

JAZZ 1913 — 1926 **Some Beginnings**



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J4248
1977

MUSIC LP

Side 1

- Band 1. You Can't Get Away From It
(Bert Williams)
- Band 2. Down Home Rag
(James Reese Europe's Society)
- Band 3. Raggin' The Scale
(Fred Van Eps)
- Band 4. Round The Corner
(Dabney's Band)
- Band 5. I'm Done
(Eddie Hunter—Alex Rogers)
- Band 6. You Gotta See Mama Every Night
(Gene Fosdick's Hoosiers)
- Band 7. Masculine Women! Feminine Men!
(M. Brunies and his Friar's Inn Orch.)

Side 2

- Band 1. 'Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness If I Do
(C.A. Matson's Creole Serenaders)
- Band 2. Graysom Street Blues
(M. Johnson acc. by the Black and Blue Trio)
- Band 3. Nobody Knows and Nobody Cares Blues
(Sara Martin)
- Band 4. When My Sugar Walks Down The Street
(J. DeDroit and his New Orleans Orch.)
- Band 5. Weary Blues
(Vic Meyers and his Orch.)
- Band 6. Old Time Blues
(Mamie Smith's Jazz Hounds)
- Band 7. In Harlem's Araby
(The Good Time Band)

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JAZZ Some **Beginnings**

COMPILED & ANNOTATED BY
SAMUEL CHARTERS

COVER DESIGN BY RONALD CLYNE

COVER PHOTO BY WALKER EVANS

Street Scene, Vicksburg, Mississippi, March 1936

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JAZZ/Some Beginnings

Compiled and Annotated by Samuel Charters

Side A

1. You Can't Get Away From It Bert Williams
Vocal with studio orchestra.
Recorded in N. Y. c. 1914
2. Down Home Rag James Reese Europe's Society
Orchestra
Cricket Smith, cnt; Edgar Campbell, cl.; Tracy Cooper, George
Smith, Walker Scott, vln; Ford Dabney, pno; ? bjo, Buddy Gilmore, d.
Recorded in New York, Dec. 29, 1913
3. Raggin' The Scale Fred Van Eps
Banjo with accompaniment.
Recorded in New York, June 1, 1916
4. Round The Corner Dabney's Band
Cricket Smith, cnt; Nappy Lee, tbn; Edgar Campbell, cl; Alonzo
Williams, as; Dabney, pno; John Haywood, string bs; Dennis
Johnson, d.
Recorded in New York, December, 1919
5. I'm Done Eddie Hunter - Alex Rogers,
with piano by C. Luckyeth Roberts
Vocal duet with piano accompaniment.
6. You Gotta See Mama Every Night Gene Fosdick's Hoosiers
Joe Rose, cnt; Gene Fosdick, cl and ss; Dudley Fosdick, mel;
? tbn; Gerald Finney or Will Lanin, p; Ray McDermott, bjo; ? b;
John Sonin, arranger.
Recorded in New York, December, 1922
7. Masculine Women! Feminine Men! Merritt Brunies and his Friar's
Inn Orchestra
Brunies, cnt; Harry Brunies, tbn; Volly de Faut, cl and as;
Marty Freeman, pno; Jules Casard, bb; Bill Paley, d; others
unknown, Lew King, vocal.
Recorded in Chicago, March 2, 1926

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Side B

1. 'Tain't Nobody's Biz-ness If I Do Charles A. Matson's Creole
Serenaders
Personnel unknown, Matson, pno and leader.
Recorded in New York, July 30, 1923
2. Graysom Street Blues Margaret Johnson accompanied by
the Black and Blue Trio
Vocal with
Tom Morris, cnt; Bob Fuller, cl; Mike Jackson, pno.
Recorded in New York, Oct. 20, 1926
3. Nobody Knows and Nobody Cares Blues Sara Martin
Vocal with Bubber Miley, cnt; Robert Cooksey, harmonica; ? Phil
Worde, pno.
Recorded in New York, c. Nov. 17, 1925
4. When My Sugar Walks Down The Street Johnny DeDroit and his New
Orleans Orchestra
de Droit, cnt; Ellis Stratakos, tbn; Henry Raymond, cl; Rudolph
Levy, as; Frank Froeba, pno; George ~~Monahan~~ Potter, bjo; Paul de Droit, d.
Recorded in New York, c. Jan 12, 1925
5. Weary Blues Vic Meyers and his Orchestra
Billy Stewart, Bill Zimmerman, cnts; Jim Taft, tbn; Art Kenton,
cl and as; Cecil Harnack, as; Bob Gordon, ts and bs; Al Neuman, pno;
? bjo, "Chief" bb, Bob Goodwin, d; Vic Meyers, ldr.
Recorded in Los Angeles, c. April 1924
6. Old Time Blues Mamie Smith's Jazz Hounds
Johnny Dunn, cnt; Buster Bailey, cl; Chink Johnson, bb; unknown
xylophone and rhythm.
Recorded in New York, c, Feb 21, 1921
7. In Harlem's Araby The Good Time Band
Personnel unknown, believed to be a studio group including
clarinetist Andy Sannella.
Recorded in New York c. 1925

(Personnels and recording dates from Brian Rust's compilation "Jazz Records, 1896-1942")

At a first glance it might seem a little tenuous to include this gathering of recordings under the word "jazz." There are sounds of vaudeville banjo, one of the comedians from the Ziegfield Follies,

a dance orchestra from Spokane, novelty songs, blues singers, and the first recording of New York stride piano. But one thing does tie them all together, and that is the kind of excited exploration each of the artists is making toward the new syncopated instrumental music that came to be known as jazz. It was a time, as Bert Williams sings, when "Syncopation rules the nation - You Can't Get Away From It."

It was only a brief period of years before jazz matured into the music we know today, but even in its earliest period of development in New York and Chicago it was already a complex form built from some of the elements of these early beginnings. The small bands ten years later often had the same kind of excitement as Europe's Society Orchestra, but the melodic line had added the more subtle extension that was in the blues singing of Margaret Johnson and Sara Martin. Perhaps the only thing that went through all of the period of growth and development without much change was the New York style known as "stride piano." Lucky Roberts plays on this 1919 recording with all the ease and assurance of a master, even this is his - and stride piano's - first time on record.

Bert Williams was usually considered a comedian with a ~~giff~~ genius for interpreting a song, and in his years in the Follies he did comedy sketches as well as humorous songs. This is one of the few records where he just sang, and it is one of the first recordings that begins to "swing" in the modern sense of the word. For the bands of the period this kind of rhythmic ~~ma~~ looseness came a little harder, and despite their energy and enthusiasm they didn't find the key to it until some years had passed. Jim Europe's orchestra became very successful playing the music for the dancers Vernon and Irene Castle, and Europe, as one of Harlem's best known musical figures, could have had a major career after he returned from leading a brass band in France that played ragtime for General Pershing. A disgruntled musician, however, stabbed him to death a few months after he came back to New York and Ford Dabney, who had been with him in the first band, took over the leadership. Their

music has a startling exoticism after the smoother arrangements of jazz played only a short time later.

Some of the bands, like Gene Fosdick's Hoosiers, were most active as recording groups, others, like Vic Meyers and his Orchestra, were dance bands, and their few recordings were incidental. The Meyers Orchestra was from Spokane; although they had to travel to Los Angeles to record. Johnny de Droit's group was a genuine New Orleans band, even if they were being influenced by recordings by other groups, and they were used to playing in small clubs. Mamie Smith's Jazz Hounds, in contrast, accompanied Mamie on her recordings and stage tours; so they were more of a theatre presentation than a working jazz band. With Charles A. Matson's Creole Serenaders and the Good Time Band some of the outlines of a mature jazz style begin to emerge, and it's clear that the new music will include some of the feel of all of it - from Bert Williams easy swing, to Fred Van Eps stiffly syncopated banjo and Charles Matson's voicing of horn arrangements.

This period of jazz was so startlingly different from the jazz that emerged out of it that few of the musicians were able to make the transition. The ones who went on were often young and still shaping their own styles, like Bubber Miley, here with Sara Martin, who went on to the Duke Ellington Orchestra, and Buster Bailey, who went from the Jazz Hounds to the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra. The others are part of a kind of pre-history where we trace, as best we can from the scattered elements that remain, the roots of jazz.

Sam Charters

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