

THE RECORDINGS OF KATIE CRIPPEN

An Annotated Tentative Personnel - Discography

CRIPPEN, Katie, singer

born: Philadelphia, Nov. 17, 1895; died: New York, Nov. 25, 1929

Singer in Harlem cabarets, wife of trombonist Lew Henry. From 1925 through 1929 she performed in New York theaters and on the vaudeville circuit. (Tucker/Bushell, Jazz from the Beginning)

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: *Katie Crippen*
- Probable, generally agreed, but not documented identifications are listed in italics, thus: *Katie Crippen*
- 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: (*Katie Crippen*)

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.

The following statements and the resulting list of recordings only reflect the opinion of this writer/listener and are open to discussion. More so, discussion is eagerly invited. Corrections, amendments and controversial opinions are much appreciated.

KATIE CRIPPEN

001 KATIE CRIPPEN	Henderson's Novelty Orchestra	New York,	Mar. 1921
Katie Crippen – voc;			
unknown – tpt; <i>Chink Johnson</i> – tbn;			
<i>Garvin Bushell</i> – clt; <i>Cordy Williams</i> – vln;			
<i>Willie Gant</i> – pno			
P-103-2	Blind Man's Blues	BS 2003,	Document DOCD-5342
P-104-1	Play 'Em For Mama, Sing 'Em For Me	BS 2003,	Document DOCD-5602
P-104-2	Play 'Em For Mama, Sing 'Em For Me	BS 2003,	Document DOCD-5342

All players present play their arranged parts straight (as written in the arrangement). There are no ad-lib solos to possibly detect any individual traces in what is played by the wind instruments and the prominent violinist.

The retained clarinet player might well be the youthful Garvin Bushell recalling to have recorded with Miss Crippen. He is not Campbell for stylistic reasons!

The pianist plays close to the arrangement – probably as written – and was assumed to be Henderson judging from the band name and Henderson's position with the Black Swan company. But: in the second chorus of the second title suddenly a different piano player appears – much livelier and much looser than Henderson. The band ceases playing to give room for the piano soloist who accompanies Miss Crippen's spoken chorus in early Harlem stride/ragtime style to be relieved by the band again in the third/last chorus.

This piano player very probably is Willie Gant, who believed to have recorded behind Katie Crippen and other early blues/vaudeville singers when interviewed in the late 1950s (Record Research 30 p.4).

Listed musicians' names are taken from 'Hendersonia'. Their deduction may be taken from 'Hendersonia' p. 14.

Notes:

- Record Research 30-4: "He (Willie Gant) believes that he may have recorded behind Lavinia Turner, Katie Crippen and Josie Miles, to name some."

- WC Allen, *Hendersonia*, p18: unk. trumpet; Chink Johnson?, trombone; prob Edgar Campbell, clarinet; prob Cordy Williams, violin; Fletcher Henderson, piano

- Bushell/Tucker, *Jazz from the Beginning*; this session not listed in the G. Bushell discography!

- BGR*2: unknown t; prob George Brashear -tb; Edgar Campbell -cl; prob Cordy Williams -vn; Fletcher Henderson -p

- BGR*3,*4: unknown t; poss Chink Johnson -tb; prob Edgar Campbell -cl; prob Cordy Williams -vn; Fletcher Henderson -p

- Rust*3,*4: unknown t; ? George Brashear -tb; Edgar Campbell -cl; ?Cordy Williams -vn; Fletcher Henderson -p

- Rust*6: unknown t; ? Chink Johnson, tb; Edgar Campbell, cl; ?Cordy Williams, vn; Fletcher Henderson, p

Discernible differences of takes:

P-104-1: KC starts last chorus with: 2 eighth-notes db - c (play 'em), quarter-note bb (for), eighth-note bb, dotted quarter-note g (mama), 3 eighth-notes bb-c-d (sing 'em for), dotted quarter-note bb (me)

P-104-2: KC starts last chorus with: 2 eighth-notes bb - a (play 'em), quarter-note bb (for), quarter-note g, dotted quarter-note eb (mama), 3 eighth-notes bb-a-bb (sing 'em for), dotted quarter-note g (me)

002 KATIE CRIPPEN	Henderson's Novelty Orchestra	New York,	c. Jun. 1921
Katie Crippen - voc;			
Gus Aiken - tpt; Jake Frazier - tbn;			
Edgar Campbell - clt; Buster Bailey - clt, alt;			
Fletcher Henderson - pno; unknown - bbs			
P-136-2	That's My Cup Blues	BS 2018,	Document DOCD-5342
P-137-1	When It's Too Late (You're Gonna Miss Me, Daddy)	BS 2018,	Document DOCD-5342

Walter C. Allen p22: "Both Buster Bailey and Garvin Bushell dimly recall recording behind Katie Crippen. Bailey had in fact been in New York the past February, recording with Mamie Smith. One of the clarinetists doubles on saxophone, and Bushell did not take up sax until 1923". Rust *6 lists Willie Gant - pno. Accompaniment is mainly played straight, therefore impossible to discriminate personal styles. But tpt playing (tone, vibrato, time) is within the limits and style of Gus Aiken as displayed in his later years.

One of the clarinet players constantly plays first parts together with the singer or the trumpet and might therefore well be Edgar Campbell of whom Garvin Bushell said "But one important clarinet player would take the solos. Ed Campbell did a lot of that. He wasn't much of a jazz man, but he was a very good reader". If I am right with this assumption this would rule out Bushell for this session. And it would furthermore mean that Bushell - recalling recording behind Katie Crippen - would be the very retained clarinetist of the first Crippen session (see above). From these two Katie Crippen sides Edgar Campbell's personal clarinet style can now be deduced with some certainty.

The pianist certainly is Henderson throughout as no traces of the light and crisp piano style of Willie Gant can be detected here as in session 001.

Neither source list the tuba player who - according to the arrangement - is often coupled with the trombone.

Notes:

- WC Allen, *Hendersonia* p22: unknown trumpet; unknown trombone; poss Buster Bailey, clarinet and sax; possibly Garvin Bushell or Edgar Campbell, clarinet; Fletcher Henderson, piano

- Bushell/Tucker, *Jazz from the Beginning*, p.150: unknown t; unknown tb; Buster Bailey -cl -as; Garvin Bushell -cl; Fletcher Henderson -p (obviously from Rust*4)

- BGR*2: prob: Gus Aiken, cnt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Garvin Bushell, Edgar Campbell or Buster Bailey, clt and clt/alt; Fletcher Henderson -p

- BGR*3,*4: unknown c; unknown tb; poss Garvin Bushell or Edgar Campbell -cl; poss Buster Bailey cl/sax; Fletcher Henderson -p

- Rust*3: prob: Gus Aiken -t; Jake Frazier -tb; Buster Bailey -Edgar Campbell -Garvin Bushell (2 cl, one dblg as); Fletcher Henderson -p

- Rust*4: unknown t; unknown tb; Buster Bailey -cl -as; Garvin Bushell -cl; Fletcher Henderson -p

- Rust*6: unknown t; ? Chink Johnson, tb; Edgar Campbell, cl; ?Cordy Williams, vn; Willie Gant, p