

# THE RECORDINGS OF BEN WHITTED

## A Tentative Personello-Discography

WHITTED, Ben H., alto sax, clarinet

Played with Mary Stafford (921-1922); Charlie Johnson (1927-32 1t least); rec. Clarence Williams groups, supposedly 1926-30; Eubie Blake (1931); subbed with Fletcher Henderson on New England tour (early 1932). Later with Noble Sissle (late 1942)

Born: unknown; Died: 1955

(W.C. Allen, Hendersonia)

Alto saxophonist Ben Whitted was first alto man – and clarinet soloist – of the Charlie Johnson’s Paradise Band, for the band’s entire existence, probably. And he was with Charlie Johnson’s band in 1921 already, when accompanying Mary Stafford. Which makes him one of the real work-men of the jazz history, unobtrusive and most reliable, fulfilling his duties as section-leader of the reeds while others received the honours.

### STYLISTICS Alto

Ben Whitted played first/lead alto sax with the Charlie Johnson Band of New York for about 16 years. He lead the band with security and good tone, but he never played an alto solo on any recording known, except for ‘Armful Of Sweetness’ by Fats Waller and his Rhythm, where his short solo is not convincing .

### STYLISTICS Clarinet

#### STYLE

Whitted’s clarinet style is only documented in two far-apart phases of his professional musical activity. His first recordings with Mary Stafford of 1921 show him as a not very accomplished clarinetist, mostly playing long-noted melody lines above the accompaniment, displaying a strong bluesy funk formula, using a sharp clarinet tone.

His later style of the late 1920s/early 1930s is very melodious, swinging, horizontal, and mainly in the lower register of the instrument.

#### TONE

Warm, soft and voluminous.

#### VIBRATO

On clarinet Whitted uses a medium fast vibrato with moderate amplitude.

#### TIME

As a years-long leader of the Ch. Johnson Band’s sax section Whitted decidedly was absolutely secure in rhythmic playing, but this possibly also implied a certain lack of off-beat phrasing when improvising.

#### PHRASING

He uses parts of the melody, mingling them sparingly with pre-practised fast bits of runs in cross-rhythms. But mostly he keeps a close nearness to the melodic material given.

This personello-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: **Ben Whitted**
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Ben Whitted*
- 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: (*Ben Whitted*)

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.

At this point I have to remind everybody interested in this project that certainly Brian Rust, Godrich/Dixon and a lot of other discographers certainly have their unmeasurable merits, but they have also accumulated a lot of wrong and even ridiculous data concerning the personnels in early jazz. This fact has to make us – and all readers and listeners - very careful when taking their personnels for granted and to doubt everything not positively documented! This also means that some audio-memory you might have in your brains may be founded only on Rust or others and not on actuality and might therefore simply be wrong. If so, we ask you to rethink along the lines shown here and maybe come up with a completely new view on a specific matter. Without any doubt this all does also concern myself, which certainly means that I do not pretend to be right in all my identifications. But I hope that in places where I am wrong, this attempt may at last be a hint to a better or final solution.

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.

### BEN WHITTED

001	<b>MARY STAFFORD</b> her Jazz Band	New York,	Jan. 05, 1921
	Mary Stafford – voc;		
	Charlie Gaines – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;		
	Ben Whitted – clt; Nelson Kincaid – alt;		
	Charlie Johnson – pno		
79628-3	Royal Garden Blues	Col A3365,	Archeophone 6006
79629-1	Crazy Blues	Col A3365,	Archeophone 6006

Having started my listening duties with the second session below, which – according to Ch. Gaines statement – definitely had been recorded with him on trumpet – I listened to this first session a bit later, but have to report that the musicians obviously are identical to those of the next session, but without the violin. In the IAJRC article (see below) Gaines told about Freddie Keppard’s presence in Philadelphia a couple of years earlier, and that he had been taught “a lot” by him. (Incidentally, in his article on Gaines in Storyville 68 - by the same author – we are told that: “*We all tried to sound like him but he was a stuck-up kind of guy and wouldn’t show you anything* (Gaines)” Be that as it may, but it can certainly be assumed that Keppard left a lot of influence in Philly when he left town, especially on a young promising trumpet player.

In ‘Royal Garden Blues’ at the end of the first strain B you can hear the trumpet with some “laughing” device at c. 1:22 min, which is also known from Keppard in Doc Cook’s ‘So This Is Venice’ of some years later. So, this might have been some of the lot that Gaines learnt from Keppard?

The names of the other participating musicians are known from Bradford’s recollection: Earl Granstaff as a forceful and functional harmonic trombonist without ambition to solo, Ben Whitted (not Whittet – KBR) - as the always dependable reed man in Charlie Johnson’s band for nearly two decades – on tasteful clarinet playing chordal arpeggios most of the time, and – as Bradford calls him – “the old reliable sax-shark (who gave the record a big lift)” - Nelson Kincaid, who plays strong harmonic middle parts.

The second title is dominated by Nelson Kincaid’s strong alto sax in the accompaniment – the rest of the band staying in the background. And we hear astonishingly strong and reliable piano comping from Charlie Johnson. He leads the whole procedure from the piano stool.

#### Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Addington Major or Charlie Gaines, cnt; Ben Whittet, clt; Grandstaffe, tbn; Nelson Kincaid, alt; Charlie Johnson, pno  
- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Addington Major or Charlie Gaines - c; Earl Granstaff – tb; Nelson Kincaid - Ben Whittet, - cl -as; Charlie Johnson, pno

002	<b>MARY STAFFORD</b> her Jazz Band	New York,	Mar. 07, 1921
	Mary Stafford – voc;		
	Charlie Gaines – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;		
	Ben Whitted – clt; Nelson Kincaid – alt; George Breen – vln;		
	Charlie Johnson – pno		
79775-2	I’m Gonna Jazz My Way Right Straight Thru Paradise	Col A3390,	Archeophone 6006
79776-3	Down Where They Play The Blues	Col A3390,	Archeophone 6006

According to Charlie Gaines own statement he did record “I’m Gonna Jazz My Way Right Straight Thru Paradise” (IAJRC Vol.10, No.2). What can be heard of Gaines is an ad-lib introduction in the first title with accented triplet phrasing in Johnny Dunn style, the remaining parts played straight from an arrangement, falling into triplets again at the very end of the tune. Gaines’ playing in the second title also seems to be following arranged parts, with frequent triplets phrasing again as before, as well as a lot of grace notes. So, at this early time Gaines certainly is a strong follower of Johnny Dunn’s predominant model.

His musician colleagues are the same as in the session before. Yet, they have added a violinist in George Breen as it was the use in those days. But was it an advantage or a benefit? I wonder.

For these two sessions Rust and BGR list Addington Major as alternate trumpet player, but Major owns a rather straight and simple (subdued?) style as heard in Mamie Smith’s recording sessions of August 10 and September 12, 1920, and can thus be neglected here!

#### Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Addington Major or Charlie Gaines, cnt; Ben Whittet, clt; Grandstaffe, tbn; Nelson Kincaid, alt; George Breen, vln;  
Charlie Johnson, pno  
- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Addington Major or Charlie Gaines - c; Earl Granstaff – tb; Nelson Kincaid - Ben Whittet, - cl -as; George Breen – vn;  
Charlie Johnson, pno

003 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, May 06, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; *unknown – ten (if at all)*;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno  
 79826-2 If You Don't Want Me, Send Me To My Ma Col A3418, Archeophone 6006  
 79827-2 Strut Miss Lizzie Col A3418, Archeophone 6006

In IAJRC Gaines recounts that five recording sessions followed. This would probably mean that any of these Mary Stafford sessions had been accompanied by the Charlie Johnson band of the day. And certainly, this session does feature the same band with Charlie Gaines on trumpet as before. In the introduction to the first title Gaines delivers some “peppery” growl tones as he might have learned from Keppard, together with a lot of his Dunn derived triplet phrasing in the further course of the tune. The coda shows his use of grace notes as a melodic device. Trombonist and clarinetist certainly are the same as before again, but they have left out Nelson Kincaid. The discographies still list a second reed man – perhaps on tenor sax, but I feel unable to discover any. Maybe, there is a tenor player very soft in the middle ground, but intuitively I would deny this. Also, I can't hear a brass bass/tuba.

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: *unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown clt/alt or perhaps ten; unknown pno; unknown bbs*  
 - Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: *unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl –as; ? unknown cl –ts; unknown p; unknown bb*

004 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, May 24, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; *unknown – ten*;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno; John Warren – bbs  
 79857-2 Wild Weeping Blues Col A3426, Archeophone 6006  
 79858-3 I've Lost My Heart To The Meanest Girl In Town Col A3426, Archeophone 6006

This certainly again is the Johnson band as related by Perry Bradford. I hear Charlie Gaines and Earl Granstaff as before. But I have slight doubts on Whitted's presence on clarinet here as this player plays shrieky at times, what Whitted did not before, and he uses trills what Whitted neither did on the previous 6 titles. Other instances, yet, seem to show Whitted. Maybe he was instructed to play more “fashionable”? A tenor sax playing middle parts can distinctly be detected now, for instance in the third bar of the introduction of ‘Wild Weeping Blues’.

A tuba can be heard faintly in the background (see second title at 2:04 min) and might thus be John Warren as shown in the well-known band photo in ‘A Pictorial History of Jazz’, p.108. (This photo, by the way, shows exactly this Charlie Johnson band of 1920/21 – with some additional musicians - and not the one of the late '20s as given!)

Notes:

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: *unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown clt/alt or perhaps ten; unknown pno; unknown bbs*  
 - Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: *unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl –as; ? unknown cl –ts; unknown p; unknown bb*

005 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, Sep. 27, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Addington Major – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; *unknown – alt*;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno  
 80001-3 Arkansas Blues Col A3493, Archeophone 6006  
 80002-3 Down Home Blues Col A3511, Archeophone 6006  
 80006-2 Blind Man Blues Col A3493, Archeophone 6006

This trumpet player is not as aggressive and assured as Charlie Gaines on the previous sessions, and I assume him to be Addington Major, if not somebody else. Yet, we have to keep in mind, that Gaines in his interview/article possibly said that “five more recording sessions followed”. As this sentence is not stated to be direct speech, it might also mean that the interviewer took this statement from his discography, supposing that Gaines was present on all these six sessions by Mary Stafford. But, if Gaines stated this to his interviewer, it would necessarily be him on this and the next session, too. But I hear distinct differences in trumpet playing on these two last sessions. Granstaff seems to be right. The clarinetist is a bit shrieky again, and therefore not necessarily Whitted. There seems to be an alto sax playing the middle parts, and can be heard together with the trumpet in ‘Down Home Blues’ chromatically in the breaks in the middle of the first and third blues choruses. Obviously, Charlie Johnson leads from the piano.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: *unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl –as; ? unknown cl –ts; unknown p; unknown bb*  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: *unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown clt/alt or perhaps ten; unknown pno; unknown bbs*

006 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, Nov. 03, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Addington Major – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; *unknown – ten*;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno  
 80047-2 Monday Morning Blues Col A3511, Archeophone 6006

The overall sound suddenly is different, but this may be caused by a different recording studio as the band still seems to be the same. The same problem re the trumpet player arises, and I think it is not Gaines. Trombonist and clarinetist appear the same as on the previous session, but here we have a prominent tenor sax player whose name must remain unknown as in the fourth session. Johnson again on piano.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4: *unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl –as; ? unknown cl –ts; unknown p; unknown bb*  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: *unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown clt/alt or perhaps ten; unknown pno; unknown bbs*

**007 CHARLIE JOHNSON'S PARADISE ORCHESTRA**

New York,

c. Feb. 1925

Leroy Rutledge, Charlie Saunders – tpt; Bud Aiken – tbn;

Ben Whitted, Billie Barnes – alt, clt; Elmer Harrold – ten, clt;

Charlie Johnson – pno; Bobby Johnson – bjo; Henry “Bass” Edwards – bbs; George Stafford – dms

2623- Don't Forget You'll Regret Day By Day

Em 10854,

Hot'n Sweet (F) FDC 5110

2624-1 Meddlin' With The Blues

Em 10856,

Hot'n Sweet (F) FDC 5110

*Composer credits are: 2623 (Edgar Dowell); 2624 (Edgar Dowell)*

In early 1925 the Johnson band played the ‘Nest Club’ on 169 West 133<sup>rd</sup> Street. The only two existing photographs of the Johnson band were probably taken as publicity photos for advertising their engagement at this venue (see Driggs, Lewine, ‘Black Beauty, White Heat’ p. 133. The band photo on the advertising sheet is a different photo to that in the middle of the page). Another source dates these photos as possibly from 1923. The personnel shown on these two photos has been identified by a couple of Harlem musicians in 1978 (see ‘Storyville’ 75, 77 and 82) with the exception of the trombone player, who nevertheless is Bud Aiken as by comparison with a photo of Snowden’s Orchestra in Perry Bradford ‘Born with The Blues’ p. 102, where Aiken, who also played trumpet, is shown third from left.

According to the testimony of the musicians who identified the band members of the photos, this is the personnel of the first Johnson recording session. (The hitherto generally listed personnel for this session, as in Rust\*6, is the Johnson band personnel at the opening of ‘Smalls’ Paradise’ in October 1925 as listed in ‘Orchestra World’ of November 1925 and does thus not apply to this session.)

“Don’t Forget You’ll Regret” uses the same arrangement as the Henderson band of Oct. 13, 1924, thus probably a stock arrangement, only that Don Redman in the Henderson recording transposed the saxophone section behind the trombone in A2 to a clarinet section.

“Meddlin’ With The Blues” might be an arrangement by Charlie Johnson himself or one of his colleagues, as it does not have an identifiable melody as with commercial stock arrangements. It is just a compilation of several different devices: the then fashionable minor strain as in Henderson’s “The Gouge of Armour Avenue” and the chordal arpeggios at the end of the tune, which certainly come from a pianist’s mind. As this tune has not been recorded by any other band, it certainly is a Johnson original.

It was ‘Bass’ Edwards when with this band who had electric lights fastened on the large bell of his instrument that were switched on and off rhythmically with a foot-pedal while playing!

Notes:

- *Delaunay, New Hot Discography 1948: Probably the same personnel as session of Jan. 24, 1928: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris, Cliff Brazzington - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Benny Carter - alt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - gtr; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms*

- *Jazz Directory Vol. Five 1955: Probably similar personnel as session of Jan. 24, 1928: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris, Cliff Brazzington - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Benny Carter - alt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms*

- *Rust\*2: Probably: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - alt, clt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms*

- *Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Gus Aiken, Leroy Rutledge - tpt; Regis Hartman - tbn; Ben Whitted, Alec Alexander - alt, clt; Elmer Harrell - ten, clt, vln; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms*

- *Storyville 35-185: Gus Aiken, Leroy Rutledge, tpt; Regis Hartman, tbn; Ben Whitted, Alec Alexander, alt, clt; Elmer Harrell, ten, clt, vln; Charlie Johnson, pno; Bobby Johnson, bjo; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs; George Stafford, dms*

Tunes Structures:

2623-2 *Don't Forget You'll Regret Day By Day* Key of Ab Emerson  
(Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 32 bars AA' ens)(A2 Chorus 32 bars tbn + reeds)(B1 Verse 16 bars AA' ens)(A3 Chorus 32 bars ens + hot tpt)

arrangement: prob. stock arrangement / composer credit: Edgar Dowell

2624-1 *Meddlin' With The Blues* Key of Ab / Db / Db m Emerson  
(Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 12 bars ens)(A2 Chorus 12 bars reeds)(A3 Chorus 12 bars tpt)(A4 Chorus 12 bars tpt)(B1 Chorus 16 bars ens)(B2 Chorus 16 bars ens)(Bridge 6 bars ens)(C1 Chorus (Db minor) 12 bars ten)(C2 Chorus (Db minor) 12 bars ens)(Coda 6 bars reeds)

arrangement: Charlie Johnson ? / composer credit: Edgar Dowell

**008 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' JAZZ KINGS**

New York,

Jan. 25, 1927

Carmello Jari, Bennie Morton – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs

143348-2 Gravier Street Blues

Col 14193-D,

Frog DGF 14

143349-2 Candy Lips

Col 14193-D,

Frog DGF 14

This is a most charming recording and shows Clarence’s feeling for what can be done with a personnel consisting of two clarinet players and a rhythm section. Very difficult to identify the reedmen. Judging from tone and sound (the harsh tone in the intro of ‘Candy Lips’ even suggests an alto sax) – and the fact that the first clarinet mainly plays straight (the music without improvising) – this player may be Carmello Jari. The second – improvising – player displays some characteristics of Bennie Morton (not Moten! – KBR) of ‘Joe Jordan’s Ten Sharps and Flats, clarinet soloist of ‘Joe Jordan’s Ten Sharps and Flats’ who probably was back in New York at this time. Soundwise it certainly is Buddy Christian on banjo with his typical ringing sound.

Notes:

- *Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: Author gives accumulated personnel without distinct deposition.*

- *Storyville 20: possibly Ben Whitted, Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*

- *Lord, Clarence Williams p195: possibly Ben Whitted, Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*

- *Rust\*2: Buster Bailey (?), Ben Whitted (?) or Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*

- *Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: ?Ben Whitted, ?Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.*

**009 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' WASHBOARD FOUR**

New York,

Jan. 29, 1927

Ed Allen – cnt; Bennie Morton – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno, voc; Floyd Casey – wbd

80362-C Nobody But (My Baby Is Getting My Love)

OK 8440,

Collectors Classics COCD-19

80363-B Candy Lips

OK 8440,

Collectors Classics COCD-19

As this seems to be the first session Floyd Casey participating, it is appropriate to date the well-known photos of the Clarence Williams band (two photos big band, one photo washboard band, one photo CW with Eva Taylor and Sara Martin – sides 10 – 13 of the photo section in Lord's book) to early 1927. The date "about summer 1927" cannot be correct as Jari, Robinson and Edwards were with Leon Abbey's Savoy Bearcats in South America from early May until the end of the year. The personnel of the first photo (page 10 in Lord's photo section) being left to right: Carmelo Jari (not A. Socarras!), Prince Robinson, Henry "Bass" Edwards (not Cyrus St. Clair!), CW, Buddy Christian, Charlie Irvis, Sara Martin, Floyd Casey, Eva Taylor, Ed Allen.

The Joe Jordan Band including Moten/Morton was touring during the second half of 1926, returning to NYC by late 1926. So, it is not impossible that Morton was present for these recordings. He had left Jordan for Chicago by May 1927, so that any recordings after this time are very unlikely to include him.

Notes:

- *Storyville 20: Ed Allen (cnt); Ben Whitted (clt); Clarence Williams (pno, vcl); Floyd Casey (wbd).*

- *Lord, Clarence Williams p196: Ed Allen (cnt); possibly Bennie Moten or Prince Robinson (clt); Clarence Williams (pno, vcl); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).*

- *Rust\*2,\*3: Ed Allen (cnt); Ben Whitted (clt); Clarence Williams (pno, vcl); Floyd Casey (wbd).*

- *Rust\*4,\*6: Ed Allen -c; Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p -v; Floyd Casey -wb.*

**010 CHARLIE JOHNSON'S ORIGINAL PARADISE TEN**

New York,

Feb. 25, 1927

unknown, Cladys Jabbo Smith, Thomas Morris – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;

Ben Whitted, Benny Carter – alt, clt; Benny Waters – ten, clt;

Charlie Johnson – pno; Bobby Johnson – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; George Stafford – dms;

Monette Moore – voc

38115-1 Paradise Wobble

Vic 20551,

Frog DGF 8

38116-1 Birmingham Black Bottom

Vic 20551,

Frog DGF 8

38116-2 Birmingham Black Bottom

Vic test,

Frog DGF 12

38117-1 Don't You Leave Me Here

Vic 20653,

Frog DGF 8

38117-3 Don't You Leave Me Here

Vic test,

Frog DGF 12

The personnel is established as given with the exception of the first trumpet player. Rust's 'Victor Master Book Vol. 2' gives three cnt/tpt. After year-long repeated listening I am unable to hear three trumpet/cornet players. Jabbo Smith joined the band most probably in late 1926 as a replacement for Sidney de Paris, who stayed behind in Atlantic City when the band changed over to NYC, as they usually did when the summer season was over. So, de Paris can be disregarded for this session. All solos – except for "Don't You Leave Me Here" – are by Jabbo Smith. It probably is Thomas Morris soloing in this latter tune. Morris' presence has been suggested by Richard Rains in 'Storyville 153'. So, there might be the possibility that the Johnson band was temporarily without a first trumpet, and Morris had been hired as a sub (the trumpet lead in "Birmingham Black Bottom" chorus B1 certainly sounds like Morris). But then the listing in the 'Victor Master Book' would have to be wrong. In this respect it has to be borne in mind that it was most uncommon at the time to have three trumpets in a big band. Two were the rule. The great exception was the Henderson band, which had three trumpets since Armstrong had been engaged. From then on, Redman certainly wrote for three trumpets, and after Armstrong's return to Chicago, writing for two trumpets – plus trombone – certainly would have been a musical relapse.

Or they had a lead trumpet player (the very enigmatic Cliff Brazzington has been listed at the time also with the Ellington band) and Morris was added for some other reason, maybe because he provided the arrangement of "Birmingham Black Bottom", which looks rather related in structure and general conception to Morris' own "Ham Gravy" as recorded by Morris' Hot Babies. In return Morris could have been allowed to solo in the unarranged free ensemble of "Don't You Leave Me Here". This then would explain the cited three trumpets/cornets. Yet only two trumpets can be heard in the brass section in chorus A1 of "Paradise Wobble".

Benny Carter was a member of the Johnson band throughout 1927 (Berger, Berger, Patrick 'Benny Carter'), joining – for the second time – in late 1926 and staying until February 1928. He allegedly started arranging with Charlie Johnson, and I can well imagine that "Paradise Wobble" might be one of his first recorded – or even authored – arrangements. (The Berger book names his possibly first recorded arrangement as "P.D.Q. Blues" by Fletcher Henderson. This arrangement sounds as though it was written by a white arranger with its whole-tone parts and rhythmic figures and is not related to anything Carter has arranged later, but still includes some later ensemble parts and harmonic devices which may, yet, be his work.)

Alas, Carter cannot be heard in solo in this session. This is the period the Johnson saxophon section was named "The Three Bens" – Whitted, Carter and Waters. Whitted, by the way, was always responsible for the clarinet solos.

McCarthy 'Big Band Jazz' denies Morris' presence on this session and attributes the plunger solos in "Don't You Leave Me Here" to Sidney de Paris. Carter's presence is denied as well.

Richard Rains in 'Storyville' 153 is certainly correct in stating that it is Morris here despite "...Jabbo Smith's assertion when listening to Birmingham Black Bottom, 'That's Ham'". It is believed that Leonard Davis did not join the Johnson Band until some time in 1928." (Davis left the Arthur Gibbs band to join Johnson in summer 1928.)

"Paradise Wobble" is a heavily arranged 12 bar blues. The arrangement is complex, much more so than the two other titles of this session.

And I suggest this to be one of the earliest arrangements of Benny Carter on record – if not the very earliest. Appropriate and even great soloing by Jabbo Smith and Ben Whitted. (Re Ben Whitted: please, forget almost all nominations of Whitted in former discographies on Clarence Williams! They are completely wrong and out of place and pure unsubstantiated speculation without documented background!)

"Birmingham Black Bottom" is akin remarkably in structure and thematic material to Thomas Morris' "Ham Gravy" and I speculate whether this tune was contributed to this session by Morris himself, if he really is one of the trumpets. On the other hand, this number is a real swinger – very advanced for early 1927 – and perfectly shows the Johnson band abilities.

"Don't You Leave Me Here" is the very well-known Morton tune, here played unarranged in free ensemble with solo contributions by Monette Moore, the then 18-year-old Jabbo Smith, and Charlie Irvis. Great functional ensemble playing here without turning chaotic.

Notes:

- *Delaunay, New Hot Discography 1948: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - gtr; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc*

- *Jazz Directory Vol. Five 1955: Probably similar personnel as session of Jan. 24, 1928: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms, Monette Moore - voc*

- *Rust\*2: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris, Cliff Brazzington - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - alt, clt; Benny Carter (?) - ten; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc*

- *Rust\*3: Jabbo Smith, Leonard Davis, Thomas Morris - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Benny Carter - alt, sop, clt, arr; Ben Whitted - alt, clt; Elmer Harrell - ten, clt; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc*

- Storyville 35-185: Jabbo Smith, Leonard Davis, Tom Morris, tpt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Benny Carter, Ben Whittet, alt, clt; Elmer Harrell, ten, clt; Charlie Johnson, pno; Bobby Johnson, bjo; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs; George Stafford, dms; Monette Moore, vcl  
 - Rust\*6: Jabbo Smith, Leonard Davis, Thomas Morris - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Benny Carter - alt, sop, clt, arr; Ben Whittet - alt, clt; Benny Waters - ten, clt, arr; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc  
 - Rust, *The Victor Master Book Vol. 2*: 3 c (tp ?) / tb / 3 s / p / bj / bb / d; vocalist: Monette Moore

Tunes Structures:

38115-1 *Paradise Wobble* Key of Eb Victor  
 (Intro 8 bars ens - tpt - clt)(A1 Chorus 12 bars blues ens)(A2 Chorus 12 bars Irvis tbn + saxes)(A3 Chorus 12 bars ens breaks bjo - Smith tpt 8 bars)(A4 Chorus 12 bars Smith tpt)(A5 Chorus 12 bars saxes - ens)(A6 Chorus 12 bars Moore voc + Smith tpt obligato)(A7 Chorus 12 bars Moore voc + Smith tpt obligato)(A8 Chorus 12 bars Whitted clt - ens)(A9 Chorus 12 bars brass)(A10 Chorus 12 bars ens)

arrangement: Benny Carter? / composer credit is: F. Johnson - T. Morris

38116-1 *Birmingham Black Bottom* Key of Ab / Eb / Ab Victor

(Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 12 bars saxes - ens)(A2 Chorus 12 bars saxes - ens)(A3 Chorus 12 bars brass)(A4 Chorus 12 bars Moore voc - ens)(A5 Chorus 12 bars Smith tpt)(A6 Chorus 12 bars Moore voc - ens)(Bridge 4 bars ens)(B1 Chorus 16 bars AA ens - Morris (?) tpt lead, middle break Smith tpt)(B2 Chorus 16 bars bjo - middle break Waters ten)(Bridge 4 bars ens + cymbals)(A7 Chorus 12 bars ens + Smith tpt lead)(Coda 6 bars ens + Smith tpt lead)

38116-2 *Birmingham Black Bottom* Key of Ab / Eb / Ab Victor

same as 38116-1

arrangement: Thomas Morris? / composer credit is: F. Johnson - T. Morris

38117-1 *Don't You Leave Me Here* Key of Bb Victor

(Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 16 bars AA ens)(B1 Verse 16 bars ens)(A2 Chorus 16 bars Moore + Whitted clt obligato)(A3 Chorus 16 bars Morris tpt)(A4 Chorus 16 bars Irvis tbn)(A5 Chorus 16 bars Moore + Johnson pno obligato)(A6 Chorus 16 bars ens)

38117-3 *Don't You Leave Me Here* Key of Bb Victor

same as 38117-1

Discernible differences of takes:

38116-1 2nd bar of coda: two trombone notes and banjo

38116-2 2nd bar of coda: two trombone notes and banjo plus two heavy drumbeats and cymbal

38117-1 2nd half of vocal: "Hear that bell a-ringin', hear that whistle sound".

38117-3 2nd half of vocal: "Hear that whistle blow, hear that whistle sound".

See my article on the Charlie Johnson band in Names & Numbers 57 and elsewhere on this web-site. The frequently listed enigmatic Cliff Brazzington seems to be a real person and might be the first trumpet player. He is said to have been with the Ellington band in 1926. If so, he seems to be playing on *Paradise Wobble* only.

**011 CLARENCE WILLIAMS AND HIS WASHBOARD BAND**

New York,

Mar. 08, 1927

Ed Allen - cnt; Arville Harris - clt, alt;

Clarence Williams - pno, voc; Floyd Casey - wbd;

Clarence Lee - voc

E-21786/E-4728 *Cushion Foot Stomp*

Br 7000,

Frog DGF 37

E-21787/E-4729 *Cushion Foot Stomp*

Br 7000,

Frog DGF 37

E-21788/E-4726 *P.D.Q. Blues*

Br 7000,

Frog DGF 37

E-21789/E-4727 *P.D.Q. Blues*

Br 7000,

Frog DGF 37

Storyville 20-56: "Previous listings showing two reed men are in error as only one man is present, and he is clearly the man we have been listing as Ben Whittet." Storyville 70-160 says: "As has been noted, the singer here (*i.e. session 100*) is also present on the Vocalion/Brunswick *Cushion Foot Stomp/P.D.Q. Blues* sides two days earlier, so now we can put a name to him" (*i.e. Clarence Lee!*). The use of a bassoon on "Cushion Foot Stomp" has been discussed publicly, but this is certainly an alto sax played in low register. This clarinet player here has been identified by a very sharp eared and very experienced professional clarinet player of today - Reimer von Essen of Bad Homburg, Germany - as the same man as on session #106 (Red Hot Flo), who by general consensus in our group is now seen to be Arville Harris. He is certainly not Jari as can be heard from his tonal qualities and his fundamentally different approach to the first strain of "Cushion Foot Stomp" (the bended notes).

Notes:

- Storyville 20: Ed Allen (cnt); Ben Whittet (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd); unknown (female vcl).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p198: Ed Allen (cnt); Bennie Moten (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd); unknown (vcl).

- Rust\*2: Ed Allen (cnt); Ben Whittet (clt, ten); Buster Bailey (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno, vcl); Floyd Casey (wbd); unknown girl (vcl).

- Rust\*3: Ed Allen -c; Ben Whittet -cl -as; Clarence Williams -p; Floyd Casey -wb; unknown -v whose sex is still in doubt.

- Rust\*4,\*6: Ed Allen -c; Carmelo Jari -cl -as; Clarence Williams -p; Floyd Casey -wb; unknown -v whose sex is still in doubt.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p199):

E-21786: Second voc chorus (penultimate chorus), bars 3 and 4: „Weird chords. Lord, Lord.“

E-21787: Second voc chorus (penultimate chorus), bars 3 and 4: „Weird chords. Oh, Lord, Lord.“ (pno stresses abnormally the accents of the vocal in these two bars.)

E-21788: Two „All Aboard“ before music starts.

E-21789: One „All Aboard“ before, and one single „All“ (or similar) in second bar of ens introduction.

**012 DIXIE WASHBOARD BAND**

New York,

Mar. 10, 1927

Ed Allen - cnt; Carmello Jari - clt, alt;

Clarence Williams - pno, voc; Floyd Casey - wbd;

Clarence Lee - voc

143612-3 *Anywhere Sweetie Goes (I'll Be There)*

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

143612-4 *Anywhere Sweetie Goes (I'll Be There)*

Col 14239-D,

Frog DGF 75

143613-2 *Cushion Foot Stomp*

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

143613-3 *Cushion Foot Stomp*

Col 14239-D,

Frog DGF 75

Storyville 70-160 says: "The final Dixie Washboard Band session has posed a number of problems until now, but the file cards are most helpful. The full personnel is given as by "Clarence Williams And His Washboard Band" and is: Ed Allen, cornet; Carmelo Jari, clarinet; Clarence Williams, piano; Floyd Casey, washboard; Clarence Lee, vocal. Lee's name is crossed out and replaced by "singing by Shufflin' Sam" – which is how the record appeared. As has been noted, the singer here is also present on the Vocalion/Brunswick *Cushion Foot Stomp/P.D.Q. Blues* sides two days earlier, so now we can put a name to him. Carmelo Jari is the true name of the man variously listed as Jejo, Jary and Yardi, and you are referred to *Hendersonia*, p. 565 for further details. Reports of the existence of pressings using 163613-4 (*sic*) are without foundation as only three takes of this title were made. Four takes of 143612 were made with -4 first choice and -3 second. Take -3 was first choice for 143613 with -2 as second. Both first choices were used and appear on all copies of the record known to us. If anyone actually has a copy using any other take will they please report. Incidentally, the alto by Jari on the second title is noted on the file card." Now here we have positive proof of Jari's presence. A member of our group suggests strongly that Clarence Lee might be a pseudonym for Clarence Todd because he thinks the voices to be identical.

As this comment is in contrast to the Storyville project and Tom Lord's Williams list we have followed Storyville 70 in accordance with Rust 6\* and have changed take numbers of Cushion Foot Stomp accordingly (see above).

Notes:

- Mahony, *Columbia 13/14000-D Series*: Author gives accumulated personnel without distinct deposition.

- Storyville 20: Ed Allen (cnt); Buster Bailey (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd); Clarence Todd (vcl).

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p200*: Ed Allen (cnt); Buster Bailey (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd); unknown (vcl).

- Rust\*2: Ed Allen (cnt); Buster Bailey (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd); Eva Taylor (vcl).

- Rust\*3: Ed Allen -c; Ben Whitted -cl -as; Clarence Williams -p; Floyd Casey -wb; "Shufflin' Sam" (this does not sound very much like Clarence Todd) -v.

- Rust\*4,\*6: Ed Allen -c; Carmelo Jari -cl -as; Clarence Williams -p; Floyd Casey -wb; Clarence Lee (as "Shufflin' Sam") -v.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p199):

As one take of each of these titles was issued, comparison is impossible.

013	<b>SARA MARTIN</b>	Clarence Williams' Blue Five	New York,	Apr. 09, 1927
	Sara Martin – voc;			
	Charlie Irvis – tbn; Arville Harris – clt; ( <i>Ben Whitted</i> ) – alt;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs			
	80712-B	Cushion Foot Stomp	OK 8461,	Collectors Classics COCD-19
	80713-B	Take Your Black Bottom Outside	OK 8461,	Collectors Classics COCD-19

Our group is proud to have detected a hitherto unlisted banjo player, presumably Buddy Christian. Or Leroy Harris? The clarinetist was said to be Benny Waters for years. We have been unable to find a source for this assumption and it has to be mentioned that Waters started as a saxophonist, soloing on clarinet only in later years. Tone and style seem to belong to Arville Harris. The alto might belong to Ben Whitted stylistically, but this is not documented anywhere and only our vague suggestion. In April 1927 Irvis and St. Clair were with Charlie Johnson's band at Smalls' Paradise and might easily have brought Whitted – first alto sax with the Johnson band - with them to this recording session.

Notes:

- Storyville 20: Charlie Irvis (tbn); Benny Waters (clt); Arville Harris (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p203*: Charlie Irvis (tbn); Benny Waters (clt); Arville Harris (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: Charlie Irvis, tbn; Benny Waters, clt; Arville Harris, alt; Clarence Williams, pno; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.

- Rust\*3: Charlie Irvis -tb; Ben Waters -cl; Arville Harris -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- Rust\*4,\*6: Charlie Irvis -tb; Benny Waters -cl; Arville Harris -as; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

014	<b>CLARENCE WILLIAMS' WASHBOARD FIVE</b>		New York,	Apr. 13, 1927
	Ed Allen – cnt; Carmelo Jari - clt;			
	Clarence Williams – pno, voc; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; Floyd Casey – wbd			
	80688-E	Cushion Foot Stomp	OK 8462,	Collectors Classics COCD-19
	80689-F	Take Your Black Bottom Outside	OK 8462,	Collectors Classics COCD-19

Whitted and Bailey have been named as clarinet players for this session in the past years. But our group agrees that this man is definitely Carmelo Jari. The other participants are undisputed.

Notes:

- Storyville 21: Ed Allen (cnt); Buster Bailey (clt); Clarence Williams (pno, vcl); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (wbd).

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p203*: Ed Allen (cnt); poss Ben Whitted (clt); Clarence Williams (pno, vcl); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (wbd).

- Rust\*2,\*3,\*4,\*6: Ed Allen (cnt); Buster Bailey (clt); Clarence Williams (pno, vcl); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (wbd).

015	<b>CLARENCE WILLIAMS' BLUE FIVE</b>		New York,	Apr. 14, 1927
	Ed Allen – cnt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;			
	Carmelo Jari - alt, clt; Arville Harris – alt, clt;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; Floyd Casey - dms			
	80728-B	Black Snake Blues	OK 8465,	Collectors Classics COCD-19
	80729-B	Old Folks Shuffle	OK 8465,	Collectors Classics COCD-19

Here again the reed players' identities were unsolved. Tonally and stylistically (the bouncing-trills!) the clarinet lead player in "Black Snake Blues" is unquestionably Jari and the other reed man is most probably Arville Harris. Both seem to be playing alto - no tenor here – on the second title. Carmelo Jari plays first clarinet part in 'Black Snake Blues' and first alto part in the second title! The clarinet solo in 'Old Folks Shuffle' then is by Arville Harris, as is the subsequent clarinet solo, for tonal reasons, both. Others undisputed. But listen to the wonderful tuba played by Cyrus St. Clair. And Ed Allen's great work on cornet/trumpet. Again, and as so often in early discographies, Ben Whitted has been falsely assumed – and listed un-scrutinized – as clarinet/alto player instead of Carmelo Jari on these 1927 Clarence Williams recordings, without any similarity in style with his Charlie Johnson solo outings on clarinet.

Notes:

- Storyville 21: Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt, alt); Arville Harris (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (dms).  
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p204: Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt, alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten?); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (dms).  
 - Rust\*2,\*3: Ed Allen (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet, Arville Harris (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (dms).  
 - Rust\*4,\*6: Ed Allen -c; Charlie Irvis -tb; Ben Whittet -cl -as; Arville Harris -cl -as or ts; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb; Floyd Casey -d.

**016 CLARENCE WILLIAMS AND HIS BOTTOMLAND ORCHESTRA**

New York,

Jun. 07, 1927

Ed Anderson, Henry Red Allen – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;

Albert Socarras – alt; unknown – ten;

Clarence Williams – pno; Floyd Casey – dms;

Evelyn Preer – voc

E-6055; E-23500 Slow River

Br 3580,

Frog DGF 37

E-6056; E-23501 Slow River

BrG A-457,

Frog DGF 37

E-6057; E-23502 Zulu Wail

BrG A-457,

Frog DGF 37

E-6058; E-23503 Zulu Wail

Br 3580,

Frog DGF 37

Composer credits: E-6055 (----); E-6056 (Charles M. Schwb); E-6057 (----); E-6058 (----)

Three takes of each title are listed in Rust\*6 and we do not know whether they really exist or whether this is an error. We have therefore preferred to list the tunes according to Rust\*4 and Lord. These sources in the past gave two takes of each title.

The whole session seems to be a concerto for young Henry ‘Red’ Allen from NOLA whose first recordings these were. Undisputed is Irvis on trombone, but our group is unable to give any reasonable name for the reedman and for the other trumpet player who plays some sort of call-and-response pattern with Allen in ‘Zulu Wail’ and seems to be stylistically very similar to Allen. As Ed Anderson is traditionally named for this session it might be him as his style was reportedly very akin to Oliver’s. And that is what we hear from the muted trumpet player who plays behind Allen. Ed Anderson was with the King Oliver band a year later, where he played the trumpet solos that were attributed to Oliver still today (‘Aunt Hagar’s Blues’!).

There is some uncertainty whether we have two altos or alto and tenor on this recording. Ben Whitted as alto player (re Rust\*2) may be excluded for this personnel as he spent the summer season of each year with the Charlie Johnson band in Atlantic City! Notwithstanding this fact, we still have Irvis on this session, and he also was with the Charlie Johnson band at this time! The alto solo on ‘Slow River’ take 6056 (German edition without vocal) is so uneven and amateurish rhythmically that I am unable to associate it with an experienced big band musician as Whitted. This, yet, may be a hint as to Albert Socarras’ recollection (see Storyville 90, below). He tries to improvise a jazz solo, when having joined the Clarence Williams stable only recently – at the age of 19. Quite contrary, the alto solo in ‘Zulu Wail’ take 6057 (German edition without vocal, again) is strong and secure, while being played straight from the music. So, I assume the altoist to be Albert Socarras. This, then, is Alberto Socarras first appearance on record!

Behind the alto I hear a tenor sax, prominently, recognised in the middle-break of the second chorus of ‘Slow River’ and clearly behind the singer in the second chorus of ‘Zulu Wail’. A possible candidate for the tenor sax player would be Arville Harris – or the tenor player of the ‘Bottomland’ show band, perhaps? but the performance of the tenor part does not allow any deduction as to his identity.

Lacking a tuba and a banjo, Clarence Williams is confined to deliver a most simple piano accompaniment using strict 4-to-the-bar chordal thumping, supported by Floyd Casey’s sock-cymbal and Chinese tom tom.

Notes:

- Storyville 21: Henry Allen, poss Ed Anderson (tpt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); poss Alberto Socarras, unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (dms); Evelyn Preer (vcl).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p210: Henry Allen, poss Ed Anderson (tpt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); poss Alberto Socarras, unknown (alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (dms); Evelyn Preer (vcl).

-Rust\*2: Ed Anderson and another (June Clark ?) (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet (?) and another (clt, alt); Arville Harris (?) (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (dms); Evelyn Preer (vcl).

-Rust\*3,\*4: Henry Allen -?Ed Anderson -t; Charlie Irvis -tb; Albert Socarras and another -as; Clarence Williams -p; Floyd Casey -d; Evelyn Preer -v.

-Rust\*6: Henry Allen -?Ed Anderson -t; Charlie Irvis -tb; Albert Socarras and another -as; Clarence Williams -p -a; Floyd Casey -d; Evelyn Thompson -v.

- Storyville 90, Herb Friewald, Alberto Socarras Story: “The director of the orchestra for Clarence Williams’ show ‘Bottomland’ was Joe Jordan. I was first alto in the orchestra. It opened at the Savoy Theatre in Atlantic City and went to the Princess Theatre in New York, where we did not have a long run. That was a shame because it had some beautiful music. Eva Taylor, Sara Martin, and Clarence were all in the show. I think we recorded some of the compositions.”

Tunes Structures:

E-6055 Slow River Key of Eb / Bb / Eb Brunswick  
 (Chorus 1 32 bars AA’ ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AA’ EP voc over ens)(Chorus 3 32 bars AA’ ens - middle-bk HA o-tpt)(tag 2 bars ens)

E-6056 Slow River Key of Eb Brunswick  
 (Intro 8 bars ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AA’ ens - middle-bk HA o-tpt)(Chorus 2 32 bars AA’ sax section with ad-lib brass)(Chorus 3 32 bars AA’ ens - middle-bk HA o-tpt)(tag 2 bars ens)

E-6057 Zulu Wail Key of Eb / Cm / Eb Brunswick  
 (Chorus 1 32 bars AABA ens)(Verse 16 bars CI o-tbn – ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA CI o-tbn 16 – sax section 16)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA ens)

E-6058 Zulu Wail Key of Eb / Cm / C / Ed Brunswick  
 (Chorus 1 32 bars AABA ens)(Verse 16 bars CI o-tbn – ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA EP voc over ens)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA ens)

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p211):

E-6055; E-23500: Second chorus is vocal chorus.

E-6056; E-23501: This item has no vocal despite the label legend.

E-6057; E-23502: This item has no vocal despite the label legend.

E-6058; E-23503: Second chorus – after verse – is vocal chorus.

**017 CHARLIE JOHNSON’S PARADISE TEN**

New York,

Jan. 24, 1928

Sidney de Paris, Cladys Jabbo Smith – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;



Ben Whitted, Benny Carter – alt, clt; Ben Waters – ten, clt; Edgar Sampson – vln;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno; Bobby Johnson – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; George Stafford – dms;  
 Monette Moore – voc (1,2);  
 Benny Carter – arr (1,2,3,4); Ben Waters – arr (5,6)

41639-1	You Ain't The One	Vic test,	Frog DGF 12
41639-2	You Ain't The One	Vic 21247,	Frog DGF 8
41640-1	Charleston Is The Best Dance After All	Vic 21491,	Frog DGF 8
41640-2	Charleston Is The Best Dance After All	Vic test,	Frog DGF 12
41641-1	Hot Tempered Blues	Vic test,	Frog DGF 12
41641-2	Hot Tempered Blues	Vic 21247,	Frog DGF 8

Now, here we have the Johnson band in full flight. With the extra attraction of Benny Carter's definitely first (see "Paradise Wobble" above) recorded arrangements, together with his first recorded solo efforts, straight on the way to later highs.

Trumpet soloing is definitely by Jabbo Smith on the first two titles, by another man on the third title, who may be, but is not necessarily Sidney de Paris. Jabbo Smith told Chip Deffaa ('Voices of The Jazz Age') that he left the band because of being accused of bad behaviour, and that de Paris was his successor. This would mean, that Smith would not have been in the band together with de Paris. So, the first trumpet player's identity has to be questioned, just as in the session of February 25, 1927.

"You Ain't The One" has a typical Carter reed chorus, this time on clarinets. It is not easy to play and Carter's colleagues struggle along in three-part harmony, Carter playing lead. Very advanced and interesting modulations in the bridges show Carter's early mastership. We hear Edgar Sampson with his violin accompanying Monette Moore's vocal chorus. Sampson has always been listed as saxophonist/violinist in this session, but it has to be kept in mind that he still was a member of Arthur Gibbs' band until summer 1928, when he together with Leonard Davis changed over to the Johnson band. Ben Waters in his book 'The Key to A Jazzy Life' said that the Johnson band sometimes had more than two trumpets, but never more than three saxes. So, I think, that Charlie Johnson added Sampson only as violinist in this session, just for the thrill of it, maybe being impressed by this young man's possibilities. The 'Victor Master Book' has three saxes and a violin. We never hear four reeds at the same time, which in 1928 certainly would have been extremely uncommon.

"Charleston Is The Best Dance After All" again have a Carter reed chorus, this time on saxophones. At the end of this saxophone chorus we hear Charlie Johnson's piano playing into the trumpet break, which seems to be proof of Johnson's carelessness.

"Hot Tempered Blues" is Ben Waters' arrangement with his typical bluesy clarinet writing. Then in chorus A4 we hear a trumpet player, who sounds very much like Thomas Morris in his phrasing in take -1, only that he has much better embouchure than Morris had (G. Bushell said about Thomas Morris: "He had some great ideas, but no lip – it just splattered all over the place"). This man here plays assured, with a controlled vibrato/shake and some funny phrases in take -2 which may yet come from de Paris's art of preaching on his horn (see "The Boy In The Boat" of the next session). Beautiful bluesy four-string violin by Sampson and phantastic free collective improvisation by the whole band in the last two choruses, in Gunther Schuller's words: "Here the band swings and rocks in a manner way ahead of its time, especially in the final, climactic improvised chorus. In its all-out abandon, it stops just this side of cacophony, a triumph of the art of ensemble improvisation" (Schuller 'Early Jazz').

#### Notes:

- *Delaunay, New Hot Discography 1948: Jabbo Smith, Sidney De Paris, Cliff Brazzington - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Benny Carter - alt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - gtr; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc*

- *Jazz Directory Vol. Five 1955: Probably similar personnel as session of Jan. 24, 1928: Jabbo Smith, Cliff Brazzington - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Edgar Sampson - alt, clt, vln; Benny Carter - alt; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc*

- *Rust\*2: Jabbo Smith, Leonard Davis, Cliff Brazzington - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Ben Whitted - alt, clt; Benny Carter - alt; Edgar Sampson - alt, vln; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc*

- *Rust\*3: Jabbo Smith, Leonard Davis - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Benny Carter - alt, sop, clt, arr; Edgar Sampson - alt, vln; Elmer Harrell - ten, clt; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc*

- *Storyville 35-185: Jabbo Smith, Leonard Davis, tpt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Benny Carter, alt, clt; Edgar Sampson, vln, alt; Elmer Harrell, ten, clt; Charlie Johnson, pno; Bobby Johnson, bjo; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs; George Stafford, dms; Monette Moore, vcl*

- *Rust\*6: Jabbo Smith, Leonard Davis - tpt; Charlie Irvis - tbn; Benny Carter - alt, sop, clt, arr; Edgar Sampson - alt, vln; Benny Waters - ten, clt, arr; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms; Monette Moore - voc*

- *Rust, The Victor Master Book Vol. 2: 2 t / tb / 3 s / vn / p / bj / bb / d; vocalist: Monette Moore*

#### Tunes Structures:

41639-1 You Ain't The One Key of C / Eb / F / Eb Victor  
 (Intro 6 bars ens – Carter alt)(A1 Chorus 32 bars AA' ens)(A2 Chorus 32 bars Moore voc + Sampson vln obligato)(Bridge 4 bars ens)(B1 Verse 12 bars ens)(A3 Chorus 32 bars / Waters ten + brass 16, Irvis tbn 16)(Bridge 4 bars ens)(A4 Chorus 32 bars clts)(Bridge 4 bars ens)(A5 Chorus 32 bars / J. Smith tpt 16, ens 16)(Coda 2 bars ens)

41639-2 You Ain't The One Key of C / Eb / F / Eb Victor  
 same as 41639-1

arrangement: Benny Carter / composer credit is: Chas. Johnson - Arthur Porter

41640-1 Charleston Is The Best Dance After All Key of F Victor  
 (Intro 6 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 32 bars AABA ens)(Bridge 2 bars\* ens)(B1 Verse 20 bars ens /ens 8, saxes 8, ens 4)  
 (A2 Chorus 32 bars saxes in harmony)(A3 Chorus 32 bars /J. Smith tpt 16, B. Carter alt 8, J. Smith tpt 6, ens 2)  
 (Bridge 2 bars\* ens)(A4 Chorus 32 bars ens /ens 14, C. Johnson pno 2, Ch. Irvis 6, ens 10)(Coda 2 bars bbs - ens)

41640-2 Charleston Is The Best Dance After All Key of F Victor  
 same as 41640-1

arrangement: Benny Carter / composer credit is: G. Johnson - A. Porter

(\* this bridge actually consists of four bars, two of which are the last two bars of the previous chorus. This same device has been called "an unprecedented practice in the history of jazz arrangements" by Andre Hodeir in his book JAZZ, IT'S EVOLUTION AND ESSENCE, only that he discusses Ellington's "Concerto For Cootie" of March 1940. Ellington had used this same device in his "Stevodore Stomp", but never as early as Carter does here. So, who is the originator of this little beautiful trick?)

41641-1 Hot Tempered Blues Key of Bb Victor  
 (Intro 8 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 12 bars blues tpts in harmony)(A2 Chorus 12 bars Irvis tbn)(A3 Chorus 12 bars E. Samp-son vln - clts background riff)(A4 Chorus 12 bars S. de Paris(?) tpt)(B1 Verse 16 bars AA clts)(A5 Chorus 12 bars ens riff)(A6 Chorus 12 bars ens ad lib)(Coda 2 bars ens)

41641-2 Hot Tempered Blues Key of Bb Victor  
 same as 41641-1

arrangement: Benny Waters / composer credit is: Chas. Johnson - Arthur Porter

Discernible differences of takes:

41639-1	<i>Intro: first trumpet plays chromatic downward sequence with 3 times: 1 quarter note, 2 eighth notes (second note downward jump), 1 quarter note in chromatic sequence again, band playing even chromatic sequence</i>
41639-2	<i>Intro: first trumpet plays even chromatic downward sequence together with band</i>
41640-1	<i>pno plays into tpt break at end of Chorus A2 and stops abruptly</i>
41640-2	<i>pno silent in tpt break at end of Chorus A2, foot thumping instead</i>
41641-1	<i>tbn enters for solo in first bar of A2, no Whitted clt in A5</i>
41641-2	<i>tbn enters for solo 3 beats before A2, Whitted clt over ens in A5</i>

**018 CLARENCE WILLIAMS & HIS ORCHESTRA**

Long Island City,

c. Aug. 1928

Ed Allen, Joe King Oliver – cnt; Ed Cuffee – tbn;  
 (Ben Whitted), (Harvey Boone?) – alt, clt; Ben Waters – ten, clt;  
 Clarence Williams – pno, voc; Leroy Harris – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs

151	Long, Deep And Wide	QRS R-7004,	Frog DGF 48
152-A	Speakeasy	QRS R-7004,	Frog DGF 48
153	Squeeze Me	QRS R-7005,	Frog DGF 48
154-A	New Down Home Blues	QRS R-7005,	Frog DGF 48

Now, this is the epitome of all Clarence Williams music. Wonderful Harlem big band music, full of blues, relaxed yet swinging, very melodic and musicianly. The only uncertainties are the (probably) two alto saxes. Benny Morton (of the Joe Jordan band) certainly out of the picture, so it might be Harris, had there been any recognizable trait of his style. But taking Ben Waters for granted (Waters identified himself on matrices 151 – 154, but was less sure for the subsequent QRS dates – Storyville 1998/9), it would be very significant to suggest Ben Whitted, who was Waters' band mate from the Charlie Johnson band, just as St. Clair was. Whitted was an experienced 1st alto man and played all the clarinet solos – in a very bluesy style – in the Johnson band. Harvey Boone on alto had been listed in Cl. Williams' files as playing on an QRS date.

Notes:

- Storyville 22: Ed Allen, Joe Oliver (cnt); Ed Cuffee (tbn); prob Arville Harris (clt, alt); prob Ben Waters (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p243: Ed Allen, Joe Oliver (cnt); Ed Cuffee (tbn); prob Arville Harris (clt, alt); prob Ben Waters (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust\*2: Ed Allen, King Oliver (cnt); Charlie Irvis or Ed Cuffee (tbn); Arville Harris, Bennie Moten (clt, sop, alt); Ben Waters (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust\*3: Ed Allen, King Oliver -c; Ed Cuffee -tb; ?Arville Harris, ?unknown third -cl -as; Ben Waters -cl -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- Rust\*4,\*6: Ed Allen, King Oliver -c; Ed Cuffee -tb; prob Arville Harris -cl; Ben Waters -cl -ts; Clarence Williams -p -v; Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

**019 CHARLIE JOHNSON AND HIS PARADISE BAND**

New York,

Sep. 19, 1928

Leonard Davis, Sidney de Paris – tpt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn, voc exhortations (2,3);  
 Ben Whitted, Edgar Sampson – alt, clt; Ben Waters – ten, clt;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno; Bobby Johnson – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; George Stafford – dms;  
 Ben Waters – arr (2,3,4,5,6); possibly Ken Macomber – arr (2,3)

47530	Gettin' Away From Me	Vic unissued	not on LP/CD
47531-1	The Boy In The Boat	BB B10248,	Frog DGF 12
47531-2	The Boy In The Boat	Vic 21712,	Frog DGF 8
47532-1	Walk That Thing	Vic test,	Frog DGF 12
47532-2	Walk That Thing	Vic 21712,	Frog DGF 8
47532-3	Walk That Thing	BB B10248,	Frog DGF 12

Every time the Johnson band was in the studio, the Victor people restricted the band's output to three titles. Even more so, they rejected one of these few titles on this and the last Victor session. Can it be that the band was so undisciplined or unrehearsed? Just think of Victor's attempt to use Eddie Condon to bring a rehearsed Fats Waller band to the studio!

So, the first title had been rejected. For what reason I dare to ask? For me, this session marks the climax of the whole Charlie Johnson output. "The Boy In The Boat" certainly is one of the greatest recordings in classic jazz, "Walk That Thing" is a phantastic early swinger. What then might have been the cause for the failure of "Gettin' Away From Me"? I'd certainly give a lot would somebody offer me a test pressing!

At least we can be certain now of the whole personnel. Leonard Davis had come over from Arthur Gibbs. He had stayed with Gibbs from summer 1927 until summer 1928. Before Gibbs he had played with Edgar Hayes and his Symphonic Harmonists at the Alhambra Theatre from 1926 until summer 1927. Now with Johnson he teamed with Sidney de Paris, one of the real great growl and hot trumpeters, for me much more impressiv than Bubber Miley with the Duke. I can only wonder what the Duke could have made with de Paris in his band. (Did he ever try to hire him?). Where Miley was stuck in his Johnny-Dunn influenced triplets and rather stiff phrasing, de Paris owns a phantastic looseness which enables him really to preach and talk on his trumpet. And then we have Harrison, one of the greatest stylists and giants of classic jazz. What a wealth of brass players!

On saxophones the always reliable Ben Whitted, with Johnson from the early twenties on. He always played the clarinet solos with the band and was responsible for arranging the hits of the day. Reportedly he did arrange Louis Armstrong's solos harmonized for the brass. Young and promising Edgar Sampson had also come over from Arthur Gibbs as steady member of the band. It is interesting to note, that Sampson, as a steady member of the band now, dno longer plays the violin on Johnson band recordings. Ben Waters and the rhythm section were the back-bones of the whole aggregation.

"The Boy In The Boat" has been called "the black diamond of early jazz" somewhere in a book the title of which I am unable to recall. But listen to the row of solos: first Harrison, then de Paris with a call-and-response pattern, first with Whitted, then with Harrison's voice. De Paris here is absolutely equivalent with everything Cootie or Tricky Sam could do. The answering voice is unmistakably Harrison. And then listen to the great but unsung George Stafford using some recent devices for drummers, a choked high-hat in take -1 and a hand-high-hat in take -2. This recording is absolutely phantastic, only that take -2 is very slight degree better to my taste.

The arrangement must be Ben Water's. When the author of this little article played this very title at the Breda Jazz Festival in 1972, the door opened and in walked Benny Waters, immediately shouting into the room "Hey, that's my arrangement!" On the other hand he told pianist

Keith Nichols, that the arrangement was Ken Macomber's, who as a young white arranger made the rounds through Harlem trying to sell his arrangements, using his beautiful young wife as bait to gain attention. Stylistically the arrangement is pure Waters! Fats Waller's "Squeeze Me" was originally titled "The Boy In The Boat" just as this "The Boy In The Boat" here was recorded as "The Rock" (STORYVILLE 35). "Walk That Thing" is not as outweighed, but it nevertheless has beautiful soloing by Whitted on clarinet, de Paris on C1 (strain C / verse II) and probably Davis on D1 (Verse III / strain D). But the peak is Harrison's solos in all three takes, take -2 the least perfect. As takes -1 and -3 are very similar in Harrison's solo and take -2 differing mostly in the breaks, the recording order might originally have been take -2, take -1 and take -3. And then St.Clair's majestic tuba breaks in the last chorus, together with Bobby Johnson's banjo breaks and Stafford's drum artifices: phantastic!

Notes:

- *Delaunay, New Hot Discography 1948: Leonard Davis, Sidney De Paris (tp); Jimmy Harrison (tb); Ben Whitted (cl); Edgar Sampson (as & v); Ben Waters (ts); Charlie Johnson (p); Bobby Johnson (g); Cyrus St. Clair (b); George Stafford (dm)*

- *Jazz Directory Vol. Five 1955: Leonard Davis, Sidney De Paris (tpt); Jimmy Harrison (tbn); Ben Whitted (clt); Edgar Sampson (alt, vln); Ben Waters (ten); Charlie Johnson (p); Bobby Johnson (bj); Cyrus St. Clair (tu); George Stafford (d)*

- *Rust\*2: Sidney de Paris (tpt); Jimmy Harrison (tbn); Ben Whitted (clt, alt); Edgar Sampson (alt); Ben Waters (clt, ten); Charlie Johnson (pno); Bobby Johnson (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); George Stafford (dms)*

- *Rust\*3,\*4: Leonard Davis -Sidney de Paris -t; Jimmy Harrison -tb; Ben Whitted -cl -as; Edgar Sampson -cl -as -vn; Ben Waters -cl -ts;*

*Charlie Johnson -p -ldr; Bobby Johnson -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb; George Stafford -d; unknown male exhortations where marked*

- *Rust, The Victor Master Book Vol. 2: 2 t / tb / 3 s / p / bj / bb / d.*

- *Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Leonard Davis, Sidney de Paris, t; Jimmy Harrison, tb; Ben Whitted, cl, as; Edgar Sampson, cl, as, vn; Ben Waters, cl, ts, a; Charlie Johnson, p, dir; Bobby Johnson, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb; George Stafford, d; unknown male exhortations where marked*

- *Storyville 35-185: Leonard Davis, Sidney de Paris, tpt; Jimmy Harrison, tbn; Ben Whitted, Edgar Sampson, clt, alt; Ben Waters, ten, clt; Charlie Johnson, pno; Bobby Johnson, bjo; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs; George Stafford, dms*

Tunes Structures:

47530 *Gettin' Away From Me* Victor  
unissued

47531-1 *The Boy In The Boat* Key of Gm (Bb) Victor, Bluebird  
(Intro 12 bars ens)(A1 Verse I 16 bars clts in harmony - brass)(B1 Chorus 16 bars AA' Harrison tbn - clts riff)(C1 Verse II (Vamp ?) 11 bars (!) clts in harmony /clts 7, ens 4)(D1 Chorus 12 bars De Paris tpt - Whitted clt)(D2 Chorus 12 bars De Paris tpt - Harrison voc)(Bridge 2 bars ens)(E1 Verse III 16 bars AA ens)(D3 Chorus 12 bars De Paris tpt - Stafford cymbals)

47531-2 *The Boy In The Boat* Key of Gm (Bb) Victor  
same as 47531-1

arrangement: Benny Waters (Ken Macomber?) / composer credit is: C. Johnson

47532-1 *Walk That Thing* Key of C Victor

(Intro 8 bars /pno 4, ens 4)(A1 Chorus 32 bars AA' Waters ten)(B1 Verse 20 bars AA' Waters ten - ens)(C1 Verse II 16 bars AA De Paris tpt - ens)(A2 Chorus 32 bars Harrison tbn)(D1 Verse III 16 bars AA Davis (?) tpt - clts)(D2 Verse III 16 bars Whitted clt - ens)(A3 Chorus 32 bars ens /breaks bbs, bjo, cymbals)(Coda 3 bars clt - ens)

47532-2 *Walk That Thing* Key of C Victor  
same as 47532-1

47532-3 *Walk That Thing* Key of C Victor, Bluebird  
same as 47532-1

Discernible differences of takes:

47531-1 Chorus D1: Stafford plays choked high-hat

Chorus D2: Harrison shouts "Yes, yes, yes, yes, yes; preach that thing, brother low-down, do!"

47531-2 Chorus D1: Stafford plays hand cymbal

Chorus D2: Harrison shouts "Oh, preach that thing, brother, preach it now; preach it Kid!"

47532-1 ten solo Chorus A1: Waters starts with five notes, 1 eighth note (g), 1 quarter note (g), 3 eighth notes (g-eb-e)

tpt solo in strain C1 (Verse II): tpt plays a three-quarter rhythm in second half of strain C1, breaks in tbn solo: arpeggio downward from g# to F in first bar, in third bar a syncopated downward sequence

47532-2 ten solo Chorus A1: Waters starts with three evenly played notes (g),

breaks in tbn solo: no arpeggio

47532-3 ten solo Chorus A1: Waters starts hesitatingly with three nearly evenly played notes (g),

breaks in tbn solo: arpeggio downward from g# to F in first bar, in third bar a downward sequence with 2 eighth notes and 1 quarter note (not syncopated)

020 JACKSON AND HIS SOUTHERN STOMPERS

New York,

Sep. ?, 1928

Leonard Davis, Sidney de Paris – tpt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn ;

Ben Whitted, Edgar Sampson – alt, clt ; Ben Waters – ten, clt;

Charlie Johnson – pno; Bobby Johnson – bjo; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; George Stafford – dms;

Bob Haring – arr (stock) (1?,2)

31339-2 Dusky Stevedore

Mar 227 (7"),

Frog DGF 71

31340-2 Take Your Tomorrow (Give Me Today)

Mar 227 (7"),

Frog DGF 71

This elusive coupling was only issued on a 7" Marathon disc. The small size of the disc resulted in very narrow groove which in turn made the sound of the disc very muddy. The first reissue of these two sides came out on John R.T. Davies' Ristic 28 in 1969, announced as "the greatest sleeper of recent years". As I have been told a whole cardboard box full of this very record, had been discovered in the 1960s in Europe – probably France? – unknown until then. Davies reissued the item and I was lucky enough to get hold of a copy through the very great services of Dick M. Bakker, then of Deventer, The Netherlands. My immediate reaction when listening was, that this band was in many respects akin or even identical with the Charlie Johnson Band. Certainly, there was Jimmy Harrison on trombone, Ben Waters on tenor and George Stafford on drums. I wrote a letter to John R.T. telling him my suggestions, but he wanted to have none of it. The reader may imagine my satisfaction when Rust\*4 listed exactly what I had distinguished.

Particulars of the tune "Dusky Stevedore" and its issue and publication can be found in Bruce Bastin 'Never Sell a Copyright', p.44/45.

The personnel for this recording can only be concluded aurally and seems to be as given above. There seem to be two trumpets because of the thickness of sound and because certainly the arrangement required two, but only one can be distinguished clearly. And this player seems to be Leonard Davis with his majestic horn (listen to Eddie's Hot Shots for a sample of his great trumpet playing). He seems to be the only trumpet soloist here. Then we hear unequivocally the one and only Jimmy Harrison on trombone. Ben Whitted might be on first alto, because he was the saxophone leadman with the Johnson band. Presuming this to be the Johnson band the other alto has to be Edgar

Sampson, who was with the band from mid 1928 on, just as Leonard Davis was. Although I do not know any Sampson solo that early, I assume that Sampson – as successor to Benny Carter – might have been under his influence. This could be a clue to the alto solo in the second title. The tenor solo in the beginning of the first title certainly sounds like what we have come to know of Ben Waters. Yet, when asked late in his life, Waters denied his presence here. Well, I have become aware of so many errors of memory and judgement of the surviving musicians in my research, that I am inclined not to believe in Waters' memory here. The rhythm section certainly is the one of the Johnson band. Only, that the presence of a piano cannot be stated with certainty. So, can it be the case, that the Johnson band recorded without their leader? For contractual reasons? Or because Charlie Johnson just did not care? Or because he simply was "upstairs" gambling? We do not know, yet the music is fantastic!

"Dusky Stevedore" follows the published arrangement of the Triangle Music Company of Joe Davis, as do the recordings of Thelma Terry and the Mills Hotsy Totsy Gang of the same year. The staff arranger might have been Bob Haring as with the next title. Great soloing by Waters (?), Whitted and Davis.

"Take Your Tomorrow (Give Me Today)" is a stock arrangement definitely by Bob Haring, published by the Triangle Music Company. Very typical Jimmy Harrison solo in chorus A3 and a very Carterish eight bar solo by the second alto player, who in my estimation must be Edgar Sampson (in this relation I would like to ask the reader to listen to Clarence Williams' "Zonky" and "You've Got To Be Modernistic" of December 3, 1929. I think that we have the same musician here.)

And then the fantastic punch and swing of the band! What an aggregation!

Once again, at (\*) we have the device of starting a new chorus or bridge – in this case – on the two last bars of the preceding unit, just as before in "Charleston's The Best Dance After All". See there!

Notes:

- Delaunay, *New Hot Discography 1948*: not listed

- *Jazz Directory Vol. Five 1955*: not listed

- Rust\*2: not listed

- John R.T. Davies, cover text of *Ristic 28*: 2 tpts; tmb; alt; poss. Buster Bailey – clt, alt; Prob Prince Robinson – ten; Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; prob Leroy Harris – bjo; unknown – dms (Tom Lord in 'Clarence Williams' gives the same personnel)

- Rust\*3: 2 unknown - tpt; unknown - tbn; unknown - alt, clt; unknown - alt; Ben Waters - ten; ?Mike Jackson - pno; unknown - bjo; unknown - bbs; unknown – dms

- Rust\*4,\*6: probably: Leonard Davis, Sidney De Paris - tpt; Jimmy Harrison - tbn; Ben Whitted, Edgar Sampson - alt, clt; Ben Waters - ten, clt; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs; George Stafford - dms

Tunes Structures:

31339-2 Dusky Stevedore Key of F / Bb / Ab Marathon

(Intro 8 bars ens)(A1 Chorus (F) 32 bars AABA Waters (?) ten - ens)(B1 Verse I 20 bars ens)(Bridge 8 bars ens modulation to Bb)

(A2 Chorus (Bb) 32 bars Whitted (?) clt)(C1 Verse II (Vamp ?) 20 bars / ens 4, Davis tpt 8, Sampson (?) alt 4, ens 4 - modulation to

Ab)(A3 Chorus (Ab) 32 bars / ens - Davis tpt lead 16, saxes 8, ens 8)(Coda 4 bars ens)

arrangement: stock arrangement possibly by Bob Haring (see also Thelma Terry on Columbia and Mills' Hotsy Totsy Gang on Duo) (Bruce Bastin, 'Never Sell A Copyright', p. 45) / composer credit is: Razaf & Johnson

31340-2 Take Your Tomorrow (Give Me Today) Key of F / Bb / Ab Marathon

(Intro 6 bars ens)(Verse 8 bars ens)(A1 Chorus (F) 32 bars AA' saxes)(A2 Chorus (F) 32 bars / Davis tpt 16, Waters (?) ten 16)

(Bridge 4 bars Davis tpt - ens modulation to Bb)(A3 Chorus (Bb) 32 bars / Harrison tbn 8, Whitted (?) clt 8, Harrison tbn 16\*)

(Bridge 4 bars ens modulation to Ab)(A4 Chorus (Ab) 32 bars ens / ens 8, Sampson (?) 8, ens 8, bjo 4, ens 4)(Coda 2 bars ens)

Arrangement: stock arrangement by Bob Haring (Bruce Bastin, 'Never Sell A Copyright', p. 45) / Composer credit is: (not having been able to inspect a copy of this rare disc, I would like to add that the composers of this tune were Andy Razaf and J.C. Johnson)

021	<b>KATHERINE HENDERSON</b>	Clarence Williams and his Orchestra	Long Island City,	c. Oct. 1928
	Katherine Henderson – voc;			
	Joe King Oliver – cnt; Ben Whitted – clt, alt; Ben Waters – ten;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs			
256-A	Lonesome Lovesick Blues	QRS R-7032,	Frog DGF 48	
257-A	Have You Felt That Way?	QRS R-7032,	Frog DGF 48	
258-	What Can You Do Without Me?	QRS R-7054,	Frog DGF 48	

The clarinet solo is more blues inflected than Arville Harris' work, so most likely Whitted, who was capable of good blues playing. The tenor is not really prominent and the brass bass might not be St. Clair.

Notes:

- Storyville 23: Joe Oliver (cnt); Benny Moten (clt, alt); Ben Waters (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p256: Joe Oliver (cnt); unknown (clt, alt); Ben Waters (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust\*3: King Oliver -c; ?Ben Whitted -cl; Arville Harris or Ben Waters -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- Rust\*4,\*6: King Oliver -c; ?Ben Whitted -cl; Ben Waters -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- BGR\*2: King Oliver, cnt; Benny Moten, clt; Ben Waters, ten; Clarence Williams, pno; Leroy Harris, bjo; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.

- BGR\*3,\*4: King Oliver, c; unknown, cl, as; Ben Waters, ts; Clarence Williams, p; Leroy Harris, bj; Cyrus St. Clair, bb.

022	<b>KATHERINE HENDERSON</b>	Clarence Williams and his Orchestra	Long Island City,	c. Nov. 1928
	Katherine Henderson – voc;			
	Joe King Oliver – cnt; Arville Harris – clt, alt; Ben Waters – ten;			
	Clarence Williams – pno; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs			
273-A	Do It Baby	QRS R-7041,	Frog DGF 49	
274-A	Mushy Love	QRS R-7054,	Frog DGF 49	
275-	If You Like Me	Pm 12840,	Frog DGF 49	
275-A	If You Like Me	QRS R-7041,	Frog DGF 49	

The musicians in the listening group recognise pitching problems here. Harris is struggling out of tune on clarinet, this probably caused by an out of tune piano which forces the reedmen to lower their pitch. This may explain the previous suggestion that there is an additional clarinet player on the first title only. The tenor sax might be Waters.

Notes:

- Storyville 24: Joe Oliver (cnt); poss Ben Whitted (clt); Albert Socarras (alt); poss Ben Waters (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p261: Joe Oliver (cnt); poss Ben Whittet (clt); Albert Socarras (alt); poss Ben Waters (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust\*3: King Oliver -c; ?Ben Whittet -cl; Arville Harris or Ben Waters -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- Rust\*4,\*6: King Oliver -c; ?Ben Whittet -cl; Arville Harris, ?Albert Socarras -as; Ben Waters -ts; Clarence Williams -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- BGR\*2: King Oliver, cnt; Benny Moten, clt; Arville Harris, ten; poss unknown, sax (1); Clarence Williams, pno; Cyrus St. Clair, bbs.

- BGR\*3,\*4: King Oliver, c; poss Ben Whittet, clt; Albert Socarras, as; poss Ben Waters, ts; Clarence Williams, p; Cyrus St. Clair, bb.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p262 and KBR):

275- : Second chorus, bar 16 (bar 66 of tune): second bar of cornet break: 2 long held notes G - F

275-A: Second chorus, bar 16 (bar 66 of tune): second bar of cornet break: sequence of 2 quarter notes a - G, 2 eighth notes G - Gb, 1 quarter note F.

#### 023 CLARA SMITH

New York,

Jan. 17, 1929

Clara Smith - voc;

(George Bacquet?), unknown - clt;

Porter Grainger - pno

147851-3

Tell Me When

Col 14409-D,

Document DOCD-5368

147852-3

Empty House Blues

Col 14409-D,

Document DOCD-5368

The Columbia files do not give any information as to the identities of these two clarinetists. Thus, all listed names certainly are pure speculation. I hear some traits of early clarinet style of "Western" origin played by the first clarinetist, who could well be Baquet as assumed. Emerson Harper appears with the Leroy Smith band in Rust, thus as a legitimate musician who probably did not have the strong and fast vibrato heard. Because of this Ernest Elliott appears to be another possibility. The clarinetist playing second parts can not be identified at all since nothing individual can be detected, and it is far off the mark to name Ben Whittet, who certainly was an improvising and experienced musician with a strong bluesy style, of what nothing can be detected here.

Porter Grainger probably is the most probable pianist here.

Notes:

- Mahony, Columbia 13/14000-D Series: clarinets and piano acc.

- Rust\*3: ? George Baquet, ?Ben Whittet -cl; ?Clarence Williams -p.

- Rust\*4: ?Emerson Harper and another -cl; ?Porter Grainger -p.

- Rust\*6: Acc by 2 cl (? Emerson Harper, ? George Baquet, ?Ben Whittet); ?Porter Grainger -p.

- BGR\*2: prob George Baquet, Ben Whittet, clts; prob Clarence Williams, pno.

- BGR\*3,\*4: poss George Baquet, poss Ben Whittet, clts; prob Clarence Williams, pno.

#### 024 CHARLIE JOHNSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

May 08, 1929

Leonard Davis, Sidney de Paris - tpt; George Washington - tbn ;

Ben Whittet, Edgar Sampson - alt, clt ; Ben Waters - ten, clt;

Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Billy Taylor - bbs; George Stafford - dms;

Ben Waters - arr (1,2,3,4); Benny Carter - arr (5)

51298-1

Harlem Drag

Vic test,

Frog DGF 12

51298-2

Harlem Drag

Vic V38059,

Frog DGF 8

51299-1

Hot Bones And Rice

Vic V38059,

Frog DGF 8

51299-2

Hot Bones And Rice

Vic test,

Frog DGF 12

53600-1

Mo'lasses

Vic test unis.on 78, [www.soundcloud.com](http://www.soundcloud.com)

Note: 53600-1: see VJM 167- 21/ N&N 63-12, 69 - 10

The Johnson band was able to keep a steady personnel over lengthy periods, possibly because of Ed Smalls' generosity and Johnson's happy-go-lucky attitude. Yet Arthur Gibbs' disbanding in summer 1928 opened up the opportunity to engage some young and promising musicians and thus to fill vacancies. There had not been a distinct first trumpet player, such as the Henderson band and the Ellington band had. Here now, with Leonard Davis, a perfect man for this role had been hired. Together with him arrived Edgar Sampson to fill Benny Carter's footsteps. These two musicians seem to have been engaged immediately and had already been recorded in the two preceding sessions of September 1928. Later arrivals from the same Gibbs band - it really is a pity they were not recorded under Gibbs' name (but they were under 'Lem Fowler's Favorites') - were trombonist George Washington to fill Harrison's place and Billy Taylor sen. as replacement for Cyrus St.Clair. Both chairs were not easy to fill, as their earlier inhabitants left very big holes when leaving. And quite naturally the band lost a lot of impetus after the change.

Thus, it is no wonder that these two issued titles leave something to be desired. The band certainly sounds a bit tame here, in spite of the competent playing and soloing by all participants. Whereas every Victor session before produced at least one issued up-tempo tune, this session had only two slow-to-medium titles, the unissued title probably a fast one. A pity! We do not know anything about this title, but it should be added, that there exists a ragtime composition of that very name by C. Luckeith "Lucky" Roberts, recorded as piano roll on QRS in 1923. A quite lively and exciting tune and I wonder if it is the same as recorded here.

"Harlem Drag" is a rather neat blues composition, enlivened by some 16 bar strains. There is some variety in Waters' arrangement and phantastic trumpet lead playing by Len Davis. Whittet is beautiful on clarinet, and I certainly wonder why Harry Dial rated him so poorly in his book 'All This Jazz About Jazz'. With Johnson he played beautiful down-to-earth bluesy clarinet, just the right notes at the right places, just as he did later on on record with Eubie Blake's Orchestra (listen to "St. Louis Blues"! ). Very interesting growl playing of an individual kind by George Washington. And again, prominently de Paris on trumpet. Although all earlier discographies list Gus Aiken as trumpet here, he certainly is not on the record nor was he a permanent member of the band.

"Hot Bones And Rice", a Charlie Johnson composition arranged by Waters is a sombre, partly minor, tune basing on extended blues structure, which only shows off its qualities when listened to carefully. Soloists again Whittet, Washington and de Paris. If only they had issued the third title!

These two tunes, together with the two issued titles of September 19, 1928, exhibit what we identify as the Charlie Johnson band sound. Yet it has to be stated that the Charlie Johnson band did not own an individual sound as the Ellington band or the Henderson band. These two last named bands had in Redman - later Benny Carter - and Ellington himself arrangers in their ranks, who were able to create a distinctive characteristic band sound, whereas the Johnson band relied on stock arrangements and arrangements from other sources. Johnson is known to have bought everything available from outside arrangers. Thus, he played two different arrangements of "Rhapsody In Blue" from

different people, one of them Benny Carter. Moreover, Ben Whitted was responsible to make fitting arrangements out of every hit tune published and he is known to have harmonized Louis Armstrong's recorded solos for three-part brass for the band.

It certainly was a major event for similarly interested collectors when the discovery of an hitherto unknown test pressing of this session's third recorded title "Mo'lasses" was published on the world-wide-web.

On this title we hear one of the hottest bands in Harlem at the end of the 1920s, very compact here, smoothly swinging their way with an arrangement which certainly is not by Benny Waters, as with most of the other band recordings. Waters' style was more down-to-earth – more rudimentary, in three-part harmony. Here now we hear an arrangement very much pointing forward to Swing-style Jazz. Certain elements of the arrangement – the rhythmic conception, the augmented chords - are very similar to the two titles by Joe Steele's Orchestra, of which we know that their arrangements were the work of a youthful Benny Carter. The young arrangers at that time made the rounds through the dancing-establishments to sell their latest works to the bands and earn some money and reputation. But as Carter had been a long-serving member of the Johnson band – now with Fletcher Henderson's band – he probably also had been an important contributor to the Johnson band book. We know that Johnson bought every arrangement suitable for his band. With Johnson's band Carter had made the earliest recordings of his arrangements (*Charleston Is The Best Dance After All* and *You Ain't The One* of January 24, 1928). The rhythmic approach, the chords, the chord-progressions and the four-part harmony force me to the conclusion that this has to be a Benny Carter arrangement.

As soloists we hear a rather smooth – or tame – Benny Waters on tenor, then 6 bars of a very unusual – for its time – saxophone section led by trombone in close four-part harmony (who would have thought of something like that but Benny Carter ?) (B1), then a short clarinet solo by the band's clarinet man Ben Whitted (B2), then unmistakably Sidney de Paris with his peppery hot style for one chorus (A2). In between and just after de Paris we hear two alto breaks by what must be the young Edgar Sampson. The style is very much like what we know of Benny Carter, and certainly Sampson was - as successor to Carter in the Johnson band - influenced by the growing giant Carter. This then supports very unexpectedly my claim in our Clarence Williams series part 3, session 096 in N&N 60, that Sampson might actually be the altoist of Williams' *Zonky* and *You've Got To Be Modernistic!* There aren't any further recordings of Sampson that early. The "middle-eight" of the tpt chorus is filled by a beautiful melodious trombone solo by Washington, not in his usual growl manner. He certainly was one of the many sadly overlooked great musicians of the Jazz-Age. In the last chorus (A3), again in the "middle-eight", we hear as soloist the majestic – and clear – Leonard Davis, he too one of the sadly neglected greats.

Furthermore I'd like the reader – and listener – to take notice of Billy Taylor Sr.'s 2 octave tuba-glissando in bar 8 of the last chorus (A3). Marvelous! (He was Duke Ellington's bass player in the late 1930 - another unsung master of Jazz.) And what I love to notice is the very amiably nonchalant inaccuracy of the band playing the music. Quite different from white bands of the time. But I love that! And the band swings like hell!

The title "Mo'lasses" is a tune by the great Harlem pianist C. Luckeyth "Lucky" Roberts, one of the fathers of Harlem stride piano. He composed the tune for his show "Go! Go!" in the early 20s. He also recorded this tune on piano-roll QRS 2306 in August 1923, reissued on LP Biograph BLP 1001. Words were by Alex Rogers. The tune has a Chorus in C, starting in minor chords in AABA form 32 bars, then goes – after a bridge – into a very unusual structure of 24 bars AAB in almost immovable harmonies. Then again it goes back to the chorus of the beginning. The Johnson recording (Carter arrange-ment?) follows this structure, yet expanding it harmonically, according to the possibilities of the band and in contempo-raneous style.

#### Notes:

- *Delaunay, New Hot Discography 1948: Leonard Davis, Sidney De Paris, Gus Aiken - tpt; George Washington - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Edgar Sampson - alt, vln; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - gtr; Billy Taylor - bbs; George Stafford - dms - Jazz Directory Vol. Five 1955: Gus Aiken, Sidney De Paris - tpt; George Stephenson - tbn; Ben Whitted - clt; Edgar Sampson - alt, vln; Ben Waters - ten; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Billy Taylor - bbs; George Stafford - dms*  
 - *Rust\*2: Sidney De Paris, Gus Aiken - tpt; George Stephenson - tbn; Ben Whitted - alt, clt; Edgar Sampson - alt; Ben Waters - ten, clt; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Billy Taylor - bbs; George Stafford - dms*  
 - *Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Leonard Davis, Sidney De Paris - tpt; George Stephenson - tbn; Edgar Sampson, Ben Whitted - alt, clt; Ben Waters - ten, clt, arr; Charlie Johnson - pno; Bobby Johnson - bjo; Billy Taylor - bbs; George Stafford - dms*

- *Storyville 35-185:*

- *Rust, The Victor Master Book Vol. 2: 2 t / tb / 3 s / p / bj / bb / d.*

- *Storyville 35-185: Leonard Davis, Sidney de Paris, tpt; George Washington, tbn; Ben Whitted, Edgar Sampson, clt, alt; Ben Waters, ten, clt; Charlie Johnson, pno; Bobby Johnson, bjo; Billy Taylor, bbs; George Stafford, dms; "Rust lists George Stephenson as the trombone player on this last session but, according to John Chilton in his book 'Who's Who of Jazz', Stephenson did not join Charlie Johnson until three years later."*

#### Tunes Structures:

51298-1 Harlem Drag Key of Eb Victor

(A1 Chorus 12 bars blues Davis tpt - ens)(A2 Chorus 12 bars Whitted clt)(B1 Vamp 16 / ens 4, De Paris tpt 4, ens 4, De Paris tpt 2, ens 2)(C1 Verse 16 bars AABA ens)(C2 Verse 16 bars /De Paris tpt 8, saxes 4, Washington tbn 4) (Bridge 4 bars ens)(A3 Chorus 12 bars ens)(Coda 4 bars ens)

51298-2 Harlem Drag Key of Eb Victor

same as 51298-1

arrangement: Benny Waters / composer credit is: Benny Waters

51299-1 Hot Bones And Rice Eb / Eb m / Eb Victor

(Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Verse I 16 bars extended blues Whitted clt - ens)(Vamp 4 bars ens)(B1 Chorus (Eb minor) 16 bars AA' Washington tbn)(C1 Verse II (Vamp ?) 8 bars clts in harmony)(Bridge 4 bars ens)(B2 Chorus 16 bars De Paris tpt)(A2 Verse I 16 bars ens)

51299-2 Hot Bones And Rice Eb / Eb m / Eb Victor

same as 51299-1

arrangement: Benny Waters / composer credit is: Chas. Johnson

53600 Mo'lasses Key of C (Am) / F / C (Am) Victor unissued test

(Intro ens 4 bars) (A1 Chorus 32 bars AABA ens 16 - saxes 8 - ens 8 bars - alto break in bars 7/8) (bridge ens 8 bars modulation to F) (B1 Chorus 24 bars AAB Waters ten 6 - ens 2 - Waters ten 6 - ens 2 - tbn + saxes 6 - ens 2) (B2 Chorus 24 bars Whitted clt 6 - ens 2 - clt 6 - ens 2 - ens 8 modulation back to C (Am)) (A2 Chorus 32 bars AABA de Paris tpt 14 - Sampson alt 2 - Washington tbn 8 - de Paris tpt 6 - Sampson alt 2) (tag 6 bars Sampson alt 2 - ens 4) (A3 Chorus 32 bars AABA ens 16 - L. Davis tpt 6 - ens 2 - ens 8) (tag ens 2)

arrangement: Benny Carter / composer credit is: C. Luckeyth "Lucky" Roberts (not on test?)

#### Discernible differences of takes:

51298-1 tpt II (De Paris) plays double-time in 7th bar of B1 Vamp  
 51298-2 tpt II (De Paris) does not play double-time in 7th bar of B1 Vamp  
 51299-1 A1 starts rather chaotic, clt plays 23 notes in first 4 bars  
 51299-2 A1 starts clean, clt plays only 13 notes in first 4 bars

## 025 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' ORCHESTRA

New York,

Jan. 15, 1930

*Leonard Davis* – tpt; *George Washington* – tbn;*Ben Whitted*, unknown – alt, clt; *Arville Harris* – ten, clt;*Clarence Williams* – pno (1); *James P. Johnson* – pno (2); *Billy Taylor* – bbs; *Floyd Casey* – dms

403630-B Left All Alone With The Blues

OK 8763, Collector's Classics COCD 29

403631-A I've Found A New Baby

OK 8763, Collector's Classics COCD 29

*Composer credits are: 403630 (Williams - Johnson); 403631 (Palmer - Williams)*

With a fresh look and further developed ears, I – KBR – have to state a partially new personnel for this Clarence Williams session, in parts different from what our listening group had agreed to about ten years ago, but without consulting my former – or still present – co-workers. Sorry! I have now discovered a much more reasonable personnel as follows:

The trumpet player shows that clean and strong trumpet sound as owned by Leonard Davis. It is characterized by his academic approach to his instrument as typical for first-chair trumpet players. Please, listen to the two Charlie Johnson sessions of September 1928 and 1929 or the McKinney's Cotton Pickers sessions of November 1929.

The trombonist has that "shallow" growl sound I have got to know from George Washington, as can be heard at Charlie Johnson's recording session of 1929. Both players had joined the Johnson band in early 1929 coming from the Arthur Gibbs band. The Arthur Gibbs band was a very ambitious band, established in Harlem in 1926, playing a couple of important ballrooms and other premises at this time, but unable to state a decent recording contract. As their only recording I have identified the two sides by Lemuel Fowler's Favorites (see my list on Lem Fowler and my article 'A Case of Sudden Enlightenment' at this website!).

The first alto sax is probably played by Ben Whitted, he the first chair altoist with the Charlie Johnson band for many years, and contemporaneously together with Davis and Washington with this famed houseband of 'Smalls' Paradise'. He certainly is not Socarras with his sophisticated tone, nor is he Cecil Scott as assumed earlier. There also is a second (third) alto present, but he only plays section parts, except for 8 solo bars in the middle of James P.'s piano solo in the second title. He might not be Russell Procope, as he - by his own statement - had his first recording session with Clarence Williams. This must accordingly have been sometime in 1928, before his documented Jelly Roll Morton session in December of that year.

Arville Harris is audible briefly on clarinet, mainly playing tenor sax parts.

As can be easily differentiated, we have two pianists: Clarence himself on the first title and the father of the 'Harlem Stride' piano – James P. Johnson – on the second. Oddly, there is no banjo player on these sides.

On tuba we certainly do not hear Cyrus St. Clair, the master. But instead, the above-named horn men obviously have brought their band-mate Billy Taylor – of the Johnson band, as well as the former Arthur Gibbs band – with his multi-toned more modern approach to bass playing – to this session. I believe Taylor to be one of the originators of 'bass-lines' playing, on tuba as well as on his string bass of subsequent years. He became one of the most sought-after bassists of the Swing era.

The drum playing is restricted to soft cymbal playing in the background - the afterbeat double-strokes on cymbal – and the occasional strategic cymbal-crash. This is what we know as from Floyd Casey.

The following is what our listening group agreed to be the personnel when checking all Clarence Williams band recordings about ten years ago: *Ed Anderson* – tpt; *Henry Hicks* – tbn; *Ben Whitted* or *Cecil Scott*, *Russell Procope* – alt, clt; *Arville Harris* – ten, clt; *Clarence Williams* – pno (1); *James P. Johnson* – pno (2); *Cyrus St. Clair* – bbs; *Floyd Casey* – dms. We also wrote: "The drum playing is restricted to cymbal crashes and could be anyone, although we list Casey. Harris is audible briefly on clarinet. The lead alto is not Socarras and Procope is a possibility. Both Anderson and Charlie Gaines were discussed for trumpet and Anderson seems more likely on comparison with Gaines' solo work during the period. The trombonist is uncertain: Rust gives Geechie Fields and George Washington has also been suggested. Hicks is a suggestion, because he was band mate with Anderson in Willie Lynch's band – later Mills Blue Rhythm Band – at the time of recording and on aural grounds compared with his contemporaneous work with the Jungle Town Stompers, the Musical Stevedores and Jasper Davis/Georgia Gigolos."

Notes:

- Storyville 26: *Charlie Gaines* (tpt); *unknown* (tbn); *poss Ben Whitted* (alt); *poss Russell Procope* (alt); *Arville Harris* (clt, ten); *prob James P. Johnson* (pno); *Cyrus St. Clair* (bbs); *Floyd Casey* (cymbal).

- Lord, *Clarence Williams p311: Charlie Gaines* or *Roy Eldridge* (tpt); *unknown* (tbn); *possibly Ben Whitted*, *possibly Russell Procope* (if present) (alt); *Arville Harris* (clt, ten); *prob James P. Johnson* (pno); *Cyrus St. Clair* (bbs); *Floyd Casey* (cym); *Clarence Williams* (dir).

- Rust\*2: *Charlie Gaines*, *?another* (tpt); *unknown* (tbn); *Ben Whitted*, *?Russell Procope* (clt, alt); *Arville Harris* or *poss Prince Robinson* (clt, ten); *?Fats Waller* (pno); *Cyrus St. Clair* (bbs); *Floyd Casey* (dms)

- Rust\*3: *Charlie Gaines* -t; *unknown* -tb; *Ben Whitted*, *?Russell Procope* -cl -as; *Arville Harris* -cl -ts; *James P. Johnson* -p; *Cyrus St. Clair* -bb; *?Floyd Casey* (or anyone) -cymbal.

- Rust\*4,\*6: *Charlie Gaines*, t; *?Geechie Fields*, tb; *?Russell Procope*, cl, as; *Arville Harris*, cl, ts; *James P. Johnson*, p; *Cyrus St. Clair*, bb; *?Floyd Casey*, d.

## 026 EUBIE BLAKE AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

Mar. 1931

*Eubie Blake* – pno, ldr;*Alfred Brown*, *Frank Belt*, *Walter 'Jock' Bennett* – tpt; *Calvin Jones* – tbn;*Harold Scott*, *Ralph Brown* – alt, clt; *Robert Robinson* – ten, clt;*George Rickson* – pno; *Leroy Vanderveer* – bjo; *Frank Smith* – bbs; *Alan Porter* – dms;*Dick Robertson* – voc

1234-4 Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone

Cr 3090, Harrison Records LP-R (LP)

1239-1 I'm No Account Anymore

Cr 3090, Harrison Records LP-R (LP)

1240- When You're Lover Has Gone

Cr 3086 not on LP/CD

1241- It Looks Like Love

Cr 3105, Harrison Records LP-R (LP)

This first recording session of Eubie Blake and his Orchestra of March 1931 may positively be seen as cut by the personnel given by George Winfield's recollections (see above), with the exception that it is not Winfield on third trumpet here, but probably Walter 'Jock' Bennett, and not Ben Whitted on first alto sax, but the band's regular first alto man Harold Scott. The singer aurally is Dick Robertson as on all sessions recorded.

From Michael Rader's research we know that Blake's band accompanied the show 'Singing the Blues' from April 1931 on, possibly earlier. As it was frequent use, the band was recorded before, for publicity reasons and to cash in on public success.

My personnel listed seems to be generally known since 1969 (Rust\*3), yet is adapted along 'George Winfield's Story', being published in 1978. We thus find Walter 'Jock' Bennett – not 'Cuban' Bennett, and not George Winfield! – as third trumpet player/soloist. First alto sax should be Harold Scott, as Winfield recalled: "On the records we made for Eubie, incidentally, Ben Whitted subbed for Harold Scott." As Winfield only participated in the September session, Ben Whitted should only be seen as participant at this session 006 ("records we made for Eubie ..."). Of the three reed players I assume Ralph Brown to be the main clarinet soloist on the below sides (see Al Vollmer, Storyville 51-84: "and Jones preferred Brown to play mostly alto, as he felt the clarinet otherwise conflicted with the violin"), whereas Robert Robinson can clearly be distinguished as clarinet soloist in the Vitaphone short-film 'Pie Pie Blackbird' (see session 007 below).

In some choruses we hear both pianists solo together, George Rickson spreading a fine jazzy and swinging foundation for Eubie Blake's rather irritating ragtime styled renditions in the treble register. OK, it was a show band!

There almost is no solo work on 'Please, Don't Talk About ...' except for the pianists and the singer. On the second title we find a nice chorus for the clarinet trio cum trombone. The final clarinet solo on this title may be played by Robinson, as compared with his work in the 'Pie Pie Blackbird' film. The fourth title of the session is of similar substance, and equally uneventful jazz-wise.

Notes:

- Delaunay, *New Hot Discography 1948*: not listed

- Rust\*2: three unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); Robert Robinson, unknown (clt, alt); unknown (ten); Eubie Blake (pno, ldr); unknown (bjo); unknown (bbs); unknown (dms); Dick Robertson (vcl)

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Alfred Brown -Frank Belt -George Winfield -t; Calvin Jones -tb; Ben Whittet -Ralph Brown -cl -as; Robert Robinson -cl -ts; Eubie Blake -p -ldr; George Rickson -p; Leroy Vanderveer -bj; Frank Smith -bb; Helen Porter -d; Dick Robertson -v

Tunes Structures:

1234-4 *Please Don't Talk About Me When I'm Gone* Key of Eb/Db/Ab/F Crown  
(Intro 8 bars bbs-clt - ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA DR voc - ens)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Verse 16 bars AA' ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA ens)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA EB treble pno + GR background pno 16 - ?RB clt + ens 8 - EB treble pno + GR background pno 6 - ens 2)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 4 32 bars AABA ens 16 - CJ o-tbn 8 - ens 8)(tag 2 bars ens)

1239-1 *I'm No Account Anymore* Key of Eb/F/Eb Crown  
(Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA DR voc + ens)(bridge 4 bars ens)(tag 4 bars ens modulation)(interlude 8 bars ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA CJ o-tbn - ens 16 - clts 8 - CJ o-tbn - ens 8)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA ens 16 - EB treble pno + GR background pno 8 - ens 8)(tag 2 bars ens)(1/2 Chorus 4 16 bars BA RR clt 8 - ens 8)(tag 2 bars ens)

1241- *It Looks Like Love* Key of Eb/Db/Eb Crown  
(Intro 8 bars ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA ens)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Verse 16 bars AA' ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA DR voc - ens)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA EB treble pno + GR background pno 4 - ens 4 - EB treble pno + GR background pno 4 - ens 4 - EB treble pno + GR background pno 8 - ens 8)(tag 2 bars ens)

027 **EUBIE BLAKE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

New York,

Apr. 1931

Eubie Blake – pno, ldr;

Alfred Brown, Frank Belt, Walter 'Jock' Bennett – tpt; Calvin Jones – tbn;

Harold Scott, Ralph Brown – alt, clt; Robert Robinson – ten, clt;

George Rickson – pno; Leroy Vanderveer – bjo; Frank Smith – bbs; Alan Porter – dms;

Dick Robertson – voc

1295-1 *Two Little Blue Little Eyes*

Cr 3111, Harrison Records LP-G (LP)

1296-1 *Nobody's Sweetheart*

Cr 3130, Harrison Records LP-G (LP)

1297-1 *One More Time*

Cr 3111, Harrison Records LP-G (LP)

1298-3 *St. Louis Blues*

Cr 3130, Harrison Records LP-G (LP)

1298-4 *St. Louis Blues*

Cr 3130 not on LP/CD

We cannot determine possible changes of personnel at subsequent sessions as the recorded music is almost entirely arranged. As musicians can be identified by their solo-work only, there is very little possibility to compare. Thus, I can only but maintain the former personnel – with no alterations. And this still is not the session with Ben Whitted participating, re George Winfield.

There is very nice trumpet in the first chorus of the first title, but for me it does not sound like Bennett as I know him. 'Nobody's Sweetheart' has Blake "tickling" the keys, again; the clarinet soloist shows blues and funk – for me Ralph Brown, and the hot trumpet – 'Jock' Bennett? – delivers the hot ride-out. There is very competent growl playing by the second trumpet probably in 'One More Time', thus probably Frank Belt. And 'St. Louis Blues' also has nice muted trumpet – Belt again, possibly – and bluesy clarinet of the Western manner, thus probably Ralph Brown. The last trumpet choruses I would assume to be 'Jock' Bennett. This version of 'St. Louis Blues' is performed in an arrangement very different from all other titles, because the band use a less complicated jazz arrangement here. Therefore we find much more solo performance.

Notes:

- Delaunay, *New Hot Discography 1948*: not listed

- Rust\*2: three unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); Robert Robinson, unknown (clt, alt); unknown (ten); Eubie Blake (pno, ldr); unknown (bjo); unknown (bbs); unknown (dms); Dick Robertson (vcl)

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Alfred Brown -Frank Belt -George Winfield -t; Calvin Jones -tb; Ben Whittet -Ralph Brown -cl -as; Robert Robinson -cl -ts; Eubie Blake -p -ldr; George Rickson -p; Leroy Vanderveer -bj; Frank Smith -bb; Helen Porter -d; Dick Robertson -v

Tunes Structures:

1295-1 *Two Little Blue Little Eyes* Key of C/Eb/C Crown  
(Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AA' ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AA' DR voc)(tag 4 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 3 32 bars AA' EB treble pno + GR background pno)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 4 32 bars AA' ens 16 - RR ten 8 - ens 8)(Coda 4 bars ens)

1296-1 *Nobody's Sweetheart* Key of Ab/C/Ab Crown  
(Intro 8 bars ens)(Chorus 1 40 bars ABACA' ens)(Chorus 2 40 bars ABACA' DR voc modulation)(Chorus 3 40 bars ABABA' ?RB clt 16 - CJ o-tbn 16 - ?RB clt 6 - ens 2 modulation)(Chorus 4 40 bars ABACA' ens 16 - WJB o-tpt 24)(tag 2 bars ens)

1297-1 *One More Time* Key of Em/Fm Crown  
(Intro 8 bars ens+?FB m-tpt)(Chorus 1 38 bars AA'BA' ens+?FB m-tpt 18 - saxes 8 - ens+?m-tpt 12)(Chorus 2 38 bars AA'BA' DR voc)(Bridge 6 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 3 AA'BA' ens+RR ten 20 - saxes 8 - ens+RR ten 4 - ens 8)(tag 2 bars ens)

1298-3 *St. Louis Blues* Key of G/Gm/G Crown  
(Intro 8 bars ens)(Chorus 1 12 bars DR voc + ?FB m-tpt)(Chorus 2 12 bars DR voc + ?FB m-tpt)(Verse 16 bars CJ o-tbn - ens)(Chorus 3 12 bars DR voc)(Chorus 4 12 bars ?RB clt)(Chorus 5 12 bars ?RB clt)(Chorus 6 12 bars WJB o-tpt)(Chorus 7 12 bars ?RB clt)(Chorus 8 12 bars WJB o-tpt - ens)(tag 2 bars WJB o-tpt)

Discernible differences of takes:



1298: as take -4 of matrix 1298 is un-reissued, differences cannot be stated.

028 **EUBIE BLAKE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

New York,

Jun. 03, 1931

Eubie Blake – pno, ldr;

Alfred Brown, Frank Belt, Walter 'Jock' Bennett – tpt; Calvin Jones – tbn;

Harold Scott, Ralph Brown – alt, clt; Robert Robinson - ten, clt;

George Rickson – pno; Leroy Vanderveer – bjo; Frank Smith – bbs; Alan Porter – dms;

Dick Robertson - voc

69683-1 Thumpin' n' Bumpin'

Vic 22737,

Frog DGF 11

69683-2 Thumpin' n' Bumpin'

Vic unissued,

Frog DGF 71

69684-1 Little Girl

Vic 22735,

Frog DGF 11

69684-2 Little Girl

Vic unissued,

Frog DGF 71

69685-1 My Blue Days Blew Over (When You Came Back To Me)

Vic unissued,

Frog DGF 71

69685-2 My Blue Days Blew Over (When You Came Back To Me)

Vic 22735,

Frog DGF 11

The band really seems to be in fine fettle: "thumpin' and bumpin'", as the first title suggests. The tuba has a nice and interesting part in this title, playing harmonic bass-lines and swinging along with Rickson on piano. (Which makes me wonder: was Rickson the author of all these most interesting arrangements?) And the drummer still uses brushes all along, to change over to sticks in the last chorus, only to cause big confusion when missing the band's rhythm for one measure on his cymbal in take -2 (see below).

'Little Girl' has nice romantic trumpet over the ensemble and the vocal by probably Belt in the first choruses, and hot muted trumpet in the last chorus by probably Bennett. He also solos extendedly in the penultimate chorus, the middle-eight taken over by Vanderveer's banjo solo. The two pianists then perform their double-level piano model in the middle-eight of the last chorus.

And not Ben Whitted, here.

Notes:

- Delaunay, *New Hot Discography 1948*: not listed

- Rust\*2: three unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); Robert Robinson, unknown (clt, alt); unknown (ten); Eubie Blake (pno, ldr); unknown (bjo); unknown (bbs); unknown (dms); Dick Robertson (vcl)

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Alfred Brown -Frank Belt -George Winfield -t; Calvin Jones -tb; Ben Whitted -Ralph Brown -cl -as; Robert Robinson -cl -ts; Eubie Blake -p -ldr; George Rickson -p; Leroy Vanderveer -bj; Frank Smith -bb; Helen Porter -d; Dick Robertson -v

- B. Rust, *The Victor Master Book*, Vol. 2: 3 t; tb; 3 s; p; bj; bb; d; vocalist: Dick Robertson

Tunes Structures:

69683-1 Thumpin' n' Bumpin' Key of F / Dm / G / Bb

Victor

(Intro 8 bars ens – RR ten)(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA ens)(Chorus 2 30(!) bars AABA' DR voc)(Chorus 3 32 bars AA'BA ens 8 – CJ o-tbn 8 – ?WJB 8 – CJ o-tbn 8)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 4 32 bars AABA ens 16 – RR ten 8 – ens 8)(tag 4 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 5 32 bars AABA ens / clts 16 – ens 16)(Coda 4 bars ens)

69684-1 Little Girl Key of Bb / Ab / C

Victor

(Chorus 1 32 bars AA' ens 8 – EB treble pno + GR background pno 8 – ens 16)(Chorus 2 32 bars AA' DR voc – ? m-tpt)(tag 4 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 3 32 bars AA' CJ o-tbn 8 – ens 8 – CJ o-tbn 8 – ens 8)(tag 2 bars ens modul.)(Chorus 4 32 bars AA' ?WJB m-tpt 16 – saxes 8 – ens 8)

69685-1 My Blue Days Blew Over (When You Came Back To Me) Key of C / Eb / D

Victor

(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA clts 16 – m-brass 8 – clts 6 – ens 2)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Verse 16 bars ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA DR voc 30 – WJB o-tpt 2)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA WJB o-tpt 16 – LV bjo 8 – WJB o-tpt 6 – ens 2)(tag 2 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 4 32 bars AABA ens 16 – EB treble pno + GR background pno 8 – ens 8)(tag 2 bars ens)

Discernible differences of takes:

69683-1: Middle-eight of last chorus: drummer's cymbal inaudible

69683-2: Middle-eight of last chorus: drummer struggles to play same rhythm with band, but plays two quarter strokes each one measure behind the band for four bars, then changing over to play one stroke each only on the band's two beats

69684-1: First chorus: E. Blake starts his treble piano over Rickson's background reluctantly in bar 10

69684-2: First chorus: E. Blake starts his treble piano over Rickson's background in bar 8 already

69685-1: Trumpet solo in chorus 3 ends with downward phrase ending with middle Eb

69685-2: Trumpet solo in chorus 3 ends with upward phrase ending with high Eb

029 **EUBIE BLAKE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

New York,

Sept. 1931

Eubie Blake – pno, ldr;

Alfred Brown, Frank Belt, George Winfield – tpt; Calvin Jones – tbn;

Ben Whitted, Ralph Brown – alt, clt; Robert Robinson - ten, clt;

George Rickson – pno; Leroy Vanderveer – bjo; Frank Smith – bbs; Jesse Baltimore – dms;

Dick Robertson - voc

1476-3 Blues In My Heart

Cr 3197,

Harrison Records LP-G (LP)

1477-2 Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries

Cr 3193

not on LP/CD

1477-3 Life Is Just A Bowl Of Cherries

Cr 3193

not on LP/CD

1478-2 Sweet Georgia Brown

Cr 3197,

Harrison Records LP-G (LP)

1479-1 River, Stay ^Way From My Door

Cr 3193

not on LP/CD

1479-3 River, Stay ^Way From My Door

Cr 3193

not on LP/CD

Here now, we seem to be on firm ground, re the personnel. This must be the recording session George Winfield refers to in his recollections, he himself on trumpet, and Charlie Johnson's Ben Whitted on alto/clarinet.

'Blues In My Heart' is the famous Benny Carter composition of this same year, yet played in an arrangement different from Carter's own as used by the Chick Webb Band – and with Carter himself on alto sax. The Blake band version uses a more romantic trumpet part.

The trumpet soloist in 'Sweet Georgia Brown' using wa-wa technique must then be Frank Belt, as George Winfield - although playing third trumpet - recalled that "I didn't take any solos" (see below). (It is a sad fact that the only ad-lib trumpet solo declared by Winfield as his own is on Jesse Stone's Variety recording of 'Windstorm', one of two only titles by the Jesse Stone's Orchestra of 1937 never reissued in all the years of great LPs and CDs of the past.)

Notes:

- Delaunay, *New Hot Discography 1948*: not listed

- Peter Carr, *You Don't Know Me, But ... George Winfield's Story*, p. 20: "After my first week (with Elmer Snowden at 'Smalls' – KBR), Eubie Blake sent for me for the show 'Singing The Blues'. I was on two weeks' notice at Small's (sic – KBR) when I made the audition with Blake. There were only the two of us at his apartment. He asked me if I knew 'Memories Of You' – he had written it for one of his shows. He told me to play a straight chorus, then to swing the second. At the end of the second chorus he said he was changing keys, so I played it in the new key with ease. He told me I was satisfactory and would let me know when rehearsals would start for the full band. He told me to call him when I finished at Small's. I did this and went into rehearsal for the show as 3rd trumpet. The show had already had a try-out and had closed until the theatre season started.

Walter 'Jock' Bennett was Blake's 3rd trumpeter but left before the show reopened. For the show, the band was follows: Alfred Brown, 1st trumpet; Frank Belt, 2nd trumpet; George Winfield, 3rd trumpet; Calvin Jones, trombone; Harold Scott, 1st alto sax; Bob Robinson, tenor sax; Ralph Brown, 3rd alto sax; George Rickson, piano; Leroy Vanderveer, guitar; Frank Smith, bass; Jesse Baltimore, drums. There were later changes in the band after the show closed. The show was a musical drama and ran for about four weeks. It opened on 21st September 1931 at the Liberty Theatre on West 42nd Street. Adam Clayton's first wife, Isabell Washington, was the star. Her sister Fredi Washington was later starred in the film 'Imitation Of Life' with Louise Beavers.

After the show closed, we made a few auditions. One was for NBC but nothing came of it. We played a week at the Lafayette Theatre on 7th Avenue. I continued my gig work while Blake was idle. We finally got two weeks with the Buck and Bubbles unit, using the same band except for the brass. We had lost Frank Belt and Alfred Brown, who went with a show called 'Sugar Hill'. The *International Musician* of January 1932 lists the band in Washington with the two changes in the trumpet section. I was now playing second, Gilbert Paris was 1st, Ward Pinkett was 3rd. For the first show there was no one there but me; Ward had fallen asleep in the movie and Paris was held up with a problem at the Union. So Ward showed and I played 1st and Ward 2nd.

On the records we made for Eubie, incidentally, Ben Whitted subbed for Harold Scott. I didn't take any solos. Bob Robinson was the feature man on tenor sax; he was from Newport News, Virginia, but I didn't know him from his Norfolk days. When Eubie first needed another trumpet player, it was Harold Scott who highly recommended me. Bob named Ward Pinkett. Eubie called me as I had more show experience than Ward and had played more under a baton. Ward was a good swing man and had a very exciting style. At sessions, when each man would take a chorus, Ward would say, "Give me the next five."

The *'International Musician'* of January 1932 lists the personnel of the band as mentioned above."

- Rust\*2: three unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); Robert Robinson, unknown (clt, alt); unknown (ten); Eubie Blake (pno, ldr); unknown (bjo); unknown (bbs); unknown (dms); Dick Robertson (vcl)

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Alfred Brown -Frank Belt -George Winfield -t; Calvin Jones -tb; Ben Whitted -Ralph Brown -cl -as; Robert Robinson -cl -ts; Eubie Blake -p -ldr; George Rickson -p; Leroy Vanderveer -bj; Frank Smith -bb; Helen Porter -d; Dick Robertson -v

#### Tunes Structures:

1476-3 *Blues In My Heart* Key of Bb / F Crown  
(Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA DR voc modulation)(1/2 Chorus 3 16 bars AABA ens 16)  
(Coda 4 bars RR ten – ens)

1478-2 *Sweet Georgia Brown* Key of G / Dm / Ab / G Crown  
(Intro 8 bars ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AA' ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AA' DR voc – EB pno background)(tag 6 bars ens modulation)  
(Verse 20 bars AA' RR ten – ens modulation)(Chorus 3 32 bars AA' FB m-tpt)(Bridge 4 bars clt – ens modulation)(1/2 Chorus 4 16 bars A' ens – ten – ens)(Coda 8 bars ens)

#### Discernible differences of takes:

1477: as both takes of this title are un-reissued, differences cannot be stated.

1479: as both takes of this title are un-reissued, differences cannot be stated.

#### 030 CHARLIE JOHNSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Personnel unknown, but probably:

Leonard Davis, Frank Newton, Henry Red Allen – tpt;

Dicky Wells – tbn;

Ben Whitted, Harvey Boone – alt, clt; Leon Chu Berry – ten;

Charlie Johnson – pno; Bernard Addison – gtr; Billy Taylor – sbs; George Stafford – dms

unknown title (12 bar blues)

Tiger Rag

unknown title

New York, Jan. 25, 1933

Broadcast from SMALLS' PARADISE

CLUB 135<sup>th</sup> Street & 7<sup>th</sup> Avenue

broadcast

not on LP/CD

broadcast

not on LP/CD

broadcast

not on LP/CD

When I first came into contact to John R.T. in 1969, he told me that a number of Johnson radio transcriptions existed, and that he was optimistic about owning them some day. My latest inquiry on this matter happened to be just a couple of months before his untimely death, but he let me know that he still did not have them. The years before I had virtually asked everybody possible about this matter, but nobody knew anything about it. But 'Storyville' 35 positively stated in their Charlie Johnson disco, that "some broadcast items of Charlie Johnson's band from a later period exist, and it is to be hoped that these will appear on record eventually."

Finally, in ca. 2005 I found these – or some of these – items mentioned in Jan Evensmo's 'History of Jazz Tenor Saxophone' Vol. 1. You might imagine my surprise because I had regarded these items as simple rumors without actual value. It still cost me another two years to get hold of them, and I have to tell everybody interested that these items – there are three of them – are in fact very interesting, but that they are audible with great difficulty only because of their surface noise. And most of the listeners might judge it simply not worthwhile to listen. But we can hear a Charlie Johnson band of the day (early 1933) playing in advanced swing style as we know it from Count Basie in the beginning of his band's recording career. Benny Moten had just recorded his last Victor sessions in November 1932. These recordings are generally regarded as the first swing recordings. Now, 3 months later, Charlie Johnson shows us, that his band was perfectly aware of the developments in jazz music, and his band was at the forefront of what was going on.

The first title is a 12-bar blues tune, the first choruses missing, because the eager "recording engineer" switched his apparatus on too late. But we can hear a beautiful muted (?) trumpet chorus, which might come from Frankie Newton stylistically since he was a member of the band for some years. He is followed by a tenor solo with some counter-rhythm triplet phrasing on the sub-dominant part of the chorus. This might easily stem from Chu Berry who was Johnson's tenor man at the time, although I have to admit, that Evensmo prefers to leave this musician unknown, and it simply may be my own wishful thinking. Anyway, this beautiful tune then ends with some powerful riffs and a very advanced coda with extended chords.

"Tiger Rag" is played in a rather conventional arrangement – probably by Ben Whitted – with a competent solo clarinet on strains A and B. Then we have a full chorus of clarinet, followed by a full chorus of very exiting trumpet – probably Henry Red Allen, as he joined the band every evening after finishing his own engagement at another spot. Then a difficult to hear tenor chorus played by – perhaps – Chu Berry. This tenor chorus is divided into two parts, some bars missing in the middle. This because obviously the "recording engineer" had filled his disc with the first tune and the then following first half of "Tiger Rag". He then had to turn over his disc and record the second half of "Tiger Rag" and the following out-tune.

The title ends with a beautiful uncommon last riff chorus.

The last title, again unnamed, sounds very Ellingtonian, but is unknown to me or anybody else I have asked. Most of the sound is overlapped by the radio announcer, who brings the whole broadcast "from Smalls' Paradise" to an end.

Notes:

- Storyville 35-185: "Some broadcast items of Charlie Johnson's band from a later period exist, and it is to be hoped that these items will appear on record eventually."

Tunes Structures:

unknown title (12 bar blues) key of G (?) broadcast unissued

(A1 Chorus 12 bar blues fragment of tbn (?) chorus/ saxes – 2 bars only)(A2 Chorus 12 bars F. Newton (?) muted tpt)(A3 Chorus 12 bars Ch. Berry (?) ten)(A4 Chorus 12 bars ens syncopated riff)(A5 Chorus 12 bars ens call-and-response riff (saxes – brass))(A6 Chorus 12 bars ens)(Coda 3 bars ens)

arrangement: ? / no composer credit

Tiger Rag key of Bb, Eb, Ab broadcast unissued

(A1 strain A 32 bars /8 bars ens / 8 bars ens / 8 bars clt breaks Whitted (?) / 8 bars ens)(B1 strain B 32 bars ens – breaks clt Whitted (?))(C1 Chorus strain C 32 bars ens – clt Whitted (?))(C2 Chorus strain C 32 bars 'Red' Allen (?) tpt solo) (C3 Chorus strain C 32 bars Ch. Berry (?) ten solo - some bars missing)(C4 Chorus strain C 32 bars ens riff)

arrangement: Ben Whitted ? / no composer credit

unknown title key of Eb (?) broadcast unissued

(c. 29 bars of Chorus 32 bars AABA (?) ens – ten interjections / out tune, announcer over band)

arrangement: ? / no composer credit

**031 FLETCHER HENDERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

New York,

Feb. 1932

Russell Smith, Bobby Stark – tpt; J.C. Higginbotham – tbn;

Ben Whitted, Henry Jameson – alt, clt; Coleman Hawkins – ten, clt;

Fletcher Henderson – pno; Clarence Holiday – gtr; John Kirby – bbs, sbs; Walter Johnson - dms

unknown titles

unknown recording company

This recording session is listed only in W.C. Allen's magnificent 'Hendersonia', resulting from his own personal research. It certainly keeps a great amount of probability, but is documented nowhere. But should perhaps somebody somewhere .... OK, it certainly will not really happen. But we have to recognise: Ben Whitted for Henderson was a first rate choice for "subbing" his altoists in case of emergency. No wonder when you consider that the Charlie Johnson Paradise Band was rated among the first three of "jazz" bands in Harlem.

Notes:

- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*, p. 307: "Alto saxophonist Henry Jameson told me that he came to New York in "1932" and recorded a session with Fletcher Henderson early that year in New York, for an unrecalled company. Edgar Sampson and Russell Procopé, the regular altos with the band, were ill at the time, and Ben Whitted and he were the replacements. He said it was a somewhat smaller band than normal, and gave to following personnel: (see above). He does not recall any titles, but thinks Coleman Hawkins made at least one of the arrangements. These were instrumentals, without vocals. This session may correspond with one of the known 1932 sessions, but the personnel and instrumentation do not seem to fit.

**032 FATS WALLER AND HIS RHYTHM**

New York,

May 16, 1934

Herman Autrey – tpt; Ben Whitted – clt, alt;

Thomas Fats Waller – pno, cel, voc; Albert Casey – gtr; Billy Taylor – sbs; Harry Dial – dms, vib (1)

82526-1 A Porter's Love Song To A Chambermaid

Vic 24648,

Chronological Classics 720

82527-1 I Wish I Were Twins

Vic 24641,

Chronological Classics 720

82527-2 I Wish I Were Twins

Vic uniss. 78,

JSP 928 D

82528-1 Armful O' Sweetness

Vic 24641,

Chronological Classics 720

82529-1 Do Me Favor

Vic 24648,

Chronological Classics 720

For this, his premier recording session with his most recent recording band, Fats Waller hired musicians from the contemporary Charlie Johnson Paradise Band: Herman Autrey, Billy Taylor, and Ben Whitted. Waller had not yet developed the way to organize his highly enthusiastic bunch of musicians, and this is the very first session of its kind for Victor. So, the whole performance is below par as compared with the many following sides by Fats Waller and his Rhythm.

Herman Autrey already shows his hot side of the trumpet with good attack, flexible tone, wide open vibrato and bluesy melodic phrases – with mute or open.

His partner Ben Whitted in the wind section shows his melodic abilities on a smooth and warm clarinet, mainly sticking to the melodies with light variations of them. Drummer Harry Dial in his book 'All This Jazz about Jazz' recalls that: "Whitted didn't make more than two sessions (*recte one!* – KBR) because Oberstein said he didn't fit in the combination and he was right. 'Obie' was the recording manager." This as for the "artistic" superintendence of the Victor Recording Company. But, to be honest, Whitted decidedly was not the right man in his seat when observing the development of Waller's group of many years. For his demand Gene Sedic was a much better suited musician with punch, fire, and rapture. Whitted, instead, was first chair player in the Charlie Johnson reed section, with very little exposure only as soloist, although he played convincing blues-tinged solos – only on clarinet - in some of the Charlie Johnson Paradise Band records. Here, with Waller, he can also be heard soloing on alto in the third title. I like his intimate and soft playing all through this whole session, but probably, it was not what was wanted by the Victor people to gain good and sufficient results..

Nothing must be said about the bandleader in all his glory. After twenty-two years of a public life in the Harlem jazz and show scene, he had found his way, now, to live another all too short row of nine exuberant and excessive years of music and wide popularity.

This also was the begin of a years-long happy co-operation of youthful guitarist Albert Casey, 18 years of age, this session being his first professional job. Billy Taylor was the Charlie Johnson band's bassist – first on tuba and on string bass now – for half-a-decade, now, much respected and most reliable. And Harry Dial on drums, a very honest but ambivalent person who organised Waller's band at this time, but did not resume his duties with the band after seven recording sessions – and a lot of annoyance and irritation.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948: Herman Autrey (tp); Ben Whitted (cl & as); Fats Waller (p & vo); Al Casey (g); Billy Taylor (b); Harry Dial (dm)*

- Rust\*2,\*3,\*4,\*6: Herman Autrey (tpt); Ben Whitted (clt, alt); Fats Waller (pno, vcl, org, cel); Albert Casey (gtr); Billy Taylor (sbs); Harry Dial (dms, vib)

Discernible differences of takes (from L. Wright, "Fats" in Fact (Thanks, Laurie:

82527-1: *Fats' interjection at end of third line of vocal: "Aw, you dog!"*  
 82527-2: *Fats' interjection at end of third line of vocal: "You dog!"*

033 **NOBLE SISSE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

Hollywood,

Nov. 1943

Jubilee Show No. 56

Noble Sissle – ldr; probably/possibly:

*Wendell Culley*, *Edna Williams*, *Demas Dean* – tpt;

*Chester Burrill*, (*Herb Flemming?*) – tbn;

(*Ben Whitted?*) – alt, clt; *Don Pasquall*, *Eugene Mikell* – alt; *Phil Cubinar*, unknown – ten;

*Harry Brooks* – pno; *Jimmy Jones* – sbs; *Wilbert Kirk* – dms;

*Dorothy Webster* – voc (3); *Edna Williams* – voc (4); *Sister Rosetta Tharpe* (voc, gtr)

Intro & One O'Clock Jump

Storyville The Jubilee Shows 501 1010

Skater's Waltz

Storyville The Jubilee Shows 501 1010

Sunday, Monday And Always

Storyville The Jubilee Shows 501 1010

Hey, Lawdy Mama

Storyville The Jubilee Shows 501 1010

That's All

Storyville The Jubilee Shows 501 1010

Blues In The Night

Storyville The Jubilee Shows 501 1010

O'Clock Jump

Storyville The Jubilee Shows 501 1010

Solo outings are a tenor saxophonist, the pianist in (2), beautiful trumpet doing the intro and bridge of (3), the tenor saxophonist soloing the middle eight of the last chorus of (3), trumpete Edna Williams singing and high-note trumpetblowing and one (?) of the tenorists in (4), and the band's pianist Harry Brooks (?) in (6).

There are no musical elements enabling us to identify Ben Whitted, and we even do not know whether he still was with the Sissle band in late 1943 – being photographed with this band in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1942 (see G. Winfield, "You Don't Know Me, But ...").

G. Winfield had left June 1943

H. Flemming had formed his own groups (!) when N. Sissle's band folded in Hollywood

K. – B. Rau

16-12-2022

09-05-2023