

The
DRUMS
of
ALVIN BURROUGHS
“MOUSE”

Born: Mobile, Alabama, Nov. 21, 1911
Died: Chicago, Illinois, Aug. 1, 1950

Introduction:

Oh yes, we knew Alvin Burroughs already back then when we were young, because we collected Lionel Hampton 78s, and the session of Oct. 11, 1938 made a great impression on us!!

History:

Raised in Pittsburgh. At 16 made debut (with Roy Eldridge) in a kid's band at Sharon, Pennsylvania – swift return to Pittsburgh. Worked with Walter Page's Blue Devils 1928-29, with Alphonso Trent (1930). Settled in Chicago, played with various leaders including spell with pianist Hal Draper's Arcadians in 1935. With Horace Henderson from 1937 until 1938. With Earl Hines from September 1938 until late 1940. With Milton Larkin's band at Rhumboogie, Chicago (1941), with Benny Carter in late 1942. Led own band, then worked with Henry "Red" Allen from 1945 until April 1946. Led own band for a while, then joined George Dixon's quartet, was a member of this group at the time he suffered a fatal heart attack (ref. John Chilton).

ALVIN BURROUGHS SOLOGRAPHY

WALTER PAGE's BLUE DEVILS **Kansas City, Nov. 10, 1929**

James Simpson, Hot Lips Page (tp), Dan Minor (tb), Buster Smith (cl, as), Ted Manning (as), Reuben Roddy (ts), Charlie Washington (p), Reuben Lynch or Thomas Owens (g), Walter Page (tu, b, dir), Alvin Burroughs (dm), Jimmy Rushing (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

612	Blue Devil Blues	(SM)
613	Squabblin'	(F)

Although the thirties have not yet arrived, jazz drumming is evolving rapidly. Studying "Squabblin'" closely, we can hear an active Alvin Burroughs supporting his fellows closely, in fact there are many interesting details here. "Blue ..." in slow medium tempo is not interesting in this respect.

LIONEL HAMPTON & HIS ORCHESTRA **Chi. Oct. 11, 1938**

Walter Fuller (tp), Omer Simeon (cl, as), George Oldham (as), Budd Johnson, Robert Crowder (ts), Spencer Odun (p), Jesse Simpkins (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib, p, vo).

Three titles were recorded for Victor:

25866-1	Down Home Jump	(FM)
25867-1	Rock Hill Special	(M)
25868-1	Fiddle Diddle	(M)

This session is AB's de facto application for membership into the congregation of great vintage jazz drummers. This recording studio group has a strong Earl Hines base, and he swings it masterly. He takes it easily though determined on "Fiddle ...", but on "Rock ..." and particularly "Down ..." (note how he drives Crowder on this one!!) he is highly active all the way through, dropping numerous bombs and really pushes the performance forward, making these two items two of Hampton's best and most swinging ones!

EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA **Dec. 4, 1938**

Personnel including Alvin Burroughs (dm).
Bill Savory collection, broadcast, two titles:

Time Out	Solo 4 bars. Break. FM)
Please Come Out Of Your Dreams	(FM)

Obviously Earl Hines saw something very useful in this great and dynamic drummer, as evident in "Time Out"!

EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 12, 1939**

Walter Fuller (tp), Milton Fletcher, Ed Sims (tp), George Dixon (tp, as, bar), Ed Burke, John Ewing, Joe McLewis (tb), Omer Simeon (cl, as), Leroy Harris (as, vo), Budd Johnson (as, ts, arr-38258,59,60), Robert Crowder (ts), Earl Hines (p, arr), Claude Roberts (g), Quinn Wilson (b, arr), Alvin Burroughs (dm), Horace Henderson (arr-38255), Elmer "Skippy" Williams (arr-38257).

Six titles were recorded for Bluebird:

38255-1	Indiana	(FM)
38256-1	G. T. Stomp	Solo with orch 16 bars. (F)
38256-2	G. T. Stomp	As above. (F)
38257-1	Ridin' And Jivin'	(M)
38258-1	Grand Terrace Shuffle	(F)
38259-1	Father Steps In	Break. (FM)
38260-1	Piano Man	(F)

The main reason for an AB solography is of course that he swings one of the major bands in vintage jazz. Although rarely very prominent on records, his presence is certainly strongly felt. His only solo feature is with soft brushes on "... Stomp".

EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA **Chi. Oct. 6, 1939**
 Personnel as above with Walter Fuller (tp, vo-40478), Laura Rucker (vo-40475), Budd Johnson (arr-40474,76), Jimmy Mundy (arr-40478,79), Earl Hines/Quinn Wilson (arr-40477).
 Six titles were recorded for Bluebird:

40474-1	Riff Medley	Solo 4 bars. (M)
40475-1	Me And Columbus	Breaks. (M)
40476-1	XYZ	Solo 14 bars. (F)
40477-1	'Gator Swing	(FM)
40478-1	After All I've Been To You	(S)
40479-1	Lightly And Politely	(FM)

Of all the Earl Hines sessions, this one has the most remarkable drumming. Particularly "XYZ" and "Riff ..." demonstrate convincingly why AB should be considered as one of the most important vintage bigband drummers.

EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Feb. 13, 1940**
 Walter Fuller (tp), Milton Fletcher, Ed Sims (tp), George Dixon (tp, as), Ed Burke, John Ewing, Joe McLewis (tb), Omer Simeon (cl, as), Leroy Harris (as), Jimmy Mundy, Robert Crowder (ts), Earl Hines (p, arr-47055), Claude Roberts (g), Quinn Wilson (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm), Budd Johnson (arr-47056,57,58), Billy Eckstine (vo-47057).
 Four titles were recorded for Bluebird:

47055-1	Boogie Woogie On St. Louis Blues	(M)
47055-2	Boogie Woogie On St. Louis Blues	(M)
47056-1	Deep Forest	(M)
47057-1	My Heart Beats For You	(SM)
47058-1	Number 19	Intro 8 bars. Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Note particularly "Number 19" where AB has a prominent role.

EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. June 19, 1940**
 Walter Fuller (tp, vo-51524,26), Shirley Clay, Ed Sims (tp), George Dixon (tp, as), Ed Burke, John Ewing, Joe McLewis (tb), Omer Simeon (cl, as), Leroy Harris (as, vo-51525), Robert Crowder (ts), Budd Johnson (ts, arr-51523,25,27), Earl Hines (p), Claude Roberts (g), Quinn Wilson (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm), Billy Eckstine (vo-51521,23), Buster Harding (arr-51522).
 Seven titles were recorded for Bluebird:

51521-1	Wait 'Till It Happens To You	(S)
51522-1	Call Me Happy	(FM)
51523-1	Ann	(SM)
51524-1	Topsy Turvy	(FM)
51525-1	Blue Because Of You	(S)
51526-1	You Can Depend On Me	(M)
51526-2	You Can Depend On Me	(M)
51527-1	Tantalizing A Cuban	Solo 16 bars. (M)
51527-2	Tantalizing A Cuban	As above. (M)

Nothing to add here, except that he plays soft brushes on "... Cuban".

EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA **Hollywood, Dec. 2, 1940**
 Pee Wee Jackson, Rostelle Reese, Leroy White (tp), John Ewing, Ed Fant, Joe McLewis (tb), Leroy Harris (as), Scoops Carry (cl, as), Willie Randall (ts), Budd Johnson (cl, ts, arr-55177), Franz Jackson (ts, arr-55179), Earl Hines (p, ldr), Hurley Ramey (g), Truck Parham (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm), Billy Eckstine (vo-55177,80), Madeline Green, The Three Varities (vo-55178, Bingie Madison (arr-55176), Mort Maser (arr-55178), Jimmy Mundy (arr-55175).
 Six titles were recorded for Bluebird:

55175-1	Easy Rhythm	Break. (FM)
55176-1	In Swamp Lands	Break. (FM)

55177-1	I'm Falling For You	(S)
55178-1	Everything Depends On You	(SM)
55179-1	Comin' In Home	Break. (FM)
55180-1	Jelly, Jelly	(S)

Only a few breaks here and there, although he swings the band professionally, but dig his strong "Farewell" at the end of "... Home"!

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA **LA. Dec. 18, 1942**

Personnel, tentatively based on BC's opening at the Swing Club in LA, Nov. 1942 (ref. Down Beat, Nov. 15, 1942, p. 11 (ref. Ed Berger)): Benny Carter (tp, as), George Treadwell, Hal Mitchell, Chiefe Scott (tp), Earl Hardy, John "Shorty" Haughton, J. J. Johnson, Alton Moore (tb), Ted Barnett, Stretch Ridley, Gene Porter, Eddie De Verteuil (reeds), Ted Brannon (p), Johnny Smith (g), Curly Russell (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm), Savannah Churchill (vo).
AFRS Jubilee no. 4:

Stompin' At The Savoy	(F)
All I Need Is You	(S)
I Can't Get Started	(S)
Ol' Man River	Solo 4 bars to orch and coda. (F)

Already on "... The Savoy" AB's presence is heavily felt, he swings the band like h..., and proceeding to "... River", the closing is remarkable, just because of this great drummer.

THE SESSION SIX **Chi. April 2, 1944**

Jesse Miller (tp), Nat Jones (as), Eddie Johnson (ts), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Session (12"), two have been available:

164	Big Oaks	
165	I Wished On The Moon	
166	In The Act	Intro. Acc. With ens. (F)
167	Yesterdays	(S)

AB is back in Chicago (sorry that I missed out this session previously), and he does a great job on "... The Act", from the very beginning with soft highhat, then accompanying his fellow musicians and finally slams hard in the conclusion. One important AB item.

HENRY "RED" ALLEN **Chi. May 5, 1944**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Don Stovall (as), Al Williams (p), Benny Moten (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for World Transcriptions:

25185	The Theme	Solo 4 bars. (M)
25186	Ride, Red, Ride	(F)
25187	Just A Feeling	(S)
25188	Dark Eyes	Solo 14 bars. (F)
25189	Dear Old Southland	(S/M)
25190	Red Jump	Breaks. (FM)
25191	Get The Mop	(M)

Quote my Henry "Red" Allen solography: "This is so corny, that it is difficult to understand how it came about, and how could there be an audience for it?" However, AB should not be blamed, he just performs his supporting role with quality. Dig his numerous bombs on "... Ride". Note also some breaks and brief soli.

HENRY RED ALLEN **Chi. Aug. 1, 1944**

Personnel as above.

Broadcast from the Downbeat Room of Garrick Stage Lounge, five titles:

Get The Mop	(FM)
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Pomona	Solo 40 bars. (F)
On The Sunny Side Of TS (NC)	(M)
St. James Infirmary	(SM)
The Crawl (NC)	(M)

Have forgotten where this session hides! Postscript of Aug. 2018: Found it of course among Franz Hoffman's dedicated works! AB swings the band, but the sound is very bad. His dynamic drums on "Pomona" needs however no good sound!!

J. C. HIGGINBOTHAM **Chi. Sept. 14, 1944**

J. C. Higginbotham (tb), General Morgan (p), Jim "Daddy" Walker (g), Benny Moten (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Session:

186	Dear Old Southland	(FM/S)
187	J. C. Jumps	Intro. (M)
188	Confessin'	(S)
189	Sporty Joe	(FM)

Postscript of Jan. 2018: Forgot this session! AB is heard particularly in "... Jumps" where he opens the ball, and also clearly in the background of this item and "... Joe".

HENRY RED ALLEN **NYC. Jan. 28, 1946**

Personnel as above.

Soundies:

17M2	Drink Hearty	(SM)
18M4	Mop (Get The Mop)	(F)
19M2	Crawl, Red, Crawl	(FM)
20M3	Count Me Out	(F)
21M5	House Of 52 nd Street	(FM)

And these! Great to see the guys in action, and probably the only chance to see AB playing his drums. All items available on YouTube.

BILL HARRIS & HIS SEPTET **Chi. April 5, 1945**

Pete Candoli (tp), Bill Harris (tb), Flip Phillips (ts), Ralph Burns (p), Billy Bauer (g), Chubby Jackson (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Keynote:

321-1	Cross Country	Intro 4 bars. (F)
322-1	Characteristically B. H.	(FM)
323-1	Mean To Me	(S)
324-1	She's Funny That Way	(S)

From a drums point of view, the two fastest items, "Cross ..." and "... B. H." are interesting, and AB, cooperating effectively with Chubby, creates an excellent rhythmic background to a series of fine blown soli.

HENRY RED ALLEN **NYC. Jan. 14, 1946**

Henry Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Don Stovall (as), Bill Thompson (p), Benny Moten (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

1560-1	The Crawl	(FM)
1561-1	Buzz Me	(SM)
1562-1	Drink Hearty	(SM)
1563-1	Get The Mop	(F)

Pretty corny and noisy, but try to hold on and enjoy AB's hard drumming on "... Crawl" and "...Mop".

ALBERT AMMONS AND HIS RHYTHM KINGS **Chi. Aug. 6, 1947**

Marvin Randolph (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), Albert Ammons (p), Ike Perkins (g), Israel Crosby (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Mercury:

929-1	St. Louis Blues	(M)
929-2	St. Louis Blues	(M)
929-3	St. Louis Blues	(M)
930-1	Shufflin' The Boogie	(M)
930-2	Shufflin' The Boogie	(M)
931-1	S. P. Blues	(FM)
932-1	Hiroshima	(FM)

From my Gene Ammons solography: "If I had to select a handful of jazz 78s for a desolate island, "St. Louis Blues" with father and offspring Ammons would be one of them. Early in my jazz studies I discovered that while the combination of modern rhythm and swing brass and reeds was disastrous, the opposite could be a pure delight, like Charlie Parker with Tiny Grimes. And this session is the ultimate proof!!! The foundation is not only made by Albert's dynamic piano playing but also largely by the incredible Alvin B., drummer with the Earl Hines band and master of the high hat. Particularly on "St. Louis ..." does he swing out of this earth, believe me!!!!". Nothing more needs to be said.

NELLIE LUTCHER & HER RHYTHM **Chi. Dec. 27-29, 1947**
Nellie Lutcher (p, vo), Hurley Ramey (g), Charles "Truck" Parham (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Twenty titles seems to be recorded for Capitol, possibly 3038 "Without A Song", 3044 "I Used To Be Dull" and 3045 "The Dog Fight Song" are unissued, while 3040 "Life Is Like That" has not been available but:

3034	Fine Brown Frame	(SM)
3035	Humoresque	(SM)
3036	Imagine You Having Eyes For Me	(M)
3037	Alexander's Ragtime Band	(FM)
3039	I Wish I Was In Walla Walla	(M)
3041	A Maid's Prayer	(S)
3042	Ditto From Me To You	(M)
3043	My Man	(S)
3046	Lutcher's Leap	(S)
3047	Say A Little Prayer For Me	(S)
3048	Cool Water	(SM)
3049	A Chicken Ain't Nothing But A Bird	(FM)
3050	Princess Poo-Loo-Ly	(M)
3051	He Sends Me	(F)
3052	My Little Boy	(S)
3053	My New Papa Got To Have Everything	(FM)

Chi. early 1948

Same. Four titles, 4002 "To Be Forgotten" has not been available but:

4000	Come And Get It Honey	(M)
4001	Little Sally Walker	(M)
4003	Darktown Strutters Ball	(FM)

Here we can enjoy another side of AB's masterly drumming; he is playing softly with brushes. Even if you be not particularly interested in Nellie's piano and vocal contributions, which in fact are pretty nice, and you think the above list is too long, nevertheless you should try "Fine Brown ...", "... Ragtime Band", "... Bird", "... Little Boy" and "Darktown ..." and enjoy the elegant background

support. With Alvin Burroughs' much too early death, jazz lost one of its greatest vintage drummers.

No further recording sessions.

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