

[Early jazz inspires a professor, a band and an archive](#)

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khobgood@tulane.edu

The Louisiana Repertory Jazz Ensemble, a band with deep Tulane ties, will be giving a free concert at the Old U.S. Mint in the French Quarter on Friday (Nov. 2), featuring the compositions of the 1920s-era Sam Morgan Jazz Band.



John Joyce, Jr., associate professor of music, drums with the Louisiana Repertory Ensemble at the New Orleans Jazz & Heritage Festival. (Photo by Sally Asher)

The concert, taking place from 12:15-1:45 p.m., will be [live streamed](#) and archived online. The Mint is at 400 Esplanade Ave.

John Joyce, Jr., associate professor of music and drummer for the ensemble, has spent the last several years carefully transcribing 1927 recordings of the Sam Morgan Jazz Band. Every note from the ensemble's performance — two trumpets, alto saxophone, tenor saxophone/clarinet, trombone, piano, banjo, string bass and drums — has been painstakingly marked on paper by Joyce.

It is these transcriptions from which the LRJE will be performing on Friday.

"You will hear in the music a uniquely rustic style of New Orleans jazz — an early

black jazz that must have evolved before ragtime," says Joyce. "It's virtually church music transferred to instruments, a rare example of early black jazz in the state of evolution."

The jazz ensemble was founded in 1980 as the performing arm of the [Hogan Jazz Archive](#) at Tulane, Joyce says.

From those beginnings, the [LRJE](#) has traveled around the world, performing the earliest New Orleans jazz music from bands such as the New Orleans Owls and Celestin's Tuxedo Orchestra.

"All these bands did not think of themselves as jazz," explains Joyce, who is also editor of [The Jazz Archivist](#). "When the music evolved, say from 1880-1915, the word 'jazz' did not even exist. To the pioneering musicians who created it, it was simply dance music."

The concert, sponsored in part by the [New Orleans Center for the Gulf South](#) at Tulane, is a featured activity of the joint meeting of the American Musicological Society, the Society for Ethnomusicology and the Society for Music Theory.