



Jazzy Jimmy Dorsey

By Robert L. Stockdale

As author of two bio-discographies about the Dorsey Brothers I'm quick to acknowledge that neither of the Pennsylvania duo could be labeled "jazz icons". No one can argue the bulk of their output is not commercial. However as far as Jimmy is concerned his early years from 1924 to 1927 can definitely be pointed to as his 'jazz period', a time when he worked extensively with the many California Ramblers' and Red Nichols' groups.

It was also the era when the senior Dorsey worked closely with the likes of Red Nichols, Adrian Rollini, and Miff Mole at a time when musicians had a freer hand in what they recorded than would be the case come the crash of 1929 and through World War Two.

If Jimmy had been given a choice he would have been a jazz musician but family demands, the economic necessities of the thirties, and the machinations of his brother Tommy and Jimmy's financial advisors ruled this out.

The mid twenties were by and large the years during which he shone on clarinet and only occasionally on alto. When he "went legit" however the emphasis switched from "licorice stick" to the mellower alto. Much of his prolific product during the mid-twenties contains startling innovations in style and presentation. This is not to say that in the years that followed many musicians didn't consider him a master of his instruments, Charlie Parker for example, as I referenced in my Jimmy Dorsey book:

"One of the *Stage Show* viewers March 12, 1955 was Charlie ("Bird") Parker, by then undisputed jazz king of the alto sax and one of the creators of bop. At approximately 8:35 P.M., which would place it about the time the Dixieland number was on, Parker reportedly began to laugh, suddenly collapsed and died a few minutes later of a massive heart attack, complicated by lobar pneumonia, ulcers and cirrhosis of the liver. Scenes from the show on a TV screen were part of the excellent 1988 bio-movie *Bird*, directed by Clint Eastwood.

Parker was known to admire Jimmy's techniques, as Jimmy did his. Parker reportedly was paid \$100 to play one night for Jimmy in his hotel room. Two years later when Jimmy died *Billboard* called him the Charlie Parker of his day for his work in the twenties."

Let's take a look at some of the solo work Jimmy turned out in those "roaring" days, performances that made him actively sought after for years to come by jazz fans and music contractors both here and abroad. In truth his jazz work was better known and appreciated in England and other parts of Europe than it was here at home. As a guide I also list the initial 78rpm releases, plus CD reissues for the sides cited. Each is followed by some comments on Jimmy's work. There are even some listed sessions that are not included in the author's books.

OKeh, New York, Tuesday, November 25, 1924 -

THE GOOFUS FIVE

Red Nichols (cnt) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Adrian Rollini (bsx) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d)
S-72-998-C **Everybody Loves My Baby**

78: OKeh 40244, Odeon (G) 03162, Parlophone (E) E-5326
CD: Timeless CBC1042

This Goofus Five session shows Jimmy's jazz awakening. An alto solo just 30 seconds into "Baby" is typical but a very brief clarinet riff following Rollini's solo about 1:50 into the piece has a "wailing" feel that fits really well into the framework.

Plaza, New York, c. Thursday, December 11, 1924 -

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Frank Cush, Bill Moore (tp) Lloyd Olsen (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Arnold Brillhart (cl,as,ssx) Fred Cusick (cl,ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d)

5766-1,2,3 **Nobody Knows What A Red Head Mama Can Do**

78: Banner 1459, 1471, Ajax 17112, Domino 429, 3446, Oriole 304, Regal 9758(-3), 9774, Silvertone 2606, Apex (C) 8308

At about 1:50 into this Jimmy has an eight-bar alto solo followed by Adrian Rollini on the bass-sax. Within the limitations posed by the basic California Ramblers format it was another hint of what was to come.

Columbia, New York, Saturday, December 13, 1924 -

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Same personnel
140177-1 **Oh! Mabel**

78: Columbia 268-D, (E) 3600

This one two days later shows Jimmy on a short clarinet solo, at about 2:25 in, which reveals even more that his feelings for jazz are beginning to jell. What this side *doesn't* include is a Billy Jones vocal erroneously indicated in many discographies (including the author's Jimmy Dorsey book).

Columbia, New York, Monday, January 5, 1925 -

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Frank Cush, Bill Moore (tp) Lloyd Olsen (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Arnold Brillhart (cl,as,ssx) Fred Cusick (cl,ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d) 140220-1

Where's My Sweetie Hiding?

78: Columbia 278-D

On this one Jimmy's alto solo at 2:25 shows his early Rudy Wiedoft influences are beginning to be tempered by his exposure to Art Rollini. It isn't as obvious on the flip side.

OKeh, New York, Wednesday, January 14, 1925 -

THE GOOFUS FIVE

Bill Moore (tp) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Adrian Rollini (bsx) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d)

S-73-099-B **Alabamy Bound**

78: OKeh 40292

"Alabamy Bound" has a Dorsey alto solo early on that has an interesting shift half way through. The tone of Jimmy's performance changes about :55 in so that it sounds like two musicians are splitting the solo spot. Since the only other reed present is Adrian Rollini and his bass sax can be heard all through the solo it appears that Jimmy was able to shift from a high register note to a lower one without taking a breath! Such breath control was, of course, a trait of both Dorseys, instilled in them by their father-teacher.

S-73-100-B **Deep Blue Sea Blues**

78: OKeh 40292, **LP:** Fountain Retrieval (E) FJ118, **CD:** Timeless (H) 1-042

On "Deep Blue Sea Blues" the Rollini influence is really beginning to take over in Jimmy's alto solo. Later as Rollini solos, Jimmy turns to clarinet noodling behind Art and drops in some strong clarinet riffs as well.

Plaza, New York, c. Monday, February 16, 1925 -

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Frank Cush, Bill Moore (tp) Lloyd Olsen (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Arnold Brillhart (cl,as,ssx) Freddy Cusick (cl,ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx,xyl) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d,kazoo) Vernon Dalhart (vcl)

5856-1,2 **My Gal Don't Love Me Anymore**

78: Banner 1502, Domino 3471, Pathe Actuelle 036227, Perfect 14408, Regal (E) 9799, Apex (C) 8360, Leonora (Au) 10021, Starr (Au) 10021

While this one is typical Ramblers output it points out a startling contrast in Arnold Brillhart's and Jimmy's styles in the year since the older Dorsey has been aboard the Rambler bandwagon. Brillhart has a standard solo before the Dalhart vocal and Jimmy follows the singing with a full 16 bars of phrasing and tonguing that broadly hints of techniques to come.

Cameo, New York, Friday, February 27, 1925 -

VARSITY EIGHT

Bill Moore (tp) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey**, Arnold Brillhart (cl,as) Freddy Cusick (ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx,goof) Irving Brodsky (p) Ray Kitching man (bj) Stan King (d,kazoo) Ernie Hare (vcl)

1378 A, B, C **(I Like Pie, I Like Cake) But I Like You Best Of All**

78: Cameo 695, Lincoln 2311, Tremont 0530 (-B, -C)

Jimmy has a clarinet solo following Ernie Hare's that "takes the cake". And it's just enough different on each take to hint of creativity ahead, unlike the rigid white "jazz" so prevalent then.

1379 B **Cheatin' On Me** [Jack Yellen; Lew Pollack]

78: Cameo 725, Lincoln 2337, Tremont 0537.

CD: Timeless (H) CBC1062

Both Brillhart and Jimmy have alto solos on this but again at about 2:00 in Jimmy shines over Arnie's packaged sound.

OKeh, New York, Monday, March 16, 1925 -

THE GOOFUS FIVE

Personnel as January 14, 1925.

S-73-238-B **I Had Someone Else Before I Had You**

78: Okeh 40340, Odeon (G) 03036; **CD:** Timeless (H) 1-042

Jimmy leads off this one with a full chorus alto solo that shows greater attention to inventiveness, but still the commercial mind of contractor-manager Ed Kirkeby is holding him back.

Columbia, New York, Monday, March 23, 1925 -

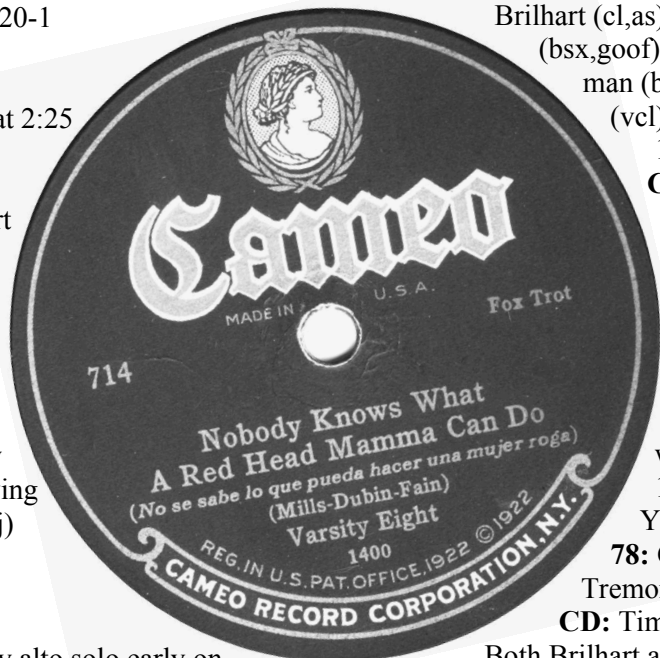
CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Red Nichols (cnt) Frank Cush (tp) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as,hfp) Arnold Brillhart (cl,as) Freddy Cusick (cl,ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d)

W 140457-1 **Just A Little Drink**

78: Columbia 340-D

Brother Tommy grabs the spotlight on "Just A Little Drink" with a chorus and a half showcase on the trombone, but it is Jimmy who picks up another of Adrian Rollini's



trademark “instruments” for a solo, the “hot fountain pen” (a miniature single-octave clarinet with no keys over the tone-holes and played with a saxophone mouthpiece).

Columbia, New York, Monday, March 30, 1925 -

LITTLE RAMBLERS

Red Nichols (cnt) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,ssx,as) Sam Ruby [or] Freddy Cusick (ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx,goof) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d) Billy Jones (vcl)

W 140477-1,2 **Don't Bring Lulu**

78: Columbia 346-D; **CD:** Timeless (H) 1-037

Jimmy's alto jumps on the end of brother Tom's trombone solo for another interesting look at his search for style. There are even some subtle hints of the riffs he'll build into many of his big band instrumental specialties.

Edison, New York, Thursday, April 2, 1925 -

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Personnel as March 23, 1925, except Rollini adds (p) (with Brodsky)

10292-B **Charleston**

78: Edison 51542; **CD:** Biograph BCD153

Jimmy breaks loose about 2:30 into this mid-twenties dance classic with an alto solo showcasing his fast tonguing, ad-libbing style that was now emerging. Once more Rollini's antics are inspiring him.

Cameo, New York, Friday, April 3, 1925 -

VARSITY EIGHT

Red Nichols (cnt) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey**, Arnold Brilhart (cl,ssx,as) Freddy Cusick (ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx,goof) Irving Brodsky (p) Ray Kitchingman (bj) Stan King (d)

1399 C **Don't Bring Lulu**

78: Cameo 714, Lincoln 2330; **CD:** Timeless (H) CBC1062

“Lulu” also provides a platform for Jimmy to break loose on alto, this time about 1:15 into the side. While Jimmy often swings more fluently on clarinet during this period, the author gains the impression recording directors then preferred the more full-bodied alto to the clarinet, given the limited frequency range of the microphones being used at that time.

1400 A,C **Nobody Knows What A Red Head Mama Can Do**

78: Cameo 714, Lincoln 2328, Tremont 0526

Jimmy has a full chorus opening solo on this one and again pleases the short-skirted flappers and their fur-coated “fellas” with a lot of fast notes and ad-lib variations as the alto solo builds to its finish and a throw-over to brother Tommy.

Gennett, New York, Wednesday, April 15, 1925 -

BAILEY'S LUCKY SEVEN

Sam Lanin (ldr) Red Nichols (cnt) Vic D'Ippolito (tp) Sam Lewis (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Chuck Muller (cl,as,ts) Lucien Smith (cl,ts) Frank Signorelli (p) Tony Colicchio (bj) Joe Tarto (tu) Vic Berton (d)

9464-B **Flag That Train (To Alabam')**

78: Gennett 5710, 3011

Of the three sides cut in this Sam Lanin-led session, “Flag” is the one that stands out. Although it is a good treatment, unfortunately Jimmy's full chorus lower-register clarinet solo about 1:50 in fails to register fully. Gennett's New York facilities apparently hadn't quite adjusted to the new recording techniques.

Edison, New York, Wednesday, April 22, 1925 -

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Personnel as March 23, 1925.

10331 C **Everything Is Hotsy-Totsy Now**

78: Edison 51551; **CD:** Biograph BCD154

Jimmy gets the opening solo spot about a minute in and comes up with some more intriguing riffs that show he's becoming more creative in his approach. “Flapper Wife” in the same session doesn't offer the same opportunities but he does have another alto solo.

Pathé, New York, Monday, May 4, 1925 -

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Red Nichols (cnt) Frank Cush (tp) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as,hfp) Arnold Brilhart (cl,as,fl) Freddy Cusick (cl,ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d)

106004 **Dustin' The Donkey**

78: Pathé Actuelle 036260, Perfect 14441;

CD: Village (G) VILCD 011-2

A full chorus alto solo swings Jimmy's way about 1:50 into this Howdy Quicksell original and he makes the most of it. Brother Tommy follows up with a half-chorus on the trombone. The addition of Red Nichols to the Ramblers about this time has proven an inspiration to both Dorseys.

106005 **Tiger Rag**

78: Pathé Actuelle 036266, (F) P6853, Perfect 14447, Banner 6049, Oriole 984, 1544 (some issues), Apex 8644, Domino 4011, 21303, Rex 8380, Lucky Strike (C) 24120, Microphone (C) 22197, Starr (C) 10272, Salabert (F) 197;

CD: Village (G) VILCD 011-2

Jimmy has some interesting clarinet riffs about :30 into this Ramblers' treatment of the by now ODJB standard, but brother Tom gets a shot at a chorus full of “tiger growls” plus a trombone solo chorus before Jimmy picks up with a half-chorus alto solo that leads into a Nichols outing.

Cameo, New York, Wednesday, May 13, 1925 -

VARSITY EIGHT

Red Nichols (tp) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Arnold Brilhart (cl,ssx,as) Freddy Cusick (ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx,goof) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d,kazoo)

1449 C **Flag That Train (To Alabam')**

78: Cameo 740, Lincoln 2355, Tremont 526; **CD:** Timeless (H) CBC1062

Three sides were cut this session, two are typical treatments of "If You Knew Susie" and the mid-twenties anthem "Charleston". But Lindsay McPhail's "Flag" has Jimmy soloing about 2:00 into the arrangement as he again points the way to future personal styles.

Columbia, New York, Thursday, May 14, 1925 -

CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS

Frank Cush, Red Nichols (cnt) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey**, Arnold Brillhart (cl,as) Freddy Cusick (cl,ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx) Arthur Hand (vn) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d)

W 140603-1 **Sweet Georgia Brown**

78: Columbia 380-D, (E) 3717; **CD:** Village (G) VILCD 011-2, Timeless (H) 1-053

On this, the first known recorded Jimmy Dorsey arrangement, it is 2:15 into the "old reliable jazz standby" before he takes a reasonably good half-chorus alto solo, giving Adrian Rollini the other half before picking up the clarinet for a few riffs in the closing moments.



Cameo, New York, Thursday, June 4, 1925 -

VARSITY EIGHT

Red Nichols (tp) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey**, Arnold Brillhart (cl,ssx,as) Fred Cusick (ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx,goof) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d,kazoo)

1489-A **Yes, Sir! That's My Baby**

78: Cameo 750, Lincoln 2371

A somewhat mundane arrangement of this twenties "standard" brightens up about 2:15 into the piece with a half-chorus almost adlib alto solo by Jimmy that leads into some equally pulsing notes from Red Nichols.

Columbia, New York, Tuesday, June 16, 1925 -

LITTLE RAMBLERS

Red Nichols (cnt) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Adrian Rollini (bsx, goof) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d)

W-140644-5 **Look Who's Here!**

78: Columbia 403-D; **CD:** Timeless (H) 1-037

The Little Ramblers were an early version of groups both Dorseys would use in their big band years, a smaller "band within a band". It was a vehicle to spotlight the Ramblers headliners, of which Jimmy was one by this time. He shines on a full chorus alto solo that starts about 1:00 into the arrangement.

W-140645-5,6 **Got No Time**

78: Columbia 403-D, (E) 3783; **LP:** Vintage Jazz Music (E) VLP28; **CD:** Timeless (H) 1-037

Again Jimmy gets first solo spot and once more 1:00 into the arrangement. It also sparkles with some previews of the multi-tonguing that was to become one of his trademarks.

Edison, New York Tuesday, June 23, 1925 - **CALIFORNIA RAMBLERS**

Frank Cush, Red Nichols (cnt) Tom Dorsey (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey**, Arnold Brillhart (cl,as) Freddy Cusick (cl,ts) Adrian Rollini (bsx) Irving Brodsky (p) Tommy Felling (bj) Stan King (d)

10451-A **Collegiate**

78: Edison 51580; **CD:** Biograph BCD153; Village (G) VILCD 011-2

10451-B,C **Collegiate**

78: Edison 51580; **CD:** Village (G) VILCD 011-2

On this twenties "standard" Jimmy takes a solo at about 2:20 in. While each take shows basically the same solo, there are decided riff changes between each that hint at Jimmy's strong desires to "break the mold" of mediocrity sought by Kirkeby.

10452-A,B,C **Look Who's Here!**

78: Edison 51591; **CD:** (-B) Village (G) VILCD 011-2, (-C) Jazz Oracle (C) BDW 8007

This Ray Klages "pop" tune of the day was upgraded simply by the presence of Red Nichols, Adrian Rollini and Jimmy Dorsey. Dorsey again is free and easy with solo variations between take -B and -C.

Jimmy went totally "commercial" for nearly half a year working with Jean Goldkette on the road and Frank Rich in the radio studios. By February 1926 however he had again begun "sneaking in" some jazz work.

Pathé, New York, c. Thursday, February 4, 1926 - **THE RED HEADS**

Red Nichols (cnt) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cnt,cl,as) Miff Mole (tb) Alfie Evans (cl,ts) Rube Bloom (p) Vic Berton (d) Arthur Fields (vcl)

106602-1 **Poor Papa (He's Got Nothin' At All)**

78: Pathé Actuelle 36387, (E) 11134, Perfect 14568, Grafton (E) 9217, Salabert (F) 262; **CD:** Jazz Archives 119, Classics (F) 1267, Jazz Oracle 8043

Red Nichols gives Jimmy full rein for a 16-bar opening solo that sets the stage for a "dixie" clarinet style that Jimmy would carry through his life, peaking with the late forties Dixieland sides for Columbia.

Pathé, New York, N.Y. c. Wednesday, April 7, 1926 - **THE RED HEADS** (new JD session)

Red Nichols (cnt) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cnt,cl,as) Miff Mole (tb) Arthur Schutt (p) Vic Berton (d)

106786-1 **Wild And Foolish**

78: Pathé Actuelle 36492, (E) 11206, Perfect 14673
The Red Heads are one “strand” smaller two months later. Alfie Evans is not present when they take on this Don Redman piece. Jimmy gets a full chorus clarinet solo about 1:00 in followed by Red and Miff splitting the next. Again Jimmy is trying things, many of which succeed.

Edison, New York, Wednesday, October 13, 1926 -

RED AND MIFF'S STOMPERS

Red Nichols (mgr,cnt) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Alfie Evans (as) Arthur Schutt (p) Joe Tarto (tu) Vic Berton (d)



11245-A,B **Alabama Stomp**

78: Edison 51854

11245-C **Alabama Stomp**

(unissued take) **LP:** Only For Collectors 36, London (E) AL-3541, Riverside SPD-11

On these 3 takes of “Alabama Stomp” Jimmy clearly controls the final 1:15 of this 3:45 arrangement, first with a 16-bar, no-holds-barred clarinet solo that then rides full swing into the close, which

he also dominates.

11246-A, B, C **Stampede**

78: Edison 51854; all takes also on **CD:** Jazz Oracle (C) BDW 8007. 11246-A also on **CD:** Biograph BCD129, Classics (F) 1212

Jimmy’s clarinet solo on “Stampede” (through a typo, the author listed it as an alto solo in his book) gets opening exposure on this one. It’s a little more “stock” in its style but still stands out.

Edison, New York, Wednesday, November 10, 1926 -

RED AND MIFF'S STOMPERS

Same personnel.

11291-A, B **Hurricane**

78: Edison 51878; **LP:** Riverside RLP-1448 (-B)

Jimmy has both clarinet and alto solos on this one. His 8-bar clarinet solo opens things up and he also uses the instrument for all his ensemble work. But about 2:50 into the arrangement his alto solo rides for 16 bars and shows why he is beginning to be recognized not only here but also abroad for his jazz abilities.

11292-B, C **Black Bottom Stomp**

78: Edison 51878; **CD:** Biograph BCD129, Classics (F) 1212

All **five** takes of 11291 and 11292 also on **CD:** Jazz Oracle (C) BDW 8007

Again both clarinet and alto come to the front, but this time the clarinet stands out. The Stompers deal with Jelly Roll Morton’s classic somewhat reverently.

Pathé, New York, c.Thursday, November 11, 1926 - **THE RED HEADS** (new JD session)

Red Nichols, Leo McConville (tp) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Bill Haid or Arthur Schutt (p) Dick McDonough (bj,g) Vic Berton (d)

107204-A **That's No Bargain**

78: Pathé Actuelle 36576, (E) 11331, Perfect 14757

Jimmy’s alto has the opening solo on this Red Nichols original, which is “bluesy” by nature, given the tune. Again however it’s the only time he picks up the alto. His clarinet supplies riffs throughout the rest of the side.

107206-A, B **Black Bottom Stomp**

78: Pathé Actuelle 36557, (E) 11289, Perfect 14738, Pathe (F) X-6965, Salabert (F) 565; **CD:** (-A) Timeless (H) CBC1-027; All takes except 107206-B on **CD:** Jazz Archives 119, Classics (F) 1267, Jazz Oracle 8043

Unlike the tunes’ treatment in the Stompers session the day before, The Red Heads open up on this version. Jimmy starts with an alto riff but :30 in cuts loose with a full 16-bar clarinet solo that really sets the tone for the rest of the side.

Brunswick, New York, N.Y. Wednesday, December 8,

1926 - **RED NICHOLS AND HIS FIVE PENNIES**

Red Nichols (cnt) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Arthur Schutt (p) Eddie Lang (g) Vic Berton (d,tymp)

E-20993-3 **Washboard Blues**

78: Brunswick 3407, 6814, 80072 (in alb. B-1019), (C,E,Au) 3407, (E) 01801, (G) A-222, Coral (G) 6495, 97024 (E-4179), Vocalion 1069; **CD:** Classics (F) 1212
Jimmy’s clarinet shines several times on this gem recorded nearly a year before Paul Whiteman’s “discovery” of the tune. Jimmy and Red bounce back and forth sharing choruses in true Chicago style. Jimmy’s clarinet solo about 2:00 in is a solid statement.

E-20995-5 **That's No Bargain**

78: Brunswick 3407, 6814, 80072 (in alb. B-1019), (E) 01801, (G) A-222, 87014, Coral (G) 97016; (E-4181) Vocalion 1069, 15498; **CD:** Classics (F) 1212

Like the Red Heads version earlier this IS a bargain because Jimmy switches from clarinet to alto and back to clarinet showing his ability to shine on both. It was at the end of this session that Vic Berton is credited with creating the band’s name by suggesting to Brunswick’s recording chief Jack Kapp that the group be called “Red Nichols And His Five Pennies”. Jimmy dusted off the same solo he uses in “That’s No Bargain” for Paul Whiteman’s “Sensation Stomp” and later in the Meyer Davis November 1928 “Tiger Rag” arrangement

Brunswick, New York, N.Y. Monday, December 20, 1926

- **RED NICHOLS AND HIS FIVE PENNIES**

Miff Mole (tb) added. Dick McDonough (g) replaces Lang.

E-21594- **Buddy's Habits**

78: Brunswick 3477, 6815, 80071, (C,E,Au) 3477, (E) 01802, (G) A-358, Vocalion 1076, 15573; **CD:** ASV Living Era AJA 5025, Classics (F) 1212, Fabulous 131
While his clarinet obligattos at the beginning and ending are crisp and clear crowd pleasers, Jimmy's alto solo which follows Miff Mole's is a "rough and ready" display which Jimmy never seemed to carry into his big band years.

E-21597- **Boneyard Shuffle**

78: Brunswick 3477, 6815, 80071 (in alb. B-1019), (C,E,Au) 3477, (E) 01802, (G) A-558, Vocalion 1076, 15573; **CD:** Classics (F) 1212, Fabulous 131, ASV Living Era AJA 5025

Jimmy's alto solo at the outset of this Hoagy Carmichael classic really stands out. Later in the piece he picks up his clarinet for background work only.

Pathé, New York, N.Y. December 1926 -

CLIFF EDWARDS' Hot Combination

Red Nichols (cnt) **Jimmy Dorsey**, Jimmy Lytell (cl,as) Bill Haid (p) John Cali (bj) Cliff Edwards (uke,vcl) Joe Tarto (tu) Ray Bauduc (d)

107281 **Lonely Eyes** vCE

78: Pathé Actuelle 25203, Perfect 11637

A solid 16-bar alto solo by Jimmy opens this side and is the only one in the piece despite the fact it's Red Nichols' band. It helps emphasize the respect that Red held for his sidemen during the period.

107283 **I Know That You Know** vCE

78: Pathé Actuelle 25204, Perfect 11638, Supertone 25201, Starck 204

All three sides also on **CD:** Jazz Oracle (C) 8043

Jimmy has another full 16-bar alto solo sandwiched between Edwards' vocals here.

Columbia, New York, N.Y. Tuesday, January 4, 1927 -

ARKANSAS TRAVELERS

Red Nichols (cnt) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl) Fred Morrow (as) Arthur Schutt (p) *unknown* (g) Vic Berton (d)

143260-3 **Washboard Blues**

78: Harmony 332-H

On the first Hoagy Carmichael classic recorded this day Jimmy noodles some clarinet notes at about :35 that lead into a chorus of "traditional" byplay between Nichols and Jimmy. This is followed by Art Schutt's piano work. The mystery however is who is doing the unaccredited guitar that follows Art? It sounds suspiciously like Eddie Lang! Jimmy returns at 2:00 in for another half-chorus clarinet solo that has its moments, too.

143262-3 **Boneyard Shuffle**

78: Harmony 332-H

The other Carmichael tune spots a full chorus solo at about 1:00 in where Jimmy lets loose once again.

Both sides also on: **CD:** Fountain Retrieval (E) 79010, Classics (F) 1269

Brunswick, New York, N.Y. Wednesday, January 12, 1927 - **RED NICHOLS AND HIS FIVE PENNIES**

Red Nichols (cnt) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Arthur Schutt (p) Eddie Lang (g) Vic Berton (d,tymp)

E-22981 **Alabama Stomp**

78: Brunswick 3550, 6817, (C,E,Au) 3550, (E) 01804, (G) A-456, Vocalion 1078, 15566; **CD:** Classics (F) 1212.

ASV Living Era AJA 5025

E-22982 **Alabama Stomp**

78: Brunswick 3550, (C,E,Au) 3550, (G) A-4546, Vocalion 1078, 15566

E-22983 **Alabama Stomp**

78: Brunswick 3550; Vocalion 1078, 15566

On all three takes of this Creamer-Johnson creation Jimmy grabs a full alto solo at 1:30 that runs up and down the scales, handling high and low notes equally well, giving hints of his thirties and forties style to come. It's obvious Jimmy came up with a solo arrangement that he sticks with on all three versions.

E-22984 **The Hurricane**

78: Brunswick 3550, 6817, (C,E,Au) 3550, (G) A-456, Vocalion 1078, 15566; **CD:** ASV Living Era AJA 5025

E-22985 **The Hurricane**

78: Brunswick 3550, (E) 01804, Vocalion 1078, 15566; **CD:** Classics (F) 1212

E-22986 **The Hurricane** (cl,as solo)

78: Brunswick 3550. Vocalion 1078, 15566

Three takes again of this Paul Mertz gem in which Jimmy has a clarinet bridge about :20 in, with Nichols' trumpet breaking in for a few notes while Jimmy switches to alto. There follows a full chorus on which Jimmy again shines. Full solos by Red and Artie Schutt and a full ensemble wrap-up finish all three takes.

Pathé, New York, N.Y. c.Thursday, January 20, 1927-

THE RED HEADS (new JD session)

Red Nichols (cnt) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Arthur Schutt (p) Vic Berton (d) Frank Gould (vcl)

107350-B **Tell Me Tonight**

78: Perfect 14764, Pathé Actuelle 36583

107350-C **Tell Me Tonight**

78: Perfect 14764, Pathé Actuelle 36583

107350-D **Tell Me Tonight**

78: Perfect 14764; **CD:** Jazz Archives (F) 119

While The Red Heads were a more "commercial" version of Brunswick's The Five Pennies and despite Pathé insisting on vocals, the opportunities for Jimmy to hone his style were equally available. He blows a lively full chorus alto solo on this one about 1:30 into the side.

107351-A **Here Or There**

78: Perfect 14764, Pathé Actuelle 36583, 11376;

CD: Jazz Archives (F) 119

107351-C **Here Or There**

78: Perfect 14764, Pathé Actuelle 36583

Both sides also on **CD:** Jazz Oracle 8043

At about the same spot as on "Here Or There" Jimmy gloms onto a full chorus clarinet low-register solo that spotlights his ability to do a standout job no matter what the range in which he was working.

Columbia, New York, N.Y. Thursday, January 27, 1927 - **CHARLESTON CHASERS**

Red Nichols (cnt) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as) Arthur Schutt (p) Dick McDonough (bj,g) Joe Tarto (tu) Vic Berton (d)

143258-5 **Someday, Sweetheart** [John and Benjamin Spikes] (cl solo)

78: Columbia 861-D, (E) 4419, 0920, DB-5005, (It) CQ-1416, (G) DW-4361; **CD:** BBC (E) 664, ABC (Au) 836185, ASV (E) AJA5316

The two released sides cut this date were the eventually successful results of 12 tries, six of them on January 4, to cut the two arrangements. On "Someday", following Miff Mole's opening solo, Jimmy plays a plaintive half-chorus on clarinet that nails down the blues quality of this classic.

143259-5 **After You've Gone**

78: Columbia 861-D, (E) 4419, 0920 FB-1108, test pressing AYG-1; **CD:** ASV (E) AJA5316

The complete opposite of "Sweetheart", this rouser opens with Jimmy sounding oddly like Benny Goodman (who was still in Chicago with Ben Pollack) leading into Red's opening chorus. Then at 1:20 into the arrangement we hear a full chorus alto solo with wide ranging trills that show his mastery by now of the instrument.

Columbia, New York, N.Y. Friday, February 4, 1927 - **FRANKIE TRUMBAUER AND HIS ORCHESTRA WITH BIX AND LANG**

Frank Trumbauer (c-mel [or] as) Bix Beiderbecke (cnt) Bill Rank (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl) Paul Mertz (p,arr) Howdy Quicksell (bj) Chauncey Morehouse (d)

80392-A **Clarinet Marmalade**

78: OKeh 40772, Columbia 37804 (dubbing), Vocalion 3010, 4412, Parlophone (E) R-3323, R-2304, (Au) A-7534, Odeon (F) 165093, (Arg) 194718, (G) A-189019, A-286089; **CD:** Flapper (E) 9765, Saville (E) 201, CDS (E) CD-620, Pavilion/Pearl (E) PAST-CD-9765, Fremaux (F) FA215, Jazz Hour 73517, Fabulous 144

Being second reedman on a Trumbauer session and still standing out speaks well about the progress Jimmy has made over the past three years. At 2:25 into the arrangement we finally actually hear a clarinet in this marmalade and are treated to Jimmy's great double-tonguing half-chorus.

Miff Mole (tb) replaces Rank (tb), Eddie Lang (g) replaces Quicksell (bj):

80393-C **Singin' The Blues (Till My Daddy Comes Home)**

78: OKeh 40772, Columbia 37804 (dubbing), Brunswick 7703, Parlophone (E) R-3323, R-1838, (Au) A-6235, (Scan) B-27597, (It) TT-9073, Odeon (F) 165093, (Arg) 295124, (Au) A-2409, (G) A-189019, A-286085; **CD:** ASV Living Era (E) CD-AJA 5080, CD-AJA5117, ABC (Au) 836-181-2, BBC (E) REB589, CD589, ProArte Digital CDD490, MFP (E) 6046, Saville (E) SVL-201, The Old Masters 107, JSP (E) CD913, Best Of Jazz (F) 4012, Fremaux (F) FA215, Fabulous 144

All sides also on **CD:** Columbia CK 45450, Masters Of Jazz (F) CD-MJ7, IRD (It) BIX 2, Origin Jazz Library BXCD 1-3, Drive 41065, Sony SNY45450.2, Sunbeam BXCD2, Classics (F) 1188, JSP (E) CD316, Mosaic MD-211, Proper Box 66

Again on "Singin'" Jimmy's solo opportunities are restricted but when he gets his chance about 2:00 into the piece he makes the most of it.

Columbia, New York, N.Y. Friday, February 25, 1927 - **CHARLESTON CHASERS**

Red Nichols (cnt) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy**

Dorsey (cl,as) Arthur Schutt (p,arr) Dick McDonough (bj,g) Joe Tarto (tu) Vic Berton (d)

143533-1 **Farewell Blues**

78: Columbia 1539-D; **CD:** ASV (E) AJA5316

Jimmy's partial alto solo about :25 in is rather bland, in keeping with the whole Artie Schutt arrangement, but after Nichols' solo the senior Dorsey opens up with a range-challenging 16 bars on clarinet that Miff Mole finds hard to top.

143534-2 **Davenport Blues** arrAS (as,cl solos)

78: Columbia 909-D, 909-D (Blue Wax), (E) 4453, FB-1108; **CD:** ASV (E) AJA5316, Origin Jazz Library 13

Red's salute to fellow cornetist (and some say hero) Bix Beiderbecke turns first to Jimmy for another so-so alto solo as a half-chorus build-up to Nichols' full chorus tip of the hat to Bix. At 2:10 Jimmy's clarinet wails away in another fine response performance.

143535-2 **Wabash Blues**

78: Columbia 909-D, 909-D (Blue Wax), (E) 4419, (J) 219, Parlophone (E) R-2211, (Au) A-6510, B-71143, Odeon (Norway) D-517; **CD:** BBC (E) 664, ABC (Au) 836 185, Jazz Roots 56071, ASV (E) AJA5316

Unlike "Davenport" which was a showcase for Red & Jimmy, "Wabash" was designed by Schutt to give everyone an outing, even Joe Tarto and Dick McDonough. We do hear Jimmy first with an upbeat half-chorus on clarinet that is buttressed by Tarto "oompah-ing" behind. It is one more example of why Jimmy was so much in demand in those mid-twenties sessions.



Brunswick, New York, N.Y. Thursday, March 3, 1927

- **RED NICHOLS AND HIS FIVE PENNIES**

Red Nichols (cnt) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as)
Joe Venuti (vn) Arthur Schutt (p) Eddie Lang (g) Vic
Berton (d,tymp)

E-21718- **Bugle Call Rag**

78: Brunswick 3490, 3510, 6816, (E) 3510, 01803, (G)
A-7556, (Au) 3490, Coral (G) 6795, 97024, Vocalion
15536; **CD:** Best Of Jazz (F) 4041, ASV (E) 5386,
5564, Quadromania 222464, Classics (F) 1241, CDS
(G) REB644, RPCD626, CD644, Fabulous 131

On this Jack Pettis classic Jimmy's alto shines about
1:00 into the arrangement with some close-order-drill
sounds that show his jazz mastery of the alto as well.

E-21721- **Back Beats**

78: Brunswick 3490, 3510, 6816, (E) 3510, 01803, (G)
A-7556, (Au) 3490, Vocalion 15536, **CD:** Classics (F)
1241

This effort, written by trumpeter Frank Guarente, again
spotlights Jimmy, twice this time. First he blows a full
chorus about :50 in which shows he's really in the com-
fort zone now with his alto. This leads into a give and
take trademark chorus with Joe Venuti and Eddie Lang
that sets the stage for a full-band chorus highlighted by
Jimmy's clarinet noodling.

OKeh, New York, N.Y. Monday, March 7, 1927 -

MIFF MOLE'S MOLERS

Red Nichols (cnt) Miff Mole (tb) **Jimmy Dorsey** (cl,as)
Arthur Schutt (p) Dick McDonough (bj,g) Joe Tarto
(tu) Ray Bauduc (d)

80501-B **Davenport Blues**

78: OKeh 40848, Parlophone (E) R-3362, (G) A-4903,
Odeon (Arg) 193053, A-189176; **CD:** BBC (E)
RPCD627, 664, ABC (Au) 36185, Jazz Roots 56071,
Swing Time 9911, Village (G) 015-2, Swing Time
9911, Village (G) 015-2, Quadromania 222464, ASV
(E) Living Era 5632

Unlike the February 25 salute to Bix, this version spot-
lights Mole rather than Nichols, but nonetheless Jimmy
has his moments. First his clarinet pops in and out of
the first full-band chorus, Mole does his thing for a
chorus and then at 1:20 tips his hat to Jimmy whose
following alto work again stands out. The only other
solo work is by Schutt before the windup chorus.

80502-A **The Darktown Strutters' Ball**

78: OKeh 40784, Vocalion (dubbing) 3041, Parlophone
(E) R-3326, (Au) A-2188, A-4903, Odeon (Arg)
193008, 194865; **CD:** BBC (E) RPCD627, 664, ABC
(Au) 36185, Swing Time 9911, Village (G) 015-2

This is truly a traditionally styled salute to Shelton
Brooks' classic that, according to Joe Tarto, Red Nich-
ols and Miff Mole tried to get OKeh to reject because
Artie Schutt had dropped a few measures in his solo.
About :50 into the arrangement Jimmy tears off a 16-

bar clarinet solo in true "trad" style. Even Tarto has his turn
on this one.

80503-B **A Hot Time In The Old Town Tonight**

78: OKeh 40784, Vocalion (dubbing) 3041, Parlophone (E)
R-3326, (Au) A-4903, Odeon (Arg) 193008; **CD:** BBC (E)
664, ABC (Au) 36185, Swing Time 9911, Village (G) 015-2
After Miff Mole's opening solo, at 1:25 Jimmy shifts to alto
for a wide-ranging chorus that includes the high and low reg-
ister notes Dorsey was so capable of delivering. The other
solos are capably shared by Tarto and Lang.

Jimmy had earned an impressive reputation on the alto sax
by 1927, which resulted in his authoring a booklet titled *100
Hot Breaks For The E-flat Alto Sax*. A major accomplishment
for a twenty-three-year-old from the coal mines of Pennsyl-
vania who hadn't finished school, it became a "must-read" for
anyone wanting to play jazz alto and was actively published
for years. It was at this point that Jimmy joined the Paul
Whiteman organization, the first of numerous jazz-oriented
white musicians who would sign up for a year or two in
which "Pops" tried valiantly to live up to his self-proclaimed
title of "King Of Jazz."



In addition to Jimmy and
brother Tommy, Red
Nichols, Vic Berton, Bix
Beiderbecke, Frankie
Trumbauer, Joe Venuti
and Eddie Lang and later
the Teagardens (Jack and
Charlie) would spend
some time in the White-
man camp.

There are some who
say that this "selling out"
to Whiteman was what
took the edge off Jimmy's
jazz abilities. In reality he

never lost them, simply put them on the back burner for pure-
ly monetary survival when the Depression caused the demise
of the jazz age. For example, his "Dixieland Jazz Band" in
the early fifties, while somewhat straight-jacketed by Mitch
Miller's iron hand at Columbia, did a lot to rekindle interest
in the genre. If you listen to the live broadcast versions of the
fifties group's output rather than the recorded studio sessions,
you can hear a decided difference.

Like his much more business-minded brother, and because
of the deeply imbedded family principles drilled into them by
their father, Jimmy faced the tough decision of whether to be
a jazz specialist or commercial musician and reluctantly
chose the latter. Given the financial pressures everyone faced
in the thirties when the Dorsey Brothers were shaping their
future, the decision is not that difficult to understand.

Robert L. Stockdale's landmark bio-discographical works, each published
by Scarecrow Press:

Tommy Dorsey: On The Side, 1995

Jimmy Dorsey: A Study in Contrasts, 1999