

The band recorded four titles for Victor on May 13, 1931, of which 'That's My Desire' was unissued, but re-recorded at the later session below.

Rather curiously we find trombonist Bennie Morton among the band's musicians.

In 'I Can't Get Enough Of You' a flute is present among the three-part reed section, but heard only in the vocal chorus together with an oboe. As Wooding's flutist is named as his brother Quentin in Storyville 72-215 (see below), Socarras might possibly only be an assumption of record collectors conveyed to Brian Rust and listed in Rust*4,*6, based on his uniqueness as flutist among coloured musicians in the late 1920s in New York.

The flute part heard in this title is quite short in size and requirement, and may well be played by any flutist. But regarding Quentin Wooding's documented activity as reed/flute-player in his brother's band in c. 1929 (see below) this might well be a clue to this player's identity. The scored flute parts, yet, do not allow any determination as to the musician's identity.

Another name cited in Storyville 72 is a Mr. Kennedy playing oboe. He might possibly be the ill-famed Gene Kennedy, notorious for always carrying a gun and threatening others, but known for playing with Luis Russell, June Clark, Leon Abbey and other leaders. (He is the soprano sax player on the famous Perry Bradford band photo in 'Keepnews / Grauer, A Pictorial History of Jazz', p.129! It must yet be added that the band shown actually is 'June Clark and his Creole Stompers', house band at 'Smalls' Sugar Cane Club' in 1924/25!)

If in fact this is 'this' Gene Kennedy, he must be the tenor sax soloist in the band, playing an un-swinging tenor sax style of by-gone times, yet the only examples possibly of this enigmatic man's musical activities on record.

Notes:

- Storyville 72-215: Russell Wooding Orchestra (no date, no location, but before August 1929?): Demas Dean, trumpet; Juan Tizol, Trombone; --- Blanchette, violin; Russell Wooding, piano; R. Tizol, bass; --- Kennedy, oboe; Q. Wooding, flute; unknown, banjo; unknown, drums; Busch (sic) Hunter, cello, vocal; Wesley Howard, violin.

- L. Wright, "Fats" in Fact, p.61: "The 'International Musician' of February 1930 has a report of what appears to be the Russell Wooding Orchestra from Local 9 of Boston which lists Russell Wooding, Bernard Parker, vn; Willie Hicks, t; Joe Marshall, d; Thomas Waller, p; Charles Green, tb; and Dallas Chambers, t."

- Rust*2: two unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); three unknown (reeds); unknown (pno); unknown (bjo); unknown (bbs); Percy Robinson (dms); Willie Jackson, Frank Luther (vcl)

- Rust*3: two unknown -t; unknown -tb; three unknown -cl -ss -as -ts; unknown -p; unknown -bj; unknown -bb; Percy Robinson -d; Willie Jackson, Frank Luther -v

- Rust*4: 2 unknown -t; Benny Morton (?) -tb; Albert Socarras -as -f; 2 unknown -cl -ss -as -ts -one doubling -o; unknown -p; unknown -bj; unknown -bb; Percy Robinson -d; Willie Jackson, Frank Luther -v

- Rust*6: unknown, unknown, t; Benny Morton, tb; unknown, unknown, cl, ss, as; unknown, cl, ss, ts; Albert Socarras, as, f; unknown p; unknown bj; unknown bb; Percy Robinson, d; Willie Jackson, Frank Luther -v

002 WOODING'S GRAND CENTRAL RED CAPS

New York,

May 20, 1931

unknown, unknown - tpt; Benny Morton - tbn;

Q. Wooding or (Albert Socarras?) - alt, clt, flt; unknown - alt, clt; Gene Kennedy - ten, clt;

unknown - pno; unknown - bjo; unknown - bbs; Percy Robinson - dms;

Dick Robertson - voc

69609-4

That's My Desire

Vic 22718,

Frog DGF 12

This is the re-recording of the unissued title of the fore-going session. No additional titles seem to have been recorded on this date.

Here the flutist leads the three-piece reed section, again including an oboe, in the first chorus. He may well be the same musician as before in the vocal chorus of 'I Can't Get Enough Of You'. Yet, on this 'That's My Desire' he is featured much more on flute, playing scored fast arpeggiated phrases behind the vocalist.

In case this in fact would be Socarras as listed in Rust*4,*6, he is not added to a three-piece reed section, but is part of it, and would thus perhaps be an integral part of the Wooding band. But unfortunately, Socarras does not mention any connection or business with the Russell Wooding band - recording for Victor - in his reminiscence in Storyville 90! Instead, he remembered working as a studio musician for Columbia Records for some time.

Conclusively, I do not think that Albert Socarras is the flutist/saxophonist on these two Russell Wooding sessions, the flute parts being played nicely and musically, but not necessarily by Mr. Socarras.

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- Rust*2: two unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); three unknown (reeds); Albert Socarras (alt, flt); unknown (pno); unknown (bjo); unknown (bbs); Percy Robinson (dms); Dick Robertson (vcl)

- Rust*3: two unknown -t; unknown -tb; Albert Socarras -as -f; three unknown -cl -ss -as -ts; unknown -p; unknown -bj; unknown -bb; Percy Robinson -d; Dick Robertson -v

- Rust*4: 2 unknown -t; Benny Morton (?) -tb; Albert Socarras -as -f; 2 unknown -cl -ss -as -ts -one doubling -o; unknown -p; unknown -bj; unknown -bb; Percy Robinson -d; Dick Robertson -v

- Rust*6: unknown, unknown, t; Benny Morton, tb; unknown, unknown, cl, ss, as; unknown, cl, ss, ts; Albert Socarras, as, f; unknown p; unknown bj; unknown bb; Percy Robinson, d; Dick Robertson, v

003 RUSSELL WOODING AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

1933

regular big band personnel of

Vitaphone film 'Rufus Jones for President'

3 unknown - tpt; unknown - tbn;

3 unknown reeds;

unknown - pno; unknown - gtr/bjo; unknown - bbs; unknown - dms;

Mabel Scott - voc

Puttin' It On

on you tube 'harryoakley'

Website "harryoakley" presents an excerpt from the Vitaphone short "Rufus Jones for President" of 1933, showing a very slim female dancer/ singer - assumed to be Mabel Scott - performing one chorus of 'Puttin' It On', accompanied by a very strong big band of regular

instrumentation and assumed to be Russell Wooding's, and a chorus line of female dancers, also accompanied by this same big band, performing 4 choruses with a simple score of riff-like A-parts of AABA chorus, the B-parts being ad-libbed by a hot trumpeter or a hot trombonist. The Vitaphone film stars singer Ethel Waters and the very young singer/dancer Sammy Davis, Jr.

004	ETHEL WATERS	Russell Wooding and his Orchestra	New York,	Oct. 16, 1935
		Ethel Waters – voc;		
		unknown – tpt;		
		unknown – clt; unknown – vln;		
		unknown – pno; unknown – gtr; unknown – sbs; unknown – dms		
95605-1		Hottentot Potentate	LMS L-188,	Chronological Classics 755
95606-1		Thief In The Night	LMS L-188,	Chronological Classics 755
		<i>Composer credits are: 95605 (Dietz - Schwartz); 95606 (Dietz – Schwartz)</i>		

Russell Wooding led big bands in Harlem with differing personnels through the early 1930s. With five sides recorded for Victor in New York in 1931, these two titles with Ethel Waters are his only known output. The band is a competent and strong unit, but plays scores, throughout. No individual traits can be detected. Thus, nothing can be said about the personnel. Great Ethel Waters.

Notes:

- Rust*2, *3, *4, *6: Instrumentation and personnel unknown

K. - B. Rau
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