

**The**  
**TENORSAX**  
**of**  
**HENRY DURANT**

Solographer: Jan Evensmo  
Last update: Feb. 28, 2014

Born: no info  
Died: no info

*Introduction:*

Quite easy, just play any of his few recorded contributions, and you will agree that Henry Durant was one tenorsax player with a great potential.

*History:*

No information except the recording sessions given.

## HENRY DURANT SOLOGRAPHY

**MR. GOOGLE EYES & HIS FOUR BARS** **NYC. 1948**

Possibly Henry Durant (ts), Raymond Lewis (p), Rubert Robinson (g), James Prevost (b), Emile Provost (dm), Joe "Google Eyes" August (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Coleman:

Young Boy	Solo 12 bars. Obbligato 36 bars. (M)
Poppa Stoppa's Be Bop Blues	Solo 12 bars. Obbligato 12 bars. (S)

Strong playing, quite out of ordinary r&B, and the similarity to the following August tenorsax is so great, that I feel confident these are Durant items.

**JOSEPH "GOOGLE EYES" AUGUST WITH BILLY FORD AND HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. 1949**

Personnel most likely as Dec. 1, 1949.

Two titles were recorded for Coleman:

123-A	Rough And Rocky Road	Duet with (tp) 8 bars. Obbligato parts. Solo 24 bars with vocal acc. (M)
123-B	No Wine No Women	Soli with vocal acc. 12 and 8 bars. (M)

This is honking of the strong and positive type, the kind real boppers used as training field!! HD has got it, why didn't he make it?

**BILLY FORD & HIS MUSICAL V-8s** **NYC. Nov.? 1949**

Personnel most likely as Dec. 1, 1949.

Two titles were recorded for Columbia/Okeh:

41895	For You My Love	Solo 24 bars. (M)
41896	Rough And Rocky Road	In ens. Solo 24 bars. Coda. (M)

**NYC. Nov. 21, 1949**

Same/similar. Two titles, no HD on "I'm So Glad You're Comin' Home" but:

41929	No Wine, No Women	Solo 24 bars, last chorus with vocal acc. (M)
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More ordinary playing on "... My Love", but "Rough ..." has a colourful solo of high merits. Always surprising details in HD's playing, note also this version of "... Women"!

**BILLY FORD & HIS MUSICAL V-8s** **NYC. Dec. 1, 1949**

Billy Ford (tp), Robert "Grandy" Washington (tb), Henry Durant (ts), William Harris (bar), Howard "Duke" Anderson (p), Edward D. Wright (g), Lorenzo Goins (b), Harold Wing (dm), Joseph "Google Eyes" August (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, 30181 without (vo) has not been available, no HD on "Life Can Be A Hard Road To Travel" but:

41968	Love Me	Solo 24 bars. (M)
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Note the opening here and learn the perfect blend of honking & bebop! HD obviously got good practice with Billy Ford, and in the next decade he had some real surprises in store for us!!

**LEO PARKER AND HIS MAD LADS** **Philadelphia, Dec. 28, 1950**

James Robertson (tp), Henry Durant (ts), Leo Parker (bar), Kenny Drew (p), Dillon "Curley" Russell (b), Edward Bourne (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Gotham, one has tenorsax:

-1	On The House / Leo Leaps In	No solo. (FM)
-2	On The House / Leo Leaps In	Solo 12 bars. 48 bars 4/4 with (bar-LP). (FM)
-3	On The House / Leo Leaps In	Soli 12 and 12 bars. 48 bars 4/4 with (bar-LP). (FM)

HD is an excellent bebop tenorsax player and one of those characters whose early disappearance is a real loss to modern jazz. His soloing is strong and confident with a big sound matching Leo's, and the chases are fine examples of the blend of r&b and modern jazz until these two musical trends separated. Note that the solo structure is different in the three takes.

Played briefly in 1954 with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers.

**ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS** **NYC. March 24, 1954**

Henry Durant (ts), Horace Silver (p), Percy Heath (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for EmArcy:

10397	In The Basement	Soli 5 and 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
10398	Try A Little Tenderness	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
10399	Little Girl Blue	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
10400	On The Roof	Intro 8 bars to straight 1 chorus to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Straight 16+8 bars, (dm) on bridge, to coda 8 bars. (F)

What a marvellous surprise!! In spite of the excellent contributions on the previous Leo Parker session more than three years earlier, I was not prepared for this!! Did you know that HD belongs to the greatest of the young modern tenorsax stars? His beautiful ballad playing with a voluminous emotional sound is masterly, rarely since Herschel Evans and Dexter Gordon have we heard the lowest register of the instrument treated like this. "Little Girl ..." is magnificent but "... Tenderness" is particularly unforgettable!! The blues in the "... Basement" is also remarkable, and note the two straight choruses coplayed with Silver at the end! And finally "... Roof", in a tough uptempo this "nobody" smacks in with a perfect intro and plays chorus upon chorus in a manner quite incredible!! Who was HD, why did he disappear after this memorable date??

Postscript: Another session has been found!!

**BOBBY BANKS TRIO** **NYC. Dec. 29, 1955**

Henry Durant (ts), Bobby Banks (org), Jimmy Schenk (b), Rodney "Red" Alcott (dm), Nappy Brown (vo- 6787).

Eight titles were recorded for Savoy, three issued, one not available (Savoy 1186), 6787 issued as **NAPPY BROWN**:

6784	Shangri-La	
6787	I'm In The Mood	Intro 4 bars to obbligato 3 choruses of 12 bars. (S)
6788	Blues For Everybody	Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo 1 chorus to straight 4 choruses. (M)

Most memorable tenorsax performance by one of the most mysterious tenorsax performers in jazz, with reference to previous research volumes!! On "... Mood" he plays a continuous, elaborate and very strong personal background, note this item!! On his feature number "... Everybody" he unfortunately is constrained to simple riffs on most of the item, but there is one solo chorus, excellent!!

No further recording sessions.

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