

Dance and the New Orleans Second Line Tradition

Interviewee: Catina Braxton Robertson

Interviewer: Rachel Carrico

Interview date: April 14, 2014

Location: Braxton Robertson's home in Slidell, Louisiana

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:00:02 My name is Catina Braxton [*later became Braxton Robertson*]. I live in Slidell, Louisiana. I have a social and pleasure club named Ice Divas, and I am the founder of it since 2012.

Rachel Carrico

Okay, so, Catina, I want to start by taking it all the way back and ask you, how did you begin second lines?

Catina Braxton Robertson

As a younger child, going to all the second lines as a young child, I grew up in a neighborhood with second lining and had family members participating in social and pleasure clubs. And it just carried on and on. As I got older, I just got into it myself and joining clubs and just decided to start my own after a while.

Rachel Carrico

What neighborhood did you grow up in?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:00:56 Oh, I grew up in the uptown area, in the [Third Ward](#), which is like around Third Street, Freret Street. Then I went downtown to Carver High School for my high school years, and I went to school down there, participated in a lot of things. And every Sunday, I had a second line; I just participated in until I decided to join second-line clubs. And I started performing at second-line clubs in 1998.

Rachel Carrico

What was the first club you joined?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Lady Rollers—Lady Rollers. And I paraded with Lady Rollers, and I stopped for a little while once I got married and all. Then I decided to go back, and I started up again. And then I decided to get my own club at that point.

Rachel Carrico

And you said you had family members involved. Were they in clubs, too?

Catina Braxton Robertson

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0:01:56 They were in clubs, and there were males. My sister performed Lady Rollers. She was actually the queen of Lady Rollers in 20[00]—I mean, 1999, I believe it was. She was the queen of Lady Rollers. And my uncles and cousins, they was performers of social and pleasure clubs. I can't remember the name of the males' club, but it was males' clubs that they were members of.

Rachel Carrico

And so do you remember in your early years as a child, or even, you know, in the late [19]90s, when you got involved in clubs as an adult—what do you remember about dancing and how that played a part in your experience?

Catina Braxton Robertson

The excitement—I mean, you felt free. You do what you wanna, and it was just like a big old family. You get together, you meet people, you meet your friends out there that you haven't seen before. And Sunday was like a day that you just meet everybody, and everybody is just enjoying the day and dancing and, you know, just enjoying it, and that motivated me. Like, every Sunday, you look forward to doing something because it's everybody jumping around, hopping around. You're doing what you want, you're having fun, and it's just like—it's whatever.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah. So tell me a little bit more about your own club, the Ice Divas.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:03:27 Oh, those ladies are so loyal to me. I picked them one by one to join the club, and they are so well respected and honorable. And I asked each individual, did they want to join? Some was like, Are you kidding? Nobody's ever asked me to join. I used to see them at the second lines all the time, enjoying themselves, dancing, and I mean every Sunday. And I said, I'm going to ask them. I walked up to them and I asked them. I said, Hey, y'all, are you a member of those second-line clubs? No. I said, Would you like to be? Sure, sure, sure. So I got everybody's phone numbers, you know, and we met, and we went from there. And some of them have been with me for the last three years, four years. One club member been with me for the last five years when we was with another club before I started my own club. So from that point, we just grew like a family, and it's just like—we just enjoy it.

Rachel Carrico

What is the process like to start your own club?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:04:32 For enrollment, we do an application fee of twenty-five dollars. We have dues, fifty dollars a month. Around Christmastime, we pick a family from a school and, you know, adopt a family for Christmas, give them Christmas gifts or what have you. We do fundraisers, raffles. We're also going to start feeding the homeless at least once a month. And I gave a drive once to give out clothing to the homeless.

Rachel Carrico

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And when you decided that you wanted to start your own club, was there any sort of official charter that you had to get from the city or anything like that?

Catina Braxton Robertson

You have to go to City Hall and apply and put your name on the list, and you have to wait for your turn to get a date yourself, or you can join another club and parade with them on their date. And that's officially what I did. I went and joined up—signed up at City Hall, and I searched around until I felt a club was fit for me and my club to join their club and parade with them on their date. And that was the extent of it until they have actually Sundays available for us to parade on our own date instead of joining with other social and pleasure clubs and parade on their date.

Rachel Carrico

Got it. So you're on a waiting list?

Catina Braxton Robertson

You're on a waiting list for your own date, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

And how did you—? This year you came out with [Keep'N It Real](#)?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah.

Rachel Carrico

Has it always been with them or has it been different ones?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:06:04 The last—since I started my own club, we've been parading with Keep'N It Real.

Rachel Carrico

And how did you choose them?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Oh, I searched around, and I talked with different people. I met with them—you know, we met as a club, and I just didn't feel comfortable with the other club members, social and pleasure clubs that I met with. I wasn't very comfortable. And I met with Keep'N It Real, and I went to them and sat down and talked to them, brought them my members, and we felt comfortable with them. And it wasn't just my agreement to say, Hey, we're going to go with this club, Keep'N It Real; it was everyone's input. And I prefer to have it as a whole to agree with something, just one person to agree, which they all look up to me and respect my honors of what I would say and what I would lay out and say, Hey, I think this is the best thing for us. They agree with it, but at the same time, I give them the opportunity to say, Hey, this will work for all of us and not just for one person.

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Rachel Carrico

Right. And on that note, how—? I know every club is kind of different in terms of how they pick their colors and decorations every year. How do you both choose the color scheme and then the decorations? Do you hire someone to make those or do them yourself? Or how does all that work?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:07:26 Actually, we pick our own colors. One year, we took and just put some colors, and we drew out, and whatever colors we came out with, that's the colors we used. And the last few years, we used this young lady by the name of Wynoka ["Nokie" Boudreaux]. She used to do our fans for us. Mr. Charles used to do the print and screening for us, but God rest the day, he passed away last year sometime. So it really affected all social and pleasure clubs because he was one of the main people that actually did everybody's screenings and prints and T-shirts or whatever they needed, you know, for their fans and all. So he was a big asset to the social and pleasure club industry completely. And with the colors, we pick them ourselves. We design our own clothing. We may order them from here or there. I get magazines. I may order them, or I do a lot of research on finding our clothing. And I will go out—we'll go out and buy all the decorations that we put on our clothing or whatever the case may be. It's always a group thing. It's never one individual, always. But this year, we've done our own fans. We didn't hire nobody to do it. We've done it all ourselves. We didn't hire nobody to do our fans, nothing. We did all. I said, we decorate our own hats. We normally pay somebody to do our hats. We cut the costs on a lot because we've done it all ourselves.

Rachel Carrico

And how did you know how to make a fan?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:09:18 The way I took one apart is the way I put one together. (laughs) And I just used a pattern from an old fan. The way I took it apart is the way I put it together. And I just went and bought all the materials and the rhinestones or whatever it was that we needed to put together. I can tell you how Ice Divas came about, the name.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:09:44 Okay, how the name came about—we all left one club, a club that we used to parade with. And everybody was saying, why you don't have your own club? You do it all by yourself anyway. So I said, Okay, I'm gonna start my own club. So that's why I went to City Hall and done everything, paperwork, and stuff. So we all met at a yoga shop, and we said, Okay, we're gonna come up with a name. We all came up with a name for the club; everybody came up with a name. We put it in a little bag or what have you. It was in the yoga shop, they had a little girl in there with her family, and I asked one of the parents—I said, can she do us a favor? Can she pull

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a name out of a hat for us? And I explained to them we'd just started out all social and pleasure club, and we want to pull a name, but we want somebody else to pull it. And she pulled the name Ice Divas. So that's how the name became Ice Divas. That's how we became Ice Divas. That was our name from that point. And everybody enjoyed it, and we just went on with that name. So that was the beginning of Ice Divas Social and Pleasure Club.

Rachel Carrico

Wow, and whose contribution was that, Ice Divas?

Catina Braxton Robertson

The Ice Divas, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

And who put that slip in the hat?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:10:56 Oh, that was my name, actually.

Rachel Carrico

I thought so.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Actually, Ice Divas came about because my nickname is Black Ice. I ride motorcycles. So I'm called Black Ice. My lawn service is Ice Lawn Service. And it just so happens that the club became Ice Divas.

Rachel Carrico

That seems fitting.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:11:21 Yeah, and not only that. Keep'N It Real's president, which is [Perry \[Franklin\]](#), his name is Iceberg. So it all fit together.

Rachel Carrico

That's funny. It must have been divine then.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah, then all the ladies became—they all made a name with ice in it, Snow Ice, Vanilla Ice, Cherry Ice. It just was like, everything was ice.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, that's funny.

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Catina Braxton Robertson

That's how we came about.

Rachel Carrico

And how many members do you have now?

Catina Braxton Robertson

One, two, three—five original members, so we got six, and you included makes seven. [*Braxton Robertson Robertson invited Carrico to join the club several weeks before this interview.*]

Rachel Carrico

Seven, cool. And one of the things—I guess Lady Rollers—I don't really know a whole lot about Lady Rollers. I haven't seen them for that many years. But it seems like at least now this is true of them, and I see this, that you all seem to be a really interracial club, that there's a lot of, you know, people coming from all kinds of backgrounds into the clubs.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:12:23 Yeah, I think—if I'm not mistaken, I think I was the first person, first social and pleasure club—what I can remember—started interracial social and pleasure clubs, and it started when I was with Lady Rollers—my very last year with the Lady Rollers when I started with interracial, you know, members. And once we left that—that was the first year. And the last year, we paraded with Lady Rollers, and they all left and came with me. And we started my club, and everybody loved it. I mean, people is people. You don't look at people as color or what have you. People is people; we're all human. Everybody can enjoy whatever culture they want to, and I love it. I don't have no picks and no chooses. I see fit that you can provide for our club, and I see you love it, I'm going to approach you and ask you. All you can do is say yes or no. And that's the uniqueness of it.

Rachel Carrico

And I know—I heard you say that, and just from my own experience, it seems like people that you'll approach—you mentioned that when you see them dancing and—

Catina Braxton Robertson

When I see them dancing, having a real good time, I'm like, I can use her. I'm gonna ask her. Even when we paraded that day, I had so many people come approach me and ask me, Hey, can I join your club? Sure, sure, sure. So I got a lot of people always coming to me, especially on parade day. You want to join a club for, like, Jazz Fest? We performed at Jazz Fest, Keep 'N It Real. And you always get a lot of people, but you got to stay with them and keep them interested in doing things throughout the year and not just participate in that day you parade. But you got to give back to the community at some point and somehow, and that's where our focus is really. It's not about just parading that day. It's about giving back to the community and getting youths involved, to give them something to do because, you know, there's so much going on that kids don't have a lot to do. And it'll keep them going and stay out of trouble. And I would love to have more young teenagers and young adults and young girls actually become members of Ice

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Divas Club. I've also had some men come to me and ask me, will I get a men's group. I say, Yeah, but I need to get my ladies together first and establish that. So maybe in another year or two, I might go head-on and get men involved. But I want to pull more younger girls and young adults into it to give them something to do besides just hanging out and—you know, get them involved in the community. They can do recreational stuff, play sports. I mean, when we grew up, we had everything there was. At the park, you played sports all year round, baseball, basketball, softball, volleyball, run track. I mean, we did it all. And that's what a lot of youths are missing right now. You don't see them do no activities. And they're so much on the phones and games inside. Oh, when we was growing up, you was outside 99 percent of the time. So, I mean, that's our goal, to reach more kids and get them involved in something. If it's not second line, then in something.

Rachel Carrico

And what about your daughters? Were they ever into second lining?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:16:12 I had two of my daughters. They actually paraded with me one year. They enjoyed it. They loved it. But they said they couldn't afford it. I paid for it all for them with their budgets and stuff. One year, I thought they was going to pick up and say, I'll keep going. But they said it's too expensive. The older two, they have a baby now, so they got more responsibilities right now. So I said, okay, but they come out and participate and support completely. They love it. And also, on Sundays, for fundraisers, I sell [yakamein](#) and gumbo on Sundays to make a fundraiser for the club also. Whoever help put in, that's money that we save that we don't have to come out for putting towards our budgets. When it's almost parade time, it cuts down on the band, the permit, the budget, and all that stuff.

Rachel Carrico

Where do you sell it?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:17:15 At the second lines, every stop.

Rachel Carrico

Every Sunday, are you doing that?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Every Sunday.

Rachel Carrico

How come I haven't seen you?

Catina Braxton Robertson

I don't know. But every Sunday, I'm gumbo—

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Rachel Carrico

Are you in a food truck or—?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:17:33 I set up at every stop, a table and everything.

Rachel Carrico

Okay. Okay. And you make it all?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Uh-huh (affirmative). Yeah, and I make it all. It is a process of preparing it, but—oh.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, well, it must be worth it if you keep doing it.

Catina Braxton Robertson

It's worth it, and it helps out the club. It provides for the club, so that's what basically it's all about. Well, you don't have to actually—you're raising money for the club, and you don't have to spend your own money.

Rachel Carrico

Well, it seems like, you know, from what I've heard and read that the benevolent societies, a long time ago, you know, were established to take care of each other when they were sick or needed to pay for the funerals, and then—[sneeze] Bless you. A lot of clubs today, kind of that function of taking care of each other, one of the ways it continues is through the activities like you described, like adopting a family and feeding the homeless and having youth programs, like those kinds of community-based programs.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:18:38 Right. Also, I got offered for my club to do like a repast. Somebody passes and, you know, they have the repast, this performative repast. When someone gets married, you go perform, and sometimes for weddings. And when people have just left functions and, you know, they hire a band. Like, one of the ladies in my club, she has a youth program called Mother's Helpers. She's actually on Morrison and Downman. And she had an organization that she had some type of function, and we performed and closed it out at the end of it. And it was very educational from all the speakers and stuff. It was very great, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

Cool. That's cool. So, let's see. So when you're going to second lines, mostly through the year, you're going to sell food. So your process of going is very different than going and dancing.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:19:49 Oh, no, some days—I'm out there almost every Sunday, but the days I choose not to sell food, I'm out second lining. I follow the second line from the beginning to the end. I mean, it's

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like an addiction at some point. When you're out there, you hear the beat—I can go to any instrument, tube or drum, trumpet, whatever. I mean, I can dance to any beat. And it's like—when you hear it, it's just that you just got to go with it. It's just something that—you just become a whole new person when you're out performing and dancing, and you hear the music. It's just you being you. You step out of your body into another body, and you just enjoy yourself.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah. When you're out dancing, is there a particular part of the second line that you like to be on? Like some people like to be right behind the band. Some people like to be over on the sidewalk. Some people like to be right along the ropes.

Catina Braxton Robertson

I'll be along the ropes. I'll be behind the band. I'll be in front of the band. I mean, it moves so quickly, so your feet are moving. So sometimes, you can start in the beginning, but you'll be at the end; or sometimes, you'll be in the middle, and you wind up in the beginning. I mean, you just got to move with the crowd. And it's enjoyable because you're moving so fast, your feet move, and you're dancing, and it's like you're just going, going, going. You don't realize you done walked four hours, really, jumping around and dancing. You really don't realize that you actually went four hours of just enjoyment and dancing. Then they got people taking pictures of you. Show your footwork! They just cheer you on and egg you on. Oh, it's exciting.

Rachel Carrico

Now, you grew up uptown as a kid but then went to high school downtown. So do you feel like you have footwork that's more characteristic of uptown or downtown, or do you mix them up?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:21:49 I have both. And also, I dance a lot, so I mix it all together. And it's really no way to second line. I mean, you just do what you do, and you—however you do what you do, there's really no way to second line.

Rachel Carrico

Now, do you have any, like, personal style or signature moves?

Catina Braxton Robertson

All the time. Oh, yes, everybody got their own, their uniqueness of it. You know, everybody got their own little signature of what they do that just stands out saying, this is me. And that's what makes you so unique from each and every other person.

Rachel Carrico

So what's yours? Can you describe it?

Catina Braxton Robertson

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0:22:41 Oh, let me see. How can I describe it? Oh, my God. How can I describe it? Second, dancing forward, back, spin around, down, and up again.

Rachel Carrico

Forward, back, spin around, down, and up again.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Right.

Rachel Carrico

And then, when people talk about downtown and uptown footwork, what do you see as the difference between those?

Catina Braxton Robertson

It's no difference in footwork, actually. Everybody dances differently, and you go to the beat, actually. I mean, you can go to any beat of the instrument that's playing, drum, tuba, you know, whatever. They got even the ones that come along in the second line with the little bottles and the sticks. So, I mean, you can do footwork to any one of these sounds, and it's just unique the way you do it, how you make your moves to go to that actual rhythm of the beat. It's great, though. I'll tell you one thing. At the end of the day, your feet be hurting. Your feet be hurting, and you'll be tired as I don't know what.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, yeah. What are some of the ways—like after four hours of second lining, you kind of just grab that feeling of—while you're in it, sometimes you don't really register how hot it is or how hard it is or how much your feet hurt because you're just kind of, like you said, in another body. But then, okay, it's over. You're walking back to your car. What does it feel like?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:24:24 Oh, I can't believe it. Your feet hurt. You're like, Damn, I walked that far? But sometimes, where you start at is where you end at because the second line starts in a spot and sometimes ends in the spot. Now, if the second line don't end where it starts at, you got to get a ride back to your car, or one of your friends, they take their car and go from stop to stop to stop, and then that person may give you a ride back to your car. I see somebody, Hey, come bring me back to my car, something. You know, you'd be so tired. But, I mean, after the day is all said and done, you done what you came out there for, you enjoy yourself. And everybody, all you hear is a lot of, Let me see some footwork. Let me see. Let me see the footwork. And when you hear them words, that just makes you act a fool also. You're going to jump around, act a fool, and show your little moves and put your spin on it, you know. So it's exciting.

Rachel Carrico

How do you keep your energy up?

Catina Braxton Robertson

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0:25:26 Oh, my God. Drink water. Some people have a drink to keep them motivated. Some people just naturally—I mean, naturally, naturally, you don't really need nothing. Just keep yourself hydrated and just go. Oh, let me get something to eat. Let me get some chips or something to put a little salt back in my body from sweating or whatever. But other than that, it is basically naturally, and you know, some people enjoy a drink and getting in the mood, and some people are just natural. I love it.

Rachel Carrico

Do you feel like you dance harder when you're inside the ropes when it's your parade day?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yes, indeed, because it's all about you. It's all about you. It's your day. And you done worked hard that whole year with your fundraisers and the support for others, so you're looking for—you want everybody to come out and support you and see you on that day, so it's exciting. And like you're out there, and you're parading, and you see everybody, Hey! Everybody, hollering, speaking, and you know, then they some come to the ropes. They want to tell you about your feet. Let me see them feet work. Don't stop. Do this. Do that. So it's very exciting.

Rachel Carrico

And do you have to do anything special on parade day to just make it, physically make it to the end?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:26:46 Oh, no, because you hyped already. I'll tell you; that night before, you're hyped. You're ready to get—you get up early. We do our little breakfast thing in the morning, do our little prayer, get together, and we just start from that point. Everything is in hype mode. So, I mean, it's a process of getting ready and starting. And on your day, it's like, we got to do this, and we've got to do it four hours. That's all we need. Man, come on, kick it up! Roll it up! Bom, bom, bom, bom [*sic*]. It's all over till the end. All the way till the end is enjoyment.

Rachel Carrico

Do you have a favorite band?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:27:35 Oh, I like One Mind Band and [21st Century](#). They both have played for me, 21st Century and One Mind Band. And also, [Hot 8](#) played for me one year. That's when I was with Lady Rollers. But me, as Ice Divas, 21st Century and One Mind Band played for me, and I enjoyed both of them.

Rachel Carrico

What do you like about them?

Catina Braxton Robertson

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The boys are young, and they love to play. And some of them, they will challenge another band, and I mean—they're young, so they have a lot of energy, so they always want to outdo the next person. And when you have that energy like that, they're going to always keep you jumping and moving and going on your day, even after you were just a parade-goer to go out. They have the crowd constantly jumping and moving. I love it. But they got also some other bands that's pretty good that I like, but you can't pick them all to play for you on that day, you know. So you got to have one. You got to pick somebody. But, I mean, it's a bunch of them out there that, if I could have them all play for me on that day, I would have them play for me on that day.

Rachel Carrico

Do you have any favorite songs that when you hear that song, you're like, oh, and then your dancing just goes to a new level?

Catina Braxton Robertson

“Cassanova,” “Do Watcha Wanna,” “Take It To The Streets,” and that Michael Jackson song.

Rachel Carrico

Oh, what is that one? I'm hearing it lately, and I can't remember which one it is.

Catina Braxton Robertson

I want to say—damn. I'm gonna think about it later. Yeah, I'm gonna think about it later.

Rachel Carrico

It'll hit you at three in the morning or something. So I know that some people admit that before the parade day, they get together and practice their footwork a little bit. Have you ever done that?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:30:10 Actually, no. When I first got with the interracial girls, we had practice once, and that was it. But also, when I was with the Lady Rollers, they had these other—I don't think they're social and pleasure clubs, but there was some other women's organizations.

Rachel Carrico

That's right. I remember like the [Pussyfooters](#).

Catina Braxton Robertson

The Pussyfooters and all of them, I actually had a session with them to teach them how to second line. I had a session with them to teach them.

Rachel Carrico

Before this year's parade?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:30:54 It was two years ago. Yeah, two years ago, I actually had a session with some of them to teach them how to second line.

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Rachel Carrico

And so what did you teach them?

Catina Braxton Robertson

I mean, I just showed them the basics of footwork and jump and, you know, how you jump around and heel/toe or whatever the case may be. And I explained to them, really, second line. You really can't teach a person. You got to go with the music, and it's just what you do. And they just got into the rhythm, and they observed me and watched me, and it just went from that point. And we done it for probably about two hours, a little practicing or what have you, played all in the second line music, and you know, everybody enjoyed it. We laughed and joked about it, and it was very nice.

Rachel Carrico

Where did you go do it?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:31:48 We was at this warehouse. We went to a warehouse somewhere downtown in the—I want to say Seventh Ward, somewhere off of Galvez, I believe it was. It was a little warehouse we went to, and we practiced up in there.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah. And was that—I guess both times the practice, was that at the request of the new people coming in?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:32:16 That was the request of the Pussyfooters and—I can't remember all these other little clubs, organizations that they had. And that was the first year, actually, when I paraded with the Lady Rollers that these other organizations actually paraded with a social and pleasure club. And from that point, I think they've done it the last two or three years, parade with Lady Rollers behind them.

Rachel Carrico

And do you know how that—well, I guess you were in the club. How did that come about, that decision to include those other clubs?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:32:54 It was actually the owner's, [Linda Green](#)'s idea, but also, she—I was the president, so she let me make—I made lots of the decisions and dealt with the people hands-on. She just was the one sitting in the back—you know, let my president do it all. So I kind of did. Everybody enjoyed it and loved it and all, but it was very unique, and it was a good experience with all them different people. And that changed—that flipped the script for a social and pleasure club second liner because everybody used to have floats, kings and queens, and people riding on cars. But we actually had people on the grounds actually parading behind us. And it was a beautiful year that year. We had Christmas colors, red, green, and white, and they dressed up in like Santa suits, and

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it was beautiful. And it was like two days before Christmas. It was beautiful. It was very nice. And that was the first year we had all them different people parade, and it was something different. So I think that broke the ice for a lot of things at that time.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, yeah, because that is really taking two—you know, two different traditions and kind of—

Catina Braxton Robertson

Putting them together.

Rachel Carrico

Putting them together, yeah. That's cool.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:34:25 Also, I can't remember—but this parade called the [Yemaya Parade](#)—we parade with them also. You know, that's all women's group organization. And with the Yemaya Parade—what is her name? Ann Marie [Coviello] is her name. She gets all of the second-line clothes and all the other little social and pleasure clubs—may not be second-line clubs, but there are ladies' clubs, and all perform on that one day, which is all women. And it turned out to be something beautiful.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, I bet. I used to be in the [Camel Toe Lady Steppers](#).

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:35:08 Camel Toe, that's another name, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, and I know that they were involved in the Yemaya, and I've actually, for one reason or another, never managed to see it, but I would love to. It sounds beautiful.

Catina Braxton Robertson

It's nice. It is. It's very nice. I enjoyed it when we did it. We've done it two years with them. I don't know what happened last year. I didn't get a chance to parade with it. I don't know. I think I just lost contact or what have you. And I used to see her at all the second lines, but unfortunately, I didn't see her get involved in it.

Rachel Carrico

So this—no, maybe I'll ask these questions first. Okay. So what are the characteristics of a good second liner? And when you see somebody, and you think, like, Oh, yeah, they're really—they're rolling, or they're really good, or whatever, what are their characteristics?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:36:06 Always dancing, on the move, talking to people. It's actually the band and the people themselves that's in the club. And actually, you make the parade, the people that parades that

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day, because you have a lot of friends and associates, and people just love to come out and see you. And when they see you, they may make you act a fool. I mean, especially your friends you hang out with, if they don't parade with you, they're coming out, and they're going to cheer you on and dance on the side of you. So they're going to make you go, go, and go. I think it's very unique when you got someone to come in and support you, and everybody's just go, go, go.

Rachel Carrico

Do you see any differences between the way that men and women second line?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah, you know, men have a tendency of dancing harder, and, you know, they're more strong and muscular than women. And some of the men are more acrobatic than females, so they have a tendency of performing a little differently than women. But at the end of the day, we're all doing the same thing—footwork, dancing, hopping around, jumping around, or whatever the case may be. So it all still falls up under the same thing. We all are out there doing the exact same thing.

Rachel Carrico

Have you or your—you know, the way your uncles or parents or grandparents even used to talk about second lining. What have been some of the major changes in the tradition over the years?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:38:11 Oh, age difference—age difference, for sure.

Rachel Carrico

What do you mean by that?

Catina Braxton Robertson

When I was growing up, the social and pleasure clubs was much older people. Now, these days, it's more of a younger generation second lining. And you see more—some clubs that have youths coming up. And I enjoy it; and I love that because they got the little ones coming up behind them, and they're teaching them and showing them the culture. So it's becoming a big difference as the youths coming up and getting involved, and I think that's great to pass it on to the youths, and they start in little and grow up—you know, and have a tradition just to grow up and go on, carry on. So for the difference, yes and no.

Rachel Carrico

So there weren't as many kids and teenagers in clubs before?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:39:20 Back then, no. It was like mainly—from what I can remember, I think it was like more of adults, young adults. I didn't see much little kids like you see now second lining on the streets on parade days. You didn't see that back then, as I recall. I don't remember seeing that. But that's the difference now. And I think that's a great thing, that the kids coming up and getting involved.

Rachel Carrico

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Right. And what about men and women? Were there always equal numbers of men and women's clubs, or are women getting more involved these days?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Well, it's always been men or women, so it wasn't never a major difference between men and women clubs, because it wasn't no such thing as a number. If you wanted to join, you was able to join if you paid your dues or participated or whatever the case may be. Each individual club had their own rules or what have you, so if you was able to sustain those rules and deal with those members in that club, that's what it was.

Rachel Carrico

I just read something today. It was in the [Gambit](#). It was this interview with the guy who—Joe, who owns [Joe's Cozy Corner](#), and he, I guess, paraded with the [Jolly Bunch](#) for a bunch of years. And he was saying in this interview that women didn't used to march, that they would ride in cars or ride on something and that just the men would dance.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Oh, maybe that was before my time.

Rachel Carrico

Maybe, yeah.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:40:51 Or maybe I was too young to know. But as I've known, I don't have a history of that. So you gave me something to look upon.

Rachel Carrico

What years would it have been when you were—you know, as a child, but go into the parades with your family all the time?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Back in—I mean, I got out of high school in [19]91, so it was—

Rachel Carrico

In the '80s?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Late [19]80s, early [19]90s. So, I mean, it was something before then. I don't know nothing about it before then.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah. Yeah, I think he was talking about like in the [19]50s. I don't know.

Catina Braxton Robertson

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0:41:30 I don't know, but I know they've always had women and men, but—and I know, like, [Lady Buckjumpers](#) been around a very long time.

Rachel Carrico

Sure, they have.

Catina Braxton Robertson

They've been around a very long time. Lady Rollers' been around for quite a long time also. I'm not so familiar with other women's clubs that been around for so long. But what I was interested in trying to do at one point—and I think, in the future, I'm going to try to do it—like [Young Men Olympians](#), they have like six or seven divisions that come out on one day. If I can get six or seven divisions of women to come out on one day, I think that'd be so great.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, that would be amazing.

Catina Braxton Robertson

That would be so great. Even if they had the regular parade, they can't just get everybody to come out again. Even if they got to wear their own suits that they wore for it, they just get six or seven clubs together and come out on one day. So that's my goal.

Rachel Carrico

That's awesome, like a female superstar parade or something.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:42:44 Yes, that's my goal. That's the intended goal for me.

Rachel Carrico

That would be so cool to see that many women out the door like that.

Catina Braxton Robertson

And another club that I admire a lot is [Versatile Ladies](#). They're from downtown. It's a downtown group. They are so unique and down-to-earth, and I really admire that club also, Versatile Ladies, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

So we were talking about things that have changed over the years in second lining. What has stayed the same?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Say it again.

Rachel Carrico

What has stayed the same?

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Catina Braxton Robertson

0:43:28 The routes, the routine, the music, the people. The people have changed because they're getting older. They got younger ones coming out enjoying the parades. They even have older ones come out and enjoy the parades. And some parades, you may have honorary members that still come out and support the organization that they used to parade with, so that's that.

Rachel Carrico

Does the dancing seem like it's been pretty much the same over the years?

Catina Braxton Robertson

The dancing, it don't change. It's just within that person. I mean, like I said earlier, everybody has their own way of dancing. So, I mean, footwork is footwork, and you can jump around and move around and go to the beat. That's your footwork and is unique in your own way.

Rachel Carrico

In your opinion, do you think that [Hurricane] [Katrina](#) had an impact on the second-line tradition?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:44:36 I want to say yeah. The reason being—I think for Katrina, a lot of people was displaced. A lot of people didn't come back. A lot of people that was in the culture, that actually was members of social and pleasure clubs just haven't come back, so it's a lot of new faces, new club names and, you know, new goers coming and going. Even people that just moved into the city is getting to learn the culture and starting to enjoy the culture of second lining. So yeah, it made a very—well, much impact on the change because a lot of people didn't come back home or couldn't participate because of their financial status or whatever the case may be. And then you had— [Social Aid and Pleasure Club] Task Force came along, and they made a major step on what they did, trying to get some clubs back together to follow up on the Task Force. But that was about it with that. But I think, yeah, it made a big impact. And you have now a lot of new clubs with new names that wasn't clubs before Katrina. So yeah, that was the impact of it.

Rachel Carrico

Because it seems like, despite the number of people who were in the culture that were displaced, second lines are really strong. Some people say they're stronger than ever.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Right.

Rachel Carrico

Right? And so, how does that make sense?

Catina Braxton Robertson

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0:46:32 It does because you have lots of new people move to the city, and people know the history of second line. And actually, from the first line to the second line comes from funerals and all that stuff. But all the sudden, this is broadcast on websites, the radio, Jazz Fest, you know, all these different functions. And there's always—somebody's always talking about second lines on Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, or what have you. So it's out there in the media, and people that never been to it comes out and enjoy it. Even when they have functions in the city, they may get caught up in the second line, and they really enjoy it. I remember one year I paraded, and they had these people from New York came, was down, and they took beautiful pictures, and that was their first time at a second line. Actually, I still talk to a few of them up until today, and they sent me so many photos that they took of us and enjoyed it. And every time I get ready to parade—make sure you let us know when you parade so we can come on down. So, I mean, it's just by word of mouth with some people. You tell this person, that person, you know, and it goes on and on. And, you know, like Jazz Fest, like the French Quarter Fest, all this stuff that just happened this weekend, they had a big crowd turned out, from my understanding. I didn't make it last weekend, but I heard they had a big crowd. You had so many people in town, so they had a lot of things to do. So without stuff that's going on in the city, you have a big crowd regardless. Sunday is the day for a lot of people to relax and enjoy because they've got the work week, and they just come out and just enjoy it. So just the culture itself, it speaks volume.

Rachel Carrico

Right. And what's your opinion on Second Lines becoming more publicized, more mainstream? A lot of people who have never—didn't grow up in the culture are attending them. I mean, do you have a point of view on that?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:48:46 I tell them keep coming. Keep coming because it is something you can enjoy, come enjoy it. If you don't like it, come figure out and test it yourself to see if you like it or you don't like it. Some may go, some may not like it, but some are going to go, and they're going to continue to go. Because at one time, I didn't—when I first started going to second line, like, this would be the people for me. Yeah, I walk on fast; everybody's walking all over y'all. It was like, I can't do that. But as I went more and more, it was like, okay, I got the hang of this here. And I enjoyed it. Out there at the second lines, you meet lots of people. You eat all different kinds of foods. You become friends with people that you never know. You come in contact with people that—you live on one side of town, and they live on the other side, and you finally meet up on a Sunday, and then you make friends from here, here, and here. And on a Sunday, it's like one big party. Everybody comes together. People look forward to just that day because I want them—at one time, I wouldn't miss a second line for nothing in the world. I'd go to church—some Sundays, I ain't going to church because I want to be at the second line at two o'clock. I would miss church to go to second line. Oh, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

Well, some people say it is like church.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Huh?

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Rachel Carrico

Some people say it is their church.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Really? I just—second line is just something—it's addiction. It's addiction. I love it.

Rachel Carrico

And so this question kind of follows up on that, and you've kind of already answered it, really. But if you have any other thoughts on this, why is second lining meaningful to you personally and to New Orleans as a whole?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:50:47 To New Orleans as a whole, it's the culture of it. It goes back to the history of the jazz bands and the musicians, and people express themselves through music. Some people express themselves through dancing. I express myself, personally, through dancing and listening to music and enjoying the outdoor views on Sundays and just the sounds of the music.

Rachel Carrico

You have mentioned earlier that you had offered—tried to offer a little class for the Pussyfooters and them before the parade and, you know, some basic things you could show them. But there was kind of no way to teach second lining, right? You just got to feel it.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Right.

Rachel Carrico

You know, I think, you know, because through Elsie [Semmes], but one of the people that I've been interviewing and spending a lot of time with is Darryl Young [better known as [Dancing Man 504](#)], and I know people have a lot of different opinions on him. So I just wanted to ask kind of what's your point of view on kind of what he's doing and, you know, teaching and spreading the culture in the way that he is?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:52:10 Well, it's just my personal opinion of—you really can't teach a person how to second line, but some people have within them that their dancing is a motto for them, their goal. And that's something they do on a daily basis and live just for that. So some people feel that they can teach it. But me, personally, in my opinion, I don't think you can teach it, but somebody else will have a different opinion. I can teach it, and maybe you can because maybe you can do it better than me. So some people may—maybe they have their ways of saying, I can teach you, but me, personally, I just say, I'll show you what I can do and show you how to dance, and you just go from there. I don't really say, I taught you. I showed you some steps, some moves, and now let's make it work how you make it work. I mean, you know, some people figure that's their livelihood, you know, they can teach it. Okay, you can teach the way you dance. You can teach a person the way you dance, sure. Whatever you teach a person how to dance, they're always going

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to put their own moves into it. So you can, and you can't. I mean, I don't want to say you can't, but it's up to each individual.

Rachel Carrico

Is there anything else you wanted to include that I didn't ask about?

Catina Braxton Robertson

No, not really. I think we covered everything.

Rachel Carrico

Okay. So my last portion here is this little video portion, and it's just kind of a random collection of different second lines that I shot while I've been at them. And I haven't updated it in a while. I'd taken a lot more since I put this together. But I'll just play it a little bit and then pause it and just ask me to just tell me what you see. Anything like that. Oh, that's right. He's doing that. That drop spin thing I told you about, or, oh, that guy definitely has downtown footwork, or whatever it is you see.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Okay.

0:54:25 [video playing]

Catina Braxton Robertson

A little drop spin.

Rachel Carrico

A little drop spin? (laughs)

0:54:48 [end of video]

Rachel Carrico

Okay, anything else in that little clip?

Catina Braxton Robertson

In other words, they're rolling.

Rachel Carrico

They're rolling. (laughs)

Catina Braxton Robertson

They're rolling.

Rachel Carrico

And this clip, I think you saw this because I showed this at the [Folklore] conference at Dillard.

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0:55:06 [video playing]

Catina Braxton Robertson

Footwork, that's what you would call that, footwork. Let me see the footwork! Street, sidewalk. They be all on a stop sign, bus stops, buildings, and everything.

0:55:43 [video stops]

Rachel Carrico

Okay, so this guy, he's doing all the footwork. He has—

Catina Braxton Robertson

All the footwork—he has some good footwork.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, he does, right? Is there anything you see that makes you think that, anything you could point to like, oh, because he is like this?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:55:57 His feet constantly moving, and he's going to the beat, and he's on beat with it. And I'm pretty sure he picked one of those instruments to dance to.

Rachel Carrico

Can you tell which one?

Catina Braxton Robertson

You actually probably could.

Rachel Carrico

Okay, let's keep watching.

0:56:20 [video playing]

Rachel Carrico

Cowbell?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah, he has a cowbell.

Rachel Carrico

Nobody ever says the cowbell, that's my favorite.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Uh-huh.

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Rachel Carrico

Okay, now this woman in the pink sock, we'll go back to her in a sec, but she's pretty incredible.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Trumpet, and that's [Rollin' Joe](#) [Henry]. He's hilarious. Oh, talk about—when he parades—he's a member of a club, social and pleasure club now.

Rachel Carrico

Uh-huh, he's with the Uptown Swingers, I think.

0:57:01 [video stops]

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:57:00 Uptown Swingers. He really cuts up in that wheelchair. Oh, yes. [*Correction: Rollin' Joe Henry parades with Pigeon Town Steppers.*]

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, he does. I remember Deborah Cotton had on her blog once a video of him [of Wellington "Skelly" Ratcliff, Jr.], and she had the caption on it, said, Now, don't tell me just because this guy is in a wheelchair, he don't have footwork.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Right. Oh, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

I loved that. Yeah, I love Skelly [Wellington Ratcliff, Jr.]. I actually did an interview with him not too long ago, and he's actually starting his own club of all people in wheelchairs called Push for Change.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Well, all right now, that's great.

Rachel Carrico

Ain't that cool?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah.

Rachel Carrico

So, yeah, he's amazing. And he used to do—I guess, used to do a lot of breakdancing in the 80s. He said he was on like a competitive breakdance team, which I think it shows. He's amazing.

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:57:47 Yeah, he is.

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Rachel Carrico

Okay, and so then this guy in the red shirt, he's always out, always dancing, but he looks real different. He looks very unique.

0:57:59 [video playing] **0:58:06**

Rachel Carrico

Okay. Anything to say about the guy in the red?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Flying with it.

Rachel Carrico

Oh, because he was on—

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah, flying with it.

0:58:24 [video playing] **0:58:29**

Catina Braxton Robertson

Oh, look. See him right here? That's when they were saying, Way downtown! Way downtown!

Rachel Carrico

Oh, he's like bending down?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah.

0:58:37 [video playing] **0:58:46**

Catina Braxton Robertson

I'll tell you, he's on the church step.

Rachel Carrico

Up on the billboard?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah, it sounds like he's going right to that little—oh, what do you call them?

Rachel Carrico

The tambourine?

Catina Braxton Robertson

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Tambourine.

0:59:04 [video playing] **0:59:15**

Catina Braxton Robertson

They make good money selling stuff at the second line, yeah, beer, water, juice, whatever.

Rachel Carrico

And since you sell stuff, I always wondered—I mean, does anybody ever give you trouble by having to have a permit to sell or anything like that?

Catina Braxton Robertson

0:59:31 Well, actually, you go to City Hall. We have IDs that we take now, and you have to pay twenty-five dollars to be a vendor, but you have to be a social and pleasure club, and you have IDs now as a second-line vendor.

Rachel Carrico

No way. When did that start?

Catina Braxton Robertson

They enforced it. We had meetings about it last year sometime, but just about three weeks ago, they started letting us take IDs to actually have your badge to actually sell it. But I think it was—some people already had had them, but I think they're really enforcing it now.

Rachel Carrico

I see. Because, yeah, I saw like Herman and Baybay, the guys—

Catina Braxton Robertson

Baybay, yeah, they have the ID. They just started. Baybay had his about three weeks ago, and he told me I needed to go get mine because they can stop you, and you can get a fine for it without having it.

Rachel Carrico

Do you know how much the fine is?

Catina Braxton Robertson

1:00:26 I don't know.

Rachel Carrico

I wonder. But you have to be a social and pleasure club to sell?

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah.¹

¹ In an interview with Rachel Carrico on April 21, 2014, Tamara Jackson Snowden refuted this detail, claiming that vendors at the Second Line do not have to be members of Social Aid and Pleasure Clubs.

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Rachel Carrico

Interesting.

Catina Braxton Robertson

You have to be a social and pleasure club.

Rachel Carrico

Because I know not everybody out there is, but maybe they just become a member so they can keep selling or something?

Catina Braxton Robertson

They got a—I'm not sure how that goes. I don't want to state that because I don't know.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, no. I don't know either.

Catina Braxton Robertson

But I know Baybay then told me that we have to go—that if we sell stuff out there, we have to go actually get the ID.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, okay. I always wondered about that.

1:00:58 [video playing]

Rachel Carrico

So this guy—this is a guy who moved to the city, I think, in the [19]90s, and he's a white guy in the [Big 7](#), Leo [Gorman].

Catina Braxton Robertson

Oh, Leo, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

He's my neighbor, actually.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Okay, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

Well, he gets on top of stuff. He's somebody that—

Catina Braxton Robertson

Uh-huh, he'd be out there with the baby and in the little carriage.

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Rachel Carrico

I know, crawling up flags and everything.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Right.

Rachel Carrico

Okay, so here's some more of what I like to call, you know, white people footwork right here. They're trying, but they're maybe not quite hitting it.

1:01:25 [video playing]

Catina Braxton Robertson

Oh, they're on beat. I would ask them to join.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah! All right. They get—

Catina Braxton Robertson

I would ask them to join.

Rachel Carrico

And this guy, I love this guy. His name is Scotty. He's from Houston.

1:01:53 [video playing]

Catina Braxton Robertson

All right, now, Scotty. Come on, look, amen.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah, this guy.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Let me get some. (laughs) That's Little Shorty. Yeah, now, she be rolling, too.

Rachel Carrico

Yeah. Okay, anything you see her doing that stands out?

Catina Braxton Robertson

1:02:30 She got some excellent footwork. She has some moves. And she's an older person, and she has a good spirit when she dances. She's a different person when she second line also, totally. She's a second liner when she's parading and when she's not parading. When she is outside the ropes, she goes.

Rachel Carrico

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Their parade was right before Christmas this year on this day, and it rained the whole four hours.

Catina Braxton Robertson

And I did not go out there. I just could not do the rain.

Rachel Carrico

Oh, my goodness. And they all—they stuck it out the whole time. And she led the charge. Nobody would let down and give up because she would not let them.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Uh-huh.

Rachel Carrico

And here's the Lady Rollers.

Catina Braxton Robertson

1:03:37 Uh-huh (affirmative). There's Linda.

Rachel Carrico

[Poppy Tooker](#).

Catina Braxton Robertson

Oh, that's one—the other groups, like the Pussyfooters or somebody that came out with them, huh?

Rachel Carrico

[Poppy Tooker](#), I think she was like an honorary guest or something, not a queen, but something like that.

Catina Braxton Robertson

Yeah, yeah.

Rachel Carrico

So that's all.

Catina Braxton Robertson

That was great.

Rachel Carrico

Thanks. Anything else before I turn it off?

Catina Braxton Robertson

That'd be it.

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Rachel Carrico
Okay.

1:04:14 [End of Recording]
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