

THE RECORDINGS OF HAZEL MEYERS

An Annotated Tentative Personnel - Discography

HAZEL MEYERS

001 HAZEL MEYERS	New York,	c. Sep. 08-17, 1923
Hazel Meyers – voc;		
Porter Grainger – pno		
Love Ain't Blind No More	Ajax 17007,	Document DOCD-5430
Wish I Had You (And I'm Gonna Get You Blues)	Ajax 17007,	Document DOCD-5430

This certainly is Porter Grainger with his light and easy Harlem stride piano style as I have come to get to know it from Viola McCoy's early recordings. His style is marked by frequent short upward arpeggios in the right hand and a strong left hand rhythm. It all sounds very workmanlike, but nice and pleasing, and sometimes he shows his inner swing by passing over into double-time passages.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Porter Grainger p
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Porter Grainger p
- W.R. Bryant, Ajax Records: Porter Grainger (piano).

002 HAZEL MEYERS	New York,	Oct. 01, 1923
Hazel Meyers – voc;		
Leslie A. Hutchinson ("Hutch") – pno		
12048 Graveyard Dream Blues	Voc 14688,	Document DOCD-5430
12049 Graveyard Dream Blues	Voc 14688,	Document DOCD-5430
12050 Low Down Papa (Treat Sweet Mama Kind)	Voc 14688,	Document DOCD-5430
12051 Low Down Papa (Treat Sweet Mama Kind)	Voc 14688,	Document DOCD-5430

What a wealth of good pianists they did have in Harlem – or rather New York – in the early twenties. And how many of them would never have been able to be documented on record. This Mr. "Hutch" was an extraordinary exception: He went to France and the UK in the second half of the 1920s and gained celebrity through singing, piano playing and affairs with members of the British society. Except for this session he only recorded in the USA as accompanist to Mamie Smith in September 1924 as part of Elmer Snowden's orchestra – he very probably is also on Ajax 17063! – and is then listed in a jazz context in Rust as accompanist of Alice Morley in September 1927 in London.

His early style heard here is not "Harlem Stride", but a more Western oriented bluesy piano style.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Leslie A. Hutchinson ("Hutch"), p
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Leslie A. Hutchinson ("Hutch"), p

Discernible differences of takes:

- 12048: Intro starts with short upbeat, fourth bar right-hand chords on the beat. Tune has 4 chorusses and no coda.
- 12049: Intro has no upbeat, fourth bar right-hand chords syncopated. Tune has 4 chorusses and 4 bar coda.
- 12050: Miss Meyers' entry in bar 3 of tune (first bar of verse) is accompanied by chords on the beat.
- 12051: Miss Meyers' entry in bar 3 of tune (first bar of verse) is accompanied by a short right-hand upward arpeggio.

003 HAZEL MEYERS	New York,	Oct. 30, 1923
Hazel Meyers – voc;		
Joe Smith – cnt; Fletcher Henderson – pno		
12208 He's Never Gonna Throw Me Down	Voc 14709,	Document DOCD-5430
12209 He's Never Gonna Throw Me Down	Voc 14709,	Document DOCD-5602
12211 Awful Moanin' Blues	Voc 14709	not on LP/CD
12212 Awful Moanin' Blues	Voc 14709,	Document DOCD-5430

This clearly is the wonderful and romantic Joe Smith with his smooth and flexible tone, yet still showing influences of Harlem's trumpet star of the era, Johnny Dunn, and his military triplet-dominated style. Fletcher Henderson playing his workman-like – but not at all bad – accompaniment on piano.

Notes:

- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*, p. 75: Joe Smith, cornet; Fletcher Henderson, piano. „The cornetist plays in the style of Howard Scott here, but the tone is Joe Smith's.”
- Rust*3,*4,*6: Joe Smith, c; Fletcher Henderson, p.
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Joe Smith, c; Fletcher Henderson, p.

Discernible differences of takes:

12208: First two vocal lines "I'm Gone Away" answered by trumpet with multi-toned double-time phrases.

12209: First two vocal lines "I'm Gone Away" answered by trumpet with slow phrases, the second one with sustained blue-notes (Db).

Because of the unavailability of take 12211 comparison with 12212 was impossible!

004 HAZEL MEYERS		New York,	c. Nov. 16-23, 1923
Hazel Meyers – voc;			
Porter Grainger – pno			
31015-1	Tired O' Waitin' Blues	Ajax 17013	not on LP/CD
31016-1	He's My Man, Your Man (Somebody Else's Too)	Ajax 17013	not on LP/CD

Because of the unavailability of these titles on LP/CD a valuation of this session was impossible.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Porter Grainger, p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Porter Grainger, p

- W.R. Bryant, Ajax Records: Porter Grainger (piano).

005 HAZEL MEYERS		New York,	Nov. 30, 1923
Hazel Meyers – voc;			
Joe Smith – cnt; Fletcher Henderson – pno			
12377	Mason-Dixon Blues	Voc 14725,	Document DOCD-5430
12379	Chicago Bound Blues	Voc 14725,	Document DOCD-5430

Again the delicate and reliable Joe Smith on cornet here, on his way from out of the spell of Johnny Dunn to his very own romantic way of playing. Fletcher Henderson on piano.

Notes:

- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*, p. 81: Joe Smith, cornet; Fletcher Henderson, piano. "See remark for band session on this same date: "The name of Freddie Keppard has been mentioned as the cornet soloist on 'Charleston Crazy', but it sounds quite typical of Howard Scott. Note that later in this same day, Henderson cut two more titles behind singer Hazel Meyers, but with Joe Smith on cornet. Comparison of Scott's solo work here with Smith on the Meyers sides shows a decided similarity of style, but also a definite difference in tone. Joe Smith does not seem to have taken part in any band sessions during this period. Hawkins is not distinctly audible, unless he is the bass sax player."

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Joe Smith, c; Fletcher Henderson, p.

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Joe Smith, c; Fletcher Henderson, p.

006 HAZEL MEYERS		New York,	c. Dec. 1923
Hazel Meyers – voc;			
unknown (Fletcher Henderson ?) - pno			
26092-2	Bleeding Hearted Blues	Bell P-255,	Document DOCD-5430
	Down-Hearted Blues	Bell P-255,	Document DOCD-5430

The piano accompanist is listed as unknown in any discography at hand. But the style is at least very similar to Fletcher Henderson's of the time and I see the strong possibility of his presence. Listen and compare this player's left-hand rhythm and his melodic and harmonic feature ... and his rhythmical energy. Probably Fletcher Henderson for me.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: acc. unknown

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

- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*: not listed.

007 HAZEL MEYERS		New York,	c. Jan. 02-17, 1924
Hazel Meyers – voc;			
Ernest Elliott – clt, alt; Porter Grainger – pno			
31502	Mississippi Blues	Ajax 17019,	Doc DOCD-1005
31503	The Man Ain't Born Who Can Treat Me Like You Do	Ajax 17019,	Doc DOCD-1005

These two titles – together with the two titles by Clara Smith of 29 January 1924 - show in an exemplary way Elliott's style and performance both on clarinet and alto saxophone. They have been used as a measure for all recordings of his examined so far and will be used further on in my Ernest Elliott research, although it has to be admitted that Elliott approved in later years. My description of Elliott's "Stylistics" (see under Stylistics) is founded on these recordings. So, even without documented proof of Elliott's presence here, we could be sure to hear him on these sides.

Porter Grainger is on piano. Both accompanists are listed on the record labels.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Ernest Elliott, cl, as; Porter Grainger p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Ernest Elliott, cl, as; Porter Grainger p

- W.R. Bryant, Ajax Records: Ernest Elliott (saxophone), Porter Grainger (piano). Accompanying personnel are listed on the labels.

008 HAZEL MEYERS		New York,	Mar. 1924
Hazel Meyers – voc;			
Porter Grainger – pno			
5457-1	Tain't A Doggone Thing But The Blues	Dom 362	not on LP/CD
5457-2	Tain't A Doggone Thing But The Blues	Ban 1358,	Document DOCD-5430
5458-2	Plug Ugly (The Worst Lookin' Man In Town)	Ban 1358,	Document DOCD-5430

The Regal 9654 issue checked names Porter Grainger as piano accompanist. Stylistic features – as compared to Porter Grainger’s playing on session 001 above and his playing with Viola McCoy – underline this identification unequivocally.

Take -1 of the first title is reliably reported to exist and seems not to have been recognized before. Due to technical difficulties both takes 5457 have not yet been compared in detail and described.

Notes:

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Porter Grainger p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Porter Grainger p

Discernible differences of takes:

- 5457-1:

- 5457-2:

009	HAZEL MEYERS	Henderson and his Jazzy Cornetist	New York,	c. Apr. 09-23, 1924
		Hazel Meyers – voc;		
		Howard Scott – tpt; Fletcher Henderson – pno		
31555		Heart-Breakin’ Joe	Ajax 17026,	Document DOCD-5430
31558		Don’t Mess With Me	Ajax 17026,	Document DOCD-5430

With Joe Smith, the outspoken blues accompanist of the time, on tour and not available for Fletcher Henderson, Henderson’s second trumpeter and ‘jazzy’ conetist (!), public’s taste seems to be apparent: Scott is the ‘jazzy’ musician – and Smith the romantic. (Scott’s career urgently has to be researched. He is a very shadowy musician.) And Elmer Chambers – first trumpet with Henderson at the time – obviously was out of consideration because of stylistic reasons. Measured against him Howard Scott certainly was much more “jazzy”. This trumpeter here certainly is much jazzier than Chambers and must have listened to trumpeters of “Western” style, but still shows his roots in early Harlem Johnny Dunn commanded trumpet style. This certainly is Howard Scott! It was his bad luck that after one year in the Henderson band his duties as “hot” trumpeter became superfluous when Armstrong joined the band.

I have found his earliest appearance with the Henderson band on the ‘Seven Brown Babies’ recordings of October 04, 1923 by the Henderson band, although this seems not to have been recognized and noted earlier by anybody. W.C. Allen has none of it in his ‘Hemderonia’ (see my Early Fletcher Henderson list elsewhere on this website!).

Notes:

- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*, p.102: Howard Scott, cornet ; Fletcher Henderson, piano. “The ‘jazzy cornetist’ is aurally identifiable as Scott; see remarks on p. 100 re Joe Smith, at this time on tour with ‘In Bamville’. This was the last known Ajax session with Henderson; after this, most blues accompaniments on this label were by the ‘Choo Choo Jazzers’, a Joe Davis unit of varying personnel on each title. Joe Davis did, incidentally, claim to have used Fletcher Henderson on some of his Ajax dates, possibly some of the foregoing, possibly with some of the ‘Jazzers’.”

- Rust*3: ? Joe Smith, c; Fletcher Henderson, p.

- Rust*4,*6: Howard Scott, c ; Fletcher Henderson, p.

- BGR*2: prob Joe Smith, cnt; Fletcher Henderson, pno.

- BGR*3,*4: Howard Scott, c ; Fletcher Henderson, p.

- W.R. Bryant, *Ajax Records*: probably Joe Smith (cornet) ; Fletcher Henderson (piano). Smith is not credited by name on the labels; the attribution is based on strong aural and circumstantial evidence.

010	HAZEL MEYERS		New York,	Apr. 1924
		Hazel Meyers – voc;		
		Elmer Chambers – cnt; Don Redman – clt;		
		Fletcher Henderson – pno		
42592-1		Don’t Know And Don’t Care Blues	Em 10748,	Document DOCD-5430
42593-1		I’m Gonna Tear Your Playhouse Down	Em 10748,	Document DOCD-5430

This is unmistakably Elmer Chambers with his antiquated 6/8 phrasing and fast vibrato, together with Henderson’s clarinet soloist (yes, Redman had been hired as clarinetist!). And nice Fletcher Henderson piano.

Notes:

- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*, p.102: Elmer Chambers, c ; Don Redman, cl ; Fletcher Henderson, p

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Elmer Chambers, c ; Don Redman, cl ; Fletcher Henderson, p

- BGR*2,*3,*4: Elmer Chambers, cnt ; Don Redman, clt ; Fletcher Henderson, pno.

011	HAZEL MEYERS		New York,	c. May 19, 1924
		Hazel Meyers – voc;		
		Howard Scott – tpt; Fletcher Henderson – pno		
105326		Pipe Dream Blues	PA 032053,	Document DOCD-5430
105327		Black Star Line	PA 032053,	Document DOCD-5430

It seems that Henderson got convinced of Chambers’ unsuitability to this kind of recordings and thus favoured Howard Scott, who certainly is a much better jazz musician (see session 009 above). Very nice piano on ‘Black Star Line’.

Notes:

- W.C. Allen, *Hendersonia*, p.107: prob Howard Scott, cornet; Fletcher Henderson, piano. “Cornetist is identified by similarity of style to Scott on Columbia 14033-D.”

- Rust*3,*4,*6: Howard Scott, c; Fletcher Henderson, p.

- BGR *2,*3: Howard Scott, cnt; Fletcher Henderson, pno.

- BGR *4: prob Howard Scott, cnt; Fletcher Henderson, pno.

012	HAZEL MEYERS	her Sawin’ Trio	New York,	May 18-26, 1924
		Hazel Meyers – voc;		
		Bubber Miley – tpt (1,2); Bob Fuller – clt (1,2);		

Louis Hooper – pno, bjo

31571	Papa Don't Ask Mama Where She Was	Ajax 17039,	Document DOCD-5430
31574	I'm Every Man's Mama	Ajax 17040,	Document DOCD-5430
31575	You Better Build Love's Fire (Or Your Sweet Mama's Gone)	Ajax 17040,	Document DOCD-5430

Easily and very probably Bubber Miley with his clear and forceful tone, and his Johnny Dunn derived style. Fuller and Hooper OK. No bjo audible on first and second titles. Hooper as by own testimony.

On third title there is a banjo – definitely not Snowden – which starts after piano ceases and stops again immediately before piano resumes playing, so this is very probably played by Hooper.

Notes:

- RR 77-6: Miley, Fuller, Hooper, unknown bjo.
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Bubber Miley, c; Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p; unknown bj; or Louis Hooper, pno; unknown bjo (3)
- Rust*3,*4,*6: Bubber Miley, c; Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p; ? Elmer Snowden, bj; or Hooper and Snowden only.
- W. Bryant, Ajax Records: personnel per Hooper: Bubber Miley, c; Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p; unknown bj.
- Bob Hitchens, Choo Choo Jazzers, VJM 175: Bubber Miley (t) Bob Fuller (cl) Louis Hooper (p, bj)

013 **HAZEL MEYERS** Choo Choo Jazzers New York, Jun. 21-26, 1924

Hazel Meyers – voc;

Bubber Miley – tpt; Louis Hooper – pno;

unknown - effects

31597	War Horse Mama	Ajax 17047,	Document DOCD-5431
31599	Cold Weather Papa	Ajax 17047,	Document DOCD-5431

Bubber Miley and Louis Hooper as can easily be distinguished.

Notes:

- RR 86-6: unlisted
- Rust*3: ? Bubber Miley - c; Bob Fuller - cl; Louis Hooper – p.
- BGR*2,*3: poss Bubber Miley, cnt; Bob Fuller, clt; Louis Hooper, pno.
- BGR*4: poss Bubber Miley, c; Louis Hooper, p; unknown, effects
- Rust*6: Bubber Miley, c; Bob Fuller cl; Louis Hooper, p.
- W. Bryant, Ajax Records: no personnel.
- Bob Hitchens, Choo Choo Jazzers, VJM 175: Bubber Miley (t) prob Louis Hooper (p) Joe Davis (effects)

014 **HAZEL MEYERS** Choo Choo Jazzers New York, Jun. 21-26, 1924

Hazel Meyers – voc;

Bob Fuller – clt; Louis Hooper - pno

31602	Hateful Blues	Ajax 17048,	Document DOCD-5431
31603	Frankie Blues	Ajax 17048,	Document DOCD-5431

Fuller undisputed. Hooper, too, with his somewhat western style (no stride!), sometimes also using blues/boogie elements.

Notes:

- RR 86-6: Bob Fuller, Louis Hooper
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p.
- Rust*3,*4,*6: Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p
- W. Bryant, Ajax Records: personnel per Hooper: Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p.
- Bob Hitchens, Choo Choo Jazzers, VJM 175: Bob Fuller (cl) Louis Hooper (p, bj)

015 **HAZEL MEYERS** New York, Jun. 21-26, 1924

Hazel Meyers – voc;

Louis Metcalf – tpt; Louis Hooper – pno

31622	He Used To Be Mine (But You Can Have Him Now)	Ajax 17082	not on LP/CD
31624	Lost My Sweetie Blues	Ajax 17077,	Document DOCD-5431

Unfortunately we do not have the first title on LP/CD. This is certainly Metcalf on trumpet, as he uses to bend his notes what Rex Stewart does not, at least not to this degree. Stewart is more Armstrong inclined, whereas Metcalf obviously was much impressed by Bubber Miley's style, which he follows to some degree without being as stiff as Miley. Insofar there is a lot of Johnny Dunn influence with Metcalf - yet changed into a much looser and less military style - which you do not hear with Stewart. Chilton, Who's Who In Jazz: "During following year (1924 – KBR) (Metcalf) spent several months with Willie The Lion Smith at the Rhythm Club." RR 86/3, Louis Metcalf: "At age 17 (1922 – KBR) he hit Broadway in New York City to become a jazzier with the Julian Arthur combo that toured with Jimmy Cooper's famous Black and White revue." Accordingly it cannot be stated firmly that Metcalf "did not arrive in New York until 19 August 1924" (which I cannot read out of Storyville 2002/03, p. 198! – KBR). Hooper is the pianist.

Notes:

- RR 86-6: Rex Stewart, cnt; Jake Frazier, tbn; Louis Hooper, pno, per Hooper.
- BGR*2,*3,*4: Louis Metcalf, c; Louis Hooper, p.
- Rust*3,*4,*6: Louis Metcalf, c; Louis Hooper, p.
- W. Bryant, Ajax Records: personnel per Hooper: Louis Metcalfe, c; Louis Hooper, p (second title); no personnel (first title)
- Bob Hitchens, Choo Choo Jazzers, VJM 175: poss Louis Metcalf (t) Louis Hooper (p, bj)

016 **HAZEL MEYERS** New York, Aug. 05, 1924

Hazel Meyers – voc;

Thomas Fats Waller – pno

13467	Maybe Someday	Voc 14861,	Document DOCD-5431
13469	(I'm Gonna See You) When Your Troubles Are Just Like Mine	Voc 14861,	Document DOCD-5431

This certainly is the young Thomas “Fats” Waller in all his glory with a singer singing the words to the tunes. As to the notice in Jazz Information below: If only everything in finding out personnels would be that easy!

Notes:

- *Jl 2-9/26: “Merrill Hammond also has a Hazel Meyers “Maybe Somdey” and “When Your Troubles”, Vocalion 14861. The piano accompanist in the opinion of Hammond, Bill Love and Larry Muehling, is Fats Waller. Can anyone else give an opinion on this item?”*
- *BGR*2,*3,*4: Fats Waller, p.*
- *Rust*3,*4,*6: Fats Waller, p.*

017	HAZEL MEYERS	the Choo Choo Jazzers	New York,	Jun. 21-26, 1924
	Hazel Meyers – voc;			
	<i>Louis Metcalf</i> – tpt (2); Bob Fuller – clt (1);			
	Louis Hooper – pno			
31630		You’ll Never Have No Luck By Quitin’ Me (sic)	Ajax 17054,	Document DOCD-5431
31631		Lonesome For That Man Of Mine	Ajax 17054,	Document DOCD-5431

This probably is Bob Fuller, yet a bit unfamiliar, playing only very short phrases. But bending the notes is Fuller’s. The pianist very probably is Hooper, as piano playing on both sides is compatible to Hooper’s style. Possibly Hooper did not recognize his own playing on the first title because of some approximations to classic or symphonic piano accompaniments. (Whether Joe Davis played piano – and if so, how - I do not know.)

On the second title I hear Metcalf, whose tone is not as clear as Miley’s, but a bit coated (see session 012 above), and whose phrasing is much looser than Miley’s. There certainly are some Miley licks, but I see it possible that Metcalf was asked to copy Miley a bit, and he used the most obvious licks from Miley’s style. The pianist seems to be the same as on first title.

Notes:

- *RR 86-6: Bob Fuller, clt; not Louis Hooper, pno, on 31630, Bubber Miley, cnt and Louis Hooper, pno on 31631.*
- *BGR*2,*3: Bubber Miley, cnt (2); Bob Fuller, clt; Louis Hooper, pno (2); unknown pno (1)*
- *BGR*4: Bubber Miley, c; or Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p.*
- *Rust*3,*4,*6: Bob Fuller, cl; unknown, p; or Bubber Miley, c; Louis Hooper, p*
- *W. Bryant, Ajax Records: personnel per Hooper (first title): Bob Fuller, cl; Louis Hooper, p; (second title): Bubber Miley, c; Louis Hooper, p.*
- *Bob Hitchens, Choo Choo Jazzers, VJM 175: prob Bubber Miley (t) Bob Fuller (cl) Louis Hooper (p-2) unknown (p-1)*

018	HAZEL MEYERS	Stark’s Hot Five	Chicago,	Jun. 21, 1926
	Hazel Meyers – voc;			
	Shirley Clay – tpt; Preston Jackson – tbn; Artie Starks – clt, alt;			
	Cassino Simpson – pno; Johnny St. Cyr – bjo			
9766-A		Blackville After Dark	OK 8364,	Document DOCD-5431
9767-A		Heartbreaking Blues	OK 8364,	Document DOCD-5431

It certainly is a pity that Preston Jackson in his book “Trombone Man” does not even mention Hazel Meyers. Yet, although I am not as much into the Chicago jazz scene of the 1920s as into the Harlem scene, I feel secure to list the personnel as above – taken from Rust*6. This is not Bernie Young, but the very beautiful Shirley Clay, and there is no drummer at all, as listed earlier. My opinion is strongly supported by Jörg Kuhfuss.

Notes:

- *Jl 2-9/26: “Merrill (Hammond – KBR) also brings up again the question of Hazel Meyers’ Okeh 8364, ‘Blackville After Dark’ (9766 a) – ‘Heartbreaking Blues’ (9767 a), accompanied by “Starks Hot Five” (no apostrophe). This excellent blues record was mentioned by George Beall in an old J.I.; but as far as we know, the personnel remains unknown.”*
- *Rust*3: Bernie Young –c; Preston Jackson –tb; Artie Starks –cl –as; Cassino Simpson –p; Cliff Jones –d.*
- *Rust*4,*6: Shirley Clay –c; Preston Jackson –tb; Artie Starks –cl –as; Cassino Simpson –p; Johnny St. Cyr –bj.*
- *BGR*2: Bernie Young, cnt; Preston Jackson, tbn; Artie Starks, clt, alt; Cassino Simpson, pno; Cliff Jones, dms.*
- *BGR*3,*4: Shirley Clay or Bernie Young, cnt; Preston Jackson, tbn; Artie Starks, clt, alt; Richard M. Jones or Cassino Simpson, pno; Johnny St. Cyr, bjo.*

I have to thank Joerg Kuhfuss who again gave generously of his spare time to check the accompanists as documented on the record labels in his exquisite record collection, and also generally for his expert advice!

K.-B. Rau
Erlangen, 24 July 2016