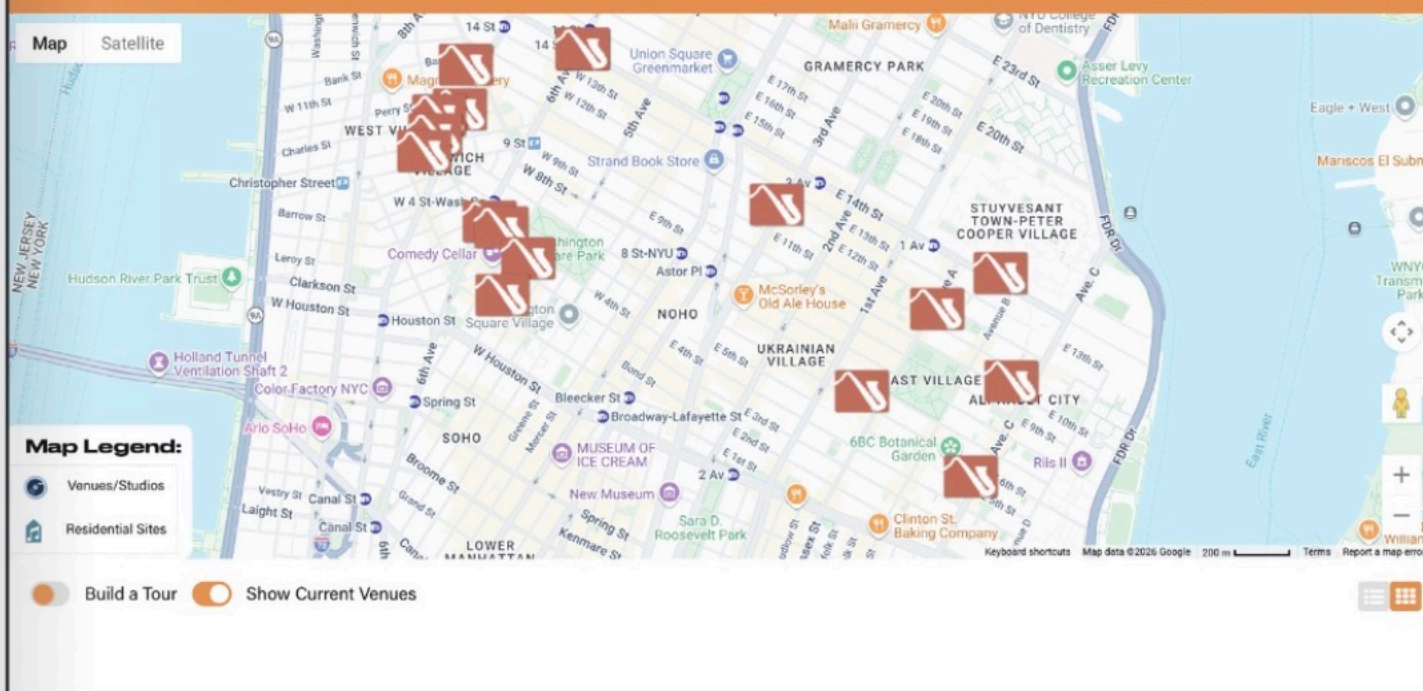


Jazz Map of Greenwich Village, the East Village, and NoHo



Village Preservation releases its first interactive jazz map of the East Village, Greenwich Village, and NoHo

A NEW, INTERACTIVE JAZZ MAP WITH LOCATIONS of famous jazz clubs, figures, and organizations is now available for anyone to explore around and use. After two years of research and collaboration, Village Preservation, the nonprofit leading the preservation of the East Village, Greenwich Village and NoHo, announced its newest map to the public on April 6. The map includes venues, musicians, and producers from the three neighborhoods, from the 1910s to the 2020s. Users can view the past to present and take a walk through history using one of the map’s unique features that also allows people to build their own walking jazz tours.

Juan Rivero, the Director of Special Projects at Village Preservation, told me about the creation and vision of the map highlighting jazz history in the three Lower Manhattan neighborhoods. The project began in May 2023, inspired by an event honoring Charles Mingus. The organization brought in several performers, including bassist Mike Richmond, who decided with Juan that there was a need for more programming around jazz history.

“I left with a sense that there’s a lot of stories throughout the neighborhoods of musicians who lived or performed famously all over that we haven’t really been paying much attention to,” says Juan. “We realized that information is not really consolidated anywhere in a useful way.”

That’s how the idea for a jazz map started to conceptualize and with a team behind him, Juan dove into research, writing, and coordination, working alongside

a website developer. The research started with the venues, and quickly moved onto major musicians, producers, and journalists who lived in the three neighborhoods, who formed the music scene and the ecology that allowed jazz to thrive and to develop at different points in its history. “There are so many interesting little tidbits, like the fact that Café Bohemia became a jazz venue after it had almost given up on being a music venue and was operating as a strip joint,” says Juan. He had found in his research that Charlie Parker, who happened to be staying across the street, would come and sit in with the band that played for the strip performances and would run up a tab of Brandy Alexanders, and then decided to settle the tab by offering to perform there. The venue took Charlie up on it, and it generated an enormous amount of buzz, but he died before he could perform. The owner, seeing all the attention the word of the performance generated, decided to turn his place into a jazz venue full time. “It became, for over a decade, one of the premier, cutting-edge contemporary jazz venues in the city,” says Juan. “That’s kind of an improbable story.” He says he was also struck during his research by the number of jazz musicians that lived in just two buildings on East 6th Street during the late ‘50s and early ‘60s, and how so many of them were from Philadelphia and collaborated with each other. “They were major musicians living in what must have been a jazz dormitory,” says Juan.

The fundamental challenge of building out the jazz map was “knowing what you didn’t know” and trying

to figure out what to include and what not to include. This was especially difficult with clubs since there were some clubs that hosted jazz performances, but weren't formal jazz clubs. The team would have to ask: Were they important to the history of jazz? "It's impossible to be 100% comprehensive," says Juan.

The jazz map includes the oldest continuously operating jazz club, The Village Vanguard, which was established in 1935 and became exclusively a jazz club in 1957. The earliest pin the team noted is in the 1910s with George Gershwin's residence on 91 2nd Avenue, through to the 1920s showing early signs of jazz growing with places like the Columbia Phonograph Company, Nick's Tavern, The Pepper Pot and Hot Feet Club. Joining in the 1930s were the Zinc Club, which is still operating today, and Café Society. Even more jazz venues came in hot in the 1950s and 1960s. The peak era for jazz clubs opening in the entire city was at the end of Prohibition in the 1930s and 1940s with the highest concentration on 52nd Street between 5th and 6th Avenues dubbed "Swing Street" (although the original "Swing Street" was in Harlem on West 133rd Street between 7th and Lenox Avenues).

The current-day venues on the map include Arthur's Tavern (1937), Blue Note (1981), Cellar Dog, DROM, Mezzrow, Le Poisson Rouge, Nublu, Smalls (1994) and 11th Street Bar.

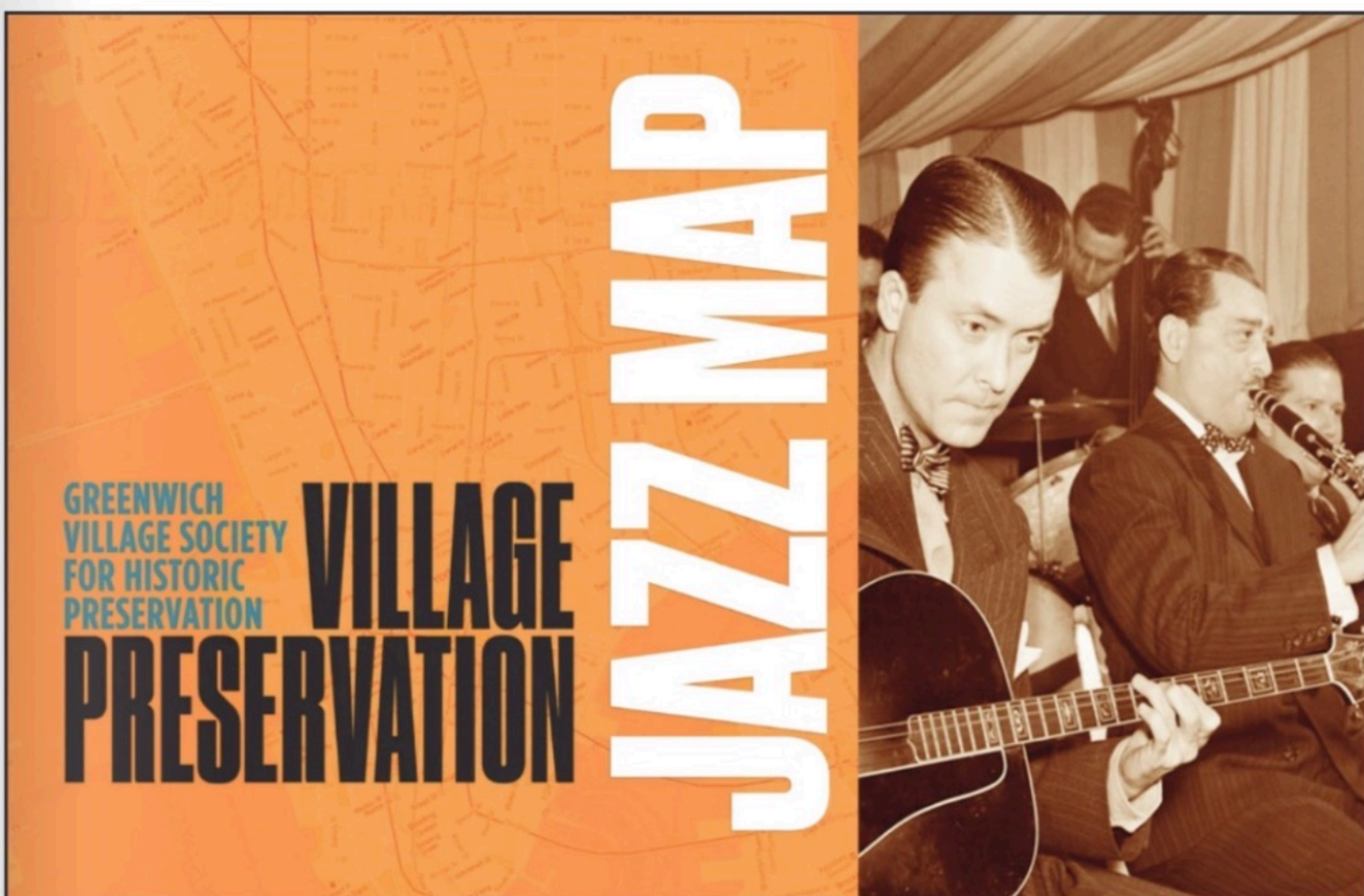
The research team knew they wanted the map to have a research possibility and a capacity for it to serve as a resource. "The idea was once we had that up, we would start doing programs around it," says Juan. The Village Preservation hosted the first webinar for the jazz map in late April with trombonist Kelly Coker, the dean of the New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music. During the webinar, Juan and Kelly highlighted the first jazz recordings, which were made in 1917 by the Original Dixieland Jass Band for the Victor Talking

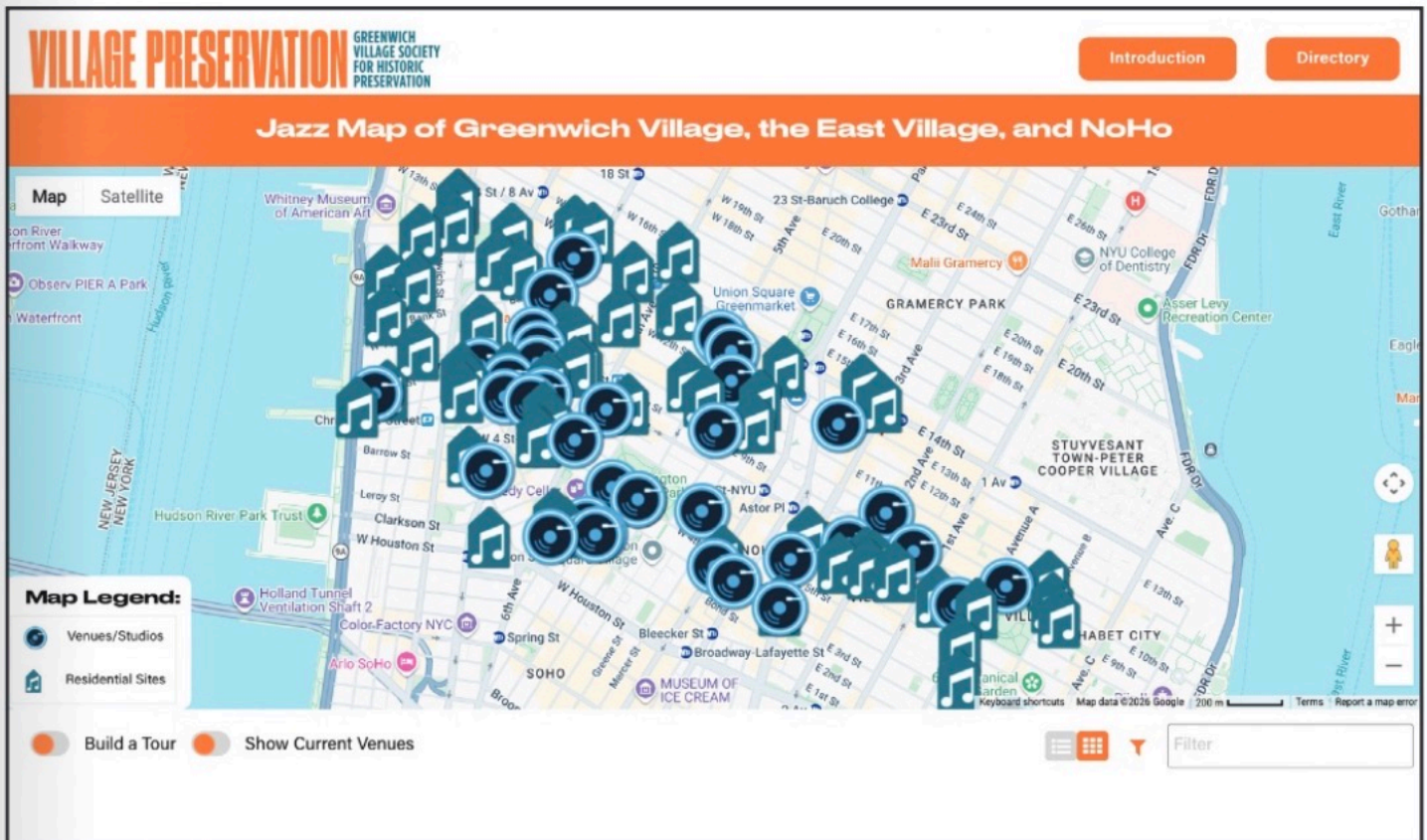
Machine Company in New York City. They are widely recognized as the first commercially issued jazz records. "In a way, New York City really starts to own the jazz culture," says Coker.

Juan says they plan on organizing more programming going forward on a semi-regular basis, covering either moments in the history, musicians, or certain venues. Future expansions of the jazz map are planned for next April, focusing on incorporating new research. The jazz map will hopefully serve both enthusiasts and those new to jazz history.

If you decide to build your own walking tour, you have the options to pick your landmarks, search by jazz style, filter by decade, or look into a particular musician and embark on a pilgrimage of all the sites associated with a particular musician. "There's a variety of ways you can go about it, depending on your own personal taste," says Juan. "If I were gonna do it, I might start somewhere in the West Village, and then choose a spot that either because of the venue or because of a musician, tells the story of how music in the neighborhood evolved starting in 1920s all the way to the 80s and ultimately to the present." He suggests working backwards, choosing places that are close to each other, working into a walking route you could incorporate into the larger story of jazz in the neighborhood. Juan told me about an email he already received from one of his former college professors who was overly thrilled in his retirement to spend several days exploring and listening to the music he found from the jazz map. "I'm hoping that people who are into jazz will find all kinds of avenues for exploration," he says. "There's so many ways of exploring and looking into connections that they may not have known."

Sarah Belle Lin is a freelance journalist, born and raised in the Bay Area, with roots in local and print news who now calls Harlem home.





Notable venues in Village Preservation jazz map:

- The Pepper Pot (141 West 4th Street)
- Hot Feet Club (142 West Houston Street)
- Columbia Phonograph Company (55 Fifth Avenue): Billie Holiday's first records were produced here
- Café Society (2 Sheridan Square): First racially integrated club in the country where Sarah Vaughan, Lena Horne, Billie Holiday, Mary Lou Williams, and Hazel Scott performed
- Village Gate (158 Bleeker Street): Duke Ellington, Miles Davis, Dizzy Gillespie, Charles Mingus, Thelonious Monk, Art Blakely, and Sonny Rollins all performed here
- Boomer's (340 Bleeker Street): Became the only Black-run jazz venue in Greenwich Village
- Café Bohemia (15 Barrow Street): A hard bop venue that helped launch the career of Cannonball Adderley and hosted live recordings such as Art Blakey's "The Jazz Messengers at the Café Bohemia Vols. 1 and 2" (1956), Miles Davis Quintet with John Coltrane (1956), and Charles Mingus and Max Roach's "Mingus at the Bohemia" (1956)
- Slugs Saloon (242 East 3rd Street): Avant-garde jazz venue where Pharaoh Sanders, Herbie Hancock, Sun Ra Arkestra, Ornette Coleman, and Charles Tolliver performed

Notable residences:

- Charles Mingus (5 Great Jones Street, 512 East 5th Street, 39 East 10th Street)
- Charlie Parker (151 Avenue B)
- Carla and Paul Bley (639 ½ Hudson Street)
- Bill Dixon (119 Bank Street)