

**The influence of recorded jazz on  
the music of Django Reinhardt,  
c.1929-1939**

**Tom Sykes 2004**

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## **Introduction**

The influence of Manouche gypsy guitarist Django Reinhardt (1910-1953) on many jazz, folk and rock guitarists is widely known and well documented. He was famously disabled due to a caravan fire in 1928, which affected his playing both positively and negatively, but this is not the subject of this investigation. The aim of this project is to examine the influence of recorded jazz on Reinhardt, his background being traditional Manouche music and the *bal-musette* popular in 1920s Paris. Not well documented are exactly which recordings he listened to, especially in his formative jazz years of the late 1920s and early 1930s.

At the risk of redefining the framework of research that this project's title suggests, reading the secondary literature has brought about a change of emphasis, due to the lack of documentary evidence and the fact that virtually all of Reinhardt's contemporaries are now dead. Even after interviewing such people not long after Reinhardt's death, one writer (James Jones) abandoned his biographical project due to the contradictory anecdotal evidence. It would seem that the most successful approach would probably be to make an 'educated guess' at the recordings he listened to by comparing recordings and transcriptions of Reinhardt and his idols, using what anecdotal evidence there is as a starting point. This will inevitably require a small amount of musical analysis, but only what is necessary to show the comparisons. For details of all recordings mentioned in the text, please refer to the discography.

Since writing this for my MA in 2004, other Reinhardt books have been published (such as Michael Dregni's), but I have not updated this due to other research projects.

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I would also like to thank members of the Gypsy Jazz Guitar e-group (too numerous to mention individually) and Paul Balmer, director of Music on Earth Productions, for their helpful comments and suggestions.

## Background

A brief historical/musical background will help to place Reinhardt and his music in a wider context. Although born in Liverchies in Belgium, because Reinhardt (who was christened Jean, but quickly adopted the name Django) was a gypsy, his early childhood was spent travelling around Europe to avoid hostilities during the First World War. After the war, the Reinhardt family settled in a gypsy encampment on the outskirts of Paris (at Porte de Choisy), where Django led an adventurous, and unschooled, childhood. The Manouche tribe to which the Reinhardts belonged is well known for its musical tradition; indeed, it is the way in which many Manouche men make a living. Django showed an intense interest in music from an early age, and eventually was given a banjo-guitar by a neighbour (his mother could not afford to buy an instrument). He learned to play it by copying the musicians around him, who were astonished by the ease with which he mastered the instrument, and began to play with local musicians including his uncle, who had a regular cabaret engagement in La Varenne. By the age of thirteen, Django had become a professional musician in the clubs of Paris, accompanying an accordionist for the *bals-musettes*, where the criminal fraternity made their transactions. The style of music he played was typical French café music and traditional dances (waltzes and bourrées for example); both in spite of and because of his Manouche background, and with the aid of his natural talent, he could learn almost any style of music by ear and reproduce it convincingly.<sup>1</sup>

Charles Baker (1863-1928), an African-American singer and dancer, claimed to have introduced jazz into France, and established himself as a performer of ragtime and early jazz in Paris until 1923. Other black American jazz musicians who successfully performed in Paris during the 1920s included Louis Mitchell of Mitchell's Jazz Kings, Arthur Briggs and Josephine Baker, who starred in *La revue nègre*, an exotic and erotic show that was well received by Parisian intellectuals such as Jean Cocteau (see Gendron 2002, 115-6). Following the success of jazz in Paris (where, unlike in America, black jazz musicians were seen as 'chic'), many European jazz musicians emerged, such as Gregor (Krikor KÈlÈkian), an Armenian singer whose band the Gregorians included StÈphane Grappelli, the violinist who was to be closely

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<sup>1</sup> Much of this information is taken from Delaunay 1961 (31-40), regarded as the definitive Reinhardt biography. Delaunay knew Reinhardt well and was instrumental in furthering his career. Reference was also made to the 'Django Reinhardt' entry in *New Grove II* online (see webliography).

associated with Django Reinhardt (see Shipton 2001, 381-3). It was in this atmosphere, where the Parisian art world was engrossed in American jazz (the use of jazz by avant-garde composers, for instance, being the alliance of modernism with popular culture, as Gendron describes it (Gendron 2002, 83)), that Reinhardt developed his musical skills. He was apparently found outside the Abbaye de ThÈlème in Place Pigalle trying to listen to Billy Arnold's band in the mid-1920s, so he would almost certainly have heard live jazz from quite an early age (see Delaunay 1961, 40). In 1928, the near-fatal accident that cost him the use of two of his left fingers was only a temporary setback, so determined was he to master his instrument; after learning to play again with a new technique, he became seriously interested in jazz. The affinity of this Manouche gypsy with jazz is thought by Alyn Shipton to be due perhaps to 'a shared background between Europe's first leading jazz musician and the African-Americans whose music he was to assimilate himself: a background of slavery and oppression' (Shipton 2001, 385).

### **Encounter with recorded jazz**

Once Reinhardt had fully recovered from his accident (which took about eighteen months), he started playing in the streets and cafÈs around Montmartre, where he was heard and hired by Stephen Mougins, an accomplished French jazz musician. This increased Reinhardt's passion for the music, especially as the *bals-musettes* were now a thing of the past. It was while Django (and his brother Joseph) was in Toulon that he was 'discovered', and where he became acquainted with recorded American jazz. Emile Savitry, a jazz aficionado living at the time in a room above a cafÈ where the Reinhardts occasionally played, thought he was hearing a gramophone recording until the audience applauded, and on meeting the Reinhardts invited them up to his room. There he played them records of American jazz masters such as Joe Venuti, Duke Ellington and, in particular, Louis Armstrong (see Delaunay 1961, 47). Armstrong's playing had a profound effect on Django, and it must have been one of the earliest opportunities he had of listening to recorded American jazz, as such records had only recently appeared in France.

There is also a story (so far unsubstantiated) that Reinhardt had found a recording of Armstrong's *Dallas Blues* in an OrlÈans flea market in 1929 (see Disley 1956 in

Cherrett 1997, 56),<sup>2</sup> providing a turning point for him; whether true or not, we can be reasonably sure that Armstrong and Ellington were major influences on his music. He is known to have had great admiration for both, eventually getting the opportunity to play with each of them (on separate occasions), if only briefly. However, without more evidence from secondary sources, what follows is an examination of the primary sources, which are the recordings of Armstrong, Ellington and Reinhardt himself. It should be mentioned that although it is widely thought that Reinhardt and Grappelli's partnership was modelled on the American guitar and violin duo of Lang and Venuti, (see Baxter 1963 in Cherrett 1997, 54). Reinhardt was apparently quite dismissive of Lang's playing, and Grappelli, though respectful of Venuti, claims to have been influenced more by Armstrong and Ellington.<sup>3</sup> It is also known that Reinhardt was influenced in some of his compositions by composers such as Debussy and Ravel, but that is moving away from the focus of this project, which is more concerned with the jazz and improvisational style of Reinhardt's playing. There is a lot of 'gypsy style' to his playing, occasionally evident in his solo improvisations (which have a flamenco flavour in parts) and his use of fast runs and arpeggios in the Hungarian gypsy style. The two-in-a-bar off-beat accents of the Hungarian *csárdás* accompaniment also show a similarity to ragtime and early jazz (see Shipton 2001, 386).

### **Exploring the possibilities**

As a starting point, perhaps we should consider *Dallas Blues* (recorded by Armstrong with Luis Russell and His Orchestra in 1929) to determine whether it was significant. The initial trumpet melody of this twelve-bar blues is nothing special, and indeed almost sounds improvised on the spot. After a trombone solo there is a short (probably written) trumpet break at the beginning and end of an arranged section with the reeds, followed by a piano solo. What then follows are two vocal choruses by Armstrong (again sounding semi-improvised) and another arranged reed section. Towards the end of this, Armstrong's trumpet enters, and after a two-bar break (see example 1), he launches into a typically virtuosic solo. This ends abruptly to make way for a one-bar alto saxophone break, a similar trombone break, and what seems to

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<sup>2</sup> The Cherrett book is basically a personal collection of articles, reviews, cuttings, sleeve notes and other material (in English) about Django Reinhardt.

<sup>3</sup> This is according to Grappelli himself, in an article in *Melody Maker* in 1954 (in Cherrett 1997, 40). See also an article by Hughes PanassiÈ (an ardent supporter of Reinhardt and Grappelli) from *Hot News* in 1935 (in Cherrett 1997, 116).

be Armstrong's final break, joined by the band for the last three chords (see example 1). This turns out to be a false ending however, and Armstrong continues with another break which leads to the real ending, Armstrong finishing on a high concert C. If it is true that Reinhardt first encountered Armstrong on this recording, it is no wonder that he was impressed enough for the trumpeter to become his idol (Reinhardt appears to have liked jazz trumpeters, and later professed an admiration for Dizzy Gillespie (see Delaunay 1961, 159).

### Example 1

2-bar break to start solo Breaks to end piece

The image shows two staves of musical notation in treble clef. The first staff, labeled '2-bar break to start solo', contains two measures of music. The first measure has four eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, and C5, each with an accent (>). The second measure has four eighth notes: B4, A4, G4, and F4, each with an accent (>). The second staff, labeled 'Breaks to end piece', contains four measures. The first measure has four eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, and C5, each with an accent (>). The second measure has four eighth notes: B4, A4, G4, and F4, each with an accent (>). The third measure has four eighth notes: E4, D4, C4, and B3, each with an accent (>). The fourth measure has four eighth notes: A3, G3, F3, and E3, each with an accent (>). There are triplets of eighth notes indicated by a '3' below the notes in the second, third, and fourth measures of the second staff.

Reinhardt is not known to have recorded *Dallas Blues*,<sup>4</sup> so a direct comparison is not possible (he recorded relatively few twelve-bar blues in fact). There are, however, some examples of Reinhardt's playing that share the features of Armstrong's solo breaks above, in particular the sequences of rising chromatic lines and hemiola effects. Such an instance is Reinhardt's two-bar solo break in his December 1934 recording of *Tiger Rag* with the Quintette du Hot Club de France (example 2).<sup>5</sup>

### Example 2

The image shows a single staff of musical notation in treble clef. It contains four measures of music. The first measure has four eighth notes: G4, A4, B4, and C5. The second measure has four eighth notes: B4, A4, G4, and F4. The third measure has four eighth notes: E4, D4, C4, and B3. The fourth measure has four eighth notes: A3, G3, F3, and E3. The notes in the second, third, and fourth measures are chromatically descending.

Although this does not provide any evidence that Reinhardt was directly influenced by Armstrong's solo in *Dallas Blues*, with the knowledge that Armstrong was undoubtedly a strong inspiration for Reinhardt, there remains a good possibility that there is substance in the flea market story.

<sup>4</sup> Not according to Delaunay's discography at least, and his is regarded as the most comprehensive available (Delaunay 1961, 163-241).

<sup>5</sup> Both extracts are my own transcriptions.

A more direct comparison could be made between the recordings of *Ain't Misbehavin'* by Armstrong in 1929 and Reinhardt in 1937 (see discography for details of all recordings discussed). Without going into detail, there are some similarities between their solos, even down to Armstrong's brief quote from Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* at which Reinhardt hints at one point. However, there are as many, if not more differences between the two solos as there are similarities, and again, there is no concrete evidence that Reinhardt's version was directly influenced by Armstrong's. Another example is *St Louis Blues*, which Armstrong recorded in 1929. This is mainly a feature for Armstrong's distinctive vocal, but there is a trumpet solo, which becomes the top line of the band arrangement at the end. Reinhardt recorded it at least twice during the 1930s, but his 1935 version (where he is in the rhythm section of a sextet) does not have a guitar solo. His 1937 recording features himself, accompanied only by rhythm guitar and bass, and is mostly improvised. It is quite different from Armstrong's version, and does not reveal a direct connection with it, but his solo style does show signs of Armstrong's influence in his use of accented high notes and very rhythmic phrasing. Both of these examples would seem to indicate that Reinhardt may well have heard the original Armstrong recordings, but perhaps not for some time before he recorded the same tunes himself.

Before leaving the subject of Armstrong's influence on Reinhardt's improvising style, it is worth mentioning a couple more obvious examples. Armstrong's solo on *Beau Koo Jack* (recorded in 1928) is, according to Gunther Schuller, one of his best (see Schuller 1968, 128). Example 3 is an extract from this solo (transcribed by Schuller), showing some features which are also found in Reinhardt's playing.

*Example 3*

The musical notation for Example 3 consists of two staves. The top staff is in B-flat major and shows a melodic line with several triplet figures. Above the staff, the chords Eb, Eo, and Bb7 are indicated. The bottom staff shows a more rhythmic accompaniment, also in B-flat major, with chords Eb and Bb7 indicated above. The notation includes various rhythmic values, including eighth and sixteenth notes, and rests.

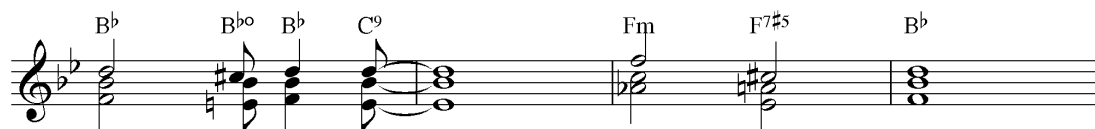




a feature for Reinhardt, accompanied by rhythm guitar and bass only, and has similarities to Ellington's in some of the breaks and the fact that it is a solo guitar 'arrangement'. This term is used loosely, because Reinhardt was incapable of writing down his musical ideas (although other people did occasionally transcribe his music for him), but from listening to many of his recordings it would seem that he had well-conceived ideas in his mind about arrangement and structure, and his aural skills and musical memory were highly developed. The December recording is with the one by the Quintette du Hot Club de France referred to above, and it uses a similar sort of arrangement and has similarities in some of the breaks. Reinhardt and Grappelli spur each other on to heights of improvisation at a breakneck tempo, and the whole 'work' is very well formed, whether by accident or design. It was the first recording released under the quintet's name, and could well have been inspired by Ellington's version. A similar thing could be said about *Limehouse Blues*, which Ellington recorded in 1931 and Reinhardt in 1935 and 1936. There are some resemblances between Ellington's and Reinhardt's recordings, particularly where Ellington uses long held notes in the reeds with crescendos; in both of his recordings, Reinhardt emulates this by playing long chords with crescendos (by using a tremolo technique). Reinhardt's 1936 version also contains a quaver figure that is similar to part of Ellington's arrangement.

Reinhardt had a sophisticated harmonic approach to his own compositions (including his own introductions to other people's compositions), which may be at least partly due to listening to Ellington, who had a similar degree of self-taught harmonic knowledge (or intuition).<sup>8</sup> A famous example of Ellington's use of harmony is *Mood Indigo* from 1930 (example 6).<sup>9</sup>

*Example 6*



Ellington's use of chords and voice leading are unusual for jazz of this period, and Reinhardt seems to have been attracted to these aspects of Ellington's music. The first

<sup>8</sup> Ellington is known to have been influenced (whether directly or otherwise) by the harmonic approaches of Debussy and Ravel, as was Reinhardt (see Rattenbury 1990, 43).

<sup>9</sup> Transcription by Ken Rattenbury (Rattenbury 1990, 27).

three chords of Reinhardt's composition *Swing 39* (from 1939) are Bb – Bb – C9,<sup>10</sup> which, apart from the diminished passing chord, are identical to those of the first two bars of *Mood Indigo*. The chords in the third bar are also in an unusual progression, and there is an example of a Reinhardt composition that uses a similar device (albeit from slightly later than the period this project covers), *Lentement Mademoiselle* (recorded in 1942). In the 'turnaround' at the end of the first section of this tune, the chords are Ab6/C – F7 (leading back to Bbm).<sup>11</sup> Although this is not quite what Ellington does in *Mood Indigo*, because Ab6/C can be thought of as an inversion of Fm, and the F7 chord is functioning in exactly the same way as Ellington's F7#5 chord, we have essentially the same progression.

Reinhardt did record several Ellington compositions during the 1930s. Because they were fairly recent compositions at the time Reinhardt recorded them, it is probable that he had learned them by listening to Ellington's records rather than through hearing other musicians playing them, but we cannot be absolutely certain about this. *It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)* was recorded by Ellington in 1932 and by Reinhardt in 1935. Reinhardt's version has less harmonic sophistication than Ellington's, but this may be partly explained by the fact that his rhythm guitarists in the quintet were not always up to Reinhardt's standards of chord-playing ability; indeed, he often preferred them to keep to simple chord progressions so that he could embellish the harmony himself. On later occasions when Reinhardt worked with bigger bands, he could make use of the larger instrumental palette to realise his more advanced harmonic ideas, in the way Ellington did.<sup>12</sup> An interesting example is *Solitude*, recorded by Ellington in 1934 as a ballad-style arrangement, with no improvised solos other than Harry Carney's bass clarinet, which is really just an embellishment of the bridge melody. Ellington's arrangement has the melody harmonised in fifths and diatonic sixths at the beginning, with varying textures throughout the piece. Reinhardt's quintet recording (from 1937) is slightly faster and has Grappelli playing the melody with occasional chordal flourishes from Reinhardt's guitar, followed by an improvised solo by Reinhardt. After this Grappelli re-enters

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<sup>10</sup> As published in Pierson 1983, 38.

<sup>11</sup> As published in Peters 1984, 73.

<sup>12</sup> For example, *Place de Brouckère*, recorded in 1942 and 1943 by 'Django Reinhardt et son Orchestre', which is a very Ellingtonesque composition and arrangement (which must have been transcribed by someone else, who may have had some creative input into the piece).

with the bridge, followed by the last section of the melody in free time, accompanied only by Reinhardt playing arpeggiated chords. What Reinhardt adds to the piece is a short introduction (example 7).<sup>13</sup>

#### Example 7



This uses compositional techniques that would not have been out of place in Ellington's own work. The first three notes of the *Solitude* melody (G, A, B) have been extended into a five-note pattern in the first bar, which has then been repeated a tone lower in the second bar (a melodic sequence). This has allowed Reinhardt to end on a G, which he makes into a G chord, the dominant chord that is required when the actual *Solitude* melody starts in the following bar. Reinhardt harmonises his introduction by using sixths, but instead of Ellington's diatonic sixths he uses minor sixth intervals throughout, creating a whole-tone effect (in the style of Debussy). In a very similar vein to *Solitude* is *In A Sentimental Mood*, recorded by Ellington in 1935 and Reinhardt in 1937. Again, Ellington's version is a slow ballad that is played slightly faster by Reinhardt (perhaps because it is harder to sustain the sound with acoustic guitars), and both versions have something in common: a slightly chromatic, rubato solo introduction. Ellington's is more typical of his own style than Reinhardt's, which sounds almost like the beginning of a classical guitar piece. Ellington features several soloists during his recording whereas Reinhardt essentially plays an embellishment of the melody, followed by Grappelli doing the same, with a slightly extended ending. Perhaps Reinhardt simply liked this tune, and felt that he did not need to add much to it, although he did reharmonise it slightly.

### Other possibilities

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<sup>13</sup> My own transcription.

It has already been mentioned that neither Reinhardt nor Grappelli considered himself to be continuing the jazz violin and guitar duo style that had begun with Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang. For them to say this, they must have heard Venuti and Lang on recordings. The style typical of Venuti and Lang in the late 1920s and early 1930s was a two-in-a-bar ragtime rhythmic feel, often with more than a hint of bluegrass, particularly in recordings such as *Wild Cat* (1928), *Raggin' The Scale* (1930) and *Goin' Places* (1927). *Goin' Places* is just the two of them, playing with great panache (they were both considered virtuosos on their instruments), but whether it is really jazz is debatable – it is more of a novelty ragtime number with little if any spontaneous improvisation. Their arrangements were carefully planned, and both were in the Paul Whiteman Orchestra for a while, so they were used to playing from written parts (although Lang was apparently less of a reader than Venuti). Even when playing repertoire more suited to the Swing era, they often sounded as though they were approaching the music from a ragtime point of view, such as on *Sweet Lorraine*, which was recorded in 1933 and included Benny Goodman and Bud Freeman in the band. This could be why Reinhardt and Grappelli were dismissive of their influence, preferring Louis Armstrong (who bridged the gap between ragtime and jazz) and Duke Ellington (who was always at the cutting edge of jazz and big band style).

Grappelli had heard Venuti at a concert in the late 1920s, which inspired him to try playing jazz on the violin,<sup>14</sup> although some secondary sources suggest that the inspiration came from seeing the black American jazz violinist Eddie South.<sup>15</sup> The Venuti/Lang style was so different from that of Reinhardt/Grappelli that it is very difficult to guess which Venuti/Lang recordings they heard; possibly the only significance is that the combination of violin and guitar (without drums) in a jazz context was inspired by Venuti and Lang. It is possible that Reinhardt's style of accompaniment could have been initially influenced by the Venuti/Lang duet recordings, as Roger Baxter suggests (Baxter 1963 in Cherrett 1997, 54). However, Grappelli wrote in 1954 that he had not heard the Venuti/Lang duet recordings when he first began playing with Reinhardt, and that Reinhardt said that 'there was nothing to be learned from Lang' (Grappelli 1954 in Cherrett, 1997, 40).

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<sup>14</sup> Source: *Stéphane Grappelli: A Life in the Jazz Century* (DVD, produced by Paul Balmer).

<sup>15</sup> An example being a *Downbeat* article available online called *The Magnificent Gypsy* (author and date not credited).

Other musicians who probably provided inspiration for Reinhardt include Art Tatum, and the Jimmie Lunceford and Paul Whiteman orchestras, all of whom Grappelli has mentioned in various interviews and biographies. The two big bands were known for their two-beat approach, and despite their popularity they were superseded by the swinging four-beat style of bands such as those of Benny Goodman and Count Basie. The up-tempo ‘gypsy’ style numbers of Reinhardt’s Hot Club quintet did have a two-beat feel, something that was maintained into the Swing era, despite it being an old-fashioned approach. The absence of a drummer and the use of acoustic guitars made it difficult to do anything else, and the rhythm guitarists (often gypsies) were not really able to play in any other way. Perhaps Reinhardt was trying to find ways of making this rhythmic feel ‘swing’ better by listening to bands like Lunceford’s.

Pianist Art Tatum is known to have been an inspiration for Grappelli,<sup>16</sup> who was an accomplished pianist himself (he and Reinhardt apparently discovered Tatum at around the same time). Tatum’s way of embellishing melodies and improvisations with rapid runs and arpeggios is so similar to Reinhardt’s that the guitarist must have taken some inspiration from him as well. Tatum also had a gift for harmonic creativity, often using substitute chords spontaneously at a time when most jazz musicians deviated little from standard chord progressions, and again Reinhardt had this gift as well. Another aspect of their playing styles that Reinhardt had in common with Tatum was an ‘orchestral’ approach, in which they were emulating the sound of a full band. As discussed earlier, Reinhardt did this by playing chords with a tremolo technique and also playing accented octaves and chords in a brass-like manner (the octaves at the end of his solo in *After You’ve Gone* (1936) are a classic example). Tatum achieved the effect by playing riffs typical of brass and reed sections, as is described by Shipton when he discusses the influence of Ellington’s 1929 recording of *Tiger Rag* on Tatum’s solo version of the piece in 1933 (Shipton 2001, 186). This is the same Ellington recording that could have inspired the Hot Club quintet’s first recording discussed above.

## **Conclusion**

It was indicated in my introduction that, due to the lack of reliable documentary evidence and sometimes contradictory anecdotal evidence (which cannot be verified

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<sup>16</sup> As note 14.

by Reinhardt's contemporaries due to the passage of time), a certain amount of guesswork would have to be employed with regard to particular jazz recordings that may have influenced Django Reinhardt. It may or may not be true that Reinhardt discovered Louis Armstrong as a result of a chance encounter with *Dallas Blues*, and Reinhardt's version of *Ain't Misbehavin'* may or may not have been based on Armstrong's, but the influence of Armstrong's solo style is not difficult to hear in Reinhardt's playing. Even Armstrong's characteristic 'terminal' vibrato was reproduced by Reinhardt, albeit in a slightly more intense, 'gypsy' way.

Secondary sources also tell us that Duke Ellington was the other main influence on Reinhardt's music, and it is much more likely that Reinhardt became familiar with Ellington's work by listening to his records than any other means, before recording the tunes himself. The fact that there are often several years between the dates of Ellington recordings and Reinhardt's recordings of the same Ellington compositions can be explained by the time it took American jazz recordings to reach Paris at this time. It is almost certain that Reinhardt's versions of *It Don't Mean A Thing (If It Ain't Got That Swing)*, *Solitude* and *In A Sentimental Mood* were based on the original Ellington recordings. In many of Reinhardt's recordings, Ellington's musical influences can be heard, mainly in the style of his accompaniment (to try to sound more like a big band), in his compositions (his introductions and use of chords) and in the structure of his 'arrangements'. It must always be remembered that Reinhardt was musically illiterate, so listening to music was his only means of learning it.

As for other musicians, Eddie Lang must have had some influence on Reinhardt's accompanying style if nothing else, probably from duet recordings such as *Goin' Places*. The influence of Art Tatum can also be heard in Reinhardt's solos, but exactly which Tatum recordings he had heard is difficult to tell. Similarly, anecdotal evidence suggests that Reinhardt listened to bands such as those of Paul Whiteman and Jimmie Lunceford, but identifying particular recordings would require more time than this project has allowed. Without speaking to Emile Savitry or Joseph Reinhardt (who were the only witnesses and who are now both dead), we will probably never know which records from Savitry's collection made the most impact on Django Reinhardt from around 1929 onwards. What we *can* say is that Reinhardt took elements of Armstrong's solo style, Ellington's harmonic and composing style and a few aspects

of the styles of Lang and Tatum, and absorbed them into his own gypsy-based style. This produced a unique sound, which, along with his natural ear for melodic invention and an unusual but highly effective technique, made Django Reinhardt the first great European jazz musician and one of the world's most respected jazz guitarists.

## Discography

Louis Armstrong. *The Golden Years of Louis Armstrong*. 2003. Compact Disc. The Soho Collection. SOHOC016.

Duke Ellington. *The Centenary Collection*. 1999. Compact Disc. Castle Music. PBX CD 433/2.

Duke Ellington. *Duke Ellington and his Orchestra 1927-1931*. Compact Disc. CD 53030.

The Reinhardt recordings are from a variety of compilations, some of which are now unobtainable, so they are listed as they were in Delaunay's original 1961 discography:

*Tiger Rag*. Private acetate. August 1934.

*Tiger Rag*. 78 rpm disc. December 1934. Ultraphone. AP1422.

*Blue Drag*. 78 rpm disc. 1935. Ultraphone. AP1479.

*It Don't Mean A Thing*. 78 rpm disc. 1935. Decca. F5831.

*Limehouse Blues*. 78 rpm disc. 1935. Decca. F5780.

*Limehouse Blues*. 78 rpm disc. 1936. Gramophone. K7706.

*After You've Gone*. 78 rpm disc. 1936. Gramophone. K7707.

*Solitude*. 78 rpm disc. 1937. HMV. B8669.

*Ain't Misbehavin'*. 78 rpm disc. 1937. HMV. B8690.

*In A Sentimental Mood*. 78 rpm disc. 1937. HMV. B8629.

Joe Venuti. *1927 to 1934 Violin Jazz*. 1989. Compact Disc. Yazoo Records. Yazoo 1062.

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