

The Baritone Saxophone in American Recorded Jazz 1926-1946

By Geoffrey Wheeler



{Author's Note: The following is a section drawn from a discussion of various Dial recordings Ross Russell made for his record label in the fall of 1946. This particular portion deals with sides featuring baritone saxophonist Serge Chaloff from September 21, 1946. Four tunes were recorded that day and issued under various leader names, although trumpeter Sonny Berman was the contract leader. This excerpt covers only the tune based on "Cherokee" and variously titled "Blue Serge" and "Dial-ogue." The text presented here is drawn from the author's forthcoming book *Dial Records: West Coast Jazz and the Be-Bop Era*, scheduled for release this year. The text has been slightly modified for publication in the *IAJRC Journal*. Our story begins with the Woody Herman band appearing at the Casino Gardens ballroom. **Label abbreviations:** BB=Bluebird, Br=Brunswick, Co=Columbia, De=Decca, Vi=Victor, Vo=Vocalion.]

Herman in Hollywood. With Parker out of the picture, Russell did not record again until nearly two months later when he put together a session with present and former members of the Woody Herman Orchestra then in Hollywood. The exceptions were Serge Chaloff, who was a member of the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra then appearing at the Casino Gardens, Ocean Park, Calif., and bassist Artie Bernstein, who had become a studio musician. Coming in behind trumpeter Sonny Dunham and his Orchestra, the Herman band had preceded Dorsey at the Casino Gardens. At the time of the Herman band's engagement, the personnel was: Conrad Gozzo, Pete Candoli, Sonny Berman, Cappy Lewis, Shorty Rogers, trumpets: Bill Harris, Ed Kiefer, Ralph Piffner, trombones; Sam Marowitz, John La Porta, also saxophones; Flip Phillips, Mickey Folus, tenor saxophones; Sam Rubinwitch, baritone saxophone; Jimmy Rowles, piano; Chuck Wayne, guitar; Joe Mondragon, bass; Don Lamond, drums; Red Norvo, vibraphone; Woody Herman, clarinet and alto saxophone; vocals by Lynne Stevens and The Blue Moods. [*Clef* magazine, September 1946, page 6] With the exception of Lynne Stevens and The Blue Moods, this is the same lineup used in recording Stravinsky's "Ebony Concerto I and II" (Co 7479-M, the 12-inch blue "Masterworks" label generally reserved for classical recordings) at Columbia's Hollywood studios, Monday, August 19, 1946.

Clef's Caught in the Act. A review of the band's appearance at Casino Gardens was only partly favorable: "There is no question about it. The Herman band of today is not the equal of former Herds. The best indication of this is the requests of the dancers: *Woodchopper's Ball*, *Ten Day Furlough*, *Fan It—not Blowin' Up a Storm*, *Bijou*, or *Non-Alcoholic*. The rhythm section is shot. With Chubby Jackson out, the breakdown is complete. Don Lamond, contrary to many reports, appears to me a most inadequate drummer. The trumpets, excluding Cappy Lewis, are all trying to out-Diz Dizzy. Lewis, a veteran of the old Woodchopper days, is a thorough musician and the most dependable brassman in the lineup. Candoli, of course, is sensational with his acrobatic choruses—so what?"

Herman on the air. Broadcasts during 1946 show the band in great form. Along with familiar arrangements the band had recorded for Columbia, such as "Apple Honey," "Northwest Passage," "Non-Alcoholic," and "Bijou," there are other exciting charts it had not. Examples include "Black Orchid" [a.k.a. "The Good Earth"], "Hallelujah," "They Went That-A-Way," "Crazy Rhythm," "Superman with a Horn," "Digga Digga Do," "12th Street Rag," "Liza," "Gung-Ho," "Glommed," "E-Bob-A Le-Ba," "Get Happy," "Half Past Jumping Time," "Tico Tico," "Red Top," "Rose Room," and some untitled "heads." The power of the band, especially the brass and trumpeter Pete Candoli, is overwhelming. Hearing this band "live" must have been an unforgettable experience. Red Norvo was featured far more on vibraphone in "live" performances than he was on record. Tunes that specifically showcased his talents were "Hallelujah," "Crazy Rhythm," "12th Street Rag," "Apple Honey," and "Liza."

Trumpeter Sonny Berman also got additional solo space on a blistering “E-Bob-A-Le-Ba,” and on his own composition “They Went That-A-Way.” On a later broadcast performance of the tune, the announcer refers to it as a “head arrangement.” “The Good Earth” was written and arranged by Neal Hefti in 1944, and the band broke it in on the road before recording it for Columbia, Friday, August 10, 1945. “The Good Earth” was also the title of a mammoth popular novel by Pearl S. Buck that was the number-one bestseller of 1932. It was made into a film of the same name in 1937 that is considered one of the great photoplays of that era. Actress Luise Rainer won an Oscar for her role as the ever-patient wife of a Chinese peasant, and Karl Freund won for cinematography. For whatever reason, the piece was re-titled “Black Orchid” and is heard in an AFRS aircheck performance from Columbus, Ohio with Don Lamond on drums, not Dave Tough who was the drummer on the Columbia recording. Woody Herman introduces the number. These broadcasts even include performances of Stravinsky’s “Ebony Concerto” from Carnegie Hall, and Ralph Burns’s “Summer Sequence.” A tape transfer of the commercial recordings of multi-part “Summer Sequence” made directly from studio acetates presents the performances in startling clarity.

As can be seen from the lineup below, Russell used key soloists from the Herman band for his next recording session.

Session 5 Groups: Sonny Berman Big Eight, Bill Harris Big Eight, The Mad Monks, Ralph Burns Quintet. *Orchestra leader:* Sonny Berman. *Personnel:* Sonny Berman, trumpet; Bill Harris, trombone; Flip Phillips, tenor saxophone; Serge Chaloff, baritone saxophone; Ralph Burns, piano; Chuck Wayne, guitar; Artie Bernstein, bass; Don Lamond, drums. Other choices on bass were Red Callender and Steve Phillips, and Jackie Mills on drums. *Union contract filed:* Tuesday, September 17, 1946. *Recording date:* Saturday, September 21, 1946, 12:00 Noon to 4:00 p.m. *Location:* C.P. MacGregor Studios, Hollywood, California. *Sound engineer:* Ben Jordan. *Supervision:* Ross Russell.

Under “Hours of Employment,” the contract reads: “One session of not over four hours, five record sides, and at least four record sides. It is further agreed that all of the musicians named on this contract will appear for the recording engagement.” The contract is signed by Russell and Berman. Cost of the session was \$660.00, with Berman Phillips, Harris, and Burns each receiving \$100.00; Bernstein, \$60.00; and Lamond, Chaloff, and Wayne, \$50.00 each. Other costs included: studio time, \$450.00; five masters, \$250.00; 20 acetates, \$150.00; six hours overtime (Saturday), \$60.00; 1-1/2 extra hour overtime, \$30.00; tax, \$4.50; Shorty Rogers, arranging, \$25.00; band boy, \$10.00; liquor, \$10.00.

Ralph Burns Quintet (personnel: Ralph Burns, piano; Serge Chaloff, baritone saxophone; Chuck Wayne, electric guitar; Artie Bernstein, bass; Don Lamond, drums). “Blue Serge” is a barely disguised version of Ray Noble’s classic, “Cherokee.”

‘**Cherokee.**’ Noble had switched from Victor to Brunswick in February 1938 and recorded “Cherokee” in New York, Tuesday, October 11, 1938 (Br 8247, mx. B 23575). The arrangement by Will Hudson is one of his best. Jimmy Dorsey and his Orchestra also recorded “Cherokee” for Decca (De 2961-A), backed by “A Man and His Drum,” a feature for drummer Buddy Schutz. The title is a play on the James V. Monaco-Johnny Burke song, “A Man and His Dream,” which Dorsey also recorded (De 2650-A). Although Count Basie cut a lack-luster two-part arrangement of the “Cherokee” for Decca, Thursday, February 2, 1939 (De 2406-A and B), the recording that made the tune a big hit and an enduring part of his recorded legacy was not Noble’s, Dorsey’s, or Basie’s but Billy May’s driving arrangement for Charlie Barnet recorded Monday, July 17, 1939 (BB B10373; mx. BS-038276-1). This was also May’s first recording date with the band. As Barnet later recalled: “The really comical bit was that when we cut, it [“Cherokee”] for Bluebird, the record supervisor thought it was a real nothing and sarcastically offered the disc to me as a birthday present. That really made me hot, as he was so far off base. It turned out the tune, Cherokee was the biggest hit we ever had.”

This may have been the same supervisor who thought Artie Shaw’s recording of “Begin the Beguine” was a “real nothing.” Barnet’s recording was so successful, “Cherokee” became his theme and Broadway publicists dubbed him “Cherokee Charlie.” As a sequel to “Cherokee,” Barnet recorded two minutes fifty-six seconds of riffs based on parts of the “Cherokee” arrangement issued as “Redskin Rhumba” on Bluebird B-10944-A. Credited to Dale Bennett, the piece features a lengthy solo by Barnet on tenor. Cliff Leeman’s drumming is outstanding. The flip side is “Southern Fried,” which became one of the favorites in the Barnet book. In his mid-’40s post-Decca band, Barnet had a small contingent that recorded as “Charlie Barnet and His Cherokees.” Barnet re-recorded “Cherokee” (mx. 6197) Monday, August 12, 1946, backed by “The New Redskin Rhumba” (mx. 6195) Although this was ostensibly a recording session for Apollo during which four other selections were recorded that were issued on that label, the pairing was issued first on Cardinal 25001, Barnet’s own label, then on National 25001. These two issues were the only ones with a “25000” catalog number on their respective labels.

To date, no evidence has surfaced Shaw had an arrangement of “Cherokee” in his book, but Barnet had an arrangement of “Begin the Beguine” in his. A 1940 NBC broadcast performance of the piece aired from “the popular Blue Room of the Hotel Lincoln just off Broadway west of Times Square in New York City” opens with drummer Cliff Leeman using mallets on floor and side toms and snare drum with the snare thrown beating out a “Jungle Drums” type rhythm. The treatment is aggressive with boo-wah brass. Part of the familiar trombone phrase may also be heard in the 1933 recording of “Sophisticated Lady” by Don Redman and His Orchestra (Br 6560; mx. 13284). Barnet did not cover “...Beguine” for Bluebird because Shaw was the principal artist who had made the tune a hit for the label. Barnet also had a big-band arrangement of Goodman’s “Seven Come

Eleven” featuring himself on tenor and Bus Etri on electric guitar. As evidenced by airchecks, Etri soloed more often with the band in person than he did on record. Although obviously influenced by Charlie Christian, he had his own sound and was developing a distinctive style that might have made him one of the key voices on electric guitar in the 1940s. Unfortunately, Etri died in a car crash in October 1941. He is not even listed in *The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz* nor is he mentioned under the entry for “Guitar” [pages 458-462].

Other ‘Native American’ tune titles. For Noble, the success of “Cherokee” spawned other compositions with Native American names: “Comanche War Dance,” “Iroquois,” “Seminole,” and “Sioux Sue.” Each is a carefully arranged work with expertly played ensemble passages. The sound quality on clean 78s is excellent because these are laminated issues. During the 78 era, “Cherokee” was recorded by dozens of artists, but none approached Barnet’s success with the tune. Barnet had begun a long-term recording contract for Bluebird January 20, 1939 and this proved advantageous for both parties. Barnet’s ’39 band was one of his best and produced a string of excellent recordings. Being on Victor’s 35-cent Bluebird label ensured his discs got plenty of earplay on radio and on jukeboxes. Until the arrival of May, the principal arrangers for the band had been Jimmy Mundy; Andy Gibson, who continued to arrange for the band through the 1940s; Roscoe Fritz, and Barnet himself. Another good seller that May arranged was the engaging Will Osborne-Dick Rogers “Pompton Turnpike” (BB B10825-B), recorded Friday, July 19, 1940. Pompton Turnpike was the address of Frank Dailey’s Meadowbrook Ballroom and later, of Donahue’s, a dining and dancing emporium owned by bandleader Al Donahue.

Barnet re-recorded “Pompton Turnpike” in 1947 for the Apollo label (Apollo 1105). This was issued both as a single and in the three-record album Apollo A-13: *Charlie Barnet.etc.*, released in 1948. Unusual for the time, the album’s liner notes give the playing time for each piece. Tenorman Jerry Jerome supervised the recordings. Of the 13 albums in Apollo’s line, the only other jazz album was by pianist Bob Mosely entitled *Bob Mosely Boogie Woogie* (Apollo A-1). Mosely had also recorded for the by-then-defunct Bel-Tone label. One of May’s most ambitious pieces for Barnet was his composition and arrangement of “Wings Over Manhattan,” recorded in two parts, Tuesday, September 17, 1940 (BB B-10885-A/B). May also proved to be a “singer” of sorts. After an introduction from Charlie Barnet in the style of Sammy Kaye, May provides the vocal on the Monday, October 9, 1939 novelty number “The Wrong Idea” (BB B-10804-A), which could just as well have been titled “Fantasy on Guy Lombardo.” The flip side was “The Right Idea” (BB B-10804-B), a medium-tempo riff-based tune with plenty of solo space and a tip of the hat to Count Basie.

Billy May. Born Edward William May Jr., November 10, 1916 in Pittsburgh, May had a long and successful career as trumpeter, arranger, and conductor, working with Barnet, Glenn Miller, Les Brown, Woody Herman, Alvino Rey, Ozzie Nelson, and Phil Harris. He was a studio arranger at NBC and then Capitol Records where he had his own orchestra in the 1950s. The orchestra’s name, arrangements, and theme “My Lean Baby” with its trademark “scooping” saxophones were then acquired by singer Frankie Lester who fronted the band for several years. In the meantime, May, along with Nelson Riddle and Gordon Jenkins, became arranger-conductor for Frank Sinatra and scored a number of Sinatra’s most successful albums. Noted for his sense of humor, May also teamed up with satirist Stan Freberg on an often sparkling 15-week radio show on CBS Radio Network during the summer of 1957 and several amusing albums for Capitol, among them *Stan Freberg Presents The United States of America* (Cap W 1573) and *The Madison Ave. Werewolf* (Cap T1816). May also scored for television, films, and advertising. In the 1970s, he was musical director for a series of handsomely packaged albums for Time/Life Records re-creating Swing-era favorites. This led to writing arrangements for the Boston Pops Orchestra. May died Thursday, January 22, 2004 at his home in San Juan Capistrano, Calif. after a heart attack. He was 87. Unbeknownst to music fans, May was also an ardent model railroader and collector.

“Spud” Murphy. Trombonist Lyle “Spud” Murphy, who arranged for Austin Wylie, Jan Garber, Mal Hallett, Joe Haymes, Benny Goodman, Fletcher Henderson, Glen Gray, and others, fronted his own band for a Decca date in 1938 when he waxed his own arrangement of “Cherokee,” backed by Jan Savitt’s theme song, “Quaker City Jazz” (De 2040). “Quaker City” refers to Philadelphia where Savitt worked in radio before taking his popular band into theatres and ballrooms. The nickname “Quaker City” is so popular with Philadelphians, it is applied to products, businesses, clubs, and events. Quaker City is also the name of a town in Ohio. According to the 2000 census, it has a population of 563, of which 273 are male and 290, female. There are approximately 267 families in the town, which suggests 95% of the citizens are married to one another. As proof American copyright law does not cover song titles, “Cherokee” was used as the title for a popular tune written by vocalist Vaughn DeLeath and Sam Morris in 1920.

(*Issues*: 4 takes recorded—3 issued, 1 unissued test.) This next extraordinary series of four takes represents Ralph Burns’ first label credit as leader, the first extended Bop baritone saxophone solo put on a commercial record, and Serge Chaloff’s first extended feature on record as a soloist. For Chaloff, it is a brilliant outing, in every way as remarkable as the double-sided Dial issue of “The Chase” Ross Russell would record with Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray on tenor saxophones (see *Session 10* below). Because of the great attention given to Charlie Parker’s recordings on Dial and the Gordon-Gray tenor battle, this outing for Serge Chaloff was and is largely ignored. It shouldn’t be because it is yet another example of the many gems Russell produced on his short-lived but singular Dial imprint. It demonstrates his unerring ability to pick artists who were in the forefront of jazz in the mid-1940s and his role as innovator in putting them on record.

- D-1035-A Blue Serge (issued on Dial 1012-B) as by Serge Chaloff's All Stars
(reissued on Spotlight SPJ132 Side Two track 4, and Mosaic MQ5-147 Record One Side A track 1)
- D-1035-AA Blue Serge (issued on Dial 1012-B) as by The Mad Monks
- D-1035-A Blue Serge as "Mad Monk" (issued on Dial LP 211-B track 3)
by The Mad Monks
- D-1035-B/C Blue Serge (issued on Dial LP 210-B track 1) as by Ralph Burns Quintet (6:00)
Reissued on Spotlight SPJ132 Side Two track 8, and Mosaic MQ5-147 Record One Side A track 2
- D-1035-B Dial-ogue (issued on Dial 1008-B) as by Ralph Burns Quintet (3:00)
Not reissued by Spotlight or Mosaic
- D-1035-C Dial-ogue (issued on Dial 1007-B and 1008-B) as by Ralph Burns Quintet (3:00)
Not reissued by Spotlight or Mosaic
- D-1035-D Dial-ogue (unissued take, 10-in. acetate test) (2:59) Not issued by Mosaic

The baritone saxophone as solo instrument. Although "Dial-ogue" was the first recording issued under Ralph Burns' name, it's essentially a Chaloff feature. Many serious jazz listeners associate Chaloff with the Woody Herman band, but at the time of these recordings he was playing with the Jimmy Dorsey Orchestra, which was then touring the West Coast. During 1945, Chaloff played with the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra but was not featured on any of the band's recordings or airchecks. Such was the case also during his stay with Dorsey. Chaloff did not solo on any of the band's Decca recordings, and even Herman's 1946 baritone saxophonists, Sam Rubinwitch, who doubled on alto, and John LaPorta, who doubled on alto and clarinet and seldom got solo features. Only in "Summer Sequence," recorded in three parts in Hollywood, Thursday, September 19, 1946, can one hear the baritone used briefly as a solo voice. Chaloff, who was only 22 at the time of this recording date, had been a professional musician since age 16, playing with clarinetist Tommy Reynolds, Shep Fields, singer Ina Ray Hutton, Boyd Raeburn, and Georgie Auld before joining Jimmy Dorsey. Although Chaloff didn't solo on any commercial recordings by these artists, the recordings themselves often present excellent performances. Reynolds had a good orchestra in 1939-1941 with capable arrangers. Many of his recordings issued on Vocalion and Okeh sound like they were recorded in Leiderkranz Hall in New York City and have a full, resonant sound. Some commentators claim Reynolds modeled his playing after Artie Shaw but I hear more of the sound and phrasing of Joe Marsala. The Shep Fields orchestra was an unusual ensemble of all reeds and rhythm, in stark contrast to his saccharine "Rippling Rhythm" orchestra that recorded for buff Bluebird in the mid-1930s. The All-Reed orchestra made a number of excellent, and in some cases, startling recordings for Bluebird in the early 1940s. Airchecks of broadcast performances by the orchestra have been issued on Golden Era and Hindsight. They are worth having.



The Dial Session. This session for Dial is Chaloff's first opportunity to solo on record. The results are as momentous and extraordinary as hearing Charlie Christian's amplified guitar for the first time on record with Benny Goodman. Seemingly from out of nowhere we hear a highly skilled artist with a well-formed style that would continue to mature up to the time of his death in 1957. Chaloff left Dorsey in January 1947 and joined a sextet led by tenorman Georgie Auld.

Chaloff's solos for Dial are among the longest baritone saxophone solos recorded up to this time. About the only solos of equal length are Harry Carney's live and studio performances on his feature, the ballad "Frustration." This is not the same "Frustration" recorded by Bill Harris and his New Music for the Keynote label. The Harris recording was cut during a late-night session Monday, May 6, 1946 in the RCA Victor studios on Lakeshore Drive in Chicago. Written as a rumba and perhaps intended as a showcase sequel to "Bijou," the piece was composed and arranged by Ralph Burns, the pianist on the date. This was Harris' second session as leader and the personnel includes members of Woody Herman's Orchestra. Only two selections were cut: "Everything Happens to Me" in one take (HL 157-3) and "Frustration" in two takes (mx. HL 158-2 and mx. HL 158-5. Take -5 was issued on Keynote 10-inch 78 K-634. Take -2 was issued for the first time in the *Complete Keynote Collection*, a joint project of Nippon Phonogram Co. Ltd. Japan and PolyGram Inc. U.S.A. The other takes, whether complete, partial, or false starts, have not survived. As is noted elsewhere in this text "HL" stands for Harry Lim, who was the producer on the date. The meticulous Discography, Musician Index, and Song Title Index in the set were compiled by Kiyoshi Kayama. Other than recordings made by trumpeter Red Rodney in January 1947, we do not again hear a lengthy baritone solo in a be-bop context until Cecil Payne's solo on the Friday, August 22, 1947 RCA Victor recording of "Ow!" (Vi 20-2480; mx. D7-VB-1542-1) by Dizzy Gillespie and his Orchestra. Credited to Gillespie and based on "I Got Rhythm," "Ow!" has a more conventional swing-band phrasing to it than other Gillespie performances recorded for Victor. Dizzy takes a spirited solo; Payne's is imaginative and well-played, with a clean, warm sound that is quite in contrast with some of his later small-group playing that skirts the edge of R&B.

Stomp Evans. When he participated in his first recording session for Duke Ellington November 29, 1926, Carney was already a baritone saxophone specialist. Hampered by the 3:25 playing time of the average 10-inch 78, most baritone sax solos are usually

no longer than 16 bars, and many of them 8- or 4 bars. Larger than the tenor saxophone and possessing great tonal possibilities, the baritone saxophone, however, lacked the glamour of the tenor. To some, it was more a novelty instrument, akin to the kazoo or bass saxophone, than a legitimate solo instrument. By the time Chaloff made these sides for Dial, the baritone saxophone had become a standard instrument in most 16-piece dance bands but was seldom given solo space. During the 1920s, we find the baritone saxophone being used in the ensembles of Erskine Tate and his Vendome Orchestra (Vocalion), Joe Venuti and his New Yorkers/and His Blue Four (Okeh, Victor), Paul Whiteman (Victor, Columbia), Jabbo Smith and his Rhythm Aces (Brunswick), saxophonist Cecil Scott and His Bright Boys (Victor; "Lawd, Lawd" Vi 38098 is a good example), and others. Recorded Wednesday, May 28, 1926, Stomp Evans' burly baritone solo on the Jack Yellen-Phil Wall "Static Strut" for Erskine Tate is particularly striking (Vo A 1027; mx. E 3140). The side also features crackling muted trumpet from Louis Armstrong, brief trombone by Fayette Williams, an unknown alto sax, and ragtime piano from Teddy Weatherford. Although Armstrong normally played cornet, he switched to trumpet for this date. By recording for Vocalion, Armstrong was in violation of his contract with the General Phonograph's Okeh label. Vocalion was a secondary label owned by Brunswick-Balke-Collender. Brunswick had purchased the Vocalion Record Division of the Aeolian Co. Thursday, January 1, 1925. The agreement to purchase was announced to the trade Monday, December 1, 1924.



The "B" side of Vo 1027 is the equally historic Elmer Schoebel tune, "Stomp Off, Let's Go" (mx. E 3142). This features more classic Armstrong and a rousing finish. Schoebel composed a number of tunes that became jazz classics, among them: "House of David Blues," "Railroad Man," "Brotherly Love," "Teapot Dome Blues," "Spanish Shawl," "Bugle Call Rag" "Farewell Blues," and "Tampeekoe." The Tate sides are not only great performances but the sound is cleaner and stronger than on many other Vocalion recordings of the period. Sound balance is good, too. The same is true for two more Armstrong sides

made that day: "Georgia Bo Bo" (mx. C0 C-0340) and "Drop That Sack" (mx. C0 C-0341) issued on Vo 1037. These were cut with a drumless quintet under the name "Lil's Hot Shots," with Armstrong's wife, Lil Armstrong the pianist and nominal leader. Armstrong's trumpet, Johnny Dodds' clarinet, Kid Ory's trombone, and Johnny St. Cyr's banjo shine on these sides. This, in fact, is Armstrong's Hot Five personnel that recorded for a year and a half with Okeh before expanding to the Hot Seven in May 1927 with the addition of tuba and drums.

Oliver and Alphonse Trent. There is also a fine baritone solo on King Oliver's tune, "Stop Crying" (Br 6053), by King Oliver and His Orchestra. Although pianist Alphonse Trent employed the baritone saxophone in his sophisticated and challenging arrangements, only on his Gennett recording of "St. James Infirmary" (Ge 7161) does it briefly get its own space. Trent's recordings are quite amazing for their unusual and beautiful voicings and excellent solos. As an example of the idiosyncrasies of the recording industry, his various recordings were issued under the names of Alphonso Trent and His Orchestra, Al Trent and His Orchestra, and Alphonse Trent and His Orchestra. His 1929 recordings are marvels but the Friday, March 24, 1933 recordings are something else altogether, played with precision and incredible swing. One of the greatest jazz pairings ever recorded is "I Found a New Baby" with "Clementine (Of New Orleans)" Champion 16587. I've played both dozens of times. Each time I hear them, they command my fullest attention and I discover something new, be it in the arrangements, solos, or both. Among the outstanding soloists featured on these recordings are Herbert "Peanuts" Holland, trumpet; Leo "Stuff" Smith, violin; Leo "Snub" Mosely, trombone; Hayes Pillars, tenor and baritone saxophones; and Alphonse Trent, piano. Mosely's virtuosic playing is quite extraordinary. It's a pity Trent did not record for Victor, Okeh, or Columbia so their fine sound studios, engineers, and quality record pressings could have captured the glories of his music.

Eddie and Sugar Lou's Hotel Tyler Orchestra. Some of the more unusual recordings prominently featuring a baritone saxophone during the late 1920s in both solo and supportive roles were those made by Eddie and Sugar Lou's Hotel Tyler Orchestra for Vocalion in Dallas, Texas, Thursday, October 24, 1929. The "Eddie" and "Sugar Lou" of this seven-piece white band were Eddie Fennell, banjo, vocal, and "arranger" in quotation marks since the arranging is minimal; Charles "Sugar Lou" Morgan, piano; Stanley Hardee, trumpet; Adrian Kenney, alto and baritone saxophones; Albert Mitchell, trombone; Lee Scott, drums; and possibly a Henry Thompson, second trumpet. The seven sides recorded that day are decidedly rough in spots, with faltering intonation and sometimes-weak execution. But it's hard not to like this band for its rompin', stompin' comin'-at-you barrelhouse style punctuated by Morgan's two-fisted piano and Kenney's baritone in the background. As will be noted from the personnel, no brass or string bass was used on the date. Instead, Kenney's baritone, an unusual choice for such a small group, supplies some of the "bottom" a bass or tuba would normally provide as rhythm in recordings of this period while continuously improvising his own melody line behind the lead soloists: Fennell's tenor vocals, Hardee on trumpet, Mitchell on trombone, and Morgan on piano.

Sides of particular note from this session are: “There’ll Be Some Changes Made” (Vo 1455), “K.W.K.H. Blues” (Vo 1445), “Eddie and Sugar Lou Stomp” and “Sweet Papa Will Be Gone” (Vo 1514). The last three numbers are credited to Eddie Fennell. “K.W.K.H.” are the call letters of a radio station in Shreveport, Louisiana owned by the band’s financial backer. The driving backbeat provided by drummer Lee Scott reminds this listener of the exuberant sides cut by Sidney Bechet for Victor in 1931, especially “Lay Your Racket Down” (Bluebird B 10472-A), composed by Bechet and Billy Maxey. According to Cab Calloway’s *Hepster’s Dictionary* (revised 1939 edition), the expression “lay your racket down” means “to jive, to sell an idea, to promote a proposition.”

‘Marihuana.’ The cover of sheet music for the Gus Kahn-Walter Donaldson tune, “The Midnight Waltz” (“The Waltz in the Air Everywhere at Midnight”), features a photo of Dave Harmon and his Cinderella Orchestra. The well-equipped three-man reed section has not one but *two* baritone saxophones, one bass saxophone, plus altos, tenors, and clarinets. In short, a veritable music store of instruments. Harmon recorded some nice hot-dance sides for Bluebird in Texas in 1934. They include “We’re Out of the Red” (BB B-5436), “Cocktails for Two” (BB B-5437), and “Marihuana” (BB B-5438), the latter two from the pre-Code film “Murder at the Vanities.” Kitty Carlisle, who starred in the film as a chorus girl, recalled wearing a bra composed of two leaves, presumably representing the leaves of the marijuana plant. She says that at the time she thought marijuana was “some kind of Mexican musical instrument.” An offbeat murder mystery set backstage at the Earl Carroll Vanities, the film was directed by Mitchell Leisen, and featured Jack Oakie, Victor McLaglen, Carl Brisson, Donald Meek, Duke Ellington, and a young Ann Sheridan as a chorus girl.

Doublers. A number of reedmen doubled on baritone sax, including George Johnson of the Wolverine Orchestra (clarinet, tenor and baritone saxophones), Hale “Pee Wee” Byers (alto, tenor, soprano, baritone, clarinet, flute), Donald Clark (alto, baritone), and Charles Strickfadden (alto, tenor, soprano, baritone, clarinet, oboe, English horn) for Paul Whiteman; Don Murray, Jimmy Dorsey, Pete Pumiglio, Ernie Caceres, and Herbert Hall with Don Albert and his Orchestra. A 1924 photograph of the Wolverine Orchestra shows George Johnson seated holding his tenor, with drummer Vic Moore on his left and fellow reedman Jimmy Hartwell on his right. On stands in front of Johnson are a clarinet and a baritone saxophone. Fine examples of Ernie Caceres’s work are to be found on recordings he made with Sidney Bechet and his Orchestra for Vocalion at the Master Records Studio, Sunday, November 6, 1938. Four sides were cut that day: “What a Dream”/“Chant in the Night” (Vo 4575) and “Hold Tight (Want Some Sea Food Mama) mx. M-925”/“Jungle Drums” mx. M-926 (Vo 4537). The instrumentation is a bit unusual: Sidney Bechet, soprano saxophone and clarinet; Ernie Caceres, baritone and tenor saxophones; Dave Bowman, piano; Leonard Ware, electric guitar; Ed Robinson, bass; and Zutty Singleton, drums. Bechet on soprano is exuberant throughout but the two most interesting sides are “What a Dream” (M-924) and “Chant in the Night” (M-927) both composed by Bechet. Caceres plays in the ensemble and solos on baritone on both. He gets a good biting sound that blends well with Ware’s electric guitar. Ware was one of the early electric guitarists and he shows himself to be an able technician and interesting soloist. “What a Dream” is an attractive song and the performance is highly recommended as an example of Caceres’s work.



Master Records Inc. Although chartered as a separate corporation February 3, 1937, Master Records Inc. was a wholly owned subsidiary of Consolidated Film Industries Inc. Its address of 1776 Broadway, New York City, was the same as American Record Corp. and Brunswick Record Corp. also subsidiaries of Consolidated Film Industries. Master Records, the corporation and all its assets including its two imprints Master and Variety, were acquired by CBS as part of its purchase of American Record Corp. effective January 1, 1939. For many years, Master Records Inc. was a corporation in name only until dissolved by CBS July 24, 1970. By that time, all its assets had long been transferred to Columbia Recording Corp., the former American Record Corp. after its name was changed through a Certificate of Amendment filed with the State of Delaware May 22, 1939. Contrary to what everyone has believed over the past 67 years, Columbia Phonograph Co. Inc. had no legal connection whatsoever to ARC, Columbia Recording Corp., or CBS. Like its parent Consolidated Film Industries, ARC was a Delaware corporation. Another example of Caceres’s baritone work is the fine solo he takes on a performance of “Shine” broadcast over television, Saturday, September 3, 1949. Hosted

by Eddie Condon, the broadcast aired from 9:30 to 10:30 P.M. Source for the performance is a 16-inch transcription disk, Part 2 of 4, included in a bound limited-edition presentation album. At a guess, the huge album weighs between 10 and 15 lbs. Other artists featured on the broadcast include Billie Holiday accompanied by Horace Henderson on piano, and Louis Armstrong, whose delightful segment includes the reading of a children’s story. The album includes selected performances from other broadcasts.

Ernie Caceres. Caceres plays the melody line on Bobby Hackett’s Friday, November 4, 1938 recording of “Poor Butterfly” (Vo 4499), followed by an exquisite Hackett solo and wonderful modulations going into valve trombonist Brad Gowan’s solo. Although Caceres does not solo, he gets to vocalize on Glenn Miller’s “Jingle Bells” (BB B-11353) that features Tex Beneke and The Modernaires. There’s some fine reed work on this recording where one can hear Caceres on baritone. With Muggsy Spanier and His Band, Caceres solos on “Bugle Call Rag” on club-owner Nick Rogetti’s Manhattan label (A20-3). Available

only in albums, the recordings were sold to club patrons and are, therefore, rather scarce. Two other recordings that feature Caceres on baritone are “Humoreque in Swing” (Vi 25710) and “What’s the Use” (Vi 25719) by the Emilio Caceres Trio, Ernie Caceres’s brother. Instrumentation includes violin (Emilio Caceres), clarinet and baritone saxophone (Ernie Caceres), and guitar (J. Gomez). These are hard-to-find discs with wonderful, virtuosic performances. Both the solos and ensemble voicings are excellent. Emilio Caceres and his Orchestra also recorded a number of non-jazz sides for Victor for the Mexican market

Don Murray. Born June 7, 1904, Don Murray was just five days shy of his 25th birthday when he died Sunday, June 2, 1929. A precocious reed player, Murray was only 19 when he played with the New Orleans Rhythm Kings (1923). He then played with Jean Goldkette until 1927. During this period, he recorded a number of historic sides with Bix Beiderbecke and Frankie Trumbauer. During 1927-28, he played with Adrian Rollini’s short-lived big band and played in Broadway pit orchestras. When the Rollini band failed, Murray continued to freelance and Rollini accepted a job offer from Fred Elizalde in London, where he worked and recorded until 1929 when he returned to the States. At the time of his death, Murray was in Hollywood performing in Ted Lewis’s band for the 1929 biographical talkie “Is Everybody Happy?” Directed by Archie Mayo, the film starred Tod Todd as Lewis. Universal made another movie about Lewis in 1942, also titled “Is Everybody Happy?”

Whiteman’s use of the baritone. Paul Whiteman was probably the most adventurous of the popular orchestra leaders of the 1920s in making use of the baritone saxophone. In some of his arrangements for Whiteman, Ferdé Grofé sometimes scored for *two* baritone saxophones. Examples include “Song of the Wanderer (Where Shall I Go?),” recorded Tuesday, March 29, 1927 (Vi 20570-A); “So Blue,” recorded at the same session, with unison tenor and baritone saxophones (Vi 20570-B); “When Day is Done,” recorded Wednesday, June 8, 1927 (Vi 35828-A); “Just a Memory (Solo un Recuerdo),” recorded August 19, 1927 (Vi 20881-A); and Bill Challis’s arrangement of Walter Donaldson’s delightful “Changes,” recorded Wednesday, November 23, 1927, where *three* baritone saxes take the first eight bars of the first chorus (Vi 21103-B, take –3 released January 20, 1928; take –2 was released July 30, 1936 on Vi 25370-A) as part of the Bix Beiderbecke Memorial Album. The three baritone saxophonists are Charles Strickfadden, Jimmy Dorsey, and Nye Mayhew. “When Day is Done” was a feature for the trumpet of Henry Busse. When he formed his own band, he made it his theme song (De 774-A). In his 1934 recording of “Dardanella,” Glen Gray and his Orchestra use the baritone saxophone to good effect in the first chorus and then for warmth and underpinning through the rest of the performance (Vi 24256-A).

By contrast, Paul Whiteman’s version of the tune, which was recorded Thursday, February 9, 1928 in Liederkranz Hall in New York City but not released until January 26, 1936 (Vi 25238-A), does not make use of the baritone in the fine Bill Challis arrangement. Isham Jones and his Orchestra also made effective use of the baritone in ensemble passages on recordings for Victor. Merely to cite one example, Jones’s recording of “Say It” (Vi 24681-A; mx. 83178) uses the baritone at various points in the arrangement, providing warm contrast to the strings and the acoustic guitar, which has wonderful presence on the original Victor scroll issue. Composed by Nat Schwartz and Basil G. Adlam, “Say It” is one of those lovely, romantic ballads that typify the best of popular music from the early 1930s. This is not to be confused with the tune of the same title by Frank Loesser and Jimmy McHugh recorded, by among others, Tommy Dorsey and his Orchestra, with vocal by Frank Sinatra (Vi 26535). Whiteman’s Sunday, September 10, 1933 recording of the Irving Kahn–Sammy Fain “Sittin’ on a Backyard Fence” (Vi 24403-A) makes effective use of the baritone saxophone for both solo and ensemble work. The recording is best known for Bunny Berigan’s exciting trumpet solo that leaps out of the ensemble, transforming the entire performance and leaving the listener breathless. Vocal refrain is by The Rhythm Boys.

Ellington and Ozzie Nelson. Only Ellington specifically wrote music to highlight the instrument. As for the importance of the multi-instrumentalist, Ozzie Nelson’s Bluebird B-10666-A put it best: “I’m Looking for a Guy Who Plays Alto and Baritone and Doubles on Clarinet and Wears a Size 37 Suit” (who can also arrange, copy, play oboe and flute, sing, shine shoes, and drive the band truck). Vocal refrain is by Nelson and Rose Ann Stevens. Miss Stevens laments it “happened in Gary, Indiana” when a girl met this cute musician who played alto and baritone and doubled on clarinet but she doesn’t know the color of his hair because he didn’t take his hat off when he kissed her good night. Unusual for the time, the drummer on Nelson’s recording keeps time throughout the performance on a sizzle cymbal rather than hi-hat or brushes on the snare drum. The reverse side is the Denniker-Razaf-Davis “Make Believe Danceland,” again with vocal refrain by Rose Ann Stevens and Ozzie Nelson. Nelson’s “Looking...” title reminds one of Alec Templeton’s composition “Give Me the Name, Age, Height and Size” as recorded by vocalists Gisele MacKenzie and Helen O’Connell for Capitol Records (Cap 2521; mx. 11330).

Venuti-Lang. The 1927-1930 quartet recordings for OKeh and Victor by violinist Joe Venuti and guitarist Eddie Lang make unusual use of the baritone with Don Murray, Jimmy Dorsey, and Pete Pumiglio featured on more than a dozen sides. Murray is featured on “Penn Street Beach”/“Four String Joe” (OK 40947), “Dinah”/“The Wild Dog” (OK 41025), and “The Man from the South”/“Pretty Trix” (OK 41076). A fleet-fingered player, Murray applies his skills as a clarinetist to achieve a medium-full, vibratoless sound that would have fit in well with the bop groups and big bands of the 1940s. Clearly a polished musician, Murray’s clarinet playing is said to have attracted the interest of Benny Goodman, who would spend an evening by the bandstand listening to him with the Jean Goldkette Orchestra. Pumiglio is featured on baritone on “The Wild Dog” (Vi 23021), recorded Tuesday, October 7, 1930. On some recordings, Dorsey (like Ozzie Nelson’s ideal reedman), plays alto, baritone, and clarinet. A fine example is the swinging “I’ve Found a New Baby” (OK 41469), recorded Wednesday, November 12, 1930. Also from that date are “Pardon Me Pretty Baby” and “Little Girl” (OK 41506) with engaging vocals by Harold Arlen. On the

Wednesday, December 12, 1928 date that produced “My Honey’s Lovin’ Arms” and “Goin’ Home” (Ok 41215), he also plays trumpet on “Goin’ Home.”

Jimmy Dorsey. Dorsey was an amazing technician and excellent soloist who made a number of remarkable recordings in the 1920s, long before he became famous for his big band and his hits on Decca with vocalists Bob Eberly and Helen O’Connell. [Although Bob Eberly and Ray Eberle, who sang with Glenn Miller, were brothers, they spelled their last names differently for professional reasons.] While in England in 1930, Dorsey recorded four delightful sides with Spike Hughes and His Three Blind Mice for English Decca that were never released in the U.S. They are: “I’m Just Wild About Harry/After You’ve Gone” (DeE F1876) and “Tiger Rag/St. Louis Blues” (DeE F1878). Hughes plays baritone saxophone on these sides. The only copies the author has ever seen of these recordings are his own.

The Venuti-Lang recordings are true treasures with wonderful solos, great swing, and marvelous interplay between the musicians. Made at the same time Armstrong was cutting his historic Hot Five and Hot Seven sides with their emphasis on brass lead, the Venuti-Lang sides with their chamber instrumentation of strings, reeds, piano, and no drums are totally different in texture, tonality, and structure. But like the Armstrong recordings, they are jazz to the core. In their time, the Venuti-Lang recordings were prized and sought after, but within a few years, they were eclipsed by the enthusiasm first-generation collectors brought to the new hobby of record collecting and the new “science” of discography and their conviction that New Orleans jazz, i.e. “Black” jazz, was the only jazz. This was borne out in the late-1940s 78 bootleg reissues devoted to the New Orleans Diaspora, with almost no attention given to recordings by artists from the Southwest, Kansas City, or even the West Coast. Listeners today who appreciate these Venuti-Lang recordings often come to them later in life, long after they have memorized the Armstrong, Dodds, and other sides of the New Orleans Diaspora.

The passage of more than 70 years has in no way dimmed the musical luster of these sides with their sometimes odd titles “Cheese and Crackers,” “Kickin’ the Dog,” “Beatin’ the Cat,” “Doin’ Things,” and “Four String Joe.” In fact, they may shine all the brighter for their excellence and musical surprises. They also help remind us that Joe Venuti, Eddie Lang, Jimmy Dorsey, Adrian Rollini, and others of their peers were highly skilled musicians at the top of their game and excellent jazz players. The problem certain writers on jazz today have in coming to terms with these performers is not their individual or collective musicianship but their color: they’re white. Whites, we are told, can’t jump and they can’t play jazz. How is this different from what the pro-Nazi Frenchman said when he claimed Jews could speak French for a thousand years but would never be “French?”

With Zoot Sims. Although known as a prankster, when he put bow to string, Venuti was all business and capable of extraordinary solos. During the 1970s, he made a series of stellar recordings with Zoot Sims, Marian McPartland, and others that show him still master of jazz violin. A private recording with excellent sound that Venuti had taped for himself Sunday, April 25, 1976 at the Firehouse in Candlewood Lake, Conn. showcases Venuti with Zoot Sims, pianist Monty Alexander, bassist Major Holly, and drummer Jake Hanna. Everybody is in great form and the audience loves it. The group’s performance on “C-Jam Blues” is the dictionary definition of “swing.” Venuti riffs behind Sims with such intensity and swing the piece is about to become airborne. For the most part, the concert is a tribute to Duke Ellington with such tunes as “In a Melotone,” “Satin Doll,” “Take the ‘A’ Train,” “Sophisticated Lady” (a Venuti feature), and “Do Nothing ’Til You Hear from Me” (a Sims feature). The remaining pieces are “Someday Sweetheart” (a feature for guest trombonist Spiggle Wilcox); an unidentified hymn, which is “Just a Closer Walk with Thee”; an unidentified piece by Monty Alexander, something cooked up on the spur of the moment called “We May Be Wrong But We’re Not Far From It” (based on “How High the Moon”), and “Angel Eyes,” a closing feature for bassist Major Holly.

Baritone features. Other recordings that have excellent baritone saxophone solos include trumpeter Jabbo Smith’s 1929 “Band Box Stomp,” (Br 7111) with baritone solo by Willard Brown, who also takes a fine alto solo. The melody line is mindful of the 1917 pop tune “I Ain’t Got Nobody Much,” which was a hit for singer Marion Harris (Vi 18133). Harris re-recorded the tune in 1921 as “I Ain’t Got Nobody.” The tune was also recorded by Sophie Tucker (Ok 40837) and Bessie Smith (Co 14095). Stripper Gypsy Rose Lee liked to sing her own version of the song as “I Ain’t Got No Body,” which, of course, she did. Herb Hall, Edmund Hall’s brother, solos on “The Sheik of Araby (With No Pants On)” (Vo 3411) and “Liza” (Vo 3491) by Don Albert. The complicated voicings of the arrangement show the influence of Alphonse Trent, with whom Albert played.

Big-band baritonists. Prior to the emergence of Chaloff, Leo Parker, Cecil Payne, Gerry Mulligan, Manny Albam, Bob Gordon, Jack Nimitz; the occasional baritone solo by Herbie Fields, who doubled on alto, tenor, and soprano saxophones and clarinet; and Tony Scott as bop-oriented, or in the case of Scott, free-blowing, baritone saxophone soloists, the principal baritone soloists in swing bands included Charlie Bubeck (Ozzie Nelson), Harry Carney (Duke Ellington), Heywood Henry (Erskine Hawkins), Jack Washington (Count Basie), and occasionally, Elmer Williams (Fletcher Henderson). A number of bands of the ’20s and ’30s employed the baritone in particular arrangements for “bottom” or tonal contrast. An example of its use in a conventional early ’30s dance-band is the recording by Dick Cherwin & His Orchestra that features a baritone solo on “He’s a Good Man to Have Around” (Banner 6537-A, mx. 2526, 108989-1).

1933 was ‘a very good year’ for baritones. 1933, in particular, stands out as a year when the baritone was used as an ensemble lead or solo instrument on a number of recordings. To cite just a few: “Remember My Forgotten Man” by George Hall and The Hotel Taft Orchestra with Loretta Lee on vocal; Don Redman’s beautifully scored performance of “Sophisticated Lady” (Br 6560; mx. 13284); “Happy as the Day is Long” by Leo Reisman and His Orchestra, with vocals by Harold Arlen and Reisman (Vi 24315; mx. 76072); “Lazy Rhythm” by Lew Stone and His Band (De 656; mx. TB 1917-1); “Coffee in the Morning (And Kisses in the Night)” by Adrian Rollini and His Orchestra, with vocal by Howard Phillips (Romeo 2184; mx. 14379); and “Forty-Second Street” by Art Kahn and His Orchestra, with vocal by Dick Robertson (Perfect 15730; mx. 12893). The baritone appears far less frequently in 1934 recordings. A fine example of its use as the melody lead is the first chorus of Jimmie Grier’s October 5 recording of the Gordon and Revel tune, “Stay as Sweet as You Are,” with vocal by Harry Foster (Br 7307; mx. LA 226A). In his mid-range, Foster sounds like a young Bob Crosby. The last chorus has excellent underpinning from guitar and bass playing an authoritative four-four. The flip side is another Gordon and Revel tune: “Take a Number from One to Ten” (mx. LA 223 A). Perhaps the baritone was chosen in early Thirties recordings for its “down-in-the-depths” sound to express the “blue” mood of the country during the Depression.

English bands during the 1930s tended to make more use of the baritone than American. This is especially true for recordings by Ray Noble on HMV and Ambrose on (E) Decca. A good example of the use of the baritone as a solo instrument is the Ambrose recording of “Hometown,” also recorded by Ronnie Munro for HMV and released in the U.S. on Bluebird.

Although he did not solo, Earl “Jock” Carruthers was a prominent part of the reed sound of Jimmie Lunceford’s orchestra and may be heard in the ensemble on many of the band’s Decca recordings. A particularly fine example of Carruthers’ contribution to the band’s sound is Sy Oliver’s great arrangement of his own “The Melody Man” (De 805; mx. 60277), recorded in New York, Monday, September 23, 1935. The performance features sophisticated reed voicings against brass that are polished to perfection. Oliver does the vocal; trumpeter Eddie Tompkins, and alto saxophonist, Willie Smith solo. Chuck Gentry, who enjoyed a long career playing with such bands as Harry James, Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Artie Shaw, Jan Savitt, and others, was not a featured soloist but his presence is evident on many recordings where his rich sound anchors ensemble passages. Over the years, he participated in many studio sessions, supporting orchestras and singers. Together, the combined baritone saxophone solos recorded between 1936 and 1946 would barely fill four or five 78s.

Charlie Bubeck. A capable soloist, Bubeck normally played alto and clarinet in the Nelson orchestra, and Williams played tenor for Henderson. A typical example of Bubeck’s work may be found on “You Can’t Run Away from Love” and “Cause My Baby Says It’s So” on Bluebird B-6909. Written by Al Dubin and Harry Warren, both songs are from the 1936 Warner Bros. film *The Singing Marine*. Along with trumpeter Bo Ashford, Bubeck gets generous solo space on both sides and shows his clean tone and agile style. The longer of his two solos is on “Cause...” (B-6909-B). Williams’ solo on the Tuesday, August 4, 1936 recording of “Knock, Knock Who’s There” (Vi 25373-A; mx. BS-100887-1) is excellent, far better than his usual hotel-sounding tenor with its florid vibrato. The recording features vocals by trumpeter Roy Eldridge and trombonist Ed Cuffee (“knock, knock who’s there? Cuffee. Cuffee who? Cuffee and donuts.”) and two brief passages of stand-up-and-shout trumpet from Eldridge.

Jack Washington. Recording for Count Basie on Decca, baritonist Jack Washington solos on “Boo Hoo” (De 1228; mx. 62079), “Exactly Like You” (De 1252; mx. 62078), “Topsy” (De 1770; mx. 62514), “Doggin’ Around” (De 1965; mx. 63920), “Jive at Five” (De 2922; mx 64982), and one of his finest solos ever on Leo Wood’s “Somebody Stole My Gal” (CO 35500; mx. WCO 26662), with vocal by Jimmy Rushing. Rushing also performed the tune as “James Rushing” with Benny Moten and his Kansas City Orchestra (Vi 23028; mx. 62927; and BB B 6709). An unissued broadcast performance of “Doggin’ Around” from Boston’s Southland Restaurant, Tuesday, March 12, 1940 also features a fine solo by Washington. Buchmann-Møller reviews it in his book *You Got to Be Original, Man!* [pages 136-137]. The 10-inch acetate is a bit scratchy but the sound comes through gloriously, especially Lester Young’s thrilling two-chorus solo and the audience’s enthusiastic response. Even after nearly 70 years of listening to jazz, two things still send chills up your author’s spine: a great solo by Lester Young and a great solo by Louis Armstrong, especially some of his live-performance airchecks.

An excellent example is “Exactly Like You,” which he never recorded commercially during his Decca period. Driven by Sid Catlett’s drums, the band plays with bursting-at-the-seams energy and swing. Armstrong is ebullient. The performance was taken from a *Coca Cola Victory Parade of Spottie Bands* broadcast, Tuesday, December 7, 1943. Based on the few airchecks the author has heard from this period, Armstrong’s Decca recordings not only reflect questionable choices of material Armstrong probably never performed “live” but the band’s studio recordings do not reflect its capabilities as an exuberant, swinging ensemble. Armstrong’s Decca recordings from 1935 to 1942 may have served Jack Kapp well but they present a skewed historical picture of what Armstrong and his band were playing nightly and what audiences really heard when they caught Armstrong “live.” This is another example of how Decca screwed the artist and screwed the public.

“Jive at Five” is a retitling of the same tune recorded Thursday, October 15, 1936 by the Mills Blue Rhythm Band (MBRB) as “Barrelhouse” (Co 3156D; mx. 20074), which features a nice baritone solo by alto saxophonist Crawford Washington. The flip side is a marvelous recording titled “Ballooney” (mx. CO 20073). The arrangement sounds like it might have been done by Benny Carter. Columbia 3156D is a black-wax-blue-label issue.

Another fine baritone solo is featured on the MBRB Tuesday, October 10, 1933 recording of Dave Rose's "Break It Down" (Vi 24482; mx. 78093). This is the same Dave Rose who was born David Rose in London in 1910 and emigrated to the U.S. at age four. He enjoyed a distinguished career as a composer, conductor, and recording artist. He arranged for Benny Goodman, Artie Shaw, and the Sam Donahue Navy Band. He recorded for RCA Victor and M-G-M, and served as musical director for a number of TV shows, including Fred Astaire, Bob Hope, Dean Martin, and Red Skelton. A survey in 1959 revealed Rose's compositions were used as theme songs for 22 TV shows. He died in 1975. This is yet another example of what made the MBRB such an exciting band. Jack Washington also takes the 16-bar baritone solo on Bennie Moten's 1928 recording of "South" (Vi V-38021). The record may have enjoyed some popularity because Victor reissued it in 1934 as one of the last in its 24M scroll series (Vi 24893; the last number in the series was 24899), and again circa 1937 in an excellent pressing on the round-gold label, which the author considers the best pressing of the three.

Even by 1946, *Metronome*, *Down Beat*, and *Esquire* magazine jazz polls did not yet have a separate voting category for baritone saxophone. Although ignored by the jazz press of the time, these Dial performances by Chaloff are landmark recordings and helped put the baritone on an equal footing with the tenor and alto saxophones as a compelling solo voice.

References (all recordings and documents from the author's collection):

Clef magazine (monthly; only seven issues published, March to September 1946)

Simosko, Vladimir. *Serge Chaloff: A Musical Biography & Discography*, The Scarecrow Press, 1998.

Note: For those interested in the career of baritonist Leo Parker, the book offers his discography as an Appendix. Recordings Parker made for the Prestige label have been issued on the Italian Misterioso label and in the two-disc Prestige set P-24081 *First Sessions 1949-1950*. Both are recommended. The Misterioso recordings were transferred from original studio sources and are issued "as is" without equalization. A complete mint set of the four Misterioso LPs featuring varied artists currently goes for about \$150.00.

Source Recordings: Original 78s, LPs, acetates, and tape transfers dubbed from original recordings. Grateful thanks to Jack Towers for his invaluable help in transferring recordings.

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