

PRESS RELEASE: Immediate Release

Date: October 5, 2013

Contact: Kathe Hambrick Jackson

River Road African American Museum

[225-474-5553](tel:225-474-5553)

On Eve of Jazz Centennial, Noted Author To Appear in Donaldsonville

Donaldsonville, LA----- On Saturday, November 16, 2013 at 2:00 pm, *Jazz Puzzles* author Dan Vernhettes will appear at Hambonz Piano Room located at 212 ½ Railroad Avenue in Donaldsonville, leading a colloquium on Louisiana jazz history, and focusing on the river parishes as “feeders” to the New Orleans sound. **This event is a part of the *Jazz on the Avenue* concert series presented by the River Road African American Museum (RRAAM).**

A typographer by trade (and superb jazz musician), Dan has created an exquisitely designed book including lovely old photographs, maps, draft registrations, death certificates, record labels, and sheet music covers, all printed on high-grade glossy paper.

Jazz Puzzles covers the careers of John P. Robichaux, Buddy Bolden, Manuel Perez, Ernest Coycault, King Oliver, Chris Kelly, Freddie Keppard, Lorenzo Tio, Arnold Metoyer, Evan Thomas, Punch Miller, Buddy Petit, Sidney Bechet, and Kid Rena. The book portrays not only each player’s family, neighborhood, and musical development, but also the lives and music of those with whom he worked: teachers, bandleaders, sidemen, cabaret owners, and the like. In effect, *Jazz Puzzles* tells the story of an entire music: a from-the-ground-up genesis of a national art form.

The colloquium will also feature jazz historian Peter Gerler leading a free-ranging discourse about the rural roots of jazz. As is well known to River Road folk, big pieces of that form drifted into the Crescent City from the late-1800s plantation belt, where bands such as Thibodaux’s Excelsior helped produce the eminent bandleader Robichaux, and Donaldsonville gave us Claiborne Williams, who mentored Oscar “Papa” Celestin from Napoleonville.

Donaldsonville, of course, also gave us Joe “King” Oliver—by all accounts the successor to Fred Keppard’s Crescent City “monarchy.” Oliver was perhaps the first to perfect the “talking horn” technique—a defining trait of all jazz to follow. We know Joe Oliver, too, as Louis Armstrong’s New Orleans mentor, who put Armstrong on the national stage.

Among other things, Dan will speak on Oliver’s youth on Salsburg Plantation, his connections with other River Road musicians, his relationship with Armstrong, and the music that made them famous. The “King Oliver” chapter in *Jazz Puzzles* contains vintage River Road maps, a rare photo of Oliver’s wife, Stella—also from Donaldsonville--and photos of Oliver’s early bands and venues.

Audience members will have plenty of time for all questions. To cap it off, Dan will perform with **New Orleans Fiesta**, a top-ranked traditional jazz band from Toulouse, France. . For more information contact Kathe Hambrick Jackson at Kathe@aamuseum.org or [225-474-5553](tel:225-474-5553) or Peter Gerler at pgerler@verizon.net or [617-686-1116](tel:617-686-1116). **Plan to visit the RRAAM at 406 Charles Street before this music event.**