

The
PIANO
of
FRANCOIS RILHAC

Born: Paris, France, Aug. 1, 1960
 Died: France, Sept. 3, 1992

Introduction:

This century came into existence before I heard Francois Rilhac on record for the first time. Know then that I stayed one year in Paris 1984/85! I could have heard this magnificent pianist live, an 'unknown' French jazz musician comparable to Django Reinhardt, a 'well hidden' white vintage stride pianist comparable to the great Afro-Americans of the thirties, but nobody told me about him ...

History:

Francois discovered jazz with his older brother Michel, also a pianist, around the age of 10, and discovered "Fats" Waller at the age of 12. He clearly preferred piano duets to the classical lessons which he gave up early on. He reached an impressive speed by strenuously working along with Art Tatum recordings (notably the Decca 1939-40 ones). He copied "Fats" records by ear and played in a small local band Poires Cuites at 14, then at the Winston Churchill Pub in Paris around 1975, where he met Aaron Bridges. He also performed in the bars in the Pigalle area. Around 1978, he became the steady pianist at the Cardinal Paf where he met Jean-Loup Longnon who hired him in his 8-piece band as pianist and arranger. His job with Longnon made him discover a more modern kind of jazz (block chords, Oscar Peterson, Monk, Bud Powell, Wynton Kelly) and the great arrangers, notably Duke Ellington and Shorty Rogers. Jean-Loup is certainly greatly responsible for Francois' harmonic and rhythmic freedom, and his whimsical and unusual improvised phrasing. Towards 1982 Francois became the pianist for Gilbert Leroux and Marcel Zanini, but he also worked as a soloist or as a substitute in other bands. Shortly afterwards he created a piano duet, and then he formed his own 6-piece band called the Francois Rilhac Harlem Jazz. During the time when he played with Leroux, Zanini and me (Mazetier), Francois did a curious about-face, back to a more "traditional" jazz and studied in depth stride piano, and his favorite stride pianists: James P. Johnson, "Fats" once again and Donald Lambert. His style, at the end, with the Harlem Jazz, represents a synthesis of these odd influences, where stride, block-chords, fast-moving right-hand phrases, dissonances and harmonic and melodic surprises all combine to form his own personal style. He had numerous personal problems which threw him into long periods of depression, hospitalization and various medical treatments, during which he practically stopped playing. His tragic death put an end to what seemed to be a hopeless personal battle, and his friends were devastated (excerpts from Louis Mazetier's liner notes to the CD "Thank's A Million" with some modification).

Message:

I know that lots of privately recorded material by this great pianist exist. It would be highly appreciated if such information could be included in future updates of this solography. Postscript of Feb. 2022: Numerous broadcasts have recently found their way into the solography!!

FRANCOIS RILHAC SOLOGRAPHY

FRANCOIS RILHAC**Paris, Spring 1978**

Francois Rilhac (p), J. M. Rombi (el-b), W. Roudil (dm) added on items 4-5.
TV-program (colour), sent May 3, 1978, five titles:

Just A Gigolo	1:55. (M)
Blues	2:32. (FM)
Ragtime	1:54. (FM)
Autumn Leaves	4:44. (FM)
Night In Tunisia	4:42. (F)

Rather strange that Francois Rilhac's first appearance should be a TV-program, seven years before he enters a proper recording studio! This boy-genius, or at least a very young man, shows great talent and knowledge of jazz music. Looking at his later career, it is also remarkable that he started out with a broad spectre of style influences, also modern jazz, as evident in the choice of such vehicles as "Autumn ...", and above all, "... Tunisia". Later he retrograded and stuck to older jazz forms, a sort of development quite unique.

MAXIME SAURY**Paris, 1979**

Maxime Saury (cl), Francois Rilhac (p), unknown (b), (dm).
TV-program (colour), eight titles:

9:09	I Got Rhythm	Acc. (cl). Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
6:29	Lady Be Good	Acc. (cl). Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
9:11	Body And Soul	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (S)
8:46	Royal Garden Blues	Acc. (cl). Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
9:27	Georgia On My Mind	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. Acc. (b). (S)
7:48	Blues	Acc. (cl). Solo 36 bars. (S)
10:00	On The Sunny Side Of TS	Acc. (cl). Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars (4 bars missing end 2 nd chorus). Acc. (b). (SM)
	Tea For Two (NC)	Acc. (cl). (FM)

These items confirm the impression we got through the previous program; FR is still in a development phase, far from the stride he got so famous for later. There is little bringing associations to vintage swing in the slow and thoughtful titles like "Georgia ..." and "Body ..." here. However, there is no doubt about his enormous talent, just listen to how he treats fast titles like "I Got ..." and "Lady ..." with sovereign technique, and even more important, full of exciting phrases and details, a highly creative musician only 19 years old, still searching.

JEAN-LOUP LONGNON OCTET**Paris, Nov. 22, 1980**

Jean-Loup Longnon (tp, ldr), Francois Chassagnite (tp), William Treve (tb), Jean Eteve (cl, as), Marc Thomas (ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Enzo Mucci (bjo), Philippe Berthe (soubassophone), unknown (vo-"... Rag", "... Baby").
Five titles were recorded at concert in 5th arrondissement, "The Sheik Of Araby" and "Lady Be Good" have not been available but:

10:00	Tiger Rag	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
7:11	Body And Soul	Intro. Soli 4 and 32 bars. (S)
9:40	Everybody Loves My Baby	Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: One cannot be but very impressed by the creativity of French jazz music! With Longnon we get our dear vintage tunes transformed with daring modern arrangements, and they work! FR seems to thrive immensely; at this stage he is more into modern music than later, and he delivers some wonderful piano playing on "... Soul"! At the same time, he already knows his stride, as particularly evident on "Tiger ..." and taking a swinging solo on ... My Baby". A genius is entering the scene, and not slowly!

JEAN-LOUP LONGNON OCTET Paris, Dec. 8, 1981

Jean-Loup Longnon (tp, ldr), Francois Chassagnite (tp), William Treve (tb), Jean Eteve (cl, as), Andre Villeger, Marcel Zanini (ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Philippe Berthe (tu), Francois Laudet (dm).

Eight titles were recorded at concert in Espace Cardin:

5:23	Doin' The Voom Voom	With orch. (FM)
5:55	Tiger Rag	Solo 64 bars. (F)
5:13	Shiny Stockings	With orch. (SM)
4:27	Body And Soul	Solo 4 bars. Acc. (tp). Solo 4 bars. (S)
4:36	Lady Be Good	Acc. (tp). (FM)
10:14	Afternoon With Mini	Soli 8, 8, 8, 64, 4, 20 and 8 bars. (FM)
10:30	Royal Garden Blues	Soli 5 and 2 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
5:34	Bugle Call Rag	Acc. (tp). With orch. (F)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: One year later with a similar group, and also here very important music is made. FR is slightly less featured; only two choruses on "Tiger ..." this time, and no full chorus on "... Soul". "Royal Garden ..." is not particularly exciting, and therefore it is a pleasure to highlight the fascinating ten-minutes item "... Mini" where FR has a very important role!

MARCEL ZANINI QUINTET Saint-Cloud, Oct. 2, 1982

Marcel Zanini (cl-items 1,5,8,9, ts-items 2-7,10, vo?-items 3,8,9), Francois Rilhac (p), Marc Edouard Nabe (g), Pierre Yves Sorin (b), Alain Bouchaux (dm).

Ten titles were recorded in concert at Festival de Saint-Cloud:

6:00	How Am I To Know?	Acc. (cl). Solo 64 bars. (M)
6:25	Suivez Le President	Intro 24 bars. Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
5:38	Deed I Do	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
4:26	Louisiana	Intro 4 bars. Solo 64 bars. (M)
5:01	Lotus	Acc. (ts). (S) Solo. Acc. (cl). (M)
7:09	Relax	Intro 8 bars to solo 16+8 bars, (ts) on bridge. Solo 64 bars. (M)
4:26	Ruby My Dear	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (ts) 32 bars. Solo with (b) 16 bars. Acc. (ts). (S)
4:35	Thanks A Million	Solo 64 bars. Acc. (vo). (M)
4:27	If Dreams Come True	Intro 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. Acc. (b). Acc. (vo). (F)
6:25	Ramatuelle	Intro 8 bars. Solo 64 bars. (M)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: This is an important discovery! For the first time we hear FR together with Marcel Zanini, cooperation which should continue all the way down the final session eight years later. An excellent musician, particularly on tenorsax here, as on "... Le President". There is no real stride here, not even on "... True" which later became one of FR's most popular tunes. In fact, what we hear is good modern mainstream piano playing, still undeveloped and not with the originality we encounter later, but he has a very good technique with delicate details. However, the session as such is more hot swinging than the piano itself, good rhythm section, and in toto highly enjoyable!

JEAN-LOUP LONGNON BIG BAND Audincourt, Dec. 3, 1982

Bigband personnel including Francois Rilhac (p).

Six titles were recorded in concert:

8:50	The Band Is Coming	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
7:30	Lover Man	Acc. (tp). (S)
16:15	Doin' Longnon Thing	Long solo with dm/orch. (FM)
8:10	Les Elephants	With orch. (FM)
9:30	Torride	With orch. (FM)

5:30 Bis With orch. (F)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: An excellent modern bigband but not necessary with the charm of the octet and its vintage repertoire. Also, of course, less space for piano soli, however there are two, both in the quite modern style.

CHANTAL KOROLOFF **1982**
Marcel Zanini (ts, comp), Francois Rilhac (p, arr), + unknown musicians, Chantal Koroloff (narr).

EP Disques KOR 1 "Dit La Fontaine", lasting 6:48. Duration of music 2:40.

Quote Francis Lalubin's FR discography: "Eight short musical extracts at the beginning and at the end of four recited fables": Faint background piano only.

FRANCOIS RILHAC TRIO **Paris, Jan. 13, 1983**
Francois Rilhac (p), Marc Michel (b), Richard Portier (dm).
Concert in studio, four titles:

Lennie's Blues	6:20. (FM)
Emily	8:25. (S/M)
All God's Chillun Got Rhythm	7:05. (F)
Autumn Leaves	8:00. (FM)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: For those of you that thought FR was a stride pianist, this session must come as a great surprise! You encounter a modern young pianist in his first real solo session, and his equally modern trio and repertoire. It is impossible not to be influenced by knowledge of his later development, but to my opinion his music in this style has international class. Half-an-hour of highly confident art in all tempi, from the beautiful "Emily" to the fast and fantastic "... Rhythm". This session is a very important document of early FR and where he came from. And do you know; and the end of "... Rhythm" there are a few stride choruses!!

ARNETT COBB – DANY DORIZ BIGBAND **Limoges, May 30, 1983**
Bigband personnel including Claude Gousset (tb), Arnett Cobb (ts), Dany Doriz (vib), Francois Rilhac (p), Pierre-Yves Sorin (b), Michel Denis (dm).
Concert at Hot Club de Limoges, TV (colour), one title:

11:33 Air Mail Special Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

This is quite amazing and valuable, inasmuch as we still hear a modern oriented FR, not yet started on his process towards the stride. Not particularly exciting as such, but historically important.

JOEL LACROIX JAZZ ORCHESTRA **Paris, April 30/May 1, 1984**
Joel Lacroix (sop), Claude Braud (cl, ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Claude Quibel (b), Japy Gautier (dm).
Twelve titles were recorded live at Caveau de La Huchette:

5:04	Royal Garden Blues	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
2:43	Where Am I?	Acc. only. (S)
2:52	Hello Dolly	Intro 8 bars. Solo 36 bars. (FM)
2:43	Buddy Bolden Stomp	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
2:40	Petite Fleur	Acc. only. (SM)
3:56	Marchand De Poisson	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
3:25	Blame It On The Blues	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
3:24	Nuages	Solo 32 bars. (SM)
3:45	Jeepers Creepers	Intro 20 bars to solo 7 choruses of 34 bars, (dm) on last bridge. (F)
2:56	Passport To Paradise	Acc. only. (S)
3:11	Dardanella	Acc. only. (FM)
3:15	Medley: Laura / Over The Rainbow	No solo. Solo 8 bars to acc. (ts) 8 bars. (S)

Postscript of Feb. 21, 2019: A new session has appeared! The highlight is the solo feature number "Jeepers ...", a massive swinging item of the kind that almost only FR could do! "Royal Garden ..." is also very interesting, never heard it being played like this, sometimes rather disconnected and far out with flashing runs. Note also

“Nuages” played almost only with strong chords. A beautiful brief conclusion with “... Rainbow”.

JEAN-LOUP LONGNON BIG BAND **Nice, July 12, 1984**

Bigband personnel including Francois Rilhac (p).

Nine titles were recorded in concert at “Festival de Jazz de Nice”:

3:20	Jamie	With orch. (S)
5:20	It’s About Time	With orch. (S)
15:45	Doing Longnon Thing	Long solo with orch. (FM)
7:30	Lover Man	Acc. (tp). (S)
15:15	Little Pixie	Intro to acc. (vo). Solo 64 bars. (FM)
8:10	Les Elephants	With orch. (FM)
8:40	The Band Is Coming	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
5:30	Saida’s Conversation	With orch. (S)
9:10	Torride	With orch. (FM)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: Quite similar to the 1982 session, with FR highlighting on the same two titles, “... Thing” and “The Band ...” with an additional solo on “... Pixie”. This is the last time we hear FR with Longnon, and it is obvious he was a very important part of his orchestra. But be amazed to consider that this solography was started because I by coincidence found a fantastic stride piano artist, little evidence of that here!

JEAN-LOUP LONGNON BIG BAND **Paris, July 13/14, 1984**

Bigband personnel including Francois Rilhac (p).

Four titles, “Les Elephants”, “Torride”, “Doin’ Longnon Thing” and “The Band Is Coming” were issued as “Torride!” on 52 Rue East (F) RE003, but FR cannot be heard.

FRANCOIS RILHAC **Paris, 1984**

Francois Rilhac (p, comp).

Three titles were recorded at “Le Petit Opportun”, issued on an LP by ERIC GEMSA, Carriere 63.122:

	Honky Tonk Speed Boogie	3:37. (F/M/F)
	Strange Op’Boogie	7:08. (SM/FM)
	Striding The Boogie	2:42. (FM)

Postscript of June 2018: An interesting and very valuable surprise, to hear FR really go for the boogie! Obviously the session is no casual event but a well prepared occasion. The highlight is “Strange ...” which in fact is a suite consisting of three different parts, of which the first part is more than four minutes long, then going uptempo. “Honky ...” is structured with a medium intermission between the rolling boogie parts. Only “Striding ...” is a one-piece performance. Great playing!

GILBERT LEROUX QUARTET **Marcillac, Chapiteau, Aug. 10, 1984**

Gilbert Leroux (wbd), Alain Marquet (cl), Francois Rilhac (p), Frederic Legendre (b), Chris Reisner (vo).

Three titles were recorded at Festival Jazz in Marcillac:

7:18	Ain’t Misbehavin’	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 64 bars. (M) Acc. (cl). (F)
6:42	It Had To Be You	Intro 8 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 64 bars. Acc. (cl). (SM)
5:55	China Boy	Intro 8 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Acc. (cl). Coda 4 bars. (F)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: This session seems to be the first one with the hot washboard group of Gilbert Leroux, wish I had heard it live, I was resident in Paris at that time!! A pleasant laidback “Ain’t, a “... Be You” with beautiful accompaniment to the clarinet and following original solo, and a highlight in a very hot “China ...” with lots of fancy and unexpected details!

FRANCOIS RILHAC / LOUIS MAZETIER **Paris, Dec. 27, 1984**

Francois Rilhac, Louis Mazetier (p).

Concert in studio, Maison de la Radio, seven titles:

	On The Trail	3:35. (FM)
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Ain't Misbehavin'	3:56 (SM/F)
Taking A Chance On Love	4:36. (SM/M)
Jingle Bells	2:46. (F)
Mule Walk	3:32. (FM)
If Dreams Come True	4:48. (FM)
The Entertainer	4:12. (FM)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: Half-an-hour of what seems to be the first meeting between the two French jazz piano giants! They fit each other as hand-in-gloves to use an outdated expression and seem to thrive in each others company, although, as far as I understand, their personalities were vastly different. Details on each item should not be necessary, but I cannot but highlight "If Dreams ...", one of FR's most played tunes, and this duo version is five minutes of just fun and swing, or fun and swing!!

GILBERT LEROUX Paris? Jan. 1, 1985

Gilbert Leroux (wbd, ldr, Alain Marquet (cl), Jacques Montebruno (ts-items 4-7), Francois Rilhac, Louis Mazetier (p), Freddy Legendre (b), Francois Corbier (dm). Seven titles were broadcasted as "Pollen" (also one fine unidentified solo item by Louis Mazetier):

6:00	Somebody Stole My Gal	Duet 2 choruses of 80 bars. (F)
5:18	Everybody Loves My Baby	Duet 3 choruses of 32 bars. Coda 4 bars. (F)
5:15	Ain't Misbehavin'	Intro 4 bars. Duet 64 bars. (SM)
5:33	Unidentified Tune	Duet 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
6:33	Please Don't Talk About MWIAG	Intro 8 bars. Duet 64 bars. (FM)
5:41	I Got Rhythm	Duet 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
6:07	It Had To Be You	Intro. Duet 64 bars. Acc. (cl/ts). (FM)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: This time we get an augmented personnel, and FR and LM take their unique cooperation into the washboard group. The result is forty minutes of hot swing on the best of vintage evergreens. Listen to the violent piano duets on "... My Baby" on "... Rhythm" and hold firmly to your chair! Everything (almost) goes very fast here, and you should be in a very bad mood not to be inspired by the enthusiasm inherent in this music.

FRANCOIS RILHAC / LOUIS MAZETIER Aubusson, Feb. 3, 1985

Francois Rilhac, Louis Mazetier (p).

Ten titles were recorded at concert in Centre Culturel et Artistique Jean Lurcat:

Mule Walk	3:30. (FM)
The Jeep Is Jumpin'	3:40. (F)
Do You Know What It Means TMNO	6:35. (S/M)
Thou Swell	4:25. (F)
Yacht Club Swing	4:17. (M)
Boogie Woogie	5:35. (M)
Jazz Me Blues	3:40. (FM)
Indiana	5:35. (M/F)
I Got Rhythm	3:55. (F)
Liza	3:25. (F)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: Another fine concert, fifty minutes of perfect cooperation between these two masters of the stride piano. As their piano styles are very similar, it might be a challenging exercise to try to identify who is in charge of the different parts. Sometimes I think I do, recognizing some personal FR tricks, but generally I just give up; who cares, the music is excellent, which is what matters. For a nice highlight try "... New Orleans".

MARCEL ZANINI QUARTET Aubusson, Feb. 3, 1985

Marcel Zanini (cl-items 4,7-9, ts-items 1-3,5-6,10-11, vo-items 4,6,9,11), Francois Rilhac (p), Pascal Chebel (b), Sam Woodyard (dm).

Twelve titles were recorded at concert in Centre Culturel et Artistique Jean Lurcat:

7:10	Take The A Train	Duet with (ts) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. Acc. (dm). Duet 32 bars. (M)
7:30	Relax	Intro and duet with (ts). Solo 48+8 bars, (dm) on 2 nd bridge. Duet 32 bars. (M)
8:15	Suivez Le President	Soli 6 and 7 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
5:45	'S Wonderful	Intro and acc.(vo). (S). Acc.(vo). Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Acc. (vo). (FM)
6:40	Limbo Jazz	Solo 32 bars. Duet with (ts) 16 and 32 bars. (M)
5:35	My Buddy	Intro 32 bars. Acc. (vo) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (vo) 32 bars. (M)
7:00	High Tide	Solo 64 bars. (M)
7:40	Lotus	Duet with (cl) (S) to long solo and duet. (M)
4:20	J'ai Fabrique Un Amour / I've Got A Feeling I'm Falling	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). Solo 32 bars. (M)
7:30	Histoire De Mal	Acc. (ts). Solo 32 bars. (S)
7:30	Cherry	Acc. (ts). Acc. (vo). Soli 16 and 8 bars. (M)
0:40	Sign Off	Solo 24 bars. (M)

Postscript of Feb. 2022: This concert is preceding the studio recording session by almost two months, but the music is quite similar and impressing. We get some new versions of the studio tunes, like "My Buddy", "Lotus" and "... De Mal". The leader has possibly and even more prominent role here, but there is enough of exciting piano soli, such as "Relax" and "High Tide". The medium tempo is preferred, and generally this group represents a more laidback contrast to the hard swinging Leroux.

MARCEL ZANINI QUINTET

Paris, March 26/27, 1985

Marcel Zanini (cl, ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Marc Edouard Nabe (g), Pascal Chebel (b), Sam Woodyard (dm-except 002-1), ?? (vo-002,007).

Eleven titles were recorded for Black & Blue, seven issued as "Lotus":

85-001	Lotus	Duet with (cl) (S) to solo 136 bars (M) to duet and coda. (S)
85-002-1	My Buddy	Intro 8 bars to acc.(vo) 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Acc. (vo) 32 bars. (M)
85-002-2	My Buddy	As above. (M)
85-005	Hot Brass	Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
85-006	Je Vole Parmi Les Nuages	Acc. (vo) 16 and 8 bars. Solo 64 bars. Acc. (vo) 12 bars to coda. (M)
85-007	Rosetta	Duet with (cl) 32 bars to acc.(vo) 32 bars to solo 64 bars to acc. (cl). (M)
85-008-2	Histoire De Mal	4:14. (S)
85-010	Pele Mele	Intro 4 bars to acc. (ts) 36 bars to solo 24 bars to acc. (ts). (SM)

This is the real beginning of a most important jazz archeological discovery, the magnificent swing pianist Francois Rilhac! Lucky you French jazz enthusiasts who had this genius with you, but why didn't you tell? Swing piano like this has not been heard since the days of the great Teddy Wilson and Mel Powell, only challenged by a few postwar Swedes, believe me! Swinging with a sovereign technique transparent as glass, creative, dynamic and original soli, what more could you wish for? In this quintet he plays mostly softly with a delicate touch, as in the blues "Hot Brass" and "Pele Mele" (dig the last chorus!). His two choruses on "Rosetta" are full of surprises and just great, as is "Je Vole ...". In the bossa nova "Lotus" he also introduces some of his easily identifiable chords. Finally, though this is not the right word, "My Buddy" with its two takes is played with such imagination that one is just hypnotized. Note how he uses his chords at the end but much stronger on take 2 compared to take 1. Final note, he would not have been

able to perform like this without the fine work of Zanini and the quintet as a whole! And another postfinal note, "... De Mal" is a solo feature for FR in a slow tempo, incredibly beautiful!

BUSTER BENTON**Paris, May 23/24, 1985**

Francois Rilhac (p), Billy Branch (harmonica), Buster Benton (el-g, vo), Carlton Weathersby (elg), W. J. Williams (b), Mose Rutues (dm).

Nineteen titles were recorded for Black & Blue, issued on CDs BB 728.2, issued as "Sons Of Blues" and 59.001-2, issued as "Blues At The Top". Some titles have (almost) no trace of FR, some have soft accompaniment, where one really has to struggle to hear any piano, but the following five have prominent FR:

Blues And Trouble	Acc. (g/vo/hca) 48 bars to solo with (hca) 12 to acc. (vo/g/hca) 24 bars. (S)
I Wish I Knew	Acc. (vo) 32 bars to acc. (g) 8 bars to acc. (vo) 16 bars. (S)
The Band Ladies Have The Blues	Acc. (g/hca) to solo 24 bars with (hca) acc. (S)
As The Years Go Passing By	Solo 24 bars with (hca) acc. (S)
Fours	Solo 24 bars. (M)

These are magnificent blues sessions, but of course, everything revolves around Buster Benton's charismatic personality. One has to listen closely to find FR, but there are some occasional very nice things in the background. That he could play the slow blues is evident, and the execution is sensitive and delicate.

BERT DE KORT**& HIS DUTCH DIXIELAND PIPERS Hilversum, Holland, June 3, 1985**

Bert de Kort (cnt, vo), Dick Sleeman (tb), Frits Kaatee (cl, sop), Francois Rilhac (p), Adrie Braat (b), Nanning van der Hoop (dm).

Eight titles were issued on Downtown (Swiss) CD9207:

Riverboat Shuffle	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
A Song Was Born	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
What's New?	Acc. (cnt). Solo 16 bars. (S)
It Don't Mean A Thing	Solo 64 bars. (F)
I Cover The Waterfront	Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. (S)
Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams	Soli 16 and 16 bars. (M)
Wolverine Blues	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Postscript of June 2018: At last this CD has become available! On this 'dixieland' session FR is only one of many good and inspired musicians, and his soli are mainly of limited length. In uptempo like "... Shuffle", "... Born" and "... Blues" he is more modest than in later years. The highlight is "... Thing", here he offers some of the surprises that his later works are so full of, note the opening phrase as a good example and the agitated second chorus! Note however his beautiful slow soloing on "... New?" and "... Waterfront", not so many examples of this side of his artistry.

same date

Francois Rilhac (p) solo, three titles:

Mule Walk	2:59. (F)
It Had To Be You	3:28. (S/FM)
Daintiness Rag	2:03. (F)

To compensate for limited playing time on the collective items, he is allotted three nice solo items. The most interesting item is "... You" with a slow introduction interspersed with some flashing runs, then going into stride, well done!

FRANCOIS RILHAC**Paris, June 14, 1985**

Francois Rilhac (p) solo.

Twentyfive titles were recorded live at La Table d'Harmonie by Jean-Pierre Tahmazian, fifteen of which appeared on the CD Black & Blue BB 812 2 (these are marked with a *) as "It's Only A Paper Moon", in October 2016, produced by Louis Mazetier:

*	I Cover The Waterfront	4:25. (M)
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*	Daintiness Rag	2:18.(F)
	The Mule Walk	2:58.()
*	I've Got The World On A String	3:43.(M)
*	F Minor Stride	4:14.(F)
*	Somebody Stole My Gal	3:27.(F)
	Blue Lou	4:21.(FM)
	Between The Devil And The DBS	4:40.(FM)
	Fussin'	3:31.(FM)
	Anitra's Dance	2:49.(F)
	Somebody Loves Me	3:17.(FM)
*	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	5:18.(SM)
*	Ain't Misbehavin'	6:01.(SM)
*	Sugar	6:21.(SM)
*	Lullaby In Rhythm	3:20.(M)
*	April In My Heart	4:09.(SM)
*	Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now	3:43.(SM)
*	C'Est La Mere Michel	3:07.(FM)
*	Sweet Lorraine	5:22.(M)
	Anitra's Dance -2	2:56.()
	Breeze	7:56.()
*	It's Only A Paper Moon	7:29.(M)
	It Had To Be You	9:16.()
	Yesterdays	1:56.()
	Ain't Misbehavin' -2	3:11.()
	You Took Advantage Of	1:51.()
	Lullaby In Rhythm -2	3:24.()
*	Body And Soul	7:16.(S)

A very valuable addition to the FR-treasury! Excellent sound and variation of tunes and tempi, and Louis Mazetier has written detailed and informative comments to each item. There are no superlatives left for me to describe the originality and creativity of this great piano player. Possibly one might miss some of the madness (meant positively!) found in other sessions under less controlled circumstances, this sounds like a proper and supervised studio recording session, if you understand what I mean. Very difficult to single out particular highlight items, but I feel confident that the "... Rag" and "... Michel" will find you at home! The quite long version of "Sugar", the "Tatum-esque" "... Lorraine", the surprising and original "Body ..." of full seven minutes, you will enjoy these, but to mention some is really a shame to the others. Get this CD as soon as possible and ask for more! Postscript of Sept. 2018: More music from this session exists. I have heard some items, and they merit another CD!

FRANCOIS RILHAC / LOUIS MAZETIER Juan Les Pins, July 26, 1985
 Francois Rilhac, Louis Mazetier (p), Frederique Carminati (vo-items 5-10), Gilbert Leroux (wbd-items 8-10).

Ten titles were recorded at Festival de Jazz d'Antibes:

Mule Walk	4:00.(F)
Who?	3:20.(F)
Boogie Woogie Special	5:30.(M)
Royal Garden Blues	3:50.(FM)
I Can't Give You Anything But Love	4:50.(M)
Do You Know What It Means TMNO?	5:30.(S)

Baby Won't You Please Come Home	3:40. (M)
All Of Me	4:25. (FM)
When You're Smiling	4:35. (F)
Crazy About My Baby	2:47. (F)

Postscript of March 2022: Another duo session and perhaps not much to add, same lovely music! However, when they expand the duo and allow washboard and female vocal to join, we really get some additional fun! The three final items, starting with a memorable "All ...", and concentrating on uptempo, are really out of the ordinary. Again I must marvel at the quality of French vintage music!!

FRANCOIS RILHAC **Amilly, France, Sept. 22, 1985**

Francois Rilhac (p) solo.

Two titles were recorded live, issued on Hot Club du Gatinais HCG01 -02 (CD) as "Ticklin' At The District":

How High The Moon	2:54. (F)
Gone With The Wind	2.24. (M)

FR on his own, how does that work out? There is no doubt that he has heard Art Tatum, and he has learned his stride, but otherwise he blends everything he has learned into his own personal style. Two fine items!

GILBERT LEROUX WASHBOARD GROUP **Paris, Nov. 2, 1985**

Gilbert Leroux (wbd, ldr), Daniel Barda (tb-except "Supraton ..."), Alain Marquet (cl), Francois Rilhac (p), Louis Mazetier (p-"... Wild"), Frederic "Freddy" Legendre (b).

Amateur videos (colour), recorded at Town Hall of 5th district of Paris during an event called "Jazz Band Ball", four titles:

6:41	Runnin' Wild	Solo 64 bars (2 nd (p)-solo?). (F)
5:44	Blues My Naughty SGT M	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
5:42	Weary Blues	Solo 5 choruses of 16 bars. (F)
5:25	Supraton In Marrakouch	Acc. (cl). Solo 32+12 bars. (F)

Found these after having listened to the recording session below, and one must just throw in the towel to this exciting and violently swinging music! "... Wild" is just that with LM taking the first brilliant piano solo, FR the second one. Going to "... My Naughty ...", FR takes three magnificent chorus (dig his opening phrase!).

same date?

Postscript of Feb. 2, 2022: Found the same program under the title "Festival de Jazz de Paris" with two additional titles:

5:06	I Found A New Baby	Solo 64 bars. (F)
6:33	Ain't Misbehavin'	Intro 4 bars. Solo 32 bars. (SM)

Two pianists are involved on "... Baby", and it seems there are more duets in these six items than noted, sorry. "Ain't ..." is played in slower tempo than usual.

GILBERT LEROUX WASHBOARD GROUP **Paris, Jan. 7, 1986**

Gilbert Leroux (wbd, ldr), Daniel Barda (tb), Alain Marquet (cl), Michel Bescont (ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Louis Mazetier (p-"... Naughty", "Weary ...").

Seven titles recorded live at Studio 105, Maison de Radio France, six issued on Djaz DJ 508-2:

8:15	Please Don't Talk About MWIG	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
7:30	It Don't Mean A Thing IYAGTS	Intro 16 bars. Acc. (tb). Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
8:20	These Foolish Things	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (S)
9:20	Somebody Stole My Gal	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 3 choruses of 40 bars. (F)
7:20	Blues My Naughty SGT M	Duet with (p-LM) intro and 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
7:15	Weary Blues	Duet with (p-LM) 5 choruses of 16 bars. (FM)

same date

Francois Rilhac, Louis Mazetier (p).

One title:

Blue Lou

4:50. (FM)

For those of you not familiar with French swing and traditional jazz, you are up for a great and pleasant surprise! The leader with his washboard sets a firm base for almost fifty minutes of jiving and jumping. Almost five minutes into "Please ..." FR shows his masterly piano capabilities. Although their styles have many differences, FR's dynamic approach to playing, as well as his harmonic surprises reminds me somewhat of Mel Powell. On "It Don't ..." almost a feature number for trombone, he picks up the preceding terminating phrase and throws it around like a ragdoll, going to strong stride in the upper register in the third chorus, wow!! A sparkling solo on "Somebody ..." almost takes the breath out of you. Finally note a thoughtful slow chorus on "... Things". No not finally, because on the two last items the excellent pianist Louis Mazetier joins the ball, and some two-piano groove is just unforgettable! Highly recommendable session!! And also a fine duet on "Blue Lou" has recently appeared (postscript: Feb. 2022).

MARCEL ZANINI**Paris, March 3, 1986**

Marcel Zanini (cl, ts), Francois Rilhac(p).

Three titles were recorded for Black & Blue, two issued:

86-001	Carro	Acc. (ts) to solo 24 bars to acc. (ts). (S)
86-003	Thanks A Million	Duet with (cl) 32 bars to solo 32 bars to acc. (cl) 32 bars to duet 36 bars to coda. (M)

The very slow and pensive "Carro" shows another side of FR not heard in the previous sessions, beautiful solo and fine cooperation with the tenorsax. "Thanks ..." is just a perfect duo item, brilliant piano chorus and tight cooperation between the two.

FRANCOIS RILHAC**Paris, March 3, 1986**

Francois Rilhac (p) solo.

Twelve titles were recorded for Black & Blue, the following three are unissued: 86-011 "Hallelujah", 86-012 "Runnin' Wild", 86-015 "Jeepers Creepers". The LP cover states: "Francois Rilhac – Megalo Piano Stride" with James P. Johnson, Willie "The Lion" Smith, Fats Waller and Art Tatum as astonished bylookers):

86-004	Ain't Misbehavin'	4:25. (M/F)
86-005-1	Pilgrim Chorus	2:28. (F)
86-006-2	F Minor Stride	4:05. (F)
86-007-2	Fussin'	3:27. (FM)
86-008	I've Got The World On A String	4:05. (M)
86-009	Russian Lullaby	2:39. (F)
86-010	If Dreams Come True	4:10. (F)
86-013	Mule Walk	2:55. (FM)
86-014	C'Est La Mere Michel	3:22. (FM)

Paris, March 10, 1986

Same. Nine titles were recorded for Black & Blue, the following six are unissued: 86-019 "Believe It Beloved", 86-021 "Sweet Lorraine", 86-022 "Blue Lou", 86-025 "I Believe In Miracles", 86-028 "Thou Swell" and 86-030 "I Got Rhythm" (this one with Louis Mazetier (p) added) but:

86-020	When You And I Were Young, Maggie	3:50. (S/FM)
86-026	The Joint Is Jumpin'	3:38. (F)
86-027	Two Sleepy People	3:15. (S)

These sessions for B&B are something very special, because they are the only examples where FR is in a proper recording studio all by himself. If you think you should sense some claustrophobic vibrations, forget it!! This is some of the greatest piano sessions I have ever heard!! Although there are those who seem to think that FR is only a clone of the great stride pianists of the thirties, it is not so. He knows the history of the tradition down to the smallest detail, and he can easily copy the old masters soli note by note. However, he has his own emotional approach, a sense of drama probably connected to the difficult psyche that eventually broke him down. And he has an amazing technique, so clean and penetrating, each and every

note stands out so clearly and shining. All items here are just magnificent. They seem to group into three. The first may be called conventional like “Mule ...”, “Fussin”, “... Maggie”, “... Misbehavin”, “... People”, and “... Jumpin”. The second has “... String” and “... Michel”, not so easy to classify. The third is the particularly dramatic performances, often in minor key, like “F Minor ...”, “If Dreams ...”, “... Lullaby” and “... Chorus”, and when these are played for unprepared listeners, they usually cannot believe what they hear. To sum up, this is a perfect session by one of vintage jazz piano’s very greatest. It should be an international public demand to have Black & Blue issue everything they have in stock, alternate takes and everything, it is jazz history!!!

GILBERT LEROUX WASHBOARD GROUP **Paris, Nov. 8, 1986**

Gilbert Leroux (wbd, ldr), Daniel Barda (tb), Alain Marquet (cl), Michel Bescont (ts), Francois Rilhac, Louis Mazetier (p).

Concert, five titles:

3:40	Please Don't Talk AMWIG	Duet with (p) 72 bars. (FM)
7:00	Blues My Naughty Sweetie GTM	Duet with (cl) 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
8:22	Exactly Like You	Intro 8 bars. (SM). Solo (SM/F) In ens. (F)
8:15	Margie	Intro 8 bars. Duet with (cl) 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
12:15	Somebody Stole My Gal	Intro 24 bars. Duet with (cl) 40 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 40 bars. (F)

Postscript of March 2022: I never get tired of this washboard group, not only because I love the ‘instrument’ itself, because the atmosphere is so unlimited happy and swinging! I believe FR does most of the piano soloing here. “... Naughty ...” we have heard before, but the more versions the better!!

FRANCOIS RILHAC **Villeneuve sur Lot, Nov. 21, 1986**

Michel Boss (tp), unknown (tb-“Rosetta”), Bruno Monte (cl, ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Frederic Legendre (b), Lucien Dobat (dm).

Nine titles were recorded at the club “Jazz 47” by Jean Depoid:

Yacht Club Swing	Solo 64 bars. (M)
It's A Sin To Tell A Lie	Intro 8 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
Blues	Intro 4 bars to ens 24 bars. Solo 36 bars to ens 24 bars. (S)
Unidentified title	Acc. (tp) and (ts). Solo 64 bars. (M)
Honeysuckle Rose	Intro 8 bars to ens 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M)
Hold My Hand	Solo 32 bars to ens 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
I'm Getting Sentimental Over You ?	Soli 32 and 32 bars. (S)
Rosetta	Intro 8 bars to ens 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
High Society	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

An inspired jam session, and I cannot be mightily impressed by the quality of French vintage jazz. It always swings heavily, and this encounter is no exception, fine soloing by everybody. FR seems to enjoy himself the most, and his piano playing comes clearly through with excellent sound quality. All items have long and inspired piano soli, and it is interesting for once to hear him play the slow “Blues”, pure and simple. Beautiful slow piano also on “... Sentimental ...”. A solid rhythm backing makes the session even more pleasant, and a fine example is Fats’ “Hold My Hand”. Another highlight is “... Lie”, in fact all items are just great! If such a jam session was recorded at Villeneuve, there should be many others lying dormant in some dusty boxes of tapes. Take a look!!

FRANCOIS RILHAC & HIS QUINTET **Montauban, 1987**

Alain Bouchet (tp), Jacques Montebruno (cl, ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Enzo Mucci (g), Freddy Legendre (b), Michel Denis (dm).

Concert at Festival Jazz De Montauban, video recording (colour), three titles:

9:11	Dinah	Intro 8+32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
8:07	Way Down Yonder In New Orleans	Intro 28 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 28 bars. (FM)
6:50	Unidentified Tune	Solo 64 bars. Break. (FM)

same date

Same except Sam Woodyard (dm) replaces Denis. One title:

9:36	In A Mellow Tone	Straight intro. Solo 64 bars. (SM)
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Note the laidback intro on “Dinah” with such a determined bridge! The just now unidentified Fats Waller tune has a fine piano solo, particularly the second chorus is great, and he is really jumping on “... New Orleans”!

FRANCOIS RILHAC

Paris, April 14, 1987

Francois Rilhac (p) solo.

Large number of titles, recorded live at the club “La Table d’Harmonie” by Emmanuel Jacomy, some are issued on the CD described below (1987/1988).

GILBERT LEROUX WASHBOARD GROUP Samois Sur Seine, June 1987

Daniel Barda (tb), Alain Marquet (cl), Michel Bescont (ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Gilbert Leroux (wbd, ldr).

One title was recorded at “Festival De Jazz Juin 87, Django Reinhardt”, issued on LP Agri-Promotion JFR 4739, not available:

Everybody Loves My Baby

FRANCOIS RILHAC

Paris, April 14, 1987

Francois Rilhac (p) solo.

Seven titles, recorded live at the club “La Table d’Harmonie” by Emmanuel Jacomy, issued on FR-01 (CD) as “Thank’s A Million” (Postscript of Feb. 2019: nine additional titles on this CD from Jan. – March 29, 1988, see below):

Just One Of Those Things	4:59. (M/F)
If I Had You	5:05. (M)
Liza	3:44. (SM/F)
Sweet And Lovely	3:23. (S)
This Can’t Be Love	4:49. (F)
High Society	4:41. (F)
I Can’t Help Lovin’ That Man	3:48. (S)

These recordings are unique inasmuch as they are the only available from informal circumstances. They are just incredible, showing how great FR was. At first listening you will be completely chocked by the ultra-fast “... Vagabonds” (“The ultra-rapid stride and giddy phrasing of the right hand fall and dazzle you with their ease and impressive mastery. Few pianists have dared rub up against this Tatum war-horse. But Francois was crazy enough and gifted enough to accept the challenge”) and “... Things” (“this tune tells us a long story. The Tatum-like harmonized statement (sometimes Bud Powell-style) precedes a brilliant first chorus where the right hand gives its own easy phrasing at a fast tempo while the left hand only punctuates. Then comes a Don Lambert-inspired stride take-off. The energy is fabulous. Nobody else could have done it in 1987, and no rivals have done so since”). After recovering you can continue on the 14 other tunes, of which I will not select any (okay, “Rosetta” then...), just go ahead and have an hour of incredible excitement. Then ... the liner notes of Louis Mazetier states that “out of 7 hours of recordings of 3 different evenings, I had to make a painful selection ...”. Well it is time to issue the rest!! Postscript of Feb. 21, 2019: The comments above are written to the CD as such, the exact dates were not clear then.

LOUIS MAZETIER & FRANCOIS RILHAC

Rouen, June 12, 1987

Francois Rilhac (p) solo.

Filmed by an amateur, Bernard Creton, three titles (there is also one solo feature by Louis Mazetier: “Harlem Strut”):

F Minor Stride	3:59. (F)
Pilgrim’s Chorus	2:49. (F)
Smoke Gets In Your Eyes	2:49. (SM)

Hallelujah	5:28. (SM/F)
The Mule Walk	3:41. (FM)
Thanks A Million	4:53. (M)
I Never Knew	3:24. (F)
Rosetta	4:40. (FM)

Paris, March 29, 1988

Francois Rilhac (p) solo with Jacques Montebruno (cl, ts) added on some titles.
Large number of titles, recorded live at the club "La Table d'Harmonie" by Emmanuel Jacomy, some (piano soli only) are issued on the CD "Thank's A Million" described above (April 14, 1987):

Composition En Re B	1:50. (F)
Oh! Peter	2:07. (FM)
Song Of The Vagabonds	3:21. (F)

Postscript of Feb. 21, 2019: Note that all these items are issued on the CD "Thank's A Million".

FRANCOIS RILHAC's HARLEM JAZZ **Nice, July 16, 1988**

Michel "Boss" Queraud (tp, cl), Jacques Montebruno (cl, ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Enzo Mucci (g), Freddy Legendre (b), Stephane Roger (dm).

Broadcast from Nice Jazz Festival (private collection), 46:35, seven titles:

5:50	Pantin' In The Panther's Room	Soli 8 and 64 bars. (M)
5:45	Oh Peter, You're So Nice	Intro to solo 18 bars. Acc. (vo). Solo 3 choruses of 18 bars. (FM)
5:05	Enzo's Blues	Acc. (only). (S)
12:35	Nagasaki	Soli 1 and 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
5:30	Kansas City Man Blues	Intro 4 bars. Solo 12 bars. (S)
4:00	Moulin A Cafe	Acc. (cl). Solo 48 bars. (FM)
7:50	Boogie Woogie For Fats Waller	Soli 6 and 6 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

Postscript of Jan. 2022: I am familiar with this group from the CD "Ticklin' At The District" which opened my ears to FR. Several very nice things here (and lots of interesting accompaniment not described in detail), like the elegant three choruses on "... So Nice". The highlight seems to be "Nagasaki", played quite unusually the first two chorus, then one block chords and final one stride, exciting! "Finally "Boogie ...", played like that in the first solo and two first choruses of the second one, but then stridingly easily.

HENRI CHAIX / FRANCOIS RILHAC **Geneva, July 21, 1988**

Henri Chaix, Francois Rilhac (p).

Two titles were recorded live at the yearly summer concert. Arild Widerøe produced a triple-CD as a tribute to Henri Chaix, supposedly to be issued on Sackville, but the owner John Norris died (2010) before production. Later attempts to complete the project have not yet had success, but the music lives!:

I've Found A New Baby	3:38. (F)
Blue Turning Grey Over You	5:03. (S)

Postscript of April 18, 2019: A swinging "... Baby" shows fine cooperation between the two pianists, but the highlight is the beautiful "... Grey ...", great!!

same concert

Fifteen more titles have appeared! Three titles have Henry Chaix solo (p), items 1-2 below have Francois Rilhac solo (p), the rest are duos:

Unidentified	3:22. (FM)
Unidentified	4:44. (S/M/F)
Christopher Columbus	3:52. (M)
I Got A Feeling I'm Falling	4:03. (M)
Unidentified	6:24. (S/FM)

Honeysuckle Rose	5:42. (M)
Unidentified	3:52. (SM)
Unidentified	3:43. (F)
Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now	4:23. (S)
Unidentified	4:18. (M)
High Society	5:18. (FM)
I Got Rhythm	6:22. (M/F)

Great!!

FRANCOIS RILHAC

Paris, Jan. 4, 1989

Francois Rilhac solo (p).

Broadcast "De Vous a Moi" from Maison de Radio France (private collection), three titles:

3:26	If Dreams Come True	Intro to solo 6 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (F)
2:24	Love Nest	Intro to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (M)
2:50	Le Lac Des Cygnes	Intro. (S) to solo 3 choruses of 40 bars. (F) to coda. (S)

Postscript of Jan. 2022: Here are some real gems! This "... True" teaches us something about FR's workings; the three first choruses, fine enough but we have heard them more or less before, but then he goes into completely new terrain and starting the fifth chorus he changes the key. A nice and cozy "Love ..." follows, and finally an exciting version of the famous "Swan Lake", described later in this solography.

FRANCOIS RILHAC's HARLEM JAZZ

Amilly, France, May 27, 1989

Michel "Boss" Queraud (tp), Jacques Montebruno (cl), Francois Rilhac (p), Enzo Mucci (g), Freddy Legendre (b), Stephane Roger (dm).

Three titles were recorded live, issued on Hot Club du Gatinais HCG01-02 (CD) as "Ticklin' At The District":

Yacht Club Swing	Intro 8 bars. Prominent acc. (ens), (cl), (tp). Soli 64 and 8 bars. (M)
If Dreams Come True	Intro 32 bars (free tempo) to solo 32 bars. Prominent acc. (ens), (tp), (cl). Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
KC Man Blues	Intro 12 bars. Prominent acc. (ens), (cl), (tp). Solo 24 bars. (S)

Quote Ray Brown listening to Francois Rilhac (CD liner notes): "Who's that piano player? Jesus, I haven't heard that piano playin' for forty years". Well, this session, and "... True", was my very first encounter with FR, and I had never, ever in my life heard something like this!!!! From that day I decided to collect all his records but found there were so few, and not easily available. Starting with an elegant intro to "Yacht Club ...", then leading the ensemble and actively comps the trumpet and clarinet. Then, when his turn comes, he surprises with four bars of unexpected chords to continue with one chorus so delicate with sparse use of notes, and then back to chords, really heavy this time, a great and original performance. The solo version of "... True" has already been mentioned, now we get it in a swing and jam version with a very strong and pushy rhythm section, and what happens! First FR introduces the theme just by himself, then goes into a hot chorus with a left hand like an axe, and then follows up the trumpet and clarinet closely, note how he feeds them chords (trumpet, first bridge!!!)!! Then he takes it out with four choruses that would have put Harlem on fire if he had been there at the right time; two single notes choruses, one dynamic purely chord chorus and then one gigantic stride chorus, my goodness! A soft "... Blues" closes this memorable ball.

FRANCOIS RILHAC

Nice, July 11, 1989

Francois Rilhac solo (p).

Broadcast from Nice Jazz Festival (private collection), 44:25, fifteen titles:

If I Could Be With You	3:15. (SM/F)
Keep Off The Grass	3:27. (F)
Don't Let It Bother You	2:56. (M/FM)

Between The Devil And The DBS	3:21. (F)
Carolina Shout	2:57. (F)
Michel's Boogie	2:00. (FM)
Lucia De Lamermoor	2:36. (S/F)
Tannhauser – Overture	2:26. (S/F)
Honeysuckle Rose	3:58. (M)
Liza	2:37. (SM/F)
Love Nest	2:33. (S/FM)
Snake Hips	1:55. (M)
I Got Rhythm	3:17. (SM/F)
Over The Rainbow	3:43. (SM)
Mule Twin (?)	2:47. (F)

Postscript of March 8, 2022: The last solo concert in excellent sound! Note that he often starts out a tune in moderate tempo, for then later going into a very fast one. Otherwise there is really nothing to add, all superlatives have been used over and over again. This is also the last session I play until the update of the Francois Rilhac solography is finished, and I will conclude with an admission: Although I of course from teenage was familiar with great vintage stride pianists like Fats Waller and James P. Johnson, I never really grasped the depth and greatness of their art and style. It was Francois Rilhac that opened my ears at mature age, making me understand what I have been missing. This later led me to the artistic piano worlds of Willie "The Lion" Smith and Donald Lambert and many others. Thank you FR, wherever you are!!

FRANCOIS RILHAC's HARLEM JAZZ **Nice, July 11, 1989**

Michel "Boss" Queraud (tp), Jacques Montebruno (cl, ts), Francois Rilhac (p), Enzo Mucci (g), Freddy Legendre (b), Michel Denis (dm).

Broadcast from Nice Jazz Festival (private collection), 45:30, seven titles:

6:00	Yacht Club Swing	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
8:15	Le Lac Des Cygnes	Solo. (S) to Solo. (F) Solo 4 choruses of 40 bars. (F)
6:20	Sweet Sue	Intro 16 bars. Solo 64 bars. (FM)
6:25	Having A Ball	Soli 1 and 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
3:50	Love Nest	Solo feature. (SM/FM)
7:55	Somebody Stole My Gal	Intro 8 bars to solo 40 bars. Solo 80 bars. In ens. (F)
2:25	Mop Mop	Solo 8 bars. (F)

Postscript of Jan. 2022: Several goodies here, where to start? An excellent solo feature on "... Nest", a swinging tribute to James P. Johnson on "... Ball" but not in his style, a laidback Basie-like first chorus on "... Sue", the happily pushing "... My Gal", dig them all. The highlight though is the quite unusual version of Tchaikowsky's "Swan Lake", starting with two-and-one-half minutes of FR going from semi-classical slow to striding fast, later returning for four choruses, of which two are blocks. Unforgettable!!

Nice, July 12, 1989

Same. Broadcast from Nice Jazz Festival (private collection), 43:55, nine titles:

3:55	Pantin' In The Panther's Room	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (M)
4:20	Enzo's Blues	Acc. only. (SM)
6:40	Having A Ball	Solo 1 and 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
2:10	Colonel Bogey's March	Solo feature. (F)
4:25	Staying at Home	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (ts). (S)
7:20	Love Nest	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
6:35	Rose Room	Acc. only. (M)
6:10	Nagasaki	Soli 1 and 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

2:20 Yacht Club Swing Intro 8 bars. Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Postscript of Jan. 2022: Perhaps not quite as exciting as the session the day before, but some Basie-like jesting on the first chorus of "... Ball" should be noted as well as a very hot "Nagasaki". However, how could they turn the lovely "Rose ..." into a drum feature!?

FRANCOIS RILHAC's HARLEM JAZZ Marciac, Chapiteau, Aug. 13, 1989

Personnel as above.

Broadcast from Festival Jazz in Marciac (private collection), 43:19, seven titles:

2:03	Yacht Club Swing (NC)	Solo/straight 62 bars. (M)
7:02	Mama M'a Dit	Solo/straight 40 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. In ens. (FM)
8:19	Having A Ball	Solo 2 and 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
5:32	Folle Complainte	Long intro to duet with (cl). Solo 16 bars. (S)
7:55	Le Lac Des Cygnes	Solo. (S) to solo 40 bars. (F) Solo 4 choruses of 40 bars. (F)
8:00	It's A Sin To Tell A Lie	Solo 32 bars. With ens 32 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
2:38	Tannhauser (Ouverture)	Solo. (S) to solo 3 choruses of 40 bars. (F) to Coda. (S)

Postscript of Jan. 2022: A third version of "... Des Cygnes", and I wonder what a classical public would have thought then, and think now, or the composer for that matter! Lots good stuff here! Dig another "... Ball", quite different from the one above. And the beautiful, slow and delicate "Folle ...". Or an uptempo "... Lie"!! And if this is not enough, dig the "Tannhauser" and drop your jaw.

LOUIS MAZETIER /

FRANCOIS RILHAC

Marne-La-Vallee, Nov. 22/23, 1989

Louis Mazetier (p-except "Love ..."), Francois Rilhac (p-except "Echoes ..."), Alain Marquet (cl-"Harlem ...", "Shim- ...", bcl- "... That Way").

Fifteen titles were recorded for Stomp Off, issued as "Echoes Of Carolina":

Carolina Shout	2:42. (FM)
If I Could Be With You One Hour Tonight	2:54. (SM/F)
The Mule Walk	3:02. (F)
Harlem Joys	2:51. (F)
Yacht Club Swing	3:14. (M)
Love Will Find A Way Out	2:48. (S/FM/F)
Keepin' Out Of Mischief Now	2:18. (SM)
Guess Who's In Town	2:41. (FM)
Shim-Me-Sha-Wobble	3:18. (FM)
Echoes Of Carolina	3:22. (FM)
The Love Nest	5:16. (S/FM)
Blues In C	3:24. (S)
Liza	3:29. (F)
She's Funny That Way	3:13. (SM)
Keep Off The Grass	3:02. (F)

This is something different!! FR teams up with the great LM (still most active in 2016), and together they create quite a ball on two pianos! Their styles are so similar that it is difficult to separate one from the other, and most of the time they are duetting, rarely one has a pure solo. Therefore it is no particular sense in trying to sort out the details, it is enough to enjoy these two great guys creating the most delicate of swing and stride piano. Hopefully this music will survive among all the brainless noise of the 21st century!!

LOUIS MAZETIER / FRANCOIS RILHAC

Paris, Feb. 9 or 10, 1990

Louis Mazetier, Francois Rilhac (p).

One title was recorded at 2nd Nuit Jazz & Boogie Piano, Hotel Lutetia:

2:04 Harlem Boogie Stride Duet 9 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

This is great fun, swinging duo-boogie-woogie, wish I had been there, but of course the more subtle aspects of FH's (and LM's) genius cannot be found here.

FRANCOIS RILHAC & OTHERS Paris, Feb. 11, 1990

Francois Rilhac (p).

Broadcast from HotelLutetia (private collection), one title:

6:30 Sweet Lorraine Intro 4 bars to solo 6 choruses of
32 bars to coda. (M)

same

Francois Rilhac, Louis Mazetier (p). One title:

4:00 Sneak Away Duet. (FM)

same

Same, with Daniel Barda (tb), Alain Marquet (cl), Gilbert Leroux (wbd) added.

Three titles:

4:51 High Society Duet 64 bars. (F)

8:04 Dinah Solo 64 bars.
Duet 32 and 8 bars. (FM)

9:31 There'll Be Some Changes Made Intro. (S) to solo 36 bars.
Duet 4 choruses of 36 bars. (FM)

Postscript of Jan. 2022: This "... Lorraine" should be particularly noted, because it is the only time I have heard FR sounding that he is not in control of his music, there are strange things going on here. When he is joined by LM and his other colleagues he seems to operate as usual, although also "... Changes Made" has some things that make you wonder, possibly my fault.

MARCEL ZANINI & FRANCOIS RILHAC Hungary, May 1990

Marcel Zanini (cl, vo), Francois Rilhac (p).

One title was recorded at the Nemzetközi Dixieland Fesztival, Salgotarjan, issued on Pop-Ton (Hun):

If Dreams Come True 4:47. (S/F)

A worthy sortie for this great artist! He chooses the usual format, first a slow intro and then going into four choruses of stride, lively as always. Then he accompanies the clarinet two choruses, they take one chorus 8/8, and finally conclude with a vocal chorus with FR jumping behind. Oh, why did he choose to leave us, a brilliant artist with so much to give?

No further recording sessions.

I would like to conclude this solography with another quote from the "Thank's A Million" CD: "Perfection was imperative to reach the level of which he aspired: to be second only to Tatum. Up until around 1990, Francois' style was galvanizing for all his fellow musicians and his audience. He was capable of playing with the same ardor, never-ending inspiration and pianistic quality for hours on end. This phenomenon struck everybody who heard him. He had a pure swing, a steady, pulsing tempo and a spirited power all his own on riffs or ultra-rapid tempos. His ease in all styles of swinging jazz made him the ideal accompanist. Few living pianists are as wide-ranging as was Francois Rilhac. First try to find those who swing, then those who haven't got any technical problems. After that, after an already murderous sorting-out, find those who have a musical personality and who are capable of also playing stride and of knowing how to improvise without copying the masters. Now you've found the complete jazz pianist. I'll let you think it over, and at the end of this exercise, you will have understood that Francois was a rare and exceptional artist".