

The
TENORSAX
of
JOHN GILMORE

Solographers: James Accardi and Jan Evensmo
Last update: April 12, Oct. 11, 2021

Born: Summit, Mississippi, Sept. 28, 1931
 Died: Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, Aug. 20, 1995

Introduction:

I don't remember Oslo Jazz Circle having played a single record with Sun Ra in the fifties and sixties, and for my own sake, it was the Clifford Jordan / John Gilmore session for Blue Note that made me listen more closely. We should have had some better developed curiosity.

History:

Studied clarinet in Chicago from the age of 14, and performed in bands while in the air force (1948-51). In 1952 he played tenor saxophone briefly with Earl Hines in a travelling show organized around the basketball team the Harlem Globetrotters, then the following year joined Sun Ra. Apart from a period with Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers (1964-65), he remained a member of the Sun Ra's band, often serving as a drummer. Members of the avant garde have credited JC as the first to produce the sustained, screaming type of improvisation in the upper register of the tenor saxophone that became integral to the style of John Coltrane, Pharaoh Sanders and others in the mid-1960s (ref. New Grove Dictionary of Jazz).

JOHN GILMORE TENORSAX SOLOGRAPHY

JAM SESSION**Chi. 1954**

Art Farmer, Ira Sullivan (tp), John Gilmore, Eddie Harris (ts), unidentified (p), Wilbur Ware (b), Wilbur Campbell (dm).

Recorded at Roosevelt College (James Accardi Collection), one title:

11:29 There Will Never Be Another You (NC) Solo 3 choruses of
32 bars (1st (ts)-solo). (M)

Postscript of April 2021: An exciting jam session has been excavated! Although some parts are missing, the general sound is quite good. Very good soloing by all participants, and since this seems to be JG's first recorded solo, the item has particular interest. He plays modern tenorsax fluently and coherently, even better than one might expect from the still quite young artist.

SUN RA**Chi. Fall 1955**

Herman "Sun Ra" Blount (Wurlitzer ep, ldr), Julian Priester (tb), John Gilmore (ts), Pat Patrick (bar), Richard Evans (b), Robert Barry (dm).

Unissued Jimmie Davis 78 rpm. acetate, "Unidentified Title" (two takes) have Sun Ra only, but the following have full personnel:

3:55 Out Of Nowhere Solo 32 bars. (M)

Postscript of June 29, 2020: A very interesting item (also including a baritonesax solo in addition to the leader)! The sound quality camouflages a lot, but the tenorsax solo sounds fresh and inspired in a mixture of old traditions and new ideas.

LE SUN RA & HIS ARKISTRA**Chi. ca. March 22, 1956**

Personnel for JG items: Sun Ra (p), Art Hoyle (tp), Julian Priester (tb), John Gilmore (ts), Laurdine "Pat" Patrick (bar), Wilburn Green (b), Robbert Barry (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Saturn at Balkan Studio, no tenorsax on "Medicin For A Nightmare" (two takes) and "Advice To Medics" but:

Super Blonde Solo 12 bars. (FM)

Soft Talk Solo 34 bars. (FM)

Big surprise to have a new, modern tenorsax player, though yet unfinished, to enter the jazz scene with such conviction and inspiration! These recordings have more straightforward jazz blowing than later "space-vehicles"!

BILLIE HAWKINS VOCAL ACC. BY**SUN RA AND HIS ORCHESTRA****Chi. probably April 1956**

Personnel similar to below.

Rehearsal session, four titles, "I'm Coming Home", "Last Call For Love", "Kiss Me Sweet" and "At Last", but no tenorsax soli.

Chi. April/May 1956

Art Hoyle, Dave Young (tp), Julian Priester (tb), Pat Patrick (as, bar), John Gilmore (ts), Herman Blount alias Sun Ra (p, el-p, arr), Wilburn Green (el-b), Robert Barry (dm), Jim Herndon (tymp).

Two titles were recorded for Heartbeat, "I'm Coming Home" and "Last Call For Love", but no tenorsax soli.

LE SUN RA & HIS ARKISTRA**Chi. May 16, 1956**

Sun Ra (Wurlitzer ep, p), Art Hoyle (tp), Julian Priester (tb), John Gilmore (ts), Laurdine "Pat" Patrick (bar), Wilburn Green (b), Robert Barry (dm), Jim Herndon (tymp).

Seven titles were recorded for Saturn at RCA Studios, no JG on "Medicin For A Nightmare" and "Velvet" but:

Demon's Lullaby Solo 12 bars. (FM)

Saturn Solo 32 bars. (F)

Umack Soli 8 and 32 bars. (F)

A Call For All Demons Solo 12 bars. (M)

Supersonic Jazz Solo 12 bars. (FM)

The good impression from the March session is sustained here, five exciting tenorsax soli!

SUN RA**Chi. July 12, 1956**

Art Hoyle, Dave Young (tp, bells), Julian Priester (tb, chimes, arr), James Scales (as), John Gilmore (ts, woodlocks), Pat Patrick (bar, bells), Sun Ra (p, org), Richard Evans (b), Wilburn Green (el-b, tamb), Robert Barry (dm, bells), Jim Herndon (tymp, timb, bells), Eutrice U. Shell (arr).

Fourteen titles recorded for Transition, eleven issued on Delmark DD-411 as "Sun Song", no JG on "Street Named Hell", "New Horizons", "Sun Song" and "Delight" but:

Brainville	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
A Call For All Demons (NC)	No solo.
A Call For All Demons	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
Transition	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Possession	Solo with orch 32 and 44 bars to coda. (S)
Lullaby For Realville	Solo 12 bars. (M)
Future (NC)	No solo?
Future	Soli 8 and 64 bars. (F)
Swing A Little Taste	Solo with ens 20 bars. (M)
Fall Off The Log	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Delilah	With ens. Solo 16 bars. (S)

Sun Ra's music is a topic in itself, and courageous is the one who dares to venture into an analysis of the life and production of this exciting but controversial musician and composer. These early performances are however not at all "far out"; original arrangements but conventional post-bebop soloing. JG is the most interesting soloist and is rendering several straightforward, good tenorsax soli in the 32 and 12 bars traditions. Most noteworthy are his slow feature number "Possession" and his uptempo "Future", dig these!

SUN RA**Chi. Nov. 21, 1956**

Art Hoyle (tp, perc), Pat Patrick (as, perc), John Gilmore (ts, perc), Charles Davis (bar, perc), Sun Ra (p, el-p, space gong(!)), Victor Sproles (b), William Cochran (dm), Jim Herndon (tymp, perc).

Seven titles were recorded for Saturn at RCA Vicor Studi, issued on Evidence CD 22015, only one has tenorsax solo:

Blues At Midnight	Solo 13 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
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This solo is possibly JG's most important one till now, a series of fine, swinging, modern blues choruses!

SUN RA**Chi. ca. Dec. 1, 1956**

Art Hoyle (tp, perc), Dave Young (tp), John Avant (tb), Pat Patrick (as, bar, perc), John Gilmore (ts, perc), Charles Davis (bar, perc), Sun Ra (p, el-p), Victor Sproles (b), William Cochran (dm), Jim Herndon (tymp, timb), Clyde Williams (vo-"... True", "... Once Were").

Twelve titles were recorded for Saturn at Universal Recording, many issued on Evidence CDs 22039 and 22014 and Delmark 414. "El Is The Sound Of Joy", "Overtones Of China", "Eve", "Two Tones", "Paradise", "Planet Earth", "El Viktor" and "Ankh" have no tenorsax soli, but:

Reflections In Blue	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
Reflections In Blue	As above. (M)
Saturn	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Dreams Come True (tk1)	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Dreams Come True (tk2)	As above. (M)
Dreams Come True (tk4)	As above. (FM)
Dreams Come True (tk5)	As above. (FM)
As You Once Were	Solo 16 bars. (S)

Nothing complicated with this session, fine modern mainstream! JG takes his share of soli in a variety of tempi, good but rather brief. Particularly interesting is "Dreams

...” with notable different tempi. Note also the fine baritone sax soli on the Sun Ra sessions!

CLIFFORD JORDAN - JOHN GILMORE Hackensack, NJ., March 3, 1957
John Gilmore, Clifford Jordan (ts), Horace Silver (p), Curley Russell (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Seven titles were recorded at Rudy Van Gelder Studio for Blue Note, issued as "Blowing In From Chicago":

tk2	Evil Eye	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars (last (ts)-solo). 4 choruses 4/4 with CJ. (M)
tk3	Status Quo	Solo 64 bars (1 st (ts)-solo). Soli 4 and 4 bars. (F)
tk5	Let It Stand	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars (2 nd (ts)-solo). (FM)
tk7	Bo-Till	Solo 64 bars (last (ts)-solo). (M)
tk9	Everywhere	Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars (1 st (ts)-solo). (FM)
tk12	Blue Lights	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars (1 st (ts)-solo). (M)
tk13	Billie's Bounce	Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars (1 st (ts)-solo). Soli 4, 4 and 4 bars. (F)

One may be an avid fan of Sun Ra, but in my opinion here is where JG belongs! Although he gets a lot of opportunities with the "Arkestra", this session is what modern jazz of the fifties is all about!! Six brilliant JG items, part of tenorsax history, only "Let It ..." is of less interest with regard to JG. To choose a particular highlight is not easy, but maybe the surging minor blues of "... Lights" is it, or "Evil ..." being also the only item with a real 4/4 chase. Only too bad we don't get a ballad. If JG had given us only this recording date, he would still be listed among the great tenorsax ones.

YOCHANAN – THE SPACE AGE VOCALIST Chi. probably 1957

Sun Ra (p), John Gilmore (ts), probably Victor Sproles (b), probably Robert Bany (dm), Yochanan (vo).

Studio recordings, four titles, no JG on "Muck Muck" (two takes) but:

Hot Skillet Mama	Obbligato parts. (FM)
Hot Skillet Mama (alt.)	As above. (FM)
Rocket Ship Rocket	Obbligato parts. Solo 24 bars. (FM)
Is That Me?	Intro 16 bars. Obbligato parts. (M)

Quite untypical Sun Ra production, but raw Chicago r&b has its charm, and JG executes "... Rocket" accordingly. "Is That ..." is also nice.

SUN RA

Chi. late 1957/early 1958

Personnel similar to those of the period.

Four titles from Saturn rehearsal sessions, issued on Evidence CDs 22039 and 22164, "Hours After" (mid-1958), "Great Balls Of Fire" (Aug./Sept. 1958), "Planet Earth", and "Overtones Of China" (late 1957/early 1958), but no tenorsax soli.

SUN RA & HIS RAYS OF JAZZ

Chi. 1958

Sun Ra (p), Marshall Allen (fl, as), John Gilmore (ts), unknown (elg), (b), (dm), Clyde Williams (vo).

Three titles were recorded live at Budland:

'S Wonderful	In ens. (F)
Roll 'Em Pete	In ens. (M)
My Funny Valentine	In ens. (S)

Bad sound, the vocalist can almost not be heard, and while there is a tenorsax player present, nothing of interest.

THE COSMIC RAYS WITH THE SUN RA ARKESTRA **Chi. 1958**

The Cosmic Rays: Calvin Barron, Matt Swift, Lonnie Tolbert, unidentified (vo), with Sun Ra (Wurlitzer ep), E. J. Turner (tp), Marshall Allen (fl), James Spaulding (as), John Gilmore (ts), Charles Davis (bar), Ronnie Boykins (b), Robert Barry (dm), Jim Herndon (timp), Pat Patrick (space lute).

Rehearsals, five titles, "Somebody's In Love", "Bye Bye", "Black Sky And Blue Moon", "Honey" and "Come Rain Or Come Shine", but no tenorsax soli.

**THE SUPREMES WITH
SUN RA & HIS RAYS OF JAZZ**

Chi. 1958

Marshall Allen (fl, as), John Gilmore (ts), Sun Ra (p), Ronnie Boykins (b), The Supremes (vo-group).

One title was recorded at Budland:

Everybody Mambo	Straight/riffs. (SM)
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SUN RA ARKESTRA

Chi. Sept. 23, 1958

Sun Ra (p, Solovox), Marshall Allen fl, as), John Gilmore (ts), Pat Patrick (cl, bar), BeBop Sam Thomas (g), Ronnie Boykins (b), unknown (dm).

Five titles were recorded at Budland:

Just One Of Those Things	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Sophisticated (Swinging Shepard) Blues	Solo 33 bars. (S)
Will You Still Be Mine?	Solo 2 choruss of 56 bars. (F)
Tequila	In ens. (M)
Medicine For A Nightmare (Theme)	No solo.

Informal and swinging sessions here with three highly noteworthy tenorsax soli, particularly "... Things" in a very fast tempo is remarkable, as well as a lovely slow blues, where Ra is so impatient that he breaks up the last chorus.

SUN RA & HIS MYTH SCIENCE ARKESTRA

Chi. 1958

Sun Ra (p), Lucius Randolph (tp), Nate Pryor (tb), James Spaulding, Marshall Allen (as), John Gilmore (ts), Pat Patrick, Charles Davis (bar), Ronnie Boykins (b), Robert Barry (dm), Jim Herndon (timb, perc).

Rehearsal session, one title:

Star Time	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Breaks. (FM)
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Chi. 1958/1959

Same/similar. Several recording sessions for Saturn, issued on Evidence CDs 22039, 22066 and 22164, of the many titles, only has tenorsax solo:

Plutonian Nights	Solo 36 bars. (SM)
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Excellent tenorsax soli here, some of the best JG with Ra of the fifties, brilliant technique and surprising details, dig these!

SUN RA & HIS ARKESTRA

Chi. March 6, 1959

Hobart Dotson (tp), Bo Bailey (tb), James Spaulding, Marshall Allen (fl, as), John Gilmore (ts, perc), Pat Patrick (fl, bar, perc), Charles Davis (bar), Sun Ra (p, cel), Ronnie Boykins (b), William Cochran (dm).

Sixteen titles were recorded for Saturn, twelve issued on Evidence CD 22012 and 22014, no tenorsax on "Hours After", "Enlightenment", "Ancient Aiethopia", "Round Midnight", "Hour Of Parting", "Back In Your Own Backyard", "I Could Have Danced All Night", "Interstellar Low Ways" and "Spontaneous Simplicity" but:

Horoscope	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Images	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Images alt.	As above. (M)
Blues At Midnight	Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
Saturn	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Velvet	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
You Never Told Me That You Care	Solo with ens 18 bars. (M)

Ankhaton

Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Some very interesting JG items can be found here. Foremost is a new, faster and longer version of “Blues ...”. Then a colourful solo on “Saturn” and fine swinging “Velvet”, “Horoscope” and “Images”. It seems that JG is more confident now compared to the first Sun Ra sessions. Why he chose to stay with Sun Ra for the rest of his life is not easy to understand, he could have been a prominent and well known tenorsax performer among the best ones. But he might have been thinking similarly to Harry Carney; Duke was the safest place to make a living. So was Sun Ra.

SUN RA**Chi. 1960**

Sun Ra (p), Phil Cochran (cnt), Marshall Allen (fl, as), John Gilmore (ts), Ronnie Boykins (b), possibly Robert Barry (dm).

Three titles, recorded live:

Big City Blues

Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

Delilah

In ens. (S)

Velvet

Solo 2:38. (F)

Two very interesting items here; a series of blues choruses on “Big City ...” and somelong and very fast blowing on “Velvet”.

SUN RA**Chi. 1960**

George Hudson (tp), Marshall Allen (fl, as), John Gilmore (ts), Sun Ra (p, el-p, perc), Ronnie Boykins (b), Jon Hardy (dm), Ricky Murray (vo).

Seven titles were recorded at the Wonder Inn, issued on Atavistic, four have JG:

Space Aura

Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

‘S Wonderful

Solo 32 bars. (FM)

It Ain’t Necessarily So

Solo 24 bars. (SM)

How High The Moon

Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

This session seems to have taken place in a garage with live audience, and the sound is therefore not the best, but JG can be heard clearly most of the time. It is only natural that I find tunes that are familiar and from old times most interesting, because only then it is possible to have an opinion on how the improvisations are formed. “How High ...” is then an interesting example, going fast, but I am not very impressed, finding little coherence, although it is quite possible to follow the melody through the five choruses. Bypassing “Space...”, “... Wonderful” and “... Necessarily ...” are also easy to follow, but the playing is so staccato, wonder why, because JG knows so much better.

SUN RA**Chi. 1960**

Phil Cochran (cnt), Marshall Allen (fl, as), Gene Easton (as), John Gilmore (ts), Ronald Wilson (bar), Sun Ra (p), Ronnie Boykins (b), Robert Barry (dm).

Ten titles were recorded at Majestic Hall (possibly May 28), issued on Atavistic, three have JG:

Possession

Solo/straight with orch 32 bars.
Long closing solo. (S)

Majestic 2

Solo. (M)

Majestic 4

Solo. (F)

The sound is even worse here, but “Possession” is quite interesting with a soft start and a colourful stop-time-like ending. In the others he is drowned by noise.

SUN RA**Milwaukee, Wisconsin, June 14, 1960**

Phil Cochran (tp, cnt, vo, zither), Nate Pryor (tb, bells), Marshall Allen (fl, as, bells, vo), John Gilmore (cl, ts, perc, vo), Sun Ra (p, bells, perc), Ronnie Boykins (b, vo), Jon Hardy (dm, perc).

Twentyfour titles were recorded for Saturn at Elk’s Hall, issued on various Evidence CDs, ten have JG:

Ankhaton

Solo 16 bars. (M)

But Not For Me

Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Coda. (FM)

I Loves You Porgy

Solo 16 bars. (S)

Body And Soul

Soli 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S)

Keep Your Sunny Side Up

Soli 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

State Street	Solo 16 bars. (M)
State Street alt.	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Big City Blues	Solo 12 bars. (M)
Velvet	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Somewhere In Space	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
Rocket Number Nine TOFTPV	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Fine mixture of music material on this maratón session. There are some flashing uptempo items like “Velvet”, “... Sunny Side ...” and “... Number Nine ...”, and it is obvious that JG is moving in the direction that will be called avant garde. The version of “But Not ...” is exciting and original. At the same time he can play softly and moving with both legs in an older tradition with “... Porgy” as a good and delightful example. He also has his own way of doing “Body ...”, blending jazz elements from different time periods. Exciting and important JG session!!

SUN RA & HIS INTERGALACTIC ARKESTRA **Chi. 1960**

Sun Ra (p), Marshall Allen (fl, as), John Gilmore (ts), Ronnie Boykins (b), Jon Hardy (dm), Ricky Murray (vo).
One title was recorded at Wonder Inn:

Early Autumn	Solo 16 bars. (S)
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What a beautiful surprise, a fantastic ballad performance on tenorsax!! Again one is amazed at the incredibly many faces of JG, of which some goes straight into the heard of old mainstreamers, while others are highly enigmatic.

SUN RA **Chi. 1960/1961**

Personnels including John Gilmore (ts).
Several recording sessions for Saturn, two titles have JG:

Distant Stars	Solo 24 bars. (M)
Space Aura	Solo 64 bars. (F)

Sun Ra's music is getting rougher, but it continues to swing, and these two items are very interesting and enjoyable with fine and 'acceptable' tenorsax soloing.

SUN RA & HIS ARKESTRA **Newark, NJ. Oct. 10, 1961**

Bernard McKinney (tb, euph), Marshall Allen (fl, as), John Gilmore (ts, bcl), Pat Patrick (bar), Sun Ra (p, perc), Ronnie Boykins (b), Willie Jones (dm), Leah Ananda (cga), Ricky Murray (vo).
Twelve titles were recorded for Savoy, issued as “The Futuristic Sounds Of Sun Ra”, two have tenorsax:

Space Jazz Reverie	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Motherhood	Solo 17 bars. (S)

A beautiful slow solo on “Motherhood” should be noted, as well as a “Space ...” where he shows more flashing runs than usual.

SUN RA & HIS ARKESTRA **NYC. Nov./Dec. 1961**

Marshall Allen (fl, perc), John Gilmore (ts, perc), Pat Patrick (bar, perc), Sun Ra (p), Ronnie Boykins, John Ore (b), Thomas “Bugs” Hunter (dm).
Unknown number of titles were recorded for Saturn at the Choreographer's Workshop, seven found to have JG:

The Bad And The Beautiful	In ens. (S)
Just In Time	Soli 64 and 32 bars to coda. (M)
Search Light Blues	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 12 bars to long coda. (S)
And This Is My Beloved	In ens. (S)
Kosmos In Blue	Solo 64 bars. (M)
Lights On A Satellite	In ens. Solo to fade out 0:48. (M)
Chicago, Southside	Solo 3:05. (FM)

This is 'less out' than most sessions and thus quite enjoyable. “Search Light ...” shows another side of JG, fine and creative slow blues, note this one! Fine tenorsax also on “... Time” while “... Blue” is not that exciting. Note also a long solo on “... Southside”.

SUN RA**NYC. 1962**

Personnels including John Gilmore (ts).

Several recording sessions for Saturn, the following have tenorsax:

Space Aura	Solo/Duet with (bar). (M)
Reflects Motion Pt 2	Solo 1:50. (F)
What's New?	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Wanderlust	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Autumn In New York	Solo 4:39. (S/M)
State Street	Solo 16 bars. (M)

Many examples of conventional repertoire, sparing us for all that space-nonsense. Both "... New?" and "Wanderlust", a waltz, have good tenorsax soloing, and in "... New York" we get a real memorable highlight, first a proper slow chorus and then some venturing into the distance, dig this one!

LITTLE MACK**NYC. 1962**

John Gilmore (ts), Sun Ra (p, dir), Ronnie Boykins (b), C. Scoby Stroman (dm), "Little Mack" (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Saturn:

Tell Her To Come On Home	In ens. (M)
I'm Making Believe	In ens. (S)

FREDDIE HUBBARD**Englewood Cliffs, NJ. July 2, 1962**

Freddie Hubbard (tp), Curtis Fuller (tb), John Gilmore (ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Art Davis (b), Louis Hayes (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Impulse, issued as "The Artistry Of Freddie Hubbard":

Caravan	Solo 64 bars. (F)
Bob's Place	Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
Happy Times	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Summertime	Solo 64 bars. (M)
The 7 th Day	Solo 1:15. (FM)

After five years, JG is again recording with somebody else than Sun Ra, and with the trumpet leader in the zenith of his career and a star group, this was bound to be exciting!! His "Caravan" is quite out of the ordinary, this is a *avant garde* at its very best! For us oldtimers should also be recommended an equally strange "Summertime" and the hot and fast blues of "... Place". There is no doubt that JG could have obtained much greater recognition if he had crept out of the safe protection of the Arkestra.

SUN RA QUINTET**NYC. late 1962/early 1963**

Walter Miller (tp), John Gilmore (ts), Sun Ra (p), Ronnie Boykins (b), Clifford Jarvis (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Saturn:

5:59	Dancing Shadows	Solo 1:15. (F)
6:49	Sometimes I'm Happy	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Straight 40 bars to coda. (M)
3:34	Time After Time	No solo. (F)
3:30	Easy To Love	Soli 64 and 32 bars to duet with (tp) 32 bars to coda. (F)
3:38	Keep Your Sunny Side Up	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 32 bars. In ens. (F)
6:44	But Not For Me	Solo 64 bars. 64 bars chase with (tp/dm). In ens. (F)

Sun Ra and JG can sometimes create some surprising and great contrasts. This is in fact an 'ordinary' quintet session with excellent soloing by all participants, did not have to be issued on Saturn but rather Blue Note! It is strange how Sun Ra and his men moves back and forth between standards which are treated in a very professional and enjoyable manner, and then into a kind of heaven I hope I will never meet in the end... "Sometimes..." which has a fine medium tempo, has JG in an interesting solo easy to follow. The three other items have fast tempo with clean

and interesting tenorsax playing, although he chooses to take it more staccato than necessary, as I see it. A 'must' session for JG enthusiasts!

SUN RA**NYC. 1963**

Personnels including John Gilmore (ts).

Several recording sessions, the following have tenorsax:

The Rainmaker	Solo 2:35. (F)
When The Sun Comes Out	Solo 1:10. In ens. (FM)
The Idea Of It All	Solo 1:49. (F)

But possibly our readers won't like this very much...

PHILLY JO JONES SEXTET**NYC. Jan. 5, 1963**

Dizzy Reece (tp), Sonny Red (as), John Gilmore (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Larry Ridley (b), Philly Jo Jones (dm).

WADO broadcast "The Symphony Sid Show" from Birdland (James Accardi collection), no JG on "Theme – Jumpin' With Symphony Sid" and "Theme – Blue 'N' Boogie" but:

12:49	Joe's Delight	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
9:52	I Can't Get Started	Solo 32 bars. (S)
6:59	Take Twelve	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. 6 choruses 4/4 with (dm/tp/as). (F)

Postscript of Oct. 11, 2021: A great jazz archeological discovery with a fantastic drummer leading the proceedings! JG has his strongest solo on "... Twelve", should have been there!

DIZZY REECE / JIMMY WITHERSPOON**Toronto, Summer 1963**

Dizzy Reece (tp), John Gilmore (ts), Pepper Adams (bar), John Hicks (p), Ali Jackson (b), Charlie Persip (dm), Jimmy Witherspoon (vo).

CBC-TV broadcast, unknown titles, not available.

ELMO HOPE ORCHESTRA**NYC. Aug. 19, 1963**

Lawrence Jackson (tp), Freddie Douglas (sop, as), John Gilmore (ts), Elmo Hope (p), Ronnie Boykins (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm), Earl Coleman (vo-"... Dream"), Marcel Daniels (vo-"... High").

Seven titles were recorded for Audio Fidelity (two more with trio), issued as "Sounds From Rikers Island", no tenorsax solo on "One For Joe", "It Shouldn't Happen To A Dream" and "Groovin' High" but:

Ecstasy	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
A Night In Tunisia	Break 4 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 8 bars. Coda. (F)
Trippin'	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
Monique	Straight with (p). (S)

Surprisingly Hope does not use JG much on his session. In "Ecstasy" he takes two nice blues choruses, and there is a brief solo on "Trippin'". Only on "... Tunisia" does he really gets an open invitation, which he uses quite well, so note this one!

SUN RA**NYC. 1964**

Personnels including John Gilmore (ts).

Several recording sessions, the following have tenorsax:

Sketch	Straight. Solo 2:00. Straight. (FM)
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A transparent item consisting only of tenorsax and piano, and an excellent example if you want to learn where jazz is going. It is amazing how this kind of tenorsax playing can be combined on other occasions with that of traditional background. There is something JG hears now that is closed to my and many other jazz lovers' minds.

McCOY TYNER SEXTET**Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Feb. 4, 1964**

Thad Jones (tp), Frank Strozier (as), John Gilmore (ts), McCoy Tyner (p), Butch Warren (b), Elvin Jones (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Impulse, three issued:

90047	Contemporary Focus	Solo 48 bars. (M)
90050	Three Flowers	Solo 2:18. (FM)
90051	T 'N' A Blues	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

A fine session as such, and JG makes some nice contributions without being particularly remarkable. For conventional listeners, the "... Blues" will probably fit their taste best.

GRANT GREEN **Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Feb. 12, 1964**

John Gilmore (ts), Bobby Hutcherson (vib), Duke Pearson (p), Grant Green (g), Butch Warren (b), Billy Higgins (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Blue Note: 1299 "Untitled Grant Green Tune", 1300 "Minor League", 1301 "Grant's Tune", 1302 "Un Poco Loco" and 1303 "Ezz-Thetic", rejected.

PAUL BLEY **NYC. March 9, 1964**

John Gilmore (ts), Paul Bley (p), Gary Peacock (b), Paul Motian (dm).

Seven titles issued on Improvising Artists / Savoy:

6:19	Calls	Solo 2:03. (FM)
6:40	Turns	Solo 2:26. (FM)
6:10	King Korn	Solo 2:04. (F)
4:10	Ictus	Solo 1:42. (F)
5:09	Ida Lupino	Solo 1:15. (S)
5:27	Ida Lupino alt.	Solo 1:30. (S)
5:47	Around Again	Solo 1:34. (FM)
6:40	Syndrome	Solo 1:54. (S)

This I have no competence in evaluating. I find the session utterly boring, unable to hear any difference between the various items, and JG is the least interesting, only repeating disconnected phrases. Sorry, my fault.

ANDREW HILL **Englewood Cliffs, NJ. June 25, 1964**

John Gilmore (ts), Bobby Hutcherson (vib), Andrew Hill (p), Richard Davis (b), Joe Chambers (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "Andrew!!!":

tk 6	Black Monday	In ens. Solo 1:23. (S)
tk 12	Symmetry	In ens. Solo 1:05. (M)
tk 14	Symmetry alt.	In ens. Solo 0:56. (M)
tk 20	Duplicity	In ens. Solo 1:18. (M)
tk 31	Le Serpent Qui Danse	In ens. Solo 1:08. (FM)
tk 33	No Doubt	In ens. (S)

Andrew Hill was a great pianist and composer, and the sound here blending the other instruments with the vibraphone is highly fascinating. This is no swinging Blue Note session but really new sounds and ideas for the future. The highlight for me is "... Monday" with an emotional JG. If you want to be openminded about new developments, this is good example.

GEORGE RUSSELL **Newport, Rh. I. July 1964**

Don Ellis (tp), Dave Baker (tb), John Gilmore (ts), George Russell (p, arr), Steve Swallow (b), Pete LaRoca (dm), Sheila Jordan (vo-"... Sunshine").

Four titles were recorded live at Newport Jazz Festival, issued on Spanish RLR:

9:31	The Outer View	Solo 1:25. In ens. (F)
7:09	Stratusphunk	Solo with ens 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
12:00	Volupte	In ens. (S)
8:59	You Are My Sunshine	In ens. (M)

The solography concept is not meant for this music, and it would also be unfair to have any strong opinions about it, as the musicians obviously are having a nice time. I have no idea about what they are trying to accomplish. From the irrelevant point of view of myself and probable readers of this text, "Stratusphunk" is assumed to be the one item that may interest you most.

ART BLAKEY & HIS JAZZ MESSENGERS **LA. Nov. 15, 16 & 25, 1964**

Lee Morgan (tp), Curtis Fuller (tb), John Gilmore (ts), John Hicks (p), Victor Sproles (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Limelight, issued as “S Make It”, no tenorsax soli on 31706 “Lament For Stacy (S), 31707 “Faith” (FM), 31709 “Olympia” (S) and 31710 “One For Gamal” (M) but:

31704	Waltz For Ruth	Solo 0:45. (M)
31705	‘S Make It	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
31708	Little Hughie	Solo 36 bars. (M)

It seems that great Art did not get so much out of this session, our expectations are always high. There are good moments by all soloists, but the main impression is rather modest. JG is also not given much attention, influencing his playing, but there is some interesting blues on “... Make It” and “... Hughie”.

ART BLAKEY & HIS JAZZ MESSENGERS Paris, Feb. 27, 1965

Lee Morgan (tp), John Gilmore (ts), John Hicks (p), Victor Sproles (b), Art Blakey (dm).

TV-program from l’Olympia with live audience, five titles, “Sophisticated Lady” is an unaccompanied piano solo, “Easy Living” is a feature for trumpet but:

9:43	On The Ginza	Solo 3:00. (F)
18:52	The Egyptian	Solo 3:40. (F)
8:36	Blues March	Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

As pointed out below, this is much more exciting than the studio session above, a great group! With regard to JG, he is perhaps not that interesting on “The ...”, more on “... The Ginza”, and of course it is the “Blues March” that is something for us (JE), that exciting vehicle from long time ago. He seems to take it cool, not letting himself be carried away.

ART BLAKEY & HIS JAZZ MESSENGERS London, March 7, 1965

Lee Morgan (tp), John Gilmore (ts), John Hicks (p), Victor Sproles (b), Art Blakey (dm), Humphrey Lyttelton (mc).

BBCfour TV-program Jazz 625 with live audience, five titles, plus three brief “Theme”s (no tenorsax solo), music also issued on Moon CD:

4:58	On The Ginza	Solo 1:05. (F)
4:35	Lament For Stacy	No solo. (S)
10:08	The Egyptian	Solo 1:10. (F)
4:58	I Can’t Get Started	Intro to solo 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to very long coda. (S)
7:54	Buhaina’s Delight	Solo 1:52. (F)

This is also something quite different from the studio session, even if we take into account the increased impression we get from actually seeing the artists in action. This is an important historic treasure, just to watch the drummer master with his younger guys is unforgettable. Also this opportunity to see John Gilmore, an enigmatic artist as I perceive him. He is most interesting here on “... Delight” where his solo has all aspects from ‘normal’ playing to really avantguardistic yelling and screaming, and of course how he very seriously treats a beautiful ballad like “... Started”.

ART BLAKEY & HIS JAZZ MESSENGERS NYC. June 11, 1965

Gary Bartz (as), John Gilmore (ts), John Hicks (p), Victor Sproles (b), Art Blakey (dm), Alan Grant (mc).

Quote: Jet Magazine, July 1, 1965 (page 63): “Trumpeter Lee Morgan, starring with Art Blakey’s band at the Half Note was stopped by two thugs on his way to work and lost two teeth defending himself and his trumpet from their onslaught”.

WABC “Portraits In Jazz” Stereo broadcast from the Half Note, four titles:

15:30	On The Ginza	Solo 3:16. (F)
10:37	I Can’t Get Started	Acc. (as) 8 bars. (S)
13:21	One By One	Solo 3:23. (M)
3:48	The Theme	In ens. (F)

Another great Blakey session, although not so much JG as expected. “... Started” is this time all altosax. However there are some great and long tenorsax soli in upper tempo; dig “... By One”, no avant garde here, and agree that JG was one of the most interesting modern performers these days.

Personnels including John Gilmore (ts). Dates taken from Tom Lord.
Several recording sessions, the following have tenorsax:

April 20	Other Worlds
“	The Cosmos
“	Dancing In The Sun
Spring	The Shadow World
“	Other Worlds
Sept. 24	The Magic City

Solographing has given up...

ANDREW HILL

Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Oct. 8, 1965

Freddie Hubbard (tp, flhm), John Gilmore (ts, bcl-“Premonition”), Andrew Hill (p), Cecil McBee (b), Richard Davis (b-“Premonition”), Joe Chambers (dm), Nadi Qamar (African instr), Renaud Simmons (cga).

Three titles were recorded for Blue Note (a fourth title, “Legacy”, without JG), issued as “Compulsion”:

tk 3	Compulsion	In ens. (SM)
tk 6	Limbo	In ens. Solo 1:38. (SM)
tk 14	Premonition	In ens. (S)

A different mood on this second Andrew Hill session. There is not so much tenorsax solo work here, but “Limbo” is a good example of what JG is working on these days.

This solography has to stop somewhere, last recording session in 1991.

Some afterthoughts: After spending so much with John Gilmore and his music, I still cannot quite understand how his music is put together. With some malice I might argue that he is a very competent performer with his roots in common postbebop, and that much of his avantguardism is just something put on so as to join the popularity of the trends around him. This is of course not right and fair, I am sure he is an extremely serious artist with everything he delivers. Then I just cannot understand it is possible for one man to play so many quite different things, one leg on Earth, the other one in Kuiper belt?... However, it does not matter the least what I personally don't understand. John Gilmore is one of the the great tenorsax players deserving more attention than he has got.

Some more afterthoughts: I have spent quite some time with Sun Ra during the development of this John Gilmore solography and I have learnt a lot. One thing is the main object itself, and as you can read above, he plays, in my ears, the very best of post-bebop on level with the best contemporary performers, and with the same band the strange noise they call ‘avant garde’. However, Sun Ra is so much more; beautiful things you will enjoy (and imagine to be there and look also!), stuff you may hate, other excellent soloists (particularly on baritonesax), and by all means, how Herman Blount could play the piano, worth a study in itself!!

...ooo...