

THE RECORDING OF ISSIE RINGGOLD

An Annotated Tentative Name-Discography

RINGGOLD, Issie, singer

no personal data known

The only notes found in my library regarding Issie Ringgold are copied below. Her sister Muriel was a popular Broadway artist in New York, and Issie – or ‘Izzy’ as also reported - probably also worked as a vaudeville performer and singer.

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

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.

ISSIE RINGGOLD

001 **ISSIE RINGGOLD**

New York, Jan. 22, 1930

Issie Ringgold – voc;

Walter ‘Jock’ Bennett - tpt;

Wesley ‘Socks’ Wilson - pno

149797-3 He’s A Good Meat Cutter

Col 14509-D, Document DOCD-5504

149798-2 Be On Your Merry Way

Col 14509-D, Document DOCD-5504

Composer credits: 149797 (Wilson); 149798 (Wilson)

I – KBR – most recently received a note from collector Phil Melick of Charleston, W.V. He – a keen trumpet specialist, as it seems – advises me to check Walter ‘Jock’ Bennett as the trumpet accompanist of Miss Ringgold on these two only sides. And – with particular tension I did – I can only congratulate him for his sharp ears and his aural memory. ‘Jock’ Bennett, trumpet player and leader on the wonderful ‘Bennett’s Swamplanders’ Columbia sides, certainly is the same player as heard here with Miss Ringgold. When compiling my Walter Bennett list (elsewhere on this web-site) in 2018, I was not aware of this possible association, the more so as Miss Ringgold’s only two recorded sides are hidden in Johnny Parth’s ‘Blue Girls Vol. 2’ CD, which does not grace my CD player very often – if ever. But now we know, I think. Thank you very much for informing me, Phil! This clear identification of Mr. Bennett by Phil Melick is one further step to a “final” discography. There aren’t so many, anymore!

Miss Ringgold has a clear and medium strong voice with good delivery, but she tends to lower her notes, which sounds a bit un-professional at times.

After listening I am totally convinced that we have Walter Bennett here. Of Wesley ‘Socks’ Wilson as pianist (see my note below) I am not as certain. There are very few recordings by this player only accompanying a singer. But those there are show a pianist with little left-hand bass – one-note phrases mostly, no ragtime of stride bass – and rather simple right-hand phrases – little chordal playing – he may yet be our man here.

Notes:

- BGR*2: prob Louis Metcalfe, cnt; unknown, pno. This is a female singer.

- BGR*3: Muriel ‘Issie’ Ringgold, v; unknown, c; unknown, p

- BGR*4: Issie Ringgold, v; unknown, c; unknown, p. This artist’s name is usually spelled ‘Izzy’ in contemporary newspapers. She is the sister of variety artist Muriel Ringgold.

- Rust *3: ? Louis Metcalfe -c; unknown, p

- Rust*4, *6: acc. by unknown c, unknown p

SOURCES:

- David Griffith, Barclay Draper, Storyville 87-99: *“Later, shortly before Bubber Miley died, I did another vaudeville stint, this time with Bubber’s own band. Irving Mills was the producer and he had arranged for Bubber to have his own band. Frank Belt, an old-time trumpet player that I knew, recommended me to Bubber, as Bubber was living at Frank’s house. Frank called me up and I went over the parts with Bubber. Then I was invited to attend the rehearsals, but unfortunately the act only lasted about five or six weeks. I stayed with them from the beginning to the end. We had a nice act, featuring Bubber and the band, comedian Tim Moore, Izzy Ringgold, and the Five Blazers. After about four weeks, and while we were at the Lafayette Theater. Bubber became very ill and for the last few shows I had to do his feature, where they called on ‘Brother’ Bubber to lead us in prayer and of course Bubber would make those sounds on the horn like he was preaching. Without Bubber, we had no act, as Irving Mills had put it together especially for Bubber. There were three trumpets, Bubber, Ray Carn, and myself on second trumpet, R.H. Horton was the trombone player, Booker Pittman was one of the saxophone players, Gene Anderson was on piano, Paul Burnett on banjo, and Zutty Singleton on drums. Ralph Cooper took over that band after Bubber died and put in three new trumpet players and went abroad with them. That was one of my most pleasant experiences with big bands, everyone had a great deal of respect for Bubber because he was so creative. Bubber, I feel, was responsible for the ‘jungle rhythm’ which Duke was supposed to have created.”*

- Storyville 160-160 (682): *“Despite the entry in ‘Blues and Gospel Records’, Issie Ringgold’s Co 14509-D does not bear the name ‘Muriel’ and the ‘Defender’ of 11 June 1927 reports that Izzy (as she is usually known in press reports) is the sister of the well-known Muriel. Both sides of the recording show composer credit as Wilson, which may be a clue to the identity of the pianist.”*

- Alain Balfour, booklet to Document CD DOCD-5504 (1996): *“It was once thought that Louis Metcalf provided the distinctive cornet accompaniment to ‘Issie Ringgold’s’ recordings. It was also once thought that Issie and Muriel Ringgold were one and the same person. Research has since proved both these assumptions incorrect and whilst the identity of the cornet player is still open to speculation, Muriel Ringgold, who was a popular Broadway artist, was discovered to be none other than Issie’s sister. Issie’s two jaunty pieces would suggest that some of her sister’s music hall material left his mark.”*

- I – KBR – have a hand-written note in my Rust*6 under ‘Issie Ringgold’ as: *“Louis Metcalf?, tpt; Sox Wilson ?, pno – IAJRC 26-2/28”* Unfortunately, I never was a member of the IAJRC organisation and thus do not possess their publications. But if there is somebody reading this, being interested in jazz research, and having access to this IAJRC mag, would he – please – send me a copy of this note to ‘kb.rau@t-online.de’. I would be most grateful!

With sincerest thanks to Phil Melick!

K.- B. Rau
09-09-2024