

PERRY BRADFORD'S JAZZ PHOOLS

An Annotated Tentative Personnelo - Discography

PERRY BRADFORD'S JAZZ PHOOLS

In continuing my series of discographies on Perry Bradford's recording groups I would like to tackle his "Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools" now, known to everyone listening to early jazz by the last session of its name, i.e. the one with Louis Armstrong of November 1925. This one really is a classic and a gem, and no jazz collector should be without it.

For the author the greatest surprise was to find that on many recordings attributed to Johnny Dunn the actual trumpet man is Gus Aiken. Aiken was – together with his brother Gene 'Bud' Aiken – a pupil of Jenkins' Orphanage of Charleston, SC. Jabbo Smith was an alumnus, too, and seems to be rather influential in Gus Aiken's style of later years. Yet, in 1922/3 he played in a completely Dunn derived style, so perfectly and skilled that he has erroneously been mistaken for Dunn himself – and probably only used because of this very ability. Even Bushell says about him: "If that's Gus Aiken he's playing Johnny Dunn's patterns note for note." And Bushell should have known! After Aiken's tour to Cuba from May 1923 until the end of that year he seems to be reborn as a trumpet player. I assume that the much freer rhythms he was confronted with in Cuba rang a bell and he started to reshape his playing. This then led to a style similar to Jabbo Smith's, yet not as distinct, flashy and virtuoso, but miles away from the pedestrian and limited trumpet blasting of Mr. Dunn. His first recordings in New York after his Cuban sojourn seem to be with Matson's Lucky Seven – and probably Virginia Liston and her Jazz Trio – in January 1924, and the interested listener is invited to hear Aiken's astonishing change of taste and style leaving all his Dunn derived playing behind (see The Frog Blues and Jazz Annual Vol. 3 for more Aiken recordings).

After Aiken's departure for Cuba and Dunn in England Perry Bradford had to search for suitable musicians playing on his recording dates. For most of these dates Rust and other discographers still stick to the Dunn alumni. With these dates it can safely be assumed that Bradford tried to find musicians elsewhere in bands playing the Harlem premises and making themselves known. It seems that we find parts of the early Ellington band here – still under Snowden's name – and of the Cotton Club Orchestra, later known as the Missouriians. But still there are groups with distinct sound but unidentifiable personnel, one of these very probably a band not from Harlem but from Chicago or even from farther south. It is to be hoped that future research and intensive listening and comparing might find possible candidates for these personnel later on. For that purpose every interested reader/listener is invited to contribute every suggestion that might be helpful and important to this aim.

The very last session under the Jazz Phoools sign then has a fairly established personnel of Henderson men of which only the trombonist and the banjo player were listed as doubtful. But, as said above, this session should be and probably is in everybody's possession, and I think to have solved the last remaining uncertainties here in this article.

| | | |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| LENA WILSON Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools | New York, | c. early Apr. 1923 |
| Lena Wilson – voc; | | |
| Gus Aiken - tpt; Herb Flemming - tbn; | | |
| Perry Bradford - pno; Sam Speede – bjo | | |
| 1362-1 Deceitful Blues | Pm 12029, | Timeless CBC 1-073 |
| 1362-2 Deceitful Blues | Pm 12029, | Document DOCD-5443 |
| 1362-3 Deceitful Blues | Pm 12029, | Document DOCD-T002 |
| 1363-1 I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me | Pm 12029, | Timeless CBC 1-073 |
| 1363-2 I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me | Pm 12029, | Document DOCD-5443 |
| 1363-3 I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me | Pm 12029, | Document DOCD-5627 |

Discernible differences of takes:

| | |
|--------|---|
| 1362-1 | bars 7/8 of first chorus: trumpet break - trombone coming in at the end with 4 upward notes |
| 1362-2 | bars 7/8 of first chorus: trumpet break - no trombone coming in |
| 1362-3 | |
| 1363-1 | bars 15/16 of first chorus (after 4 bars intro and 8 bars verse): vocal break - no background noise bar 3 of ensemble chorus; bjo break with one tremolo |
| 1363-2 | bars 15/16 of first chorus (after 4 bars intro and 8 bars verse): vocal break - pno softly in background bar 3 of ensemble chorus; bjo break with two tremolos |

1363-3 bars 15/16 of first chorus (after 4 bars intro and 8 bars verse): vocal break - no background noise
bar 3 of ensemble chorus; bjo break with two tremolos

This is the first recording under the Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools sign. I have listened to it after checking the session of late May (see below), generally dated May/June 1923. Rust's personnel for this session is vague or even non-existent. With first delving into the matter it became apparent that there are some familiar figures present and the sounds heard easily give hints to Gus Aiken in his Dunn-derived style of the time, a very fluent and elegant trombone player who has to be Flemming in contrast to Gus Aiken's brother Bud, who very often teamed with his trumpet playing brother, but plays in a less exuberant style than Flemming, Flemming had been with Lt. Europe's "Hell-Fighters Band" in Europe in World War I, and he certainly had learned how to play a trombone with all of its tricks and finesse, and accordingly he did not have any competitor at this early time in Harlem. Bradford can be heard with his own busy tinkle-tinkle-plink piano and a banjo player trying to sound like John Mitchell, but without his expertise. Then the next day I happened to skim through Record Research 79 finding the notice below re this session by W.C. Allen which perfectly verified my assumptions. Bradford and Speed were easy to identify. There is no reed player on these sides! Comparison with other recordings by Edith Wilson suggests that Aiken plays at a couple of other instances where Dunn is listed. (There even are a couple of recordings listed as Dunn's Jazz Hounds where a Sam Wooding aggregation plays!) Gus Aiken obviously was able to play exactly in the Dunn manner, so much so that nobody in the past doubted Dunn's presence and tried to find out whether it was really Dunn or somebody else. But this might be the subject of a subsequent article!
Recording date is from: The Rise and Fall of Paramount Records, Vol. 1, Third Man Records.

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- Info from Walter C. Allen in 'Filling In Discographically', Record Research 79 p. 10: "Johnny Dunn or Gus Aiken, cornet; Herb Flemming, trombone; Garvin Bushell, clarinet; George Rickson ?, piano; John Mitchell, banjo. This personnel, with Dunn, is from John Mitchell after hearing the record. However, the cornetist does not sound at all times like Dunn's other work, and according to the NEW YORK AGE, May 5, 1923, Dunn along with Rickson and other members of the Plantation Revue troupe had already sailed for England by that date. WCA suggests Gus Aiken as a more likely candidate for cornetist - although Aiken was a regular member of the Gonzell White troupe which toured the country and was in Cuba from June to December, 1923."

- JAZZ INFORMATION 1-35 p.2: "Les Zacheis of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, writes that with the help of Dave Caughren he has obtained the correct personnel (sic!) of the Paramount/Claxtonola records by Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools. For 'Charleston South Carolina' - 'Hoola Boola Dance' (Claxtonola 40309) and 'Daybreak Blues' - 'Fadeaway Blues' (National 12255), also issued on other labels, this personnel was given by Perry Bradford himself: Gus Aiken, trumpet; Garvin Bushell, clarinet; Brassfield, clarinet and sax; (for other records, Bradford has given "Brass" Field, drummer! KBR) "Speed", banjo; Bradford, piano. Johnny Dunn is definitely not on these sides. According to Bradford, Dunn was in Europe when they were made (No, not yet! KBR)."

- Rust*3, *4, *6: "probably similar to Johnny Dunn - c; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming or Calvin Jones - tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott and/or Herschel Brassfield - cl-as; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson or Dan Wilson - p; John Mitchell or Sam Speed - bj; possibly others." (take your choice! - KBR)

- BGR*4: "prob. Johnny Dunn, c; unknown, tb; prob. Perry Bradford, p; unknown, bj."

- Bushell/Tucker p.157: no distinct comment by Bushell here, but "personnel as above?: Lena Wilson, v; Johnny Dunn, c; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming, or Calvin Jones, tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott, and/or Herschel Brassfield. cl, as; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson, or Dan Wilson, p; John Mitchell or Sam Speed, bj; others?"

1362-1 and 1363-1 are reissued on CD Timeless CBC 1-073 'Perry Bradford Panorama',

1362-2 and 1363-2 are reissued on Document DOCD-5443 'Lena Wilson Vol.1',

1363-3 is on CD Document DOCD-5627 'Classic Blues, Jazz and Vaudeville Singers'.

| | | | |
|--|-------------------------------|-----------|--------------------|
| LENA WILSON | Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools | New York, | c. late Apr. 1923 |
| Lena Wilson - voc; | | | |
| Gus Aiken - tpt; Gene Bud Aiken (or Herb Flemming)- tbn; Garvin Bushell - clt; | | | |
| Leroy Tibbs (or Charlie "Smitty" Smith) - pno; Sam Speede - bjo | | | |
| 1378-2 | Here's Your Opportunity | Pm 12042 | not on LP/CD |
| 1378-3 | Here's Your Opportunity | Pm 12042, | Timeless CBC 1-073 |
| 1379-3 | Memphis, Tennessee | Pm 12042, | Timeless CBC 1-073 |

Discernible differences of takes:

As take -2 of the first title does not seem to be reissued, apparent differences cannot be stated!

Rust lists this session under the same date as before - and with the same personnel - without paying attention to the large gap in matrix numbers. Furthermore there is a reed player here who is not on the session above. B&GR have separated sessions listed and list the reed player. Johnny Dunn had been to England early May until September 1923. So, as by this date it might have been Dunn here, but aurally this is the same trumpet player as on the foregoing session, thus Aiken. Gus Aiken plays very much in the Johnny Dunn style, but with a little more rhythmical freedom and a somewhat less brilliant tone, and - as Bushell expressed it - "If that's Gus Aiken, he's playing Johnny Dunn's patterns note for note". The trombone player lacks a bit of Flemming's brilliance and might therefore be Gus Aiken's brother Gene "Bud" Aiken, who - as always - plays in his no-nonsense style. The clarinetist might well be Garvin Bushell, as he belonged to this circle of musicians frequently engaged by Bradford, Dunn and cohorts. His technical ability is demonstrated in the first title where he on the spot repeats fast trumpet runs improvised by Aiken. Tone and vibrato are well in his range. The pianist shows nothing of Perry Bradford's characteristics (frequent treble figures), but plays in a simplified stride style, and might therefore be Leroy Tibbs, but might also be Charlie Smitty Smith of later Blue Rhythm Orchestra fame. The banjo player is Sam Speed with his straight four beat playing and his difficulties keeping time when playing arpeggios.

Recording date is from: The Rise and Fall of Paramount Records, Vol. 1, Third Man Records.

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- Rust*3, *4, *6: "probably similar to Johnny Dunn - c; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming or Calvin Jones - tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott and/or Herschel Brassfield - cl-as; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson or Dan Wilson - p; John Mitchell or Sam Speed - bj; possibly others."

- B&GR*4: "prob. Johnny Dunn, c; unknown, tb; unknown, cl; prob. Perry Bradford, p; unknown, bj."

- Bushell/Tucker p.157: no distinct comment by Bushell here, but: "personnel as above?: Lena Wilson, v; Johnny Dunn, c; Earl Granstaff, Herb Flemming, or Calvin Jones, tb; Garvin Bushell, Ernest Elliott, and/or Herschel Brassfield. cl, as; Leroy Tibbs, George Rickson, or Dan Wilson, p; John Mitchell or Sam Speed, bj; others?"

1378-3 and 1379-3 are reissued on CD Timeless CBC 1-073 'Perry Bradford Panorama' and on Document DOCD-5443 'Lena Wilson'.
1378-2 seems to be unreissued.

PERRY BRADFORD'S JAZZ PHOOLS

| | | | |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|
| | | New York, | c. mid May 1923 |
| Gus Aiken – tpt; Eugene Bud Aiken – tbn; | | | |
| Garvin Bushell – clt; unknown – ten; | | | |
| Charlie "Smitty" Smith – pno; John Mitchell – bjo | | | |
| 1429-1 | Fade Away Blues | Pm 12041, | Timeless CBC 1-073 |
| 1429-2 | Fade Away Blues | Pm 12041, | Frog DGF 56 |
| 1429-3 | Fade Away Blues | Pm 12041, | Document DOCD-5353 |
| 1430-1 | Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues) | Pm 12041, | Biograph BLP-12007(LP) |
| 1430-2 | Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues) | Pm 12041, | Frog DGF 56 |
| 1430-3 | Daybreak Blues (Original BugleBlues) | Pm 12041, | Timeless CBC 1-073 |

Discernible differences of takes:

| | |
|--------|--|
| 1429-1 | first 4 bars of 5 th chorus: clt plays very restrained trying to find his part which he hits on bar 5 |
| 1429-2 | first 4 bars of 5 th chorus: clt plays arranged part in harmony with tenor from the beginning |
| 1429-3 | first 4 bars of 5 th chorus: clt enters on bar 3 |
| 1430-1 | bar 9 of first strain B (after 4 12-bar blues chorus): clarinet in harmony with tenor bar 1/2 of second strain B: tpt starts with short legato notes from first beat on |
| 1430-2 | bar 9 of first strain B (after 4 12-bar blues chorus): clarinetist struggles for finding his part bar 1/2 of second strain B: tpt starts on second beat, short pause on first beat |
| 1430-3 | bar 9 of first strain B (after 4 12-bar blues chorus): clarinet in harmony with tenor bar 1/2 of second strain B: tpt plays long legato notes with little jump in the middle from 1 st beat on |

This session obviously has to be seen in relation to the first Gulf Coast Seven session for Columbia, organised by Perry Bradford and certainly executed under his guidance. The two recorded tunes are Bradford's and the same ones as with the Gulf Coast Seven (see my article on the Gulf Coast Seven in Names&Numbers 69). And obviously and aurally the band personnel is the same, too. This then unquestioningly has to change the hitherto listed recording date(s). As Gus Aiken left New York for an extended tour to Cuba at last on May 25, this session has to be predated before this day (Dunn was in England by this date)! As Columbia's Gulf Coast Seven recording session of the same two titles seems to be better documented and dated May 17, 1923 I tend to date this latter Paramount session on the same day (same personnel!) or only on an insignificantly different date. The unknown saxophonist, who certainly is neither Brassfield nor Rollen Smith, who both were in England at the time together with Dunn, might possibly be found in the ranks of Gonzell White's 'Real Jazzers of Jazz', the band Gus Aiken was about to leave for Cuba with, namely Harvey Lankford or Amanzie Richardson. But this is only my own guess-work.

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- Rust*2: Johnny Dunn or June Clark? (cnt); Jimmy Harrison (tbn); "Smitty" (clt); Herschel Brassfield (clt/alt); Charles Smith (pno); Samuel Speed (bjo)
- Rust*3: Gus Aiken – c; Bud Aiken – tb; Garvin Bushell – Herschel Brassfield – cl-as; Charles Smith – p; Samuel Speed – bj.
- Rust*4, *6: Gus Aiken – c; Bud Aiken – tb; Garvin Bushell – cl-as; Charles Smith – p; Samuel Speed – bj.
- JAZZ INFORMATION 1-35 p.2: "Les Zacheis of Cedar Rapids, Iowa, writes that with the help of Dave Caughren he has obtained the correct personnel (sic!) of the Paramount/Claxtonola records by Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools. For 'Charleston South Carolina' – 'Hoola Boola Dance' (Claxtonola 40309) and 'Daybreak Blues' – 'Fadeaway Blues' (National 12255), also issued on other labels, this personnel was given by Perry Bradford himself: Gus Aiken, trumpet; Garvin Bushell, clarinet; Brassfield, clarinet and sax; (for other records, Bradford has given "Brass" Field, drummer; which is correct?) "Speed", bano; Bradford, piano. Johnny Dunn is definitely not on these sides. According to Bradford, Dunn was in Europe when they were made."
- Bushell/Tucker p. 158: Fade Away Blues: "If that's Gus Aiken, he's playing Johnny Dunn's patterns note for note. Day Break Blues: That's not Johnny (Dunn), but he sure plays like Johnny. This date puzzles me, because I don't recall Gus playing so much like Johnny. There's a saxophone in there, so there had to be two reeds."
- RR 75 p.9: "Aiken recalled recording Daybreak Blues and Fade Away Blues". Gus Aiken was in Cuba from Mid-May until End-December 1923. Johnny Dunn was in England from early May 1923 until September 1923 with Will Vodery's Orchestra.
Against our recent opinion, the above testimony obviously shows that Aiken was still at hand for these two sessions recording Fade Away Blues and Daybreak Blues! But then Aiken delivers a perfect copy of Dunn's very personal style!

1429-1 and 1430-3 are reissued on CD Timeless CBC 1-073 'Perry Bradford Panorama'

1429-2 and 1430-2 are reissued on CD FROG DGF 56 'Perry Bradford'

1429-3 and 1430-2 are reissued on CD Document DOCD-5353 'Perry Bradford & the Blues Singers'

1430-1 seems to be reissued only on LP Biograph BLP-12007 'New York to Chicago'

ETHEL RIDLEY Bradford's Jazz Phoools

| | | | |
|---|--|------------|--------------------|
| | | New York, | Jun. 26, 1923 |
| Ethel Ridley – voc; | | | |
| unknown – tpt; unknown (Calvin Jones?) – tbn; | | | |
| unknown – alt; unknown – ten, clt; | | | |
| unknown (Leroy Tibbs ?) – pno; unknown - bjo | | | |
| 28234-2 | Memphis, Tennessee | Vic 19111, | Document DOCD-5353 |
| 28235-3 | If Anybody Here Wants A Real Kind Mama (Here's Your Opportunity) | Vic 19111, | Document DOCD-5353 |

Both titles have been reissued on CD FROG DGF 56 'Perry Bradford'

PERRY BRADFORD'S JAZZ PHOOLS

| | | |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| unknown, Bubber Miley – tpt; <i>Charlie Irvis</i> – tbn; | New York, | Feb. 1924 |
| unknown – clt; <i>Otto Hardwick</i> – alt; unknown (<i>Coleman Hawkins</i>) – ten; | | |
| <i>Perry Bradford</i> – pno; <i>Elmer Snowden</i> – bjo; <i>Harry Hull</i> – bbs | | |
| 1668-1 Charlestown, South Carolina | Pm 20309, | Frog DGF 56 |
| 1668-2 Charlestown, South Carolina | Pm 20309, | Timeless CBC 1-073 |
| 1669-1 Hoola Boola Dance | Pm 20309, | Frog DGF 56 |
| 1669-3 Hoola Boola Dance | Pm 20309, | Timeless CBC 1-073 |

Discernible differences of takes:

| | |
|--------|---|
| 1668-1 | <i>tpt chorus after bridge: tpt plays 3 identical 2-bar phrases, starts 7th bar with same phrase, altering melody in bar 8</i> |
| 1668-2 | <i>tpt chorus after bridge: tpt plays 3 identical 2-bar phrases, continuing 7th bar with different melody</i> |
| 1669-1 | <i>2nd verse (after 8-bar intro and 1st 16-bar verse): bar 3/4 tenor tries to find his part behind alto – silent on first 3 beats</i> |
| 1669-2 | <i>2nd verse (after 8-bar intro and 1st 16-bar verse): bar 3/4 tenor in harmony with alto throughout</i> |

It seems that we have one of those complete take-overs of bands here that have been mentioned in my earlier articles on the Perry Bradford recordings. Just as Clarence Williams did in January 1926 Bradford obviously engaged part of the Ellington band – Snowden still the leader in early February 1924, but replaced by George Francis later on Feb. 22, 1923 – adding a tenor sax and a tuba player and Bradford himself on piano.

Re trumpet players I would like to follow Scherman/Eriksson assuming Bubber Miley and an unknown colleague who stays very much in the background and obviously plays straight parts. This man is impossible to identify, but certainly is not the exuberant Johnny Dunn as we know him. We hear a trombone player – unlisted by Rust – who very probably is Charlie Irvis stylistically and tonally, although not as distinct as desirable.

On clarinet we hear a musician who might be found with Mamie Smith on her session of August 31, 1926. A clarinet player, who plays in a much more fashionable and modern style than Bushell – he himself denying his presence – or Fuller, who is usually listed for this very Mamie Smith date, with interesting melodic phrases – unheard of by Fuller – especially in 'I Once Was Yours' and a completely different vibrato. On alto then we find a sax player with a romantically singing legato style, rather uncommon for this time. When assuming Miley's and Irvis' presence, who might be easier to suggest than Otto Hardwick, at this time with the Washingtonians at the Hollywood Club. The style is Hardwick's, only the tone is a bit harsh but cannot exclude the possibility of Hardwick's presence.

Contrary to Scherman/Eriksson's statement the tenor sax player plays on both titles and can easily be heard on the second title unisono with the trumpet in the verse and later behind the prominent alto. As with the trumpet players I am following their assumption of Hawkins on tenor, only that I wonder why he does not solo. But I have to admit that I do not have any better proposal as there were not so many tenor sax players at this time playing in this advanced manner. Hawkins had not been influential that early and consequently there were no other tenor sax players playing in his very own style. The riff the tenorist plays in the last chorus of the first title seems to be ad-libbed and has a distinct Hawkins flavour. Also this player has been left out by Rust.

I hear Bradford's typical piano tinkling behind the clarinet solo of the first title, avoiding all the bass notes as he mostly does. On the second title he delivers some more essential and supporting playing. I would suggest to listen to the banjo break in the verse of the second title. To me this is Elmer Snowden, very different from Mitchell and Speed. And in early February the Washingtonians still were Snowden's band, Snowden leaving later that month (Dutton, Birth of a Band, Storyville 80-44). The tuba might be Hull as listed in Rust or might even have been Bob Escudero brought over from the Henderson band by Hawkins.

So I am convinced that we have 4/5 of the early Ellington band here, together with some colleagues from other bands.

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- Rust*2: 'probably similar to' Johnny Dunn or June Clark ? (cnt); Jimmy Harrison (tbn); "Smitty" (clt); Herschel Brassfield (clt/alt); Charles Smith (pno); Samuel Speed (bjo).
- Rust*3, *4, *6: Johnny Dunn, Bubber Miley – c; Herb Flemming – tb-dir; ? Garvin Bushell – Herschel Brassfield – cl-as; ? Leroy Tibbs – p; Samuel Speed – bj; ? Harry Hull – bb.
- Scherman/Eriksson: Bubber Miley, unknown (tp); prob Charlie Irvis (tb); poss Garvin Bushell (cl, ss); poss Herschel Brassfield (as); Coleman Hawkins (ts -1,2); Leroy Tibbs (p); Samuel Speed (bj); poss Harry Hull (bb). "Rust lists two trumpets, Johnny Dunn and Bubber Miley. One of them is prominent and is most certainly BM, the other one can be heard faintly in the background and is impossible to identify aurally. The latest edition of Rust doesn't list the trombonist and tenor sax player, whom we have identified as Charlie Irvis and Coleman Hawkins respectively, the latter audible only in the first title (which, incidentally, has nothing to do with James P. Johnson's famous composition). An earlier edition of Rust has Herb Flemming as trombonist and leader, but this seems unlikely aurally."
- Bushell/Tucker p. 159 "I doubt if I was playing clarinet on this session, because at the time I was playing saxophone with Wooding and wouldn't have taken a clarinet date. That sounds like Brassfield on saxophone. I don't think Bubber Miley would have been on a date with Johnny Dunn, since by this time he'd established himself down at the Kentucky Club with Ellington." (Miley joined the Washingtonians at the Hollywood Café (later Kentucky Club) in the fall of 1923! KBR).

1668-1 and 1669-1 have been reissued on CD FROG DGF 56 'Perry Bradford'

1668-2 and 1669-3 have been reissued on CD Timeless CBC 1-073 'Perry Bradford Panorama'

SIPPY WALLACE Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools

| | | |
|--|-----------|--------------------|
| Sippie Wallace – voc; | New York, | Aug. 19, 1925 |
| R.Q. Dickerson – cnt; DePriest Wheeler – tbn; Rudy Jackson – clt, sop; | | |
| Earres Prince – pno | | |
| 73555-A Section Hand Blues | OK 8232, | Document DOCD-5399 |
| 73556-A Parlor Social De Luxe | OK 8232, | Document DOCD-5399 |

In an ongoing research project on the recordings of Edith Wilson the author has found out, that without reasonable doubt Edith Wilson's accompanying band on her recording of December 17, 1924 is a contingent of the Cotton Club Orchestra of the time comprising R.Q.

Dickerson, DePriest Wheeler, Earres Prince and probably – among others – David Jones. It now seems that the musicians involved in this recording of Sippie Wallace are – at least in part - identical to the before-named Cotton Club Band members.

The trumpet player plays in R.Q. Dickerson style with a sharp tone, frequent very sharp staccato phrases and uses a Harmon mute just as on the Wilson sides and later with Jasper Taylor (with Johnny Dodds) June 1928. Hear his break in the middle of the first verse of the first title (squeezed first note and then sharp staccato notes)! The trombonist has the same sharp tone as the trombonist on the recordings with the Cotton Club Orchestra/ Missourians of later and could therefore well be DePriest Wheeler.

A little problematic is the identification of the reed player. He plays soprano sax throughout in the first title (the famous story of John Henry, by the way!). In the second verse we can hear him play a middle break very much in a Bechet like manner which might have led to the assumption that Buster Bailey had been present (compare his attempts on soprano sax on the Clarence Williams Blue Five recordings!). Certainly neither Bechet nor Bailey are responsible (Bechet was busily involved in the Club Basha in New York and would have put himself much more into the foreground on this recording, and Bailey being on tour with Henderson in the Middle West at this date). But thanks to Dave Brown's hint to the immediately following recording session of Sippie Wallace one day later where we hear a skilled soprano sax accompanist – wrongly listed by Rust as alto sax – it is absolutely feasible that we hear the same man here. This player is Rudy Jackson of later Ellington fame who obviously had just arrived in New York with Billy Butler's band after touring extensively with King Oliver's band in 1924. His colleague in the Oliver band – and earlier in Carroll Dickerson's Sunset band – had been Buster Bailey, and it seems appropriate that the better musician – Bailey – left a lasting mark on Jackson's style, so much so that his soprano break in Section Hand Blues has been thought to be by Bailey ever since. On the second title this player plays an expert clarinet with reminiscences of Oliver and Armstrong. The pianist certainly is not Bradford himself, but a man who knows to accompany a band functionally and Earres Prince, the Cotton Club band's pianist is a most significant and probable assumption. In any case, this is not Hersal Thomas, Sippie's brother, who plays on Sippie's next day's session.

This Cotton Club Orchestra – partly under Andrew Preer's leadership – did not leave the Cotton Club until late 1927 to give room for the Ellington band. It certainly is astonishing that a renowned band as this one does not show up more often in the personnels of other recording groups.

Prior to this research project of the Bradford recordings we (our group of listeners Michael Rader, Dave Brown, K-B Rau) have attributed this recording to the work of Gus and Bud Aiken and consorts (see The FROG Blues & Jazz Annual No. 3, 2013). But more recent research and further gained knowledge of this music has brought the author to the above stated conclusions.

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- Rust *3, *4, *5, *6 : unknown c; unknown tb; ?Buster Bailey-cl-ss; ?Perry Bradford p.
- B&GR *4: unknown c; unknown tb; poss Buster Bailey-cl-ss; presumably Perry Bradford p.

Both titles have been reissued on CD Document DOCD-5399 'Sippie Wallace Vol. 1'

PERRY BRADFORD'S JAZZ PHOOLS

New York, Oct. 07, 1925

Personnel unknown, but possibly:

Perry Bradford - voc;

June Clark – cnt; Jimmy Harrison – tbn; Leonard Fields - alt;

Charlie "Smitty" Smith – pno; Will "Splivy" Escoffery – bjo

E-1434/6 Lucy Long

Voc unissued not on LP/CD

E-1437/9 I Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle

Voc unissued not on LP/CD

At the end of 1925 June Clark cut his lip and injured his teeth, which caused him to have a break for 3 weeks and take his band out of Smalls' Sugar Cane Club in December. Out of permanent work, the band had at least a few recording sessions with Perry Bradford. We do not know when Perry Bradford aimed to recruit the Clark band for his own recording purposes. But I see the possibility that Perry tried out the Clark band on this recording date with disappointing results. Disappointing for himself as for the Vocalion people. The disappointment might have been caused by Clark's increasing troubles with lips and teeth, trying to copy Louis Armstrong (Rosenberg/Williams draft: *Fall 1925 June cut his lip and hurt his teeth making high F's at Small's*).

So, when a later date for the recording was fixed for November 2nd, 1925, he might have been in an even worse shape, and Bradford recruited Louis Armstrong with a bunch of Henderson men. But this is only guess-work!

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- Rust *2: Similar to the following? (P.B. Jazz Phoools session of Nov.02, 1925! KBR).

- Rust *3: Possibly similar to the next personnel below (P.B. Jazz Phoools session of Nov.02, 1925! KBR).

- Rust *4, *6: Instrumentation probably similar to the foregoing (P.B. Jazz Phoools session of Feb. 1924! KBR). Perry Bradford, v, dir: unknown personnel.

PERRY BRADFORD'S JAZZ PHOOLS

New York, Nov. 02, 1925

Perry Bradford – voc;

Louis Armstrong – cnt; Charlie Green – tbn;

Buster Bailey – clt; Don Redman – alt;

James P. Johnson – pno; Charlie Dixon – bjo; Kaiser Marshall – dms

E-1580/2 Lucy Long

Voc 15165, Timeless CBC 1-073

E-1583/5 I Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle

Voc 15165, Timeless CBC 1-073

Hateful Blues

Voc unissued not on LP/CD

unknown title

Voc unissued not on LP/CD

The banjo is not easy to hear, but behind Armstrong's chorus in the first title you can hear it. It's character is not Sam Speed's, as very often listed, but clearly tonally and stylistically - and in contrast to Sam Speed's on earlier recordings in this list - that of Charlie Dixon, Henderson's banjo player. Leaving the trombonist's identity the only question (arisen by Mr. Walter C. Allen himself). But judging from tone, vibrato and phrasing I feel quite certain that it is Charlie Green – who certainly would be the only reasonable candidate. Listen to his breaks in the second title. The cymbal sound is identical to Marshall's cymbal played in recordings of the Henderson band of the time. So, with the exception of pianist James P. Johnson, we have a top group of Henderson alumni here.

And what music do they play?! Everybody seems to be at his best, Redman plays an agreeable solo, Bailey is nearly swinging, Green a bit subdued and Louis starts vertically through the clouds like a missile. And the always dependable James P. Johnson gives a solid foundation to this extraordinary music, not to forget Dixon and Marshall. Just imagine you could have been there at the session!

But why, oh why, did they delete the two last titles? Any thinkable reason will never be reason enough for this barbarism.

Note: For this session the following personnels have been listed:

- Rust*2: Louis Armstrong (cnt); Charlie Green (tbn); Buster Bailey (clt); Don Redman (alt); James P. Johnson (pno); Kaiser Marshall (dms); Perry Bradford (voc)

- Rust*3, *4: Louis Armstrong - c; Charlie Green - tb; Buster Bailey -cl; Don Redman - as; James P. Johnson - p; ? Sam Speed – bj; Kaiser Marshall - d; Perry Bradford – v.

- JAZZ INFORMATION Vol.I No.19: At the recording date that produced the famous Perry Bradford's Jazz Phoools "Lucy Long -- I Ain't Gonna Play No Second Fiddle" (Vocalion 15165), four sides were made according to Bradford himself. Only those two were issued, however "Hateful Blues", and a fourth side which he doesn't remember, appear to have been lost. The band at this date, besides Louis Armstrong, included James P. Johnson and Fats Waller, pianos; and Don Redman, alto sax. This information was obtained from Perry Bradford by Dan Qualey of Brooklyn, sponsor of Solo Art Records.

Both titles have been reissued on CD Timeless CBC 1-073 (Du) 'Perry Bradford Panorama', Chronological Classics (sic) 24 'Complementary Tracks' (F) and on several LP and EP issues.

As always I have to thank my good friends Michael Rader, David Brown and Jörg Kuhfuss for their great help, advice, discussion and contradiction!

Sources that have been used are named at the appropriate places in the text.