

The  
**TENORSAX**  
of  
**FRANK GOUDIE**  
**“BIG BOY”**

Solographer: Jan Evensmo  
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Born: Royville (Youngsville), Louisiana, Sept. 13, 1899  
 Died: San Francisco, California, Jan. 9, 1964

*Introduction:*

Frank Goudie was one of the early tenorsax players with his own concepts and personality, making him stand out from the crowd (and if you have seen photos of the guy, vow, he didn't get the name 'Big Boy' for nothing!). He certainly deserves his own solography!

*History:*

Family moved to New Orleans when Frank was eight. Began by playing a home-made fiddle, then played cornet in school band. Became apprentice at a barbershop, but also played piano for silent movies whilst still in his early teens. Occasionally experimented with sax and clarinet, but worked mostly on cornet during his days in New Orleans. Played with Papa Celestin's Original Tuxedo Band, the Magnolia Band, Arnold DuPas, and Jack Carey. From 1921 began touring with a minstrel show, for the next four years worked in Texas, Louisiana, New Mexico, and California with a variety of bands including Frank Matthews' and the Louisiana High Browns. Quit touring in Tampico, Mexico, and sailed to Europe. Lived in France from 1925, concentrated on tenor sax and clarinet, but occasionally played trumpet; worked in France, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland, and Holland with Benny Peyton, Louis Mitchell, Sam Wooding, Noble Sissle, and Freddy Johnson. Lived in France, concentrated on tenorsax and clarinet, but occasionally played trumpet; worked in France, Portugal, Spain, Belgium, Switzerland and Holland with Benny Peyton, Louis Mitchell, Sam Wooding, Noble Sissle and Freddy Johnson. With Willie Lewis from April 1935 until October 1938, then joined Oscar Aleman's band. Remained in Paris until 1940, then spent duration of World War II in Brazil and Argentine. Whilst in South America played with various bands including spell with Booker Pittman orchestra, also led own small bands. Returned to France in 1946, worked with pianist Charlie Lewis, Arthur Briggs, and Harry Cooper. With Glyn Paque in Switzerland during 1948, left in April 1949, for next two years spells with Bill Coleman's band. From 1951 until 1956 led own band in Berlin. Moved back to U.S.A. in summer of 1957, lived in San Francisco where he ran own business (which was part of an inheritance from his uncle). Continued to play clarinet regularly – worked with Marty Marsala, Earl Hines, Burt Bales, Dick Oxtot, Eddie Smith, Bill Erickson etc. (ref. John Chilton).

*Message:*

Just published: Dan Vernhettes with Christine Goudie and Tony Baldwin: "Big Boy – The Life and Music of Frank Goudie"! A magnificent book, a 'must', utterly well researched, fascinating reading, every page a real treasure, with gorgeous photos. [www.jazzedit.org](http://www.jazzedit.org) Hurry up and buy it before it is too late!!!!  
 Note: Frank Goudie is reported to be exactly 2.00 metres tall.

## FRANK "BIG BOY" GOUDIE SOLOGRAPHY

First recording session with **NOBLE SISSLE AND HIS SIZZLING SYNCOPATORS** in London, Dec. 11, 1930, but no tenorsax soli (possibly a (cl)-solo on "You Can't Get To Heaven ..."). A rejected session with **MACEO JEFFERSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA** in Paris, ca. Dec. 20, 1932 leads to his first recording session with definite soli on tenorsax:

**MACEO JEFFERSON AND HIS BOYS** **Paris, ca. July 1933**  
Arthur Briggs, Harry Cooper (tp), Billy Burns (tb), Filiberto Rico, Alcide Castellanos (as), Frank Goudie (ts, bar ?), Freddy Johnson (p), Maceo Jefferson (bjo, g, ldr), Juan Fernandez (b), Oliver Tines (dm), Elizabeth Welch (vo-1626/27).  
Four titles were recorded for Salabert, all have FG:

SS-1625-B	Ready For Love	(Baritone sax solo 16 bars?). Solo 2 bars. (FM)
SS-1626-B	Stormy Weather	With orchestra. (SM)
SS-1627-A	Crying For Love	Solo with orch 20 bars. (M)
SS-1628-B	Look Who's Here	Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)

"Big Boy's" presence is evident, and the records are generally nice, but the tenorsax contributions are not very sensational nor prominent.

**FREDDY JOHNSON, ARTHUR BRIGGS AND THEIR ALL STAR ORCHESTRA** **Paris, ca. July 1933**  
Arthur Briggs, Bobby Jones, Theodore Brock (tp), Billy Burns (tb), Peter Duconge (cl, as), Alcide Castellanos (as), Frank Goudie (ts), Freddy Johnson (p, arr), Sterling Conaway (g), Juan Fernandez (b), Billy Taylor (dm), Louis Cole (vo-61/62), Spencer Williams (vo-59/60).  
Five titles were recorded for French Brunswick, four issued, all have tenorsax:

6459	Sing About The Swanee	Break 2 bars. Solo 18 bars. Obbligato 2 bars. (M)
6460	My Baby's Gone	Obbligato 8 bars. (M)
6461	Sweet Georgia Brown	Solo 32 bars. (F)
6462	Foxy and Grapesy	With ensemble 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. With ens 32 bars. (F)

This is something else and the real breakthrough of a very important tenorsax stylist! "Sweet ..." and "Foxy ..." are very fine performances, the soli flow smoothly in a staccato way, paradoxically as it may seem. Not many tenorsax players are his superior in 1933. The two medium tempo items are also quite noteworthy and unusually relaxed compared to this general style. You should really wet your appetite on this session!

**FRANK "BIG BOY" GOUDIE** **Paris, Aug. 1935**  
Frank Goudie (tp, cl, ts-77468), Django Reinhardt, Joseph Reinhardt (g), Sigismund Beck (b), Jerry Mengo (dm).  
Two titles were recorded for Ultraphone. Only one tenorsax item, but they are both listed and commented below:

P-77468	I've Found A New Baby	Trumpet solo 32 bars. Tenorsax solo 30 bars. Clarinet solo 32 bars. Trumpet solo 32 bars. (FM)
P-77469	St. Louis Blues	Clarinet solo 64 bars. Trumpet solo 24 bars. (M)

Impressive! "... Baby" is a real pleasure!! A solid, quite professional trumpet solo starts the ball, with a lightening switch to a tenorsax solo which is very fine and personal. After a Django break, we get a clarinet solo, also quite personal. At last, trumpet again, forceful and competent, although certain symptoms of fatigue can be heard. A fine record side in general and very impressive considering the switch of instruments. Not only Benny Carter could do this, obviously! "St. Louis ..." is the second side, but has a long, very clever clarinet solo, and a trumpet solo which this time is a little shivering, probably the load has been too much on his embouchure. In all, a very interesting record.

A recording session with **JOAN WARNER ACC. BY WILLIE LEWIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA**, Paris, April 16 or 21, 1936 has no FG soli.

**WILLIE LEWIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Paris, April 28, 1936**  
 Bill Coleman, Bobby Martin (tp), Billy Burns (tb), Willie Lewis (as, ldr), Joe Hayman (as, ts, bar), George Johnson (as), Frank Goudie (cl, ts), Herman Chittison (p), John Mitchell (g), Louis Vola (b), Ted Fields (dm).  
 Two titles were recorded for Pathé, one has FG:

2631 Christopher Columbus Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)

**Paris, May 5, 1936**

Same. Four titles were recorded for Pathe, none has FG.

**Paris, Oct. 15, 1936**

Same, except Arthur Briggs (tp) replaces Bobby Martin. Willie Lewis (vo).  
 Six titles were recorded for Pathé, three have FG:

2902-1 Sing, Sing, Sing Solo 16 bars. (F)

2904-1 Sweet Sue Solo with orch 32 bars. (F)

2905-1 Organ Grinder's Swing Solo 16 bars. (M)  
 (Clarinet solo 24 bars?)

**Paris, Nov. 12, 1936**

Personnel as Oct. 15, 1936 except Jack Butler (tp) replaces Bill Coleman.  
 Four titles were recorded for Pathé, one has FG:

2960 On Your Toes Solo 18 bars. (FM)  
 (Clarinet solo 8 bars?)

**Paris, Oct. 18, 1937**

Personnel as Nov. 12, 1936, except Bill Coleman (tp) replaces Briggs, Wilson Myers (b, arr) replaces Vola, and without George Johnson. Pilly Bretscher (arr).  
 Six titles were recorded for Pathé, one has FG:

3476 Swinging For A Swiss Miss Solo 18+8 bars,  
 orch on bridge. (FM)  
 (Clarinet solo 6 bars?)

Several soli of great strength and personality. Compared to most contemporaries FG is a rough, manly artist, comparable to his unusual size physically. The great improvisational depths are never penetrated, but the soli are well constructed and enjoyable. Note for instance the bridge on "Sweet Sue" or "Sing, Sing, Sing".

**BILL COLEMAN ET SON ORCHESTRE** **Paris, Nov. 19, 1937**  
 Bill Coleman (tp), Christian Wagner (cl, as), Frank Goudie (cl-1981, ts), Emile Stern (p), Django Reinhardt (g), Lucien Simoens (b), Jerry Mengo (dm).  
 Four titles were recorded for Swing, all have tensorsax:

1979-1 I Ain't Got Nobody Tensorsax in ens 32 bars.  
 Tensorsax solo 32 bars.  
 Tensorsax in ens 32 bars. (M)

1980-1 Baby Won't You Please Come Home? Tensorsax in ens  
 18 bars. Solo 18 bars.  
 Tensorsax in ens 18 bars. (M)

1980-2 Baby Won't You Please Come Home? As above. (M)

1981-1 Big Boy Blues Tensorsax in ens 12 bars.  
 Clarinet solo 24 bars,  
 first 12 with tp acc.  
 Tensorsax in ens 12 bars. (S)

1982-1 Swing Guitars Tensorsax in ens 32 bars.  
 Tensorsax solo 32 bars.  
 Tensorsax in ens 32 bars. (M)

This is a magnificent session because of Bill Coleman and the accompaniment. However, also Big Boy makes some nice contributions, particularly on clarinet in his feature number "Big Boy ..", but also on tensorsax, where the best item is "... Nobody".

FG participates in a Paris, Jan. 12, 1938 broadcast via the French radio for BBC, four titles with **ALIX COMBELLE ET SON ORCHESTRE**, but all tenorsax soli are by AC.

**WILLIE LEWIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Hilversum, May 4, 1938**

Personnel as Oct. 18, 1937.

Six titles were recorded for Dutch Panachord, three have tenorsax:

AM-482-1	The Maid's Night Off	Solo 22 bars. (M)
AM-483-2	Who's Sorry Now?	Solo 8 bars. (M)
AM-484-1	Swinging At The Chez-Florence	Solo 8 bars. (M)
AM-484-2	Swinging At The Chez-Florence	As above. (M)

Note: There are clarinet soli on three items from this session: 484 (14 and 4 bars), 486 ("Memphis Blues" 12 bars), 487 ("A Shanty In Old Shanty Town" 32 bars, two takes). Only 486 is believed to be by FG.

A fine, well played solo on "... Night Off" should be remembered, the others are quite brief and leave no lasting impression, although it is interesting to note the two versions of "... Chez-Florence".

**ANDRE EKYAN ET SON ORCHESTRE** **Paris, May 24, 1939**

Frank Goudie (tp, ts-76), Andre Ekyan (as), Joe Turner (p), Django Reinhardt (g), Lucien Simoens (b), Tommy Benford (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Swing, although only one with tenorsax:

OSW72	The Sheik	Trumpet in ens 32 bars. Trumpet solo 64 bars. (F)
OSW75	Darktown Strutters' Ball	Trumpet in ensemble 20 and 40 bars. (FM)
OSW76	Blues Of Yesterday	Tenorsax solo 24 bars. Trumpet solo with (as) 24 bars. (M)

The session looks very exciting on paper, but is a disappointment in general, and I can understand the decision not to release the sides on 78 rpm. The trumpet playing has more strength than refinement, and even the strength seems to be inefficient; there are many fluffs and the sound shivers, particularly on "The Sheik", like an old man's. The tenorsax performance is the best one, the forceful and gutsy blues in two choruses, quite acceptable but not memorable.

**FRANK "BIG BOY" GOODIE  
ET SON ORCHESTRE**

**Paris, May 28, 1939**

Jack Butler (tp), Andre Ekyan (cl, as), Frank Goudie (ts), Joe Turner (p), Norman Isidore Langlois (g), Wilson Myers (b), Tommy Benford (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Swing:

OSW77-1	You And I Babe	Solo 32 bars. In ensemble. (FM)
OSW78-1	You In My Arms And Sweet Music	Solo 64 bars. In ens. (FM)
OSW79-1	Heebie Jeebies	Solo 36 bars. In ens. (FM)
OSW80-1	It's A Sin To Tell A Lie	Solo 32 bars. In ens. (M)
OSW81-1	Who's Sorry Now?	Solo 32 bars. In ens. (F)

This is an excellent swing session in all respects, lovely soli by all participants, with FG's forceful and penetrating tenorsax as a major ingredience. While the elements of FG's style belong to the past rather than the future, the quality of his playing makes him one of the better performers of the era. All items are in high spirit, with the romantic "... Sweet Music" as my favorite.

**BIG BOY TRIO**

**Paris, Oct. 17, 1946**

Frank Goudie (ts), Charlie Lewis (p), Mac Kac Reilles (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Swing, four issued, all have FG:

OSW430-1	Blue Drag	Soli 32, 32 and 32 bars. (FM)
OSW432-1	Big Boy Boogie	Soli 24, 24 and 36 bars. (FM)
OSW433-1	What Is This Thing Called Love?	Soli 64 and 32 bars. (FM)

OSW434-1 Dizzy Boogie

Solo 36 bars. (FM)

Time for some anachronistic tenorsax playing! Although in "exile" in Europe, FG was one of the better performers in the thirties, being closer to the Hawkins style than most of his contemporaries. During the war period he made no records, and it is exciting to hear him again. True, times have changed, and modern trends have developed, while old swing masters have refined their styles. For FG time seems to stand still, and this session might easily have been from the late thirties without anybody noticing the difference. He plays competently with good results particularly in "What Is ..." and also "Blue Drag". Getting to the blues, he seems more oldfashioned, even close to helpless in "Big Boy ...". All titles run in the same fast medium tempo, bringing some unnecessary monotony to the session. Nevertheless it is a pleasure to listen to an old "friend" again!!

**JAM SESSION NO. 6****Paris, Dec. 3, 1946**

Harry Cooper (tp), Robert Mavounzy (cl, as), Frank Goudie (ts), Charlie Lewis (p), Lorenzo Jova (b), Benny Bennett (dm), two unknown (g) added on SWK24, most probably Sarane and Pierre Ferret (ref. Walter Bruyninckx).

Four titles were recorded for Swing, all have FG:

SWK21-1 Misty Sunrise In ens. Solo 24 bars. (M)

SWK22-1 China Boy In ens. Solo 32 bars. (F)

SWK23 Swing Guitar (Honeysuckle Rose) In ens. Solo 16 bars. (M)

SWK24 Blues In ens. (SM)

This session is more inspired than the previous one but has not so much tenorsax soloing. In "Misty ..." FG shows an amazing sense of humour in his performance. He also masters the fast "China Boy", and "Swing ..." brings back memories of the good old days.

**BIG BOY GOUDIE****Geneve, Switzerland, March 8, 1947**

Frank Goudie (ts), Henri Chaix (p), Maurice Rosenberg (g), Sunny Lang (b), Pierre Bouru (dm).

Two titles were recorded by Radio de Geneve:

I Found A New Baby Soli 64 and 64 bars. (F)

Georgia On My Mind Soli 32 and 32 bars. (SM)

Postscript of March 28, 2019: This session was supplied by Arild Widerøe and is a very pleasant surprise! FG is playing his very best here, fine uptempo on "... Baby", but my favourite is the beautiful "Georgia ...", in a style assumed modern fifteen years earlier. A delightful anachronism, and our thoughts easily wander to Hawk from the same period.

**BIG BOY GOODIE TRIO****Paris, June 10, 1947**

Frank Goudie (cl), Charlie Lewis (p), Benny Bennett (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Swing, rejected.

**JAM SESSION NO. 3****Paris, Dec. 16, 1947**

Ray Circurel (tp-489,490), George Kennedy (as), Frank Goudie (ts), Charlie Lewis (p), J. P. Sasson (g), Georges Hadjo (b), Benny Bennett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Swing:

OSW487-1 The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise Soli 32 and 32 bars. (F)

OSW488-1 Tea For Two Solo 32 bars. In ens 16 bars. (M)

OSW489-1 Just Another Blues Solo 12 bars. In ens 12 bars. (S)

OSW490-1 Sweet Lorraine Acc. (tp) 32 bars. Solo 16 bars.  
Acc. (tp) 32 bars. (SM)

Although FG is reported to record in the fifties, here is nevertheless a goodbye to France and his arena for more than a decade. With fine co-musicians, this is a nice session with good variation. The "... Blues" is here performed in a professional manner, the up-tempo is treated admirably on "... Sunrise", a fine swinging "Tea ...", and the climax is reached with a lovely solo on "Sweet Lorraine". We miss you, "Big Boy"!!!

**SIDNEY BECHET AND HIS ALL STAR BAND****Paris, Oct. 20, 1949**

Bill Coleman (tp), Sidney Bechet (sop), Frank Goudie (ts), Charlie Lewis (p), Pierre Michelot (b), Kenny Clarke (dm).

Three titles were recorded for French Vogue (another three titles without FG):

- V3023 Orphan Annie's Blues Solo 8 bars. (S)  
 V3024-1 Happy Go Lucky Blues Solo with ens 16 bars. (FM)  
 V3025-1 Klook's Blues In ensemble 12 bars. (S)

No, I was wrong, Big Boy is still here two years later. The session is almost all Bechet's, but he has a few brief solo opportunities. His personality is still easily recognizable, although he seems to have retrograded, being more similar to the old Hawkins than ever before. Particularly "Orphan ..." should be noted.

Postscript of July 2, 2015: Previously I wrote: "No further recording sessions on tenorsax", but this is wrong! The FG-book gives you this exciting information:

**FRANK BIG BOY GOUDIE GJC ALL STARS Berlin, Sept. 2, 1952**

Gabriel Dores (tp), Frank Goudie (cl), Helmut Wernicke (p), Wolf van Well (g), Teddy Lenz (b), William McAllan (dm).

Two titles were recorded for German Columbia:

- 1105-1 You And I, Babe (cl)-Solo 32 bars. In ens. (FM)  
 1106-1 Collector's Blues (cl)-Solo 12 bars. Acc. (tp) 12 bars. (S)

Although there is no tenorsax on this session, it should be noted for its fine clarinet playing and in general very good qualities.

**FRANK BIG BOY GOUDIE GJC ALL STARS Berlin, April 13, 1953**

Gabriel Dores (tp), Hans Wolf "Hawe" Schneider (tb), Frank Goudie (cl, ts, vo-1173), Helmut Wernicke (p), Wolf van Well (g), Teddy Lenz (b), Günther Kiesant a.k.a. Tom "Eminenz" Roberts (dm).

Four titles were recorded for German Columbia:

- 1171-1 Davenport Blues (ts)-Solo 16 bars. (SM)  
 1172-1 Lonesome Road (cl)-Soli 8 and 16 bars. (S)  
 1173-1 When The Saints Go Marchin' In Vocal 16 bars.  
 (cl)-Solo 16 bars. (F)  
 1174-2 Sweet Georgia Brown (cl)-Solo 32 bars.  
 (ts)-Solo 32 bars. (FM)

"Davenport ..." has a very nice tenorsax solo in the tradition but sounding new and fresh, just the kind you will like! "Sweet ...", which also has a good clarinet solo, is not that successful with regard to tenorsax, his tone is somewhat constrained, but he still knows how to swing!

**OS BATUTAS CARIOCAS Zagreb? ca. 1953-54**

Gabriel Dores (tp, vo-638,646), Frank Goudie (ts, vo-641,643,645), unknown (rhythm).

Ten titles were recorded for Yugoslav Jugoton: 639 "Carinhoso", 641 "Maria Dolores", 642 "Delicado", 643 "When The Saints Go Marchin' In", 646 "El Manicero" and 647 "Selectoer Blues" have not been available, no FG on 638 "Manana" and 640 "Brazil" but:

- 644 Perdido Soli 32 and 8 bars. (M)  
 645 On The Sunny Side Of The Street Acc. (tp) 32 bars.  
 Vocal 32 and 16 bars. (M)

The tenorsax playing on "... The Street" is well camouflaged behind the trumpet, but the titles indicate more jazz items ... Postscript of May 2017: Yes, "Perdido" is a jazz item with a full tenorsax chorus, nothing particularly ear splitting but interesting an typical in the old style.

**BIG BOY GOUDIE Neuchatel, Switzerland, 1955-56**

Francis Bonjour (tp), Frederic De Coulon (tb), Jean-Paul Augsburg (cl), Big Boy Goudie (ts), Claude Joly (p), unknown (b, tu), (dm).

Six titles were recorded privately at Basin Street (one more title without FG), private collection:

- Who's Sorry Now? (NC) Solo 12+64 bars (NC). Solo  
 6 choruses of 32 bars to coda,  
 last 2 with ens. (FM)

Blues	Soli 5 and 3 choruses of 12 bars. (S)
Sweet Georgia Brown (NC)	Solo 12 bars + 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 5 choruses last 3 with ens. (F)
Muskrat Ramble	With ens 4 choruses of 16 bars to solo 5 choruses. Solo 3 choruses. In ens 2 choruses. (FM)
St. Louis Blues	With ens 28 bars to solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 13 choruses. (M)
I've Found A New Baby	With ens 2 choruses of 32 bars to solo 4 choruses. Solo 2 choruses to ens 3 choruses. (F)

The appearance of this session came as a great and pleasant surprise, because it was thought that FG only played the clarinet at this point of time. This is certainly very wrong!! Here we get more of this instrument than in all other sessions put together!! The event is pretty unique, to my knowledge there is not much like it. FG is a tenorsax player of the old school, but not like Hawk adapted to the modern times. With his enormous energy and inspiration, and with good help from his fellow musicians, FG can give us a glimpse of what the nightly jam sessions must have been like in the really old days. Of course through as much as 65 minutes, it is not surprising that quantity occasionally seems to overrule quality, FG cannot be expected to have the same unending creativity like the jazz tenorsax greats, and neither has he, often also taking the underlying chords pretty lightly. However, this does not really matter, it is the joy of playing real vintage jazz that makes at least me love this session and FG's music. Wonderful sortie!

Frank Goudie's Californian period 1957 – 1963 offers quite a lot of clarinet, but no further tenorsax sessions.

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