

THE RECORDINGS OF
DUKE ELLINGTON
AND HIS ORCHESTRA
PRE - COTTON CLUB PERIOD

An Annotated Tentative Personnel - Discography

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

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

- Documented, most certain and aurally absolutely obvious identifications are listed thus: Duke Ellington
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in *italics*, thus: *Duke Ellington*
- 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: *(Duke Ellington)*

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.

DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

001 THE WASHINGTONIANS

Bubber Miley – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Otto Hardwick – cms; Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Sonny Greer – dms; unknown – train-whistle (1)

New York,

c. Nov. 1924

T-2005-2 Choo Choo (Gotta Hurry Home)
T-2006-1 Rainy Nights

BD T-1002, Chronogical Classics 539
BD T-1002, Chronogical Classics 539

Composer credits: T-2005 (Ellington – Ringle - Schafer); T-2006 (Trent – Donaldson - Lopez)

This is the first record of the Duke Ellington band. And it is a classic, as it shows Ellington's talent to think and write in his very own inimitable musical way. As for the composer credits: the first title obviously was the Duke's composition, while 'Rainy Nights' – although very much in Ellington's vein – was the work of white composers/lyricists.

“Fred Guy identified himself on these recordings to Bruce Kerr. Note that piano is silent on ‘Rainy Nights’ (Steven Lasker, e-mail to KBR 17-09-2020). In recent years, George Francis had been named as banjo player on these sides (see below). I gladly follow Mr. Lasker’s note re Fred Guy’s presence as banjo player, but I cannot accept his remark on the Duke’s silence all through ‘Rainy Nights’. I feel rather certain to hear his four-four chordal rhythm in the trombone solo and in the 16-bars verse before – and all other parts of the title. The sound of the rhythm-section would be much thinner without the piano! And what would Ellington have been doing during the recording, I ask!

All time Notes:

Notes:

- Delaunay, New Hot Discography, 1948: *Bubber Miley (tp); Charlie Irvis (tb); Otto Hardwick (as); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bjo); Sonny Greer (dm).* "Early 1926"!
- Carey, McCarthey, Jazz Directory Vol. 3: *Bubber Miley (tpt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Otto Hardwick (alt); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Sonny Greer (d).* "Late 1926"!
- Rust*2, *3, *4, *6: *Bubber Miley (cnt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Otto Hardwick (clt, alt); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Sonny Greer (dms).*
- Storyville 80-48, F. Dutton, Birth of a Band: *Bubber Miley, t; Charlie Irvis, tb; Otto Hardwick, as, C-m, bar, ss, cl; Duke Ellington, p; George Francis, bj, v; Sonny Greer, d.*

Solos ad-lib.

T-2005: OH cms 2+2; OH cms 16; BM m-tpt 1+32; CI o-tbn 8; FG bjo 8; OH cms 4
 T-2006: OH cms + BM m-tpt+CI o-tbn 32 obl 32 + 16; CI o-tbn 32; BM m-tpt

002 THE WASHINGTONIANS

New York, Sep. 1925

Clifton 'Pike' Davis – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;
 Otto Hardwick – alt, cms; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;
 Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Henry 'Bass' Edwards – bbs
 106250 I'm Gonna Hang Around My Sugar
 106251 Trombone Blues

PA 36333, Chronical Classics 539
 PA 36333, Chronical Classics 539

Composer credits: 106250 (Palmer - Williams); 106251 (Nixon - Williams)

The band play sketchy arrangements that seem not to be Duke Ellington's work as compared with the titles of the first session. They seem to be founded in earlier ragtime style and might have been attached to the band for recording purposes, only. And there is a horrible sound of the band, obviously resulting in the recording engineer's incapacity.

But listen to Hardwick's dominating position in the band.

A drummer cannot be heard at this session, and Greer's presence must be denied – or at least doubted. There is not a single cymbal-stroke on either title! Yet, instead of the cymbal the tuba plays the final 'G' of 'Trombone Blues' when the band ceases to play.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948: unknown personnel*
- Carey, *McCarthy, Jazz Directory Vol. 3: unknown personnel: tpt; tbn; 2 sax; Duke Ellington (p); bj; tu.*
- Rust*2, *3, *4, *6: *Pike Davis (tpt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Otto Hardwick (clt, alt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs).*
- *Storyville 80-48, F. Dutton, Birth of a Band: Clifton 'Pike' Davis, t; Charlie Irvis, tb; Otto Hardwick, as, C-m, bar, ss, cl; Prince Robinson, ts, cl; Duke Ellington, p; Fred Guy, bj; Bass Edwards, tuba; Sonny Greer, d. (JR claims Greer is absent. ...Edwards' presence is definite.)*
- *Storyville 80-48, F. Dutton, Birth of a Band: Clifton 'Pike' Davis, t; Charlie Irvis, tb; Otto Hardwicke, as, C-m, bar, ss, cl; Prince Robinson, ts, cl; Duke Ellington p; Fred Guy, bj; Bass Edwards, tu; Sonny Greer, d.*

Solos ad-lib:

106250: CPD m-tpt 16; CI m-tbn 16; OH cms 24; PR ten 4; OH cms 3; DE pno 16; CPD m-tpt 1+14; FG bjo 2; CPD m-tpt+ens obl 8; PR clt 4; CPD m-tpt+ens obl 4+3
 106251: CI m-tbn 11; CPD m-tpt 1; CH m-tbn 10; cms 1; CPD m-tpt 1 + 10+10; PR clt 10; CI m-tbn 15; CPD m-tpt+ens obl 24+5

003 DUKE ELLINGTON'S WASHINGTONIANS

New York, Mar. 1926

Leroy Rutledge, Harry Cooper – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn;
 Otto Hardwick - alt, bar; Don Redman - alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;
 Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Henry 'Bass' Edwards – bbs

106729 Georgia Grind
 106730 Parlor Social Stomp

PA 7504, Frog DGF 78
 PA 7504, Frog DGF 78

Composer credits: 106729 (Spencer Williams); 106730 (Duke Ellington)

Note: see VJM 157-9

These are two surprisingly hard-hitting sides by Ellington's early band. The development of the band's personnel was not finished yet, but the nucleus was there. Only, that the Duke was not settled with the trumpet section. Leroy Rutledge was known for fine and dependable first chair playing – he was not a hot man – and thus Harry Cooper must have been the soloist. All ad-lib trumpet parts seem to be Cooper's, and stylistically they would fit with his style, which, by the way, is remarkably secure and hard driving here – with some deficiencies in his phrasing. Charlie Irvis is only heard doing harmony duties in the brass section. Otto Hardwick is clearly playing first parts with his "singing" alto style and soloing in chorus A4 of the first side on baritone, the young Prince Robinson doing clarinet and tenor sax parts, and on third alto sax Duke had borrowed Don Redman with his dry style from the Henderson band. This then marks the first time Ellington had a three-piece reed-section on record.

The rhythm section is what is known of it at this time, only that Sonny Greer is absent again. Not a single cymbal stroke can be heard on these sides. It might be feasible that the Pathé Actuelle engineers had problems with the sound recorded, and therefore locked out the drums. Again, the tuba plays the last note of the introduction of 'Parlor Social Stomp' instead of the drummer's cymbal-stroke, just as before at session 002. Interestingly, only the Pathé Aktuelle sessions do not have a drummer's part!

It is my strong opinion that both arrangements are the Duke's attempts, a bit hasty and somewhat over-arranged, but harmonically interesting and advanced. 'Georgia Grind' is played at a fast pace, but retaining the original length of the melody, so that the 12-bar blues chorus of the original tune becomes a 24-bar chorus. And: here already, Ellington uses the device of starting a subsequent part of the arrangement into the last two bars – the last two tonic bars - of the preceding chorus, thus shortening it for two bars. It is this device which André Hodeir in his famous 'Jazz, It's Evolution and Essence' has described as absolutely 'novel' for his description of Ellington's 'Concerto For Cootie' of 1940. Here it is 16 years earlier. 'Parlor Social Stomp' seems to be a recreation of a typical ragtime tune with its multitude of different strains. Again, beautiful harmonies and changes. There is no indication of the arrangements being the work of Don Redman, as I have found being assumed somewhere else.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948: similar to: Bubber Miley (tp); Charlie Irvis (tb); Otto Hardwick (as); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bjo); Sonny Greer (dm), but with Don Redman (as).*
- Carey, *McCarthy, Jazz Directory Vol. 3: unknown personnel: 2 tpt; tbn; Don Redman, another (sax); Duke Ellington (p); bj; tu; d.*
- Rust*2: *Harry Cooper, Leroy Rutledge (tp); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Otto Hardwick (clt, alt); Don Redman (clt, alt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms)*
- Rust*3, *4, *6: *Harry Cooper -Leroy Rutledge -t; Charlie Irvis -tb; Otto Hardwick -as -bar; Don Redman -cl -as; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.*

- *Storyville 80-50, F. Dutton, Birth of a Band: Leroy Rutledge, Harry Cooper, t; Charlie Irvis, tb; Otto Hardwicke, as, C-m, bar, ss, cl; Prince Robinson, ts, cl; Duke Ellington p; Fred Guy, bj; Bass Edwards, tu; Sonny Greer, d.*

Solos ad-lib:

106729: HC o-tpt 20; PR clt 20; OH bar 20; DE pno 20; HC o-tpt 20
 106730: PR ten 2 + 2 + 2; DR clt 2 + 2 + 2 + 2; HC m-tpt 16; OH alt 16; HC o-tpt 16; PR clt 16

Tunes structures:

<u>106729 Georgia Grind Key of Eb/Bb/Eb</u>	<u>Pathé Actuelle</u>
(Intro 8 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 24 bars ens tpt lead HC ?)(A2 Chorus 24 bars saxes + brass mod to Bb)(A3 Chorus 22 bars! clt PR 20 – ens 2 mod to Eb)(A4 Chorus 24 bars bar 20 – ens 2)(A5 Chorus 20 bars! pno DE)(Bridge 8 bars ens)(A6 Chorus 24 bars ens tpt lead HC)	
<u>106730 Parlor Social Stomp Key of G/C</u>	<u>Pathé Actuelle</u>
(Intro 6 bars ens)(A1 strain A 16 bars AA saxes)(B1 strain B 32 bars AABA ens - breaks alt DR)(B2 strain B 32 bars ens breaks - clt PR)(A2 strain A 16 bars saxes + brass)(Bridge 4 bars tpts mod to C)C1 strain C 16 bars AA saxes)(C2 strain C 16 bars tpt HC)(D1 strain D 16 bars AA' alt DR)(D2 strain D 16 bars tpt HC)(D3 strain D 16 bars clt PR)(D4 strain D 16 bars ens)(Coda 2 bars saxes)	

004 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA	New York,	Mar. 30, 1926
Leroy Rutledge, Harry Cooper - tpt; <i>Jimmy Harrison</i> – tbn;		
Otto Hardwick – alt, bar, <i>cms</i> , Don Redman – alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;		
Duke Ellington - pno; Fred Guy - bjo; Henry 'Bass' Edwards – bbs; Sonny Greer - dms;		
Bob Haring – arr (1); Sonny Greer - voc (1); <i>Jimmy Harrison</i> – voc (2)		
X-57-A (You've Got Those) Wanna Go Back Again Blues	Gnt 3291, ,	Frog DGF 78
X-58-A If You Can't Hold The Man You Love	Gnt 3291,	Frog DGF 78
<i>Composer credits: X-57 (Turk - Handman); X-58 (Kahal - Fain)</i>		

There is controversy about the trombonist and one of the singers on this recording.

The trombonist(s): Certainly, Charlie Irvis was trombone player with Ellington at that time. But Jimmy Harrison, the undisputed trombone star among Harlem musicians at that time, had just departed from June Clark's band at Smalls' Sugar Cane Club and every bandleader of note wanted to hire him. So did Ellington. And we know that trombonist Harrison was part of a short tour of Connecticut with the Ellington band in early April 1926! And from April 12 to April 26 the Ellington band - with Harrison added to the band as recalled by Ellington, Benny Carter and Harry Cooper - played a two-week engagement doubling at Ciro's and the Lafayette Theatre (S. Lasker, VJM 157). I have contributed a note on the problems inherent in this session in VJM 155 Ate's 'Discographical Ramblings', which has been commented by Steven Lasker in VJM 157. As it seems he does agree with my thesis re the singer(s), but he does not concerning the trombonist ("Contrary to Greer's recollection – but in agreement to Mr. Rau – three friends of mine who've extensively studied Jimmy Harrison and his style – Brad Kay, Dan Weinstein and Jon Zeiderman – are of the opinion that the vocalist on 'If You Can't Hold The Man You Love' is actually Harrison and not Greer (unlike Mr. Rau, however, none of the three contends he plays trombone on the date.)" Steven Lasker VJM 157).

It seems that I stand all alone against the world in stating that I hear Harrison as sole trombone player on this session. So, let's see – and hear – what happens! In 'Wanna Go Back ...' the trombonist plays solo in all three A-parts of the chorus with the B-part taken over by the reeds. Ellington scholar Mark Tucker writes about this solo: "... is a paraphrase solo by Irvis on muted trombone (one of the few extended examples where he uses this technique)" In my estimation this remark could only be interpreted that Tucker judges this solo as untypical for Irvis. This I can whole-heartedly underline and support. Irvis' style was above all a legato style and he used staccato notes only at the beginning of a phrase; exceptions to this statement might certainly be found on records, but as a rule he played legato with strong linear horizontal phrases and melody. His tone was rather straight, not much vibrato, with a rather antiquated punctuated phrasing. Nothing of this can be heard here. Instead, the trombone paraphrase of the theme melody is played staccato, in vertical manner and with a tone and vibrato owned by Harrison. Absolutely different to Irvis' playing. The difference is even bigger when listening to the eight-bar trombone solo in 'If You Can't Hold The Man You Love'. Here we hear a short eight-bar solo on vamp-like changes, played staccato, vertical and in a definite preaching manner completely different to anything I know of Irvis. And just listen to the dramatic construction of the short solo: three slightly changing and developing phrases of acclamation and a resulting answer as a fourth phrase. This is completely beyond Charlie Irvis' power of imagination and capability. The third phrase contains a short jumping-lip-trill unheard in Charlie Irvis' solos. Furthermore, a kind of solo like that could have been played by Louis Armstrong; and we know that Harrison formed his style (together with June Clark) after listening to Oliver and Armstrong in Chicago 1923, Harrison playing the Armstrong part in his duets with Clark!

I played trombone myself a couple of years in my youth, and I am not at all unfamiliar with trombone playing. Mr. Lasker in his comment then concludes: "Thus, Harrison didn't join Ellington's ranks until a couple of weeks after the Gennett date on which some contend he took part." Now, if the Gennett date is given as c. April 01, the band toured shortly to Connecticut and then started at Ciro's on April 12, Mr. Lasker is wrong in maintaining that Harrison joined "a couple of weeks" after the Gennett date. There is only room for a couple of days. And certainly, the Duke had negotiated the terms with Harrison in the meantime. And there certainly was an opportunity to take him into a recording studio as part of his band if only as substitute for Irvis. And the recording date is not securely settled and might also have taken place a few days later! So, the temporal aspect of this matter would certainly not rule Harrison out.

From this background I am absolutely positive that this is Jimmy Harrison on trombone. And with repeated listening I am growing more and more positive about it. May I ask everybody who wants to make his own opinion to first listen really very carefully?! And do not rely on what has been published in the discographies! I suppose that many supporters of the Irvis side only rely on the given personnels without checking it out and because "it has always been listed like that". (By the way, Mr. Tucker, the Washingtonians do not "skip the verse" in 'Wanna Go Back Again Blues'! They certainly play it just after the first chorus and before the trombone solo.)

The singers: For years George "Fathead" Thomas has been listed as the singer on the first title, Jimmy Harrison as the singer on the second title. If compared to the rather strange sound of George Thomas' voice familiar from the McKinney's Cotton Pickers recordings ('deep, barrel-chested' as Joel O'Sickey describes it, I would say 'squeezed') the singer on the first title has a much lighter sound and approach. And from his own testimony we know that Sonny Greer was the singer here. This sounds quite reasonable. From 1925 until 1930 George Thomas was a member of the MKCP (Chilton, McKinney's Music) playing the Detroit's Graystone Ballroom. He was not one of the Harlem bunch of musicians, certainly not known in Harlem as the MKCP had not recorded yet (Don Redman took over the band as front-man in the summer of 1927 – first recordings in July 1928 - and certainly would not have promoted a singer/saxophone player whom he did not know in early 1926). So, the presence of George Thomas can easily be ruled out.

The singer on the second title has hitherto been listed as Jimmy Harrison. Here as well, in an interview Sonny Greer claimed his own responsibility as singer. The Frog CD notes say that Greer was adamant on this claim. This writer feels unable to prove the contrary, but comparing the first singer – Greer – to the second, it is my firm belief that the second singer shows better timing and more looseness in his singing – and a different kind of off-beat. Here I opt for Jimmy Harrison. The voice on the Frog CD sounds much crisper than it did on earlier issues – thanks to the great work of Nick Dellow – but when comparing it to Harrison's voice on the recent Coleman Hawkins issue on Mosaic CD there seems to be accordance.

The saxophones: If we agree that the singer on the first title is not George Thomas but Greer, there is no need left to list him as a fourth reed player, the more so on tenor as mainly noted. Big bands in the 20s had three reeds – two altos and one tenor, the reedmen doubling on other reed instruments – and not four. Arrangements were made and sold for these three reed players. And it was only in the 1930s that reed sections were augmented. Armstrong/Russell had four reeds in 1935 (two altos, two tenors), Calloway added a fourth reed player – Eddie Barefield – in 1933 (a third alto!), Duke Ellington did so in 1932 (also a third alto with Otto Hardwick back in the band!), Goodman added a second tenor in 1934, Benny Carter used four reeds – two altos, two tenors apart from himself on alto in the Spike Hughes sessions of May

1933, and Fletcher Henderson had four reeds in 1934. So, a fourth reed player in a big band in 1926 would have been completely superfluous. There would not have been any parts for a fourth man to play. Which means, that we can safely rule out George 'Fathead' Thomas as participant in this session of the Ellington band. It simply makes no sense whatsoever! If you listen to the first title 'Wanna Go Back Again Blues' chorus A1 you will hear Hardwick on baritone alternating with clearly two clarinets – Redman and Robinson. If there had been four reed players it would have made sense to write the score for three clarinets against the baritone sax. But not so here! I only wonder who invented this tale or who absurdly misidentified the singer on the first title as George Thomas.

ADDITION 17-09-20: I have just been informed by Steven Lasker that the recording date of this session is transmitted as March 30th, 1926 by the original Gennett file cards as held by the Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University, Newark, USA.

ADDITION 23-11-2023: A professional classical trombonist in Europe with a big interest in jazz music let me know that he is rather certain that it is not Irvis on this session, but he feels not able to ascertain Harrison!

ADDITION 06-03-25: Above I (KBR) stated that "... trombonist Harrison was part of a short tour of Connecticut with the Ellington band in early April 1926! And from April 12 to April 26 the Ellington band - with Harrison added to the band as recalled by Ellington, Benny Carter, and Harry Cooper - played a two-week engagement doubling at Ciro's and the Lafayette Theatre." I (KBR) must admit that I have been unable to find the source for my recollection re the "short tour of Connecticut with the Ellington band", but it somehow sticks in my brain for some decades. Harrison's presence at Ciro's and the Lafayette Theatre instead seem to be unquestioned.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography*, 1948: Harry Cooper, Leroy Rutledge (tp); Charlie Irvis, Jimmy Harrison (tb); Otto Hardwick, Don Redman (as), Prince Robinson, George Thomas (ts); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bass); Sonny Greer (dm); Jimmy Harrison (v)(1); George Thomas (v)(2)
- Carey, *McCarthy, Jazz Directory Vol. 3*: Harry Cooper, Leroy Rutledge (tpt); Charlie Irvis, Jimmy Harrison (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Don Redman, George Thomas, Prince Robinson (reeds); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Bass Edwards (tu); Sonny Greer (d).
- Rust*2: Harry Cooper, Leroy Rutledge (tpts); Charlie Irvis, Jimmy Harrison (tbn); Otto Hardwick (clt, alt); Don Redman (clt, alt, bar); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); George Thomas (clt, ten, vcl); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms)
- Rust*3, *4, *6: Harry Cooper -Leroy Rutledge -t; Charlie Irvis -tb; Jimmy Harrison -tb -v; Otto Hardwick -as -bar; Don Redman -cl -as; Prince Robinson -George Thomas -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.
- Storyville 80-50, F. Dutton, *Birth of a Band*: Leroy Rutledge, Harry Cooper, t; Charlie Irvis, tb; Otto Hardwicke, as, C-m, bar, ss, cl; Don Redman, as, cl; Prince Robinson, ts, cl; Duke Ellington p; Fred Guy, bj; Bass Edwards, tu; Sonny Greer, d.

Solos ad-lib:

- X-57: OH bar 6 + 6 + 2 + 4; JH m-tbn 16 + 6; SG voc 30
- X-58: JH voc 31; FG bjo 8; JH m-tbn 8; PR clt+OH cms obl 24; PR clt 4

Tunes structures:

- X-57-A *(You've Got Those) Wanna Go Back Again Blues* Key of Gm / Ab / Bb / Ab Gennett
(Intro ens 8 bars Gm)(A1 Chorus 32 bars Ab AABA bar / 2clt 16 bars – brass + 2clt 8 bars – bar / 2clt 8 bars)(Verse ens 8 bars)(A2 Chorus Bb tbn 16 bars – reeds 8 bars – tbn 8 bars)(A3 Chorus Ab voc)(A4 Chorus Ab ens)(tag 2 bars ens)
- X-58-A *If You Can't Hold The Man You Love* Key of Bb Gennett
(Intro 4 bars ens)(A1 Chorus 32 bars ABA'C ens)(Verse 16 bars ens)(A2 Chorus voc)(Vamp 8 bars tpts)(Vamp 8 bars tpts)(Vamp 8 bars bjo)(Vamp 8 bars tbn)(A3 Chorus ens – clt breaks)

005 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS WASHINGTONIANS

New York,

Jun. 21, 1926

Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe 'Tricky Sam' Nanton – tbn;
Otto Hardwick – alt, bar; (Harvey Boone) – alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;
Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms;
Paul van Loan – arr (1)

X-190	I'm Just Wild About Animal Crackers	Gnt 3342,	Frog DGF 78
X-191	Li'l Farina	Gnt 3342,	Frog DGF 78

Composer credits: X-190 (Rich – Coslow - Link); X-191 (Smith - Mier)

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

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography*, 1948: Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley (tp); Charlie Irvis (tb); Prince Robinson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick, Clarence (as); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (b); Sonny Greer (dm).
- Carey, *McCarthy, Jazz Directory Vol. 3*: Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley (tp); Charlie Irvis (tb); Prince Robinson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick, Clarence (as); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Bass Edwards (b); Sonny Greer (dm).
- Rust*2: Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick ?(clt, alt); Prince Robinson ?(clt, ten); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bjo); Bass Edwards (bbs); Sonny Greer (dms)
- Rust*3, *4, *6: Bubber Miley -Charlie Johnson -t; Joe Nanton or Charlie Irvis -tb; Otto Hardwick -as -bar; Prince Robinson -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.
- Storyville 80-50, F. Dutton, *Birth of a Band*: Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley, t; Charlie Irvis, tb; Otto Hardwicke, as, C-m, bar, ss, cl; Prince Robinson, ts, cl; poss. unk. 3rd man; Duke Ellington p; Fred Guy, bj; Bass Edwards, tu; Sonny Greer, d.
- Media 7 Duke Ellington Vol.1 CD-booklet: Charlie Johnson, Bubber Miley (tp); Tricky Sam Nanton (tb); Otto Hardwick (Cms, bar); Prince Robinson (cl, ts); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Mack Shaw (tu); Sonny Greer (d).
- VJM 157-9/10: the -A takes were destroyed in 1929, the plain takes were released! Irvis had left in June.

Solos ad-lib:

X-190:	PR ten 2+2 + 2+2+2; DE pno 16; ?OH alt 8; PR ten 6; ?OH alt 2+14; BM m-tpt 2+30
X-191:	SG dms 2 + 2; CI m-tbn 16; PR clt 8; PR ten 2+14; BM m-tpt 2+14; CI o-tbn obl 16; PR ten 6; ?OH alt 4 + 2; FG bjo 2; PR clt obl 8 + 6

006 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York,

Nov. 29, 1926

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe 'Tricky Sam' Nanton – tbn;

Duke Ellington – pno; Sonny Greer - dms
 37527 Make Me Love You
 37528-1 If You Can't Hold The Man You Love
 Composer credits: 37528 (S. Fain - I. Kahal)

Vic unissued not on LP/CD
 Vic test, TAX LP-9 (LP), Frog DGF 8

This is a beautiful recording of an early Ellington ensemble outside of his band. I hear clear Miley, Ellington on piano, most interesting brush-work by Greer, two saxophones in the sax section, nice clarinet cum trumpet behind the singer, and beautiful 6 bars of violin solo wrapped between a piano solo and a trumpet solo. To my ears this is undoubtedly violin playing by Sampson, and there is no need to assume Hardwick on alto anywhere on this side as the violinist has plenty of time to change from alto to violin and back again! And why should he have been paid for alto playing when another altoist was present! To my ears Hardwick is not present on these sides. After all that has been said (below), I believe this personnel to be the exact one. Steven Lasker insisted on hearing a violin in parts of the tune before the violin solo, and I admit that he may be right in chorus 1 (see 'Tune Structure' below), where the violin most probably plays sustained low notes below clarinet and muted-trumpet to supply a harmonic basis for the wind instruments while Ellington keeps back with a very sparse piano accompaniment.

The tune features interesting – for the time – brush playing by Sonny Greer and a beautiful choked cymbal struck with a mallet in the trumpet solo.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography*, 1948: not listed
- BGR*2, *3, *4: not listed
- Rust*2: *Bubber Miley (cnt); Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Otto Hardwick (alt, vln); Duke Ellington (pno); Sonny Greer (dms)*.
- Rust*3, *4, *6: *Bubber Miley - c; unknown -cl -as; Otto Hardwick -as -vn; Duke Ellington -p; Sonny Greer -d*.
- Timner, *Ellingtonia*: *Bubber Miley; Rudy Jackson; Otto Hardwick; Duke Ellington; Sonny Greer*
- Vail, *Duke's Diary*: *Bubber Miley (trumpet); Otto Hardwick (alto sax); Prince Robinson (tenor sax); unknown (violin); Duke Ellington (piano); Sonny Greer (drums)*
- Booklet to 'D. Ellington Centennial Edition' RCA Ed.09026-63386: *Bubber Miley, trumpet; prob Prince Robinson, clarinet/tenor saxophone; Otto Hardwick, alto saxophone; unidentified, violin; Duke Ellington, piano; Sonny Greer, drums; Evelyn Preer, vocal.*
- A. Rado, booklet to: *Media 7 MJCD 9: Evelyn Preer (voc); Bubber Miley (tpt); Otto Hardwick (Cms, as); prob Edgar Sampson (as, vn); Prince Robinson (ts, cl); Duke Ellington (p); Sonny Greer (d)*
- Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, *Bubber Miley Discography*: *Miley (tp); prob Prince Robinson (cl, ts); Otto Hardwick (as); prob Edgar Sampson (vln); Duke Ellington (p); Sonny Greer (dr).* "The real surname of this artist was Peer. The issued title was listed as 37528-3 on RCA 731.043, but is aurally identical to take-1. It was erroneously identified as "It Takes A Good Woman To Keep A Good Man At Home" (36823-2) on Document DOCD-1015. Rust has unknown (cl, as), Otto Hardwick (as, vln). The new edition of "Duke Ellington's Story on Records" by Luciano Massagli and Giovanni M. Volonté has unknown (cl, ts), Edgar Sampson (as, vln), Hardwick (as). Steven Lasker, in the book of the 24-CD-box RCA 09026-63386-2 has probably Prince Robinson (cl, ts), Hardwick (as), unknown (vln). Mark Tucker, in his book "Ellington, The Early Years" claims that "besides Ellington, Greer, Hardwick and Miley, the ensemble included both a clarinettist and a violinist who doubled on alto saxophone – the latter was probably Edgar Sampson, who had played with Ellington the previous year". Prince Robinson played with Ellington in 1926 as well. In a note to chapter 12 of his book, Tucker writes that "Garvin Bushell, who played with Hardwick in the early 1930s, has stated that the alto saxophonist never played violin. ... Brooks Kerr has suggested Sampson's name for the unknown saxophonist/violinist. A comparison of some of the violin solos Sampson played with Fletcher Henderson (e.g. "House Of David Blues", recorded July 17, 1931) to the one on "If You Can't Hold the Man You Love" reveals similarities, especially in the double stops and intonation." Jazz violin expert Anthony Barnett also lists Sampson as a possibility on violin for the Preer session in his discography of Sampson's recordings on violin. Ref. (Violin Improvisation Studies). There are only two reed players present, as far as we can hear. Although there is no passage where two reed instruments and the violin can be heard simultaneously, we don't think the violinist could have made the change fast enough to double. Miley (soloist) and Hardwick (in the ensembles) can be aurally identified."

Tune Structure:

37528-1 If You Can't Hold The Man You Love Key of C Victor
 (Intro 10 bars ens BM m-tpt 4 – saxes 4 – BM m-tpt 2)(Verse 1 16 bars AA' EP voc + PR clt - BM m-tpt)(Chorus 1 32 bars AA' EP voc + PR clt - BM m-tpt - ? ES vln obl)(Verse 2 16 bars AA' EP voc + ES alt - PR clt - BM m-tpt)(1/2 Chorus 2 16 bars A' EP Voc + ES alt - PR ten - BM m-tpt)(Chorus 3 32 bars AA'DE pno 8 - ES vln 6 - BM m-tpt 2+8 - EP voc 4 - EP voc + ens 2)(Tag 2 bars EP voc + ens)

009 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York, Feb. 03, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;
 Otto Hardwick – alt, sop, bar; Edgar Sampson – alt, clt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;
 Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms
 E-4510 New Orleans Low-Down
 E-4511 Song Of The Cotton Field
 Composer credits: E-4510 (Ellington); E-4511 (Grainger)

Voc 1086, Chronical Classics 539
 Voc 1086, Chronical Classics 539

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

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

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

Notes:

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

- *Rust*3, *4, *6: Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; ? Prince Robinson -? and another -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Bass Edwards -bb; Sonny Greer -d.*
- *TDWAW, Feb. 03, 1927: St. Lasker believes the reed players at this session to be Prince Robinson, Otto Hardwick, unknown third man. ...*
- *Ibid.: The late Brooks Kerr told me that in 1967, Otto Hardwick told him his solo on 'New Orleans Low-Down' was borrowed from Sidney Bechet's solo on 'Snag It'." (There is no recording known of 'Snag It' by S. Bechet in the 1920s! - KBR)*
- *M. Tucker, Ellington, the Early years, p. 216: "The voices of the singers in the "cotton field" are represented by the plaintive solos of Miley, Nanton, and a clarinetist (Rudy Jackson, according to Harry Carney) growling in his low register."*

Solos ad-lib:

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

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

010 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York,

Feb. 28, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley - tpt; Joe Nanton - tbn;
 Otto Hardwick - alt, bar; *Edgar Sampson* - alt, clt; Prince Robinson - ten, clt;
 Duke Ellington - pno, arr; Fred Guy - bjo; Mack Shaw - bbs; Sonny Greer - dms
 E-21636/8 East St. Louis Toodle-Oo
 E-21641 Birmingham Breakdown
Composer credits: E-21641 (Ellington)

Br unissued

not on LP/CD

Br 3480, Chronogical Classics 539

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

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

Notes:

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

Solos ad-lib:

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

011 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS KENTUCKY CLUB ORCHESTRA

New York,

Mar. 14, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley - tpt; Joe Nanton - tbn;
 Otto Hardwick - alt, bar, sop; *(Edgar Sampson)* - alt, clt; Prince Robinson - ten, clt ;
 Duke Ellington - pno, arr; Fred Guy - bjo; Mack Shaw - bbs; Sonny Greer - dms
 E-21872 East St. Louis Toodle-Oo
Composer credits: E-21872 (Ellington)

Br 3480, Chronogical Classics 539

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

Very beautiful!

Notes:

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

Solos ad-lib:

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

012 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS WASHINGTONIANS

New York,

Mar. 22, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley - tpt; Joe Nanton - tbn;
 Otto Hardwick - alt, bar, sop; *(Edgar Sampson)* - alt, clt; Prince Robinson - ten, clt ;
 Duke Ellington - pno, arr; Fred Guy - bjo; Mack Shaw - bbs; Sonny Greer - dms
 143705-3 East St. Louis Toodle-Oo
 143706-2 Hop Head
 143707-2 Down In Our Alley Blues
Composer credits: 143705 (Ellington); 143706 (D. Ellington - O. Hardwick); 143707 (D. Ellington - O. Hardwick)

Col 953-D, Chronogical Classics 539

Col 953-D, Chronogical Classics 539

Col 1076-D, Chronogical Classics 539

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

The first recorded title is Duke's now well-known 'East St. Louis Toodle-Oo' in the according arrangement with Bubber Miley's predominant growl solo. The reed section in the last chorus' first eight bars A-part has only soprano and one clarinet! The subsequent 10-bar A'-part is performed by Louis Metcalf's trumpet leading the ensemble in rather lax rhythm. The title is finished by Miley in growl manner. The lack of a third voice in the reed parts makes me question the general presence of a third reed player for the entire session! The two other titles recorded are fast and extensively arranged titles – both in co-work of the Duke and Otto Hardwick – and give no

likelihood of a third reed player, again. Thus, I have noted a third alto player in italics. To my ears, Louis Metcalf takes over most of the trumpet solo duties, as may be seen below. There is very little trombone solo work. The work of the tenor sax – clarinet player is more like that of the player in session 009 of Feb. 03, 1927, and might therefore be Rudy Jackson, playing more vertical in a Chicago manner and with a more “gutsy” tone. Sonny Greer has a lot of exact cymbal strokes to place, and Mack Shaw plays the tuba in his retained way.

Notes:

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

Solos ad-lib:

143705-3:	<i>BM m-tpt 1+32; JN o-tbn 18; ?PR clt 1+14; LM o-tpt 5; BM m-tpt 8</i>
143706-2:	<i>JN o-tbn 2; LM o-tpt 3 + 3; OH alt 16; LM o-tpt 16; DE pno 4; JN o-tbn 2; ?PR clt 8; LM o-tpt 2; OH alt 30; ?PR clt obl 32</i>
143707-2:	<i>JN o-tbn 4 + 2; BM o-tpt 1+16; ?PR ten 4; OH bar 4; DE pno 15; LM o-tpt 16</i>

013 THE WASHINGTONIANS

New York, Apr. 07, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley – tpt; Joe Nanton – tbn;
 Otto Hardwick – alt, bar, sop; (*Edgar Sampson*) – alt, clt; *Prince Robinson* – ten, clt;
 Duke Ellington – pno, arr; Fred Guy – bjo; Mack Shaw – bbs; Sonny Greer – dms
 E-4874 / E-22299 Black And Tan Fantasy

Br 3526, Chronological Classics 539

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

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

Notes:

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

Solos ad-lib:

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

014 THE WASHINGTONIANS

New York, Apr. 30, 1927

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

Br 3526, Chronological Classics 539

Composer credits: E-4965 (R. Bloom)

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

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

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

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

Notes:

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

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

Solos ad-lib:

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

Tune Structure:

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

015 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

Oct. 06, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley - tpt; Joe Nanton - tbn;
Otto Hardwick - alt, sop; Harry Carney - alt, bar, clt; Rudy Jackson - ten, clt;
Duke Ellington - pno; Fred Guy - bjo; Wellman Braud - sbs; Sonny Greer - dms

40155-2 Black And Tan Fantasy

Vic 24861 on LP/CD ?

40156-1 Washington Wabble

Vic uniss 78, Chronogical Classics 542

40156-2 Washington Wabble

Vic X LVA-3037, Media 7 MJCD 9

Composer credits: 40156 (D. Ellington)

Note: All Rusts list 40155-2 'Black And Tan Fantasy' which is not included in RCA Victor's 'Duke Ellington, The Centennial Edition'. It is therefore assumed to be not existent!

This nice composition is interesting for Ellington's dealing with a fast jazz number in contrast to his better known "jungle" titles and the later arising "mood" numbers.

But first: this is Ellington's first recording using a string bass. The player is New Orleans veteran Wellman Braud (real name Breaux). He is a strong exponent of the traditional "slap-bass" practice, the manner of pulling the strings back from the fret-board and let them slap against it to increase the sound volume and strengthen the rhythmic impetus. His playing initiated a very special sound and rhythmic power to the Ellington band of before, and certainly was the reason for many bandleaders of the time to change over their rhythm sections to the use of the string-bass.

And we have Harry Carney in the band, from now on handling the baritone saxophone as well as playing the third (!) alto sax parts of the arrangements. Thus, he may be discovered to play just one 2-bar break in the course of this number.

Notes:

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

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

- B. Rust, *The Victor Master Book*, Vol. 2: 2c/ tb/ 3s/p/ bj/ b/ d

- Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf (tp); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (sbs); Sonny Greer (dms).

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley -Louis Metcalf -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; Harry Carney -cl -as -bar; Rudy Jackson -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Wellman Braud -sb; Sonny Greer -d.

- Booklet to 'D. Ellington Centennial Edition' RCA Ed.09026-63386: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalf, trumpet; Joe Nanton, trombone; Rudy Jackson, clarinet/tenor saxophone; Otto Hardwick, alto saxophone/baritone saxophone; Harry Carney, alto saxophone; Duke Ellington, piano; Fred Guy, banjo; Wellman Braud, bass; Sonny Greer, drums.

Solos ad-lib:

40156-1: LM o-tpt 14; RJ clt 6; WB sbs 2; RJ clt 6; DE pno 16; OH alt 2; HC bar 2; OH alt 2+8 + 7; JN o-tbn 2+8 + 14; RJ clt obl 2+32

40156-2: LM o-tpt 14; RJ clt 6; WB sbs 2; RJ clt 6; DE pno 16; OH sop 2; HC bar 2; OH alt 2+8 + 7; JN o-tbn 2+8 + 14; RJ clt obl 2+32

Discernible differences of takes:

40156-1: Hardwick's first 2-bar break after piano solo is played on alto sax; drums inaudible after trombone 2-bar entrance break

40156-2: Hardwick's first 2-bar break after piano solo is played on soprano sax; drums start with double rim-shot after trombone 2-bar entrance break

016 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Camden, NJ,

Oct. 26, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley - tpt; Joe Nanton - tbn;
Otto Hardwick - alt, sop, clt; Harry Carney - alt, bar, clt; Rudy Jackson - ten, clt;
Duke Ellington - pno; Fred Guy - bjo; Wellman Braud - sbs; Sonny Greer - dms;
Adelaide Hall - voc (1,2,3)

40155-4 Black And Tan Fantasy

Vic 21137, Chronogical Classics 542

40156-5 Washington Wabble

Vic 21284, Chronogical Classics 542

39370-1 Creole Love Call

Vic 21137, Chronogical Classics 542

39371-1 The Blues I Love To Sing

Vic 21490, Chronogical Classics 542

39371-2 The Blues I Love To Sing

Vic X LVA-3037, Media 7 MJCD 9

Composer credits: 40155 (D. Ellington - B. Miley); 40156 (D. Ellington); 39370 (D. Ellington - R. Jackson - B. Miley); 39371 (D. Ellington - B. Miley);

These are the first recordings of the young Adelaide Hall. And - most interestingly - she mixes scat with verbal singing in the Duke's band in 'The Blues I Love To Sing'. In 'Creole Love Call', one of Duke's most famous compositions, she uses scat entirely.

Hardwick attributes a beautiful soprano solo which shows his very musical way to play a melody. Hardwick also solos on the first and second titles on alto.

Fred Guy's banjo style is growing much stronger than before, and more of the jazz side but ragtime. May this be Wellman Braud's Southern influence? He himself is very strong on slapping the strings of his bass violin.

And hear Nanton's flattened fifth in the final Bb sixth chord of 'Creole Love Call'! Most daring.

Notes:

- Ch. Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Metcalf, Bubber Miley (tp); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (d)
- Carey, McCarthy, *Jazz Directory Vol.3*: June Clark, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwicke (alt, sop); Harry Carney (bar, alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (bs); Sonny Greer (d).
- B. Rust, *The Victor Master Book, Vol. 2*: 2c/ tb/ 3s/p/ bj/ b/ d
- Rust*2: Bubber Miley, Louis Metcalfe (tpt); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clt, alt); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (sbs); Sonny Greer (dms); Adelaide Hall (vcl)
- Rust*3, *4, *6: Bubber Miley - Louis Metcalfe -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; Harry Carney -cl -as -bar; Rudy Jackson -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -a -ldr; Fred Guy -bj; Wellman Braud -sb; Sonny Greer -d; Adelaide Hall -v.
- Booklet to 'D. Ellington Centennial Edition' RCA Ed.09026-63386: Bubber Miley, unidentified, trumpet; Joe Nanton, trombone; Rudy Jackson, clarinet/tenor saxophone; Otto Hardwick, Harry Carney, clarinet/alto saxophone; Duke Ellington, piano; Fred Guy, banjo; Wellman Braud, bass; Sonny Greer, drums; Adelaide Hall, vocal.

Solos ad-lib:

- 40155: BM m-tpt+JN m-tbn 12; OH alt 6 + 6; BM m-tpt 12 + 12; DE pno 12; JN m-tbn 12; BM m-tpt 10+4
- 40156: LM o-tpt 14; RJ clt 6; WB sbs 2; RJ clt 6; DE pno 16; OH sop 2; HC bar 2; OH alt 2+8 + 7; JN o-tbn 2+8 + 14; RJ clt obl 2+32
- 39370: AH voc obl 12; BM o-tpt 12; RJ clt 12; AH voc obl 12+2
- 39371: AH voc 8; BM o-tpt 22; OH sop 14; JN o-tbn 8; AH voc +BM o-tpt 24

Discernible differences of takes:

- 40156-5 (see above): Hardwick's first 2-bar break after piano solo is played on soprano sax; drums start with cymbal stroke after trombone 2-bar entrance break
- 39371-1: Bars 7/8 from start: A. Hall sings: "Oh, play me the blues, boy!"
- 39371-2: Bars 7/8 from start: A. Hall sings: "Play me the blues, boy!"

017 DUKE ELLINGTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

New York,

Nov. 03, 1927

Louis Metcalf, Cladys 'Jabbo' Smith - tpt; Joe Nanton - tbn; Otto Hardwick - alt; Harry Carney - alt, bar; Rudy Jackson - ten, clt; Duke Ellington - pno; Fred Guy - bjo; Wellman Braud - sbs; Sonny Greer - dms; Adelaide Hall - voc (4)

81775-A	What Can A Poor Fellow Do?	OK 8521,	Chronological Classics 542
81776-B	Black And Tan Fantasy	OK 40955,	Media 7 MJCD 25
81776-C	Black And Tan Fantasy	OK 8521,	Chronological Classics 542
81777-C	Chicago Stomp Down	OK 8675,	Chronological Classics 542

Composer credits: 81775 (Meyers - Schoebel); 81776 (Miley - Ellington); 81777 (Creamer - Johnson)

Note: Okeh 8675 is labelled as 'Chicago Footwarmers'.

Ellington's star trumpeter Bubber Miley is replaced here by the one and only Jabbo Smith. Miley possibly was unable to record for personal reasons, and Ellington choose one of the most promising young trumpet players in Harlem to deputize, just like he had done with June Clark half a year earlier.

In the first title already, Jabbo Smith dominates the proceedings in his very own elegant and romantic legato trumpet style, with high interval jumps, fluid melody lines, a silken tone, and a Southern - or Western - understanding of rhythm and swing - contrary to Bubber Miley's staccato style in Johnny Dunn's succession.

Hardwick solos on alto on the last two titles, Carney is on alto on the first title. And Joe Nanton masters his trombone with or without mutes in his very own unsurpassed style.

Adelaide Hall again contributes a great scat vocal chorus in 'Chicago Stomp Down'. This title also has a lot of Rudy Jackson's squeaking style which does not sound very favourable in today's ears.

Notes:

- Delaunay, *New Hot Discography, 1948*: Louis Metcalf, Jabbo Smith (tp); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tb); Rudy Jackson (cl & ts); Otto Hardwick (as); Harry Carney (bs); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Billy Taylor possibly replaces Wellman Braud (b); Sonny Greer (dm); Adelaide Hall (vo)
- McCarthy, Carey, *Jazz Directory, Vol. 3*: Louis Metcalfe, Jabbo Smith (tpt); Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick (alt, clt); Harry Carney (bar, alt); Rudy Jackson (clt, ten); Duke Ellington (p); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (bs); Sonny Greer (d); Adelaide Hall (vcl)
- Rust*2: Louis Metcalfe, Jabbo Smith (tpts); Joe Nanton (tbn); Otto Hardwick, Rudy Jackson (clts, alti); Harry Carney (clt, bar); Duke Ellington (pno); Fred Guy (bj); Wellman Braud (sbs); Sonny Greer (dms); Adelaide Hall (vcl)
- Rust*3, *4, *6: Louis Metcalfe -Jabbo Smith -t; Joe Nanton -tb; Otto Hardwick -ss -as -bar; Harry Carney -cl -as -bar; Rudy Jackson -cl -ts; Duke Ellington -p -ldr -a; Fred Guy -bj; Wellman Braud -sb; Sonny Greer -d; Adelaide Hall -v
- Storyville 80 / 91, F. Dutton, *Birth of a Band*: Louis Metcalf, Cladys 'Jabbo' Smith, t; Joe Nanton, tb; Otto Hardwicke, as, ss, cl, bsx, Harry Carney, as, bar, cl; Rudy Jackson, ts, cl; Duke Ellington, p; Fred Guy, bj; Wellman Braud, sb; Sonny Greer, d.
- W.E. Timmer, *The Recorded Music of Duke Ellington and his Sidemen*: LM, JSmt; JN; RJ, OH, HC; DE, FG, WB, SG; AH

Solos ad-lib:

- 81775: JN o-tbn 2; JB m-tpt 22 + 10; HC alt 8; LM o-tpt
- 81776-B: JS m-tpt+JN m-tbn 12; OH alt 6 + 6; JN m-tbn 12; JS m-tpt 12; DE pno 12; JN m-tbn 12; LM (or JS) m-tpt 10+4
- 81776-C: JS m-tpt+JN m-tbn 12; OH alt 6 + 6; JS m-tpt 12 + 12; DE pno 1+12; JN m-tbn 12; JS m-tpt 10+4
- 81777: RJ clt 4; OH alt 20; AH voc 20; JN o-tbn 20; RJ clt 1+20; RJ clt obl 4 + 4 + 4

Discernible differences of takes:

- 81776-B: Joe Nanton plays one solo chorus on muted trombone after Hardwick's alto solo, followed by Jabbo Smith on trumpet
- 81776-C: Jabbo Smith plays two choruses on muted trumpet after Hardwick's alto solo, followed by D. Ellington on piano

To people who'd like to deepen their knowledge of the early Duke Ellington band I'd like to recommend Mark Tucker's book 'Duke Ellington, The Early Years', Bayou Press, Oxford, of 1991, which gives a much-enlarged in-depth insight into the Ellington band and their music, their leader's development and their musical style.

On December 03, 1927, Duke Ellington and his Orchestra started their first period at the Cotton Club on 644, Lenox Avenue, Harlem, New York, lasting for nearly 40 months in the years 1927 to early 1931.

K. - B. Rau
20-04-2024
04-01-2026