

The  
**TENORSAX**  
of  
**EUGENE STANLEY  
AMMONS  
“GENE” “JUG”**

Born: Chicago, Illinois, April 14, 1925  
Died: Chicago, Illinois, Aug. 6 or 7, 1974

*Introduction:*

I remember we did not have so many Gene Ammons records in my early days at the Oslo Jazz Circle. However, due to the late John Bergh, our eyes opened to this brilliant tenorsax player, one of the major ones in jazz! Personally I became a lifelong addict when I heard his "St. Louis Blues" with his father's group!

*History:*

Son of Albert Ammons, the famous boogie-woogie pianist. He studied music at Du Sable High School under Captain Walter Dyett. Left Chicago on first professional job with the band led by trumpeter King Kolax at 18. He then joined Billy Eckstine's innovative band 1944-1947 as its principal bop soloist. From 1947 he began leading small groups and recording under his own name. After playing briefly with Woody Herman's big band (mid-1949) he returned exclusively to leading small groups, working from 1950 to 1952, and frequently thereafter, in partnership with Sonny Stitt. Gene Ammons became a leading exponent of the impassioned blend of bop and black gospel preaching known as soul jazz. Problems with drugs then disrupted his career, although he was allowed to continue playing in jail (1958 - 60, 1962 - 69). His term in prison coincided with the rise of soul music as a commercial genre, and after his release his improvisations, now accompanied by electric instruments, were more popular than ever before (ref. The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz).

## GENE AMMONS SOLOGRAPHY

### **BILLY ECKSTINE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Dec. 5, 1944**

Dizzy Gillespie, Maurice "Shorty" McConnell, Gail Brockman, Marion "Boonie" Hazel (tp), Gerald Valentine, Taswell Baird, Howard Scott, Alfred "Chippy" Outcalt (tp), John Jackson, Bill Frazier (as), Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons (ts), Leo Parker (bar), John Malachi (p), Connie Wainwright (g), Tommy Potter (b), Art Blakey (dm), Billy Eckstine (ldr, vo), Sarah Vaughan (vo), Gerry Valentine, Tadd Dameron, John Malachi (arr).

Six titles were recorded for DeLuxe, one features GA:

- |       |                        |  |
|-------|------------------------|--|
| 120-3 | Blowing The Blues Away | Six blues choruses after the pattern:<br>Orch 4, DG 8, Orch 4,<br>GA 8, (DG 4, GA 4) x 3,<br>DG 12, GA 12 bars. (FM) |
| 120-? | Blowing The Blues Away | As above. (FM)   |

Gene Ammons' entrance into the jazz tenorsax race may, almost, be compared to that of Lester Young! To start with a tenorsax battle with Dexter Gordon is really something out of the ordinary, to put it mildly. Here we find two of the three most important of the young be-boppers (the third is Wardell Gray) on the same record, playing as if they had done nothing else for a decade. The reality, however, is that Dexter already has a brief recording history, and for Gene it is the night of the virgin! They play just like hell, and create one of the most memorable occasions of early modern jazz. The playing is inventive and historical, and GA already proves himself to be one of the jazz greats. I would not be the one to choose the winner of this battle! Two takes give additional spice to the encounter. The tenorsax battles are to be considered of equal quality with the details differing all the way through. In all, a magnificent occasion, a shrine for all lovers of modern jazz tenorsax!!

### **BILLY ECKSTINE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **L.A. ca. late Jan. 1945**

Probable personnel: Fats Navarro, Maurice "Shorty" McConnell, Gail Brockman, Marion "Boonie" Hazel (tp), Gerald Valentine, Taswell Baird, Howard Scott, Alfred "Chippy" Outcalt (tb), John Jackson, Bill Frazier (as), Budd Johnson, Gene Ammons (ts), Leo Parker (bar), John Malachi (p), Connie Wainwright (g), Tommy Potter (b), Art Blakey (dm), Billy Eckstine (tp, vtb, vo, dir), Lena Home (vo). Date also given as Feb./March 1945.

Probably recorded at the Club Marquee, Hollywood.

AFRS Jubilee No. 119, 120, 121 and 122. The following items feature GA:

- |                        |                                   |
|------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Blowing The Blues Away | Solo 8 bars (last (ts)-solo). (F) |
| Together               | Solo 66 bars. (F)                 |
| Love Me Or Leave Me    | Solo 64 bars. (F)                 |

We have met GA once before, just with "Blowing The Blues ...", and we know he is already one of the greatest of the young upcoming tenorsax stars, his chase with Dexter Gordon is just unforgettable. Therefore, this abbreviated version is a great disappointment. However, he more than compensates with two long soli in fast tempo. Not yet twenty years old, he has already found his style and is in full command of his horn. Both "Together" and "Love Me ..." are important evidence of modern tenorsax development, I have a slight preference for the latter (which also has some beautiful Fats Navarro).

### **BILLY ECKSTINE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. May 2, 1945**

Personnel as late Jan. except Dexter Gordon (ts) returns, Budd Johnson switches to (as) and replaces Bill Frazier, Sonny Stitt (as) replaces John Jackson.

Four titles were recorded for National, one features GA:

- |        |                             |  |
|--------|-----------------------------|--|
| NSC 55 | I Love The Rhythm In A Riff | Soli 40 and 4 bars with<br>orch 4 bars between. (FM) |
|--------|-----------------------------|--|

A beautiful solo, "his Prez roots are in view ... with Blakey bombing away underneath" as Ira Gitler put it, and maybe an influence from Dexter too? An unforgettable item for GA fans!

### **BILLY ECKSTINE AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Sept. 4, 1945**

Fats Navarro, Shorty McConnell, Boonie Hazel, Raymond Orr (tp), Chips Outcalt, Gerald Valentine, Howard Scott, Walter Knox (tb), John Cobbs, Budd Johnson (as), Gene Ammons, Arthur Simmons (ts), Teddy Cypron (bar), Richard Ellington or

probably John Wallington (p), Connie Wainwright (g), Tommy Potter (b), Art Blakey (dm), Billy Eckstine (ldr, vo).

Four or five titles were recorded for National (info from Jepsen, Bruyninx and Savoy SJL 1127 differ somewhat), but no tenorsax soli.

**NYC. Oct. 1945**

Probably same personnel. Four titles were recorded for National, one has GA:

NSC 72-x Long Long Journey Obligato 12 bars. (S)

NSC 72-y Long Long Journey As above. (S)

Eight titles with only one GA performance; a terrible neglect! However, "... Journey" makes us forget all frustrations. Presenting Jug for the first time in slow tempo, the two obligato blues choruses immediately show that he does not only master the uptempo but is a wizard of ballads and blues, with a majestic sound in his horn.

**BILLY ECKSTINE AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Jan. 3, 1946**

Kenny Dorham, Shorty McConnell, Boonie Hazel, Raymond Orr (tp), Chips Outcalt, Gerald Valentine, Robert Scott (tb), Norris Turney, Bob "Junior" Williams (as), Gene Ammons, Arthur Simmons (ts), Tate Houston (bar), Richard Ellington (p), Connie Wainwright (g), Bill McMahon (b), Art Blakey (dm), Billy Eckstine (ldr, vo).

Four titles were recorded for National, one features GA:

NSC 105 The Jitney Man Soli 8, 8 and 6 bars. (FM)

**NYC. Feb. 1946**

Same personnel except Fats Navarro (tp), Josh Jackson (ts), Leo Parker (bar), Jimmy Golden (p) replace Dorham, Simmons, Houston and Ellington.

Four titles were recorded for National, two feature GA:

NSC 115 Second Balcony Jump Solo 32 bars. (M)

NSC 117 Tell Me, Pretty Baby Obligato 12 bars. (S)

**NYC. March 1946**

Similar personnel.

Four titles were recorded for National, one features GA:

NSC 124 Cool Breeze Solo 26 bars. (M)

Four solo items out of twelve, could have been better, still the quality of GA's playing makes us happy for every bar. When we get such masterly constructions as "Second Balcony ..." and "Cool Breeze" in a pleasant medium tempo, it is only to bow deeply. Note the flashing opening of the second chorus of the latter! A nice "... Pretty Baby" obligato cannot quite be compared to "Long Long Journey", while "... Jitney ..." has excellent fragments.

**BILLY ECKSTINE ORCHESTRA NYC. ca. June/July 1946**

Hobart Dotson, King Kolax, Leonard Hawkins, possibly Rostelle Reese (tp), Billy Eckstine (vtb, vo), Alfred "Chippy" Outcalt, Gerald Valentine, Howard Scott, unknown (tb), Porter Kilbert, possibly Robert "Junior" Williams (as), Gene Ammons, Frank Wess (ts), unknown (bar), possibly Linton Garner or Jimmy Golden (p), Connie Wainwright (g), Bill McMahon (b), Art Blakey (dm), Ann Baker (vo).

Film "Rhythm In A Riff", directed by Leonard Anderson, produced by William D. Alexander's "Associated Producers of Negro Motion Pictures".

GA solos on the following two items:

Rhythm In A Riff Solo 2 choruses of 32 bars,  
last with orch. (F)

Second Balcony Jump Solo with orch 32 bars. (M)

Two very fine soli in the good GA/BEckstine tradition!

**BILLY ECKSTINE AND HIS ORCHESTRA L.A. Oct. 5, 1946**

Miles Davis, Hobart Dotson, Leonard Hawkins, King Kolax (tp), Walter Knox, Chips Outcalt, Gerald Valentine (tb), Sonny Stitt, John Cobbs (as), Gene Ammons, Arthur Simmons (ts), Cecil Payne (bar), Linton Garner (p), Connie Wainwright (g), Tommy Potter (b), Art Blakey (dm), Billy Eckstine (ldr, vo).

Four titles were recorded for National (complete session said to exist, not available, possibly additional soli to those below), two feature GA:

N 164-A Oo Bop Sh'Bam Break to solo 16 bars. (M)

N 164-C Oo Bop Sh'Bam As above. (M)

N 167-x Jelly Jelly Obligato 12 bars. (S)  
 N 167-y Jelly Jelly As above. (S)

The last GA soli with Eckstine after a stay of two years, giving many memorable soli, but too few! Here we have two takes of each, showing how inventive this young man was. His breaks on "Oo Bop ..." and cool but hot backing of Eckstine on "Jelly ..." are historic documents of importance as long as jazz still swings!

**LA. Oct. 6, 1946**

Personnel as above with strings added.  
 Four titles but no GA.

**EARL COLEMAN/**

**ANN HATHAWAY ACC. BY**

**Hollywood, Oct. 18, 1946**

Miles Davis (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), Linton Garner (p), Connie Wainwright (g), Tommy Potter (b), Art Blakey (dm), Earl Coleman (vo-"Don't Sing ...", "Don't Explain ..."), Ann Baker Hathaway (vo-"... Got The Blues", "Baby ...").  
 Produced by Eddie Laguna, never issued on 78 rpm.

168-1 Don't Sing Me The Blues Solo 12 bars. (SM)  
 168-2 Don't Sing Me The Blues As above. (SM)  
 169-1 Don't Explain To Me Baby Solo 12 bars. (S)  
 169-2 Don't Explain To Me Baby As above. (S)  
 169-3 Don't Explain To Me Baby As above. (S)  
 169-4 Don't Explain To Me Baby As above. (S)  
 170-1 Baby Won't You Make Up Your Mind No solo.  
 170-2 Baby Won't You Make Up Your Mind No solo.  
 170-3 Baby Won't You Make Up Your Mind No solo.  
 171-1 I've Always Got The Blues (NC) Solo 24 bars. (M)  
 171-2 I've Always Got The Blues As above. (M)  
 171-3 I've Always Got The Blues As above. (M)

For forty years nobody heard this session and then!! Presented on Black Lion with a recording quality far surpassing most from this era, including the Eckstine sessions for National, GA takes off as a rising star, which he is. Although Miles Davis gets the leader credit, this is a tenorsaxophone session! Earl Coleman has always been a favorite vocalist of mine since I first heard his "Dark Shadows" with Bird, and he creates the perfect atmosphere for Jug in slower tempi. Luckily several takes were needed and each presents marvellous, charismatic tenorsax. Note for instance the four versions of "Don't Explain ..."!! And yet, the medium "... Always ..." nails you to the worship altar; in an almost hypnotic manner GA creates the greatest musical tension in the most swinging of tempi. A magnificent session!!

As I guessed, GA does not participate on the ALBERT AMMONS session for Mercury in Chi. 1946 with titles "Doin' The Boogie Woogie", "Lady Be Good", "Mr. Bell Boogie", "Why I'm Leaving You", "I Don't Want To See You", recorded for Mercury. Who is making up such things?

**GENE AMMONS**

**Chi. Oct. 1946**

Gene Ammons (ts), unknown (g), possibly Oscar Pettiford (b), possibly Petite Swanson (vo).  
 Acetate, recorded by Bob Redcross (James Accardi collection), two titles:

3:35 Blues In A Flat (NC) Intro 4 bars. Acc. (vo) 24 bars. Solo 24 bars. Acc. (vo) 12 bars. Solo 36 bars. Acc. (vo) 12 bars. Solo 8 bars (NC). (M)  
 3:29 I Never Knew (NC) Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses + 8 bars (NC). (FM)

This is one of the greatest tenorsax archeological gems this year (2022)!! There is something unique with GA in these early years, a physical strength combined with perfect understanding of the modern trends. Nobody, yes nobody, can play better than early GA, with a few on his level. He has the blues inside him, more than anybody else, and this example of "... E Flat" is gorgeous. Except for a fine bass solo in the middle, it is all tenorsax, five solid solo choruses and some riffing behind the

vocal. I assume they continued for a while after the acetate ran out. On "... Knew" he shows us another side, the ability to improvise endlessly on an evergreen. First an introductory chorus, not really straight, and then a solid solo chorus. After a bass chorus he continues until time is running out, and one gets the impression he could go on forever, like Pres. Magnificent seven minutes!!

**PETITE SWANSON VOCAL  
WITH MARL YOUNG TRIO**

**Chi. March 1947**

Gene Ammons (ts), Marl Young (p), Rail Wilson (b).

Four titles were recorded for Sunbeam, 654 "Lawdy Miss Claudy" has no GA, while "I'm Sorry" and "Did You Ever Feel Lucky" have not been available, and it seems nobody ever heard them!

655	My Jockey Knows How To Ride	Obbligato 24 bars. Solo 24 bars. (M)
-----	-----------------------------	---

Postscript of Feb. 26, 2016: At last one of these two rare records have turned up! First some rather conventional background but then comes a great solo on "My Jockey ...", two blues choruses of the very best 1947 quality, great discovery!

**GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. June 17, 1947**

Gail Brockman (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), James Craig (p), Gene Wright (b), Chuck Williams (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Mercury:

848	Concentration	Break 8 bars. Solo 24 bars. Solo 36 bars. (FM)
849-1	Red Top	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
850-1	Idaho	Soli 8, 64, 4 and 8 bars. (F)

The first session under Jug's own leadership, and his strong affection for the blues is evident. Even if this looks like a bebop session, and typical boppish trumpet, one can see the start of a trend in his playing, leading up to his success as a blues tenorsaxophonist with organ backing. GA never was a real bebopper like Dexter and Wardell, and his choice of blues material shows this clearly compared to his competitors. Now "Idaho" is not a blues, mind you, but a 32 bars theme, still the blues feeling is there. "Red Top" became a hit, later to become famous when King Pleasure vocalized the ensembles and Jug's solo. And the solo is a lovely one! Yet, maybe "Concentration", also a blues, is the best item. Anyway, the Mercury sessions represent another step forward for Gene Ammons, one of the all-time greats of jazz tenorsaxophone.

**ALBERT AMMONS AND HIS RHYTHM KINGS**

**Chi. Aug. 6, 1947**

Marvin Randolph (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), Albert Ammons (p), Ike Perkins (g), Israel Crosby (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Mercury:

929-1	St. Louis Blues	Solo 24 bars. (M)
929-2	St. Louis Blues	Solo 36 bars. (M)
929-3	St. Louis Blues	Solo 36 bars. (M)
930-1	Shufflin' The Boogie	Solo 20 bars. (M)
930-2	Shufflin' The Boogie	Solo 32 bars. (M)
931-1	S. P. Blues	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
932-1	Hiroshima	Solo 32 bars. Brief breaks. (FM)

If I had to select a handful of jazz 78s for a desolate island, "St. Louis Blues" with father and offspring Ammons would be one of them. Early in my jazz studies I discovered that while the combination of modern rhythm and swing brass and reeds was disastrous, the opposite could be a pure delight, like Charlie Parker with Tiny Grimes. And this session is the ultimate proof!!! The foundation is not only made by Albert's dynamic piano playing but also largely by the incredible Alvin B., drummer with the Earl Hines band and master of the high hat. Particularly on "St. Louis ..." does he swing out of this earth, believe me!!!! And the contrast when the rolling piano of old days is replaced by Jug's three choruses, inspired by Prez but yet a 100% original creation by a young tenorsax genius. Play it once, play it twice, put in on repeat!! The other three items also have excellent soloing, particularly "S.P. ...", and note the piano/drums interplay on "Hiroshima". One of the most original recording sessions ever, and great!! Postscript: We have been heard and rewarded, the Mercury archives did contain alternate takes after all!! "... Boogie" is perhaps not a great

discovery, and it is one chorus (orch 4, ts 8+12 bars) shorter than the 78 rpm. version. But "St. Louis ..."!!! Take 2 is an "ordinary" alternate, and while take 3 obviously was the correct choice with regard to the performance as a whole, GA has an excellent solo quite comparable to the wellknown one. Then a take 1, more like a rehearsal take, being notably slower in tempo, and with a trumpet solo at the end, consequently GA only gets two choruses, but how he blows them!!! Run and buy the Mercury CD-box set!!!

**GENE AMMONS QUINTET**

**Chi. Sept. 23, 1947**

Gene Ammons (ts), Leo Parker (as, bar), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Ellis Bartee (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Aladdin, 304 "Bartee Meets Gene" is unissued (the complete session with alternate takes said to exist) but:

301-5	Concentration	Solo 8 bars. Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
302	Jack's Town	Soli 48 and 8 bars. (M)
303-8	Blowing Red's Top	Solo 24 bars. (M)

These rare sides are slightly disappointing. Particularly "Blowing ..." never takes properly off, and while any GA item from this period is a must, it sounds rather sluggish. "Concentration" is better, with a fine 8 bars stop-time solo, followed by two strong baritone sax choruses, to feature GA for the rest of the record. Interesting but not up to the Mercury version. "... Town" also has some good playing for 1 1/2 chorus and later a stop-time solo. Would be interesting to have the complete session available possibly to understand better what went wrong.

**LEO PARKER's ALL STARS**

**Detroit, Oct. 4, 1947**

Howard McGhee (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), Leo Parker (bar), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Chuck Williams (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

800	El Sino	Solo 16 bars. (M)
801	Ineta	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
802	Wild Leo	No solo. (M)
803	Leapin' Leo	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

When Bob Porter states that "throughout this session, Jug played very close to Lester Young - probably closer than at any time before or since!", it is easy to agree. Note for instance the opening of "El Sino", after a few bars you might be inclined to believe it was Paul Quinichette, but then the typical GA sound cuts through. This is the best item, in general it seems that the Prez-feeling stems from lack of force and inspiration!

**JIMMY DALE & HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. Oct. 5, 1947**

Bigband personnel including unknown (tp), Gene Ammons (ts).

WGES radio broadcast "The Al Benson Show" from Park City Bowl, one title (James Accardi collection):

Cobb's Idea	Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)
-------------	------------------------------

Postscript of Aug. 30, 2023: A pleasant discovery, although on an acetate in miserable condition, but with typical GA!

**GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. Oct. 23, 1947**

Gail Brockman (tp), Ernest McDonald (as, bar), Gene Ammons (ts), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Ellis Bartee (dm), Earl Coleman (vo-1134), George Stone (arr). Four titles were recorded for Mercury:

1133-2	McDougal's Sprout	Solo 48 bars. (FM)
1134-2	Hold That Money	Intro 4 bars. Solo 12 bars. (S)
1135-2	Shermanski	Solo 64 bars. (F)
1136-1	Harold The Fox	Intro 4 bars. Solo 60 bars. (F)

**Chi. Dec. 1, 1947**

Same, except John "Flaps" Dungee (as), A. K. Salim (arr) replace McDonald and Stone.

Four titles were recorded for Mercury:

1332-1	Jeet Jet	Solo 66 bars. (F)
--------	----------	-------------------

1333-2	Odd-En-Dow	Solo 24 bars. (M)
1334	Going For The Okey Doak	Solo 32 bars. (M)
1335	E.A.A.K. Blues	Solo 24 bars. (M)

**Chi. Dec. 10, 1947**

Same. Four titles were recorded for Mercury:

1390	Sugar Coated	Solo 32 bars. (M)
1391	Blowing The Family Jewels	Solo 90 bars. (F)
1392-2	Dues In Blues	Intro. Solo 24 bars. (M)
1393	Jay, Jay	Solo 66 bars. (F)

The three Mercury autumn sessions represent a cross section of GA's music, different tempi, blues and standards. As a whole, his fellow musicians, while good, are not quite good enough to give the items the completeness and magic as for instance Bird's Savoy and Dial recordings, and I question several of the arrangements regarding taste and purpose. Still, these are minor arguments, the main point is: We experience GA in his prime, playing like an established star, not like a young man of 22 years. There is maturity in every bar rarely found even in the playing of the most highly praised jazz musicians. There is no purpose in singling out individual items here, all twelve have their particular merits!

**SKETZ VAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA****Chi. early 1948**

Gail Brockman (tp), unknown (tp-7172,73), Andrew "Goon" Gardner or John "Flaps" Dungee (as-7139), Gene Ammons, possibly Tom Archia (ts), possibly Julian "Junior" Mance (p), possibly George Freeman (g-7139), unknown (b), (dm).

Possibly recorded live at Pershing Ballroom.

Two titles were recorded for Aristocrat:

U7172	Come Back To Sorrento	Feature number for tenorsax, various tempi. (F/S)
U7173	Bronzeville Stomp	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars, last 2 with ens. (F)

Two recent, rare and very valuable discoveries with a lot of speculative ideas about who is playing tenorsax. But to me it seems simple, Gene Ammons no doubt! "Bronzeville ..." is a standard, a little fast to be quite successful, and it takes two choruses to warm up, but then things get going! "... Sorrento" is a peculiar piece, not easy to understand what kind of musical logic behind it, but the most is made of the occasion in different tempi, and you should really listen and be excited by this one!!

**TOM ARCHIA AND HIS ALL STARS****Chi. early 1948**

Personnel probably as above.

One title recorded for Aristocrat, issued on a Tom Archia Classics CD. However, the leader has for some inexplicable reason given the solo to Gene Ammons:

U7139	McKie's Jam Boppers	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
-------	---------------------	---------------------------------

An exciting record with swing rhythm and good trumpet, altosax and piano before the tenorsax enters the scene. And somewhere, somewhen, somebody must have mixed up the files, because to the best of my experience, this is pure Gene Ammons blowing the best of blues!!

**GENE AMMONS****Chi. possibly early 1948**

Gene Ammons (ts), unknown (p), (b), (dm).

WGES broadcast "Battle of Bands" from Pershing Ballroom, two titles (James Accardi collection):

3:55	Little Miss Sport	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 16 bars. Straight 8 bars. (FM)
4:19	Bottoms Up	Solo 14 bars + 3 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 16 and 8 bars. (FM)

Important discovery, broadcasts with vintage Gene Ammons are not everyday discoveries! He is playing in his typical style, strong and persisting, highly enjoyable!

**GENE AMMONS - TOM ARCHIA****Chi. Oct. 12, 1948**

Gene Ammons (ts), Tom Archia (ts-7142), Willie Jones (p), Leroy Jackson (b), Wesley Landers (dm).



Four titles were recorded for Aristocrat (note that 7140 and 7143 are two versions of the same tune, the former recorded first as it is too long for a 78 rpm, and note also that there have been many errors in discographies and liner notes for this session):

U7140?	Jam For Boppers	First part of intro. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> tenorsax solo). (F)
U7141	Swingin' For Christmas	Solo 24 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> tenorsax solo). (FM)
U7142	It's The Talk Of The Town	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
U7143?	The Battle	First part of intro. Solo 32 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> tenorsax solo). 32 bars 4/4 with TA (GA first). Solo 4 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> solo). (FM)

An exciting but very rough session of great historical interest. While Dexter Gordon did his battles with Wardell Gray and Teddy Edwards, GA seems to be more of a lone wolf, and from the late forties this is the only example of a duel. The "victim" is the largely unknown but very promising Tom Archia, and he is beaten only after a hard fight. "...Xmas" is a funny thing in the passing, though with a fine GA solo, and it is the two versions of an IGR-inspired tune which should be given the closest attention, particularly "... Boppers" with four choruses by each performer. TA steps off the stage on "... Town", which is great but marred by too active and overrecorded piano backing and a drummer from out-of-space. Note GA's heavy quote of "Can't Help Lovin' That Man" towards the end, I wonder if he is being sarcastic?!

Note: "Blues Records 1943 to 1970" lists "Cabbage Head Part 1 & 2" on Aristocrat 803 as a possible Gene Ammons item. This is however not correct.

GA is reported to have joined Woody Herman in December 1948. However, this cannot be correct. Herman's Capitol recordings in LA. Dec. 30, 1948 and broadcast Jan. 1, 1949 have Stan Getz and no trace of GA. Since GA and Herman record in Chicago Feb. 1949 and May 26, 1949 respectively, I believe that GA joined Herman in Chicago Spring 1949 and travelled with him to the West Coast.

#### GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA

**Chi. Feb. 5, 1949**

Jesse Miller (tp), Ernest McDonald (as, bar), Gene Ammons (ts), Junior Mance (p), Leo Blevins (g), Leroy Jackson (b), Wesley Landers (dm), Marcel Danield (vo, arr-2503).

Four titles were recorded for Mercury:

2501-1	Daddy Sauce's Airlines	Break 4 bars to solo 48 bars. (M)
2502-1	Little Irv	Solo 28 bars. (M)
2503-1	Abdullah's Fiesta	Break 2 bars to solo 24 bars. (M)
2504-1	Brother Jug's Sermon	Solo 80 bars. (M)

While GA consistently plays excellently, I must admit to some scepticism regarding his choice of material and coplayers. My simple taste leads me to select "... Sermon" with "party atmosphere, hand-clapping, shouting and a lot of spoken dialogue" to quote Dan M., and I thrive in GA's company, but it seems that he is spreading his talents thin, I do not like the tendency.

#### CHRISTINE CHATMAN'S ALL STAR COMBO / GENE AMMONS SEXTET

**Chi. Feb. 28, 1949**

Gene Ammons (ts), Christine Chatman (p, vo-7175), Leo Blevins (g), Lowell Pointer (b), Ike Day (dm), Mary Graham (vo-7179).

Six titles were recorded for Chess:

U7174	Hey Mr. Freddy	Solo 24 bars. (M)
U7177	When Your Hair Has Turned To Silver	Obbligato 48 bars. (S)
U7178	Do You Really Mean It?	Obbligato parts. Solo 8 bars. Coda. (S)
U7179	Bless You	Obbligato parts. Coda. (S)
U7180	Stuffy	With ens 32 bars to solo 48 bars. Solo 8 bars to ens. (M)
U7181	Once In A While	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)

Note: 7180/7181 have been issued on Aristocrat 711 as "Three O'Clock In The Morning" Part 1 and 2.

The recording quality on this session is resembling that of Paramount a quarter of a century earlier, terrible. The session also seems to be quite casually prepared with only "Once ...", a feature number for GA, of class. The strong echo effect may be a nuisance (not on the Arct 711!), but the record is beautiful none the less. "Stuff" is quite sluggish and surprisingly uninspired. The two remaining items are vocals, but just in such cases one may make interesting discoveries, and the brief solo on "Do You ..." saves the whole record, and there are some nice obbligato parts.

**WOODY HERMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. May 26, 1949**

Ernie Royal, Al Porcino, Stan Fishelson, Charlie Walp, Shorty Rogers (tp), Earl Swope, Bill Harris, Ollie Wilson, Bart Varsalona (tb), Woody Herman (cl, as, vo, dir), Sam Marowitz (as), Gene Ammons, Buddy Savitt, Jimmy Giuffre (ts), Serge Chaloff (bar), Lou Levy (p), Oscar Pettiford (b), Shelly Manne (dm), Mary Ann McCall (vo-3794).

Two titles were recorded for Capitol, no tenorsax on 3794 "The Crickets", but:

3795-2      More Moon      Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Referring to the discussion one page earlier, this studio session contains what is most likely GA's first preserved solo with Woody Herman, in fact there are only two studio solo items altogether, the remaining twenty-and-so being from broadcasts. "... Moon", which is of course a variation on "How High The ...", is a beautiful, strong logical, authoritative, "charismatic" solo, showing that GA was just what Woody needed!

**WOODY HERMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **LA. Spring? 1949**

Personnel similar to July 14, 1949. GA is announced as "the recent addition to the herd". "Just Jazz". Possibly identical to items in programs No. 75 and 77. Date also given as late 1948.

Pennies From Heaven	Intro 8 bars to solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
Terry And The Pirates	No solo.
Man Don't Be Ridiculous	No solo.
The Man I Love	No solo.

**LA. Spring? 1949**

Personnel similar to July 14, 1949. Gene Norman (mc). Date also given as late 1948. AFRS Just Jazz No. 75. Date also given as Aug. 1949.

Early Autumn	No solo.
Keen And Peachy	Solo 32 bars. (F)
Pennies From Heaven	Intro 8 bars to solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
Rhapsody In Wood	No solo.
What's New? (NC)	No solo.

**LA. Spring? 1949**

Personnel similar to July 14, 1949. GA is announced as "the recent addition to the band". Gene Norman (mc).

AFRS Just Jazz No. 77. Date also given as Dec. 30, 1948 and Aug. 1949.

Terry And The Pirates	No solo.
Man, Don't Be Ridiculous	No solo.
Summer Sequence	No solo.
Jamaican Rhumba	No solo.
The Man I Love	No solo.
Detour Ahead	No solo.
Apple Honey	Solo four choruses of 32 bars, last three destroyed by announcement. Solo 8 bars. (F)

**Balboa Beach, Ca., July 2, 1949**

Personnel probably as above.

"Excursions in Modern Music" broadcast from the Rendezvous Ballroom.

Theme	No solo.
Lemon Drop	Solo 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4. (F)
Laura	No solo.
Four Brothers	Solo 16 bars (2 <sup>nd</sup> (ts)-solo). Solo 2 bars. (FM)
I Got It Bad	No solo.
More Moon	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
The Crickets	No solo.
The Man I Love	No solo.
Terry And The Pirates	No solo.
I Ain't Getting Any Younger	No solo.
Everywhere	No solo.
That's Right	No solo.
Blue Flame	No solo.

#### Hollywood, July 6, 1949

Same personnel. Movie short, Universal International Featurette, not available.

Jamaica Rhumba  
I've Got News For You  
It's A Great Day For The Irish  
Lollypop  
Skip To My Lou  
Keen And Peachy

#### Balboa Beach, Ca. July 9, 1949

Personnel probably as July 14. Broadcast from the Rendezvous Ballroom.

Not Really The Blues	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Blues Medley	No solo.
Non Drastic	Solo with orch 32 bars. (F)
What's New	No solo.
Bijou	No solo.
Pennies From Heaven	Intro 8 bars to solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
Jamaica Rhumba	No solo.
Four Brothers	Soli 16 and 2 bars. (FM)
Keen And Peachy	Solo 32 bars. (F)
Theme	No solo.

GA certainly was a strong new asset to the Woody Herman band, and he makes his presence known on the various Just Jazz programs and broadcasts. A fine variation on "More Moon" should be particularly noted, as well as his beautiful rendering of "Pennies ..." in a very unusual tempo, making the most of it. And he slips nicely into the "Four Brothers" arrangement, as well as old vehicles like "Apple Honey", "Lemon Drop" and "... Peachy".

#### WOODY HERMAN AND HIS ORCHESTRA

LA. July 14, 1949

Personnel as May 26 with Terry Gibbs (vib) added.

Five titles were recorded for Capitol, 4670 "More Than You Know" unissued, 4667 "Jamaica Rhumba" tenorsax solo 8 bars (M) but not GA, 4666 "Detour Ahead" no tenorsax, 4669 "The Great Lie" tenorsax solo 16 bars (M) but not GA. However:

4668	Not Really The Blues	Solo 16 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> (ts)-solo). (FM)
------	----------------------	--

While not as well known as the famous "More Moon", "Not Really ..." also is a magnificent bigband item and has an excellent but much briefer GA solo.

**WOODY HERMAN  
AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Balboa Beach, Ca. July 16, 1949**

Personnel probably as July 14. Broadcast from the Rendezvous Ballroom.

The Goof And I	No solo.
I Only Have Eyes For You	No solo.
Apple Honey	Soli 96 and 8 bars. (F)
A Date With The Blues	No solo.
Tiny's Blues	No solo.
Early Autumn	Possibly solo 10 bars and coda. (S)
Lollypop	No solo.
Don't Be Ridiculous	No solo.

**L.A. July 20, 1949**

Personnel as July 14, except Joe Mondragon (b) replaces Pettiford.

Four titles, "Tenderly", "Lollipop", "You Rascal You", "Rhapsody In Wood" recorded for Capitol but no GA.

**Balboa Beach, Ca. July 23, 1949**

Personnel probably as July 20, plus Nat King Cole (vo-"Yes, Sir ...").

Mutual broadcast from the Rendezvous Ballroom.

Not Really The Blues	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
Detour Ahead	No solo.
Rhapsody In Wood	No solo.
Yes, Sir, That's My Baby	No solo.
Tenderly	No solo.
That's Right	No solo.
You Rascal, You	No solo.
I've Got News For You	No solo.
Out Of Nowhere	No solo.
How High The Moon	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Theme	No solo.

**Balboa Beach, Ca. July 1949**

Personnel probably as July 14 or 20. Same place.

Pretty-Eyed Baby	No solo.
Unidentified instrumental (NC)	No solo.
	<b>Same</b>
Same.	
The Good Earth	No solo.
Leo The Lion (NC)	No solo.
	<b>Same</b>
Same.	
Leo The Lion	No solo.
Sonny Speaks	No solo.
Early Autumn	No solo.

**L.A. July 29, 1949**

Personnel similar to the above. Date doubtful, see programs No. 75 and 77.

AFRS Just Jazz No. 76 from the Shrine Auditorium.

Baby, I've Got News For You	No solo.
-----------------------------	----------

I Ain't Getting Any Younger	No solo.
Everywhere	No solo.
Four Brothers	Solo 16 bars (2 <sup>nd</sup> (ts)-solo). Solo 2 bars. (FM)
Keen And Peachy	Solo 32 bars behind announcer. (F)

**Balboa Beach, Ca. July 30, 1949**

Personnel probably as July 20.

Mutual broadcast from the Rendezvous Ballroom (last broadcast).

Lollypop	No solo.
I Got It Bad	No solo.
Blue Flame	No solo.
Four Brothers	Solo 16 bars (2 <sup>nd</sup> (ts)-solo). Solo 2 bars. (FM)
Early Autumn	No solo.
That's Right	No solo.
How High The Moon	No solo.

**LA. Aug. 1949**

Personnel similar to the above. Date doubtful, see programs No. 75 and 77.

AFRS Just Jazz No. 79 from the Shrine Auditorium.

Lemon Drop	Solo 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 (GA first). (F)
Keen And Peachy	Solo 32 bars. (F)
How High The Moon (named More Moon)	After talk and sign off: Solo 32 bars to fade out. (M)

GA did not stay more than 3-4 months with Herman, and by considering the numerous "no solo" items, he probably felt his time was wasted. Nevertheless there is occasionally remarkable soloing to be found. A favourite may be the Aug. version of "... Moon", wailing when the program and GA run out.

**GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. Oct. 4, 1949**

Jesse Miller (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Ernest McDonald (as, bar), Gene Ammons (ts), Junior Mance (p), Leo Blevins (g), Leroy Jackson (b), Wesley Landers (dm), Jimmy Mundy (arr).

Four titles were recorded for Mercury:

3001	Everything Depends On Me	Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)
3002	Hot Springs	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (M)
3003	When You're Gone	Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)
3004	Little Slam	Solo with ens 64 bars. (FM)

The final Mercury session presents Jug in the ballad mood. The way he chooses echo, backing and a very slow tempo tells that he pretentiously and consciously tries to capture attention, listeners, buyers for his records. "Everything ..." and "... Gone" are beautiful performances. Still, the smell of commerce is there. I feel ambivalent, I appreciate the beautiful slow tenorsax playing immensely, yet I do not like the development of GA's productions, he is in somebody's pocket. The air of "Little Sam" is refreshing, really the best and most honest piece of music at the session. But we should be grateful to Mercury for their efforts with Jug, without these sessions we would have a very meager knowledge of this important period in his musical development.

**GENE AMMONS SEXTET**

**Chi. Jan. 8, 1950**

Jesse Miller (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Junior Mance (p), Leo Blevins (g), Leroy Jackson (b), Wesley Landers (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Aristocrat/Chess:

U7231	Pennies From Heaven	Intro 8 bars to solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
U7232	The Last Mile	Solo 12 bars. (S)
U7233	Cha-Bootie	Solo 36 bars. (M)

U7234 More Moon Solo 64 bars. Solo with ens 32 bars. (F)

GA enters the fifties as one of the leading modern tenorsax men, deeply anchored to the Chicago blues tradition. On his first recording session in this decade he tries however to capitalize on two "hits" with the Woody Herman band from the late forties, "... Heaven" and "... Moon". Although they are excellent tenorsax pieces, "... Moon" is better in the previous version, and the very slow "... Heaven" is obviously aiming to attract a new more popular market. I find most excitement in the blues; the slow chorus on "... Mile" and the session highlight "Cha-Bootie", a blues reminding of "Perdido".

**COUNT BASIE AND HIS SEXTET NYC. Feb. 2, 1950**

Harry Edison (tp), Dicky Wells (tb), Georgie Auld (ts), Gene Ammons (ts, bar), Count Basie (p), Freddie Green (g), Al McKibbon (b), Gus Johnson (dm), Deep River Boys (vo-3188), Joseph "Google Eyes" August (vo-3187-1 only!).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

3187-1	If You See My Baby	Solo 24 bars. (M)
3187-2	If You See My Baby	As above. (M)
3188-1	Solid As Rock	No solo. (M)
3189-1	Rat Race	Solo 12 bars (2 <sup>nd</sup> (ts-solo). 36 bars 4/4 with (ts-GA), who leads. (FM)
3189-2	Rat Race	As above, but only 24 bars 4/4. (FM)
3190-1	Sweets	No solo. (M)

One fact should be pointed out right away; it is unfortunate that Basie did not hire GA as a permanent addition to his band, he would have been tremendous! Also it would have done him good, brought him a way from the trend which eventually made him end up with organs and congas. The magnificent Basie rhythm section gives a perfect base for his groovy playing, and "... See Me Baby" has two lovely choruses, demonstrating all facets of his artistry. Note two quite different takes, one vocal, one non-vocal!! "Rat Race" is a tenorsax battle, and it is very surprising how Auld adapts to the bebop style, in fact he is sometimes uncannily resembling Wardell Gray, could you believe that?! "... Rock" has no tenorsax soli, while "Sweets" has a 16 bars solo by Auld only.

**GENE AMMONS / SONNY STITT NYC. Feb. 18, 1950**

Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt (ts), Dick Hyman (p), Gene Ramey (b), Art Blakey (dm). Broadcast from Birdland. Dates Feb. 2 and Feb. 10 have been suggested on Ozone 1 and Kings of Jazz (It) KLJ 20013 LP issues, which I have not heard. I assume there is only one program as noted below, but please volunteer information!

You're Driving Me Crazy	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 16+8 bars, (b) on bridge. (FM)
The Way You Look Tonight	No solo.
Fine And Dandy	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 3 choruses 4/4 with (ts-SS) to coda. (F)

Despite a very fast tempo on "... Dandy", this is the better GA item on this broadcast, "... Crazy" seems somewhat unconcentrated at times.

**GENE AMMONS BAND NYC. March 5, 1950**

Bill Massey (tp), Eph Greenlea (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (ts, bar), Duke Jordan (p), Tommy Potter (b), Jo Jones (dm), Teddy Williams (vo), ensemble (vo-1221).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, 1218 "Soft Winds" and 1219 "Keep Your Head From Ammons" were rejected, however:

1220	Bye Bye	Solo 64 bars to solo with ens 32 bars. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
1221	Let It Be	Solo with ens 24 bars. Long coda. (M)

**Same date**

Personnel as above minus Massey and Greenlea.

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

1222-1	Blues Up And Down (NC)	Solo structure: GA 12, SS 12, 24 bars 4/4 GA/SS, breakdown. (FM)
--------	------------------------	---

1222-2	Blues Up And Down	Solo structure: GA 12, SS 12, 36 bars 4/4 GA/SS, 12 bars 2/2 GA/SS, GA 12, SS 12, breakdown. (FM)
1222-3	Blues Up And Down	Solo structure as take 2, but concluding ensemble intact. (FM)
1223-1	You Can Depend On Me	Solo structure: Ens 16, 8 bars 2/2 GA/SS, ens 8, GA 32, SS 32, 32 bars 8/8 GA/SS, 32 bars 4/4 GA/SS. (F)
1223-2	You Can Depend On Me	As above. (F)
1224	Touch Of The Blues	Obbligato parts. (S)
1225	Dumb Woman Blues	Solo 12 bars. (SM)

This is one of the most important parts of the early fifties tenorsax history!! The Ammons/Stitt combination playing at Birdland from January 1950 enters the Prestige recording studio, and some of the most incredible tenorsax battles are created. There are two titles, "Blues Up And Down" and "You Can Depend On Me" with alternate takes, and the playing is just gorgeous, building upon and even transcending the concepts of Dexter Gordon/Wardell Gray. Both players are in the shape of their lives, and the exchanges are sharp as razors. The more you play this music, lasting almost 12 minutes, the better it becomes! In addition there are four interesting items with GA alone. My favourite is the beautiful chorus on "Dumb Woman...", but also "Bye Bye" in particular has good playing. But back to the two GA/SS items; here you have the essence of modern jazz tenorsax "battles", a unique kind of music where musical creation on the most sophisticated level is combined with an almost animalistic and primitive fight for survival! Certainly Jug survives here!!

#### GENE AMMONS BAND

NYC. April 26, 1950

Bill Massey (tp), Bennie Green (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (bar), Duke Jordan (p), Tommy Potter (b), Art Blakey (dm), ensemble (vo-86).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

85	Cha-Bootie	Solo 24 bars. (M)
86	Who Put The Sleeping Pills In Rip Van Winkle's Coffee?	Solo 34 bars. (M)
87	Gravy (Walkin')	Solo 36 bars. (M)
88	Easy Glide	Solo with ens 6 bars. Solo 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M)

The GA band is no more than a vehicle for the master himself, and he blows some of the best tenorsax ever in the early fifties on his Prestige dates. He is always close to the blues whatever he plays, and on "Gravy", which is a blues, later made famous as "Walkin'", he is magnificent, note particularly the third and last chorus! Likewise "Cha-Bootie" has two incredible choruses preceded by SS on baritone sax, a rare occasion. Even in a crazy piece like "... Sleeping Pills ..." he manages to slip in with a first class solo, and also "... Glide" is highly noteworthy.

#### GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA

Chi. May 2, 1950

Bill Massey (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Charles Bateman (p), Gene Wright (b), Wesley Landers (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Chess:

U7247	Ten Or Eleven	Solo 64 bars. (M)
U7248	Goodbye	Solo feature for tenorsax. (S)
U7249	You Go To My Head	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
U7250	My Foolish Heart	Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)

Back to Chicago GA seems to forget his Prestige contract and continues to record for Chess. This company works with a more commercial concept, adding echo to preferred slow songs. Since it is a giant who plays, it does not really matter much, even the rather bombastic version of Benny Goodman's sign-off theme "Goodbye" seems to work. "... Head" and "... Heart", his biggest hit on Chess, are much in the same style and quite enjoyable, but it is obvious that the music is not 'honest' in the real sense, I am convinced that GA played the ballads quite differently and deeper on a late club night. The odd item "... Eleven" has a straightforward swinging solo with no echo, more like the real thing.

#### GENE AMMONS QUARTET

NYC. June 28, 1950

Gene Ammons (ts), Duke Jordan (p), Gene Wright (b), Wes Landers (dm).  
Two titles were recorded for Prestige (four others with Sonny Stitt replacing Gene Ammons):

- |    |                                    |  |
|----|------------------------------------|--|
| 89 | I Wanna Be Loved                   | Intro 4 bars to solo<br>32 bars to coda. (S) |
| 91 | I Can't Give You Anything But Love | Solo 4 choruses<br>of 32 bars. (FM)          |

On "... Loved" we encounter Jug in a soft and sweet mood, maybe a little too soft and with a faint echo to emphasize the mood, but it is nevertheless a lovely ballad. "... Love" is however a more important piece of music, played as a bright swinger, and he needs the opening chorus and a warm-up one to really get into the groove. It seems that he struggles somewhat, he is further from the blues than usual, but he frees himself from any constraints imposed and delivers two excellent choruses.

**GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. July 27, 1950**  
Bill Massey (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Gene Ammons (ts, vo-101), Sonny Stitt (bar), Duke Jordan (p), Gene Wright (b), Wesley Landers (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

- |     |                           |  |
|-----|---------------------------|--|
| 100 | Back In Your Own Backyard | Soli with orch 32 bars and<br>8 bars to long coda. (S) |
| 101 | Sweet Jennie Lou          | Vocal. Solo with orch 16 bars. Vocal. (M)              |
| 102 | La Vie En Rose            | Solo with orch 40 bars to coda. (S)                    |
| 103 | Seven Eleven              | Solo with orch 24 bars. (M)                            |

This session is not well produced and disappointing, the band is just noisy fill-in. "... Backyard" is taken in an unusual and rather unsuitable syrupy tempo, and although it is interesting with a freak vocal encounter, it is not remarkable. "La Vie ..." is a very commercial item with only appr. 8 bars of real improvisation. Best is the two blues choruses on "Seven ...".

**GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. July/Aug. 1950**  
Same. Four titles were recorded for Chess:

- |       |                     |                                      |
|-------|---------------------|--------------------------------------|
| U7265 | Jug Head Ramble     | Solo 24 bars. (M)                    |
| U7266 | Can Anyone Explain? | Solo 22 bars. Solo bars to coda. (S) |
| U7267 | Don't Do Me Wrong   | Solo 34 bars. (M)                    |
| U7268 | Prelude To A Kiss   | Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)            |

There are elements of routine in GA's recordings now, particularly with Chess, and "Prelude ..." is a prominent example. "... Explain" is of the same commercial lot, and "... Wrong" also seems quite ordinary. We have to go to the 'simple' shuffle "... Ramble" to have the real thing. Of course, when GA plays the commercials, he makes more music than most people with serious efforts, but I feel a warning is needed!

**SONNY STITT BAND** **NYC. Oct. 8, 1950**  
Personnel as July 27 except Gene Ammons (bar), Sonny Stitt (ts).  
Four titles were recorded for Prestige, "To Think You've Chosen Me", "After You've Gone", "Our Very Own", "S'Wonderful", but unfortunately no baritone sax soli.

**GENE AMMONS - SONNY STITT BAND** **NYC. Oct. 28, 1950**  
Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (ts-116,117), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Wes Landers (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

- |     |                        |   |
|-----|------------------------|---|
| 116 | Stringin' The Jug Pt 1 | Solo 32 bars. 32 bars<br>8/8 with (ts-SS). (FM)                   |
| 117 | Stringin' The Jug Pt 2 | 32 bars 16/16 to 32 bars 8/8<br>to 32 bars 4/4 with (ts-SS). (FM) |
| 118 | When I Dream Of You    | Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)                                    |
| 119 | A Lover Is Blue        | Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)                                    |

Two beautiful ballads, maybe not going very deep, being constrained to a single chorus and coda appropriate for a juke box market, but nevertheless quite noteworthy.



"... The Jug" is another exciting but less known chase, why has not this item been reissued?

**GENE AMMONS BAND****NYC. Jan. 16, 1951**

Bill Massey (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Gene Ammons (ts, vo-124), Sonny Stitt (ts, bar), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

124	Around About 1. AM	Intro 4 bars. Vocal. Solo 12 bars. (S)
125	Jug	Long intro with orch. Solo with orch 96 and 16 bars. (F)
126	Wow	Soli with orch 32 and 8 bars. (M)
127	Blue And Sentimental	Solo 36 bars to long coda. (S)

Here we have a good Prestige session with more variation than the preceding ones, emphasizing jazz and tenorsax soloing rather than purely commercial aspects. "Around ..." has a groovy intro which immediately defines the atmosphere, and an excellent slow blues chorus follows later. In "Jug" we get a real up-tempo item, which is really "Dexter Digs In", and it is quite good although there are more important GA items in this tempo. "Wow" has a remarkable last solo in double-time, note this one!! Finally, "Blue ..." has a magnificent solo feature; Herschal Evans' old vehicle seems excellently suitable for Jug, this is my favorite item from this session!

**GENE AMMONS BAND****NYC. Jan. 31, 1951**

Bill Massey (tp), Al Outcalt (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (ts, bar), Charles Bateman (p), Gene Wright (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Prestige:

136/ 137	New Blues Up And Down Pt 1 & 2	Solo 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (ts-SS) to solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (ts) to ensemble. (F)
-------------	--------------------------------	--

A faster version of an old hit, and although it is a recreation it has dynamics and inspiration and fits well into the important sequence of GA soloing from the early fifties. Not reissued, it is a great pleasure to find and be hypnotized by!

**SONNY STITT****NYC. Jan. 31, 1951**

Personnel as above except Gene Ammons (bar), Larry Townsend (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Prestige, "The Thrill Of Your Kiss" and "If The Moon Turns Green", but no GA.

**GENE AMMONS - SONNY STITT****NYC. March 10, 1951**

Bill Massey (tp), Wade Marcus (tb), Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt (ts), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Recorded at Birdland, one title has not been available:

More Moon	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (F)
My Foolish Heart	
After You've Gone	No solo.
Ain't Misbehavin'	No solo.
Blues Up And Down	Solo schedule: GA 12 bars, SS 12 bars, 4 choruses of 4/4 (GA first), GA solo 8 choruses, SS solo 18 choruses, 2 choruses of 4/4 (GA first). Duet 3 choruses. (F)
Jumpin' With Symphony Sid	Soli 24, 12 and 4 bars. (M)

A thrilling jam session, but Jug seems to lack some of Stitt's inspiration. "More Moon" proceeds according to the usual format, and in "Blues ..." he ventures after a few choruses into more noise than really good music. "... Sid" on closing seems to be his best solo feature.

**GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA****Chi. May 3, 1951**

Personnel as July 27.

Four titles were recorded for Chess:

U7337	Baby Won't You Please Say Yes	Intro to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 2, 2 and 8
-------	-------------------------------	--

		bars to coda. (M)
U7338	Happiness Is Just A Thing Called Joe	Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)
U7339	It's You Or No One	Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)
U7340	You're Not The Kind	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars to coda. (M)

The final Chess/Chicago session is like the preceding ones; the ballads are bombastic and commercial, yet with GA's strong personality giving them importance. Nevertheless here 'they' are stretching it too far, the ending of "... No One" is just too bad. The medium titles are to be preferred and have some good soloing, particularly "Baby ...".

#### GENE AMMONS AND HIS BAND

NYC. June 29, 1951

Bill Massey (tp), Eli Dabney (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Rudy Williams (bar), Clarence "Sleepy" Anderson (p), Earl May (b), Ted Stewart (dm), Sally Early (vo-151).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

148	Ammons Boogie	Break to solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
149	Echo Chamber Blues	In ens. Solo 24 bars. Coda. (S)
150	Sirocco	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars, partly with ens. Coda. (M)
151	Fine And Foxy	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars, partly with ens. (M)

I have a particular weakness for GA playing the groovy blues, whether in medium tempo like "... Boogie", "Sirocco" and "... Foxy", or slow tempo like "Echo ...", in this idiom his unique personality and strength really unfold, nobody is his superior here! For a particular highlight note how he almost duets with "Sleepy" for two choruses on the latter item, wow!!

#### GENE AMMONS QUARTET

NYC. Aug. 14, 1951

Gene Ammons (ts), Clarence Anderson (p), Earl May (b), Ted Stewart (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

160-A	Hot Stuff	As below but only solo 12 bars at the end. (F)
160-B	Hot Stuff	As below. (F)
160-C	Hot Stuff	Intro 4 bars to straight 24 bars to solo 48 bars. Solo 24 bars to straight 12 bars to coda 4 bars. (F)
161-A	Them There Eyes	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 16 bars. (M)
162-A	When The Saints Go Marching In	As below. (M)
162-B	When The Saints Go Marching In	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to straight 16 bars. (M)
163-A	Archie	Straight with (p) 24 bars to solo 24 bars. Solo 12 bars to straight 12 bars. (M)

A lively session with better sound than most of the earlier Prestige sessions. "Hot Stuff" is one of Jug's best fast tempo performances in the early fifties. And he even manages to blow a lot of life into the terrible nuisance "... The Saints ...". Good soloing also on "... Eyes" and the blues as only GA can make it on "Archie". In all, a very nice date. Note that when I state 'straight' above, it is an overstatement, he never plays straight 'really', but there is a need to discern the real soli from the melody presentations.

#### GENE AMMONS AND HIS BAND

NYC. Nov. 14, 1951

Bill Massey (tp), Eli Dabney (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (ts, bar), Clarence Anderson (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

255	Undecided	Straight 32 bars to solo 72 bars to straight 8 bars. (M)
-----	-----------	---

256	Until The Real Thing Comes Along	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
257	Because Of Rain	Solo with orch 48 bars to long coda. (S)
258	Charmaine	Solo with orch 48 bars to coda. (S)

"Undecided" has some first rate GA blowing to be noted. "... The Real Thing ...", "... Rain" and the waltzlike "Charmaine", highly echoed, are however setbacks to commercialism; while quite pleasant they are not aimed at jazz listeners.

**GENE AMMONS AND HIS BAND** **NYC. March 24, 1952**

Bill Massey (tp), J. J. Johnson (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (bar), John Houston (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Bob Wilson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

82532	I'll Walk Alone	Soli 8 and 36 bars. (SM)
82533	Old Folks	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
82534	Beezy	Solo 8 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Coda. (F)
82535	Somewhere Along The Way	Intro 4 bars to solo 40 bars to long coda. (S)

A session fitting nicely into the Prestige atmosphere and the last chance to hear the Ammons/Stitt band, although GA takes it all, there are no other soloists except for a piano intro. Three titles are beautiful ballads, and I am not able to prefer one from the others. And then an exciting IGR-item, "Beezy", perhaps noisy by some standards due to the rather unnecessary band background, but nevertheless a fine example of up-tempo GA.

Break up of his co-led band with Sonny Stitt in 1952.

**GENE AMMONS AND HIS BAND** **Chi. Nov. 18, 1952**

John Coles (tp), Lino Murray (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Mack or Gene or McKinley Easton (bar), John Houston (p), unknown (g), Benny Steuberville (b), George Brown (dm).

Four titles were recorded for United (later issued on Savoy):

U1163	Just Chips	Duet with (dm) 32 bars. Break 4 bars to solo 32 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. Duet with (dm) 16 bars to fade out. (FM)
U1164-2	Street Of Dreams	Solo 16 bars (S) to 48 bars (M) to coda. (S)
U1165-2	The Beat (Good Time Blues)	Solo 32 bars to coda. (SM)
U1166	Travellin' Light	Solo 48 bars to coda. (S)

**Chi. April 15, 1953**

Same. One title, with band vocal:

U1302	Red Top	Solo 24 bars. (M)
-------	---------	-------------------

**Chi. June 8, 1953**

Same. McKinley Easton ? (ts, bar). Four titles:

U1331	Fuzzy	Solo 72 bars. (M)
U1332	Stairway To The Stars	Solo 40 bars to coda. (S)
U1333	Jim Dawgs	Intro. Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
U1334	Big Slam Pt 1	Solo schedule: Ens 40 bars, GA 16, Ens 8, GA 32, (bar-ME) 64, 2x(GA 8, ME 8), 4x(GA 4, ME 4), GA/ME 64 bars. (F)
U133?	Big Slam Pt 2	Probably edited alternate take, starting on ME 32 continuing with chase as above. (F)

The Chicago sessions for United are generally more inspired than those for Prestige, and there is some excellent tenorsax playing to be heard. In the slow tempo there are three magnificent performances with some echo added, "... Light", "... Dreams" and

"Stairways ...", all majestic and rather straight, yet more interesting than most tenorsax players' in-depth improvisations. Then there are several versions of the blues; the well known "Red Top" but also "Good Time ..." and "Jim Dawgs", all showing for the n'th time the immense strength of GA in this area. "Fuzzy" is not a blues, as it may seem from the ensemble, but yet having excellent soloing as has "Just Chips" with some fascinating coplaying ts/dm. Finally the fast "Big Slam" featuring a tenorsax battle between GA and a quite competent Easton, whatever his first name. The Savoy LP presents two parts, but it is unclear how they are related to the original 78 rpm. issue on United. They are alternate versions of the same tune, but Part 2 contains only the last half, starting in the middle of Easton's solo. As tenorsax battles go, this is perhaps not among the historical ones, but both of them wait to utter satisfaction. To sum up: One of the best GA collections from the early fifties.

**GENE AMMONS AND HIS BAND                      Englewood Cliffs, NY. Nov. 26, 1954**

Nate Woodyard (tp), Henderson Chambers (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), McKinley Easton (bar), John Houston (p), Benny Steuberville (b), George Brown (dm), Gerry Valentine (arr).

Note: Date given by Bob Porter as Feb. 8, 1955 but later discographies give date above.

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

643	Sock	Break to solo 64 bars. (FM)
644	What I Say	Break to solo 60 bars. (FM)
645	Count Your Blessings	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
646	Cara Mia	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)

GA leaves the early fifties with good soloing in fast medium tempo on "Sock" which is a standard, and "... Say" which is a blues. The two slow items represent his "other self", they are played straight with echo for a non-jazz public but are nevertheless of more value than most tenorsax players' wholehearted improvisations!

**GENE AMMONS AND HIS BAND                      NYC. Feb. 8, 1955**

Nate Woodyard (tp), Edwin Moore (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Cecil Payne (bar), Lawrence Wheatley (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Gene Brown (dm), Earl Coleman (vo-694, 696), Gerry Valentine (arr).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

694	This Is Always	Solo 8 bars. (S)
695	Blue Roller	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
696	My Last Affair	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
697	Our Love Is Here To Stay	Solo 48 bars to coda. (S)

GA continues to record for Prestige into the late fifties, and Earl Coleman's rendering of the old Charlie Parker feature "... Always" is a proper start; a brief but very nice solo. "... Roller" is a most typical GA blues performance in medium tempo of good quality. The main item of the session is however the ballad "Our Love ...", an item with many nice parts but somewhat commercialized and lacking the completeness of a masterpiece. "... Affair" is however a peculiar piece, in between EJ's nice vocal parts, GA plays just like an ordinary honker, and it is difficult to hear that it is really him.

**GENE AMMONS ALL STARS                      NYC. June 15, 1955**

Art Farmer (tp), Lou Donaldson (as), Gene Ammons (ts), Freddie Redd (p), Addison Farmer (b), Kenny Clarke (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Prestige (no 78 rpm.):

755	Juggernaut	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to 1 chorus of 4/4 with (dm). (M)
756	Woofin' And Tweetin'	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

GA is entering the LP age, allowing him and his fellow musicians to stretch out. This is by all means a good session and good soloing by all participants, but it seems that the leader is somewhat hesitant in his approach to the new medium. Unexpectedly he lets the other horns and piano enter first on both items, and when he takes the stage himself his soloing is typical and groovy but not outstanding.

**GENE AMMONS BAND****NYC. Nov. 4, 1955**

Personnel as Feb. 8.

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

810	Blues For Turfers	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
811	Rock-Roll	Solo 8 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (FM)
812	Ghost Of A Chance	Solo 8 bars. (S)
813	I Haven't Changed A Thing	Solo 8 bars. (S)

Rewrite of Sept. 26, 2015): Good blues playing on "... Turfers", typical slow and groovy on "... Thing", and in fact rather corny on "... Chance", while "Rock-Roll", having nothing to do with r&b nor r&roll, is the most exciting one with GA really going!

**GENE AMMONS ALL STARS****NYC. April 23, 1956**

Art Farmer (tp), Jackie McLean (as), Gene Ammons (ts), Duke Jordan (p), Addison Farmer (b), Art Taylor (dm), Candido Camero (cga).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "The Happy Blues":

880	The Happy Blues	Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. 5 choruses 4/4 with (as/tp). (M)
881	The Great Lie	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
882	Can't We Be Friends?	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. solo 48 + 12 bars to close, (cga) on last bridge. (SM)
883	Madhouse	Solo 8 bars. 64 bars 4/4 with (as/tp). Solo 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (tp/as). Solo 32 bars. 32 bars 2/2 with (tp/as) to 32 bars all out. (F)

This session is a confident step forward from the previous LP-one! GA is in excellent shape here; my favourite item is "... Friends", played with humour, inspiration and great emotion. "... Happy ..." has fine blues playing, and particularly the last chorus of "... Lie" swings greatly. "Madhouse" is a slightly camouflaged "Hot House" and consists mostly of chases, interspaced with brief soli. Excellent contributions also by the other members, however, the presence of conga may be debated; while there is nothing wrong with the way it is performed, it disturbs in my opinion the "true" jazz feeling.

**GENE AMMONS ALL STARS****NYC. July 13, 1956**

Art Farmer, Donald Byrd (tp), Jackie McLean (as), Gene Ammons (ts), Mal Waldron (p), Doug Watkins (b), Art Taylor (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Jammin' With Gene":

940	Jammin' With Gene	Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
941	We'll Be Together Again	Solo 32 bars (S) to solo 64 bars. (FM). Solo 24 bars (FM) to solo 8 bars to coda. (S)
942	Not Really The Blues	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. 1 chorus 8/8 with (as), 2 choruses 4/4 with (as), 3 choruses 4/4 with (tp/tp/as). (F)

Fine blowing session without much fuss. "Not Really ..." is an ordinary 32 bars standard, and GA plays a long, inspired solo, note particularly the third chorus! And his chase with altosax is white hot!! In "Gene ..." he plays the medium blues in the heavy, almost massive way he masters so successfully. And "... Together Again" has a fine blend of tempi, also an excellent GA item. It seems that Prestige has found a very successful concept with its Gene Ammons sessions!

**GENE AMMONS ALL STARS****NYC. Jan. 11, 1957**

Art Farmer (tp), Jackie McLean (as), Gene Ammons (ts), Mal Waldron (p), Kenny Burrell (g), Doug Watkins (b), Art Taylor (dm), Jimmy Mundy (arr).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Funky":

1054	Pint Size	Solo 8 bars. Solo 3 choruses of
------	-----------	---------------------------------

		32 bars. Solo 2 bars. (M)
1055	King Size	Intro 4 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (tp). (FM)
1056	Funky	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
1057	Stella By Starlight	Solo 32 bars (S) to break and solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M). Solo 16 bars to coda. (S)

"Stella ..." commences with a very slow, floating solo, nice, but it seems that GA wakens up when the tempo changes to medium, and the last chorus is really swinging. Returning to slow, there is more action than in the beginning, an exciting performance. "Funky" is really what it pretends to be, a juicy, well performed solo in a perfect tempo, carried by DW's bass, and "Pint ..." is quite similar, albeit a little faster. And "King ..." swings nicely, note Farmer's "encouragement" in the second tenorsax chorus!

#### GENE AMMONS ALL STARS

NYC. April 12, 1957

Idrees Sulieman (tp), Jackie McLean (as), Gene Ammons (ts), Mal Waldron (p), Kenny Burrell (g), Paul Chambers (b), Art Taylor (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Jammin' In Hi-Fi":

1184	The Twister	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. 2 choruses 4/4 with (tp/as/g). (FM)
1185	Cattin'	Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
1186	Pennies From Heaven	Solo with (g) acc. 32 bars (S) to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M). Solo 32 bars to coda. (M/S)
1187	Four	Soli 32, 32, 16, 16, 8, 8, 4, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)

Another fine jam session with emphasis on straight forward blowing rather than sophisticated arrangements. There are three standards of which "Pennies ..." with tempo change is a particularly pleasant performance, and the groovy blues is played with inspiration on "Cattin'".

#### GENE AMMONS ALL STARS

NYC. Jan. 3, 1958

Jerome Richardson (fl), John Coltrane (as, ts), Gene Ammons, Paul Quinichette (ts), Pepper Adams (bar), Mal Waldron (p, arr), George Joyner (Jamil Nasser) (b), Art Taylor (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "The Big Sound" and "Groove Blues":

1426	Ammons' Joy	Break to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (SM)
1427	Groove Blues	Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
1428	The Real McCoy	Break to solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. 4 choruses of 4/4 with (bar/fl/as/ts). (M)
1429	That's All	Solo 64 bars. Solo 16 bars to long coda. (S)
1430	It Might As Well Be Spring	Soli 2 choruses of 40 bars. Solo 24 bars to coda. (S)
1431	Cheek To Cheek	Solo 5 choruses of 72 bars. (F)
1432	Jug Handle	Solo 7 choruses of 32 bars. 2 choruses 4/4 and 1 chorus 2/2 with (fl). Soli 4 and 4 bars. (F)
1433	Blue Hymn	Soli 1, 3 and 4 choruses of 12 bars. (S)

This is one of the greatest Prestige sessions, to be highlighted several places in this book! GA has one of his great days here, and there are some very important highlights; note in particular the slow blues, "Groove ..." and "... Hymn", on this arena GA cannot be beaten by anybody! But the uptempi "Jug ..." and "Cheek ..." show that also this tempo is no match for him. Note also the outstanding and groovy "... Joy" as well as the magnificent ballad of "... Spring"!! Or quite possibly the neverending fast solo on "Cheek ..." is the real session summit, although there is some

confusion with regard to the number of choruses he is supposed to take. And there is more to this session than "just" Jug ....

**BENNIE GREEN****Hackensack, NJ. April 28, 1958**

Bennie Green (tb, vo), Gene Ammons, Billy Root (ts), Sonny Clark (p), Ike Isaacs (b), Elvin Jones (dm), Babs Gonzales (vo-"Soul Stirrin'", "We Wanna Cook"). Six titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "Soul Stirrin'":

tk2	Lullaby Of The Doomed	Solo with ens 32 bars. Solo 2 bars. (S)
tk5	We Wanna Cook	Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
tk9	That's All	Solo 16 bars. Coda. (S)
tk12	Soul Stirrin'	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
tk15	B. G. Mambo	Solo 64 bars. (M)
tk19	Black Pearl	Solo 32 bars. (M)

Since GA is under contract with Prestige, he has to become a sideman on this Blue Note date, but who cares? This is great session in all respects; high quality originals, excellent rhythm section, trombone playing deluxe, a second tenorsax player which from his style I believed to belong to this book until learning otherwise .... and finally the great GA himself, featured extensively on all items. "... Mambo" and "... Pearl" are good medium swingers, particularly the latter, and note the second chorus of the former. The very fast "... Cook" has a "Cheek To Cheek" quote in the sixth chorus, and the very groovy, almost slow "Soul..." refers to "Flight Of The Bumble Bee"! A lovely very slow "... All" with his fullbodied sound and typical staccato phrasing is a must, but the session highlight seems to be the original and deeply moving "Lullaby ...", dig this!!

**GENE AMMONS ALL STARS****NYC. May 2, 1958**

Idrees Sulieman (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), Pepper Adams (bar), Mal Waldron (p), Doug Watkins (b), Art Taylor (dm), Ray Barretto (cga). Four titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Blue Gene":

1509	Blue Greens 'N Beans	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (SM)
1510	Hip Tip	Solo 48 bars. (S)
1511	Scamperin'	Solo 14 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
1512	Blue Gene	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (S)

Another fine session, similar to the one of April 12, 1957, with emphasis on the blues. One never stops marvelling at how GA is treating the slow blues, and "... Beans" and "Blue ..." represent two more examples of the kind, you're bound to love them! Or maybe the slow "... Tip" thrills you more, who knows? A final point; the use of conga represents a blind trail.

**JAM SESSION****Chi. Aug. 15, 1958**

J. J. Johnson (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Pat Patrich (bar), Sun Ra (p), Ronnie Boykins (b), Robert Barry (dm).

Jam session at Pershing Ballroom, two titles have GA ("I Can't Get Started" and "Don't Blame Me" without tenorsax), issued on Transparency 0316 CD:

13:22	Chi-Town Blues	Solo 4 choruses of 44 bars. (M)
11:30	Just You, Just Me	Solo 7 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 4, 4, 4 and 4 bars. (F)

An important jazz archeological discovery, available for everybody on CD (postscript of Oct. 1, 2019). Unfortunately the sound quality is pretty poor, the trombone can hardly be heard, only the baritone sax is reasonable well recorded, and riffing and shouting do not make things better. GA suffers from this, particularly because he seems to be in excellent shape. Knowing his style and playing well, we can guess how exciting this really is!! "Chi-Town ..." is an AABA tune with A=12, B=8. "Just You ..." has a messy chase between everybody at the end. You have to be quite dedicated to enjoy this date, and I am reluctant to play it for hi-fi friends, but if you take your time, and play it several times to be familiar with it, you will be rewarded, because any GA from this time is gold.

**BENNIE GREEN / GENE AMMONS****NYC. Nov. 12, 1958**

Nat Adderley (cnt), Bennie Green (tb), Frank Wess (fl, ts), Gene Ammons, Frank Foster (ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Ed Jones (b), Albert Heath (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Vee Jay, issued as "The Swingin'est", no tenorsax on "Sermonette" but:

Jim Dog	Solo 36 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> (ts)-solo). (M)
Jim Dog (alt.)	As above. (M)
Going South	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> (ts)-solo). (M)
A Little Ditty	Solo 24 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> (ts)-solo). (M)
Swingin' For Benny	Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> (ts)- solo). 8 choruses 4/4 with (FF/FW). (F)
Juggin' Around	Solo 8 bars. Solo 64 bars (1 <sup>st</sup> (ts)-solo). (FM)
Juggin' Around (alt.)	As above. (FM)

Quite a get-together with three of the top tenorsax performers of the day present. There are three examples of the blues, so basic to GA, "... South", "Jim Dog" and "... Benny", while "... Around" is a standard, and "... Ditty" an unconventional ABA song. The session in general is somewhat uneven, the arrangements rather ordinary, but the tenorsax (and trumpet/trumpbone/flute) playing is mostly of high quality by all participants, pick your choice! GA is most exciting in the groovy "... South" and "... Dog" but needs several choruses to warm up on "... Benny", and "... Around" is somewhat stale. Two alternate takes represent an extra benefit. I wish there had been better preparations for this session; only one item use 4/4 exchanges, and more competition could have been put into the proceedings. But by all means, this is an exciting one-hour session!

**GENE AMMONS Englewood Cliffs, NJ. June 16, 1960**

Gene Ammons (ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Doug Watkins (b), Art Taylor (dm), Ray Barretto (cga).

Seven titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Boss Tenor":

2303	Close Your Eyes	Straight 40 bars to solo 64 bars. Straight 36 bars to fade out. (M)
2304	Stompin' At The Savoy	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Straight 16 and 8 bars. (FM)
2305	Blue Ammons	Straight 2 to solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 2 choruses to fade out. (M)
2306	Confirmation	Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 32 bars. (F)
2307	Hittin' The Jug	Straight 1 to solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 1 to straight 1 chorus. (S)
2308	Canadian Sunset	Straight 64 bars to solo 64 bars to straight 40 bars. (M)
2309	My Romance	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)

Gene Ammons enters the recording studios again after a break of 1 ½ years, continuing his fruitful connection with Prestige. Here he has the very best of rhythm section (the cga does not interrupt much here), and with a variety of tempi he shows that he still is a major force on the tenorsax arena. GA has always been strongly connected to the blues, and there are two very nice examples, "... Jug" in a very slow tempo and "Blue ..." in a swinging medium. The beautiful ballad "... Romance" is also noteworthy, but possibly the session highlight is the wistful "... Eyes". Note however that he has no problem with an uptempo title like "Confirmation". To sum up, GA is in full command of all his former powers!

**GENE AMMONS Englewood Cliffs, NJ. June 17, 1960**

Gene Ammons (ts), Frank Wess (fl, ts), Johnny "Hammond" Smith (org), Doug Watkins (b), Art Taylor (dm), Ray Barretto (cga).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Angel Eyes":

2310	Getting' Around	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (fl). (SM)
2311	The Blue Room	Soli 64 and 4 bars. (M)



2312	Water Jug	Soli 32 and 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (ts-FW). Break 2 bars. (FM)
2313	Angel Eyes	Soli 48+8 bars, (fl) on 2 <sup>nd</sup> bridge. Solo 8 bars to long coda. (S)
2314	Velvet Soul	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (S)
2315	In Sid's Thing	Soli 64 and 16 bars. 64 bars 8/8 to 32 bars 4/4 to 32 bars 2/2 with (ts-FW). (F)

Only the day after but a completely different session! It is the first of GA's "organ sessions" of which there will be so many later. Bob Porter in his fine liner notes says that "Gene Ammons didn't care for organists", but "Hammond" has a laidback style that works very nicely, particularly in slower tempi". GA battles heavily with FW on the two faster titles, very satisfactory and in the best of tradition, no screaming nor honking but fine exchanges. In slower tempi he plays with great strength and inspiration. All items are noteworthy, but the album title number is something quite special, quote again: "Angel Eyes" was one of Gene's biggest records and it should be noted that nine-minute ballads do not gain hit status very often!" Lovely!! As good as the day-before-session was, this one is likely to thrill you even more!!

**GENE AMMONS** **Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Jan. 26, 1961**  
Gene Ammons (ts), Richard Wyands (p), Doug Watkins (b), J. C. Heard (dm).  
Eight titles were recorded for Moodsville/Prestige, issued as "Nice And Cool":

2843	I Remember You	Solo 72 and 20 bars to coda. (SM)
2844	Willow Weep For Me	Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)
2845	Someone To Watch Over Me	Solo 48 bars. (S)
2846	Something Wonderful	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
2847	'Till There Was You	Solo 64 and 20 bars to coda. (S)
2848	Something I Dreamed Last Night	Solo 56 bars. (S)
2849	Answer My Love	Solo 64+4 bars to coda. (S)
2850	Little Girl Blue	Solo 72 bars to coda. (S)

A delightful ballad session! Only "... You" has a bit of tempo, all the other moves along at a very slow pace. One might point out that the session therefore is unbalanced, and possibly a bit boring. However, this absolutely to think wrongly! One does not have to play the whole of it as one piece, just take a few when you are in the mood. Each title is so beautiful, emotional and personal, GA is a master of ballads. Bob Porter hints that there is some routine here, and that there are more inspired session. I don't know that, how can one play like this just on routine! Note also the fine rhythm section, with RW as a brilliant and underrated pianist, giving the best of background and some delicious contributions in particular on the longest titles "... Was You" and "Something ..." and also "Someone ...". Forty or fifty years ago I would encourage you to play this with candlelights and your (girl)friend, but I guess most of the readers of this have forgotten what I mean ...

**GENE AMMONS** **Englewood Cliffs, Jan. 27, 1961**  
Gene Ammons (ts), Clarence "Sleepy" Anderson (org-2855, p-2856), Richard Wyands (p), Doug Watkins (b), J. C. Heard (dm), Ray Baretto (cga).  
Eight titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Jug":

2851	Miss Lucy	Straight 2 to solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 1 chorus to fade out. (SM)
2852	Exactly Like You	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Straight 36 bars to coda. (M)
2853	Ol' Man River	Long intro (S) to straight to solo 44 bars to straight and fade out. (SM)
2854	Easy To Love	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to 16 bars 4/4 with (b) to straight 20 bars to coda. (M)
2855	Namely You	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to straight 20 bars and coda. (SM)
2856	Let It Be You	Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)
2857	Seed Shack	Straight 2 to solo 4 choruses of 12

bars. Solo 2 to straight 2 choruses. (SM)  
 2858 Tangerine Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 16 bars to straight 18 bars and coda. (FM)

I have a certain ambivalence to this session. The rhythm section is rather edgy compared to June, and the conga is rather disturbing. The setup also has too much melody presentation instead of real improvisation, and "... River" is dangerously close to corn. However, what amazes me, when listening to GA's actual solo sections, he plays as well as anytime! Take "Tangerine", the fastest tune, as a good example! Dig also the beautiful "... Be You"!

**GENE AMMONS SEPTET****Chi. Feb. 4, 1961**

Fip Ricard (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), Ronald Wilson (bar), Jodie Christian (p), Alan Garrett (b), Louis Taylor (dm), Al Hayes (cga, bgo).  
 Broadcast from Sutherland Lounge, six titles:

Pennies From Heaven	Free intro to solo 32 bars to very long coda. (S)
Canadian Sunset	Straight 64 bars to solo 64+48 bars to straight 32 bars. (M)
Mambo	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Juggin' Around (NC)	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
My Romance	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
Unidentified Title	Intro. Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. 3 1/2 choruses 8/8, 4/4, 2/2 and 1/1 with (dm). Solo 8 bars. Coda. (F)

The sound of these titles on Johan's tape is very lousy, but with patience and concentration one can hear that GA is playing well. "Pennies is a feature number in an extremely slow tempo, and "... Sunset has also GA as the only soloist. "Mambo" however also has a trumpet solo. Postscript: The three remaining items have been available. "... Around" lacks the beginning which probably contained the GA solo. "... Romance" is another utterly slow performance, too slow. Finally the most interesting item of the whole session with lots of good GA!

**GENE AMMONS****Englewood Cliffs, NJ. June 13, 1961**

Hobart Dodson, Clark Terry (tp), Oliver Nelson (as), Gene Ammons, George Barrow, Red Holloway (ts), Bob Ashton (bar), Richard Wyands (p), Wendell Marshall (b), Bill English (dm), Ray Barretto (cga).  
 Seven titles were recorded for Prestige:

3079	Things Ain't What They Used To Be	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Breaks. (SM)
3080	Makin' Whopee'	Solo 64 bars. (SM)
3081	I Want To Be Loved	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
3082	Lullaby Of The Leaves	Straight with orch 40 bars to solo 32 bars. Straight 16 bars to very long coda. (SM)
3083	Too Marvelous For Words	Solo with orch 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. Solo with orch 32 bars. (M)
3084	Love I've Found You	Solo 72 bars to coda. (S)
3085	The Song Is You	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 64 bars. Solo 64 bars. Straight 32 bars. (FM)

A quite different session from the above, arranged and conducted by the very personal Oliver Nelson. Most notable is the beautiful ballad "... Loved", and also "Love...", but the latter a bit too emotional. There is strong blues on "Things ...", while "The Song ..." is not that exciting. "Making ..." and "Lullaby ..." seem to be somewhat overarranged, but the solo sections are fine. I would like to quote some of Dan Morgenstern's liner notes, although they might be even more tailored to other sessions: "Listening to this album makes one think about the secret of GA's great and lasting popularity. Part of it no doubt is his talent for picking the right tempos; surely his big sound plays a key role, as does his natural swing. But it might also be a matter of content; of his ability to be rough without getting raucous, brusque without being bitter, tender without turning treacly, acerb without getting angry. No "great innovator" or character of new paths, GA tells a straightforward story of and for our times".

**GENE AMMONS****Los Angeles, Aug. 15, 1961**

Gene Ammons (ts), Richard "Groove" Homes (org), Gene Edwards (g), Leroy Henderson (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Pacific Jazz:

Groovin' With Jug	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 36 bars. (FM)
Morris The Minor	Straight 2 to solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. Straight 32 bars. (M)
Hey You, What's That?	Straight 2 to solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 12 choruses. (FM)

**same**

Same. Five titles recorded live at The Black Orchid:

Hittin' The Jug	Straight 1 to solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 12 bars. (SM)
Good Vibrations (Happy Blues)	Straight 2 to solo 11 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 24 bars. (M)
Willow Weep For Me	Soli 64 and 8 bars to very long coda. (S)
Juggin' Around	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 3 choruses 4/4, 2/2 and 1/1 to straight 32 bars. (F)
Exactly Like You	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 56 bars 4/4 with (dm) to solo/straight 16 bars. (M)

Nothing wrong with the three studio items, and in fact "... Minor" and "... That" have some of the most bluesy GA around! Note though that there must be a splice in the beginning of the second solo on "... That". Bob Porter's liner notes says that the "... studio session was a bit of a struggle and the album had not been completed when it was decided to go to the club that evening and finish the album live". Nevertheless things are getting more groovy in live surroundings as immediately evident in the strong, inspired and honking "... Vibrations" and later in "Hittin' ...". Then a very slow and intense "Willow ..." (note also the exciting organ solo on this one!), but not necessarily wholly tasteful. Then an uptempo "... Around" which is taken with great bravura, and finally an original and fascinating version of his old hit "Exactly ..."! Totally, an exciting day for us and an important day for GA!

**GENE AMMONS / SONNY STITT**

**Chicago, Aug. 26, 1961**

Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), John Houston (p), Buster Williams (b), George Brown (dm).

Ten titles were recorded for Argo, issued as "Dig Him":

11183	A Mess	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
11184	New Blues Up And Down	Soli 1 and 5 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
11185	Time On My Hands	Duet with (as) 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Duet 36 bars. (M)
11186	We'll Be Together Again	Solo 32 bars. In coda. (S)
11187	My Foolish Heart	Solo 32 bars. Long coda with (as). (S)
11188	Red Sails In The Sunset	Solo 64 bars. Chase/duet 64 bars. (M)
11189	Headin' West (Water Jug)	Break to solo 32 bars. (FM)
11190	A Pair Of Red Pants	Solo 4 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Duet 3 choruses. (M)
11191	Autumn Leaves	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (M)
11192	But Not For Me	Intro 8 bars to duet 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Duet 44 bars. (FM)

**Chi. Aug. 27, 1961**

Same. Eight titles were recorded for Verve, five issued as "Boss Tenors":

380	Blues Up And Down	Solo structure: (GA 12 SS 12)x2 to
-----	-------------------	------------------------------------

		24 4/4 to GA 12x12 to SS 16x12 to GA 12 SS 12 to 24 4/4. (FM)
384	Counter Clockwise	With ens 1 chorus to solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars to ens 12 bars. (SM)
385	There Is No Greater Love	32 bars 8/8 with (as) to solo 32 bars. Chase/duet 64 bars to long coda. (M)
386	The One Before This	Soli 64 and 4 bars. (M)
387	Autumn Leaves	32 bars 8/8 with (ts-SS) to solo 64 bars. Chase/duet 40 bars to coda. (M)

One might think that when GA and SS meet together in studio after ten years, it would be a dogfight, a cutting contest, winner takes all. But that is not the case here, the two tenorsax players create an atmosphere of friendly reunion and do their best to play *together*, for common benefit. There is very little 4/4 here, mostly only on the famous "... Up And Down". Possibly it is my imagination, but it seems that GA and SS in style are closer to each other here than when they are recording separately. One of my favourite items is, symbolically, "... Together Again", beautiful playing in slow tempo. The two sessions produce altogether fifteen titles ranging from the 2 ½ minutes "Water ..." to the almost 10 minutes of "Counter ...", a slow medium blues. There is not one item here which does not measure up to a very high standard of tenorsax playing (SS also on altosax), and in my opinion this "together again" has some of GA's most prominent tenorsax playing of the early sixties, with a concentration brought about by his old friend. Lots of highlights, should not mention any before others but at least try "The One ...". Note also a supportive rhythm section! Dig these sessions!!

**GENE AMMONS****Chicago, Aug. 29, 1961**

Gene Ammons (ts), Eddie Buster (org), Gerald Donovan (dm).

Thirteen titles were recorded live at the "D. J. Lounge", ten issued:

11198	C Jam Blues	Straight 2 to solo 20 choruses of 12 bars. Duet with (dm) many choruses to solo 2 and straight 2 choruses to long coda. (F)
11199	But Not For Me	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to Straight/solo 64 bars to coda. (F)
11200	Foot Tappin'	Straight 2 to solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 3 choruses to straight 2 choruses. (FM)
11201	It Could Happen To You	Solo 64 bars to very long coda. (S)
11202	Sweet Georgia Brown	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 8/8 to 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to solo 32 bars to coda. (F)
11203	Falling In Love With Love	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 2 choruses to 40 bars coda. (FM)
11204	Please Send Me Someone To Love	Solo 64 bars. Solo 16 bars to coda 8 bars. (S)
11205	Scapple From The Apple	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 32 bars to coda. (F)
11206	P.M. – A.M. (Jug's Blue Blues)	Soli 4 and 3 choruses of 12 bars. (S)
11207	Fast Track	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to solo/straight 32 bars to coda 48 bars. (F)

Being a live club recording date, the music here is somewhat different than many of the ballad-oriented sessions, "a more driving, wailing Jug" as Bob Porter states it. GA's main choices here are fast titles like "Sweet ..." and "Scapple ...", and he goes through them with great bravura. The blues are of course also present, from the very slow and groovy "Jug's ..." (isn't this a blues played by Lester Young sometime?) to a fast medium swinging "Foot ..." to a rather too much uptempo "C Jam ..." but with seven minutes of inspired if not always the most tasteful tenorsax playing. There is some beautiful ballad playing too, "It Could ..." and "... To Love" comes nicely through in spite of a noisy audience. Certainly an interesting session you shouldn't miss, if you like to be acquainted with the many sides of Gene Ammons!

**GENE AMMONS** **Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Oct. 17, 1961**

Gene Ammons (ts), Walter Bishop jr. (p), Art Davis (b), Art Taylor (dm), Ray Barretto (cga).

Seven titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Up Tight" and "Boss Soul":

3233	The Breeze And I	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to straight 36 bars. (M)
3234	Carbow	Straight 2 to solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 1 to straight 2 choruses. (SM)
3235	Moonglow	Free intro (S) to straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 20 bars. (SM)
3236	The Masquerade Is Over	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to long coda. (S)
3237	I'm Beginning To See The Light	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 16 bars to straight 20 bars. (M)
3238	Jug's Blue Blues	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 2 choruses. (S)
3239	Lester Leaps In	Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 8/8 and 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 16 and 8 bars. (F)

A fine session with a variety of exciting tunes. Except for a too active drummer, there is fine balance here, and GA blows up to his very best. The beautiful "... Masquerade ..." has to be mentioned first. Some remarkable swinging blues in "Carbow" and "Jug's Blue ..." are very fascinating, in fact any title here is worth playing! Even the fast "Lester ..." is played with great conviction!

**GENE AMMONS** **Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Oct. 18, 1961**

Gene Ammons (ts), Patti Brown (p), George Duvivier (b), Art Taylor (dm), Ray Barretto (cga).

Seven titles were recorded for Prestige, issued with the session above:

3240	Five O'Clock Whistle	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 16 bars to straight 16 bars. (SM)
3241	I Sold My Heart To The Junkman	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
3242	Song Of The Islands	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 16 bars to 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 32 bars. (M)
3243	Up Tight	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (S)
3244	Travellin'	Straight 2 to solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (b) to straight 24 bars to fade out. (M)
3245	Soft Summer Breeze	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 24 bars to straight 8 bars. (SM)
3246	Don't Go To Strangers	Solo 64 and 20 bars to coda. (S)

Good tenorsax playing also on this session, although there are more interesting piano players around (and unnecessary and disturbing conga). Particularly the three items in slow tempo are beautiful. Note as an example how he keeps close to the melody but yet so fascinating on "... Junkman" and then improvises a lovely chorus. Note also an intense solo on "Travellin'!"

**GENE AMMONS** **Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Nov. 28, 1961**

Joe Newman (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), Brother Jack McDuff (org), Wendell Marshall (b), Walter Perkins (dm), Ray Barretto (cga).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Twisting The Jug":

3288	Stormy Monday Blues	Duet with (tp) 24 bars to solo 12 bars. Solo 20 bars. Duet 24 bars. (S)
3289	Satin Doll	Soli 64 and 4 bars. (SM)
3290	Twisting The Jug	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
3291	Born To Be Blue	Soli 16+40 bars, (tp) on 1 <sup>st</sup> bridge. Solo 8 bars to very long coda. (S)
3292	Down The Line	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

3293 Moten Swing Solo with ens 32 bars to solo 32 bars.  
32 bars 4/4 with (tp). (FM)

This session goes mostly rather slow, in my opinion a good idea, since GA seems to be particularly inspired by ballads and slow blues. With a soft organ background, he makes several memorable items, note particularly "Born ...". The addition of a trumpet does not seem to enhance the session quality, nor is the drummer of the most inspiring kind, but a gain, listening, GA's soloing is what makes the time spent worth while.

**BROTHER JACK McDUFF** **NYC. Jan. 23, 1962**  
Gene Ammons, Harold Vick (ts), Jack McDuff (org), Eddie Diehl (g), Joe Dukes (dm).  
Eight titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Brother Jack Meets The Boss", GA not present on 3363 "Strollin'" but:

3360 Watch Out Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)  
3361 Mellow Gravy Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)  
3362 Ballad For Baby Solo 32 bars (S) to 32 bars (SM).  
Solo 8 bars to long coda. (S)  
3364 Mr. Clean Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)  
3365 Christopher Columbus Solo 64 bars. (M)  
3366 Buzzin' Around Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

This is a surprisingly weak session in a period so fruitful for GA's tenorsax artistry. That it is sluggish with rather ordinary rhythmic support is one thing, that the unnecessarily addition of another tenorsax player with a different and not compatible style is another thing, but that GA seems to be without his usual taste and inspiration is unexpected. But of course, there are good moments, like the blues in "... Around", except for the clumsy solo ending.

**GENE AMMONS / SONNY STITT** **Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Feb. 1962**  
Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Don Patterson (org), Paul Weeden (g), Billy James (dm).  
Five titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "Boss Tenors In Orbit":

267 Long Ago And Far Away 64 bars 8/8 to 16 bars duet. (S)  
268 Walkin' Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)  
269 Why Was I Born? Duet with (as) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars.  
Soli/duet 24 bars. (M)  
270 John Brown's Body Solo 64 bars. 64 bars 8/8 and 4/4  
to chase/duet 64 bars. (M)  
271 Bye Bye Blackbird 32 bars 8/8 to solo 3 choruses  
of 32 bars. 112 bars 8/8 to  
4/4 and ens/duet. (M)

GA and SS are "in orbit" again but not of the highest ones. A mediocre drummer and the contribution of guitar and organ offer not the best of support, and the atmosphere in general cannot compare with the almost electric one of late August last year. But of course, when this is said, these two guys together cannot but inspire each other to a lot of good tenorsax soloing. The ultra slow "Long Ago ...", consisting of a series of eights, is a good introduction to the session, and thereafter all items have good moments. Note that GA leads the chase on "John ..." while SS that on "... Blackbird".

**GENE AMMONS / SONNY STITT** **NYC. Feb. 19, 1962**  
Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt (ts), Jack McDuff (org), Charlie Persip (dm).  
Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Soul Summit":

3403 Dumplin' Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars.  
4 choruses 4/4 with (ts-SS). (M)  
3404 Tubby Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (M)  
3405 Shuffle Twist Soli 12, 12 and 24 bars. (M)  
3406 Sleeping Susan Soli 64 and 4 bars. (M)  
3407 Out In The Cold Again Solo 32 bars. Very long coda  
sequence with (ts-SS). (S)  
3408 When You Wish Upon A Star Soli 32 and 4 bars. (SM)

Another “low orbit” session, good tenorsax playing but not with the force and chemistry these guys can exhibit. The organ backing does mostly more harm than good, note the medium blues of “Tubby”, which might have been exciting but now quite boring. “... Twist” however make you tap your foot on the groove, and “... Cold Again” has the best of ballad playing by both of them.

**GENE AMMONS****NYC. April 13, 1962**

Gene Ammons (ts), Patti Brown (p), George Duvivier (b), Walter Perkins (dm), Etta Jones (vo-3482,83,85).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, (one more title 3488 “Scram” has Harold Vick (ts) and no solo by GA), issued as “Soul Summit, Vol. 2”:

3482	But Not For Me	Obbligato parts to solo 64 bars to obbligato 36 bars. (SM)
3483	If You Are But A Dream	Obbligato parts to solo 16 bars. Obbligato 16 bars. (S)
3484	The Party’s Over	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. Straight 36 bars. (M)
3485	Cool Cool Daddy	Obbligato parts. Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
3486	Lascivious	Straight 2 to solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (b) to straight 24 bars. (M)
3487	Soft Winds	Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 16 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 16 bars. (M)

There seem to be elements of routine in the GA sessions now. Some straight melody presentation, then solo choruses, and after a pianosolo and 4/4 bars chase with bass or drums, back to a final straight. Nothing wrong with GA’s soloing really, but with so many excellent sessions around, more should have been done to create variation and excitement. In fact, this has been done with the vocal items, something different, and with beautiful tenorsax playing, try “... Dream”!

**GENE AMMONS****NYC. April 14, 1962**

Gene Ammons (ts), Patti Brown (p), George Duvivier (b), Ed Shaughnessy (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Prestige/Moodsville, issued as “The Soulful Moods of Gene Ammons”:

3489	Two Different Worlds	Soli 72 and 20 bars to coda. (SM)
3490	But Beautiful	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
3491	Skylark	Soli 64 and 32 bars. (S)
3492	On The Street Of Dreams	Solo 32 bars (S) to 16 bars (SM) to 16 bars to coda. (S)
3493	You’d Be So Nice To Come HT	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Straight 48 bars to coda. (M)
3494	Under A Blanket Of Blue	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
3495	I’m Glad There Is You	Soli 16 and 48 bars to very long coda. (S)
3496	Three Little Words	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 72 bars to coda. (M)

Another “soulful moods” session, mainly slow tempi, and to me GA’s ballad playing never becomes boring, and if it might be some routine in the production, the results are always gorgeous. Here PB is doing a fine job on the piano, and the rhythm section as such is excellent. Bob Porter compares this session with the one on Jan. 26, 1961, says GA is more inspired here, but also states that “it is merely a case of going from the good to the exceptional” and “some of the best he has ever committed to record”. Strong words, but play a few ballads!!

**GENE AMMONS****Chi. April 27, 1962**

Gene Ammons (ts), Clarence “Sleepy” Anderson (p, org), unknown (g), (b), (dm).

Ten titles were recorded for Prestige, eight issued as “Blue Groove”:

11664	Blue Groove	Straight 2 to solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 12 bars to coda. (SM)
11665	Yea!	Straight. Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm). (M)

11666	It Never Goes Away	Straight 64 bars to solo 64 bars. Soli 16 and 16 bars. Straight 32+16 bars (b) on bridge. (M)
11667	Blinky	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (b). (M)
11669	Someone To Watch Over Me	Soli 56 and 12 bars to long coda. (S)
11671	Sleepy	Intro 8 bars to straight 40 bars to solo 80 bars. 40 bars 4/4 with (dm). Straight. (FM)
11672	You Better Go Now	Solo 36 bars to long coda. (S)
11673	The Masquerade Is Over	Solo 56 bars to long coda. (S)

Particularly the three ballads in very slow tempo with organ backing are lovely, GA knows how to do this! The rest are of even and good quality, similar to many sessions from this time. The piano is overrecorded on most titles, particularly on "... Goes Away", making the accompaniment more like a duet, rather disturbing.

**GENE AMMONS****Chi. ca. May 1962**

Gene Ammons (ts), Don Patterson (org), Paul Weeden (g), Billy James (dm).  
Two titles were recorded for Argo / Prestige:

11704	I Can't Stop Loving You	Solo 48 bars to coda. (S)
11705	My Babe	Straight 32 bars to solo 48 bars. 16 bars 4/4 with (dm). (M)

"... Loving You" is nice and slow but certainly with more than a slight commercial touch. "My Babe" has some groovy action.

**HOWARD MCGHEE & THE BLAZERS****Chi. probably May 1962**

Howard McGhee (tp), Gene Ammons (ts), Jake Fisher (g), Barney Richmond (b), Willie Mashburn (dm), Waco (bgo).

Four titles were recorded for Winley / Argo, issued as "House Warmin'". (Note that on my Trip double-LP, the two sides of this session are identical! The two titles are called "Nothing But Soul / "House Warming and "Jug & McGhee" / "Jivin' Around" but are in fact the titles called "... Beat" and "... McGhee" below!!).

Jazz With A Beat (12:27)	Solo 36 bars. Solo 12 bars to 24 bars 4/4 with (tp). Solo 12 bars. (S)
Muggin' McGhee (4:51)	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (tp). (FM)
House Warming (6:25)	Solo 3 and 2 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
Jivin' Around (10:06)	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 2 choruses to 4 choruses of 4/4 and 2 choruses 2/2 with (tp). Solo 12 bars. (SM)

Except from his sessions with Stitt, GA seems to have preferred playing with rhythm only. Therefore this encounter with the great trumpeter HMG is something special. Note also the omission of piano. All titles are blues, "... Beat" is very slow and very groovy, "Muggin' ..." is uptempo, the two other in a pleasant slow medium. Excellent playing by all!

**GENE AMMONS****Chi. May 3, 1962**

Gene Ammons (ts), Clarence Anderson (org), Sylvester Hickman (b), Dorrell Anderson (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Preachin'": "Sweet Hour", "Yield Not", "Abide With Me", "Blessed Assurance", "The Prayer", "You'll Never Walk Alone", "I Believe", "Precious Memories", "What A Friend", "Holy, Holy, Holy", "The Light".

This is not a jazz session but a collection of religious songs, lasting from 2 ½ to 4 minutes, all in slow tempo. It does not seem necessary to go into details.

**GENE AMMONS / DODO MARMAROSA****Chi. May 4, 1962**

Gene Ammons (ts), Dodo Marmarosa (p), Sam Jones (b), Marshall Thompson (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Jug & Dodo":

Georgia On My Mind	Soli 64 and 8 bars to long coda. (S)
For You	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm)



		to solo/straight 3 choruses. (F)
You're Driving Me Crazy	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to solo 40 bars to coda. (M)	
Where Or When	Solo 2 choruses of 40 bars. Solo 10 bars to very long coda. (S)	
Bluzarumba	Straight 2 to solo 2 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 2 choruses. (FM)	
Falling In Love With Love -1	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight 36 bars to coda. (FM)	
Falling In Love With Love -2	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Straight 20 bars to coda. (FM)	

A session with lots of good music, but possibly with a slight disappointment, since I expected something quite different with the brilliant Dodo on piano. He comps actively, but I have the feeling that the two do not really understand each other deeply, playing their separate ways, and Jug seems to be exactly the same as before. Nothing wrong with that, and his ballads on "Georgia ..." and "... When" are of the beautiful kind we now are so familiar with.

**GENE AMMONS** **NYC. Sept. 5, 1962**  
Gene Ammons (ts), Mal Waldron (p), Wendell Marshall (b), Ed Thigpen (dm).  
Eight titles were recorded for Prestige:

3573	Light'n Up	Straight 2 to solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 18 bars. (SM)
3574	Short Stop	Straight to solo 36 bars. 12 bars 2/2 with (dm). (M)
3575	They Say You're Laughing At Me	Solo 64+4 bars to coda. (S)
3576	It's The Talk Of The Town	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
3577	Salome's Tune	Straight to solo 16 bars. Solo 8 bars to straight. (S)
3578	Blue Coolade	Straight 28 to solo 28 bars. Solo 16 bars to straight 12 bars. (SM)
3579	A Stranger In Town	Long intro to solo 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to long coda. (S)
3580	You Go To My Head	Solo 68 bars to long coda. (S)

The last GA ballad session ..., with the unique Mal Waldron as an extra benefit. There is not much to add, there is nobody in the jazz tenorsax world who could play ballads *better* than Gene Ammons, only a few on the same level. For highlights, try "A Stranger ..." and "They Say ...", although all titles here are very nice!

**GENE AMMONS** **Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Sept. 9, 1962**  
Gene Ammons (ts), Hank Jones (p), Bucky Pizzarelli (spanish-g), Kenny Burrell (g), Norman Edge (b), Oliver Jackson (dm), Al Hayes (bgo).  
Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Bad! Bossa Nova":

3614	Pagan Love Song	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Duet with (g) 32 bars. (M)
3615	Anna	Solo 4+64 bars. (FM)
3616	Ca' Purange (Jungle Soul)	Solo with (rhythm) 7 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
3617	Yellow Bird	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Straight 24 bars to fade out. (M)
3618	Cae Cae	Straight 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to straight 32 bars. (F)
3619	Moito Mato Grosso	Straight 12 bars. Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

Our last opportunity to hear Gene Ammons for a long time! He (or the company) has chosen to jump on the 'bossa-nova-wagon', not a bad idea, considering what Stan Getz got out of it (and a beautiful session by Ike Quebec!). However, it is really more jungle than Copacabana, and I wish we could have had a Desafinado-album with Jug, vow! Returning to what this session actually produces; there is lots of exciting music here, particularly two tracks. Take as one "Jungle ..." with a long solo, almost like a chase between tenorsax and rhythm, something quite outside the ordinary. And the second, the story behind "... Grosso", vividly told on the liner notes, must be read carefully before the item is played, but the music is a slow medium blues, with GA playing several groovy choruses.

Gene Ammons did not record again until 1968, and I have decided that the solography for the time being shall stop here.

...ooo...