

The
GUITAR
of
ARVIN CHARLES
GARRISON

Born: Toledo, Ohio, Aug. 17, 1922
 Died: Toledo, Ohio, July 30, 1960

Introduction:

Oh yes, we noticed Arv Garrison, a guitarist playing with Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, Miles Davis, Lucky Thompson and Howard McGhee must certainly be somebody!

History:

Taught himself ukulele at age nine and played guitar for dances and local functions beginning at the age of twelve. Led his own trio at a hotel in Albany, New York in 1941. In 1946 recorded on the West Coast (see solography). As part of the Earl Spencer orchestra, he played in a guitar section that included Irving Ashby and Barney Kessel. From 1946 to 1948 he toured with his wife, the double bass player Vivien Garry. He performed in Toledo through the 1950s. In 1960 while he was swimming, he died when he had an epileptic seizure in the water (ref. New Grove Dictionary of Jazz & Wikipedia).

Message:

Postscript of July 2021: The recent appearance of “The Unknown Arv Garrison – Wizard of the Six String”, a 3 CD-set on Fresh Sound, is a great effort that should be praised and supported by all of you reading this. It has necessitated a complete rewrite of the previous solography, something which is executed with great pleasure!

ARVIN GARRISON SOLOGRAPHY

VIVIEN GARRY TRIO**NYC. June 20, 1945**

Teddy Kaye (p, vo), Arvin Garrison (g, vo), Vivien Garry (b, vo).
Two titles were recorded for Guild:

Altitude	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (FM)
Relax Jack	In ens. (M)

This early session appeared with the CD-project. "Altitude" has fine guitar playing, reinforcing the good impression we got from the session below. "... Jack" however is boring, mostly singing, and of slight interest.

VIVIEN GARRY QUARTET**Hollywood, Dec. 15, 1945**

George Handy (p, vo-"Where ..."), Arvin Garrison (g), Vivien Garry (b, vo-"... All", "... Dear"), Roy Hall (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Sarco, no (g) present on "I've Got To, That's All" and "I Surrender Dear" but:

Hopscotch	Intro 12 bars to solo 36 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (p). Solo 8 bars. (F)
Where You At?	Intro. Break to solo 32 bars. (M)
Tonsillectomy	Duet with (p). Solo 32 bars. (FM)
These Foolish Things	Solo feature for (g). (S/SM)

This session must have been forgotten or overlooked in general, because it contains highly exciting modern experimentation and introduces a fine guitarist in Arv Garrison. In fact this might possibly considered his most important session! His laidback solo on "Where ..." is very original. The interplay with piano on "Tonsillectomy" is peculiar and the following guitar solo very interesting, as is the one on "Hopscotch", note also the cooperation with an equally important pianist. Finally a magnificent "... Things", not many others are playing such modern oriented guitar these days. If AG already at this time is known to be so creative, it is no wonder he later was invited to record with the best of the modern bebop innovators.

DIZZY GILLESPIE JAZZMEN**Glendale, Ca., Feb. 5, 1946**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Lucky Thompson (ts), George Handy (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Ray Brown (b), Stan Levey (dm).

One title was recorded for Dial:

1000	Diggin' Diz	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
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As hinted above; one is not invited to play guitar with these guys without having a reputation! Since the session became a mess, not so much guitar came out of it, but the solo that comes after the the three horns certainly is not inferior.

TEMPO JAZZMEN**Glendale, Ca., Feb. 6, 1946**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Lucky Thompson (ts), Milt Jackson (vib), Arvin Garrison (g), Al Haig (p), Ray Brown (b), Stan Levey (dm), The Three Angels (ens-vo-1004).

Five titles were recorded for Dial, 1001-E "Confirmation", 1002-E "Diggin' For Diz", 1003-A&B "Dynamo A & B", 1004-E "When I Grow Too Old To Dream" and 1005-A&B "Round Midnight", but no guitar soli.

VIVIEN GARRY TRIO**Hollywood, March 1946**

Wini Beatty (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Vivien Garry (b).
AFRS Jubilee No. 175, two titles, one has been available:

Where You At?	Break to solo 64 bars. Break. Coda. (FM)
How High The Moon	

Another version of "... At?", longer and faster, but of the same great quality.

CHARLIE PARKER SEPTET**Hollywood, March 28, 1946**

Miles Davis (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Lucky Thompson (ts), Dodo Marmarosa (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Vic McMillan (b), Roy Porter (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Dial (a fourth title 1010-1,2,3 "Moose The Mooche" without AG), no guitar soli on 1012-1,3,4 "Ornithology" but:

1011-1	Yardbird Suite	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
1011-4	Yardbird Suite	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

1013-4	A Night In Tunisia	Solo 8 bars. (M)
1013-5	A Night In Tunisia	As above. (M)

This is where AG entered our lives! Note that the structure of the two "... Suite"s is different. The brief solo on take 1 is somewhat disconnected, while the longer take 4 flows much better. On "... Tunisia" take 5 is most successful.

VIVIEN GARRY TRIO

Hollywood, 1946?

Personnel as above?

Four titles were recorded for Premier 29006 ("Flying Home" and "Mop Mop") and 29007 ("Seven Come Eleven" and "I've Got To, That's All") (ref. Jim Harrod, Jazz Research), not available.

GEORGE HANDY WITH THE VIVIEN GARRY TRIO

Hollywood, 1946?

Personnel as above with George Handy (p)?

Two titles, "Perdido" and "Handy Man", listed as Studio & Artists K05 (ref. Jim Harrod, Jazz Research), not available.

Note: AFRS Jubilee No. 179 has the following: RED CALLENDER TRIO, ca. April 1946, two titles: "Baby I'm Gone" and "Cottontail", with personnel: Possibly Emmaïne Brooks (p), possibly Louie Gonzales (g), Red Callender (b). Can this be a mixup, involving VG/AG?

VIVIEN GARRY TRIO / FRANKIE LAINE

Hollywood, May 1946

Wini Beatty (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Vivien Garry (b), Frankie Laine (vo-"It Ain't Gonna ...", "It Only Happens ..."), Ernest "Bubbles" Whitman (mc).

AFRS Jubilee No. 183, four titles:

Mop Mop	Soli 8, 32 and 8 bars. (F)
How Deep Is The Ocean	Acc. (vo) with (p). (S)
It Ain't Gonna Be Like That	Intro with (p) 4 bars. (M)
It Only Happens Once	Intro with (p) 4 bars. Obligato parts. Solo 8 bars. Coda. (S)

One great item here, "Mop Mop", with AG really going for it in fast tempo. On the other three items however he only has a minor role, most interesting is "... Once" with a good guitar solo almost drowned by heavy piano accompaniment.

VIVIEN GARRY TRIO

Hollywood, May 1946

Wini Beatty (p, vo), Arvin Garrison (g), Vivien Garry (b, vo), Mildred Christy (b, vo)?

Five titles seem to be involved: "Where You At" and "Baby I'm Gone" issued on V Disc. "Got You Gertrude" and "Stuck With A Sticker" are listed as unissued on the same session, but the former appears on AFRS Jubilee No. 203, together with "Prisoner Of Love" (also on No. 297):

Where You At?	Break to solo 32 bars. (FM)
Baby I'm Gone	Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. (SM)
Get You Gertrude	Solo 16 bars. (M)
Prisoner Of Love	Intro 4 bars. Obligato parts. Solo 8 bars. Coda. (S)

Obviously AG must enjoy to play "... At?", because this is the third version, fine as the others. However also "Baby ..." has an excellent guitar solo to be noted. The piano accompaniment is much too strong and heavy though. Postscript of Sept. 28, 2021: "... Gertrude" and "... Love" have appeared, and there are beautiful contributions by AG!

VIVIEN GARRY TRIO

Hollywood, May 1946

Wini Beatty (p, vo), Arvin Garrison (g, vo), Vivien Garry (b, vo), Fred Shields (mc).

AFRS "Magic Carpet" 332 from Club Morocco, three titles:

Perdido / Theme	In ens. (FM)
How High The Moon	In ens. Solo 64 bars. In ens 32 bars. (F)
Rip Van Winkle	In ens. Soli 16 and 16 bars. (M)

"Perdido" is only an 8 bars introduction without soloing. But then comes "... The Moon" with some excellent bebop guitar soloing! Also "... Winkle" has some notable AG.

**LEO WATSON VOCAL WITH
THE VIC DICKENSON QUINTET**

LA. Sept. 7, 1946

Vic Dickenson (tb), Leonard Feather (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Vivien Garry (b), Harold "Doc" West (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Signature, no guitar soli on 101-4 "Sonny Boy" and 104-3 "Jingle Bells" but:

102-1	Tight And Gay	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
103-1	Snake Pit	Solo 32 bars. (F)

Far from bebop this time, great entertainment by the-one-and-only Leo Watson, but room for two quite typical guitar solo, particularly "... Gay" is nice.

RALPH BURNS

LA. Oct. 1946

Bigband personnel including Arvin Garrison (g).

One title "Introspection" was recorded for Mercury, but no guitar solo.

GEORGE HANDY

LA. Oct. 1946

Bigband personnel including Arvin Garrison (g).

One title "The Bloos" was recorded for Mercury, but no guitar solo.

JUBILEE SHOW

Hollywood, Oct. 14, 1946

Sonny White (p), Barney Kessel (g-"Cherokee"), Irving Ashby (g-"I Got Rhythm"), Arvin Garrison (g-"How High The Moon"), Les Paul (g-"Honeysuckle Rose"), Tommy Moultrie (b), Percy Brice (dm), Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman (mc). AFRS Jubilee No. 205, one title:

Medley: How High The Moon	Intro 8 bars to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
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Now this is a rare and original almost eleven minutes of highly memorable guitar playing!! One has put four of the greatest of the west-coast-guitar-players on the same stage and let them play one standard song each. There is certainly an element of competition here, because all seem to give their very best. There is stop and applause after each presentation, and AG is number three in the row. His solo here is the longest to be preserved, and by quality also a must for all of us!!

HOWARD McGHEE

Hollywood, Oct. 18, 1946

Howard McGhee (tp), Teddy Edwards (ts), Dodo Marmarosa (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Bob Kesterson (b), Roy Porter (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Dial:

1041-4	Dial-ated Pupils	Solo 32 bars. (F)
1041-5	Dial-ated Pupils	As above. (F)
1042-4	Midnite At Minton's	Soli 8 and 16 bars. (M)
1043-1	Up In Dodo's Room	Solo 24 bars. (M)
1043-2	Up In Dodo's Room	As above. (M)
1044-2	High Wind In Hollywood	Solo 32 bars. (F)

From the point of volume, this is AG's most important session, soloing at length on all existing six items. Quoting Mosaic's liner notes: "AG, the guitarist married to singer/bassist Vivien Garry, was also an underrated talent who was very much at ease with the bop idiom – he was to die a few years later in a swimming accident – cutting short what would have turned out to be an interesting career". From the point of quality this is also possibly his most important one. "... Pupils" and "High Wind ..." are perhaps a bit too fast to show his best, nevertheless the difference between the takes on the former shows AG's improvisational qualities. This is even more evident in the medium tempo of "... Room", and the highlight "Midnite ..." with an elaborate and highly individual solo. Only too bad we did not get a ballad. Even so sad that this is the actual end of Arvin Garrison's recording career, only twenty four years old. One gets the feeling that he was a great talent that never was properly realized.

EARLE SPENCER /

THE ARVIN GARRISON QUINTET

Hollywood, Oct. 19, 1946

Arvin Garrison, Barney Kessel, Irving Ashby, Tony Rizzi, Gene Sargent (g), Artie Shapiro (b) (large to be a quintet?...) with bigband.

One title was recorded for Black & White:

529	Five Guitars In Flight	Solo 8 bars. Straight chording. (M)
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Quite disappointing, cannot see any purpose with this. Why collect all (almost) the top guitarists at the time and end up with nothing but unison playing and a trumpet solo? Even the brief solo cannot with certainty be attributed to AG.

**RICKEY JORDAN VOCAL /
VIVIEN GARRY TRIO**

Hollywood, Oct. 28, 1946

Wini Beatty (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Vivien Garry (b), Rickey Jordan (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Exclusive:

1077	Blues In The Storm	Obbligato 12 bars to coda. (S)
1078-2	Night And Day	Solo 16 bars. (M)
1079-1	Rickey's Blues	Solo 12 bars. (S)
	Stormy Weather	Obbligato 16 and 8 bars. (S)

This session seems now to have been completed. Two well conceived guitar soli in good sound, a swinging "... Day" and the best of bebop slow blues on "Rickey's ...". Adding some fine background on the remaining two slow items, the total sums up to an important AG session!

same date?

Personnel as above with Teddy Buckner (tp), Les Robinson (as), Lucky Thompson (ts) added.

Two titles were recorded for Exclusive, "A. B. C. Blues" and "Drop Dead", but no AG to be heard.

VIVIEN GARRY TRIO

Hollywood, Nov. 1946

Wini Beatty (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Vivien Garry (b), Gene Norman (mc).

KMPC broadcast "Mild And Mellow", one title:

Mop Mop	Solo 64 bars. (F)
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Another version of "Mop Mop", which has a fine solo, possibly, because the guitar is almost destroyed by strong microphone arrangement amplifying the piano, and the banging piano style of accompanying does not make it better.

EARL SPENCER & HIS ORCHESTRA

1947

Personnel listings from Neyer/Lotz: "AFRS Jubilee" hints at AG be present on AFRS Jubilee No. 238, 239, 257, 288, 289. Ought to be checked.

VIVIEN GARRY TRIO

NYC. May 24, 1947

Teddy Kaye (p, vo), Arvin Garrison (g, vo), Vivien Garry (b, vo), Art Ford (mc).

WNEW broadcast, Art Ford's "Saturday Night Swing Session", five titles:

Just You, Just Me	In ens. Solo 32 bars. In ens. (M)
Lover Man	Obbligato parts. Solo 8 bars (NC). (SM)
The Three Bears	Solo 12 bars. (M)
Indiana	Soli 64 and 12 bars to coda. (F)
Jingle Bells	Soli 16, 4 and 12 bars. (FM)

Possibly some disappointment can be felt, because the trio should have got more out of this occasion. The expected highlight "Lover ..." has a promising guitar solo suddenly cut short, to be resumed later in the piano solo. Titles like "... Bears" and "... Bells", although the latter is a blues with a good chorus, do not emphasize the jazz image. When this is said, there is some excellent guitar playing on "Just You ..." and "Indiana" (a small 'hole' in the latter).

same date

As above with Roy Ross (accordeon), Phil Kraus (dm), Babs Gonzales (vo) added. One title:

Blues In B Flat	Obbligato parts. Solo 24 bars. (M)
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Some good guitar blues, but almost drowned, as many times before, by overactive piano comping.

same date

As above with Kai Winding (tb), Charlie Ventura (ts), Lionel Hampton (vib) added. One title, "Flying Home", seven minutes, but no (g) to be heard. What a shame!

ARV GARRISON TRIO

1948

El Myers (p, vo), Arvin Garrison (g, vo), Vivien Garry (b, vo).

Two titles, private recordings:

Baby, I'm Gone	Solo 16 bars. (M)
Walk It Off	Solo 16 bars. Straight 16 bars. (M)

Reluctantly this is the time to admit that I am not a fan of the Vivien Garry trios (or under other names as here). It is a mediocre mixture of popular music, boring vocals, jazz elements, hardhitting piano players, untidy structures, and the fact that the leader was something strange as a woman. In the middle of all this we get an excellent guitar player in the modern, bebop tradition, trying to say something. What is of interesting jazz is made by AG, as here, although "... Off" is almost killed.

ARV GARRISON TRIO **1948**

El Myers (p, vo), Arvin Garrison (g, vo), Vivien Garry (b, vo).
Four titles were recorded for Metro:

You Can Do It If You Try	Solo 16 bars. (M)
Spring Is Saying Hello	Solo 4 bars. (S)
Right Me If I'm Wrong	Soli 16 and 4 bars. (M)
New Love	Solo 12 bars. (S)

After the comments above, which I simply had to write, it is heart warming to note that these four items are quite pleasant. The sound quality is as mediocre as you can expect, but there is some nice male vocal here, and AG takes very nice soli on all, two medium, two slow, "... Hello" even so slow that 4 bars seems like a positive eternity. Keep on looking for more Arv Garrison performances!!

No further recording sessions.

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