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## One Giant Leap for Fankind

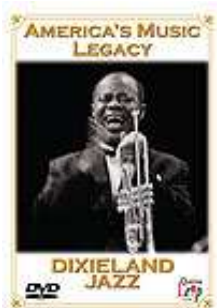
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15

## [America's Music Legacy: Dixieland Jazz \(DVD\)](#)

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By **Danny R. Phillips**



It has been said that Jazz is the only truly American music style. While other genres blend rhythm, tones, and instruments from other countries, Jazz—whether it be Davis, Coltrane, Armstrong, Hancock, Holliday, or Horne (or god forbid, Kenny G.)—was hatched, raised, nurtured, and perfected here within our shores.

Dixieland Jazz, a mash up of blues, ragtime, and other stylings is a perfect choice for the series *America's Music Legacy*; it has a rich, colorful history that is explored here by host Al Hirt, the Jazz trumpeter and Dixieland luminary. Much like the [Blues](#) installment of the this series, it includes live performances and is packed with clips of giants who have already left us: piano great Fats Waller, Louis Armstrong, and Eubie Blake.

The live performances jump off with *Touched By An Angel* alum Della Reese accompanying Mr. Hirt on a splendid version of “Man With A Horn.” The New Orleans Jazz All-Star Band blows out smoking renditions of “Tiger Rag,” “South Rampart Street Parade,” and of course, the classic “When The Saints Go Marching In.”

If you are familiar with the *America's Music Legacy* DVD series you will most likely experience déjà vu while

watching this one. There are several performances by jazz greats and lesser-knowns in a club with a rapt audience possibly comprised of actors. But there is a major difference in this installment. The performances stand apart from those on the *Blues* offering: there is life, excitement, and joy exploding from the performers. Della Reese belts out "Blue Skies" with a richness not lost on the viewer; Scotty Plummer's fingers move across his banjo strings like a hummingbird after ten espressos while jamming "Waiting For Robert E. Lee;" Scatman Crothers (the chef from *The Shining* for those that need a memory jogger) does a crowd pleaser with "The Gal Looks Good;" while several other players all bring their A games.

To my surprise, none of the performance here fall flat. Yes, the production, the clothes, the lighting, and graphics all scream to us, "Remember how bad the '80s looked?" but that isn't what *America's Music Legacy: Dixieland Jazz* is about. No, it ain't about being pretty; it's about showing those who may not be acquainted with the genre what it is and was all about: the joy and love of your heritage and the excitement that being part of a community can bring.

If that's what the filmmakers here were shooting for, then they hit the mark. *Dixieland Jazz* is truly enjoyable. When the DVD ended, I had a smile on my face and "When The Saints" playing away in my head. There are far worse ways to spend a Sunday afternoon.

*America's Music Legacy: Dixieland Jazz* was released December 7, 2010 from *Quantum Leap* and *MVD Visual* and is available through [See Of Sound](#).

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- [Issue 006: Sep/Oct 2008](#)
- [Issue 007: Nov/Dec 2008](#)
- [Issue 008: Jan/Feb 2009](#)
- [Issue 009: Mar/Apr 2009](#)
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- [Issue 015: Mar/Apr 2010](#)
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