

The
TENORSAX
of
HERMAN COOK
“JUNIOR”

Solographer: Jan Evensmo
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Born: Pensacola, Florida, July 22, 1934
Died: NYC. Feb. 3, 1992

Introduction:

Oslo Jazz Circle in the old days was very interested in the exciting art of the famous Horace Silver, and thus we also became familiar with Junior Cook. Unfortunately they never visited our backward country although they came pretty close. For me personally though, I solved the problem by visiting New York!

History:

Played alto saxophone while he was in high school but soon took up the tenor instrument instead. Played with Dizzy Gillespie in early 1958 and joined the Horace Silver Quintet in May; also in that year he recorded with Kenny Burrell. After leaving Silver in 1964 he played until 1969 with Blue Mitchell, who had also been one of Silver's sidemen, and recorded with Barry Harris (1967) and organists John Patton and John Patterson (both 1968). Taught at the Berklee College of Music before working with Freddie Hubbard (1973-75). Played in a quintet with with Louis Hayes (from 1975) (ref. The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz).

JUNIOR COOK SOLOGRAPHY

KENNY BURRELL SEPTET

NYC. May 14, 1958

Louis Smith (tp), Tina Brooks, Junior Cook (ts), Duke Jordan (p-items 1,2,3), Bobby Timmons (p-items 4,5,6,7), Kenny Burrell (g), Sam Jones (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "Blue Lights", no tenorsax on tk4 "The Man I Love" and tk11 "Autumn In New York" but:

tk1	I Never Knew	Solo 7 choruses of 32 bars (last tenorsax solo). (F)
tk2	Scotch Blues	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars last tenorsax solo). (M)
tk8	Yes Baby	Solo 24 bars (last tenorsax solo). (S)
tk9	Phinupi	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
tk10	Chuckin'	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars (last tenorsax solo). Solo 4 bars. (FM)
tk12	Rock Salt	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars (first tenorsax solo). (SM)
tk14	Caravan	Solo 64 bars (first tenorsax solo). (FM)

Another important tenorsax artist enter the scene, JC is a fully developed modern tenorsax swinger from this very first session! Somewhat traditional compared to the more unpredictable Brooks, he nevertheless takes fine soli, note his long one on "... Knew" and the "Scotch ..." blues as good examples of what he could do. We miss a tenorsax chase though!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET

Hackensack, NJ. June 15, 1958

Donald Byrd (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Silver (p), Gene Taylor (b), Louis Hayes (dm), Bill Henderson (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Blue Note, no tenorsax solo on "Senor Blues" but:

Tippin'	Soli 64, 4, 4, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
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A fine solo confirming the good impression from the Burrell session.

HORACE SILVER QUINTET

Newport, Rh. I., July 6, 1958

Louis Smith (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Silver (p), Gene Taylor (b), Louis Hayes (dm).

Four titles were recorded at the Newport Jazz Festival:

Tippin'	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 3 choruses 4/4 with (dm/tp). (FM)
The Outlaw	Soli 120 and 6 bars. (FM)
Senor Blues	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
Cool Eyes	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

A fine and extended version of the Blue Note recording of "Tippin'", and now also tenorsax solo on "Senor ..."! Fine soloing also on the two other titles from this discovery, issued on Mosaic.

Note: I heard this quintet live!! As a teenager, I washed dishes on the Norwegian ocean liner "Oslofjord" across the Atlantic and back in August 1958, to have the opportunity to experience three nights in NYC. To find jazz alive! And we did!! One night was spent at the Village Vanguard, and I remember it as exciting, even had the chance to speak to Silver, who was most impressed by our bags of 78s purchased at the Commodore Music Shop. Never knew then that I would be sitting half-a-century later writing about it!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET

Hackensack, NJ. Feb. 1, 1959

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Silver (p), Gene Taylor (b), Louis Hayes (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "Finger Poppin'":

tk11	Cookin' At The Continental	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (F)
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tk24	Mellow D	Soli 72, 8 and 8 bars. (F)
tk29	You Happened My Way	In ens. (S)
tk30	Swingin' The Samba	Solo 36 bars. (M)
tk32	Finger Poppin'	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (F)
tk37	Come On Home	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
tk39	Juicy Lucy	Solo 32 bars. (M)

Lucky JC to have the opportunity to play with Horace Silver and also the excellent trumpeter Blue Mitchell who was to be his close companion for years! Lots of fascinating compositions on this session, not of the most complicated type with the possible exceptions of "... Samba" and "... D". The tenorsax playing is all over of very good quality, perhaps not so epoch making as some contemporaries, but solid, honest and competent.

HORACE SILVER QUINTET

Paris, Feb. 14, 1959

Personnel as Feb. 1.

Concerts, items 1-3 unknown, item 4 as first concert, item 5-6 as second concert:

11:56	The Preacher	Solo 11 choruses of 16 bars. (FM)
15:08	Room 608	Solo 12 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
18:19	Doodlin'	Solo 11 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
13:18	Senor Blues	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
15:10	Ecaroh	Solo 7 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
12:51	Senor Blues	Solo 24 bars. (SM)

I found these items just when putting together this (updated) solography (Aug. 2019), and note their duration, giving new opportunities for prolonged soloing, something that seems to fit all artists. Note "Senor ..." as an exception, always having two tenorsax choruses. The performances are cooking, and within the scope of this work, JC never plays extended soli like this. The main impression is that his improvisational capabilities as well as inspiration are excellent, dig all items but particularly the three first.

HORACE SILVER QUINTET

Frankfurt, Germany, Feb. 1959

Personnel as Feb. 1.

Club date, Johan Helø collection, four titles (a fifth title, "Sweet Stuff" is a piano solo):

Ecaroh	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
Repetition	Soli 80, 8 and 8 bars. (F)
Silver's Blues	Solo 7 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Senor Blues	Solo 24 bars. (SM)

Valuable addition to the early JC collection, particularly "Silver's ..." should be noted, this item is a real gasser in uptempo, showing that JC could pick cherries with anyone!!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET

Laren, Holland, 1959

Personnel as Feb. 1.

Video, presenting TV recordings from The Singer Theatre, two titles:

Senor Blues	Solo 24 bars. (SM)
Cool Eyes	Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Last minute discovery (many years ago ...), good sound and photo, fine tenorsax playing!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET

Newport, July 1959

Personnel as Feb. 1.

Three titles were recorded at the Newport Jazz Festival:

Blowing The Blues Away	Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. 3 choruses 4/4 and 2/2 with (tp). (F)
Peace	Solo 20 bars. (S)

Cookin' At The Continental

Solo 21 choruses of 12 bars.
7 choruses 4/4 with (dm/tp). (F)

If this had been JC's only appearance, he would have become legendary!! Two uptempo blues items demonstrate great strength and ability to really step on it, really extraordinary. Take "... Away" as a brilliant warming up, and then lay back and marvel at his extended version of "... Continental", wow!!!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET**Hackensack, NJ. Aug. 29/30, 1959**

Personnel as Feb. 1, 1959.

Ten titles were recorded for Blue Note, six issued as "Blowin' The Blues Away":

tk3	Blowing The Blues Away	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. 2 choruses 2/2 with (tp). (F)
tk18	The Baghdad Blues	Break to solo 64 bars. (F)
tk2	Sister Sadie	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (M)
tk8	Peace	In ens. (S)
tk11	How Did It Happen?	Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. (FM)
tk14	Break City	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (F)

From the Blue Note liner notes quote Ira Gitler: "... once described as being touched by John Coltrane, is in reality out of the Hank Mobley mould but in a much more muscular manner". A good way of describing JC's playing! He takes fine soli here, from the "hit" "Sister ..." to the uptempo of which "... Baghdad ..." is a rather tricky blues-influenced but not quite blues. "Blowing ..." is however a real blues and "... City" a fine standard. He has problems with "How ..." and is likely to have gotten the blame for this item not being issued until later as a CD item. JC will have a lot to offer in the next decade!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET**Englewood Cliffs, NJ. July 8&9, 1960**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Silver (p), Gene Taylor (b), Roy Brooks (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Blue Note, seven issued as "Horace-Scope":

tk10	Where You At?	Solo 72 bars. (F)
tk14	Strollin'	Solo 32 bars. (M)
tk22	Without You	Solo 8 bars. (S)
tk23	Nica's Dream	Break to soli 64 and 8 bars. (F)
tk31	Horace-Scope	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
tk34	Yeah!	Solo 3 1/2 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
tk38	Me And My Baby	Solo 36 bars. (M)

Obviously JC enjoys himself with the Horace Silver group, now with a change of drummer, because his soli are generally well conceived in all tempi. Should any particular item be singled out, "Horace-Scope" and "Yeah!" are good candidates.

DAVE BAILEY SEXTET**NYC. July 19&20, 1960**

Clark Terry (tp), Curtis Fuller (tb), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Parlan (p), Peck Morrison (b), Dave Bailey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Epic/Columbia:

One Foot In The Gutter	Solo 64 bars. (SM)
Well You Needn't	Solo 64 bars. (M)
Sandu	Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
Brownie Speaks	Solo 64 bars. (F)

This session is not among JC's best, he seems constrained and not always in tune; some good sections combined with not so good ones. Best is "... Speaks".

HORACE SILVER**Newport, Aug. 1960**

Personnel probably as July 1960.

One title was recorded at Newport Jazz Festival, not available:

Senor Blues

HORACE SILVER**Europe, ca. 1960**

Personnel probably as July 1960.

One title was recorded live, issued on Europa Jazz, not available:

Nica's Dream

JUNIOR COOK QUINTET**LA. April 10, 1961**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Dolo Coker (p), Gene Taylor (b), Roy Brooks (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Jazzland, issued as "Junior's Cookin'":

Blue Farouq	Solo 48 bars. (M)
Sweet Cakes	Solo 64 bars. (M)
Field Day	Solo 64 bars. (FM)

This is JC's first recording session under his own name, simply consisting of the Horace Silver group without the boss himself, and that does not seem to bother anybody, in fact the music seems to swing more freely without him, if I dare say so! Particularly the two medium items are very groovy, and everybody seem to thrive immensely!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET**NYC. May 19&20, 1961**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Silver (p), Gene Taylor (b), Roy Brooks (dm).

Six titles recorded live at Village Gate (according to Tom Lord, there seem to be six versions of each tune indicated with take numbers, but the contents of my CD does not seem to correspond to this, so I just present below my findings), issued as "Doin' The Thing – At The Village Gate":

Filthy McNasty	Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
Doin' The Thing	Solo 14 choruses of 12 bars. 36 bars 4/4 with (tp). (F)
Kiss Me Right	Solo 9 choruses of 16 bars. (FM)
The Gringo	Solo 7 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Cool Eyes (Theme)	No solo. (F)
It Ain't S'posed To Be Like That	Solo 24 bars. (M)
Cool Eyes	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Great live session with soli longer than usually on studio sessions. Two strong and fast blues items, "... McNasty" and particularly "... The Thing", open the proceedings, JC is certainly inspired and cooking here, and he follows up with "Kiss Me ..." and the latin "... Gringo", both dynamic items of the very best quality. For some reasons he has serious problems with "... Eyes", but the relaxed medium swinger "... Like That" is taken nicely. Important JC session!

JUNIOR COOK QUINTET**NYC. Dec. 4, 1961**

Personnel as April 10, except Ronnie Matthews (p) replaces Coker.

Four titles were recorded for Jazzland, issued as "Junior's Cookin'":

Myzar	Soli 88 and 8 bars. (FM)
Turbo Village	Solo 3 choruses of 36 bars. (FM)
Easy Living	Duet intro with (tp). Solo 64 bars. Duet to long coda. (S)
Pleasure Bent	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Fine tenorsax playing also on this second recording date for Jazzland but perhaps not quite as exuberant as the first one. Nevertheless, note his beautiful version of "... Living"!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET**Englewood Cliffs, NJ. July 13&14, 1962**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Silver (p), Gene Taylor (b), John Harris (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Blue Note, four issued as "The Tokyo Blues":

tk3	The Tokyo Blues	Solo 5 choruses of 16 bars. (M)
tk9	Sayonara Blues	Solo 7 choruses of 16 bars. (FM)
tk20	Ah! So	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

tk24 Too Much Sake Solo 5 choruses of 16 bars. (M)

After visiting Japan in early 1962, Silver used his experiences to create the music for this session. Whether the Japanese flavour is very strong can be discussed, nor are the "... Blues"s really blues, but the music is fine anyway, and JC's soli of usual high quality.

BLUE MITCHELL NYC. Aug. 28&30, 1962

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Cedar Walton (p), Gene Taylor (b), Roy Brooks (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "The Cup Bearers":

Turquoise	Solo 40 bars. (FM)
Why Do I Love You?	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Dingbat Blues	Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
Capers	Solo 64 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm/tp). (F)
Cup Bearers	Solo 56 bars. (FM)
How Deep Is The Ocean?	Solo 16 bars. (S)
Tiger Lily	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

Trumpeter Blue Mitchell now gets his chance to be a leader, changing Blue Note addicted Silver for Cedar Walton on piano, and this seems to inspire him even more than usual. JC plays his usual self, and note his brilliant half chorus on "The Ocean?". Fine blues in different tempi on "Dingbat ..." and "Tiger ...". Should any other item be singled out for particular attention, it must be "Capers", a fast vehicle with incredible trumpet and an excellent tenorsax solo following.

HORACE SILVER QUINTET Paris, Oct. 1962

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Silver (p), Gene Taylor (b), Roy Brooks (dm).

Five titles were recorded live at Olympia Theater, issued on Pablo as "Paris Blues":

10:41	Where You At?	Solo 5 choruses of 36 bars. (F)
12:41	The Tokyo Blues	Solo 6 choruses of 16 bars. (M)
10:41	Filthy McNasty	Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
16:28	Sayonara Blues	Solo 10 choruses of 16 bars. (FM)
12:04	Doin' The Thing	Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. 36 bars 4/4 with (tp). (F)

Fine concert versions of the 'japanese' hits "... Tokyo ..." and "Sayonara ..." and other well known Silver tunes.. JC is in exceptional state of inspiration here, and all five items are excellent demonstration of his capabilities, but if selecting one, the very fast "... Thing" should make you highly impressed, and any doubt about JC belonging among the most important tenorsax players of the current time should be 'blown' away!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET Stockholm, Oct. 11, 1962

Personnel as above.

Concert, three titles, Johan Helø collection:

The Tokyo Blues	Solo 9 choruses of 16 bars. (M)
Filthy McNasty	Solo 13 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
Untitled Ballad	Solo 64 bars. (S)

Excellent versions of old vehicles plus a magnificent ballad with JC and Silver complimenting each other, nice surprise!

HORACE SILVER QUINTET Zürich, Oct. 18, 1962

Personnel as above.

Concert in Kongresshaus, four titles, Johan Helø collection:

Sayonara Blues	Solo 9 choruses of 16 bars. (FM)
The Tokyo Blues	Solo 8 choruses of 16 bars. (M)
Doin' The Thing	Solo 17 choruses of 12 bars. 36 bars 4/4 with (tp). (F)

Sister Sadie

Solo 64 bars. 32 bars 2/2
with (tp). Solo 8 bars. (M)

Very good sound on this concert. We know the music very well by now, and perhaps no surprises, but nevertheless one must be highly impressed by the ultrafast "...The Thing"!

ROY BROOKS**Detroit, 1963**

Blue Mitchell (tp), George Bohanon (tb), Junior Cook (ts), Hugh Lawson (p), Gene Taylor (b), Roy Brooks (dm).

Six titles were recorded at Jazz Workshop, issued as "Beat":

Homestretch	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
If You Could See Me Now	Solo with ens 32 bars to solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
Passin' The Buck	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Soulin'	Solo 4 bars to fade out. (M)
Soulsphere	Solo 48 bars. (FM)
My Secret Passion	Solo 4 choruses of 24 bars. (FM)

This time it is the drummer's turn to be a leader, and this time a trombonist is added. Nice laidback soloing on "... The Buck", while "Homestretch" is much too fast. Competent but not remarkable on "Soulsphere" and and "... Passion". The highlight must be the beautiful version of the ballad "... See Me Know". Too bad he is faded out on the lovely blues "Soulin'".

HORACE SILVER TENTETTE Englewood Cliffs, NJ. April 11&12, 1963

Personnel including Junior Cook, Jimmy Heath (ts).

Seven titles were recorded for Blue Note, unissued.

HORACE SILVER QUINTET**Englewood Cliffs, NJ. May 7&8, 1963**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Horace Silver (p), Gene Taylor (b), Roy Brooks (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "Silver's Serenade":

tk7	Silver's Serenade	Solo 5 choruses of 16 bars. (M)
tk10	Nineteen Bars	Solo 88 bars. (F)
tk16	Let's Get To The Nitty Gritty	Solo 56 bars. (M)
tk21	The Dragon Lady	Solo 3 choruses of 24 bars. (M)
tk25	Sweet Sweetie Dee	Solo 3 choruses of 24 bars. (M)

The last 'real' studio session with the longtime successful quintet since 1960. Some exciting titles like the 16 bars minor blues "... Serenade", the funky "... Nitty Gritty" and the ultrafast "Nineteen ...". JC plays with his usual competence without making anything special out of the occasion.

HORACE SILVER QUINTET**Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Oct. 31, 1963**

Personnel as May 7/8, 1963.

Two titles were recorded for Blue Note, tk1 "Calcutta Cutie" and tk14 "Sanctimonious Sam" (two more without JC), but no JC.

Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Jan. 28, 1964

Same. Three titles, two issued, tk11 "Sighin' And Cryin'" and tk14 "Silver Treads Among My Soul", but no JC.

The final Silver/Cook sessions before the quintet was disbanded have excellent piano playing, but the rest of the group is just a backup band and no tenorsax soli.

BLUE MITCHELL QUINTET**Englewood Cliffs, NJ. July 30, 1964**

Blue Mitchell (tp), Junior Cook (ts), Chick Corea (p), Gene Taylor (b), Aloysius Foster (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "The Thing To Do":

tk5	Fungi Mama	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
tk14	Step Lightly	Solo 4 choruses of 16 bars. (SM)
tk15	The Thing To Do	Solo 64 bars. (M)
tk17	Chick's Tune	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 8 and 8 bars. (FM)

tk42

Tones For Joan's Bones

No solo.

The octet format here creates a quite different atmosphere compared to the sessions above, and also there is by necessity less blowing space to each artist. I am not too fond of the choice of material here, but everything is of course executed professionally. The highlight is Corea's 'fire-breathing model workout' "... Up And Down". JC's has shown some changes since the eight years which have passed since his recording debut, but he has managed to establish himself as one of the tenorsax players that should be remembered and played.

The solography stops here for the moment, but Junior Cook continues to play great tenor saxophone for many years to come, last session in 1991.

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