

**The**  
**ALTOSAX**  
**of**  
**JAMES OSTEND BROWN**  
**“PETE”**

Born: Baltimore, Maryland, November 9, 1906  
 Died: New York City, November 20, 1963

*Introduction:*

The original jumping style of Pete Brown fascinated me from the very beginning, particularly those from the late thirties, and curiosity led me to look for his later works. There may be more important altosax players in jazz, but PB combines originality and inspiration in a fascinating way, well worth a solography, right?

*History:*

Father (originally from Barbados) played trombone; mother was a pianist. Pete's cousin, Estelle Carroll, was a vocaliste. Played piano from the age of eight, spell on ukulele, then specialised on violin. Played in local movie-house from the age of 12, was featured as soloist at high school concerts. Began working in a Baltimore theatre orchestra, changed to alto and tenor in 1924, continued theatre work, then played with The Southern Star Jazz Band, The Baltimore Melody Boys and Johnny Jones' orchestra. Joined Banjo Bernie Robinson in Atlantic City (early 1927), moved to New York with that band in June 1927, played residency at the Capitol, then at the Sugar Cane Club (where Pete began doubling trumpet-1928). From ca. 1930 until 1935 worked on and off with Charlie Skeets (worked with this band for Clarence Williams' recording session in 1933). From ca. 1933 until 1936 worked in Fred Moore's trio (with Don Frye) at the Victoria Cafe, New York, from January 1937 played with the Trio at Brittwood Club, then became an original member of the John Kirby band in May 1937. Left Kirby in May 1938, formed own band which played many residencies in New York including: Kelly's, The Onyx, etc. During this period played on several recordings organised by jazz-writer Leonard Feather, also recorded with Willie 'The Lion' Smith (1937), Frankie Newton, etc. Co-led band with Frankie Newton at Kelly's Stables (early 1940), then led own band at Martin's, Jimmy Ryan's, Kelly's etc., 1941-43. With Frankie Newton in Boston (spring 1943), briefly fronted Louis Jordan's group whilst the leader did solo tour (1943). Led own small groups from 1944: Garrick, Silhouette (Chicago), Three Deuces, Kelly's, Club Cobra, etc. (New York). Continued to lead own same groups during the 1950s, but persistent ill health curtailed regular playing in the later years of his life. Featured at the Newport Jazz Festival in 1957, continued playing in the early 1960s, played long residencies at the Club Arlington in Brooklyn, New York, and also appeared at the Village Gate. From the late 1950s doubled on tenor sax. Regularly gave sax tuition from the 1930s, pupils include baritone saxist Cecil Payne and Flip Phillips. (Ref. John Chilton).

## PETE BROWN SOLOGRAPHY

### BIRMINGHAM SERENADERS

NYC. Feb. 1, 1935

Ed Allen, Charlie Gaines (cnt), unknown (tb), Pete Brown (as), Cecil Scott (cl, ts), possibly Clarence Williams (p, vo), Floyd Casey (dm, wbd).  
Four titles were recorded for Decca, two have altosax soli:

39326-A	Papa De Da Da	Solo 20 bars. (FM)
39327-A	You're Bound To Look Like A Monkey	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

This session predates the first "official" Pete Brown altosax recording by more than two years, but it is no doubt that he is taking these two choruses, particularly "... Monkey" is exactly in the style we come to love later.

### FRANKIE NEWTON & HIS UPTOWN SERENADERS

NYC. March 5, 1937

Frankie Newton (tp), Edmond Hall (cl), Pete Brown (as), Cecil Scott (ts), Don Frye (p), John Smith (g), Richard Fullbright (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Clarence Palmer (vo-173, 174).

Four titles were recorded for Variety, 173 "You're The One" unissued but:

174-1	You Showed Me The Way	Solo 8 bars. (M)
174-2	You Showed Me The Way	As above. (M)
175-1	Please Don't Talk About Me WIG	Soli 8 and 8 bars. (M)
175-2	Please Don't Talk About Me WIG	As above. (M)
176-1	Who's Sorry Now?	Solo 24 bars. (M)
176-2	Who's Sorry Now?	As above. (M)

PB's first 'official' recording session teams him up with the great Frankie Newton, and he is kicked into jazz history! His jumping and personal style fits in to perfection, and immediately he is one of the original personalities, whose music still is charming us, threequarters of a century later. Here is no Carter nor Hodges influence but a self-made swinging, somewhat staccato style which is very effective. All three items have excellent contributions, and although the alternate takes are not that different, it does not really matter. The highlights are the solo in "... Sorry Now?".

### FRANKIE NEWTON & HIS UPTOWN SERENADERS

NYC. April 15, 1937

Frankie Newton (tp), Russell Procope, Pete Brown (as), Cecil Scott (cl, ts), Edmond Hall (cl, bar), Don Frye (p), John Smith (g), Richard Fullbright (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Slim Gaillard (vo-404, 405).

Four titles were recorded for Variety, no altosax on "I've Found A New Baby" but:

403-2	The Brittwood Stomp	Solo 36 bars. (F)
404-2	There's No Two Ways About It	Obbligato 32 bars. Solo 30 bars. (FM)
405-1	'Cause My Baby Says It's So	As below. (FM)
405-2	'Cause My Baby Says It's So	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

A few months later an almost identical group is frequenting the studio again. The atmosphere is a bit more frantic, the tempi higher, and the session cannot as a whole quite compare with the former one, but there are excellent soli all over. PB manages very well, note in particular the fast "... Stomp". Dig also his active background playing on "... About It"! Note also that RP's altosax is heard on this session, but no mixup should be possible.

### FRANK NEWTON & HIS UPTOWN SERENADERS

NYC. July 13, 1937

Frankie Newton (tp), Edmond Hall (cl), Pete Brown (as, vo), George Johnson (as), Cecil Scott (ts), Don Frye (p), Frank Rice (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Leon La Fell (vo-558,560).

Four titles were recorded for Variety, three issued, but no PB.

### WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH & HIS CUBS

NYC. July 14, 1937

Frankie Newton (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Pete Brown (as), Willie "The Lion" Smith (p), Jimmy McLin (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

62372-A	Get Acquainted With Yourself	In ens. Solo 8 bars. (FM)
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- 62373-A Knock Wood In ens. (FM)  
 62374-A Peace, Brother, Peace In ens. Solo 16 bars. (FM)  
 62375-A The Old Stamping Ground Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (SM)

In general this session is a bit disappointing, the tunes are not the most exciting, too much mediocre vocals, and there is a lack of drive. Good piano playing cannot change this impression, nor can PB's contributions, "... Peace" is in fact quite corny, "... Ground" is rather straight, and the brief solo on "... Yourself" a sort of highlight.

**MAXINE SULLIVAN NYC. Aug. 6, 1937**

Personnel including Pete Brown (as).  
 Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, but no altosax soli.

**WILLIE "THE LION" SMITH & HIS CUBS NYC. Sept. 15, 1937**

Personnel as July 14.  
 Four titles were recorded for Decca:

- 62593-A Blues, Why Don't You Let Me Alone? Solo 8 bars. (SM)  
 62594-A I've Got To Think It Over Solo 8 bars. In ens. (M)  
 62595-A Achin' Hearted Blues Obligato parts. Solo 8 bars  
 to 4 bars in ens to coda. (SM)  
 62596-A Honeymoonin' On A Dime Solo 8 bars. (M)

A session quite similar to the one above, but better tunes, and PB plays quite nicely on all, although one may get the feeling that he is a bit frightened of slower tempi, preferring to jump steady in uptempo.

**BUSTER BAILEY & HIS RHYTHM BUSTERS /  
 JERRY KRUGER & HER KNIGHTS OF RHYTHM NYC. Sept. 17, 1937**

Frankie Newton (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Pete Brown (as), Don Frye (p), Jimmy McLin (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Jerry Kruger (vo-642,643).  
 Four titles were recorded for Variety, no PB on 642-2 "The Bed Song" but:

- 643-1 So You Won't Sing Obligato 36 bars. (M)  
 644-2 Afternoon In Africa Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (M)  
 645-1 Dizzy Debutante Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Strong and inspired altosax solo on "... Debutante". More relaxed and sensitive on the beautiful and almost hypnotizing "Afternoon ..." with Frankie taking the bridge.

**MIDGE WILLIAMS & HER JAZZ JESTERS NYC. Oct. 1, 1937**

Frankie Newton (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Pete Brown (as), Billy Kyle (p), Jimmy McLin (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Midge Williams (vo).  
 Four titles were recorded for Variety:

- 661-2 The One Rose Weak obligato in ens. (M)  
 662-1 The Lady Is A Tramp Solo 32 bars. (FM)  
 663-2 An Old Flame Never Dies Weak obligato in ens. (M)  
 664-1 Fortune Tellin' Man Intro. Solo 12 bars. (S)

Fine altosax soloing on this vocal session, note in particular "... Tramp"!

**MAXINE SULLIVAN NYC. Oct. 22, 1937**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Pete Brown (as), Claude Thornhill (p), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Maxine Sullivan (vo).  
 Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, but no altosax soli.

**MIDGE WILLIAMS & HER JAZZ JESTERS NYC. Nov. 23, 1937**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Pete Brown (as), Billy Kyle (p), James McLin (g), John Kirby (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm), Midge Williams (vo).  
 Four titles were recorded for Variety/Vocalion, two have altosax:

- 349-3 Singin' The Blues Intro 8 bars. Solo 16 bars. (M)  
 685-1 The Greatest Mistake Of My Life Solo 8 bars. (M)

Fine feeling in PB's contributions on this nice and swinging session. "... Life" is however rather brief, and "Singin' ..." is more interesting.

**JIMMIE NOONE & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Dec. 1, 1937**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Jimmie Noone (cl), Pete Brown (as), Frank Smith (p), Teddy Bunn (g, vo-62836), Wellman Braud (b), O'Neil Spencer (dm, vo-62830, 33,35,37), Teddy Simmons (vo-62834).

Eight titles were recorded for Decca:

62830-A	Sweet Lorraine	Weak obligato parts. In ens. (SM)
62831-A	I Know That You Know	In ens. (F)
62832-A	Bump It	Solo 12 bars. In ens. (SM)
62833-A	Four Or Five Times	Solo 16 bars. In ens. (M)
62834-A	Hell In My Heart	In ens. (SM)
62835-B	Call Me Darling	In ens. Solo 16 bars. (M)
62836-A	I'm Walking This Town	Prominently in ens. (F)
62837-A	Japansy	Weak obligato parts. "Duet" with (cl) 32 bars. (SM)

The laidback atmosphere is reminding of the "The Lion" sessions, and with many competing for solo space and lots of vocal, there is not much left for PB. He takes only three soli out of possible eight, and they are rather simple, best is "Call ...".

**BUSTER BAILEY / MIDGE WILLIAMS** **NYC. Feb. 18, 1938**

Personnel as Nov. 23, 1937. Midge Williams (vo-760, 761).

Four titles were recorded for Variety/Vocalion:

758-1	Planter's Punch	With ens. (F)
759-1	Sloe Jam Fizz	Solo 16 bars. (M)
760-1	I'm In A Happy Frame Of Mind	Obligato 8 bars. (M)
761-1	Love Is Like Whisky	Intro 2 bars. Solo 12 bars. Obligato parts. (S)

Fine blues feeling in PB's altosax on "Love ...", note this one!

**LEONARD FEATHER ALL-STAR JAM BAND** **NYC. March 10, 1938**

Bobby Hackett (cnt, g), Joe Marsala (cl, ts), Pete Brown (tp, as), Leonard Feather (p-777), Joe Bushkin (p-775,8, cel-776), Ray Biondi (vln, g), Artie Shapiro (b), George Wettling (dm), Leo Watson (vo-775).

Four titles were recorded for Commodore, no PB on 778-1 "Clementine" but:

775-2	For He's A Jolly Good Fellow	Solo 20 bars. Break. (FM)
776-1	Jammin' The Waltz	As below. (SM)
776-2	Jammin' The Waltz	Solo 12 bars. (SM)
777-1	Let's Get Happy	Solo 8 bars. In ens. (M)

Maybe not one of the most memorable of swing sessions, strange choice of music material, but with pleasant contributions. PB is heard on all titles, in good shape. Be careful so that you don't mistake Marsala's jumpy tenorsax on "Clementine" to be Pete!

**FRANKIE NEWTON & ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Jan. 13, 1939**

Frankie Newton (tp), Mezz Mezzrow (cl), Pete Brown (as), James P. Johnson (p), Al Casey (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Bluebird:

31460-1	Rosetta	With ens 32 bars to solo 32 bars. With ens 64 bars. (FM)
31461-1	Minor Jive	In ens to solo 8 bars to ens. (S)
31462-1	The World Is Waiting For TS	Solo 32 bars. Acc. (tp) 32 bars and 32 bars with ens. (FM)
31463-1	Who?	Straight 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to 32 bars with ens. (F)
31464-1	The Blues My Baby Gave To Me	No solo. (S)
31464-2	The Blues My Baby Gave To Me	Solo 10 bars to ens. (S)
31465-1	Rompin'	With ens 24 bars. Solo 24 bars.

With ens 24 bars. (FM)

This is one of PB's most exciting sessions!! Possibly one might argue there is too much ensemble playing here, but our man is the most active one, obviously enjoying himself immensely. "Rosetta" is an excellent example, and the solo here is also one of his best ones. Likewise, he is wailing on "The World ...", "Who?" and "Rompin'", and it seems that he is cultivating his style to be even more staccato than before. Which absolutely is not a bad thing, but very effective, note as an example his part in the opening ensemble of "Rompin'" and later the solo, oh how it swings! On the other hand, there is a most beautiful and emotional solo in slow tempo on "... Jive", showing that PB had a variety of tools to his disposition. Last minute addition: On the unissued alternate take of "Blues ...", PB starts soloing after the piano solo, when Newton is ready for his closing solo. To save the take, which otherwise would have been too long, he is allowed to continue with the ensemble coming in to close.

**LEONARD FEATHER'S ALL STAR JAM BAND NYC. April 20, 1939**

Bobby Hackett (cnt, g), Benny Carter, Pete Brown (tp, as), Joe Marsala (cl), Billy Kyle (p), Hayes Alvis (b), Cozy Cole (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Decca:

65437	Twelve Bars Stamped	Solo 24 bars. (F)
65438	Feather Bed Blues	Solo 12 bars. (S)
65439	Men From Harlem	Solo 32 bars. Break. (FM)
65440	Ocean Motion	Solo 64 bars. (FM)

This is a good session for PB, and it is exciting to contrast him with Benny Carter, they are really two extremes on the altosax! He is perhaps a bit formal on "... Harlem", but he plays the slow blues very nicely on "Feather ...", and the two other titles swing the most! Note also that PB solos on trumpet on "... Harlem"!

**JIMMIE GORDON & HIS VIP VOP BAND NYC. April 28, 1939**

Personnel including Frankie Newton (tp), Pete Brown (as), Jimmie Gordon (vo).  
Six titles were recorded for Decca:

65494-A	Get Your Mind Out Of TG	Solo 16 bars. Obligato parts. (M)
65495-A	Delhia	Obligato parts. (S)
65496-A	Do That Thing	Obligato parts. Solo 14 bars. In ens. (SM)
65497-A	The Mojo Blues	Intro 4 bars. Obligato parts. Solo 12 bars. (S)
65498-A	St. Peter Blues	Obligato parts. (S)
65499-A	If The Walls Could Talk	Part of intro. Obligato parts. (SM)

These items are disappointing, slow and sluggish most of them, and neither Frankie nor Pete can do very much, although they try to fill out the emptiness behind the singer. The altosax soli are ok but not too exciting.

**SEXTET OF THE RHYTHM CLUB OF LONDON NYC. Dec. 1, 1939**

Danny Polo (cl), Pete Brown (as), Hazel Scott (p, vo-43946,47), Albert Harris (g), Pete Barry (b, vo-43948), Arthur Herbert (dm), Leonard Feather (organizer).  
Four titles were recorded for Bluebird:

43945-1	Calling All Bars	Soli 16 and 4 bars. (FM)
43946	Mighty Like The Blues	Solo 12 bars. (S)
43947-1	You Gave Me The Go-By	Solo 16+12 bars, (cl) on bridge. (M)
43948-1	Why Didn't William Tell?	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

But these are quite charming with PB playing a quite active role and soloing nicely on all items!

**JOE MARSALA & HIS DELTA FOUR NYC. April 4, 1940**

Bill Coleman (tp, vo-2797), Joe Marsala (cl), Pete Brown (as), Carmen Mastren (g), Gene Traxler (b), Dell St. John (vo-2796,98).  
Four titles were recorded for General:

2796-2	Wandering Man Blues	Part of intro. Solo 12 bars. (SM)
2797-2	Salty Mama Blues	In ens. Solo 12 bars. (M)

- 2798-2 Three O'Clock Jump Solo 48 bars. (F)  
 2799-2 Reunion In Harlem Solo 32 bars. (SM)

One of my favourite PB sessions! Good slow medium solo on "Wandering ..." but on "Salty Mama ..." things start to happen. Listen then to "Three ...", originally a 12" 78 rpm., and then you will understand his importance as one of the creators of jump style and influence on many small bands in the decades to come!! Finally, to cool down, an elegant "Reunion ...", better PB don't exist!!

**PETE BROWN & HIS BAND**

**NYC. Feb. 9, 1942**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Jimmy Hamilton (cl), Pete Brown (as), Sam Price (p), Charlie Drayton (b), Ray Nathan (dm), Helen Humes (vo-70299,300,301), Nora Lee King (vo-70302).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

- 70299-A Mound Bayou Intro 2 bars. Solo 8 bars. (S)  
 70300-A Unlucky Woman Obbligato 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. (SM)  
 70301-A Gonna Buy Me A Telephone Straight. Solo 36 bars. (M)  
 70302-A Cannon Ball Obbligato 12 bars. (FM)

Much more could have been made out of this session (Dizzy having a very modest role), and Price's swing and jump capabilities are not exploited. However, PB have several nice contributions.

**PETE BROWN TRIO**

**NYC. Jan. 2, 1943**

Pete Brown (as), Al Matthews (p), Kenny Brown (b).

WNYC broadcast on "Metropolitan View", from unknown club, four titles, three have been available:

- 3:50 Indiana Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo  
 40+16 bars, (p) 8 bars inbetween. (F)  
 4:46 Nest Of The Chicken Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars.  
 Solo 64 bars. (FM)  
 3:33 Lady Be Good (NC) Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars.  
 Solo 2 ½ choruses, partly destroyed  
 by announcer to 12 bars (NC). (F)

Postscript of June 2020: This broadcast comes as a big surprise, because there is no comparable sessions, and any new discovery with PB is heartily welcomed. He plays inspiredly in his wellknown staccato style, and all items are enjoyable.

**PETE BROWN & HIS ORCHESTRA**

**Chi. Jan. 16, 1944**

Jonah Jones (tp-except "Caravan", "Lowdown Blues"), Pete Brown (as, vo-"Lowdown Blues"), Zed Jackson (p), Dallas Bartley (b), Eddie Nicholson (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for World Transcriptions (a few very brief breakdowns have been omitted below):

- 25073-1bk Said Zed Duet with (tp) 28 bars (NC). (FM)  
 25073-2bk Said Zed Duet with (tp) 32 bars.  
 Solo 28 bars (NC). (FM)  
 25073-3ms Said Zed Duet with (tp) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars  
 to duet 32 bars. (FM)  
 25074-3 That's The Lick As below. (FM)  
 25074-4ms That's The Lick Solo 32 bars. (FM)  
 25075-1bk The Little Jump Duet with (tp) 8 bars. (FM)  
 25075-2ms The Little Jump Duet with (tp) 8 bars. Solo 16+8 bars,  
 (tp) on bridge, to duet 32 bars. (FM)  
 25075-2 Blue Skies Solo 32 bars to duet with (tp) 32 bars. (FM)  
 25075-3bk Blue Skies Duet with (tp) 32 bars. (FM)  
 25075-4 Blue Skies As take 5 below. (FM)  
 25076-5ms Blue Skies Duet with (tp) 16+8 bars, solo on bridge.  
 Solo 32 bars to duet 32 bars. (FM)  
 25077-2 Ain't Misbehavin' As take 3 below. (S)  
 25077-3ms Ain't Misbehavin' Soli 8 and 16 bars. (S)

25078-1ms	Rosetta	Duet with (tp) 16+8 bars, solo on bridge. Solo 32 bars to duet 32 bars. (FM)
25079-1ms	The World Is Waiting For TS	Duet with (tp) 64 bars to solo 48 bars to duet 16 bars. (FM)
25080-1-bk	Caravan	As take 2 below, except last 8. (FM)
25080-2ms	Caravan	Soli/straight 2 ½ choruses of 64 bars. (FM)
25081-1bk	Lowdown Blues	Solo 12 bars. (S)
25081-2	Lowdown Blues	Solo 12 bars. Vocal 24 bars. Solo 36 bars. (SM)
25081-3	Lowdown Blues	As above but solo 48 bars. (SM)
25081-4	Lowdown Blues	As take 5 below. (M)
25081-5ms	Lowdown Blues	Solo 24 bars. Vocal 24 bars. Solo 36 bars. (M)

The first session after almost two years of absence, most likely due to the recording ban, must be considered quite successful. It is the first of many sessions together with Jonah Jones, and they seem to work well and inspired together. PB's sound is coarser than before, and playing more staccato than ever, but his technique and ideas are still good. The items are rather brief and follow mostly the same formula with duets and solo sections, but for a difference try "Caravan".

#### **PETE BROWN QUARTET**

**Chi. April 23, 1944**

Pete Brown (as), Jim "Daddy" Walker (g), John Levy (b), Eddie Nicholson (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Session, 175 "Eddie's Idea" and 177 "Jim Daddy Blues" have not been available but:

174	Jim's Idea	Soli 64 and 8 bars. (M)
176	Pete's Idea	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Straight 16 bars to coda. (M)

These are very pleasant, jumpy and groovy sides, not at all as importunate as some later postwar performances could be, to be highly recommended as good examples of PB's best altosax playing.

#### **PETE BROWN'S HOT FIVE**

**NYC. July 11, 1944**

Pete Brown (as), Kenny Watts (p), Al Casey (g), Al Matthews (b), Eddie Nicholson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

5480	Ooh Wee	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge to straight 16 bars. (F)
5481	Bellevue For You	Straight 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to straight 16 bars. (M)
5482	Pete Brown's Boogie	Straight 16 bars to solo 16 bars. Solo 24 bars to straight 12 bars. (M)
5483	Moppin' The Blues	Intro 16 bars to solo 48 bars. Solo/straight 36 bars. (F)

Now, here I believe PB is overdoing it, particularly on the fast titles. His style should be extremely suited for modern jump bands, but this is rather frantic. I doubt you will play these more than a couple of times, max.

#### **PETE BROWN'S ALL STAR QUINTET**

**NYC. July 19, 1944**

Joe Thomas (tp), Pete Brown (as), Ken Kersey (p), Milt Hinton (b), J. C. Heard (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Keynote:

45-2	It All Depends On Me	Duet with (tp) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars, last 8 with ens to coda. (M)
46-2	That's My Weakness Now	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
46-3	That's My Weakness Now	As above. (FM)
47-1	It's The Talk Of The Town	Acc. (tp). (S). Solo 64 bars. (M)
47-2	It's The Talk Of The Town	As above. (S/M)



48-3 I May Be Wrong Solo 64 bars. (F)

Keynote gives PB a real swing session with an excellent group, producing very good results. One might feel that he is overdoing his humour and staccato playing somewhat, however, he plays with conviction and inventiveness all over. This is certainly one of his most important postwar sessions.

**JOE MARCELLA NYC. July 21, 1944**

Charlie Shavers (tp, p?), Joe "Marcella" Marsala (cl), Pete Brown (as), Al Casey (g), Al Matthews (b, vln), Specs Powell (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Signature, issued on Muzicon:

715-A When The Moon Comes Over The Mountain Solo 56 bars. (FM)

715-B Blues Before Dawn Solo 12 bars. (S)

716-A Roses Of Picardy Solo 16 bars. (M)

716-B Escapade Solo 16 bars. (M)

Postscript of Jan. 2018: These titles have now appeared, and PB is featured on all four items, playing in his fine personal style, particularly attractive on the slow "Blues ...", of the others "... Picardy" seems to be the highlight.

**PETE BROWN'S BAND NYC. Aug. 1, 1944**

Pete Brown (as, vo-5498), Kenny Watts (p), Herman Mitchell (g), Al Hall (b), Eddie Nicholson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

5495 Boot Zoot Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Soli 16 and 32 bars to straight 16 bars. (FM)

5496 It's Great Straight 32 bars. Soli 16 and 18 bars to coda. (M)

5497 Lazy Day Intro 4 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 16 bars to coda. (M)

5498 Sunshine Blues Solo 16 bars. (S)

Again we have the frantic PB on "Boot ...", the three others are quite nice with good altosax playing.

**PETE BROWN'S SEXTETTE NYC. Feb. 20, 1945**

Ed Lewis (tp), Pete Brown (as), Ray Parker (p), Al Casey (g), Al Matthews (b), Ray Nathan (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

5784 Fat Man's Boogie Solo 24 bars. (M)

5785 That's The Curfew Solo 32 bars. (M)

5786 Midnite Blues Solo 12 bars. (SM)

5787 That's It Solo 32 bars. (FM)

**NYC. March 6, 1945**

Same except Bill Moore (g) replaces Casey.

Four titles, three issued:

5789 Just Plain Shuffle Solo 32 bars. (M)

5790 Pushin' The Mop Soli 8 and 32 bars. (FM)

5791 Back Talk Boogie Soli 36 and 12 bars to coda. (FM)

These Savoy sessions are the better ones, PB has moderated himself, possibly with good influence from the fine old trumpeter Ed Lewis, and his soloing here is clean, jumpy and quite satisfactory.

**COUSIN JOE VOCAL ACC. BY PETE BROWN'S BROOKLYN BLOWERS NYC. Feb. 13, 1946**

Leonard Hawkins (tp), Pete Brown (as), Ray Abrams (ts), Kenny Watts (p), Jimmy Shirley (g), Leonard Gaskin (b), Arthur Herbert (dm), Cousin Joe (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

5882 Wedding Day Blues Solo 4 bars. (S)

5883 Desperate G. I. Blues In ens. (SM)

5884 You Got It Comin' To Ya Solo 12 bars. (S)

5885 Boogie Woogie Hannah Solo 12 bars. (M)

PB is careful about featuring himself on this vocal session, but in fact his soli on "... To Ya" and "... Hannah" are nice!

**CLYDE BERNHARDT** **NYC. Feb. 21, 1946**

Pete Brown (tp, as), Clyde Bernhardt (tb, vo), Leonard Feather (p), Sam Allen (g), Al McKibbin (b), Eddie Dougherty (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Musicraft, two issued:

5404 Blues Behind Bars Obligato parts. (S)

5405 Blues Without Booze Intro 8 bars to obligato 12 and 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. Obligato 24 bars. Coda 8 bars. (M)

Fine background playing on "... Bars", and on "... Booze" he is active most of the time, also taking a groovy solo.

**COLEMAN HAWKINS** **NYC. Feb. 27, 1946**  
**& HIS 52<sup>nd</sup> STREET ALL STARS**

Charlie Shavers (tp), Pete Brown (as), Coleman Hawkins, Allen Eager (ts), Jimmy Jones (p), Mary Osborne (g), Al McKibbin (b), Shelly Manne (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Victor, two have PB:

1310 Low Flame Solo 12 bars. (S)

1311 Allen's Alley Solo 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (ts-AE). (F)

Obviously PB tries to adapt to the modern styles here, "... Alley" has phrases we never have heard before from this guy! Surprisingly we also get a chase with Eager here, while Hawk is conspicuously absent. And in "... Flame", a nice solo, he seems to change his style into more fluent one, I would not have guessed this really was PB!

**COUSIN JOE VOCAL WITH** **NYC. 1947**  
**DICKIE WELLS' BLUE SEVEN**

Shad Collins (tp), Dicky Wells (tb), Pete Brown (as), Billy Kyle (p), Danny Barker (g), Lloyd Trotman (b), Woodie Nichols (dm), Cousin Joe (vo).

Six titles were recorded for Signature, four issued:

439 Come Down Baby Breaks. (M)

440 Bachelor's Blues Obligato 8 bars. (SM)

441 Don't Pay Me No Mind Intro. Obligato 24 bars to solo 12 bars. Coda. (M)

442 Stop To Conquer Obligato 8 bars. (S)

Good PB here, note in particular "... No Mind".

**JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC** **NYC. March 24, 1947**

Roy Eldridge (tp), Pete Brown, Willie Smith (as), Flip Phillips (ts), Les Paul (g), Hank Jones (p), Benny Fonville (b), Alvin Stoller (dm).

One title was recorded at Carnegie Hall:

Blues Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

No, this was not successful at all, quite awful in fact, sorry to say it.

**WYNONIE HARRIS** **NYC. July 1947**

Personnel uncertain but definitely including two (tp), Pete Brown (as), two (ts), Wynonie Harris (vo), The Harlemaires (vo-group). Tab Smith (as) is also suggested, but no audible trace of him.

Four titles were recorded for Aladdin, two have altosax:

4025-3 You Got To Get Yourself A Job, Girl Solo 12 bars. (S)

4027-1 Big City Blues Solo 12 bars. (S)

Typical PB and nice soli as such!

**SIR CHARLES THOMPSON** **NYC. Dec. 29, 1947**

Joe Newman, Taft Jordan (tp), H. B. Mitchell (tb), Pete Brown (?) (as), Bob Dorsey (ts), Tate Houston (bar), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Hank Morton (g), John Simmons (b), Shadow Wilson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Apollo, PB assumed to be on one title:

- 1307-1 Harlem Jump Solo 18 bars? (M)  
 1307-2 Harlem Jump As above. (M)

According to Sir Charles, the altosax player on this session is PB. It is difficult to contradict such a statement, and the Hawkins session 1 ½ years earlier also show that he was flirting with the modern trends. However, these soli in my opinion absolutely do not show any resemblance to PB as we know him. And when we go forward to 1953, we recognize him immediately, again. So I seriously doubt this.

**DOC POMUS VOCAL ACC. BY**

**BILL DOGGETT & HIS ORCHESTRA**

**NYC. March 8, 1951**

Unknown (tp), Pete Brown (as), unknown (ts), (bar), Reggie Ashby (p), Leonard Gaskin (b), Jimmy Crawford (dm), Bill Doggett (arr, ldr), Doc Pomus (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Coral, one has PB:

- Give It Up Soli 8 and 8 bars. (M)

A bit frantic, not particularly interesting.

**PETE BROWN QUARTET**

**NYC. Sept. 9, 1952**

Pete Brown (as), Reginald Ashley (p), Leonard Gaskin (b), Haywood Jackson (dm).

Three titles were recorded at Birdland:

- How High The Moon Solo 64 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Straight 32 bars. (F)  
 Strike Up The Band Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo/straight 36 bars. (F)  
 Perdido Solo 64 bars. Straight. (M)

Postscript of March 17, 2021: An interesting new discovery (brought to attention on internet by Nikolaus Schweizer)! PB really tries to play modern altosax, and he ends "How High ..." properly with "Ornithology". Whether he is very successful can be discussed, but the session tells a lot about PB's development and ambitions. "Perdido" is played slower than usual.

**SIR CHARLES THOMPSON SEXTET**

**NYC. Dec. 30, 1953**

Joe Newman (tp), Benny Powell (tb), Pete Brown (as), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Gene Ramey (b), Osie Johnson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vanguard:

- Bop This Solo 32 bars. (F)  
 Memories Of You Solo 16 bars. (S)  
 Oh Joe! Solo 32 bars. (SM)  
 For The Ears Soli 36, 4, 4 and 24 bars. (M)

PB has not been an active and important altosax player for a long time, and it is with pleasure and amazement we meet him again in this Vanguard mainstream session. It seems that he has delved quite a lot into the modern trends, and while his sound and rhythm are more or less the same, he has changed a lot. And not necessarily for worse, as might be feared, he takes some very interesting soli here. He does not quite master the uptempo on "Bop ...", and "... Ears" seems rather ordinary blues, but on "Oh ..." and "Memories ..." he creates some quite memorable soli, very well worth noticing.

**PETE BROWN SEXTET**

**NYC. Nov. 16, 1954**

Joe Wilder (tp), Pete Brown (as), Wade Legge (p), Wally Richardson (g), Gene Ramey (b), Rudy Collins (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Bethlehem:

- There'll Never Be Another You Solo 32 bars. (M)  
 I Can't Believe That You're ILWM Solo 32 bars. Solo 48+8 bars, (p) on bridge. (FM)  
 Used Blues Soli 32 and 16 bars. (S)  
 Moonlight In Vermont Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. (S)  
 The World Is Waiting For The S Solo 64 bars to duet with (tp) 32 bars to coda. (F)  
 Tea For Two Solo/straight 16+32 bars. (FM)

## Delta Blues

Duet with (tp) 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge, to solo 32 bars. Duet 12 bars. (S)

It may seem surprising that PB chose this kind of modern group for one of his rare recording sessions under his own name, but it is obvious that his preferred music is different now from what we know before. And this is a very nice session with a much underrated trumpeter coplaying. PB's music is very interesting now, listen particularly "... Another You" and "... Vermont" and you will find an active, searching musician. Except for the most uptempo titles, too fast for him, PB is a very interesting and original altosax performer.

**SAMMY PRICE & HIS KAYCEE STOMPERS NYC. March 20, 1955**

Jonah Jones (tp), Vic Dickenson (tb), Pete Brown (as), Sammy Price (p, vo), Milt Hinton (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Jazztone, three have PB:

Jumpin' On 57 <sup>th</sup>	Solo 8 bars. (M)
Pete's Delta Bound	Straight/duet with (tp) 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Duet 32 bars to coda. (SM)
Jonah Wails The Blues	Solo 36 bars. (M)

Nice mainstream session, but VD takes most of soloing. PB is not present on many titles, and while he plays competently, none of the three items above can be considered very exciting.

**JOE TURNER****NYC. March 6, 1956**

Joe Newman (tp), Lawrence Brown (tb), Pete Brown (as), Frank Wess (ts), Pete Johnson (p), Freddie Green (g), Walter Page (b), Cliff Leeman (dm), Joe Turner (vo).

Six titles were recorded for Atlantic, three have PB:

1915-orig. Low Down Dog	Solo 24 bars. (M)
1915-4 Low Down Dog	As above. (M)
1919-orig. Piney Brown Blues	Solo 12 bars. (SM)
1920-orig. Morning Glories	Solo 32 bars. (M)
1920-1 Morning Glories	As above. (M)
1920-4 Morning Glories	As above. (M)

**NYC. March 7, 1956**

Personnel as above, except Jimmy Nottingham (tp), Seldon Powell (ts) replace Newman and Wess. Six titles, two have PB:

1922-orig. St. Louis Blues	Obbligato 16 and 16 bars. (M)
1922-1 St. Louis Blues	As above. (M)
1924-orig. Pennies From Heaven	Solo 32 bars. (M)
1924-alt. Pennies From Heaven	As above? (M)

These sessions belong to my greatest treasures!! Not only was the Atlantic original LP an important part of my inventory in younger days, but the quality with Pete Johnson firmly in charge makes them into some of the most important mainstream sessions of the middle fifties. PB seems to thrive, and particularly "... Glories" with three takes show how he improvised immensely.

**PETE BROWN / COLEMAN HAWKINS Newport, Rh. I., July 5, 1957**

Pete Brown (as), Ray Bryant (p), Al McKibbon (b), Jo Jones (dm).

One title was recorded live at Newport Jazz Festival:

Day By Day	Solo 64 bars. (S)
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**same date**

Personnel as above plus Roy Eldridge (tp), Coleman Hawkins (ts). Two titles:

I Can't Believe That YILWM	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
Sweet Georgia Brown	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Please forget this occasion as soon as possible, this is not PB as we like to remember him.

**CHAMPION JACK DUPREE****NYC. Aug. 20, 1957**

Pete Brown (ts), Champion Jack Dupree (p, vo), Larry Dale (g), Al Lucas (b), Willie Jones (dm).

One title was recorded for Groove or Vik:

6155	Shake Baby Shake	Obbligato parts. Solo 24 bars. (M)
6155-alt.	Shake Baby Shake	As above. (M)

**NYC. Oct. 15, 1957**

Same. One title:

7502	Lollipop Baby	Soli 16, 16, 16 and 16 bars. Obbligato parts. (FM)
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Maybe not a session of jazz historical proportions, but PB plays tenorsax here, exactly in the same way he plays his altosax. Particularly "Shake ..." has some gutsy playing, and the two takes have notable differences.

**CHAMPION JACK DUPREE****NYC. Feb. 4, 1958**

Pete Brown (as), Champion Jack Dupree (p, vo), Ennis Lowery (g), Wendell Marshall (b), Willie Jones (dm).

Thirteen titles were recorded for Atlantic, ten issued as "Blues For The Gutter", seven have PB:

2954	T. B. Blues	Obbligato parts. (S)
2956	Junker's Blues	Obbligato 24 bars. Solo 12 bars. Obbligato 16 bars. (SM)
2959	Bad Blood	Obbligato 24 bars. (S)
2960	Nasty Boogie Woogie	Solo 12 bars. (M)
2961	Stack-O-Lee	Intro 8 bars to obbligato 24 bars to solo 16 bars to obbligato 48 bars. (SM)
2963	Evil Woman	Obbligato 36 bars to solo 12 bars. Obbligato 12 bars. (S)
2964	Frankie And Johnny	Obbligato 56 bars to solo with (vo) comments 16 bars to coda. (SM)

This session was a nice surprise with a very active PB, getting lots of blowing opportunities and taking good care of them! Obviously Dupree enjoys having a horn blowing behind him.

**PETE BROWN****NYC. May 5/6, 1959**

Pete Brown (as), Reggie Ashby (p), Wally Richardson (g), Bill Pemberton (b), Clarence Stroman (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "From The Heart":

22817-4	Cherokee	Straight with (g) 64 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 36 bars to coda. (FM)
22818-2	Sometimes I'm Happy	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 64 bars to coda. (M)
22819-1	Blues For Leslie	Soli with (g) acc. 5 and 3 choruses of 12 bars to coda. (S)
22820-3	It All Depends On You	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 36 bars to coda. (SM)
22821-4	Body And Soul	Solo/straight 3 choruses of 64 bars. Solo/straight 64 bars to coda. (FM)
22822-3	Avalon	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 64 bars to coda. (FM)
22823-1	But Not For Me	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. (FM) Solo/straight 64 bars to coda. (FM)
22824-1	Trouble In Mind	Solo 48 bars to coda. (S)

Quoting Nat Hentoff's liner notes: "The date was a relaxed, unhurried one, and indicates that Pete retains much of his vitality, humor and infectious swing". "His style continues to be distinctive and although the youthful cockiness of his earlier playing has been toned down, there is more open, reflective warmth". It is easy to agree with these statements, a pleasant session, not necessarily earth-shaking but

very personal and effective alto sax playing. His guitar player from some years back, WR takes again an important role, as soloist and accompaniment. The tempi are mainly fast medium, even on "Body And Soul", and all items are of good quality. Possibly though that the slow items will be most treasured, and particularly "Blues ..." has so much 'soul', really a noteworthy item, something PB should be very proud of!!

**BERNARD ADDISON ALL STARS****NYC. Oct. 21, 1961**

Johnny Letman (tp-except "... Sweet", "... Dear", "... Happy", vo- "... Girl"), Pete Brown (as), Bernard Addison (g), Hayes Alvis (b), Sonny Greer (dm).  
Ten titles were recorded for "77", issued as "High In A Basement" and "Pete's Last Date":

Lady Be Good	Soli with ens 64 and 8 bars. Solo 4 bars. (FM)
Lady Be Good (alt.)	As above. (FM)
Cherry	Duet with (tp) 32 bars to solo 32 bars to duet 16 bars. (S)
272 West 84 <sup>th</sup> Street	Solo 36 bars. (S)
Ain't She Sweet?	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars with (b) on 3 <sup>rd</sup> and (dm) on 4 <sup>th</sup> bridge. (M)
I Want A Little Girl	Intro 4 bars. Obligato 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Obligato 16 bars. (S)
Them There Eyes	Duet with (tp) 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Duet 32 bars to coda. (FM)
Them There Eyes (alt.)	Solo 32 bars to duet with (tp) 32 bars to solo 32 bars to acc. (tp) 64 bars. (FM)
I Surrender Dear	Weakly acc. (tp). (S)
I Surrender Dear (alt.)	As above. (S)
Please Don't Talk About MWIG	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
High In The Basement	Soli 8 and 64 bars. (FM)
Sometimes I'm Happy	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to 28 bars 4/4 with (b) to fade out. (M)

Pete Brown's final session shows that he still is in a very good shape! His fellow surroundings might have been more appropriate, the trumpet is much too forceful, and the drums not very suitable, the guitar is excellent though. But PB himself is obviously highly inspired on this date, more than two years after his last one. It is exciting to hear him take four choruses on "Please ...", this memorable vehicle of 1937 where he got only 16 bars! Good playing also in other medium tempo items. However, it is the three slow titles, "272 ...", "Cherry" and "... Girl" which are lovely surprises and highly exciting. At the end of his career, the jump king Pete Brown cools down and offers us very pleasant music in a tempo unheard of in the old days!! A fine and original alto sax player and jazz musician through 25 years of recordings. Postscript of March 2017: The remaining items have been located. Note that the alternate version of "... Eyes" is shorter and have several fluffs. The appearance of a new item, "... Happy", is a surprise; lasting five minutes before it is faded out at the end of a chase with the bass player.

No further recording sessions.

... ooo ...