

The
PIANO
of
ELMORE SYLVESTER
HOPE
“ELMO”

Born: NYC. June 27, 1923
 Died: NYC. May 19, 1967

Introduction:

I hate to say it, but Elmo Hope was quite unknown back in the old days, even when Thelonious Monk, Bud Powell and Horace Silkver were highly appreciated. Sorry about that.

History:

Elmo Hope's parents were immigrants from the Caribbean. Elmo began playing the piano aged seven. He had classical music lessons as a child and won solo piano recital contests from 1938. Fellow pianist Bud Powell was a childhood friend; together they played and listened to jazz and classical music. Hope attended Benjamin Franklin High School which was known for its musical program. He developed an excellent understanding of harmony and composed jazz and classical pieces at school. Met Thelonious Monk in 1942. Was enlisted in U.S. Army in March 1943. His absence from the early bebop scene largely continued after he left the army as he played principally in rhythm and blues bands for a few years. He had his first long-term association with the Joe Morris band from 1948 to 1951. Jazz career started in June 1953 when he recorded for Blue Note with Clifford Brown quintet. However, drug problems made him lose his NYC cabaret card around 1956 so he was no longer permitted to play in clubs in the city. Toured with Chet Baker in 1957 and began living in Los Angeles. Met his wife in 1960 and returned to NYC. in 1961. Although musically active, drug problems persisted. He was hospitalized with pneumonia in 1967 and died a few weeks later, of heart failure. In September 2016, Lyman Place in the Bronx was co-named "Elmo Hope Way – Jazz Pioneer" in honor of the pianist (abbreviated from Wikipedia, which has a lot of interesting information!!).

Important information:

Postscript of July 2023: Noal Cohen's Elmo Hope discography (attictoys.com) should be looked up carefully, because it contains important and very useful information, but sometimes on the edge of my solography approach. Some of it I have used in an appendix (page 13).

ELMO HOPE SOLOGRAPHY

JOE MORRIS & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Sept. 19, 1948**

Joe Morris (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Johnny Griffin (ts), Bill McLemore (bar), Elmo Hope (p), Percy Heath (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Atlantic, two issued:

A141 Wow! Acc. (tb/ts). (SM)

A142 The Applejack In ens. Solo 12 bars. (SM)

NYC. Dec. 22, 1948

Same. Five titles, four issued:

A166 Weasel Walk Acc. (ts). (SM)

A167 Boogie Woogie March In ens. Acc. (ts). Solo 12 bars. (M)

A168 Chuck-a-boogie In ens. Solo 12 bars. Acc. (bar). (M)

A169 Jax Boogie In ens/straight. (M)

Elmo Hope's role in the Joe Morris orchestra is rhythm and blues and boogie only. Nothing wrong with that, but one is somewhat surprised that nothing of his later jazz greatness penetrates the extrovert noise here. Although three blues choruses on these first sessions, nothing exciting happens, really.

WYNONIE HARRIS**Linden, NJ. April 13, 1949**

Joe Morris (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Freddie Douglas, Johnny Griffin (ts), Bill McLemore (bar), Elmo Hope (p), Gene Ramey (b), Kelly Martin (dm), unknown (vo-group).

Three titles were recorded for King, "Drinkin' Wine Spoo-dee-o-dee", "All She Wants To Do Is Rock" and "I Can't Take It No More", but no EH.

JOE MORRIS & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. May 11, 1949**

Personnel as above.

Five titles were recorded for Atlantic, two issued:

A230 Beans And Cornbread No EH. (M)

A234 Tia Juana In ens. Acc. (ts). (FM)

NYC. Oct. 28, 1949

Joe Morris (tp, vo), Alfonso King (tb), Johnny Griffin, Wally Williams (ts), Bill McLemore (bar), Elmo Hope (p), Bobby Burton (b), Sinclair Abbott (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three issued:

75457 Sneakin' Around Acc. (vo-JM). In ens. (S)

75458 Portia's Boogie In ens. Acc. (bar). Solo 48 bars. (M)

75459 Lowdown Baby Acc. (tp). Acc. (vo-JM). (S)

NYC. Nov. 18, 1949

Same except Al Jones (dm) replaces Abbott.

Three titles:

75520 Wig Headed Mama Blues No EH. (M)

75521 Broken Hearted Blues Acc. (vo-JM) 24 and 12 bars. (S)

75522 Ooh, Ooh That's Good In ens. Acc. (vo-JM). (S/M)

No change from the preceding sessions, but if you still want to hear clearly what EH is doing these days, "Sneakin' is a nice example of his backing of Morris' vocal, and "Portia's ..." shows that he certainly knows how to play the boogie woogie.

Note of July 10, 2023: Noal Cohen does not include the following Joe Morris sessions in his discography, finding no substantial evidence that EH actually is present. Make sense!

JOE MORRIS & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. June 7, 1950**

Joe Morris (tp), unknown (tp), (as), (ts), (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Roy Gaines (g), unknown (b), (dm), Laurie Tate (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Atlantic:

A463 Anytime, Anyplace, Anywhere Acc. (vo-LT). (S)

A464	Stormy Weather	Acc. (vo-LT). (S)
A465	Come Back Daddy, Daddy	Acc. (vo-LT). Solo 8 bars. (S)
A466	Rock Me Daddy	Straight intro. In ens. (M)

NYC. Nov. 14, 1950

Same. Two titles, unissued.

NYC. Nov. 20, 1950

Same except unknown (bar), Teddy Smith (vo) added.
Four titles:

A533	You're Mine Darling	Acc. (vo-LT). (S)
A534	I Hope You Are Satisfied	Acc. (vo-LT). (S)
A535	Can't Stop My Crying	Acc. (vo-LT). (S)
A536	Don't Take Your Love Away	Acc. (vo-TS). (S)

As you can see, with only one brief exception, EH only accompanies the various vocalists, no real jazz. However, there is certainly pleasure to get from his playing behind Laurie Tate, good singer/screamer also!

JOE MORRIS BLUES CAVALCADE

NYC. Jan. 15, 1951

Same with Joe Morris, Billy Mitchell, Jimmy Lewis (vo).
Eight titles were recorded for Atlantic, six issued:

A549	Ghost Train Pt 1	Prominent in ens. (SM)
A551	Midnight Grinder	Prominent in ens. (SM)
A552	Jump, Everybody, Jump	Prominent in ens. (M)
A553	Love Fever Blues	Acc. (vo-JL). (S)
A554	Yeah! Yeah! Yeah!	Acc. (vo-JM). (M)
A555	Pack Up All Your Bags	Acc. (g). Acc. (vo-BM). (S)

Philadelphia, Feb. 10, 1951

Same. Four titles, two issued:

A557	My Love, My Desire	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (vo-BM). (S)
A558	Bald Headed Woman	Obbligato parts (vo-BM). (S)

NYC. April 26, 1951

Same plus unknown (tb). Five titles, three issued:

A605	If I Had Known	In ens. Acc. (vo-BM/TS). (S)
A607	Let's Have A Ball Tonight	No EH. (M)
A608	Verna Lee	Acc. (vo-BM). (S)

NYC. Oct. 24, 1951

Same. Julia White, Faye Adams (vo) added.
Six titles, two issued:

A651	Watch Out, I Told You	Solo with (vo-ens) 12 bars. Prominent in ens. (S)
A654	Someday You'll Be Sorry	Acc. (g). Acc. (vo-BM). Acc. (as). (S)

NYC. Oct. 1, 1952

Same. Dr. Jones (vo) added. Two titles, unissued.

NYC. Dec. 23, 1952

Same but Faye Adams, Jack Walker (vo).
Four titles, three issued:

A966	I'm Goin' To Leave You	Acc. (vo). (S)
A968	That's What Makes My Baby Fat	Acc. (vo-FA/JM). (M)
A969	Sweet Talk	Acc. (vo-JW). (SM)

Nothing more needs to be said, you know how the music sounds before you put on the needle/spotify. However, these years must have been good practice for an EH growing up.

**LOU DONALDSON /
CLIFFORD BROWN QUINTET**

NYC. June 9, 1953

Clifford Brown (tp), Lou Donaldson (as), Elmo Hope (p, comp-489, 490, 493), Percy Heath (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Blue Note:

489-1	Bellarosa	Solo 32 bars. (M)
490-1	Carving The Rock	Soli 8, 68 and 8 bars. (FM)
490-alt. 1	Carving The Rock	As above. (FM)
490-alt. 2	Carving The Rock	As above. (FM)
491-0, alt.	Cookin'	As below. (FM)
491-1	Cookin'	Solo 24 bars. Acc.(b). (FM)
492-0	Brownie Speaks	Acc. (tp). Solo 32 bars. (F)
493-0	De-dah	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (b). (M)
494-0	You Go To My Head	Acc. (as/tp). (S)

This is the real beginning of Elmo Hope's recorded jazz career, in fact it seems that he starts to play jazz, really, close to this time. He had had inside all the time, and now it develops quickly into maturity. His abrupt style fits perfectly into Lou Donaldson's music, and he seems to be not the bit nervous playing with the famous and legendary "Brown". He has interesting contributions on all items, although he only comps on the slow "... My Head". The session piano highlights and proof of his creativity are the three takes of "... The Rock", play the first eight bars of all three to meet a true improviser and coming jazz piano star!

ELMO HOPE TRIO

Hackensack, NJ. June 18, 1953

Elmo Hope (p, comp-495-500), Percy Heath (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "New Faces – New Sounds":

495-1	Happy Hour	2:50. (M)
496-2	Freddie	3:02. (M)
497-2	Carving The Rock	2:54. (FM)
498-0	Hot Sauce	3:50. (F)
499-0	Mo Is On	2:48. (F)
499-1	Mo Is On alt.	2:47. (F)
500-1	Stars Over Marrakesh	3:03. (SM)
501-1	I Remember You	2:43. (SM)
	It's A Lovely Day, Today	2:44. (FM)
502-2?	Sweet And Lovely	2:56. (S)

As always, Blue Note is the number one recording company, giving EH a full trio session only nine days after the previous session, mostly with his own compositions. Almost half-an-hour with bubbling improvisations in different tempi. To choose highlights is difficult, but the fast and dramatic "Hot Sauce" should be noted and "Freddie" is a fascinating blues. "... Today" is a good example of how EH swings a standard, and he knows to play a ballad as evident in "... Lovely", although retaining his own strongly modern style and harmonies. This session is a fine introduction to EH's piano style.

ELMO HOPE QUINTET

Hackensack, NJ. May 9, 1954

Freeman Lee (tp), Frank Foster (ts), Elmo Hope (p, comp), Percy Heath (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "New Faces – New Sounds" Vol. 2:

566-2	Crazy	Soli 64 and 8 bars. (FM)
566-3	Crazy	As above. (FM)
567-3	Later For You	Intro 4 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)

568-1	Abdullah	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
569-1	Chips	Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
570-2	Maybe So	Solo 64 bars. (M)
571-2	Low Tide	Intro 4 bars. Solo 64 bars. (M)

However, almost one year passed before Blue Note recorded EH again, this time with the great Frank Foster from the Basie band adding some extra fire. All titles are EH originals, and start with “Crazy” and “Later...” to continue and discover his originality as a writer and his strong and exciting piano playing. It seems that he now has some increased confidence in his playing. All items here are highly noteworthy.

SONNY ROLLINS QUINTET

Hackensack, NJ. Aug. 18, 1954

Kenny Dorham (tp), Sonny Rollins (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Percy Heath (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as “Movin’ Out”:

606	Movin’ Out	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
607	Swingin’ For Bumsy	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
608	Silk ‘N Satin	Acc. (ts). Solo 8 bars. (S)
609	Solid	Solo 48 bars. (M)

A fine session where Rollins takes another step towards the eternal stardom obtained a few years later. Two quite fast titles show an inspired EH in his abrupt style, particularly “... Bumsy” is highly exciting. His four blues choruses are very creative, as are his beautiful eight bars on “... Satin”, and it is easy to understand his closeness to Monk.

LOU DONALDSON SEXTET

Hackensack, NJ. Aug. 22, 1954

Kenny Dorham (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Lou Donaldson (as), Elmo Hope (p, comp-“... Bluff”), Percy Heath (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Blue Note:

tk3	Caracas	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
tk4	The Stroller	Intro 8 bars. Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
tk6	Moe’s Bluff	Intro 4 bars. Solo 48 bars. (M)
tk10	After You’ve Gone	Acc. only. (F)

Another important session! Fine straightforward playing on “Caracas” and “... Bluff”, but perhaps the fast blues on “The Stroller” takes the first prize here.

ELMO HOPE TRIO

NYC. July 28, 1955

Elmo Hope (p, comp 773-774, 778-780), John Ore (b), Willie Jones (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as “Meditations”:

770	All The Things You Are	3:22. (M)
771	Ghost Of A Chance	4:55. (S)
772	Falling In Love With Love	2:56. (M)
773	Quit It	4:24. (S)
774	Huh!	3:46. (FM)
775	My Heart Stood Still	3:22. (S/M)
776	It’s A Lovely Day Today	3:38. (F)
777	I’m In The Mood For Love	4:24. (M)
778	Lucky Strike	2:53. (F)
779	Blue Mo	6:40. (S)
780	Elmo’s Fire	2:33. (F)

A second trio session, two years after the previous one, and this one seems even more exciting! Excellent variations in music material and tempi. At first listening, EH’s music may sound edgy, ragged, difficult to grasp, but after being familiar with his style, there is so much beauty in his playing. Take “... Today” as a good example, this is a version for those searching the advanced modern thinking. Note

that “Elmo’s Fire”, supposed to be an EH original, is a non-camouflaged version of “After You’ve Gone”! Note also the active work of the bassist and his opening of “... Love”. A great trio session!

ELMO HOPE / FRANK FOSTER

NYC. Oct. 4, 1955

Freeman Lee (tp-798-800), Frank Foster (ts), Elmo Hope (p, comp 798-99, 801,02), John Ore (b), Art Taylor (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as “Wail, Frank, Wail”:

798	Zarou	Intro 8 bars. Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
799	Fosterity	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
800	Shut Out	Intro 4 bars. Solo 64 and 32 bars. (M)
801	Wail, Frank, Wail	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (ts). Solo 11 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
802	Yaho	Straight intro 12 bars. Acc. (ts). Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
803	Georgia On My Mind	Intro 4 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M)

An excellent modern mainstream session, where EH and Foster share the stage amiably, with inspired playing on all items. There are blues and standards half-half here with “Georgia ...” as the only ‘oldfashioned’ title, played a bit too fast, but with fine piano. The highlight for conservative me is the groovy blues with lots of surprises on “Yaho”, wow!

JACKIE McLEAN QUINTET

Hackensack, NJ. Jan. 27, 1956

Donald Byrd (tp), Jackie McLean (as), Elmo Hope (p), Doug Watkins (b), Art Taylor (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as “Lights Out”:

850	A Foggy Day	Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. (FM)
851	Kerplunk	Intro 8 bars to solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
852	Up	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
853	Lorraine	Intro. Acc. (tp/as). (S)
854	Inding	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
855	Lights Out	Acc. (b). Solo 12 bars. Acc. (as). Acc. (tp). Solo 48 bars. (S)

EH is not the leader here, but his contributions are highly noteworthy; four uptempo items played with great inspiration, the most exciting seems to be the blues on “Kerplunk” where he leads the way for the others, and good old “... Day” (note the beginning of the second chorus). In slow tempo, he is to be noticed on the not sweet “Lorraine”, although he does not solo but creates beautiful background for the horns. Finally, if I don’t push the album title forward as a highlight, someone out there is likely to, but this 13 minutes of the very slow blues as only they could make it, then. EH starts out strongly together with the bass in the beginning but returns with four magnificent choruses at the end, great!

ELMO HOPE ALL STAR SEXTET

NYC. May 7, 1956

Donald Byrd (tp), Hank Mobley, John Coltrane (ts), Elmo Hope (p, comp 884,886), Paul Chambers (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as “Informal Jazz”:

884	Wee Jah	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
885	Polka Dots And Moonbeams	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (tp/ts). Solo 32 and 8 bars. Coda. (S)
886	On It	Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
887	Avalon	Intro 4 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

EH’s last session before he moves to California, and with the most challenging of the upcoming talents. Nevertheless, he is clearly in full command on these four items ranging from 8 ½ to 11 minutes. The fast medium blues on “... It” is great, the two fast items likewise. My particular highlight is nevertheless the beautiful piano playing on “... Moonbeams”, so highly original!

ELMO HOPE QUINTET**LA. Oct. 31, 1957**

Stu Williamson (tp), Harold Land (ts), Elmo Hope (p, comp), Leroy Vinnegar (b), Frank Butler (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Pacific Jazz:

Vaun Ex	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Acc. (b). (M)
St. Elmo's Fire	Intro 16 bars. Acc. (ts). Acc. (b). (SM)
So Nice	Intro 8 bars. Solo 64 bars. (M)

EH is in California now, starting a series of sessions involving tenorsax artist Harold Land. This one is pleasant and quite conventional with good music. It seems that EH limits himself somewhat to easily congestable music, nothing wrong with that, and "Vaun Ex" and "So Nice" have fine piano soli. On "... Fire" his soloing is limited to the opening, but note his comping of Land here.

CURTIS COUNCE QUINTET**LA. Jan. 6, 1958**

Gerald Wilson (tp), Harold Land (ts), Elmo Hope (p, comp), Curtis Counce (b), Frank Butler (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Contemporary:

So Nice	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. (M)
Origin	Solo 24 bars. Acc. (b). (M)
Bella Rosa	Solo 32 bars. Acc. (b). (M)

Straight forward session, this time led by bassist Curtis Counce who therefore has a rather prominent role, and with rather brief piano soli. Note "So Nice" with only one chorus compared to the version above.

CURTIS COUNCE QUINTET**LA. ca. April 1958**

Rolf Ericson (tp), Harold Land (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Curtis Counce (b), Frank Butler (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Dootone, issued as "Exploring The Future":

6:30	Chasin' The Bird	Solo 64 bars. Acc. (b). (FM)
3:59	Angel Eyes	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (ts/tp). Solo 8 bars. (S)
4:32	Race For Space	Solo 32 bars. Acc. (b). (F)
6:14	Exploring The Future	Intro. Solo 36 bars. (SM)
3:40	Someone To Watch Over Me	Solo with (b) 48 bars. (S)
4:43	Into Orbit	Intro 4 bars. Solo 36 bars. Acc. (b). (M)
6:37	So Nice	Solo 32 bars. Acc. (b). (M)
6:35	Forecast	
4:17	Move	Acc. (tp/ts). (F)

The close cooperation and feeling between EH and Counce on "... Watch Over Me" is some of what one immediately notes on this fine session. That he could play "pretty" is well demonstrated in "... Reyes". Some typical and exciting soloing on "... The Bird" and "... The Future", otherwise not a weak spot here. Note that there is only one version of "Move", lasting 4:17, false info because some issues have edited version.

same date

Omit (tp) and (ts). One title (also given as "Head Gear"):

The Countdown (stereo)	5:41. (M)
The Countdown (mono)	4:10. (M)

Note that these are two versions of the same tune. Exciting playing here!

HAROLD LAND QUARTET**Vancouver, Nov. 1958**

Harold Land (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Scott LaFaro (b), Lennie McBrowne (dm).

Five titles were recorded live in The Cellar:

18:59	Cherokee	Intro and 64 bars with ens. Solo 7 choruses of 64 bars. (F)
19:40	Just Friends	Intro 16 bars. Acc. (ts). Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. Acc. (b). (M)

1:17	The Scene Is Clean (Theme)	Intro. Acc. (ts). (M)
27:44	Big Foot	Acc. (ts). Solo 37 choruses of 12 bars. Acc. (b). (FM)
11:57	Come Rain Come Shine	Intro 8 bars. Acc. (ts). Solo 32 bars. (S)

To follow the Harold Land solography format closely: “Now how to evaluate this!?! It is certainly of great historical value, also for the presence of Land and LaFaro, but the length of these items may stress the listener’s concentration. “Big Foot” of almost half-an-hour with seven minutes of strong piano blues, can you really take it; it would have been nice to be there, but on CD? I really don’t know. But the session has reasonably good sound, and sounded better when played for the third than the first time! My favourite item is not surprisingly “... Shine” in a pleasant slow tempo. The term “duet” is proper for this co-work, because HL and Hope plays so closely together all the way, great! You simply have to listen to this session, it is quite unique!!

ELMO HOPE TRIO

LA. Feb. 8, 1959

Elmo Hope (p, comp-except “... Love”), Jimmy Bond (b), Frank Butler (dm-except “Tranquility”).

Eight titles were recorded for Contemporary:

B’s A-Plenty	5:39. (FM)
Barfly	6:11. (S)
Eejah	3:51. (S)
Boa	5:57. (FM)
Something For Kenny	6:09. (FM)
Like Someone In Love	7:24. (S)
Minor Bertha	4:46. (FM)
Tranquility	2:56. (S)

The third trio session, 3 ½ years after the last one, and equally exciting. The items are in general somewhat longer, giving EH the opportunity to stretch out, but also more solo space to bass and drums. The date seems to be divided into two parts, one of four items with fast medium tempo, full of energy and so uncommercial. The more you listen, the more hypnotized you will be by this music. Should a highlight of these be chosen, “... Kenny” is a very strong candidate! And a second part with four beautiful ballads, perhaps the solemn should be particularly noted, but the only non-Hope composition “... In Love”, played so differently from the conventional, will surely be highly appreciated. As far as I understand, this album received a rare five-star review from Down Beat magazine.

HAROLD LAND QUINTET

LA. Aug. 1959

Dupree Bolton (tp), Harold Land (ts), Elmo Hope (p, comp items 2-4,6), Herbie Lewis (b), Frank Butler (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Contemporary, issued as “The Fox”:

The Fox	Intro 8 bars. Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
Mirror-Mind Roses	Acc. (ts/tp). Solo 16 bars. (S)
One Second, Please	Intro. Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Sims-A-Plenty	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Little Chris	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
One Down	Solo 2 choruses of 40 bars. (FM)

This quite experimental session produces its third solography! Also here EH offers the majority of the compositions. He digs into the very fast blues “The Fox” without fear, and on the other tempo end, “... Roses” is a very slow and beautiful composition with a highly original piano solo. The four fast medium items are a matter of choice with exciting music all the way, and to suggest piano highlights is quite impossible, they are all great!

ELMO HOPE SEXTET

NYC. June 22, 1961

Blue Mitchell (tp), Frank Foster, Jimmy Heath (ts), Elmo Hope (p, comp), Percy Heath (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as “Homecoming”:

Moe Jr. take 2	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Moe, Jr. take 4	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Eyes So Beautiful As Yours	Intro. Solo 2:27. Coda. (S)
A Kiss For My Love take 4	Solo 64 bars. (M)
A Kiss For My Love take 5	As above. (M)

Almost two years since the last recording session, such a shame! EH is still one of the most interesting performers of modern jazz piano, although the world did not want to know. He returned to the East Coast, stating as advice to young players, that "This (West Coast) is no place to try to learn anything. If they want to learn, let them go back to New York – both for inspiration and brotherly love. They'll hear more things happening ...". Well, EH certainly makes things happen here! Beautiful soli in medium tempo, particularly "... My Love". The highlight is nevertheless "... Beautiful ...", and EH plays just so, a magnificent performance.

ELMO HOPE TRIO

NYC. June 29, 1961

Elmo Hope (p, comp), Percy Heath (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "Homecoming":

La Berthe	3:10. (FM)
Homecoming	5:04. (F)
One Mo' Blues	6:44. (S/M)
Imagination	6:39. (S)

Then a trio session with the same bass and drums as the week before. Note that "Homecoming" is another non-camouflaged version of "After You've Gone".

ELMO HOPE

NYC. Nov. 9&14, 1961

Elmo Hope (p, comp-item 2, 4, 6, 8), Bertha Hope (p-item 1-3).
Eight titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "Hope-Full" and "Afternoon Party":

Yesterdays	5:18. (S)
Blues Left And Right	6:05. (S)
My Heart Stood Still	5:23. (FM)
Underneath	4:35. (SM)
When Johnny Comes Marching Home	4:58. (FM)
Most Beautiful	5:03. (S)
Liza	3:32. (S/M)
Moonbeams	4:50. (S)

This is something very special, a session one really should spend time with. For once there are several no own compositions, thus the material seemingly should be easy to digest. But it isn't. The music is so full of complexities that its greatness take some time to live into it. The presence of EH's wife Bertha on three items offer also some new dimension, and she comps her husband very effectively on "Blues ...". She obviously is a very good pianist in her own right, as particularly evident on "Yesterdays". The tempi are generally quite slow here, but they swing happily together on "My Heart ...". The five solo items are just magnificent, and you have never heard "Liza" played in a romantic way like this! And ballads like "... Beautiful" and "Moonbeams" again show how great EH was as a composer, and as a pianist.

ELMO HOPE TRIO

NYC. Jan. 8, 1962

Elmo Hope (p, comp), Percy Heath (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).
Postscript of Feb. 13, 2023: Note new dates. Dec. 12, 1961 is not correct (ref. the book "The Melody Man: Joe Davis" owner of Celebrity and Beacon Records, page 290).

Six titles were recorded for Celebrity, issued as "Here's Hope":

Hot Sauce	3:32. (F)
When The Groove Is Low	4:59. (M)
De Dah	4:26. (M)
Low Tide	3:45. (M)

Freddie	3:37. (FM)
Stars Over Marrakesh	6:44. (M)

same

Same. Three titles were recorded for Beacon, issued as “High Hope”:

Chips	4:56. (M)
Moe’s Bluff	4:19. (M)
Hot Sauce	4:03. (M)

NYC. Jan. 10, 1962

Elmo Hope (p, comp), Butch Warren (b), Granville T. Hogan (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Beacon, issued as “High Hope”:

Mo Is On	4:28. (M)
Maybe So	4:37. (F)
Crazy	4:15. (FM)

There is not really much to add; if you already are addicted to EH’s exciting piano playing, you will find numerous treasures everywhere in these three trio sessions, if not, neither here does he make it easy for you with his complex interpretations of his own look at the world. To select highlights is next to impossible, it will highly depend on yourself as an individual. For me, I was particularly fascinated by “Abdullah”, “... Marrakesh” and “Maybe So”.

PHILLY JO JONES QUINTET**NYC. Feb. 24, 1962**

Bill Hardman (tp), Roland Alexander (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Larry Ridley (b), Philly Jo Jones (dm).

WADO broadcast “The Symphony Sid Show” from Birdland (James Accardi collection) three titles (plus two “Theme”s (“Wee Dot”), no piano of importance). (Note also that after the quintet program while “Symphony Sid” Torin is introducing Sonny Stitt’s group, Elmo Hope is heard noodling behind him, appr. one minute):

7:26	Shaw ‘Nuff	Solo 64 bars. (F)
6:37	The Scene Is Clean	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
7:03	Stablemates	Solo 48 bars. (FM)

Postscript of June 23, 2023: The dynamics of drums is too prominent here, and PJJ’s group next year is better, but EH is always exciting. He does not seem to go quite along with “Stablemates”, but he takes two sparkling piano soli on “Shaw ...” and “The Scene ...”, great discoveries!!

NYC. March 3, 1962

Same. Three titles (some initial piano noodling, plus final “Theme” (“Blue ‘N’ Boogie”), no piano of importance):

10:15	Muse Rapture	Solo 3 choruses of 36 bars. (FM)
7:45	Shaw ‘Nuff	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
5:21	Well You Needn’t (NC)	Solo 32 bars (NC). (FM)

Better drum balance here and it is a pleasure to hear the cooperation between EH and PJJ on this “Shaw ...”.

PHILLY JO JONES SEXTET**NYC. Jan. 5, 1963**

Dizzy Reece (tp), Sonny Red (as), John Gilmore (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Larry Ridley (b), Philly Jo Jones (dm).

WADO broadcast “The Symphony Sid Show” from Birdland (James Accardi collection), no EH on end theme 0:56 “Theme – Blue ‘N’ Boogie” but:

1:02	Theme – Jumpin’ With Symphony Sid	Briefly in ens. (FM)
12:49	Joe’s Delight	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Acc. (dm). (FM)
9:52	I Can’t Get Started	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (tp/as/ts). Solo 16 bars. (S)
6:59	Take Twelve	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (F)

Postscript of Oct. 2021: Great jazz archeological discovery, the first broadcast unearthed with this group! The dynamics of the leader is incredible, particularly "... Twelve" can take your breath away. EH has a prominent role, note how he comps PJJ on "... Delight" in addition to a long solo. His highlight is "... Started", and the sound is good enough to give much detail of his comping behind the various soloists. A beautiful solo also, only too bad he only gets half a chorus here, less than all the others get.

ELMO HOPE ORCHESTRA

NYC. Aug. 19, 1963

Lawrence Jackson (tp), Freddie Douglas (sop), John Gilmore (ts), Elmo Hope (p, comp-item 1-2, 4, 6), Ronnie Boykins (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm), Earl Coleman (vo- "... Dream"), Marcel Daniels (vo- "... High").

Seven titles were recorded for Audio Fidelity, issued as "Sounds From Rikers Island":

One For Joe	In ens. Solo 84 bars. Acc. (dm). (F)
Ecstasy	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
A Night In Tunisia	In ens. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Trippin'	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
It Shouldn't Happen To A Dream	Acc. (vo). (S)
Monique	Solo/straight. Acc. (ts). (S)
Groovin' High	Intro 8 bars. Acc. (vo). (F)

This is a very special EH-session, inasmuch as the music is built around the infamous prison which has housed many jazz artists, mostly because of drug addiction. Thus there is less emphasis on piano soloing, but with many other qualities. Most interesting is "... Tunisia" which is played in a rather surprisingly minimalistic way. The famous break is given to the altosax.

same date

Elmo Hope (p, comp), Ronnie Boykins (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).
Two titles:

Kevin	4:19. (FM)
Three Silver Quarters	4:49. (S)

Two fine trio items are perhaps the most piano-exciting from this session.

ELMO HOPE TRIO

NYC. Nov. 14, 1964

Elmo Hope (p), John Ore (b), Billy Higgins (dm).

Private recordings by Alan Sukoening, not available, but music exists and is likely to be issued in the near future (ref. Noal Cohen), eleven titles:

Carving The Rock	7:55. ()
Imagination	8:15. ()
Low Tide (NC)	7:31. ()
Like Someone In Love	10:13. ()
All The Things You Are	9:36. ()
So Nice (NC)	7:27. ()
Ghost Of A Chance	7:51. ()
De-dah (NC)	9:23. ()
What's New?	7:36. ()
A Kiss For My Love	4:40. ()
I Love You	5:34. ()

Postscript of July 2023: Looking forward to hear this session!!

ELMO HOPE TRIO

NYC. May 8, 1966

Elmo Hope (p, comp-item 3-5), John Ore (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Postscript of Feb. 13, 2023: Date is corrected.

Five titles were recorded by Herb Abramson for his Festival label but never issued as such, issued later as "The Final Sessions Vol. 1":

I Love You	10:50. (M)
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A Night In Tunisia	10:16. (FM)
Stellations	4:22. (SM)
Pam	2:47. (S)
Elmo's Blues	10:42. (SM)

NYC. May 9, 1966

Elmo Hope (p, comp-except item 1), John Ore (b), Clifford Jarvis (dm).
 Nine titles, issued as "The Final Sessions Vol. 2":

Somebody Loves Me	8:42. (SM)
Low Tide	4:57. (M)
Low Tide alt.	6:32. (M)
Roll On	2:56. (FM)
Roll On alt.	5:52. (M)
Vi-Ann	6:37. (FM)
Vi-Ann alt.	5:40. (FM)
Toothsome Threesome	8:52. (S)
Grammy	8:26. (M)
A Kiss For My Love (Bertha My Dear)	8:04. (S)
Something For Kenny	6:40. (M)
Punch That	9:37. (FM)

Two and a half years have passed since the last EH session, and full five years since the fruitful 'homecoming' to New York. And after a life of struggle, the final end is coming closer; one more year and at the age of close to 44, this great piano artist was no longer with us. Happily he gave us these full two hours of music as a wonderful goodbye. There is no diminishing of his creative powers as far as I am able to hear, and the duration of the tracks goes up to around ten minutes, giving fine opportunity for prolonged improvisation. There is no need to try to go into details, just listen, but you just have to hear him play the slow blues on "Toothsome ..."! A kind of wonderful farewell blues. Dare I, somewhat un-solography-like, say that I find Elmo Hope more exciting and unpredictable than his better known friend Thelonious Monk? Note also that although he never achieved in life the popular and commercial success he deserved, any CD with Elmo Hope has liner notes full of awe for the music of this magnificent composer and pianist.

No further recording sessions.

APPENDIX

Please be aware that there are duplicate titles for several of EH's compositions (ref. Noal Cohen), in alphabetical order:

Abdullah (Abdulla) = When The Groove Is Low
 Barfly (Bar Fly) = This Sweet Sorrow
 Bertha My Dear = A Kiss For My Love
 Bird's View = Low Tide = Into The Orbit
 Crazy = Race For Space
 De-Dah = Kevin
 Delving = Happy Hour
 Ecstasy = Vaun Ex
 Elmo's Fire = Homecoming
 If I Could I Would = Something For Kenny
 One For Joe = Take Twelve
 Origin = Roll On = Stealthy Fingers
 So Nice = Trippin'

In my solography, the title used on the available CDs is just copied to avoid confusion, but you should consult this list.

...ooo...