

The
TENORSAX
of
HERSCHEL EVANS

Solographer: Jan Evensmo
Last update: May 22, 2017, Nov. 30, 2022, June 23, 2023

Born: Temple, Texas, May 1, 1910
Died: New York, Feb. 9, 1939

Introduction:

Herschel Evans was one of the all-time greats of tenor saxophone, one of the strongest assets of the Count Basie. After hearing his introduction of "Georgianna" I was hopelessly addicted to his charismatic playing. Even today my hair raises when I hear his strong and personal sound, and I will go so far as to say that of all jazz musicians in history, one marginal solo discovery has the greatest value! His solography was printed as part of Vol. 2 in my Jazz Solography Series.

History:

Did early work in "T.N.T." (Trent's Number Two) Band in Texas (c. 1926), then worked in "The St. Louis Merrymakers" (a Texas band). Brief spells with Edgar Battle, Terrence Holder and with Sammy Holmes in Texas before joining Troy Floyd's Band in Texas (1929). Left Troy Floyd in 1931, stints with Grant Moore's Band, then worked with Benny Moten (Feb. 1933-1935), but no recording sessions. He appears again in 1935 with Richard M. Jones, and became one of the all-time greats of tenorsax with Count Basie 1936-1939. Left Troy Floyd in 1931, stints with Grant Moore's Band, then worked with Benny Moten (February 1933-35), worked in Kansas City with Hot Lips Page's Band, moved on to Chicago, played briefly in Dave Peyton's Band (autumn 1935). Then settled in Los Angeles. With Charlie Echols' Band in Los Angeles, also worked with Lionel Hampton's Band at the Paradise Cafe and with Buck Clayton's Band in the "Brownskin Revue". Joined Count Basie (with Buck Clayton) in autumn 1936 and remained with Basie until fatal illness (ref. John Chilton).

Message:

The Bill Savory collection gave us an incredible treasure of music from the late thirties, including many of the jazz greats. However, I believe that the Herschel Evans discoveries possibly could be the most valuable of all, considering how little we have of this magnificent tenorsax player!

HERSCHEL EVANS SOLOGRAPHY

TROY FLOYD AND HIS**SHADOWLAND ORCHESTRA****San Antonio, June 21, 1929**

Probable personnel: Troy Floyd (cl, as, dir), Don Albert, Willie Long (tp), Benny Long (tb), N. J. "Siki" Collins (cl, as), probably Scott Bagby or Herschel Evans (ts), Allan Vann (p), John H. Braggs (bjo), Charlie Dixon (tu, b), John Humphries (dm). Two titles were recorded for Okeh, one has tenorsax:

402697-B Dreamland Blues - Part II Solo 12 bars. (SM)

From "History of Jazz Tenor Saxophone – black artists – 1917 – 1934": "SB has confirmed that he played this solo, earlier believed to be by Herschel Evans, who joined Troy Floyd in 1929. It is a surprisingly good performance for its time, based on technical command and musical ideas". Postscript of Oct. 2013: Phil Schaap has contacted me, indicating that the solo identification is not that easily solved. It seems that Jo Jones has stated that Evans had a copy, and that they listened together, and that Evans identified the tenorsax solo as by himself. So we have two contrasting statements, I guess we will never know the truth for sure.

JONES' CHICAGO COSMOPOLITANS**Chicago, Sept. 13, 1935**

Richard M. Jones (arr, dir), Louis Metcalf, Jimmy McLeary (tp), Albert Wynn (tb), Jimmy Hutchinson, Artie Starks (cl, as), Herschel Evans (ts), Dave Peyton (p-90324), Gideon Honore (p-90323), Hurley Ramey (g), Oliver Bibb (b), Roy Slaughter (dm), George D. Washington (vo-90323, 90324-B).

Two titles were recorded for Decca, one has HE:

90324-A Baby O' Mine Soli 2 and 8 bars. (M)

90324-B Baby O' Mine As above. (M)

This encounter with Herschel Evans, which for the author took place after listening to his later works, is rather surprising. He sounds different than on the Basie records, more primitive and staccato in his phrasing, and he is not easily recognizable. However, his soli are characterized by the usual eagerness and forceful attack, is swinging violently, and has no similarity to the products of any of his contemporaries. This "Baby ..." definitely has its value both from a historical point of view and for its jazz content. Postscript of Dec. 5, 2016: An alternate of "... Mine" has appeared! A vocal has replaced the orchestral introduction on take A! The tenorsax contributions are slightly different, exciting!

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Jan. 21, 1937**

Buck Clayton, Joe Keyes, Carl Smith (tp), George Hunt, Dan Minor (tb), Caughy Roberts (as), Jack Washington (as, bar), Herschel Evans, Lester Young (cl, ts), Count Basie (p), Claude Williams (vln, g), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (dm), James Rushing (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has HE:

61544-A Swingin' At The Daisy Chain Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Herschel Evans' first recorded solo with Count Basie is quite typical of his production. The time span between his first and last record is only two years, and there is no notable stylistic development. He already had found his own personal manner of expression which was characterized by a unique sound, somewhat dry, but big, powerful and emotional. His style is kind of edgy and winded. However, these effects sound highly intentional. Evans brings something new into the realm of tenor saxophone, and the solo is original in the best sense of the word.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**Pittsburgh, Feb. 1937**

Personnel probably as Jan. 21, 1937.

Broadcasts from The Chatterbox, Hotel William Penn.

Items 1-14 on Jazz Archives JA-16.

Possibly Feb. 8, 1937

1 Oh, Lady Be Good Solo 32 bars. (M)

2 St. Louis Blues Weak obbligato 12 bars. (FM)

3 Moten Swing (Conclusion) No solo.

4 Shoe Shine Swing No solo.

5 Moten Swing (Conclusion) No solo.

Possibly Feb. 10, 1937

6 Moten Swing (Introduction) No solo.

7	King Porter Stomp	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
8	I'll Always Be In Love With You	No solo.
9	You Do The Darndest Things Baby	Solo 8 bars. (M)
10	Swingin' At The Daisy Chain	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
11	Yeah Man (NC)	No solo.
12	Riffin' (falsely titled "Rug Cutters Swing")	No solo.
Possibly Feb. 12, 1937		
13	Oh, Lady Be Good	Solo 32 bars. (M)
14	Tattersfield Stomp	No solo.
15	Magnolias In The Moonlight	No solo.
Possibly Feb. 8-12, 1937		
16	Moten Swing (Introduction)	No solo.
17	Margie (NC)	No solo.
18	Swing, Brother, Swing	Soli 2 and 2 bars. (FM)
19	You Do The Darndest Things Baby	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
20	Moten Swing (Introduction)	No solo.
21	I Cried For You (NC)	No solo.

Note: The allocation of titles to dates above should only be taken as a guide. Items 3 and 5 are both conclusions and cannot possibly be from the same date. Items 6-10 are listed as Jan. 10 on JA-16. This is a typographical error, the date should be Feb. 10.

On these dates (how many seem to be an unresolved question), we hear Evans at his very best. The choice of highlights is difficult, but there is no doubt that "... Daisy Chain" has a magnifique chorus, a concentrated musical contribution which alone is enough to establish Evans as one of the great tenor saxophonists in jazz. It is also very important to note what hides behind the 2 x 2 bars on "Swing ...". They represent violent and almost unique breaks of a kind rarely if ever heard, and are used as an elegant ignition to an immediately following solo by Lester Young. Compare with "Time Out" on Aug. 9, 1937! "King Porter ..." is good, but perhaps not quite up to the same standard as the version of Aug. 9, 1938, being a little too eager for a perfect balance to be obtained. The two versions of "Lady ..." are quite different, the Feb. 8 version (with Claude Williams' violin solo) being the better one and a memorable piece of work. Note the lazy opening of the bridge. The background arrangement is rather corny here and disturbs the listening. However, Evans later compensates for this defect by letting his beautiful strong sound penetrate the whole orchestra in the riff parts. His obbligato on "St. Louis ..." shows another ability to great advantage. At last, two versions of "You Do ...", where he concentrates all his majestic power into eight bars of the very best medium tempo. The soli are not very different though. In all, a set of sessions with very memorable tenorsax playing and a most valuable addition to the not too large Evans "memory book".

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. March 26, 1937**
 Personnel as Jan. 21, 1937, except Ed Lewis, Bobby Moore (tp), Freddie Green (g) replace Keyes, Smith and Williams.
 Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has HE:

62080-A The Glory Of Love Solo 20 bars. (FM)

A really successful solo with powerful drive and fine swing. It is melodically so well constructed that it immediately ranks Evans as one of the greatest tenor saxophonists of the era.

MILDRED BAILEY AND HER ORCHESTRA **NYC. June 29, 1937**
 Buck Clayton (tp), Edmond Hall (cl), Herschel Evans (ts), James Sherman (p), Freddie Green (g), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (dm), Mildred Bailey (vo).
 Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, all have HE:

21332-1	If You Ever Should Leave	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
21333-1	The Moon Got In My Eyes	No solo (see below). (SM)
21334-2	Heaven Help This Heart Of Mine	Solo 18 bars. (SM)
21335-1	It's The Natural Thing To Do	Solo 12 bars. (M)

21335-2 It's The Natural Thing To Do As above. (M)

This recording session more than anything else really makes the listener understand the dimensions of Evans, and that he, in spite of many excellent big band soli, rarely had the opportunity to express himself to his full extent. It is obvious that it was primarily the slower tempi that fitted his personal way of playing and his beautiful sound. The two slow medium sides here present wonderful sax playing, so emotional, inspired and original that one can only regret that he never received the attention and praise of contemporaries like Berry, Hawkins, Webster and Young. Particular "... Leave" is really a masterpiece, while "Heaven ..." offers an example of the strange way of clipping the notes which he often used. In addition, "... Natural ...", which is an excellent medium swinger, has two alternate takes. Both are forceful and inspired, but in my opinion take 2 is definitely the better one. "... My Eyes" has no solo, but HE gives the ensemble a characteristic and personal sound worth more than extended soli by many lesser artists!

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. June 30, 1937

Personnel as March 26, 1937, except Earl Warren (as) replaces Roberts and Billie Holiday (vo) is added.

Broadcast from the Savoy Ballroom.

1	Moten Swing	No solo.
2	Shout And Feel It	Solo 6 bars. (FM)
3	Me And You That Used To Be	No solo.
4	The Count Steps In	No solo.
5	They Can't Take That Away From Me	Obbligato (vo: B.H.) 4 bars. (S)
6	I'll Always Be In Love With You	No solo.
7	When My Dreamboat Comes Home	Obbligato (vo: J.R.) 14 bars. (M)
8	Swing, Brother, Swing	No solo.
9	Bugle Blues	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
10	I Got Rhythm	No solo.
11	Moten Swing	No solo.

We do not hear much from Evans on this date, but enough to get a positive impression. Most interesting is the quite long and well played solo in "Bugle Blues", where particularly the opening of the choruses is remarkable. In "... Dreamboat ..." the recording treats him badly, and all we can say is that he swings enormously with a first rate rhythm section and manages the obbligato-playing as a truly great jazz musician. Note also the fine short obbligato on "They Can't ...".

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. July 7, 1937

Personnel as June 30, 1937 minus B. Holiday.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three have HE:

62331-B	Smarty	Solo 16 bars. (M)
62332-A	One O'Clock Jump	Solo 12 bars. (M)
62334-A	John's Idea	Solo 20 bars. (FM)

We notice first of all "Smarty", not because of any clever improvising, the solo is mainly straight playing, but because the execution is very beautiful and with great authority. There are also some really fine and dexterious playing on "... Idea" and a good solo on "... Jump", where particularly the opening bars are fascinating and full of enthusiasm.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Aug. 9, 1937

Personnel as July 7, 1937, except Bennie Morton (tb) replaces Hunt, Eddie Durham (tb, g) added.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have HE:

62513-A	Time Out	Solo 4 bars. (FM)
62514-A	Topsy	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

A very fine "duet" with the band on "Topsy", plus an intro of maximum inspiration on "Time Out", where he lays out to Lester Young. The remarkably effortless

transition demonstrates how much the two tenor saxophonists had in common in spite of many differences, for instance their sound. Naturally they had to be influenced by each other, sitting side by side for years.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Oct. 13, 1937**

Buck Clayton, Bobby Hicks, Ed Lewis (tp), Eddie Durham (tb, g), Dan Minor, Bennie Morton (tb), Earl Warren (as), Jack Washington (as, bar), Herschel Evans, Lester Young (cl, ts), Count Basie (p, ldr), Freddie Green (g), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (dm), Jimmy Rushing (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has HE:

62682-A I Keep Remembering Solo 8 bars. (M)

A rather commercial tune, and the solo is of no particular interest.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **Cedar Grove, NJ. Nov. 3, 1937**

Personnel possibly as Oct. 13, 1937 plus Billie Holiday (vo-3).

CBS broadcast from Meadowbrook Lounge:

1	Moten Swing	No solo.
2	One O'Clock Jump	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
3	I Can't Get Started	No solo.
4	Study In Brown	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
5	Rhythm In My Nursery Rhymes	No solo.
6	John's Idea	Soli 4 and 12 bars. (FM)
7	Good Morning Blues	No solo.
8	Dinah	Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Fine soli on several numbers, particularly the long one on "... Jump", where he plays with maximum effort and drive even if the ideas could have been more interesting at times. "... Idea" is close to the 78 rpm. version but not quite as good. Otherwise both "Dinah" and "Study ..." are well played.

HARRY JAMES AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Dec. 1, 1937**

Buck Clayton, Harry James (tp), Eddie Durham (tb), Earl Warren, Jack Washington, Herschel Evans (reeds), Jess Stacy (p), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (dm), Helen Humes (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Brunswick, three have HE:

22084-1	When We're Alone	Solo 8 bars. (M)
22084-2	When We're Alone	As above. (M)
22085-1	Can't I?	Intro 2 bars. Solo 24 bars. (M)
22086-1	Life Goes To A Party	Solo 34 bars. (FM)
22086-2	Life Goes To A Party	As above. (FM)

The two recording sessions with Harry James are very valuable. Not only does Evans solo well but the presence of several alternate takes gives another dimension to his playing. Certainly Evans was an improviser of high status, both brief and long soli show a lot of differences to the listener's pleasure. One tune in particular deserves attention, "... Alone", whose second take contains a masterpiece of a brief solo in a pleasant medium tempo fitting Evans very well. Truly one of his best recorded soli ever. Take 1 however, shows how little is needed to degrade a solo from excellent to ordinary. It is rather similar to take 2 but lacks the latter's jubilant and airy freedom. In "Can't I" he plays rather straight at the beginning of the record, and even if it is not very exciting from a jazz point of view, it is personal and inspired. "Life ..." is lively enough, and the two takes are more than ordinarily different. However, none of them are completely satisfying. They are both somewhat restless and unbalanced, and Evans never gets a good contact with the rhythm section. Personally I prefer take 2 slightly.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 3, 1938**

Personnel as Oct. 13, 1937, except Karl George (tp) replaces Hicks.

Two titles were recorded for Decca, one has HE:

63122-A Georgianna Solo 16 bars. (M)

Evan's role is to present the melody, which he does in a convincing way. There are really few musicians who play straight more personally and enjoyably than he does.

HARRY JAMES AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 5, 1938**

Personnel as Dec. 1, 1937, except Vernon Brown (tb) replaces Durham.

Four titles were recorded for Brunswick, two have HE:

22249-1	Texas Chatter	Solo 32 bars. (M)
22249-2	Texas Chatter	As above. (M)
22252-1	One O'Clock Jump	Solo 24 bars. (M)
22252-2	One O'Clock Jump	As above. (M)

The soli in "... Jump" are exceptionally good, original and swinging like mad. Upon the sole knowledge of take 2 I previously wrote: "It's one of Evans' very best soli on record, and by far his best preserved version of this tune". I should have been more careful because take 1 is even better! The first chorus builds logically up to a perfect climax in the second chorus. I will not say more, listen yourself! "Texas ..." presents an unusual number of interesting details and daring ideas, note for instance the very advanced bridge. Even a rhythm section which on this track sounds rather lost, does not manage to take the listener's concentration away from a great soloist. The two takes are of similar quality with moderate differences in details.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Feb. 16, 1938**

Personnel as Jan. 3, 1938, except Harry Edison (tp) replaces George.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three have HE:

63286-A	Sent For You Yesterday	Solo 12 bars. (M)
63287-A	Every Tub	Solo 8 bars. (F)
63289-A	Swingin' The Blues	Solo 12 bars. (FM)

Three good swinging soli but none particularly remarkable. "Sent ..." is the most interesting.

COUNT BASIE & HIS ORCHESTRA **Randall's Island, May 29, 1938**

Personnel as usual.

Bill Savory collection, outdoors concert, four titles, no HE on "Boogie Woogie" but:

Farewell Blues	Solo 32 bars. (F)
Every Tub	Solo 8 bars. (F)
One O'Clock Jump	Solo 24 bars. (FM)

The sound on this legendary event is not of ordinary Savory quality, but who cares!?! Particularly HE's two choruses on "Farewell ..." are historical.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. June 6, 1938**

Personnel as Feb. 16, 1938.

Three titles were recorded for Decca, two have HE:

63919-A	Blue And Sentimental	Soli 18 and 12 bars. (S)
63920-A	Doggin' Around	Solo 32 bars. (F)

"Blue ..." is a strict arrangement and does not give Evans much opportunity to improvise, but he does an excellent job, his big, dry sound really shows up to advantage and the result is, in many ways, both original and worthwhile. It would be interesting to hear a more informal version of this tune.... However, it is "Doggin'..." which makes the strongest impression on the listener, a sparkling solo which probably is his best recorded one in a fast tempo. Let me even say he outdistances Lester Young by far!

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 9, 1938**

Personnel as Feb. 16, 1938 except Dicky Wells (tb) replaces Durham, Helen Humes (vo) added.

CBS "America Dances" broadcast:

1	One O'Clock Jump	No solo.
2	Every Tub	Solo 8 bars. (F)
3	Song Of The Wanderer	No solo.

4	Flat Foot Floogie	No solo.
5	Lady Be Good	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
6	Boogie Woogie Blues	No solo.
7	One O'Clock Jump	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
8	I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart	No solo.

Some fine music on this broadcast even if nothing exceptional occurs. "Lady ..." is well played with a heavy, massive swing. "... Jump" is of the usual solid quality, and the opening is suggestive of his solo from the earlier broadcast of Nov. 3, 1937. "... Tub" is rather similar to the 78 rpm. version and swings along fine.

LIONEL HAMPTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 21, 1938**

Harry James (tp), Benny Carter (cl, as, arr), Dave Matthews (as), Babe Russin, Herschel Evans (ts), Billy Kyle (p), John Kirby (b), Jo Jones (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib, vo-024067).

Four titles were recorded for Victor, two have HE:

024066-1	Shoe Shiner's Drag	Solo 12 bars. (SM)
024068-1	Muskrat Ramble	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Evans obviously thrives in small band settings, and on this occasion he makes two first-rate soli. Particularly juicy and remarkable is "... Drag". The tenorsax obbligato on "Any Time ...", which is a fine piece of work, is by Babe Russin.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 23, 1938**

Personnel as July 9, 1938 + Harry James (tp) on "King Porter Stomp".

CBS broadcast from The Famous Door:

1	Time Out	No solo.
2	If I Could Be With You	No solo.
3	(Jumpin' At The) Woodside	Clarinet in ens, first solo 16+8 bars, (tb) on bridge, then arranged 16 bars, to conclude with another three choruses. (FM)
4	I Hadn't Anyone Till You	No solo.
5	King Porter Stomp	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
6	Lady Be Good	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
7	Everybody Loves My Baby (NC)	No solo.

"King Porter ..." has a very good solo, perhaps not quite up to the one of Aug. 9, 1938, but well constructed, surprisingly legato at times and swinging like it should. "Lady ..." has an even and well played solo of good quality without remarkable ideas. Postscript: A lot of clarinet is heard on "Woodside", but as on Aug. 22, 1938, the performance is not particularly attractive. I have a feeling we have, by the few up-tempo examples, got a wrong impression of Evans' clarinet playing.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Aug. 9, 1938**

Personnel as July 9, 1938.

CBS broadcast from The Famous Door:

1	One O'Clock Jump	No solo.
2	King Porter Stomp	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
3	I've Got A Date With A Dream	No solo.
4	Lady Be Good	Part of intro 2 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)

An excellent solo on "King ...", effortless and happy with a marked swing. And not forgetting the "Lady ..." which contains one of Evans' very best soli in fast tempo, particularly the first chorus is magnificent. Two valuable contributions to prewar tenor saxophone.

COUNT BASIE & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Aug. 10, 1938**

Personnel as July 9, 1938. Broadcast from The Famous Door, Bill Savory collection, one title, "Do You Wanna Jump Children?" but no HE.

NYC. Aug. 12, 1938

Personnel as July 9, 1938.
CBS broadcast from The Famous Door, "I Haven't Changed A Thing" but no HE.

NYC. Aug. 18, 1938

Personnel as July 9, 1938. Broadcast from The Famous Door, Bill Savory collection, three titles, one has HE:

Every Tub Solo 8 bars. (F)

A new version of "... Tub", but not that different from the others.

same

Postscript of May 22, 2017: The following item appeared on iTunes, must have slipped through my attention when I went through the Bill Savory collection:

I Ain't Got Nobody Brief break. (F)

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Aug. 22, 1938

Personnel as July 9, 1938.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three have HE:

64471-A Stop Beatin' Around The Mulberry Bush Solo 8 and 8 bars. (FM)

64471-B Stop Beatin' Around The Mulberry Bush As above. (FM)

64473-A Texas Shuffle Solo 8 bars. (F)

64474-A Jumpin' At The Woodside Clarinet solo 48 bars. (F)

This session is interesting for two reasons. First we have in "... Bush" the only example with regard to Evans of two issued takes of the same title of a Count Basie record, and the surprise is pleasant. Except for the opening phrases, the two takes are very different and demonstrate his cleverness as an improviser. In quality they are about equal with a small plus for take A. Second, "... Woodside" contains one of the very few examples I know of Evans as a clarinet soloist. However, this is a great disappointment, even if the style is personal and reminds us of the tenor sax style. The solo is restless and uneasy, and it is probable that he could do better in a slower tempo. "Texas ..." contains a really fine brief tenorsax solo.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Aug. 23, 1938

Personnel possibly as July 9, 1938 + Helen Humes (vo).

CBS broadcast from The Famous Door:

1 Yeah Man No solo.

2 John's Idea Solo 4+12 bars, orchestra interrupting for 4 bars. (FM)

3 Melody In F Solo 8 bars. (M)

4 Must We Just Be Friends Solo 8 bars. (SM)

The author admits an unusual weakness for Evans' playing in medium and slow medium tempi, and there is a majestic serenity and at the same time an elegance in "... F" and "... Friends" which makes improvisation as such really unnecessary. "... Idea" also contains a good solo.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Aug. 24, 1938

Personnel probably as July 9, 1938.

CBS broadcast from The Famous Door:

Nagasaki Solo 32 bars, then 3 pieces, each of 4 bars in the next chorus, the rest by orchestra. (F)

Doggin' Around Tenor sax solo 32 bars. Very faint clarinet solo with orch 16+8 bars, (dm) on bridge. (F)

One O'Clock Jump No solo.

"Nagasaki" contains a gigantic solo, one rarely hears an improvisation with such drive and inspiration, and it sends shivers down the spine. Maybe the very best Evans has made in this tempo! "Doggin' ..." which is almost overshadowed by "Nagasaki", also contains a fine tenor sax solo which strongly resembles the Decca recording. The clarinet solo is of very little importance.

COUNT BASIE & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Aug. 28, 1938**
 Personnel as July 9, 1938. Broadcast from The Famous Door, Bill Savory collection, two titles, one has HE:

Honeysuckle Rose Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)

NYC. Aug. 30, 1938

Same. One title:

Stop Beatin' Around The Mulberry Bush Soli 8 and 8 bars. (M)

NYC. Aug. 31, 1938

Same. Five titles, one has HE:

Texas Shuffle Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)

Here we have another sensational discovery, HE blows the "... Rose", oh yes, he knew the standards also! An exciting version of "Texas ..." is received with gratitude. Then, don't overlook "... The Mulberry Bush", this version is very strong and colourful, much better than the 78 recording, note the last solo!

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Sept. 6, 1938**
 Personnel probably as July 9, 1938.
 CBS broadcast from The Famous Door:

Indiana No solo.

Out The Window No solo.

NYC. Sept. 11, 1938

Broadcast from The Famous Door, Bill Savory collection, four titles, two have HE:

Sent For You Yesterday Solo with orch 12 bars. (M)

Texas Shuffle Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)

NYC. Sept. 13, 1938

Personnel probably as July 22, 1938.

CBS broadcast from The Famous Door:

Ta-Ta Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Indiana (NC) No solo.

Love Of My Life No solo.

John's Idea (NC) No solo.

"Ta-Ta" has a solo of absolute top quality. Two fine discoveries from the BS collection should also be noted.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Sept. 24, 1938**
 Personnel probably as July 9, 1938.
 CBS broadcast from The Famous Door:

Margie No solo.

This Time It's Real No solo.

NYC. Oct. 9, 1938

Personnel probably as July 9, 1938.

CBS broadcast from The Famous Door:

Yeah Man No solo.

NYC. Oct. 11, 1938

Personnel as usual. Broadcast from The Famous Door, Bill Savory collection, seven titles, three have HE:

Rosetta Solo 64 bars. (F)

Blue And Sentimental Soli 18 and 6 bars to long coda. (S)

Moten Swing Solo 32 bars. (M)

NYC. Oct. 12, 1938

Same. Four titles, one has HE:

Harlem Shout Solo with orch 8 bars. (F)

NYC. Oct. 19, 1938

Same. Four titles, three have HE:

Limehouse Blues Solo 32 bars. (F)

Russian Lullaby Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Texas Shuffle Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)

NYC. Oct. 28, 1938

Same. One title, "I Never Knew", but no HE.

NYC. Oct. 30, 1938

Same. One title:

Shout And Feel It Solo 8 bars. (FM)

The BS collection from one single week of October 1938 gives us some of greatest tenorsax playing captured by the great Herschel Evans!! When I heard "Rosetta" the first time up in Harlem, I wrote 'my god' in my notebook. When I came to "Russian Lullaby" I almost fainted. When I woke up, I got a magnificent "Limehouse ..." straight in my face. Adding a "Moten ..." and "Texas ..." did not make things better! And finally, to have a full broadcast version of "Blue And Sentimental", truly incredible. Not that he plays so very differently from the 78 version, but just to hear his heavy sound pushing this lovely tune through, vow! Note that when one thinks the performance continues with Helen Humes' vocal, it was no space for this on a three-minute studio version.

TEDDY WILSON AND HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Oct. 31, 1938

Harry James (tp), Bennie Morton (tb), Benny Carter, Edgar Sampson (as), Herschel Evans, Lester Young (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Al Casey (g), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (dm), Billie Holiday (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Brunswick, no HE.

COUNT BASIE & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Nov. 2, 1938

Personnel as usual.

Postscript of May 22, 2017: Note that I presented earlier this broadcast as Nov. 6, but my notes may be wrong, as the issue on iTunes has Nov. 2.

Broadcast from The Famous Door, Bill Savory collection, six titles, one has HE:

Limehouse Blues Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Yes, there is a second version of "Limehouse ...", not at all inferior!

TEDDY WILSON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Nov. 9, 1938

Personnel as Oct. 31, 1938.

Four titles were recorded, two have HE:

23688-1 April In My Heart Solo 4 bars. (SM)

23688-2 April In My Heart As above. (SM)

23689-1 I'll Never Fail You Solo 8 bars. (M)

His playing is rather ordinary and not typical, particularly in "April ..." where one would probably never have guessed it was Evans if he had not been listed among the personnel.

COUNT BASIE & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Nov. 11, 1938

Personnel as usual.

Broadcast from The Famous Door, Bill Savory collection, two titles, one has HE:

Harlem Shout Solo with orch 8 bars. (F)

NYC. unknown dates

Same. Three titles:

I Ain't Got Nobody Break. (F)

One O'Clock Jump Solo with orch 8 bars (NC). (FM)

One O'Clock Jump Solo 12 bars. (M)

There are some additional Bill Savory stuff with HE, well worth noticing.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 15, 1938**

Buck Clayton (tp), Lester Young, Herschel Evans (ts), Count Basie (p), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (dm) and members of the Benny Goodman Orchestra without Benny Goodman.

CBS "Camel Caravan" broadcast:

Lady Be Good Solo 32 bars. (F)

A quite common solo, one gets the impression that Evans finds the tempo too fast on this occasion.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 16, 1938**

Personnel as July 9, 1938.

Five titles were recorded for Decca, one has HE:

64750-A Panassie Stomp Solo 8 bars. (F)

Good solo with no special merits.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Dec. 23, 1938**

Personnel as July 9, 1938 + Shad Collins, Hot Lips Page (tp).

John Hammonds Carnegie Hall Concert.

One O'Clock Jump No solo.

Blues With Lips Solo 24 bars. (FM)

Rhythm Man No solo.

This is Evans' last solo on record, and there is no evidence of his illness. He swings all the way, and the ideas are still there. He does an honorable sortie, though the author's personal wish is that he had done a ballad instead, his posthumous reputation has lost something valuable there.

NYC. Dec. 23, 1938

Note: New material from the Carnegie Hall Concert has appeared on the (now longer) recent "Spirituals to Swing" CD-box set:

Swingin' The Blues Solo with orch 24 bars. (F)

Every Tub Solo with orch 8 bars. (F)

Believing the potential of more Count Basie material to be exhausted, it was an immense pleasure to have two more soli from the great HE. These are faster versions of the well known Decca studio recordings, "... Blues" also longer, making room for extended soloing of fine quality. Note, however, that HE is not well recorded, making details difficult to analyze.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Autumn 1938**

Personnel probably as July 9, 1938 (Shad Collins (tp) is not included as formerly believed).

CBS broadcast(s) probably from The Famous Door.

Limehouse Blues Solo 32 bars. (F)

One O'Clock Jump Solo 12 bars. (M)

King Porter Stomp Solo 32 bars. (F)

Sent For You Yesterday Solo 12 bars. (M)

This (no longer) recent discovery came as a real surprise! Here we are concerned with HE and what a pleasure; four valuable additions to the much too small Evans treasure chest! On all titles he plays with his usual strength and inspiration, and none should be preferred to the others, although it is of course very exciting to hear him play "Limehouse ...", never recorded by Basie. Postscript: Somebody should compare these items with those relevant in the Bill Savory collection, I have no way of assuring back here in Oslo that they are really different.

LIONEL HAMPTON JAM SESSION **NYC. Dec. 28, 1938**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Vernon Brown (tb), Dave Matthews (as), Herschel Evans (ts), Howard Smith (p), Milt Hinton (b), Lionel Hampton (vib, p).

Bill Savory collection, four titles (a fifth title "Chinatown, My Chinatown" is a feature number for LH's piano):

Blues	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
Rosetta	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Dinah	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Stardust	Solo feature for HE's tenorsax: Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)

This discovery is unique, it represents HE's last farewell, only a few weeks before he passed away of fatal heart attack. He plays two rather modest blues choruses on "Blues", and does his best to swing "Rosetta" and "Dinah" in uptempo. It is obvious that he has problems with breathing, his usually big sound is much thinner than usual. Not that this matter very much, as we are most taken in by the historical occasion. Finally however, we have one of the BS collection's greatest and most important findings, a full version of "Stardust", nobody to interfere, except from some soft ensemble backing at the end. This treasure shows what this great saxophone player could do with a ballad, and there is nothing like this with Basie, "...Sentimental" included". He plays so sadly that one is deeply moved, listen to how he starts the second chorus, as crying for help. Without trying to be after-wise, it seems that he knew his days were numbered. "Stardust" is a great performance, one of the greatest treasures of jazz tenor saxophone of the vintage era, and a worthy goodbye from one of its greatest performers.

COUNT BASIE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 5, 1939**
 Personnel as July 9, 1938 + Shad Collins (tp).
 Two titles were recorded for Decca, no HE.

No further recording sessions.

REVISED APPENDIX

of June 23, 2023

HERSCHEL EVANS / MARY LOU WILLIAMS **NYC. 1938**
 Herschel Evans (ts), Mary Lou Williams (p).
 Acetate (James Accardi collection), one title:

2:31 Unidentified Title Solo 32 bars. Solo 32 bars
 to 10 bars 2/2 to fade out. (M)

Previous comments: An immensely valuable jazz archeological treasury, any new solo by HE is just a gem!! The sound is not the best, but he is heard in a full and relaxed chorus on something not easy to identify. However, there is something strange here, namely the brief duration of only one minute! After a brief piano intro, HE plays his chorus, and then MLW returns for a few bars to be cut short. It is not a runout, the sound stops abruptly, so it is likely that what is available is an excerpt (beginning) of something larger. Maybe the rest turns up someday?? Postscript of June 23, 2023: Quite correct! It turned up, and its predecessor was as assumed an excerpt. After HE's first chorus, MLW takes one and HE returns for a second chorus. Then they start on a chase, but the acetate runs out after ten bars. Exciting 2 1/2 minutes!!

...ooo...