

THE 1930s RECORDINGS OF TINY BRADSHAW AND HIS ORCHESTRA

An Annotated Tentative Personnelo-Discography

BRADSHAW, 'Tiny' Myron, drums, piano, vocals

Born: Youngstown, Ohio, 23rd September 1905;
Died: Cincinnati, Ohio, 26th November 1958

Majored in psychology at Wilberforce University, Ohio. Began singing career with Horace Henderson's Collegians. Subsequently worked in New York with Marion Hardy's Alabamians, The Savoy Bearcats, the Mills Blue Rhythm Band (1932), and sang with Luis Russell. Left Russell to form own band which made its debut at the Renaissance Ballroom, New York, in 1934 – later that year they recorded for Decca. After residencies in Philadelphia, Chicago, and the Savoy, New York, the band achieved national fame with several big-selling records. Tiny continued to lead throughout the 1940s and early 1950s, including U.S.O. tour of Japan in late 1945. Worked regularly in Chicago, until suffering two strokes which enforced his retirement. (J. Chilton, Who's Who of Jazz)

This personnelo-discography is based on Rust, Jazz And Ragtime Records 1897 - 1942.

Personnels are taken from this source, but modified in the light of earlier or subsequent research or on the strength of my own listening, discussed with our listening group or other interested collectors.

- Documented, most certain and aurally absolutely obvious identifications are listed thus: **Tiny Bradshaw**
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Tiny Bradshaw*
- Not attributable identifications – although the musician in question might be an otherwise well-known person – are listed thus: unknown
- If a possible identification for an otherwise unknown musician is suggested by the author without the possibility to prove the factual evidence, it is listed thus: (*Tiny Bradshaw*)

When feeling certain without a musician's documented presence, I have not refrained from altering Rust's statements without using italics. In any case, my statements are open to discussion and I would appreciate any contribution - pro or contra!

As always in my discographies on this website I have written recording sessions with their headings, dates, titles and names of musicians in italics, whenever I am convinced that the eponymous musician of this discography is not part of the accompanying group of this session! Documented names of musicians if known – in recording ledgers or on record labels – are listed in bold letters.

This discography still is - and will certainly be - a work in progress for a long time, if not eternally. Yet, on the way to a definite discography of all jazz recordings before 1942 - which certainly will never be possible - it is intended to fill some gaps that have not been treated before.

The following statements and the resulting list of recordings only reflect the opinion of this writer/listener and are open to discussion. More so, discussion is eagerly invited. Corrections, amendments and controversial opinions are much appreciated.

TINY BRADSHAW

001 **TINY BRADSHAW AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

Tiny Bradshaw – voc, ldr;
Max Maddox, Lincoln Mills, Shad Collins – tpt;
Eugene Simon or *Eugene Green*, George Matthews – tbn;

New York,

Sep. 19, 1934

Bobby Holmes – alt, clt; Eddie Williams – alt; Edgar Courance – ten, clt; Happy Caldwell – ten;		
Clarence Johnson – pno; Bob Lessey – gtr; Ernest Williamson – sbs; Arnold Bolden – dms		
38693-A Shout, Sister, Shout	Dec 456,	Harlequin HQ 2053 (LP)
38694-A Mister, Will You Serenade	Dec 317,	Harlequin HQ 2053 (LP)
38695-A The Darktown Strutters' Ball	Dec 194,	Harlequin HQ 2053 (LP)
38696-A The Sheik Of Araby	Dec 194,	Harlequin HQ 2053 (LP)

This is the little known, but beautifully swinging big band of the late Harlem period, led by Tiny Bradshaw, singer in a Cab Calloway mode. His band of ten years later achieved national fame with several big-selling records (Chilton, 1970).

These sides are most remarkable for the space left to the instrumental soloists. We hear the very much under-rated Shad Collins as principal trumpet soloist, the even more under-rated George Matthews on trombone with his warm and smooth lip-trills, and a couple of other Harlem musicians, among them Happy Caldwell on tenor sax and altoist Eddie Williams, a special favourite of mine for his perpetual use of augmented chords (whole-step scales) when improvising.

I have relied on Johnny Simmen's personnel listing on the LP cover of Harlequin HQ 2053. Mr. Simmen was a life-long jazz fan from the 1920s on and spent a large part of his well-to-do life in contacting and interviewing jazz musicians and discussing their recordings. His knowledge was immense and his recollections always are most informative. He did not list Russell Procope as a member of the Tiny Bradshaw recordings, but Eddie Williams instead, and what can be heard and recognised certainly proves his statement. The Harlequin LP lists – certainly on Mr. Simmen's instigation – Eugene Simon as an alternative trombonist for Eugene Green. I'd assume that either Gene Simon was the factual trombonist – apart from Matthews – at this session (Simon recorded with Benny Carter and Don Redman and therefore favoured by Mr. Simmen) or that in fact an otherwise un-known player with the surname Green was hired. He is listed for this one single session only in Rust. I'd favour to consider (Eu)gene Simon to be the trombonist for this player's advanced technique and virtuosity – and sharp tone. And that the name Green was simply a mis-recollection for a young – and un-known - Gene Simon who served in the Redman band from 1936 on.

Notes:

- Rust*2: 2 (?) unknown tpts; unknown tbn; unknown alt; Edgar Courance (sic), Happy Caldwell (clts, tens); unknown pno; unknown gtr; Ernest Hill (sbs); Arnold Bolden (dms); Tiny Bradshaw (vcl)

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Lincoln Mills -Shad Collins -Max Maddox -t; George Matthews -Eugene Green -tb; Bobby Holmes -Russell Procope -as; Edgar Courance, Happy Caldwell -cl -ts; Clarence Johnson -p; Bob Lessey -g; Ernest Williamson -sb; Arnold Bolden -d; Tiny Bradshaw -v -ldr.

- Record Research 71, Bertrand Demeusy: "The complete personnel of the Tiny Bradshaw's records made in NYC, September 19th, 1934 and October 3rd, 1934 for the label Decca ('Shout, Sister, Shout', 'Mister, Will You Serenade', 'Ol' Man River', 'I Ain't Got Nobody', etc.) is the following: Lincoln Mills, Shad Collins, Max Maddox (tp); George Matthews, Eugene Green (tb); Bobby Holmes, Russell Procope (as); Spider Courance, Happy Caldwell (ts); Clarence Johnson (p); Bob Lessey (g); Ernest Williamson (b); Arnold Bolden (dr); Tiny Bradshaw (voc). The personnel was confirmed to me by both George Matthews and Bob Lessey. G. Matthews added that he took the trombone solo on 'I Ain't Got Nobody' and Eugene Green is the soloist on 'I'm A Ding Dong Daddy'."

- Harlequin HQ 2053, LP cover, Johnny Simmen: Lincoln Mills, Lawrence "Max" Maddox, Lester "Shad" Collins (tpt); "Big" George Matthews, Eugene Green or Eugene Simon (tbn); Bobby Holmes (clt, alt); Eddie Williams (alt); Edgar "Spider" Courance (clt, ten, bar); Albert "Happy" Caldwell (ten); Clarence Johnson (pno, arr); Bob Lessey (gtr); Ernest Williamson (sbs); Arnold "Scrippy" Boling (dms); Myron "Tiny" Bradshaw (voc, ldr)

Order of solos (after Johnny Simmen, with own alterations):

38693-A	BL gtr 4; SC o-tpt 16; EC clt 8; SC o-tpt 8; ?LM m-tpt obl 32; GM o-tbn 16; HC ten 8; GM o-tbn 8; EW alt 8.
38694-A	SC o-tpt 32; EW alt 4; BH clt 4 + 4; HC ten 4 + 4; GM o-tbn 8.
38695-A	SC m-tpt 24 + 24; EW alt 2 + 24; CJ pno 24 + 24; ES/EG o-tbn 24.
38696-A	LM m-tpt 32; EC ten 16; ES/EG o-tbn 16; BH clt 16; EW alt 16.

002 TINY BRADSHAW AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

Oct. 03, 1934

Tiny Bradshaw – voc, ldr;

Max Maddox, Lincoln Mills, Shad Collins – tpt;

Eugene Simon or Eugene Green, George Matthews – tbn;

Bobby Holmes – alt; Eddie Williams – alt; Edgar Courance – ten, bar; Happy Caldwell – ten;

Clarence Johnson – pno; Bob Lessey – gtr; Ernest Williamson – sbs; Arnold Bolden – dms

38785-A	Ol' Man River	Dec 236,	Harlequin HQ 2053 (LP)
38786-A	I Ain't Got Nobody	Dec 456,	Harlequin HQ 2053 (LP)
38787-A	I'm A Ding Dong Daddy (From Dumas)	Dec 236,	Harlequin HQ 2053 (LP)
38788-A	She'll Be Coming Round The Mountain	Dec 317,	Harlequin HQ 2053 (LP)

The same personnel again, equally inspired and enthusiastic. I again followed the late Johnny Simmen in his identification of the soloists. And I must add that Johnny Simmen was in contact with many great jazz musicians for all his life and might have reported Mr. Courance's own testimony.

This personnel of the Tiny Bradshaw Orchestra is the band that played the Renaissance Ballroom in 1934.

Notes:

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- Rust*3,*4,*6: Lincoln Mills -Shad Collins -Max Maddox -t; George Matthews -Eugene Green -tb; Bobby Holmes -Russell Procope -as; Edgar Courance, Happy Caldwell -cl -ts; Clarence Johnson -p; Bob Lessey -g; Ernest Williamson -sb; Arnold Bolden -d; Tiny Bradshaw -v -ldr.

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Order of solos (after Johnny Simmen, with own alterations):

38785-A *EW alt 32 + 16; ES/EG o-tbn 16.*
38786-A *SC o-tpt 4; SC m-tpt 16; HC ten 8; SC m-tpt 8; GM o-tbn 16; BH clt 8; GM o-tbn 8.*
38787-A *SC o-tpt 16; EC ten 16; ES/EG o-tbn 16; EC bar 16.*
38788-A *BH clt obl 16; SC o-tpt 16; BH clt 16; SC m-tpt 16 + 16.*

Tiny Bradshaw recorded prolifically in the 1940s/1950s.

See Tom Lord, *The Jazz Discography* or Eric Raben, *Jazz Records 1942-1980, Vol. 2.*

K. – B. Rau
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