

## Old Time Memory Jazzband

Gunnar Besen

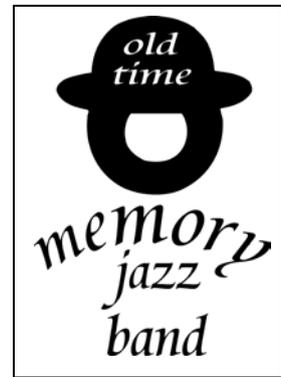
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The Old Time Memory Jazzband has been found in 1962 by students at the Friedrich-Schiller-Universität in Jena and is since then a popular and well known Jazzband all over Germany and especially in Thuringia.

In spite of personal rejuvenation during the years the musicians still stick to the same style of Jazz, the two-beat-Jazz, as done first of all by Louis Armstrong during the twenties.

With trumpet, clarinet and trombone in the melody section and banjo, piano and sousaphone in the rhythm section a typical sound is created, tied with a stylistic pure performance of solo and tutti improvisations. In regards of the Jazz history mainly oriented at the New-Orleans-Jazz, the band also plays the good old Chicago-Dixieland, thus extended by polyphonic singing.

Several gigs in TV, the participation at the International Dresden Dixieland Festival in 1974 and 1980, the teamwork together with the Philharmonic Orchestra of Jena and Stendal as well as international concerts in the Czech Republic and Georgia have been the musical heights before the wall came down.

During the following years the band took the audience by storm during lots of concerts in all parts of Germany, especially in the various Jazzclubs. Additionally in the beginning of 1996 the band took part in a TV show from MDR. In March 1996 the first time in the USA, the band was met with warm reception and success during the 22nd Jazz Reunion Fest in New Orleans.

Almost 37 years after the foundation of the band the first CD was recorded and released in 1999.

In 2002 the Old Time Memory Jazzband had its 40th anniversary, the members can look back to lots of gigs in Germany and foreign countries. A second very successful trip to New Orleans in 2002, the participation at the "18th Dixieland Festival & Jazz Band Ball" in Berlin and of course the ceremony at the 40th anniversary together with many previous band members marked this year.

Concerts at the Riverboat Jazz Festival in Silkeborg, Denmark, together with Jaques Gauthé, a clarinet and soprano-saxophone player from New Orleans and former student of Sidney Bechet, the participation at the XV. Salon Traditional Jazz in Prague as well as at the XXIIIrd International Competition of Jazz New-Orleans in Saint-Raphaël, France, in the year 2003 are highlights in the life of the band.

In 2004 the second CD called „Dixieland doin's“ appeared, and there were concerts in the Netherlands and Denmark. In 2005 the band was an official participant at the 35th International Dixieland Festival in Dresden and we have been the second time in France for the International Competition of Jazz New-Orleans in Saint-Raphaël.

Lots of concerts, i.e. in the underground in the cavern of the power station Markersbach, at the Jazz-Weekend in Arnstadt, in the old venerable Collegienhof of the university of Jena together with the Jubilee Singers Jena, at the AUDIX Dixielandfestival on Augustusburg in Sachsen, in Hamburg in the Cotton-Club and at the Feuerschiff, at the Quedlinburger Jazz- and Swingdays, at the Baltic Sea at the isle of Usedom and at the festival of traditional jazz "Golden Stream" in Poland as well as in Jazzclubs in Danmark and of course at the annual festival "Dixieland Meeting Jena" add to the long list of performances until today.

In 2012 the band again was officially invited to the Dresden Dixieland Festival and also the bands 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary was celebrated. For this event a new CD called "Glimpses of a new century" was released. As for now the band is active in certain types of gigs and is willing to continue preservation of good old classic Jazz. The 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary was highlighted by a festive concert in 2022 in Jena.

### Cast:

Gunnar Besen	trumpet, vocal, leader
Thomas Kniese	clarinet
Dietmar Jung	trombone, vocal
Christian Wegner	banjo
Rainer Pratzka	sousaphone, hi-hat
Johannes Schlecht	piano