

The
TRUMPET
of
JOSEPH LEWIS THOMAS
“JOE”

Solographer: Jan Evensmo
Last updated: Jan. 4, 2020, March 30, 2022, Jan. 16, 2024
Note: This is a complete solography with comments to all sessions.

Born: Webster Groves, Missouri, July 24, 1909
 Died: NYC. Aug. 6, 1984

Introduction:

Joe Thomas was a great trumpeter with a particularly successful period in the middle 1940s. My friends and I have always been fascinated by his solid tone, staccato playing and strong originality. I had the opportunity to visit him and his wife Babe Matthews in their home in 1981, we had a nice day together, but I wish he had gotten the renown he deserved, and could have had a better life. The solography below is a reprint of the solography printed as Vol. 12 in my Jazz Solography Series (1982) with a few added items, and still a few missing ones!

History:

Began playing trumpet whilst at school, taught by P. G. Lankford in St. Louis. To New York in 1928, played briefly with Cecil Scott, then worked with Darrell Harris band in Fort Wayne, Indiana (1929). With Eli Rice's Cotton Pickers (1930-32), then with trombonist Shuffle Abernathy (late 1932-33) and drummer Harold Flood in Milwaukee (1933). Moved back to New York in late 1933, played for a while with Emperor Jones, then worked with Fletcher Henderson for a few months early in 1934. With Ferman Tapp's band at Small's (ca. May 1934). Regularly with Fletcher Henderson from summer 1935 until 1937. With Fats Waller and Willie Bryant before joining Benny Carter bigband in May 1939. From December 1939 until November 1940 in James P. Johnson's band, then with Joe Sullivan at the Famous Door. Member of Teddy Wilson's sextet from August 1942 until October 1943, then led own band at Village Vanguard. Played in Barney Bigard's small group at the Onyx Club (autumn 1944 until early 1945), extensive free-lance recordings, then again led own band. With Cozy Cole quintet early in 1948, during following year worked in Chicago with Bud Freeman's band. Continued to lead own small group throughout the 1950s, free-lanced with other leaders and took part in several recording sessions, took part in Fletcher Henderson Re-union Band in 1957. During the 1960s led own band in New York, Boston, Toronto, etc., spell at Eddie Condon's in 1964, also featured at Newport Jazz Festival. With Claude Hopkins in 1966, and through the 1960s has played many 'gigs' with J. C. Higginbotham. (Ref. John Chilton).

JOE THOMAS SOLOGRAPHY

MISSOURI ANDERSON**St. Louis, June 21, 1926**

Joe Thomas (cnt), Miles Davis (p), unknown (speaker-3445), Missouri Anderson (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

E-3443 Somebody Else's Blues Intro, obbligato and solo 12 bars. (S)

E-3445 Gamblin' George Blues Intro, obbligato and solo 12 bars. (S)

This music is so far removed both in time and conception from the Joe Thomas we know, that the question of his presence seems somewhat academic. Joe was only 17 years old at this recording date and doubt has been expressed concerning his presence. Dewey Jackson, native of St. Louis and 26 years old has been suggested. However, there is one very good argument for Joe's presence: Joe himself says he was there!

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. March 6, 1934**

Bigband personnel including Henry "Red" Allen, Russell Smith, Joe Thomas (tp). Four titles were recorded for Victor but no JT.

ALEX HILL & HIS HOLLYWOOD SEPIANS**NYC. Sept. 10, 1934**

Joe Thomas, Dick Green (tp), Clyde Bernhardt, ? Jordan (tb), Albert Nicholas (cl), George James (as), Gene Sedic (ts), Alex Hill (p,ldr, arr), Eddie Gibbs (g), Billy Taylor (b), Harry Dial (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

15879-1 Ain't It Nice? Probaby solo 8 bars. (FM)

15880-1 Functionizin' Probably solo 16 bars. (M)

NYC. Oct. 19, 1934

Same except Benny Carter (tp), Claude Jones (tb), Garnet Clark (p) replace Green, Bernhardt and Hill. Alex Hill (vo).

Two titles, no JT on 16142-1 "Let's Have A Jubilee" but:

16141-1 Song Of The Plow Possibly solo 16 bars (mute). (SM)

We have problems in identifying JT's presence. There has been much dispute concerning the personnel on these sessions, but if we take the above as correct, it seems most likely that "Functionizin'" is by Joe. A very fine and forceful solo. "... Nice?" seems to be by Joe too, also very satisfactory. "Song ..." is not very interesting with straight wa-wa mute. JT seems more likely than Benny Carter, but neither suggestion is convincing. The fine muted trumpet solo on "Jubilee", 16 bars, points very strongly to Carter.

FLETCHER HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA**Chi. 1936**

Bigband personnel including Roy Eldridge, Dick Vance, Joe Thomas (tp). Four titles were recorded for Vocalion and 15 titles for Victor but no JT.

LIL ARMSTRONG & HER SWING BAND**Chi. Oct. 27, 1936**

Joe Thomas (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Chu Berry (ts), Teddy Cole (p), Huey Long (g), John Frazier (b), Lil Armstrong (vo).

Six titles were recorded for Decca:

90967-B Or Leave Me Alone In ens 16+8 bars, (ts) on bridge.
In ens 32 bars. (FM)

90968-A My Hi-De-Ho Man Solo 16 bars (mute). Obbligato parts
8 and 8 bars. In ens 8 and 4 bars. (FM)

90969-A Brown Gal Intro in ens 6 bars.
Obbligato parts 28 and 8 bars. (S)

90970-A Doin' The Suzie-Q In ens 32 bars. Obbligato in ens
32 bars. In ens 8 bars. (FM)

90971-A Just For A Thrill Solo 8 bars. Solo with ens 16 bars. (SM)

90972-A It's Murder Solo 16 bars, last 8 in ens. (F)

This is the very first session where Joe Thomas stand forth as a trumpet personality. His style has not yet matured, he has not got "his own thing" yet. However, he certainly is no novice! He plays with great power, and there is no doubt that Louis Armstrong is his idol. He can be heard a lot on this session but mostly in ensemble, with or without Lil's "vocal". Nevertheless, his sound has no problem reaching us clearly. Particularly "... Suzie-Q" and "Or Leave ..." have noteworthy ensemble

playing regarding JT. For soloing, “Just For A Thrill” is also our thrill. The eight bars offer much of the relaxed, economic playing of the forties, however, a bad fluff in bar 5 spoils the performance somewhat. Later, however, he returns with a magnificent, strong solo with ensemble backing, a reason for a solography in itself! Note also two other performances, one is the beautiful obbligato in “Brown Gal”, where he takes breaks in bars 7-8 and 15-16, moving very close to the microphone. The second is the only muted contribution, “My ... Man”, where the staccatoness, later to become a trade mark, already is present. To sum up: A very promising session, and more trumpet than you discover at first hearing!

LIL ARMSTRONG & HER SWING BAND **NYC. April 16, 1937**

Joe Thomas (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Robert Carroll (ts), James Sherman (p), Arnold Adams (g), Wellman Braud (b), George Foster (dm), Lil Armstrong (vo).
Four titles were recorded for Decca:

61945-A	Born To Swing	Solo 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge, last 8 with ens. (FM)
61946-A	Sit Down Strike For Rhythm	Break. Solo 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge. Obbligato in ens 8 bars. (FM)
61947-A	Bluer Than Blue	Intro 4 bars. Solo 16+4 bars, (ts) on bridge. In ens coda. (SM)
61948-A	I'm Knockin' At The Cabin Door	In ens intro/coda. Obbligato 6 (mute), 6 and 8 bars. Solo 8 bars. (SM)

Another very important session from the early period. Foremost we must mention the lovely “Bluer Than Blue”, by far the most memorable of Lil Armstrong's Decca recordings. JT has a fine intro, but the moving solo overshadows everything, the almost slow tempo fits him very properly. Almost equally important is the close to medium “... Door”, fine soloing and obbligato. In the faster tracks, the trumpet role is more towards soloing than ensemble compared to the previous session. The soloing is very fine, note for instance the beginning of the second eight in both “Sit Down...” and “Born ...”. However, his technique seems to have certain shortcomings, evident in both tracks, and particularly in bar 5 in “Born ...”. Anyway, this is a very important trumpet session.

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. May 20, 1939**

Benny Carter (tp, as, arr, ldr), Lincoln Mills, Louis Bacon or Joe Thomas, Archie Johnson (tp), Tyree Glenn (tb, vib), Vic Dickenson, Jimmy Archey (tb), James Powell, Carl Frye (as), Ernie Powell (cl, ts), Castor McCord (ts), Eddie Heywood (p), Arnold Adams (g), Hayes Alvis (b), Ted Fields (dm).

Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, five titles, three have trumpet soli, but probably not by JT.

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. June 29, 1939**

Joe Thomas, Lincoln Mills, George Woodlen (tp), James Archey, Vic Dickenson (tb), Tyree Glenn (tb, vib), Benny Carter, James Powell, Carl Frye (as), Ernie Powell, Castor McCord (ts), Eddie Heywood (p), Ulysses Livingston (g), Hayes Alvis (b), Henry Morrison (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, one has JT:

1047-A	Savoy Stampede	Solo 32 bars. (F)
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“Savoy ...” is a very interesting performance, featuring JT for the first time in a bigband context. Here his chosen style is evident, he plays a staccato solo like it has never been blown before! Well, maybe there is a resemblance to Shad Collins' soloing with Teddy Hill and Dicky Wells, but primarily this is Thomas' own personal approach.

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 24, 1939**

Personnel similar to above.

Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, nine titles, two have JT:

Lady Be Good	Solo 14 bars. (F)
Honeysuckle Rose	Solo 64 bars. (F)

“Lady ...” is quite staccato and maybe not that exciting, but “...Rose” has a long, exciting solo, a real treasure!!

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Aug. 31, 1939**

Personnel as above except Eddie Mullen (tp) replaces Woodlen. Dell St. John (vo) added.

Three titles were recorded for Vocalion, two have JT:

1069-A	When Lights Are Low	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
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1071-A Riff Romp Solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. (F)

"... Low" features JT very convincingly, while "Riff Romp" is more arranged and not as interesting.

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Oct. 9, 1939**

Personnel similar to Nov. 1 below.

Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, one title has JT:

Savoy Stampede Solo 32 bars. (F)

NYC. Oct. 14, 1939

Same. One title has JT.

Riff Romp Solo 16+6 bars, orch on bridge. (F)

NYC. Oct. 23, 1939

Same, but no JT.

Two fine JT soli in Ed Berger's collection. It is particularly exciting to have a broadcast version of "Savoy ...", recorded four months earlier, lots of different details!

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 1, 1939**

Benny Carter (tp, as), Joe Thomas, Lincoln Mills, Eddie Mullen, Irving Randolph (tp), James Archey, Vic Dickenson (tb), Tyree Glenn (tb, vib), James Powell, Carl Frye (as), Ernie Powell, Sammy Davis (ts), Eddie Heywood (p), Ulysses Livingston (g), Hayes Alvis (b), William Purnell (dm), Roy Felton (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion but no JT.

NYC. Nov. 18, 1939

Same. Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, seven titles but no JT.

FOUR MARSHALLS **NYC. Jan. 2, 1940**

Personnel listed in discos: Joe Thomas (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), Pete Clark (cl), George James (as), Ben Webster (ts), G. de Paul (p), Al Casey (g), Yank Porter (dm), Four Marshalls (vo-group).

Two titles, 26373-A "Honk Honk" and 26374-A "Pick-A-Rib" were recorded for Vocalion, issued on Vo 5497, but no JT to be heard.

JT had no recall of the session, and there are no soli except some "almost breaks", particularly trombone and guitar. The record has very little value as a jazz record. However, the accompanying group may easily be the one suggested above, by the sound of it.

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Jan. 30, 1940**

Benny Carter (tp, as), Joe Thomas, Lincoln Mills, Eddie Mullen (tp), James Archey, Vic Dickenson, Gene Simon (tb), James Powell, Carl Frye (as), Stanley Payne, Coleman Hawkins (ts), Eddie Heywood (p), Ulysses Livingston (g), Hayes Alvis (b), William Purnell (dm), Roy Felton (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, with the appearances of alternate takes on Meritt, the session should now read like this: two have JT:

1126 no.1 Sleep Solo 16 bars. (F)

1126 no.2 Sleep As above. (F)

1126 no.3 Sleep (NC) No solo.

1126-1no.4 Sleep As above. (F)

1129 rhs Slow Freight (NC) No solo.

1129-1no.1 Slow Freight Solo 8 bars. (M)

"Slow Freight" has a beautiful, almost majestic solo, one to be remembered, and certainly a challenge to the leader of the band! "Sleep", however, has an ultra fast tempo, and while performed o.k. is of no lasting value. All other trumpet soloing seems to be performed by Benny Carter. Postscript: The alternate takes are disappointingly similar.

ART TATUM & HIS BAND **NYC. Jan. 21, 1941**

Joe Thomas (tp), Edmond Hall (cl), Art Tatum (p), John Collins (g), Billy Taylor (b), Eddie Dougherty (dm), Joe Turner (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

68605-A Wee Baby Blues Obligato 6 bars. (S)

68606-A Stompin' At The Savoy Duet with (cl) 16+8 bars (mute), (p) on bridge. Solo 32 bars. (M)

- 68607-A Last Goodbye Blues Obligato 12 bars. In ens 4 bars. (S)
 68608-A Battery Bounce Solo 24 bars. In ens 24 bars. (FM)

NYC. June 30, 1941

Joe Thomas (tp), Art Tatum (p), Oscar Moore (g), Billy Taylor (b), Yank Porter (dm), Joe Turner (vo). Four titles:

- 69356-A Lucille Obligato with (p) 24 bars.
 Coda with (p) 4 bars. (S)
 69356-B Lucille Obligato with (p) 24 and 24 bars. (S)
 69357-A Rock Me Mama Obligato with (p) 36 and 12 bars. (SM)
 69358-A Corinne Corinna Obligato with (p) 24 bars. Solo
 12 bars. Obligato with (p) 24 bars. (M)
 69359-A Lonesome Graveyard Blues Obligato with (p) 24 and 12 bars. (S)
 69359-B Lonesome Graveyard Blues Obligato with (p) 12 bars. (S)

These sessions have always meant something special because of the opportunity to study the fabulous piano of Art Tatum in a real context of jazz, not only as an expression of egocentricity. Why didn't he do sessions like these more often? They are also very special because they permit us to study JTs' playing from several viewpoints, solo/obligato, quick/slow tempo, blues/standard. He has the opportunity to show off on every track and uses it to complete satisfaction. To one half of me his obligato is the most moving and memorable. "Last Goodbye ...", "Lucille", "Rock Me ..." and "... Graveyard ..." are all masterpieces of the difficult art of background support, and to choose a highlight must be on quantity, therefore "Lucille"! Note how different the alternate takes are, the solo/obligato set-up varies. In "Lucille", take A has three vocal choruses, while take B has two vocal choruses twice. "... Graveyard...", take B, lacks the concluding vocal chorus, which is exchanged for a piano chorus. The second half of me is most impressed by his upper tempo contributions. The solo on "... Savoy" is masterly, as is also "Battery ...", not only from a narrow 1941 view-point but in comparison with the later "golden era". On the average the second session is slightly, just slightly better than the first one.

JAM SESSION**NYC. (April 22) – July 9, 1941**

Joe Thomas (tp-2,4,7), Bobby Hackett (cnt-1,3,6,7), Miff Mole (tb-3,7), Lou McGarity (tb-1,6,7), Benny Morton (tb-2,4,7), Edmond Hall (cl-2,4,7), Joe Marsala (cl-1,3,7), Abe Walker (ts-1,3,7), Dave Bowman (p-2,4,7), Joe Sullivan (p-1,3,5(solo),6,7), Eddie Condon (g), unknown (b), Zutty Singleton (dm). To sum up: There are two groups, JT's has got items 2 and 4, but 2 features (cl) only. The groups join on item 7.

BBC broadcast, Radio Rhythm Club, seven titles:

- | | | |
|---|---------------------|--|
| 1 | Sugar | No solo. |
| 2 | The Man I Love | No solo. |
| 3 | Nobody's Sweetheart | No solo. |
| 4 | Them There Eyes | In ens 32 bars. Solo 32 bars.
In ens 32 bars. (FM) |
| 5 | Little Rock Getaway | No solo. |
| 6 | Basin Street Blues | No solo. |
| 7 | Blues | Solo 12 bars, last 8 with ens.
Abundantly in ens. (M) |

A long jam session with lots of nice soloing. However, JT only gets one real opportunity, which he nevertheless uses to great success: A lovely solo on "Them ...", the style in transition from the thirties to his great era 3-5 years later. The opening on "Blues" is also notable. There is a lot of ensemble playing too, but the individual voices are not easily discerned.

BOB BON & HIS BUDDIES**NYC. July 23, 1941**

Joe Thomas (tp), Eddie Durham (tb, g), Buster Smith (cl), Jackie Fields (as), James Phipps (p), Al Hall (b), Jack Parker (dm), George "Bon Bon" Tunnell (vo). Four titles were recorded for Decca:

- 69557-A I Don't Want To Set The World OF Solo 8 bars (mute). (SM)
 69558-A Blow, Gabriel, Blow Soli 16 and 16 bars.
 Long coda with (vo). (F)
 69559-A Sweet Mama, Papa's Getting Mad Solo 12 bars (mute). (SM)

69560-A All That Meat And No Potatoes Solo 8 bars (mute). (M)

This is a session I enjoy! A fine atmosphere and good vocal make listening pleasant. The highlight is JT's excellent solo on "... Fire", this is the kind of majestic contribution we all look for when record hunting. In the beautiful "Sweet Mama" one is intrigued by how similar JT's style is to Frankie Newton's. "All That ..." is more ordinary, and "... Gabriel...", while satisfactory executed has a much too fast tempo to fit JT properly.

FATS WALLER, HIS RHYTHM & ORCHESTRA NYC. March 16, 1942
Bigband personnel including Herman Autrey, John Hamilton, Joe Thomas, Nathaniel Williams (tp).

Four titles were recorded for Bluebird but no JT.

With the use of some common sense by Mr. Waller, Joe Thomas would have had the same role as Bill Coleman in the 1934-35 sessions ...

TEDDY WILSON SEXTET NYC. Sept. 7, 1942
Joe Thomas (tp), Benny Morton (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Teddy Wilson (p), unknown (b), (dm).

CBS broadcast from Café Society, two titles:

Unknown Title	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
I Got Rhythm	In ens. (F)

An interesting discovery this broadcast, with fine piano. The trumpet solo, however, is rather ordinary.

"JAZZ UNIT" NYC. Dec. 29, 1942
Joe Thomas (tp), Benny Morton (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Mel Powell (p), unknown (b), (unknown dm).

Postscript of March 2022: This group was part of an Eddie Condon project for the US Army, which did not materialize' except for a concert in Town Hall. Music available on 'swingyoucats'. Three titles, no JT on "Basin Street Blues" but:

I Want To Be Happy	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Blue Room	Solo 16 bars. (M)

Nice to have more music by this great trumpeter!

same date
Joe Thomas, Bobby Hackett (tp), Lou McGarity, Benny Morton (tb), Edmond Hall, Pee Wee Russell (cl), Bud Freeman (ts), Joe Sullivan (p), unknown (b), unknown(dm). One title:

Impromptu Ensemble	Solo 4 bars to ens 8 bars. (M)
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TEDDY WILSON QUARTET NYC. Aug. 13, 1943
Joe Thomas (tp), Edmond Hall (cl), Teddy Wilson (p), Sid Catlett (dm).
Two titles were recorded for VDisc:

How High The Moon	Solo 32 bars. In ens to coda. (FM)
Russian Lullaby	Solo 32 bars. (SM)
Russian Lullaby alt. (NC)	Solo 32 bars. Duet with (cl) 6 bars (NC). (SM)

This session has earlier been dated to 1944, but since JT played with Teddy Wilson till Oct. 1943, it seems necessary with a correction. "... Lullaby" is by far the most important track. Since JT introduces the theme, he plays more straightforwardly than on the later, famous Keynote recording. However, JT manages to play straight in a more interesting manner than most trumpeters when they improvise! Another important point: 32 bars here are exactly twice as much as 16 bars on the other version, quantity matters, not only quality! And there are two different versions, each with its particular details. In "... Moon" he also keeps within modest improvisational limits, and this item is not too interesting.

LITTLE JAZZ TRUMPET ENSEMBLE NYC. Jan. 24, 1944
Joe Thomas, Emmett Berry, Roy Eldridge (tp), Johnny Guarneri (p), Israel Crosby (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Keynote:

5-1	Don't Be That Way	Solo 32 bars (2 nd (tp)-solo). (FM)
6-1	I Want To Be Happy	Solo 32 bars (3 rd (tp)-solo). (F)
7-3	Fiesta In Brass	Solo 24 bars (2 nd (tp)-solo). (M)

7-4	Fiesta In Brass	As above. (M)
8-1	St. Louis Blues	Solo 24 bars (2 nd (tp)-solo). In ens 12 bars. (F)
8-2	St. Louis Blues	As above. (F)

This is the real beginning! 1944 represents the real breakthrough for Joe Thomas. Within a time span of a little more than two years, he takes part in ca. twenty recording sessions! Obviously, his pure style must have opened the Keynote doors, as well as those of B&W, Jamboree, Musicraft, Selmer and HRS. Whether he felt gratitude is not known, but he certainly gives the companies return for their investments! On this session, led by Roy Eldridge, he creates a contrast which works very effectively. The best item, in all and for JT, is "Fiesta In Brass". Note here how Roy starts the ball in his intense style, and then JT turns everything upside down with his cool, utterly staccato opening phrase, a masterly solo!! The other tracks are also very good, whatever viewpoint. The two takes of "St. Louis Blues" are not too different but enough to create interest. One might miss 4/4 exchanges or a slow tune, but the session does in fact represent one of the most important trumpet sessions in late swing tradition. Postscript: On the alternate of "Fiesta ...", he uses the same opening four bars phrase but then goes differently.

COZY COLE ALL STARS **NYC. Feb. 22, 1944**

Joe Thomas (tp), Trummy Young (tb), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Earl Hines (p), Teddy Walters (g), Billy Taylor (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Keynote, no JT on 19-1&2 "Just One More Chance" but:

17-1	Blue Moon	Solo 14 bars. (M)
17-2	Blue Moon	As above. (M)
18-1	Father Cooperates	As below. (F)
18-2	Father Cooperates	As below. (F)
18-5	Father Cooperates	As below. (F)
18-6	Father Cooperates	Solo with ens 32 bars. (F)
20-1	Through For The Night	As below. (SM)
20-2	Through For The Night	Solo 16 bars. (SM)

The most outstanding item (note that all are 12" records) on this session is undoubtedly "... Night", which has a moving JT solo. The way he uses his big fat sound to create authority is overwhelming, and by now he certainly has manifested himself as one of the greatest swing trumpeters. The remaining items are not as important. "Father ..." is too fast for JT's almost solemn style, really, although he manages well. The smart opening of "Blue Moon" is also worth noticing. But again, take another listening to the beautiful "Through ...", you cannot get a better example of JT's greatness! Postscript: The four versions of "Father ..." are surprisingly different, with take 5 as the most surprising. And the "new" "... Night" is a great discovery, almost as good as the original take!!

PETE BROWN'S ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 19, 1944**

Joe Thomas (tp), Pete Brown (as), Ken Kersey (p), Milt Hinton (b), J. C. Heard (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Keynote (matrix numbers corrected April 2019):

45-2	It All Depends On You	Duet with (as) 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Duet 8 bars to coda. (M)
46-2	That's My Weakness Now	Solo 32 bars. (M)
46-3	That's My Weakness Now	As above. (M)
47-1	It's The Talk Of The Town	Duet with (as) 32 bars. Solo 8 bars to coda. (S)
47-2	It's The Talk Of The Town	As above. (S)
48-3	I May Be Wrong	Solo 64 bars. (F)

A lovely session! We cannot but love this informal setup, filled with happy music. Not that everything is very first quality, but the atmosphere is one we like to breathe. To be preferred are the two first items. "... Depends ..." has a lovely (tp)/(as) duet with a magnificent trumpet solo afterwards, taken in a pleasant medium tempo. Note for instance the second eight of the solo, a very nice construction. The very best item seems though to be "... Town", JT plays lead while Pete does some very nice, attentive backup. The result must be considered one of the most memorable in the JT production. The remaining two soli also are of good quality. Postscript:

Another take of "... Town" (and "... Now"), slightly more straight than the original take, but very nice!

RED NORVO's ALL STAR SEPTET **NYC. Oct. 10, 1944**

Joe Thomas (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), Hank d'Amico (cl), Red Norvo (xyl), Teddy Wilson (p), Slam Stewart (b), Specs Powell (dm), Johnny Thompson (arr).

Three titles were recorded for Keynote:

61-1	Russian Lullaby	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
61-2	Russian Lullaby	As above. (SM)
62-1	I Got Rhythm	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
62-2	I Got Rhythm	As above. (FM)
62-3	I Got Rhythm	As above. (FM)
63-1	Sing Something Simple	Solo 16 bars. (M)
63-2	Sing Something Simple	As above. (M)
63-3	Sing Something Simple	As above. (M)

What a wonderful performance! If we ever had to pick one 78 rpm. with JT for a desolate island, it would (maybe) be Keynote 1310 with "Russian Lullaby"! One of the most beautiful trumpet soli of the swing era!! It is said that JT had a very big reputation with his fellow musicians, although he did not achieve public renown. Why? Listen to this item! Note the cool/warm majestic opening six bars, the shocking 'kick' in bar seven, to continue with great ease for the rest of the solo. Ingenious! "I Got ..." has a very good solo of the typical staccato kind for this tempo. But, again, play "... Lullaby" for the Russians, bet they won't sleep but get peace in their minds. Postscript: The above was written when two items were available, now we have eight!!! Some attention should be given to the delicate arrangements. With regard to "Russian ...", as Dan Morgenstern states it "... Thomas, who is wonderful on the second take, merely great on the first". It has a fluff and no 'kick' and is worth listening to! The three versions of "I Got ..." are quite different. Finally, a completely new tune, "Sing ..." with three, hitherto unreleased trumpet soli, similar, yet slightly different in the details, study!!

JOE MARSALA & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 29, 1944**

Joe Thomas (tp), Joe Marsala (cl), Adele Girard (harp), Charlie Queener (p), Chuck Wayne (g), Irving Lang (b), Buddy Christian (dm), Linda Keene (vo-40,41).

Six titles were recorded for Black&White:

37	Romance	Duet with (cl) 64 bars (mute). Solo 14 bars (mute). In ens 16 bars. (FM)
38	Zero Hour	Solo 32 bars (mute). (FM)
39	Joe Joe Jump	Solo 48 bars. (F)
40	Unlucky Woman	Obbligato 12 and 8 bars (mute). (S)
41	Blues In The Storm	Solo 12 bars. (S)
42	Don't Let It End	Duet with (cl) 16+6 bars (mute), (cl) on bridge. Solo 16 bars (mute). (S)

Another very nice session. There are three definite highlights. One is the extremely nice duet with Marsala on the lovely "Romance". Even with a trumpet solo present, the duet is making the really lasting impression, rarely do we hear such good team work. Second is "... End", also with a nice duet, but best here is an utterly slow muted solo, reminding somewhat of Frankie Newton's works in this tempo. Third is the slow open hom on "... Storm", lovely! The other tracks have also good moments, for instance, the ultra fast "... Jump" features four blues choruses, surprisingly good. A session not to forget!

GEORGE WETTLING's NEW YORKERS **NYC. Dec. 12, 1944**

Joe Thomas (tp), Jack Teagarden (tb, vo-72,74), Hank d'Amico (cl), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Herman Chittison (p), Billy Taylor (b), George Wettling (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Keynote:

72-2	Home	In ens 16+8 bars, (tb) on bridge. Solo with ens 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge. (M)
72-4	Home	As above. (M)
73-1	Too Marvelous For Words	Solo 32 bars. In ens 16 bars. (F)

73-2	Too Marvelous For Words	Solo 32 bars. In ens 16+8 bars, (b) on bridge. (FM)
73-3	Too Marvelous For Words	Solo 16 bars, last half with (ts). Then as take 2. (FM)
74-1	You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me	Solo 8 bars to 8 bars in ens. (SM)
74-2	You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me	Solo 16 bars. In ens 8 bars. (SM)
75-1	Somebody Loves Me	In ens 32 bars. Solo 32 bars In ens 8 bars. (F)

This is a great swing session! Everybody's having a ball, and even if this is JT's solography, it must be allowed to mention the lovely trombone, tenorsax, piano and other contributions. JT has a magnificent solo on the 'usual' take of "You Brought ...", in just the right slow medium tempo for his style. The alternate take sounds somewhat like a rehearsal and is shorter. The trumpet solo though is very nice and quite different. In "Too Marvelous ...", another take should have been made! After 8 bars of trumpet, Hawkins tries to take over, probably by mistake. They salvage the take by making a duet out of the next 8 bars, and the trumpet playing on this item is very nice. Otherwise, note in particular the ensemble playing on this date. Usually that means a lot of people playing together in a mighty sound fog, and these sequences are as interesting as the soloing ones! In all, memorable!! Postscript: Also "Home" is very nice, majestic playing!! Two alternate takes of "... Words" are also worth noticing, a fluff on take 2 does not matter. Still wonder why they chose the take 3 for 78 rpm. issue.

BARNEY BIGARD & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Dec. 29, 1944**

Joe Thomas (tp), Barney Bigard (cl), Georgie Auld (as-55,56,58, ts-51-54,56,57), Leonard Feather (p-51-55), Cyril Haynes (p-56-58), Chuck Wayne (g), Billy Taylor (b), Stan Levey (dm), Etta Jones (vo-51-54).

Eight titles were recorded for Black&White:

51	Salty Papa Blues	Obbligato with ens 8 bars. (S)
52	Evil Gal Blues	Obbligato 8 and 8 bars. (S)
53	Blow Top Blues	Obbligato 4 and 6 bars. (S)
54	Long Long Journey	Obbligato 12 bars (mute). (SM)
55	Blues Before Dawn	Solo 8 bars (mute). (S)
56	Poon Tang	Solo 32 bars. (F)
57	Nine O'Clock Beer	Solo 16 bars. In ens (mute). (SM)
58	How Long Blues	In ens (mute). (M)

This is primarily a blues session. The first four sides, featuring Etta Jones, plus "... Dawn", are all blues in slow speed. They do not belong to the memorable kind, nor give JT opportunity to show off, but with patience one can have some pleasant moments when listening to the obligato parts. The highlight is the muted solo in "... Dawn". JT did not use the mute very often, but when he did, it was always to very good taste. Another nice slow medium solo in "Nine ...", plus a fast one in "Poon Tang" are worth mentioning, but there are other much more important sessions.

BARNEY BIGARD & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Dec. 1944?**

Joe Thomas (tp), Barney Bigard (cl), Chuck Wayne (g), Billy Taylor (b), Stan Levey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Selmer, "Poon Tang", "Rose Room", "A Lull At Dawn" and "Blues In Barney's Flat", not available.

BARNEY BIGARD SEXTET **NYC. Jan. 5, 1945**

Joe Thomas (tp), Barney Bigard (cl), Joe Thomas (ts, vo-65), Art Tatum (p), Billy Taylor (b), Stan Levey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Black&White:

63	Can't Help Loving That Man	Duet with (ts) 16+8 bars, (ts/p) on bridge. Solo with ens 8 bars. (S)
64	Please Don't Talk About Me WIG	32 bars 4/4 with (ts). (FM)
65	Sweet Marijuana Brown	Obbligato 16 bars. (M)
66	Blues For Art's Sake	Solo 12 bars. (S)

There is no doubt about what to remember from this date. Listen to the trumpet chorus on "... Art's Sake", and you'll know what I mean! The opening four bars are utterly expressive, yet so simple, so simple. The solo is another evidence of JT deserving a status among the very best. Interesting is the slow tempo of "... Man" with a good (tp)/(ts) duet, and, surprisingly, a chase on "Please...", but on the whole the remaining three items are more ordinary.

DON BYAS ALL STARS**NYC. Jan. 23, 1945**

Joe Thomas (tp), Don Byas (ts), Johnny Guarneri (p), Billy Taylor (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Jamboree:

7001	Pennies From Heaven	Duet with (ts) 32 and 8 bars. (M)
7002	Should I?	Soli 32, 4 and 4 bars. In ens 8 bars. (F)
7003	You Call It Madness	Solo 8 bars. (S)
7004	Jamboree Jump	Solo 32 bars. (M)

Being an eager fan of Don Byas, it is very easy to be happy about this session! JT's role, however, is good enough in itself, all items are very important. Perhaps "... Jump" is to be preferred, with a very attractive jumpy solo in a good medium tempo. On the other hand, the very beautiful slow solo in "... Madness" is not to be forgotten. Another night you will perhaps find the perfectly timed duet on "... Heaven" to be the thrill, featuring JT in lead with Byas giving nice variations, bringing memory back to the Pete Brown session's "It All Depends On You". At last, but not least, an exceptionally good, fast solo on "Should I?", plus even half a chorus of 4/4 chase. Remember this session!

BARNEY BIGARD QUINTET**NYC. Feb. 5, 1945**

Joe Thomas (tp), Barney Bigard (cl), Johnny Guarneri (p), Billy Taylor (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Keynote, no JT on 82 "Rose Room" but:

83	Bojangles	Solo 16 bars. (M)
84	Coquette	Solo 32 bars (mute). (M)
85	Borobudor	Solo 8 bars. (S)

Sometimes it is very difficult to understand the reason for rejected items. Why the beautiful, slow "Borobudor" had to wait thirty years before appearing in public seems to be a shame, particularly when JT has a sensitive open horn solo of the very best caliber here. In "Bojangles" he also plays quite nicely, as also in "Coquette", although he did not have to use that particularly sharp mute.

JOE MARSALA SEXTET**NYC. May 4, 1945**

Joe Thomas (tp), Joe Marsala (cl, vo-87), Adele Girard (harp), Charlie Queener (p), Chuck Wayne (g), Sid Weiss (b), Buddy Christian (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Musicraft, no JT on 5284 "Southern Comfort" but:

5285	Lover	Solo 16 bars (mute). (F)
5286	Don't Let It End	Solo 8 bars. In ens 8 bars (mute). (S)
5287	Gotta Be This Or That	Obbligato 8 bars (mute). Solo 8 bars. In ens 8 bars. (M)

This Marsala session is generally less interesting than the B&W one, and JT is not much featured. "... End" is certainly the best item with a very fine slow solo. Otherwise, we may notice the solo on "Gotta ...", while JT only plays the bridge rather straight in "Lover".

SANDY WILLIAMS BIG EIGHT**NYC. Nov. 5, 1945**

Joe Thomas (tp), Sandy Williams (tb), Johnny Hodges (as), Harry Carney (bar), Jimmy Jones (p), Brick Fleagle (g), Sid Weiss (b), Shelly Manne (dm).

Four titles were recorded for HRS, no JT on 1009 "Mountain Air" but:

1010	Sumpin' Jumpin' Round Here	Soli with ens 4, 4 and 12 bars. (M)
1011	After Hours On Dream Street	Solo 8 bars. (S)
1012	Chili Con Carne	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

The HRS sessions with Thomas have always seemed to be the borest among the most boring ones, dull arrangements and no swing at all. There is simply no possibility of making music come alive. Best is the slow "After Hours ...", but the

word ‘bombastic’ which never, never should be used in connection with JT’s artistry, manages to pop into one’s mind. “... Carney” is quite ordinary, and so are the arranged parts of “... Round Here”.

DAVE TOUGH QUINTET**NYC. Jan. 9, 1946**

Joe Thomas (tp), Ted Nash (ts), Bernie Leighton (p), Jack Lesberg (b), Dave Tough (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Jamboree:

7013	You Were Meant For Me	Duet with (ts) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars, last 4 in ens. (M)
7014	Love Walked In	Duet with (ts) 16 and 4 bars. (SM)
7015	When You’re Smiling	Duet with (ts) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F)
7016	East Of The Sun	Solo 16 bars. Duet with (ts) 4 bars. (SM)

The session does not function as well as it might have done, the rhythm section does not fit well together, more stamping than swinging. Too bad for the brilliant Dave Tough, who did not have so many sessions as a leader. However, there are some nice coplaying between JT and Nash, particularly in “You Were ...” and “Love ...”. The nicest solo is to be found on “East ...”, while “... Smiling” is much too fast to be quite successful.

JIMMY JONES BIG EIGHT**NYC. Jan. 10, 1946**

Joe Thomas (tp), Lawrence Brown (tb), Otto Hardwick (as), Ted Nash (ts), Harry Carney (bar), Jimmy Jones (p), Billy Taylor (b), Shelly Manne (dm).

Four titles were recorded for HRS:

1021	Old Juice On The Loose	Soli 6, 16 and 4 bars. (M)
1022	Departure From Dixie	Soli 4 and 8 bars. (M)
1023	A Woman’s Got A Right To Change	In ens. (S)
1024	Muddy Miss	Solo with ens 16 bars. (S)

Again a quite uninteresting session, at least in connection with trumpet studies. We hear some bits and pieces, and particularly “Muddy Miss” has something to say, but there are so many other sessions worth spending your time with.

TED NASH QUINTET**NYC. Jan. 25, 1946**

Joe Thomas (tp), Ted Nash (ts), Geoffrey Clarkson (p), Trigger Alpert (b), J. C. Heard (dm), Marie Bryant (vo-118).

Four titles were recorded for Keynote:

117	The Girl In My Dreams	Solo 8 bars. (S)
118	I’ve Got A Pocketful Of Dreams	Solo 24 bars. (M)
119	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	Solo 16 bars. Obbligato parts. (M)
120	Wicks Kicks	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

This Ted Nash/Joe Thomas cooperation seems to function better than the previous one, since the duets are replaced by soli, and being based upon a firm rhythm section. Here we get three well constructed and very worthy trumpet soli. The slow “... Girl” belongs among his very best in this tempo, and in “... Dreams” he seems extraordinarily eager to play, resulting in a very fine solo. “Wicks Kicks” is perhaps overshadowed by the other items but is still quite good. Postscript: After this was written, “... Sunny Side ...” appeared with a first class solo!!

JOE THOMAS BIG SIX**NYC. Feb. 15, 1946**

Joe Thomas (tp), Lem Davis (as), Ted Nash (ts), Jimmy Jones (p), Billy Taylor (b), Denzil Best (dm), Babe Matthews (vo-1025,26).

Four titles were recorded for HRS:

1025-2	No Better For Ya	Solo 16 bars. Obbligato 4 bars. (M)
1026-1	He’s Got So Much	Solo 12 bars (mute). (SM)
1027	Riff Street	Solo 32 bars. (F)
1028	A Touch Of Blue	Solo 8 bars. (S)

As said earlier, the HRS sessions have an undefinable atmosphere of non-swing. However, if one manages to shut everything but Babe’s singing and JT’s trumpet out, there are certainly some good moments here. Particularly on “... So Much”,

the best item on the session, he has a muted solo which ranks among his very best ones.

HARRY CARNEY'S BIG EIGHT

NYC. March 18, 1946

Joe Thomas (tp), Lawrence Brown (tb), Otto Hardwick (as), Ted Nash (ts), Harry Carney (bar), Jimmy Jones (p), Billy Taylor (b), Jimmy Crawford (dm).
Four titles were recorded for HRS, 1029 "Minor Mirage", 1030 "Jamaica Rhumble", 1031 "Shadowy Sands", 1032 "Candy Cane", but no JT.

JOE THOMAS & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Aug. 16, 1946

Joe Thomas (tp), Tyree Glenn (tb), Hilton Jefferson (as), Jerry Jerome (ts), Bernie Leighton (p), Hy White (g), Billy Taylor (b), Lee Abrams (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Keynote:

164	You Can Depend On Me	Solo with ens 32 bars. Solo 16 bars, last half with ens. (FM)
165	Pocatello	Solo 32 bars. Solo with ens 16 bars. (FM)
166	Black Butterfly	Solo with ens 16+8 bars, (as) on bridge. Solo with ens 16 bars to coda. (SM)
167	She Didn't Say Yes	Soli with ens 20 and 20 bars. (M)

In a way, this is the final session. Of course it isn't, there are several more to come. The point is that eight years elapse until the next one, and then we are in another era, post swing is then replaced by mainstream. JT's activities then seem to be quite another piece of cake and have to be considered on other premises. These items are the last examples of the young Joe Thomas, the master of trumpet playing, one of the strongest and most original voices in swing jazz. Happily, this session is one of his very finest. He takes up much of the solo space for himself, but it is never enough! The least important item is "She Didn't ...", but even this one has nice trumpet. However, in "You Can Depend ..." and "Pocatello", he flies with high colours in a pleasant medium tempo. Full ripe sound, with authority, and everything in full control, almost like he knew what was coming. Then, unforgettable, "Black Butterfly", a last slow medium song, and then oblivion?

BANDS FOR BONDS SHOW

NYC. April 8, 1950

Joe Thomas, Max Kaminsky (tp), Wilbur De Paris, Munn Ware (tb), Edmond Hall, Sol Yaged (cl), Ralph Sutton (p), Herb Ward (b), Arthur Trappier (dm).
Broadcast, eight titles, no JT on "St. Louis Blues" and "Caravan" but:

Sugar (Introduction)	Solo 4 bars. (S)
Sweet Georgia Brown	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
C Jam Blues	Solo 24 bars. (M)
Jelly Roll	In ens. (M)
Don't Blame Me	Solo 30 bars to coda. (S)
Bugle Call Rag	Solo 12 bars. (FM)

No, it wasn't oblivion! Hiding in Dixieland, yes, but still in excellent shape. There are many to share the bandstand here, but JT does not miss his opportunities. Particularly his slow solo feature "Don't Blame Me" is a beautiful work, showing that four "empty" years have not lessened his power. Only too bad he only gets an introductory chorus, the item is less than two minutes in duration.

Postscript of Jan. 4, 2020: Finally, after so much trouble: The session listed as: TAMARA HAYES, recorded NYC. June 1, 1951 with the following personnel: Joe Thomas (tp, ldr), Ellis Larkins (p), Tamara Hayes (vo) and others, turned out to be a great disappointment. Two titles, "Tonight You Belong To Me" and "These Things I Offer You" were recorded for Decca 27650, but in fact this is a group by vocalist JOEY THOMAS. The error could have saved me many sleepless nights.

JAZZ AT CENTRAL PLAZA

NYC. Feb. 9, 1952

Joe Thomas (tp), "Big Chief" Russell Moore (tb), Sol Yaged (cl), Willie "The Lion" Smith (p, vo), Arthur Trappier (dm).
Broadcast, three titles, no JT on "After You've Gone" and "Fingerbustin" but:

Bill Bailey	Intro with (dm), later abundantly in ens. (F)
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NYC. March 16, 1952

Same. Eight titles, no JT on "Morning Air" but.

Way Down Yonder In NO (Intro)	In ens. (FM)
Royal Garden Blues	In ens. Solo 36 bars. (FM)

At The Jazz Band Ball	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (M)
Black And Blue	Solo with ens 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge. Solo 8 bars to coda. (S)
C Jam Blues	Solo 24 bars. In ens 24 bars. (F)
Don't Blame Me	Long intro to solo 16+24 bars, (p) on first bridge to coda. (S)
When The Saints Go Marchin'	Solo 16 bars. In ens. (FM)

Not the very best of recording quality and not always tailored to show JT's artistry, but there are many good moments here. Again, "Don't Blame Me", together with another slow tune, "Black And Blue", get most of the attention, in this tempo JT's trumpet is as moving as ever. However, one should not forget many good contributions on the faster tunes, like "... Ball".

WINI BROWN

NYC. March 1952

Personnel listed in discographies: Joe Thomas (tp), Bill Doggett (p), Billy Taylor (p), Eddie Safranski (b), Don Lamond (dm), Wini Brown (vo), The Boy Friends (vo-group), Joe Reisman (arr, cnd). However, there is no trace of any (tp) but there is a (ts) instead, so possibly Joe Thomas (ts)?

Three titles were recorded for Mercury, two issued: "Be Anything" and "Heaven Knows Why".

JOE THOMAS QUINTET WITH BABE MATTHEWS

NYC. 1953

Joe Thomas (tp), Lem Davis (as), Ken Kersey (p), Billy Taylor (b), J. C. Heard (dm), Babe Matthews (vo-1377-79).

Four titles were recorded for Seeco:

1377	No Better For Ya	Solo 16 bars. Coda with (vo). (M)
1378	Smilin' To Myself	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (M)
1379	Lost In A Dream	Obbligato 16 bars. (S)
1380	Back Home Again In Indiana	Solo 64 bars, first half in ens. In ens 32 bars. (F)

"... Indiana" is played in an unusually fast tempo, but JT manages pretty well with his economical way of playing. However, "No Better ..." is more along the lines we enjoy so much, and this version is better both for Joe and Babe than the HRS version. The two other sides are not quite that interesting, but there is some very nice obbligato on "Lost ...".

BUCK CLAYTON JAM SESSION

NYC. March 31, 1954

Buck Clayton, Joe Thomas (tp), Urbie Green, Trummy Young (tb), Woody Herman (cl), Lem Davis (as), Al Cohn, Julian Dash (ts), Jimmy Jones (p), Steve Jordan (g), Walter Page (b), Jo Jones (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Columbia:

51243-2	How Hi The Fi?	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
51243-5	How Hi The Fi?	As above. (FM)
51244-3	Blue Moon	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
51244-3	Jumpin' At The Woodside	No solo.

These are good soli! In "How ..." he plays triumphantly, stronger and with sharper sound than usual, compared to previous years. "Blue Moon" has mellow first eight, then changes to a very forceful attack. It is now much easier to understand why Joe Thomas has been called a Louis Armstrong disciple. Postscript: The alternate of "How Hi ..." is much inferior to the earlier issued version.

JAZZ FROM NEW YORK

NYC. Nov. 1, 1957

Joe Thomas (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Buster Bailey (cl), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Al Williams (p), Benny Moten (b), Eddie Bourne (dm).

Two titles:

J. C. Jumps	Solo 24 bars. (F)
Bill Bailey	In ens 32 bars. Soli 64 and 32 bars. (F)

These are fine soli, the style is still the well known one. Particularly the long solo on "Bill Bailey" has the majestic touch so appreciated. Unfortunately the embouchure is not what it used to be. The last blues chorus on "J. C. Jumps" and the last fourth of "Bill..." are badly marred by technique not being equal to ideas.

REX STEWART & THE HENDERSON ALL STARS NYC. Nov. 1957

Rex Stewart (cnt), Emmett Berry, Taft Jordan, Joe Thomas (tp), J. C. Higginbotham, Benny Morton, Dicky Wells (tb), Buster Bailey (cl), Garvin Bushell, Hilton Jefferson (as), Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster (ts), Haywood Henry (bar), Red Richards (p), Al Casey (g), Bill Pemberton (b), Jimmy Crawford (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Jazztone:

Sugarfoot Stomp	Solo 12 bars (2 nd (tp)-solo). (FM)
King Porter Stomp	Part of intro 2 bars (2 nd (tp)). Solo 32 bars (3 rd (tp)-solo). (FM)

NYC. Nov. 29, 1957

Same except Dick Vance (tp), Norman Thornton (bar) replace Berry and Henry. Three titles, no JT on "The Way She Walks" but:

Honeysuckle Rose	Solo 32 bars (2 nd (tp)-solo). (FM)
Wrappin' It Up	Solo 32 bars (2 nd (tp)-solo). (FM)

The best item is, to my taste, "... Up", a colorful but pensive solo of high quality. "... Stomp" and "... Stomp" are also good, while "... Rose" seems to be rather lame and unconcentrated.

REX STEWART & THE HENDERSON ALUMNI NYC. Aug. 1, 1958

Rex Stewart (cnt), Allen Smith, Joe Thomas, Paul Webster, Taft Jordan (tp), Benny Morton, Dicky Wells, Jim Comegys (tb), Hilton Jefferson, Garvin Bushell (cl, as), Buddy Tate, Bob Wilber (ts), Dick Cary (E-Flat horn), Haywood Henry (bar), Red Richards (p), Chauncey Westbrook (g), Bill Pemberton (b), Mousie Alexander (dm), Big Miller (vo-"Hello ...").

Five titles were recorded live at the Great South Bay Jazz Festival, one has JT:

D Natural Blues	Solo 12 bars. (M)
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Only one brief solo on the whole LP and not particularly noteworthy as such.

TONY SCOTT & THE ALL STARS NYC. Aug. 6, 1958

Joe Thomas (tp), Wilbur de Paris, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Pee Wee Russell, Tony Scott (cl), Sonny White (p), Al Casey (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Denzil Best (dm). Two titles were recorded for Coral, no JT on "Love Is Just Around The Corner" but:

105428	Blues For The Street	Solo 24 bars. In ens 12 bars. (S)
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This is quite a surprise! Being far from retired, JT brings forth two magnificent blues choruses in a lovely tempo. The creative power has not diminished at all, contrary to common belief. A small fluff in the second chorus does not matter at all, this is great trumpet!!

JOE THOMAS & HIS ALL STAR GROUP NYC. Oct. 27, 1958

Joe Thomas, Johnny Letman (tp), Dicky Wells (tb), Buster Bailey (cl), Buddy Tate (ts), Herbie Nichols (p), Everett Barksdale (g), Bill Pemberton (b), Jimmy Crawford (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Atlantic:

3174	Sweethearts On Parade	Solo 32 bars (mute). In ens 40 bars. (M)
3175	Blues For Baby	Soli 12 and 24 bars. (S)
3176	I Can't Believe TYILWM	Soli 32 and 32 bars to ens. (M)
3177	Crazy Rhythm	Solo with ens 16+8 bars to coda, (cl) on bridge. (FM)

A good and typical mainstream session. Though being leader, JT shares solo space very kindly with the others. Generally JT introduces and concludes the items, with Johnny Letman in the middle (there should be no identity problems). JT's best track is "Blues ...", this tempo is bound to succeed. Also the second, Armstrong inspired, solo on "... Love" is a strong contribution. "Sweethearts ..." and "Crazy ..." are more ordinary.

COLEMAN HAWKINS & HIS ALL STARS NYC. Jan. 8, 1960

Joe Thomas (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Wendell Marshall (b), Osie Johnson (dm, tmb-1975).

Five titles were recorded for Swingville:

1973	You Blew Out The Flame	Solo 32 bars. (M)
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1974	I'm Beginning To See The Light	Solo 32 bars. (M)
1975	More Bounce To The Vonce	Solo 72 bars. (M)
1976	Cool Blue	Solo 32 bars (mute). (SM)
1977	Some Stretching	Solo 100 bars. (FM)

I am not too fond of this session, the rhythm section is modern and not at all fit for JT. He is best on mute, and apart from a fluffy opening also strong and good on "... Light". Otherwise it is more ordinary stuff, "More ..." has six blues choruses and "Some ..." three choruses of standard, with a tag.

BUTTERBEANS & SUSIE **NYC. March 15, 1960**
Susie and Joe Edwards (vo) accompanied by Joe Thomas (tp), Benny Morton (tb), Gene Sedric (as), Eddie Heywood (p), Leonard Gaskin (b), Jimmy Crawford (dm). Four titles were recorded for Festival, three issued, but no JT.

The vocalists, an old time comedy team from the 1920's, are the whole story here.

CLAUDE HOPKINS & HIS ALL STARS **NYC. Feb. 21, 1961**
Joe Thomas (tp), Buddy Tate (cl-2880, ts), Claude Hopkins (p), Wendell Marshall (b), J. C. Heard (dm).
Seven titles were recorded for Swingville, no JT on 2882 "I Surrender Dear" but:

2879	Safari Stomp	Acc. (ts) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. (FM)
2880	Late Evening	Solo 24 bars (mute). (S)
2881	The Way You Look Tonight	Soli 16 and 32 bars. (M)
2883	I Would Do Anything For You	Solo 32 bars. In ens. (M)
2884	Offbeat Blues	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
2885	I Apologize	Acc. (ts) 32 and 8 bars. (S)

An enormous improvement to the Hawkins session. JT plays superbly all over, from the fast medium swinger "Safari ..." to the most sensitive, muted and slow "... Evening". His coplaying with Tate on "I Apologize" shall also be highly recommended, no problem with the chops here! Note also the surprising way he treats "The Way...".

THE SWINGVILLE ALL STARS **NYC. May 19, 1961**
Joe Thomas (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), Pee Wee Russell (cl), Al Sears, Buddy Tate (ts), Cliff Jackson (p), Danny Barker (g), Joe Benjamin (b), J. C. Heard (dm).
Six titles were recorded for Swingville, no JT on 3043 "Vic's Spot" but:

3037	Things Ain't What They Used To Be	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
3038	So Glad	Soli 32, 4, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
3040	I May Be Wrong	Solo 16+8 bars, (tb) on bridge. Solo 16 bars. In ens 16+8 bars to coda, (tb) on bridge. (SM)
3041	Phoenix	Solo 32 bars. (M)
3042	Years Ago	Solo 24 bars (mute). In ens 24 bars. (S)

A fine rhythm section makes a fine creative atmosphere, but the session does not get top colors to my taste. One reason is corny melodies like "So Glad" and "Phoenix", here JT does not seem inspired and also fluffs. However, in slow medium tempo and below, things improve substantially. "Years Ago" has a very fine muted solo, and must probably be considered the best item, together with the lovely open "I May ...". For a nice detail, listen to the first half trumpet chorus on "Things ..."!

JOE THOMAS **Newport, Rh. I., July 1, 1964**
Joe Thomas (tp), J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Peanuts Hucko (cl), George Wein (p), Bob Haggart (b), Jo Jones (dm).
Two titles were recorded live at Newport Jazz Festival, no JT on "Dear Old Southland" (solo feature for JCH) but:

I'm In The Mood For Love Soli 32 and 16 bars to coda. (S)

Is this the end then? We thought it was, and if so it seemed to be a fitting sortie. JT's roots seem to protrude in later years, and the debt to Louis is very evident here. As a whole, the piece is not too exciting, the playing is rather straight and 'pretty'. However, it is personal in the best sense of the word. Now, how can it be both personal and in debt to Louis? But why, that's the enchantment of jazz, has always been and will always be! There will never be another Joe!!

JAM SESSION **Newport, Rh. I., July 2, 1964**

Joe Thomas, Muggsy Spanier, Wingy Manone (tp), Lou McGarity, J. C. Higginbotham (tb), Edmond Hall, Peanuts Hucko (cl), Bud Freeman (ts), George Wein (p), Slam Stewart (b), Jo Jones (dm).

One title was recorded live at Newport Jazz Festival:

That's A Plenty Solo 32 bars (1st (tp)-solo). (F)

Nice start but the tempo is too high for him.

BENNY CARTER ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 2, 1972**

Jimmy Nottingham, Carl Warwick, Joe Thomas, Taft Jordan, Harry Edison (tp), Benny Morton, Tyree Glenn, Dicky Wells, Quentin Jackson (tb), Benny Carter, Earl Warren, Howard Johnson (as), Budd Johnson, Buddy Tate (ts), Haywood Henry (cl, bar), Teddy Wilson (p), Bernard Addison (g), Milt Hinton (b), Jo Jones (dm).

Seven titles were recorded in Carnegie Hall at "Newport Jazz Festival in New York 1972", "Honeysuckle Rose", "Doozy", "Blues For Beginners", "The Juke Box", "I Can't Get Started" and "You Are" have no JT, but:

Sleep Solo with orch 16 bars. (F)

I was there when it happened! However JT's solo on "Sleep" is very far from what he could do in his prime.

same

Maxine Sullivan (vo), Joe Thomas (tp), Benny Morton (tb), possibly others, with rhythm as above.

Five titles, no JT on "Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams" and "The Lady Is A Tramp" but:

I've Got The World On A String Weak obligato parts. (M)

I Gotta Right To Sing The Blues Weak obligato parts. (SM)

A Hundred Years From Today Weak obligato parts. (SM)

Very weakly recorded collective obligato parts and only of academic interest, if any.

VIC DICKENSON **NYC. Feb. 15, 1974**

Joe Thomas (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), Scoville Brown (cl, as), Red Richards (p), Bill Pemberton (b), Oliver Jackson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for RCA Victor:

Then I'll Be Tired Of You Solo 8 bars. Solo 8 bars (mute). (S)

Out Of Nowhere Solo 32 bars (mute). (SM)

You Gave Me The Blues Solo 24 bars. (SM)

Do You Ever Think Of Me? Solo 32 bars (mute). (M)

This solography never seems to end! Hope it never will be complete. JT seems tired here, but to me it is a happy tiredness. Listen to his open solo on "... Tired ...", can trumpet be played more moving than this? "... Nowhere" is the weakest item, JT's staccato style is not helped by the fact that the rhythm section also tries to play staccato! Regarding "... Blues" I can truly say that he does not play significantly below the standard of the golden year of 1944. And and at last: "Do You Ever Think Of Me?". A most appropriate conclusion, we are proud to say YES!!

JOE THOMAS **NYC. June 14, 1974**

Joe Thomas (tp), Herb Hall (cl-"Medley", "Crazy ..."), Rudy Powell (as), Jimmy Andrews (p), Mike Burgevin (dm).

Recorded by Michael Steinmann (swingyoucats) at "Brew's" on 156 East 34th Street, four titles:

Where Or When Duet with (as). (SM)

I May Be Wrong Soli 32 and 8 bars. (M)

Medley: I Cover The Waterfront Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)

Crazy Rhythm In ens 32 bars to solo 32 bars.
In ens 64 bars to coda. (FM)

Postscript of Jan. 16, 2024: No the Dickenson session was not JT's last! This session turned up today, a great surprise and pleasure!! JT is in excellent shape and blows more or less as in the old days, both in swinging tempo and in the beautiful ballad "... Waterfront", much better than one might expect!! Made my day!!

No further recording sessions.

Late history:

Ill health curtailed his music activities. However, he was an up-and-going man, a good friend, until he passed away.

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