

Destination Freedom

Curated by
John F. Barber

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Season 10, Episode 02 of Re-Imagined Radio
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Episode Synopsis

Re-Imagined Radio celebrates Black History Month and the democratic traditions and cultural contributions of Black Americans. We sample from original episodes of *Destination Freedom* to consider W. C. Handy, "The Father of the Blues" and the New Orleans jazz music of Louis Armstrong.

COLD OPENSONG "FREEDOM" SAMPLED FROM "FATHER
OF THE BLUES" EPISODE

RIR ANNOUNCER Welcome to Re-Imagined Radio, a program about radio storytelling. I'm Jack Armstrong. With each episode we combine dialogue, sound effects, and music to engage your listening imagination. This episode is no different, and here to tell you about it is John Barber, producer and host.

MUSIC: RIR THEME?

HOST Thank you Jack. Hello everyone. Welcome.

This episode of Re-Imagined Radio is titled "Destination Freedom Tribute." We offer it as a tribute to Black History Month and the radio series *Destination Freedom*, with its focus on the democratic traditions and cultural contributions of Black Americans.

Broadcast nationwide on the NBC network by WMAQ, Chicago, Illinois, from 1948 to 1950, *Destination Freedom* was written by Richard Durham, editor of *The Chicago Defender*.

With each weekly episode, Durham used powerful radio storytelling to work against the discriminatory traditions and stereotypes of Blacks in American history, arts, and culture. His unflinching focus established the

footholds for later civil and human rights movements.

HOST The focus of our tribute is music. First let's listen to "The Father of the Blues," a dramatized biography of W.C. Handy, American musician, composer, and songwriter. This was the 12 September 1948 episode of *Destination Freedom*, written by Richard Durham.

SFX: "THE FATHER OF THE BLUES"

HOST You just heard "The Father of the Blues," a dramatized biography of W.C. Handy, an episode of *Destination Freedom* written by Richard Durham. Handy was voiced by Fred Pinkard, a well known Chicago voice actor.

This is Re-Imagined Radio and we're paying tribute to *Destination Freedom*, and Black American musicians and composers, as part of Black History Month.

We salute *Destination Freedom* for its unflinching spotlight on stereotypes and discriminatory practices directed toward Black Americans. Our partner radio program, *The Fusebox Show*, shines its own bright light on American politics and culture.

Freeform, but focused, appropriate for all age groups and audiences, the Fusebox characters share their observations and reactions to events

that both stir our imagination and boil our blood.

Here's a sample . . .

THE FUSEBOX SHOW

HOST As you heard, *The Fusebox Show* is "ear food" . . . rich in production value, satirical humor, unique characters, and sometimes outrageous absurdity. Listen for episodes on this radio station, and learn more at *The Fusebox Show* website, [www dot thefuseboxshow dot com](http://www.thefuseboxshow.com).

MUSIC: RIR BRIDGE/TRANSITION

HOST This is Re-Imagined Radio. I'm John Barber. We are paying tribute to a radio series called *Destination Freedom*, broadcast nationally from WMAQ, Chicago, Illinois, 1948-1950. Each weekly broadcast, written and produced by Richard Durham, worked against discriminatory traditions and stereotypes by dramatizing the life and contributions of Black American artists, writers, musicians, leaders, and others.

HOST Earlier we listened to "The Father of the Blues," a dramatization of the life of W.C. Handy, American musician, composer, and songwriter. Handy's musical inspiration sprang from the Mississippi River delta.

?? MUSIC: BRIEF JAZZ MUSIC SAMPLE

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In New Orleans, a different genre of music evolved, jazz. The July 31, 1949 episode of *Destination Freedom* tells the story of how a young Louis Armstrong created a new genre of jazz with his trumpet playing. Let's listen now to "The Trumpet Talks."

SFX: "THE TRUMPET TALKS"

HOST

You just listened to "The Trumpet Talks," an episode of *Destination Freedom* written by Richard Durham. Oscar Brown, Jr. voiced the part of Louis Armstrong.

This episode of Re-Imagined Radio pays tribute to Black History month and *Destination Freedom*, a radio program that through its unflinching focus on Black American history, arts, and culture, established the footholds for later civil and human rights movements.

Written and produced by Richard Durham, *Destination Freedom* is an important radio series for its portrayal of Black Americans their history in the radio medium. Episodes offer compelling narratives, powerful dramatizations, dynamic characters, and engaging musical arrangements, all based on historical research and first-rate writing.

Re-Imagined Radio is proud to celebrate this legacy with our "Destination Freedom Tribute."

Throughout the year we plan to offer additional tributes. For example, we plan a tribute to Archibald MacLeish and his radio drama written in prose, "The Fall of the City." Other tributes are planned for William Conrad and his million dollar radio voice, three radio adventure series produced and broadcast by the same Detroit radio station, and potential influences for the most famous radio broadcast ever, "The War of the Worlds."

Next month, please join us for our tribute to Lucille Fletcher, a radio writer recommended by Orson Welles.

?? SFX: ORSON WELLES AND HIS
TRIBUTE TO LUCILLE FLETCHER ??

HOST

I'm John Barber. I hope you enjoyed this episode of Re-Imagined Radio.

The script was written by John Barber.

Sound design, and post production by Marc Rose of Fuse Audio Design.

Our presence on Twitter, Facebook, and Instagram is coordinated by Regina Carol Social Media Management.

Graphic design and branding by Holly Slocum Design.

This is John Barber, producer and host. Thank you for listening. Please join us again. We promise a good listening experience.

ANNOUNCER

This is a production of Re-Imagined Radio. Our radio broadcasts are heard on local, regional, and international community radio stations.

For on demand streaming, point your browsers to our website, reimagedradio (all one word, no punctuation) DOT net. While there, subscribe to our snappy email Program Guide.

Thank you so much for listening, and please, join us again for another episode of Re-Imagined Radio where we will continue our exploration of radio storytelling.

MUSIC: RIR CLOSE ENDS, FADE OUT