

# THE RECORDINGS OF CHARLIE GAINES

## An Annotated Tentative Personnelo-Discography

GAINES, Charlie; born: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 8<sup>th</sup> August, 1900; died: Philadelphia, 23<sup>rd</sup> November 1986  
His son, Stanley, is a bassist, another son, the late Charlie Jr., was a trumpeter. Played in local brass bands until 1917, then worked in Philadelphia and Atlantic City with Charlie Taylor's Band, also worked in Atlantic City with Charlie Johnson. Moved to New York in 1920, played in Wilbur Sweatman's Orchestra, also joined Clarence Williams' recording staff. Giggled at the Garden of Joy with various leaders, joined Sam Wooding at the Nest (c. 1923). Toured with Earl Walton's Band before joining LeRoy Smith in 1925, for the next five years worked regularly with LeRoy Smith (including 'Hot Chocolates' revue), also free-lanced in New York; occasionally with Charlie Johnson, also recorded with Fats Waller in 1929. In 1930 returned to Philadelphia to lead own band, briefly rejoined LeRoy Smith in 1931, then again led own band in Philadelphia (accompanying Louis Armstrong in 1932). Brief excursion to New York in 1934 to record own composition 'Ants In My Pants' with Clarence Williams, then resumed leading in Philadelphia. During the 1940s continued long residency at Carroll's; led own trio at the Hangover Club in Philadelphia during the late 1960s. Giggling in the mid-1970s with own quartet. (John Chilton, Who's Who in Jazz)

### GAINES, CHARLIE

(from: Fats Waller And His Buddies)

#### STYLE

Gaines does not play in a southern style. His style, though, is more rhythmical than melodic. His playing is somewhat quirky and a bit erratic, using long notes where you would not expect them, rather irregular. His playing is not marked by the use of harmonic finesse or elegance. Instead he ad-libs by playing a row of not melodically related notes, but varying their rhythmical relations. His general style might still show some influence from Freddie Keppard, as shown above.

#### TOPE

Not clear, rather molded. Not, what we call a beautiful tone.

#### VIBRATO

Gaines uses very low – rather irregular – vibrato, lasting during the whole length of a tone, but increasing in frequency in the middle of a tone's duration, then lowering again (no final vibrato of tone as so often with other trumpeters). He often starts his notes with relatively strong vibrato, then immediately getting lower.

#### TIME

His notes come on the beat without dragging or being hasty. He displays good rhythmic feeling and drives the band along.

#### PHRASING

His ad-lib playing is linear, consisting of long phrases with little difference of altitude, mainly staying in a limited range of his trumpet. He does not play melodically, but more rhythmically, using his notes in rhythmical coherence to relate on the ground-beat. Thus he very often uses staccato notes. There is no singable quality in his playing.

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

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.

CHARLIE GAINES

001 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, Jan. 05, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; Nelson Kincaid – alt;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno  
 79628-3 Royal Garden Blues Col A3365, Archeophone 6006  
 79629-1 Crazy Blues Col A3365, Archeophone 6006

Having started my listening duties with the second session below, which – according to Ch. Gaines statement – definitely had been recorded with him on trumpet – I listened to this first session a bit later, but have to report that the musicians obviously are identical to those of the next session, but without the violin. In Russ Shor’s IAJRC article (see below) Gaines told about Freddie Keppard’s presence in Philadelphia a couple of years earlier, and that he had been taught “a lot” by him. (Incidentally, in his article on Gaines in Storyville 68 - by the same author – we are told that: “*We all tried to sound like him but he was a stuck-up kind of guy and wouldn’t show you anything* (Gaines)” Be that as it may, but it can certainly be assumed that Keppard left a lot of influence in Philly when he left town, especially on a young promising trumpet player.

In ‘Royal Garden Blues’ at the end of the first strain B you can hear the trumpet with some “laughing” device at c. 1:22 min, which is also known from Keppard in Doc Cook’s ‘So This Is Venice’ of some years later. So, this might have been some of the lot that Gaines learnt from Keppard?

The names of the other participating musicians are known from Bradford’s recollection: Earl Granstaff as a forceful and functional harmonic trombonist without ambition to solo, Ben Whitted (not Whittet – KBR) - as the always dependable reed man in Charlie Johnson’s band for nearly two decades – on tasteful clarinet playing chordal arpeggios most of the time, and – as Bradford calls him – “the old reliable sax-shark (who gave the record a big lift)” - Nelson Kincaid, who plays strong harmonic middle parts.

The second title is dominated by Nelson Kincaid’s strong alto sax in the accompaniment – the rest of the band staying in the background. And we hear astonishingly strong and reliable piano comping from Charlie Johnson. He leads the whole procedure from the piano stool.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: *Addington Major or Charlie Gaines - c; Earl Granstaff – tb; Nelson Kincaid - Ben Whitted, - cl -as; Charlie Johnson, pno*  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: *Addington Major or Charlie Gaines, cnt; Ben Whitted, clt; Grandstaffe, tbn; Nelson Kincaid, alt; Charlie Johnson, pno*

002 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, Mar. 07, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; Nelson Kincaid – alt; George Breen – vln;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno  
 79775-2 I’m Gonna Jazz My Way Right Straight Thru Paradise Col A3390, Archeophone 6006  
 79776-3 Down Where They Play The Blues Col A3390, Archeophone 6006

According to Charlie Gaines’ own statement did he record “I’m Gonna Jazz My Way Right Straight Thru Paradise” (IAJRC Vol.10, No.2). What can be heard of Gaines is an ad-lib introduction in the first title with accented triplet phrasing in Johnny Dunn style, the remaining parts played straight from an arrangement, falling into triplets again at the very end of the tune. Gaines’ playing in the second title also seems to be following arranged parts, with frequent triplets phrasing again as before, as well as a lot of grace notes. So, at this early time Gaines certainly is a strong follower of Johnny Dunn’s predominant model.

His musician colleagues are the same as in the session before. Yet, they have added a violinist in George Breen as it was the use in those days. But was it an advantage or a benefit? I wonder.

For these two sessions Rust and BGR list Addington Major as alternate trumpet player, but Major owns a rather straight and simple (subdued?) style as heard in Mamie Smith’s recording sessions of August 10 and September 12, 1920, and can thus be neglected here!.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4: *Addington Major or Charlie Gaines - c; Earl Granstaff – tb; Nelson Kincaid - Ben Whitted, - cl -as; George Breen – vn;*  
*Charlie Johnson, pno*  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: *Addington Major or Charlie Gaines, cnt; Ben Whitted, clt; Grandstaffe, tbn; Nelson Kincaid, alt; George Breen, vln;*  
*Charlie Johnson, pno*

003 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, May 06, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; *unknown – ten (if at all);*  
 Charlie Johnson – pno  
 79826-2 If You Don’t Want Me, Send Me To My Ma Col A3418, Archeophone 6006  
 79827-2 Strut Miss Lizzie Col A3418, Archeophone 6006

In IAJRC Gaines recounts that five recording sessions followed. This would probably mean tht any of these Mary Stafford sessions had been accompanied by the Charlie Johnson band of the day. And certainly does this session feature the same band with Charlie Gaines on trumpet as before. In the introduction to the first title Gaines delivers some “peppery” growl tones as he might have learned from Keppard, together with a lot of his Dunn derived triplet phrasing in the further course of the tune. The coda shows his use of grace notes as a melodic device. Trombonist and clarinetist certainly are the same as before again, but they have left out Nelson Kincaid. The discographies still list a second reed man – perhaps on tenor sax, but I feel unable to discover any. Maybe, there is a tenor player very soft in the middle ground, but intuitively I would deny this. Also, I can’t hear a brass bass/tuba.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: *unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl –as; ? unknown cl –ts; unknown p; unknown bb*  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: *unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown clt/alt or perhaps ten; unknown pno; unknown bbs*

004 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, May 24, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; unknown – ten;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno; John Warren – bbs  
 79857-2 Wild Weeping Blues Col A3426, Archeophone 6006  
 79858-3 I've Lost My Heart To The Meanest Girl In Town Col A3426, Archeophone 6006

This certainly again is the Johnson band as related by Perry Bradford. I hear Charlie Gaines and Earl Granstaff as before. But I have slight doubts on Whitted's presence on clarinet here as this player plays shrieky at times, what Whitted did not before, and he uses trills what Whitted neither did on the previous 6 titles. Other instances, yet, seem to show Whitted. Maybe he was instructed to play more "fashionable"? A tenor sax playing middle parts can distinctly be detected now, for instance in the third bar of the introduction of 'Wild Weeping Blues'.

A tuba can be heard faintly in the background (see second title at 2:04 min) and might thus be John Warren as shown in the well-known band photo in 'A Pictorial History of Jazz', p.108. (This photo, by the way, shows exactly this Charlie Johnson band of 1920/21 – with some additional musicians - and not the one of the late '20s as given!)

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl –as; ? unknown cl –ts; unknown p; unknown bb  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown clt/alt or perhaps ten; unknown pno; unknown bbs

005 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, Sep. 27, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Addington Major – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; unknown – alt;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno  
 80001-3 Arkansas Blues Col A3493, Archeophone 6006  
 80002-3 Down Home Blues Col A3511, Archeophone 6006  
 80006-2 Blind Man Blues Col A3493, Archeophone 6006

This trumpet player is not as aggressive and assured as Charlie Gaines on the previous sessions, and I assume him to be Addington Major, if not somebody else. Yet, we have to keep in mind, that Gaines in his interview/article possibly said that "five more recording sessions followed". As this sentence is not stated to be direct speech, it might also mean that the interviewer took this statement from his discography, supposing that Gaines was present on all these six sessions by Mary Stafford. But, if Gaines stated this to his interviewer, it would necessarily be him on this and the next session, too. But I hear distinct differences in trumpet playing on these two last sessions. Granstaff seems to be right. The clarinetist is a bit shrieky again, and therefore not necessarily Whitted. There seems to be an alto sax playing the middle parts, and can be heard together with the trumpet in 'Down Home Blues' chromatically in the breaks in the middle of the first and third blues choruses. Obviously Charlie Johnson leads from the piano.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl –as; ? unknown cl –ts; unknown p; unknown bb  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown clt/alt or perhaps ten; unknown pno; unknown bbs

006 **MARY STAFFORD** her Jazz Band New York, Nov. 03, 1921  
 Mary Stafford – voc;  
 Addington Major – tpt; Earl Granstaff – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – clt; unknown – ten;  
 Charlie Johnson – pno  
 80047-2 Monday Morning Blues Col A3511, Archeophone 6006

The overall sound suddenly is different, but this may be caused by a different recording studio as the band still seems to be the same. The same problem re the trumpet player arises, but I think it is not Gaines. Trombonist and clarinetist appear the same as on the previous session, but here we have a prominent tenor sax player whose name must remain unknown as in the fourth session. Johnson again on piano.

Notes:

- Rust\*3,\*4: unknown c; unknown tb; unknown cl –as; ? unknown cl –ts; unknown p; unknown bb  
 - BGR\*2,\*3,\*4: unknown cnt; unknown tbn; unknown clt; unknown clt/alt or perhaps ten; unknown pno; unknown bbs

007 **ELVIRA JOHNSON** Birmingham Darktown Strutters New York, c. Jun. 17, 1926  
 Elvira Johnson - voc  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; (Otto Hardwick) – sop;  
 Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo  
 X-177 How Could I Be Blue? Gnt 3337, Document DOCD-5375  
 X-178 Numbers On The Brain Gnt 3337, Document DOCD-5375

We can apparently be quite sure of Gaines' presence on these two sides as documented in Tom Lord's 'Clarence Williams'. Gaines also provided insights into Williams' modus operandi: Williams had contracts with a steady roster of musicians who were on call for recording sessions, both instrumental and blues accompaniments. I hear Gaines' straight and horizontal approach, more into rhythmic and staccato than melodic playing. He uses a cup mute here.

There is a very agile soprano saxophone player on these sides who phrases much too "jazzy" to be Elliott, judging from everything we have heard from Elliott up to now. There really are no instances of anything I have written about his style in "Stylistics". This player belongs to a better and more modern class of musicians and resembles in part Buster Bailey of the Clarence Williams Blue Five period. He uses many rhythmic and melodic devices of the "Armstrong" period and does thus not belong to Elliott's pre-Armstrong school. As there are not many – if at all? – distinct soprano players around in New York/Harlem, the identity of this man should be searched for among tenor saxophonists (Bb instrument!) of the time: Prince Robinson, Happy Caldwell and others come to mind. After relistening I believe that Otto Hardwick would be a well-suited candidate (28.06.2018)! Elliott may safely be excluded.

Charlie Gaines named Mike Jackson as pianist, not Clarence Williams. But there are not any musical hints as to Mike Jackson's presence here!

The other musicians as above, but it has to be recognized that possibly Irvis – if it is he – had a bad day. Too much booze?

Notes:

- Rust\*3: unknown -c; unknown -tb; Buster Bailey -ss; ?Clarence Williams -p; ?Buddy Christian -bj  
 - Rust\*4,\*6: Charlie Gaines - c; Charlie Irvis - tb; ?Ernest Elliott - ss; Clarence Williams or poss Mike Jackson - p; Buddy Christian - bj  
 - BGR\*2: unknown cnt; unknown tbn; Buster Bailey, sop; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo  
 - T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 167: Charlie Gaines (cnt); prob Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ernest Elliott (sop); Clarence Williams or Mike Jackson (pno); Buddy Christian (bjo) "There is not much agreement on the personnel. Ed Allen has been considered as the cornetist. However, Charlie Gaines, in an interview by Dave Goldenberg "talked about a number which had 'horses and numbers' in the vocal". (This would be Numbers On The Brain.) The (Storyville – KBR) team lists Buster Bailey on soprano sax, Williams, and Christian. I (Tom Lord – KBR) have strong doubts about the identity of the reed player, and in view of the statement by Charlie Gaines, feel that Irvis, Elliott and Mike Jackson might be considered. According to WCA (W.C. Allen – KBR), Bailey was with Henderson on a New England tour. The estimation of the date is by the two sources mentioned above (Rust and Godrich/Dixon – KBR). The assignments of the adjacent matrices is unknown."  
 - BGR\*3,\*4: Charlie Gaines, c; prob Charlie Irvis, tb; Ernest Elliott, ss; Clarence Williams or Mike Jackson, p; Buddy Christian, bj unknown."

008 BESSIE BROWN

New York, early Jul. 1926

Bessie Brown – voc;

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Carmelo Jari – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

6706-1	What's The Matter Now?	Ban 1833	not on LP/CD, but held
6706-3	What's The Matter Now?	Or 698,	Document DOCD-5456
6707-1	How Could I Be Blue?	Or 698	not on LP/CD
6707-2	How Could I Be Blue?	Or 698,	Document DOCD-5456
6707-3	How Could I Be Blue?	Do 3781	not on LP/CD

The trombonist plays much more retained than Irvis usually does, but tone, entirely legato playing, and some Irvis-like licks make his presence probable.

This is the first appearance of reed man Carmelo Jari in the Williams stable. His rather unique and personal style and tone was identified by our team by comparison with the recordings of the Savoy Bearcats. He will be a familiar name with Williams personnels from now on until the Bearcats leave for an extended tour of South America in May 1927. (The second title of this session was also part of the Bearcats' repertoire.)

Notes:

- Storyville 19: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Ben Whittet (clt); poss Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).  
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p173: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo).  
 - BGR\*2: Tom Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ben Whittet, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo.  
 - BGR\*3,\*4: unknown, c; poss Charlie Irvis, tb; Bennie Moten, cl; Clarence Williams, p; unknown, bj.  
 - Rust\*3: unknown -c; unknown -tb; Ben Whittet -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bb; unknown -d.  
 - Rust\*4,\*6: unknown -c; ?Charlie Irvis -tb; Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown -bj.

Notable differences of takes (from Lord p174):

6706-1: final bar of tune: tpt plays long held three-quarter note Bb.  
 6706-3: final bar of tune: tpt plays four eighth notes Bb-F-G-F and one quarter note Bb.  
 6707-1: this take -1 not reissued, therefore no comment possibly.  
 6707-2: two-bar clt break before final vocal chorus is played in high register.  
 6707-3: two-bar clt break before final vocal chorus is played in low register.

009 SADIE GREEN

New York, c. Aug. 1926

Bessie Brown – voc;

Charlie Gaines – tpt; unknown – tbn; Carmelo Jari – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Buddy Christian - bjo

6782-2	Senorita Mine	Or 716,	Document DOCD-5456
--------	---------------	---------	--------------------

This accompanying band is very probably identical to the before heard (see above). There might possibly be another trombonist here. After close and repeated listening members of our team still disagree on the identity of the singer on "Senorita Mine". Some believe her to be a different person from the singer on "What's The Matter Now" and "How Could I Be Blue" others still think her to be one identical person. Lord, p. 178 : "One fact indicating that this side (*Senorita Mine*) is from a separate session is that the singer on this title is different from the singer on all the other titles from the three Bessie Brown sessions. Eva Taylor and her son Spencer, upon hearing tapes of these three Bessie Brown sessions, felt that *Senorita Mine* was not sung by Bessie Brown, but by a white woman (whose name they couldn't recall) who used to come around the CWMP office for new material. Note this singer's peculiar pronunciation of *Senorita* (Seen-ee-or-ita: phonetic)." Note: info on matrix-number and recording date from Björn Englund N&N 60!

Notes:

- Rust\*3: unknown -c; ? Charlie Irvis -tb; Ben Whittet -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown bj  
 - Rust\*4: unknown -c; ? Charlie Irvis -tb; Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown bj  
 - BGR\*2: prob: Thomas Morris, cnt; Charlie Irvis, tbn; Ben Whittet, clt; Clarence Williams, pno; Buddy Christian, bjo  
 - T. Lord, Clarence Williams p 179: unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo)  
 - BGR\*3,\*4: Senorita Mine ... credited to Sadie Green is by an unknown, possibly white, artist of no blues interest.  
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p 179: unknown (voc); unknown (cnt); poss Charlie Irvis (tbn); Bennie Moten (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); unknown (bjo)  
 - Rust\*6: unknown -c; ? Charlie Irvis -tb; Bennie Moten -cl; Clarence Williams -p; unknown bj. The first title (*Senorita Mine*) is not by Brown, but an unknown, possibly white, singer.

010 LEROY SMITH AND HIS ORCHESTRA

Camden, NJ, Feb. 23, 1928

Frank Belt, Charlie Gaines – tpt; Wilbur de Paris – tbn;  
 Emerson Harper, Harold Henson – alt, clt; Stan Peters – ten, clt;  
 Leroy Smith, John Long – vln;  
 Harry Brooks – pno; Sam Speed – bjo; Fred Peters – bbs; Edward Beeler – dms  
 43428-2 Rhapsody In Blue Vic 21328, Frog DGF 8  
 43429-2 St. Louis Blues Vic 21328, Frog DGF 8

The first title, ‘Rhapsody In Blue’, is a very dexterously condensed version of George Gershwin’s piano concertino, without the piano solo part, yet, arranged for a dance band. It is known that every band of fame had to feature this composition of 1924 in their programs. This title bears no hot solos.

‘St. Louis Blues’ offers hot solos by Emerson Harper on clarinet, Wilbur de Paris on muted trombone, then a trumpet solo – played into the derby hat - on a minor blues chord scheme which I’d attribute to the first trumpet player, Frank Belt, played with a beautiful range. The following trumpet solo – played with a plunger mute – obviously by Charlie Gaines, shows his straight ahead linear and horizontal style, swinging, bluesy and jazzy.

The band plays very professionally and exact and verifies their excellent reputation. And: what a marvellous tuba player they have! And: this band offers the only really documented performances of banjo player Sam Speede. I hear two violins, contrary to the discographies. Very interesting is the writer’s and interviewer’s comment on this recording of ‘St. Louis Blues’ in IAJRC 10 – 2: “*He also has a 1927 recording of the “St. Louis Blues” he made with Leroy Smith. His short plunger-muted outburst at the end of the work is the only saving grace in a hopelessly chaotic arrangement, reminiscent of Paul Whiteman.*”

Notes:

- Rust\*2: prob: Frank Belt, Charlie Gaines (tpt); Wilbur de Paris (tbn); Emerson Harper, Harold Henson – alt, clt; Stan Peters – ten; Leroy Smith – vln; Harry Brooks – pno; Sam Speede – bjo; Fred Peters – bbs; Edward Beeler – dms

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: prob: Frank Belt, Charlie Gaines (tpt); Wilbur de Paris (tbn); Robert Lewis – frh; Emerson Harper, Harold Henson – alt, clt; Stan Peters – ten; John Long – vln; Harry Brooks – pno; Sam Speede – bjo; Fred Peters – bbs; Edward Beeler – dms

011 **LEROY SMITH AND HIS ORCHESTRA** Camden, NJ, Apr. 02, 1928  
 Frank Belt, Charlie Gaines – tpt; Wilbur de Paris – tbn;  
 Emerson Harper, Harold Henson – alt, clt; Stan Peters – ten, clt; John Long – vln;  
 Harry Brooks – pno; Sam Speede – bjo; Fred Peters – bbs; Edward Beeler – dms, vib  
 43432 I’m Riding To Glory (With A Glorious Girl) Vic unissued on 78, Frog DGF 12  
 43433-2 I’m A Broken-Hearted Blackbird Vic 21472, Frog DGF 8

And again, a very professional and smooth performance. A first-class orchestra – cultivated and expert, yet not as hot as I would have wished. The bell notes at the beginning of the introduction of the first title are played on orchestra bells, the bell like notes after the brass phrases – still in the intro - a little later are probably played by the drummer – or the pianist? - on a xylophone.

There might be a flute in the introduction to the second title, which also features a rather strange clarinet solo.

Unfortunately, we do not hear any hot solos in these titles.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: prob: Frank Belt, Charlie Gaines (tpt); Wilbur de Paris (tbn); Emerson Harper, Harold Henson – alt, clt; Stan Peters – ten; Leroy Smith – vln; Harry Brooks – pno; Sam Speede – bjo; Fred Peters – bbs; Edward Beeler – dms

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: prob: Frank Belt, Charlie Gaines (tpt); Wilbur de Paris (tbn); Robert Lewis – frh; Emerson Harper, Harold Henson – alt, clt; Stan Peters – ten; John Long – vln; Harry Brooks – pno; Sam Speede – bjo; Fred Peters – bbs; Edward Beeler – dms

012 **FATS WALLER AND HIS BUDDIES** New York, Mar. 01, 1929  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; Charlie Irvis – tbn; Arville Harris – clt, ten;  
 Thomas Fats Waller – pno; Eddie Condon – bjo  
 49760-2 The Minor Drag Vic V-38050, Chronological Classics 689  
 49761-2 Harlem Fuss Vic V-38050, Chronological Classics 689

This is one of the all-time classic jazz sessions of Harlem times, known to everyone interested in the music. From Eddie Condon’s narration we have a true and dependable documentation of the participating musicians and the circumstances the session was arranged. Apart from that we here have one of the funniest stories about jazz music and musicians. This session then can serve as reference for the playing of any participant. Much has been said about this session and needs not to be repeated here.

Arville Harris does not play alto sax on these sides.

Notes:

- Delaunay: Charlie Gaines (tp); Charlie Irvis (tb); Arville Harris (clt & alt); Fats Waller (p); Eddie Condon (bjo)

- Rust\*2: Charlie Gaines (tpt); Charlie Irvis (tbn); Arville Harris (clt, alt, ten); Fats Waller (pno); Eddie Condon (bjo)

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Charlie Gaines -t; Charlie Irvis -tb; Arville Harris -cl, as, ts; Fats Waller -p; Eddie Condon -bj

013 **CLARENCE WILLIAMS’ JAZZ KINGS** New York, Sep. 26, 1929  
 Charlie Gaines – tpt; George Washington – tbn;  
 Ben Whitted – alt, clt; Benny Waters – ten, clt;  
 Clarence Williams – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Cyrus St.Clair – bbs  
 149056-1 Nervous Breakdown Col unissued not on LP/CD  
 149056-3 Nervous Breakdown Col 14468-D, Frog DGF 17  
 149057-1 Railroad Rhythm Col 14468-D, Frog DGF 17  
 149057-2 Railroad Rhythm Col unissued not on LP/CD

Gaines is now majority opinion in our group, but Ed Anderson is also suggested, and it is certainly his own identical style rather than that of Anderson. Anderson displays a good amount of southern laziness which cannot be detected here. Everything is compatible to what we know of Gaines. The remainder of the band seems to have been recruited from the Charlie Johnson band of the time, although the brass bass could well be St. Clair in stead of Taylor.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: *poss slightly different from: Ed Allen, Ed Anderson (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); ? Russell Procope, Albert Socarras (clt, alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*  
 - Rust\*3: *prob: Ed Allen, Ed Anderson (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); ? Russell Procope, unknown (clt, alt); unknown (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*  
 - Lord, Clarence Williams p 299: *Ed Anderson, possibly Ed Allen (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); unknown (clt, alt); unknown (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*  
 - Rust\*4,\*6: *Ed Allen, Ed Anderson (cnt); Geechie Fields (tbn); ? Russell Procope, (clt, alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs)*

014 **FATS WALLER AND HIS BUDDIES**

New York,

Sep. 30, 1929

Henry Red Allen – tpt; Jack Teagarden – tbn, vib;

Otto Hardwick, Albert Nicholas – alt, clt; Larry Binyon – ten;

Fats Waller – pno; Eddie Condon – bjo; Al Morgan – sbs; Gene Krupa – dms;

The Four Wanderers (Herman Hughes, Charles Clinkscales, Maceo Johnson, Oliver Childs) – voc

56727-2

Lookin' Good But Feelin' Bad

Vic V-38086,

Chronological Classics 702

56728-1

I Need Someone Like You

Vic V-38086,

Chronological Classics 702

This trumpet player unequivocally is Henry Red Allen, and not Charlie Gaines as listed in Rust\*2. Thus, the personnel is settled as above.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: *Charlie Gaines (tpt); Jack Teagarden (tbn); Albert Nicholas, Otto Hardwick (alt); Larry Binyon (ten); Fats Waller (pno); Eddie Condon (bjo); Al Morgan (sbs); Gene Krupa (dms); The Four Wanderers (vcl quartet).*

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: *Henry Allen -t; Jack Teagarden -tb -vib; Albert Nicholas, Otto Hardwick -as; Larry Binyon -ts; Fats Waller -p; Eddie Condon -bj; Al Morgan -sb; Gene Krupa -d; The Four Wanderers (Herman Hughes – Charles Clinkscales -tenors; Maceo Johnson -baritone; Oliver Childs -bass) -v.*

015 **MARGARET WEBSTER** Clarence Williams' Washboard Band

New York,

Oct. 09, 1929

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Arville Harris – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Floyd Casey – wbd;

Margaret Webster - voc

403045-C

You've Got To Give Me Some

OK 8738,

Document DOCD-5376

403046-B

I've Got What It Takes

OK 8738,

Document DOCD-5376

Both Lord and the Storyville team suggest Gaines on the strength of the similarity of the trumpet playing to that on the Waller Buddies date of 1 March, 1929. Rust lists the clarinet as Ben Whitted (?), but Charlie Gaines suggests Ernest Elliott. According to information provided to Walter C. Allen by Helen Chmura the Okeh files list the singer as Margaret Webster.

This trumpeter's style and performance are exactly what can be resumed to be Gaines' style from the earlier recordings. Strong horizontal and linear playing, rhythmically emphasized, but lacking that southern laziness. Sometimes – but seldom - his time is a bit too hasty.

The clarinetist certainly is not Elliott for all what we know of this player. Our listening team suggested Arville Harris instead.

Piano and washboard as given.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: *Ed Allen (cnt); ? Ben Whitted (clt, alt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd); unknown girl vcl*

- Rust\*3: *Charlie Gaines –t; unknown cl; Clarence Williams –p; Floyd Casey –wb; Virginia Liston -v*

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 301: *Charlie Gaines (tpt); unknown (clt); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd); Margaret Webster (vcl)*

- Rust\*4: *Charlie Gaines –t; Arville Harris -cl; Clarence Williams –p; Floyd Casey –wb; Margaret Webster -v*

016 **EDITH WILSON**

New York,

c. Nov. 1929

Edith Wilson – voc;

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Wilbur De Paris – tbn;

Albert Socarras – clt, flt; Emerson Harper – ten;

Harry Brooks – pno; Sam Speede – bjo (2); Fred Peters – bbs

E-31558 (What Did I Do to Be So) Black And Blue

Br 4685,

Archeophone 6006

E-31559 My Man Is Good For Nothing But Love

Br 4685,

Archeophone 6006

This personnel obviously is taken from the Leroy Smith band. The discographies list Gaines as trumpet player, but I feel unable to really identify him, by lack of performance as a soloist. But the discographers forgot to hear and name the flutist. This man – as can be unmistakably heard - also plays the clarinet. This would probably mean that Emerson Harper plays the tenor sax throughout, at least in the first title. Although a very accomplished but unsung musician, he is not known to have played the flute. Because of stylistic reasons and the vicinity to Clarence Williams' circles I tend to name the flutist/clarinetist as Albert Socarras. But I have to add that somewhere in my memory there are snippets of a flute player brother of one of Harlem's band leaders. I only do not remember his very name (now I know: this is Q. Wooding, probably brother to Russell Wooding). Sam Speede does not play on the first title.

But listen to a very beautifully swinging band accompaniment of the second title. As I have been corrected by Mark Berresford some time ago, the prominent bass part is not by a tuba, but by the piano player's left hand! Yet, after repeated listening, I am not certain whether Mark is right here. I hear long sustained bass notes in 'Black And Blue' which very probably can not be played as such by a piano left hand. And the short bass notes in the second title sound too strong and low to come from a piano. So, I assume a tuba player here and have listed as a possibility the Leroy Smith band's wonderful tuba player Fred Peters.

Great!

Note:

- Rust\*3: *acc. unknown t; tb; cl; p; bj*

- BGR\*2: *acc by unknown orchestra (no details)*

- BGR\*3,\*4: *Charlie Gaines, t; Wilbur de Paris, tb; Emerson Harper, cl; Harry Brooks, p; Sam Speed, bj*

- Rust\*6: *Charlie Gaines, t; Wilbur de Paris, tb; Emerson Harper, cl; Harry Brooks, p; Sam Speed, bj.*

- BGR\*4: *Charlie Gaines – tpt; Wilbur de Paris – tbn; Emerson Harper – clt; Harry Brooks – pno; Sam Speede – bjo*

## 017 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' WASHBOARD BAND

New York, Nov. 19, 1929

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Arville Harris – clt;

Clarence Williams – pno, voc; James P. Johnson – pno, cel; Floyd Casey – wbd

W403280-B You Don't Understand

OK unissued

not on LP/CD

W403280-C You Don't Understand

OK 8752,

CC COCD-29

W403281-A (Oh Baby) What Makes Me Love You So

OK 8752,

CC COCD-29

W403281-B (Oh Baby) What Makes Me Love You So

OK unissued

not on LP/CD

The trumpet player is perfectly comparable to the previously recognized Charlie Gaines characteristics, thus Gaines! Darnell Howard had been suggested for the clarinet by reedman Emerson Harper (October 28, 1973 interview). Howard has been quoted as having played on a Clarence Williams recording session, but there is no evidence that he travelled to New York at this time. Certainly the characteristics of this clarinet player here are those of Arville Harris, whereas Howard owns a much more fluent and rhythmically regular style. Williams plays piano until just before the vocal on each side, at which point James P. Johnson takes over. Williams can be heard playing piano behind the celeste on 403280-C.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: Ed Allen (cnt); ? Ben Whittet (clt, alt); Fats Waller (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd); who is the vcl on first title ?

- Rust\*3: Charlie Gaines –t; unknown cl, as; James P. Johnson –p, cel; Clarence Williams –p, v; Floyd Casey –wb

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 302: Charlie Gaines (tpt); unknown (clt/alt); James P. Johnson (pno/cel); Clarence Williams (pno/vcl); Floyd Casey (wbd)

- Rust\*4,\*6: Charlie Gaines –t; Arville Harris- cl, as; James P. Johnson –p, cel; Clarence Williams –p, v; Floyd Casey –wb

## 018 CLARENCE WILLIAMS AND HIS JAZZ KINGS

New York, Dec. 03, 1929

Ed Anderson or (Charlie Gaines) – tpt; George Washington – tbn;

Edgar Sampson – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt;

James P. Johnson – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; Harry Hull or Richard Fullbright – sbs;

Eva Taylor – voc

149665-2 Zonky

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

149665-4 Zonky

Columbia 14488-D,

Frog DGF 17

149666-2 You've Got To Be Modernistic

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

146666-3 You've Got To Be Modernistic

Columbia 14488-D,

Frog DGF 17

This is a session where there was much discussion about possible personnel. Our listening group were unanimous to exclude Leonard Davis from this personnel. Leonard Davis had been suggested by Charlie Gaines, who in turn denied his own presence. But Davis seems to be far off the mark. As Gaines and Ed Anderson were the trumpet players of Williams' choice at the time, Anderson seems to be the best possibility, although I (KBR) would certainly see the possibility to assign the linear muted-trumpet solo at the start of 'Zonky' to Charlie Gaines. As trombonist George Washington with his shallow and dirty trombone sound – and band-mate to Edgar Sampson in the Charlie Johnson band at this time – has to be regarded with priority. Sampson is nominated on the grounds of an alto solo on "Take Your Tomorrow" by Jackson & His Southern Stompers, now identified as the Charlie Johnson band. Formerly Benny Carter had been considered as the soloist, but Carter denied ever having recorded or played with Williams. Sampson having been Carter's successor in the Johnson band sounds very Carterish here as he does on the above-named title. From the clarinet solo in the second title we can easily and securely identify Arville Harris, brother of banjo player Leroy Harris. The source of listing Fullbright is unknown to the group and we therefore consider the possibility of James P. Johnson's bass player at the time, Harry Hull. Harris was frequently employed on reeds by Williams during this period and the tenor work is absolutely appropriate for him. It should also be kept in mind that Sampson and Washington were band mates in the Johnson band, and it was Clarence's use to hire two or more musicians from one band each.

Notes:

- Storyville 26: Charlie Gaines, poss Leonard Davis (tpt); unknown (tbn); unknown (clt, alt); Benny Carter (alt); unknown (clt, ten); prob James P. Johnson (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); prob Richard Fullbright (sbs); Eva Taylor (vcl)

- T. Lord, Clarence Williams, p.303: Leonard Davis, unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); poss 2 unknown (alt, clt); unknown (ten, clt); prob James P. Johnson (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); prob Richard Fullbright (sbs); Eva Taylor (vcl); Clarence Williams (dir)

- Rust\*2: unknown (tpt); Geechie Fields (tbn); Arville Harris, unknown (clt, alt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); James P. Johnson (pno); Leroy Harris (bjo); Richard Fullbright? (sbs); Eva Taylor (vcl)

- Rust\*3: Charlie Gaines –?Leonard Davis –t; unknown –tb; Benny Carter –unknown –cl –as; unknown –cl –ts; James P. Johnson –p; Leroy Harris –bj; Richard Fullbright –sb; Eva Taylor –v

- Rust\*4,\*6: Leonard Davis –unknown –t; ?Geechie Fields –tb; ?Don Redman –cl –as; Arville Harris –cl –ts; James P. Johnson –p; Leroy Harris –bj; ?Richard Fullbright –sb; Eva Taylor –v

Tunes structures:

149665 Zonky Key of F / G / F

Columbia

(Intro 4 bars ens)(Chorus 1 32 bars AABA ?EA or ?CG m-tpt 30 – saxes 2)(Tag 2 bars ens)(Verse 16 bars ens)(Chorus 2 32 bars AABA ET voc)((Bridge 6 bars ens modulation)(Chorus 3 32 bars AABA GW o-tbn 16 – ES alt 8 – ens 8)

149666 You've Got To Be Modernistic Key of Db

Columbia

(Strain A1 16 bars ?EA or ?CG o-tpt + ens)(Strain A2 16 bars ET voc)(Strain B 16 bars clts 12 – ens 4)(Strain C 16 bars ens)(Bridge 4 bars ens)(Strain A3 16 bars GW o-tbn)(Strain A4 16 bars AH clt)(Strain A5 16 bars ES alt)(Strain A6 16 bars ?EA or ?CG o-tpt + ens)

## 019 THE SEVEN GALLON JUG BAND

New York, Dec. 06, 1929

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Arville Harris – clt;

unknown (Putney Dandridge) – pno; unknown (Frank Robinson) – bsx; Clarence Williams – jug; unknown – tin-whistle

W149690 Wipe 'Em Off

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

W149691-3 What If We Do

Col 2087-D,

Chronological Classics 810

Despite the alternate proposition of Ed Allen by most of the team, KBR comes out in favour of Charlie Gaines – and insists. This, by the way, is a suggestion Bernhard Behncke of Hamburg, Germany, and has been stated for long!

After listening to everything available of Charlie Gaines I do certainly not hear Ed Allen, but Gaines here. Arville Harris is favoured by a majority on clarinet and there is no reason to doubt Frank Robinson on the sundry instruments, although no one really knows him.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: Ed Allen (cnt); Cecil Scott (clt); unknown bsx; Ikey Robinson (hca, ocarina, vcl); ? Willie The Lion Smith (pno); Clarence Williams (jug, vcl).

- Rust\*3: Ed Allen -c; unknown cl; Frank Robinson -bsx, h, tin w, v; ? Willie The Lion Smith -p; Clarence Williams -jug, v.

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 304: Ed Allen (cnt); unknown (clt); unknown (bsx); poss Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); Clarence Williams (jug); unknown (tin whistle)

- Rust\*4: Ed Allen -c; unknown cl; Frank Robinson -bsx, h, descant recorder, v; ? Willie The Lion Smith -p; Clarence Williams -jug, v.

**020 THE SEVEN GALLON JUG BAND**

New York,

Jan. 03, 1930

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Arville Harris – clt;

Thomas Fats Waller – pno, voc; unknown (Frank Robinson) – bsx, hca; Clarence Williams – jug, voc

W149690-6 Wipe 'Em Off Col 2087-D, Chronological Classics 810

W149638 For My Baby Col unissued not on LP/CD

W149639 What Makes Me Love You So Col unissued not on LP/CD

And again, I do not hear Allen, but very probably – almost certainly – Charlie Gaines again!

With coming out in favour of Waller as the pianist, despite doubts expressed by Laurie Wright and John Collinson, among others, and Harris as the clarinet player, this is far off any hitherto listed personnel, although we have to say that the former personnels mainly consist of "unknowns". Waller is suggested because of his alleged presence as "vocalist" and the rhythmical impetus heard here, which probably stems from the piano. Waller's alleged presence has been doubted in the past, yet what better proof for his presence could be gained than from his own son's statement when hearing this record completely unprepared?

Notes:

- Rust\*2: Ed Allen (cnt); Cecil Scott (clt); unknown bsx; Ikey Robinson (hca, ocarina, vcl); ? Willie The Lion Smith (pno); Clarence Williams (jug, vcl).

- Rust\*3: Ed Allen -c; unknown cl; Frank Robinson -bsx, h, tin w, v; ? Willie The Lion Smith -p; Clarence Williams -jug.

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 305: Ed Allen (cnt); unknown (clt); unknown (bsx); poss Willie "The Lion" Smith (pno); Clarence Williams (jug); unknown (tin whistle)

- Rust\*4: Ed Allen -c; unknown cl; Frank Robinson -bsx, h, descant recorder, v; ? Willie The Lion Smith -p; Clarence Williams -jug, v.

**021 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' ORCHESTRA**

New York,

Jan. 15, 1930

Leonard Davis – tpt; George Washington – tbn;

Ben Whitted, unknown – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt;

Clarence Williams – pno (1); James P. Johnson – pno (2); Billy Taylor – bbs; Floyd Casey – dms

403630-B Left All Alone With The Blues OK 8763, Collector's Classics COCD 29

403631-A I've Found A New Baby OK 8763, Collector's Classics COCD 29

With a fresh look and further developed ears, I – KBR – have to state a partially new personnel for this Clarence Williams session, in parts different from what our listening group had agreed to about ten years ago, but without consulting my former – or still present – co-workers. Sorry! I have now discovered a much more reasonable personnel as follows:

The trumpet player shows that clean and strong trumpet sound as owned by Leonard Davis. It is characterized by his academic approach to his instrument as typical for first-chair trumpet players. Please, listen to the two Charlie Johnson sessions of September 1928 and 1929 or the McKinney's Cotton Pickers sessions of November 1929.

The trombonist has that "shallow" growl sound I have got to know from George Washington, as can be heard at Charlie Johnson's recording session of 1929. Both players had joined the Johnson band in early 1929 coming from the Arthur Gibbs band. The Arthur Gibbs band was a very ambitious band, established in Harlem in 1926, playing a couple of important ballrooms and other premises at this time, but unable to obtain a decent recording contract. As their only recording I have identified the two sides by Lemuel Fowler's Favorites (see my list on Lem Fowler and my article 'A Case of Sudden Enlightenment' at this website!).

The first alto sax is probably played by Ben Whitted, he the first chair altoist with the Charlie Johnson band for many years, and contemporaneously together with Davis and Washington with this famed house-band of 'Smalls' Paradise'. He certainly is not Socarras with his sophisticated tone, nor is he Cecil Scott as assumed earlier. There also is a second (third) alto present, but he only plays section parts, except for 8 solo bars in the middle of James P.'s piano solo in the second title. He might not be Russell Procope, as he - by his own statement – had his first recording session with Clarence Williams. This must accordingly have been sometime in 1928, before his documented Jelly Roll Morton session in December of that year.

Arville Harris is audible briefly on clarinet, mainly playing tenor sax parts.

As can be easily differentiated, we have two pianists: Clarence himself on the first title and the father of the 'Harlem Stride' piano – James P. Johnson – on the second. Oddly, there is no banjo player on these sides.

On tuba we certainly do not hear Cyrus St. Clair, the master. But instead, the above-named horn men obviously have brought their band-mate Billy Taylor – of the Johnson band, as well as the former Arthur Gibbs band – with his multi-toned more modern approach to bass playing – to this session. I believe Taylor to be one of the originators of 'bass-lines' playing, on tuba as well as on his string bass of subsequent years. He became one of the most sought-after bassists of the Swing era.

The drum playing is restricted to soft cymbal playing in the background - the afterbeat double-strokes on cymbal – and the occasional strategic cymbal-crash. This is what we know as from Floyd Casey.

The following is what our listening group agreed to be the personnel when checking all Clarence Williams band recordings about ten years ago: Ed Anderson – tpt; Henry Hicks – tbn; Ben Whitted or Cecil Scott, Russell Procope – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt; Clarence Williams – pno (1); James P. Johnson – pno (2); Cyrus St. Clair – bbs; Floyd Casey – dms. We also wrote: "The drum playing is restricted to cymbal crashes and could be anyone, although we list Casey. Harris is audible briefly on clarinet. The lead alto is not Socarras and Procope is a possibility. Both Anderson and Charlie Gaines were discussed for trumpet and Anderson seems more likely on comparison with Gaines' solo work during the period. The trombonist is uncertain: Rust gives Geechie Fields and George Washington has also been suggested. Hicks is a suggestion, because he was band mate with Anderson in Willie Lynch's band – later Mills Blue Rhythm Band – at the time of recording and on aural grounds compared with his contemporaneous work with the Jungle Town Stompers, the Musical Stevedores and Jasper Davis/Georgia Gigolos."

Notes:

- Storyville 26: Charlie Gaines (tpt); unknown (tbn); poss Ben Whittet (alt); poss Russell Procope (alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten); prob James P. Johnson (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (cymbal).
- Lord, Clarence Williams p311: Charlie Gaines or Roy Eldridge (tpt); unknown (tbn); possibly Ben Whittet, possibly Russell Procope (if present) (alt); Arville Harris (clt, ten); prob James P. Johnson (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (cym); Clarence Williams (dir).
- Rust\*2: Charlie Gaines, ?another (tpt); unknown (tbn); Ben Whittet, ?Russell Procope (clt, alt); Arville Harris or poss Prince Robinson (clt, ten); ?Fats Waller (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (dms)
- Rust\*3: Charlie Gaines -t; unknown -tb; ?Ben Whittet, ?Russell Procope -cl -as; Arville Harris -cl -ts; James P. Johnson -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb; ?Floyd Casey (or anyone) -cymbal.
- Rust\*4,\*6: Charlie Gaines, t; ?Geechie Fields, tb; ?Russell Procope, cl, as; Arville Harris, cl, ts; James P. Johnson, p; Cyrus St. Clair, bb; ?Floyd Casey, d.

## 022 CLARENCE WILLIAMS' WASHBOARD BAND

New York,

Apr. 23, 1930

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Prince Robinson – clt, ten;

Clarence Williams – pno; Floyd Casey – wbd

403972-A Whip Me With Plenty Of Love

OK 8790, Collector's Classics COCD 29

403972-B Whip Me With Plenty Of Love

OK 8790, Collector's Classics COCD 29

403973-A Worn Out Blues

OK 8790, Collector's Classics COCD 29

403973-B Worn Out Blues

OK 8790, Collector's Classics COCD 29

The IAJRC 10 – 2 interview states: “Gaines says he still gets “a kick out of those old sides.” His favourite Clarence Williams title is “Whip Me With Plenty Of Love” which features liberal doses of his high voltage trumpet, as do the Waller items.” This then will certainly mean that Gaines states his own presence on these sides, and that Henry Allen's presence can be disregarded since the trumpet style shown is not Allen's. So, this then should have settled the matter for the future. Other musicians are unquestioned.

Note that the titles are probably reversed on the original issues.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: Charlie Gaines (tpt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 316: Charlie Gaines or Henry Allen (tpt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd).

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Charlie Gaines or Henry Allen (tpt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Floyd Casey (wbd).

## 023 LAZY LEVEE LOUNGERS

New York,

Jun. 25, 1930

Charlie Gaines, unknown – tpt; (Jonas Walker) – tbn;

Albert Socarras – alt, clt, flt; Prince Robinson – ten, clt;

Clarence Williams – pno, voc; Leroy Harris - bjo; Cyrus St. Clair - bbs

150612-1 If I Could Be With You (One Hour To-Night)

Col 2243-D,

Frog DGF 17

150613-1 Shout, Sister, Shout !

Col 2243-D,

Frog DGF 17

The first trumpet solo on ‘If I Could Be With You’ certainly is by Charlie Gaines. It's his style, tone and vibrato. Gaines' own testimony says that he “definitely was on these two sides”. But there is a very agile second trumpet player, whose presence is discussed as a possible first Roy Eldridge appearance on records, but seems unlikely since, according to Chilton, Eldridge came to New York in October 1930. He might be the soloist on the second title. Yet it should be considered, that Eldridge might have been in New York before settling down there in October. Our listening team suggests Jonas Walker for trombone (very interestingly Charlie Green also has been listed as a “possible” for some time). Listen to the sweet saxophone lead by Socarras! And his flute obligato. On clarinet and tenor sax is undoubtedly Prince Robinson. Harris is the likely banjo player.

Notes:

- Rust\*2: Charlie Gaines and another (tpt); unknown (tbn); Buster Bailey, Arville Harris (clt, alt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno, voc); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust\*3: Charlie Gaines and another (tpt); unknown (tbn); Arville Harris and another (clt, alt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno, voc); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 321: Charlie Gaines and unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); Albert Socarras (clt, flt, alt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno, voc); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust\*4,\*6: Charlie Gaines and another (tpt); unknown (tbn); Albert Socarras (clt, flt, alt); Prince Robinson (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno, voc); Leroy Harris (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

## 024 CLARENCE WILLIAMS &amp; HIS JAZZ KINGS

New York,

Jul. 23, 1930

Charlie Gaines – tpt; unknown – tbn;

Albert Socarras – alt, clt, flt; unknown – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt;

Clarence Williams – pno; Leroy Harris – bjo; unknown (Cyrus St.Clair) - bbs

150659-1 High Society Blues

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

150659-2 High Society Blues

Col 14555-D,

Frog DGF 17

150660-1 Lazy Levee Loungers (From “Garrick Gaieties”)

Col unissued

not on LP/CD

150660-2 Lazy Levee Loungers (From “Garrick Gaieties”)

Col 14555-D,

Frog DGF 17

The trumpet playing is fully compatible to what we know of Gaines - including tone, vibrato and a slight tendency to minor flaws when playing the parts. This also was discussed as a possible Roy Eldridge item, but has been denied because of the above noted reasons. The trombone is impossible to identify for lack of exposure. Socarras is identified on the strength of his flute playing, otherwise the number of reed players is uncertain. Harris is probable. I do hear only two reed players in the first title – as always with Williams – either alto plus tenor, or two clarinets, or flute plus tenor. In the second title then there is a three-part clarinet section and the first theme chorus is obviously played by four players, two altos and two tenors.

Piano is not easily to be heard, but I believe it is there, at least behind the flute solo. There is slight doubt about the banjo player being Leroy Harris. This banjo has a higher, more ringing sound than Harris'. It sounds a little tinny.

Lord and the Storyville team feel that the sound of the tuba is “too heavy” to be St. Clair, but might nevertheless be him.

(The unclear personnel, the emphasized use of sixths in the chords, and the temporal vicinity to the big band recordings Clarence made later this year, makes me think further about the personnel. I see the possibility of part of the Bingie Madison band being used here together with

some musicians of Clarence Williams' own stable. Possibly Clarence recorded the first title performing his own arrangement, thus using only two reeds, Socarras and Harris. Then playing a stock arrangement of the second title, a little pepped up for four saxophones by leader and tenorist Bingie Madison, using his own arranging skill - and sixths, which you can prominently hear in the Madison band's recordings under the name of Clarence Williams (Oct. 31, 1930, Nov. 24, 1930, Feb. 19, 1931) and King Oliver (Jan. 09, 1931, Apr. 15, 1931). Thus the following musicians should also be considered to participate:

Bill Dillard – tpt; Jimmy Archey – tbn; Albert Socarras – alt, clt, flt; Henry Moon Jones – alt, clt; Arville Harris – ten, clt; Bingie Madison – ten, clt, arr; Clarence Williams – pno; Goldie Lucas – bjo; Richard Fullbright – bbs. This might perhaps have been a try-out for future collaboration?)

Notes:

- Rust\*2: unknown (tpt); unknown (tbn); Albert Socarras (clt, alt, flt); unknown (clt, alt); Arville Harris ? (clt, ten); Clarence Williams (pno); Leroy Harris ? (bjo); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs).

- Rust\*3: Henry Allen -tp; unknown -tb; Albert Socarras -cl, as, fl; Arville Harris -cl -ts; unknown -ts; Clarence Williams -p; ? Leroy Harris -bj; Cyrus St. Clair -bb.

- Lord, Clarence Williams p 322: poss Charlie Gaines or Roy Eldridge (tpt); unknown (tbn); Albert Socarras (clt, flt, alt); unknown (alt, clt); poss Arville Harris (clt, ten); unknown (ten); Clarence Williams (pno); prob Leroy Harris (bjo); unknown (bbs).

- Rust\*4,\*6: Henry Allen or poss Charlie Gaines or Roy Eldridge -tp; unknown -tb; Albert Socarras -cl, as, fl; unknown -cl -as; Arville Harris -cl -ts; unknown -ts; Clarence Williams -p; ? Leroy Harris -bj; unknown -bb.

**025 BLANCHE CALLOWAY AND HER JOY BOYS**

Camden, NJ,

Mar. 02, 1931

Blanche Calloway – ldr, voc;

Harry Lawson, *Charlie Gaines*, Clarence Smith, Edgar Battle – tpt; Floyd Brady – tbn;

John Harrington – alt, clt; John Williams – alt; Lawrence Freeman – ten, clt;

Mary Lou Williams – pno; Bill Dirvin – bjo; Andy Kirk – bbs; Ben Thigpen – dms;

Billy Massey, Clarence Smith – voc (1,2), unknown – train effects (1,2)

64068-1	Casey Jones Blues	Vic 22640,	Chronological Classics 655
64068-2	Casey Jones Blues	Vic 22640,	HEP 1007 (LP)
64069-1	There's Rhythm In The River	Vic 22641,	HEP 1007 (LP)
64069-2	There's Rhythm In The River	Vic 22641,	Chronological Classics 655
64070-1	I Need Lovin'	Vic 22641,	HEP 1007 (LP)
64070-2	I Need Lovin'	Vic 22641,	Chronological Classics 655
64070-3	I Need Lovin'	Vic 22641,	HEP 1007 (LP)

Russ Shor, IAJRC 10-2: "*The Pearl (Theatre, Philadelphia – KBR) was also constantly filled with intrigue generated by its owner Sam Steful. 'Blanche Calloway, Cab's sister, came in for a long engagement with Andy Kirk's band. Sam was Blanche's agent so he tried to ease Kirk out of his leader's role and put the groups under her name. At the same time, my (Charlie Gaines' - KBR) group was broadcasting over radio station WIP but Sam tried to switch show times around so Blanche would get the radio spot. I kept my air time and also made sure I played on those Victor recording sessions that he got for Blanche.'*" Russ Shor, Storyville 68 p.48: "*Sam was always tryin' to get Blanche's boys on the radio in our place, so I had to really look out for my guys, but don't worry 'cause I got all my radio time and Sam didn't bother me after that. When I was at the Pearl, I made records with Blanche Calloway. We drove down Ridge Avenue and across the bridge to Camden with some of Andy Kirk's boys, right after the shows. Eddie Battle took most of the solos though.'*"

So, if we take this citation literally, Gaines did participate with one - or even more - Victor recording sessions of Andy Kirk's band under Blanche Calloway's name. Intensive listening displays a very good of the territory kind, but showing no sign of Charlie Gaines' participation. All trumpet solos show a youthful and developing Edgar Battle, but nothing to associate with Gaines. Gaines might have been a better soloist here. Yet, there are passages in the brass section where Gaines could possibly have been playing second or third parts to relieve Battle. But listen to Mary Lou Williams playing fantastic piano here, and listen to that great and unsung press role drummer Ed Thigpen!

Notes:

- Jazz Directory Vol.2: Harry Lawson, Clarence Smith, Edgar Battle (tpt); Floyd Brady (tbn); John Harrington (alt, clt);

John Williams (alt); Lawrence Freeman (ten); Mary Lou Williams (pno); Bill Dirvin (bjo); Andy Kirk (bsx); Ben Thigpen (dms);

Billy Massey, Blanche Calloway (voc)

- Rust\*2: Joe Keyes or Harry Lawson, Clarence Smith, Edgar Battle (tpt); Alton Moore or Floyd Brady (tbn); John Harrington (alt, clt);

John Williams (alt); Lawrence Freeman (ten); Mary Lou Williams (pno); Bill Dirvin (bjo); Andy Kirk (bsx); Ben Thigpen (dms);

Billy Massey, Blanche Calloway (voc)

- Rust\*3,\*4,\*6: Harry Lawson, Clarence Smith, Edgar Battle -t; Floyd Brady -tb; John Harrington -as -cl; John Williams -as; Lawrence Freeman -ts; Mary Lou Williams -p; Bill Dirvin -bj; Andy Kirk -bb; Ben Thigpen -d; Billy Massey, Blanche Calloway -v

Following Charlie Gaines' reminiscences above he might have played with Blanche Calloway's band on more than one session. I have listened through all the issued Blanche's Victor recordings. At no instance have I been able to identify trumpet playing distinctly by Gaines, although there are spots where he might be responsible: on 'It Looks Like Susie' and 'Make Me Know It' of June 11, 1931 there are trumpet parts that might be Gaines' playing. There might be others on the sessions of March 27, May 08, November 18, 1931. His style would certainly have changed considerably since the Fats Waller session of March 01, 1929.

**026 LOUIS ARMSTRONG AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

Camden, NJ,

Dec. 21, 1932

Louis Armstrong – tpt, voc;

Charlie Gaines, unknown – tpt; unknown – tbn;

Louis Jordan, Arthur Davey – alt; Ellsworth Blake – ten;

Wesley Robinson – pno; unknown – bjo, gtr; Ed Hayes – bbs; Benny Hill – dms

74877-3	Medley of Armstrong Hits – Part 2 (When You're Smiling / St. James Infirmary / Dinah)	Vic 36084,	Chronological Classics 536
74877-4	Medley of Armstrong Hits – Part 2 (When You're Smiling / St. James Infirmary / Dinah)	Vic unissued,	BMG Classics LC 0316/2
74878-2	Medley of Armstrong Hits – Part 1 (You Rascal You / Nobody's Sweetheart / When It's Sleepy Time Down South)	Vic 36084,	Chronological Classics 529

This is the Charlie Gaines' band of the day, limited mainly to play chorded background to Louis' performance. Yet, on 'When You're Smiling' Gaines can favourably be heard playing an own ad-lib background to Louis' vocal. Very nice, and much livelier and melodically more interesting than what we have heard from him earlier, and certainly more advanced than before. There is nothing to be said about Louis Armstrong, but there is Louis Jordan here among the personnel doing his first recording session ever. Of the Gaines band the pianist Wesley Robinson plays some good and assured piano bridges. But the rhythm is somewhat clumsy at times.

Notes:

- *Rust\*2, \*3, \*4, \*6: Louis Armstrong (tpt, vcl); Charlie Gaines and another (tpt); unknown (tbn); Louis Jordan, Arthur Davey (alt); Ellsworth Blake (ten); Wesley Robinson (pno); unknown (bjo, gr); Ed Hayes (bbs); Benny Hill (dms)*

**027 CLARENCE WILLIAMS AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

New York,

Mar. 23, 1934

Charlie Gaines – tpt; Ed Allen – cnt;

Louis Jordan, unknown – alt; Cecil Scott – clt, ten;

James P. Johnson – pno; Cyrus St.Clair – bbs; Floyd Casey – wbd;

Clarence Williams, Charlie Gaines, Louis Jordan – voc (1); Chick Bullock – voc (2,3,4)

14989-1 I Can't Dance, I Got Ants In My Pants

Voc 2689,

Timeless CBC 1-056

14990-1 Christmas Night In Harlem

Voc 2689,

Timeless CBC 1-056

14991-1 Ill Wind (You're Blowing Me No Good)

Voc 2674,

Timeless CBC 1-056

14992-1 As Long As I Live

Voc 2674,

Timeless CBC 1-056

This is beautiful Clarence Williams music of the mid 1930's, with this lazy and swinging tuba and washboard beat. And – the top for me – Cecil Scott on clarinet and tenor. The history of this collaboration of Clarence Williams and Charlie Gaines may be taken from Tom Lord, 'Clarence Williams'. There are – for Clarence Williams rates – some very advanced arrangements played. They might have been brought by Gaines from his own band's repertoire.

It seems that Gaines leads the ensemble throughout. The only trumpet solo played in this session heard can be found in 'As Long As I Live', but does not show Gaines, but very probably Ed Allen in a more modern style of his than heard before, but still Ed Allen's. It is obvious that the Swing Era is beginning, and the music played tries to keep pace with the times. And Charlie Gaines was wealthier with \$ 500 than before after this session.

Notes:

- *Rust\*2: Charlie Gaines (tpt, vcl); Cecil Scott (clt, ten); Louis Jordan (alt); Clarence Williams (pno?, voc); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (wbd); Chick Bullock (voc)*

- *Rust\*3: Charlie Gaines –t -v; Ed Allen –c; Cecil Scott –cl -ts; Louis Jordan –as -?ts; unknown third sax added (3,4); James P. Johnson -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb; Floyd Casey -wb; Clarence Williams –v; third voice in trio unknown; Chick Bullock –v*

- *T. Lord, Cl. Williams, p.358: Charlie Gaines (tpt, vcl); Ed Allen (cnt); Cecil Scott (clt, ten); Louis Jordan (alt, ?ten, voc); unknown third reed (alt); James P. Johnson (pno); Cyrus St. Clair (bbs); Floyd Casey (wbd); Chick Bullock (voc)*

- *Rust\*4,\*6: Charlie Gaines –t -v; Ed Allen –c; Cecil Scott –cl -ts; Louis Jordan –as -?ts -v; unknown –as (3,4); James P. Johnson -p; Cyrus St. Clair -bb; Floyd Casey -wb; Clarence Williams –v; Chick Bullock –v*

**SOURCES**

Perry Bradford, *Born with the Blues*, p. 153: "Here's how Mary Stafford (sic) became the second colored girl to crash the recording field, with a Negro jazzband accompaniment. It happened during the "Crazy Blues" popularity in December, 1920, when OKeh was taking Columbia's business by leaps and bounds; and Columbia dealers were bootlegging Mamie's records by the truckloads, though they were allowed to sell Columbia products only according to contract. .... Barron's was the hottest spot in Harlem and catered to all Broadway's biggest "ofay" stars and Harlem's big-shot gamblers, because the working class couldn't stand those prohibition prices. That made Barron's the most logical place to get a cross-section of views and mixed opinions, the best barometer understanding of how a record would sell in white and colored sections all over the country.

It was right down Mary Stafford's (sic) alley, because she had been featuring "Crazy Blues" and "It's Right Here For You" nightly and the nightlifers were tipping just like their money had grown on trees. When Mr. Harris requested "Crazy Blues" she thought it was just another request, so Mary shouted the song, by going from table to table until she nearly collapsed. Then the customers started hand-clapping in unison, "We want 'It's Right Here For You.'" As this was her money song, Charlie Johnson sent Mary off again on "It's Right Here For You" as an encore.

This song happened to be the biggest cabaret and stage-song in the country at that time. Every burlesque show was featuring it and Jeanette Adair was goulting 'em in Ed Wynn's *Grab Bag* show – a Broadway production. Charlie Johnson saw how they were raining money on the floor for Mary, so he told Mattie Hite, "Go out there and help Mary, because we don't want to lose none of that gold." I happened to be in Barron's at that time, but didn't know who Mr. Harris was.

The following morning Mary Stafford (sic) was yanked downtown post-haste to Columbia Studio, which was located at 59<sup>th</sup> Street and Broadway, and she recorded "Crazy Blues" and Clarence Williams' song "Royal Garden Blues." As Charlie Johnson's jazzband was playing at Barron's and made the audition with Mary, his band cut the record with her; because Mr. Harris wanted them to do "Crazy Blues" just the same as though she was entertaining guests – with no changes.

Mary made a great record, because she couldn't miss with this hot band of great stars sending her. She had Major on cornet; Ben Whitted was the clarinet man; Granstaff (who worked in vaudeville with George Davis) was the sliding trombone guy; Kincaid, the old reliable sax-shark (who gave the record a big lift); George Breen, with his violin, was added to make the record sound like Mamie's "Crazy Blues" record. Charlie Johnson, a sensational musician, was directing and playing the piano.

Mary had a low contralto voice which made her record sound deeper than Mamie's. But here's a secret I've never revealed before. No singer or jazzband could have topped Mamie's record of "Crazy Blues," for I made it my business to leave out 24 bars when we printed the sheet music."

IAJRC Journal, Vol. 10, No.2: Charlie Gaines, Philly's Maestro: "Mamie Smith was the rage then so Columbia came down and signed up Mary (Stafford – KBR) as competition. For the first session she took me and six other guys from the band (Charlie Johnson's – KBR) and

we drove up to New York to make two sides. Recording was hard work in those days. We had to blow into this big acoustical horn – they didn't have microphones in those days – and I mean we had to blow LOUD; doin' it over and over again until the technicians got it right. Charlie still has one of the records he made that day with Stafford "I'm Gonna Jazz My Way Thru Paradise", and still plays to it on occasion "as a warm up before a job. .... Five more recording sessions followed; then several job offers."

Storyville 69, Charlie Gaines: This article mainly is an abridged version of the IAJRC piece – with some minor unaccountable differences.

Bernhard Behncke, Charlie Gaines, replacing Ed Allen from October 1929 until August 1930: article published probably in VJM, on Gaines replacing Allen in Clarence Williams recording bands in the stated period.

K.-B. Rau  
18-08-2005  
20-12-2017  
01-04-2022