

Ward Hall King Of The Sideshow Academic PDF

Ward Hall, King of the Sideshow: A Legacy of Circus and Entertainment

The world of sideshows and carnival entertainment has long fascinated audiences with its blend of the bizarre, the extraordinary, and the theatrical. Among the legendary figures who have left an indelible mark on this unique world is Ward Hall, renowned as the "King of the Sideshow." His remarkable career, characterized by his charismatic performances and dedication to the art of sideshow entertainment, has made him a legendary figure in the history of circus culture. This article explores the life, career, and legacy of Ward Hall, detailing how he became an icon in the sideshow industry and why his influence continues to resonate today.

Who Was Ward Hall?

Ward Hall was born in 1937 in Texas and became one of the most recognizable faces in the sideshow and carnival circuit. Known for his flamboyant personality, distinctive appearance, and masterful storytelling, Hall dedicated his life to preserving and promoting the art of sideshow entertainment. His career spanned over five decades, during which he worked tirelessly to keep the traditions of the carnival alive amidst a changing entertainment landscape.

Hall's moniker as the "King of the Sideshow" was not just a title but a testament to his status as a leading figure in the industry. His performances and promotional efforts helped elevate sideshow acts from roadside curiosities to celebrated elements of American cultural history.

The Early Life and Entry into Sideshow Entertainment

Background and Influences

Ward Hall grew up in a world surrounded by the sights and sounds of traveling carnivals. His fascination with sideshows began during childhood visits to local fairs and circuses, where he was captivated by the performers' ability to mesmerize audiences with their talents and oddities.

His early exposure to carnival life inspired him to pursue a career in the entertainment industry, initially working behind the scenes before stepping into the spotlight himself. His charismatic personality and innate showmanship eventually led him to become a performer, promoter, and historian of sideshow acts.

Breaking into the Industry

In the 1950s and 1960s, Ward Hall started performing as a sideshow entertainer, showcasing acts that ranged from classic "freak show" attractions to bizarre stunts. He quickly gained recognition for his engaging storytelling and ability to connect with audiences of all ages.

Hall also became a passionate advocate for the preservation of sideshow history, documenting acts and acts' stories and working to keep the traditions alive amid the decline of traditional traveling circuses due to changing entertainment tastes and regulations.

Ward Hall's Career Highlights

Master of Ceremonies and Promoter

One of Hall's most prominent roles was serving as a master of ceremonies (MC) for various sideshow acts. His charismatic stage presence and storytelling ability made him a natural at engaging audiences and introducing acts with humor and reverence.

In addition to performing, Hall was an influential promoter, organizing sideshow shows across the country. His efforts helped sustain the industry during its challenging years, and he was instrumental in reviving interest in sideshow entertainment through festivals, conventions, and live performances.

Iconic Acts and Performances

Ward Hall was known for several signature acts and performances, including:

- "The Human Blockhead": A classic sideshow act involving nails, skewers, or other objects being hammered into the performer's face or head, showcasing pain endurance and showmanship.

- "The Human Ostrich": An act where Hall would swallow and regurgitate objects, demonstrating extraordinary control over his body.

- Storytelling and Humor: Hall's ability to tell amusing, sometimes shocking stories about his experiences and acts made him a beloved figure among fans and fellow performers.

His performances were characterized by a blend of humor, shock, and genuine skill, making him a standout in the world of sideshows.

Preservation of Sideshow Heritage

Beyond performing, Ward Hall dedicated much of his later career to documenting and preserving sideshow history. He authored books, gave lectures, and appeared in documentaries to educate new generations about the art and significance of sideshow entertainment.

Hall's interviews and writings provide invaluable insights into the history, ethics, and cultural impact of sideshows, helping to keep their legacy alive in contemporary culture.

The Legacy of Ward Hall

Influence on Modern Sideshow and Circus Acts

Ward Hall's influence extends beyond his performances. His passionate advocacy helped inspire a renewed appreciation for sideshow acts among modern audiences. Many contemporary performers cite him as a mentor or inspiration, and his work has contributed to the ongoing revival of sideshow traditions.

His emphasis on storytelling, showmanship, and respect for the performers' craft continues to shape how sideshows are presented and preserved today.

Honors and Recognitions

Throughout his career, Ward Hall received numerous accolades recognizing his contributions to entertainment and cultural history, including:

- Induction into sideshow and circus halls of fame.
- Recognition as a pioneer and preservationist of sideshow arts.
- Celebrated appearances at festivals, conventions, and cultural events dedicated to circus and sideshow history.

Continuing Influence and Cultural Significance

Even after his passing, Ward Hall's legacy endures through:

- Documentaries and books about sideshow history featuring his work and insights.
- Revival festivals and events that honor sideshow traditions, often inspired by Hall's dedication.
- The ongoing careers of performers who continue to emulate his style and philosophy.

His persona as the "King of the Sideshow" symbolizes the spirit of showmanship, resilience, and cultural preservation that defines the world of carnival entertainment.

Why Ward Hall Remains a Cultural Icon

- Authenticity and Passion: Hall's genuine love for sideshows and dedication to their preservation have made him an enduring figure.
- Educational Contributions: His efforts to document and teach about sideshow history have helped ensure the art form's survival.
- Charismatic Persona: His storytelling, humor, and stage presence made him a beloved performer and ambassador for carnival culture.
- Legacy of Preservation: By promoting respect and understanding for sideshow acts, Hall helped elevate them from mere curiosities to respected performances.

Conclusion

Ward Hall, the "King of the Sideshow," was much more than a performer; he was a custodian of a rich cultural tradition that has enthralled audiences for generations. From his early days of fascination with carnival life to his role as a performer, promoter, and historian, Hall dedicated his life to celebrating and preserving the art of sideshow entertainment. His influence continues to inspire performers, enthusiasts, and historians, ensuring that the legacy of sideshow culture remains vibrant and respected.

As modern audiences seek authentic and unique entertainment experiences, Ward Hall's contributions serve as a reminder of the power of showmanship, storytelling, and cultural preservation. His life story exemplifies how one individual's passion can keep a treasured art form

alive for future generations to enjoy and admire.

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- Sideshow legend
- American carnival history
- Sideshow performer biography

Ward Hall, King of the Sideshow: A Deep Dive into the Legend and Legacy

When discussing the golden age of sideshows and their most memorable figures, few names resonate as profoundly as Ward Hall, King of the Sideshow. His name is synonymous with the classic carnival atmosphere, a master showman whose charisma, wit, and enduring legacy cemented him as one of the most iconic figures in the history of American sideshows. This guide aims to provide a comprehensive exploration of Ward Hall's life, his contributions to the sideshow world, and what makes him a legendary figure worth studying.

Who Was Ward Hall?

Early Life and Background

Born in 1937 in Oklahoma, Ward Hall's journey into the world of sideshows was unconventional. Growing up in a rural setting, he was captivated early on by the spectacle, storytelling, and larger-than-life personalities that populated the carnival circuits of mid-20th-century America. His fascination with the art of entertainment and the bizarre led him to pursue a career that would eventually earn him the moniker "King of the Sideshow."

Entry into the Sideshow World

Ward Hall's entry into sideshow entertainment was marked by a combination of talent, wit, and a deep understanding of audience engagement. Unlike performers who specialized in physical anomalies or supernatural acts, Hall's forte was as a charismatic emcee, master showman, and storyteller. His ability to connect with audiences, build anticipation, and add theatrical flair made him

a standout figure.

The Role and Significance of a Sideshow King

What Does It Mean to Be a 'King of the Sideshow'?

The title "King of the Sideshow" isn't merely honorary; it reflects a performer's mastery over the craft, influence within the carnival community, and an enduring legacy that shapes the genre. As a sideshow king, Ward Hall embodied:

- Charisma and Stage Presence: An innate ability to command attention and entertain.
- Knowledge of the Industry: Deep understanding of carnival operations, audience psychology, and promotional techniques.
- Innovation: Pioneering new acts, storytelling methods, and engagement strategies.

The Importance of the Sideshow in American Culture

Sideshow entertainment has been a vital part of American cultural history, serving as a mirror to society's curiosities, fears, and fascination with the extraordinary. Figures like Ward Hall preserved this tradition, adapting it through decades of change and technological advancement.

Ward Hall's Signature Acts and Style

Emcee and Storytelling

Ward Hall was renowned for his sharp wit and storytelling prowess. His emcee acts often included:

- Humorous anecdotes and tall tales.
- Audience participation, involving spectators in the act.
- Historical narratives that added depth to his performances.

Theatrical Flair and Presentation

Hall's performances were characterized by:

- Costume and makeup that enhanced his larger-than-life persona.
- Use of props and staging that heightened the spectacle.
- Vocal delivery—a booming voice capable of captivating large crowds.

Engagement with Audience and Community

Hall's ability to connect with audiences extended beyond the stage. He fostered a sense of community and shared experience, which was vital for the longevity of sideshow acts.

Ward Hall's Contributions and Legacy

Preservation of Sideshow Art

Ward Hall was a passionate advocate for the preservation of sideshow history. He documented many acts, shared stories from his career, and mentored younger performers, ensuring that the craft persisted.

Innovator and Modernizer

While respectful of tradition, Hall embraced innovation by:

- Incorporating new storytelling methods.
- Using media (such as recordings) to reach wider audiences.
- Participating in documentaries and interviews to educate the public.

Cultural Impact

Hall's influence extended beyond the carnival circuit. He became a cultural icon, symbolizing the spirit of American entertainment and resilience in the face of changing tastes and entertainment modalities.

Challenges and Changes in the Sideshow World

Decline of Traditional Carnivals

The rise of digital entertainment and changing societal attitudes led to a decline in traditional sideshows. Many performers faced financial hardships, and venues closed.

Hall's Response and Adaptation

Ward Hall adapted by:

- Participating in nostalgia tours and revival shows.

- Using social media to connect with fans and promote sideshow history.
- Engaging in educational efforts about sideshow art and history.

Lessons from Ward Hall's Career

The Power of Charisma and Storytelling

Hall demonstrated that entertainment is rooted in connection. His mastery of storytelling and audience engagement remains a blueprint for performers across genres.

Preservation of Cultural Heritage

His dedication to documenting and sharing sideshow history highlights the importance of cultural preservation amid change.

Innovation Within Tradition

Balancing respect for tradition with innovation ensures the survival and relevance of artistic forms.

Key Takeaways: Why Ward Hall Is the King of the Sideshow

- Master Emcee and Storyteller: His performances captivated audiences and set standards for showmanship.
- Legacy and Preservation: He dedicated much of his life to safeguarding the history and artistry of sideshows.
- Cultural Icon: His influence transcended his performances, impacting American entertainment culture.
- Adaptability: His willingness to evolve with times ensured the survival of sideshow traditions.

Final Thoughts

Ward Hall, King of the Sideshow, exemplifies the enduring spirit of American carnival entertainment. His life and career offer valuable insights into performance art, cultural preservation, and the power of storytelling. As the torchbearer of a bygone era, Hall's legacy continues to inspire performers, historians, and enthusiasts who recognize the magic and importance of sideshow history.

Whether you're a dedicated carnival aficionado or a casual admirer of American entertainment history, understanding Ward Hall's contributions underscores the significance of preserving and celebrating this colorful, eccentric world. His story is a testament to the enduring allure of the sideshow and the timeless appeal of a charismatic showman who truly was the king of his craft.

QuestionAnswer Who was Ward Hall and why is he known as the 'King of the Sideshow'? Ward Hall was a legendary American carnival showman, known for his charismatic leadership and contributions to sideshow entertainment, earning him the nickname 'King of the Sideshow'. What were some of Ward Hall's most famous acts or performances in the sideshow industry? Ward Hall was renowned for his classic sideshow acts, including hosting shows with human oddities, daring stunts, and his memorable storytelling, which kept audiences captivated for decades. How did Ward Hall influence modern sideshow and carnival entertainment? Ward Hall played a pivotal role in preserving traditional sideshow acts, inspiring contemporary performers and helping to keep the legacy of carnival entertainment alive through his shows and mentorship. What is the legacy of Ward Hall in the context of sideshow history? Ward Hall's legacy lies in his dedication to the art of sideshow performance, his role as a master showman, and his efforts to keep the spirit of carnival entertainment vibrant for future generations. Are there any documentaries or books that explore Ward Hall's life and contributions? Yes, several documentaries and books, such as 'The Sideshow Gangs' and archival interviews, delve into Ward Hall's life, highlighting his impact on sideshow entertainment and his legendary status among fans and performers alike.

Related keywords: sideshow performer, carnival entertainer, side show artist, freak show, carnival freak, sideshow legend, carnival star, performer biography, entertainment history, sideshow culture

King of the queen city the story of king records

King of the Queen City: The Story of King Records

In the rich tapestry of American music history, few labels have left as profound and enduring a legacy as King Records. Emerging from Cincinnati, Ohio—often affectionately called the "Queen City"—King Records became a pioneering force in the development of rhythm and blues, soul, and country music. The label's story is one of innovation, resilience, and an unwavering commitment to diverse musical voices. This article delves into the fascinating history of King Records, exploring its origins, influential artists, groundbreaking contributions, and lasting impact on the music industry.

The Origins of King Records

Founding and Early Years

King Records was founded in 1943 by Syd Nathan, a music industry veteran with a vision to create a label that could produce and distribute a wide array of musical styles under one roof. Based in Cincinnati, Ohio, the label was uniquely positioned in the Midwest, away from the traditional music

industry hubs like New York City, Nashville, and Los Angeles. Nathan's goal was to establish a regional powerhouse that could serve both rural and urban audiences.

Initially, King Records focused on producing 78 rpm records, emphasizing genres that resonated with the local community. The label's early catalog included country, hillbilly, blues, and R&B recordings, reflecting the diverse musical tastes of Cincinnati and the surrounding areas.

The Business Model and Operations

Syd Nathan's innovative approach included:

- Vertical Integration: King Records owned its recording studios, pressing plants, and distribution channels, allowing greater control over the entire process.
- Diverse Catalog: The label deliberately avoided genre restrictions, aiming to reach as broad an audience as possible.
- Talent Recruitment: King Records signed both emerging and established artists, fostering a vibrant and eclectic roster.

This strategic approach helped King Records flourish during the 1940s and 1950s, setting the stage for its historic influence on American music.

The Rise to Prominence

Breakthrough Artists and Recordings

King Records gained recognition through several key artists and groundbreaking recordings:

- James Brown: Often called the "Godfather of Soul," James Brown's recording career began with King Records in 1956. His energetic performances and innovative sound revolutionized soul music.
- The Stanley Brothers: A prominent bluegrass duo whose recordings helped popularize country and bluegrass music nationally.
- Homer and Jethro: A comedy and country duo that achieved success through King Records' diverse catalog.

Some notable recordings include:

- James Brown's "Please, Please, Please" (1956), which became a hit and launched his

legendary career.

- Bill Doggett's "Honky Tonk (Parts 1 & 2)," a jazz and R&B crossover that topped charts in the late 1950s.

Innovations in Music and Business

King Records was among the first to:

- Combine genres: Breaking down barriers between country, R&B, and soul music.
- Use regional talent: Promoting artists who resonated with local audiences but had national potential.
- Maintain artist control: Providing artists with more creative freedom compared to other labels of the era.

The label's emphasis on innovation and diversity helped it stand out during a competitive period in music history.

Impact and Legacy

Influence on R&B and Soul Music

King Records is credited with helping shape the sound of soul music. James Brown's work under the King label laid the foundation for funk and modern R&B. His recordings at King introduced revolutionary rhythms, vocal styles, and stage presence that influenced countless artists.

Contribution to Country and Bluegrass

While best known for R&B, King Records also played a pivotal role in country and bluegrass music. The label's support of artists like The Stanley Brothers helped bring bluegrass into the mainstream, blending rural traditions with the broader musical landscape.

Breaking Racial Barriers

King Records was one of the few labels in the 1940s and 1950s to produce racially diverse artists and recordings. It fostered an environment where Black artists like James Brown could achieve success alongside country and bluegrass musicians, promoting racial integration within the music industry.

Challenges and Decline

Despite its successes, King Records faced numerous challenges:

- Financial Difficulties: Competition from major labels and changing industry dynamics strained the company's resources.
- Management Changes: Syd Nathan retired in the 1960s, and subsequent management struggles affected the label's direction.
- Market Shifts: The rise of Motown, Stax, and other major soul labels shifted industry focus away from regional labels like King.

By the late 1960s, King Records had largely ceased its operations, but its catalog remained influential and revered.

Legacy and Preservation

Reissues and Recognitions

In recent decades, there has been a resurgence of interest in King Records' catalog:

- Numerous reissues of classic recordings have introduced new generations to King's groundbreaking work.
- Music historians and collectors have celebrated the label's diverse roster and innovative sound.

Musical and Cultural Influence

King Records' pioneering efforts in merging genres, supporting racial integration, and promoting regional artists have left an indelible mark on American music. Its influence can be seen in the development of soul, funk, country, and bluegrass.

The Queen City's Cultural Heritage

Cincinnati proudly honors King Records as a vital part of its cultural history. The city recognizes the label's role in shaping American music and continues to celebrate its legacy through museums, festivals, and educational programs.

Conclusion

The story of King Records is a testament to innovation, diversity, and resilience in the face of industry challenges. From its humble beginnings in Cincinnati to becoming a major force in shaping American musical genres, King Records exemplifies the power of regional labels to influence the

national and global music landscape. Its legacy endures through the timeless recordings of legendary artists like James Brown and the ongoing appreciation of its pioneering spirit. As the "King of the Queen City," King Records remains a symbol of musical excellence and cultural significance, inspiring future generations of musicians and industry leaders alike.

Key Takeaways

- Founded in 1943 in Cincinnati by Syd Nathan.
- Pioneered the integration of multiple genres including R&B, country, and bluegrass.
- Launched the careers of iconic artists such as James Brown.
- Promoted racial and musical diversity during a segregated era.
- Left a lasting legacy that continues to influence music today.

Whether you're a music historian, a fan of classic soul, or someone interested in regional American culture, the story of King Records offers invaluable insights into the evolution of American music and the enduring power of regional innovation.

King of the Queen City: The Story of King Records

King of the Queen City: The story of King Records is a compelling narrative that encapsulates the rise, influence, and enduring legacy of one of America's most iconic independent record labels. Founded in Cincinnati, Ohio, during the mid-20th century, King Records became a pivotal force in shaping the landscape of American music, bridging genres, and nurturing legendary artists. This article delves into the origins of King Records, its groundbreaking contributions to music, its challenges, and its lasting impact on the industry.

Origins of King Records: From Cincinnati's Streets to the Music Industry

The Birth of a Label in a Musical Crossroads

In 1943, in the vibrant city of Cincinnati, a man named Syd Nathan established King Records. Cincinnati, often called the "Queen City," was a melting pot of cultural influences, and its strategic location along major transportation routes made it an ideal hub for distribution and recording. Nathan, a former record store owner and music distributor, recognized the potential for a local label that could serve both a regional and national audience.

Early Years and Strategic Vision

Initially focusing on the rhythm and blues (R&B) and country markets, King Records differentiated itself by its pragmatic approach—recording local artists, pressing records in-house, and distributing

through its extensive network. Nathan's vision was to create a label that could produce records quickly and affordably while maintaining quality.

Key Factors in Its Formation

- Location Advantage: Cincinnati's geographical position allowed for easier distribution across the Midwest and South.
- In-House Manufacturing: King Records operated its own pressing plant, reducing costs and increasing control over production.
- Diverse Catalog: Unlike many labels that specialized narrowly, King recorded a broad spectrum of genres, including jazz, blues, gospel, country, and R&B.

The Rise of King Records: Pioneering a Musical Empire

Breaking Into the Mainstream

By the late 1940s and early 1950s, King Records had established itself as a powerhouse in independent music, thanks to its prolific output and talented roster. The label's strategy of nurturing local talent and embracing a diversity of genres allowed it to reach various audiences.

Notable Artists and Recordings

Some of the most influential artists associated with King Records include:

- James Brown: Often called the "Godfather of Soul," Brown recorded numerous hits at King, including early classics like "Please Please Please."
- The Stanley Brothers: Pioneers of bluegrass music, whose recordings helped popularize the genre.
- Hank Ballard & The Midnighters: Known for hits like "Work with Me, Annie," which was influential in the development of R&B.
- The Count Basie Orchestra: Demonstrating King's reach into jazz.

Genre Fusion and Innovation

King Records was ahead of its time in blending genres and fostering innovation. For example:

- R&B and Country Crossover: King produced records that appealed to diverse audiences, breaking racial and genre boundaries.

- Innovative Recording Techniques: The label adopted and adapted recording methods that enhanced sound quality and artist expression.

Business Model and Distribution

King's success was also rooted in its savvy business practices:

- Regional Focus with National Ambitions: While rooted in Cincinnati, the label aimed for national distribution.
- In-House Pressing: This gave King control over the quality and release timeline.
- Artist Development: King invested in developing talent, sometimes providing artists with their first recording opportunities.

Challenges and Controversies: Navigating a Complex Industry

Racial Barriers and Industry Obstacles

During its peak years, the music industry was rife with racial discrimination, which posed significant challenges for King Records and its predominantly Black artists. Despite this, King's leadership and perseverance helped carve a space for Black artists in a segregated industry.

Financial Struggles and Competition

King Records faced stiff competition from major labels, which often sought to acquire successful independent labels or their artists. Additionally, the financial demands of running an in-house pressing plant and managing a diverse catalog strained the company's resources.

Legal Disputes and Ownership Issues

Over the years, disputes over rights and royalties emerged, reflecting broader industry issues. Some artists felt undercompensated, leading to tensions that affected relationships and the label's reputation.

Decline and Transformation: The Later Years of King Records

The Shift in the Music Industry

By the late 1960s and early 1970s, changes in the industry—such as the rise of rock music, changing consumer tastes, and corporate consolidation—began to impact King Records' business model.

Sale and Dissolution

In the early 1970s, King Records was sold off, and its operations were gradually phased out. Some of its catalogs were acquired by larger entities, but the original Cincinnati headquarters and pressing plant eventually ceased operations.

Legacy Preservation

Despite its decline, King Records' catalog remained influential. Reissues, compilations, and scholarly works have kept its legacy alive, influencing generations of musicians and industry professionals.

The Enduring Legacy of King Records

Pioneering Racial Integration in Music

King Records played a crucial role in breaking down racial barriers in the music industry by promoting Black artists and recordings that crossed racial boundaries.

Influence on Future Generations

Many artists and producers cite King Records as an inspiration. Its approach to genre fusion, artist development, and independent production served as a blueprint for future independent labels.

Cultural Significance

Beyond music, King Records symbolizes resilience and innovation within a challenging social and economic landscape. Its story reflects broader themes of perseverance, creativity, and cultural impact.

Modern Recognition and Revival

In recent years, there has been renewed interest in King Records' history. Documentaries, academic studies, and music festivals celebrate its contributions, ensuring that the label's story continues to resonate.

Conclusion: A Queen City Legend

King of the Queen City: The story of King Records is more than just a regional success story; it's a testament to the power of independent spirit, artistic innovation, and cultural perseverance. From its humble beginnings in Cincinnati to its influence on the national and international stage, King

Records carved out a legacy that endures in the fabric of American music history. Its ability to bridge genres, promote groundbreaking artists, and challenge industry norms cements its place as a true king of the Queen City and of American music overall.

Question What is the significance of 'King of the Queen City' in the story of King Records? 'King of the Queen City' highlights Cincinnati's reputation as a major hub for music and the influential role King Records played in shaping the music industry there. Who founded King Records and when was it established? King Records was founded by Syd Nathan in 1943, becoming a pioneering independent record label in Cincinnati. Which notable artists were associated with King Records? King Records was home to legendary artists like James Brown, The Stanley Brothers, Hank Ballard, and Little Willie John. How did King Records influence the development of R&B and soul music? King Records was instrumental in developing R&B and soul by producing groundbreaking tracks and nurturing artists like James Brown, shaping the genres' evolution. What challenges did King Records face during its peak years? The label faced financial difficulties, competition from major labels, and issues related to racial segregation, which impacted its growth and sustainability. What is the legacy of King Records in today's music industry? King Records' legacy endures through its pioneering artists and its role in breaking racial barriers, influencing future independent labels and the development of modern music genres. Are there any documentaries or books about the story of King Records? Yes, several documentaries and books, such as 'King of the Queen City: The Story of King Records,' explore its history and impact on music. How did the nickname 'Queen City' relate to Cincinnati's history with King Records? Cincinnati is known as the 'Queen City,' and the phrase 'King of the Queen City' symbolizes King Records' dominance and cultural influence in the city. What are some key milestones in the history of King Records? Key milestones include its founding in 1943, signing major artists like James Brown, and its impact on the development of R&B and soul music during the 1950s and 1960s.

Related keywords: King Records, Queen City, Cincinnati music history, record labels, jazz and blues, Cincinnati musicians, music industry, American record companies, 20th-century music, music legends

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