

**The**  
**TRUMPET**  
**of**  
**BOOKER LITTLE**

Solographer: Jan Evensmo  
Last update: Feb. 11, 2020

Born: Memphis, April 2, 1938  
Died: NYC. Oct. 5, 1961

*Introduction:*

You may not believe this, but the vintage Oslo Jazz Circle, firmly founded on the swinging thirties, was very interested in the modern trends represented by Eric Dolphy and through him, was introduced to the magnificent trumpet playing by the young Booker Little. Even those sceptical in the beginning gave in and agreed that here was something very special.

*History:*

Born into a musical family and played clarinet for a few months before taking up the trumpet at the age of 12; he took part in jam sessions with Phineas Newborn while still in his teens. Graduated from Manassas High School. While attending the Chicago Conservatory (1956-58) he played with Johnny Griffin and Walter Perkins's group MJT+3; he then played with Max Roach (June 1958 to February 1959), worked as a freelancer in New York with, among others, Mal Waldron, and from February 1960 worked again with Roach. With Eric Dolphy he took part in the recording of John Coltrane's album "Africa Brass" (1961) and led a quintet at the Five Spot in New York in July 1961. Booker Little's playing was characterized by an open, gentle tone, a breathy attack on individual notes, and a subtle vibrato. His soli had the brisk tempi, wide range, and clean lines of hard bop, but he also enlarged his musical vocabulary by making sophisticated use of dissonance, which, especially in his collaborations with Dolphy, brought his playing close to free jazz. Died of complications resulting from uremia (ref. New Grove Dictionary of Jazz & Wikipedia).

## BOOKER LITTLE SOLOGRAPHY

### MAX ROACH PLUS FOUR

**Chi. June 3, 1958**

Booker Little (tp), George Coleman (ts), Eddie Baker (p), Bob Cranshaw (b), Max Roach (dm).

Five titles were recorded for EmArcy, issued as "On The Chicago Scene" (BL not present on 16987/JB328 "Stompin' At The Savoy"):

16982	Shirley (mono)	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm/ts). (F)
JB323	Shirley (stereo)	As above. (F)
16983	Memo: To Maurice (mono)	In ens. Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 6 and 6 bars. (FM)
JB324	Memo: To Maurice (stereo)	In ens. Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 6 and 4 bars. (FM)
JB325	Stella By The Starlight	In ens. (S). Solo 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm/ts). In ens. (FM)
JB326	Sporty	In ens. Solo 64 bars. (FM)
16986	My Old Flame (mono)	Intro to solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)
JB327	My Old Flame (stereo)	As above. (S)

It is quite incredible, but this magnificent trumpeter has just left teen age! There is a maturity in Booker Little's playing that indicates long experience, and yet he has just begun a musical career which was very successful but ended so tragically early. With Max Roach as the strong leader and very active background, BL exploits the different tempi in his own very personal way, and to me he is the first and only one that challenged the style of the legendary Clifford Brown and created something completely new on the instrument. Everything here represents something new and exciting, trumpet phrases you have never heard before, played with a youthful inspiration! Therefore it is unfair to single out particular highlights, but you could easily start by how he swings the uptempo blues on "... Maurice" and conclude with the magnificent ballad playing on "... Flame", solemn combined with fireworks!

### MAX ROACH PLUS FOUR

**Newport, RI., July 6, 1958**

Booker Little (tp), George Coleman (ts), Ray Draper (tu), Art Davis (b), Max Roach (dm).

Five titles were recorded at the Newport Jazz Festival and "Love ..." at an unknown studio in the summer of 1958:

JB342	Love For Sale	Solo 4 choruses of 64 bars. Soli 8 and 8 bars. In ens. (F)
JB343	La Villa	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 8 and 8 bars. (F)
JB344	A Night in Tunisia	In ens. Solo 64 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. Long coda. (FM)
JB345	Deeds Not Words	In ens. Solo 12 bars. In ens. (S)
JB346	Minor Mode	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
JB347	Tune-Up	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (F)

The cooperation between BL and Max Roach continues with an original group, pianoless and including tuba, but functioning very good. BL seems to thrive, and although the tempi here are mainly very high, as on "La Villa", "Tune-Up" and "... Sale" in particular, they represents no problem. In fact, he uses his technique effectively on the only slow item, "... Words". Again, everything is highly memorable, but one just has to try "... Tunisia", and how he chooses to implement this famous vehicle. Note also "Minor ...", a complicated and fast blues theme written by BL himself, and executed with great intensity. And back to extreme tempo; listen to "... Sale" and how he manages to put his incredible and numerous runs into a music whole, as his my modest opinion.

**MAX ROACH QUINTET****NYC. Sept. 4, 1958**

Personnel as July 6.

Six titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "Deeds Not Words":

You Stepped Out Of A Dream	In ensemble. (SM) Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Filide	Solo 32 bars. (M)
It's You Or No One	Straight 38 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 48 bars 4/4 with (dm/ts) to straight. (F)
Jodie's Cha-cha	In ens. Solo 64 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm/ts). (F)
Deeds, Not Words	In ens. Solo 12 bars to ens 10 bars. (S)
Larry-Larue	In ens. Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. (FM)

Another great session! Should one be critical, it is possible to feel that BL is so fond of his technique that he is overplaying it, presenting endless extreme fast runs, and also seems to enjoy too long even lines without breakups. "... No One" can be used as an example. Nevertheless, he seems to get away with it; there is an hypnotic beauty in his music. "Deeds ..." is a highlight with its slow tempo and transparent trumpet solo, and "Larry ..." should be noted for being a BL composition. Don't miss anything here, and particularly not "Filide" in a rare medium tempo.

**MAX ROACH QUINTET****Hollywood, Ca., Oct. 6, 1958**

Personnel as July 6.

Note that recording date may be earlier than broadcast date given above.

KABC TV Show "Stars Of Jazz", three titles:

4:04	Minor Mode Blues	In ens. Solo 24 bars. (FM)
3:53	The Scene Is Clean	In ens. Soli 16 and 4 bars. (FM)
3:16	Love For Sale	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (F)

Tailored for an audience and TV, these items are rather brief, thus soli likewise. What we get is anyway the same exciting quality. BL's "Minor ..." is familiar but only two choruses, and "Love ..." features a split chorus only between trumpet and tenorsax but what a performance! And even Clifford couldn't do "... Clean" more exciting!

**BOOKER LITTLE 4 & MAX ROACH****NYC. Oct. 1958**

Booker Little (tp), George Coleman (ts-except "Sweet ...", "Moonlight ..."), Tommy Flanagan (p), Art Davis (b), Max Roach (dm).

Six titles were recorded for United Artists/Blue Note:

Milestones	In ens. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
Sweet And Lovely	Intro to solo 64 bars. Solo 8 bars to very long coda. (SM)
Rounder's Mood	Solo 2 choruses of 40 bars. (FM)
Dungeon Waltz	Solo 64 bars. (M)
Jewel's Tempo	Solo 3 choruses of 30 bars. 2 choruses 4/4 with (b/dm). (FM)
Moonlight Becomes You	Soli 36 and 16 bars to very long coda. (S)

BL and Max Roach continues to cooperate, but for probably contractual reasons BL assumes the leadership, and also the tuba has been replaced by a very competent pianist. The drummer takes a lower profile than usual, and BL contributes with three originals, items 3-5. There is enough brilliant uptempo playing if you go for that, but the session is unforgettable because of the slower items. Magnificent BL on both, but if I had to choose, "Moonlight ..." becomes my favourite; it is one of the most beautiful trumpet soli from this period of modern jazz!!

**MAX ROACH QUINTET****NYC. Jan. 22, 1959**

Booker Little (tp, arr-466), Julian Priester (tb), George Coleman (ts), Art Davis (b), Max Roach (dm, tymp-465).

Seven titles were recorded for Mercury:

JB454-9	Lepa	In ens. (F)
JB455-7	Connie's Bounce	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
JB463-5	Prelude	In ens. (SM)
JB464-11	Bemsha Swing	Soli 32 and 8 bars. (FM)
JB465-5	Tympanalli	Solo 40 bars. (FM)
JB466-4	There's No You	In ens. Solo 18 bars to ens. (SM)
JB467-7	A Little Sweet	Solo 24 bars. (FM)

There is not so much trumpet here as one might like. "Lepa" and "Prelude" are interesting compositions but not much of improvisation. The other items have quite brief soli compared to what has been usual, but of course of excellent quality as always. Playing the emotional and yet cool "... No You", I cannot but marvel over music that seems well above the mentality or capability of a young man of only at the age of twenty, where did he get it from?

**BILL HENDERSON**

**Chi. Oct. 27, 1959**

Booker Little (tp), Bernard McKinney (tb, euph), Yusef Lateef (ts), Wynton Kelly (p), Paul Chambers (b), Jimmy Cobb (dm), Benny Golson (arr), Bill Henderson (vo).

Six titles were recorded for Vee Jay, only one has BL:

59-1313	This Little Girl Of Mine	In ens. Solo 12 bars. (FM)
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One blues chorus for each soloist, and BL's is excellent, just so original as one of the greatest jazz trumpeters could make it.

**MAX ROACH QUINTET**

**NYC. Nov. 25, 1959**

Personnel as Sept. 4, 1958.

Seven titles were recorded for Time, issued as "Award-Winning Drummer":

Milano	Straight with ens. (S)
Tuba De Nod	Straight with ens. (FM)
Variations On The Scene	Soli 64, 4 and 4 bars. (M)
Pies Of Quincy	Straight with ens. (M)
Old Folks	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars (FM) to long coda. (S)
Sadiga	Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
Gandolfo's Bounce	Soli 72, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)

Back to Max's tuba group but also for a final session. BL is prominent on four items only but uses his opportunities well. The highlight is "Old Folks", a feature number for trumpet and a magnificent performance, one to digest and remember! "Sadiga" is a strong piece of blues, and also "... The Scn" and "... Bounce" have great trumpet playing.

**SLIDE HAMPTON OCTET**

**NYC. late 1959**

Freddie Hubbard, Booker Little, Burt Collins (tp), Slide Hampton (tb, tu), Bernard McKinney (tb, barhm), George Coleman (ts), Jay Cameron (bar), George Tucker (b), Kenny Dennis, Pete La Rocca (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Strand, only one has BL:

Newport	Solo with orch 86 bars. (M)
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A very serious piece of music, written by Slide himself, almost like a suite with soli enclosed. BL gets his only solo opportunity here and executes it professionally. No attempt to let BL and Freddie Hubbard challenge each other, unfortunately.

**YOUNG MEN FROM MEMPHIS**

**NYC. late 1959**

Booker Little, Louis Smith (tp), Frank Strozier (as), George Coleman (ts), Phineas Newborn (p), Calvin Newborn (g), George Joyner (b), Charles Crosby (dm).

Date also given as Feb. 1960.

Two titles were recorded for United Artists, issued as "Down Home Reunion":

Things Ain't What They UTB	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
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## Blue 'N Boogie

Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (F)

The “Young Men” blow the blues! Two elegant trumpet choruses in a pleasant tempo, for once, on “Things ...”, while BL shows his technique again in up tempo on “... Boogie”. A very fine and exciting session, and note another fine trumpeter here, Louis Smith!

**FRANK STROZIER****NYC. Dec. 9, 1959**

Booker Little (tp), Frank Strozier (as), Wynton Kelly (p), Paul Chambers (b), Jimmy Cobb (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Vee Jay:

60-1453	W. K. Blues	Solo 36 bars. (M)
60-1454-4	A Starling's Theme	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
60-1454-6	A Starling's Theme	As above. (FM)
	Runnin'	Part of intro 4 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Part of coda 4 bars. (F)
	Lucka Duce	Solo 24 bars. (S)
	Lucka Duce alt.	As above. (S)
	Tibbit	Solo 84 bars. (SM)
tk2	Just In Time	Soli 32, 4 and 4 bars. (M)
tk3	Just In Time	Solo 32 bars. (M)

**NYC. Feb. 3, 1960**

Same. Four titles:

60-1455-3	I Don't Know	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (M)
60-1455-6	I Don't Know	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 4 bars. (M)
60-1456-1	Waltz Of The Demons	Solo 32 bars. (M)
60-1456-3	Waltz Of The Demons	Solo 48 bars. (M)
60-1457-4	Runnin'	As above. (F)
60-1457-7	Runnin'	As above. (F)
60-1458-3	Off Shore	Solo 64 bars. (M)
60-1458-5	Off Shore	As above. (M)

BL manages very well without the great drummer, and this is a magnificent quintet led by a fine alto sax player deserving his own solography someday. Everything is highly enjoyable here, “Blue Note quality” if you see what I mean, and BL is in top shape. Except for the ultra fast “Runnin’ where you get get as much of his running technique as you wish, there is much medium tempo here, and he is seemingly more relaxed here than on earlier sessions. Note his blues playing on “W. K. ...” and “... Know”, and his own composition “... The Demons” in 6/8 time, and all the other items! The presence of alternate takes makes the session even more interesting, take “... Duce” as an example, two slow blues choruses, and the two trumpet soli are very different, showing BL’s improvisational qualities more clearly than ever before.

**THE SOUL OF PERCUSSION****NYC. Spring 1960**

Booker Little, Marcus Belgrave, Donald Byrd (tp), Mal Waldron (p), Addison Farmer (b), Ed Shaughnessy (dm), Armando Peraza (cga).

Three titles were recorded for Warwick, no BL on “Call To Arms” but:

Chasin' The Bird	In ens. Solo 32 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> (tp)-solo). (tp)-duet/trio 48+8 bars, (dm) on last bridge. (F)
Wee Tina	Solo 1:00. (FM)

**NYC. Spring 1960**

Booker Little, Don Ellis (tp), Curtis Fuller (tb), Teddy Charles (vib), Mal Waldron (p), Addison Farmer (b), Ed Shaughnessy, Philly Joe Jones (dm), Willie Rodriguez (cga).

Three titles, no BL on “Construction Crew” but:

Witch Fire	Solo with (cga) 58 bars. (M)
November Afternoon	In ens. Solo 40 bars. (FM)

I had forgotten how exciting these sessions were, having not listen to them for forty years. BL is in top shape, as always, and particularly exciting is the wistful “Witch ...” which is almost a duet with Rodriguez, and particularly the tricky “Wee Tina”, great!

**BOOKER LITTLE QUARTET** **NYC. April 13, 1960**  
Booker Little (tp), Tommy Flanagan (p), Scott LaFaro (b), Roy Haynes (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Time:

Opening Statement	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 40 bars. Solo/straight 2 choruses to coda. (FM)
Minor Sweet	Free introduction 1:00. (S) to solo 4:20. (F) to coda. (S)
The Grand Valse	Solo/straight 3:00 and 0:30. (SM)
Who Can I Turn To?	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)

**NYC. April 15, 1960**  
Same except Wynton Kelly (p) replaces Flanagan. Two titles,

Bee Tee’s Minor Plea	Straight 2 to solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 2 choruses. (M)
Life’s A Little Blue	Straight 1 to solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. Straight 1 chorus. (M)

After all the praising words stated before, this is one of BL’s most important sessions. A fantastic group with legendary LaFaro on bass giving monumental support. Here BL is in full command of the repertoire, and except for “Who Can ...”, all titles are his own compositions. I dare a quote from Richard Williams’ liner notes on the reissue: “What you’ll hear from his trumpet is a virtuoso technique and a tremendous harmonic subtlety allied to an unforgettably vivid imagination. He’s shown here to be one of the greatest trumpet soloists in all of jazz, his characteristic smoothness of delivery never vitiating the essential adventurateness of his approach”. Convinced? Everything here is jazz trumpet history. Note that for once the tempi in general are quite modest, and listen to the solemn, majestic “Who Can ...” and his almost straight playing, letting the tone tell everything. If you absolutely need a particular highlight, you will be immensely thrilled by his medium blues of “... Minor Plea”.

**TEDDY CHARLES’**  
**NEW DIRECTIONS QUARTET** **NYC. Aug. 25, 1960**  
Booker Little (tp), Booker Ervin (ts), Teddy Charles (vib), Mal Waldron (p), Addison Farmer (b), Ed Shaughnessy (dm).  
Five titles were recorded live for Warwick at Museum of Modern Art (other titles without BL), issued as “Jazz In The Garden” and “Sounds Of Inner City”:

Souchie	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Cycles	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (M)
Blues De Tambour	In ens. Solo 60 bars. (M)
The Confined Few	In ens. Solo 96 bars. (M)
Stardust	Solo 4 bars. In ens (mute). (S)

Possibly “new directions” are somewhat exaggerated, but this is an interesting session typical of 1960 with good soli by all. The highlights are the long and sophisticated solo on “... Few”, and “... Tambour” in  $\frac{3}{4}$  time which is not really a blues after all, BL blows exciting on both.

**MAX ROACH ENSEMBLE** **NYC. Aug. 31, 1960**  
Booker Little (tp), Julian Priester (tb), Walter Benton, Coleman Hawkins (ts), Jimmy Schenk (b), Max Roach (dm), Abbey Lincoln (vo).  
Two titles were recorded for Candid, no BL on “Driva’ Man” but:

Freedom Day	0:44. (F)
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**NYC. Sept. 6, 1960**

Same except Hawkins omitted, Michael Olatunji (cga), Raymond Matillo, Thomas Duvail (perc) added. Two titles, no BL on "All Africa" but:

Tears For Johannesburg 2:20. (M)

Strong introductions by Abbey Lincoln, on "Tears ..." followed by BL in close cooperation with tenorsax, later soloing, while "... Day" is more like an ordinary solo performance.

**JAZZ ARTISTS GUILD****NYC. Nov. 1, 1960**

Booker Little (tp), Julian Priester (tb), Walter Benton (ts), Peck Morrison (b), Max Roach, Jo Jones (dm).

One titles was recorded for Candid:

Cliff Walk 1:32. (F)

Almost ten minutes of defiant protest music, typical of its time, and BL is an important contributor.

**ERIC DOLPHY****Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Dec. 21, 1960**

Booker Little (tp), Eric Dolphy (fl, as, bcl), Jaki Byard (p), Ron Carter (b), Roy Haynes (dm).

Five titles were recorded for New Jazz / Prestige ("It's Magic", "Left Alone" and "Tenderly" are without BL), issued as "Far Cry!":

2772	Ode To Charlie Parker	Duet with (fl). (S). Solo 40 bars. (SM)
2773	Mrs Parker of K. C.	Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
2775	Serene	Solo 24 bars. (S)
2776	Miss Ann	Solo 56 bars. 40 bars 2/2 with (as). (F)
2777	Far Cry	Duet with (as). Solo 48 bars. (FM)

Here starts the very fruitful cooperation between BL and Eric Dolphy. Quoting Michael Cuscuna's liner notes: The team of Eric Dolphy and Booker Little during its brief existence was one of the most creative and important pairings in the history of jazz". Since the latter is the leader, BL is featured only on five of the eight titles recorded, but he certainly puts his personal mark on the session. "Ode ..." is a beautiful piece of close cooperation with ED's flute in command, and so is "Serene", this time with ED's bassclarinet. The remainders are in upper tempi, all having great trumpet; my favourite is the solid blues choruses on "... K. C.". And, don't forget the rapid chase on "Miss Ann", impressive!

**ABBIEY LINCOLN****NYC. Feb. 22, 1961**

Booker Little (tp), Julian Priester (tb), Eric Dolphy (pic, fl, as, bcl), Walter Benton, Coleman Hawkins (ts), Mal Waldron (p, arr), Art Davis (b), Max Roach (dm), Roger Sanders, Robert Whitley (cga), Abbey Lincoln (vo).

Seven titles were recorded for Candid, three have BL:

Straight Ahead	In ens. Obbligato 6 bars. (S)
When Malindy Sings	In ens. Obbligato 4 bars to solo 32 bars. (SM)
Blue Monk	Obbligato 24 bars (mute). (S)

A disturbing session not easy to forget. Quote Alice Childress' liner note: "Abbey Lincoln is an artist who faithfully records sorrow and creatively celebrates joy through music. She sings life". So much happens here, but limiting ourselves to the BL-context; his presence is felt overall, but the highlight is an emotional and strong solo on "... Malindy ...", amazing how such a young man can go so deep down. Note also the rare occasion of a muted BL although faintly recorded behind the vocal.

**BOOKER LITTLE & HIS SEXTET****NYC. March 17, 1961**

Booker Little (tp), Julian Priester (tb), Eric Dolphy (fl, cl, as), Don Friedman (p), Art Davis (b), Max Roach (dm, tym, vib).

Three titles were recorded for Candid, issued as "Out Front":

We Speak	In ens. Solo. (S/M)
Quiet Please	In ens. Solo. (S/M)
Quiet Please alt.	As above. (S/M)
A New Day	In ens. Solo. (S/M)



**NYC. April 4, 1961**

Same except Ron Carter (b) replaces Davis. Four titles:.

Strength And Sanity	In ens. Solo. (S)
Strength And Sanity alt.	As above. (S)
Moods In Free Time	In ens. Solo. (S/M)
Man Of Words	In ens. Solo. (S)
Hazy Hues	In ens. Solo. (S/M)
Hazy Hues alt.	As above. (S/M)

BL is now definitely exploring new frontiers. Quoting Nat Hentoff's liner notes: "There is no aura of experimentation-for-its-own-sake in this collection. The music is immediately assimilable and is characterized by the stories it tells rather than by technical bravura or self-conscious academism. "My own feelings", Booker says, "about the direction in which jazz should go are that there should be much less stress on technical exhibitionism and much more on emotional content, on what might be termed humanity in music and the freedom to say all that you want to". Well, freedom to do what? There are tight and emotional arrangements here, and BL's trumpet carries it all, but to me the music gets rather boring and monotonous, so to enjoy, one item at a time is optimal.

**JOHN COLTRANE ORCHESTRA Englewood Cliffs, NJ. May 23, 1961**

Bigband personnel including Booker Little (tp).

Four titles were recorded for Impulse, no BL on "Greensleeves" (two versions), "Song Of The Underground Railroad", "The Damned Don't Cry" and "Africa", but no BL.

**JOHN COLTRANE ORCHESTRA Englewood Cliffs, NJ. June 7, 1961**

Bigband personnel including Booker Little (tp).

Two titles were recorded for Impulse, "Africa" (two versions) and "Blues Minor", but no BL.

**ERIC DOLPHY / BOOKER LITTLE QUINTET NYC. July 16, 1961**

Booker Little (tp), Eric Dolphy (fl, cl, as), Mal Waldron (p), Richard Davis (b), Ed Blackwell (dm).

Nine titles were recorded live at "Five Spot Café", no BL present on 3148 "God Bless The Child" but:

3147	Status Seeking	Acc. (as). Solo with (dm) 1:55. (F)
3149	Agression	Duet with (bcl) 1:10. Solo 3:20. 8/8 chase with (dm/bcl) 1:05. Coda with (bcl) 1:16. (F)
3150	Like Someone In Love	Duet with (fl). (S). Solo 4:25. (SM) Duet with (fl). (S)
3151	Fire Waltz	In ens with (as). Solo 4:05. (FM)
3152	Bee Vamp	In ens with (bcl). Solo 3:05. (FM)
3152-alt.	Bee Vamp	In ens with (bcl). Solo 2:02. (F)
3153	The Prophet	In ens with (as). (S). Solo 4:15. (SM)
3154	Number Eight	In ens with (as). Solo 1:35. (FM)
3155	Booker's Waltz	Duet with (bcl). Solo 2:45. 4/4 with (dm/bcl) 1:10. (M)

I haven't listened to this live session for many years, since I collected Dolphy, and it is a unique affair because it is BL's only one with a live audience. Thus I was surprised to note that BL absolutely not is in his usual shape here. Quite often he seems hesitating on what to do, leaving substantial holes in his soli. He is really no match for Dolphy. Of course there are strong sections with flashing trumpet, like in "Fire ..." and "Booker's ...", and in "Aggression" he even offers some quite unique growls, but in general he seems to have an off day. Even on the only slow item here, "... Someone ...", he surprises by playing far below his usual standard; maybe he doesn't know the tune properly. Did I step on somebody's toes now?

**MAX ROACH NYC. Aug. 1, 3, 8, 9, 1961**

Collective personnel: Booker Little (tp), Julian Priester (tb), Eric Dolphy (fl, as, bcl), Clifford Jordan (ts), Mal Waldron (p), Art Davis (b), Max Roach (dm), Carlos Valdes, Carlos Eugenio (latin), Abbey Lincoln (vo- "... Ghost", "Mendacity").

Six titles were recorded for Impulse, issued as “Percussion Bitter Sweet”, no BL on “Man From South Africa” but:

Garvey’s Ghost	Solo 1:55. (M)
Mendacity	Intro with ens. (S)
Mama	Solo 0:55. (F)
Tender Warriors	Solo 1:15. (M)
Praise For A Martyr	Intro. (S). Solo 1:15. (FM)

Max Roach and BL are moving into uncharted territories, being quite a distance from their initial cooperation three years ago. Those of us who have grown up in the old tradition may find this music strange and difficult, but BL has chosen his road, and it is our duty to follow, perhaps most easily on “... Warriors”. And the end of the road is coming closer ...

### **BOOKER LITTLE**

**NYC. Aug./Sept. 1961**

Booker Little (tp), Julian Priester (tb), George Coleman (ts), Don Friedman (p), Reggie Workman (b), Pete La Rocca (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Bethlehem, issued as “Booker Little And Friend”:

Victory And Sorrow	In ens. Solo 1:50. (FM)
Forward Flight	In ens. Solo 1:55. (FM)
Looking Ahead	In ens. Solo 1:40. (F)
Looking Ahead alt. 1	In ens. Solo 0:53. (F)
Looking Ahead alt. 2	In ens. Solo 1:40. (F)
If I Should Lose You	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
Calling Softly	In ens. Solo 1:15. (M)
Booker Blues	In ens. Solo 2:45. (FM)
Matilde	In ens. Solo 0:50. (S)

The final session before BL’s untimely death. The arrangements follow the same tight tp/tb/reed pattern as on the “Out Front” session, and you may be more or less fond of them. Here however they lead up to ‘normal’ solo sequences, and BL delivers his last breath with memorable soli on all items. On upper tempi, the “... Blues”, which is not a proper blues, and “... Softly” are the most memorable. As should be, however, is his goodbye through his solo on “Matilde” and particularly his five minutes magnificent very slow solo feature “... Lose You”. I wrote it before, and I repeat it; Booker Little was the last who contributed something really new to jazz trumpet. And he did not even reach the age of 24, while Clifford Brown got two more years to become legendary. Imagine the two of them jamming together ...

No further recording sessions.

...ooo...