

THE RECORDINGS OF ANNA BELL

An Annotated Tentative Name-Discography

BELL, Anna no personal details known.

(Tom Lord, Clarence Williams)

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: Anna Bell
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Anna Bell*
- 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: (*Anna Bell*)

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.

ANNA BELL

001	ANNA BELL	Clarence Williams and his Orchestra	Long Island City,	Sept. 1928
		Anna Bell – voc;		
		<i>King Oliver</i> – cnt; <i>Arville Harris</i> – clt;		
		Clarence Williams – pno; <i>Cyrus St. Clair</i> - bbs		
171-A		Hopeless Blues	QRS R-7007,	Frog DGF 48
172-A		Every Woman Blues	QRS R-7007,	Frog DGF 48
173-A		Kitchen Woman Blues	QRS R-7008,	Frog DGF 48
173-B		Kitchen Woman Blues	QRS R-7008,	Frog DGF 48

"A long time settled personnel, only that some of us doubt the presence of Cyrus St.Clair. But we don't know any alternative." This note from our Clarence Williams evaluation of some years ago probably needs some new perspective.

First: there is a distinct dissimilarity of trumpet/cornet playing to the trumpet/cornet player of the last three sides (below). These first matrices sound more like King Oliver than Ed Allen to me (KBR), but it is definitely Allen on the last three sides (session 002 below). But: on 'Everywoman Blues' the intro is played using a cub-mute, and sounds like Ed Allen. Then the player uses a straight- or knob-mute and sounds like King Oliver, being relieved by the cub-mute player in the first ten bars of the third chorus, then it is the straight- or knob-mute player again until the end.

Furthermore, these sides present a somewhat unsecure clarinetist with a shaky but sharp tone, quirky phrasing and clumsy and simple inner rhythm, not unlike Harris, yet, who might well be somebody else, or possibly Harris on a bad day.

Tuba playing is of a somewhat sober quality, lacking St. Clair's known licks, but it is clearly St. Clair on both takes of the third title!

As we know that the QRS people liked to cut three-title sessions, I feel caused to divide the former six-title session into two different three-title ones.

Notes:

- *Storyville 23*: Ed Allen (cnt); Arville Harris (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- *Lord, Clarence Williams p251*: Ed Allen (cnt); Arville Harris (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- *Rust*3,*4,*6*: Ed Allen -c; Arville Harris -cl; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- *BGR*2,*3,*4*: Ed Allen, cnt; Arville Harris, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p252):

173-A: 4th chorus: Anna Bell sings „Oh, your ham-fat woman wouldn't ...“ and repeats it.
 173-B: 4th chorus: Anna Bell sings „Oh, your ham-fat vamp wouldn't ...“ and repeats it.

002 ANNA BELL	Clarence Williams and his Orchestra	Long Island City,	Sept. 1928
Anna Bell – voc;			
Ed Allen – cnt; Arville Harris – clt;			
Clarence Williams – pno; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs			
174-	Lock Step Blues	Bwy 5033,	Frog DGF 48
174-B	Lock Step Blues	QRS R-7008,	Frog DGF 48
175-	Shake It, Black Bottom	QRS R-7009,	Frog DGF 48
176-A	I Don't Care Who Gets What I Don't Want	QRS R-7009,	Frog DGF 48

“A long time settled personnel, only that some of us doubt the presence of Cyrus St. Clair. But we don't know any alternative.” Yet, the situation is much simpler here than above. All four musicians are easy to recognize from their own known personal features. And it is definitely St. Clair on tuba here!

Notes:

- Storyville 23: Ed Allen (cnt); Arville Harris (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p251: Ed Allen (cnt); Arville Harris (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ed Allen -c; Arville Harris -cl; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Ed Allen, cnt; Arville Harris, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.

Notable differences of takes (KBR):

174- : 4th bar of introduction: bbs plays three notes: 2 quarter notes G – E, and 1 half note C.

174-B: 4th bar of introduction: bbs plays four notes: 1 quarter note G, 2 eighth notes E – G, and 1 half note C.

K.-B. Rau
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