

The
TENORSAX
of
EDWIN WILLIAMS
“EDDY” “EDDIE”
“CAT-EYE”

Born: Chicago
Died: No info

Introduction:

His recording sessions in the period 1958 – 1961 are good reasons to include Eddy Williams in the jazz archeology gallery! Fine tenorsax artist!

History:

Attended DuSable High School in Chicago. Started on clarinet. After two and a half years in 'Uncle Sam's Navy Band', attended Chicago Conservatory., majored in clarinet, piano, theory and composition for three fruitful years. Giggling around Chicago at this time, fronted own small groups and worked two years with Horace Henderson's band. Joined trombonist Bennie Green, appeared on two LPs. Was for a short time late in 1959, a part of the Ray Charles band. Was in 1960 part of Billy Williams Revue, then back to Chicago with own combo.

Message:

This E. "Cat-Eye" Williams should not be confused with the Eddie Williams who played with Chick Webb, MBRB, Don Redman and others in the 1930s.

“CAT-EYE” WILLIAMS SOLOGRAPHY

EDWARD “GATES” WHITE **Chi. Nov. 26, 1952**

Probable personnel: Fortunatus “Fip” Richard (tp), Tom Archia, Eddie Williams (ts), Lewis Carpenter (p), Ike Perkins (el-g), Jimmy Richardson (b), Red Saunders (dm), Edward “Gates” White (vo).

Four titles were recorded for States, issued on Delmark 717 (CD) (issued as “Long Man Blues”), no tenorsax on 1245 “Mother-In-Law”, one tenorsax heard on 1243 “Tired Of Being Mistreated” and “Love Is A Mistake”, most probably Tom Archia, but on the following title, both tenorsaxophoists solos:

1246-9 Rock-A-Bye Baby Solo 12 bars. (M)

Most probably EW takes the first tenorsax solo here, good, but not quite as sharp as the second one, and I hold Tom Archia as one of the really great tenorsax players! I could certainly be wrong, what is your opinion?

HORACE HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA **Chi. July 10, 1954**

Gail Brockman, Hobart Dotson (tp), Porter Kilbert, Andrew “Goon” Gardner (as), Jimmy Forrest, Eddie Williams, Moses Gant (ts), Laurdine “Pat” Patrick (bar), Horace Henderson (p, arr), Eddie Calhoun (b), George Reed (dm), Jean Cunningham (vo).

WIND broadcast from the Trianon Ballroom. Seven titles, EW is assumed to solo on two:

Ray's Idea Solo 18 bars. (M)

Cobb's Idea Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

Chi. July 17, 1954

Same. Eight titles, one has EW:

Artistry Jumps Solo 20 bars. (F)

Chi. July 24, 1954

Same. Eight titles, but no EW.

Competent but not remarkable tenorsax playing; "Artistry ..." is too fast, "Ray's ..." is more interesting. CD-liner notes for "Cobb's Idea" "features a tenor battle ... between Jimmy Forrest and Eddy Williams", but there is only one tenorsax soloist, believed to be EW.

PORTER KILBERT & HIS ORCHESTRA **Chi. 1957**

Personnel including Porter Kilbert (as), Eddy Williams (ts).

Two titles were recorded for Ping 1007, “Swinging With A Mambo” and “Let’s Bounce”, but no tenorsax soli.

BENNIE GREEN QUINTET **Hackensack, NJ. Nov. 23, 1958**

Bennie Green (tb), Eddy Williams (ts), Sonny Clark (p), Paul Chambers (b), Jerry Segal (dm), Babs Gonzales (vo).

Eight titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as “Minor Revelation”:

tk6 On The Street Where You Live Duet with (tb) 16 bars.
Solo 32 bars. (M)

tk9 Can’t We Be Friends? Solo 32 bars.(SM)

tk13 Minor Revelation Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

tk14 Why Do I Love You? Solo 32 bars. (M)

tk15 Encore Solo 64 bars, last 32
with vocal comments. (FM)

tk16 Encore (alt.) As above. (FM)

tk19 Bye Bye Blackbird Solo 34 bars. (SM)

tk21 It’s Groovy Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

tk22 Ain’t Nothin’ But The Blues Solo 24 bars. (SM)

EW is a very pleasant modern tenorsax performer, owing quite a lot to Dexter Gordon it seems, but having enough of his own thing. With some luck he might have become a big name, as now, there are only a few sessions to represent a great talent. This one was not issued until the Japanese got hold of it, now available to all

of us in the Bennie Green CD-box. It is possible to understand this, the drummer is quite heavyhanded, and titles like "... You Live" and "Why Do ..." are not well chosen. The general mood is quite sluggish, take the ensemble of "... Blackbird" as an example, not even the brilliant Clark can lift the session to top performance. But the tenorsax soloing is very nice on all items, note for instance "... Friends" or the many blues items of which the oriental flavoured "... Revelation" is excellent! Take a notice of EW, a great and pleasant surprise!!

BENNIE GREEN QUINTET

Hackensack, NJ. Jan. 25, 1959

Bennie Green (tb), Eddy Williams (ts), Gildo Mahones (p), George Tucker (b), Al Dreaves (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Blue Note:

Tk2	All I Do Is Dream Of You	Solo 32 bars. In coda. (M)
Tk11	This Love Of Mine	Duet with (tb) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. Duet 32 bars. (SM)
tk17	Hoppin' John	Solo 32 bars. (SM)
tk21	Green Leaves	Duet with (tb) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. Duet 32 bars. (M)
tk22	Walkin' And Talkin'	Duet with (tb) 12 bars. Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
tk25	The Shouter	Solo 36 bars. (SM)

The second BG/EW session is more relaxed than the previous one with more airy ensembles, and the tenorsax playing is close to sensational; not anyday comes a new star playing groovy modern tenorsax like this, firmly based in the Chicago tradition with some Dexter added and having his own thing too! Play the cozy "... Dream" and listen to have he treats it! There are no real ballads, but "This Love ..." is close to it! And a lot of exciting blues on "Walkin' ..." and "... Shouter". And a groovy "... John". Note also the brilliant piano playing of one of my favourites, try "... Talkin'" and "Hoppin' ...". Summing up: Too bad EW already is on his way out.

JOHNNY GRIFFIN ORCHESTRA

NYC. May 24&31, June 3, 1960

Bigband personnels including Johnny Griffin, Eddy Williams (ts).

Eight titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "The Big Soul-Band" but no EW soli.

JOHN WRIGHT QUARTET

NYC. June 23, 1961

Eddy Williams (ts), John Wright (p), Wendell Marshall (b), Roy Brooks (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Prestige (3107 "Like Someone In Love" is without EW), issued as "Makin' Out":

3102	Street	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Long coda. (M)
3103	Kitty	Solo 32 bars. (S)
3104	Back In Jersey	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (p). (FM)
3105	Soul Search	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
3106	Sparkie	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm)/(p). (M)
3108	It Could Happen To You	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 48 bars to coda. (FM)
3109	Makin' Out	Solo 24 bars. Acc. (p). (M)

This final EW session is following up the very good impression from the two Bennie Green sessions in 1958/59. He is a remarkable tenorsax performer, clearly from the Chicago school, Gene Ammons comes to my mind (as well as Dexter Gordon). Four out of seven titles are the blues, played with elegance and fire, note in particular "... Jersey" and "Sparkie". And in "Kitty" he shows that he can play a ballad like the best of those "names". "Sparkie" and "Soul Search" are composed by EW. The group is remarkably efficient, and Wright is an excellent piano player, also surprisingly unknown. This session is really an important tenorsax one, and EW is another one of all the disastrous disappearing acts in jazz! What happened to him!?

The liner notes on the above LP says that trumpeter Bobby Bryant used him on an album not yet released. However, now it is!:

BOBBY BRYANT & HIS ORCHESTRA

Chi. Feb. 9&13, 1961

Bigband personnel as listed on LP-cover: Bobby Bryant, Johnny Howell, Marty Marshack, Fortunatus Ricard (tp), John Avant, Bill Porter, Louis Satterfield (tb), Bill Adkins, Willie Randall, James Spaulding, Eddie Williams, George Hunter (reeds), John Young (p), Robare Edmondson (b), Wilbur Wynn (g), Marty Clausson (dm). Tom Lord's disco has some differences: Louis Satterfield (el-b), Wilbur Wynn (g) is omitted and the reeds are given as: Willie Akins, James Spaulding, Willie Randall (fl, as), Edwin Williams (ts), George Hunter (bar). In addition to this, the session contains soloing by James Spaulding (ts) and Wilbur Wynn (g)! Of all this, the most interesting is that Lord uses Edwin instead of Eddie! Could this come from nothing or is it based on fact!?

Ten titles were recorded for Vee Jay, issued as "Big Band Blues", two have EW:

61-1805	Round Midnight	Solo/straight 16 bars. Solo with orch 42 bars. Coda. S)
61-1812	Indiana	3 choruses of 32 bars 8/8 with (ts-JS) and orch. (F)

This is a good reminder of what we have lost with EW's early disappearance from the jazz scene. A strong bigband session gives us two EW items only, but they are highly noteworthy. First a beautiful version of "... Midnight", a real treasure! Then an exciting tenorsax chase in the tradition on "Indiana", with Spaulding playing this instrument for the occasion, should have been much longer, this version could have fitted into a 78 rpm... What happened to this fine tenorsax artist?

No further recording sessions.

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