

The
TRUMPET
of
HOWARD MCGHEE
“MAGGIE”

Solographer: Jan Evensmo
Last update: Aug. 26, 2019

Born: Tulsa, Oklahoma, March 6, 1918
Died: NYC. July 17, 1987

Introduction:

In the old days of Oslo Jazz Circle, bebop was also a highly appreciated art form, and Howard McGhee was recognized as a great trumpet artist from the very beginning.

History:

Played clarinet and tenor saxophone before taking up trumpet in 1935. After working with territory bands in the Mid- and Northwest in the late 1930s, he joined Lionel Hampton (1941), then played as a principal soloist with Andy Kirk (1941-42), for whom he also provided compositions and arrangements. In 1942 he participated in jam sessions at Minton's Playhouse and Monroe's Uptown House which contributed to the emergence of the bop style. After playing with Charlie Barnet (1942-43), Andy Kirk (1943-44), Georgie Auld (1944), and briefly with Count Basie, he went with Coleman Hawkins to Los Angeles (1945). Remained in California for two years. In 1947 he joined the JATP touring group, and thereafter toured frequently and recorded prolifically as the leader of his own groups. By the end of the decade he was one of the most highly regarded musicians in the bop movement; he was named "best trumpeter" by Down Beat in 1949. During most of the 1950s he was relatively inactive, but after 1960 he performed frequently; he formed a big band in the mid-1960s, and participated in jazz services at St. Peter's Lutheran church in New York (ref. The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz).

Message:

The first part of the solography treating HMG's work with the Andy Kirk orchestra, partly together with Fats Navarro, is heavily dependent upon the research and magnificent book: Leif Bo Petersen (LPB) & Theo Rehak: "The Music And Life Of Theodore "Fats" Navarro" (Scarecrow Press 2009), ISBN 978-0-8108-6721-5. You cannot find a better researched book on a jazz artist, buy it right away, and read it and follow the note examples, while you are playing the music, great fun!!

HOWARD MCGHEE SOLOGRAPHY

ANDY KIRK & HIS CLOUDS OF JOY**NYC. July 14, 1942**

Howard McGhee (tp, arr), Johnny Burris, Harry Lawson (tp), Ted Donnelly, Milton Robinson (tb), John Harrington (cl, as), Ben Smith (as), Al Sears (ts), Ken Kersey (p), Floyd Smith (g), Booker Collins (b), Ben Thigpen (dm), June Richmond (vo), Andy Kirk (dir).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has HMG:

71053-A McGhee Special Feature number for HMG. (M)

NYC. July 29, 1942

Same. Four titles, one has HMG:

71241-A Hip Hip Hooray Solo 16 bars. (M)

It might seem strange that an unknown artist's opening work on his first recording session should give him a feature number like "McGhee Special", but HMG was already 24 years old, had been around for awhile, and was already recognized as a promising trumpeter in the new developing style. The number is obviously well rehearsed, and thus, although with the necessary qualities, perhaps not quite as exciting as might be expected. More interesting is his proper improvised solo on "... Hooray", exactly what might be expected, swingbased solo with modern phrasing, similar to what Dizzy did a few years earlier, and with some slight problems in the first four bars.

Note: HMG was on and off with Andy Kirk in 1942/43. There are several AFRS programs, not all available, not even existing anymore, and no HMG solo has been found so far.

CHARLIE BARNET & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. June 2, 1943**

Peanuts Holland, Howard McGhee, Al Killian, Paul Cohen (tp), Bob Swift, Eddie Bert, Trummy Young, Ed Fromm (tb), Steve Cole, George Siravo (as), Kurt Bloom, Mike Goldberg (ts), Charlie Barnet (ts, ldr), Danny Bank (bar), Ralph Burns (p), Turk Van Lake (g), Chubby Jackson (b), Lou Fromm (dm).

Columbia soundie "Jam Session", HMG appears on the soundtrack (not on the film shooting, which only had white musicians ...):

Cherokee / Redskin Rhumba Solo with orch/(ts) 40 bars. (FM)

Quite a trumpet section! This item is brought to my attention through LBP, and the colourful trumpet soloing ending up in the sky must be HMG!

ANDY KIRK & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Dec. 3, 1943**

Harry Lawson, Art Capehart, Fats Navarro, Howard McGhee (tp), Taswell Baird, Wayman Richardson, Bob Murray (tb), Ben Smith, Reuben Phillips (as), John Harrington, Jimmy Forrest, J. D. King (ts), Ed Loving (bar), John Young (p), Booker Collins (b), Ben Thigpen (dm), June Richmond (vo), Andy Kirk (dir).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, three have trumpet soli but by FN (ref. LBP).

ANDY KIRK & HIS ORCHESTRA**1944**

Personnels are same/similar to Dec. 3, 1943.

Various programs, the following have found to have soli by HMG:

Wilmington, Del., before Jan. 7, 1944

NBC Blue Network broadcast: Coca-Cola Victory Parade of Spotlight Bands #407 from Newcastle Army Air Base, sent Jan. 7, two titles may have HMG:

Wednesday Night Hop Possibly solo 16+8 bars,
(orch) on bridge. (FM)

Ridin' Along Possibly solo 16+8 bars,
(tb) on bridge. (F)

Wilmington, Del., before Feb. 21, 1944

AFRS Yank Swing Session #34 from Newcastle Army Base, sent Feb. 28, one title has HMG:

McGhee Special Feature number for HMG. (M)

unknown date

AFRS GI Jive #618, one title has HMG:

Paradise Valley Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Hollywood, Feb. 21, 1944

AFRS Jubilee #66, three titles may have HMG:

Ridin' Along	Solo 16+8 bars, (tb) on bridge. (F)
Paradise Valley	Possibly 16 bars. (FM)
One O'Clock Jump (NC)	24 bars 4/4 with (tp-FN). (FM)

Hollywood, Feb. 28, 1944

AFRS Jubilee #67, four titles have HMG:

Wednesday Night Hop	Possibly solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. Solo 16+8 bars, (ts) on bridge. (FM)
McGhee Special	Feature number for HMG. (M)
Peepin' Through The Keyhole	Solo 24 bars. (M)
One O'Clock Jump (NC)	Identical to #66. (FM)

Hollywood, March 6, 1944

AFRS Jubilee #68, two titles have HMG:

New Orleans Jump	Possibly soli 4, 4 and 8 bars. (FM)
One O'Clock Jump (NC)	19 bars 4/4 with (tp-FN) (NC). (FM)

NYC. June 7, 1944

WMCA broadcast from Apollo Theatre, one title has HMG:

Paradise Valley	Possibly 16 bars. (FM)
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HMG's music is not that easy to research. He did not work continuously with the band but came in and out. The music are mostly AFRS programs hard to find and sometimes with less than acceptable sound. Finally he shared the trumpet section with an other trumpet giant, Fats Navarro, whose style had close similarities. Thus any conclusions are hard to give, except that the programs above give another element to the history of modern jazz development and bebop trumpet in particular. There are some convincing HMG examples like two additional "McGhee special". There are two highly exciting "One O'Clock ..."s with Maggie and Fats taking 4/4s, wow!! There are also some speculations on the relation between the two of them, and how that in general was solved when distributing solo space. LBP argues strongly that they in several cases shared it, like in "Paradise ..." and "Wednesday ...". Since I (JE) cannot with certainty support all the suggestions, I have decided simply to state 'possibly' in these cases. I am sure we can debate this later and have other opinions.

CHUBBY JACKSON'S SEPTET**NYC. Jan. 10, 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Bill Harris (tb), Flip Phillips (ts), Ralph Burns (p), Billy Bauer (g-76), Chubby Jackson (b), Dave Tough (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Keynote:

HL76	Northwest Passage	Solo 32 bars. (F)
HL77	Crying Sands	Solo 8 bars. (S)

HMG has now entered the bebop era, recording with members of the Woody Herman's First Herd. Too bad they only had time for two titles, because these are highly noteworthy in their tempo extremes. The trumpet soloing is excellent both in the very fast "... Passage" and a moving and quite slow "... Sands".

COLEMAN HAWKINS & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Jan. 11, 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Eddie Robinson (b), Denzil Best (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Asch (HMG not present in the sixth title 795 "Leave My Heart Alone"):

790	Sportman's Hop	Solo 16 bars. (M)
791	Bean Stalking	Solo 32 bars. (F)
792	Ready For Love	Solo/straight 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. (SM)
793	Ladies Lullaby	Solo 32 bars. (M)
794	Night Ramble	Solo 4 bars. (M)

I remember I was not too fond of this session when I played it with focus on Hawk, but here and now, it seems different. The two horns seem to work very well together, the tenorsax exploring new dimensions inspired by a young bebop trumpeter with roots in the tradition. Fine trumpet playing on "... Hop", "... Stalking" and "... Lullaby".

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC **LA. Feb. 12, 1945**

Personnel including Howard McGhee (tp), Billie Holiday (vo).

Two titles were recorded at the Philharmonic Auditorium, no HMG on "Strange Fruit" but:

Body And Soul Weak obligato parts. (S)

same date

Howard McGhee, Joe Guy (tp), Willie Smith (as), Illinois Jacquet, Charlie Ventura (ts), Garland Finney (p), Ulysses Livingston (g), Red Callender (b), Gene Krupa (dm).

Two titles:

Lady Be Good Solo 64 bars (1st (tp)-solo). (FM)

How High The Moon Solo 64 bars (2nd (tp)-solo). (M)

The first JATP concert was on July 2, 1944, but now it is HMG's turn to join the show. The rhythm backing is heavy and the items somewhat sluggish but nevertheless many good soli. HMG manages pretty well on both items, and this is also a rare opportunity to compare him to Joe Guy, another of the aspiring modern trumpeters, the judgement is yours.

COLEMAN HAWKINS & HIS ORCHESTRA **LA. Feb. 23, 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Allen Reuss (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Denzil Best (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Capitol, no HMG solo on 576 "Stuff" but:

573 April In Paris Solo 20 bars. (SM)

574 Riff tide Solo 32 bars. (FM)

575 Stardust Solo 16 bars. (M)

The Capitol sessions seem to work better than the previous one on Asch, in my opinion due to the presence of an active guitar giving better dynamics. The music can be characterized as a modernized swing, and cooperation with Hawk is perfect. The claim that HMG was influenced by Roy Eldridge is not without basis, as evident in the fast "Riff tide" (alias "Lady Be Good"). He takes a beautiful solo on "... Paris", as well as taking the opening verse of "Stardust", lovely! His trumpet contributions here establishes him firmly as one of the most noteworthy of the young talents appearing, although he is already an 'old man' of 27 years.

COLEMAN HAWKINS & HIS ORCHESTRA **LA. Feb./March 1945**

Same. Film soundtrack, two titles: "The Crimson Canary":

Hollywood Stampede Solo 32 bars. (F)

0:36 Riff tide (NC) In ens behind talking. (FM)

LA. Feb. March 1945

Same. AFRS Jubilee #122 & #218, one title (HMG not on "Body And Soul"):

Mop Mop Solo 32 bars. (F)

Great trumpet playing in fast tempi here, particularly fast on "... Stampede" but not too good sound. The cooperation with Coleman Hawkins turned out to be very successful.

CHARLIE VENTURA SEXTET **LA. March 1, 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Charlie Ventura (ts), Arnold Ross (p), Dave Barbour (g), Artie Shapiro (b), Nick Fatool (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Sunset (a fourth title, "I Surrender Dear" without HMG):

106 Ghost Of A Chance Solo 8 bars. (S)

106-2 Ghost Of A Chance As above. (S)

107-3 Tea For Two Intro 4 bars. Soli 32 and 4 bars. (FM)

107-6 Tea For Two As above. (FM)

108-2 C. V. Jump Solo 24 bars. (M)

A nice and swinging session with excellent rhythm backing. HMG takes two fine blues choruses on "... Jump" (do I hear a slightly misplaced note in bar 19?). On "Tea ..." he splits the intro with tenorsax and then presents the song all by himself in an improvised mode, with the necessary differences in the two takes, great! "Ghost ..." is mostly Ventura, but HMG gets 8 bars, and here the two takes are very, very different.

COLEMAN HAWKINS & HIS ORCHESTRA **LA. March 2, 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Allen Reuss (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Denzil Best (dm).

One title was recorded for Capitol (586 "I'm Through With Love", 587 "What Is There To Say?" and 588 "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams" without HMG):

585 Hollywood Stampede Solo 32 bars. (FM)

LA. March 9, 1945

Howard McGhee (tp), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Allen Reuss (g), John Simmons (b), Denzil Best (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Capitol (HMG not present on 596 "It's The Talk Of The Town"):

593 Too Much Of A Good Thing Solo 16 bars. (M)

594 Bean Soup Solo 32 bars. (M)

595 Someone To Watch Over Me Solo 8 bars. (S)

Only a few weeks have passed and then another great Capitol session! Although HMG is soloing on only half of the items, he certainly makes himself highly noted in lovely swinging items like "... Stampede" (alias "Sweet Georgia Brown"), "... Thing" (alias "Fine And Dandy") and "... Soup" (alias "Tea For Two"), concluding with memorable 8 bars in slow tempo on "... Watch ...", great!

HOWARD MCGHEE AND HIS COMBO **Hollywood, May 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Teddy Edwards (ts), Vernon Biddle (p), Stanley Morgan (g), Charles Mingus (b), Nat "Monk" McFay (dm).

One title was recorded for Modern Music:

JM2 Deep Meditation Solo 8 bars (mute). (S)

The dates for HMG's West Coast recordings are very inexact, but discos has this one as the first one. If so, it is a very modest beginning with the tenorsax taking most of the solo space; a nice brief muted trumpet solo can be noted though.

HOWARD MCGHEE AND HIS BAND **Hollywood, May 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Teddy Edwards, James King (ts), Vernon Biddle (p), Bob Kesterton (b), Roy Porter (dm). Date may possibly be Sept..

Four titles were recorded for Philo:

van200 Intersection Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. Straight. (M)

van201 Life Stream Soli 8, 16 and 8 bars to coda. (S)

van202 Mop-Mop Soli 64 and 8 bars. (F)

van203 Stardust Solo 16+28 bars to long coda. (S)

The bebop of the West Coast is pretty rough, but if you can adapt to the frantic atmosphere, there is lots of fine jazz music to be heard. Take "Mop-Mop" as a good example with HMG in his most colourful mood. "Intersection" is less exciting. Possibly then "Stardust" will come as a nice surprise, because HMG here teaches us a lesson; his strong and beautiful solo feature is something quite out of the ordinary. And as if this is not enough, the moving and original "... Stream" also has some remarkable trumpet playing in slow tempo. HMG has certainly by now established himself as one of the greatest modern trumpeters, challenged only by Dizzy Gillespie and Fats Navarro.

WYNONIE "MR. BLUES" HARRIS **LA. June/July 1945**
ACC. BY JOHNNY OTIS' ALL STARS

Howard McGhee (tp), Teddy Edwards (ts), Lee Jones (p), Stan Morgan (g), Robert Kesterton (b), Johnny Otis (dm), Wynonie Harris (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Aladdin (HMG not present on "Around The Clock Blues Part 1 & 2"):

Cock-A-Doodle-Oo Solo 24 bars. Obbligato 48 bars. (SM)

Yonder Goes My Baby Obbligato 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. (SM)

Typical HMG on these two titles, soft and pleasant soloing both on “Cock ...” and “... My Baby” and active bebop background playing, highly noteworthy!

SLIM GAILLARD AND HIS BOOGIEREENERS **LA. ca. Sept. 1945**

Possibly Howard McGhee (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), unknown (as), Fletcher Smith (p), Slim Gaillard (g, vo), Bam Brown (b), Leo Watson (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Queen, no trumpet solo on 5009 “Please Wait For Me” but:

5008 Vout Oreenee Solo 8 bars. (SM)

An excellent bebop trumpet solo here, but can we be quite sure it is HMG?

SLIM GAILLARD AND HIS BOOGIEREENERS **LA. ca. Sept. 1945**

Howard McGhee, Karl George (tp), Lucky Thompson, Teddy Edwards, Wild Bill Moore (ts), Fletcher Smith (p), Slim Gaillard (g, vo), Bam Brown (b), Leo Watson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for King, 5015 “Harlem Hunch” and 5017 “Travellin’ Blues” seem to have KG only but:

5014 Slim Gaillard’s Boogie Solo 24 bars (2nd (tp)-solo). (M)

5016 Tutti-Frutti Solo 16 bars. Obligato parts. (M)

Lots of trumpet on this session, but it seems that Karl George is as much featured as HMG. Would like to have your comments on this issue.

HOWARD MCGHEE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **Hollywood, Sept. 4, 1945**

Personnel as May 1945 plus Snooky Young, Karl George (tp), Vic Dickenson, Gene Roland (tb), Robert Isabell, Gene Porter (as, bar).

Three titles were recorded for Modern:

McGhee Special Feature number for HMG. (M)

Cool Fantasy Part 1 / McGhee Jumps Solo 18 bars. (M)

Cool Fantasy Part 2 Solo with ens 12 bars.
With ens to coda. (M)

Good sides these, although “... Special” maybe is not that exciting, having an element of routine. The swinging “... Jumps” is the highlight.

WILLIE SMITH **Hollywood, Nov. 12, 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Willie Smith (as), Lucky Thompson (ts), Arnold Ross (p), Eddie Safranski (b), Lee Young (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Sunset:

127-14 I Found A New Baby Solo 16+6 bars, (p) on bridge. (FM)

127-16 I Found A New Baby As above. (FM)

127-? I Found A New Baby As above? (FM)

132-7 Windjammer Solo with ens 16+8 bars (mute),
(ts) on bridge. (FM)

133-3 Skylark Solo 6 bars. (S)

134/135 Experiment Perilous /
Lover Come Back To Me Solo ca. 24 bars. (FM)
Solo 64 bars (mute).
Solo 64 bars (open). (F)

Now, this is really something!! Particularly nine minutes of “Lover ...” is utterly exciting (note Ross’ piano playing, and then I won’t even mention Lucky’s presence ...), where the guys start fumbling in fast medium tempo with HMG warming up, but then changes to fast and a real, serious take. Well serious or serious, both trumpet soli start out well and are excellent for appr. 48 bars, but it seems the way ahead is quite unclear, the ending is messy. The other items seem to be scheduled for 78 rpm., being around three minutes. “... New Baby” have earlier been believed to have two takes, good but not remarkable trumpet playing here, but Noal Cohen states that there are in fact three, needs to be confirmed. Fine muted trumpet on “Windjammer” with Lucky on the bridge. Finally, note also a few nice trumpet bars on the slow “Skylark”.

HOWARD MCGHEE AND HIS ORCHESTRA **Hollywood, Dec. 21, 1945**

Howard McGhee (tp), Teddy Edwards (cl-“... Blues”, ts), J. D. King (ts), Vernon Biddle (p), Bob Kesterton (b), Roy Porter (dm), Monette Moore (vo-“... Chair”, “... Jive).

Broadcast from “Street of Paris” (issued on Uptown CD):

1:01	Intro / Night Mist (Theme)	Straight. (S)
5:32	Night In Tunisia	Straight. Solo 64 bars. Coda. (M)
3:58	Rockin’ Chair	Weak obbligato parts. (S)
4:57	Howard’s Blues	Solo 36 bars (mute). (M)
2:07	Killin’ Jive (Nagasaki)	Solo 32 bars. (F)
3:15	The Man I Love	Intro 8 bars (S) to solo 64 bars. (F)

Interesting broadcast but I believe HMG could have done much more out of it. The performances are quite noisy, and the band as such seems not to have any clear purpose. When this is said, there are some fine trumpet playing here. I don’t think “... Tunisia” is treated like it should; no gorgeous break as expected, and it takes time before anything happens. More exciting then is the muted “... Blues”, and a strong “... Jive”, but the tenorsax riffing behind is unnecessary and spoils some of the fun. The highlight “The Man ...” though makes up for much, this is HMG at his very best!!

WILBERT BARANCO & HIS RHYTHM BOMBARDIERS**LA. Jan. 1946**

Howard McGhee, John Burks, Karl George, Snooky Young (tp), Ralph Bledsoe, Henry Coker, Vic Dickenson, George Washington (tb), Marvin Johnson, Willie Smith (as), Fred Simon, Lucky Thompson (ts), Gene Porter (bar), Wilbert Baranco (p,ldr), Buddy Harper (g), Charles Mingus (b), Earl Watkins (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Black & White, two have HMG:

Weeping Willie	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
Baranco Boogie	Solo 24 bars. (FM)

“Baranco ...” is a somewhat anachronistic item with a long piano boogie solo first and then into a fine modern trumpet solo! “... Willie” has mainly altosax with a HMG solo in the middle, but not that interesting this one.

SLIM GAILLARD AND HIS ORCHESTRA**LA. Jan. 1946**

Howard McGhee (tp), Marshall Royal (cl), Lucky Thompson (ts), Dodo Marmarosa (p), Slim Gaillard (g, vo), Bam Brown (b, vo), Zutty Singleton (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Bel-Tone:

58-3	Chicken Rhythm	Solo 16 bars. (M)
59-1	Santa Monica Jump	Solo 32 bars. (F)
60-1	Mean Pretty Mama	Solo 12 bars to coda. (S)
61-2	School Kids' Hop	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

The session as such is rather uneven, although Gaillard’s vocals always are events of smile and laughter. Clean sound and good soloing by everybody; for HMG the highlight is the fast solo on “... Monica ...”.

LESTER YOUNG & HIS BAND**LA. ca. Jan. 18, 1946**

Howard McGhee (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), Willie Smith (as), Lester Young (ts), Lee Wesley Jones (p), Curtis Counce (b), Johnny Otis (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Aladdin (a fourth title 3568 “After You’ve Gone” without HMG), no trumpet solo on 3567 “It’s Only A Paper Moon” and 3569 “Lover Come Back To Me” but:

3583	Jammin’ With Lester	Solo 12 bars. (M)
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A good and typical solo on “Jammin’ ...” is all we get, Pres takes it all and the rest of the personnel is just a backup band.

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC**LA. Jan. 28, 1946**

Howard McGhee, Al Killian (tp), Charlie Parker, Willie Smith (as), Lester Young (ts), Arnold Ross (p), Billy Hadnott (b), Lee Young (dm).

Four titles were recorded live at the Philharmonic Auditorium:

Blues For Norman	Solo with ens 5 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
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I Can't Get Started	Solo/straight 32 bars. (S)
Lady Be Good	Solo 64 bars. (M)
After You've Gone	Solo 2 choruses of 40 bars. (F)

This famous JATP session is of course a must, although the quality in general perhaps is not quite up to the high expectations. There is also something with the sound quality that make the trumpet playing more shrilling than it really was. HMG executes his role to satisfaction, but none of his soli may called remarkable; my favourite is his hot blowing on "... Gone". Note also that the "Lady ..." is played in an unusually slow tempo.

BENNY CARTER**LA. March 31, 1946**

Miles Davis, Howard McGhee (tp), possibly Britt Woodman (tb), Benny Carter (as), Bumps Myers, unknown (ts), Sonny White (p), James Cannady (g), Thomas Moultrie (b), Percy Brice (dm).

Broadcast from "The Street of Paris", three titles, "Just You, Just Me", "Don't Blame Me" and "Sweet Georgia Brown", but all trumpet soli by Miles Davis. HMG might be in the ensembles, but sound quality is mediocre.

HOWARD MCGHEE ORCHESTRA**Hollywood, Spring 1946**

Howard McGhee (tp), Teddy Edwards (ts), James King (ts, vo-23345), Vernon Biddle (p), Robert Kesterson (b), Roy Porter (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Melodisc:

23333	Sweet Potato	Soli 32 and 64 bars. (F)
23337	Hoggin'	Solo 64 bars. (F)
23345	Blues A La King	Solo 24 bars. Obligato parts. (M)
23610	Night Mist	Straight. (S). Solo 8 bars. (M)

HMG's trumpet is brilliant on this low-fidelity date. The fast titles are fireworks of modern trumpet playing, and very few contemporaries could do anything like "... Potato" (actually "Sweet Georgia Brown") and "Hoggin'"! Note also fine blues on "... King", and "... Mist" which is an emotional piece with a beautiful straight trumpet introduction.

HOWARD MCGHEE AND HIS ORCHESTRA**Hollywood, 1946**

Howard McGhee (tp), Teddy Edwards, James King (ts), Vernon Biddle (p), Bob Kesterton or Oscar Pettiford (b), Roy Porter (dm), Pearl Taylor, Estelle Edson, Clarence Williams (vo).

Nine titles were recorded for Modern Music, no HMG on "The Jive I Like" and "I'm Drunk" but:

11:45 Swing / Rummage Bounce	Solo with ens 32 bars. (M)
Mad Hype	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Play Boy Blues	Obligato 36 and 24 bars. (SM)
Around The Clock Pt 1	Solo with ens 12 bars. Obligato 8, 8 and 8 bars. (S)
Around The Clock Pt 2	Solo 12 bars. Obligato 8 and 8 bars. (S)
Gee I'm Lonesome	Solo with ens 8 bars. Obligato 24 and 12 bars. (S)
Call It The Blues	Straight 4 bars to solo 8 bars. Obligato 8 bars. (S)

Only two pure jazz items here, "11:45 ..." and "... Hype" with excellent trumpet playing. However, one should not overlook the remaining titles, all blues for the people with HMG concentrating upon obligati behind the female vocalists. Spend some time listening to these; the audibility of the trumpet varies, but everything sounds good, he seems to enjoy this!

CHARLIE PARKER QUINTET /**HOWARD MCGHEE****Hollywood, July 29, 1946**

Howard McGhee (tp), Charlie Parker (as-1021-24), Jimmy Bunn (p), Bob Kesterson (b), Roy Porter (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Dial:

1021	Max Is Making Wax	In ens 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)
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same date

Howard McGhee (tp), Ted Nash (ts), probably Tommy Todd (p), probably Charlie Drayton (b), Joe Preston (dm).

One title (falsely announced as "How High The Moon"):

Cottontail Solo 64 bars, last 32 with ens/(dm). (F)

Today, the organization called JATP is known to all jazz lovers, but Just Jazz, created by Gene Norman, is almost forgotten. Still the JJ concerts contain music with at least the same qualities. The "... Juba ..." concentrates on tb/cl/vo, but on the somewhat faster blues, HMG takes four choruses, good but not outstanding. The other item, intended to be a showcase for the ten years old drummer Joe Preston, however has a trumpet solo of high quality, particularly first chorus when he gets 'too much help'.

CHARLIE PARKER HOME COOKING SESSION L.A. Feb. 1, 1947

Collective personnel: Melvin Broiles, Howard McGhee, Shorty Rogers (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Russ Freeman (p), Arnold Fishkin (b), Jimmy Pratt (dm).

Several titles were recorded privately at Charlie Kopley's home, issued on Mosaic, but only Bird's soli have been preserved.

CHARLIE PARKER ALL STARS Hollywood, Feb. 26, 1947

Howard McGhee (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Wardell Gray (ts), Dodo Marmarosa (p), Barney Kessel (g), Red Callender (b), Don Lamond (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Dial:

D1071-A	Relaxin' At Camarillo	Solo 12 bars (mute). (FM)
D1071-C	Relaxin' At Camarillo	As above. (FM)
D1071-D	Relaxin' At Camarillo	As above. (FM)
D1071-E	Relaxin' At Camarillo	As above. (FM)
D1072-A	Cheers	Solo 16 bars (open). (FM)
D1072-B	Cheers	As above. (FM)
D1072-C	Cheers	As above. (FM)
D1072-D	Cheers	As above. (FM)
D1073-A	Carvin' The Bird	Soli 12, 12 and 4 bars (open). (FM)
D1073-B	Carvin' The Bird	As above. (FM)
D1074-A	Stupendous	Solo 16 bars (open). (FM)
D1074-B	Stupendous	As above. (FM)

One of the greatest bebop sessions ever to be recorded, bringing three of the most famous hornmen together with a fine rhythm section. HMG is in excellent shape with his trumpet, he plays both open and muted here, and it is certain not his fault that several takes of each tune were recorded, just good luck. I dare not pinpoint any highlights here, and the soli are much too brief, but this is all legendary!!

HOWARD MCGHEE QUINTET L.A. March 1-13, 1947

Howard McGhee (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Hampton Hawes (p), Addison Farmer (b), Roy Porter (dm).

The Dean Benedetti collection, issued on Mosaic, large number of titles, but as we all know, Dean was an one-eyed Bird fan and did not record the others in the group. Obviously it made sense to him then, and probably many today agree with his choice, but personally I regret the omission of one of the most important trumpet players, as well as a great pianist. We have enough Bird but so little of many others!! However, there are some examples of Bird/HMG taking 4/4, information about this later.

HOWARD MCGHEE SEXTET Pasadena, Ca., ca. March 1947

Howard McGhee (tp), Sonny Criss (as), Teddy Edwards (ts), Hampton Hawes (p), Addison Farmer (b), Roy Porter (dm).

Date falsely given as June 1947.

AFRS Jubilee programs No. 238/239 from McCornack General Hospital, three titles recorded (alternatively L.A. and the "Hi-De-Ho Club"):

6:17	The Man I Love	Intro 6 bars (S) to solo 32+16 bars, (as) on bridge. Soli 64 and 4 bars. (F)
3:38	Ornithology	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Three titles were recorded for Mercury (a fourth title 231 "My Old Flame" (two takes) without HMG):

229	Cake	Soli 24 and 12 bars. (M)
229-alt.	Cake	Soli 24 and 8 bars. (M)
230	Znarg Blues	Solo 36 bars. (M)
232	Cool	Solo 36 bars. (M)
232-alt.	Cool	As above. (M)

Pleasant, swinging smallband session, all blues in similar tempo, with good trumpet soli on all items with fine variations between the takes..

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC

NYC. Sept. 27, 1947

Howard McGhee (tp), Bill Harris (tb), Illinois Jacquet, Flip Phillips (ts), Hank Jones (p), Ray Brown (b), Jo Jones (dm).

Four titles were recorded in Carnegie Hall:

Perdido	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
Mordido	Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
Endido	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
I Surrender Dear	Solo 32 bars. (S)

Our man tries to keep a straight melodic face in an environment more interested in igniting the public (as IJ on "Endido"). There are better examples of HMG's artistry, but he seems to manage pretty well, and there are no excesses from his side. The highlight is of course his nice chorus on the slow "... Dear", but there are some fluffs. .

LEO PARKER ALL STARS

Detroit, Oct. 4, 1947

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

Four titles were recorded for Savoy, no HMG on 802 "Wild Leo" but:

800	El Sino	Solo 16 bars. (M)
801	Ineta	Solo 24 bars. (M)
803	Leapin' Leo	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

A fine Savoy session with HMG joining two of the most important bebop reed players, and his three trumpet soli are all excellent.

HOWARD MCGHEE

Chi. Oct. 15 or Nov. 10, 1947

Howard McGhee (tp), Billy Eckstine (vtb), Kenny Mann (ts), Hank Jones (p), Ray Brown (b), J. C. Heard (dm), Marcel Daniels (vo-"... Lip", "... Word").

Date falsely given as Feb. 1948. Revised date comes from Mann, the session takes place after a JATP concert, giving the two possible dates.

Four titles were recorded for VitaCoustic, bought by and issued on Savoy:

Belle From Bunny Cock	Break to solo 32 bars. (FM)
Belle From Bunny Cock alt.	As above. (FM)
Flip Lip	Solo 8 bars. (M)
The Man I Love	Solo 32 bars. (S) to solo 16 bars. (FM) to solo 8 bars to long coda. (S)
The Last Word	Soli 32 and 32 bars. (F)

HMG has obviously a nice time in Chicago! His playing on "Belle ..." and the fast "... Word" is of first rate quality, but to hear him in slow items like "The Man ..." is something quite special, beautiful inventive with a sound from heaven. You tell me which young and modern trumpeters at this point of time could play anything like this?!!

HOWARD MCGHEE SEXTET

NYC. Dec. 3, 1947

Howard McGhee (tp), James Moody (ts), Milt Jackson (vib), Hank Jones (p), Ray Brown (b), J. C. Heard (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Dial:

1121-A	Dorothy	Soli 16 and 2 bars. (M)
1122-A	Night Mist	Solo/straight. (S)
1122-B	Night Mist	As above. (S)
1123-C	Coolie-Rini	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
1124-B	Night Music	No solo. (S)
1125-A	Turnip Blood	Solo 16 bars (open). (FM)
1125-B	Turnip Blood	Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)
1126-C	Surrender	Soli 16 and 8 bars to long coda (open). (S)
1127-A	Sleepwalker Boogie	No solo. (M)
1128-A	Stoptime Blues	Intro 8 to solo 36 bars (mute). (F)
1129-A	You	Solo 16 bars (open). (M)

A fine Dial session with a great personnel, and there is a friendly sharing of solo space. In fact, possibly too friendly, because I believe HMG could have been a bit more egoistic as a leader, his soli are generally only half a chorus, much too brief. The two "Night ..."s are more concert pieces than solo vehicles, but interesting as such, "... Music" almost a solo feature for piano. Note that HMG's horn chooses differently on the two takes of "Turnip ...", pick your choice! For highlights otherwise, "Stoptime ..." is exciting, a brother of the famous "Congo Blues", and a delicate "Surrender", not many of this kind!

Note: Howard McGhee is not present on the LA. Dec. 27, 1947 session GENE NORMAN's "JUST JAZZ" at the Shrine Auditorium (AFRS Jubilee 271: "Just Bop" / C Jam Blues", and "Sweet Georgia Brown"), also featuring Wardell Gray, Vido Musso (ts). The trumpeter is Ernie Royal. HMG is in Chicago.

HOWARD MCGHEE SEXTET

Chi. Dec. 24-31, 1947

Howard McGhee (tp), Jimmy Heath (as, bar), Milt Jackson (vib), Will Davis (p), Percy Heath (b), Joe Harris (dm).

Date falsely given as Feb. 1948. Correct date connected to HMG's stay at the Argyle Lounge.

Eight titles were recorded for VitaCoustic (may come from 2 or 3 sessions (source: Arthur Zimmermann), bought by and issued on Savoy:

Merry Lee / Riff tide	Soli 8 and 16 bars. (FM)
Short Life	Solo 12 bars. (FM)
It's Talk Of The Town	Solo 16+8 bars, (bar) on bridge. Solo 8 bars to long coda. (S)
Bass C Jam	Straight with (bar) 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Straight with (bar) 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. (FM)
Bass C Jam alt.	As above. (FM)
Down Home	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
Sweet And Lovely	Soli 32, 4 and 8 bars to long coda. (SM)
Fiesta (= Short Life)	Solo 12 bars. (FM)
I'm In The Mood For Love	Solo 16+8 bars, (vib) on bridge. Solo 8 bars to long coda. (S)

Fine trumpet playing in upper tempi, no problems. However, the really great and possibly surprising experiences are his magnificent contributions in slow tempo. With a big sound and much feeling he makes "... The Town", "... Lovely" and "... The Mood ..." into highly memorable items, only too bad they are still 78 rpm. constrained.

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Personnel as above. Earl Coleman (vo-"... Suite").

Four titles, two issued on Old Swing-Master:

Yardbird Suite	Solo 8 bars (mute). (SM)
Messin' With Fire / Donna Lee	Solo 32 bars (open). (F)

Good soli without being particularly noteworthy.

For the time being the solography stops here, intended to be continued later.

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