

The  
**TENORSAX**  
of  
**HUNTINGTON KENDRICK  
ALEXANDER  
“JOE”**

Born: Birmingham, Alabama, ca. 1929  
Died: Cleveland, Oct. 1970

*Introduction:*

Upon hearing Joe Alexander's fine tenorsax playing on Tadd Dameron's LP "Fontainebleu", our interest in this elusive musicians became born. That's all.

*History:*

Graduated from Detroit Conservatory of Music. Toured with Gay Crosse's band "Good Humor Six", sharing the sax section with John Coltrane. Played with former Count Basie trumpeter Eddie Preston and drummer Lawrence Jackson at the Cotton Club, Cleveland (Sept. 1954) and pianist Jimmy Saunders' group at the Congo Lounge (late 1954). In March 1956 recorded with Cleveland native Tadd Dameron. Spent six months with Charlie Mingus' group in New York (1956) and toured briefly with the Lionel Hampton orchestra. Returned to Cleveland (late 1956), mostly playing there, with exception of a tour with the Woody Herman orchestra (1968). In June 1960 recorded his only album as a leader. Was diagnosed with a serious heart problem and underwent open heart surgery (1969). Did not recover and died in Oct. 1970. Quoting Reverend Albert Hall at the jazz funeral service: "The Cleveland jazz scene will miss him, and the national jazz scene, for the most part, will not know what they missed" (ref. Joe Mosbrook, *Jazzed in Cleveland* (brief excerpts)).

## JOE ALEXANDER SOLOGRAPHY

### PAUL WILLIAMS

NYC. May 18, 1950

Phil Gilbeaux (tp), Joe Alexander, Sam Miller (ts), Paul Williams (bar), Lee Anderson (p), John Murphy (b), William Benjamin (dm), unknown (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy, three issued, but no tenorsax.

NYC. Feb. 26, 1951

Possibly similar. Four titles, one issued, no tenorsax.

### TADD DAMERON AND HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. March 9, 1956

Kenny Dorham (tp), Henry Coker (tb), Sahib Shihab (as), Joe Alexander (ts), Cecil Payne (bar), Tadd Dameron (p), John Simmons (b), Shadow Wilson (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Fontainebleu":

Fontainebleu	No solo.
Delirium	Intro and solo with ensemble 3 and 3 choruses of 32 bars to long coda. (FM)
The Scene Is Clean	No solo.
Flossie Lou	No solo.
Bula-Beige	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

This exciting session features one of the most legendary tenorsax performers! Ira Gitler's liner notes to the LP mention him as "Tadd's fellow Clevelander", that is all information given. However, JA is a very competent performer of modern tenorsax, as particularly evident from the impressive "Bula-Beige" blues, but also in upper tempo as "Delirium".

### JOE ALEXANDER QUINTET

NYC. June 20, 1960

John Hunt (tp, frh), Joe Alexander (ts), Bobby Timmons (p), Sam Jones (b), Al Heath (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Jazzland, issued as "Blue Jubilee":

Blue Jubilee	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
Weird Beard	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars to 3 choruses 4/4 with (frh). (FM)
Brown's Town	Solo 64 bars. (M)
I'll Close My Eyes	Solo 32 bars. Duet with (frh) 16 bars to coda. (S)
Terri's Blues	Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. 8 choruses 4/4 with (dm/frh). (FM)

This is an excellent session where everybody does their very best, combining their efforts into a perfect whole. The rhythm section is perfect, and any record with this pianist is bound to be good, as a most underrated trumpet player is making very fine contributions. Joe, as the leader of the session, is playing his tenor saxophone in a highly confident manner, not inferior to any of the great names of this period in jazz. His style is most close to that of Johnny Griffin, but he has certainly got his own things. There is a groovy gospel atmosphere all over here, and all items are highly noteworthy, although if a highlight is needed, "... Blues" is a good suggestion. It is such a shame that he chose to withdraw from the national jazz scene and therefore lost the chance of further recording sessions. Joe Alexander is a typical example of just that kind of great performer that we should try to bring out of history and into present connoisseurs' delight!!

No further recording sessions.

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