The

TRUMPET

of

ROBERT ELLIOTT JONES

“JONAH”

Solographer: Jan Evensmo

Note: This is a complete solography with comments to every session but only to 1942. There are a few missing items, please assist.
Born: Louisville, Kentucky, Dec. 31, 1909
Died: April 29, 2000

Introduction:

Jonah Jones was a fine trumpeter and well recognized in our Oslo Jazz Circle club. He was a candidate for my previous Jazz Solography Series, but I never got that far. Now it’s time!

Early history:

Husband of tromboniste Elizabeth Bowles (sister of Russel Bowles). During his early teens played in the Booker T. Washington Community Centre Band in Louisville. First professional work with Wallace Bryant’s Band on the S.S. Island Queen’, sailing between Cincinnati and New Orleans. Returned home to Louisville, worked with Kentucky Derbies at Lexington State Fair, then joined Horace Henderson in Cleveland (1928), the band broke up in Buffalo. Then joined Wesley Helvey Band and toured Indiana with The Hardy Brothers. With drummer Guy Jackson at Vendome Hotel, Buffalo, then spent several months in Jimmie Lunceford band in 1931, joined Stuff Smith in Buffalo (1932). Played on and off with Stuff during 1933-4, then regularly with Lil Armstrong’s bigband in 1935, brief spell with McKinney’s Cotton Pickers, then rejoined Stuff Smith at Silver Grill, Buffalo. With Benny Carter in 1940. Brief spell with Fletcher Henderson, then with Cab Calloway from February 1941 until 1951. (Ref. John Chilton).
JONAH JONES SOLOGRAPHY

STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS NYC. Jan. 17, 1936
Jonah Jones (tp, vo), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Raymond Smith (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), John Washington (dm).
One title, 18508 “With All My Heart”, was recorded for Vocalion, rejected.

NYC. Feb. 11, 1936
Same. Four titles:
18654-1 I’se A-Muggin’ - Part 1 In ens. (M)
18655-1 I’se A-Muggin’ - Part 2 Duet with (vln) 16 bars. (M)
18655-2 I’se A-Muggin’ - Part 2 Duet with (vln) 8 bars. (M)
18656-1 I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music Intro 8 bars. Acc. (vln). Solo 36 bars with (vln) acc. to coda. (F)
18657-1 I’m Putting All My Eggs In One Basket Duet with (vln) 16+6 bars, (vln) on bridge to break 4 bars. Obbligato 32 bars (mute). Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. Duet with (vln) 32 bars. (FM)

Jonah Jones appears on record for the first time with one of the most swinging bands, violinists and personalities in jazz history! The session starts with a great waste, “I’se …” has no jazz value. However, the two remaining items are gigantic swingers, led by Stuff himself but JJ following up nicely with swinging soli, showing that he aims to be one of the greatest swing trumpeters. Note his aggressive intro on “… Gabriel …” to set the mood, and his strong, confident conclusion. And his contributions on “… Basket” are filled with inspiration and joy, this a happy trumpet player!

STUFF SMITH NYC. Feb. 23, 1936
Same. Broadcast “Paul Whiteman Show”, two titles:

I’m A Ding Dong Daddy Duet with (vln) 32 bars to solo 32 bars to 64 bars “solo” with (vo) acc. (F)
I’se A-Muggin’ In ens. (M)

“… Daddy” is a very noisy and exhibitionistic piece, nice to be present but more of historical value only now. The guys had fun, obviously. Some good JJ after Stuff’s contribution, but then he enters into a long sequence of high notes with verbal encouragement.

STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS NYC. March 13, 1936
Jonah Jones (tp, vo-18820), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), James Sherman (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), Cozy Cole (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

18817-1 I Don’t Want To Make History Straight/solo 32 bars (mute) to acc. (vo) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars, last 8 with (vln) to coda. (FM)
18818-2 ‘Tain’t No Use Free intro to straight/duet with (vln) 32 bars. Acc. (vo) 32 bars (mute). Acc. (vln). Coda. (SM)
18819-1 After You’ve Gone Duet with (vln) 36 bars. Break to solo 40 bars with (vln) acc. to coda. (F)
18820-1 You’re A Viper Solo 64 bars with (vln) acc. (FM)

Possibly the greatest of the Stuff Smith sessions, swinging like …!!! JJ seems to have matured, playing even more freely and inspired here. He opens “… History” with lovely, confident muted playing and continues wailing behind Stuff’s vocal, later concluding with a fine open solo. And in “After …”, later one of Roy Eldridge’s show numbers, he really goes for it, sparkling duet with violin, later a strong solo. In “… Viper” he gets a long interrupted solo of high quality, but the vocal he could have left to Stuff. After all this praise, there is another item, my favourite, the slow medium “… Use”, played rather straight, a lovely, sensitive intro and backing Stuff’s violin with so much soul in his open horn, later utterly beautiful muted obbligato, a magnificent records and a great trumpeter!!
STUFF SMITH  
NYC. April 23, 1936
Same. Broadcasts “The Fleischmann’s Yeast Hour”, two titles, “I’se Muggin’” is unissued but:

After You’ve Gone  
With ens 20 bars (NC), partly with heavy announcement. Solo/duet with (vln) 44 bars to coda. (F)

STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS  
NYC. May 12, 1936
Same. Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

19239-1 Robins And Roses  
Duet (mute) with (vln) 16+6 bars, (vln) on bridge. Solo 8 bars (mute) to acc. (vln) 14 bars to coda. (M)

19240-1 I’ve Got A Heavy Date  
Duet (mute) with (vln) 16+8 bars, (vln) on bridge. Break. Solo 16+8 bars (open), (p) on bridge. (FM)

These are also lovely items with great, laidback muted trumpet playing on “… Roses” and similar but faster and strongly swinging on “… Heavy Date”, also fine open horn on this one. But note Stuff’s violin on this date, better does not exist, gigantic solo on “… Use” and even better on “… Date”!!!

TEDDY WILSON & HIS ORCHESTRA  
NYC. June 30, 1936
Jonah Jones (tp), Johnny Hodges (as), Harry Carney (cl, bar), Teddy Wilson (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Billie Holiday (vo—except 19497).

Five titles were recorded for Brunswick:

19495-2 It’s Like Reaching For The Moon  
Solo with ens 16 bars. (SM)

19496-2 These Foolish Things  
Solo 10 bars to coda. (SM)

19497-1 Why Do I Lie To Myself About You?  
Soli 8 and 8 bars. Solo 16+8 bars, (as) on bridge. (M)

19498-1 I Cried For You  
Weak obbligato 38 bars (mute). Solo with ens 8 bars to coda. (M)

19499-2 Guess Who?  
Solo/straight 16+6 bars (mute), (p) on bridge. Solo 8 bars (open). Solo with ens 16 bars to coda. (M)

Never thought about it before, but this is JJ’s first session outside his Stuff Smith companionship. And what a session it is!! The combination of Billie, Teddy and “The Rabbit” is deadly enough, then topped by an unusually inspired baritone sax, and JJ arrives when the table is set for party. He plays beautiful open horn in the ending of “… Moon”, “… Things”, “… You” and “Guess Who?” but controls the latter nicely from the start with his mute. And then, believe it or not, the highlight of the session, “Why Do I …”, the only item without Billie, can you believe it? But listen to how he and Hodges circle around each other like in a lovers’ dance, magnificent!!!

STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS  
NYC. July 1, 1936
Personnel as March 13.

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, three issued:

19500-1 It Ain’t Right  
Duet with (vln) 16+8 bars, (vln) on bridge. Solo with (vln) acc. 16+8 bars, (vln) on bridge, to coda. (FM)

19501-1 Old Joe’s Hittin’ The Jug  
Intro with (vln) 8 bars to duet 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. In ens to coda. (F)

19503-2 Serenade For A Wealthy Widow  
Solo/straight duet (open & mute) with (vln). (FM)

Two lovely titles with excellent trumpet playing, note how he plays rather straight in the beginning of “… Use” with the violin moving around, later an excellent, strong solo, open horn here. And a colourful “… Jug”, few trumpeters played on this level in 1936! Note another super gigantic violin solo on this one!! “Serenade …” is the odd item, a tune of strange structure, and the guys play and play, ok enough, but very exciting.

STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS  
NYC. Aug. 21, 1936
Same. Three titles were recorded for Vocalion:
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19731-1  Knock, Knock, Who’s There?  Breaks. Solo with (vln) acc. 48 bars to coda. (F)
19732-1  Bye Bye, Baby  Solo/straight 16+10 bars, (p) on bridge. Duet with (vln) 24 bars to coda. (M)
19733-1  Here Comes The Man With The Jive  Solo with (vln) 32 bars. (FM)

The material here is not as exciting on the previous sessions, note the nonsense vocal parts of “Knock …” and “… Jive”, and the atmosphere is slightly less jubilant, although there are good swinging moments and hot violin. JJ has some great moments though, particularly “… Jive” is enjoyable.

STUFF SMITH  Aug. 1936
Same. Broadcast possibly from Onyx Club:

Here Comes The Man With The Jive  Solo with (vln) 32 bars. (FM)

Fine JJ here but not the best of sound.

NYC. Oct. 3, 1936
Same, except probably Clyde Hart (p).
Broadcast “Saturday Night Swing Club”, three titles, one issued:

Oh! Lady Be Good  Part of intro 2 bars. Solo/straight 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F) to coda. (S)

Better sound and a fine solo by JJ on this broadcast, but tempo could have been more convenient.

DICK PORTER & HIS ORCHESTRA  NYC. Oct. 7, 1936
Jonah Jones (p), Joe Marsala (cl, as), Dick Porter (p, vo), Eddie Condon (g), Ernest Wilson Myers (b), George Wettling (dm), Dick Porter (vo).
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, two issued:

20009-1  Sweet Thing  Obbligato 32 bars (mute). Solo 8 bars (open). Solo 8 bars (open) with (vo) acc. to coda. (SM)
20010-1  Swingin’ To A Swing Tune  Obbligato with (cl) 34 and 18 bars (mute). Solo 18 bars (open). (FM)

Dick Porter is not the most exciting of vocalist trying to tap the Fats Waller market, but the personnel here is very competent, and the result is a very nice swing record! JJ plays with the same brilliance as on all other events in 1936/37, both with open and muted horn, and his contributions here are highly noteworthy!

TEDDY WILSON & HIS ORCHESTRA  NYC. Nov. 19, 1936
Jonah Jones (tp), Benny Goodman (cl), Ben Webster (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Allan Reuss (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Billie Holiday (vo-except 20292).
Four titles were recorded for Brunswick:

20290-1  Pennies From Heaven  Part of intro. Breaks. In ens 4 bars. (SM)
20290-2  Pennies From Heaven  As above. (SM)
20291-1  That’s Life I Guess  Solo 16+8 bars (mute), (cl) on bridge. Solo with ens 10 bars (open) to coda. (SM)
20291-2  That’s Life I Guess  As above. (SM)
20292-2  Sailin’  Solo 32 bars. Solo with ens 64 bars to coda. (F)
20293-1  I Can’t Give You Anything But Love  Straight 16 bars. With ens 8 bars to coda. (SM)

JJ seems to have much less important role here compared to the earlier, lovely Wilson/Holiday session, but there are great moments. The non-vocal “Sailin’” is a bit too fast for much taste, but he introduces “… Love” masterly with a big open horn. The session highlight is however “… Life …” with two takes of which the 78 issued one is notably faster within the slow medium range. JJ let his mute create a nice atmosphere here, and his soli while cast in the same mould have the necessary variations from take to take to let us be more familiar with his improvising style.
STUFF SMITH & HIS ORCHESTRA  
NYC. 1937
Jonah Jones, Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, Nat Story (tb), Garvin Bushell, Andrew Brown (cl, as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Walter Thomas, Ben Webster (ts), Stuff Smith (vln), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).
WMCA broadcasts from Hotel Biltmore, “Let’s Listen To Lucidin” eye lotion commercials. All programs have the same theme before and after, and JJ solos on all:

Theme                                                                 Straight (growl). (S)
Jan. 6, 1937

Five titles, two have JJ:

Stardust                                                           Solo 16+8 bars (mute), (ts) on bridge. (S)
Jan. 8, 1937

Stompin’ At The Savoy                                                   Solo 18+6 bars, (p) on bridge. (FM)

Five titles, two have JJ:

I Got Rhythm                                                        Solo 36 bars. (FM)
Make Believe Ballroom                                                   Solo 18+6 bars (open), (tb) on bridge. (M)
Jan. 11, 1937

Two titles (incomplete program):

Love Marches On                                                        Solo 8 bars (mute). (SM)
The Organ Grinder’s Swing                                               Solo 24 bars. (M)

These programs give JJ many opportunities, obviously he is one of the most entrusted soloists, and since this early period also is the most important in his career, his solography is augmented by several great items. A brilliant solo on “Stardust”, worth the whole program, this is JJ at his very best!! And a delightful muted solo on “Love …”, vow!! In fact everything is working out beautifully here, what discoveries!!

BILLIE HOLIDAY & HER ORCHESTRA  
NYC. Jan. 12, 1937
Jonah Jones (tp), Edgar Sampson (cl, as), Ben Webster (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), Allan Reuss (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Billie Holiday (vo).
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

20506-1 One Never Knows, Does One                                    Solo 10 bars. Obbligato 10 bars (mute). (S)
20507-1 I’ve Got My Love To Keep Me Warm                              Weak obbligato parts (mute). Break 2 bars. (M)
20507-2 I’ve Got My Love To Keep Me Warm                               As above. (M)
20508-1 If My Heart Could Only Talk                                   Intro 4 bars to obbligato 32 bars (mute). Solo 16 bars. Obbligato 16 bars to coda. (SM)
20509-2 Please Keep Me In Your Dreams                                 Solo 16 bars (mute), Weak obbligato 32 bars to coda. (M)

This is a nice session with an overall romantic atmosphere and a tight supportive rhythm section. The solemn “One Never …” is perhaps the most notable item as such with a fine open horn solo, but there is lots of beautiful muted playing on “… Only Talk”, and a few fluffs are easy to forgive. “Please … “ also has a strong muted solo.

STUFF SMITH & HIS ORCHESTRA  
continued
Same personnel.  
Jan. 15, 1937

Five titles, two have JJ:

I’ve Found A New Baby                                                 Break to solo 16 bars. (FM)
Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet                                          Solo 30 bars. (F)
Jan. 18, 1937

Five titles, one has JJ, plus a trailer:

Basin Street Blues                                                   Intro 8 bars to solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
Honeysuckle Rose  
Solo 24 bars (mute). (FM)  
Sweet Sue (trailer)  
Solo 6 bars. (FM)  

Jan. 22, 1937

Four titles, but no JJ.

Two titles (incomplete program), one has JJ:

Make Believe Ballroom  
Solo 18+6 bars (mute), (tb) on bridge. (FM)

These programs also contain some of the most magnificent soloing JJ ever made!! His version of “Basin …” alone is enough to put him as one of the very greatest of the swing trumpeters of the 30s!! Also absolutely top quality trumpet on “… Baby” and “… Bonnet”. The Lucidin broadcasts are in fact so important as to increase our understanding of JJ and raise his position in jazz trumpet higher than otherwise would have been the case.

HAVEN JOHNSON & HIS ORCHESTRA  
NYC. Jan. 27, 1937  
Jonah Jones (tp), Russell Procope (cl, as), Stanley Payne (as), Ben Webster (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), Ira Bolling (dm), Haven Johnson (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

20586-1  Before We Part  
Obbligato 32 bars (mute). (M)

20587-1  There Is No Moon  
Solo 16 bars (open). (M)

Another session of similar type as the Dick Porter ones, with an ordinary vocalist but excellent accompanying personnel. With regard to JJ he takes an interesting, but not quite tasteful solo, on “… Moon” and a fine although weakly recorded obbligato on “… Part”.

DICK PORTER & HIS ORCHESTRA  
NYC. Feb. 16, 1937  
Jonah Jones (tp), Edgar Sampson (as), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Dick Porter (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

20682-1  Swing, Boy, Swing  
Solo 8 bars to acc. (vo). (M)

20682-2  Swing, Boy, Swing  
As above. (M)

20683-1  May I Have The Next Romance With You?  
Intro (mute). Acc. (vo) to solo 16 bars (mute). (M)

20683-2  May I Have The Next Romance WY?  
As above. (M)

20684-1  There’s No Two Ways About It  
Solo with (p) acc. 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge. Solo 8 bars (open). (FM)

20684-2  There’s No Two Ways About It  
As above. (FM)

20685-1  Poor Robinson Crusoe  
Solo with ens 32+16 bars, (as) on bridge. (F)

20685-2  Poor Robinson Crusoe  
As above. (F)

The second Dick Porter is generally better than the first one, due to one of the most brilliant of swing rhythm sections. That the vocalist is more of a disturbing element than a benefit does not matter much. JJ plays in his very best 1937 shape, with open horn but superb with his mute on “… Romance …” and “… No Two Ways …”. Note also there exist alternate takes of all titles in private possession, make the session even more interesting!!

TEDDY WILSON & HIS ORCHESTRA  
NYC. late Feb./early March, 1937  
Jonah Jones (tp), Ben Webster (ts), Stuff Smith (vln), Teddy Wilson (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Helen Ward (vo).

Date erroneously given as Nov. 25, 1936, but this program was made after Lucidin was on the market.

Broadcast, commercial for Lucidin eye lotion:

Them There Eyes (Theme)  
Faintly behind announcer. (M)

You Turned The Tables On Me  
Obbligato 32 and 16 bars. (S)

Darling, Not Without You  
Solo 16 bars. Obbligato 8 bars. (S)

Them There Eyes (Theme)  
Faintly behind announcer. (M)
I Got Rhythm
In ens 32 bars. Solo 34 bars.
Solo with ens 16 + 10 bars,
(p) on bridge. (F)

Did You Mean It?
In ens 8 bars. Obbligato 32 bars. (M)

Them There Eyes (Theme)
Faintly behind announcer. (M)

A rare commercial, presenting jazz of the very best vintage all the way, in a style well known from numerous Stuff Smith and Teddy Wilson recording sessions. JJ plays up to his very best, and particularly the solo on “Darling …” and the obbligato on “You Turned …” should be noted!

ROLY’s TAP ROOM GANG
NYC. March 17, 1937
Jonah Jones (tp), Sid Stoneburn (cl, as), Arthur Rollini (ts), Adrian Rollini (btx, vib-273), Fulton McGrath (p), Dick McDonough (g), George Hnida (b), Al Sidell (dm), Red McKenzie (vo-271,272).

Four titles were recorded for Variety/Master:

270-1 Bugle Call Rag Part of intro (mute). (S). With ens 8 and 8 bars. Solo 16 bars (open). With ens. (FM)

270-2 Bugle Call Rag As above. (FM)

271-2 I Cried For You Obbligato 8 bars. (SM)

272-2 The Trouble With Me Is You Obbligato 8 bars. Solo with ens 16+8 bars, (ts) on bridge. (FM)

273-2 Old Fashioned Love With ens 16 bars. Solo with ens 32 bars. With ens 16 bars to coda. (FM)

I did not realize until quite recently after having purchased the Retrieval CD with unissued material, that JJ played quite an important role in this session. All items have something of trumpet interest, and for a highlight try the ending obbligato on “I Cried …”.

ADRIAN ROLLINI & HIS ORCHESTRA
NYC. March 20, 1937
Personnel said to be same/similar to March 17 except Arthur Rollini omitted. However, there are (tb) and (strings) present and the band seems larger.

Two titles were recorded for Master:

286-2 I Don’t Know If I’m Comin’ Or Goin’ Coda. (M)

287-2 Slap That Bass Solo 16+4 bars, (tb) on bridge. (FM)

NYC. March 27, 1937

Same/similar to March 17. Four titles, three issued:

322-1 Slap That Bass With ens 4 bars. (FM)

323-2 The Love Bug Will Bite You Soli 8 and 18 bars. (FM)

324-2 Let’s Call The Whole Thing Off Straight with orch 8 bars. (M)

Compared to the March 17 session above, JJ is not so important here, but the first version of “Slap …” and particularly “The Love Bug …” have absolutely interesting trumpet.

STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS
NYC. May 4, 1937
Jonah Jones (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

62172-A Twilight In Turkey In ens (mute). Duet (mute) with (vln) 16 and 16 bars. (F)

62173-A Where Is The Sun? Obbligato parts (mute). Solo 8 bars (mute). Duet (open) with (vln) 10 bars to coda. (SM)

62174-A Upstairs Solo 44 bars. Duet with (vln) 24 bars. In ens 36 bars. (F) to coda. (S)

62175-A Onyx Club Spree Solo/straight 16+8 bars (mute), (vln) on bridge. Obbligato parts (mute), Duet (open) with (vln) 12 bars to coda. (M)

62175-B Onyx Club Spree As above. (M)

This is a different kind of Stuff session, possibly due to Decca which usually messed up everything in their recording sessions… The material here is not
particularly exciting. “… Turkey” is rather artificial, “Upstairs” forced and rather vulgar, the setup in general somewhat messy compared to the wonderful Vocalion sessions earlier. However, it is fair to say that JJ plays his parts reasonably well, most pleasant muted on “Onyx …” and there are much of interest also from violin and piano.

LIONEL HAMPTON & HIS ORCHESTRA       Hollywood, Aug. 16, 1937
Jonah Jones (tp), Eddie Barefield (cl), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Lionel Hampton (vib, p, dm, vo).
Four titles were recorded for Victor:

09644-1 Confessin’           Solo 18 bars. (SM)
09645-1 Drum Stomp         Solo with (cl) acc. 64 bars to coda. (F)
09646-1 Piano Stomp        Solo 32 bars with (p-LH/cl) acc. (F)
09647-1 I Surrender Dear  Solo/straight 16+8 bars (mute), (cl) on bridge. Acc. (vib). (SM)

JJ gets his Hampton-Victor-opportunity together with so many other great contemporaries and contributes with two very memorable performances in a very pleasant tempo; “Confessin’” with open horn and particularly “… Dear” with mute, both among JJ’s proudest 1937 works!! However, “Drum …” alias “Crazy Rhythm” is so torn up by Hamp’s drums that his otherwise active trumpet playing degenerates to more heat than pleasure. “Piano …” is not much different with drums changed for a piano. But the two other titles are enough to make this an important JJ session, no doubt!

STUFF SMITH       Randall’s Island, NY. May 29, 1938
Jonah Jones (tp), Ben Webster (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Stuff Smith (vln, ldr).
Bill Savory collection, broadcast, one title:

Crescendo In Drums       Solo 16+6 bars, (ts) on bridge. (FM)

Lousy sound here, difficult to evaluate.

TEDDY WILSON & HIS ORCHESTRA       NYC, July 29, 1938
Jonah Jones (tp), Benny Carter (as), Ben Webster (ts), Teddy Wilson (p), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Nan Wynn (vo).
Four titles were recorded for Brunswick, no JJ on 23305-1&2 “Now It Can Be Told” but:

22306-1 Laugh And Call It Love As below. (M)
22306-2 Laugh And Call It Love Intro 4 bars (S) and solo 8 bars (mute). Solo with ens 8 bars (open) to coda. (M)
22307-1 On The Bumpy Road To Love Solo/straight 32 bars (mute). Solo with ens 8 bars (open) to coda. (FM)
22307-2 On The Bumpy Road To Love As above. (FM)
22308-1 A-Tisket, A-Tasket Solo 16 bars (open). (FM)

A very nice Teddy Wilson session, even without Billie Holiday! JJ’s playing is of high quality and should definitely be noted, my favourite is “Laugh … ” with a lovely, typical muted slow opening and later fine soli. The two takes are similar but not identical, listen closely. Note that almost one year has passed since the JJ’s previous recording session, and that more than another year will follow until he is in studio again.

STUFF SMITH       NYC, June 29, 1939
Personnel probably as below.
Broadcast WJZ, one title:

Big Wig In The Wigwam Soli 16 and 16 bars (mute). Solo 16+8 bars (open), (ts) on bridge. (F)

Absolutely interesting and colourful this “… Wigwam”, also having some fine violin and a tenorsax contribution!!

STUFF SMITH & HIS ORCHESTRA       NYC, Sept./Oct. 1939
Jonah Jones (tp), George Clarke (ts), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Sam Allen (p), Bernard Addison or Carl O. Seaman (g), John Brown (b), Herbert Cowans (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Varsity, no JJ on 7793-2 “My Thoughts” but:

7792-3 Sam The Vegetable Man Solo 16+12 bars, (vln) on bridge. (F)
One cannot but compare with sadness the deterioration of Stuff Smith sessions since the unforgettable 1936-37 period, also because this violinist obviously has all his capabilities retained. The choice of material is now commercial in a different and negative sense. It seems that JJ still is good shape but he is noisy in a noisy environment.

**LIL ARMSTRONG & HER DIXIELANDERS**  
*Nyc. March 18, 1940*

Jonah Jones (tp), Don Stovall (as), Russell Johns (ts), Lil Armstrong (p), Wellman Braud (b), Manzie Johnson (dm), Midge Williams (vo-67333), Hilda Rogers (vo-67334).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, no JJ on 67333-A “Why Is A Good Man So Hard To Find?” but:

- 67331-A  Sixth Street  Break. Solo with ens 12 bars. (FM)
- 67332-A  Riffin’ The Blues  Solo with ens 60 bars. (M)
- 67334-A  My Secret Flame  Solo 16 bars (mute). (S)

Typical jump band session, kind of superficial to my ears, too active drums, but after this has been stated, JJ plays certainly with style, and his “… Blues” is quite impressing.

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ORCHESTRA**  
*Nyc. March 18-22, 1940*

Jonah Jones (tp, vo), George Clarke (ts, vo), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), John Brown (b), Herbert Cowans (dm), Éric Henry (p), Luke Stewart (g), Stella Brooks (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Varsity, no JJ on 1506-1&2 “It’s Up To You” but:

- 1507-1  I’ve Got You Under My Skin  Intro 8 bars. (M)
- 1507-2  I’ve Got You Under My Skin  As above. (M)
- 1508-1  Crescendo In Drums  Solo 16+6 bars, (ts) on bridge. (F)
- 1508-2  Crescendo In Drums  As above. (F)
- 1509-1  Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho  Solo 16 bars. In ens. (FM)
- 1509-2  Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho  As above. (FM)

Better than the previous Varsity session but not close to what could have been achieved with more interesting material. Not even alternate takes make things very interesting, and the two intros on “… Skin” are close to identical.

**PEETIE WHEASTRAW VOCAL ACC. BY**  
*Nyc. April 4, 1940*

Jonah Jones (tp), Lil Armstrong (p), Sid Catlett (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Decca:

- 67481-A  Big Apple Blues  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 24 and 24 bars (mute). (S)
- 67482-A  Big Money Blues  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 12 bars. Solo 12 bars to obbligato 24 bars (mute). (S)
- 67483-A  Chicago Mill Blues  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 24 and 24 bars (mute). (S)
- 67484-A  Five Minutes Blues  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 24 and 24 bars (mute). (S)
- 67485-A  Two Time Mama  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 24 and 24 bars (mute). (S)
- 67486-A  Jaybird Blues  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 24 and 24 bars (mute). (S)
- 67487-A  Suicide Blues  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 12 bars. Solo 12 bars to obbligato 24 bars (mute). (S)
- 67488-A  Pocket Knife Blues  Intro 4 bars to obbligato. 24 and 24 bars (mute). (S)

Fine trumpet on this session with good sound. JJ is playing all mute in a very dedicated and inspired fashion, so this session can definitely be recommended. But do not play more than one or two items at a time, they are so similar! Note also that among all the background playing, there are two items with good soloing, “Big Money …” and “Suicide …”.
STUFF SMITH
Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 16, 1940

Same. Broadcast, two titles:

Bugle Blues (NC)
Solo with ens 16 bars (open).
Solo with ens 32 bars (mute).
Solo with ens 48 bars (open). (F)

Body And Soul (NC)
No solo. (S/F)

Surprisingly enough, this is the best of all the Stuff Smith broadcasts, although it is quite late, after the group’s real prime time. JJ has a lot of good things to say on “Bugle …”, dig this. However, although it does not really belong here: If one should choose the most swinging item in jazz history, Stuff Smith’s version of “Body …”, incomplete in both ends but nevertheless taking a long solo, this it it!!
You have never heard anything like it, believe me!!!

GEORGIA WHITE
NYC. April 18, 1940

Jonah Jones (tp), Fess Williams (cl), Georgia White (p, vo), Walter Martin (dm).
Six titles were recorded for Decca:

67563-A  Jazzin’ Babies Blues  Break (open). Obbligato parts (mute).
Solo (open) with (cl) 12 bars to coda. (SM)

67564-A  Papa Pleaser  Break (open). Obbligato parts (mute).
Solo (open) with (cl) 24 bars. (SM)

67575-A  Sensation Blues  Intro 4 bars to solo 12 bars.
Solo 12 bars. (SM)

67576-A  Late Hour Blues  Soli 16, 16 and 16 bars. (FM)

67577-B  Panama Limited Blues  Obbligato parts. Solo 12 bars.
Obbligato parts. Coda. (SM)

67578-A  You Ought To Be Ashamed Of Yourself  Obbligato parts. Solo 16 bars. Obbligato parts. (SM)

Nice session this one with several good contributions by JJ, most notably on “Sensation …”, “Late Hours …” and “… Yourself”.

PEETIE WHEATSTRAW
NYC. Aug. 28, 1940

Personnel as previous Wheatstraw session.
Five titles were recorded for Decca:

68022-A  Gangster’s Blues  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 12, 12 and 24 bars. (SM)

68023-A  Cuttin’ ‘Em Slow  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 12, 12 and 24 bars. (SM)

68024-A  Look Out For Yourself  Intro 8 bars to obbligato 8 and 8 bars.
Solo 8 bars to obbligato 16 bars. (S)

68025-A  No ‘Count Woman  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 12, 12 and 12 bars. (S)

68026-A  What’s That?  Intro 4 bars to obbligato 24 bars.
Solo 12 bars. Obbligato 12 bars. (SM)

Another Wheatstraw session of same quality, JJ playing mostly muted trumpet of high quality, and the recording sound is very good. Of course, all items are more or less similar, except for the lyrics, but each one is for itself nice music!

BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA
NYC. Oct. 23, 1940

Russell Smith, Bobby Williams, Jonah Jones (tp), Milton Robinson, Madison Vaughan (tb), Chauncey Haughton (as), George James (as, bar), George Irish, Stafford Simon (ts), Sonny White (p), Everett Barksdale (g), Hayes Alvis (b), William Purnell (dm), Roy Felton (vo-68284,85,87), The Mills Brothers (vo-group-68284).
Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have JJ:

68284-A  By The Watermelon Vine, Lindy Lou  Solo 16 bars (mute). (M)

68286-A  Boogie Woogie Sugar Blues  Soli 18, 4 and 2 bars (mute/growl). (SM)

This recording session is in general not very exciting, and the trumpet soloing is rather ordinary, influenced by the lame atmosphere.
BENNY CARTER & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Jan. 21, 1941
Benny Carter (tp, cl, as), Russell Smith, Sidney De Paris, Jonah Jones (tp), Vic Dickenson, Jimmy Archeay, Joe Britton (tb), George Dorsey, Bill White (as), George Irish, Fred Mitchell (ts), Sonny White (p), Herb Thomas (g), Ted Sturgis (b), J. C. Heard (dm), Roy Felton (vo-60354).
Four titles were recorded for Bluebird, one has JJ:

60353-1 Babalu Solo 16 bars (open). (FM)

A competent trumpet solo in an otherwise pretty sterile item.

CAB CALLOWAY & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. March 5, 1941
Jonah Jones, Dizzy Gillespie, Lammar Wright (tp), Tyree Glenn (tb, vib), Keg Johnson, Quentin Jackson (tb), Jerry Blake (cl, as), Hilton Jefferson (as), Andrew Brown (as, bar), Walter Thomas, Chu Berry (ts), Bennie Payne (p), Danny Barker (g), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Okeh, three have JJ:

29867-1 Jonah Joins The Cab Obbligato parts to solo 6 choruses of 12 bars (open) to coda. (M)
29867-2 Jonah Joins The Cab As above. (M)
29868-1 Geecie Joe Solo 12 bars (mute). (SM)
29868-2 Geecie Joe As above. (SM)
29869-1 Special Delivery Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars (open). (FM)
29869-2 Special Delivery As above. (FM)
29869-3 Special Delivery As above. (FM)

“JJ Joins The Cab”, yes, well ok, but as you will see below, it is almost only this introductory session that counts! The band is not the same swinging organization as a few years earlier. Note also that this is not the same JJ as we encountered four, five years ago. Then he was a happy, informal, exciting young man with so much love coming from his horn. Now he is a very competent professional but with much routine in his playing, some of the magic has been lost, “… Cab” is a feature number with qualities but maybe not so spontaneous, and the same goes for “… Joe”. “… Delivery” though is an exception to what was written earlier, being a real hot number with Chu Berry in his prime, and although the three takes are rather similar, here JJ demonstrates he still can wail!

CAB CALLOWAY & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. July 3, 1941
Same/similar.
Four titles were recorded for Okeh, one has JJ:

30835-1 Take The A Train Solo 32 bars (mute). (M)

NYC. July 24, 1941
Same/similar. Four titles, one has JJ:

30939-1 Hey Doc Solo 20 bars (mute). (M)

This “… Train” does not have that much power, but JJ takes a fine muted solo on this one, and also “… Doc” belongs to JJ’s nicer contributions with the Cab.

CAB CALLOWAY & HIS ORCHESTRA Chi. Summer 1941
Personnel probably as March 5, 1941.
Broadcast from The Panther Room, Hotel Sherman, six titles, two have JJ:

Geechie Joe Solo 12 bars (mute). (S)
Daddy Solo with orch 8 bars. (M)

A fine, fresh, slower version of “… Joe”, while the sound quality of “Daddy” is very bad.

CAB CALLOWAY & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Sept. 10, 1941
Same/similar.
Four titles were recorded for Okeh, two have JJ:

31300-1 Blues In The Night Intro 4 bars (mute). (SM)
31302-1 My Coo-Coo Bird Solo with orch 6 bars. (M)
31302-2 My Coo-Coo Bird As above. (M)
Similar but Russell Smith, Lester “Shad” Collins (tp), Ted McRae (ts) replace Gillespie and Berry. Five titles, one has JJ:

31645-1 A Smo-o-oth One Solo 32 bars. (FM)

NYC. Nov. 3, 1941

NYC. Dec. 24, 1941

Same. Four titles were recorded for Okeh, three issued, but no JJ.

ca. 1941-42

Soundies. No JJ on “The Skunk Song” and “Virginia, Georgia And Caroline” but:

Blues In The Night Intro 4 bars (mute). (SM)
Minnie The Moocher Solo 4 bars (mute). Obbligato parts (mute). (SM)

Chi. Feb. 2, 1942

Same/similar. Five titles, two have JJ:

4179-1 I Want To Rock Solo 16 bars (mute). (FM)
4183-1 Minnie The Moocher Solo 4 bars (mute). Obbligato 8, 8 and 8 bars (mute). (M)

Cleveland, Ohio, Feb. 25, 1942

Same/similar. Quizzicale Show, four titles preserved, one has JJ:

Rose O’Day Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Cleveland, Ohio, March 4, 1942

Same/similar. Quizzicale Show, four titles preserved, two have JJ:

Deep In The Heart Of Texas Solo with orch 16 bars. (FM)
Geechie Joe Solo 12 bars. (S)

L.A. July 27, 1942

Same/similar. Three titles, one has JJ:

885-2 Ogeeche River Lullaby Solo 16 bars. Coda. (S)

The Cab Calloway orchestra has now lost most of its heat, and JJ only performs the necessary trumpet soli to help pretending the productions are still exciting. There are certain highlights like “A Smo-o-oth One” and “Geechie Joe”, but generally this is routine.

I have decided to close the Jonah Jones solography at this point. However, he continued to play with Cab Calloway and later had great public success on his own. We might continue his solography upon your assistance.

Late history:

With Cab Calloway from February 1941 until 1951. Briefly with Joe Bushkin quartet at the Embers, then mainly with Earl Hines’ sextet from early 1952 until early1954 - during this period played occasionally with Cab Calloway and took part in brief reunion with Stuff Smith (spring 1953). Also played in Broadway theatre orchestras, Toured France and Belgium (as a soloist) in summer of 1954. Returned to New York, briefly with Lester Lanin Orchestra, then from September of 1955 began leading own quartet. After playing residencies at The Embers, New York, and London House, Chicago, etc., the group began regular television work. The quartet achieved international success and made several best-selling L.P.s. Long residencies at The Embers and Rainbow Grill; trips to Monaco 1959 and 1960 and a tour of Australia. The group (now a quintet) has maintained its popularity through the 1960s, and toured Europe, the Far East, and Australia; from 1969 to 1977 the quartet’s drummer was Cozy Cole. JJ performed at jazz festivals in Europe in 1978, and continued to work into the 1980s, last session in 1986.

... ooo .... 