The

TRUMPET & CORNET

of

PHILIP SUNKEL

Solographer: Jan Evensmo Last update: July 22, 2020 Born: Zanesville, Ohio, Nov. 26, 1925

Died: No info

Introduction:

Phil Sunkel is the result of a long process starting with the appreciation of cool jazz, represented by Chet Baker, then we were led to Tony Fruscella and Don Joseph, and only now, fifty years too late, is Phil Sunkel becoming a name, together with Don Ferrara and other fine and forgotten white trumpeters. Sorry for that.

History:

Played cornet when he was fourteen, later also trumpet and attended the conservatory in Cincinnati. From 1950 played in local groups, then worked with Claude Thornhill, Charlie Barnet and other band leaders. In 1955 he played in Stan Getz' band. Member of Gerry Mulligan Concert Band. No info after 1961 except playing with Dick Meldonian 1981/82 (ref. Wikipesdia).

PHIL SUNKEL SOLOGRAPHY

HAL McKUSICK / BETTY ST. CLAIR

NYC. Jan. 1955

Phil Sunkel (tp), Billy Byers (tb), Hal McKusick (as), Gene Di Novi (p), Jimmy Raney (g), Clyde Lombardi (b), Jimmy Campbell (dm), Betty St. Clair (vo). Four titles, "Out Of Nowhere, What Is There To Say?", "Almost Like Being In Love" and "Here Comes Trouble Again" were recorded for Jubilee, but no trumpet soli.

same

Same without (vo). Three titles, "Byers Market", "Willow Weep For Me" and "The Thrill Is Gone", not available.

WILL BRADLEY, JR.

NYC. Feb. 25 & March 9, 1955

Phil Sunkel (cnt), J. R. Monterose (ts), Wade Legge (p), Doug Watkins (b), Will Bradley jr. (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Epic, six issued:

My Old Flame Solo 16 bars. With ens to coda. (S)

Jay Walkin' Solo 48 bars. (FM)

Brainwasher In ens. Solo 32 bars. (F)

Spice Solo 16 bars. (SM)

Bradley's Beans Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Sugar Hips Solo 32 bars. (M)

This fine quintet session gives Phil Sunkel ample solo opportunities. His style fits nicely into the white-based cool style but with his own sound. He is creative, somewhat staccato in upper tempi like the four blues choruses in "Jay ...", more fluent on "... Beams", his own composition "Brainwasher", and "... Hips". The highlights on this session are nevertheless in the slow tempi; "Spice" and "... Flame" are played most beautifully. Note that this session in fact is the only proper studio occasion with a small band, and where he does not have to fight with other trumpeters to be heard!

AL COHN NYC. May 16, 1955

Joe Newman, Thad Jones, Phil Sunkel (tp), Nick Travis (tp, vtb), Al Cohn (ts), Dick Katz (p), Freddie Green (g), Buddy Jones (b), Osie Johnson (dm). Four titles were recorded for RCA Victor, issued as "The Jazz Workshop – Four Brass, One Tenor ... Al Cohn", 3738-5 "Sugar Cohn", 3739-3 "I'm Coming Virginia" and 3741-6 "Linger Awhile" all have trumpet soli but unlikely PS (note the colourful 64 bars trumpet chase on "... Awhile") but one seems to have PS:

3740-9 Haroosh Solo 8 bars. (S)

This beautiful but brief solo sounds very much like PS to me, but I am open for feedback.

LAWRENCE BROWN

NYC. Sept. 14, 1955

Ernie Royal, Phil Sunkel (tp), Lawrence Brown (tb), Arthur Clarke, Al Cohn (ts), Danny Bank (bar), Hank Jones (p), Wendell Marshall (b), Jo Jones (dm), Ralph Burns (cnd, arr).

Eight titles were recorded for Verve, one has PS:

2521-2 Ill Wind Solo with ens 20 bars. (SM)

One chance only but an emotional solo on "... Wind".

STAN GETZ SEXTET

NYC. 1955

Phil Sunkel (cnt), Bob Brookmeyer (vtb), Stan Getz (ts), John Williams (p), Ted Kotick (b), Frank Isola (dm).

Three Mutual broadcasts from Birdland. Johan Helø collection. Several titles is by quintet without PS, and although he is heard in the sextet ensembles, particularly the themes "Lullaby Of Birdland", the sound quality is rather lousy, so only the six solo items are listed below:

Lester Leaps In Soli 64 and 4 bars. (FM)

Get Happy Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Home Cooking Soli 40 and 4 bars. (M)

Old Wives' Tales Solo 34 bars. (M)

New York Central Solo 64 and 4 bars. (FM)

Get Happy No. 2 Soli 64, 4 and 8 bars. (F)

We should be most happy for the existence of these programs. Although the sound quality is not the best, it is good enough to present this exciting sextet to great advantage. PS seems to fit elegantly into the group and its concepts, two compositions of his, "... Tales" and "... Central" are included, and his soloing is of high quality. The cooking "... Happy"s are my favorite items, and the trumpet solo on the first one, in fast tempo, is astonishing, tense as if life depends upon it. Noteworthy soli also on the other four items.

BOB PRINCE & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Jan. 4, 1956

Bigband personnel including Nick Travis, Al Stewart, Phil Sunkel, Jon Eardley (tp), Bob Prince (vib, ldr).

Five titles were recorded for Columbia, but no PS.

DON STRATTON NYC. Feb. 1956

Don Stratton, Phil Sunkel (tp), Dave McKenna (p), Chuck Andrus (b), Karl Kiffe (dm).

Five titles were recorded for ABC-Paramount, issued as "Modern Jazz With Dixieland Roots", no PS on "Yesterdays" but:

Royal Garden Blues (M)

Charleston Solo 32 bars $(2^{nd} (tp)$ -solo) (open). 32 bars 4/4 with (dm/tp). (F)

Sow Goo Mang Solo 32 bars (2nd (tp)-solo) (open). (M)

To my surprise, this session, which is to be found on spotify, is vey interesting in spite of the comy title, featuring two very professional trumpeters. However they play tightly together, using both mute and open horn, and identification is more difficult then expected. I am quite confident of the session highlight solo "... Mang" and also "Charleston", but for the other two I will be happy receiving feedback.

PHIL SUNKEL's JAZZ BAND NYC. May 13, 29 & June 14, 1956 Phil Sunkel, Al Stewart, Ziggy Schatz (tp), Gene Hessler (tb), Dick Meldonian (as),

Buddy Arnold (ts), Gene Allen (bar), George Syran (p), Bob Peterson (b), Harold Granowshy (dm).

Ten titles were recorded for ABC-Paramount:

Jack's Theme Solo 64 bars. (M)

Polka Dots And Moonbeams Soli 32 and 8 bars to long coda. (S)

Train Ride Solo 34 bars, last 16 with ens. (FM)

Old Wives' Tales Solo 68 bars. (M)

Every Mornin' Solo 64 bars. (M)

How Strange Solo 64 bars. Solo 32 bars. Long coda. (FM)

The Animal Man Solo 32 bars. (M)

Chomp Chomp Blues No solo. (FM)

Joe The Architect Solo 36 bars. (F)

T. Blues Solo 24 bars. (FM)

If there is one reason better than others for a Phil Sunkel solography, it is these recording sessions for ABC-P. One must not forget, as I understand it, that PS is better known as a composer and arranger rather than a horn player, and here we get everything properly planned, rehearsed and executed, giving a firm basis for solo improvisations. One might perhaps wish for greater variation in tempo, but "... Moonbeams" where PS is introducing with a rather straight but beautiful solo helps a lot. Otherwise there are great trumpet soli of unusual length, for PS that is, and to choose highlights is not that easy, but try "... Tales" and "... Strange". The trumpet playing here shows that PS was much better than jazzhistory and recording sessions have documented, and if you are not moved and impressed by his music, this solography is nothing for you...

THE COOL GABRIELS NYC. June 1956

Conte Candoli, Nick Travis, Don Stratton, Bernie Glow, Phil Sunkel (tp), Elliot Lawrence (p), Burgher Jones (b), Sol Gubin (dm).

Three titles were recorded Groove (others without PS), issued as "Cool Gabriels":

Each Others Arms Solo 18 bars. (S)

Swinging Scots Solo 16 bars (1st (tp)-solo). (F)

Swinging Scots alt. As above. (F)

Nick Solo 16 bars (2nd (tp)-solo). (M)

With five white trumpeters of overlapping styles, it is not easy to identify the soloists perfectly. However, the CD cover of "Cool Gabriels" has given their facts or opinions, who knows, and I have no reason to protest. The highlight is the beautiful slow solo on "... Arms", a good reason to consider a solography. But, with so many good trumpeters, I consider it shameful to get so little out of it; take "... Scots", lasting only 1 ½ minutes!

NYC. Aug. 23, 1956

Doc Severinsen, Phil Sunkel (tp), John Carisi (tp, arr), Urbie Green, Lou McGarity, Rex Peer (tb), Bill Barber (tu), Ray Beckenstein, HalMcKusick (as), Al Cohn (ts), Danny Bank (bar), Dave McKenna (p), Vinnie Burke (b), Osie Johnson (dm). Four titles were recorded for ABC-Paramount, one has PS:

Plain Bill From Bluesville

Solo 24 bars. (M)

The two fine blues choruses here sound very much like PS to me.

AARON SACHS OCTET

NYC. Feb. 18 & 21, 1957

Phil Sunkel (tp, arr), Bernie Glow (tp), Frank Rehak (tb), Aaron Sachs (cl, ts, arr), Gene Allen (bar), Nat Pierce (p, arr), Aaron Bell (b), Osie Johnson (dm), Billy Ver Planck, Benny Golson (arr).

Seven titles were issued on Fresh Sound, issued as "Clarinet & Co.", one has PS:

Blue Sophisticate

In ens to solo 12 bars. (M)

A vey nice, laidback blues chorus here!.

GERRY MULLIGAN CONCERT JAZZ BAND NYC. April 19/20, 1957 Bigband personnel including Don Ferrara, Don Joseph, Jerry Lloyd, Phil Sunkl (tp), Gerry Mulligan (bar, p, arr).

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, but no PS.

ERROLL GARNER WITH ORCHESTRA

NYC. May 31, 1957

Bigband personnel including Phil Sunkel (tp), Erroll Garner (p). Three titles were recorded for Columbia, but 'of course' no trumpet soli.

BILLY VER PLANCK / JAZZ IS BUSTING ALL OVER

Hackensack, NJ. July 30, 1957

Bernie Glow, Phil Sunkel (tp), Bill Harris (tb), Phil Woods (cl, as), Seldon Powell (fl, ts), Sol Schlinger (bar), Eddie Costa (p, vib), Wendell Marshall (b), Gus Johnson (dm), Billy Ver Planck (arr, end).

Three titles were recorded for Savoy, no trumpet on "Playgirl Stroll" but:

Walkin' Solo 36 bars. (M)

Jan Cee Brown Solo 16 bars. (M)

Fine session and two very nice trumpet soli, obviously played by the same guy, and to my ears, PS seems to be the one.

PHIL SUNKEL NYC. Oct. 14, 1957

Phil Sunkel (cnt), Nick Travis, Al Stewart, Don Stratton, John Wilson (tp), Frank Rehak (tb), Bob Brookmeyer (vtb), Eddie Bert (btb), Don Butterfield (tu), Dick Meldonian (as), Cliff Hoff, Bill Slapin (ts), Gene Allen, Gerry Mulligan (bar), Milt Hinton (b), Osie Johnson (dm)

One title was recorded for ABC-Paramount:

15:41 Jazz Concerto Grosso Solo 80 bars. (M)

NYC. Oct. 15, 1957 Phil Sunkel (cnt), John Wilson (frhn), Bob Brookmeyer (vtb), Jim Reider (ts), Gerry Mulligan (bar), Wendell Marshall (b), Harold Granowsky (dm). Two titles:

9:08 Something For The Ladies Solo 64 bars. (M)

7:34 Song For Cornet Long intro. Solo/straight 108 and 24 bars to coda. (M) Remarkable followup of the ABC-P sessions more than one year earlier, now with the cooperation and participation of Mulligan and Brookmeyer. These items are three concertos rather than one and feature PS extensively. How much is improvised can be discussed, but this is cool jazz at its very best, and PS again demonstrates that his artistic capabilities both as arranger and performer are highly underrated.

JIMMY GIUFFRE NYC. Dec. 31, 1957 & Jan. 2, 3 & 6, 1958

Collective personnel: Bernie Glow, Phil Sunkel, Joe Wilder, Nick Travis, Art Farmer (tp), Jimmy Giuffre (cl, ts, bar), Al Cohn, Eddie Wasserman (ts), Sol Schlinger (bar), Wendell Marshall (b), Ed Shaugnessy (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Atlantic, issued as "The Music Man", only one has trumpet soli, featuring all three trumpeters present here, Sunkel, Wilder and Travis:

2894 The Wells Fargo Wagon Trumpet soloing 28 bars. (M)

Need some feedback on this, but I am quite confident that PS takes the first 8 bars.

LEE KONITZ TENTET

NYC. Oct. 29/30, 1959

Ernie Royal, Mark Markowitz, Phil Sunkel (tp), Eddie Bert, Billy Byers (tb), Bob Brookmeyer (vtb), Lee Konitz (as), Bill Evans (p), Jim Hall (g), Sonny Dallas (b), Roy Haynes (dm), Jimmy Giuffre (arr, cnd).

Eight titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "You And Lee", but no trumpet soli.

ROGER KING MOZIAN

late 1950s / early 1960s

Bigband personnel including Phil Sunkel (tp), Dick Meldonian (fl, as), Eddie Costa (vib), Willie Rodriguez (perc), Roger King Mozian (arr, end). This is a personnel quoted from Tom Lord, and probably there is a reason for it; aural identification by somebody or other information?

Twelve titles were recorded for MGM, three have trumpet of interest:

Crazy Rhythm Solo 8 bars (mute). (M)

How High The Moon Duet with (fl) (mute). (FM)

I Got Rhythm Solo 26 bars (open). (FM)

A heavy Latin-based bigband with arrangements of dubious jazz qualities but occasional jazz elements, and brief items probably suitable for dancing for those inclined. The three items mentioned has professional trumpet playing, quite possibly by PS, but more experienced listeners than me are needed for this.

GERRY MULLIGAN'S CONCERT JAZZBAND NYC. May 21, 1960 Bigband personnel including Danny Stiles, Don Ferrara, Phil Sunkel (tp), Gerry

Mulligan (p, bar). One title, "I'm Gonna Go Fishin" was recorded for Verve, but trumpet solo seems to be by Ferrara.

GERRY MULLIGAN'S CONCERT JAZZBAND Newport, RI. July 1, 1960 Don Ferrara, Phil Sunkel, Conte Candoli (tp), Bob Brookmeyer (vtb), Wayne Andre, Alan Raph (tb), Gene Quill (cl, as), Dick Meldonian, Jim Reider (ts), Gerry Mulligan (p, bar, arr), Gene Allen (bar, bcl), Buddy Clark (b), Mel Lewis (dm), Al

Eleven titles were recorded live at the Newport Jazz Festival, issued as "Concert In The Rain", one has PS:

> Broadway Solo 56 bars. (M)

The arrangement takes the first A, otherwise PS has a fine solo of two choruses here.

GIL EVANS ORCHESTRA

NYC. Nov. 18 & 30, 1960

Bigband personnel including Johnny Coles, Phil Sunkel (tp).

Four titles were recorded for Impulse, issued as "Out Of The Cool", lots of fine trumpet playing on "Sunken Treasure", "Stratusphunk" and "Sister Sadie", but believed to be by Coles.

NYC. Dec. 10 & 15, 1960

Similar. Two titles, lots of fine trumpet playing on "La Nevada" but believed to be by Coles.

PEGGY LEE NYC. Feb. 5, 8, 9 & March 8, 1961

Bigband personnel including Phil Sunkel (tp), Peggy Lee (vo). Large number of titles were recorded for Capitol at Basin Street East. Many of these have been available on Spotify, but no soli has been found so far, and it is no reason to believe there are any, the band is purely back up to all vocal.

EDDIE "LOCKJAW" DAVIS

NYC. May 12, 1961

Clark Terry, Ernie Royal, Phil Sunkel (tp), Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (ts), Lloyd Mayers (p), Larry Gales (b), Ben Riley (dm), Ray Barretto (cga, bgo, quinto), Johnny Pacheco, Ray Mantilla (latin-perc).

Five titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "Wild Rice", fine trumpet soli by Terry and Royal but no PS.

No further recording sessions until a few final ones with Dick Meldonian's bigband in 1981/82.

DICK MELDONIAN/ SONNY IGOE BIG BANDNJ. May 4, 1981
Bigband personnel including Leo Ball, Spanky Davis, Chris Pasin, Phil Sunkel (tp, flh), Dick Meldonian (sop, as, ts), Sonny Igoe (dm).
Nine titles were recorded for Progressive, one has PS:

Abscam Solo 12 bars. (FM)

Although only PS solo, this is great bigband music!

NJ. Nov. 30, 1981

Similar with Paul Cohen, Phil Sunkel, Barry Bryson, Chris Griffin (tp). Three titles were recorded for Progressive, but no PS.

DICK MELDONIAN & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. March 2&3, 1982 Paul Cohen, Phil Sunkel, John Eckert, Johnny Glasel (tp), Bob Pring (tb), Dick Meldonian (sop, ts), Gary Klein, Cliff Hoff, Arthur Sharp, Chuck Fisher (ts), Dick Bagni (bar, bcl), Derek Smith (p), Marty Grosz (g), Frank Tate (b), Fred Stoll (dm), Gene Roland (arr).

Fourteen titles were recorded for Circle, issued as DM "swing the arrangements of Gene Roland", eight have trumpet soli of which the following six are sounding very much like what one could expect PS to do these days:

'S Wonderful Solo 16 bars. (M)

The Great Lie Solo 16 bars (1st (tp)-solo). (FM)

Love Is Here To Stay Solo 16 bars. (M)

You Rang? Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Tom Thumb Soli 8 and 8 bars (1st and 3rd (tp)-soli). (M)

If I Love You Solo 16 bars. (M)

A great swinging bigband session you really should not miss, it is available on spotify! Fine arrangements, the presence of a perfect rhythm guitar, good soli on the various instruments, what more can one ask for? With regard to trumpet playing, it seems there are only two soloists, and there can be no doubt about PS's presence. However, one can be quite amazed at how great he is playing, what on earth did he do the preceding twenty years? Six memorable items and note "Tom ..." where he trades 8/8 with another trumpeter.

No further recording sessions.