

**The**  
**TENORSAX**  
**of**  
**LEON BERRY**  
**“CHU”**

Solographer: Jan Evensmo  
Last update: May 30, 2018, Nov. 24, 2021, June 11, July 27, 2023, Jan. 5, 2024

Born: Wheeling, West Virginia, Sept. 13, 1910  
 Died: Conneaut, Ohio, Oct. 30, 1941

### *Introduction:*

Oslo Jazz Circle may be said to have developed upon the grave of Chu Berry!! From the very beginning he was identified as the most swinging tenor sax player of them all, the center of swing which all jazz revolved around. To be a member of the club, you had to answer correctly to a questionnaire related to his music, no amateurs were allowed to join this very serious association!! Great plans were made to commemorate him, including a statue, first of normal height to be located on a small island in the Molde fiord for the benefit of visitors to the Molde Jazz Festival, but later the vision was upgraded to the size of the Statue of Liberty in New York, with Chu blowing to warn ships in distress when the fog was coming. However, the ideas were not consistent with the new airport in Molde, a large statue would be a danger to air safety. So the plans were buried. For good? Who knows? Chu still deserves a statue, to me he is greater than ever!!!

A Chu Berry solography was published in my Jazz Solography Series as Vol. 1 way back in the 1970s. Most of the comments have been left unchanged, but lots of additional material has been discovered since then!

### *History:*

Came from a musical family, his brother, Nelson, is a tenor sax player. Took up sax after hearing Coleman Hawkins playing on a Fletcher Henderson summer tour. Played alto sax at high school, and later, during his three years at West Virginia State College, played alto and tenor with Perry Smith and with Fleming Huff in Ohio. Was offered a career as a professional footballer, but decided on music. Whilst with Edwards' Collegians in Bluefield, West Virginia, was sent for by Sammy Stewart. Travelled to join the band in Columbus, Ohio (1929). At the time of his joining he sported a goatee beard and moustache, lead alto Billy Stewart began calling him "Chu-Chin-Chow", this was later shortened to "Chu". (In the late 1930s a photograph was published showing "Chu" wearing a sweater clearly marked "Chew" - it is impossible to ascertain whether Leon or the knitter decided on this change of spelling). Chu travelled to New York with the Sammy Stewart Band for their Savoy Ballroom residency (February-April 1930), he left the band later that year at the Arcadia Ballroom. During the early 1930s worked short spells with several bandleaders including: Cecil Scott, Otto Hardwick (at the Hot Feet Club), Kaiser Marshall, Walter Pichon, and Earl Jackson's Band at the Lennox Club. With Benny Carter in summer of 1932, and again in 1933, also with Charlie Johnson late 1932 to early 1933. Joined Teddy Hill's Band and remained until late 1935. Became a regular member of Fletcher Henderson's Band in late 1935, but had previously worked for Henderson on broadcasts and other dates from the spring of 1934. With Cab Calloway in July 1937. Remained with Calloway until the time of his death (other than absence for a tonsillectomy in June 1939). After playing a one-nighter with Cab in Brookfield, Ohio, Chu, Andy Brown and Lammar Wright set out by car for the next night's venue in Toronto, Ontario. Near Conneaut, Ohio, the car skidded on the road and hit a concrete bridge. Brown and Wright were only slightly hurt, but Chu received severe head injuries. He died four days later without regaining consciousness. The Cab Calloway Band flew to Wheeling to be present at his funeral.

### *Message:*

Somebody once told me that an acetate with Chu Berry and Ken Kersey existed. I have forgot who and when! Please identify yourself!!

I have also noted a Cab Calloway broadcast, Chicago, Hotel Sherman, June 16, 1941. Can anybody help with this one?

One more thing: The Chu Berry solography now contains 337 items. Of these 2/3 were issued properly at the time of recording. Of the remaining 1/3, half is unissued studio material, half is broadcast material. See the need for jazz archaeology!?

Postscript of Nov. 2014: 7 more items have appeared!

## LEON "CHU" BERRY SOLOGRAPHY

**BENNY CARTER AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. June 23, 1932**

Louis Bacon, Frankie Newton, unknown (tp), Dickie Wells (tb), Wayman Carver (fl, as), Benny Carter (cl, as), Chu Berry (ts), unknown (not Teddy Wilson) (p), unknown (g), Dick Fullbright (b), Sid Catlett (dm), unknown female (vo).

One title known to be recorded for Crown:

1765-1 Tell All Your Daydreams To Me No solo.

**BENNY CARTER AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 5, 1932**

Personnel probably as June 23, 1932 + unknown (tb) and (ts).

Three titles were recorded for Victor, rejected, but a test pressing of one of these items said to exist. If you know anything about this, please let me know!

73772-2 Hot Toddy

73773-2 Jazz Cocktail

73774-2 Black Jazz

**BENNY CARTER AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. March 14, 1933**

Shad Collins, Leonard Davis, Bill Dillard (tp), Wilbur de Paris, George Washington (tb), Benny Carter (tp, cl, as, vo), Howard Johnson (as), Chu Berry (ts), Rod Rodriguez (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Ernest Hill (b), Sid Catlett (dm, vib).

Four titles were recorded, three have CB:

265090-2 Swing It Solo 8 bars. (F)

265091-3 Synthetic Love Solo 8 bars. (M)

265092-2 Six Bells Stampede Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Chu's first appearance as a soloist produces rather varying results. Even if he already has a personal approach, his technique is rather primitive, and his style is unpolished. His best solo is on "Six ...", the opening especially is lively and enthusiastic. This should later be one of the most typical aspects of his style. "... Love" also sounds promising, while his solo on "Swing It" has poor balance and is mostly of historical interest.

**JAM SESSION** **NYC. March-April 1933**

Benny Carter (tp), Chu Berry (ts), Joe Sullivan (p), probably Lawrence Lucie (g). Private recording session at John Hammond's house. Described by Hammond in the April 1933 issue of "Melody Maker".

The following item exists (there may be more):

Honeysuckle Rose (?) Solo 20 bars, not complete, acetate ends. (M)

Incredibly enough, this session was not lost! However, the sound is not very good, and the music is rather unstructured. The melody is stated by the piano, and although it sounds almost like "... Rose", some details confuse. After piano there is a magnificent trumpet solo, and then Chu, in the typical overexposed style of the time. I find some very nice moments when listening, but can the music be said to have great historical value? I don't know. What is the value of a drawing by Leonardo da Vinci in his teenage years ...??

**SPIKE HUGHES AND HIS NEGRO ORCHESTRA** **NYC. May 18, 1933**

Henry Allen, Leonard Davis, Bill Dillard (tp), Wilbur de Paris, George Washington, Dicky Wells (tb), Benny Carter, Wayman Carver, Howard Johnson, Coleman Hawkins, Chu Berry (reeds), Luis Russell (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Ernest Hill (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for English Decca, two have CB:

13353-A Fanfare Solo 12 bars. (FM)

13355-A Music At Midnight Solo 16 bars. (FM)

**same**

Henry Allen (tp), Dickie Wells (tb), Wayman Carver (fl), Benny Carter (sop, as), Coleman Hawkins, Chu Berry (ts), Rod Rodriguez (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Spike Hughes (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

One title was recorded:

13356-A Sweet Sue, Just You Solo 8 bars. (F)

**NYC. May 19, 1933**

Personnel as May 18, 1933, except Rod Rodriguez (p) replaces Luis Russell and Howard Scott (tp) replaces Davis.

Four titles were recorded, one has CB:

13361-A Firebird Solo 16 bars. (FM)

**Same**

Personnel as May 18, 1933, (13356). One title:

13363-A How Come You Do Me Like You Do? Solo 16 bars.  
(2<sup>nd</sup> (ts)-solo). (M)

The overall impression from the five soli with Spike Hughes is not a good one, Chu has not by far developed his own style yet. It is interesting to compare him with Hawkins who is also present at the sessions, and the comparison shows that Hawkins at this time is way ahead of Chu as far as tonal and technical qualities are concerned. However, for this reason, these sessions give no fair foundation for a general comparison between the two tenor-giants. His best solo is "How Come ...", where Chu, in spite of a certain stiffness, shows good rhythmic feeling, especially in the first part of his solo. Here he expresses some of the authority which later would become prominent. "Sweet Sue ..." and "Firebird" show some purpose, but the style is chaotic and nervous. On "Fanfare" and "Music ..." the soli are of little musical interest, and Hawkins, who has the second tenor sax solo on both sides, is almost a relief.

**THE CHOCOLATE DANDIES****NYC. Oct. 10, 1933**

Max Kaminsky (tp), Benny Carter (tp, as), Floyd O'Brien (tb), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Ernest Hill (b), Sid Catlett (dm - 265156, 57, 58), Mezz Mezzrow (dm - 265159).

Four titles were recorded, all have CB:

265156-2 Blue Interlude Solo 8 bars. (SM)

265157-1 I Never Knew Solo 18 + 8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (FM)

265157-2 I Never Knew As above. (FM)

265158-1 Once Upon A Time Solo 8 bars. (SM)

265158-2 Once Upon A Time As above. (SM)

265158-1 Krazy Kapers As below. (F)

265159-2 Krazy Kapers Soli 32 and 8 bars. (F)

This session represents a step forward with four sides of good quality. The balance is better, and he has achieved a round and warm sound in the lower register. This is most apparent in "Blue ...", where he has a beautiful solo, demonstrating a more advanced musical mind than at the earlier sessions. "Once ..." also is good, even if the solo is a little too staccato to be considered wholly successful. The two fast tunes swing well, and especially "I ..." has a good melodic construction, but the balance and completeness are lacking. Postscript: The appearance of two alternates is very important. The soli are very much different, and although the choices for 78 rpm. are wisely made, Chu's contributions are not inferior on the alternates. An important point: When listening to both takes of "I ...", the "old one" seems to improve! It is almost like the light of one is reflected on the other and back, giving the music further dimensions, and we understand better the intentions behind the performances. Postscript: The alternate of "Krazy ..." appearing recently, is very exciting in general, but Chu plays better on the issued take.

**BESSIE SMITH WITH BUCK AND HIS BAND****NYC. Nov. 24, 1933**

Frankie Newton (tp), Jack Teagarden (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Buck Washington (p), Bobby Johnson (g), Billy Taylor (b), Bessie Smith (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, all have CB:

152577-2 Do Your Duty Solo 8 bars.  
Very faint in ensemble. (SM)

152578-2 Gimme A Pigfoot Very faint in ensemble. (SM)

152579-2 Take Me For A Buggy Ride Very faint in ensemble. (SM)

152580-2 I'm Down In The Dumps Obligato 16 bars.  
Very faint in ensemble. (SM)

Although Chu's tenor can be heard in the ensemble on all four sides, and in solo/obligato on two, there is very little of interest. "... Duty" is nervous and lacks

melodic cohesion. There appears to be better musical intentions in "... Dumps", but the phrasing is too staccato.

On the same date, there is a recording session by **BUCK AND BUBBLES**, and there is aural evidence for the same personnel accompanying. The session was rejected, but has appeared with several alternates of the two items recorded. No tenorsax can be heard though.

CB is now entering an era where he matures into one of the leading performers on his instrument and one of the most recorded.

**RED NORVO AND HIS SWING OCTET** **NYC. Jan. 25, 1935**  
Bunny Berrigan (tp), Jack Jenney (tb), Johnny Mince (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Red Norvo (xyl), Teddy Wilson (p), George van Eps (g), Artie Bernstein (b), Gene Krupa (dm). Four titles were recorded for Columbia, all have CB:

16703-2	Honeysuckle rose	Soli 2 and 16 bars. (F)
16709-1	With All My Heart And Soul	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
16710-1	Bughouse	Soli 4 and 16 bars. (F)
16711-1	Blues In E Flat	Solo 12 bars. (S)

After one year away from the recording studios, Chu is now definitely proving to be one of the leading soloists of the swing era. "... Soul" has a beautiful, romantic solo and demonstrates his ability to create a melody. There is still a tendency to overplaying, but generally the phrases are delivered smoothly and are well balanced. There is nothing amateurish about him any longer. His solo in "Blues ..." is also good, although he never was a typical blues musician. "Bughouse" is probably the first example of Chu as the real swing musician, and his playing is simple but effective, with a relaxed swing that many musicians might envy. "... Rose" is almost of equal quality.

**TEDDY HILL AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Feb. 26, 1935**  
Bill Dillard (tp, vo), Bill Coleman, Roy Eldridge (tp), Dicky Wells (tb), Russell Procope (cl, as), Howard Johnson (as), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Hill (ts, ldr), Sam Allen (p), John Smith (g), Dick Fulbright (b), Bill Beason (dm). Four titles were recorded for Melotone, three have CB:

16923-1	Here Comes Cookie	Solo 16+10 bars, (tb) on bridge. (FM)
16924-1	Got Me Doin' Things	Soli 8 and 8 bars. (M)
16925-1	When The Robin Sings His Song	Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (FM)

During Chu's period with this orchestra, four sides were made, and only two of these are of Chu-interest. However, they are very good, with excellent swing and without his earlier tendencies towards overplaying. His sound is still improving, even though, particularly in faster tempi, he has not yet achieved the round, warm tone of later years. "... Robin ..." contains a charming solo, with a logically contrived melody, probably his first really successful solo in faster tempi and a most memorable one. This in spite of a rather jazzless arrangement which obviously does not permit the orchestra to show its real class. Almost as good is "... Cookie", containing fine ideas and a solid swing. The melody is rather corny though, and the whole session actually has some cabaret atmosphere. To label Chu's straight playing on "... Things" as a solo is probably going too far, the whole tune is rather in the direction of ordinary dance music.

**HENRY ALLEN AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. April 29, 1935**  
Henry Allen (tp, vo), Dicky Wells (tb), Cecil Scott (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Horace Henderson (p), Bernard Addison (g), John Kirby (b), Gene Stafford (dm). Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have CB:

17395-1	Rosetta	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
17396-1	Body And Soul	Obbligato 31 bars. Solo 2 bars. (FM)
17397-1	I'll Never Say "Never Again" Again	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
17398-1	Get Rhythm In Your Feet	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)

This is a very good session showing different sides of Chu's style. On the one hand, there is the dynamic and hard-swinging "I'll Never ...", which can be best characterized by the word effective. The main quality is not the simple, charming melody he constructs, but his drive and rhythm, and his ability to swing hard from the very beginning. On the other hand, "Rosetta", more on the lyrical side with an emotional and elegant opening, is creating swing in a different, indirect way. This is a side of Chu's playing deserving wider attention. Both soli are important in his career. Practically in the same class is his solo on "Get Rhythm ...", but here he is using the upper register to a certain extent, and at this time he still did not have a very good sound on that part of the instrument. In "Body ..." he is too much off-mike to make possible any evaluation of his playing.

**PUTNEY DANDRIGE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. June 25, 1935**

Roy Eldridge (tp), Chu Berry (ts), Harry Grey (p-17730), Carmen Mastren (not Nappy Lamare) (g), Artie Bernstein (b), Bill Beason (dm), Putney Dandridge (p-17731, vo).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion, both have CB:

- |         |                              |   |
|---------|------------------------------|---|
| 17730-1 | Chasing Shadows              | Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. With (tp) and (vo) 16 bars at the end. (M)  |
| 17730-2 | Chasing Shadows              | As above. (M)   |
| 17731-1 | When I Grow Too Old To Dream | Chu solos almost the whole side through: Intro 4 bars, solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge, solo 8 bars, two obbligato parts with (tp) 32 and 8 bars, and duet with (tp) 8 bars at the end. (FM) |

In "Chasing ..." we hear a new side of Chu, what we may call his "ballroom style". In the first edition of the solography I was careless and wrote: "... he improvises little, mostly presents the theme, but this is done in a very, very pleasant, unforgettable way with a personal relaxed swing". I should have known better. There is nothing to add to the last part of my statement, but the first .... I had never really believed that I should encounter take 2, but when I did, I discovered that I had mistaken utterly refined simplicity for straight playing. Take 2 is as "straight" as take 1, but they are different in every detail. My apologies! "When ..." is in his usual style, and incidentally a very exciting side. Chu's soli are of high standard and of special interest is his musical understanding with Roy Eldridge. Those two could inspire each other to great music, and for several years almost constituted a jazz institution.

**MILDRED BAILEY AND HER SWING BAND** **NYC. Sept. 20, 1935**

Gordon Griffin (tp), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Dick McDonnough (g), Artie Bernstein (b), Eddie Dougherty (dm), Red Norvo (xyl-18093), Mildred Bailey (vo). Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have Chu:

- |         |                                  |  |
|---------|----------------------------------|--|
| 18090-1 | I'd Love To Take Orders From You | Solo 32 bars.<br>In ensemble 8 bars. (F)                       |
| 18091-1 | I'd Rather Listen To Your Eyes   | Intro 8 bars. Solo 14 bars.<br>Very faint obbligato. (M)       |
| 18092-1 | Someday Sweetheart               | Obbligato 32 bars.<br>Faint obbligato at the end. (M)          |
| 18093-1 | When Day Is Done                 | Solo 16 bars. Faint obbligato<br>32 bars and in ensemble. (FM) |

Concerning Chu, this session is disappointing. Certainly he swings along easily, however, somewhat out of tune, and does not produce the usual full sound with his horn. Furthermore, he does not seem to be much interested, his appearance is rather retired. Best is his solo on "I'd Rather ...", where especially a few bars just after the opening of the solo are excellent.

**TEDDY WILSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 25, 1935**

Roy Eldridge (tp), Benny Morton (tb), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Dave Barbour (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Billie Holiday (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Brunswick, all have Chu:

- |         |                                  |   |
|---------|----------------------------------|---|
| 18196-1 | Twenty Four Hours A Day          | Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge<br>with (ts) acc. Solo 8 bars. In<br>ens 8 bars at the end. (FM) |
| 18197-1 | Yankee Doodle Never Went To Town | Solo 8 bars.<br>In ens 8 bars. (M)  |

- 18199-1 Eeny Meeny Miney Mo Solo 24 bars. Obligato  
16 bars. In ens. (F)
- 18209-1 If You Were Mine Obligato 16 bars. (SM)

A happy session with good Chu all the way, from a juicy melodic presentation on "Twenty ..." to an original and surprisingly modernistic solo in "Eeny ...". This last tune also shows his ability to play good obbligato. His short soli on "Twenty ..." and "Yankee ..." also have good moments.

### **ROY ELDRIDGE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. Feb. 5, 1936**

Roy Eldridge (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Cole (p), John Collins (g), John Kirby (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca. The full session was rejected, but one item has surfaced later:

- C90604-A Christopher Columbus Solo 32 bars. (M)

If this title is typical of the session as a whole, it is understandable that it was rejected at the time. The soloists all play well, but the rhythm section plays so heavily that one cannot quite believe it! Compare this item to the Vocalion version of May 27, 1936, and the difference is remarkable. The tempo is much slower here, an unwise decision. After these seemingly condescending comments, it is a pleasure to state that Chu's solo is inventive and quite satisfactory, and that this item really is a historical discovery of great importance.

### **GENE KRUPA AND HIS ALL STAR SWING BAND**

**Chi. Feb. 29, 1936**

Roy Eldridge (tp), Benny Goodman (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Jess Stacy (p), Allan Reuss (g), Israel Crosby (b), Gene Krupa (dm), Helen Ward (vo-100013,14).

Four titles were recorded for Victor, all have Chu:

- 100012-1 I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music Solo 36 bars.  
In ensemble. (F)
- 100013-1 Mutiny In The Parlour Intro 4 bars, in ens 32 bars,  
obligato 16 bars, solo 8 bars,  
in ensemble 8 bars. (M)
- 100014-1 I'm Gonna Clap My Hands Obligato 32 bars.  
In ens 32 and 10 bars. (FM)
- 100015-1 Swing Is Here Solo 32 bars, in ens 32 bars,  
duet with (tp) 8 bars. (F)

"Mutiny ..." is the best side here, with a polished and elegant playing right from the opening ensemble. The tempo is perfect, and a special point should be made of the closing ensemble, Chu's playing here is among the highlights of his recorded music. Both here and in "I'm Gonna ..." he shows a fully developed sound, free from earlier rough edges. Also the two fast sides provide good music, however, note the difference in execution. "Swing ..." is so fast that Chu has to change his style, it becomes less rhythmically accentuated because of the fast fingering that has to be done. Both sides are good, but "... Music" is probably most satisfying because of the easier tempo.

### **FLETCHER HENDERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. March 27, 1936**

Roy Eldridge, Joe Thomas, Dick Vance (tp), Fernando Arbello, Ed Cuffee (tb), Buster Bailey (cl, as), Scoops Carey (as), Elmer Williams, Chu Berry (ts), Fletcher and Horace Henderson (p), Bob Lessey (g), John Kirby (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have Chu:

- C-1331-1 Christopher Columbus Solo 32 bars. (FM)
- C-1332-1 Grand Terrace Swing Solo 16 bars. (FM)
- C-1333-1 Blue Lou Soli 32 and 8 bars. (FM)
- C-1334-1 Stealin' Apples Solo 32 bars. (FM)

When he became a star soloist with Fletcher Henderson's Orchestra, Chu had his definite breakthrough as one of the great jazz improvisors. Three of the four sides above contain soli which rank among the absolute peaks in his whole career. He has no trouble either technically or musically. The sound is pure and rich, and he has a wonderful contact with the rhythm section and especially Sid Catlett. This is most obvious on "... Columbus" and "... Lou", and the last bridge on "... Lou" contains some of the very finest music he has left behind. "... Apples", which is almost a small

band side, taken at a delicious, "waving" tempo, is also a masterpiece. "Grand ...", which also has a good solo, is actually a little dull in comparison.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. April 9, 1936**

Personnel as March 27, 1936, except Omer Simeon (cl, as), Israel Crosby (b) replace Carey and Kirby.

Four titles were recorded for Victor, three have Chu:

100361-1	Moonrise On The Lowlands	Solo 20 bars. (M)
100362-1	I'll Always Be In Love With You	Solo 8 bars. (M)
100363-1	Jangled Nerves	Solo 24 bars. (F)

Especially "Moonrise ..." has an excellent solo, tasteful and relaxed, obviously the work of a mature musician. Worthy of attention are also the first bars of his solo on "... Always", a real explosion after a build-up by the sax section. Less interesting is the solo on "Jangled ...", the tempo seems a little too fast, and the music has the same character as on Krupa's "Swing Is Here", professionally executed, but musically not too exciting.

**TEDDY WILSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. May 14, 1936**

Roy Eldridge (tp, vo-1376), Buster Bailey (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Bob Lessey (g), Israel Crosby (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Brunswick, all have Chu:

C-1376-1	Mary Had A Little Lamb	Solo 20 and 20 bars. In ensemble 16 bars. (FM)
C-1377-2	Too Good To Be True	Solo 32 bars. Duet with (tp) 8 bars. (SM)
C-1378-1	Warmin' Up	Solo 32 bars. In ens 32 bars. (F)
C-1379-1	Blues In C Sharp Minor	Solo 12 bars. Duet with (tp) 8 bars. (SM)

Note of July 2023: As late as 1960, a matrix of 1379-2 was reported to exist in Columbia vaults (ref. Helen Chmura). Various attempts to find out the fate of this exciting item has failed.

As the previous Wilson session, this is a loose, informal affair with good musical results. Chu reaches the top in "Blues ..." with one of the most engaging tenor sax soli on record, so melancholy and sad that it almost makes me cry, even thirty years after I heard it for the first time. He is also prominent in "Too Good ...", where he presents the melody rather straight but with a peculiar atmosphere that dominates the whole side. The two fast tunes are typical of his "hot" style in a loose context. "Mary ..." is good, "... Up" more ordinary. Except on "Blues ...", his sound is a little harder than usual.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. May 23, 1936**

Personnel as April 9, 1936, except Jerome Pasquall (cl, as) replaces Simeon. Roy Eldridge, Ted Lewis (vo).

Five titles were recorded for Victor, three have Chu:

100557-1	Where There's You There's Me	Solo 16 bars. (M)
100558-1	Do You Or Don't You Love Me?	Solo 16 bars. (M)
100561-1	Mary Had A Little Lamb	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Three good hard-swinging soli and an excellent rhythm section. Really remarkable is "Where ..." with an almost modernistic solo. Chu is obviously quite at home in a medium tempo where he can relax and create music with the greatest rhythmic tension.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Aug. 4, 1936**

Personnel as May 23, 1936, except Walter Johnson (dm) replaces Catlett. Roy Eldridge, G. B. Simpkins, Dick Vance (vo).

Six titles were recorded for Victor, five have CB:

100882-1	Shoe Shine Boy	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
100883-1	Sing, Sing, Sing	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
100885-1	Knock, Knock, Who's There?	Most probably baritone sax solo 16 bars. (FM)



100885-2	Knock, Knock, Who's There?	As above. (FM)
100886-1	Jimtown Blues	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
100887-1	You Can Depend On Me	Soli 16, 6 and 8 bars. (FM)

The most interesting point here is the baritone sax soli on "Knock, Knock ...". Whether it really is Chu who plays them or not is difficult to prove, as this is the only possible case. However, the rhythmic feeling and the phrasing are so typical of Chu, and it is hardly possible that anyone else in the sax section could produce such good soli. The two takes have the same structure in the solo, but the many different details show the improvising talent. His other soli are not of the same quality as on the last session, best are "Shoe ..." and partly "You ...". Postscript of Feb. 12, 2018: The baritone sax issue was up for discussion in The Unilateral Hot Club of Morristown, New Jersey, last October, and we all agreed, it must be Chu!

**LIL ARMSTRONG AND HER ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Oct. 27, 1936**

Joe Thomas (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Cole (p), Huey Long (g), John Frazier (b), Lil Armstrong (vo).

Six titles were recorded for Decca, all have Chu:

90967-B	Or Leave Me Alone	Solo 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge. In ensemble. (FM)
90968-A	My Hi-De-Ho Man	Solo 16 bars. Very faint in ensemble. (FM)
90969-A	Brown Gal	Solo 19 bars. In ensemble. (S)
90970-A	Doin' The Suzy-Q	Solo 32 bars. Obligato 24 bars. In ensemble. (FM)
90971-A	Just For A Thrill	Obligato 32 bars. In ensemble. (SM)
90972-A	It's Murder	Solo 16 bars. In ensemble. (F)

This is a disappointing session with Chu far below his usual standard. Like on the earlier Mildred Bailey session he sounds a little out of tune and produces a thin and unpleasant sound. Most of his playing is in the upper register, rhythmically weak and with little swing. Best is "Or Leave ...", with "... Suzy-Q" and "Just For ..." also having some good moments. "Brown Gal" has tendencies toward extreme sentimentality, Chu's weakness from time to time.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. 1936-1937**

Personnel unknown, probably similar to Victor sessions above.

Broadcast from Grand Terrace. Recorded on aluminum cuts.

King Porter Stomp	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Plans (NC)	No solo.

One becomes very enthusiastic upon discoveries of this kind. It is difficult not to, when offered an excellent, very hard-swinging solo with good recording quality. If one compares it to the later Calloway airshots, one is struck by the difference. It seems to be less sophisticated and more directly to the musical point. Enthusiasm is as prominent as ever, but in a more youthful way. Several phrases are completely new to me. Note the opening and, in particular, the beginning of the last eight bars with a big rhythmic surprise effect.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON  
AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Ca. fall 1936 - mid. 1937**

Personnel unknown, possibly including Emmett Berry (tp) and Ed Cuffee (tb).

Broadcast. Recorded by Jerry Newman.

Sugar Foot Stomp	Solo 34 bars. (FM)
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The sound quality of this sensational item is really utterly lousy, but you probably don't complain about the paper quality of the Dead Sea Scrolls, so why in this case? The tenor sax solo is also better recorded than the rest, and it seems to be quite satisfactory where swing and improvisation are concerned.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON  
AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. March 2, 1937**

Emmett Berry, Russell Smith, Dick Vance (tp), Ed Cuffee, J. C. Higginbotham, George Washington (tb), Jerry Blake (cl, as, vo-20754), Hilton Jefferson (as), Chu Berry, Elmer Williams (ts), Fletcher Henderson (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Israel Crosby (b), Walter Johnson (dm), Dorothy Derrick (vo), Benny Carter (arr-20755). Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have Chu:

20754-1	Slummin' On Park Avenue	Solo 8 bars. (M)
20754-2	Slummin' On Park Avenue	As above. (M)
20755-1	Rhythm Of The Tambourine	Solo 32 bars. (F)

"Slummin' ..." has short but excellent soli which swing pleasantly and differently in a good tempo. "Rhythm ..." is well played, with good unity and drive, but seems to have a deficit of inspiration.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON  
AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. March 22, 1937**

Personnel as March 2, 1937.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, three have Chu:

20858-1	Back In Your Own Backyard	Lead 8 bars. Solo 16+6 bars, (p) on bridge. (M)
20858-2	Back In Your Own Backyard	As above. (M)
20859-1	Rose Room	Solo 20 bars. (M)
20859-2	Rose Room	As above. (M)
20860-2	Great Caesar's Ghost	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Three very successful soli performed with good taste and rhythmic power, a demonstration of how well Chu enjoyed being a soloist with a big band. His playing is direct and to the point utterly efficient. His best solo is on "... Backyard", and the general impression of this session is very good. Postscript of Nov. 24, 2021: Stop press!! Two alternate takes have appeared!! Who could imagine that such could happen, 84 years after the recording!?! The alternate solo on "Rose ..." is very nice but not more different than we should expect from this gigantic improviser. But "... Backyard", oh my god, Chu never stops surprising, but this was more than expected, how is it possible!!?! Lots of exciting details, like the one suddenly out of the air on bar 10. Christmas came in November this year.

**CHU BERRY AND HIS STOMPY STEVEDORES**

**NYC. March 23, 1937**

Hot Lips Page (tp, vo), George Matthews (tb), Buster Bailey (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Horace Henderson (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Israel Crosby (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Variety:

M 293-1	Now You're Talking My Language	As below. (FM)
M 293-2	Now You're Talking My Language	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
M 294-1	Indiana	As below. (FM)
M 294-2	Indiana	Intro 2 bars. Soli 34 and 2 bars. (FM)
M 295-1	Too Marvellous For Words	Soli 32 and 8 bars. (FM)
M 295-2	Too Marvellous For Words	As above. (FM)
M 296-1	Limehouse Blues	Soli 32 and 36 bars, the first one is straight. (F)
M 296-2	Limehouse Blues	As above. (F)

This is the first of the five recording sessions under Chu's own name. Although some music is good, the general result is not what one should expect from this group. The main reason may be that the rhythm section is too heavy. On neither side a satisfying easy rhythmic balance is achieved. As the band title indicates, this is simply "stompy" swing music without ambitions. As mentioned, there are good moments, and of particular interest are the two takes of "Too Marvellous ...". Chu's spontaneity is demonstrated in the opening ensemble, where the last part is surprisingly different in the two versions. His soli follow the same general ideas, but with many different details demonstrating his talent for improvising. I cannot find any difference in quality, but the opening of his solo on take 2 is especially interesting. Postscript: Again, alternate takes seem to lift a session to a higher level! The 'Meritt version' of "Indiana" is very colorful, and maybe even better than on the issued take. The takes are in general of equal quality, so that the choice for original issuing must have been rather random.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. June 30, 1937**

Personnel as March 22, 1937, except Albert Wynn, John McConnell (tb) replace Washington and J.C. Higginbotham, and Pete Suggs (dm) replaces Johnson. Chuck Richards (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have CB:

1957-2	All God's Chillun Got Rhythm	Solo 2+10 bars. (FM)
1958-1	Chris And His Gang	Solo 16 bars. (M)

As on the last Henderson session, Chu is in excellent form. Especially "Chris ..." contains fine phrasing.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Aug. 24, 1937**

Doc Cheatham, Irving Randolph, Lammar Wright (tp), Keg Johnson, Claude Jones, DePriest Wheeler (tb), Andrew Brown, Garvin Bushell, Chu Berry, Walter Thomas (reeds), Bennie Payne (p), Morris White (g), Milt Hinton (b), LeRoy Maxey (dm), Cab Calloway (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Variety, one rejected (M-609 "Go South Young Man"), of the remaining three, two have Chu:

M 607-1	I'm Always In The Mood For You	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (SM)
M 608-1	She's Tall, She's Tan, She's Terrific	Solo 16+8 bars, (tb) on bridge. (FM)

This is the first of a long sequence of recording sessions with the Cab Calloway Orchestra, lasting for years. Chu already seems to feel at home in the band, and his solo on "... Terrific" is full of enjoyment and power.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Aug. 31, 1937**

Personnel as Aug. 24, 1937.

Five titles were recorded for Variety (M 617 is a remake), four have Chu:

M 617-1	Go South Young Man	Solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. (F)
M 618-1	Mama, I Wanna Make Rhythm	Solo 6+14+2 bars, orch in between. (FM)
M 620-2	Queen Isabella	Solo 32 bars. (M)
M 621-2	Savage Rhythm	Solo 18+10 bars, orch on bridge 6 bars. (FM)

An excellent session with four powerful soli of top quality. It is obvious that the band fits Chu like a glove. His direct playing is well suited to the band's hardswinging style, and he gets tremendous support from the rhythm section. A very enjoyable collection of soli where "Queen ..." (an ingenious pseudonym for a variation on "Christopher Columbus" !!!) and "Go South ..." rank as the best.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **1937**

Personnel probably as Aug. 24, 1937.

Movie soundtrack, "Manhattan Merry-Go-Round". Only one title:

Mama, I Wanna Make Rhythm	Solo 3+4+8+4 bars, orch in between. (F)
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An interesting version compared to the well known Variety recording. Both the solo layout and the musical details are quite different. The general impression is good but not remarkable. Note that one sees Walter "Foots" Thomas on screen during the solo!

**CHU BERRY AND HIS STOMPY STEVEDORES** **NYC. Sept. 10, 1937**

Irving Randolph (tp), Keg Johnson (tb), Chu Berry (ts), Bennie Payne (p, vo-624), Danny Barker (g), Milt Hinton (b), LeRoy Maxey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Variety:

M 622-1	Chuberry Jam	Solo 52 bars. (FM)
M 623-1	Maelstrom	In ensemble 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. In ens 8 bars. (M)
M 623-2	Maelstrom	As above. (M)
M 624-1	My Secret Love Affair	Solo 32 bars (straight). (SM)
M 625-1	Ebb Tide	Soli 32 and 18 bars. In ens 8 bars. (FM)

Chu's second session under his own leadership, with musicians from Cab Calloway's band, is, like the first, not wholly successful. The rhythm section, which does such an excellent job with the full orchestra, is in this context much too heavy and without swing. There are no ambitions behind this music, though the idea is probably to make simple and solid music, and, as such, it is in many ways both efficient and enjoyable. I would also presume it had a wide public appeal. The best side is "... Jam", and Chu's ability to build up the tension in his second solo on "Ebb Tide" should also be observed. Maybe a little lacking in taste, but with a power that one seldom hears. Postcomments: Another "Maelstrom" to appear, being quite different in many details to the 78 rpm. issue, evidencing again Chu's greatness.

# **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Sept. 23, 1937**

Personnel as Aug. 24, 1937.

Airshot.

Queen Isabella

Solo 32 bars. (FM)

A charming solo which may be compared to the Variety recording about three weeks earlier. The general structure of the solo are the same, but the details are refreshingly different.

# **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Dec. 10, 1937**

Personnel as Aug. 24, 1937, except Danny Barker (g) replaces White.

Six titles were recorded for Vocalion, four have Chu:

M690-1/3	Everyday Is A Holiday	Solo with orch 6 bars. (M)
M 690-2	Everyday Is A Holiday	As above. (M)
M691-2/3	Jubilee	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
M 694-1	A Minor Breakdown	Solo 8 bars. (F)
M 694-2	A Minor Breakdown	As above. (F)
M 695-1	Bugle Blues	Solo 24 bars. (F)

"Jubilee" (there is only one take, contrary to what has been said) has a pleasant, quiet and elegant solo which, in its form, is fundamentally different from Chu's playing on the last sessions. His solo on "Bugle Blues" is more ordinary than expected, fast-fingering but lacking a little finesse. "... Breakdown", earlier reported to have no Chu solo, in fact has brief but quite dynamic ones (why was this item rejected?). At last, "Everyday ..." really exists in two versions; although the takes marked -1 and -3 are identical (dubbings), a test exists of a true alternate. Here Chu is more prominent in the end, leading me to reexamine the old version and finding the 'no solo' notation to be somewhat imprecise.

# **TEDDY WILSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Dec. 17, 1937**

Hot Lips Page (tp), Pee Wee Russell (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Allan Reuss (g), unknown (b), unknown (dm), Sally Gooding (vo-22192,93).

Four titles were recorded for Brunswick, all have Chu:

22192-2	My First Impression Of You	Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. In ens 8+2 bars. (M)
22193-1	With A Smile And A Song	Intro 4 bars. Solo 8 bars to 8 bars in ensemble. (SM)
22193-2	With A Smile And A Song	As above. (SM)
22194-2	When You're Smiling	In ens 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. In ensemble 8 bars. (M)
22195-2	I Can't Believe That You're In Love With Me	Soli 8 and 16 bars. In ensemble 8 bars. (M)

The reasons for rejecting this session are not known, but they are definitely not connected with Chu's playing. On the contrary, he plays with a wonderful feeling on all tracks. Both "My First ..." and "I Can't ..." are beautiful, relaxed and utterly inspired in a perfect medium tempo. "With A Smile ..." has a brief but beautiful solo, reminding one somewhat of "That's All I Ask Of You" more than a year later. The two takes are different enough, and the one is as good as the other. The climax of the session is to be found in "... Smiling". This solo belongs among his most memorable ones. It is utterly relaxed, nearly cool in execution, but it only seems to be cool. In contrast to the marvellously swinging phrasing, it creates a tension which is nearly unbearable. The long melodic lines are beautiful, and rarely does one find such wholehearted integration of melody and rhythm. One last point: Compare this solo

with the two by Lester Young on the remake session of Jan. 6, 1938. Whatever your judgment is, your insight into the realm of jazz music will be greater. Somebody ought to take his doctoral thesis on these soli!

**MILDRED BAILEY AND HER ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Jan. 10, 1938**

Jimmy Blake (tp), Hank d'Amico (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Allan Reuss (g), Pete Peterson (b), Dave Tough (dm), Mildred Bailey (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have Chu:

22266-1	Thanks For The Memories	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
22266-2	Thanks For The Memories	As above. (SM)
22268-1	Lover Come Back To Me	Solo 8 bars. (M)
22268-2	Lover Come Back To Me	As above. (M)

In the first edition of the Chu Berry solography I wrote: "Thanks ..." offers us one of Chu's straight and most beautiful soli. It is ingenious in its simplicity. Nothing special happens, but the solo has a strange atmosphere and a wonderful relaxed swing. The fact that this is the same musician as on "Chuberry Jam", shows his wide variety of expression. It would be of great interest to have take 1 issued ...". Now take 1 is here, and one is not disappointed. It is much more different than expected, proving of course that the simpleness of take 2 was only superficial. One never learns! The atmosphere is similar, but the details are not. Take 1 is nearly as good as take 2 except for a plain mistake in the fourth bar, and in the hairbreadth dividing a masterpiece from a "merely excellent" solo. "Lover ..." is also a remarkable piece of music with soli in yet another style, very legato and with a mellow tone, though less accentuated rhythmically. The two takes are exceptionally different in details but of equal quality. A remarkable session showing Chu's creative power in its prime.

**WINGY MANONE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Jan. 12, 1938**

Wingy Manone (tp, co), Joe Marsala (cl, as), Doc Rando (as), Chu Berry (ts), Conrad Lanoue (p), Jack LeMaire (g), Artie Shapiro (b), Danny Alvin (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Bluebird, all have Chu:

018321-1	Annie Laurie	Intro 8 bars. Solo 16 bars. (M)
018322-1	Loch Lomond	Solo 16 bars. (M)
018323-1	Down Stream	Solo 4 bars. (SM)
018324-1	Where's The Waiter	In ens 32 and 16 bars. (M)
018325-1	My Mariucca Takes A Steamboat	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
018326-1	In The Land Of Yamo Yamo	Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. (FM)

The best solo here is "Annie Laurie". Beautiful melodic construction, good form, and with a restrained but effective swing. The other soli are also of a satisfactory quality, but the rather poor rhythm section weakens the overall rhythmic tension.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Jan. 26, 1938**

Personnel as Dec. 10, 1937.

Six titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have Chu:

M 743-1	One Big Reunion For Two	Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. Obligato 8 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M)
M 744-1	Doing The Reactionary	Solo 8 bars. (M)
M 745-1	Rustle Of Swing	As below. (SM)
M 745-2	Rustle Of Swing	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
M 746-1	Three Swings And Out	Solo 16 bars, then 12 bars with orchestra. (FM)
M 747-1	I Like Music	Solo 20 bars. (FM)
M 748-1	Fooling With You	Solo 32 bars. (M)

Rarely does Chu show so many different faces of his musical personality on a single recording session. The overall impression of his soli here is brilliant. "I Like Music" and "Three Swings ..." are straight-ahead "swingers" with the first being the best. "... Reunion" and especially "Fooling ..." have simple, very tasteful soli in his "ballroom style", while "Rustle ..." is an exceptional masterpiece, tenderness and feeling combined with technical and rhythmical perfection. The recently appearing take 2 is

completely different, maybe not as perfect as the old one, but wow! And last but not least: "... Reactionary", a strange "moody" affair that ends almost before it starts, but is entirely different from his usual styles. A brief solo that has made quite an impression.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Feb. 10, 1938**

Personnel as Dec. 10, 1937.

Broadcast.

Penguin Swing

Solo 32 bars. (FM)

A fine solo, more straightforward and less sophisticated compared with its counterpart on the session of March 23, 1938. "Penguin Swing" is the same tune as "Peck-A-Doodle-Do" with different lyrics.

**CAB CALLOWAY & HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Feb. 16, 1938**

Personnel same/similar to above.

Broadcast from the Cotton Club, Bill Savory collection, two titles have Chu:

I Know That You Know

Solo 32 bars. (F)

China Boy

Solo 32 bars. (F)

**NYC. Feb. 17, 1938**

Same. Three titles:

Toy Trumpet

Solo with orch 8 bars. (FM)

Body And Soul

Solo 32 bars. (S)

Marie

Solo 16 bars. (SM)

**NYC. Feb. 26, 1938**

Same. Two titles:

Oo-oo-Boom

Solo 8 bars. (FM)

China Boy

Solo 32 bars. (F)

**NYC. March 3, 1938**

Same. Two titles:

Nagasaki

Solo 28 bars (NC). (F)

Three Blind Mice

Solo with orch 8 bars. (M)

Bill Savory must have loved Cab Calloway (as I do), because there are quite a lot of 1938 broadcasts with this orchestra, of course involving Chu. There are several magnificent tenorsax items here. The two, quite different versions of "China Boy" should be mentioned first, this is what the swing of the thirties was all about!! But then "Body And Soul", long time before another great tenorsax player had heard about this tune ..., a beautiful performance, one chorus only, should have been all night, interesting to compare it to the Commodore version later the same year. Note also his very original solo on "Marie"!! A strong amputated solo (missing start) on "Nagasaki", a swinging "... You Know" on a slightly damaged acetate, and some previously unheard Cab-items like "Toy ...", "... Boom" and "... Mice", all and particularly the latter one with tenorsax surprises!!

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. March 23, 1938**

Personnel as Dec. 10, 1937, except Chauncey Haughton (reeds) replaces Garvin Bushell.

Six titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have CB:

M787-1 Azure

Solo 4 bars. (SM)

M 788-1 Scrontch

Solo 8 bars. (FM)

M 789-1 Breakin' Up A Lovely Affair

Obbligato 8 bars. (SM)

M 790-1 Peck-A-Doodle-Do

Solo 32 bars. (FM)

M 791-1 At The Clambake Carnival

Solo 36 bars. (FM)

M 792-1 Hoy Hoy

Solo 16 bars. (M)

As on the previous session, Chu shows many different faces. Some listeners will prefer the stompy "... Carnival" where Chu opens the carnival, or "Hoy Hoy", which is of similar type. "Peck ..." has a very swinging solo with humorous overtones.

"Scrontch" has some of the strange atmosphere as "Doing The Reactionary" from the previous session, while the beginning of the solo in "Azure" has such a rhythmic elegance in a pleasant tempo as is rarely heard.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**      **possibly March/April 1938**

Personnel as usual.

Martin Block program "Old Cedar Sunday Morning Swing Concert", also featuring Gene Krupa, possibly recorded at Meadowbrook, Cedar Grove, NJ, Bill Savory collection, one title:

Bugle Call Rag (NC)	Solo 18 bars (NC). (F)
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Postscript of Feb. 12, 2018: Was not aware of this one minute version of "Bugle ..." with the start of the tenorsax chorus missing.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**      **Minneapolis, May 28, 1938**

Personnel probably as March 23, 1938.

Broadcast from The Orpheon Theater:

China Boy	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Don't Be That Way	Solo 16+6 bars, (cl) on bridge. (FM)
Nagasaki	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
Tipi-Tipi-Tin	No solo.
I Never Knew I Could Love Anybody	Solo 8 bars. (F)
Mississippi Mud	Solo 22 bars. (FM)
Minnie The Moocher	No solo.

This is the first of the three known and preserved complete broadcasts with Cab so far, and contains several excellent tenorsax soli by Chu. The recording is rather amateurish, but the sound is surprisingly good and soloists, band and rhythm section are easily heard. The repertoire is quite varied, and the best solo is "China Boy", a charming and juicy swinger, with "Nagasaki" and "... Mud" close behind. "... Anybody" gives an example of the small, original 8 bars soli which the Calloway records are full of, while "... Heart" contains Chu in a lyrical mood, a well constructed, very legato piece. "... Way" is unfortunately divided by a clarinet bridge and might have been more intense. Main impression: A remarkable program.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**      **probably ca. 1938**

Personnel as usual.

Broadcast, also featuring Tommy Dorsey's band, Bill Savory collection:

Dear Old Southland	Solo 32 bars. (M)
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Postscript of Feb. 12, 2018: This wonderful tenorsax item was not discovered during my earlier numerous visits to the museum!! Cab shouts "get in there Berry"!!

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**      **NYC. Aug. 7, 1938**

Personnel as usual.

Broadcast, Bill Savory collection, five titles have Chu:

Lady Be Good	Solo 32 bars. (F)
Farewell Blues	Solo 4 bars. (FM)
Ain't Misbehavin'	Faint in orch. (M)
Unknown Title	Two brief breaks. (FM)
On The Sunny Side Of The Street	Obbligato 8 bars. (M)

This program is slightly disappointing; Chu is not featured much, and his solo on "Lady ..." does not have the smooth flow we are so used to find in his soloing.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**      **NYC. Aug. 30, 1938**

Personnel as March 23, 1938.

Seven titles were recorded for Vocalion, six have Chu:

M 891-1	Miss Hallelujah Brown	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
M 892-1	The Congo Conga	Solo 8 bars. (FM)

M 893-1	The Boogie Woogie	Solo 8 bars. (M)
M 894-1	There's A Sunny Side To Everything	Solo 7 bars. (M)
M 895-1	Shout, Shout, Shout	Solo 12 bars. (FM)
M 897-1	Jive	Solo 32 bars. (M)

Here the best soli are the two brief but highly inspired spots on "... Woogie" and "... Everything", both among his best recorded works. Also "Jive" contains a pleasant lyrical solo, though not among his most ambitious efforts.

#### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 17, 1938**

Personnel as usual.

Broadcast, Bill Savory collection, four titles have Chu:

Sugar Blues	Solo 18 bars. (M)
Honeysuckle Rose	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Shout, Shout, Shout	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
Do You Wanna Jump Children?	Solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. (FM)

Here we have several goodies!! "Sugar ..." is a great surprise with an unexpected but perfect solo, and the bridge on "... Rose" just knocks you off! "Shout ..." and "Do You ..." have their Vocalion counterparts, interesting to compare. With regard to the latter, the studio version seems to be a notch sharper.

#### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORHCESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 27, 1938**

Personnel as March 23, 1938.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have Chu:

M 904-1	Do You Wanna Jump Children?	Solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. (FM)
M 905-1	I'm Madly In Love With You	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (SM)
M 906-2	April In My Heart	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
M 907-1	Blue Interlude	Solo 16 bars. (SM)

For comments see Nov. 2 below. Postscript of Feb. 12, 2018: There is a baritonesax solo on "... Children?", both on Vocalion and on the air. It sounds so much like what Chu might have done, but personally I find it illogical to have an arrangement where Chu suddenly should switch to an unusual instrument in the middle of a performance. Phil Schaap disagrees with me though. But who is it?? Postscript of May 30, 2018: The baritonesax solo is played by Andrew Brown (ref. John Wriggle and Cab Calloway's "Margie" of Jan. 23, 1934).

#### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 31, 1938**

Personnel as usual.

Broadcast from the Cotton Club, Bill Savory collection, six titles have Chu:

Big Mouth Minnie	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
Honeysuckle Rose	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
Miss Hallelujah Brown	Solo with orch 16 bars. (FM)
Papaya	Solo with orch 8 bars. (FM)
I Know That You Know	Solo 32 bars. (F)
Basin Street Blues	Solo with orch 16 bars. (SM)

The final Cab-date by our 'be blessed' Bill Savory. No world shattering new discoveries, but good chu all over. Note particularly a different version of the swinging "... You Know", and the fascinating "Papaya" is a quite unusual tune.

#### **THE CAB JIVERS** **NYC. Oct. 31, 1938**

Chu Berry (ts), Bennie Payne (not Tyree Glenn) (vib), Danny Barker (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Bill Savory collection, probably from same broadcast as above, one title:

Liza	Solo 24 bars (NC) to solo/straight 16+8 bars, (g) on bridge. (F) to coda 4 bars. (S)
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For the first time we hear The Cab Jivers with excellent sound. It seems that Bill must have been listening to the broadcast without recording, and then suddenly understood what was going on! Running to put on the recording, he missed the first and most probably the most interesting part, it is gone forever. However, what is left is so stimulating to our imagination, oh why didn't this 'band-within-the-band' record in a proper studio context?!

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Nov. 2, 1938**

Personnel as March 23, 1938 + June Richmond (vo).  
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have Chu:

M 908-1	F.D.R. Jones	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
M 909-1	Deep In A Dream	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (SM)

Outstanding among the works on these studio recording sessions sessions (Oct. 27 and Nov. 2) is his excellent hard-driving solo on "... Jones". Rarely can a soloist be heard taking off as he does on this tune. Also "... Children" contains a top quality solo. On "Blue ..." he sticks closely to the melody but plays with a very personal beauty and much authority.

**CHU BERRY AND HIS "LITTLE JAZZ" ENSEMBLE** **NYC. Nov. 11, 1938**

Roy Eldridge (tp), Chu Berry (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Danny Barker (g), Al Shapiro (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Commodore, all feature Chu extensively:

23699-1	Sittin' In	As below. (F)
23699-2	Sittin' In	Is heard talking with Eldridge at the beginning. Soli 36 and 14 bars. 24 bars' 4/4 with (tp). In ensemble 8 bars. (F)
23700-1	Stardust	Solo 32 bars. Solo 8 bars to duet with (tp) 8 bars. (S)
23701-1	Body And Soul	Soli 31 and 14 bars. (S)
23702-1	46 West 52	Solo 64 bars. Duet with (tp) 16 bars. (F)
23702-2	46 West 52	As above. (F)

This is a remarkable session, especially because of the wonderful rapport between the participants. Roy and Chu fit each other perfectly, and the rhythm section is as solid as rock, led by the fantastic Sid Catlett. Successful on Chu's part are the two fast titles and the tremendous "46 West 52" in particular with some dynamic playing that is outstanding even from him. Logical, melodic construction, combined with a hard-driving attack. The same goes for "... In", even if the tempo is somewhat too fast. The two slow tunes have clear tendencies towards exaggerated sentimentality, and his first solo on "Body ..." almost goes too far. His second solo is better, though, containing some beautiful ballad playing. "Stardust" is pleasant enough, but must be considered quite ordinary. Note that "46 West 52" is, in fact, "Sweet Georgia Brown". P.S.: Chu is heard talking with Eldridge before they start playing on "... In". He probably never would have made a good vocalist! Postscript after appearance of alternate takes: These we have waited for years after years and at last! And no disappointments! The variations were just as exciting as one hoped they would be. As usually is the rule, the original choice for 78 rpm. was wisely made. There are some minor fluffs on the alternates, not that that matters at all. Note for instance the 4 bars' break beginning Chu's solo on "... In". In the issued take, this is a clean break without drums, in the alternate it seems to be some confusion about 2 or 4 bars and the drums seem out of place.

**JAM SESSION** **NYC. Nov. 11?, 1938**

Yank Lawson (tp), Tommy Dorsey (tb), Artie Shaw (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Jess Stacy (p), Alan Reuss ? (g?), John Kirby or Al Hall ? (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).  
WNEW broadcast. Martin Block Make Believe jam session. Note that these jam sessions were on Wednesday nights. Nov. 9 is perhaps a more correct date?

Limehouse Blues	Intro 4 bars to 32 bars with ens. Solo 64 bars. (F)
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A good version of an old Chu favorite. Note the defiant opening of the solo!

**TEDDY WILSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Nov. 28, 1938**

Bobby Hackett (cnt), Trummy Young (tb), Ted Buckner, Toots Mondello (as), Chu Berry, Bud Freeman (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Al Casey (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Billie Holiday (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Brunswick, one has Chu:

- |         |                              |                   |
|---------|------------------------------|-------------------|
| 23763-1 | Let's Dream In The Moonlight | Solo 4 bars. (SM) |
| 23763-2 | Let's Dream In The Moonlight | As above. (SM)    |

This session has nothing of interest to offer concerning Chu Berry.

**BILLIE HOLIDAY AND 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).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion, both have Chu:

- |         |                         |                                  |
|---------|-------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 23992-1 | That's All I Ask Of You | Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. (SM) |
| 23992-2 | That's All I Ask Of You | As above. (SM)                   |
| 23993-1 | Dream Of Life           | Intro 4 bars. (SM)               |

While the introduction on "Dream ..." is rather tasteless, the intros on "That's ..." are entirely different and tell of wonderful things to come. And so we get two soli that are masterpieces, strong but not heavy, dramatic without exaggeration, creating a wonderful mood. The details of the two takes are beautifully different, maybe more than we had the right to hope for, and show Chu's great talent as an improviser. Immortal music.

**JAM SESSION** **NYC. Jan. 20, 1939**

Harry James, Charlie Teagarden (tp), Jack Teagarden (tb, vo-2,4), Joe Marsala (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), John Kirby (b), George Wettling (dm), Red McKenzie (vo-5).

Broadcast from the Hickory House.

- |   |                             |  |
|---|-----------------------------|--|
| 1 | Someday Sweetheart          | Solo 32 bars. In ens 32 bars at the beginning and 16+8 bars at the end. (M)  |
| 2 | Basin Street Blues          | Solo 16 bars. A few bars of obbligato and very faint in ens at the end. (SM) |
| 3 | Honeysuckle Rose            | Solo 64 bars. Very faint in ensemble 16+8 bars at the end. (FM)              |
| 4 | Boogie Woogie Blues         | Solo 24 bars. (SM)<br>Solo 48 bars. (FM)                                     |
| 5 | I Would Do Anything For You | No solo.   |
| 6 | I'm Coming Virginia         | In ensemble 24 bars. (M)   |

His playing is satisfactory on this date, but nothing exciting happens. Best are "Someday ..." which is well constructed, and the last solo on "Boogie ...", where he swings well on several occasions. "... Rose" is suffering more than the other titles from a surprisingly helpless rhythm section. Of the slower soli, "Boogie ..." is the better, but they are all too sentimental to make any great impression on me. Note that titles 5-6, earlier believed to be lost, have appeared on CD. No additional tenorsax soloing, but in the closing ensemble of "... Virginia" one can hear Chu with some effort.

**COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Feb. 3, 1939**

Buck Clayton, Shad Collins, Harry Edison, Ed Lewis (tp), Dan Minor, Benny Morton, Dicky Wells (tb), Earl Warren, Jack Washington, Lester Young, Chu Berry (reeds), Count Basie (p), Freddie Green (g), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (dm), Helen Humes (vo-64981,83), Jimmie Rushing (vo-64984).

Seven titles were recorded for Decca, two have Chu:

- |         |              |   |
|---------|--------------|---|
| 64984-A | Evil Blues   | Obbligato 36 bars. (FM)                     |
| 64985-A | Lady Be Good | Solo 32 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> ts solo). (F) |

There came no really remarkable results from this short substitute appearance with the Basie band, but his work is able. "Lady ..." contains a rather reticent solo which is quite satisfying even if he obviously is unaccustomed to this rhythm section. However, it must be allowed to say that he surpasses Lester Young by fathoms,

unfortunately Young has a miserable day, otherwise we might have had an interesting comparison between these two tenor giants. His role in "... Blues" is closely connected with the arrangement, and nothing exciting is allowed to happen.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Feb. 20, 1939**

Personnel as March 23, 1938, except Cozy Cole (dm) replaces Maxey.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, one has Chu:

M 973-1 Ad-De-Dey Obligato 36 bars. (FM)

"Ad-De-Dey" is a really merry affair with an inspired and humorous obligato to Cab, more in the duet tradition of Billie Holiday/Lester Young than an accompaniment, and the records is one which is not easily forgotten.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. March 28, 1939**

Personnel as Feb. 20, 1938.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have Chu:

1009-1 A New Moon And An Old Serenade Solo 16 bars. (M)

1012-2 Floogie Walk Solo 16+8 bars,  
(cl) on bridge. (FM)

"... Serenade" belongs to the previously mentioned "ballroom" style and offers pleasant music, but with less intensity than for instance "Chasing Shadows" with Putney Dandridge. "... Walk" is of satisfying quality but rather modest.

**LIONEL HAMPTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. April 3, 1939**

Irving Randolph (tp), Russell Procope (as), Hymie Schertzer (bcl, as), Jerry Jerome, Chu Berry (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Allan Reuss (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib, vo).

Four titles were recorded for Victor, three have Chu:

035392-1 I Can Give You Love Solo 10 bars. (FM)

035393-1 High Society Solo 16 bars. (F)

035395-1 Johnny Get Your Horn Solo 32 bars. (M)

The best solo by far is the really juicy one on "... Love", while "High ..." makes little impression. The stompy "Johnny ..." is interesting even if the last half is somewhat running down and the rhythm section is working too heavily.

**LIONEL HAMPTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. April 5, 1939**

Chu Berry (ts), Clyde Hart (p-35703,04), Allan Reuss (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib-35703,04, p-35705,06, vo-35703).

Four titles were recorded for Victor, all have Chu:

035703-1 Sweethearts On Parade Chu plays whole record continually through, 4 choruses of 32 bars. The first and last are duets with (vib), the second is obligato and the third is a pure solo. (M)

035704-1 Shufflin' At The Hollywood Chu plays 3 choruses of 32 bars, first and last are duets with (vib), the second is a pure solo. (FM)

035704-2 Shufflin' At The Hollywood As above. (FM)

035705-1 Denison Swing Duet with (p-LH) 64 bars. (FM)

035705-1 Wizzin' The Wizz As below. (F)

035706-2 Wizzin' The Wizz Solo 32 bars.  
Duet with (p-LH) 32 bars. (F)

This recording session is one of Chu's most memorable, not so much because of the improvisations which, however, are superb, but for the fantastic eagerness he shows, and rarely does one witness comparable inspiration. The most remarkable side is "Sweethearts ...", a shuffle piece. For once Hampton has found his superior in whipping up a tension, Chu does not yield an inch from the mike in the three minutes, and offers such a dynamic playing that the listener has to plead for mercy. Very fascinating also is the other shuffle, "... Hollywood", where he plays with an intentional heaviness which may be felt overwhelming but is also contagious. The two takes are very different, not only in details but basically. Even if both have a kind

of oriental flavor, take 1 is more in a minor mood but at the same time more frisky, particularly towards the end. Furthermore, we find excellent music on the two last sides where Hampton plays the piano, the rapport between Hamp and Chu is, by the way, exemplary during the whole session. Particularly notable is the last solo on "... Wizz", very tasteful in halved tempo. A remarkable session and a necessity for every Chu Berry collector. Postscript: Amazing variations in the new "... Wizz"! The solo is slightly better on the originally issued take, but when the conclusion comes in half tempo, a completely new duet appears! And I thought the previous one was written out in advance, so perfect was it!!

**OLLIE SHEPARD AND HIS KENTUCKY BOYS** **NYC. April 18, 1939**

Chu Berry (ts), Sam Price (p), unknown (dm), Ollie Shepard (vo).

Nine titles were recorded for Decca, all have Chu:

65420-A	New Low Down Dirty Shame	Intro 4 bars. Obbligato 60 bars. (S)
65421-A	The Numbers Blues	Obbligato 60 bars. (S)
65422-A	Sweetest Thing Born	Intro 4 bars, solo 8 bars, duet with (p) 12 bars, three obligato parts of 12 bars. (S)
65423-A	Shepard Blues	Intro 4 bars, solo 12 bars, two obligato parts of 24 bars. (S)
65424-A	Outdoors Blues	Obbligato 24 bars, duet with (p) 12 bars, obligato 12 bars. (S)
65425-A	Hell Is So Low Down	Obbligato 60 bars. (S)
65426-A	Sugar Woman Blues	Obbligato 60 bars. (S)
65427-A	My Dripping Blood Blues	Intro 4 bars, obligato 24 bars, solo 12 bars, obligato 24 bars. (S)
65428-A	Blues 'Bout My Gal	Intro 4 bars, obligato 36 bars, (last 24 bars with (p)), obligato 24 bars. (SM)

Frankly, this is rather dull stuff. All titles are cast in the same blues mould, if you have heard one, you've heard them all. Chu is no blues musician, and while he plays competently, the variations become too few for sustained interest.

**BLUE LU BARKER**

**WITH DANNY BARKER's FLY CATS**

**NYC. April 20, 1939**

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

Four titles were recorded, three issued, all these have Chu:

65433-A	Scat Skunk	Faint obligato 32 and 8 bars. Solo 8 bars. (SM)
65434-A	Nix On Those Lush Heads	Very faint obligato with ens 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (SM)
65436-A	Georgia Grind	Three obligato parts of 12, 12 and 24 bars. (SM)

A session resembling the last one with Chu as a casual accompaniment, but far more interesting and with pleasant moments of juicy and inspired sax playing.

**WINGY MANONE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. April 26, 1939**

Wingy Manone (tp, vo), Buster Bailey (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Conrad Lanoue (p), Zeb Julian (g), Jules Cassard (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Bluebird, all have Chu:

036534-1	Downright Disgusted Blues	Solo 12 bars. (SM)
026535-1	Corrine Corrina	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
036536-1	I'm A Real Kinda Papa	Obbligato 16 bars. Solo 4 bars. In ens 20 and 12 bars. (SM)
036537-1	Jumpy Nerves	Solo 12 bars. (M)
036538-1	Casey Jones	Solo 8 bars. Very faint obligato with (cl) on most of the record. (M)
036538-2	Casey Jones	As above. (M)

036539-1 Boogie Woogie Obligato 24 bars. Solo 12 bars. (M)

The playing on these sides is even and good, supported by a rhythm section of quite another and better quality than on the last Manone session. If any particular side is to be emphasized, I suggest "Casey Jones", take 1.

**LIONEL HAMPTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. June 9, 1939**

Ziggy Elman (tp), Russell Procope (sop, as), Hymie Schertzer, Jerry Jerome (as), Chu Berry (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Danny Barker (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib, dm-37617, vo-37614,15).

Four titles were recorded for Victor, one has Chu:

037616-1 Ain't Cha Comin' Home? Solo 16 bars. (S)

"Ain't Cha ..." is probably the most beautiful solo Chu has made in slow tempo, full of emotion and completely devoid of any tendency to exaggerated sentiment, which often disfigures his playing in similar contexts. A true masterpiece.

**WINGY MANONE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. June 19, 1939**

Personnel as April 26, 1939, except Danny Barker (g) replaces Z. Julian.

Six titles were recorded for Bluebird, all have Chu:

037729-1 Royal Garden Blues Solo 12 bars. Very faint in ens. (M)

037730-1 Beale Street Blues Solo 2 bars. Very faint in ens. (M)

037731-1 In The Barrel Solo 16 bars. (M)

037732-1 Farewell Blues Solo 16 bars. (FM)

037733-1 Fare Thee Well My Baby, Solo 16 bars.  
Fare Thee Well Prom. in ens. (FM)

037734-1 Limehouse Blues Soli 64, 8 and 4 bars. (F)

Here also the soloing is kept on a pleasingly high level. In particular one notices the bubbling and luxurious "Limehouse Blues", which swings from the first groove and is perfect in all respects. The main impression is far better than of the recording with "The Stompy Stevedores". Furthermore, "... Barrel" is really remarkable, featuring an original and emotionally loaded solo.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **June 20, 1939**

Personnel probably similar to July 17, 1939.

Broadcast.

So Long No solo.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **July 14, 1939**

Personnel probably similar to July 17, 1939.

Broadcast (WABC network).

Lilt Solo 16 bars. (M)

A remarkable, juicy piece of music, almost in slow medium tempo, far from the straight playing one might have expected from the arrangement. A very valuable discovery.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. July 17, 1939**

Personnel as Feb. 20, 1939, except Mario Bauza (tp) replaces D. Cheatham.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have Chu:

1054-A Trylon Swing Solo 14 bars. (FM)

1055-A Utt-Da-Zey Solo 24 bars. (FM)

1056-A Crescendo In Drums Solo 30 bars. (FM)

1057-A The Jumpin' Jive Soli 8 and 2 bars. (FM)

Even and good playing, but nothing remarkable happens. "Utt-Da-Zey", however, sounds more fresh and inspired than the others.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Aug. 30, 1939**

Personnel as July 17, 1939, except Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Jerry Blake (cl, as) replace I. Randolph and C. Haughton.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, 1067 "Pluckin' The Bass" rejected, the three others all have Chu:

1065-A	For The Last Time I Cried Over You	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
1066-A	Twee-Twee-Tweet	Solo 4 bars. (F)
1068-A	I Ain't Getting Nowhere Fast	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (F)

None of these small pieces offer anything of particular interest.

**WINGY MANONE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Sept. 6, 1939**

Wingy Manone (tp, vo), Buck Scott (tb), Gus Fetterer (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Ernie Hughes (p), Zeb Julian (g), Sid Jacobs (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Bluebird, all have Chu:

041971-1	Blue Lou	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
041972-1	Sudan	Very faint in ensemble. (FM)
041973-1	How Long Blues	Very faint in ensemble. (SM)
041974-1	When The Saints Go Marchin' In	Solo 18 bars. (F)
041975-1	My Honey's Lovin' Arms	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
041976-1	When My Sugar Walks Down The Street	Faint obbligato 16 bars to solo 16 bars. (FM)

The quality of the soli is comparable to that presented at the previous Manone session. None of the sides are particularly prominent, but all of them have easy-swinging and uncomplicated tenorsax playing. This version of "Blue Lou" is good, but does not by far possess the greatness which marked the Fletcher Henderson recording. Postscript: That was a negative comment, change my mind!!

**LIONEL HAMPTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Sept. 11, 1939**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Benny Carter (as), Coleman Hawkins, Chu Berry, Ben Webster (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Charlie Christian (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib).

Four titles were recorded for Victor, one has Chu:

41408-1	Hot Mallets	Solo 32 bars. (F)
---------	-------------	-------------------

A very fine solo, supported by an extraordinarily buoyant rhythm section. However, it is not only sad, it is criminal negligence not to make at least one side with a tenor sax battle between the three tenor giants on this unique occasion, it was bound to make jazz history.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Oct. 17, 1939**

Personnel as Aug. 30, 1939.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have Chu:

1103-A	Jiveformation Please	Solo 6 bars. (FM)
1104-A	Vuelva	Solo 8 bars. (M)

**NYC. Nov. 20, 1939**

Same. Five titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have Chu:

1067-A	Pluckin' The Bass	Solo 32 bars. (F)
1067-B	Pluckin' The Bass	As above. (F)
1113-A	A Bee Gezindt	Several small solo pieces, none longer than 4 bars. (FM)
1114-A	Give, Baby, Give	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (M)
1115-A	Sincere Love	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
1116-A	Do It Again	Solo 16 bars. (M)

Quite ordinary and not very inspired soloing at these two sessions (thanks to rather dull musical material) except on one side, "... Bass". In return this one presents two takes of extraordinarily dynamic, really obtrusive soli with sovereign technical command of the instrument. They have several similarities, but the details vary to the listener's complete satisfaction. It is difficult to choose between them, they both belong to the best Chu made with Cab Calloway.

**THE CAB JIVERS**

**unknown place and date**

Chu Berry (ts), Tyree Glenn (vib), Danny Barker (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Broadcast, one title:

3:25                      Honeysuckle Rose (NC)                      Soli 64 and 8 bars. (FM)

Postscript of June 2023: Excavations have recently turned up a true treasure, as Cab Jivers broadcasts are very rare!! This acetate seems to lack the beginning of the "... Rose", going straight into a long guitar solo. But then Chu gives us an excellent solo, and note how elegant he changes key from first to second chorus! Please dig up more like this!

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA                      Chi. March 8, 1940**

Mario Bauza, Dizzy Gillespie, Lammar Wright (tp), Tyree Glenn (tb, vib), Quentin Jackson, Keg Johnson (tb), Jerry Blake, Andrew Brown, Hilton Jefferson, Chu Berry, Walter Thomas (reeds), Bennie Payne (p), Danny Barker (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Cab Calloway (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, one has Chu:

WC-2984-A Chop, Chop, Charlie Chan                      Soli 4 and 4 bars. (M)

Not much to hear from Chu, but the two brief soli are good enough.

**THE CAB JIVERS                      Boston, April 9, 1940**

Personnel including Dizzy Gillespie (tp, comp), Hilton Jefferson (as), Chu Berry (ts), unidentified (b).

NBC broadcast from the Southland Café, one title (note: part of this broadcast appeared on eBay Feb. 19, 2016, and presented as the full orchestra with the tenorsax solo faded out after 22 bars and other soli omitted):

2:44                      Down Under                      Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Postscript of Jan. 2024: This groovy riff tune (created by Dizzy and recorded by Woody Herman July 24, 1942) starts with a driving ensemble and continues into a dynamic tenorsax solo.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA                      NYC. May 18, 1940**

Personnel as March 8, 1940.

Seven titles were recorded for Okeh, five have Chu:

27295-1                      Calling All Bars                      Soli 8, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)

27295-2                      Calling All Bars                      As above. (FM)

27296-1                      Do It Care, No, No                      Soli 4, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)

27296-2                      Do It Care, No, No                      As above. (FM)

27296-4                      Do It Care, No, No                      As above. (FM)

27297-1                      The Lone Arranger                      Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (FM)

27297-2                      The Lone Arranger                      As above. (FM)

27299-1                      Hard Times                      Solo 32 bars. (M)

27301-1                      Who's Yehoodi?                      Soli 8, 8 and 8 bars. (FM)

27301-2                      Who's Yehoodi?                      As above. (FM)

This is the best Calloway session in a long time, with several really good soli. His playing is particularly inspired and melodic in "... Bars". The two takes are wonderfully different and note particularly the longest solo on take 2. The two takes of "... Yehoodi?" are also surprisingly different seen in the light of a rather formalistic solo structure. Take 1 seems slightly better conceived. "... Arranger" is good and easy-flowing; two takes of similar quality. While "Hard Times" is competent, it is more ordinary and not as elegant as the broadcast of July 27. In "... No, No" we can clearly hear the influence of Dizzy Gillespie, a pleasant but otherwise not very remarkable side. Note also an alternate take appearing on the Chu Berry Mosaic set, and also an unissued take exists.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA                      Chi. June 27, 1940**

Personnel as March 8, 1940.

Five titles were recorded for Okeh, all have Chu:

WC-3160-A Fifteen Minutes Intermission                      Solo 8 bars. (M)

WC-3161-A Rhapsody In Rhumba                      Solo 8 bars. (FM)

WC-3162-A Come On With The "Come On"	Solo 32 bars. (F)
WC-3163-A Ghost Of A Chance	Feature number for Chu who solos the whole record through, 64 bars + intro and coda. (SM)
WC-3163-B Ghost Of A Chance	As above. (SM)
WC-3164-A Bye Bye Blues	Solo 32 bars. (F)
WC-3164-B Bye Bye Blues	As above. (F)

Also here there are high quality soli, particularly satisfying is "Bye ...", whose two versions in spite of the fast tempi flow along with great control and are filled with ideas. They have a lot in common, are of equal quality, but differ in a lot of details. The conclusion of take A, for instance, is masterly. "Come On ..." is executed with much routine but seems somewhat superficial. "Ghost ..." is a feature number for Chu, who plays confidently and sometimes very beautifully. There are, however, certain flaws in the performance, an exaggerated sentimentality and at times uncritical use of the instrument's upper register. It is a charming and valuable side, but certainly no masterpiece, and somewhat overrated in jazz literature. A second take is, of course, interesting, but does not change this feeling.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NJ. July 27, 1940**  
 Personnel probably as March 8, 1940.  
 Broadcast from Meadowbrook, Cedar Grove.

Theme	No solo.
Limehouse Blues	Soli 36 and 8 bars. (FM)
I Can't Resist You	No solo.
Hard Times	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Fifteen Minutes Intermission	Solo 8 bars. (M)
I'll Pray For You	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
Boog It	No solo.
Cupid's Nightmare	Soli 6 and 7 bars. (SM)
King Porter Stomp (NC)	Solo 24 bars, last 16 almost drowned by the announcer who closes the program and the solo. (FM)

"King ..." alone makes this broadcast very valuable, here Chu demonstrates his ability to swing from the first note in a convincing way, and the solo is cutting and penetrating, unfortunately the program finishes when things really get going. The atmosphere in the ballrooms must have been very high on such occasions. "Hard Times" has an excellent, well balanced solo, rich in ideas, while "Limehouse Blues", which follows the same structure as the Manone version, is not by far as elaborate and successful as that one. Also to be mentioned is the pleasant ballroom solo in "I'll Pray ...".

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **July 28, 1940**  
 Personnel probably as March 8, 1940.  
 Broadcast (WOR Network). 12.30 p.m.

Silly Old Moon	Soli 8 and 8 bars. (SM)
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"... Moon" is no great jazz vehicle, but Chu makes more of it than expected, particularly after believing the recorded version of Aug. 5 to be almost straight. This is definitely improvised music.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Aug. 2, 1940**  
 Personnel probably as March 8, 1940.  
 Broadcast (WOR Network). 1 a.m.

Sunset	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
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Like "... Moon" above, the broadcast is a surprise. The first 4 bars are similar to the Okeh version, but with different rhythmic accentuations. And then a quick flowing phrase completely new! I never expected to see "Sunset" in a new and interesting light, but I really do now.

**CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Aug. 5, 1940**



Personnel as March 8, 1940.

Five titles were recorded for Okeh, four have Chu:

27801-3	Papa's In Bed With His Britches On	Solo 16 bars. (M)
27801-B/2	Papa's In Bed With His Britches On	As above. (M)
27801-A/1	Papa's In Bed With His Britches On	As above. (M)
27801-BD1	Papa's In Bed With His Britches On	As above. (M)
27801-BD2	Papa's In Bed With His Britches On	As above. (M)
27802-A	Silly Old Moon	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
27803-1	Boo-Wah Boo-Wah	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
27803-2	Boo-Wah Boo-Wah	Soli 4 and 20 bars. (FM)
27803-BD	Boo-Wah Boo-Wah (NC)	Solo ca. 27 bars. (FM)
27804-A	Sunset	Solo 8 bars. (SM)

The two fastest tunes are the most successful, but both are too rhythmically tied for the playing to sound interesting. Also the arrangements are getting more and more commercial around this time, and even if Chu obviously still enjoys himself in the band, he does not get the necessary support for his improvisations. The two slower sides were of little jazz value, I felt, before hearing the broadcast versions. Now I am not so confident. They are not exciting, but they contain much more identity than I thought. It seems that Chu never played straight, even in completely commercial setups. Postscript: Note the difference between the "Boo-Wah ..."s, obviously Chu is working to assimilate the arrangement. Postscript of Nov. 2014: Three new versions of "... Britches ..." appear, and the importance of alternate takes becomes more and more important; Chu never repeats himself, all versions are different!! And a breakdown version of "Boo-Wah ..." shows that even Chu can have problems, or maybe he is just flagged off for other reasons. Postscript of Jan. 2024: A minor error, only the two breakdowns of "... Britches ..." are new, so the total is five, not six.

#### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Aug. 28, 1940**

Personnel as March 8, 1940.

Six titles were recorded for Okeh, four have Chu:

28513-1	Cupid's Nightmare	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
28515-1	Are You Hep To The Jive?	Solo 8 bars. (M)
28515-2	Are You Hep To The Jive?	As above. (M)
28517-1	Hot Air	Soli 8 and 8 bars. (M)
28518-1	Lonesome Nights	Solo 16+8 bars, orchestra on bridge. Soli 8 and 8 bars with following coda. (SM)
28518-2	Lonesome Nights	As above. (SM)

One of the very best sessions from this period. Above all we notice "... Nights", an extraordinarily tasteful and accomplished record without any of the exaggeration which disfigured "Ghost Of A Chance", and in my opinion far better. It must be considered one of Chu's very best records in slower tempi. The second take is a typical example of a "reject". It is a beautiful piece of music, but unfortunately Chu is unconcentrated and enters too late for his last solo. In addition to this, "... Jive" and even more so "Hot Air" offer very beautiful and melodically constructed soli. Postscript: Another take of "... Hep ..." has appeared, different of course!

#### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Oct. 14, 1940**

Personnel as March 8, 1940.

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, three have Chu:

28863-1	A Chicken Ain't Nothing But A Bird	Solo 24 bars. (M)
28863-2	A Chicken Ain't Nothing But A Bird	As above. (M)
28863-BD	A Chicken Ain't Nothing But A Bird	As above. (M)
28863-3	A Chicken Ain't Nothing But A Bird	As above. (M)
28864-1	The Worker's Train	Solo with orch 16 bars. (M)
28864-BD	The Worker's Train	As above. (M)

28866-1      Make Yourself At Home      Solo 8 bars. (M)

Even if all these sides are in a commercial groove, Chu does not do badly. He obviously retains his inspiration among these pop arrangements, not that he exerts himself in any way, but he creates relaxed and enjoyable music with much ambition, especially in "... Train". The three takes of "... Bird" also show that his soloing is not routine, the details are quite different. Postscript: And so is the fourth version, unissued!

### THE CAB JIVERS

**Unknown loc. 1940/41**

Chu Berry (ts), Tyree Glenn (vib), Danny Barker (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Broadcasts.

Girl Of My Dreams      Chu fades in and 40 bars of his solo is heard. He is informally riffing behind (vib), (g), (b), during their choruses (one each). Then solos again 16+8 bars, (dm) on bridge, and concludes with 2 bars coda. (FM)

Indiana      A chorded guitar solo 30 bars fades in and Chu is heard improvising faintly in the background. After 32 bars of (b) and (dm), there are 64 bars (vib)-solo where Chu is heard improvising very faintly in the background. (F)

Real jazz-historic occasions! This "Band within the Band" never made any records, and these tunes are also the only preserved broadcasts known. "Girl ..." proves that this is an extraordinary musical loss for later years. Rarely does one stumble over such a swinging piece, the rhythm section could not have been better, it sounds even more convincing than in many big band records, and Chu really uses it! Particularly the opening, where he plays relaxed and relatively straight, gives me the creeps, not much can be compared to this. The remainder is "only" Chu of excellent quality. The recording of "Indiana" is of inferior sound quality, and Chu is heard only with great difficulty. However, the first part shows him swinging like mad. Has anybody more of these broadcasts!??

### CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA

**Chi. Jan. 16, 1941**

Personnel as March 8, 1940.

Five titles were recorded for Okeh, two have Chu:

C-3518-1	Run Little Rabbit	Solo 24 bars. (M)
C-3518-2	Run Little Rabbit	As above. (M)
C-3521-1	Are You All Reet?	Soli 6 and 6 bars. (M)
C-3521-2	Are You All Reet?	As above. (M)

The comments to the last big band session may be repeated now, even if these two sides are a little more ordinary. Best is "Are You ...". However, the items get more interesting with the appearance of alternate takes.

### CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA

**NYC. March 5, 1941**

Personnel as March 8, 1940, except Jonah Jones (tp) replaces Bauza.

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, one has Chu:

29869-1	Special Delivery	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
29869-2	Special Delivery	As above. (FM)
29869-3	Special Delivery	As above. (FM)

In "the old days" when only take 1 of 29869 was available, I wrote the following: "Special Delivery" is really up to its name, it is a marvelous jazz record which swings gorgeously, and is a blessed variation from the many completely and partly commercial sides of the last year. Chu uses the opportunity to let out steam through three gigantic blues choruses. He starts off as a member of the Apollo mission, and continues without restraint. The solo belongs to his very greatest, and makes me wonder how many choruses like these he could produce before complete exhaustion, because this record is not only a musical but a physical accomplishment." Take 2 on Jazz Archives (not 3) would, if it had come first, probably have had a similar comment. However, in comparison it is slightly, just slightly, inferior. Following the same structure, chorus by chorus, it swings like hell, but some of the minor details like the opening phrase are a hairbreadth more successful on take 1. Post comment: After having had them both for a while, I simply do not know anymore, I love them both! Try for yourself! Take 3, not issued at present, is not inferior regarding Chu.

The reason for it being ranked low is obviously the terrible tuning of the trumpet section in the last part, quite unacceptable. Also the drumming by Cozy Cole seems too active when accompanying Chu, and he probably was advised to slow it down a bit. Together, these nine blues choruses are some of the hottest tenorsax in jazz!

### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. June 1941**

Personnel probably as March 5, 1941.

Broadcast from The Panther Room, Hotel Sherman.

The Great Lie	Soli 32, 8 and 4 bars. (FM)
Geechie Joe	No solo.
Chuberry Jam	Solo 164 bars. (FM)
I Dreamt I Dwelled In Harlem	No solo.
Rhapsody In Drums	No solo.
Daddy	Solo 8 bars. (M)

This broadcast is extremely important because it contains a solo of unusual duration. For almost three minutes "Chuberry Jam" shows an almost inexhaustible supply of musical inspiration. The only related case is "Sweethearts on Parade", but there Chu shares the limelight with Lionel Hampton. Here he solos with concentration and in full command of the situation. With superb craftsmanship he changes keys without losing control for a moment and swings forcefully and dynamically like few other tenorsaxophonists have ever done. A solo like this gives credibility to the many legends about nightly jam sessions and extended soli of inexhaustible inspiration. "The Great Lie" does also contain marvelous soloing with some particularly beautiful and notable phrases in the lower register of the instrument. "Daddy" is badly recorded and insignificant in comparison with the other two items. An unforgettable broadcast!

### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. June 16, 1941**

Personnel as March 5, 1941?

NBC Blue Network broadcast from Hotel Sherman reported (long time ago) to exist, six titles: "Number Ten Lullaby", "Boy I'm Happy", "Unknown Title", "My Sister And I", "Geechie Joe", "Crescendo In Drums".

### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. July 3, 1941**

Personnel as March 5, 1941.

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, one has Chu:

30835-1	Take The A Train	Solo 16 bars. (M)
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A disappointing record, lame and uninspired, with Chu never rising from mere handicraft.

### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. July 24, 1941**

Personnel as March 3, 1941.

Five titles were recorded for Okeh, two have Chu:

30939-1	Hey Doc	Solo 10 bars. (M)
30940-1	I See A Million People	Soli 2 and 2 bars. (S)

Only "Hey Doc" is worth noticing, but it is quite ordinary. Note: Earlier I have presented two takes of "... Doc", however, this was a mixup in my head/notes, it was in fact "My Coo-Coo Bird", see below.

### **CHU BERRY AND HIS JAZZ ENSEMBLE**

**NYC. Aug. 28, 1941**

Hot Lips Page (tp, vo-4181), Chu Berry (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Al Casey (g), Al Morgan (b), Harry Jaeger (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Commodore, all have Chu:

4178-	Blowing Up A Breeze	Soli 36, 32 and 4 bars, duet with (tp) 16 and 8 bars. (F)
4178-	Blowing Up A Breeze	As above. (F)
4178-	Blowing Up A Breeze	As above. (F)
4178-	Blowing Up A Breeze	As above. (F)
4179-	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	Soli 32 and 14 bars, last with following coda. (S)

4179-	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	As above. (S)
4179-	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	As above but 30 bars to coda. (S)
4180-	Monday At Minton's	Solo 24 bars. Also 24 bars with riffs at the end. (FM)
4180-	Monday At Minton's	As above. (FM)
4180-	Monday At Minton's	As above. (FM)
4181-	Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You	Solo 16 bars with following coda. (S)
4181-	Gee Baby, Ain't I Good To You	As above. (S)

Note: The take numbers or sequence of recording on this session is not quite clear.

With regard to the two first sides, they cannot bear comparison to the two from the previous Commodore session with Roy Eldridge, even if the playing mainly is of high quality. The difference between the alternate takes are remarkably great, the second take of "... Breeze" being the most interesting. The two slow tunes are, however, far better than "Stardust" and "Body and Soul", and present much beautiful music. Doubtlessly the two "Gee Baby, ..." are the most satisfying with many beautiful embroiderings, executed with personality and taste. "... Street" is more bombastic, the coda is absolutely inferior, but even so, the soloing is mainly inspired and quite inventive with many fine details. Postscript of May 2018: Phil Schaap brought my attention to the 'long' 5:40 take of "... Street", pointing out that the final solo was a full chorus. I apologize for the error. Equally important is the fact however that this is not a long take but a splice of two takes, quite evident when listening to the transition from the trumpet solo unto Chu's final solo.

#### **CAB CALLOWAY AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. Sept. 10, 1941**

Personnel as March 5, 1941.

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, two have Chu:

31301-1	Mrs Finnegan	Soli 2 and 2 bars. (M)
31302-1	My Coo-Coo Bird	Solo 12 bars. (M)
31302-2	My Coo-Coo Bird	As above. (M)

One might wish that Chu had had a more worthy sortie from this orchestra, where he was such a prominent sideman for more than four years. "... Bird" is a light, but even with two takes it is soon forgotten.

#### **CHU BERRY AND CHARLIE VENTURA**

##### **TENOR SAX DUET**

##### **WITH RHYTHM SECTION**

**Philadelphia, Oct. 22, 1941**

Chu Berry, Charlie Ventura (ts), unknown (p), (b), (dm). (Local musicians).

Two titles were recorded for SIW in a music store when the Cab Calloway orchestra was in town.

Dream Girl I/II	Solo 64 bars (1st ts solo). (SM)
Get Lost I/II	Chu solos the first 96 and last 64 bars. (FM)

The exact date of this session, which quite obviously did not take place in a recording studio, is unknown, but I prefer to let it conclude Chu Berry's solography, not only because the musical results rank among his best and therefore might inspire me to write sadly about how great a loss to jazz his death was. I really believe that this was his last session, because his approach is definitely more modern than anywhere else. This is particularly evident in "Dream Girl", which is "All Of Me" in a tempo slower than usual. Also "Get Lost", alias "Blue Lou", which swings hotter and harder than even Chu usually does, and which contains some passages of enormous power, does show a modern phrasing at times. The presence of Charlie Ventura is obviously inspiring and a real challenge, especially in "Dream Girl". If anybody has any information about this session or knows additional tunes, it would be very welcome, indeed!

No further recording sessions.