

Throwback: Fletcher Henderson-New King Porter Stomp



Fletcher Henderson recorded Jelly Roll Morton's "King Porter Stomp" multiple times with his orchestra starting in 1925. Morton introduced the song with his inaugural 1923 recording but the popularity of Henderson's version led the way to it becoming a jazz standard. Henderson was a known bandleader who had been pioneering swing music with Dewey Redman during his residency at the Roseland Ballroom in New York in 1923. His band became very influential with stars like Duke Ellington referencing them as inspiration. Henderson and Redman's jazz innovations included the addition of a young Louis Armstrong in the group for a year. The work of Henderson and Redman helped kick off dances like the Lindy Hop and the jitterbug which outlived the swing era.

"King Porter Stomp" was essential to the development of jazz music but it was Benny Goodman's recording of Henderson's arrangement that made it a hit. Henderson's influence as an

arranger grew after he went to work providing charts for Goodman's band during their job on NBC's *Let's Dance*. His own band was the best in the state but it was difficult for them to survive because of economic struggles. The pianist, composer and bandleader did not become famous but his work as an arranger helped jazz evolve from the Dixie to the swing era. The rhythmic cohesion of swing music was a prelude to the musical concept of the groove which is found most pop music such as R&B, hip-hop and funk. Fletcher Henderson died in 1952 and in 1982 his childhood home in Cuthbert, Georgia was listed on the National Register of Historic Places.