

The

TENORSAX

of

JOHN ARNOLD GRIFFIN
“JOHNNY”
“LITTLE GIANT”

Born: Chicago, Illinois, April 24, 1928

Died: Mauprevoir (near Availles-Limouzine), France, July 25, 2008

Introduction:

Oslo Jazz Circle learned to know Johnny Griffin through his 1956 “Chicago Calling” session for Blue Note, and he was immediately accepted as one of the most exciting of the upcoming tenorsax giants.

History:

His mother sang and his father used to play cornet. First clarinet at Du Sable High School 1941. Joined Lionel Hampton in 1945 and stayed until 1947, then worked on the East Coast with the rhythm-and-blues trumpeter Joe Morris (1947-50) as well as with Philly Joe Jones, Percy Heath, Jo Jones, Gene Ramey, and Arnett Cobb. During the same period he also practiced regularly with Thelonious Monk and Bud Powell. After serving in an army band in Hawaii (1951-53) he played in Chicago for several years before beginning important engagements in New York with Art Blakey’s Jazz Messengers (1957) and Monk’s quartet (1958). From 1960 to 1962 he was the leader of a bop quintet with Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, with whom he engaged in energetic improvisatory battles. Owing to tax and family problems Griffin emigrated to Europe in 1963 and settled in Paris. He played for several years at the Blue Note with such leading bop musicians as Bud Powell, Kenny Clarke, Kenny Drew and Art Taylor, and from 1967 to 1969 was the principal soloist in the Clarke-Boland Big Band; he also played regularly in groups led by Art Taylor. Around 1973 he moved to Bergambacht in the Netherlands. He continued to tour regularly. His last concert was in Hyeres, France, four days before he passed away (ref. New Grove Dictionary of Jazz & Wikipedia).

JOHNNY GRIFFIN SOLOGRAPHY

LIONEL HAMPTON & HIS ORCHESTRA**LA. Dec. 1, 1943**

Personnel probably similar to below.

Two titles, "Slide, Hamp, Slide" and "Hey-Ba-Ba-Ba-Re-Bop", was recorded for Decca, but no JG.

LIONEL HAMPTON AND HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. Jan. 21, 1946**

Joe Morris, Wendell Culley, Dave Page, Jimmy Nottingham, Lamar Wright (tp), Jimmy Wormick, Mitchell Wood, Andrew Penn, Al Hayse (tb), Bobby Plater, Ben Kynard (as), Arnett Cobb, Johnny Griffin (ts), Charlie Fowlkes (bar), Milt Buckner (p), Lionel Hampton (vib), Billy Mackell (g), Charles Harris, Ted Sinclair (b), George Jenkins (dm), Bing Crosby (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Decca, no JG.

NYC. Jan. 29, 1946

Same minus Crosby. Three titles were recorded for Decca, no JG.

Postscript: This session has been identified with soli by Arnett Cobb, but there is a mystery here, it seems to be different versions of the following title:

73326 Gay Notes Solo with orch 8 bars. (FM)

The two versions appearing on German LPs and CDs do not seem to be alternate takes, the setup is much too different for that. If the date is correct, this should be JG's first solo, so this problem is important! Can anyone explain?

NYC. Jan. 31, 1946

Same. Three titles were recorded for Decca, one has JG:

73333 Air Mail Special Part I Solo 32 bars. (F)

Chi. June 23/24, 1946

Same. "Band Box" broadcasts. At least eight titles, the following have JG:

Unknown Title Solo 32 bars. (M)

Hamp's Boogie Woogie Solo 8 bars. (M)

unknown date

Same/similar. One title:

Flying Home Solo 64 bars. (FM)

LA. Sept. 9, 1946

Personnel as Jan. 21, except Duke Garrette, Leo Shepherd, Joe Wilder (tp) replace Morris, Page and Wright; Joe Comfort (b), Gene "Fats" Heard (dm) replace Sinclair and Jenkins.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has JG:

L4289 Tempo's Birthday Solo 8 bars. (M)

LA. Sept. 17, 1946

Same. Three titles were recorded for Decca, but no JG.

LA. Sept. 23, 1946

Same plus Jack Kelson (cl).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, but no JG.

Not yet 18 years old, JG enters the world of prominent tenorsax jazz players with a fine solo on "Air Mail ...", and he demonstrates his capabilities with a flashing second eights, also showing his modern way of thinking. At the time of writing I have found only one additional JG solo on the Hampton Decca recording sessions, "... Birthday", where the opening is rather timid, but a flashing run at the end betrays the young up-coming talent.

JOE MORRIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. late 1947**

Joe Morris (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Bill McLemore (bar), Wilmus Reeves (p), George Freeman (g), Emmett Dailey (b), Leroy Jackson (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Manor:

1627 Fly Mister Fly Solo 64 bars. (FM)

1628 Bam-A-Lam-A-Bam Solo 16 + 8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (M)

1629	Boogie Woogie Joe	Solo 24 bars. (M)
1630	Wilma's Idea	Solo 16 bars. (M)
1633	Joe's Boogie	Solo 36 bars. (M)
1634	Out Of The Night	Solo 24 bars. (M)

The Joe Morris orchestra "began as a small jazz group rooted within the emerging bop tradition but later turned into the r&b field", to quote Jonas Bernholm on the LP-issue. On the first recording session for Manor, both genres are present in a surprising blend. On "Fly ..." and "Boogie ... Joe" while the arrangements call for bebop, JG turns out to be an excellent honker! "Joe's Boogie" is just that, but here JG seems to try some modern music first, before he ventures into the r&b. "Bam ..." is a groovy piece with some very colourful details. However, "Wilma's Idea" and "... Night" are true modern titles, and here JG plays deftly modern tenorsax. He demonstrates his capabilities to satisfaction in his intense style, and particularly "... Night" is impressing with a glimpse of his fastfingering technique so prominent in his later years and with genuine insight into the modern developments.

JOE MORRIS' ORCHESTRA

NYC. Sept. 15, 1947

Personnel unknown, possibly as above.
Five titles were recorded for Aladdin, unissued.

TONI MAYO & HER BOYS FROM NEW ORLEANS

NYC. Dec. 11, 1947

Personnel as Joe Morris above. Toni Mayo (vo).
Two titles were recorded for Plaza, one issued:

A83	Deep Water Blues	Obbligato 12 bars. (S)
-----	------------------	------------------------

A very fine item as such, and JG's obbligato playing is well recorded and of notable quality.

JOE MORRIS AND HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Dec. 12, 1947

Personnel as above.
Six titles were recorded for Atlantic, four issued:

A85	Low Groovin'	Solo 12 bars. (S)
A86	Jump With Me	Solo 32 bars. (M)
A87	Mad Moon	Solo 24 bars. (M)
A88	Easy Riff	Solo 48 bars. (M)

NYC. Dec. 23, 1947

Personnel probably as above.
Four titles were recorded for Atlantic, two issued:

A96	The Spider	Soli 8 and 66 bars to coda. (M)
A97	Bottletop	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (M)

Joe Morris' orchestra was contracted by Atlantic in late 1947, but the first recording sessions kept the heavy bebop image, and JG continues to have one foot in each camp. "Easy Riff" is a typical example, an interesting, close to vulgar solo, yet with many interesting details. "Jump ...", "Mad ...", "... Spider" and "Bottletop" are more or less examples of the same kind; that JG owes much to Dexter and Jug is obvious, but his own musical taste is yet underdeveloped, just therefore he must have been perfect for Morris! And since Morris' recordings mostly are in a safe medium tempo, the slow "... Groovin'" with an intriguing tenorsax solo is an item to be noted.

TONI MAYO

NYC. Dec. 23, 1947

Personnel as Joe Morris above.
Four titles were recorded for Plaza, one issued:

A102	Juke Box Blues	Solo 12 bars. (S)
------	----------------	-------------------

Fascinating solo, among the most interesting of JG's performances from this early period!!

JOE MORRIS

NYC. Dec. 29, 1947

Two titles were recorded for Atlantic, unissued.

NYC. Sept. 19, 1948

Six titles were recorded for Atlantic, two issued, no JG on "The Applejack" but:

A141	Wow	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
------	-----	--------------------

JG seems to have matured since the last Morris session almost one year earlier, and in "Wow" he really blows modern, unfortunately some problems arise to diminish the quality of the otherwise very interesting solo.

NYC. Dec. 22, 1948

Five titles were recorded for Atlantic, four issued, no JG on A168 "Chuck-A-Boogie" but:

A166	Weasel Walk	Intro 4 bars. Solo with ens 6 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
------	-------------	---

A167	Boogie Woogie March	Solo with ens 48 bars. (M)
------	---------------------	----------------------------

A169	Jax Boogie	Break to solo with ens 12 bars. (M)
------	------------	-------------------------------------

At this point of time, a change away from bebop to more straight forward r&b seems to occur. This does not bother JG however, who plays the gutty blues in his own personal manner, not to be confused with the numerous less important personalities around. Thus, although none of these titles belong to the bebop era, the tenorsax playing has a lot of modern thinking overlaid the popular blues structure. Note in particular "Jax ...".

Linden, NJ. April 13, 1949

Three titles were recorded for King, no tenorsax on "I Can't Take It No More", but:

K5717	Drinkin' Wine Spoo-Dee-O-Dee	Obbligato 10 bars. Solo 12 bars. Obbligato 10 bars. (M)
-------	------------------------------	---

K5717-3 Drinkin' Wine Spoo-Dee-O-Dee As above. (M)

K5718-3 All She Wants To Do Is Rock As below. (M)

K5718-4 All She Wants To Do Is Rock Solo 16 bars. (M)

Wynonie Harris sings with the Joe Morris orchestra in his usual high-energetic manner, but the tenorsax soli are rather anonymous and not particularly remarkable. I am not at all sure they are played by JG. Postscript of May 2020: Alternate takes have appeared, at least they are different from the master takes.

NYC. May 11, 1949

Five titles were recorded for Atlantic, two issued:

A230	Beans And Cornbread	In ens. Solo with ens 48 bars. (M)
------	---------------------	------------------------------------

A234 Tia Juana With ens 16 + 8 bars, solo 8 bars on bridge. Solo 64 bars.
With ens 16 bars. (M)

The choices of titles seems to indicate that jazz is now on its way out from the Morris orchestra, and JG's playing on "... Cornbread" seems to be a proof; rough only, containing very little of the refinements so fascinating in an integrated bebop/r&b context. But then "Tia ..." turns up with brilliant and technical playing, JG in his very best shape!!

NYC. Sept. 27, 1949

Two titles were recorded for Abbey 3007, not available.

NYC. Oct. 28, 1949

Four titles were recorded for Decca, "The Rabbit's Hop" is unissued, no JG on "Lowdown Baby" and "Sneaking Around" but:

75458 Portia's Boogie Solo 12 bars. (M)

NYC. Nov. 18, 1949

Same except Al Jones (dm) replaces Abbott.

Three titles were recorded for Decca, no JG on "Broken Hearted Blues" and "Ooh Ooh That's Good" but:

75520 Wig Head Mama Blues Solo 24 bars. (M)

Another change of recording contract, this time to Decca. The consequences are difficult to measure, but the band seems to stabilize into a comfortable family-friendly r&b style. However, JG takes one of his best modern soli on "Portia's Boogie" and the minor "Wig Head ...", so anachronisms are plenty.

JG continued to play with Joe Morris until mid-1950 but no further recording sessions with the band.

ARNETT COBB

NYC. Aug. 7, 1951

Willie Moore (tp), Dickie Harris (tb), Arnett Cobb (ts), Johnny Griffin (bar), George Rhodes (p), Walter Buchanan (b), Al Walker (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Okeh, but no baritone sax soli.

**LITTLE JOHNNY GRIFFIN
AND HIS ORCHESTRA**

Chi. ca. April 1953

Personnel including Johnny Griffin (ts), Babs Gonzales (vo-"... Home", "... Only").

Four titles were recorded for Okeh:

51482 Flying Home Solo 32 bars. Coda. (M)

51483 Chicago Riffin' Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

51484 Till We Meet Again Intro 4 bars to solo 40 bars to coda. (S)

5148? For Dancers Only Solo with ens 64 bars to coda. (M)

A completely forgotten session but what a terrible mistake! JG is one of the most important modern jazz tenor sax performers but taking a long time from his teenage Hampton residence to his emergence as a full-fledged star in the late fifties. There is very little evidence from his early years, and particularly the early fifties is a "black hole". Therefore these recordings have a particular significance. And they have not only historical importance, they are damned good!! On all titles does JG play with great self confidence, his later style is easily recognizable, his technique is exceptional, and his inspiration is as ever bottomless. "... Home" is the weakest track, nobody has ever managed to avoid the Illinois "death kiss" and do his own thing. "... Only" and the "Chicago ..." blues are very successful each of their kind. And then the climax of the session; never has "Till We Meet ..." been played like this!! If you ever was in doubt about JG's greatness, change your mind!!

JOHNNY GRIFFIN QUARTET

Chicago, ca. 1956

Johnny Griffin (ts), Junior Mance (p), Wilbur Ware (b), Buddy Smith (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Argo:

I Cried For You Solo 2 choruses of 40 bars.
Solo 8 bars to coda. (M)

Satin Wrap Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

Yesterdays Solo 48 bars to coda. (S)

Riff-Raff Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Bee-Ees Soli 32 and 16 bars. (M)

The Boy Next Door Soli 64 and 8 bars to coda. (M)

These Foolish Things Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)

Lollypop Soli 8 and 32 bars. (M)

This is JG's second session under his own name, three years after the first one, and he is still in Chicago. The rather brief items still seem to belong to the 78 era and lack the planning and concentration soon to be demanded from the more professional Blue Note company. Nevertheless, JG plays with great inspiration and personality, and with his originality and technique he tells us that he is coming! There are two nice ballads, "Yesterdays" and "... Things", note the long coda on the latter as a particular highlight. The rest is in the medium groove and swinging in

general; “Bee-Ees” is an excellent example. If this had been JG’s last session, it would have become legendary, now it is “but” a step forward in the long process of getting the recognition he deserved, remember JG has already been around for a decade!!

JOHNNY GRIFFIN QUARTET

NYC. April 17, 1956

Johnny Griffin (ts), Wynton Kelly (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Blue Note, seven issued as “Introducing Johnny Griffin” and “Chicago Calling”:

Mildew	Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to solo 16 + 12 bars, (b) on bridge, to coda. (F)
Chicago Calling	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to coda. (M)
These Foolish Things	Soli 32 and 16 bars to very long coda. (S)
The Boy Next Door	Soli 64 and 64 bars to coda. (M)
Nice And Easy	Straight 2 to solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 2 choruses to coda. (M)
It’s All Right With Me	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 72 bars. (F)
Lover Man	Soli 64 and 16 bars to very long coda. (S)
The Way You Look Tonight	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 64 bars. 64 bars 8/8 with (dm) to solo 32 + 16 bars, (dm) on bridge, to coda. (F)
Cherokee	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 64 bars. Solo 32 bars to coda. (F)

Although we are quite familiar with JG through a decade, this session is the real start of his career!! The Blue Note LP I bought in the late fifties made a great impression on me, still does. For the first time JG is joined by a first-rate rhythm section and adopted by a professional producer, and this opportunity is eagerly grasped. Whether JG has the extra, undefinable genius of a Coltrane, Dexter or Rollins, I am a bit reluctant to decide, but he has the energy and inspiration of another “little”, the trumpeter Roy Eldridge. His music is so dynamic that it takes the breath out of the listener, and I feel his strength primarily in the upper tempi; put on “Mildew”, the opening title and enjoy! And “... With Me”, played with a conviction only shown by the really great ones! On the other hand, he takes the slow, beautiful “... Things” and “Lover ...” majestically into his possession. Possibly one might object to his occasionally somewhat sleezy phrasing, but this is a willed trademark of his. Note his selfconfident coda on “... Things”! There is a lot of good tenorsax stuff in this session, and you should dig it all, at least it will prepare you for JG’s future playing!

JAZZ MESSENGERS

NYC. March 13, 1957

Bill Hardman (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Sam Dockery (p), Spanky DeBrest (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Seven titles were recorded at Webster Hall for Vik, six issued as “Selections from Lerner & Loewe’s”:

2390	There But For You Go I	Duet with (tp) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. (FM)
2392	Almost Like Being In Love	Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. (F)
2393	They Call The Wind Maria	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
2394	On The Street Where You Live	Solo 16 bars. Solo 2 choruses of 64 bars. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
2395	I Talk To The Trees	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
2396	I Could Have Danced All Night	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Joining Art Blakey, JG seems to enter a new phase and plays with more confidence than before. This session, surprisingly with only uptempo items, has some of the most colourful JG ever! His inspiration and go-power seem to be equally evident on all six items, but particular highlights are “... You Live” and “... Maria”. And the

extended solo on "... The Trees" is a must!! This is a session you should not miss!!!

ART BLAKEY's JAZZ MESSENGERS

NYC. March 30, 1957

Bill Hardman (tp), Jackie McLean (as), Johnny Griffin (ts), Sam Dockery (p), Spanky DeBrest (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Broadcast "Bandstand USA" from Café Bohemia, three titles:

What Is This Thing Called Love	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Just For Marty	Break to solo 64 bars. (F)
Minor March	Solo 32 bars, with announcer. (F)

Rather brief soli and nothing out of the ordinary.

ART BLAKEY's JAZZ MESSENGERS

NYC. April 2, 1957

Lee Morgan, Bill Hardman (tp), Melba Liston (tb), Sahib Shihab (as), Johnny Griffin (ts), Cecil Payne (bar), Wynton Kelly (p), Spanky DeBrest (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Bluebird:

A Night At Tony's	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
A Night At Tony's alt. 3	As above. (FM)
A Night At Tony's alt. 4	As above. (FM)
Social Call	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Social Call alt. 4	As above. (M)

Too many messengers on this session, thus heavy ensembles and too little solo space for each. Nevertheless JG plays inspired, brief soli and note how differently he plays on the various takes.

AHMAD KHATAB SALIM

NYC. April 5, 1957

John Coles (tp), Buster Cooper (tb), Johnny Griffin (ts), Howard Austin (bar), Tommy Flanagan (p), Kenny Burrell (g), George Duvivier (b), Osie Johnson (dm), Ahmad Khatab Salim (arr, ldr).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy, issued as "Stablemates":

70001	A Private Cloud	Solo 20 bars. (M)
70002	Dejeuner	Break to solo 24 bars. (M)
70003	Back Talk	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
70004	D Minor Dipper	Solo 18 bars. (SM)

Again a session with many participants, but it is enthusiastic and swinging, surprisingly not reissued on CD at the time of writing. JG plays with great energy and produces good results, particularly "... Dipper", a 32 bars item with blues feeling, is excellent!!

JOHNNY GRIFFIN SEPTET

NYC. April 6, 1957

Lee Morgan (tp), Johnny Griffin, John Coltrane, Hank Mobley (ts), Wynton Kelly (p), Paul Chambers (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "A Blowin' Session":

tk1	Smoke Stack	As below but 3 choruses 4/4. (FM)
tk2	Smoke Stack	Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. 2 choruses 4/4 with (dm). (FM)
tk3	The Way You Look Tonight	Solo 1 chorus of 64 bars to break and solo 3 choruses. 2 choruses 4/4 with (dm) to solo 32+16 bars to coda, (b) on bridge. (F)
tk4	Ball Bearing	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
tk5	All The Things You Are	Straight 1 chorus to solo 3 choruses of 36 bars. 16 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 16 bars to coda. (M)

This is definitely JG's session, and he performs as much as his two tenorsax adversaries together, particularly on "The Way ..." and "... You Are". He is

obviously most inspired, really cooking on medium tempo and up, with impressing technique as on "Smokestack" and "... You Are" (note the fourth chorus), but sometimes it is a bit too much. We miss some ballads here. And why not a single tenorsax chase in almost 40 minutes, didn't he dare? But this is certainly a rare occasion, bringing together three of the top five black modern tenorsax players of 1957 together on one session!!

ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS

NYC. April 8, 1957

Personnel as March 13 plus Jackie McLean (as).

Five titles were recorded for Vik, issued as "A Night In Tunisia":

3338	Off The Wall	Solo 64 bars. (M)
3338	Off The Wall (alt.)	As above. (M)
3338	Off The Wall (tk 5)	As above. (M)
3339	A Night In Tunisia	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
3339	A Night In Tunisia (alt.)	As above. (F)
3340	Couldn't It Be You?	Solo 64 bars. (M)
3340	Couldn't It Be You? (tk 3)	As above. (M)
3341	Theory Of Art	Solo 56 bars. (F)
3341	Theory Of Art (alt.)	As above. (F)
3342	Evans	Solo 64 bars. (F)

Another first-rate Blakey "raucous hard bop session" as described in the liner notes, the only example of his sextet, bringing McLean and Griffin together. Possibly there are Blakey periods with more exciting personnels, but it certainly is cooking here! JG's most prominent item seems to be the fast "Theory ...", an AABA with A=16, B=8; here he really gets going with fire and inspiration. I was a bit disappointed with "... Tunisia", could have been stronger, takes too long to warm up properly. But all items are most noteworthy in general, this is a hot JG session!

CLARK TERRY QUINTET

NYC. April 12&17, 1957

Clark Terry (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Wynton Kelly (p), Paul Chambers (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "Serenade To A Bus Seat":

Donna Lee	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Boardwalk	Soli 8 and 8 bars to 4 choruses of 12 bars 4/4 with (tp). (SM)
Boomerang	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Digits	Solo 16 bars to duet with (tp) 32 bars. (M)
Serenade To A Bus Seat	Break to solo 64 bars. (FM)
Stardust	Soli 4, 4 and 16 bars. (S)
Cruising	Break to solo 64 bars. (M)
That Old Black Magic	Solo 16 bars. (F)

A fine swinging session with good contributions by all participants. JG is in good shape; some highlights are his chase with Terry on "Boardwalk" and his driving soli on "... Lee" and "Cruising".

ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS

NYC. May 13, 1957

Personnel as March 13 plus Louis "Sabu" Martinez (cga).

Four titles were recorded for Jubilee, issued as "Cu-Bop":

Woodyn' You	Solo 8 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
Sakeena	Break 8 bars to Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
Shorty	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Dawn On The Harvest	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

It seems to be too much percussion on this session, JG's playing is more forced than on other Messengers sessions. However, he takes a fine groovy solo on "Sakeena" in particular, and "... Harvest" is also very exciting.

ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ

MESSENGERS AND THELONIOUS MONK NYC. May 14&15, 1957

Bill Hardman (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Thelonious Monk (p), Spanky DeBrest (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Atlantic, issued as "Jazz Connection":

2560	Blue Monk	Solo 24 bars. (S)
2560	Blue Monk (alt.)	As above. (S)
2561	I Mean You	Solo 64 bars. (M)
2561	I Mean You (alt.)	As above. (M)
2562	Rhythm-A-Ning	Solo 8 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
2563	Purple Shades	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
2564	Evidence	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
2564	Evidence (alt.)	Solo 2 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
2565	In Walked Bud	Solo 64 bars. (M)

The first recorded encounter between JG and Monk, preceding the famous Five Spot sessions by more than one year. Although this is a Messengers' session, Monk's strong personality (and also the composer of all titles except "Purple ...") makes it different from other Blakey-dominated sessions. JG seems to feel at home in Monk's world and his accompaniment; everything is highly enjoyable here, whether you choose the quite different versions of the slow "Blue ..." or go uptempo to many colourful items.

ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS

NYC. July 29, 1957

Personnel as above except Sam Dockery (p) replaces Monk.

Three titles from "Stars Of Jazz" TV-Show:

I Mean You (Stick Ball Swing)	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Blue Monk	Solo 12 bars. (SM)
Evidence (Justice)	Solo 32 bars. (F)

Again, these TV shows have good music, but time is limited, and the soli consequently brief. Thus, even if JG plays fine as usual, these items will not be remembered like those on the previous session.

AHMAD KHATAB SALIM

NYC. Sept. 17, 1957

Kenny Dorham (tp), Buster Cooper (tb), Johnny Griffin (ts), Pepper Adams (ts, bar), Wynton Kelly (p), Paul Chambers (b), Max Roach (dm), Chino Pozo (cga), Ahmad Khatab Salim (arr, ldr).

Six titles were recorded for Savoy, issued as "Pretty For The People":

70125	Blu-Binsky	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
70125	Blu-Binsky (alt.)	As above. (M)
70126	R-U 1-2	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
70127	Pretty For The People	Break to solo 34 bars. (SM)
70127	Pretty For The People	As above. (SM)
70128	Ba-Lu-Ee-Du	Solo 2 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
70129	Shirley Ray	Solo 3 choruses of 24 bars. (M)
70130	Takin' Care Of Business	Break to solo 60 bars. (F)

Fine modern mainstream session and although four "blowers", there is enough blowing space for all. JG plays with inspiration as always, not necessary always with the best of taste, but he gives everything he's got! My favourite items are "... People" and "R-U ...".

ART BLAKEY'S JAZZ MESSENGERS**NYC. Oct. 9, 1957**

Bill Hardman (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Sam Dockery (p), Spanky DeBrest (b), Art Blakey (dm).

One title was recorded for Bethlehem:

Deo-X	Solo 64 bars. (F)
-------	-------------------

NYC. Oct. 11, 1957

Same except Junior Mance (p) replaces Dockery.

Six titles, issued as "Hard Drive":

6442	Right Down Front	Solo 32 bars. (M)
6443	Late Spring	Solo 32 bars. (SM)
	For Minors Only	Solo 64 bars. (M)
	Sweet Sakeena	Solo 112 bars. (F)
	For Miles And Miles	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
	Krafty	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

This is a groovy session which JG obviously enjoys the most, take the gospel-based "... Front" as an exciting example! There are in fact several excellent tenorsax soli here, from the fast "... Sakeena", through the blues on "... Miles" to the swinging minor "... Only" to mention the most exciting. It seems that by now JG has overcome some of his initial uncertainty and now is one of the most dynamic of the contemporary tenorsax players with an abundance of technique and confidence.

WILBUR WARE QUINTET**NYC. Oct. 16, 1957**

John Jenkins (as), Johnny Griffin (ts), Junior Mance (p), Wilbur Ware (b), Wilbur Campbell (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "The Chicago Cookers", no tenorsax solo on "Lullaby Of The Leaves" but:

Mama-Daddy	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). (F)
Desert Sands	48 bars 4/4 with (dm). (FM)
31 st And State	Solo 32 bars. (SM)
Latin Quarters	Break to solo 48 bars. (M)
Be-Ware	Solo 2 choruses of 24 bars. (M)

Being a bass-based session, it does not have the groove of let's say a Blakey session, but JG has many fine contributions, most noteworthy is the uptempo "Mama-Daddy".

JOHNNY GRIFFIN QUARTET**NYC. Oct. 23, 1957**

Johnny Griffin (ts), Sonny Clark (p), Paul Chambers (b), Kenny Dennis (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "The Congregation":

The Congregation	Straight 2 to solo 4 choruses of 16 bars. Solo 1 to straight 1 chorus and coda. (M)
Latin Quarter	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 24 bars. Solo 2 choruses to very long coda. (FM)
I'm Glad There Is You	Solo 72 and 36 bars to long coda. (SM)
Main Spring	Straight 2 to solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 2 choruses to coda. (M)
It's You Or No One	Straight 32 bars to solo 40 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 32 bars to straight 40 bars to coda. (FM)
I Remember You	Solo 3 choruses of 36 bars. Solo 36 bars to long coda. (M)

JG's third quartet session is good but not outstanding, it lacks some intensity, and contrary to so many other sessions, Clark does not give that extra here. JG himself seems to be in a happy mood with nice contributions, my favourite is the blues "... Spring". "The Congregation" is a fine gospel tune. The start of "I'm Glad ..." is

rather messy, has the intro been edited out? And while JG plays with inspiration on "... You", he has some problems with the first chorus and beginning of the second, thus it was issued only as a CD-bonustrack.

WILBUR WARE QUINTET

NYC. Nov. 18, 1957

Personnel as Oct. 16 except Frank Dunlop (dm) replaces Campbell.

Two titles were recorded for Riverside:

Body And Soul	Solo 16 + 8 bars, (b) on bridge (S) to solo 16 bars (M) to 8 bars and very long coda. (S)
The Man I Love	Solo 32 bars. (M)

A rather misconstrued version of "Body ...", it does not help that JG's details are good enough. The more straight forward "... I Love" is to be preferred.

MACHITO

NYC. Dec. 17, 19 & 24, 1957

Bigband and personnel earlier believed to include Johnny Griffin (ts), which is wrong. Thirteen titles were recorded for Roulette, issued as "Kenya: Afro-Cuban Jazz".

JOHNNY DOWNS & HIS ORCHESTRA

Port Stanley, Ontario, 1957/1958

Personnel including Johnny Griffin (ts).

Five titles were issued on Nomadic (Can) NR7507 (7" LP), not available.

JOHNNY GRIFFIN SEXTET

NYC. Feb. 25, 1958

Donald Byrd (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Pepper Adams (bar), Kenny Drew (p), Wilbur Ware (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Riverside:

Stix' Trix	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
What's New?	Soli 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S)
Johnny G. G.	Soli 6 and 2 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
Catharsis	Solo 8 bars. Solo with (b) 3 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (FM)

A fine session with very good soli by all participants (note Drew, a brilliant piano player!). JG takes his share in modesty but with quality, most interesting are the fine, groovy blues on "Johnny ...", and "Catharsis" where he is accompanied by bass only.

same

Personnel as above except Thelonious Monk (p) replaces Drew.

One title:

Coming On The Hudson	Solo 56 bars. (SM)
----------------------	--------------------

Pensive tenorsax playing with attentive piano backing first, later bass, quite fascinating.

JOHNNY GRIFFIN QUARTET

NYC. Feb. 26 or 27, 1958

Johnny Griffin (ts), Kenny Drew (p), Wilbur Ware (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Riverside:

Where's Your Overcoat, Boy?	Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 4 to straight 2 choruses to coda. (SM)
Hot Sausage	Straight 1 chorus of 32 bars to solo 2 choruses. Solo/straight 16 bars to coda. (M)
Sunny Monday	Straight 1 chorus of 32 bars to solo 3 choruses. 2 choruses 4/4 with (dm) to straight 1 chorus to coda. (M)
Cherokee	Straight 1 chorus of 64 bars to solo 4 choruses. Solo 1 chorus to coda. (F)
Teri's Tune	Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo 6 choruses. 2 choruses 4/4 with

(b) to straight 1 chorus to coda. (SM)

Little John

Straight 1 chorus of 32 bars to solo
2 choruses. 1 chorus 4/4 with (dm)
to straight 1 chorus to coda. (M)

Woody'n You

Straight 32 bars. Solo with (b) 64
bars to 32 bars 8/8 and 32 bars 4/4
with (dm) to straight 16+8 bars,
(dm) on bridge, to long coda. (F)

This fourth quartet session is the best one in the late fifties and features JG to the very best advantage, he never played better than this!! The rhythm section is the same efficient one as on the day before, and the piano playing is magnificent. All items are high quality ones here, and enjoy yourself while you dig the lovely and romantic "... Monday" with some waltzing in the straight! Or the two groovy slow medium items! And in uptempo we get two brilliant, technical performances, "... You" and "Cherokee". Dig the intense second chorus on "... John". Yes, this is a JG session you just cannot miss!!!

BLUE MITCHELL**NYC. July 2&3, 1958**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Curtis Fuller (tb), Johnny Griffin (ts), Wynton Kelly (p), Wilbur Ware (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Riverside, no JG on "There Will Never be Another You" and "Promenade" but:

Blues March

Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

Big Six

Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Brother 'Ball

Solo 64 bars. (M)

Jamph

Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Sir John

Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

A fine session where the participants share the solo space in brotherly harmony. JG is very inspired and takes five fine soli, note how eager he is on the fast medium titles, particularly "Big Six". Also very interesting to have him on the Golson vehicle "... March"!

THELONIOUS MONK QUARTET**NYC. July 9, 1958**

Johnny Griffin (ts), Thelonious Monk (p), Ahmed Abdul-Malik (b), Roy Haynes (dm), Art Blakey (dm-"Bye-Ja").

Recorded live at "Five Spot Cafe". Five titles (plus two brief "Epistrophe"-themes with straight tenorsax only, and an "Unidentified Solo Piano" item):

'Round Midnight

Soli 32 and 32 bars to coda. (S)

Evidence

Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Bye-Ya

Solo 9 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

In Walked Bud

Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Blues Five Spot

Solo 11 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

This is the "rejected" Five Spot date; as Orrin Keepnews states it: "Monk and I had not been fully satisfied, and we laid those tapes aside, but many years later I came to the conclusion that it had been a partially inaccurate decision. Some of the material did deserve to be heard." Yes, I definitely think so, there are some very nice things here, like "... Midnight". The tenorsax playing is somewhat uneven; occasionally full of inspiration and ideas, but sometimes rather forced, like in particular "Bye-Ya". Note: I was there some weeks later, very exciting, got the chance of shaking hands with Monk, not much conversation though!

BABS GONZALES VOCAL ACC. BY**NYC. July 16, 1958**

Clark Terry (tp), Les Spann (fl), Charlie Rouse (bcl), Johnny Griffin (ts), Horace Parlan (p), Ray Crawford (g), Peck Morrison (b), Roy Haynes (dm), The Modern Sounds (vo-ens).

Seven titles were recorded for Hope, no JG on "Them Jive New Yorkers" and "Lullaby Of The Doomed" but:

Le Continental

Solo 34 bars. (M)

Me, Spelled, M-E, Me

Solo 16 bars. (M)

The Preacher

Solo with vocalcomm. 32 bars. (FM)

A Night In Tunisia	Solo 16 bars. (M)
Movin' And Groovin'	Solo with ens 16 bars. (M)

A different kind of session for JG, not like his numerous sessions as a leader, here he is just a casual sideman joining as backup to one of the most prominent vocal personalities of this time period, besides Eddie Jefferson. The most interesting item is "Le Continental", colourful soli of the "78 rpm. kind", precise to the point!! "... Preacher" also offers a strong solo. "... Tunisia" and "Movin' ..." are somewhat surprising; the playing is so high pitched, that it sounds almost alto sax like.

THELONIOUS MONK QUARTET

NYC. Aug. 7, 1958

Johnny Griffin (ts), Thelonious Monk (p), Ahmed Abdul-Malik (b), Roy Haynes (dm).

Ten titles were recorded live at the Five Spot Café (plus two brief "Epistrophy"-themes with straight tenorsax, and a piano solo "Just A Gigolo"):

Light Blue	Solo 24 bars. (S)
Coming On The Hudson	Solo 76 bars. (SM)
Rhythm-A-Ning	Solo 11 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Blue Monk	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
Evidence	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
Nutty	Solo 64 bars. (M)
Blues Five Spot	Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
Let's Cool One	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
In Walked Bud	Solo 8 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
Misterioso	Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (S)

I was there!!! No, not on that night but around this time two young boys of 18 years had washed themselves over the Atlantic on "Oslofjord", just to hear real jazz music in NYC.. One night we spent with Horace Silver (see Junior Cook), one with Sonny Rollins and one at the Five Spot Café. There were few people there, but we were excited by the music, even dared to go backstage to meet Monk. It was not much of a conversation, really, but nevertheless a memory for life. Whether the music that night could compare to that of Aug. 7 is impossible to say, but fun it was! The session here has a lot of brilliant music and some of the best JG ever to be heard! He is mostly in excellent shape, full of ideas, sometimes pushing it too hard and groans with the effort, but this is really dedicated tenorsax playing. His sound is not the most beautiful when he is most strong going, but never mind! JG is a kind of brother to Roy Eldridge, both "little" but with an unearthly strength to go on where others would have stopped long time ago, and sometimes playing their best at the end of a long solo. My two favourite items are the five minutes long, fast solo on "... Ning" and the groovy "Blue ...", dig these!!! But don't forget "Evidence", wow!! And a fascinating slow, inspired blues "Misterioso", more than six minutes long. Note also "... Cool One" as an example where he oversteps the limits of good taste. In all, one of the most important tenorsax sessions of the late fifties!!

CHET BAKER

NYC. Sept. 1958

Chet Baker (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Al Haig (p), Paul Chambers (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Riverside (additional titles without JG), issued as "In New York":

Fair Weather	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Hotel 49	Solo 96 bars. (F)
Blue Thoughts	Solo 28 bars. (S)

A different JG session, and if you believe he would not fit in with a so different musician as Chet, you are wrong! The results are in general fine (and so nice to hear an old piano fellow like Al again!), and there are three very satisfying and colourful tenorsax soli, my favourite is the fast "... 49".

NAT ADDERLEY QUINTET

NYC. Sept. 1958

Nat Adderley (cnt), Johnny Griffin (ts), Gene Harris (p), Andre Simpkins (b), Bill Dowdy (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Riverside (additional titles without JG), issued as "Branching Out":

Sweet Caroline	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Well You Needn't	Solo 64 bars. (M)
Branching Out	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
I Never Knew	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (F)
Warm Blue Stream	Soli 8 and 8 bars. (S)

Fitting right into the many excellent sessions in this early period, JG takes several good soli in different tempi, a gospel one on "Sweet ...", a funky medium blues on "... Out", and a groovy untypical version of Monk's "... Needn't". But he seems to enjoy foremost the fast "... knew" and some emotional ballad playing on "... Stream".

PHILLY JOE JONES SEXTET

NYC. Sept. 17, 1958

Nat Adderley (cnt), Julian Priester (tb), Johnny Griffin (ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Jimmy Garrison (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm, narr-"... Dracula").

Five titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "Blues For Dracula":

Blues For Dracula	Solo 24 bars. (S)
Trick Street	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Tune-Up	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 4 bars. (F)
Fiesta	Solo 64 bars. (M)
Ow!	Solo 64 bars. (M)

A dramatic album titles certainly must have contributed to the sale of this record! The music is on a high level but not that different from many other sessions at this time. PJJ's drums have a prominent role, but like Blakey, he is a leader and puts things into place. JG's take five driving and inspired soli here, "Fiesta" is certainly a highlight and the extremely fast "Tune-Up" likewise.

AHMED ABDUL-MALIK

NYC. Oct. 1958

Johnny Griffin (ts), Naim Karacand (vln), Jack Ghanaïm (kanoon), Mike Hamway (darabeka), Bilal Abdurrahman (duf), Ahmed Abdul-Malik (Sam Gill) (b, oud), Al Harewood (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Riverside (a fourth one without JG), issued as "Jazz Sahara":

Ye Annas / Oh People	Free intro (S). Soli appr. 44 and 60 bars. (SM)
Isma's / Listen	Soli appr. 56 and 12 bars. (SM)
El Harris / Anxious	Solo appr. 56 bars (SM). Solo appr. 112 bars. (F)

This is a real cross-over session, and perfect as such!! This is pure Africa alright, but nevertheless there is jazz when JG enters the scene now and then. To take down bars here is rather complicated, so treat the notations only as guidelines to the scope of his soloing. For one particular highlight choose "Anxious", but this is in general a session which is good for you!!

RANDY WESTON

NYC. Oct. 1958

Idree Sulieman (tp-"Babe's Blues"), Ray Copeland (tp, except "Babe's Blues"), Melba Liston (tb, arr), Johnny Griffin (ts), Randy Weston (p, comp), George Joyner (b), Charlie Persip (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for United Artists, four have JG:

Little Susan	Duet with (tp). (FM)
Nice Ice	Solo 32 bars. With ens to fade out. (M)
Little Niles	Duet with (tp). (M)
Babe's Blues	Solo 36 bars. (SM)

Randy Weston's music is experimental, intellectual and very original, resembling nothing we are familiar with. It is quite out of context to venture any qualified evaluation about his concepts involving so many complex rhythms, here with a preference for 6/8 time. There are few sections of proper jazz swinging, and the soli are part of compositions more than individual presentations. Of JG's contributions,

only "... Ice" and "... Blues" have real soloing, the latter probably the most attractive item for conventional jazz listeners.

**MACHITO & HIS AFRO
CUBAN JAZZ ENSEMBLE**

NYC. late 1958

Bigband personnel including Curtis Fuller (tb), Herbie Mann (fl, comp, arr), Johnny Griffin (ts).

Twelve titles were recorded for Roulette, issued as "Machito With Flute To Boot", eight have JG:

Brazilian Soft Shoe	Solo with orch 24 bars. (FM)
Afro-Jazziac	Solo with orch 16 bars. (SM)
Ring A Levio	Solo with orch 12 bars. (FM)
Afternoon Death	Soli with orch 4 and 4 bars. (S)
To Birdland And Hurry	Solo with orch 64 bars. (F)
Calypso John	Soli with orch 16 and 64 bars. (FM)
Bacao	Solo with orch 20 bars. (S)
Answer Me	Break to solo with orch 32 bars. Soli 4, 4 and 4 bars. (M)

This session is very pleasant surprise! Expecting not much jazz nor JG here, it turns out it is a swinging latin session with very forceful and inspired tenorsax soli, as well as trombone and flute contributions. Look out for this one!!

AHMED ABDUL-MALIK

NYC. March 16, 1959

Lee Morgan (tp), Curtis Fuller (tb), Jerome Richardson (fl), Benny Golson, Johnny Griffin (ts), Naim Karacand (vln), Ahmed Yetman (kanoon), Ahmed Abdul-Malik (b, oud), Al Harewood (dm), Mike Hamway, Bilal Abdurrahman (darabeka).

Three titles were recorded for Victor, two have tenorsax, both by JG:

1844	La Ikbe (Don't Cry)	Solo with orch 40 bars. (M)
1846	E-Lail (Night)	Solo with orch 40 bars. (M)

This is a most exciting session!! It represents a very successful blend of North-African music and jazz, sounding as a genuine alternative. The soli by JG and Lee Morgan come quite natural, and it seems they have never done anything else but play this kind of music!! Of the numerous cross-overs connected to jazz during the years, this is one of the most successful. Recommended for your listening and sobering up!!

ROY BROWN VOCAL ACC. BY

Cincinnati, May 7, 1959

Johnny Griffin (ts, bar?), Roy Felder (ts, bar?), Jon Thomas (p), John Faure, Fred Jordan (g), Ed Conley (b), McCurdy (dm).

Four titles were recorded for King, no tenorsax soli but:

10365	Good Looking And Foxy Too	Possibly baritonesax solo 12 bars. (M)
-------	---------------------------	---

Why not, JG records on baritonesax with Ira Sullivan on next session!

JOHNNY GRIFFIN QUARTET

Newport, July 1959

Johnny Griffin (ts), Ray Bryant (p), Kenny Burrell (g), Major Holley (b).

Three titles were recorded at the Newport Jazz Festival:

Straight No Chaser	Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo 20 choruses. Solo 3 choruses to straight 2 choruses and close. (FM)
Nancy With Her Loving Face (?)	Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars to long coda. (S)
Cherokee	Straight intro 16 bars and 1 chorus of 64 bars to solo 5 choruses to 16 bars and close. (F)

This is JG at his very best!! A beautiful ballad and two dynamic uptempo items of great inspiration!!

IRA SULLIVAN QUINTET**Chi. July 26, 1959**

Ira Sullivan (tp, peck-horn, as, ts, bar), Johnny Griffin (as, ts, bar), Jodie Christian (p), Vic Sproles (b), Wilbur Campbell (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Delmark (a fifth title "My Old Flame" without JG), issued as "Blue Stroll":

Wilbur's Tune	Solo 32 bars. 64 bars 4/4 with (dm/tp). (FM)
Wilbur's Tune (alt.)	As above but solo 64 bars. (FM)
Blue Stroll	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
63 rd Street Theme	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (S)
Bluzinbee"	Altosax solo 18 choruses of 12 bars. Tenorsax solo 10 choruses. Baritonesax solo 12 choruses. (FM)

This is definitely Sullivan's session, and it is impressing to hear how he masters the different instruments, comparable only to Benny Carter! JG is nothing but a sideman, but makes good contributions without being particularly noteworthy on "... Tune" and "... Stroll". The solo on "... Theme" is badly recorded, otherwise good. However, "Bluzinbee" is something special, not because of particularly high quality but for quantity, 20 minutes long, and the fact that JG (and IS) solos on altosax and baritonesax (and IS uses a total of four instruments!)! He manages these unfamiliar, to us at least, instruments quite well, although he cannot quite defeat IS. Therefore "Bluzinbee", almost a jam session with two blowing guys, must be considered a must for JG collectors!!

JOHNNY GRIFFIN SEXTET**NYC. Aug. 4/5, 1959**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Julian Priester (tb), Johnny Griffin (ts), Wynton Kelly (p), Sam Jones (b), Al Heath (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "The Little Giant":

Olive Refractions	Solo 64 bars. (F)
The Message	Soli 32 and 48 bars. (M)
Lonely One	Solo/straight 8 bars (S) to 32 bars (M) to 64 bars (F). Straight 32 bars to coda. (M)
63 rd Street Theme	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
Playmates	Straight 42 bars. Solo 42 bars. (M)
Venus And The Moon	Solo 64 bars. (M)

Fine session to conclude the fifties and to demonstrate that JG is one of the decade's most important tenorsax performers. Take as a highlight his intense, groovy blowing on "... Theme" with a lot of Dexter, this is great! Some gospel on "... Message" and "Playmates" confirm his attraction to this tradition. A fascinating "... One" without the other horns, and a dynamic "Olive ..." are also worth noticing. Finally a "Venus ..." having all JG's tricks; force, technique, originality, contrasts, sweat; the "little giant" gives us everything he has got. We shall follow him closely in the years to come!!

MILDRED ANDERSON**NYC. Jan. 22, 1960**

Personnel including Johnny Griffin (ts), Mildred Anderson (vo).

Recording session for Bluesville, no further information.

Postscript of Nov. 2019: This seems to be a mistake on my part. The two issued sessions have Eddie Davis and Al Sears respectively. Could there be an unissued session?

JOHNNY GRIFFIN / BUD POWELL DUO**Paris, Feb. 14, 1960**

Johnny Griffin (ts), Bud Powell (p).

Two titles, issued on Xanadu LP:

7:01	Idaho	Soli 6 and 2 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (FM)
5:31	Perdido	Soli 3 and 2 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (FM)

The duo concept is not the most fitting for JG, but he takes an active role while Bud is rather passive. The result is some good tenorsax playing without being particularly noteworthy.

MELVIN RHYNE**NYC. March 31, 1960**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Melvin Rhyne (org), Gene Harris (p), Andy Simpkins (b), Albert Heath (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Jazzland, issued as "Organ-izing":

Things Ain't What They Used To Be	Solo 36 bars. (S)
Blue Farouq	Soli 48 and 4 bars. (SM)
Barefoot Sunday Blues	Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
Shoo, Shoo Baby	Solo 64 bars. (M)

Lots of blues here, and JG seems to be excited and inspired. The slow and surging "... Used To Be" is a fine session opening, and his originality is also evident in "... Farouq" and "Barefoot ..." (note the unaccompanied 6th and 8th chorus on the latter) and blending his technique with creativity. "Shoo ..." is not that exciting, but the session as a whole will surprise and amaze you!

JOHNNY GRIFFIN ORCHESTRA**NYC. May 24, 1960**

Clark Terry, Bobby Bryant (tp), Matthew Gee, Julian Priester (tb), Pat Patrick (as), Johnny Griffin, Eddie Williams (ts), Charles Davis (bar), Harold Mabern (p), Bob Cranshaw (b), Charlie Persip (dm), Norman Simmons (arr).

Three titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "The Big Soul-Band":

Wade In The Water	Solo with orch. (M)
Wade In The Water alt.	As above. (M)
Panic Room Blues	Soli with orch 20 and 48 bars. (M)
Deep River	Solo with orch. (S)

NYC. May 31, 1960

Same except Frank Strozier (as), Victor Sproles (b) replace Patrick and Cranshaw. Three titles:

Holla	Solo with orch 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
So Tired	Solo with orch 64 bars. (M)
Jubilation	Soli with orch 32 and 32 bars. (M)

NYC. June 3, 1960

Same except Bobby Timmons (p, cel) replaces Mabern. Two titles:

Nobody Knows The Trouble I've Seen	Solo with orch. (S)
Meditation	Solo with orch. (M)

Star-studded personnel and fine arrangements and lots of exciting and beautiful music here, but with regard to strong tenorsax playing, there are many sessions more exciting than this one. Nothing wrong with JR's performances though, try "Holla" and "... The Trouble ..." as good examples.

EDDIE "LOCKJAW" DAVIS /**JOHNNY GRIFFIN QUINTET****Hackensack, NJ. Sept. 2, 1960**

Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Johnny Griffin (ts), Norman Simmons (p), Victor Sproles (b), Ben Riley (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Battle Stations":

2429	Pull My Coat	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
2430	What's Happening?	Soli 9, 1 and 1 choruses of 12 bars. 4 choruses 4/4 with (ts-ELD). (F)
2431	Abundance	Solo 64 bars. Duets. (FM)
2432	63 rd Street Theme	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
2433	Hey Jim	Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. Duets. (M)
2434	If I Had You	Soli 64 and 12 bars. (SM)

The start of a very fruitful tenorsax cooperation between "Little Giant" and "Lockjaw"! Their styles fit very well together, both highly extrovert, energetic, often in a fighting mode, and they seem to enjoy each others company very much.

Note that ELD always takes the first solo, wonder why? Become familiar with this great tenorsax music by starting with the fast "... Happening?", a magnificent JG solo continuing with a chase with two choruses each and then into 4/4s, wow! It is not considered necessary to go into details on all six items, they are part of tenorsax history and several recording session through this and next year.

JOHNNY GRIFFIN QUINTET

NYC. Sept. 27, 1960

Dave Burns (tp), Johnny Griffin (ts), Norman Simmons (p), Victor Sproles (b), Ben Riley (dm).

Five titles were recorded with audience for Riverside ("Party Time" has no music), issued as "Studio Jazz Party":

12:35	Good Bait	Straight 16 bars (S) to 32 bars. (M) Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 2 choruses 8/8 and 4/4 with (tp). Solo 8 bars. (M)
8:31	There Will Never Be Another You	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. Duet with (tp) 64 bars to coda. (FM)
8:06	Toe-Tappin'	Solo 16 bars to 14 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
7:49	You've Changed	Soli 16, 32 and 16 bars to coda. (S)
8:11	Low Gravy	Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

A very fine quintet session, this time with JG as the only tenorsax artist. Five items of high quality of which the highlights probably are the tempo extremes; the very fast "Toe ..." and the beautiful ballad "... Changed", the latter also with fine trumpet.

EDDIE "LOCKJAW" DAVIS / JOHNNY GRIFFIN QUINTET

NYC. Nov. 4&10, 1960

Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Johnny Griffin (ts), Junior Mance (p), Larry Gales (b), Ben Riley (dm).

Twelve titles were recorded for Jazzland, six first issued as "Tough Tenors", six last issued as "Griff And Lock":

5:27	Tickle Toe	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 3 choruses 16/16, 8/8 and 4/4 with (ts-ELD). (F)
7:06	Save Your Love For Me	Solo 64 bars. (M)
6:32	Twins	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 2 choruses 8/8 and 4/4 with (ts-ELD). (F)
9:14	Funky Fluke	Soli 17 and 1 choruses of 12 bars. 9 choruses 4/4 with (ts-ELD). (F)
4:27	Imagination	Solo 56 bars to very long coda. (S)
7:17	Soft Winds	Solo 64 bars. (M)
7:59	Hey Lock	Solo 2 choruses of 56 bars. (FM)
6:54	Last Train From Overbrook	Solo 60 bars. (M)
5:29	Midnight At Minton's	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
4:25	Second Balcony Jump	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (F)
6:40	I'll Remember April	Solo 2 choruses of 48 bars. (F)
7:42	Good Bait	Duet with (ts-ELD) 16 bars. Solo 64 bars. (M)

The second and third ELD/JG sessions, now for Jazzland with a change of piano and bass, but same exciting music, still with ELD always preceding JG. I can only repeat my strong appreciation for these guys, this is how competitive and at the same time cooperative tenorsax playing was in the late vintage years of early sixties, an art soon to be fading away in the narcissistic developments of our beloved music. Dig the fast tempi constituting most of the sessions, "Midnight ...", and by all means "Tickle Toe" (fantastic!), "Twins" and "... Flute" with gorgeous chases. Note however also a beautiful ballad "Imagination" where JG takes it alone. There is not one uninspired minute on this 80 minutes treasury kit!

The solography takes an intermediate halt here, to come back later with 1961.