

The
TROMBONE
of
**JACK CLARENCE
HIGGINBOTHAM
“J. C.”**

Born: Social Circle, near Atlanta, Georgia, May 11, 1906
 Died: NYC. May 26, 1973

Introduction:

J. C. Higginbotham was the first of the great black swing trombonists, and he participated in several immortal sessions particularly in the period 1929-36. He continued to be an important trombone artist, and we had the pleasure of receiving him in Oslo.

Early history:

Two brothers were also brass players – ‘Higgy’s’ niece is song-writer Irene Higginbotham. He first played bugle, then his sister bought him his first trombone. Worked in family restaurant, also played with Neal Montgomery orchestra (1921) and ‘gigged’ with pianist Harvey Quggs. Moved to Cinconnati to learn tailoring at a training school, left to work as a mechanic at the General Motors factory. Joined Wesley Helvev’s (ca. 1924), led own band, also ‘gigged’ with Wingie Carpenter. In late 1925 toured with pianist Eugene Landrum’s jazz band in the ‘Ragtime Steppers’ show. In 1926 he was sent for by Wingie Carpenter and joined drummer Eugene Primus Band in Buffalo, New York, after seven months he joined another band in Buffalo led by a pianist named Jimmy Harrison. Whilst on a visit to New York around August 1928 he sat-in at the Savoy Ballroom with Chick Webb and with drummer Willie Lynch’s band, was subsequently signed by Luis Russell as trombonist Harry “Father” White’s replacement and remained with Russell until 1931 -during this period played for two brief spells with Chick Webb (no recordings). With Fletcher Henderson from spring 1932, then with Benny Carter in autumn of 1933. Brief absence from music scene until summer 1934, then joined the Mills Blue Rhythm Band (directed by Lucky Millinder). Left in late 1936, briefly with Fletcher Henderson early in 1937, then with Louis Armstrong bigband until November 1940. Joined Henry ‘Red’ Allen sextet (as co-leader) in December 1940. Worked regularly with Henry Allen until February 1947 (during this period appeared with Louis Armstrong and Sidney Bechet at a New Orleans Jazz Foundation Concert in January 1945 (ref. John Chilton: “Who’s Who of Jazz”).

Credits:

The greatest possible thanks must go to German Franz Hoffmann who put his enormous collection of Higginbotham’s music, biography and memorabilia and Ulrich Bela’s transcriptions of J. C. Higginbotham’s soli at our disposal. Thanks must also go to trombonists Ole ‘Fessor’ Lindgreen and Mogens Thorborg who gave their time and advice during listening sessions.

Note also that at the end of the solography, p. 28, are two fine photos of Higginbotham together with Jørn Jensen, taken by Tom Buhmann in April 1970.

J. C. HIGGINBOTHAM SOLOGRAPHY

KING OLIVER & HIS DIXIE SYNCOPATORS

NYC. Sept. 10, 1928

King Oliver (cnt except 28186), Ed Anderson (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Omer Simeon (cl, as), Barney Bigard (cl, ts), Luis Russell (p), Will Johnson (bjo), Bass Moore (tu), Paul Barbarin (dm), Benny Waters (arr 28186).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion/Brunswick.

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 28185 | Speakeasy Blues | Solo 12 bars (mute). In ens. (SM) |
| 28186 | Aunt Hagar's Blues | Break. Solo 8 bars. In ens. (SM) |

1928 was an important year in the story of jazz trombone. Until then Jimmy Harrison had almost reigned supreme as the king of jazz trombone playing, but from 1928 he met competition when both J. C. Higginbotham and Jack Teagarden made their presence felt in New York. JCH's recording debut with King Oliver was rather undistinguished, although several of the elements that would later identify JCH's soloing are already present. "Aunt Hagar's ..." is the best of the two soli.

KING OLIVER & HIS DIXIE SYNCOPATORS

NYC. Sept. 12, 1928

King Oliver (cnt), Ed Anderson (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Omer Simeon (cl, as), Barney Bigard (cl, ts), Luis Russell (p), Will Johnson (bjo), Bass Moore (tu), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion/Brunswick, one issued:

- | | | |
|-------|------------------------|----------------------------|
| 28203 | I'm Watching The Clock | Solo 16 bars. In ens. (SM) |
|-------|------------------------|----------------------------|

"... Clock" has a much better constructed solo than the previous two with Oliver. JCH's huge tone is immediately recognizable and his entry on a high dominant note was one of his trade marks at this early stage.

RUBY GOWDY / ALBERTA JONES HORSEY'S HOT FIVE

NYC. Sept. 28, 1928

Walter Bennett (cnt) J. C. Higginbotham (tb), possibly Omer Simeon (cl on 2087-2088), Mabel Horsey (p) Alberta Jones (vo-2085, 2086), Ruby Gowdy (vo-2087, 2088),

Four titles were recorded for Gennett, no trombone present on 2085 "Wild Geese Blues" but:

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 2086 | Red Beans And Rice | Solo 16 bars. (SM) |
| 2087 | Florida Flood Blues | Obbligato 12 bars. Breaks. (S) |
| 2088 | Breath And Britches Blues | Obbligato 12 bars. (S) |

JCH begins his solo on "Red Beans ..." with a shout, almost like a roar. The first 12 bars are fine and right in the tradition. Then there seems to be a confusion when he blows 4 more. The obbligati fulfill their function, but no more.

HORSEY'S HOT FIVE

NYC. Sept. 29, 1928

Walter Bennett (cnt) J. C. Higginbotham (tb), possibly Omer Simeon (cl, as), unknown (vln-bowing 2089, strumming 2090), Mabel Horsey (p).

Four titles recorded for Gennett, two issued:

- | | | |
|------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| 2089 | Weeping Blues | In ens. Break. (SM) |
| 2090 | Waitin' For You Blues | Solo 16 bars. (SM) |

On "Waitin' For You ..." JCH again begins his solo on a high dominant note. The rest of the solo however does not live up to the beginning. Postscript of Feb. 2017: We gratefully acknowledge receiving additional material from K. B. Rau after the first publication of the solography that gives further support to the identification of JCH on the previous two sessions as well as useful comments to the violin playing from Anthony Barnett.

KING OLIVER & HIS DIXIE SYNCOPATORS

NYC. Nov. 14, 1928

King Oliver (cnt), Louis Metcalf (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (sop, as), probably Teddy Hill (ts), Luis Russell (p), Will Johnson (bjo, g), Bass Moore (tu), Paul Barbarin (dm).

One title was recorded for Brunswick:

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------------------|
| 28757 | Slow And Steady | Break 2 bars. Solo 15 bars. (M) |
|-------|-----------------|---------------------------------|

JCH's solo is – as suggested by the title – slow and steady, but rather predictable.

LUIS RUSSELL & HIS BURNING EIGHT **NYC. Jan. 15, 1929**
 Louis Metcalf (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (cl, sop, as), Teddy Hill (ts), Luis Russell (p, dir), Will Johnson (bjo, g), William Moore (tu), Paul Barbarin (dm), Walter Pichon (vo-401534).
 Three titles were recorded for Okeh:

| | | |
|----------|------------------------|---|
| 401532-A | Savoy Shout | In ens 12 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
| 401533-A | The Call Of The Freaks | In ens 16 bars. (SM) |
| 401534-A | It's Tight Like That | Break 2 bars to solo with ens 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. (M) |

Eventually the new master of trombone playing steps forward, not with a whisper, but with a roar in his introduction to "Savoy ...". Then he plays a 32 bar solo, mostly in the instrument's high register with a self-assurance that must have been frightening to contemporary trombonists. And there is more. His first 12 bars on "It's Tight ..." is a highly personal statement of the theme and he continues with 12 more bars in the high register, masterful and stamped with irrefragable self-assurance. In comparison his otherwise soulful theme statement on "Call Of The ..." seems almost pale.

KING OLIVER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 16, 1929**
 Louis Metcalf (cnt), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (as), Teddy Hill (ts), Luis Russell (p), Will Johnson (bjo), Bass Moore (tu), Paul Barbarin (dm), Walter "Fats" Pichon (vo), King Oliver (dir).
 Three titles were recorded for Victor, two issued:

| | | |
|---------|---------------------|---|
| 49650-1 | West End Blues | As below. (SM) |
| 49650-2 | West End Blues | In ens. Solo 12 bars. Duet with (tp) 12 bars. (SM) |
| 49651-1 | I've Got That Thing | Break. In ens. Duet with (tp) 16 bars. (SM) |
| 49651-2 | I've Got That Thing | Break. In ens. In ens 16 bars to coda. (SM) |

NYC. Feb. 1, 1929

Same. Four titles, three issued:

| | | |
|---------|------------------------|--------------------|
| 48333-1 | Call Of The Freaks | Solo 12 bars. (SM) |
| 48333-2 | Call Of The Freaks | As above. (SM) |
| 48334-1 | The Trumpeter's Prayer | Solo 12 bars. (SM) |
| 48334-2 | The Trumpeter's Prayer | As above. (SM) |
| 49649-3 | Freakish Light Blues | Solo 12 bars. (SM) |
| 49649-4 | Freakish Light Blues | As above. (SM) |

We cannot quite join in the enthusiasm that some Higginbotham supporters feel for these Oliver-sessions. The general feeling is that it is uncanny to hear the same band that recorded shortly before under Luis Russell's name sound so uninspired and bogged down by the written arrangements. JCH's best contribution is definitely "The Trumpeter's ...", and the triplets that he inserts in the last bars of his solo on both takes are in our opinion the high point of the session's output. His soli on the two takes of "West End ..." have some fine moments, in particular the originally issued take 2. His statement on "Call Of ..." is practically a repetition of the Russell-recording two weeks earlier, though less inspired. On "Freakish ..." he is limited to play the verse to the tune practically straight.

J.C. Johnson And His Five Hot Sparks **Long Island City, c. February 1929**
 Doubtful JCH session, see appendix at the end of this solography.

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG
& HIS SAVOY BALLROOM FIVE** **NYC. March 5, 1929**
 Louis Armstrong (tp,vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Albert Nicholas, Charlie Holmes (as), Teddy Hill (ts), Luis Russell (p), Eddie Condon (bjo), Lonnie Johnson (g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).
 Two titles were recorded for Okeh:

| | | |
|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------|
| 401690-C | I Can't Give You Anything But Love | Solo 16 bars. (SM) |
|----------|------------------------------------|--------------------|

- 401690-C I Can't Give You Anything But Love As above. (SM)
 401691-B Mahogany Hall Stomp Solo 12 bars. (M)

JCH was obviously inspired by the company of the great Louis Armstrong, and he produces a well-constructed solo on "I Can't Give You ...", although only on the originally issued take C. The D-take, which despite the higher take denomination sounds as a rehearsal take, does not compare in any respect. His fairly short solo on "Mahogany ..." is competent, but does not really get going.

Jungle Town Stompers **New York, April 15, 1929**
 Doubtful JCH session, see appendix at the end of this solography.

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 16/17, 1929**
 Henry Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Albert Nicholas (cl, as), Charlie Holmes (cl, sop, as), Teddy Hill (cl, ts, bar), Luis Russell (p, cel), Will Johnson (bjo, g, vo), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm, vib).
 Four titles were recorded for Victor:

- 55133-1 It Should Be You Solo 31 bars. Break 4 bars. (F)
 55133-2 It Should Be You Solo 31 bars. Break 2 bars. (F)
 55133-3 It Should Be You As take 2. (F)
 55134-1 Biff'ly Blues Duet with (cl) 15 bars (mute).
 Solo 7 bars. (SM)
 55134-2 Biff'ly Blues As above. (SM)
 53929-1 Feeling Drowsy Soli 4 and 4 bars in duet with (as). (FM)
 53929-2 Feeling Drowsy As above. (FM)
 53929-3 Feeling Drowsy As above. (FM)
 53930-1 Swing Out Break 2 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
 53930-2 Swing Out As above. (FM)
 53930-3 Swing Out As above. (FM)

In Jazz Archeology's solography on Henry 'Red' Allen we wrote that this is one of the most outstanding trumpet sessions ever made. Add to this, that had JCH not lived to make another recording after this session, he would still be secured a place in the Jazz Hall of Fame. Putting the two together you have a recording date that is so inspired and successful in almost every respect that it has little competition in the entire history of jazz music. First JCH introduces one of his trademarks of this early period, - the sensational break that we may compare to a controlled explosion. It happens at the beginning of his solo in "Swing Out" and halfway through his solo and at the end of the trumpet solo on "It Should ...". The last break is 4 bars long on take 1 of "It Should ..." and it almost stops the momentum of the music. On the following takes it is shortened to 2 bars with supreme effect. JCH's soli on "It Should ..." are kept mostly in the high register with frightening ease. However overall take 1 of "It Should ..." has the character of a rehearsal take, whereas JCH's soli are in place on takes 2 and 3, brilliantly inspired and rather similar in the main outline on both takes. His solo on "Swing Out" is remarkable, not so much for the choice of notes as for the infectious swing he generates. Again it gets better for every new take. There is a different and almost pensive atmosphere over "Biff'ly ..." and "Feeling ...". JCH's short statements on "Feeling ..." evokes the sound of a southern preacher and most successfully on the originally issued take 3, whereas his muted duet with the (cl) on "Biff'ly ..." produces a thoughtful mood as a fine contrast to Henry Allen's dynamic outbursts. Quite unfairly we must relegate his fine solo on "Biff'ly ..." to the bottom of the score, simply because JCH's other contributions to this session are superior. But to the whole session in few words: It doesn't get any better! In addition, it should be noted that you will find no better examples of Paul Barbarin's fine drumming as on "It Should Be ..." and "Swing Out". Also the orchestra plays the arrangements of these Henry Allen-compositions with a spirit and confidence that belies the fact that Allen had only been a member of the Russell band for less than a month, and that can only be taken as a testimony to Luis Russell's qualities as a leader and arranger.

LUIS RUSSELL & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Sept. 6, 1929**
 Henry Allen, Bill Coleman (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Albert Nicholas (cl, as), Charlie Holmes (sop, as), Teddy Hill (ts), Luis Russell (p, dir), Will Johnson (bjo, g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).
 Three titles were recorded for Okeh:

- 402938-C The New Call Of The Freaks In ens 16 bars. (M)

- 402939-C Feelin' The Spirit Intro 2 bars. Break 4 bars.
Solo 15 bars. (FM)
- 402940-B Jersey Lightning Break 2 bars. Solo 18+8 bars
(as) on bridge. (F)

Less than two months after the fabulous Henry Allen session comes this one that also qualifies as one of the great sessions in the JCH discography. It begins with another soulful theme statement on "The New ..." comparable to the ones JCH recorded in January. After that the fireworks begin! We feel almost uncomfortable to relegate "Feelin' ..." to second place, but that is only because JCH's solo on "Jersey ..." is so brilliant, creative and volcanic, especially in the last 8 bars. But had "Jersey ..." not been recorded, the date would still have been memorable, because of "Feelin' ...". In the spirit of the title it is litterarily gospel with JCH in the role of the preacher giving a powerful sermon. In short, a trombone solo that almost matches "Jersey"

LOU AND HIS GINGER SNAPS NYC. Sept. 13, 1929
Same. Two titles were recorded for Banner:

- 9006-1 Broadway Rhythm Break. Solo 8 bars. (FM)
- 9007-1 The Way He Loves Is Just Too Bad Solo 16 bars. (FM)
- 9007-2 The Way He Loves Is Just Too Bad As above. (FM)

Just one week after the incredible Luis Russell Okeh session these recordings seem lame and quite insignificant, both generally and from a JCH perspective.

THE LITTLE CHOCOLATE DANDIES NYC. Sept. 18, 1929
Rex Stewart (cnt), Leonard Davis (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Don Redman (cl, as, vo), Benny Carter (as, vo), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Fats Waller (p, cel), Bobby Johnson (bjo), Cyrus St. Clair (tu), George Stafford (dm).
Two titles were recorded for Okeh:

- 402965-C That's How I Feel Today Soli 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
- 402966-D Six Or Seven Times (tb) and (vo) in ens. (SM)

JCH's contributions on "That's How ..." are too short to have any real merit.

VICTORIA SPIVEY / HENRY ALLEN & HIS NEW YORK ORCHESTRA NYC. Sept. 24, 1929
Personnel as July 16/17 with Victoria Spivey (vo), The Four Wanderers (vo-group) added.
Four titles were recorded for Victor, no trombone solo on 55854-1&2 "How Do They Do It That Way" but:

- 55852-1 Make A Country Bird Fly Wild Solo 32 bars. (FM)
- 55852-2 Make A Country Bird Fly Wild As above. (FM)
- 55853-1 Funny Feathers Blues Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. (M)
- 55853-2 Funny Feathers Blues As above. (M)
- 55855-1 Pleasin' Paul Solo 32 bars. (M)
- 55855-2 Pleasin' Paul As above. (M)

These are a very mixed bunch. First to be singled out are JCH's soli on "Make ...". They are – and take 2 especially – delivered with an imagination and technique that no other trombonist mastered in those days. Also the first take of "Pleasin' ..." is impressive and contains some triplet passages that were rather advanced at this time. Contrary to that the second take of "Pleasin' ..." is a complete failure with bad intonation and missed notes. Finally the takes of "Funny ..." do not really amount to much.

VICTORIA SPIVEY NYC. Oct. 3, 1929
Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (sop), Teddy Hill (ts-except 56735), Luis Russell (p), Will Johnson (g), Pops Foster (b, tu).
Four titles were recorded for Victor:

- 56732-1 Blood Hound Blues Obbligato parts. (SM)
- 56733-1 Dirty T. B. Blues Obbligato parts. (SM)
- 56734-1 Moaning The Blues Intro 4 bars. Obbligato parts. (SM)
- 56735-1 Telephoning The Blues Obbligato parts. Solo 12 bars. (SM)

A simple but effective blues chorus on “Telephoning ...” and an introduction on “Moaning ...” are what we get from this session. On the other items JCH stays mostly in the background.

**JELLY-ROLL MORTON
& HIS RED HOT PEPPERS**

NYC. Nov. 13, 1929

Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Albert Nicholas (cl), Jelly Roll Morton (p), Will Johnson (g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

| | | |
|---------|---------------------|---------------------------|
| 57080-1 | Sweet Peter | In ens. (M) |
| 57080-2 | Sweet Peter | As above. (M) |
| 57081-1 | Jersey Joe | In ens. Solo 16 bars. (M) |
| 57081-2 | Jersey Joe | As above. (M) |
| 57082-1 | Mississippi Mildred | In ens. (M) |
| 57082-2 | Mississippi Mildred | As above. (M) |
| 57083-1 | Mint Julep | In ens. Solo 32 bars. (M) |

JCH fills his role in the ensemble playing as well as could be expected, but Jelly Roll Morton’s neat arrangements are not the best vehicle for JCH’s musical conception. His soloing appears stifled, and his solo on “Mint ...” sounds pre-arranged or at least sketched out on beforehand by Morton. There is not much difference between the two takes of “Jersey ...”.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG

NYC. Dec. 10&13, 1929

Personnel as Sept. 6, 1929 except Otis Johnson (tp) replaces Coleman and Louis Armstrong (tp, vo) added.

Four titles were recorded for Okeh:

| | | |
|----------|-----------------------------|--|
| 403493-A | I Ain’t Got Nobody (vo) | No solo. (M) |
| 490014-A | I Ain’t Got Nobody (non-vo) | Solo 16 + 6 bars, (as) on bridge. (M) |
| 403494-C | Dallas Blues (vo) | Solo 12 bars. Break. (M) |
| 490015-A | Dallas Blues (non-vo) | As above. (M) |
| 403495-B | St. Louis Blues (vo) | Straight verse 8 bars to 8 bars with ens. Solo 12 bars. (M) |
| 490016-A | St. Louis Blues (non-vo) | As above. (M) |
| 490016-B | St. Louis Blues (non-vo) | As above. (M) |
| 403496-A | Rockin’ Chair | As below? () |
| 403496-C | Rockin’ Chair | In ens only. (SM) |

First and foremost the focus of our attention is the three takes of “St. Louis ...”. JCH’s contribution equals that of Armstrong, and together they *make* these recordings. To say that JCH’s 8 + 8 bar statement of the verse is straight is a gross understatement. It bristles with his trademarks, the tone, the trills and the triple shakes. In addition we get three brilliant 12 bar soli. If one should be very critical it could be said that the second non-vocal take is the inferior of the three takes. His soli on “Dallas ...” have the preaching character that is typical for much of work in this period. The two takes are much alike, but we think the vocal take a mite superior to the non-vocal. On his solo on the non-vocal “I Ain’t ...” his last 8 bars contain a lovely shake that immediately gives away its creator. All in all, one of the very best of JCH’s early sessions.

LUIS RUSSELL & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Dec. 17, 1929

Personnel as Sept. 6 except Otis Johnson (tp) replaces Coleman.

One title was recorded for Okeh:

| | | |
|----------|--------------|--------------------|
| 403524-C | Doctor Blues | Solo 30 bars. (FM) |
|----------|--------------|--------------------|

Here is a fine and unusual solo, inasmuch as the whole solo stays almost within the same octave, while the variety is created by small and often subtle rhythmic variations.

Fats Waller & His Buddies

NYC. Dec. 18, 1929

Doubtful JCH session, see appendix at the end of this solography.

**LUIS RUSSELL & HIS ORCHESTRA /
LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Jan. 24, 1930**

Personnel as Dec. 17, 1930.

Three titles were recorded for Okeh:

- | | | |
|----------|---------------------|---|
| 403680-A | Saratoga Shout | Verse 16 and solo 12 bars. (FM) |
| 403681-A | Song Of The Islands | Solo/straight 14 bars. (M) |
| 403682-A | Song Of The Swanee | Intro with saxes 8 bars. Solo with saxes 26 bars. Coda with saxes 8 bars. (M) |

JCH's 26 bars with the saxes on "Song ..." are often overlooked because they have little of his customary brashness and fireworks. Contrary to that, it is a marvel of musical and creative originality that perfectly reflects the mood that he sets in his intro and coda. His verse on "Saratoga ..." has him in his preacher mood with more than just a nod to "When The Saints Go Marching In", while his blues solo later on is more on the ordinary side. JCH's solo on "Song Of ..." is too easily classified as straight, but the tone and small beautiful variations are so individual and typically JCH.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Feb. 1, 1930**

Personnel as Dec. 10, 1929 except William Thornton Blue (cl, as) replaces Nicholas.

Two titles were recorded for Okeh:

- | | | |
|----------|----------------------------|----------------------------|
| 403714-B | Bessie Couldn't Help It | Soli 4, 8 and 15 bars. (M) |
| 403715-B | Blue Turning Gray Over You | Solo 18 bars. (SM) |

The triumphant collaboration between JCH and Louis Armstrong continues. On both sides JCH moves effortlessly in the high register of his horn. On "Bessie ..." he spans more than two octaves. His breaks - before Armstrong's vocal on "Bessie ..." and after it on "Blue ..." - are daring fanfares and his soli on both sides are masterful. Another great session.

J. C. HIGGINBOTHAM & HIS SIX HICKS **NYC. Feb. 5, 1930**

Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (as), Luis Russell (p), Will Johnson (g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Okeh:

- | | | |
|----------|-------------------------------|--|
| 403736-B | Give Me Your Telephone Number | Solo 16+8 bars, (as) on bridge. Solo 8 bars. Coda. (FM) |
| 403737-C | Higginbotham Blues | Straight with (as) 12 bars. Solo 12 bars to stop-time 12 bars. Coda. (SM) |

JCH is obviously the main feature on this first session under his own name. His most remarkable contributions are the two blues choruses on "... Blues" in JCH's favourite key of Eb. This is the featured leader showing off! On "Give Me ..." he enters his solo rather timidly, but he soon builds up and is quite effective on the 8 bar bridge to the trumpet solo. And then his coda to both items should not be overlooked. The reference to the strain that later developed into "Organ Grinder's Swing" on "... Blues" became one of his later trademarks.

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Feb. 18, 1930**

Personnel as July 16, 1929 except Otis Johnson (tp) added, William T. Blue replaces Nicholas, Greely Walton (ts) replaces Hill.

Four titles were recorded for Victor, no trombone soli on 58584-2 "Dancing Dave" but:

- | | | |
|---------|----------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 58581-2 | Sugar Hill Function | Solo 12 bars. (FM) |
| 58582-2 | You Might Get Better | Prom. in ens to break 4 bars. (M) |
| 58583-2 | Everybody Shout | Solo 16 bars. (FM) |

JCH's most remarkable contribution to this session is the well-crafted solo on "Everybody ...". On "Sugar Hill ..." he makes a dramatic entrance with a drop of more than two octaves from a high D, but that is also the most you can say about that solo. He is quite prominent in the ensemble on "You Might ..." and introduces the vocal with an authoritative break.

JACK PURVIS & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. April 4, 1930**

Jack Purvis (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb, vo), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Adrian Rollini (bsx), Frank Froeba (p), Will Johnson (g, vo), Charles Kegley (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Okeh:

- 403891-A Dismal Dan Solo 8 bars. (M)
 403892-A Poor Richard Solo/straight 16 bars. (SM)
 403893-B Down Georgia Way Solo 8 bars. (SM)

NYC. May 1, 1930

Jack Purvis (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb, vo-403994), Greely Walton (ts), Adrian Rollini (bsx), Frank Froeba (p), Will Johnson (g), Charles Kegley (dm).
 Three titles were recorded for Okeh:

- 403992-B What's The Use Of Cryin', Baby? Straight 4 bars. (SM)
 403993-A When You're Feelin' Blue Soli 16 and 6 bars. (SM)
 403994-A Be Bo Bo Solo 16 bars. (M)

The two sessions under Jack Purvis' name are unpretentious affairs that produced great music. There are several interesting moments from a JCH point of view. "Be Bo Bo" is in the key of G which was never JCH's favourite, but he handles his solo from the principle that it does not have to be difficult to be good, and his 16 bars are highly successful. On "Poor ..." he introduces the theme but cannot stay on the straight side very long before his presentation is inflicted with several of his trademarks. Also his solo on "When You're Feeling ..." is a highly personalized variation of the theme. His 8 bars on "Down Georgia ..." is almost an exercise in how many triplets he could squeeze into a short solo. The remaining two, "Dismal ..." and "What's The Use ..." are less interesting.

LUIS RUSSELL & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. May 29, 1930**

Same as Dec. 17, 1929.

Three titles were recorded for Okeh, no JCH on "Poor L'il Me" but:

- 404047-A Louisiana Swing Solo/straight 16 bars. (FM)
 404047-C Louisiana Swing As above. (FM)
 404049-A On Revival Day Solo 16+8 bars, (tp-HA) on bridge.
 Solo 16+8 bars (growl), (as) on bridge. (FM)
 404049-B/C On Revival Day As above. (FM)

We are not used to alternative takes at this early stage of JCH's career, but here we have a session where both titles exist with alternatives. JCH on "Louisiana ..." is a statement of the theme with a personal twist, and there is not a lot of difference between the takes. His first solo on "... Revival ..." is a convincing piece of preaching in the instrument's high register and with quite a few variations between the takes. The second solo is more like a series of roars and totally similar on the two takes.

Henry "Red" Allen's New Yorkers**July 15, 1930**

Doubtful JCH item, see appendix at the end of this solography.

LUIS RUSSELL & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Sept. 5, 1930**

Personnel as May 29, 1930 except Greely Walton (ts) replaces Hill.

Three titles were recorded for Okeh:

- 404428-A Muggin' Lightly Solo with orch 16 bars. (FM)
 404429-A Panama Solo 16 bars. Break. (F)
 404430-B High Tension Breaks. Solo 16 bars. (FM)

If you need to demonstrate what is meant by an 'exploding break', try JCH's solitary break towards the end of "Panama" or his 2 bar break at the start of his solo on "High ...". It cannot get more typical, and he certainly keeps up the tension in his solo on "High ...". His solo on Panama seems to say that no tempo is too fast, and it is spiced with a couple of effective 'shakes'. On "Muggin' ..." he begins his solo in an almost laid back fashion, but it builds up to an effective climax in the last 4 bars.

LUIS RUSSELL & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Oct. 24, 1930**

Same. Three titles were recorded for Melotone, one issued:

- 35025 I Got Rhythm Solo 34 bars. (FM)

NYC. Dec. 17, 1930

Same plus unknown (tp), Vic Dickenson (vo).

Three titles were recorded for Vocalion/Brunswick:

| | | |
|---------|------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 35758-C | Saratoga Drag | Brief break. (FM) |
| 35759-C | Ease On Down | Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
| 35760 | Honey, That Reminds Me | Brief break. Solo 16 bars. (SM) |

This marks the end of JCH's first period with the Luis Russell orchestra and you could not imagine a more fitting finale. These two sessions sum it all up. JCH has so far demonstrated that he has technique to burn and a refined sense of rhythm, and you can find no better example of these elements of his ability than his solo on "I Got ...". For most of the first 16 bars he demonstrates his total command of the instrument's high register. Completely different is "Ease On ..." where his solo is the sound of the roar from the wilderness and on top played with an awe-inspiring sense of swing. Finally his solo on "Honey ..." points forward in the direction of the more relaxed and even-swinging soloist that we shall learn to know with JCH's soli in the 1930s. And still, towards the end of the solo he prints his indelible personal signature in the form of a series of triplets.

Vance Dixon And His Pencils **New York, June 12, 1931**
Doubtful JCH session, see appendix at the end of this solography.

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Aug. 1931**
Rex Stewart (cnt, vo), Russell Smith, Bobby Stark (tp), Claude Jones (tb, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Russell Procope, Edgar Sampson (cl, as), Coleman Hawkins (cl, ts), Fletcher Henderson (p, arr), Clarence Holiday (g), John Kirby (tu), Walter Johnson (dm), Nat Leslie (arr).
Four titles were recorded for Crown, two have JCH:

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 1433-3 | Sugar Foot Stomp | Solo 36 bars. (FM) |
| 1434-3 | Low Down On The Bayou | Solo 4 bars. (M) |

When JCH joined Fletcher Henderson he began a transition where the roar from the wilderness and the brassy shakes went out to make room for a more relaxed solo voice. He replaced Benny Morton in Henderson's trombone section, and his first recorded solo on "Sugar ..." was one that Benny Morton has done on three previous Henderson-recordings of the same arrangement. Whether he was instructed to emulate Benny Morton or it just happened subconsciously we cannot know, but beginning with this piece, his coming solos were often built on almost even quarter notes or eighth notes that he managed to charge with maximum swing. "Sugar ..." is a fine introduction to a new Higginbotham style. His 4 bars on "Low Down ..." are merely a "filler" in the written arrangement.

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Oct. 1931**
Same except Claude Jones omitted.
Two titles were recorded for Crown:

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 1503-2 | 12 th Street Rag | Break. Solo 14 bars. (FM) |
| 1506-3 | Milenberg Joys | Solo 14 bars. (FM) |

NYC. Oct. 15/16, 1931
Same/similar. Five titles were recorded for Columbia, four have JCH:

| | | |
|----------|-------------------------|--|
| 151846-3 | It's The Darndest Thing | Solo 8 bars. (FM) |
| 151847-1 | Blues In My Heart | Solo 16+8 bars (mute), orch on bridge. (SM) |
| 151848-1 | Sugar | Straight 16 bars (mute). (F) |
| 151851-1 | Business In F | Solo 8 bars. (FM) |

NYC. March 10, 1932
Same except Sandy Williams (tb) added.
Six titles were recorded for Victor, one has JCH:

| | | |
|---------|---------------------|------------------|
| 71942-1 | I Wanna Count Sheep | Solo 4 bars. (M) |
|---------|---------------------|------------------|

NYC. March 11, 1932
Same/similar. Four titles were recorded for Melotone, three have JCH:

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------|--------------------|
| 11445-A | Casa Loma Stomp | Solo 16 bars. (FM) |
| 11447-A | How Am I Doin', Hey Hey | Solo 16 bars. (FM) |
| 11447-B | How Am I Doin', Hey Hey | As above? () |
| 11448-A | Good-Bye Blues | Solo 14 bars. (M) |

In Fletcher Henderson's starstudded band there was not plenty of room for the individual soloist, but JCH still manages to produce convincing solos in his "new style". The best from this bunch are "How Am I ..." and the shorter one on "Business ..." but "Goodbye ..." also has its moments. The solo on "Casa Loma ..." begins with plenty energy, but loses momentum in the last 8 bars. He also introduces some welcome earthiness into on several of his soli. On "Milenberg ..." he injects a few dirty notes and he turns the syrupy theme to "Blues In ..." into a soulful statement. He is uncommonly subdued on "12th Street ...", and his short soli on "It's The Darndest ..." and "I Wanna Count ..." do not warrant particular comments.

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC c. April 1932

Personnel probably similar.

Film soundtrack. This film was reported by the Chicago Defender and by JCH in an interview but has never been traced.

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Dec. 9, 1932

Similar. Three titles were recorded for Columbia:

| | | |
|----------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 152324-1 | Honeysuckle Rose | Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
| 152325-1 | New King Porter Stomp | Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
| 152326-1 | Underneath The Harlem Moon | Solo 8 bars. (SM) |

This is the session, that John Hammond jr. produced. It was scheduled to begin at 10 a.m., but at 12.40 p.m. the last member of Fletcher Henderson's undisciplined group stumbled into the studio. Nonetheless, in 50 minutes they made three titles (altogether five takes, alternates presumably lost) of which at least two belong to the eternal Hall of Fame for jazz recordings. For JCH these sides show that the transition has been completed. He is now a major soloist with a musical vocabulary that has been both modified and expanded since the days of the Luis Russell band. "Honeysuckle ..." is an important recording in the whole development of jazz trombone playing. His choice of notes show that JCH at this time had an unusually original tonal imagination and his rhythmic sense is spectacular, - especially in the final 6 bars of his solo where he floats over the beat in a way that can best be perceived as quarter note triplets, but not really are. "New King Porter ..." is a different story. His 2nd chorus is actually the first chorus in the series of riffs with which the Henderson band would force other bands into submission at band battles. His 1st chorus and his short solo on "Underneath ..." are updates of the gritty and rough-swinging style of his Luis Russell days. There are plenty of the old Higgy-trademarks there, however with a new and different twist.

Soundtrack to "Emperor Jones"

Aug.-Sept.1933

Doubtful JCH-item. See appendix at the end of the solography.

COLEMAN HAWKINS & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Sept. 29, 1933

Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Hilton Jefferson (cl, as), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Horace Henderson (p), Bernard Addison (g), John Kirby (b), Walter Johnson or Sid Catlett (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Okeh, no JCH on 265145-2 "Heartbreak Blues" but:

| | | |
|----------|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 265143-2 | The Day You Came Along | Solo 8 bars. (SM) |
| 265144-1 | Jamaica Shout | As below. (FM) |
| 265144-2 | Jamaica Shout | Solo 8 and break 4 bars. (FM) |

A few years ago one would have said that JCH's soli on this session were made from the principle of why make it complicated, when you can make it simple. That is until -1 take of "Jamaica Shout" was found. Here both his 8 bar solo and his break are highly creative. It may not be the greatest thing, but it is very very good.

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Oct. 16, 1933

Eddie Mallory, Bill Dillard, Dick Clark (tp), J. C. Higginbotham, Keg Johnson, Fred Robinson (tb), Benny Carter (cl, as), Wayman Carver (fl, as), Glyn Paque (as), Johnny Russell (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Lawrence "Larry" Lucie (g). Ernest Hill (b), Sidney Catlett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, two have JCH:

| | | |
|----------|-------------------|--------------------------|
| 265162-2 | Symphony In Riffs | Soli 8 and 16 bars. (FM) |
| 265163-2 | Blue Lou | Solo 8 bars. (M) |

It is remarkable that this fine session is often overlooked in listings of important JCH recordings. It is noteworthy, not so much for his short solo on "Blue ..." or

his first 8 bars on “Symphony ...” but the second 16 bars constitute a very good solo that is very typical for his playing at this point of his career.

**BUSTER BAILEY
& HIS SEVEN CHOCOLATE DANDIES** **NYC. Dec. 28, 1934**

Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Buster Bailey (cl), Benny Carter (as), Charlie Beal (p), Danny Barker (g), Elmer James (b), Walter Johnson (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

| | | |
|---------|-------------------|----------------------|
| 16445-1 | Call Of The Delta | Straight 4 bars. (S) |
| 16445-2 | Call Of The Delta | As above. (S) |
| 16446-1 | Shanghai Shuffle | Solo 8 bars. (FM) |

Towards the end of his short solo on “Shanghai ...” JCH floats on the beat in the same very personal manner as he did on Fletcher Henderson’s “Honeysuckle Rose”, showing that it was not a coincidence the first time. Besides that, there is not much to say about these very short contributions.

MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND **NYC. Jan. 25, 1935**

Henry Allen, Wardell Jones, Shelton Hemphill (tp), possibly J. C. Higginbotham, George Washington (tb), Buster Bailey (cl), Gene Michaels (cl, as), Crawford Wethington, Joe Garland (reeds), Edgar Hayes (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Elmer James (b), O’Neil Spencer (dm), Lucky Millinder (dir), Chuck Richards (vo).

Three titles were recorded for Columbia, two possibly have JCH:

| | | |
|---------|------------------|--------------------------------|
| 16700-1 | Back Beats | Solo 8 bars. (FM) |
| 16702-1 | Brown Sugar Mine | Possibly straight 8 bars. (SM) |

NYC. July 2, 1935

Similar. Three titles, no JCH (the tb-soli on 17760-1 “Harlem Heat” and 17761-1 “Once To Every Heart” are most likely by George Washington).

NYC. July 9, 1935

Similar. Three titles, one has JCH (the (tb)-solo on 17797-1 “There’s Rhythm In Harlem” is most likely by George Washington):

| | | |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|
| 17796-1 | Congo Caravan | Solo 8 bars. (FM) |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|

The solo output from JCH’s first 6 months with Mills Blue Rhythm Band is certainly limited. There is an impressive backward gliss in the last part of his solo on “Back ...”, but besides that not really much to arouse interest.

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 19, 1935**

Henry Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Albert Nicholas (cl-17845-46), Cecil Scott (ts), Horace Henderson (p, arr), Lawrence Lucie (g), Elmer James (b), Kaiser Marshall (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------|---|
| 17845-1 | Dinah Lou | Solo 18 bars. (FM) |
| 17846-1 | Roll Along Prairie Moon | Solo 48 bars. (FM) |
| 17847-1 | I Wished On The Moon | Straight/solo 30 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M) |
| 17848-1 | Truckin’ | Straight 6 bars. (M) |

Ooh, to have been a fly on the wall in the studio this day! If JCH’s solo output with the Mills Blue Rhythm Band in the previous 6 months was limited, here is plenty compensation. If in fact one was to nominate JCH’s best recordings during the 1930s, this session qualifies for a position among the very best. First of course there is “Roll Along ...” where he constructs a perfect solo from a musical perspective and rhythmically as well. In fact it swings irresistibly. We suspect that Henry Allen’s cheering to have JCH take another chorus is planned, but it sounds perfectly spontaneous and gives JCH a chance to quote his solo from Fletcher Henderson’s “New King Porter Stomp” in the second chorus. “Dinah Lou” is almost as good with some imaginative triplets, but suffers in comparison by being shorter. “I Wished ...” is interesting because JCH presents the theme with a highly personal colouring and puts plenty spice into his short solo. Only “Truckin’” falls short in comparison, where JCH is dealt only a few short measures of straight melody. However at this point in the session he has already delivered more than could reasonably be expected.

MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND **NYC. Aug. 1, 1935**

Personnel as Dec. 5, 1934.

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, three have JCH:

| | | |
|---------|-----------|----------------------------------|
| 17923-1 | Dinah Lou | Break 2 bars to solo 8 bars. (M) |
| 17924-1 | Cotton | Solo 8 bars. (M) |
| 17925-1 | Truckin' | Solo 8 bars. (FM) |

What a delight! First we have a new recording of "Dinah Lou" with a different solo. Not in the sense of an alternative take, but a completely different and slower version that stands up in comparison with the previous Allen session, even though it is shorter in actual length. Then we get the solo on "Truckin'" that was missing at the previous session and a beautifully crafted one, and on top of that, a pensive statement with controlled use of the high register on "Cotton".

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 8, 1935**

Henry Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Gene Mikell (as), Joe Garland (ts), Edgar Hayes (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Elmer James (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, no trombone solo on 18254-1 "On Treasure Island" but:

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------------------|---|
| 18253-2 | I Found A Dream | Break 2 bars. (SM) |
| 18255-1 | Red Sails In The Sunset | Solo/straight 16+8 bars, (ts) on bridge. (M) |
| 18256-1 | Take Me Back To My Boots And Saddle | Lead 8 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (FM) |

The only actually improvised solo from this session is the 4 + 4 bar solo in "Take Me Back ...", and although it is quite up to JCH's best standard, it is not the most interesting aspect of this session. The interesting part is the demonstration of how, when JCH played lead or straight passages, he could colour his parts, however small with a personal signature, in tone, phrasing or little rhythmic variations that you would never doubt for a moment that it is genuine JCH. Examples are the break on "I Found ...", the solo part on "Red Sails ..." and the 8 bar lead on "Take Me ..."

MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND **NYC. Dec. 20, 1935**

Personnel as Dec. 5, 1934.

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, one has JCH:

| | | |
|---------|-----------|-------------------|
| 18422-1 | Yes! Yes! | Solo 4 bars. (FM) |
|---------|-----------|-------------------|

NYC. Jan. 21, 1936

Same. Two titles, two have trombone (see also GW):

| | | |
|---------|-----------------|---------------------------|
| 18547-2 | Shoe Shine Boy | Solo 4 bars. (SM) |
| 18548-2 | Midnight Ramble | Possibly solo 8 bars. (M) |

We believe that the short unaccompanied passage at the beginning of "Midnight ..." could possibly be JCH while the actual 24 bar trombone solo later undoubtedly is by George Washington. Anyway all three JCH-passages from these sessions are too short to be significant.

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. April 1, 1936**

Henry Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Willie Humphrey (cl, as), Cecil Scott (ts), Norman Lester (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Elmer James (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 18907-1 | The Touch Of Your Lips | Solo 10 bars. (M) |
| 18908-1 | Lost | Solo 20 bars. (FM) |
| 18909-1 | I'll Bet You Tell That To ATG | Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
| 18910-1 | Every Minute Of The Hour | Solo 7 bars. (SM) |

This is another good Henry Allen-session, partly due to the fine rhythm section, but also JCH is in brilliant form. The two fast selections are the most interesting, especially the tremendous swing on "I'll Bet ..." that he generates by playing bars 1-4, 9-12 and 23-28 as stoptime breaks. It creates a feeling of a thrust forward that is simply electrifying. On "Lost" we encounter a new JCH speciality that he introduced during these years, namely to start his solo during the last bars of the preceding chorus. It is also a remarkable solo played mostly in the high register. On "Every Minute ..." his short solo is full of emotional details while "The Touch ..." is more on the ordinary side.

MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND **NYC. May 20, 1936**

Personnel as Dec. 5, 1934 except Tab Smith (sop, as) replaces Humphries.

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, three has JCH:

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------|---------------------------------|
| 19296-1 | Red Rhythm | Solo 34 bars. (FM) |
| 19297-1 | Everything Is Still Okay | Solo 16 bars. Coda 5 bars. (SM) |
| 19298-1 | Jes' Natch'ully Lazy | Solo 7 bars. (SM) |

After many sessions with Mills Blue Rhythm Band where JCH has been dealt limited solo space, here at last are a handful of decent features, - and then it is a disappointment. His solo on "Red ..." starts before the end of the preceding chorus and swings nicely all the way through, but does not really get anywhere musically. "Everything ..." is a JCH-composition where he comes up with some pretty spectacular trombone playing in the last 8 bars of his solo and crowns it with a *f altissimo* at the conclusion of his coda. But it leaves the impression of a set piece, a prerehearsed bravura presentation, that is uncharacteristic for the JCH who could knock out strings of electrifying improvised soli. His solo on "Jes' Natch'ully ..." is the bridge of the altosax's theme presentation and fits well with the overall atmosphere of the song, but is not particularly interesting musically.

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. May 21, 1936**

Henry Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Cecil Scott (cl), possibly Tab Smith (as), Happy Caldwell (ts), Jimmy Reynolds (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Elmer James (b), Walter Johnson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, no trombone solo on 19301 "Tormented" but:

| | | |
|---------|----------------------------|--------------------|
| 19300-1 | You | Break 2 bars. (FM) |
| 19302-1 | Nothing's Blue But The Sky | Break 4 bars. (FM) |
| 19303-1 | Would You? | Solo 35 bars. (FM) |

NYC. June 19, 1936

Henry Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Tab Smith (as), Joe Garland (ts), Edgar Hayes (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Elmer James (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, only one has JCH:

| | | |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|
| 19451-1 | Take My Heart | Solo 17 bars. (M) |
|---------|---------------|-------------------|

You might call it JCH's 1936 habit to begin his solo during the final bars of the preceding chorus. Here he does it on both "Would ..." and "Take ..." and on the former he follows it with one of the most melodious and perfectly composed soli of his whole career. Compare that with some of his explosive soli of preceding years, and you have an excellent demonstration of how wide JCH's musical conception spanned. In contrast to this display of perfection, JCH is obviously uninspired in "Take ..." where he never moves beyond some of the more basic chords in the key of G. His break on "Nothing's ..." is quite humorous, spanning 2½ octave in the first 2 bars.

MILLS BLUE RHYTHM BAND **NYC. Aug. 11, 1936**

Personnel as May 20.

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, three have JCH:

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| 19685-1 | Merry-Go-Round | Solo with orch 8 bars. (FM) |
| 19686-1 | Until The Real Thing CA | Solo 8 bars. (SM) |
| 19688-1 | Carry Me Back To Green Pastures | Solo 4 bars. (SM) |

NYC. Oct. 15, 1936

Same except Billy Kyle (p) replaces Hayes and Hayes Alvis (b) replaces James..

Four titles, one has JCH:

| | | |
|---------|--------------|--------------------|
| 20074-1 | Barrel House | Solo 16 bars. (FM) |
|---------|--------------|--------------------|

NYC. Nov. 20, 1936

Same. Four titles, but no JCH (the trombone solo on 20297 "Algiers Bounce" is by George Washington).

JCH's 4 bars solo on "Carry ..." is a small gem. The 8 bars on "Merry ..." in fairly brisk tempo are almost finished before he gets started and "Until ..." is a nearly straight paraphrase on the bridge. The melody "Barrell House" is identical to the better known "Jive At Five", but JCH's solo is a disappointing exit from the Mills Blue Rhythm Band.

**FLETCHER HENDERSON
& HIS ORCHESTRA****NYC. March 2 & 22, 1937**

Dick Vance (tp, arr) Russell Smith, Emmett Berry (tp), George Washington, Ed Cuffee, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Jerry Blake (cl, as, vo, arr), Hilton Jefferson (cl, as), Elmer "Skippy" Williams, Chu Berry (ts), Fletcher Henderson (p, arr), Lawrence "Larry" Lucie (steel-g, g), Israel Crosby (b), Walter Johnson (dm), Dorothy Derrick (vo), Benny Carter (arr).

Two recording sessions for Vocalion, but no trombone soli by JCH. See the appendix for comment to a Fletcher Henderson aircheck from this period.

See the appendix for comments to Louis Armstrong's Norge broadcasts from early 1937.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. April 9, 1937**

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo), Leonard Davis, Henry Red Allen, Louis Bacon (tp), Snub Mosely, Jimmy Archey, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Pete Clark (as, cl, bar), Charlie Holmes (as), Albert Nicholas (cl, ts), Bingie Madison (ts, cl, bar), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Fleischmann's Yeast Show, two titles have JCH:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------|
| Them There Eyes | Solo 8 bars. (FM) |
| Tiger Rag | Solo 30 bars. (F) |

NYC. April 30, 1937

As April 9, except Shelton Hemphill (tp) probably replaces Leonard Davis. One title:

| | |
|-------------------|-------------------|
| After You've Gone | Solo 36 bars. (F) |
|-------------------|-------------------|

NYC. May 14, 1937

As April 9, except Shelton Hemphill (tp) replaces Leonard Davis and George Washington (tb) replaces Snub Mosely. One title:

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------------|
| Washington And Lee Swing | Solo 16 bars. (F) |
|--------------------------|-------------------|

NYC. May 21, 1937

As May 14. One title:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------|
| Sugar Foot Stomp | Solo 12 bars. (FM) |
|------------------|--------------------|

NYC. May 28, 1937

As May 14, except George Matthews (tb) replaces Jimmy Archey. One title:

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| Bugle Blues | Solo 12 bars. (F) |
|-------------|-------------------|

When JCH joined Louis Armstrong's orchestra, he brought back into his playing style some of the muscular features from his early career while at the same time he was still able to produce brilliant soli in his "Would You"-style. This was possibly the most creative period of his whole career. His solo on "After ..." from these broadcasts has both elements, and in addition, an explosive break. "Washington ..." also contains a fine, but regrettably short solo. "Tiger ..." is too fast, even for JCH. On "Sugar Foot ..." and "Bugle ..." he opens with effective breaks, but the rest is a handful of loose phrases more than proper soli.

MEZZ MEZZROW & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. June 14, 1937**

Sy Oliver (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Mezz Mezzrow (cl, arr), Happy Caldwell (ts), Sonny White (p), Bernard Addison (g), Pops Foster (b), Jimmy Crawford (dm), Edgar Sampson, Larry Clinton (arr).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------------------|---|
| 010569-1 | Blues In Disguise | Solo 18 bars. (M) |
| 010570-1 | That's How I Feel Today | Solo 16 + 8 bars (mute), (cl) on bridge. (M) |
| 010571-1 | Hot Club Stomp | Solo 16 bars). (FM) |
| 010572-1 | The Swing Session Is Called To Order | Break 2 bars. Solo 12 bars. (F) |

This is a strangely uninspired session. None of the participants performs badly, on the contrary – all the hornmen deliver pleasing soli, - even Mezzrow - and JCH's soli are actually quite excellent. Possibly the rhythm section is the source to the atmosphere of dull routine that prevails. JCH is best on "Hot Club ..." and "The Swing Session ..."

**LOUIS ARMSTRONG &
HIS ORCHESTRA****NYC. July 2, 1937 – July 7, 1937**

Personnels including J. C. Higginbotham (tb).

Two recording sessions for Decca, but no trombone soli.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA**LA. Nov. 15, 1937**

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (as), Bingie Madison (cl, ts), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Red Callender (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Decca:

| | | |
|--------|---------------------------------|---|
| 1084-A | Once In A While | Solo 8 bars. (SM) |
| 1085-A | On The Sunny Side Of The Street | Solo/straight 16+8 bars, (as) on bridge. (M) |

Note: Rumours of an alternative take of “On The Sunny...” persist, but it has not turned up yet.

You have to love the “Once In A While” / “On The Sunny Side” coupling in all its simplicity. On “Once ...” JCH merely plays the first bridge, but so soulfully. His part in “On The Sunny ...” is to present the theme, but he rephrases it, such as it comes out in a new and different way.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA**LA. Jan. 12, 1938**

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo), Shelton Hemphill, Henry Red Allen, Louis Bacon (tp), Wilbur De Paris, George Washington, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Pete Clark, Charlie Holmes (as), Albert Nicholas, Bingie Madison (cl, ts), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has trombone solo by JCH:

| | | |
|--------|---------------------|------------------|
| 1132-A | Satchel Mouth Swing | Solo 8 bars. (M) |
|--------|---------------------|------------------|

LA. Jan. 13, 1938

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (as), Bingie Madison (cl, ts), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have trombone soli by JCH:

| | | |
|--------|-----------------------------|--|
| 1136-A | I Double Dare You | 2 breaks of 2 bars. Solo 16 bars. (FM) |
| 1136-B | I Duple Dare You | As above. (FM) |
| 1138-A | Let That Be A Lesson To You | Solo 16 bars, Break 4 bars. (M) |
| 1138-B | Let That Be A Lesson To You | As above. (M) |

NYC. May 13, 1938

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo), Shelton Hemphill (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Rupert Cole (cl, as), Charlie Holmes (as), Bingie Madison (cl, ts), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Red Callender (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have JCH:

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| 63777-A | As Long As You Live | Solo 8 bars. (M) |
| 63778-A | When The Saints Go Marchin' In | Soli 16 and 16 bars. (FM) |

NYC. May 18, 1938

Same. Four titles, one has JCH:

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------------|
| 63811-A | Something Tells Me | Solo 32 bars (mute). (FM) |
|---------|--------------------|---------------------------|

Several excellent JCH soli here and one unforgettable one. Both “... Saints” and “Something ...” are in the key of G, - an unusual key for JCH. Perhaps the necessity to use other positions forced him to think differently, because the result is a melodical and strangely beautiful muted solo on “Something ...” that is typical for JCH, but in a different way, and the same can be said about his actual solo on “... Saints” while his theme statement on that recording is pure preaching. And not far behind these are his contributions on “I Double ...” with fine breaks around Armstrong’s vocal and on “Let That ...”. Both are available in alternative takes where the originally issued ones are better settled and clearly superior. However while there is not much take difference on “I Double ...” there is a marked difference on “Let That ...”. Finally there are two fairly short soli on “Satchelmouth ...” and “As Long ...” that are fine workmanship but a little pale in comparison.

LIL ARMSTRONG**NYC. Sept. 9, 1938**

Reunald Jones (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Buster Bailey (cl), Lil Armstrong (p, vo), Wellman Braud (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm, vo-64607).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 64604-A | Safely Locked Up In My Heart | Solo 8 bars. (SM) |
| 64605-A | Everything Is Wrong, Ain't NR | Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. (SM) |
| 64606-A | Harlem On Saturday Night | Solo 32 bars. (F) |
| 64607-A | Knock-Kneed Sal | Solo 16 bars. Break. (F) |

It is not difficult to find faults in the recordings that Lil Armstrong made in the late 1930s, but still we find them utterly charming. On this session JCH gives excellent support with a deeply felt intro and solo on "Everything ..." which is a blues with 4 bars added. He kicks off "Harlem ..." with a rousing theme presentation, and he is also fine, if not quite as remarkable on "... Sal". Only "Safely ..." falls on the wrong side as overly sentimental.

BEA FOOTE VOCAL ACC. BY**NYC. Sept. 13, 1938**

Charlie Shavers (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Buster Bailey (cl), Sammy Price (p), unknown (g), (b), (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three issued:

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 64658 | Try And Get It | Solo 16 bars (mute). (M) |
| 64659 | Jive Lover | Intro 4 bars. Coda 4 bars. (S) |
| 64661-A | I Want A Long Time Daddy | Weak obbligato parts (mute). (SM) |

Nothing exceptional, but solid swinging trombone on "Try ...".

LOUIS ARMSTRONG**& HIS ORCHESTRA****Baton Rouge, LA, September 30, 1938**

Louis Armstrong, Louis Bacon or Otis Johnson, Shelton Hemphill, Henry "Red" Allen (tp), Wilbur DeParis, George Washington, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Rupert Cole, Charlie Holmes (as), Bingie Madison (ts), Albert Nicholas (cl, ts), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Broadcast, 3 titles, but no JCH.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Jan. 18, 1939**

Same. Two titles were recorded for Decca, but no trombone soli.

JIMMY JOHNSON & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. March 9, 1939**

Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Gene Sedic (ts), James P. Johnson (p), Al Casey (g), Johnny Williams (b), Sid Catlett (dm), Anna Robinson, Ruby Smith (vo).

Five titles were recorded for Vocalion:

| | | |
|---------|---------------------|------------------------|
| 24205-1 | Harlem Woogie | Solo 8 bars. (M) |
| 24205-2 | Harlem Woogie | As above. (M) |
| 24206-1 | Hungry Blues | In ens. (SM) |
| 24207-1 | Back Water Blues | Obbligato 24 bars. (S) |
| 24207-2 | Back Water Blues | As above. (S) |
| 24208-1 | He's Mine, All Mine | Obbligato 32 bars. (S) |
| 24209-1 | After Tonight | Solo 8 bars. (M) |

By far the most interesting JCH here is found in his obbligato playing, especially on "Back Water ..." where he provides masterful backing to the sympathetic Ruby Smith. The other vocalist, Anna Robinson is not in the same class, and JCH is so overbusy in his backing on "He's Mine ..." that he gets in the way of the singer. The remaining tracks, "Harlem ..." and "After ..." are less interesting, the former being the best. From a JCH viewpoint the originally issued take 1 is clearly to be preferred.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. April 5, 1939**

Personnel similar to Jan. 18.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three have trombone soli, all by JCH:

| | | |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------------|
| 65344-A | Hear Me Talkin' ToYa | Soli 8 and 8 bars. (FM) |
| 65345-A | Save It, Pretty Mama | Solo 8 bars. (SM) |

65346-A West End Blues Solo 12 bars. (SM)

Notwithstanding that this is a solography that describes JCH's jazz trombone, the arrival of Sidney Catlett in the rhythm section must be mentioned. Without downrating Paul Barbarin's playing in any way, Sidney Catlett is in a different category, and the whole band swings differently with him. However JCH's soli from this session are not particularly interesting, and doubt has been raised about whether the second 8 bars on "Hear ..." are his because of a few technical lapses, but we believe it is him. The most remarkable track is his fullblooded blues playing on "West End ..."

J. C. HIGGINBOTHAM QUINTET /

PORT OF HARLEM JAZZMEN

NYC. April 7, 1939

Quintet (513): J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Albert Ammons (p), Teddy Bunn (g), Johnny Williams (b), Sid Catlett (dm). Jazzmen (515-517: Add Frankie Newton (tp).

Four titles were recorded for Blue Note:

513-A Weary Land Blues Soli 12 and 12 bars to coda. (S)

515-A Port Of Harlem Blues Solo 24 bars. Acc. (tp) 12 bars. (S)

516-2 Mighty Blues Solo 24 bars. (SM)

517-1 Rocking The Blues Solo 36 bars. (M)

Skip these if the 12 bar blues is not your dish. The rest of us can only repeat what was already stated in Jazz Archeology's Frankie Newton-solography: A magnificent session. There is a great atmosphere on "Weary Land ..." and "Port Of ..." where JCH's choruses sound as extensions of each other even to the point of playing in the same key. But the notoriously murky sound on all issues of these two may tempt the listener to concentrate more on the other two selections, and there is also plenty of excellent JCH to sample there. He opens "Mighty ..." with two majestic blues choruses, the second beginning with an electrifying series of high c's. His finest moment however is his three opening choruses on "Rocking ..." played in the high register of the trombone while the rhythm section generates tremendous swing behind him.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. April 25, 1939

Similar. Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has trombone solo, JCH:

65460-A Confessin' 2 bar break. Solo 6 bars. (SM)

In later years "Confessin'" became a signature tune for JCH. Here we have for the first time his patented 2 bar break and the burst of semiquavers that since became his trademark, but here sounding new and fresh.

PORT OF HARLEM SEVEN

NYC. June 8, 1939

Frankie Newton (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Sidney Bechet (cl, sop), Meade Lux Lewis (p), Teddy Bunn (g), Johnny Williams (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Blue Note:

532X-12 Blues For Tommy Solo 12 bars. (S)

536-11 Pounding Heart Blues Break. Solo 12 bars. (SM)

Sidney Bechet had a tendency to take charge over every session he was a part of and so he does here too, but JCH gets to sign in too with some honest down to earth blues playng, especially on "Pounding ..." where he pulls out a convincing break and later a masterful solo.

J. C. HIGGINBOTHAM QUINTET

NYC. June 8, 1939

J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Meade Lux Lewis (p), Teddy Bunn (g), Johnny Williams (b), Sid Catlett (dm).

One title was recorded for Blue Note:

532-B-15 Basin Street Blues Soli 31 and 24 bars to long coda. (S)

3 minutes and 41 seconds of music of which close to 3 minutes is solo trombone. This could have been JCH's equivalent to Dickie Wells' masterpiece "Dickie Wells Blues", but it is not. JCH comes up with some creative and spectacular breaks, but generally he tends to run out of ideas and just rely on the chords. In addition the rhythm section produces a dull marchlike beat. It could possibly be due to Meade Lux Lewis being unable to adapt to a band setting as Albert Ammons could at the previous Blue Note sessions.

JIMMY JOHNSON & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. June 15, 1939

Personnel as March 9 except Eugene Fields (g), Pops Foster (b) replace Casey and Williams.

Five titles were recorded for Vocalion:

| | | |
|-----------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 24776-1 | Memories Of You | Solo 16 bars (open). (M) |
| 24776-2 | Memories Of You | As above. (M) |
| 24777-1 | Old Fashioned Love | Solo 32 bars (open). (M) |
| 24777-2 | Old Fashioned Love | As above. (M) |
| 24778-1#2 | Swingin' At The Lido | With ens 16 bars. (FM) |
| 24778-2#3 | Swingin' At The Lido | As above. (M) |
| 24778#1 | Swingin' At The Lido | As above. (M) |
| 24778BD | Swingin' At The Lido | As above. (M) |
| 24779-1#2 | Havin' A Ball | Soli 8 and 8 bars. (M) |
| 24779-2#3 | Havin' A Ball | As above. (M) |
| 24779-3#1 | Havin' A Ball | As above. (M) |
| 24779-4#4 | Havin' A Ball | As above. (M) |
| 24780-1 | Hungry Blues | Obbligato 14 and 4 bars. (SM) |

Note: The take numbers and sequence of this session has been updated to fit with the latest research from Mosaic's James P. Johnson CD-set (Mosaic MD7-262).

This is a most relaxed session, - in some respects maybe too relaxed. For JCH in particular the most interesting piece is his solo on "Old Fashioned ..." and between the two takes, our preference is take 2. There is not a lot of difference between JCH's soli on the different takes to "Havin' ..." but with regard to both soli on that piece we find that take 2 and 3 are superior to the others. "Memories ..." is not memorable, being mostly straight and his backing to the vocalist on "Hungry ..." is fairly indistinct and messy. On "Swingin' ..." JCH's role is fixed to the ensemble.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. June 15, 1939**
Same. Three titles were recorded for Decca, one has trombone, probably JCH:

| | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|--------------------|
| 65824-A | Baby, Won't You Please Come Home | Solo 18 bars. (SM) |
|---------|----------------------------------|--------------------|

If you are looking for an illustration of how it sounds when JCH creates a solo which is mostly a variation of the melody, but coloured with all the little features that immediately identifies it as his, here it is on "Baby Won't ...". It is beautiful and you will not find a more typical example.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA **New York, October 2, 1939**
Three titles recorded at Carnegie Hall, "ASCAP Benefit Concert", but no JCH.

LIONEL HAMPTON & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Oct. 12, 1939**
Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Earl Bostic (as), Clyde Hart (p), Charlie Christian (g), Artie Bernstein (b), Sid Catlett (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib, vo).

Three titles were recorded for Victor:

| | | |
|---------|---|--------------------------------------|
| 42941-1 | I'm On My Way From You | Solo 16 bars. (M) |
| 42942-1 | Haven't Named It Yet | Solo 16+8 bars, (as) on bridge. (FM) |
| 42943-1 | The Heebie Jeebies Are Rockin' The Town | Solo 12 bars. (M) |
| 42943-2 | The Heebie Jeebies Are Rockin' The Town | As above. (M) |

This works mostly due to a fantastic rhythm section, because the soloists do not quite meet our expectations. In JCH's case he has a fine solo on "Haven't ..." and bars 9 to 16 on his solo on "I'm On My Way ..." are absolutely convincing. His solo on take 1 of "The Heebie ..." never gets off the ground, while his solo on take 2 is far more relaxed and better structured.

IDA COX VOCAL ACC. BY
HER ALL-STAR BAND **NYC. Oct. 31, 1939**
Hot Lips Page (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), James P. Johnson (p), Charlie Christian (g), Artie Bernstein (b), Lionel Hampton (dm).
Three titles were recorded for Vocalion:

| | | |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|
| 25509-BD1 | Deep Sea Blues | No (tb). (SM) |
|-----------|----------------|---------------|

| | | |
|-----------|--------------------|--------------------------------|
| 25509#1 | Deep Sea Blues | Obbligato 32 bars (mute). (SM) |
| 25509-2#2 | Deep Sea Blues | As above. (SM) |
| 25509-BD2 | Deep Sea Blues | No (tb). (SM) |
| 25509-1#3 | Deep Sea Blues | As #1. (SM) |
| 25510#1 | Death Letter Blues | As below. (S) |
| 25510#2 | Death Letter Blues | As below. (S) |
| 25510-BD | Death Letter Blues | As below. (S) |
| 25510-2#3 | Death Letter Blues | As below. (S) |
| 25510-1#4 | Death Letter Blues | Obbligato 12 bars (mute). (S) |
| 25511#1 | One Hour Mama | Obbligato 4+16 bars. (SM) |
| 25511-BD1 | One Hour Mama | No (tb). (S) |
| 25511#2 | One Hour Mama | As #1. (SM) |
| 25511-BD2 | One Hour Mama | No (tb). (S) |
| 25511-2#3 | One Hour Mama | As #1. (S) |
| 25511-1#4 | One Hour Mama | As #1. (SM) |

Note: The take numbers and sequence of this session has been updated to fit with the latest research from Mosaic's James P. Johnson CD-set (Mosaic MD7-262).

same

Personnel as above except Fletcher Henderson (p) replaces Johnson. Four titles:

| | | |
|---------|----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 26239-A | Four Day Creep | Obbligato 12 bars (mute). (S) |
| 26240-A | Pink Slip Blues | Obbligato 12 bars (mute). (S) |
| 26241-A | Hard Times Blues | Obbligato 12 bars (mute). (S) |
| 26242-A | Take Him Off My Mind | Obbligato 12 bars (mute). (S) |

This obviously is Ida Cox' date first and foremost, but there are some priceless moments in the backing to her vocals, not least from JCH. Worthy of special mention are his contributions on "One Hour ...", "Pink Slip ..." and "Take Him Off ...". Postscript of Nov. 28, 2016: The survey above has been rewritten after the Mosaic box set of James P. Johnson. Note also that with the now excellent sound, the obbligati come through much better.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC, Dec. 11, 1939**

Louis Armstrong (tp,vcl) Bernard Flood, Shelton Hemphill, Henry "Red" Allen (tp), Wilbur DeParis, George Washington, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Rupert Cole (cl, as), Charlie Holmes (as), Joe Garland (ts, bar, arr), Bingie Madison (ts), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Pops Foster (b), Sidney Catlett (dm).

Radio broadcast from the Cotton Club, four titles recorded, two have JCH:

| | |
|------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sugar Foot Stomp | Break 2 bars. Solo 10 bars (FM) |
| Jammin' | Solo 31 bars. (FM) |

NYC. Dec. 18, 1939

Same. Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have JCH:

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|--------------------|
| 66985-A | You're A Lucky Guy | Break 4 bars. (SM) |
| 66987-A | Bye And Bye | Solo 16 bars. (FM) |

NYC, Dec. 18, 1939

Same. Radio broadcast "Cotton Club", Two titles recorded, but no JCH

The Cotton Club broadcast of Dec 11 turned up recently with fine sound quality and a couple of shouting soli from JCH, but there is better musical content in his preaching solo on "Bye ...".

W. C. HANDY'S ORCHESTRA **NYC. Dec. 26, 1939**

W. C. Handy (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Bingie Madison (ts), Luis Russell (p), Pops Foster (b), Sidney Catlett (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Varsity, two have trombone:

- 1223-1 St. Louis Blues Straight 8 bars. Solo 12 bars. (M)
 1225-1 Beale Street Blues Solo 12 bars. (M)

Historically important as these recording may be, they are also practically without musical merits. The rhythmically stiff performances come to life very shortly during JCH's and Edmond Hall's soli on "Beale Street ..." but alas too short before the listener is once more put to sleep...

COLEMAN HAWKINS' ALL-STAR OCTET NYC. Jan. 3, 1940

Benny Carter (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Danny Polo (cl), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Gene Rodgers (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), Johnny Williams (b), Walter Johnson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Bluebird:

- 46156-1 When Day Is Done Solo/straight 16 bars. (SM)
 46157-1 The Sheik Of Araby Solo 32 bars. (FM)
 46158-1 My Blue Heaven Solo 32 bars. (M)
 46159-1 Bouncing With Bean Solo 32 bars. (F)

These are fine recordings, but this time mostly due to the other soloists, while JCH seems to rely on standard chords and -phrases. He is never inferior, but not very inspirational either. "The Sheik ..." has his best solo from this session. On "My Blue ..." and "Bouncing ..." he seems to be merely going through the motions while "When Day ..." is basically a straight reading of the melody.

LOUIS ARMSTRONG & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. March 14, 1940

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo) Shelton Hemphill, Henry "Red" Allen, Bernard Flood (tp), Wilbur DeParis, George Washington, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (as), Rupert Cole (cl, as,) Bingie Madison, Joe Garland (ts), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Pops Foster (b), Sidney Catlett (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Decca, one has JCH:

- 67324-A Wolverine Blues Solo 22 bars. (F)

NYC, March 22, 1940

Same. Radio broadcast Cotton Club, one title, no JCH.

NYC, March 24, 1940

Same. Radio broadcast Cotton Club, one title with JCH recorded:

- Confessin' Break 2 bars. Solo 6 bars. (S)

NYC, April 9, 1940

Same. Radio broadcast Cotton Club, one title, no JCH.

NYC, April 15, 1940

Same. Radio broadcast Cotton Club, one title, no JCH

NYC, April 1940

Same. Radio broadcast Cotton Club, one title, no JCH.

NYC, May 1, 1940

Louis Armstrong (tp,vo), probably Shelton Hemphill (tp), probably J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Charlie Holmes (as), Joe Garland (ts, bar), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Pops Foster (p), Sid Catlett (dm).

Four titles recorded for Decca, but no trombone soli.

The broadcast version of "Confessin'..." is laid out in the same way as the recorded Decca-version. "Wolverine ..." is JCH's last solo from a recording studio with the Louis Armstrong orchestra and one of his best. Pushed forward by the magnificent Sidney Catlett, JCH moves all around his horn, starting out from the top and beating out a series of high G's in bars 9-10 to drop to a low C in bar 12 and then closing up with some of his favorite triplets towards the end. All is done with a maximum of swing and it is a solo from a master of his trade.

IDA COX & HER ALL STAR ORCHESTRA NYC. Dec. 20, 1940

Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Cliff Jackson (p), Billy Taylor (b), Jimmy Hoskins (dm), Ida Cox (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Okeh:

- 29277-1 Last Mile Blues As below. (SM)

| | | |
|---------|------------------------------|--|
| 29277-2 | Last Mile Blues | Obbligato 8 bars. (SM) |
| 29278-1 | I Ain't Gonna Let Nobody BMH | Soli 8, 8 and 2 bars. (M) |
| 29279-1 | I Can't Quit That Man | Intro 4 bars. Solo 8 bars. (SM) |
| 29279-2 | I Can't Quit That Man | As above. (SM) |
| 29279-3 | I Can't Quit That Man | As above. (SM) |
| 29280-1 | You Got To Swing And Sway | Duet with (tp) 8 bars. Solo 16 bars. (FM) |
| 29280-2 | You Got To Swing And Sway | Soli 8 and 16 bars. (FM) |

This Ida Cox session is quite different from the one in October 1939, not so bluesy and more lighthearted. The rhythm section unfortunately suffers from Cliff Jackson who was never the most subtle pianist, but in spite of these obstacles, JCH produces plenty fine music. He plays muted throughout, and his soloing on "I Ain't ..." is especially noteworthy, but his work on "You Got To ..." is also worth praising, especially take 2, and the same goes for take 2 to "Last Mile ..." where his obbligato is quite prominent.

MATINEE JAM SESSION **NYC, Dec. 29, 1940**
Shad Collins (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Lester Young (ts), Sammy Price (p), Harold West (dm).

Broadcast from the Village Vanguard, One fragment of a title has been available, but no JCH. The recording is kept in the archive of the Library of Congress and apparently there were at least two more titles recorded with this group and more titles with groups including Marty Marsala, Max Kaminsky (tp) Rod Cless (cl) Lester Brown (cl,as) Coleman Hawkins (ts) Joe Sullivan, Art Hodes, Pete Johnson (p) Teddy Bunn (g), but they have never surfaced.

HENRY "RED" ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC, Dec. 29, 1940**
Henry "Red" Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb) Edmond Hall (cl), Kenny Kersey (p), Billy Taylor, Sr. (b), Jimmy Hoskins (dm).
WNEW radio broadcast, "Bundles For Britain", one title with JCH:

| | |
|-------------|-------------------|
| K.K. Boogie | Solo 24 bars. (F) |
|-------------|-------------------|

Here, for the first time, Henry "Red" Allen's Café Society Orchestra. JCH's solo has basically the same structure on all recordings of this title, effective and swinging, but without particular musical merits. See the overall comments after the July 22, 1941-session.

MATINEE JAM SESSION **NYC, Jan. 5, 1941**
Frankie Newton, Max Kaminsky (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Pee Wee Russell (cl), Marlowe Morris, Joe Sullivan, Art Hodes (p), Eddie Condon (g), Maizie Johnson (dm), alternatively Johnny Carisi (tp), Stan Facey(p), Jimmy Chaplin (dm), alternatively Dan Burley (p).
Broadcast from the Village Vanguard. Recordings pressed on 16" transcriptions are rumoured to exist, but have never surfaced.

**SIDNEY BECHET
& HIS FEETWARMERS** **NYC. Jan. 8, 1941**
Henry "Red" Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Sidney Bechet (cl, sop), James "Buster" Tolliver (p), Wellman Braud (b), J. C. Heard (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Victor:

| | | |
|---------|---------------------------|---|
| 58776-1 | Coal Black Shine | In ens. Four breaks. Solo 16 bars. (FM) |
| 58777-1 | Egyptian Fantasy | In ens. (SM) |
| 58778-1 | Baby, Won't You Please CH | In ens. Solo 36 bars. (FM) |
| 58779-1 | Slippin' And Slidin' | In ens. Solo 16 + 8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (FM) |

This is the kind of company that JCH thrived in. Henry Allen and Bechet were his equals when it came to throwing musical fireworks, and he throws it right back at them. On "Baby ..." JCH fires off two choruses where he constantly builds up tension and just when you think he has no more to give, he shoots off a D altissimo as an opener to the final 6 bars. "Coal Black ..." is also excellent with four finely crafted breaks during the initial minor part of the theme and a nonsense solo since. On "Slippin' ..." does he seem somewhat absentminded.

MATINEE JAM SESSION**NYC, Jan. 12, 1941**

Dolly Jones Arminra, Frankie Newton (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Joe "Flip" Phillips (cl), Lester Young (ts), Stan Facey, Marlowe Morris (p), Eddie Doughery, Tom Candell (g), Alan Warner (b), Hal "Doc" West, Lou Fromm (dm) and possibly others.

Broadcast from the Village Vanguard. Recordings pressed on 16" transcriptions are rumoured to exist, but have never surfaced.

METRONOME ALL-STAR BAND**NYC, Jan. 16, 1941**

Harry James, Ziggy Elman, Cootie Williams (tp), Tommy Dorsey, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Toots Mondello, Benny Carter (as), Coleman Hawkins, Tex Beneke (ts), Count Basie (p), Charlie Christian (g), Artie Bernstein (b), Buddy Rich (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Victor:

| | | |
|---------|------------------|-------------------|
| 60331-1 | Bugle Call Rag | Solo 16 bars. (F) |
| 60332-1 | One O'Clock Jump | Solo 12 bars. (M) |

You could not accuse JCH of being intimidated by this kind of distinguished company. On the contrary, - he charges on with his usual gusto and leaves a more favourable impression than most of the other stars at the session.

MATINEE JAM SESSION**NYC, Jan. 19, 1941**

Henry Allen, Dolly Jones Arminra (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Benny Carter (as), Earl Hines, Ken Kersey (p). Billy Taylor (b), Jimmy Hoskins (dm) and possibly others.

Broadcast from the Village Vanguard. Recordings pressed on 16" transcriptions are rumoured to exist, but have never surfaced.

HENRY RED ALLEN SEXTET**NYC, Feb. 24, 1941**

Personnel including Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Ken Kersey (p).

Broadcast "Chamber of Lower Basin Street", two titles:

| | |
|--------------|--------------------|
| K. K. Boogie | Solo 24 bars. (F) |
| Blues Hop | Solo 12 bars. (FM) |

Note: The title "Blues Hop" has often been mislabeled "A Sheridan Square".

On "K K. Boogie" JCH plays his standard 24 bar solo (see also the overall comments after the July 22, 1941-session), whereas his solo on "Blues Hop" is refreshingly different and one of his better ones with Red Allen's 1941-sextet.

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC, April 17, 1941**

Henry Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Ken Kersey (p), Billy Taylor (b), Jimmy Hoskins (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, no JCH on 30272 "Sometimes I'm Happy Pt 2" but:

| | | |
|----------|--------------------------|--|
| 30270-bd | K. K. Boogie | Solo 24 bars. (F) |
| 30270-1 | K. K. Boogie | As above. (F) |
| 30270-2 | K. K. Boogie | As above. (F) |
| 30271-1 | Sometimes I'm Happy Pt 1 | Solo 28 bars. (M) |
| 30271-bd | Sometimes I'm Happy Pt 1 | No solo. (M) |
| 30271-2 | Sometimes I'm Happy Pt 1 | As take 1. (M) |
| 30273-bd | Ol' Man River | Solo 6 bars (NC). (FM) |
| 30273-bd | Ol' Man River | No solo. (FM) |
| 30273-1 | Ol' Man River | Obbligato 32 bars. Solo 16 bars. (FM) |
| 30273-bd | Ol' Man River | Obbligato 11 bars. (FM) |
| 30273-2 | Ol' Man River | As take 1. (FM) |

See the overall comments after the July 22, 1941-session.

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC, April 23, 1941**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Kenny Kersey (p), Billy Taylor, Sr. (b), Jimmy Hoskins (dm).

“Café Society” concert in Carnegie Hall. At least one title recorded with JCH:

Digga Digga Doo Solo 32 bars. (FM)

JCH highlights this performance with an energetic solo, particularly inspired in the last 16 bars. During the first of the final eight bars he spits out a series of repeated eights that could almost qualify as early rhythm and blues. Allen’s group also played “K. K. Boogie” and “Ride Red Ride” at this concert, but no recordings have surfaced.

JAM SESSION NYC. NYC. April 23, 1941

Collective personnel: Henry “Red” Allen, Bunny Berigan, Buck Clayton, Max Kaminsky, Henry Levine, Charlie Shavers (tp), Will Bradley, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Buster Bailey, Edmond Hall (cl), Russell Procope, Tab Smith (as), Don Byas Buddy Tate (ts), Albert Ammons, Count Basie, Stanley Facey, Calvin Jackson, Pete Johnson, Kenny Kersey, Billy Kyle, Art Tatum, Buck Washington (p), Eugene Fields, Freddie Green (g), Eddie South (vln), Doles Dickens, John Kirby, Walter Page, Billy Taylor (b), Jim Hoskins, Jo Jones, Ray McKinley, Specs Powell, O’Neil Spencer (dm) collective pers.

Two titles recorded in concert at Carnegie Hall:

Blues Solo 24 bars. (M)

One O’Clock Jump Solo 24 bars. (M)

This is one of those jam sessions that can be incredibly exciting to watch and listen to - if you are there – but sounds noisy and chaotic if you listen to it from your own armchair. Still some fine things do happen and JCH acquits himself commendably on “Blues”. On “One O’Clock ...” he is fighting against the frantic riffing that goes on behind him and he honestly has not got a chance to produce listenable music.

ARTIE SHAW ORCHESTRA NYC. June 26, 1941

Personnel including Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Artie Shaw (cl) Benny Carter (as), Sonny White (p), Jimmy Shirley (g), Billy Taylor (b), Sam Shepherd (dm), 8 (vln), 2 (vla), 2 (cello), 1 (harp), 1 (b).

Four titles were recorded for Victor, two have JCH:

066146-1 Confessin’ 16+8 bars 2/2 with (as),
(tp) on bridge. (SM)

066148-1 Beyond The Blue Horizon Solo 16 bars (M)

“Confessin’” is not shaped in the usual JCH fashion but is an original Artie Shaw-arrangement. Nonetheless it contains a charming duet between JCH and Benny Carter, where JCH mostly acts as a stepping stone for Carter’s elegant improvising. “Beyond ...” is almost straight melody and not particularly noteworthy.

HENRY ALLEN & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. July 22, 1941

Personnel as April 17.

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, no JCH solos on 30897 “Jack The Bellboy” and 30895-01 but:

30894-bd A Sheridan Square Solo 12 bars (SM)

30894-1 A Sheridan Square As above (S)

30894-bd A Sheridan Square No solo (SM)

30894-2 A Sheridan Square As take 1. (SM)

30894-3 A Sheridan Square As take 1. (SM)

30895-1 Siesta At The Fiesta Soli 8 and 8 bars. (M)

30896-1 Indiana Solo 32 bars. (FM)

30896-2 Indiana As above. (FM)

When Henry “Red” Allen left Louis Armstrong’s orchestra, he also stopped playing trumpet in someone else’s band. From then on he was his own leader, and leadership came natural to him as a innovative and daring trumpet player – in the 1960s he was even proclaimed ‘avant garde’ – and as a talented showman JCH was less daring and less talented as a showman and his method of keeping up with Allen was by increasing the element of raw energy in his playing. It worked in the clubs and JCH was at that time one of the most popular and highest paid sidemen in New York City. But “Red” Allen as leader failed to appreciate that

what went over big with a club audience did not necessarily work out the same way in a recording studio, and some of the group's most inspired recordings actually come from live appearances.

"K. K. Boogie" is a case in point. It was arguably the group's possibly most popular number live, but on the studio recording and on airchecks it comes out as frenetic and the highly charged riffing becomes overworked and tedious. JCH's 24 bar soli are almost note for note the same on all versions, studio or live, except the alternative take 2 studio version, where he belts out a hailstorm of fast notes at the beginning of his 2nd chorus that is different and highly effective. In a comment to "Sometimes ..." John Chilton observed that the presentation of the piece was virtually a blueprint for what was to be called "mainstream" jazz some 10 years later and he points to the phrasing of the sparse arrangements and the roles adopted within the unified rhythm section and the way the soli are structured with no attempts to force the pace by including stock 'killer-diller' phrases. In addition to this JCH's solo on "Sometimes ..." is not only his best for these sessions but a very fine solo by any JCH-standard, well conceived with many personal features and well executed. The soli on the two takes are close to identical and surely a solo which he had refined during many live appearances. The title "A Sheridan ..." falls within John Chilton's description as well, but here JCH chooses to play it safe. Except for his surprising octave jump at the opening of his solo, the rest is mostly familiar blues phrases on all takes. On "Ol' Man ..." and "Indiana" JCH is on more conventional ground and his soli on the two complete versions of "Ol' Man ..." and on the two takes of "Indiana" are quite different and all praiseworthy. Finally "Siesta ..." was initially rejected by Okeh and there is should have stayed.

METRONOME ALL-STAR ORCHESTRA **NYC. Dec. 31, 1941**

Harry James, Roy Eldridge, Cootie Williams (tp), J. C. Higginbotham, Lou McGarity (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Toots Mondello, Benny Carter (as), Vido Musso, Tex Beneke (ts), Count Basie (p), Freddie Green (g), Doc Goldberg (b), Gene Krupa (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Columbia:

| | | |
|---------|--------------------|--|
| 32079-1 | Royal Flush | Solo 8 bars (1 st (tb)-solo). (M) |
| 32079-2 | Royal Flush | As above. (M) |
| 32079-3 | Royal Flush | As above. (M) |
| 32080-1 | Dear Old Southland | Solo 16 bars (1 st (tb)-solo). (FM) |
| 32080-2 | Dear Old Southland | As above. (F) |
| 32080-3 | Dear Old Southland | As above. (FM) |

His solo on "Dear Old ..." (in a considerably faster tempo than when JCH used it as a feature in the coming years) is also first class with some quite original twists towards the end. On "Royal ..." the producer's idea is to juxtapose JCH's solo directly against that of the other trombonist, Lou McGarity, and the idea works, but the solo does not have much merit in itself. JCH's soli on the various takes of "Royal..." are practically identical.

METRONOME ALL-STARS LEADERS **NYC. Jan. 16, 1942**

Cootie Williams (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Benny Carter (as), Charlie Barnet (ts), Count Basie (p), Alvino Rey (g), John Kirby (b), Gene Krupa (dm).

One title was recorded for Columbia:

| | | |
|---------|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| 32261-1 | I Got Rhythm | Solo 16+8 bars, (b) on bridge. (FM) |
| 32261-2 | I Got Rhythm | As above. (FM) |
| 32261-3 | I Got Rhythm | As above. (FM) |

Another successful all star date for JCH. He gets most out of the solo space allotted to him on "I Got Rhythm" where he has sufficient time to unfold. The three takes are quite similar, but take 3 seems most settled.

HENRY "RED" ALLEN **LA. March 1943**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp, vo-"Ride ..."), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Don Stovall (as), General Morgan (p), Benny Moten (b), Paul Barbarin (dm), Billie Holiday (vo-"... Light"). The dating cannot be later than March 22, when the transcriptions were dubbed.

AFRS Jubilee No. 17, four titles, although it may not be the Allen band that accompanies Billie Holiday on "Trav'lin' Light" (no JCH on this title), no JCH solo on "Riffin'" but:

| | |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|
| Intro | Break 4 bars. (FM) |
| Ride, Red, Ride | Straight 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F) |

“Ride ...” is merely a showpiece and too fast to create anything of artistic value.

HENRY “RED” ALLEN

LA. March 1943

Henry “Red” Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Don Stovall (as), Barney Bigard (cl-“I Can’t ...”, “Rug ...”), General Morgan (p), Benny Moten (b), Paul Barbarin (dm), Jewel Page (vo-“I Can’t ...”).

AFRS Jubilee No. 22, eight titles, JCH is heard on five:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Intro | Break 4 bars. (FM) |
| Harlem Stomp | In ens. (F) |
| I Can’t Believe That YILWM | Acc. (vo). (FM) |
| I’ve Got The World On A String | In ens. (S) |
| Rug Cutter’s Swing | Solo 32 bars. (F) |

JCH plays a rather curious solo on “Rug...”, holding one single note as a trill over the first 16 bars, while the second part actually comes out quite satisfactorily.

HENRY “RED” ALLEN

Chi. May 5, 1944

Henry “Red” Allen (tp, vo-25186,91), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Don Stovall (as), Al Williams (p), Benny Moten (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for World Transcriptions, four have JCH:

| | | |
|-------|--------------------|---|
| 25185 | The Theme | Soli 32 and 8 bars. (M) |
| 25186 | Ride, Red, Ride | Solo 16 bars. (F). Solo 16 bars. (M) |
| 25189 | Dear Old Southland | Straight 20 bars. (S). Solo 16 bars to coda. (M) |
| 25191 | Get The Mop | Solo 24 bars. (M) |

Chi. Aug. 1, 1944

Personnel as above. Several reference works add Ben Webster to the personnel, but to our ears he is not audible.

Broadcast from the Downbeat Room of Garrick Stage Lounge, five titles, three have JCH:

| | |
|---------------------|--------------------|
| Get The Mop | Solo 36 bars. (FM) |
| Pomona | Solo 32 bars. (F) |
| St. James Infirmary | Solo 16 bars. (SM) |

These 2 sets of recordings are painfully clear examples of the problems we mentioned in the notes to the July 22 1941 session, only by now the standard has deteriorated critically. JCH spent a long and successful period with Henry Red Allen’s sextet at the Garrick Lounge in Chicago during 1942 to 1945. The atmosphere of the club inspired a brash, noisy and uptempo approach that may have worked in a “live” setting, but is a disaster to listen to on recordings. JCH’s answer to the challenge was to adapt a short phrased riffstyle that was a far cry from his earlier musical eloquence. In the process he also lost some of his impressive tone control. That side of his playing is particularly dominant on “The Theme” and on “Ride ...” and all three titles from the Aug. 1 recording, while on “Get ...” from May 5 he plays a well constructed blues solo. Finally this recording of “Dear ...” is his first of what was to become one of his preferred solo features. It has all the trademarks that went into later versions, but is, taken as a whole, not the most convincing version.

J. C. HIGGINBOTHAM

Chi. Sept. 14, 1944

J. C. Higginbotham (tb), General Morgan (p), Jim “Daddy” Walker (g), Benny Moten (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Session:

| | | |
|-----|--------------------|---|
| 186 | Dear Old Southland | Straight 32 bars. (S). Solo 32 bars. (FM) Coda 4 bars. (S) |
| 187 | J. C. Jumps | Straight 36 bars. Solo 60 bars. Straight 36 bars. (M) |
| 188 | Confessin’ | Straight 16 bars. Break 2 bars. Solo 32 bars to coda. (S) |
| 189 | Sporty Joe | Straight 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM) |

The two main features are JCH's ballad presentations, "Dear ..." and "Confessin'". Both are quite successful though later version may be marginally superior. The last 16 bars of JCH's solo on "Dear ..." are especially good and "Confessin'", is quite impressive, despite being a 'set' piece without much improvisation. JCH's soli on the remaining titles, "J. C. ..." and "Sporty ..." are merely riffs heaped upon riffs and best forgotten.

LIL ARMSTRONG & HER ALL STAR BAND **Chi. Jan. 9, 1945**

Jonah Jones (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Al Gibson (cl, bar), Lil Armstrong (p, vo), Sylvester Hickman (b), Baby Dodds (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Black & White:

| | | |
|----|--------------------|---|
| 81 | Little Daddy Blues | Break 2 bars. Solo 24 bars. In ens 12 bars. (SM) |
| 82 | Lady Be Good | Intro 2 bars. Solo 32 bars. In ens 32 bars. (F) |
| 83 | Confessin' | Break 2 bars. Solo 30 bars to coda. (S) |
| 84 | East Town Boogie | Solo 36 bars. (FM) |

From the early 1940s, JCH's playing took a turn towards a rougher riffbased style of playing. However out of all the sessions, he participated in during the later part of his active career, this is arguably the best and most successful. Obviously he is the star of the session, - on "Little Daddy ..." he gets twice as much solo space as the others, and he answers with an excellent blues solo. On "Lady ..." he may not display a lot of musical originality, but he generates colossal swing, and "Confessin' ..." has an advantage in being a mite faster than the September 1944 version. Only on "East ..." JCH falls back into his habit of belting out riff upon riff.

LUCIUS "MUSHMOUTH" ROBINSON **Chi. Jan. 9, 1945**

J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Lil Armstrong (p), Sylvester Hickman (b), Lucius Robinson (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Black & White:

| | | |
|----|------------------------|-------------------------------|
| C5 | Let's Get Some | Acc. (vo). Solo 12 bars. (SM) |
| C6 | Boogie Boo Blues | Acc. (vo). Solo 24 bars. (M) |
| C7 | I'm Hip To These Women | Acc. (vo). (SM) |
| C8 | I Got The Blues | Acc. (vo). (M) |

JCH is obviously stimulated in the unpretentious atmosphere of this session, and he does not allow himself to be handicapped by the very limited vocalising talent of Lucius Robinson. Despite the limitations of the singer and the otherwise uninspired accompaniment, JCH keeps the blues flame burning through the entire session and produces excellent backing and a remarkable blues chorus on "Let's Get t..." His solo on "Boogie ..." is also fine, but more conventional.

ESQUIRE ALL STARS **New Orleans, Jan. 17, 1945**

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo), Bunk Johnson (tp-"Basin ..."), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Sidney Bechet (cl, sop), James P. Johnson (p), Richard Alexis (b), Paul Barbarin (dm), Glenn Riggs (mc).

Six titles were recorded live at The Municipal Auditorium, four issued, no JCH on "Basin Street Blues" (note: "Basin ..." is incomplete (see comments below). "Perdido Street Blues" from this concert was seemingly issued on Sunbeam SB219. However this is an error because "Back O' Town Blues" was announced as "Perdido Street Blues" by the mc.) but::

| | |
|--------------------|---|
| Confessin' | Break 2 bars. Break to solo 6 bars. (SM) |
| Dear Old Southland | Straight 20 bars. (S). Solo 16 bars to coda. (M) |
| Back O'Town Blues | Prominent in ens/acc. (SM) |

Taken as a whole, this is a good deal above the average JCH output from this period. "Confessin'" is a merger between the Armstrong's and JCH's established versions and it works quite well. "Dear Old ..." is tighter and more focused compared to other JCH versions which is a clear improvement. On "Back O'Town ..." he embellishes the ensemble and vocal backing with some gorgeous blues phrases. Finally on "Basin ..." JCH begins a solo, but is hushed after just one roaring bar of playing.

HOT LIPS PAGE**NYC. ca. Oct./Nov. 1945**

Collective personnel including: Hot Lips Page (tp, vo), Buck Clayton, unknown (tp), Sandy Williams, Benny Morton, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Earl Bostic, unknown (as), Don Byas, Ben Webster (ts), Rufus Webster (p), unknown (el-g), (b), Buford Oliver (dm).

We have general reservations about the usually quoted personnel for this date. It does not make sense to hire some of the greatest soloists in jazz and distribute the solos so measly. We think that not all the musicians named were present on all the recordings, so the recordings could have been made over more than one session, (Red Allen's group with JCH was in California until mid October 1945). Seven titles were recorded for Continental, four have trombone soli, Benny Morton on "Corsicana" and "Race Horse Mama", Sandy Williams on "Sunset Blues" but:

W3403 Florida Blues Solo 24 bars. (FM)

A muscular blues solo without particular merits.

J. C. HIGGINBOTHAM's BIG EIGHT**NYC. Dec. 21, 1945**

Sidney De Paris (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Tab Smith (as), Cecil Scott (ts), Jimmy Jones (p), Brick Fleagle (g), Billy Taylor (b), Dave Tough (dm).

Two titles were recorded for HRS:

1014 Dutch Treat Solo 16 bars. (M)

1015 A Penny For Your Blues Solo 24 bars. (SM)

There are several good moments in JCH's two choruses on "A Penny ..." including fresh ideas and execution with good rhythmic feeling. On the other hand his "Dutch ..." solo is made up of mainly riff phrases.

HENRY "RED" ALLEN**NYC. Jan. 14, 1946**

Henry "Red" Allen (tp, vo-1561-63), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Don Stovall (as), Bill Thompson (p), Benny Moten (b), Alvin Burroughs (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

1560-1 The Crawl Solo 32 bars. (FM)

1561-1 Buzz Me Obbligato 20 bars. (SM)

1562-1 Drink Hearty Solo 8 bars. (SM)

1563-1 Get The Mop Solo 24 bars. (F)

We do not deny that these titles were obviously very popular at the time, but the musical quality of the material is painfully poor and that reflects on the soloing. Our comments to the Allen-recordings in 1944 are as valid with regard to these recordings. Without being anything remarkable, JCH's best effort is his solo on "The Crawl".

METRONOME ALL STARS**NYC. Jan. 15, 1946**

Harry "Sweets" Edison, Pete Candoli, Neal Hefti, Sonny Berman (tp), Tommy Dorsey, Bill Harris, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Buddy DeFranco (cl), Johnny Hodges, Herbie Fields (as), Flip Phillips, Georgie Auld (ts), Harry Carney (bar), Red Norvo (vib), Teddy Wilson (p), Tiny Grimes, Billy Bauer (g), Chubby Jackson (b), Dave Tough (dm), Duke Ellington (arr, cond).

Two titles were recorded for Victor, no JCH on 5026-1 "Look Out" but:

5027-2 Metronome All Out Straight intro and coda. (S)

JCH's contribution is effective as part of the arrangement, but not noteworthy as an improvisation.

HENRY "RED" ALLEN**NYC. Jan. 28, 1946**

Personnel as Jan. 14 with Johni Weaver, Harry Turner (dancing). Henry Allen (vo-17,18,21).

Soundies, five titles:

17M2 Drink Hearty Solo 8 bars. (SM)

18M4 Mop (Get The Mop) Solo 24 bars. (FM)

19M2 Crawl, Red, Crawl Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. (M)

20M3 Count Me Out Soli 32 and 4 bars. (F)

21M5 House of 52nd Street Solo 16 bars. (M)

Comments here are the same as for the January 14 session. Only on “Crawl, Red, ...” does JCH come up with a solo that matches what we could reasonably expect from him. The other titles are just useless riffing.

PETE JOHNSON’S HOUSE WARMING **NYC. Jan. 31, 1946**

Collective personnel: Hot Lips Page (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Albert Nicholas (cl), Ben Webster (ts), Pete Johnson (p), Jimmy Shirley (g), Al Hall (b), J. C. Heard (dm).

Two titles were recorded for National (many other titles without JCH):

- | | | |
|-----|----------------------------|---|
| 112 | J. C. From K. C. | Soli 48 and 36 bars to coda. (FM) |
| 113 | Pete’s House Warming Blues | Intro 2 bars. Solo 32 bars. In ens. Solo 8 bars. (F) |

From a JCH perspective, this session is best forgotten.

JAM SESSION **NYC, April 28 1946**

Henry Allen (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Earl Bostic (as,) Dexter Gordon (ts), Stuff Smith (vln), Deryck Sampson (p), Junior Raglin (b), Sidney Catlett (dm).

This session is reported by Franz Hoffmann and Anthony Barnett, but recordings, unknown titles, have never surfaced.

HENRY “RED” ALLEN **NYC. July 16, 1946**

Henry “Red” Allen (tp, vo-2501,02), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Don Stovall (as), Bill Thompson (p), Benny Moten (b), Eddie “The Mole” Bourne (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Victor:

- | | | |
|--------|-----------------------|-------------------------------|
| 2262-1 | Count Me Out | Soli 32 and 2 bars. (F) |
| 2500-1 | Check Up | Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
| 2501-1 | If It’s Love You Want | Obbligato 16 and 8 bars. (SM) |
| 2502-1 | Let Me Miss You | Solo 12 bars. (SM) |

The redeeming piece here is JCH’s blues solo on “Let Me Miss ...”. His obligato on “If It’s Love ...” is too far in the background to merit any analysis, and his soli on “Count ...” and “Check Up” are senseless displays of banal riffs and best quickly forgotten.

WNEW SATURDAY NIGHT SWING SESSION **NYC. March 8, 1947**

Collective personnel: Henry “Red” Allen (tp, vo), J. C. Higginbotham (tb, vo), Buster Bailey (cl, vo), Johnny Guarnieri (p, vo), possibly Earl Hines (p, vo), Roy Ross (acc), unknown (b), possibly Phil Kraus (dm), Art Ford (narr).

WNEW broadcast, three titles with JCH:

- | | |
|-------------------------|---|
| Confessin’ | Straight 30 bars. (S) to break 2 bars. Solo 12 bars to coda. (M) |
| On The Sunny Side Of TS | Straight 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
| Indiana | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M) |

This broadcast is rather painful for someone who has come to love and admire the trombone playing of JCH. Gone is the bubbling imagination and masterful tone control and you can add a measure of disorganized chaos. On “Confessin’” JCH continues as he always did in ballad tempo into the second chorus, while the rhythm section doubles up and it takes about a quarter of the second chorus before they find each other. The shrill and unswinging accordeon of Roy Ross does nothing to enhance the two quintet recordings. “Indiana” being the best title is a typical jam session piece. You would probably have a ball if you were there personally, but when only listening to a sound recording, it is all rather predictable.

HENRY “RED” ALLEN **NYC. prob. early Aug. 1947**

Collective personnel as July 16, 1946.

Four titles were recorded for Apollo (a fifth title without JCH):

- | | | |
|-------|--------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| R1292 | Mr. Wamp Walks | Solo 24 bars. (M) |
| R1293 | Old Folks, Do You Know Me Now? | Solo 16 bars. (SM) |
| R1294 | Bill’s Down Beat | Solo 16 bars. (M) |
| R1295 | My Alcoholic Baby | Straight 32+8 bars. Solo 8 bars. (SM) |

To end on a happier note, this is a very nice smallband session. Nothing surprising, but musicmaking of fine quality and even humorous. It is particularly

satisfying to hear JCH sparkling with the power reminiscent of his heyday on “Old ...” and “Bill’s ...” . On “My Alcoholic ...”, which of course is “My Melancholy Baby”, he plays the theme before and after Henry Allen’s vocal with exaggerated vibrato and a lovely sense of humour, but he comes back soloing with vengeance on the final 8 bars.

For next 8 years JCH faded from the spotlight and lived and played mostly in places like Boston and Cleveland without leaving a single recorded sound. So until recordings from that period turn up, the solography will stop at this point.

Late history:

During the late 1940s and early 1950s worked mainly in Boston, occasionally led own band, also featured with Joe Thomas, Rex Stewart, etc. Worked in Cleveland and Boston in 1955, then from 1956 began regular appearances at Central Plaza, New York, soon moved into The Metropole and worked there on and off throughout the late 1950s (including several stints with Henry Allen). Took part in Fletcher Henderson Re-union in 1957, also did extensive free-lance recordings, to Europe with Sam Price in October 1958 (sharing trombone duties with Elmer Crumley). During the 1960s regularly led own band, various residencies in New York including Freedomland, Room at the Bottom, The Purple Onion, etc., also played many ‘gigs’ with trumpeter Joe Thomas. Was featured at Newport Jazz Festival in 1963; also played in Scandinavia. In December 1966 he briefly returned to his home town in Atlanta to record in the late 1960s.

Total: 177 sessions, last in 1970.

APPENDIX

J. C. Johnson And His Five Hot Sparks Long Island City, c. February 1929

Walter Bennett (cnt), possibly J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Darnell Howard (cl, as), Mabel Horsey (p), Ikey Robinson (bj).

Two titles recorded for QRS:

- | | | |
|-----|-------------------|--|
| 347 | Crying For You | Solo 14 bars (SM) |
| 348 | Red Hot Hottentot | 3 breaks of 1 bar, duet with (as) 16 bars (FM) |

See discussion in Storyville 23 p. 184-87. John R. T. Davies and Laurie Wright think that the trombone player sounds like somebody who does not play very often. We feel certain that the trombone player is not JCH, and K.B. Rau has sent additional material that firmly supports that feeling. Note that Ikey Robinson did not go to New York before Feb. 1930 with Sammie Stewart.

Jungle Town Stompers New York April 15, 1929

Louis Metcalf (tp), possibly J. C. Higginbotham or Henry Hicks (tb), Charlie Holmes (cl, as), Charlie Grimes (ts), Luis Russell (p, cel), Elmer Snowden (bj), Henry “Bass” Edwards (tu, perc, effects-98), Kaiser Marshall (dm-98).

Two titles recorded for Okeh:

- | | | |
|----------|------------------|-------------------|
| 401797-C | African Jungle | Solo 16 bars (M) |
| 401798-B | Slow As Molasses | Solo 13 bars (SM) |

Luis Russell identified the trombone as Higginbotham in interview with Walter C. Allen and the tuba as Bass Moore or Lawson Buford (Storyville 146 p. 46). Ole “Fessor” Lindgreen and Mogens Thorborg agreed upon hearing both titles that it is not Higginbotham.

Fats Waller & His Buddies NYC. Dec. 18, 1929

Henry Allen, Leonard Davis (tp) Jack Teagarden (tb, vib), unknown (tb) Albert Nicholas (cl, as) Charlie Holmes (as) Larry Binyon (ts) Fats Waller (p) Will Johnson (g) Pops Foster (b) Kaiser Marshall (dm) Orlando Robertson (vo). Four titles were recorded for Victor, two have trombone soli:

- | | | |
|---------|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| 57928-1 | Won’t You Get Off It, Please? | Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
|---------|-------------------------------|--------------------|

The instrumentation of these recordings is given in the Victor files and the above personnel with JCH in place as 2nd trombone was provided by Larry Binyon. The

solo on “Ridin’ But Walkin’” is by Teagarden, but the one on “Won’t You ...” has been attributed to JCH. However we have serious doubts. It is a competent solo, but it lacks all JCH’s characteristics. The trombone heard in the ensemble of the title “Lookin’ For Another Sweetie” does not sound like him either. Elsewhere Charlie Green has been suggested as 2nd tb and that is certainly a possibility.

Henry “Red” Allen New York

July 15, 1930

Henry “Red” Allen (tp, vo), Otis Johnson (tp), Jimmy Archey (tb), J. C. Higginbotham (tb-62345) possibly replacing Archey, Albert Nicholas (cl, as), Charlie Holmes (sop, as), Greely Walton (ts), Luis Russell (p, arr), Will Johnson (bjo, g) Pops Foster (b), Ernest “Bass” Hill (tu), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Four titles recorded for Victor, no trombone solo on 62346-1&2 “I Fell In Love With You”, certainly Jimmy Archey on 62343-2 “Roamin’” and 62344-1&2 “Singin’ Pretty Songs” but:

62345-2 Patrol Wagon Blues

Solo 11 bars. (SM)

JCH was still a member of the Luis Russell orchestra at this time and has been suggested as the trombone soloist on “Patrol Wagon ...”. We think it is Jimmy Archey on all the titles from this session.

Vance Dixon And His Pencils

New York, June 12, 1931

Vance Dixon (cl, as, vo) acc. by (tp), (tb), (p), (bj), (tu), Papa Too Sweet (vo). J.C. Higginbotham (tb) has been suggested.

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, 151600-2 “Hot Peanuts”, 151601-1 “Meat Man Pete”, 151602-1 “Laughing Stomp” and 151603-1 “Who Stole The Lock?”.

Where did the suggestion that JCH plays trombone on this session come from? Aurally there is absolutely nothing to support the theory. This trombonist does not have a fraction of the creativity and technical facility that JCH had in 1931.

Soundtrack to “Emperor Jones”

Aug.-Sept. 1933

JCH stayed with Fletcher Henderson’s orchestra into 1933, although he is not on the two sideman-sessions under the combined leadership of Henry Allen and Coleman Hawkins on March 27 and July 21. The precise timing of his departure has theoretical interest because it decides if JCH could have been in the contingent of Henderson’s band that participated in the filming of the Paul Robeson picture “Emperor Jones” in August/September 1933. An educated guess would be that JCH left Henderson just before the Henderson recording session in New York on August 18 and the band’s subsequent tour to New England that began on the same day and that he is therefore probably not on the soundtrack to “Emperor Jones”. However it is only a theoretical issue because there is no trombone playing to be heard in the three short instrumental pieces in the film (Unknown title/Casa Loma Stomp/Unknown title).

Chick Bullock

New York, April 19, 1934

Chick Bullock (vo) acc. by Wardell Jones, Shelton Hemphill, Ed Anderson (tp) or Eddie Mallory (tp) J. C. Higginbotham, George Washington (tb) Crawford Wethington (as, bar), Gene Mikell (cl, as) Joe Garland (cl, ts, bar), Edgar Hayes (p, arr), Benny James (bjo, g), Hayes Alvis (tu, b), O’Neil Spencer (dm).

Two titles, 15084-1 “Frankie And Johnny” and 15085-1 “I Can’t Dance”, were recorded for Columbia.

This personel is from Tom Lord, but it is normally believed that JCH did not join Mills Blue Rhythm Band until later, which makes his presence on these recordings quite doubtful. Storyville 109 attributes the trombone solos to George Washington. JCH did most probably not join the Mills Blue Rhythm Band before Dec 1934 at the earliest. Franz Hoffman thinks that JCH did not join until Jan-Feb. 1935.

Fletcher Henderson & his orchestra

late 1936 to mid 1937

The following broadcast probably does not include Higginbotham.

Sugarfoot stomp (NC)

Solo not JCH. (FM)

Louis Armstrong & His Orchestra

early Jan. 1937

The following Armstrong broadcasts do almost certainly not include Higginbotham, because he joined Fletcher Henderson in December 1936 and left him in April 1937 and the Henderson orchestra spent the time up till February 1937 touring away from New York (Walter C. Allen p. 340 & 346) – unless they are dated late March-Early April 1937 as suggested by Franz Hoffmann (p. 48). However on p. 240 in his Red Allen-biography he assumes that the first show is



no later than late 1936 whereas he (p. 241a) believes that the second show is from late March/early April 1937.

Louis Armstrong (tp, vo), Henry "Red" Allen, Louis Bacon, Russell Smith (tp), Snub Mosely (tb), probably not J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Henry Jones, Charlie Holmes (as), Bingie Madison, Greely Walton (ts), Luis Russell (p), Lee Blair (g), Pops Foster (b), Paul Barbarin (dm).

Pre-recorded radio show "Norge Program #21", 753700-A:

The Song Is Ended (brief program theme)
 When It's Sleepy Time Down South (brief theme)
 St. Louis Blues
 Skeleton In The Closet (vo-LA)

Same with Tess Gardella [aka Aunt Jemina] (vcl) added. Her tracks are accompanied by the Armstrong orchestra without Armstrong.
 Pre-recorded radio show "Norge Program #34", 753969-A:

| | |
|--|------------|
| The Song Is Ended (brief program theme) | (unissued) |
| When It's Sleepy Time Down South (brief theme) | |
| Dinah | |
| Hallelujah, Things Look Rosy Now (vo-TG) | (unissued) |
| Can't Help Lovin' That Man (vo-TG) | - |
| Swing That Music (la vcl) | |

More details about show # 34 from John Newton in IAJRC Journal vol. 32 no. 4 (Fall 1999) p. 57.

