes.” Which he did. He’s so great, Bechet is. Experienced. And he’d be playing “Musk rat Ramble” [and] he’d be giving me my notes while he’s taking off. That’s how great he was.”

It was Bechet who arranged for Russell Moore to take part in the 1949 International Jazz Festival at the Salle Pleyel in Paris, a seminal concert that featured players from the “hot” (traditional) and the new “cool” (bebop) schools of jazz playing. Moore was a last minute addition to the group of Americans that were invited to the Festival, after boogie-woogie pianist Pete Johnson was unable to attend. Bechet handed Johnson’s plane ticket to Moore and said, “Chief, I don’t know how much money they’re going to give you, but take the job because when you get to Europe you’ll be stamped—you’ll gain a lot of prestige going to Europe. Especially Paris.”

Moore—who received billing in the Festival program just under Bechet and Charlie Parker and above Miles Davis—played with Bechet and trumpeter Oran “Hot Lips” Page in a combo that included Bechet, Page, Moore, Don Byas (tenor saxophone), George Johnson (alto saxophone), Bernard Peiffer (piano), Jean Bouchety (bass), and Roger Parabouschi (drums). They played several sets at the Festival including the opening numbers on the final concert on May 15, 1949. Moore was the only trombonist to play the Festival’s finale, a “Farewell Blues” where Bill Coleman (trumpet), Page, Bechet, Davis, and Parker had solos. Russell Moore is heard playing several tasteful riffs while backing up the soloists with appropriate style.

While they came from and represented two very different jazz worlds, Russell Moore spent time at the Festival with the 28-year-old Charlie Parker—as mentioned previously, the two had worked together in Kansas City several years earlier—and offered Parker encouragement before his first appearance:

Anyway, I had finished my set with “Hot Lips” Page and Don Byas and there’s a bar down [in the] basement under the Salle Pleyel where the Festival was and I’m down there and I’m listening to Sidney Bechet hold that audience spellbound and all the noise that came in there and I’m down there having a beer and I’m talking with Charlie Parker. Charlie was almost in tears when he says to me, “I can’t follow that old man. Listen to the people upstairs. Man, he should close the show. I shouldn’t close the show, he’s the main man here. I mean, he’s been here before and he should close the show, I don’t want to go up there.” I said, “Now, Charlie, you have your own thing, you play your thing. That’s what you’re contracted to do.” He said, “Yeah, I know Chief, but I don’t like to do it . . .”

I said, “No, Charlie, do your own thing. I love the way you blow, now you get yourself straight and go out and blow. So finally Bechet was finished and they’re waiting for Charlie Parker. So he said, “Okay, Chief, here I go. I don’t know what’s going to happen, but I’m to blow like you said.” “Go ahead, Charlie. Just think of our old days in the Kentucky Tavern in Kansas City. Remember those days, Charlie?” He said, “Yeah, Chief. Okay.” He went upstairs. He played, Charlie played and he sounded great.
Paris opened more doors for Russell Moore, and upon returning to the United States, he embarked on a regular but exhausting schedule of concerts and tours with groups out of New York City, playing with Bechet, Lester Lanin and his Society Orchestra, Wilbur “Buck” Clayton, Milton “Mezz” Mezzrow (born Mesirow), Willie “The Lion” Smith, and Henry “Red” Allen among many others. He toured Italy with Frank Sinatra, and quipped, in a letter to a friend, “Sinatra was only so-so in our Italy tour. My greatest reception was Milan and Rome. While F.S. sang sweet songs, I broke up the joint with ‘Saints’.” Returning to France, he recorded an LP with the Moustache Jazz Seven on Pathé Records (1953) that was fronted by François “Moustache” Galepides on drums, and two live tracks with “Buck” Clayton and “Mezz” Mezzrow for an extended-play 45 RPM disc on Vogue Records (1953); both album covers featured caricatures of Moore wearing feathers and quasi-Native American garb.

These albums are important not only for the fact that they contain some of Russell Moore’s finest playing. Their cover art stands as a reminder of the complex, changing attitudes of western culture toward Native Americans. Moore thoroughly embraced his nickname, “Big Chief,” and was proud of his Pima heritage. Just before and during his 1953 trip to Europe, he wore an Indian headdress for publicity and news outlet photos, cheerfully mugging for the camera as he managed his Native American identity with humor. When asked at that time to come to England to play some concerts, he told his friend and Downbeat magazine editor, George Hoefer, that the promoter wanted him “to go as an act and wear feathers so I told him, ‘of course, anything for a buck.’” It seems, though, that 1953 was a turning point for Moore when it came to “wearing feathers.” Having established himself in the jazz scene and at the height of his musical game, he seems to have walked away from the stereotypes, and the tendency of others to parlay his tribal roots into a caricature on their terms eventually irked him. These French album covers from the 1950s are, today, considered to be insensitive and demeaning to some Native Americans. On the cover of his first solo album, released in 1973, Moore is shown wearing a suit and tie as he holds his trombone. Ralph Berton put this in context:

“The portrait of Moore by Phil Stein that adorns this album was a source of particular pride to Moore, in sharp contrast to what Capitol Records would have insisted on if they’d released the album: the Chief in corny “warrior” regalia, complete with the stereotype feather-headress, which the Chief felt as a vulgar insult to his dignity as a jazz musician.”

While in New York City, Moore met Ida Powlless; she was a member of the Oneida Indian Nation from Wisconsin and later became a schoolteacher. The two were married on February 3, 1956, in Midlothian, Illinois, and settled in New York City. Later, the couple adopted a Tohono O’odham brother and sister, Randall and Amy. Because of his ever-increasing high profile as a Native American jazz musician who was playing with well-known groups, Moore began taking tours of indigenous communities in Alaska,
South Dakota, Oklahoma, Kansas, Arkansas, and back to Arizona that were sponsored by the National Conference of American Indians. He spoke to and performed before groups of children on reservations, always encouraging them to stay in school, to be proud of their tribal heritage, and to recognize the possibilities of their future.51

Louis Armstrong and Russell Moore kept in contact during the years after the breaking up of Armstrong’s Orchestra in 1947. That friendship led to Moore’s most celebrated moment, joining Armstrong’s All Stars in 1964:

Whenever Louie went to New York, I’d always go to see him and there was a song that he played that he wrote called “Someday.” And Louie knew that I loved “Someday,” and every time I’d go to where he was playing, he’d always tell the musicians, “There’s the old Chief. Let’s play ‘Someday’ for the old Chief.” And he played “Someday.” At that time Trummy Young was with him [playing trombone with the All Stars]. This is a few months later that I get a call from Arvell Shaw who was with Louis and, “Chief, Chief” so he said, “Go to [Armstrong’s manager Joe] Glaser, they want you in the band.” I said, “Oh, they do, how wonderful, that’s nice.” “Go to see Joe Glaser?” I said, “What about Trummy, isn’t he with you any more?” He said, “Trummy is in Hawaii, he left for Hawaii, he wants to go home. He didn’t give us a notice,” and this and that. So I was thinking about the time that I put Arvell in the band during the early years. So I think Arvell senses that—he kind of spoke up for me, “Let’s get Chief.”52

Russell Moore’s year with Armstrong was the zenith of his career. He joined the All Stars in Bermuda on January 2, 1964, and left in February 1965 after grueling tours to Hawaii, Fiji, New Zealand, Australia, India, Europe, Iceland, Japan, Puerto Rico, and the Virgin Islands. With the All Stars he played on the Mike Douglas and Ed Sullivan Shows as well as the Bell Telephone Hour, and Armstrong’s playful shout out to Moore on the Hello Dolly! album’s rendition of “Someday” brought Moore even more attention and acclaim. After leaving Armstrong, Moore returned to Lester Lanin’s Society Orchestra—Lanin gave him a raise to return to the group—and played at inaugural balls of Presidents Kennedy (1961), Johnson (1965) and Nixon (1969) as well as receptions in England surrounding the wedding of Prince Charles and Diana Spencer (1981).53 He began to cut down on touring, and centered his playing in and around his homes in Haverstraw and, later, Nyack, New York. This gave him easy access to New York City where he played at the Village Vanguard, and to Connecticut where he played with the Galvanized Jazz Band at the Millpond Tavern in Northford.

In 1967, Russell Moore returned to his roots in Arizona and was a featured artist at the first National Indian Trade Fair, sponsored by the Salt River Pima-Maricopa Indian Community. His concert, with Fred “Smack-a-Dab” Moore (drums), Rudy Rutherford (clarinet and baritone saxophone), and William “Budd” Blacklock (piano) was introduced by Will Rogers Jr., who at the time was special assistant to the Commission on Indian Affairs (1967–1969) during Lyndon Johnson’s presidency.

Russell Moore released two LPs of his playing in the 1970s; both were produced by Phil Stein. The first, Russell “Big Chief” Moore’s Pow Wow Jazz Band, was recorded at the Village Vanguard in New York City on April 19, 1973, and features Moore in a small combo; 1500 copies were made. Among the tunes on the album is Armstrong’s “Someday,” complete with Moore doing some “skat” singing in tribute to his friend. The second, Russell Moore Volume II, was released in 1978 with a run of 500 copies. It featured live performances recorded between 1953 and 1974 in Paris, Syracuse, and New York along with several studio tracks that did not fit on his earlier solo album; some had been recorded in 1963 for a Capitol Records album that was never released. The Galvanized Jazz Band released a compact disc featuring Moore on trombone and clarinetist Joe Licari; the disc consists of live performances with the band from 1976 and 1981 and Moore also sings on most tracks. A visit to England in October 1981 to take part in concerts
organized by trumpeter Keith Smith—billed as “The Wonderful World of Louis Armstrong”—was Russell Moore’s last trip abroad; he became ill and was hospitalized, missing several concerts. The tour reunited Moore with other alumni of the All Stars including his friend Arvell Shaw as well as Dick Cary (piano), Michael “Peanuts” Hancox (clarinet), and Barrett Deems (drums). Fittingly, one of his last public performances occurred on March 4, 1982, at the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., where Moore took part in a national telecast, “Night of the First Americans.” A late addition to the program’s lineup, he played his own composition, “Chant for Wounded Knee;” The Washington Post called it one of the show’s best moments. While being assisted from the stage by Sammy Davis Jr., Moore received a standing ovation from the audience that included Vice-President and Mrs. George H. W. Bush.

On December 15, 1983, Russell Moore, suffering from emphysema and complications relating to diabetes, collapsed at home and subsequently died; he was 71 years old. Many media outlets, including The New York Times, ran an obituary for Moore. His funeral at Nyack’s First Presbyterian Church (now the Nyack Center) included a jazz band of old friends he had worked with over the years including Joe Licari (clarinet), Ed Polceer and Fred Vigorito (cornet), Herb Gardner (piano), Jack Purcell (guitar), and Buddy Christian (drums). The band followed Moore’s cortège to Oak Hill Cemetery in Nyack where he was buried under a simple headstone with his wife, Idá, called, “his time of quietness.” A month later, a tribute for Moore was held in New York City’s St. Peter’s Church. Rev. John Gensel—known as the “Pastor for New York’s jazz community”—presided over an event that included musical performances by a constellation of jazz players who had worked with Russell Moore. Many Native Americans were in attendance; some played traditional instruments or sang, and the American Indian Thunderbird Dancers and Singers performed as well. Tonya Gonnella Frichner, a member of the Onondaga Nation and a long-time advocate for rights of indigenous peoples, “gave an impassioned speech in a beautifully controlled, low, musical voice upon the need of us subsequent Americans not to forget the original ones and their place in contemporary society.” After the performance, Moore’s nephew, Josiah Moore, returned to Oak Hill Cemetery and “spread a jar of Gila River earth over Russell’s grave so that ‘Big Chief’ Russell Moore could have with him a small piece of the community that he called home.”

In his comprehensive survey of jazz trombonists, Jazz ‘Bones: The World of Jazz Trombone,’ Kurt Dietcher includes Russell Moore in his chapter titled “Stylists and Journeymen” along with Tyree Glenn, Vernon Brown, and Walter “Pee Wee” Hunt. Moore rose to the top echelon of jazz trombonists in the traditional, “hot” jazz style; a 1952 Downbeat headline read, “Chief Moore Now One of Top Dixie Trombone Men.” He was highly regarded by those who worked with him, and played with some of the mid-twentieth century’s finest jazz artists. His recorded legacy, most of which, regrettably, is out of print although selected tracks can be found on compilation CD reissues and YouTube, shows him to be not only a capable sideman but a reliable, idiomatic, and creative soloist. Dietrich writes, “[Moore] is shown to be a solid player in this tradition, with a pleasant round sound (that he is unafraid to put some edge on) and energetic style,” and trumpet Isadore “Monte” Easter, who worked with Moore in the 1930s in Los Angeles, described him as “always up-going and he was a very good musician.” Sidney Bechet biographer John Chilton said, “‘Big Chief’ Russell Moore hadn’t the guile or the contrapuntal sense of Vic Dickenson, but he was assertive and capable of creating exciting lip trills. On harmonized passages, he blended well with Bechet.”

A look at the evolutionary arc of Russell Moore’s trombone playing is instructive. The first known recording that features him as soloist is “Stardust,” performed with Louis Armstrong’s Orchestra at the Trianon Ballroom, South Gate, California in August 1945. Moore recalled that he first worked up the solo when he was with the Jeter Pillars Orchestra in St. Louis. Here he covers the range of the trombone, from A-flat up to a-flat2, with ease, inserting doodle-tonguing, lip trills, and tastefully playing around the melody. This can hardly be considered to be improvisation as we think of that term as used in jazz today; in fact, the solo originally may have been written out. As mentioned earlier, it was with Sidney Bechet that Moore developed his improvisational style and technique that would form the core of his playing for the rest of his life. By the time of Bechet’s October 1951 performances at the Storyville club in Boston, Moore was displaying confident, solid improvisation and he superibly played the role of co-equal with Bechet’s soprano saxophone. Nowhere is this more evident than their performance of “Royal Garden Blues” where Moore compliments and never overshadows Bechet but also exhibits a creative solo side that is miles removed from his work with Armstrong in 1945. In “Storyville Blues,” he employs a plunger to great effect in what would become part of his signature technique. Moore’s use of the plunger continued to develop over the years and was particularly creative on his several extant recordings of “Wabash Blues” (1953, 1964, and 1973) where he also employed a humorous doodle-tongue/growl that is virtually impossible to describe or duplicate. A 1952 performance of “Fidgety Feet” with trumpeter Henry “Red” Allen and his Guaranteed 100 Percent Pure Housewreckers shows Moore exhibiting tremendous creativity at a brisk tempo and perhaps his finest high range playing.

As mentioned earlier, Russell Moore, while in France in 1953, gave concerts and recorded an LP as guest artist with a band fronted by drummer François “Moustache” Galepides. In many respects this disc shows Moore’s trombone playing at its best. The opening track, “When the Saints Go Marching In,” begins...
with a trombone solo that has all of the superb technique required for an advanced Paris Conservatoire étude; Moore’s high range playing up to f2 is effortless and exciting, and “Saints” features his very best singing. Here, Moore is absolutely at the top of his game. At the same time, he gave concerts in Paris with clarinetist Milton “Mezz” Mezzrow at the Théâtre des Champs-Élysées—the same theater where Stravinsky’s Le Sacre du Printemps had been premiered in 1913—and two pieces, “When the Saints Go Marching In” and “Wabash Blues” appeared on an extended play 45 rpm disc. The album featured two tracks by drummer Arthur “Zutty” Singleton on the reverse side, and was released in several incarnations including one titled Wa-Wa Boom-Boom. This is the finest of Moore’s several recorded performances of “Wabash Blues”, given with exceptional creativity and superb control of the plunger.

Six of the tracks recorded by Russell Moore in 1963 at sessions in New York City for an unreleased album for Capitol Records—they are likely test pressings—were included on Moore’s 1978 compilation LP, Russell “Big Chief” Moore Volume II. The album contains playing that is quite different than his French recordings of many years earlier, and Ralph Berton, in his review of Russell “Big Chief” Moore Volume II, aptly said the album is “without any notable flights of invention or an imagination that ever transcended the conventional.”

Still, “Blues My Naughty Sweetie Gives To Me” stands out as Moore’s finest playing on the surviving Capitol session tracks, exhibiting a sweet sound, elegant phrasing, and pleasant double-time feel.

Russell Moore recorded four sides for Mercury in 1964 with Louis Armstrong’s All Stars in addition to the 10 tracks for the Hello Dolly! album. Moore’s Mercury solos are uneven; his solo on “Bye ‘n’ Bye” starts off rather tentatively before it hits its stride. However, his performance with the All Stars on The Mike Douglas Show—Moore’s first public appearances with the group—shows him in excellent form on “Wabash Blues.” His solos with the All Stars on the Bell Telephone Hour television show a few weeks later (see footnote 54) find him featuring a brash style that complements Armstrong’s full-throated playing, but it isn’t nearly as refined as his work ten years earlier with Bechet. Moore’s distinctive, wide jaw vibrato is in full play and these videos show he had a tendency to quickly moisten his lips with his tongue between solo licks.

By the time Russell Moore got around to recording his own solo album in 1973 his playing was showing noticeable changes. Still creative—his signature “Wabash Blues” solo is excellent—he confined his playing mostly to the middle register and no longer played at a blistering speed and in the upper register as he did for Bechet and Galepides. His own composition, “Chant for Wounded Knee,” accompanied only by light playing by Jackie Williams on drums, is not rooted in traditional Akimel O’odham song but creates a touching, evocative atmosphere. A compact disc of live performances from 1976 and 1981 with the Galvanized Jazz Band—these are Moore’s last recorded tracks and he often had to sit when he played—has him singing on nearly every track and includes another performance of “Someday.”

Even at this late season of life, Moore’s playing is engaging, and he was an excellent partner with Joe Licari and Fred Vigorito (cornet). By this time, Moore was using a King 3B “Concert” model trombone he acquired around 1975 in contrast to the King 2B “Liberty” model he used for most of his career.

As a trombonist, Russell Moore’s legacy is secure as a superb representative of the traditional style of jazz trombone playing. He emerged as a player at a critical junction in jazz history, as the new bebop path was challenging the traditional school of jazz. Moore remained true to his style while he respected others who chose a different way. He recalled his early days in Kansas City where, “Fats Navarro and J.J. Johnson would just stand by my side and hear me play. Now there’s two different highways, my way and their way. But I’ve always loved J.J.” Yet he was much more than a trombone player. He remains a hero to the Akimel O’odham people, who for many years sponsored a Russell Moore Music Fest in his honor. While he mostly let the trombone do his talking—David Martínez described Moore as “neither an activist nor an elder, neither a community leader nor a tribal politician”—he was fiercely proud of his O’odham heritage. He was passionate about reaching young Native Americans with a message of encouragement, challenge, and hope, and he never forgot where he came from. When he was in Arizona in December 1959 as a delegate to the 15th annual convention of the National Congress of American Indians, he visited his home reservation to play for and speak to students. A local reporter heard some of his message:

You are living the most important years of your lives. You are gaining knowledge through study. You are training for a successful life through practicing what you have learned. You are learning self-respect and respect for your fellow man so that you will live in harmony with all people. Harmony in living, as in music, brings happiness. I urge you to work hard to gain these things.

When he returned again to Arizona in 1967 to perform at the First National Indian Trade Fair, his concert program included a lengthy message to youth:

**You are living the most important years of your lives. You are gaining knowledge through study. You are training for a successful life through practicing what you have learned. You are learning self-respect and respect for your fellow man so that you will live in harmony with all people. Harmony in living, as in music, brings happiness. I urge you to work hard to gain these things.**
Indians—almost all Indians—have a natural musical talent, and I wish every Indian schoolboy and schoolgirl would think seriously about the study of music. It is a way of life—a happy way of life and a useful and productive one. Music is more than just a means of earning a living; it is a means of expressing one’s self and a means of becoming acquainted with other talented people, living and dead. For example, there is the old saying that classical music is the background to jazz. A good jazz musician knows the music—and the heart—of Bach and Beethoven, Mozart and Hindemith, Chopin and Sibelius. Music is a source of revelation—a means of understanding one’s self and a means of understanding one’s fellow man.

Russell Moore knew this happiness that music could bring. Certainly, his lifetime of playing concerts on the road brought its challenges and hardships, but those who knew him spoke often of his winsome sense of humor, deep sense of loyalty, and his friendly engagement. “He was one big fun old guy,” singer Jewel Brown remembered. “Big Chief was a great big ol’ guy . . . Boy, I tell you, he was something else. He was a big old bundle of fun.” “Monte” Easter, whose own nickname for Moore was “Papoose,” recalled, “Any time [Russell] had anything to say to me so far as playing is concerned, it was always encouragement. Constructive criticism. He gave me tips.” Moore’s effervescent sense of humor was evident on a performance of “Chinaboy” captured on his recording with the Galvanized Jazz Band. As clarinetist Joe Licari takes a solo, Moore shouts to the crowd, “Benny Goodman!” When Licari stops playing, he shouts to Moore, “What did you say?” To which Moore replied, “Bergdorf Goodman!”

Looking back at the challenges of his early life—he was born in the year that Arizona achieved statehood, and grew up at a time when, as Jacob Moore poignantly put it, his Tribe “had been recently politically, socially, economically and culturally devastated by the loss of their life-giving river”—it is no surprise that Russell Moore reflected on his career with gratitude and a sense of wonder. He told Joe Licari, “Look at me, I’m just an Indian off the Reservation and I got to work with the great Louis Armstrong.” Moore rose from his humble roots to take a place alongside some of the great jazz musicians of his time. He had credibility when he spoke to young Native Americans about the importance of hard work and making a difference, and he knew first-hand the difficulties that many of them faced. “I’d talk to the students about the famous Indians that made it,” he said, “and tell them ‘you can do it, too.’”

This, perhaps, is Russell Moore’s greatest legacy, as a selfless, generous man who cared deeply for others while using excellence in music to bring them joy. He is more than deserving of the exhibits that have featured his life and work, such as the one...
An Appreciation of Russell Moore

currently on display at the Musical Instrument Museum in Phoenix, and the permanent exhibit in preparation at the Huhugam Heritage Center in the Gila River Indian Community near Chandler, Arizona, that will feature more material than the temporary exhibit the Center mounted in 2013.92 We can hope that some of his best recordings will be reissued so his playing can be appreciated by a new generation of trombonists and jazz enthusiasts.

The importance of the musical legacy of Native Americans cannot be overstated. David Amram related words his uncle told him about the need for people to recognize the contributions of Native American music and musicians:

_ I may be the son of a junk dealer, and I know some of these spoiled brats call me the Jewish cowboy professor, but I learned more from the Indians I grew up with in New Mexico about life than any of these so-called intellectuals will ever know. I studied philosophy, and I was a damn good student. The top of my class. But my own life’s philosophy came from being brought up with Indians. They know what human existence is all about. And they are true artists in every sense. If you want to be a musician, David, you better learn about the first American music. The Indian people have the most beautiful variety._

_ And just the way they can survive and adapt and still remain Indians, no matter what they have to do to stay alive and feed their families, they keep their music alive and keep most of it to themselves. At the same time, they have been able to learn everyone else’s music. Did you know that two of the greatest jazz trombonists were Indians? Jack Teagarden and Big Chief Russell Moore. Remember their names._

Amram’s Uncle David was only half right about the heritage of two of the greatest jazz trombonists: Jack Teagarden was not a Native American.94 But his point is valid: Russell Moore was a jazz great, a true artist, a proud descendant of America’s First People, and one who became an important part of a new musical legacy in America, jazz. A poem attributed to the 15th century Acolhua poet and leader, Nezahualcoyotl, appeared on the cover of the program for Russell Moore’s memorial concert at St. Peter’s Church in 1984 and is an apt reminder of “Big Chief,” a man who meant so much to so many and who continues to inspire us today:

_ My flowers shall not cease to live;_
_ My songs shall never end;_
_ I, a singer, intone them;_
_ They become scattered, they are spread about._

Photo by Jean-Pierre Leloir.
Thank You

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Notes

3. Kapp Records (45 rpm) K-573
5. The liner notes for the *Hello Dolly!* album give the recording date for the Las Vegas sessions as April 18, 1964, but the “MCA Record Catalog,” considered to be more reliable, gives three other dates for the session. See: Jos Willems, *All of Me: The Complete Discography of Louis Armstrong* (Lanham: Scarecrow Press, 2006), 353–354.
6. Kapp Records KL-1364 and KS-3364; available now on MCA CD 088 112 4332. Personnel are: Louis Armstrong (trumpet, vocals), Billy Kyle (piano), Arvell Shaw (bass), Danny Barcelona (drums), Joe Darenbourg (clarinet), Big Chief Russell Moore (trombone), Glen Thompson (banjo/ guitar). On “Hello Dolly!” and “A Lot of Livin’ To Do,” Trummy Young replaces Moore and Tony Gottuso replaces Thompson.
7. Throughout this article, the terms “indigenous person,” “Native American,” “Indian,” “American Indian,” and “First People” are used when quoting primary source material and interchangeably within various historical contexts. Fiercely proud of his heritage, Russell Moore wholeheartedly embraced his nickname, “Big Chief,” and referred to himself as a Pima Indian. The United States government has retained the name of its Bureau of Indian Affairs and the National Congress of American Indians (NCAI) refers to itself as “the oldest, largest and most representative American Indian and Alaska Native organization serving the broad interests of tribal governments and communities” (ncai.org).
10. The generally received date of Russell Moore’s birth is August 13, 1912. However, records at the Sherman Institute Indian School, including his application to the School (in his mother’s handwriting) and his exit document from Sherman (in his handwriting) give other dates for his birth including June 13, 1911, August 10, 1912, August 12, 1912, August 12, 1913, and September 15, 1913. His birth certificate has not been located.
13. Russell Moore frequently talked about his year at the Phoenix Indian School, however, the National Archives at Riverside, California, where records of all Indian Schools in the United States are held, has no record of Moore attending the Phoenix School. If his memory of this was incorrect, he likely learned to play trumpet while living with his uncle and aunt in Blue Island, Illinois. Correspondence with James Huntoon, Archives Specialist, National Archives at Riverside, December 16, 2016. For a history of the Phoenix Indian School and a summary of the U.S. Government’s Indian School program, see: Robert A. Trennert, Sr., *The Phoenix Indian School: Forced Assimilation in Arizona, 1891–1935* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1988).
Notes

16. For Jacob Moore’s version of this story (told in the American South), see, Russell Moore: *A Jazz Legend*, www.youtube.com/watch?v=xZnix2cnA0U. For Joe Licari’s version (told as occurring in Europe during World War II which could not have been possible since Moore was not playing with Armstrong at that time and Armstrong did not tour Europe during the War) where Moore beat several sailors “to a pulp,” see: Joe Licari, The Invisible Clarinetist (Xlibris, 2004), 30–31.
17. Russell Moore remembered that he heard Armstrong at Chicago’s Sunset Café but Armstrong had left the Sunset Café by the end of 1927; he played at Chicago’s Savoy Ballroom from 1928 until he left Chicago for New York around May 1929. Correspondence with Ricky Riccardi, Director of Research Collections, Louis Armstrong House Museum, January 5, 2017.
21. An undated (ca. 1931) Student Record in Russell Moore’s file at the Sherman Institute comments on his piano playing: “Good at thumping out jazz or dance rhythms. For voice accompaniment work, too mechanical and unsympathetic. Resents instruction.” Yet his Sherman Institute Report of School Officials upon his discharge from the School in 1933 says, “This boy is a good piano and trombone player and has been called upon many times to exercise his talent.” Russell Moore file, The National Archives at Riverside, California.
31. Tom W. Harris, “Big Chief, Now at Frolics, Unique in World of Jazz,” [source unknown, ca. 1953], Russell Moore clipping file, Institute of Jazz Studies, Jazz Oral History Project, Rutgers University.
44. The finale from the Paris International Jazz Festival can be heard on *Miles Davis–Tadd Dameron Quintet: Complete Live in Paris 1949* (The Jazz Factory JFCD22882). The track is titled “Blues Finale.”
46. Letter from Russell Moore to George Hoefer (No date; probably written between June 6–10, 1953). Russell Moore clipping file, Institute of Jazz Studies, Jazz Oral History Project, Rutgers University.
47. *Surprise Partie au Palm Beach avec Moustache Jazz Seven*. Pathé 32 ST 1011. Recorded 1953, France. Personnel: François “Moustache” Delapèdes, drums; Guy Longon, trumpet; Bernard Zacharias, trombone; André Ross, tenor saxophone; Raymond Fol, piano; Aïk Bret, bass; Anita Love [AKA Anita Haubert], vocals; “Un Known Nobilad,” vibes; Russell Moore, trombone. *Wa-Wa Boom-Boom*. Vogue EPL. (45) 75955. Recorded March 1, 1953, Théâtre des Champs-Élysées, Paris, France. Personnel: Wilbur “Buck” Clayton, trumpet; Milton “Mezz” Mezzrow, clarinet; Russell Moore, trombone; Gene Sedric, clarinet and tenor sax; Red Richards, piano; Kansas Fields, drums.
48. These photos from 1953 that show Moore with a headress include one of him by Jean-Pierre Leloir outside the “Big Chief” store in Paris that was used in the liner notes for *Les Disques D’Or du Jazz*, Vogue Records DOV 19, a publicity photo of him returning from France on the Cunard Line’s *Queen Mary*, and a photo accompanying a newspaper article (unsourced) about his appearing at Lou Posey’s Frolics in Columbus, Ohio, where he is shown laughing with his trombone and a headress in his hand and the caption, “UGH?—Big Chief Moore, jazz trombone artist at Posey’s Frolics, has been off the reservation so long he’s forgotten how to wear a headress.”
49. Letter from Russell Moore to George Hoefer (No date; probably written between June 6–10, 1953).
51. For biographies of many indigenous musicians from the United States and


58. “Big Chief” Russell Moore and Joe Licari with the Galvanized Jazz Band! GJB 4/17/76. Recorded April and August 1976 and May 1981. Personnel: Fred Vigorito, cornet; Russell Moore, trombone and vocals; Joe Licari, clarinet; Bill Sinclair, piano; Art Hovey, bass and tuba; Ed Stockmal and Bob Bequillard, drums; Bill Lezotte and Joel Schiavone, banjo and guitar.


60. Correspondence with Elizabeth Staats, Archivist, George Bush Presidential Library, December 18, 2018. Some sources (including Martinez, 141, and Jean Nahomni Mani, “Remembering Russell ‘Big Chief’ Moore,” Gila River Indian News, Vol. 13, No. 8, August 2012, 16) have stated that President Ronald Reagan attended Night of the First Americans. However President and Mrs. Reagan were away from Washington, D.C., on March 4, 1982; they were celebrating their 30th wedding anniversary at their ranch near Santa Barbara, California. See: The Daily Diary of President Ronald Reagan, March 4, 1982. https://reaganlibrary.gov/digital/library/daily/daily/1982-03.pdf. For a review of the event that mentions Russell Moore’s contribution and states that he played “Just a Closer Walk with Thee,” see: Joseph McLellan, “ First American’ Celebration,” The Washington Post, March 5, 1982. While event organizers were pressured to remove references to controversial events such as the Wounded Knee massacre (1890) and Wounded Knee incident (1973), according to Jean Nahomni Mani—who saw the event—Moore played his own composition, “Chant for Wounded Knee.” See: Lois Romano, “The Indian Heritage: Concerns Over The Whole Story,” The Washington Post, March 5, 1982. Correspondence with Jean Nahomni Mani, February 22, 2017


65. David Martinez, “Living Large During the Jazz Age: ‘Big Chief’ Russell Moore, Pima Memories, and the Changing roles of American Indians in the Twentieth Century,” 140.


68. Kurt Dietrich, Jazz ’Bones: The World of Jazz Trombone,’ 120.


71. Masters of Swing: Louis Armstrong. Swing Mania CD 682470. The album, which features performances by the Armstrong Orchestra from 1944–1945, gives the trombone section for all tracks as Taswell Bard, Adam Martin, and Larry Anderson but that is incorrect. Trombone personnel for the Stardust recording was Russell Moore, Norman Powe, Adam Martin, and Larry Anderson. See: Jos Willems, All of Me: The Complete Discography of Louis Armstrong, 152.

72. Ron Welburn, Interview with Russell “Big Chief” Moore, transcript of tape 3, 47.


76. See footnote 47.


78. The Mike Douglas Show, Cleveland, Ohio, January 14, 1964.

79. See footnote 56.

80. See footnote 58.

81. Moore’s King 3B trombone has serial number 714967 (bell) and 7131 (slide); it is housed at the Huhugam Heritage Center, Chandler, Arizona. The whereabouts of his King 2B are not known.


85. Program for “Russell ‘Big Chief’ Moore and his Band in a Concert of Traditional Jazz: A Program for Indian Schools,” May 6, 1967, Salt River Indian Community, Arizona.


87. Peter Vacher, Swingin’ on Central Avenue: African American Jazz in Los Angeles, 173.

88. Author correspondence with Joe Licari, December 9, 2016.

89. Author correspondence with Jacob Moore, March 18, 2017.

90. Joe Licari, The Invisible Clarinetist, 32.


94. Information about Jack Teagarden’s family tree and background may be found at, “Was Jack Teagarden a Native American?” www.quora.com/ Was-Jack-Teagarden-a-Native-American.

95. Program, Memorial Benefit for Russell (Big Chief) Moore, St. Peter’s Church, New York City, January 22, 1984.