

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICENATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

FOR NPS USE ONLY

RECEIVED

DATE ENTERED

SEE INSTRUCTIONS IN HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**

HISTORIC

Mutual Musician's Foundation Building;  
Musician's Union Local #627

AND/OR COMMON

Mutual Musician's Foundation Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1823 Highland Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

VICINITY OF

--- NOT FOR PUBLICATION  
CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT  
#5 Hon. Richard L. Bolling

STATE

Missouri

CODE  
64108

COUNTY

Jackson

CODE

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT  
☒ BUILDING(S)  
☐ STRUCTURE  
☐ SITE  
☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC  
☒ PRIVATE  
☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS  
☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED  
☐ UNOCCUPIED  
☐ WORK IN PROGRESS  
**ACCESSIBLE**  
☒ YES: RESTRICTED  
☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED  
☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE  
☐ COMMERCIAL  
☐ EDUCATIONAL  
☒ ENTERTAINMENT  
☐ GOVERNMENT  
☐ INDUSTRIAL  
☐ MILITARY  
☒ MUSEUM  
☐ PARK  
☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE  
☐ RELIGIOUS  
☐ SCIENTIFIC  
☐ TRANSPORTATION  
☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mutual Musicians Foundation, Inc.

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1823 Highland Avenue

CITY, TOWN

~~Jackson~~ KC

VICINITY OF

STATE  
Missouri 64108**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC

Office of the Assessor, City Hall-2nd Floor

STREET &amp; NUMBER

414 East 12th Street

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

STATE  
Missouri 64106**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

1. From Yesterday Comes Tomorrow. . .

DATE

1975

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☒ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

The Black Economic Union, 2500 Prospect Avenue

CITY, TOWN

Kansas City

STATE  
Missouri 64105

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

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**NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM**

MUTUAL MUSICIAN'S FOUNDATION BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 6 PAGE 1

2. Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, Survey  
1977 local  
Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri  
City Hall - 26th Floor, E.  
414 East 12th Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64106
3. Kansas City: A Place In Time  
1977 local  
Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri  
City Hall - 26th Floor, E.  
414 East 12th Street  
Kansas City, Missouri 64106

ITEM NUMBER 11 PAGE 1

2. Mr. James M. Denny (State Contact Person)  
Department of Natural Resources February 20, 1978  
Office of Historic Preservation  
P.O. Box 176 314/751-4096  
Jefferson City Missouri 65102

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

—EXCELLENT

X GOOD

—FAIR

—DETERIORATED

—RUINS

—UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

—UNALTERED

X ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

X ORIGINAL SITE

—MOVED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mutual Musician's Foundation Building (Musician's Union Local #627), 1823 Highland Avenue, is located in the East District of Kansas City, Missouri. Constructed in 1904, it was originally designed as a multi-family residential structure. The building is constructed above grade with its main facade facing west onto Highland Avenue.

### EXTERIOR

#### Overall Dimensions

Rectangular in shape, the maximum dimensions of the building measure approximately 31' (north-south) by 52' (east-west). The building, two full stories in height, contains approximately 4836 square feet of interior space.

#### Construction Materials and Colors

Native rubble limestone forms the foundations, while exterior walls consist of pressed red brick. The main, west facade is stuccoed and painted magenta. The secondary, north and south facades are painted gray. Along the east facade is a two-story, frame and concrete cinder block addition; the second story is presently surfaced with asphalt composition sheeting. Glass bricks are used for some window openings. The roof is flat, surfaced with built-up tar and tar paper.

#### Alterations

Originally designed as an apartment house, the building has received extensive modifications from ca. 1940 to the present. Major alterations include:

1. removal of an original first story entranceway on the west and east facades
2. addition and remodeling of present main entrance
3. resurfacing with stucco of west facade
4. removal of sash windows on west, north and south facades
5. construction of secondary entrances on north and south facades
6. replacement of original frame rear porches
7. removal of five of the original six chimneys.

#### Site

The Mutual Musician's Foundation Building is located in the once flourishing commercial center of the black community. The immediate area surrounding the building contains single and multi-family residential buildings. Churches and small commercial buildings are also situated in the area. The property slopes from east to west. Remnants of a concrete cinder block garage are located at the northeast corner of the property.

#### Present Status and Condition

The building, owned by the Mutual Musician's Foundation Inc., serves as a clubhouse, recital hall and museum. The organization has been considering the purchase of a

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MUTUAL MUSICIAN'S FOUNDATION BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 7

PAGE 1

new building to relocate and furnish the organization with larger facilities.<sup>2</sup> The building is included within an area designated for future redevelopment, centered around the intersection of East 18th and Vine Streets.<sup>3</sup> The building is well maintained and is in fair condition.

FOOTNOTES

1. Western Contractor, Vol. 3, No. 15, April 6, 1904, p.1; Service Permit No. 24390, May 2, 1904, Water Department, 5th Floor, City Hall, 414 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.
2. "Jazz Center at Armory Site," Kansas City [Missouri] Star, August 17, 1977, p. 14; "Mutual Musicians In Battle To Purchase Old Armory," The Call, August 19-25, 1977, p.7.
3. Black Economic Union, comp., From Yesterday Comes Tomorrow. . . [Kansas City, Missouri: Black Economic Union, 1975] pp. 1-53.

## 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD		AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW			
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY) Black American History	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

<b>SPECIFIC DATES</b>	1904	<b>BUILDER/ARCHITECT</b>	Rudolf Markgraf
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### STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

The Mutual Musician's Foundation Building in Kansas City, Missouri, is a significant center for the development of Jazz, particularly the "Kansas City Style," one of America's indigenous musical expressions.<sup>1</sup> The building, constructed in 1904 for Mrs. A. Lizzie Burr, was originally built as an apartment flat from designs by local architect, Rudolf Markgraf.<sup>2</sup> The structure was utilized for residential purposes until 1928, when the building was purchased by the former all-black Musician's Union Local #627 for their organizational headquarters.<sup>3</sup>

Many of the nation's leading jazzmen were or are members of the Musician's Union Local #627 and the Mutual Musicians Foundation, Inc. They include: band leaders, Bill "Count" Basie, Bennie Moten, Jay McShann and George F. Lee; singer, Julia Lee; trumpeter, "Hot" Lips Page; tenor saxophonists, Dick Wilson, Hershel Evans and Lester Young; alto saxophonist, Charlie "Bird" Parker; drummer, Baby Lovett; and pianist, Pete Johnson.<sup>4</sup> The building is immortalized in the song "627 Stomp," one of the original "boogie-woogie" tunes by jazz greats Pete Johnson and singer, Joe Turner. The song is named in honor of the Musician's Union Local #627.<sup>5</sup>

### HISTORICAL DATA

Between the first three decades of the twentieth century, Kansas City experienced an increase in its black population following a rapid migration to the urban areas. To satisfy the demand for entertainment that grew out of a diverse culture, a separate world of black entertainment and show business evolved; derived principally from minstrel shows, vaudeville, traveling companies and ragtime, culminating into its greatest product, jazz.<sup>6</sup> Jazz developed simultaneously across the country in the early part of the century. Prior to World War I, the main center of jazz was located in New Orleans. In 1917, city authorities closed down the largest club and red light district in the country, dispersing many performers to other American cities.<sup>7</sup> Many arrived in Kansas City. The genesis of Kansas City jazz dates to approximately 1917 following the organization of the Musician's Union Local #627.<sup>8</sup>

Kansas City, in association with the other jazz centers - New York City, New Orleans and Chicago, became the western center of American jazz. Under the control of political boss Thomas Pendergast, night life flourished in Kansas City during and after Prohibition. In the 1920s, large bands formed throughout the region and gravitated towards Kansas City, whose night clubs and dance spots remained open around the clock. The most famous clubs were the Reno, the Subway, the Sunset and the ballrooms, El Paseo and El Torreon. The clubs nurtured jam sessions, a Kansas City specialty, encouraging jazzmen to participate in musical contests. During the late twenties all groups and

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MUTUAL MUSICIAN'S FOUNDATION BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 1

bands with any reputation were heard at the annual tournament of bands staged by Local #627. The tournaments, begun in the early twenties, were strictly limited to union members. The proceeds from these events were used to purchase the building at 1823 Highland Avenue.<sup>9</sup>

In 1929, the Negro Musicians Association was formed and chartered. It was comprised of a group of black professional musicians in need of rehearsal facilities. In 1958, the Association changed to its present corporate identity - Mutual Musician's Foundation Inc. The Foundation's prime tenant was the Local #627.<sup>10</sup>

The Foundation was a second home, a training ground and a source of jobs for approximately 90 percent of the musicians who created the powerful Kansas City sound of the '30s and '40s. There was a period when the Foundation directly supported Count Basie and other jazz greats.<sup>11</sup>

The general prosperity in Kansas City came to a sudden end in 1939 with the indictment of Thomas Pendergast for income tax evasion. Following his conviction, reform elements soon took over. Most of the clubs and speakeasys were forced to close down and the musicians who were not established in big travelling bands drifted away. Some musicians went to war and a few remained in Kansas City.<sup>12</sup> This great era of Kansas City jazz was over, and replaced with the "Bebop Revolution." The mainstream of musical ideas that shaped this new jazz style emanated from Kansas City with saxophonists Lester Young and Charlie "Bird" Parker being the most notable practitioners.<sup>13</sup>

By the late 1950s and the early 1960s, Mutual Musicians Foundation, Inc. held regular weekend and after hours promotions for its members and their friends. These concerts and jam sessions have outgrown the facilities at 1823 Highland Avenue, and have been periodically performed in the nearby Armory Building. The Kansas City Jazz Festival concerts have been presented with other jazz programs sponsored by or affiliated with the Mutual Musician's Foundation, Inc. The proceeds from these events have been used for musical scholarships and other charitable projects.

The survey of Missouri's sites is based on the selection of sites as they relate to theme studies in "Missouri: State Historic Preservation Plan." The Mutual Musician's Foundation Building is therefore being nominated to the National Register of Historic Places as an example of the themes of "Fine Arts and Humanities," "Recreation," and "Society."

FOOTNOTES

1. William F. Woo, "Jazz in K.C." Musical America, Vol. 82, No. 5, May 1962, p. 8-9; John Haskins, "A.K.C. Jazz Film - How It Was - And How It Is," Kansas City [Missouri] Star, March 3, 1974, sec. E, p.1; Landon Laird, "About Town," Kansas City [Missouri] Times, January 6, 1941 p.8.

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INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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MUTUAL MUSICIAN'S FOUNDATION BUILDING

CONTINUATION SHEET

ITEM NUMBER 8 PAGE 2

2. Western Contractor, Vol. 3, No. 15, April 6, 1904, p.1; Service Permit No. 24390, May 2, 1904, Water Department, 5th Floor, City Hall, 414 E. 12th Street, Kansas City, Missouri 64106.
3. Ross Russell, Jazz Style In Kansas City and the Southwest, [Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1971] p. 119.
4. Ibid., pp. 213-214.
5. Laird, Kansas City [Missouri] Times, January 6, 1941, p.8.
6. Russell, op. cit., pp. 11-13; John Haskins, "Scanning the Arts," Kansas City [Missouri] Star, September 26, 1965, sec. D. p.1.
7. Russell, op. cit., pp. 1-2.
8. Woo, Musical America, p.8.
9. Russell, op. cit., pp. 11, 15-18.
10. John Haskins, "On Rediscovering Kansas City Jazz," Kansas City [Missouri] Star, January 20, 1974, sec. I, p.1; Conversation between members of the Mutual Musicians Foundation, Inc. and Edward J. Miszczuk, Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, January 20, 1978.
11. Laird, Kansas City [Missouri] Times, January 6, 1941, p.8.
12. Russell, op. cit., p. 11.
13. Ibid., op. cit., p. 206.
14. Haskins, Kansas City [Missouri] Star, January 20, 1974, sec. I, p.1.

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

# NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORM

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MUTUAL MUSICIAN'S FOUNDATION BUILDING

**CONTINUATION SHEET**

ITEM NUMBER 9 PAGE 1

3. . "On Rediscovering Kansas City Jazz." Kansas City [Missouri] Star, January 20, 1974, sec. I, p.1.
4. . "Scanning The Arts." Kansas City [Missouri] Star, September 26, 1975, sec..D, p.1.
5. "Jazz Center at Armory Site." Kansas City [Missouri] Star, August 17, 1977, p.14.
6. Kansas City, Missouri. Water Department-City Hall. Service Permit No. 24390.
7. Laird, Landon. "About Town." Kansas City [Missouri] Times, January 6, 1941, p.8.
8. Mutual Musician Foundation Inc. Members. Kansas City, Missouri. Telephone conversation with Edward J. Miszczuk, Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri, January 20, 1978.
9. "Mutual Musicians In Battle to Purchase Old Armory." The Call, August 19-25, 1977, p.7.
10. Russell, Ross. Jazz Style In Kansas City And The Southwest. Berkley, California: University of California Press, 1971.
11. Western Contractor, Vol. 3, No. 15, April 6, 1904.
12. Woo, William F. "Jazz in K.C." Musical America. Vol. 82. No.5. May, 1962.



## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES

1. Black Economic Union, comp. From Yesterday Comes Tomorrow. . . Kansas City, Missouri: Black Economic Union, 1975.
2. Haskins, John. "A K.C. Jazz Film - How It Was And How It Is." Kansas City [Missouri] Star, March 3, 1974, sec. E. p.1.

continued:

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY less than one (1) acre

UTM REFERENCES

A 15 364920 4327760  
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

B           
ZONE EASTING NORTHING

C         

D         

VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION

WM TOMS ADD N 25 FT LOT 35 ALL EXC N 30 FT LOT 36 BLK 3

LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES

STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE
STATE	CODE	COUNTY	CODE

## 11 FORM PREPARED BY

NAME / TITLE

1. Edward J. Mischczuk, Chief Research Historian

ORGANIZATION

Landmarks Commission of Kansas City, Missouri

DATE

February 20, 1978

STREET & NUMBER

City Hall-26th Floor E., 414 E. 12th Street

TELEPHONE

816-274-2555

CITY OR TOWN

Kansas City

STATE

Missouri 64106

## 12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION

THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:

NATIONAL X

STATE   

LOCAL   

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

TITLE Director, Department of Natural Resources  
and State Historic Preservation Officer

DATE

FOR NPS USE ONLY

I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER

DATE

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION  
ATTEST:

DATE

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER



Mutual Musician's Foundation Building  
Kansas City, Missouri  
"Kansas City, Mo.-Kans." Quadrangle  
U.S.G.S. 7.5' 1964  
photo revised 1970

UTM REFERENCE  
15/364920/4327760

KANSAS CITY

UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF THE INTERIOR  
NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

Theme: The Commemorative Society

Subtheme: Music

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NATIONAL REGISTER OF HISTORIC PLACES  
INVENTORY -- NOMINATION FORMSEE INSTRUCTIONS IN *HOW TO COMPLETE NATIONAL REGISTER FORMS*  
TYPE ALL ENTRIES -- COMPLETE APPLICABLE SECTIONS**1 NAME**HISTORIC Musician Association Building, Local No. 627  
American Federation of Musicians

AND/OR COMMON Mutual Musician's Foundation Building

**2 LOCATION**

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1823 Highland Avenue

NOT FOR PUBLICATION

CITY, TOWN

CONGRESSIONAL DISTRICT

Kansas City

VICINITY OF

05

STATE

CODE

COUNTY

CODE

Missouri

029

Jackson

095

**3 CLASSIFICATION**

## CATEGORY

☐ DISTRICT☒ BUILDING(S)☐ STRUCTURE☐ SITE☐ OBJECT

## OWNERSHIP

☐ PUBLIC☒ PRIVATE☐ BOTH

## PUBLIC ACQUISITION

☐ IN PROCESS☐ BEING CONSIDERED

## STATUS

☒ OCCUPIED☐ UNOCCUPIED☐ WORK IN PROGRESS

## ACCESSIBLE

☒ YES: RESTRICTED☐ YES: UNRESTRICTED☐ NO

## PRESENT USE

☐ AGRICULTURE☐ MUSEUM☐ COMMERCIAL☐ PARK☐ EDUCATIONAL☐ PRIVATE RESIDENCE☒ ENTERTAINMENT☐ RELIGIOUS☐ GOVERNMENT☐ SCIENTIFIC☐ INDUSTRIAL☐ TRANSPORTATION☐ MILITARY☐ OTHER:**4 OWNER OF PROPERTY**

NAME

Mutual Musicians Foundation, Inc.

Carroll Jenkins, Project Manager

STREET &amp; NUMBER

1823 Highland Avenue

816-421-9297

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Kansas City

VICINITY OF

Missouri 64108

**5 LOCATION OF LEGAL DESCRIPTION**COURTHOUSE,  
REGISTRY OF DEEDS, ETC.

Office of the Assessor, City Hall

STREET &amp; NUMBER

414 East 12th Street

CITY, TOWN

STATE

Kansas City

Missouri 64108

**6 REPRESENTATION IN EXISTING SURVEYS**

TITLE

DATE

☐ FEDERAL ☐ STATE ☐ COUNTY ☐ LOCALDEPOSITORY FOR  
SURVEY RECORDS

CITY, TOWN

STATE

## 7 DESCRIPTION

### CONDITION

☐ EXCELLENT

☐ GOOD

☒ FAIR

☐ DETERIORATED

☐ RUINS

☐ UNEXPOSED

### CHECK ONE

☐ UNALTERED

☒ ALTERED

### CHECK ONE

☒ ORIGINAL SITE

☐ MOVED

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

---

### DESCRIBE THE PRESENT AND ORIGINAL (IF KNOWN) PHYSICAL APPEARANCE

The Mutual Musician's Foundation Building is located in the East District of Kansas City, Missouri. Constructed in 1904, it was originally designed as a multi-family residential structure. The building is constructed above grade with its main facade facing west onto Highland Avenue.

#### Summary

The building, two stories in height, contains approximately 4,836 square feet of interior space. Native rubble limestone forms the foundation, while exterior walls consist of pressed red brick. The main, west facade, is stuccoed and painted magenta. The secondary, north and south facades are painted gray. The second story is presently surfaced with asphalt composition sheeting. Glass bricks are used for some window openings. The roof is flat, surfaced with built-up tar and tar paper.

Originally designed as an apartment house, the building has received extensive modifications from ca. 1940 to the present. Major alterations include:

1. removal of an original first story entranceway on the west and east facades.
2. addition and remodeling of present main entrance.
3. resurfacing with stucco of west facade.
4. removal of sash windows on west, north and south facades.
5. removal of five of the original six chimneys.

---

The building is located in the once flourishing commercial center of the black community. The immediate area surrounding the building contains single and multi-family residential buildings. Today the building serves as a clubhouse, recital hall and museum. The building is in fair condition.

# 8 SIGNIFICANCE

PERIOD	AREAS OF SIGNIFICANCE -- CHECK AND JUSTIFY BELOW				
<input type="checkbox"/> PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-PREHISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNITY PLANNING	<input type="checkbox"/> LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> RELIGION	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHEOLOGY-HISTORIC	<input type="checkbox"/> CONSERVATION	<input type="checkbox"/> LAW	<input type="checkbox"/> SCIENCE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> AGRICULTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> ECONOMICS	<input type="checkbox"/> LITERATURE	<input type="checkbox"/> SCULPTURE	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input type="checkbox"/> ARCHITECTURE	<input type="checkbox"/> EDUCATION	<input type="checkbox"/> MILITARY	<input type="checkbox"/> SOCIAL/HUMANITARIAN	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> ART	<input type="checkbox"/> ENGINEERING	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> MUSIC	<input type="checkbox"/> THEATER	
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMERCE	<input type="checkbox"/> EXPLORATION/SETTLEMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> PHILOSOPHY	<input type="checkbox"/> TRANSPORTATION	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> COMMUNICATIONS	<input type="checkbox"/> INDUSTRY	<input type="checkbox"/> POLITICS/GOVERNMENT	<input type="checkbox"/> OTHER (SPECIFY)	
		<input type="checkbox"/> INVENTION			

SPECIFIC DATES      1920s to 1940s      BUILDER/ARCHITECT      Rudolf Markgraf

## STATEMENT OF SIGNIFICANCE

### Summary

The Mutual Musician's Foundation Building in Kansas City, Missouri was a significant center for the development of the "Kansas City Style" of Jazz, one of America's indigenous musical expressions. The Foundation was a second home, a training ground and a source of jobs for approximately 90 percent of the musicians who created the powerful Kansas City sound of the 1930's and 1940's. Many of the nation's leading jazz men were or are members of the Mutual Musicians Foundation, Inc. They include: band leaders Bill "Count" Basie, Bennie Moten, Jay McShann, and George F. Lee; singer, Julia Lee; trumpeter "Hot" Lips Page; tenor saxophonists, Dick Wilson, Hershal Evans and Lester Young; alto saxophonist, Charlie "Bird" Parker; drummer, Baby Lovett; and pianist, Pete Johnson. The building is immortalized in the song "627 Stomp," one of the original "boogie-woogie" tunes by jazz greats Pete Johnson and singer Joe Turner. The song is named in honor of the Musician's Union Local #627.

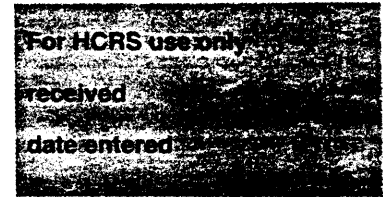
### History

Between the first three decades of the twentieth century, Kansas City experienced an increase in its black population following a rapid migration to the urban areas. To satisfy the demand for entertainment that grew out of a diverse culture, a separate world of black entertainment and show business evolved; derived principally from minstrel shows, vaudeville, traveling companies and ragtime, culminating into its greatest product, jazz. Jazz developed simultaneously across the country in the early part of the century. Prior to World War I, the main center of jazz was located in New Orleans. In 1917, city authorities closed down the largest club and red light district in the country, dispersing many performers to other American cities. Many arrived in Kansas City. The genesis of Kansas City jazz dates to approximately 1917 following the organization of the Musician's Union Local #627.

Kansas City, in association with the other jazz centers - New York City, New Orleans and Chicago, became the western center of American jazz. Under the control of political boss Thomas Pendergast, night life flourished in Kansas City during and after Prohibition. In the 1920's, large bands formed throughout the region and gravitated towards Kansas City, whose night clubs and dance spots remained open around the clock. The most famous clubs were the Reno, the Subway, the Sunset and the ballrooms, El Paseo and El Torreon. The clubs nurtured jam sessions, a Kansas City speciality, encouraging jazzmen to participate in musical contests. During the late twenties all groups and bands with any reputation were heard at the annual tournament of bands staged by Local #627. The tournaments, begun in the early

**United States Department of the Interior  
Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**

**National Register of Historic Places  
Inventory—Nomination Form**



Continuation sheet

Item number 8

Page 2

History

twenties, were strictly limited to union members. The proceeds from these events were used to purchase the building at 1823 Highland Avenue.

In 1929, the Negro Musicians Association was formed and chartered. It was comprised of a group of black professional musicians in need of rehearsal facilities. In 1958, the Association changed to its present corporate identity - Mutual Musician's Foundation, Inc. The foundation's prime tenent was the Local #627.

The general prosperity in Kansas City came to a sudden end in 1939 with the indictment of Thomas Pendergast for income tax evasion. Following his conviction, reform elements soon took over. Most of the clubs and speakeasys were forced to close down and the musicians who were not established in big travelling bands drifted away. Some musicians went to war and few remained in Kansas City. This great era of Kansas City jazz was over, and replaced with the "Behop Revolution." The mainstream of musical ideas that shaped this new jazz style emanated from Kansas City with saxophonists Lester Young and Charlie "Bird" Parker being the most notable practitioners.

By the late 1950's and early 1960's, Mutual Musicians Foundation, Inc. held regular weekend and after hours promotions for its members and their friends. These concerts and jam sessions have outgrown the facilities at 1823 Highland Avenue, and have been periodically performed in the nearby Armory Building. The Kansas City Jazz Festival concerts have been presented with other jazz programs sponsored by or affiliated with the Mutual Musician's Foundation, Inc. The proceeds from these events have been used for musical scholarships and other charitable projects.




## 9 MAJOR BIBLIOGRAPHICAL REFERENCES




Black Economic Union, comp. From Yesterday Comes Tomorrow Kansas City Missouri:  
Black Economic Union, 1975 William F. Woo, "Jazz in K.C." Musical America, Vol. 82,  
No. 5, May 1962. Western Contractor, Vol. 3, No. 15

## 10 GEOGRAPHICAL DATA

ACREAGE OF NOMINATED PROPERTY Less than 1 acre

## UTM REFERENCES

B   

D   

**VERBAL BOUNDARY DESCRIPTION**

Exc. N 30 FT Lot 36 Blk 3

**LIST ALL STATES AND COUNTIES FOR PROPERTIES OVERLAPPING STATE OR COUNTY BOUNDARIES**

**CODE**

CODE

**CODE**

**CODE**

**11 FORM PREPARED BY**

NAME / TITLE      Original prepared by Edward J. Miszczuk:  
Additions by Cecil N. McKithan

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

2-20-78

TELEPHONE

816-274-2555

STATE

Missouri

**12 STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER CERTIFICATION**

**THE EVALUATED SIGNIFICANCE OF THIS PROPERTY WITHIN THE STATE IS:**

STATE \_\_\_\_\_

LOCAL \_\_\_\_\_

As the designated State Historic Preservation Officer for the National Historic Preservation Act of 1966 (Public Law 89-665), I hereby nominate this property for inclusion in the National Register and certify that it has been evaluated according to the criteria and procedures set forth by the National Park Service.

STATE HISTORIC PRESERVATION OFFICER SIGNATURE

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**FOR NPS USE ONLY**

**I HEREBY CERTIFY THAT THIS PROPERTY IS INCLUDED IN THE NATIONAL REGISTER**

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF ARCHEOLOGY AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION

DATE \_\_\_\_\_

KEEPER OF THE NATIONAL REGISTER

**Photo Log:**

Name of Property: **Mutual Musician Foundation Building**

City or Vicinity: **Kansas City**

County: **Jackson County** State: **MO**

Photographer: **Sherry Piland**

Date

Photographed: **Dec. 1977**

Description of Photograph(s) and number, include description of view indicating direction of camera:

1 of 5. NW corner of building, view looking SE, showing N façade on the left and W façade on the right.

2 of 5. SW corner of building, view looking NE.

3 of 5. NE corner of building, view looking W.

4 of 5. SE corner of building, view looking W.

5 of 5. E façade of building, view looking W.





  
**MUSICIAN'S  
FOUNDATION  
BUILDING**



**MUSICIAN'S  
FOUNDATION  
BUILDING**





