

THE RECORDINGS OF MACK SHAW

An Annotated Tentative Personnel - Discography

SHAW, Mack, tuba no biographical dates publicly known
Mack – or Max - Shaw is named as a tuba player from Chicago in ‘Storyville’ 80. Worked in California with ‘Reb Spikes and his Pods of Pepper’ in 1924 and 1925 (being arrested for giving liquor to several minor white girls, together with Jimmy Strong and Lionel Hampton at Redondo Beach dance hall). Moved from the West coast to the East because of vexation with criminals. In course of these, his face had been severely injured, which caused a lasting period of unemployment. Joined the Duke Ellington band in 1926 until mid 1927. In 1927/8 he played with Earle ‘Nappy’ Howard’s band in upstate New York.

“The bass player who joined us was Mack Shaw; he had played with Duke Ellington the summer before he came with us. He joined us and worked coast to coast. We used his car for transportation at twenty cents a mile. He had a big old-fashioned Pierce Arrow that all eight of us could get into with instruments and baggage on top and on the sides. Mack was quite a character. He had been gassed during active service in World War I and that was the reason he gave for his drinking to excess, he really could make alcohol disappear. Mack had travelled all over the U.S.A., he was a good liar and story-teller and during trips between jobs he could really tell them, as long as he could find drink to oil his pipes on. ... I must say that he was a darn good bass player and his bass was just the thing to fill up many of the holes we had in many places of the arrangements.”
(David Griffith, Earle ‘Nappy’ Howard’s Life Story, ‘Those Were The Days’, Storyville 88)

STYLISTICS

STYLE

In classic jazz the tuba is not an instrument for solo performances. Accordingly, a “style” cannot easily be distinguished. Classic dance band/jazz band tuba playing is determined by dance/jazz band arrangements of the time. The tuba mainly plays measures one and three of each bar, but may ad-lib in bridges and transitions, depending on the requirements of bandleader and/or arranger.

Shaw’s individual features – as different from other players’ - are: a portato quarter-note started by a very short downward “jump” and followed by a tied very soft sustained same note. Thus, he plays very soft sustained half-notes instead of strict quarter-notes of other tuba players.

TONE

His tone is full, voluminous, but soft and warm.

VIBRATO

As a matter of fact, there is no vibrato in quarter-notes when playing rhythm, but long sustained notes only allow to recognize a rather long and soft vibrato with very little amplitude.

TIME

Shaw apparently owns a strong rhythmical feeling, yet, from his way of playing soft and long notes, his rhythmic impetus is not so much recognized.

PHRASING

There is little phrasing in tuba playing, but when delivering modulations or transitions beyond simple rhythm figures, most tuba players were free to ad-lib in jazz bands. Bandleader Earle Howard on Mack Shaw: “I must say that he was a darn good bass player and his bass was just the thing to fill up many of the holes we had in many places of the arrangements.”

This personnel-discography is based on RUST, JAZZ AND RAGTIME RECORDS 1897 - 1942.

Personnel 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: Mack Shaw
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Mack Shaw*
- 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: (*Mack Shaw*)

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.

MACK SHAW

001 SARA MARTIN	<i>Clarence Williams' Blue Five</i>	<i>New York,</i>	<i>Mar. 24, 1926</i>
<i>Sara Martin – voc;</i>			
<i>Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Otto Hardwick – alt;</i>			
<i>Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo</i>			
<i>74066-B</i>	<i>What's The Matter Now?</i>	<i>OK 8336,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5397</i>
<i>74067-B</i>	<i>I Want Every Bit Of It, I Don't Like It Second Hand</i>	<i>OK 8336,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5397</i>

Aurally the trumpet player here is Miley as suggested by some members of our listening team. In view of the fact, that other members of the Ellington band were recruited for this session, the presence of Miley is most probable. Irvis was a member of the Ellington crew, too, and so it seems feasible to suggest Hardwick as altoist although not much characteristics of his playing can be heard. But the romantic alto playing in the intro of the second side sounds very typical.

But: As I have just (20-11-19) been informed by Steven Lasker, there is no tuba on these sides. And he certainly is right. So, no Cyrus St. Clair! And no Mack Shaw who might have been assumed for this session as all the wind players are lent from the contemporary Duke Ellington Band. No wonder that the band is called 'Blue Five'! And: If this Clarence Williams' Blue Five would have enclosed a tuba player, he would probably have been Mack Shaw, because of his stay with the Ellington band at this date, and because Cyrus St. Clair did not join the Clarence Williams ranks before December 16, 1926.

Notes:

- *Storyville 18: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (sax); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- *Lord, Clarence Williams p156: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); poss Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- *Rust*3: no personnel, but included in session accompanied by Eddie Heywood -p, with notation: The last two titles are reportedly accomp. by Clarence Williams' Blue Five.*
- *Rust*4,*6: unknown -c; unknown -tb; unknown -as; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj; ?Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- *BGR*2: poss Tom Morris, cnt; unknown, tbn; prob Buster Bailey or Don Redman, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; unknown, bjo; with prob Cyrus St. Clair, bbs. "Matrices 74066/67 may have been made on March 24, 1926."*
- *T. Lord, Clarence Williams: unknown (cnt, tbn, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); possibly Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- *BGR*3,*4: unknown, c; unknown, tb; unknown, as; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, bj; poss Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- *Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, Bubber Miley Discography: not listed*

002 SARA MARTIN	<i>Clarence Williams' Blue Five</i>	<i>New York,</i>	<i>Mar. 25, 1926</i>
<i>Sara Martin – voc;</i>			
<i>Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Otto Hardwick – alt;</i>			
<i>Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs</i>			
<i>74072-A</i>	<i>Brother Ben</i>	<i>OK 8325,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5398</i>
<i>74073-A</i>	<i>The Prisoner's Blues</i>	<i>OK 8442,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5398</i>
<i>74074-B</i>	<i>Careless Man Blues</i>	<i>OK 8325,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5398</i>
<i>74075-A</i>	<i>How Could I Be Blue?</i>	<i>OK 8442,</i>	<i>Document DOCD-5398</i>
<i>Composer credits: 74072 (Williams - Waller); 74073 (Williams); 74074 (Todd); 74075 (Williams – Williams)</i>			

This personnel is a contingent from the Ellington band, but Irvis is uncertain here and the altoist could be anyone.

Following the note from Steven Lasker, 10-11-20, re tuba player Mack Shaw on next session (Clarence Williams' Stompers: he distinctly is here as well (see characteristics of his style in Clarence Williams Stompers session of March 25, 1926)!

And we have the great four-four rhythm by Clarence and Buddy Christian again as on many sides before.

Notes:

- *Storyville 18: Bubber Miley or unknown (2)(cnt); unknown (tbn); Otto Hardwick (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- *Lord, Clarence Williams p159: unknown (cnt); unknown (tbn); unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo); poss Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*
- *Rust*3: ? Bubber Miley -c; unknown -tb; Otto Hardwick -as; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- *Rust*4,*6: ? Bubber Miley -c; unknown -tb; Otto Hardwick or Don Redman -as; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj; ? Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- *BGR*2: poss Tom Morris, cnt; unknown, tbn; prob Buster Bailey or Don Redman, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; unknown, bjo; with prob Cyrus St. Clair, bbs. "Matrices 74066/67 may have been made on March 24, 1926."*
- *BGR*3,*4: Bubber Miley, unknown, c; unknown, tb; poss Otto Hardwick or Don Redman, as; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, bj; poss Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*
- *Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, Bubber Miley Discography: Bubber Miley (tp), poss Charlie Irvis (tb), poss Otto Hardwick or Don Redman (as), Clarence Williams (p); poss Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bj); Henry "Bass" Edwards (bb). "Dixon-Godrich and Lord's Clarence Williams discography have Miley for the first, third and fourth title and a different, unknown (tp) for the Prisoner's Blues, unknown (tb) and Cyrus St. Clair (bb). Rust has ?Miley all the way and the rest as the others. We are certain that Miley plays on all four titles and that the brass bass player is the same as for the previous 1926 Clarence Williams recordings. "Bass" Edwards. Unfortunately, Miss Martin*

belts out her lyrics loudly and close to the microphone throughout the session, leaving little space for the musicians, but Bo goes with the Ellington front-line, while Goran E. is not sure about Irvis and Hardwick, thinking that the alto playing is too straight for the latter."

003 CLARENCE WILLIAMS STOMPERS	New York,	Apr. 07, 1926
Thomas Morris, Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Don Redman – alt, clt, voc; Clarence Williams – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Mack Shaw - bbs		
74090-B Jackass Blues	OK 40598,	Chronological Classics 718
74091-B What's The Matter Now?	OK 40598,	Chronological Classics 718
<i>Composer credits: 74090 (M. Stitzel – A. Kassel); 74091 (C. Williams – S. Williams)</i>		

Now, this seems to be some kind of 'All Star' unit from early Harlem, as - apart from the now usual Ellington contingent – we also have Don Redman from the Henderson band (unmistakable for his singing alone) and bandleader and previous C. Williams alumnus Thomas Morris. This seems to be the last of Clarence's recordings including Morris, the others dating from the period before 1925 and thus not discussed here.

This is a very interesting session! Two trumpet/cornet players are clearly distinguished. Miley plays lead and solo throughout on Jackass Blues (by the way, Bubber Miley always played trumpet, not cornet, despite all quotations in the discos!). The trombone introduction is very much in the manner of Irvis, and not Charlie Green. Listen to Henderson's 'Jackass Blues' (Dixie Stompers, Apr. 14, 1926), where Green plays this intro in a completely different own style! The reed player is undoubtedly Redman, as is Williams on piano.

Williams started using a tuba on his recordings on January 04, 1926 with his first "Stompers" session. This player is named St. Clair in Rust and T. Lord, 'Clarence Williams'. Yet, the tuba player of the first two Williams sessions of 1926 clearly is Henry 'Bass' Edwards, obviously borrowed from the 'Savoy Bearcats'. 'Bass' Edwards plays the shortest tuba notes of all the jazz bassists of the time. Yet, we now know from St. Lasker that the player on this session here must be Mack Shaw. His characteristics are much different from 'Bass' Edwards'. His individual features are: a portato quarter-note started by a very short downward "jump" and followed by a tied very soft sustained same note. This same applies to all Williams' later recordings in 1926 up to December 10., when St. Clair takes over (OKeh 8443), again judging from tone and general approach.

In 2020 Steven Lasker informed me that Clarence Williams' tuba player on this session sounds just like Duke Ellington's tuba player on Ellington's Brunswick session of April 07, 1927. On listening it became apparent that Mr. Lasker is very probably right! Quite obviously, the instrumental stylistics of Shaw's playing are apparent here: tone, style and approach are the same. And, why should not Miley and Irvis have brought Shaw from the Ellington band when Edwards was unavailable (he was with the Savoy Bearcats then). And, - most interestingly – Williams does not use a tuba player until Dec. 10, 1926, when Cyrus St. Clair comes into the picture.

This probably is the earliest appearance of Leroy Harris, banjo player from St. Louis, and part of a large family of jazz musicians. His banjo sound is much lighter than Christians', and not as urgent. Yet still, he keeps a very strict four-four rhythm without varied rhythmical forms or gimmicks.

Notes:

- Storyville 18: Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris (cnt); poss Charlie Green (tbn); Don Redman (clt, alt, vcl); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian (bjo); poss Bass Edwards (bbs).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p160: Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris (cnt); unknown (tbn); Don Redman (clt, alt, vcl); Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs).

- LP, Clarence Williams Recordings 1926 – 1930, Fontana (Du) 682 088 TL: June Clark and unknown, trumpets, unknown trombone, Buster Bailey (?) and Don Redman, clarinets/altos, Clarence Williams, piano, Buddy Christian, banjo, unknown drums

- Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Tom Morris (cnts); Joe Nanton (tbn); Buster Bailey (sop, alt); Don Redman (clt, alt, vcl); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs).

- Rust*3: Bubber Miley -Tom Morris -c; ?Joe Nanton -tb; Don Redman -cl -as -v -a; Clarence Williams -p; unknown bj; unknown bb.

- T. Lord, Clarence Williams: Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris (cnts); possibly Charlie Green (tbn), Don Redman (clt, alt, vcl); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian (bjo); possibly Bass Edwards (bbs).

- Rust*4: Bubber Miley -Tom Morris -c; ?Joe Nanton -tb; Don Redman -cl -as -v; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian -bj; unknown bb.

- Rust*6: Bubber Miley, Tom Morris, c; ?Joe Nanton, tb; Don Redman, cl, as, v; Clarence Williams, p; Leroy Harris or Buddy Christian, bj; Harry Edwards, bb.

- Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, Bubber Miley Discography: Bubber Miley, Thomas Morris (tp), Charlie Irvis (tb), Don Redman (cl, as, vcl), Clarence Williams (p); Buddy Christian or Leroy Harris (bj); prob Cyrus St. Clair (bb). „Rust has ?Joe Nanton (tb) and unknown (bb). Lord's Clarence Williams discography has poss Charlie Green (tb) and 'Bass' Edwards (bb), the sleeve of Fj-121 has unknown (tb), Ernest Elliott? (as) and St. Clair (bb). We all finally agreed that the trumpet players are Morris and an off-form Miley, after Goran E. had expressed some doubt about the latter at first. The trombonist is aurally Irvis, although he plays note for note the standard solo on Jackass Blues recorded by Charlie Green twice with Fletcher Henderson. The alto sax player is clearly Redman, who also doubles on clarinet. The brass bass man plays long notes and a more legato style than 'Bass' Edwards on the previous Clarence Williams and Sara Martin sessions with Miley and is probably St. Clair."

004 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS WASHINGTONIANS	New York,	Jun. 21, 1926
Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Tricky Sam Nanton – tbn; Otto Hardwick – alt, bar; unknown – alt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt; Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms; Paul van Loan – arr (1)		
X-190 I'm Just Wild About Animal Crackers	Gnt 3342,	Frog DGF 78
X-191 Li'l Farina	Gnt 3342,	Frog DGF 78

Note: the -A takes were destroyed in 1929, the plain takes were released! Irvis had left in June. See VJM 157/10

This is not so much original early Ellington style, but rather the early Ellington band – the Washingtonians! – performing dance band titles of other composers/arrangers with Ellington's own modifications. They are showcases for the band's main soloists: Hardwick on his singing alto, great growling by Bubber Miley, Prince Robinson's honking tenor sax, a little bit of new-comer Tricky Sam Nanton, and a fast piano solo in stride style by the bandleader. I believe to hear two alto saxophones in the saxophone parts, together with Robinson on tenor. This is very nice-to-hear music, but to really hear Duke Ellington, we have to wait for some months (read M. Tucker, Ellington, 'The Early Years'). Aside: this Charlie Johnson playing trumpet is not the well-known bandleader from Smalls' Paradise! Mack Shaw joined the Ellington Band on June 25, 1926.

Notes:

- *Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley (tp); Charlie Irvis (tb); Prince Robinson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick, Clarence (as); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Bass Edwards (b); Sonny Greer (dm).*
 - *Rust*2: Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick ?(clt, alt); Prince Robinson ?(clt, ten); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms)*
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley -Charlie Johnson -t; Joe Nanton or Charlie Irvis -tb; Otto Hardwick -as -bar; Prince Robinson -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.*
 - *Media 7 Duke Ellington Vol.1 CD-booklet: Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley (tp); Tricky Sam Nanton (tb); Otto Hardwick (Cms, bar); Prince Robinson (cl, ts); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Mack Shaw (tu); Sonny Greer (d).*
 - *VJM 157-9/10: the -A takes were destroyed in 1929, the plain takes were released! Irvis had left in June.*

005 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York, Nov. 29, 1926

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe ‘Tricky Sam’ Nanton – tbn;
 Otto Hardwick – alt, bar, sop; Edgar Sampson – alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;
 Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms

E-4108/09 A Night In Harlem

Voc unissued not on LP/CD

E-4110 East St. Louis Toodle-O

Voc 1064, Chronological Classics 539

E-4112/13 Who Is She ?

Voc unissued not on LP/CD

E-4114 Birmingham Breakdown

Voc 1064, Chronological Classics 539

Composer credits: E-4110 (Ellington); E-4114 (Ellington)

This now is the Ellington band approaching their classic form, recording original material of the band-leader and his colleagues. And ‘East St. Louis Toodle-O’ is a precursor of all the Ellington jungle themes to come. For many years, this title was the band’s theme-song thereafter. Hardwick is heard on soprano sax in ‘East St. Louis Toodle-O’ and on alto – or C-melody-sax – in ‘Birmingham Breakdown’. And yes, this obviously is Californian tuba player Mack Shaw as recognised by Steven Lasker not so long ago. His individual features are: a portato quarter-note started by a very short downward “jump” and followed by a tied very soft sustained same note. His tone is unique and not to be mixed up with ‘Bass’ Edward’s sharp staccato style. He lays a soft but voluminous legato foundation under Miley’s typical soloing together with the reeds in ‘East St. Louis Toodle-O (mark the single “O”!).

‘Birmingham Breakdown’ has little soloing, but instead includes a lot of ad-libbing by the section players. And listen to the very simple melodic lines of the two different strains, in contrast to the fine and varied bass-lines below them. Bassist Shaw plays extraordinarily smooth behind the band.

Although Prince Robinson was with Billy Fowler’s band from summer 1926 on, he is still accepted – and heard – as clarinet and tenor sax soloist on this and most of the following sessions!

To me – KBR – this very recording session is the start of the enduring phenomenon of “Ellingtonia”, that lasted for close to fifty years, and of which I was immensely lucky to witness and enjoy a minimal part of live performance.

Notes:

- *Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - *Carey, McCarthy, Jazz Directory Vol. 3: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop); Harry Carney (bar, alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); “Bass” Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - *Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms).*
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ? Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.*
 - *Storyville 80-50, F. Dutton, Birth of a Band: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf, t; Joe Nanton, tb; Otto Hardwicke, as, C-m, bar, ss, cl, bsx; ?Edgar Sampson, as, cl, bar, vn; ?James R. ‘Prince Robinson’, ts, cl; Duke Ellington p; Fred Guy, bj; ?Mack Shaw, tu; Sonny Greer, d.*
 - *Media 7 Duke Ellington Vol.1 CD-booklet: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Tricky Sam Nanton (tb); Otto Hardwick (Cms, as, ss, bar); poss. Edgar Sampson (as); Prince Robinson (cl, ts); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Mack Shaw (tu); Sonny Greer (d).*

Solos ad-lib:

4110: BM m-tpt 1+30; JN o-tbn 17; PR clt 14; BM m-tpt 6

4114: DE pno obl 20; LM+BM o-tpt 6+6; PR ten 12; ens ad-lib 12

006 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York, Dec. 29, 1926

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;
 Otto Hardwick – alt, clt; Edgar Sampson – alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;
 Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms

E-4321 Immigration Blues

Voc 1077, Chronological Classics 539

E-4323 The Creeper

Voc 1077, Chronological Classics 539

E-4324 The Creeper

Or 1010, Frog GDF 78

Composer credits: E-4321 (Ellington); E-4323/4 (Ellington)

‘Immigration Blues’ presents both trumpet players playing muted solos, with Miley taking the middle blues chorus, while Metcalf has the first solo and the obligato in the last chorus. It is interesting to note how Ellington in his arrangement varies the usually rather commonly used blues changes, thus receiving beautiful sound shadings.

‘The Creeper’ then obviously is its sheer opposite, as it presents the band in full drive and swing. As I believe, only Hardwick is soloing on alto sax throughout, although we now may assume Edgar Sampson to be the second alto player (TDWAW).

Again, the original Ellington unit on their way up. Fantastic!

Notes:

- *Ch. Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - *Carey, McCarthy, Jazz Directory Vol. 3: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe “Tricky Sam” Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop); Harry Carney (bar, alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); “Bass” Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - *Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms).*
 - *Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ? Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke*

Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.

Solos ad-lib:

E-4321: PR ten 8; LM m-tpt 1+7; DE pno 1; JN m-tbn 8; DE pno 10; BM m-tpt 10; LM m-tpt obl 10

E-4323/4: LM o-tpt 16; OH alt 16; PR ten 2 + 2; DE pno 2; JN m-tbn 2; BM o-tpt 2; JN m-tbn 2+15; OH alt 14 + 14; PR clt 2+14+14

Discernible differences of takes:

E-4323: First tenor sax break: sequence of 3 eighth-notes d-eb-f, 1 half-note bb, 1 eighth-note g, 2 eighth-notes f-d

E-4324: First tenor sax break: sequence of 1 eighth-note f, 1 quarter-note g (3 times), 1 half-note bb, 1 eighth-note g, 1 half-note db; 1 quarter-note d

007 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York,

Feb. 03, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;

Otto Hardwick – alt, sop, bar; Edgar Sampson – alt, clt; Rudy Jackson or (Prince Robinson) – ten, clt;

Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms

E-4510 New Orleans Low-Down

Voc 1086,

Chronological Classics 539

E-4511 Song Of The Cotton Field

Voc 1086,

Chronological Classics 539

Composer credits: E-4510 (Ellington); E-4511 (Grainger)

'New Orleans Low-Down' again – as in 'Immigration Blues' – is a blues title of Ellington's imagination, with good alterations of the blues changes and nicely constructed. Hardwick solos on alto on this title, using Sidney Bechet's solo of 'Snag It' by his own recollection (see below). But there is no recording known of 'Snag It' by Bechet before this session – and no one later-on. But there are nice bass figures in the initial ensemble.

'Song Of The Cottonfield' is called a piece "of atmosphere of mystery and sorrow." Rudy Jackson might well be the clarinet soloist stylistically, although he is known to have joined the Ellington band as a regular not before June 1927, having toured with the 'Lucky Sambo' show for a year. Following TDWAW, Prince Robinson was not part of the cadre anymore at this time, but was still in New York, and obviously was asked to record with the band when needed. Hardwick is on baritone, throughout. And, I would attribute the tone of the tenor sax in the two-bar break at the end of the first chorus on to Jackson, rather than to Robinson!

Again, we have the very soft and musical tuba sounds of Mack Shaw on these sides, none of Edwards' harsh and short notes.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts);

Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory Vol. 3*: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop);

Harry Carney (bar; alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); "Bass" Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d)

- Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick (clt, alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, alt, bcl); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms).

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ? Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.

- TDWAW, Feb. 03, 1927: St. Lasker believes the reed players at this session to be Prince Robinson, Otto Hardwick, unknown third man. ...

- Ibid.: The late Brooks Kerr told me that in 1967, Otto Hardwick told him his solo on 'New Orleans Low-Down' was borrowed from Sidney Bechet's solo on 'Snag It'." (There is no recording known of 'Snag It' by S. Bechet in the 1920s! – KBR)

- M. Tucker, *Ellington, the Early years, p. 216*: "The voices of the singers in the "cotton field" are represented by the plaintive solos of Miley, Nanton, and a clarinetist (Rudy Jackson, according to Harry Carney) growling in his low register."

Solos ad-lib:

E-4510: BM m-tpt 10; OH alt 10; BM m-tpt 12; LM o-tpt 2; JN m-tbn 10; DE pno 12; ?RJ clt obl 10; BM m-tpt 5

E-4511: BM m-tpt 30; ?RJ ten 2; JN m-tbn 16; ?RJ clt 15; OH bar 1+8; LM o-tpt 2

008 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York,

Feb. 28, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;

Otto Hardwick – alt, bar; unknown – alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;

Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms

E-21636/8 East St. Louis Toodle-Oo

Br unissued

not on LP/CD

E-21641 Birmingham Breakdown

Br 3480,

Chronological Classics 539

Composer credits: E-21641 (Ellington)

Vocalion 1064 of Nov. 29, 1926 (see above) seems to have immensely impressed the public – and the recording industry – so that Brunswick immediately recorded the same two titles for their vaults and their business with Ellington – the same arrangements, only the solos in variance.

Yet, something must have been wrong with the first title, so that the Brunswick people had it recorded again two weeks later.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts);

Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory Vol. 3*: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop);

Harry Carney (bar; alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); "Bass" Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d)

- Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms).

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ? Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.

Solos ad-lib:

E-21641: DE pno 19; OH alt 6 + 6; LM o-tpt 1+14; OH bar 1+10; JN o-tbn 1

009 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York,

Mar. 14, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;

Otto Hardwick – alt, bar, sop; unknown – alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt ;

Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms

E-21872 East St. Louis Toodle-Oo
Composer credits: E-21872 (Ellington)

Br 3480, Chronological Classics 539

Repeated recording of 'East St. Louis Toodle-Oo (with two Os, now!) Listen to Hardwick's fast soprano runs in the final ad-lib ensemble. The band use the well-known arrangement, the only musical difference being Hardwick's use of the soprano sax playing the lead in the first eight bars of the last chorus, and his subsequent fast runs on soprano below the brass in the last 10-bar part of the chorus/tune. Very beautiful!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory Vol. 3: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf (tpt); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop); Harry Carney (bar; alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); "Bass" Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - Rust*2: *Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms).*
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: *Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ? Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.*

Solos ad-lib:

E-21872: BM m-tpt 31; JN o-tbn 18; PR clt 14; OH sop obl 9; BM m-tpt 8

010 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS WASHINGTONIANS

New York, Mar. 22, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;

Otto Hardwick – alt, bar, sop; *unknown – alt, clt; Rudy Jackson or (Prince Robinson?) – ten, clt ;*

Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms

143705-3 East St. Louis Toodle-Oo

Col 953-D, Chronological Classics 539

143706-2 Hop Head

Col 953-D, Chronological Classics 539

143707-2 Down In Our Alley Blues

Col 1076-D, Chronological Classics 539

Composer credits: 143705 (Ellington); 143706 (D. Ellington – O. Hardwick); 143707 (D. Ellington – O. Hardwick)

And just one week after the Brunswick sessions, the Columbia people attempt to cash in on Ellington's great start into the world of Jazz recordings and his own advertisement of his work to come.

The first recorded title is Duke's now well-known 'East St. Louis Toodle-Oo' in the according arrangement with Bubber Miley's predominant growl solo. The reed section in the last chorus' first eight bars A-part has only soprano and one clarinet! The subsequent 10-bar A'-part is performed by Louis Metcalf's trumpet leading the ensemble in rather lax rhythm. The title is finished by Miley in growl manner. The lack of a third voice in the reed parts makes me question the general presence of a third reed player for the entire session! The two other titles recorded are fast and extensively arranged titles – both in co-work of the Duke and Otto Hardwick – and give no likelihood of a third reed player, again. Thus, I have noted a third alto player in italics. To my ears, Louis Metcalf takes over most of the trumpet solo duties, as may be seen below. There is very little trombone solo work. The work of the tenor sax – clarinet player is more like that of the player in session 009 of Feb. 03, 1927, and might therefore be Rudy Jackson, playing more vertical in a Chicago manner and with a more "gutsy" tone. Sonny Greer has a lot of exact cymbal strokes to place, and Mack shaw plays the tuba in his retained way.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory Vol. 3: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf (tpt); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop); Harry Carney (bar; alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); "Bass" Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - Rust*2: *Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms).*
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: *Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ? Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.*

Solos ad-lib:

143705-3: BM m-tpt 1+32; JN o-tbn 18; ?PR clt 1+14; LM o-tpt 5; BM m-tpt 8

143706-2: JN o-tbn 2; LM o-tpt 3 + 3; OH alt 16; LM o-tpt 16; DE pno 4; JN o-tbn 2; ?PR clt 8; LM o-tpt 2; OH alt 30; ?PR clt obl 32

143707-2: JN o-tbn 4 + 2; BM o-tpt 1+16; ?PR ten 4; OH bar 4; DE pno 15; LM o-tpt 16

011 THE WASHINGTONIANS

New York, Apr. 07, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;

Otto Hardwick – alt, bar, sop; *unknown – alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;*

Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms

E-4874 / E-22299 Black And Tan Fantasy

Br 3526, Chronological Classics 539

Composer credits: E-4874 (D. Ellington – B. Miley)

This is the first recording of one of the Duke's most famous "compositions": 'Black And Tan Fantasy'. This tune is made up of an initial minor blues chorus for Miley's muted trumpet, followed by a 16-bars major strain as a contrast, and a subsequent string of blues choruses for casual (?) soloists, but concluded Bubber Miley's growl solo on blues changes prolonged with a final citation of the initial minor theme. Thus, the composition is not that of melodies, but of form and order. Most interesting for this kind of master-work.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory Vol. 3: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf (tpt); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop); Harry Carney (bar; alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); "Bass" Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d)*
 - Rust*2: *Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms).*
 - Rust*3,*4,*6: *Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ? Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.*

Solos ad-lib:

E-22299: BM m-tpt+JN m-tbn 12; OH alt 6 + 6; BM m-tpt 12 + 12; DE pno 12; JN m-tbn 12; BM m-tpt 10+4

012 THE WASHINGTONIANS

New York,

Apr. 30, 1927

Louis Metcalf, June Clark – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;
 Otto Hardwick, unknown – alt, clt; (*Prince Robinson*) – ten, clt;
 Duke Ellington – pno; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms;
 Rube Bloom – arr
 E-4965 / E-22809 Soliloquy
 Composer credits: E-4965 (R. Bloom)

Br 3526,

Chronological Classics 539

This is the Ellington band of the day, yet without Bubber Miley, June Clark subbing. Miley was known for his alcohol abuse and his resulting unreliability. So, this might have been one of the occasions that Ellington had to replace the erratic and unreliable Miley, another one being the session of Nov. 03, 1927, with Jabbo Smith substituting for Miley (session 017 below).

It is said that Ellington only once in his life fired a musician from his band, Miley, regardless of this musician's importance for the band. I assume that Metcalf mainly played first trumpet parts in the Ellington band, with Miley, as main soloist and crowd-puller, taking the second parts and being the get-off man. This is what happens here. But June Clark, as sub for Miley, is not provided with any solo spots on this title. The trumpet-soloist on this title is, to my ears, clearly Louis Metcalf, who also plays the first trumpet part. So, June Clark is only heard dimly playing second trumpet, which could have been played by any other trumpet player of quality. This assumption is confirmed by a note in the Rosenberg/Williams drafts, that Clark played only section work here.

As there is only one title listed, there might have been others recorded on this day. (Can it be that other titles were rejected because of Miley's absence, and therefore the recordings being below Ellington's – or the company's – demands?) As other titles of this session are non-existent, there unfortunately is no comparison. Clark's solos on additional titles might have been very interesting. The Rosenberg/Williams draft says Clark did only section work. That's what I hear! On matters reed section, besides of Otto Hardwick there still seems to be much uncertainty and controversy. Mark Tucker in 'D.E. The Early Years' is very cautious with this problem.

The choice of this title for recording might have been that of the Columbia people, as there is no real "Ellingtonia" in it, and it is "No doubt a concession to popular taste. This performance demonstrates the extent to which Duke's men have now distanced themselves from this kind of music." (booklet to Media 7 MJCD 9, Alexandre Rado). But, listen to Sonny Greer's nice cymbal work on his probably new high-hat cymbals!

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Metcalf, June Clark (tp); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)

- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory Vol.3*: June Clark, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop); Harry Carney (bar, alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); "Bass" Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d).

- Rust*2: Bubber Miley, June Clark (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms).

- Rust*3,*4,*6: June Clark -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ?Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d; Rube Bloom -a.

Solos ad-lib:

E-22809: LM o-tpt 10; JN o-tbn 2; LM o-tpt 4 + 4; DE pno 14; LM o-tpt 4

Tune Structure:

Soliloquy Key of F Arr. by Bube Bloom (W. Boutelje?) Brunswick, Vocalion
 (Intro 4 bars ens)(Strain A1 30 bars AA'B LM o-tpt 10 - ens 8 - JN m-tbn 4 - ens 8)(Strain B 18 bars AA' ens)(Bridge 4 bars ens)
 (Strain C1 16 bars DE pno)(Strain C2 16 bars ens)(Strain A2 30 bars ens)(Coda 4 bars ens)

K. – B. Rau
 12-11-2020
 10-05-2025