

The
PIANO
of
MEL POWELL
“MELVIN EPSTEIN”

Solographer: Jan Evensmo
Last update: Feb. 26, 2018

Born: New York, Feb. 12, 1923
 Died: Sherman Oaks, California, April 24, 1998

Introduction:

I remember very well the hard discussions on who was the better pianist of Teddy Wilson and Mel Powell. Young and stupid we were, who is the best of Mozart and Beethoven ...? Anyway, we became very familiar with Mel Powell's music, both the initial period with Benny Goodman, and then his later increasingly experimental sessions in the fifties until he retired into the world of 'serious music'. The conclusion anyway was that Mel Powell was one of the greatest pianist in jazz, if not the greatest (still stupid ...), and this standpoint I share and strengthen fifty/sixty years later.

History:

Worked in New York with Bobby Hackett, Georg Brunis, Zutty Singleton (1939), and Muggsy Spanier (1940). In 1941 he played and recorded with Wingy Manone and wrote arrangements for Earl Hines. At this time he changed his name, and as Mel Powell worked and recorded as a pianist and arranger for Benny Goodman (1941-42). He then became a member of the CBS orchestra under Raymond Scott (1942). During his military service he toured and recorded with Glenn Miller's band (1943) and recorded in Paris with the Jazz Club American Hot Band (1944-45). After being discharged he recorded with Goodman in New York (1945), then went to Los Angeles where he worked for studios and recorded with Jazz At The Philharmonic (1946), intermittently with Goodman (1946-47), and as a leader (1947, 1949). He studied composition at Yale (1952) with the composer Paul Hindemith, and from that time pursued a career as a classical composer in the serial tradition and as a teacher. His activities as a jazz musician largely ceased but from 1953 to 1955 he worked again with Goodman and recorded as a leader. He performed again as a jazz soloist in 1986, when he played with all-star swing and bop groups on the cruise ship S.S. Norway (ref. The New Grove Dictionary Of Jazz).

Message:

Mel Powell's recording career was heavily concentrated around Benny Goodman, and I have accordingly relied heavily on Russell Connor's "Benny Goodman – Listen to His Legacy". There seemed to be no need to copy all the details from this immense work, and I have not included reference to the numerous sessions out of my reach or that possibly does not exist anymore. On the other side, I have noted carefully the items where he accompanies vocalists, there is good music behind them if you care to listen closely. Finally this solography can hopefully be extended at some future time including more information about his work with Glenn Miller, this was too time consuming and complicated to do now.

MEL POWELL SOLOGRAPHY

WINGY MANONE**NYC. March 19, 1941**

Wingy Manone (tp, vo), Marty Marsala (tp), George Brunies (tb), Joe Marsala (cl), Mel Powell (p), Carmen Mastren (g), Al Morgan (b), Zutty Singleton (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Bluebird:

62858	Ochi Chornya	Break 4 bars. (M)
62859-1	Mama's Gone, Goodbye	Break 4 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M)
62860-1	The Boogie Beat Will Get'cha	In ens. Break 4 and 4 bars. (M)
62861-1	Stop The War	Break 4 bars. In ens. (M)

There is nothing particularly interesting about the piano playing on Mel Powell's first recording session, except that he is only eighteen years old and seems to have a certain competence already.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. June 11, 1941**

Jimmy Maxwell, Billy Butterfield, Cootie Williams (tp), Lou McGarity, Cutty Cutshall (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Les Robinson, Gene Kinsey (as), Georgie Auld, Pete Mondello (ts), Skip Martin (bar), Mel Powell (p), Charlie Christian (g), Walter Yost (b), Sid Catlett (dm), Helen Forrest (vo-30649,50).
Four titles were recorded for Columbia, no MP on 30651-1&2 "La Rosita" but:

30648-1	Tuesday At Ten	Solo 8 bars. (M)
30648-2	Tuesday At Ten	As above. (M)
30649	Soft As Spring	With orch. Acc. (vo). (M)
30649-1	Soft As Spring	As above. (M)
30650	Down, Down, Down	Soli 4 and 4 bars. (M)
30650-1	Down, Down, Down	As above. (M)
30650-2	Down, Down, Down	As above. (M)

Mel Powell's first appearance with Benny Goodman is with the full orchestra having a recording session for Columbia. He gets two opportunities to solo, with immediate success. The soli on "Tuesday ..." has a very exciting opening but they are pretty much alike. Those on "Down ..." are very different though. He also creates a fine background for the vocalist, and in fact he is heard in this role on numerous items in the years to come, making them much more interesting.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA Atlantic City, NJ. July 6, 1941

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).
Broadcast from "Steel Peer", one title issued, "Don't Be That Way" but no MP.

Atlantic City, NJ. July 12, 1941

Same. One title issued:

Roll 'Em	Solo 24 bars. (M)
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The first of several broadcast versions of "Roll ...", showing a quite confident young piano player.

Chi. July 31, 1941

Similar. Broadcast from Hotel Sherman, one title, "Flying Home", but no MP.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA**Chi. Aug. 1, 1941**

Jimmy Maxwell, Billy Butterfield, Al Davis, Cootie Williams (tp), Lou McGarity, Cutty Cutshall (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Clint Neagley, Skip Martin (as), Vido Musso, George Berg (ts), Chuck Gentry (bar), Mel Powell (p), Tom Morgan (g), John Simmons (b), Sid Catlett (dm), Tommy Taylor (vo-3925,26).
Four titles were recorded for Columbia:

3925-1	From One Love To Another	With orch. Acc. (vo). (SM)
3926-1	Anything	With orch. Acc. (vo). (S)
3927-1	The Count	Acc. (M)
3927-2	The Count	Acc. (M)

3927-3	The Count	Acc. (M)
3928-1	Pound Ridge	Straight intro. Acc. (cl). Solo 16 bars. (M)
3928-2	Pound Ridge	As above. (M)
3928-3	Pound Ridge	As above. (M)
3928-4	Pound Ridge	As above but solo 32 bars. (M)

The piano highlight here is “Pound ...”, and as Loren Schoenberg states it in his liner notes: “The real highlights are the opening choruses which find Goodman reveling in the perfect rhythm section with Powell’s comping at the helm”. Note that the first take labeled -4 is much longer than the others, giving space for a piano solo of double length. “Pound ...” is also the first really convincing example of how great an improviser MP was, all his four soli are masterly and quite different.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA Chi. Aug. 10, 1941

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p), Helen Forrest (vo).
Broadcast from Hotel Sherman, the following have MP:

Time Was	Solo 6 bars. (M)
Clarinet A La King	Acc. (cl). (M)
Soft As Spring	Acc. (vo). (S)
Caprice XXIV Paganini	Solo 16 bars. (M)
Anything	Acc. (vo)/(cl). (S)

Not much MP to be found here but a gorgeous piano solo on “... Paganini”!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA Chi. Aug. 15&20, 1941

Same, except Peggy Lee (vo-3950,81,82) replaces Helen Forrest.
Five titles were recorded for Columbia:

3950-1	Elmer’s Tune	Acc. (vo). (M)
3950-2	Elmer’s Tune	Acc. (vo). (M)
3951-1	The Birth Of The Blues	Acc. (cl). (M)
3951-2	The Birth Of The Blues	Acc. (cl). (M)
3980-1	Clarinet A La King	Acc. (cl). Breaks. (M)
3980-2	Clarinet A La King	As above. (M)
3980-3	Clarinet A La King	As above. (M)
3980-4	Clarinet A La King	As above. (M)
3981-1	My Old Flame	Acc. (vo). (S)
3982-1	I See A Million People	Acc. (vo). Solo with orch 8 bars. (SM)

Nothing of particular MP importance here, except some fine background on “... Million ...”.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA Cedar Grove, NJ. Sept. 11, 1941

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p), Peggy Lee (vo).
Broadcast from Meadowbrook”, three issued, no MP on “A Smooth One” but:

Tuesday At Ten	Solo 8 bars. (M)
When The Sun Comes Out	Weak obbligato parts. (S)

Cedar Grove, NJ. Sept. 14, 1941

Same. Three titles, no MP on “Benny Rides Again” and “Concerto For Cootie” but:

Take It	Briefly with orch. (M)
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Cedar Grove, NJ. Sept. 16, 1941

Same. Six titles, no MP on “The Count” and “Birth Of The Blues” but:

Smoke Gets In Your Eyes	Intro 4 bars. (S)
The Earl	Intro 8 bars. Breaks. Solo with orch 36 bars. Coda. (FM)

Same Time Tomorrow Briefly acc. (cl). (FM)
 Roll 'Em Solo 24 bars. (M)

Cedar Grove, NJ. Sept. 20, 1941

Same. Seven titles, no MP on "Delilah" but:

The Earl As usual. (FM)
 It's So Peaceful In The Country Acc. (vo-PL). (SM)
 Time Was Solo 4 bars. (SM)
 Tuesday At Ten Solo 8 bars. (M)
 Intermezzo Briefly with orch. (S)
 Benny Rides Again Briefly with orch. (M)

Cedar Grove, NJ. Sept. 23, 1941

Same. Three titles:

The Earl As above. (FM)
 If It's True Brief obligato parts. (SM)
 One O'Clock Jump Solo 24 bars. (M)

Cedar Grove, NJ. Sept. 11, 14, 23, 26, 1941

Same. One title, composite of several broadcasts:

Roll 'Em Soli 24, 24, 24 and 24 bars. (FM/M)

Note first a fascinating and strange brief solo on "... Ten". Then a surprisingly soft and laidback "... Jump". Then the first preserved versions of "The Earl", MP's composition, to be recorded in studio nine and two days later. Finally and not the least, more "Roll ..."s, in fact five versions, not that different rolling blues, but demonstrating that MP now is very firmly established in the Benny Goodman organization.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Sept. 25, 1941
 Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p). Peggy Lee (vo-31363,66,67), Tommy Taylor (vo-31365). Mel Powell (arr-31364).
 Five titles were recorded for Columbia:

31363	How Deep Is The Ocean?	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31363-1	How Deep Is The Ocean?	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31364	The Earl	As below? ()
31364	The Earl	As below. (F)
31364-1	The Earl	Intro 8 bars. Breaks. Duet with (cl). Solo with orch 36 bars. Coda. (FM)
31364-2	The Earl	As above. (FM)
31365	'Tis Autumn	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31365	'Tis Autumn	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31365-1	'Tis Autumn	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31366-1	That's The Way It Goes	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31366-2	That's The Way It Goes	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31367-1	Let's Do It	Acc. (vo)? ()
31367-2	Let's Do It	Acc. (vo). (M)

"The Earl", a great MP almost solo feature! Quote LS again: "Powell shows his complete mastery of jazz piano, playing a mad stride at times with a light touch (comparable to Fats Waller's), incorporating Hinesian octaves at others".

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA Cedar Grove, NJ. Sept. 27, 1941
 Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).
 Broadcast from Medowbrook, one title, "Don't Let The Doorknob Hitcha" but no MP.

Cedar Grove, NJ. Oct. 1?, 1941

Same. One title, "Sing, Sing, Sing" but no MP.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Oct. 2, 1941

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p). Peggy Lee (vo-31391,92). Mel Powell (arr-31402).

Five titles were recorded for Columbia, no MP on 31402-1&2 "I'm Here" but:

31390-1	Caprice XXIV	Solo 16 bars. (M)
31391-1	I Got It Bad	Acc. (vo). Break. (SM)
31392	My Old Flame	Acc. (vo). (S)
31392-1	My Old Flame	Acc. (vo). (S)
31393	Clarinet A La King	Breaks. (FM)
31393	Clarinet A La King	Breaks. (FM)
31393-1	Clarinet A La King	Breaks. (M)
31393-2	Clarinet A La King	Breaks. (M)

A delicate piano solo on "Caprice ..." is worth the whole session here!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA Cedar Grove, NJ. Oct. 4, 1941

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).

Note: "Ida" is by **TRIO**: Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), Sid Catlett (dm).

Broadcast from Meadowbrook, seven titles, three have MP:

Ida	Intro 4 bars. Solo 32 bars. 32 bars with (cl/dm). (F)
Soft As Spring	Duet with (cl) 8 bars. Acc. (vo). With orch. Coda. (SM)
Clarinet A La King	Breaks. (M)

"Ida" should be carefully noted, because it is the first smallband item MP ever played officially with Benny Goodman, referring to Russell Connor's immortal work. Later there will many more and better ones, but these one minutes and forty seconds are jazz history!!

Cedar Grove, NJ. Oct. 7, 1941

Same. One title:

Rose Room	Intro. Acc. (cl). (SM)
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Cedar Grove, NJ. Oct. 8, 1941

Same. Three titles, no MP on "I'm Here" but:

Clarinet A La King	Breaks. (M)
Let The Doorknob Hitcha	Weak obligato parts. (M)

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Oct. 8, 1941

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p). Peggy Lee (vo-31363,426), Tommy Dix (vo-31427).

Five titles were recorded for Columbia, probably no MP on 31427-1 "Buckle Down Winsocki" but:

31363-3	How Deep Is The Ocean?	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31426-1	Shady Lady Bird	As below? ()
	Roll 'Em Pt 1	Solo 36 bars. (M)
	Roll 'Em Pt 1 (BD)	No solo. (M)
	Roll 'Em Pt 2	No solo. (M)

NYC. Oct. 21, 1941

Similar. Peggy Lee (vo-31367).

Three titles, no MP on 31427-3 "Buckle Down Winsocki" but:

31367-3	Let's Do It	Acc. (vo). (M)
31367-4	Let's Do It	Acc. (vo). (M)
31426-2	Shady Lady Bird	Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. (M)

31426-3 Shady Lady Bird As above. (M)

MP puts his particular harmonies into Mary Lou Williams' "Roll 'Em", fascinating solo this one. Note also "... Bird" with fine background and an excellent piano solo on the take I have heard, need to find the others!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Oct. 23, 1941**

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).
Two titles were recorded for Columbia:

31393-"1" Clarinet A La King Breaks. (M)
31393-2 Clarinet A La King Breaks? ()
31393-3 Clarinet A La King Breaks? ()
31393-4 Clarinet A La King Breaks. (M)
No mx I'll Get By Solo 8 bars. (SM)

Nice solo on "... By".

BENNY GOODMAN QUARTET **NYC. Oct. 26, 1941**

Lou McGarity (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), Ralph Collier (dm).
Broadcast "Fitch Bandwagon", two titles:

You And I Intro 4 bars. Duet with (cl) 16+8 bars, solo
8 bars on bridge. Duet 8 bars to coda. (S)

"You And I" is pure gold, dig this one! Preceding and augmented smallband session by two days.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **same date**

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p), Peggy Lee (vo).

The Shrine of St. Cecilia Acc. (vo). (S)

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET **NYC. Oct. 28, 1941**

Lou McGarity (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), Tom Morgan (g), Sid Weiss (b), Ralph Collier (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Columbia:

31609-1 If I Had You As below. (SM)
31609-2 If I Had You As below. (SM)
31609-3 If I Had You As below. (SM/S)
31609-4 If I Had You Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl/tb) 32 bars.
Solo 16+8 bars, (g) on bridge.
Acc. (tb). In ens. (SM)
31610-1 Limehouse Blues As below. (FM)
31610-2 Limehouse Blues As below. (FM)
31610-3 Limehouse Blues As below. (FM)
31610-4 Limehouse Blues Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. Breaks. (FM)

The concept "Benny Goodman Sextet" was made immortal from Autumn 1939, by Charlie Christian and many others and not the least, by Benny himself. However, we should not forget that time moves on, and it is with immense pleasure we meet the new sextet. We can only be grateful for Benny's never ending strife for perfectness, producing take after take, when most mortal musicians would have been satisfied long before. The sextet is also a perfect vehicle for MP's piano. "Limehouse ..." with four versions is utterly fascinating, and although his allotted solo space is only sixteen bars, he demonstrates his greatness as an improviser. The 78 take -1 has him pick up Benny's final phrase with such elegance, and although -4 has some resemblance to this, the rest of the solo is different. Dig the dancing intro on -3, also the most experimental take. Play them all four in sequence, and your thrill will be augmented! MP gets more space on "... Had You", and this also offers gorgeous piano playing, particularly his soloing on the 78 take -2 is incredible! Note that -3 is notable slower than -2 and -4. If this session was the only we had of MP, he would have been the most legendary of all legendary jazz musicians!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 1, 1941**

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).

Broadcast from the Terrace Room, Hotel New Yorker, two titles:

Caprice XXIV Paganini	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
That Did It Marie	Acc. (vo). (M)

Excellent solo on "... Paganini".

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 13, 1941**
 Jimmy Maxwell, Billy Butterfield, Al Davis, (tp), Lou McGarity, Cutty Cutshall (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Clint Neagley, Julie Schwartz (as), Vido Musso, George Berg (ts), Chuck Gentry (bar), Mel Powell (p), Tom Morgan (g), Sid Weiss (b), Ralph Collier (dm), Peggy Lee (vo-31741,42,43,44).
 Four titles were recorded for Columbia:

31741-1	Somebody Else Is Taking My P	Acc. (vo). Chord solo 4 bars. (M)
31741-2	Somebody Else Is Taking My Place	As above. (M)
31742	Somebody Nobody Loves	As below? ()
31742-1	Somebody Nobody Loves	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). (SM)
31742-2	Somebody Nobody Loves	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). (SM)
31743	How Long Has This Been Going On?	Intro 8 bars. (S)
31743-1	How Long Has This Been Going On?	As above. (S)
31743-2	How Long Has This Been Going On?	As above. (S)
31744	That Did It, Marie	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31744-1	That Did It, Marie	Acc. (vo). (SM)

NYC. Nov. 27, 1941

Similar. Peggy Lee (vo-31811,12). Two titles:

31811	Winter Weather	Acc. (vo). (M)
31811-"3"	Winter Weather	Acc. (vo)? ()
31811-1	Winter Weather	Acc. (vo). (M)
31812	Ev'rything I Love	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (vo). (SM)
31812-2	Ev'rything I Love	As above. (SM)

The delicate piano playing behind Benny should definitely be noted! Gorgeous introductions on "How Long ..." on "... Love" also. In fact, although these items are not exactly strong jazz records, there are exciting details or hose with the patience to listen closely.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov./Dec. 1941**
 Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).
 Broadcast from Hotel New Yorker:

After You've Gone	Acc. (cl). (FM)
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BENNY GOODMAN **NYC. Dec. 5, 1941**
 Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p). Sextet: "Limehouse Blues" as Oct. 28, 1941.
 Broadcast "Coca Cola Spotlight Bands", three titles, no MP on "Goodbye" but:

The Earl	Intro 8 bars. With orch. Solo with orch 36 bars. Coda. (FM)
Limehouse Blues	In ens. Acc. (cl). Solo 16 bars. Acc. (tb). In ens. (FM)

Interesting enough but there are so many other fantastic versions.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Dec. 10, 1941**
 Similar. Peggy Lee (vo-31944,45), Art Lund (vo-31942,43,46).
 Five titles were recorded for Columbia:

31942-1	Someone's Rockin' My Dreamboat	As below. (S)
31942	Someone's Rockin' My Dreamboat	Acc. (vo). Solo 6 bars. (S)
31943	Let's Give Love A Chance	Acc. (vo). (SM)

31943-1	Let's Give Love A Chance	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31944	Not Mine	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31944-1	Not Mine	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31945-1	Not A Care In The World	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31945-2	Not A Care In The World	Acc. (vo). (SM)
31946	You Don't Know What Love Is	Acc. (vo). (S)
31946-1	You Don't Know What Love Is	Acc. (vo). (S)

As you can see, this is background only, but well recorded and nice enough, and particularly "... Dreamboat" is interesting with a brief solo added.

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET

NYC. Dec. 24, 1941

Lou McGarity (tb, vo-32051), Cutty Cutshall (tb-32051), Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p, cel-32052), Tom Morgan (g), Sid Weiss (b), Ralph Collins (dm), Peggy Lee (vo).

Three titles were recorded for Okeh:

32051-1	Blues In The Night	Acc. (vo). (S)
32052-1	Where Or When	As below. (S)
32052-2	Where Or When	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (tb). Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). (S)
32053-1	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	As below. (SM)
32053-2	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	In ens 32 bars. Acc. (vo) 32 bars. Acc. (tb). Solo 8 bars to ens 8 bars. (SM)
32053-3	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	As above. (SM)

More interesting material should have been chosen for this session, and MP has a much less important role here compared to the gigantic 28/10-42. Nothing in particular to highlight but of course lots of nice background playing.

MEL POWELL

NYC.? Dec. 26, 1941

Mel Powell solo (p).

Private home recording, acetate, two titles (also some practicing):

Somebody Loves Me	Solo 64+8 bars. (FM)
Blue Skies	Solo 8+30 bars (NC). (M)

An exciting occasion to hear MP all by himself at home on a scratchy acetate.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Jan. 1, 1942

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p), Peggy Lee (vo).

Broadcast "Coca Cola Spotlight Bands", four titles, two have MP:

Blues In The Night	Acc. (vo). (S)
Goodbye	With orch. (S)

Note "... The Night", lovely!!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Jan. 15, 1942

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p, arr-32238). Peggy Lee (vo-32239,40,42), Art Lund (vo-32240).

Five titles were recorded for Columbia, no MP on 32240-1&2&3&4 "At The Darktown Strutters Ball" but:

32238-1	Jersey Bounce	Intro 4 bars. With orch. (M)
32239-1	The Lamp Of Memory	Acc. (vo). (SM)
32240-1	If You Build A Better Mousetrap	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (vo). (M)
32240-2	If You Build A Better Mousetrap	As above. (M)
32242-1	When The Roses Bloom Again	Acc. (vo). Solo 4 bars. (S)

NYC. Jan. 23, 1942

Same. Art Lund (vo-32242,318,319). Four titles:

32238-2	Jersey Bounce	Intro 4 bars.
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		With orch 16 and 8 bars. (M)
32238-3	Jersey Bounce	As above. (M)
32238-4	Jersey Bounce	As above. (M)
32242-2	When The Roses Bloom Again	Solo 4 bars. (SM)
32318-2	A Zoot Suit	As below. (SM)
32318-1	A Zoot Suit	Acc. (vo). Solo 6 bars. (M)
32319-2	Tangerine	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. (M)

The brief soli on "... Roses ..." and "... Suit" should definitely be noted.

MEL POWELL & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Feb. 4, 1942**
 Billy Butterfield (tp), Lou McGarity (tb), Benny "Shoeless" John Jackson"
 Goodman (cl), George Berg (ts), Mel Powell (p), Al Morgan (b), Kansas Fields
 (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Commodore:

76986-A	When Did You Leave Heaven?	Solo 24 bars. (M)
76987-A	The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise	Intro to solo 64 bars. Acc. (cl). Soli 8 and 8 bars to coda. (F)
76988-A	Blue Skies	Solo 34 bars. Acc. (tb). (M)
76988-B	Blue Skies	As above. (M)
76989-A	Mood At Twilight	Solo 8 bars. Acc. (cl)/(ts)/(tb). (S)
76989-B	Mood At Twilight	As above. (S)

Nothing demonstrates MP's position better than the fact that he gets Benny Goodman to be a sideman on his first session as a leader, for creative Commodore records. The highlight is the magnificent "... Sunrise", a tune later to be recorded many times. This version is just perfect, piano and clarinet support each other to perfection, and there is just no possible of improvement, a certain masterpiece. Fine and restrained piano soloing on "... Heaven?" and "... Skies". Finally MP's own composition "... Twilight where he takes a brief solo in the beginning himself, then supports his companions, beautiful.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Feb. 5, 1942**
 Jimmy Maxwell, Bernie Previn, Al Davis, (tp), Lou McGarity, Cutty Cutshall
 (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Clint Neagley, Sol Kane (as), Vido Musso, George
 Berg (ts), Art Ralston (bar), Mel Powell (p, arr-32383), Tom Morgan (g), Sid
 Weiss (b), Ralph Collier (dm), Peggy Lee (vo-32384).

Three titles were recorded for Columbia, no MP on 32385-various "Ramona" but:

32383-1	A String Of Pearls	Straight with orch 24 bars. Acc. (cl). With orch to coda. (M)
32383-2	A String Of Pearls	As above. (M)
32383-3	A String Of Pearls	As above. (M)
32384	My Little Cousin	As below. (M)
32384	My Little Cousin	As below. (M)
32384-1	My Little Cousin	Acc. (vo). (M)

The famous "... Pearls" with a much higher tempo than Glenn Miller's version. Very interesting arrangement by MP, but solistically not that exciting.

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET **NYC. Feb. 17, 1942**

Personnel as Oct. 28, 1941.

Coca Cola broadcast from Hotel New Yorker:

If I Had You	As Oct. 28, 1941. (SM)
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MP is far out here, magnificent!!

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET / QUARTET **NYC. March 10, 1942**
 Quartet (32594-1,2*) : Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p, cel-32595), Sid
 Weiss (b), Ralph Collins (dm). Sextet (32593,94-3*,95,no mx) : Add Lou
 McGarity (tb), Tom Morgan (g). Peggy Lee (vo-32595).

Four titles were recorded for Columbia:

32593-1	The Wang Wang Blues	As below. (M)
32593-2*	The Wang Wang Blues	Solo 16 bars. Acc. (cl). (M)
32594-3*	The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise	Acc. (cl). Solo 64 bars. (F)
32594-2*	The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise	As above + solo 8 bars. (F)
32594-1	The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise	As take 3. (F)
32595-1	The Way You Look Tonight	Acc. (tb). Acc. (vo). (SM)
No mx	St. Louis Blues	Acc. (cl). Solo 24 bars. Acc. (tb). (M)

Nobody will be surprised when attention is put to the incredible "... Sunrise"!! Three takes of inexhaustible inspiration both by MP and Benny himself, words cannot describe properly what swing really is (particularly these days of jazz desert ...), just play them loud to frighten your young neighbours out of their diapers! On "... Wang Wang ...", MP is more subtle but interesting enough. "The Way ..." is not particularly exciting except for the rare occasion to hear MP on celeste. However, not let "St. Louis ..." pass you, this is quite a different interpretation from what would be expected, very exciting!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. March 12, 1942**

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p), Peggy Lee (vo-32601,02,03,04).

Six titles were recorded for Okeh:

32600-1	Before (Rachmaninoff Special)	Straight with orch. (M)
32600-2	Before (Rachmaninoff Special)	As above. (M)
32601-1	I Threw A Kiss In The Ocean	As below. (M)
32601	I Threw A Kiss In TO	Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. Acc. (b) 6 bars. (M)
32602-1	We'll Meet Again	As below. (M)
32602	We'll Meet Again	Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. (M)
32603-1	Full Moon	Acc. (vo). (M)
32603	Full Moon	Acc. (vo). (M)
32604-1	There Won't Be A Shortage Of Love	Acc. (vo). (M)
32604-2	There Won't Be A Shortage Of Love	Intro 6 bars. (M)
no mx	Peter And The Wolf	Straight with orch. (M)

NYC. May 14, 1942

Similar. Peggy Lee (vo-32793,94), Art Lund (vo-32795,96). Four titles:

32793-1	You're Easy To Dance With	Acc. (vo). (M)
32793	You're Easy To Dance With	Acc. (vo). (M)
32794-1	All I Need Is You	Acc. (vo). (S)
32794	All I Need Is You	Acc. (vo). (S)
32795-1	I've Got A Gal In Kalamazoo	Acc. (vo). (M)
32796-2	Take Me	Acc. (vo). (S)
32796-1	Take Me	Acc. (vo). (S)

MP is as you can understand mostly an accompanist to Goodman's female vocalists, but the results can often be heard quite clearly, showing beautiful playing. Occasional soli make the pleasure manifold, like on "... Kiss ...", note this one! Flashing intro on "... Shortage ...".

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. June 17, 1942**

Bernie Previn, Cootie Williams, Tony Faso (tp), Lou McGarity, Charlie Castaldo (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Hymie Schertzer, Bud Shiffman (as), Jerry Jerome, George Berg (ts), Johnny McAfee (bar), Mel Powell (p), Dave Barbour (g), Sid Weiss (b), Alvin Stoller (dm), Peggy Lee (vo-32794), Dick Haymes (vo-32795,96,97,98).

Five titles were recorded for Columbia, no MP on 32924-1 "Idaho" but:

32794	All I Need Is You	Acc. (vo). (S)
32795-2	I've Got A Gal In Kalamazoo	Acc. (vo). (M)
32796-2	Take Me	Acc. (vo). (M)
32796	Take Me	Acc. (vo). (S)
32923	Serenade In Blue	Acc. (vo). (S)
32923	Serenade In Blue	Acc. (vo). (S)
32923-1	Serenade In Blue	Acc. (vo). (S)

NYC. July 27, 1942

Jimmy Maxwell, Lawrence Stearns, Tony Faso (tp), Lou McGarity, Charlie Castaldo (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Hymie Schertzer, Clint Neagly (as), Jon Walton, Leonard Sims (ts), Bob Poland (bar), Mel Powell (p), Dave Barbour (g), Cliff Hill (b), Howard Davies (dm), Peggy Lee (vo-33048).

Three titles, no MP on 33048 "Why Don't You Do Right?" and 33049 "After You've Gone" but:

33047-1	Six Flats Unfurnished	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
33047	Six Flats Unfurnished	As above. (SM)

NYC. July 30, 1942

Same. Peggy Lee (vo-33069), Buzz Alston (vo-33067,68). Four titles:

33067-1	Dearly Beloved	As below. (SM)
33067	Dearly Beloved	Straight intro. With orch. Acc. (vo). (SM)
33067	Dearly Beloved	As above. (SM)
33068-1	I'm Old Fashioned	Acc. (cl). (SM)
33068	I'm Old Fashioned	Acc. (cl). (SM)
33068	I'm Old Fashioned	Acc. (cl). (SM)
33069-1	Let's Say A Prayer	Solo 2 bars. (SM)
33070-1	Mission To Moscow	With (cl)/orch. (F)
33070-2	Mission To Moscow	With orch. (F)
33070-3	Mission To Moscow	No solo. (F)

On the final recording sessions in MP's first residence in the Benny Goodman orchestra, there is not much piano of importance, but try nevertheless the delicate "All I Need ...".

MEL POWELL**NYC. Dec. 21, 1943**

Mel Powell (p-solo).

Three titles were recorded for Commodore:

707-1	Jubilee	2:52. (F)
708-1	When A Woman Loves A Man	2:39. (SM)
709	Hallelujah	3:00. (FM)
709-1	Hallelujah	2:54. (FM)

MP's second session for Commodore was never issued properly on 78 rpm. but had to wait until Mosaic took responsibility. Great!! My personal favourite is "... Woman ...", outstanding piano playing, and as Dan Morgenstern's says it: "Nice work for a guy just two weeks past 20!". "Hallelujah" needed two takes for some reason, because they are both just great, and different. Dig Dan's comments to this one, I have nothing to add.

In the following, sessions with **GLENN MILLER** are not systematically treated. For the time being, only some random checks have been made. First session is June 5, 1943, last June 4, 1945. Sessions with **RAY McKINLEY** are also omitted, first session Aug. 18, 1944, last possibly May 24, 1945.

GLENN MILLER & HIS ORCHESTRA**1943-1945**

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p, arr).

I have decided that the most simple way of organizing the research so far is to list the MP items alphabetically, so that one easily can check. Here is the list (May 5 & 19 items are from the Phontastic LP NPH 1, the rest have been found on

Spotify without dates. In some cases it has been possible to check with Tom Lord's discography). In several cases, more than one version have been found, and there are probably numerous unheard tunes and alternates:

	Anvil Chorus	Solo with orch 16 bars. (F)
	Beat Me Daddy	Solo with orch. (M)
	Beat Me Daddy	As above. (M)
10-03-44?	Caribbean Clipper	Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)
20-11-44	Caribbean Clipper	As above. (FM)
	Enlisted Men's Mess	Intro to solo with orch 32 bars. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
19-05-44	Everybody Loves My Baby	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
20-11-44	Everybody Loves My Baby	As above. (FM)
27-11-44	Get Happy	Solo 16+8 bars, orch on bridge. (M)
30-10-44	Great Day	Intro 4 bars. Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)
	Great Day	As above. (FM)
21-01-44	G. I. Jive	Solo with orch 8 bars. (SM)
19-05-44	Hot Time In Berlin	Acc. (vo-group). (M)
	It Must Be Jelly	Solo 12 bars to acc. (vo-group) 12 bars. (M)
19-05-44	Lady Be Good	Solo 8 bars. (SM)
	Over There	Solo with (vo-group) 32 bars. Solo 16 bars. (F)
05-05-44	Santa Fe Trail	Break 2 bars. Acc. (vo). (S)
	Stealin' Apples	Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)
19-05-44	Sweet Chariot	Solo 4 bars. (M)
20-11-44	Tail End Charlie	With orch intro 10 bars. (M)
19-05-44	9:20 Special	Break 2 bars. Solo 34 bars. (M)
05-05-44	"705"	Solo 8 bars. (M)

Admirers of MP's artistry should not bypass his residence with Glenn Miller and his bigband. Surely enough there are tons of dance music with slight or no jazz contents, but if you look closely you will find excellent piano soli, like the brief one in "705". Generally he plays more restrained than with Benny, but items like "9:20 ...", "Enlisted ..." and particularly the sparkling "Everybody ..." with two different versions belong to the MP musts! Glenn Miller & Mel Powell should be researched thoroughly, certainly treasures are waiting for us!!

**MEL POWELL
& HIS UPTOWN HALL GANG Bedford, England, July 28, 1944**
Personnel including Peanuts Hucko (cl), Mel Powell (p), Trigger Alpert (b), Ray McKinley (dm).

Broadcast, three titles were issued on Esquire, two have been available:

Sweet Lorraine	2:30. (S)
The Earl	2:05. (F)
The Blue Room	

Bedford, England, Aug. 9, 1944

Same/similar. Possibly Glenn Miller (tb) on "... April". Four titles:

Makin' Whopee	2:25. (M)
I'm Confessin'	2:15. (S)
Blue Skies	2:00. (FM)
I'll Remember April	2:20. (FM)

Bedford, England, Aug. 12, 1944

Same/similar. One title, not available:

Blow Top

These broadcasts have a lot of nice music with MP in the most prominent role. The items are rather brief but that does not matter, all of them are highly noteworthy, note for example "The Earl", "... Lorraine" and "... Whopee" in different tempi, excellent piano playing.

MEL POWELL**& HIS UPTOWN HALL GANG****Bedford, England, Sept. 6, 1944**

Personnel including Peanjts Hucko (cl, ts), Mel Powell (p), Trigger Alpert (b), Ray McKinley (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Esquire, not available:

What Is This Thing Called Love?

Sweet Lorraine

Bedford, England, Sept. 8, 1944

Same/similar. One title, not available:

With Malice And No Thought

Bedford, England, Sept. 26, 1944

Same/similar with Frank Ippolito (dm). One title:

As Long As I Live 2:50. (FM)

Excellent piano solo on "... Live"!

MEL POWELL**& HIS UPTOWN HALL GANG****Bedford, England, Nov. 25, 1944**

Personnel similar to above, including Bernie Previn (tp), Mel Powell (p).

One title was recorded for Esquire, not available:

Jerry's Aachen Bach

Bedford, England, Dec. 1, 1944

Same/similar. One title, not available:

Parachute Jump

Bedford, England, Dec. 2 or 3, 1944

Same/similar. Seven titles:

My Guy's Coming Back (theme) 1:00. (M)

Hallelujah! 1:57. (FM)

Louise 2:40. (M)

If Dreams Come True 2:13. (FM)

I'm Thru With Love 1:56. (S)

A Night In Tunisia 2:30. (FM)

My Guy's Coming Back (Theme) 1:30. (M)

Bedford, England, Dec. 6, 1944

Same/similar. One title:

Lady Be Good 2:00. (FM)

Bedford, England, Dec. 7, 1944

Same/similar. Four titles, two have been available:

Shandy 3:00. (SM)

Please Don't Talk About Me 2:15. (FM)

Fruit Cake

My Guy's Come Back (Theme)

Bedford, England, Dec. 9, 1944

Same/similar. Six titles, one not available:

One, Two, Button Your Shoes	2:00. (FM)
'Way Down Yonder In New Orleans	2:35. (M)
Triple X	3:00. (FM)
'S Wonderful	
Sweet Georgia Brown	2:30. (FM)
Please Don't Talk About Me	2:15. (FM)

Bedford, England, prob. late Dec. 1944

Same/similar. Two titles, not available:

Powell Pow Pow
Left Swing Right

Generally better sound on these broadcasts by the group that later would record in Paris. They are slightly more Dixieland oriented with some surprises into the modern, even "... Tunisia" has made its appearance in England! MP is consistently great, enjoy particularly "Hallelujah", "... True", "... Your Shoe", his own composition "Triple-X" and "... Georgia Brown"!

**DJANGO REINHARDT ACC. BY
THE GLENN MILLER ALL STARS**

Paris, Jan. 25, 1945

Bernie Previn (tp), Peanuts Hucko (ts), Mel Powell (p), Django Reinhardt (g), Joe Shulman (b), Ray McKinley (dm).

Four titles were recorded for ABC-JCF:

1227-2	How High The Moon	Intro 4 bars. In ens. Acc. (ts). Solo 32 bars. (FM)
1228	If Dreams Come True	Acc. (ts). Solo 8 bars. (M)
1229-1/2	Hallelujah	Intro 4 bars to solo 64 bars. Acc. (dm). Solo 8 bars. (F)
1230	Stompin' At The Savoy	In ens. Solo 4 bars. (M)

Nice swing session although Django while playing good, does not seem to integrate properly with the group. MP has a modest role on "... True" and "... Savoy", but he is certainly not modest on "Hallelujah" where he goes straight out from the start, great! "... The Moon" is also well worth noticing.

JAZZ CLUB MYSTERY BAND

Paris, Jan. 28, 1945

Bernie Previn (tp), Peanuts Hucko (cl, ts), Mel Powell (p), Carmen Mastren (g), Joe Shulman (b), Ray McKinley (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Jazz Club Francais:

1231	I Must Have That Man	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (SM)
1232-1	Please Don't Talk About Me WIG	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
1233	'S Wonderful	Intro 8 bars. In ens. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (dm). (F)
1234-1	Someday Sweetheart	Acc. (cl). Solo 8 bars. Acc. (tp). Solo 16 bars. (M)
1235	Blue Skies	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

The guys seem to have more freedom without Django, and the swings very nicely. MP has ample solo opportunity on all items, all with nice results, for a highlight I think "... That Man" will do perfectly, or maybe "... Wonderful"?

**MEL POWELL
& HIS UPTOWN HALL GANG**

Bedford, England, Feb. 5, 1945

Personnel including Mel Powell (p).

My Guy's Come Back

JAZZ CLUB AMERICAN HOT BAND

Paris, May 12, 1945

Personnel as Jan. 28.

Four titles were recorded for Jazz Club Francais:

1356-1	Red Light	Intro 8 bars. In ens. Solo 8 bars. Acc. (dm). (F)
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1357-3	You're Driving Me Crazy	In ens. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (tp). Acc. (ts). (M)
1358-2	You're Driving Me Crazy	As above. (FM)
1359-1	On The Sunny Side Of The Street	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Acc. (tp). Solo 8 bars. (SM)

Not as hot as the session of Jan. 28 but nevertheless fine music. The MP highlight is "... Crazy", but why two matrix numbers for it? Postscript reply: I guess it is because the tempo on 1358 is much faster than on 1357.

MEL POWELL

Paris, May 19, 1945

Mel Powell (p)-solo.

Four titles were recorded for Esquire:

1368-2	Hommage A Fats Waller	2:35. (FM)
1369-2	Hommage A Debussy	3:10. (SM)
1370-3	Poor Mme Blanc	2:17. (FM)
1371-2	Don't Blame Me	2:55. (S)

MP on his own in Paris, four remarkable sides recorded, no need to have any accompaniment. Two swinging uptempo items will appeal to all of us, but the two others are basically more exciting; "... Debussy" comes well through, and "... Blame Me" is just beautiful.

JAZZ CLUB MYSTERY HOT BAND

Paris, May 20, 1945

Personnel as Jan. 28.

Four titles were recorded for Jazz Club Francais:

1372-2	Pennies From Heaven	Solo 32 bars. Acc. (tp). (M)
1373-2	One, Two, Button Your Shoe	Intro 4 bars. Soli 16 and 2 bars. (M)
1374-1	At Sundown	Intro 4 bars. In ens. Solo 16 bars. (M)
1374-2	At Sundown	As above. (M)
1375-2	Stealin' Apples	Intro 14 bars. (M)

MP introduces "Pennies ..." in a most elegant way, the highlight of the session. But what is he doing with "... Apples", does not sound good to me?

RAY MCKINLEY TRIO

Paris, May 20, 1945

Peanuts Hucko (cl), Mel Powell (p), Ray McKinley (dm).

Four titles:

1376-3	Sugar	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. Break. (M)
1377-3	After You've Gone	Acc. (cl). (SM). Acc. (cl). Break to solo 40 bars. Solo 4 bars. (F)
1378-2	Shoemaker's Apron	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (M)
1379-3	China Boy	Acc. (cl). Soli 64, 8 and 4 bars. (F)

Reducing the 'mystery band' to half has the immediate effect that there is more solo space to the remainder. Nice to hear another good clarinetist play with MP, Benny wasn't the only one. Excellent piano playing on all four items! Not necessarily better than the others, but "... Apron" is something different.

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET

NYC. Aug. 29, 1945

Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Slam Stewart (b), Morey Feld (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Columbia, much material not available and even more unissued but:

35143	Tiger Rag	As below? ()
35143-1	Tiger Rag	Breaks. Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (F)
35143-2	Tiger Rag	As above. (F)
35144	Shine	As below? ()
35144	Shine	As below? ()

35144	Shine	As below? ()
35144-1	Shine	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. Break. (M)
35144-2A	Shine	As above. (M)

MP is back with Benny, and the result is immediately evident: Incredible piano playing on this session! I seem to note a subtle change from the previous period, a stronger and more minimalistic approach, listen to the -1 (78 version) of "Shine", what a gorgeous opening of the solo! -2 is completely different, and I cannot wait to have the remaining takes available! Then take "Tiger ...", straight on it, only too bad the solo is limited to one chorus, but several choruses make up for it. The presence of Slam on the bass is also a great benefit.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Sept. 12, 1945**
 Vince Badale, Chris Griffin, Tony Faso, Frank LoPinto (tp), Sy Shaeffer, Eddie Aulino, Chauncey Welsch (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Hymie Shertzer, Gerry Sanfino (as), Bill Shine, Al Epstein (ts), Danny Bank (bar), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Slam Stewart (b), Morey Feld (dm).
 Three titles were recorded for VDisc:

35190-1	My Guy's Come Back	As below. (M)
35190-2	My Guy's Come Back	Straight intro/coda. (M)
35191-1A	That's All That Matters To Me	As below? ()
35191-2	That's All That Matters To Me	Acc. (vo). (S)
no mx	Somebody Stole My Gal	Acc. (tp/ts). (FM)

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET **NYC. Sept. 18, 1945**
 Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Slam Stewart (b), Morey Feld (dm).
 Two titles were recorded for Columbia, much material still unissued but:

35206	Ain't Misbehavin'	As below? ()
35206	Ain't Misbehavin'	As below? ()
35206-1	Ain't Misbehavin'	Acc. (cl). Solo 16+8 bars, (cl) on bridge. (SM)
35207	I Got Rhythm	As below? ()
35207-1	I Got Rhythm	Acc. (cl). Solo 34 bars. Break. (F)
35207-2	I Got Rhythm	As above. (F)
35208-1	I Got Rhythm	Acc. (cl). Solo 68 bars. Break. (F)

The sextet with the same personnel continues its success from two weeks earlier with another two magnificent titles. "Ain't ..." on 78 rpm. was one of my first records, and it sounds equally great today. The piano solo is sparkling from the very first bar, and I hope to hear the other takes soon. Nothing wrong with the "... Rhythm"s either, brilliant and swinging. Note that 35208 is a 12" 78 version with duration of almost four minutes with space for two piano choruses.

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET **NYC. Sept. 24, 1945**
 Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Slam Stewart (b-except two first takes of "Liza"), Morey Feld (dm).
 Three titles were recorded for Columbia:

35234	Liza	Intro 4 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
35234	Liza	As above. (FM)
35234-bdk	Liza	Intro 4 bars. 0:15. (FM)
35234	Liza	Intro 4 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
35234	Liza	Intro 2 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
35234-bdk	Liza	Intro 4 bars. 0:33. (FM)
35234	Liza	Intro 4 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
35234-1	Liza	As above. (FM)
35234-2	Liza	As above. (FM)
35235-1	China Boy	Solo 32 bars. (F)

35235-2 China Boy As above. (F)
 no mx My Daddy Rocks Me Acc. (cl). Solo 16 bars. (SM)

Again we must praise Benny for being such a perfectionist, because otherwise we would not have had such opportunities to study the improvisational capabilities. Seven piano soli on "Liza", take your time and study them carefully, compare them, and tell me what you find! Which one did you like best? Don't forget "My Daddy ..." with a fine laidback piano solo.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Sept. 24, 1945**
 Personnel similar to Sept. 12.

35237-1 Lucky With orch 8 bars. (M)
 35237-2 Lucky As above. (M)

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET **Newark, NJ. Nov. 28/29, 1945**
 Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Barney Spieler (b), Bob Sheble (dm).
 Broadcasts from "Terrace Room", Mosque Theater, two titles:

After You've Gone Break. Solo 40 bars. (F)
 Slipped Disc Solo 32 bars. (F)

Fine soli on "... Disc" and "... Gone"!

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET **NYC. Dec. 8, 1945**
 Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Barney Spieler (b), Bob Sheble (dm), Alistair Cooke (mc), except "Body And Soul" and "Liza": (cl), (p), (dm) only.
 BBC radio recording "Kings Of Jazz":

Introductory Theme Acc. (cl) behind (mc). (SM)
 After You've Gone Intro x bars. Soli 40 and 4 bars. (F)
 Body And Soul Acc. (cl). Solo 8 bars.
 Duet with (cl) 16 bars to coda. (S)
 Slipped Disc Solo 32 bars. (FM)
 Liza Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl).
 Soli 64 and 8 bars. (FM)
 I'm Confessin' Intro 2 bars. Acc. (cl).
 Solo 16 bars. (S)
 The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl).
 Solo 32 bars. (F)
 Stompin' At The Savoy Intro 4 bars. Solo 16+8 bars,
 (cl) on bridge. (M)
 Somebody Loves Me Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl).
 Solo 32 bars. (M)
 Goodbye / Closing Acc. (cl) behind (mc). (S)

Magnificent program, excellent sound, the sextet in its very good shape, MP soloing as usual, which means gorgeous! There is simply no need to go into details, just play Blu-Disc T-1012 where you get it all! With one exception, take "... Savoy" as one possible highlight and dig!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Dec. 19, 1945**
 Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).
 Three titles were recorded for Columbia, no MP on 35237-3&4 "Lucky" but:

35523-1 Rattle And Roll Solo 12 bars. (FM)
 35523-2 Rattle And Roll As above. (FM)
 35523-3 Rattle And Roll As above. (FM)
 35524-1 Sweet I've Gotten On You Acc. (vo). (M)

The liner notes by LS may describe MP on "Rattle ..." as "sounding oddly antiquated" but not to my ears, and note how vastly different the three soli are, what a master of improvisation!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **Newark, NJ. Dec. 20, 1945**
Same/similar. Broadcast from the Terrace Room, two titles have MP:

Rattle And Roll	Solo 12 bars. (M)
Rose Room	Acc. (cl). (SM)

Newark, NJ. Dec. 1945
Same/similar. AFRS "Magic Carpet" 199A from the Terrace Room, no MP on "Don't Be That Way" and "Seven Come Eleven" but:

You Was Right, Baby	Acc. (vo-LM). (SM)
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Culver City, Ca., Jan. 3, 1946
Same/similar. Quintet: "Runnin' Wild".
Broadcast from Meadowbrook Gardens:

Who's Sorry Now?	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo-LM). (M)
Clarinade	Solo 8 bars. (F)
I'm Always Chasing Rainbows	Acc. (vo-AL). With orch. (M)
Runnin' Wild	Acc. (cl) 34 bars to solo 34 bars. Solo 8 bars. (F)

Culver City, Ca., early Jan. 1946
Same/similar. Quintet: "Runnin' Wild".
Broadcast from Meadowbrook Gardens, no MP on "Somebody Stole My Gal" but:

Symphony	With orch. Acc. (vo-LM). (S)
Runnin' Wild	Acc. (cl) 32 bars to solo 68 bars. (F)

Hollywood, Jan. 1946
Same/similar. AFRS Jubilee 166/168, Downbeat 206/207, the following have MP:

Runnin' Wild	Acc. (cl) 32 bars to solo 34 bars. (F)
Rattle And Roll	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
Who's Sorry Now?	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). (M)
I'm Always Chasing Rainbows	With orch. Acc. (vo). (SM)

Fine background on many items here. Three wonderful versions of "... Wild"! And two "... Roll"s!

BENNY GOODMAN **Culver City, Jan. 14, 1946**
Personnel as above. Quintet: "Body And Soul" and "Lady Be Good".
Mutual broadcast from Meadowlark Gardens:

My Guy's Come Back	Straight intro/coda. Acc. (vo). (M)
Body And Soul	Acc. (cl). Soli 8 and 16 bars. (S)
I'm Always Chasing Rainbows	As above? ()
Lady Be Good	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. Acc. (cl). (FM)
Waiting For The Train To Come In	With orch. Acc. (vo). (SM)
Rattle And Roll	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
I Wish I Could Tell You	With orch/(cl). Acc. (vo). (SM)
Goodbye (Theme)	Briefly with orch. (S)

Foremost to dig the two quintet items; a lovely "... Soul", particularly the last solo, and an unusual "Lady ...", note the opening phrase and the bridge! However, not forget another exciting "... Roll".

BENNY GOODMAN TRIO / SEXTET **Hollywood, Jan. 23, 1946**
Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Barney Spieler (b), Johnny DeSoto (dm). Omit (g) and (b) on "I Wanna Be Loved".
Date falsely given as Jan. 11.

Six titles were recorded for V-Disc:

I Wanna Be Loved	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Soli 8 and 16 bars. (S)
Lady Be Good	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. Break. (M)
Exactly Like You	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (cl) 64 bars. (SM)
Sweet Georgia Brown	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. Acc. (cl) 96 bars. (FM)
The Blues In B-Flat	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl) 24 bars. Solo 24 bars. Acc. (cl) 36 bars. (M)
Rose Room	Intro. Acc. (cl) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (cl) 32 bars. (SM)

Wonderful session!!! Goodman/Powell par excellence, everything is perfect here (with the exception of the messy ending of "... B-Flat"). As a highlight, go for the two piano choruses on "... Brown", magnificent! In fact, go for the whole session, excellent sound, excellent music!!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **Hollywood, Jan. 1946**
Personnel as usual.
AFRS Downbeat No. 206/207:

Somebody Stole My Gal	Acc. (ts). (M)
It's The Talk Of The Town	Acc. (vo-AL). Acc. (cl). (S)

Note the fine background to Lund's vocal on "... The Town"!

BENNY GOODMAN **Culver City, Jan. 26, 1946**
Personnel as usual. "Oh ..." and "Limehouse ..." are sextet, "... Lorraine" is trio.
Mutual broadcast from Meadowlark Gardens:

Swing Angel	Acc. (cl). Solo 8 bars. (M)
Oh, Baby!	Acc.(cl) to solo 32 bars. Soli 8 and 8 bars. (M)
Limehouse Blues	Acc. (cl) to solo 32 bars. Acc. (vib). (F)
Clarinade	Solo with orch 8 bars. (F)
Sweet Lorraine	Intro 4 bars to acc. (cl) to solo 16 bars to acc. (cl) with announcer. (S)

A broadcast with lots of goodies, three brilliant smallband items, and for a highlight choose "... Lorraine" with a magnificent slow piano solo.

Culver City, Jan. 27, 1946
Same. AFRS ONS 856 from Meadowlark Gardens, two titles:

Who's Sorry Now?	Acc. (vo-LM). (M)
Sweetheart	With orch. Acc. (vo-AL). (M)

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC **L.A. Jan. 28, 1946**
Collective personnel: Dizzy Gillespie, Al Killian (tp), Willie Smith, Charlie Parker (as), Charlie Ventura, Lester Young (ts), Mel Powell (p), Billy Hadnot (b), Lee Young (dm).
Four titles were recorded live at the "Philharmonic Auditorium", three issued:

Crazy Rhythm	Intro 4 bars to 32 bars with ens. Acc. various. Solo 64 bars. (F)
Sweet Georgia Brown	Intro 4 bars to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Acc. various. (F)
The Man I Love	Intro 4 bars. Acc. various. Solo 64 bars. (S)

It is an enormous pleasure to hear MP in different surroundings than Benny Goodman and Glenn Miller (nothing wrong with his efforts there, don't get it wrong!). He slides in on "Crazy ..." and "Sweet ..." with uptempo, as he never had done anything but play in jam sessions, particularly the latter is magnificent,

obviously something perceived by the audience, note the second bridge, and the third choruses is out of this world; when Bird takes over, it is sort of anticlimax, can you imagine! Nevertheless, the immortal highlight is "... Love", a fifteen minutes sermon. After a brief intro, then comes Dizzy and Pres (magnificent!) as kind of vorspiel, and then our Melvin!!! This one of my favourite piano soli, regardless of performer, words cannot describe it properly. Probably only one chorus was intended, but everybody understood the importance of the moment, dig the start of the second chorus!! Dig it all!!!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **LA. Jan. 30, 1946**

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p). Art Lund (vo-1670,73).

Four titles were recorded for Columbia:

1670-1	Sweetheart	With orch. Acc. (vo). (M)
1671-1	It's The Talk Of The Town	Acc. (vo). Acc. (cl). (S)
1671-2	It's The Talk Of The Town	As above. (S)
1672-1	Swing Angel	Solo 8 bars. With orch. (M)
1672-2	Swing Angel	As above. (M)
1672-3	Swing Angel	As above. (M)
1673	On The Alamo	As below? ()
1673-1	On The Alamo	Acc. (vo). Solo with orch/(cl) 24 bars. (S)

Fine "... Alamo"!

BENNY GOODMAN

San Diego, Feb. 2, 1946

Personnels similar to usual.

AFRS ONS No. 872:

Rattle And Roll With orch to solo 24 bars. (FM)

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

LA. Feb. 6, 1946

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).

Two titles were recorded for Columbia:

1684-1	I Don't Know Enough About You	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). (SM)
1685-1	All The Cats Join In	Intro 8 bars. Solo with orch 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M)

A rare jewel to be found with 4 ½ minutes long "... The Cats" "...", why couldn't all Goodman records be as nice as this one? MP has a most important role, great playing!!

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET

NYC. March 8, 1946

Benny Goodman (cl), Johnny White (vib), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Barney Spieler (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Art Lund (vo).

One title was recorded for Columbia:

35952-3 Don't Be A Baby, Baby Acc. (vo). Acc. (cl). (SM)

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. May 14, 1946

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p, arr-36286,87), Louis Bellson (dm).

Benny Goodman (vo-36286), Art Lund (vo-36288), Johnny White (vo-36289).

Four titles were recorded for Columbia:

36286	Oh Baby Pt 1	Solo 16 bars. (M)
36286-1	Oh Baby Pt 1	As above? ()
36286-2	Oh Baby Pt 1	As above. (M)
36287	Oh Baby Pt 2	As below. (FM)
36287-1	Oh Baby Pt 2	As below. (FM)
36287-2	Oh Baby Pt 2	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
36288-"1"	Blue Skies	As below? ()
36288-1	Blue Skies	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). (SM)
36289-1	I Ain't Mad At Nobody	Acc. (vo). (S)

MP arranges “Oh Baby ...” and limits himself to brief soli but utterly elegant, particularly “... Pt 1” is great.

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET**NYC. May 22, 1946**

Benny Goodman (cl), Johnny White (vib), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Barney Spieler (b), Louis Bellson (dm).
Broadcast from “400 Restaurant”, one title:

Tiger Rag Solo 32 bars. Break. (F)

NYC. June 3, 1946

Same. Broadcast “Bell Telephone Hour”, one title:

After You’ve Gone Soli 4, 40 and 4 bars. (F)

Extremely fast version this “... Gone”!

MEL POWELL & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. June 3, 1946**

Bernie Previn, Neal Hefti, James Blake, John Carisi (tp), Lou McGarity, Cutty Cutshall (tb), Warren Easton (frh), Mitch Miller (oboe), William Shine, Mascagni Ruffo (as), Clifton Strickland, Danny Lapedus (ts), Danny Bank (bar), Mel Powell (p), Mike Bryan (g), Bernard Spieler (b), Sid Catlett (dm).
Two titles were recorded for Commodore:

4895-1 Lover Man Acc. (ts). Solo 8 bars. Coda. (S)

4895-2 Lover Man As above. (S)

4896 Avalon Soli 64, 32 and 44 bars to coda. (F)

4896-1 Avalon Soli 64, 64 and 44 bars to coda. (F)

4896-2 Avalon As take 1. (F)

A quite unusual session with sixteen supporting musicians recruited for the occasion. “Lover Man” demonstrates clearly that MP had ideas and visions not compatible with the ‘ordinary’ world of jazz, nor with Benny’s organization. Exciting, beautiful but not easy to grasp for us mortals used to simpler concepts. “Avalon” is more conventional with soli not only by MP, although the leader of course takes the most, and with regard to him, the three takes are all great with no notable quality differences, great piano!!

BENNY GOODMAN**NYC. June 5, 1946**

Personnel including Mel Powell (p).
AFRS ONS No. 1024. Two titles:

All The Cats Join In With orch. Solo 8 bars. (FM)

I’ve Got The Suin In The Morning Acc. (vo-AL). (M)

NYC. June 12, 1946

Same. AFRS ONS No. 1046. Five titles:

Who’s Sorry Now? With orch. Acc. (tb). (M)

On The Alamo Acc. (vo). Solo with orch 16 bars. (S)

Tiger Rag Break. Solo 32 bars. (F)

I’m Always Chasing Rainbows With orch. Acc. (vo). (SM)

Fly By Night Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Note particularly “... Alamo”, fine piano here.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. June 13, 1946**

Bigband personnel including Mel Powell (p).
Two titles were recorded for Columbia, no MP on 36519 “Pity The Poor Lobster”, but:

36659-3 Fly By Night Solo 8 bars. (FM)

The piano solo is the highlight of “... Night” (could this be Bushkin?).

MP left the Benny Goodman association sometime in June.

MEL POWELL**NYC. Nov. 5, 1946**

Mel Powell (p), David Schwartz (viola-4897), Kenneth Pasmanick (bassoon-4897).

Two titles were recorded for Commodore:

4897	Sketches (For Three Instruments)	4:30.
4898	Brahms' Rhapsody No. 3, Opus 119	4:08.

This is "contemporary formal music" and has nothing to do with jazz. Just therefore it is interesting to listen and be familiar with the immense scope of MP's artistry. The liner notes of the Mosaic issue describes it all, let me just mention that this probably is the only recorded xample of MP as a concert pianist in the classical repertoire.

"A SONG WAS BORN" Hollywood, July/Aug. 1947

Personnels including Mel Powell (p).
Movie soundtrack and material not used in film, information later with updates, hitherto one item noted:

A Song Was Born Solo 8 bars. (F)

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET NYC. Aug. 11, 1947

Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Al Hendrickson (g, vo-2150), Harry Babasin (b), Louis Bellson (dm).
Two titles were recorded for Capitol:

2149-3	Hi 'Ya Sophia	Solo 32 bars. (F)
2150-3	Baby, Have You Got A Little Love To Spare?	Intro 4 bars. In ens. Solo 4 bars. Acc. (vo). (S)

MP on Capitol! An excellent solo on "... Sophia" and remarkable background playing on "Baby ...".

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET NYC. Aug. 25, 1947

Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Al Hendrickson (g), Artie Shapiro (b), Louis Bellson (dm).
One title was recorded for Capitol:

2198-3	Nagasaki	Soli 8 and 16 bars. (F)
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Yes, this is MP in his best shape, he should have taken a few full choruses here!

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET NYC. Sept. 22, 1947

Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Al Hendrickson (g, vo-2262), Joe Mondragon (b), Tom Romersa (dm).
Two titles were recorded for Capitol:

2261-4	The Varsity Drag	Solo 32 bars. (F)
2262-3	Gonna Get A Girl	Acc. (cl). (M)

Another great MP solo on "... Drag"!

BENNY GOODMAN Hollywood, Oct. 23, 1947

George Seaburg, Frank Beach, Irving Goodman, Vernon "Jake" Porter (tp), Lou McGarity, Tommy Pederon, Herbie Harper (tb), Benny Goodman (cl), Gus Bivona, Jack Dumont (as), Babe Russin, Bumps Myers (ts), Chuck Gentry (bar), Mel Powell (p), Al Hendrickson (g, vo-2370), Artie Shapiro (b), Tommy Romersa (dm), Emma Lou Welch (vo-2372)

Five titles were recorded for Capitol, three have been available:

2370-7	On A Slow Boat To China	Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. (SM)
2371-3	Sweet And Lovely	No (p). (SM)
2372-2	Ooh Look-a There, Ain't She Pretty	Acc. (vo). (M)
2373-2	Back In Your Own Backyard	Solo 8 bars. (M)
2374-1	Wrap Your Troubles In Dreams	Solo 8 bars. (SM)

Nothing special with these performances, except the beautiful "... Dreams".

Hollywood, Nov. 25, 1947

Similar. Emma "Lou" Welch (vo). One title:

2599	You Turned The Tables On Me	Acc. (vo). Solo 4 bars. (SM)
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Of no particular interest.

BENNY GOODMAN SEPTET ?? NYC. Dec. 2, 1947

Ed Kusby (tb-except 2722), Benny Goodman (cl), Chuck Gentry (bcl-2724), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Al Hendrickson (g), Artie Shapiro (b), Tom Romersa (dm), Peggy Lee (vo-2721), The Sportsmen (vclds-2724).

Three titles were recorded for Capitol:

2721-3	Keep Me In Mind	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). (S)
2722-2	Shirley Steps Out	Acc. (cl). Solo 4 bars. (M)
2724-2	Give Me Those Good Old Days	Acc. (vclds). (FM)

Mostly background playing here, but listen to the piano just before the vocal starts on "... Mind". To hear MP playing some honky tonk on "... Days" has perhaps some historical value.

BENNY GOODMAN SEPTET

NYC. Dec. 9, 1947

Jake Porter (tp-except 2796), Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Allen Reuss (g), Artie Shapiro (b), Bill Douglass (dm), Emma Lou Welch (vo-2794).

Three titles were recorded for Capitol:

2794-3	I'm In A Cryin' Mood	Acc. (vo). (S)
2795-4	High Fa-lutin'	Soli 16 and 8 bars. (M)
2796-3	That's A Plenty	Acc. (cl). Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Fine background on "... Mood". And the authority MP shows on "High ..." and "... Plenty" could be an inspiration to younger pianists.

MEL POWELL QUINTET

LA. Dec. 10, 1947

Jake Porter (tp, vo-2810), Bumps Myers (ts), Mel Powell (p), Red Callender (b), Lee Young (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Capitol:

2807-4	Anything Goes	2:38. (M)
2808-3	'Way Down Yonder In New Orleans	2:06. (F)
2809-2	You Go To My Head	2:44. (S)
2810-2	You Better Not Mess With Me	2:37. (S)
2815-4	If Dreams Come True	2:29. (M)
2816-2	There's A Small Hotel	2:50. (S)
2817-4	Hallelujah	2:06. (F)

This session is a mixture of everything (and to make it simple I have limited the solo notation down to minutes, seconds, and tempo), from the intricate, moving and lovely solo features "... My Head" and "... Hotel" to flashing, very fast and exciting "... New Orleans" and "Hallelujah", MP at his best here. The presence of trumpet and tenorsax was not necessary, in fact only makes stylistic confusion, and the arrangements likewise. Every item has some brief or longer sections of fine piano playing, with more similarity to Art Tatum's style than I can remember, but a trio session would have been much more productive.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Dec. 11, 1947

Same. Benny Goodman (vo-2832).

Three titles were recorded for Capitol:

2830-3	Henderson Stomp	Soli 4 and 16 bars. (F)
2831-2	You Took Advantage Of Me	Acc. (cl). Soli 16 and 8 bars. (SM)
2832-3	Behave Yourself	Intro 2 bars. In ens. Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. (M)

Fine piano soli here, particularly "... Of Me" should be noted.

Hollywood, Dec. 23, 1947

Similar. Four titles:

3054-3	I Hate To Lose You	Acc. (vo). (S)
3055-1	Muskrat Ramble	Acc. (cl). (M)
3056-2	Am I Blue?	Acc. (cl). Acc. (vo). (SM)
3057-3	The Blues Jumped Up And Got Me	Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. (SM)

Fine backing on “The Blues ...” and a good solo!

BENNY GOODMAN QUINTET

LA. Dec. 27, 1947

Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Red Callender (b), Lee Young (dm), Johnny Mercer (vo-“Sent For You ...”).

“Just Jazz” concert at the Shrine Auditorium, AFRS Jubilee 11, 271/299:

After You’ve Gone	Solo 80 bars. (F)
Sent For You Yesterday	Acc. (vo). Solo 24 bars. (FM)
Air Mail Special	Soli 64 and 8 bars. (FM)
Rose Room	Acc. (cl). Solo 16 bars. (SM)
The World Is Waiting For TS	Intro 8 bars to acc. (cl) to solo 64 bars. Soli 8 and 8 bars. (F)
Flying Home	Solo 64 bars. (M)

A fantastic quintet session with some of the greatest MP soloing ever, which means quite a lot! Every item here has brilliant music by all participators with the piano genius of MP on the very top. Details are simply not necessary; find this session, and sit quietly down because otherwise you may tumble and hurt yourself.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

Hollywood, Dec. 30, 1947

Bigband personnel with (strings), Emma Lou Welch (vo-3148), probably including Mel Powell (p).

Two titles were recorded for Capitol, no (p) on 3147-4 “Beyond The Sea / La Mer” but:

3148-4	Darn That Dream	Acc. (vo). (S)
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BENNY GOODMAN QUINTET

NYC. Dec. 30, 1947

Benny Goodman (cl), Red Norvo (vib), Mel Powell (p), Red Callender (b), Lee Young (dm), Emma Lou Welch (vo-3150).

Two titles were recorded for Capitol:

3149-2	The World Is Waiting For The Sunrise	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. In ens. (F)
3150-3	The Record Ban Blues	Acc. (vo). Solo 12 bars. (S)

This is not the first version of “... Sunrise” but seems possibly to be fastest one, and surprisingly enough MP gets only one chorus.

MEL POWELL SEXTET

LA. Dec. 31, 1947

Frank Beach (tp), Bumps Myers (ts), Chuck Gentry (bar), Mel Powell (p), Red Callender (b), Lee Young (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Capitol:

3155-3	Cuban Pete	2:31. (M)
3156-3	Cookin’ One Up	2:01. (F)
3157-4	The Old Black Magic	2:25. (S/M)
3158-2	When A Woman Loves A Man	2:50. (S)

One gets the same feeling of stylistic mixture here as on the previous Capitol session, perhaps even more as the pure beboppish “... One Up”. There is notable piano playing on all items, note for instance the advanced introduction on “... Black Magic”, but the overcrowded personnel serves no purpose. Reaching finally the beautiful solo feature”... Woman Loves ...”, one can at last breath freely.

MEL POWELL SEPTET

LA. Sept. 28, 1948

Clyde Hurley (tp), Lou McGarity (tb), Gus Bivona (cl), Don Lodice (ts), Mel Powell (p), Tiny Berman (b), Frank Carlson (dm).

One title was recorded for Capitol:

3442-2	Muskrat Ramble	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. Break. (FM)
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Finally, after a recording pause of nine months, a true Dixieland number (why only one??) with a sequence of soli for everybody, all with half a chorus except for the boss himself, who know how to play also this kind of music.

No recording sessions 1949 – 1951.

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. May 28, 1952

Bernie Previn, Chris Griffin, Mickey McMickle, Ricky Trent (tp), Lou McGarity, Cutty Cutshall, Will Bradley (tb), Benny Goodman (cl, ldr), Hymie Schertzer, Al Klink (as), Peanuts Hucko, Boomie Richman (ts), Art Drelinger (bar), Mel Powell (p), Mundell Lowe (g), Jack Lesberg (b), Terry Snyder (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Harmony, no MP on “I’m Gonna Sit Right Down And Write Myself A Letter” but:

47459-4 My Honey’s Lovin’ Arms Solo 14 bars. (M)

This time the recording pause lasted more than 3 ½ years and resulted in only one brief solo with unmistakably MP’s harmonies.

MEL POWELL SEPTET

NYC. Dec. 30, 1953

Buck Clayton (tp), Henderson Chambers (tb), Edmond Hall (cl), Mel Powell (p), Steve Jordan (g), Walter Page (b), Jimmy Crawford (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vanguard:

It’s Been So Long Intro to solo 32 bars. Acc. (tb)/(cl)/(tp).
Solo 8 bars. (M)

I Must Have That Man Solo 16+8 bars, acc. (tp) on bridge.
Acc. (tb)/(tp)/(cl).
Solo 8 bars to ens 8 bars. (S)

You’re Lucky To Me Intro 8 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)

‘S Wonderful Intro to solo 64 bars. Breaks. (F)

And another nineteen months had to pass by, but then ...! Go straight to the fast “‘S Wonderful” and you will see that MP has not lost anything in the preceding years, on the contrary he has added another dimension to his style. His unique abilities to swing in the vintage tradition are the same, while his harmonic scope has widened, making his soli so utterly exciting. This first Vanguard session is not more than a casual jam session, nevertheless it has so much to offer. Take”... Lucky ...” as a brilliant example of how it is possible to blend the old and the new!! “... So Long” is not that important, however this version of “... Man” is one of the darkest and most original I have ever heard, comparing to the famous prewar Teddy Wilson/ Billie Holiday version gives a unique example of the immense creativity and depth of jazz as an art form.

same date

Mel Powell (p-solo). One title:

Sonatina For Piano 11:07

A beautiful piece of music, but it has nothing to do with jazz. It tells a lot about the different worlds of Mel Powell.

BENNY GOODMAN TRIO

NYC. Jan. 28, 1954

Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), Eddie Grady (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Capitol:

20333-5 There’ll Be Some Changes Made Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). (SM)
Solo 36 bars. Acc. (cl). (FM)
Acc. (cl) to coda. (SM)

20334-6 Everything I’ve Got Belongs To You Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl).
Soli 32, 16, 8, 8 and 8 bars. (F)

20335-2 But Not For Me Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl).
Solo 16 bars. (SM)

20336-3 Margie Intro 8 bars. Acc. (cl).
Soli 32 and 32 bars. (F)

This is an important session! Quoting Loren Schoenberg’s liner notes to the Mosaic album: “The return of the famed Benny Goodman Trio sounds a bit jarring at first, but within a chorus or two their creativity overwhelms all stylistic concerns. Mel Powell had arrived at a fascinating synthesis of his previous influences by the early 50s; here he manages the almost impossible feat of looking both backwards and forwards at the same time. He is there for Benny with Wilson-ish tenths and the like, but peppers everything with special chords and new voicings that are all his own, and make his departure from the jazz scene a few years later all the more regrettable (for us, that is)”. Lots of exceptionally brilliant piano playing, and all four items are masterpieces!!

MEL POWELL & HIS ALL STARS**NYC. April 9, 1954**

Collective personnel: Ruby Braff, Jay Brower, Buck Clayton (tp), Vernon Brown, Urbie Green (tb), Tony Scott (cl), Lem Davis (as), Buddy Tate, Eddie Shu (ts), Romeo Penque (as, bar), Mel Powell, Teddy Napoleon (p), Steve Jordan (g), Milt Hinton (b), Jo Jones, Gene Krupa (dm), Martha Lou Harp (vo-51386).

Four titles were recorded for Columbia at concert in Carnegie Hall, issued as "Jam Session At Carnegie Hall":

51386	When Day Is Done	Acc. (vo) with (tp). (S)
51387	I Found A New Baby	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Duet with (b) 6 choruses. (FM)
51388	Lighthouse Blues	Intro 4 bars to solo 36 bars. Duet with (b) 4 choruses. (M)
51389	After You've Gone	Solo 2 choruses of 40 bars. (F)

Fine jam session in Carnegie Hall under MP's leadership! "... Blues" are two particularly exciting items, note the p/b duets here! Fine solo also "After ..." but there are so many remarkable examples of this title.

MEL POWELL TRIO**NYC. Aug. 17, 1954**

Paul Quinichette (ts), Mel Powell (p), Bobby Donaldson (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Vanguard, issued as "Borderline":

Borderline	In ens. Solo 32 bars to 32 bars 4/4 with (ts). Solo 8 bars. In ens. (F)
Makin' Whopee	Free intro. Acc. (ts). Soli 8, 32 and 8 bars. (M)
Avalon	Soli 32, 64 and 8 bars. Acc. (ts). (F)
Quin And Sonic	Acc. (ts). Solo 32 bars. (M)
What's New?	Free intro. Acc. (ts). Soli 8, 32 and 8 bars. (S)
If Dreams Come True	Straight 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (ts). (M)
Cross Your Heart	Soli 36, 16 and 8 bars. Acc. (ts). Coda. (FM)

The wizard Mel Powell's two trio recordings for Vanguard are among the most thrilling jazz performances of the early fifties! I really wonder how they came about, how the record company could be persuaded to invest in such a strange concept! However, the results were magnificent, starting with an unlikely choice, Paul Quinichette. Nevertheless, the cooperation is perfect, the atmosphere completely relaxed, and the tenorsax player is utterly sensitive to the delicate yet very demanding piano accompaniments. Inbetween the advanced arrangements and the 'duets', there are magnificent piano soli, some swinging par excellence in fast tempo like "Borderline" and "Avalon", the relaxed medium swingers of "... Sonic", "... True", "... Heart" and "... Whopee" and finally the soft, slow, strange and beautiful "... New?". In fact, all titles are utterly interesting one way or the other, the contrasts are challenging but successful, and the album title "Borderline" is most appropriate. A Mel Powell 'must'!!

MEL POWELL TRIO**NYC. Aug. 24, 1954**

Ruby Braff (tp), Mel Powell (p), Bobby Donaldson (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Vanguard, issued as "Thigamagig":

Thigamagig	Intro 4 bars. Solo 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm/tp). (F)
You're My Thrill	5:23. (S)
Button Up Your Overcoat	Duet with (tp) 32 bars to solo 32 bars to 4/4 & duet to coda. (M)
Don-Que-Dee	Straight. 3:28. (F)
Ain't She Sweet?	Solo 36 bars to acc. (tp) 32 bars to solo 36 bars to duet 36 bars. (M)
Take Me In Your Arms	Soli and duet with (tp). 4:08. (SM)
California, Here I Come	Intro 8 bars to solo 64 bars. Acc. (tp). Soli 4 and 4 bars. (F)

Bouquet

Solo 32 bars. Acc. (tp).
Acc. (dm). (M)

Only one week has passed since the magnificent trio recording for Vanguard, and here is another one!! Which one to prefer is just a matter of taste, Ruby Braff is like Quinichette a sensitive musician and an excellent partner for MP's genius. They swing together in the most perfect way on the medium "Button ..." and "...Sweet?", and have no problems when the tempo goes up to fast on "Thigamagig" and "California ...". "Don ..." is surprisingly mostly a drum performance, a fill-in only and can easily be skipped. On "Bouquet" MP again demonstrates his violent contrasts between his piano playing rooted in classical swing and his modern thinking which should lead him to another musical world a few years from now. "Take Me ..." is a soft and romantic item with the most delightful cooperation, another masterpiece! How should we then characterize "... My Thrill"? Five minutes of the slowest tempo, a glimpse of heaven before one is back on earth, a long introvert piano introduction leading into a magnificent trumpet solo. Say no more, play this session. There are several Vanguard sessions to come with excellent music, but none can really compete with these two trio sessions.

BENNY GOODMAN SEXTET

NYC. Nov. 8, 1954

Charlie Shavers (tp), Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), Steve Jordan (g), George Duvivier (b), Jo Jones (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Capitol:

20527-5	Air Mail Special	Solo 32 bars. (F)
20528-6	Ain't Misbehavin'	Intro 4 bars. Soli 16 and 8 bars. Acc. (cl). (SM)
20529-10	Get Happy	Solo 32 bars. Acc. (b). (F)
20530-8	Slipped Disc	Solo 32 bars. Acc. (cl). (F)

Another great Benny Goodman small band session with MP par excellence!! Note as a good start the opening of the piano solo on "... Misbehavin'"! Then dig the rest of it! Then the three other items, all in flying uptempo, and for details, the opening phrase of "Air Mail ...", as well as the whole concept of "Get ...", and the floating "... Disc", oh what a piano player MP was!!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Nov. 9, 1954

Chris Griffin, Ruby Braff, Bernie Privin, Carl Poole (tp), Will Bradley, Cutty Cutshall, Vernon Brown (tb), Benny Goodman (cl, ldr), Hymie Schertzer, Paul Ricci (as), Boomie Richman, Al Klink (ts), Sol Schlinger (bar), Mel Powell (p), Steve Jordan (g), George Duvivier (b), Bobby Donaldson (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Capitol, no MP on 20532 "When I Grow Too Old To Dream", 20534 "Blue Lou" and 20536 "Stompin' At The Savoy" but:

20531	Jersey Bounce	Intro with (b) 4 bars, then with orch. Solo 8 bars. With orch. (M)
20533	You Brought A New Kind Of Love To Me	Solo 8 bars. (M)
20535	Jumpin' At The Woodside	Solo with orch 32 bars. (F)
20537	Sent For You Yesterday	Solo with orch 12 bars. (M)

Nothing more than routine here, a nice, brief solo on "... Bounce" though.

BENNY GOODMAN TRIO / QUINTET

NYC. Nov. 16, 1954

Ruby Braff (tp-20549,50), Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), George Duvivier (b-20549,50), Bobby Donaldson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Capitol:

20547-4	Rose Room	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (M)
20548	What Can I Say After I Say I'm Sorry	Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars. (M)
20549-14	Rock Rimmon	Intro. Solo 24 bars. Acc. (b). (FM)
20550-4	You're A Sweetheart	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 16 bars. (SM)

Enjoy the piano playing behind Benny's solo on "Rose ..." and "... Sorry", and then upon the soloing be amazed at how MP has finished constructed of a completely new swingstyle, based upon old tradition but with an abundance of new harmonies and futuristic details. Every bar these days seems to contain something previously unheard. No problems with the other two items, "Rock ..." is a very fascinating blues, and "... Sweetheart" has a delightful relaxed solo.

Adding that Ruby Braff is a wonderful addition to the last two items, we can conclude that this also is a session to play and remember!

BENNY GOODMAN & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Nov. 17, 1954**

Personnel as Nov. 9.

Four titles were recorded for Capitol, no MP on 20554 "Let's Dance" but:

20551	Somebody Stole My Gal	Solo 14 bars. (M)
20522-BD	I Would Do Anything For You	As below. (M)
20552	I Would Do Anything For You	Solo 8 bars. (M)
20553	Big John Special	Solo 24 bars. (M)

A very original chorded solo on "... Special"! Dig also a fine solo on "... Gal"! And the two takes of "... Anything ..." are completely different!

MEL POWELL BAND **NYC. Dec. 1, 1954**

Johnny Glasel (tp), Jimmy Buffington (frh), Chuck Russo (cl, as, bar), Boomie Richman (ts), Mel Powell (p), Mundell Lowe (g), Joe Kaye (b), Eddie Phyfe (dm), Joan Wile (vo-"Soon", "My Last ...").

Seven titles were recorded for Vanguard, issued as "Bandstand":

Soon	3:24. (S)
My Last Millionaire	3:27. (SM)
Easy Swing	Intro 4 bars. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (frh). Solo 8 bars. (M)
Ezz-may	Intro. Soli 8 and 16 bars. Acc. (ts). (SM)
Firebug	Intro. Break to solo 16 bars. (F)
Everything I've Got	Solo 56 bars. Acc. (g). Solo 8 bars. Break. (FM)
When Did You Leave Heaven?	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (frh). Soli 32 and 8 bars. (SM)

Vanguard continues to surprise! Two vocal items with rhythm only are full of surprises, note the final solo sequence on "My Last ..."! And listen to the pianistic elegance on "Ezz-may". There is gold in all items here, but you may get a particular feeling for the relaxed swinging "... Heaven?" with French horn and piano in close understanding.

MEL POWELL SEPTET / TRIO **NYC. Oct. 19, 1955**

Septet: Al Mattaliano (tp), Peanuts Hucko (cl), Nick Caiazza (ts), Mel Powell (p), Tommy Kay (g), Arnold Fishkin (b), Bobby Donaldson (dm). Trio ("Gone ...", "Pennies ..."): (p), (g), (b) only.

Six titles were recorded for Vanguard, issued as "Out On A Limb":

Gone With The Wind	Duet with (g). (SM)
Bunny Hug	Break. Soli 16 and 6 bars. (M)
Pennies From Heaven	3:57. (S/FM)
Stompin' At The Savoy	Free intro. Solo 32 bars. (M)
When Your Lover Has Gone	3:50. (S/M)
Cooch	Solo 20 bars. (M)

The septet is perhaps not the most exciting of groups, but nothing wrong with MP's soloing on the four items, and "... Savoy" with a free intro and later solo is definitely worth noticing. The trio items however have probably greater appeal, with a beautiful piano/guitar duet on "... The Wind" and note above all MP's very unusual start in slow tempo on "... Heaven"!!

MEL POWELL QUINTET **NYC. Oct. 19, 1955**

Ruby Braff (tp-except "... Words", "... Lucky ..."), Mel Powell (p), Skeeter Best (g-except "Beale ..."), Oscar Pettiford (b-except "Beale ..."), Bobby Donaldson (dm-except "... Words", "... Lucky ...").

Six titles were recorded for Vanguard, issued as "Out On A Limb":

Beale Street Blues	Acc. (tp). Solo 24 bars. (S)
The Best Things In Life Are Free	Solo 36 bars. Duet

	with (tp) 36 bars. (M)
Rosetta	Intro 8 bars. Acc. (tp). Soli 32 and 4 bars. (M)
Three Little Words	Solo 64 bars. Acc. (g). Solo 64 bars. (F)
You're Lucky To Me	Solo 64 bars. Acc. (b). Acc. (g). Solo 16 bars. (M)
Liza	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (F)

The end of the wonderful Vanguard era which produced so many fantastic sessions giving a mature MP the opportunity to really expose all his artistic talents. Here, just take the magnificent solo on "Beale ...", never has this song been played with such beauty like this!! The cooperation with Ruby Braff was shown to be remarkable with the trio recording one year earlier, and this session is a fruitful followup. Take good old "Liza" as an excellent example, and dig MP again for the n'th time. Otherwise all items here have much to offer a MP fan.

BENNY GOODMAN QUINTET

NYC. Dec. 14, 1955

Benny Goodman (cl), Lionel Hampton (vib), Mel Powell (p), George Duvivier (b), Bobby Donaldson (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Capitol:

20953	Avalon	Solo 32 bars. (F)
20954	Moonglow	Acc. (cl). Solo 8 bars. (SM)
20955-1	Alicia's Blues	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
20956	Memories Of You	Acc. (cl). Solo 16 bars. (S)
20957	China Boy	Intro 8 bars. Acc. (cl). Solo 64 bars. In ens. (F)
20958-1	Seven Come Eleven	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
20959-2	I Got Rhythm	Intro 4 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)

The end is coming closer ... With the exception of the TV-shows below, this is the end of his cooperation with Benny, and the last Capitol studio session. There is a lot of nostalgia here, and anybody loving Benny and all he has done for jazz through a quarter of a century will enjoy this date. Absolutely nothing wrong with it, only that the great Lionel Hampton takes much of the attention, and MP seems to accept a minor role. Nothing with his soli, but they are more conventional than what he otherwise creates. A kind of protest can be heard in his chorded solo on "... Blues", which absolutely is no blues, and the violent "... Rhythm". And the way he swings "China ..."!

BENNY GOODMAN TRIO

NYC. March 23, 1957

Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), Roy Burns (dm).

Perry Como TV Show, medley:

4:50	Medley:	
	The Man I Love	Duet with (cl) 24 bars. (S)
	Embraceable You	Solo 16 bars. (SM)
	Lady Be Good	Solo 4 bars. Duet 32 bars. (M)
	Somebody Loves Me	Duet 16+8 bars, solo 8 bars on bridge. (M)
	Liza	Duet 32 bars to solo 32 bars to duet 32 bars. (F)

Brilliant performance by the trio, and MP's contributions are just great! His "Embraceable ..." is unforgettable, and so is his last "Liza".

NYC. Oct. 19, 1957

Same plus Arvell Shaw (b), medley:

4:10	Medley:	
	After I Say I'm Sorry	Intro 4 bars. Duet 32 bars. (M)
	If I Had You	Duet 16+8 bars, solo 8 bars on bridge. (SM)

How High The Moon Duet 32 bars. (FM)

I Know That You Know Duet 32 bars to solo 16 bars. (F)

Not quite as exciting as the previous TV show, but fine half-chorus on “I Know ...”. Sad to realize that this was to be MP’s last appearance with Benny Goodman, as well as the rest of the world, leaving jazz for ‘classical’ music. How could you do that to us Mel? Only 34 years old!!

No recording sessions 1958 – 1985.

Postscript of Jan. 2018: No, not quite!!!:

BENNY GOODMAN / MEL POWELL TRIO LA. May 20, 1976

Benny Goodman (cl), Mel Powell (p), Nick Ceroli (dm).

“The Melvin Griffin Show”, TV-program, three titles:

Lady Be Good Intro 16 bars. Acc. (cl) 64 bars.
Solo 32 bars. Acc. (cl) 16+8 bars,
(dm) on bridge. (FM)

Body And Soul Intro 4 bars. Acc. (cl) 32 bars. Solo
32 bars. Acc. (cl) 32 bars. (SM)

Avalon Intro 8 bars. Solo 64 bars.
Acc. (cl) 64 bars. (F)

A great TV-program and a big surprise, thanks to those who brought attention to it! While Benny seems marked by age, Mel plays with former brilliance and youthfulness, wonderful soli on all items. Run to YouTube!!

MEL POWELL aboard S.S. Norway, Caribbean Sea, Oct. 21, 1986

Bob Wilber (cl), Mel Powell (p), Mel Lewis (dm).

One title was recorded for Chiaroscuro, unissued as “The Floating Jazz Festival 1986”:

Avalon Intro 8 bars. Acc. (cl).
Soli 64 and 8 bars. (FM)

Another ten years have passed and MP is one of the stars on the Norwegian cruises. This “Avalon” appears on a CD which never was issued, and four minutes of a nice trio performance is quite pleasant. Probably more stuff exists ...

MEL POWELL aboard S.S. Norway, Caribbean Sea, Oct. 21, 1987

Benny Carter (as), Mel Powell (p), Howard Alden (g), Milt Hinton (b), Louie Bellson (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Chiaroscuro, issued as “The Return Of Mel Powell”:

Stompin’ At The Savoy In ens. Soli 64 and 8 bars. (M)

I Can’t Get Started Intro 4 bars. Acc. (as).
Solo 32 bars. (SM)

Oh, Lady Be Good Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars.
Acc. (b). Soli 8 and 8 bars. (FM)

What Is This Thing Called Love? In ens. Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Out Of Nowhere Free intro (S) to
solo 32 bars. (SM)

‘S Wonderful Intro 8 bars.
Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

Although the magic of the past is not quite there, MP’s return is in fact much better than could be expected. Obviously he must have practiced his piano playing amidst the composing, because the technique shows up with occasional colourful runs. “... The Savoy“ is perhaps not that exciting, but “... Started“ has nice qualities. Then “... Good“ where he enters an inspired and heated stride. Proceeding to “... Love?“ we hear for the first time on this session MP’s enormous creativity and the blend of the old and the new, a remarkable solo!! Back to slower tempo on “... Nowhere“ he takes a confident introduction to continue with a lightly swinging choruses. Finally “... Wonderful“, obviously he has warmed up by now, because after an excellent altosax solo he takes four flashing choruses, assisted by particularly a magnificent bass. Oh, no, MP was not at all neither oldfashioned nor old after his long absence, he could have gone straight into a possible mainstream revival era as one of its major pianists. Too bad he didn’t.

No further recording sessions.

...ooo...