

THE RECORDINGS OF KITTY BROWN

An Annotated Tentative Personnel - Discography

BROWN, Kitty

no personal data known

Kitty Brown was another early Southern vaudevillian who specialized in coon shouting. Before coming to vaudeville she had toured with Sam T. Jack's Creole Company, the Black Patti Troubadours, and other big African American road shows. Between 1900 and 1906, on platforms from Tampa to Savannah, Brown set the audience wild with her coon songs, including 'The Gambling Man', 'I Wants a Man like Romeo', 'Wedding of a Chinee and a Coon' and 'In the Jungles I'm a Queen'.
(L. Abbott - D. Seroff, 'The Original Blues')

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

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

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

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.

KITTY BROWN

001 **KITTY BROWN** Rickett's Stars

New York,

Feb. 1923

Kitty Brown - voc;

unknown - tpt; unknown - tbn;

unknown - clt; unknown - alt;

Bob Ricketts - pno; unknown - bbs; unknown - dms

71274-A Evil Blues

OK 8052,

Document DOCD-5507

71275-B Mean Eyes

OK 8053,

Document DOCD-5507

Kitty Brown is labelled "vaudevillian" by Mr. David Evans, author of the CD booklet text of Document DOCD-5507, and indicates that she was one of the very many black women active in early Harlem's night-life of the 1920s. An early advertisement already names her as "Miss Kittie Brown, of New York, who is one of the cleverest of Coon Songsters" in the Tampa Morning Tribune, December 5, 1899.

This first recording of Kitty Brown is accompanied by a group led by pianist Bob Ricketts. All men are skilled musicians, well trained in playing with a certain approach to early jazz, but none of them might be identified by his personal style as everything played is from written scores with very little possibility to show individual features. I feel unable to attach any names to the band's musicians.

Notes:

- BGR*2: unknown tpt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; Bob Ricketts, pno; unknown bjo; unknown bbs; unknown dms

- BGR*3,*4: unknown, c; unknown, tb; unknown, cl; unknown, as; presumably Bob Ricketts, p; unknown, bj; unknown, bb; unknown, d

- Rust*3: unknown -t; unknown -tb; unknown -cl; presumably Bob Ricketts -p -dir; unknown -bj.; unknown -bb.

- Rust*4,*6: unknown t; unknown tb; unknown cl; Bob Ricketts, p, dir; unknown bj; unknown bb.

002 KITTY BROWN		New York,	Jun. 1923
Kitty Brown – voc;			
(<i>John Montague?</i>) - pno			
71596-B	Deceitful Blues	OK 8077,	Document DOCD-5507
71597-B	I Don't Let No One Man Worry Me	OK 8077,	Document DOCD-5507

I heard these two sides just during my research on pianist/bandleader John Montague. And, although these sides were recorded one year before the subsequent ones, I am astonished and surprised by the similarity of piano style of the piano accompanist. The temporal distance is a bit too long to attribute these sides to John Montague with some certainty, but I wouldn't be surprised to learn they were his. Piano playing is very fine and strong, and shows similarities to Montague's left-hand style as recognised below.

Notes:

- BGR*2,*3,*4: unknown, pno

- Rust*3,*4,*6: unknown -p

003 KITTY BROWN		New York,	c. May, 1924
Kitty Brown – voc; Billy Higgins – voc;			
<i>Cecil Benjamin</i> – clt;			
<i>John Montague</i> – pno			
1782-2	He's Never Gonna Throw Me Down	Pm 12223,	Doc DOCD-5507
1783-2	Keep On Going	Pm 12223,	Doc DOCD-5507

This beautiful clarinet player shows none of Elliott's short-comings – besides some smears - and plays a very tasteful clarinet accompaniment. He may be searched for in a group of seemingly Dodds-influenced players such as the mysterious Clarence Robinson.

The piano player is equally unidentifiable.

In the course of my search for possible/probable recordings by Cecil Benjamin and John Montague I came to these sides, and when first listening they immediately showed the identity of these two musicians as recognised by this author to be the above-named persons. The clarinet player particularly is not Ernest Elliott! Nor is the pianist unknown, but both musicians are the same as at session 009 below!

Notes:

- Rust *3,*4,*6: ? Ernest Elliott, clt; unknown, pno

- BGR *2,*3,*4 prob Ernest Elliott, clt; unknown, pno

004 KITTY BROWN		New York,	c. Sep. 29, 1924
Kitty Brown – voc; Billy Higgins – voc (3,4);			
<i>Rex Stewart</i> – cnt (2,3,4);			
<i>Cecil Benjamin</i> (or <i>Bob Fuller?</i>) – clt;			
<i>John Montague</i> – pno			
5653-3	Family Skeleton Blues	Ban 1436,	Document DOCD-5507
5654-3	I Wanna Jazz Some More	Ban 1437,	Document DOCD-5507
5655-3	Keep On Going	Ban 1452,	Document DOCD-5507
5656-3	One Of These Days	Ban 1436,	Document DOCD-5507

This trumpet player is much more assured than Morris as listed in BGR and who is named by Louis Hooper in RR 77, but a somewhat disguised Bubber Miley, and my listening companions share the same opinion. Yet, there are no growls and few Johnny Dunn elements pointing to Miley, but frequent jumping trills. This trumpet player might also well be Rex Stewart considering my recognitions of above. Also, I dare to doubt Bob Fuller's presence here, and would like to propose the possibility of Cecil Benjamin's, the clarinetist of the John Montague band. And very certainly, this is not Hooper on piano, nor is it Edgar Dowell, but John Montague, regarding his two band colleagues present. Rust*6 lists Edgar Dowell.

Notes:

- RR 77-9: Thomas Morris, c; Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Tom Morris, cnt (2,3,4); Bob Fuller, clt (1,2); Louis Hooper, pno; Jazz Casper (Billy Higgins), vcl (3,4)

- Rust*3,*4,*6: ? Bubber Miley -c; Bob Fuller -cl; Edgar Dowell -p; Jazz Casper (Billy Higgins) -v

- Scherman, Eriksson, Anderby, Wallen, *Bubber Miley Discography*: prob Bubber Miley (tp), Bob Fuller, (cl); Louis Hooper, (p). "Dixon-Godrich have Thomas Morris on trumpet, Rust has ?Miley. To us, it doesn't sound at all like Morris but more like Miley"