

The
TRUMPET
of
CHARLES JAMES SHAVERS
“CHARLIE”

Solographer: Jan Evensmo
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Born: NYC. Aug. 3, 1917
Died: NYC. July 8, 1971

Introduction:

Maybe I should not say this, but Oslo Jazz Circle back then could not stand Charlie Shavers! His peculiar sense of humour and also perceived corny improvisations in many sessions of the middle forties made him a target for ridicule rather than appreciation. We don't have to discuss this here and now, because in his early period 1937-42 presented here, he plays beautifully, mostly with his mute.

Early history:

Father was a trumpet player; Charlie was a distant relative of trumpeter Fats Navarro. Began playing piano and banjo, then switched to trumpet. Played occasionally with pianist Willie Gant in New York; first work away from New York was with Frankie Fairfax band in Philadelphia (1935). Returned to New York and joined Tiny Bradshaw, then with Lucky Millinder from early 1937. In November 1937 joined John Kirby at the Onyx Club (replacing Frankie Newton). He soon became the sextet's principal arranger and composed 'Undecided', 'Pastel Blue', etc., whilst with the group. He finally left John Kirby in 1944 (ref. John Chilton).

CHARLIE SHAVERS SOLOGRAPHY

LUCKY MILLINDER / MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND

NYC. Feb. 11, 1937

Lucky Millinder (dir), Charlie Shavers, Harry Edison, Carl Warwick (tp), Sandy Watson, Wilbur DeParis (tb), Tab Smith (as), Eddie Williams, Ronald Haynes, Harold Arnold (cl, ts), Billy Kyle (p), Danny Barker (g), John Williams (b), Lester Nichols (dm, vib).

Four titles were recorded for Variety/Vocalion, two have trumpet soli:

M-1-2	Blue Rhythm Fantasy	Probably solo 14 bars (open). (M)
M-3-2	Rhythm Jam	Unlikely solo 16 bars (open) and coda. (FM)

There seem to be two different trumpeters involved here, and the last eight bars of "... Fantasy" makes me believe this must be Charlie Shavers and thus his first solo on record. "... Jam" seems more like Harry Edison to me. Your comments will be welcomed.

BILLY KYLE & HIS SWING CLUB BAND

NYC. March 18, 1937

Charlie Shavers (tp), Eddie Williams (cl), Tab Smith (as), Harold Arnold (ts), Billy Kyle (p), Danny Barker (g), John Williams (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), The Palmer Brothers (vo-group-278).

Four titles were recorded for Variety, no CS on 278-1 "Sundays Are Reserved" but:

M-279-1	Havin' A Ball	Solo/straight (open) with ens 16+8 bars, ens on bridge. Solo 8 bars. (FM)
M-280-2	Big Boy Blue	Solo 16 bars (open). (FM)
M-281-1	Margie	Break. Solo 28 bars (open). Break. In ens 8 bars to coda. (F)
M-281-2	Margie	As above. (F)

Our first real encounter with the young, not yet twenty years old, and upcoming Charlie Shavers. If his future works always had been of this hot quality, much pleasure would have been poured upon us. This is swing trumpet of high class! He seems to prefer open horn here, later in this early period, mute takes more and more over. The hard attack on "... Blue" and particularly the brief solo on "... Ball" is typical of CS, and his melodic constructions are excellent. Note also his improvisational capabilities in uptempo "Margie". Very promising session!

LUCKY MILLINDER / MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND

NYC. April 28, 1937

Personnel as Feb. 11, except Alfred Cobbs (tb), Ben Williams (cl, ts) replace Wilson and Haynes. Chuck Richards (vo-430).

Four titles, three issued, all have trumpet soli:

M-429-1	The Lucky Swing	Possibly solo 16 bars (open). (FM)
M-430-1	Please Pity My Heart	Possibly solo 4 bars (open). (SM)
M-431-1	Let's Get Together	Probably solo 16 bars (open). (FM)

NYC. July 1, 1937

Same. Unknown female (vo-546).

Four titles, three have trumpet soli:

M-545-1	Jammin' For The Jack-Pot	Unlikely solo 16 bars (open). (FM)
M-546-1	The Image Of You	Possibly solo 3 bars and straight 8 bars (mute). (M)
M-547-1	When Irish Eyes Are Smiling	Possibly solo 30 bars (mute). Unlikely solo 14 bars (open). (FM)

Identification is not easy on MBRB sessions, even if we have Harry Edison with Count Basie and later CS as references. Most likely CS takes the staccato solo on "... Together", while HE is on the open horn on "... Irish Eyes ...", possibly also on "... Jack-Pot", but what about the rest?

BILLY KYLE & HIS SWING CLUB BAND

NYC. July 23, 1937

Charlie Shavers (tp), Tab Smith (sop, as), Ronald Haynes (ts), Billy Kyle (p), Danny Barker (g), John Williams (b), Fran Marx (dm), Leon LaFell (vo-

Four titles were recorded for Variety:

M-569-1	Can I Forget You?	Solo 8 bars (open). (SM)
M-570-1	All You Want To Do Is Dance	Solo 12 bars (open). (FM)
M-571-1	Handle My Heart With Care	Solo/straight 16+8 bars (open), (p) on bridge. Solo 8 bars (mute). (FM)
M-572-1	Girl Of My Dreams	Soli 4, 8 and 4 bars (open). (FM)

On these early recordings CS plays with taste, feeling and great competence. Take "Can I ..." as the best example on open horn and "... Care" on mute.

MAXINE SULLIVAN VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. Oct. 22, 1937
Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Babe Russin (ts), Claude Thornhill (p), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, three have CS:

21936-1	Easy To Love	Obbligato 8 bars (mute). (SM)
21938-1	Darling Nellie Grey	Solo 4 bars (mute). (SM)
21939-1	Nice Work If You Can Get It	Solo 16 bars (mute). (SM)

A few nice but not very significant CS contributions here. Peculiar last 8 on "... Get It".

MIDGE WILLIAMS NYC. Nov. 23, 1937
Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Pete Brown (as), Billy Kyle (p), James McLin (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Midge Williams (vo).
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

349-3	Singin' The Blues	Solo 8 bars. Obbligato parts (mute). (M)
683-1	Mama's Gone, Goodbye	Solo 16 bars (mute). (M)
684-1	Goodnight, Angel	Solo 16 bars (mute). (SM)
685-1	The Greatest Mistake Of My Life	Solo 8 bars (mute). (M)

CS's trumpet playing in this early period is very nice, particularly with mute! His tight, concentrated approach and excellent technique give good results, and he seems to be a promising creative musician with excellent potential. All items here contain first class relaxed soloing in a pleasant swinging context.

JIMMIE NOONE & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Dec. 1, 1937
Charlie Shavers (tp), Jimmie Noone (cl), Pete Brown (as), Frank Smith (p), Teddy Bunn (g), Wellman Braud (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm, vo-62830,33,35-37), Teddy Simmons (vo-62834).
Eight titles were recorded for Decca, no CS on 62837-A "Japansy" but:

62830-A	Sweet Lorraine	Obbligato parts. Solo 8 bars (mute). In ens. (SM)
62831-A	I Know That You Know	In ens. (F)
62832-A	Bump It	In ens. Solo 12 bars (open). (SM)
62833-A	Four Or Five Times	Solo 16 bars (mute). (M)
62834-A	Hell In My Heart	Obbligato parts (mute). In ens. (SM)
62835-B	Call Me Darling	In ens. (M)
62836-A	I'm Walking This Town	In ens. (F)

Compared to the Dodds session below, this one is quite disappointing. Quite a lot of the music is close to corny, and with mostly ensemble playing, clarinet and vocal, there are few opportunities for stretching out into real soloing. CS is most successful on "... Times".

JOHNNY DODDS & HIS CHICAGO BOYS NYC. Jan. 21, 1938
Charlie Shavers (tp), Johnny Dodds (cl), Lil Armstrong (p), Teddy Bunn (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm, wbd-63189, vo-63192-94).
Six titles were recorded for Decca:

63189-A	Wild Man Blues	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars (mute). With (cl). (M)
63190-A	Melancholy	Solo 32 bars (mute). With (cl). (FM)

- 63191-A 29th And Dearborn Intro 4 bars. Solo 24 bars (mute).
With (cl). (SM)
- 63192-A Blues Galore With (cl). (M)
- 63193-A Stack O'Lee Blues With (cl). (SM)
- 63194-A Shake Your Can Soli 32 and 8 bars. (M)

This is a magnificent session in many ways, where everything seems to work out perfect, note the copleying with Dodds on all items. Limiting the comments further to CS, it is fair to say that this is his real breakthrough and one of his very best prewar sessions. He swings four items with masterly muted touch on four items, and finishes with a magnificent open horn on "... Your Can". Great trumpet playing!

MAXINE SULLIVAN VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. Feb. 4, 1938
Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Claude Thornhill (p), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have CS:

- 22368-1 It's Wonderful Soli 6 and 6 bars (mute). (S)
- 22369-1 Dark Eyes Solo 8 bars (mute). (SM)

These two items have CS at his very sensitive and beautiful best!

BUSTER BAILEY & HIS RHYTHM BUSTERS NYC. Feb. 18, 1938
Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Pete Brown (as), Billy Kyle (p), James McLin (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (vo)
Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

- 758-1 Planter's Punch Solo with ens 16 bars (mute). (F)
- 759-1 Sloe Jam Fizz Solo 8 bars (mute). (M)

Strong and impressive soli here!

MIDGE WILLIAMS & HER JAZZ JESTERS NYC. Feb. 18, 1938
Personnel as Nov. 23, 1937.
Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

- 760-1 I'm In A Happy Frame Of Mind Solo 16 bars. Break (mute). (M)
- 761-1 Love Is Like Whisky Obbligato 12 bars (mute). (S)

Following up the good impression from the previous Jesters' session, "... Mind" has a very fine trumpet solo.

JOHN KIRBY SEXTET March 24, 1938
Personnel same/similar to later. Leo Watson (vo).
Broadcast, Bill Savory collection, one title:

- Honysuckle Rose Solo 8 bars (mute). (FM)

If the date is correct, this is the first Kirby session under his own name. Fine trumpet solo.

BILLIE HOLIDAY & HER ORCHESTRA NYC. May 11, 1938
Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Babe Russin (ts), Claude Thornhill (p), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Billie Holiday (vo).
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have CS:

- 22923-1 If I Were You As below. (M)
- 22923-2 If I Were You Soli 4 and 4 bars (mute). (M)
- 22924-1 Forget If You Can As below. (SM)
- 22924-2 Forget If You Can Solo 8 bars (mute). (SM)

A beautiful session where even Teddy Wilson is not missed. Not much opportunity for CS though, although he has some nice contributions. There are clearly differences between the takes.

TRIXIE SMITH NYC. May 26, 1938
Charlie Shavers (tp), Sidney Bechet (cl, sop), Sam Price (p), Teddy Bunn (g), Richard Fullbright (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Trixie Smith (vo).
Eight titles were recorded for Decca, seven issued:

63866-A	Freight Train Blues	Obbligato parts (mute). (SM)
63867-A	Trixie Blues	Obbligato parts (mute). (SM)
63868-A	My Daddy Rocks Me Pt 1	Intro with (cl) 8 bars (mute). Obbligato parts. (SM)
63869-A	My Daddy Rocks Me Pt 2	As above. (SM)
63870-A	He May Be Your Man	Obbligato parts (mute). Duet with (cl) 16 bars. (SM)
63871-A	Jack, I'm Mellow	Duet with (cl) 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge. Obbligato parts (mute). In ens. (FM)
63877-A	My Unusual Man	Obbligato parts (open). (FM)

Fine blues session with the great Sidney Bechet guaranteeing quality, but not particularly interesting for CS, he is mainly heard faintly in the background, for him the highlight is definitely "... Mellow".

GRANT & WILSON

NYC. May 26, 1938

Personnel as Trixie Smith above, with Leola Wilson, Wesley Wilson replacing Smith.

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

63873-A	Uncle Joe	Obbligato parts (mute). Solo 8 bars (mute). Solo 16+8 bars (cl) on bridge, to coda. (FM)
63874-A	I Am A Woman	Obbligato parts (open). (SM)
63875-A	Toot It, Brother Armstrong	Obbligato parts (open). Solo 16 bars with (cl) acc. (SM)
63876-A	Blue Monday On Sugar Hill	Obbligato parts (open). Solo 22 bars (open). (FM)

Hard day's work, Trixie and G & W! These items are more interesting from a swinging point of view as well as CS. Excellent trumpet soloing with mute on "... Joe" and also good open horn on "Toot ..." and "... Sugar Hill".

MIDGE WILLIAMS & HER JAZZ JESTERS

NYC. June 10, 1938

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Billy Kyle (p), Danny Barker (g), Johnny Williams (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Midge Williams (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, three have CS:

23054-2	Don't Wake Up My Heart	Solo 8 bars (mute). (SM)
23056-1	In Any Language	Solo 16 bars (open). (M)
23057-1	Rosie The Redskin	Solo 8 bars (mute). (FM)

Three ambitious soli but "In Any ..." is rather noisy and "... Heart" is not quite successful, best is the nice muted solo on "... Redskin".

BILLIE HOLIDAY & HER ORCHESTRA

NYC. June 23, 1938

Personnel as May 11 except Ben Webster (ts) replaces Russin.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

23151-1	Having Myself A Time	Obbligato 8 bars (mute). (SM)
23151-2	Having Myself A Time	As above. (SM)
23152-1	Says My Heart	Obbligato parts (mute). Solo 8 bars (mute). (M)
23152-2	Says My Heart	As above. (M)
23153-1	I Wish I Had You	As below. (SM)
23153-2	I Wish I Had You	Obbligato parts (mute). Solo 8 bars (mute). (SM)
23154-1	I'm Gonna Lock My Heart	Solo 8 bars (mute). (M)
23154-2	I'm Gonna Lock My Heart	As above. (M)

A fine follow-up session to that of May 11. CS is heard with his muted trumpet on all four items. Brief but elaborate, personal and beautiful soli with the necessary variations from take to take, as particularly evident on "... My Heart".

TINY MAYBERRY VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. July 20, 1938

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Lil Armstrong (p), Wellman Braud (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Decca:

64325-A	I Got A Feeling For You	Obligato parts. Solo 8 bars. (SM)
64326-A	Someday Someday	Obligato 12 bars. (SM)
64327-A	Oh That Nasty Man	Obligato parts. (SM)
64327-C	Oh That Nasty Man	Obligato parts. (SM)
64328-A	Mailman Blues	Obligato 12 and 12 bars. (S)
64329-A	Mayberry Blues	Obligato parts. (S)
64330-B	Evil Hearted Woman	Obligato 12 bars. (S)

Better session than expected! CS takes a beautiful solo on "... Feeling ..." and contributes with fine background playing on all items, particularly "Evilhearted ..." and "Mailman ..." should be enjoyed. Note that the sequence of accompaniment on the two takes of "... Nasty Man" is different.

JACK SNEED VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. Sept. 9, 1938

Charlie Shavers (tp), Billy Kyle (p), unknown (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

64608-A	The Numbers Man	Duet with (vo). (FM)
64609-A	Sly Mongoose	Duet with (vo). (FM)
64610-A	West Indian Blues	Duet with (vo). (M)
64611-A	Big Joe Louis	Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. Solo 8 bars. Obligato 32 bars. (M)

Nice session this one! I have chosen to write 'duet' instead of obligato, because Sneed and CS are working more or less continuously and close together on these items, and there is a lot of fine, all-mute trumpet to be heard overall.

BEA FOOTE VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. Sept. 13, 1938

Charlie Shavers (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), possibly Buster Bailey (cl), (p), (g), (b), (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three issued:

64658	Try And Get It	Solo 8 bars (mute). (M)
64659	Jive Lover	Obligato parts. (S)
64661-A	I Want A Long Time Daddy	Intro. Obligato parts. (SM)

A nice brief solo on "... Get It".

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS NYC. Oct. 28, 1938

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Billy Kyle (p, arr), John Kirby (b, dir), O'Neil Spencer (dm, vo-64710).

Five titles were recorded for Decca:

64708-A	Rehearsin' For A Nervous Breakdown	Solo 16 bars (open). (F)
64709-A	From A Flat To C	Solo 14 bars (open). (FM)
64710-A	Pastel Blue	Soli/straight 16 and 8 bars (mute). (S)
64711-A	Undecided	Soli 14 and 8 bars (mute). (FM)
64712-A	By The Waters Of Minnetonka	In ens. (F)

I have to admit it right away: I find the enthusiasm for John Kirby's small groups quite incredible: The arrangements are in general utterly corny and pretentious close to parodic, even from the very first session, and probably the whole concept is to 'liberate oneself from that terrible jazz'. There are good soli to be found, but mostly they are brief, never a full chorus. The highlight here is the trumpet playing on "Pastel ..." with such a resemblance to Frankie Newton that it is obviously not a coincidence, he must have been CS's teacher. Note also the first eight bars of "Undecided", CS's own composition.

SWING SESSION**NYC. Dec. 28, 1938**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Vernon Brown (tb), Dave Matthews (as), Herschel Evans (ts), Howard Smith (p), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib, p-“Chinatown ...”, vo-“Blues”).
Five titles, Bill Savory collection Vol. 1, no CS on “Chinatown, My Chinatown” and “Stardust” but:

7:00	Dinah	With ens 32 bars. Soli 32 and 8 bars. (F)
9:50	Blues	With ens 12 bars. Solo 24 bars. (S)
4:05	Rosetta	With ens 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)

A great jam session, one of the treasures of the Savory collection, earlier treated in the Herschel Evans solography. The strong rhythm session pushes the soloists forcefully ahead, and CS obviously enjoys himself immensely taking up the challenges on “Dinah”. Then comes a simple and pretty slow “Blues”. Finally the CS highlight, “Rosetta”, this is gorgeous! He leads the introductory ensemble with great strength and inspiration, and when his solo opportunity appears, he demonstrates that he, at this point in his career, obviously was one of the greatest swing trumpeter talents. All open horn here.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 9, 1939**

Personnel as above.

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

23935-1	It Feels Good	Solo with ens 16 bars (mute). (FM)
23936-1	Effervescent Blues	Solo 10 bars (open). (SM)
23937-1	The Turf	Solo with ens 16 bars (open). (M)
23938-1	Dawn On The Desert	Solo with ens 8 bars (mute). (SM)

Not particularly exciting trumpet contributions here, most interesting is the aborted blues chorus on “... Blues”.

SWING SESSION **NYC. Jan. 11, 1939**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Jack Teagarden (tb), Kenneth Hollon (ts), Bill Miller (p), Teddy Bunn (g), Johnny Williams (b), unknown (dm), Leo Watson (vo-“... Creepers”), Johnny Mercer (vo-“... Creepers”, “Blues”).

Bill Savory collection, broadcast, four titles, two issued as “Jack Teagarden Jam”:

Honeysuckle Rose	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (M)
Jeepers Creepers	Solo 32 bars. (M)
China Boy	In ens. Solo 32 bars. In ens. (FM)
Blues	Obbligato 24 bars (vo-JM). Solo 12 bars. Solo with ens 12 bars. (S)

Only two weeks gone and then another great jam session treasure from the Bill Savory collection! CS is one of the most active and important contributors and shows all aspects of his personality, from straight forward swing in medium tempo to strong emotional blues playing in “Blues”.

MILDRED BAILEY & HER ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 18, 1939**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Billy Kyle (p), John Kirby (b), O’Neil Spencer (dm), Red Norvo (xyl), Mildred Bailey (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, but no trumpet soli.

BILLIE HOLIDAY & HER ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 20, 1939**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Tyree Glenn (tb), Chu Berry (ts), Sonny White (p), Al Casey (g), John Williams (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Billie Holiday (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion, one has CS:

23992-1	That’s All I Ask Of You	Weak obbligato parts. (SM)
23992-2	That’s All I Ask Of You	As above. (SM)

MILDRED BAILEY & HER ORCHESTRA **NYC. Feb. 28, 1939**

Same. Five titles were recorded for Vocalion, one has trumpet:

24179-1	‘Tain’t What You Do	Obbligato parts (open). (M)
24179-2	‘Tain’t What You Do	As above. (M)

**LEATHER MCGRAW VOCAL ACC. BY
SAM PRICE’S FLY CATS**

NYC. March 24, 1939

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Sam Price (p), possible Wellman Braud (b), possibly O'Neil Spencer (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Decca:

65267-A Do Your Duty Obligato parts. (SM)
65268-A Low Down Dirty Groundhog Obligato parts. (S)

The accompaniment is mostly collective and well in the background, and the session has slight interest with regard to CS.

CHARLIE BARNET & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. April 5, 1939

Bigband personnel including Bobby Burnet, Charlie Shavers and others (tp). Six titles were recorded for Bluebird, but all trumpet soli probably by Burnet.

**BLUE LU BARKER ACC. BY
DANNY BARKER's FLY CATS**

NYC. April 20, 1939

Charlie Shavers (tp), Chu Berry (ts), Sam Price (p), Danny Barker (g), unknown (b), (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three issued:

65433-A Scat Skunk Solo 8 bars (mute). (S)
65434-A Nix On Those Lush Heads Obligato parts. (SM)
65436-A Georgia Grind Obligato parts. (SM)

Only "... Skunk" is interesting for CS, a nice muted solo here.

MILDRED BAILEY & HER ORCHESTRA NYC. April 24, 1939

Same. Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, one has trumpet:

24430-A And The Angels Sing Solo/straight 16 bars (mute). (SM)

TEDDY GRACE VOCAL ACC. BY

NYC. May 16, 1939

Charlie Shavers (tp), Billy Kyle (p), Dave Barbour (g), Delmar Kaplan (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).

Note that the discos are in error on Teddy Grace; only Buster Bailey (cl) on May 9 and only trombone on May 23.

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

65585-A Gulf Coast Blues Obligato. Solo 12 bars. (S)
65586-A Oh Daddy Blues Obligato. Solo 16 bars. (SM)
65587-A You Don't Know My Mind Obligato. Solo 12 bars. (SM)
65588-A Low Down Blues Obligato. Solo 12 bars. (SM)

One of the nicest CS sessions around this time! Grace is one of the best vocalists around, and our man seems to be highly inspired, both on his muted background parts as well soloing. No particular highlight, play them all!

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. May 19, 1939

Personnel as Oct. 28, 1938.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

24677-A Anitra's Dance Straight ens. (FM)
24678-A Sweet Georgia Brown As below. (F)
24678-B Sweet Georgia Brown Solo 32 bars (mute). (F)
24679-A Drink To Me Only With Thine Eyes Solo 16 bars (open). (FM)
24680-A Minute Waltz Solo with ens 14 bars (open). (F)

"Sweet ..." shows CS's capabilities better than most; as a swinger, an improviser and with excellent technique. These soli are excellent, pure fireworks, and the two takes are immensely different, -B's opening closer to the melody! Dig these!! "... Dance" and "Minute ..." though are attempts to recreate the classics, ouch!

**ROSETTA HOWARD VOCAL ACC. BY
THE HARLEM BLUES SERENADERS**

NYC. June 8, 1939

Personnel is conventionally given as 'probably' for the following: Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Lil Armstrong (p), Ulysses Livingston (g), Wellman Braud (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm). Most probably right.

Five titles were recorded for Decca:

65756-A Come Easy Go Easy Intro 4 bars (mute).

- Obbligato 12 bars (mute). (S)
- 65757-A My Blues Is Like Whisky Obbligato 12 bars (mute).
Solo 12 bars (open). (SM)
- 65758-A The Jive Is Here Obbligato 12, 12 and 12 bars (open). (M)
- 65759-A My Downfall Obbligato 12 bars (open).
Solo 12 bars (open). (SM)
- 65760-A Hog-Wild Blues Obbligato 12 and 12 bars (open). (M)

Much good trumpet playing on this session, which has good sound, so that the details of the trumpet playing are easily heard. All items have interesting qualities. There can be no doubt that this is CS.

MILDRED BAILEY & HER ORCHESTRA **NYC. June 14, 1939**

Same except Cozy Cole (dm) replaces Spencer.
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have trumpet:

- 24763-A It Seems Like Old Times Solo 16 bars (mute). (M)
- 24766-A I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)

NYC. June 27, 1939

Same except O'Neil Spencer (dm) replaces Cole.
Four titles, one has trumpet:

- 24822-A You're The Moment In My Life Solo 16 bars (mute). (M)

After several Mildred Bailey sessions with meagre trumpet contributions, these final ones have three very good muted soli!

BILLIE HOLIDAY & HER ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 5, 1939**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Tab Smith (sop, as), Kenneth Hollon, Stanley Payne (ts), Sonny White (p), Bernard Addison (g), John Williams (b), Eddie Dougherty (dm), Billie Holiday (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, three have CS:

- 24877-A Some Other Spring Intro 4 bars (mute). (S)
- 24879-A Them There Eyes Very faint obbligato parts (mute).
Solo 16 bars (mute). (M)
- 24880-A Swing, Brother, Swing With ens (mute).
Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)

An almost Newtonesque trumpet intro introduces this delightful session. Note also the two swinging medium soli, particularly "... Swing".

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 28, 1939**

Personnel as before.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, three issued:

- 24945-A Front And Center Solo 16+6 bars (mute), (as) on bridge. (F)
- 24946-A Royal Garden Blues In ens. Solo 8 bars (mute).
Solo 12 bars (open). (F)
- 24946-B Royal Garden Blues As above. (F)
- 24947-A Opus 5 Solo 16 bars (mute). (F)

There is gold when one least expects it, the brief muted solo on "Opus 5" is exactly the tight and intense construction that we are looking for! Interesting soloing also on the other two items.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Aug. 10, 1939**

Personnel as above.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

- 24995-A Impromptu In ens. (F)
- 24996-A Blue Skies Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)
- 24997-A Rose Room Solo 32 bars (mute). (FM)
- 24998-A I May Be Wrong Solo 8 bars (mute). (FM)

If the guys had known that this was the day of my birth, they would probably have made something more to my taste! Well, I am a little unfair now, because

CS takes very fine muted soli here, all among his very best, my particular favourite is closely chosen to be "... Wrong".

ALBERTA HUNTER VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. Aug. 15, 1939

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Lil Armstrong (p), Wellman Braud (b).
Six titles were recorded for Decca:

66104-A	Chirpin' The Blues	Intro 4 bars (mute). Obligato 12 bars (mute). Solo 12 bars (mute). (S)
66105-A	Downhearted Blues	Obligato 12 bars (mute). (S)
66106-A	I'll See You Go	Intro 8 bars (mute). Obligato 12 bars (mute). (S)
66107-A	Fine And Mellow	Obligato 24 and 24 bars (mute). (S)
66108-A	Yelping Blues	Obligato 12 bars (mute). Solo 12 bars (mute). (SM)
66109-A	Someday Sweetheart	Solo 16 bars (mute). (M)

It seems that CS now really has learned how to take care of the blues singers! He is all muted here and plays par excellence behind Hunter on all items except the swinging "... Sweetheart". Possibly many jazz enthusiasts are not used to this kind of music, but take your time and you will find much beauty.

BLUE LU BARKER VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. Aug. 30, 1939

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Lil Armstrong (p), Ulysses Livingston (g), Wellman Braud (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Decca:

66245-A	You Ain't Had No Blues	Intro 4 bars (mute). Obligato 12 bars. (SM)
66246-A	Marked Woman	Solo 12 bars (mute). (S)
66247-A	Midnight Blues	Intro 4 bars (open). Solo 12 bars (open). (S)
66248-A	Down In The Dumps	Obligato 20 and 8 bars (open). (S)

A very pleasant session, and here CS is very well recorded also behind the vocal, showing very fine trumpet playing on all items.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA Chi. Oct. 12, 1939

Personnel as before.
Five titles were recorded for Vocalion:

2781-A	Little Brown Jug	Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)
2782-A	Nocturne	Straight (open). (S)
2783-A	One Alone	Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)
2784-A	Humoresque	In ens. (FM)
2785-A	Serenade	In ens. (FM)

Particularly "One Alone" has a good trumpet solo.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA LA. Feb. 26, 1940

Personnel as before.
Four titles were recorded for Okeh, one issued:

2161-B	Jumpin' In The Pump Room	Solo with ens 16 bars (mute). (FM)
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JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. April 22, 1940

Personnel as before.
Four titles were recorded for Okeh:

26757-A	Jumpin' In The Pump Room	Solo with ens 16 bars. (F)
26758-A	Milumbu	Solo with ens 8 bars. (FM)
26759-A	You Go Your Way	Solo/straight with ens 16 and 6 bars. (SM)
26760-A	20 th Century Closet	Solo 16 bars. (F)

For a sort of trumpet highlight here, try "... Closet".

**MAXINE SULLIVAN VOCAL ACC. BY
JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA****NYC. May 1, 1940**

Personnel as before. Two titles were recorded for Columbia:

26788-C	St. Louis Blues	Obbligato parts (mute). (SM)
26789-B	The Hour Of Parting	Obbligato 6 bars (open). (S)

Two nice muted contributions.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. May 27, 1940**

Personnel as before.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion/Okeh:

26854	Temptation	Straight 8 bars (mute). (SM)
26855-A	Blues Petite	Solo/straight 10, 12 and 10 bars (mute). (SM)
26856-A	On A Little Street In Singapore	Straight/ens (mute). (SM)
26857-A	Chloe	Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)

With "...Petite" we get one of the nicest Kirby items ever with CS playing an important and very attractive role, dig this. Otherwise a good solo on "Chloe".

BUSTER BAILEY & HIS SEXTET**NYC. May 1940**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Billy Kyle (p), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Varsity, no CS on 1761-1 "April In Paris" but:

1759-1	Should I?	Solo 8 bars (mute). (FM)
1760-1	The Blue Room	Solo 16 bars (open). (M)
1762-1	Am I Blue?	Straight 16 bars. Solo 8 bars (open). (SM)

No surprisingly this sounds like a Kirby session with an emphasis on clarinet. CS is brief but very good with mute on "... I?" and for once open horn on "... Room" and "... Blue?". Note the solo on the latter, so typical of CS' art!

BUSTER BAILEY & HIS SEXTET**NYC. June 1940**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Benny Carter (as), Billy Kyle (p), John Kirby (b), Zutty Singleton (dm), Judy Ellington (vo-1841,42).

Four titles were recorded for Varsity, no CS soli on 1841-1 "Seems Like A Month Of Sundays" and 1843-1 "Pinetop's Boogie Woogie" but:

1842-1	Fable Of A Rose	Solo 2 bars (mute). (SM)
1844-1	Eccentric Rag	Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)

Good solo on "... Rag".

JOHN KIRBY SEXTET**June 2, 1940**

Personnel as before.

Broadcast, Bill Savory collection, three titles:

Effervescent Blues	Solo with ens 10 bars. (M)
Echoes Of Harlem	Soli/straight 30, 8 and 16 bars to coda. (SM)
Milumbu	Solo with ens 16 bars. (M)

June 23, 1940

Same. One title:

Front And Center	Solo with ens 16 bars. (F)
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These items are now issued, but quite likely there are more. Although the sound is very good, there are some announcing by Kirby himself that is distracting. CS's contributions are generally very good, try "... Harlem" and "Milumbu" for a start.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. July 9, 1940**

Same. Eight titles were recorded for Okeh/Columbia, six have CS:

26997-A	Audiology	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
26998-A	Can't We Be Friends?	Solo 16+8 bars, (as) on bridge. (FM)
26999-A	Then I'll Be Happy	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

28000-A I Love You Truly Solo 16 bars. (FM)
 28003-A Coquette Solo 32 bars. (F)
 28004-A Zooming At The Zombie Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Noteworthy muted trumpet contributions here. Note as examples the intense but soft playing on “Coquette” and “... Zoombie”!

JOHN KIRBY SEXTET **July 14, 1940**

Personnel as before.
 Broadcast, Bill Savory collection, one title:

Boogie Woogie In ens. (M)

July 28, 1940

Same. Two titles:

From A Flat To C Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Rehearsin' For A Nervous Breakdown Solo 28 bars. (F)

MAXINE SULLIVAN VOCAL ACC. BY JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Aug. 1, 1940**

Personnel as before. Four titles were recorded for Columbia, but no CS.

JOHN KIRBY SEXTET **Aug. 4, 1940**

Personnel as before.
 Broadcast, Bill Savory collection, two titles:

Blues Petite As May 27. (SM)

Minnie The Moocher's Wedding Day Solo 18 bars. (FM)

Nice to hear a broadcast version of “... Petite”, one of the most pleasant Kirby titles with excellent CS. Fine solo also on “... Wedding Day”.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. prob. Autumn 1940**

Same. Lang-Worth Transcriptions. Large number of titles, not available.

EDDIE SOUTH / GINNY SIMMS **NYC. Dec. 17, 1940**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Eddie South (vln), David Martin (p), Eddie Gibbs (g), Doles Dickens (b), Specs Powell (dm), Ginny Simms (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, one has CS:

29254-1 You Danced With Dynamite Solo 16 bars (mute). (M)

Fine and typical muted solo here.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 15, 1941**

Same. Four titles were recorded for Columbia, two have CS:

29509 Beethoven Riffs On Solo 16 bars. (F)

29511-1 Cuttin' The Campus Solo 8 bars. (M)

Particularly the first title has great muted trumpet, Beethoven should have heard it!!

UNA MAE CARLISLE VOCAL ACC. BY **NYC. May 1, 1941**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Billy Kyle (p), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Bluebird, three have CS:

63837-1 I See A Million People Solo 6 bars. (SM)

63839-1 You Mean So Much To Me Solo 16 bars. (SM)

63840-1 The Boogie Woogie Piggy Obbligato 6 bars. (M)

With the addition of Una Mae, the Kirby recordings get more life, more swing, more fun. CS plays very good on “... To Me”!

JOHN KIRBY & HIS SEXTET **NYC. May 19, 1941**

Charlie Shavers (tp, arr), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Billy Kyle (p, arr), John Kirby (b, arr), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Lou Singer (arr).

Seventeen titles were recorded for Associated Transcriptions, CS can be heard in ensembles everywhere, but the following titles have soli or other particularly interesting parts, all with muted trumpet:

Little Brown Jug	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
Mr Haydn Gets Hep	Solo 8 bars. (F)
Tweed Me Down	Solo 16+6 bars, (cl) on bridge. (FM)
Temptation	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
Rehearsin' For A Nervous Breakdown	Straight. (F)
Echoes Of Harlem	Soli/straight 30, 8 and 16 bars to very long coda. (SM)
Then I'll Be Happy	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Chloe	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
Fantasy In Blue	Straight 14 and 8 bars. (S)
Original Dixieland One-Step	Solo 14 bars. (F)
Minute Waltz	Solo 14 bars. (F)

The most important item is "Echoes ...", otherwise "... Happy" has a very good solo.

**MAXINE SULLIVAN VOCAL ACC. BY
JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA**

NYC. June 17, 1941

Personnel as before. Four titles were recorded for Decca, three have trumpet:

69369-A	Just Like A Gypsy	Straight 8 bars (open). (SM)
69370	My Blue Heaven	Solo 8 bars (mute). (SM)
69371	St. Louis Blues	Straight obbligato parts. (SM)

Of no particular interest.

UNA MAE CARLISLE

NYC. July 22, 1941

Personnel as May 1.

Four titles were recorded for Bluebird, two have CS:

66879-1	Can't Help Loving Dat Man	Straight 6 bars. (SM)
66880-1	It Ain't Like That	Solo 8 bars. (FM)

A sparkling muted solo on "... That", CS at his best!

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. July 25, 1941

Same. Four titles were recorded for Victor, three have CS:

66896-1	Bugler's Dilemma	Straight. In ens (mute). (F)
66897-1	It's Only A Paper Moon	Solo 16 bars. (M)
66898-1	Fifi's Rhapsody	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Very fine soli on "... Paper Moon" and particularly "... Rhapsody", and even if "... Dilemma" is fast and furious and not improvised, it is worth a try, original piece.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. prob. Summer 1941

Same. World Transcriptions. Large number of titles, several not available but:

It Feels So Good	Solo with ens 32 bars. (F)
Echoes Of Harlem	Solo/straight 30 bars (mute). Solo 8 bars (open). Solo/straight 16 bars to coda. (S)
Blue Fantasy	Soli/straight 16 and 8 bars. (S)
Whirlaway	In ens. (FM)
Arabian Nightmare	In ens. (F)
Rose Room	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Reharsin' For A Nervous Breakdown	In ens. (F)

Royal Garden Blues	In ens. Solo 8 bars. (F)
Original Dixieland One-Step	In ens. Solo 16 bars. (F)
Charlie's Prelude	Straight 32 and 16 bars. (M)
Beethoven Riffs On	Solo 16 bars. Breaks. (F)
Bounce Of The Sugar Plum Fairy	In ens. (F)
Rustle Of Spring	Solo 16 bars. (F)
Peanut Vendor Boogie	In ens. (FM)

Several noteworthy trumpet soli here, mostly muted. For plain blowing, particularly "Rose Room" should be given a fair chance. For creating a beautiful atmosphere in slow tempo, "Echoes ..." and "... Fantasy" are musts. Note also the utterly soft "... So Good".

SIDNEY BECHET**NYC. Sept. 13, 1941**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Sidney Bechet (cl, sop), Willie "The Lion" Smith (p), Everett Barksdale (g), Wellman Braud (b), Manzie Johnson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

67791-1	I'm Coming, Virginia	In ens. Soli 8 and 24 bars. FM)
67791-2	I'm Coming, Virginia	As above. (FM)
67792-1	Limehouse Blues	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (F)
67793-1	Georgia Cabin	Solo/straight 16 bars. (SM)
67793-2	Georgia Cabin	As above. (SM)
67794-1	Texas Moaner	In ens. Solo 12 bars. (SM)
67794-2	Texas Moaner	As above. (SM)

A pleasant and loosely swinging session with CS in very good shape with his open horn. Apart from fine coplaying with the great Sidney Bechet, his soloing is all over excellent. Particularly "... Virginia" should be noted, and also "... Moaner", note by the way a small fluff in the beginning of take 1.

JOHN KIRBY & HIS SEXTET**NYC. Sept. 26, 1941**

Charlie Shavers (tp, arr), Buster Bailey (cl), Russell Procope (as), Billy Kyle (p, arr), John Kirby (b, arr), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Lou Singer (arr).

Seventeen titles were recorded for Associated Transcriptions, CS can be heard in ensembles everywhere, but the following titles have soli or other particularly interesting parts, all with muted trumpet:

Cutting The Campus	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Rhumba In The Dark	Straight. (M)
Lolly Gagging	Intro. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
Move Over	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Flamingo	Soli 6 and 6 bars. (SM)
Fifi's Rhapsody	Solo 16 bars. (F)
Charlie's Prelude	Straight. (M)
Begin The Beguine	Straight. (FM)
Can't Help Lovin' That Man	Solo 6 bars. (SM)
Bugler's Dilemma	Straight. Solo 24 bars. (F)
Double Talk	Straight. (FM)
Down On The Diminent	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Wondering Where	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
Blues Petite	Soli 10, 24 and 10 bars. (SM)

The by far most interesting is "Blues ...", this CS at his very best. Also "Fifi's ..." and "Down ..." should be noted.

UNA MAE CARLISLE**NYC. Oct. 3, 1941**

Personnel as May 1 except Specs Powell (dm) replaces Spencer.

Four titles were recorded for Bluebird, one has trumpet:

67964-2 Coffee And Cakes Solo 14 bars. (SM)

Another delightful muted solo!

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Oct. 7, 1941

Same except Specs Powell (dm) replaces Spencer.
Four titles were recorded for Victor, three have CS:

67978-1 Tweed Me Soli 16 and 4 bars (mute). (FM)

67979-1 Move Over Solo 8 bars (mute). (FM)

67980-1 Wondering Where Solo 14 bars (mute). (M)

Three of the better Kirby sides with very good contributions by CS.

SIDNEY BECHET NYC. Oct. 24, 1941

Personnel as Sept. 13 except Sid Catlett (dm) replaces Johnson.

Five titles were recorded for Victor:

68112-1 12th Street Rag In ens. Solo with ens 32 bars. (F)

68112-2 12th Street Rag As above. (F)

68113-1 Mood Indigo Soli with ens 16 and 16 bars
to coda. (S)

68113-2 Mood Indigo As above. (S)

68114-1 Rose Room Duet 32 bars to break.
Duet 16 bars to coda. (M)

68115-1 Lady Be Good In ens. Solo 10 bars. In ens. (FM)

68115-2 Lady Be Good As above. (FM)

68116-1 What Is This Thing Called Love? Solo 32 bars. In ens. (SM)

68116-2 What Is This Thing Called Love? As above. (SM)

A fine follow up to the Sept. 13 session! CS and Bechet work together as hand-in-glove, and also this time the trumpet is all open. The highlight is “--- Love?”, two quite different versions, both beautifully played, better CS cannot be found!!

JOHN KIRBY & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Feb. 11, 1942

Same. Four titles were recorded for Victor:

71900-1 Keep Smilin’ Straight. (SM)

71901-1 Comin’ Back Solo 18 bars (mute). (FM)

71902-1 No Blues At All Solo 16 bars (mute). (F)

71903-1 St. Louis Blues Solo 24 bars (mute). (FM)

71903-2 St. Louis Blues As above. (FM)

Good solo on “... Back”, circus on “... At All”, finally one of the few two-take example, two magnificent versions of “St. Louis ...”!! These show that CS at his best was one of the really great swing trumpeters, and he certainly could improvise; there are noteworthy differences between the two versions, take 2 slightly slower than take 1.

UNA MAE CARLISLE NYC. Feb. 13, 1942

Personnel as May 1, 1941.

Four titles were recorded for Bluebird, two have trumpet:

71908-1 Don’t Fetch It Solo 14 bars. (FM)

71909-1 So Long Shorty Solo 16 bars. (M)

Two typical trumpet soli here, best is “... Shorty”.

The Charlie Shavers solography stops here, for no particular reason.

Late history:

He finally left John Kirby in 1944, doubling with Raymond Scott at C.B.S. during his last year. In February 1945 he first joined Tommy Dorsey – for the next 11 years he left and rejoined the band many times. Occasionally with John Kirby early in 1946. In 1950 he co-led a sextet with drummer Louis Bellson and vibes-player Terry Gibbs, then several stints with Norman Granz's 'Jazz at the Philharmonic' tours including trips to Europe. Worked with Benny Goodman for several months from July 1954. During the 1960s regularly led own quartet including residencies at The Embers, The Metropole, etc., also did regular tours with Sam Donahue (then fronting 'The Tommy Dorsey Orchestra'), visited Europe with this unit in 1964. From 1965 was extensively featured with the Frank Sinatra jnr. touring show including tours to Japan, Vietnam, Hong Kong, Canada, and South America. Continued to do a wide variety of recording work. In late 1969 toured Europe as a soloist – appearing in Britain October and November 1969. He was also an accomplished pianist, but never played in public. Toured Europe in 1970.

...ooo...