

**The**  
**VIOLIN**  
**of**  
**WILLIS NANCE**  
**“RAY”**

Born: Chicago, Illinois, Dec. 10, 1913  
 Died: NYC. Jan. 28, 1976

*Introduction:*

We grew up with Duke Ellington in Oslo Jazz Circle, thus we all became familiar with his great soloists, including Ray Nance. I remember how we discussed whether he was best on trumpet or violin, rather silly as remembered today, but anyway, his trumpet file is too large, and his violin style so original that the solography choice is easy!

*History:*

Began on piano at six, three years later began studying violin, studied for seven years at Chicago Music College with Max Fishel. Attended Wendell Phillips High School and began doubling on trumpet, tuition from Major N. Clark Smith. Studied for a term at Lane College, Jackson, Tennessee, played and broadcast with college band The Rhythm Rascals. Sang and played in Chicago night clubs from 1932, led own sextet at Dave's Café for several years, also played residency at Midnite Club (1935) and did short stints in Buffalo, East St. Louis, etc.. Joined Earl Hines from February 1937 until December 1938, then with Horace Henderson (doubling violin and trumpet) from January 1939 until March 1940. Played at Joe Hughe's De Luxe Club before joining Duke Ellington in November 1940. Left Duke in 1944 to lead own small group, also worked briefly as a single in late 1945; returned to Duke and was a regular member of the band until September 1963 – temporary absence from music in late 1961. Switched to cornet in 1961. Led own small band in 1964, also worked for Paul Lavalle at New York's World Fair (1964 and 1965). Made solo tour of Europe in summer of 1966, worked with Henri Chaix's band in Switzerland (1967). From late 1966 through 1969 worked regularly with clarinetist Sol Yaged, resumed with Yaged after spell in hospital in August 1969 (ref. John Chilton).

*Message:*

Solographies involving Duke Ellington should be avoided at all costs! Any kind of completeness is impossible. After some initial efforts, I decided to let Desor control the proceedings, since I assume that anybody interested in Ray Nance and his violin also was a Duke Ellington fan. I decided to concentrate solely on music that was issued and thus in principle generally available. For the forties I included all issued items in the ordinary solography format, even if I had heard only a small part, with modest comments accordingly. For the fifties and sixties I decided to focus on the non-Duke sessions, and put the violin items with Duke, identified in Desor, into an appendix, should be easy to read. I decided not to include detailed solo information from Desor on items I have not heard. I would be happy to receive assistance to come closer to completeness.

## RAY NANCE VIOLIN SOLOGRAPHY

**EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Aug. 10, 1937**  
Bigband personnel possibly including Ray Nance (tp) but no violin can be heard.  
Five titles were recorded for Vocalion.

**EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. March 7&17, 1938**  
Bigband personnel including Ray Nance (tp, vo) but no violin present.  
Seven titles were recorded for Vocalion.

**EARL HINES & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Aug. 3, 1938**  
Bigband personnel including Ray Nance (tp, vo) but no violin present.  
Broadcast from Grand Terrace Ballroom.

**HORACE HENDERSON & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Feb. 27, 1940**  
Emmett Berry, Harry "Pee Wee" Jackson (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Edward Fant, Nat Atkins (tb), Dalbert Bright (cl, as), Willie Randall(as), Elmer "Skippy" Williams, Dave Young (ts), Horace Henderson (p), Hurley Ramey (g), Jesse Simpkins (b), Oliver Coleman (dm), Viola Jefferson (vo), Fletcher Henderson (dir, arr).  
Five titles were recorded for Vocalion, one has (vln):

2965-A Kitty On Toast Solo with orch 64 bars. (FM)

**Chi. May 8, 1940**

Same/similar. Five titles, but no (vln).

It certainly seems amazing that Ray Nance suddenly is featured as main soloist on "... Toast", and with such a long solo! However note that he is not a youngster anymore but 26 years old and a well known professional musician and entertainer. His style is already quite original, he can never be mistaken for anybody else. No surprise that the Duke cast his eyes and ears upon him.

**DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Fargo, Ill., Nov. 7, 1940**  
Rex Stewart (cnt), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Wallace Jones (tp), Juan Tizol (vtb), Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown (tb), Barney Bigard (cl, ts), Otto Hardwick (cl, as), Johnny Hodges (as), Ben Webster (ts), Harry Carney (bar, bcl), Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Jimmy Blanton (b), Sonny Greer (dm), Ivie Anderson, Herb Jeffries (vo).

Numerous titles were recorded at Crystal Ballroom, Lake Inn, one title has (vln):

4034op Honeysuckle Rose Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Only a countryside informal dance session could have produced this item, and there is really nothing like it in the RN/Duke history of cooperation. The item starts with Duke and Bigard more or less noodling around for two choruses until RN is let loose, going on to the closing. He plays it cool though, not as hot as we should know him later, possibly slightly embarrassed by suddenly being in the front of the famous Duke Ellington orchestra. The sound quality is not very good, and it seems that he moves around on the stage, changing the sound so that occasionally one almost thinks there are two violinists. Anyway, this is really a vintage item in a unique concert!!!

**DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA** **LA. June 5, 1941**  
Personnel as above.

Recording session for Victor, one title has (vln):

4110a Bakiff Solo with orch. (S)

The first real encounter with Duke as composer; a beautiful oriental-flavoured composition based upon Tizol's valvetrombone, Blanton's bass and RN's violin.

**RAY NANCE / BEN WEBSTER** **LA. Summer/Autumn 1941**  
Ray Nance (tp, vln), Ben Webster (cl, ts), probably Fred Guy (g), Jimmy Blanton (b), Sonny Greer (dm).  
Seven titles were recorded by unidentified friend of Ben Webster, (tp) only on 4:11 "I Never Knew" but:

4:39 Ab Swing Soli 32, 32 and 32 bars. (FM)

4:13 Eb Swing Soli 32, 32 and 32 bars. (FM)

5:12 Swingin' In 4 Soli 64, 64 and 8 bars. (F)

4:58 Memories Of You Soli with (cl)-acc. 32 and 32 bars. (S)

4:21 The Sheik Of Araby Acc. (cl). Solo 32 bars.  
Duet with (cl) 32 bars. (F)

4:40 I Can't Believe That YILWM Duet with (ts) 32 bars. Solo  
32 bars. Duet with 64 bars. (M)

This homemade session, described in detail in the Ben Webster solography, was previously to me mainly important just for that and his use as clarinet as solo instrument, nothing like it elsewhere!! However, concentrating on RN's appearance, the session gets an additional importance. Here we can hear his really hot fiddle for the first time, although the sound is not first rate, and "Swingin' ..." in very fast tempo should be your first attempt and be very impressed! But then continue with "Memories ..." and marvel at his beautiful and highly original soloing on this ballad. Afterward you can listen to the other items (I love the solo on "... Believe ..."). Some might consider them academic items only, and they can be challenging to listen to, but give give this session several chances to get used to it, and you will be rewarded!!

**DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA LA. Sept. 17, 1941**

Personnel as above.

Recording session for Standard Radio Transcriptions, one title has (vln):

4120i Bakiff

**LA. Nov./Dec. 1941**

Personnel as Nov. 7, 1940, except Junior Raglin (b) replaces Blanton.

RCM film soundtracks, one title has (vln):

4124e C Jam Blues Solo 16 bars. (M)

**LA. Dec. 3, 1941**

Same. Recording session for Standard Radio Transcriptions, one title has (vln):

4126g Moon Mist As Jan. 21, 1942 below. (S)

**Chi. Jan. 21, 1942**

Same. Recording session for Victor, two titles have (vln):

4201c C Jam Blues Solo 16 bars. (M)

4201d Moon Mist Soli 4, 4 and 8 bars. Coda 2 bars. (S)

4201e Moon Mist As above. (S)

**Culver City, Ca., Sept. 28, 1942**

Personnel as Nov./Dec. 1941, except Chauncey Haughton (cl, ts) replaces Bigard. MGM film soundtracks, one title has (vln):

4227b Going Up

**LA. Oct. 1942**

AFRS J1, one title has (vln):

4229c Going Up

**Trenton, NJ., Nov. 19, 1942**

Personnel as Sept. 28, 1942, except Harold Baker (tp) added.

NBC broadcast from Fort Dix, one title has (vln):

4231f Going Up

RN has now been with the Duke for two years, and the violin is very sparsely featured. Note that only four tunes are relevant, and "Moon ..." and "Bakiff" are rather colours on Duke's paintings than violin-vehicles for improvisation as such. Only "C Jam ..." has the kind of hot violin we encounter later.

**DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Jan. 23, 1943**

Rex Stewart (cnt), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Wallace Jones, Harold Baker (tp), Juan Tizol (vtb), Joe Nanton, Lawrence Brown (tb), Chauncey Haughton (cl, ts), Otto Hardwick (cl, as), Johnny Hodges (as), Ben Webster (ts), Harry Carney (bar, bcl), Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Junior Raglin (b), Sonny Greer (dm).

Concert in Carnegie Hall, four titles have (vln):

4301d Moon Mist Solo with orch. (S)

4301j Come Sunday Solo with orch. (S)

4301x Bakiff Solo with orch. (S)

4301af Going Up Solo 16 bars. (FM)

**Boston, Jan. 28, 1943**

Personnel as above.  
Concert in Symphony Hall, one title has (vln):

4302f Come Sunday

**NYC. April 3, 1943**

Personnel as above, except Oett Mallard (cl, as) replaces Hardwicke.  
NBC broadcast from Hurricane Restaurant, one title has (vln):

4303g Going Up Solo 16 bars. (FM)

**NYC. June 20, 1943**

Harold Baker, Taft Jordan, Wallace Jones (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Juan Tizol (vtb), Sandy Williams, Joe Nanton (tb), Nat Jones (cl, as), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as), Ben Webster (ts), Harry Carney (bar, bcl), Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Junior Raglin (b), Sonny Greer (dm).

MBS broadcast from Hurricane Restaurant, three titles have (vln):

4327a Moon Mist (Theme) Solo with orch. (S)

4327d I Have Faith Solo with orch. (S)

4327g C Jam Blues Solo 16 bars. (FM)

**NYC. June 27, 1943**

Same. MBS broadcast from Hurricane Restaurant, two titles have (vln):

4328a Moon Mist (Theme) Solo with orch. (S)

4328e Caravan Solo 32 bars. (M)

**NYC. June/July 1943**

Same. U. S. Treasury Dept. recording session, two titles have (vln).

4329c Caravan

4329h Moon Mist

**NYC. July 11, 1943**

Same. MBS broadcast from Hurricane Restaurant, two titles have (vln):

4332a Moon Mist

4332c And Russia Is Her Name

4332d It Don't Mean A Thing

**NYC. July 1943**

Same. WMCA broadcast, one title has (vln):

4334d Going Up

**NYC. Aug. 29, 1943**

Harold Baker, Taft Jordan, Wallace Jones (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Juan Tizol (vtb), Bernard Archer, Joe Nanton (tb), Nat Jones (cl, as), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as), Skippy Williams (ts), Harry Carney (bar, bcl), Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Junior Raglin (b), Sonny Greer (dm).

Broadcast from Hurricane Restaurant. One title has (vln):

4342a Moon Mist Solo with orch. (S)

**NYC. Nov. 9, 1943**

Same. World Broadcasting recording session:

4360t Caravan Solo 32 bars. (M)

**NYC. Dec. 1, 1943**

Same. World Broadcasting recording session:

4362a It Don't Mean A Thing Soli 4 and 8 bars. (FM)

4362b It Don't Mean A Thing As above. (FM)

4362c It Don't Mean A Thing As above. (FM)

**Norfolk, Va., Dec. 8, 1943**

Same. Broadcast AFRS Spotlight Bands:

4363c Going Up

**NYC. Dec. 11, 1943**

Same. Concert in Carnegie Hall:

4364c Moon Mist Solo with orch. (S)  
 4364g C Jam Blues  
 4364k Going Up

The 1943 confirms the early impression one gets, but some new tunes are added, "Caravan" and "... A Thing", which show RN's improvisational qualities; there are always change of details, even when working into strong limitations of the Duke's compositions.

**EARL HINES ORCHESTRA NYC. April 26, 1944**

Ray Nance (tp, vln), Johnny Hodges (as), Flip Phillips (ts), Earl Hines (p), Al Casey (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Sid Catlett (dm), Betty Roche (vo-1006-1010).  
 Six titles were recorded for Apollo, two have (vln):

1008 Trouble Trouble Obligato 12 bars. (S)  
 1009 Design For Jivin' Solo with ens 32 bars. (M)

Fine swing session, and RN's two violin contributions are quite noteworthy!

**EDDIE HEYWOOD SEXTET NYC. May 2, 1944**

Ray Nance (tp, vln), Aaron Sachs (cl), Don Byas (ts), Eddie Heywood (p), John Simmons (b), Shelly Manne (dm).  
 Four titles were recorded for Signature, two have (vln):

How High The Moon Solo/straight 30 bars. (FM)  
 Penthouse Serenade Duet with (p) 32 bars. (S)

Another fine swing session, the guys were jumping from one small label to another when getting a chance to record outside the Ellington organization. Dig in particular the delightful violin/piano duet introducing the "... Serenade"!

**DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Dec. 11, 1944**

Shelton Hemphill, Taft Jordan, Cat Anderson (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Juan Tizol (vtb), Lawrence Brown, Joe Nanton, Claude Jones (tb), Otto Hardwicke (cl, as), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as), Al Sears (ts), Harry Carney (bar, bcl), Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Junior Raglin (b), Sonny Greer (dm).  
 Recording session for Victor, one title has (vln):

4436b Come Sunday Solo with orch. (S)

**NYC. Dec. 19, 1944**

Same. Concert in Carnegie Hall:

4438g It Don't Mean A Thing  
 4438w Come Sunday  
 4438af Metronome All Out

**LA. Jan. 17, 1945**

Same with Rex Stewart (cnt) added. Concert in Philharmonic Auditorium:

4504i It Doin't Mean A Thing  
 4504k Esquire Jump  
 4504x Come Sunday  
 4504ab Metronome All Out

**Chi. March 25, 1945**

Same. Concert in Civic Opera House:

4509n Come Sunday  
 4509aa It Don't Mean A Thing  
 4509af Metronome All Out

**NYC. April 14, 1945**

Same. ABC broadcast from 400 Restaurant:

4513a Moon Mist

4513f Come Sunday  
 4513i Moon Mist  
 Same. Broadcast from 400 Restaurant: **NYC. April 21, 1945**

4515m It Don't Mean A Thing  
 Soli 4 and 8 bars. (M)  
 Same. ABC broadcast from 400 Restaurant: **NYC. April 28, 1945**

4521j Come Sunday  
 Same. Recording session for Victor: **NYC. May 11, 1945**

4529a Caravan  
 Same. Broadcast from Radio City: **NYC. May 12, 1945**

4530n Caravan  
 Same. Recording session for Victor: **NYC. May 14, 1945**

4531b It Don't Mean A Thing  
 Soli 4 and 8 bars. (M)  
 Same. Recording session for Victor: **NYC. May 16, 1945**

4534c Black Beauty  
 Solo 8 bars. (SM)  
 Same. Broadcast from Paradise Theatre: **Detroit, May 19, 1945**

4535n It Don't Mean A Thing  
 4535r C Jam Blues  
 Same. Broadcast from Regal Theatre: **Chi. May 26, 1945**

4536n Metronome All Out  
 Same. Broadcast from Percy Jones Hospital Center: **Battle Creek, MI, June 2, 1945**

4537l Come Sunday  
 Same. Broadcast from Paramount Theatre: **Toledo, Ohio, June 9, 1945**

4538u C Jam Blues  
 Same. Broadcast from U. S. Coastguard Training Center: **Atlantic City, NJ., June 27, 1945**

4541f C Jam Blues  
 Same. Broadcast from Apollo Theatre: **NYC. June 30, 1945**

4542b Caravan  
 Same. Broadcast from Radio City: **NYC. July 7, 1945**

4545q Hollywood Hangover  
 Same. Broadcast from RKO Theatre: **Boston, July 14, 1945**

4546n Metronome All Out  
 Same. Broadcast from Fieldstone Ballroom: **Marshfield, MA., July 21, 1945**

- 4547e C Jam Blues  
 Same. Broadcast from State Theatre: **NYC. July 28, 1945**
- 4550g Moon Mist  
 4550l Black Beauty  
 Same. World recording session: **NYC. July 31, 1945**
- 4552d Metronome All Out (NC) Brief duet with (p) (NC). (FM)  
 4552e Metronome All Out Duet with (p) 60 bars. (FM)  
 Same. Broadcast from Radio City: **NYC. Aug. 4, 1945**
- 4553o Metronome All Out  
 Same. Broadcast from Radio City: **NYC. Aug. 11, 1945**
- 4555c Blue Is The Night  
 Same. Broadcast from Radio City: **NYC. Aug. 18, 1945**
- 4556g Come Sunday  
 Same. Broadcast from Eale Theatre: **Philadelphia, Sept. 1, 1945**
- 4559j Caravan  
 4559p Moon Mist  
 Same. Broadcast from Radio City: **NYC. Sept. 15, 1945**
- 4561j Metronome All Out  
 So many of these violin items have not been available, that comments are not much relevant. Some new tunes are added, while many of the old favourites still are popular.
- DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA Worcester, MA., April 27, 1946**  
 Same. Broadcast from Municipal Auditorium:
- 4612c Moon Mist  
 4612k Come Sunday  
 Same. Broadcast from Radio City: **Hanover, NH., May 4, 1946**
- 4613e I Can't Get Started  
 Same. Broadcast from studio: **Reading, Pa., June 8, 1946**
- 4617m Come Sunday  
 Same. Recording session for Capitol: **LA. July 17, 1946**
- 4623a Moon Mist Solo with orch. (S)  
 Same. Broadcast from Lincoln Theatre: **LA. Aug. 31, 1946**
- 4639j Moon Mist  
 Same. Broadcast from Aquarium Restaurant: **NYC. Oct. 25, 1946**
- 4646f C Jam Blues Solo 20 bars. (FM)



- Chi. Nov. 10, 1946**
- Same. Concert at Civic Opera House:
- 4647a Overture To A Jam Session
- NYC. Dec. 11, 1946**
- Same. Recording session for Musicraft:
- 4652b Overture To A Jam Session
- NYC. Jan. 7, 1947**
- Same. Recording session for Capitol:
- 4701h Overture To A Jam Session Solo with orch. (M)
- NYC. May 10, 1947**
- Ray Nance (vln), Billy Strayhorn (p).  
Broadcast from WNEW studios:
- 4706h Moon Mist Duet with (p). (S)
- LA. July 25, 1947**
- Same. Recorded at Ciro's Club:
- 4714a Moon Mist
- LA. Aug. 1, 1947**
- Same. Recorded at Ciro's Club:
- 4716c Caravan
- LA. Aug. 31, 1947**
- Same. Concert in Hollywood Bowl:
- 4718o Come Sunday
- 4718ab Moon Mist
- LA. Oct. 1, 1947**
- Same. Recording session for Columbia:
- 4723d Maybe I Should Change My Ways
- LA. Oct. 6, 1947**
- Same. Recording session for Columbia:
- 4727a Maybe I Should Change My Ways
- 4727b Maybe I Should Change My Ways Solo with orch 24 bars. (S)
- NYC. Dec. 24, 1947**
- Same. Recording session for Columbia:
- 4735g Dance No. 3
- NYC. Dec. 27, 1947**
- Same. Concert in Carnegie Hall:
- 4737s Dance No. 3 Solo with orch. (S)
- 4737x Bakiff Solo with orch. (S)
- To have fun with RN's violin, it is clear that the idea is not to look broadly at how he grasps the different music material, but how he plays the same tunes again and again, without ever seeming to be bored. The quality of his violin soli is always perfect!!
- RAY NANCE & THE ELLINGTONIANS London, England, July 1, 1948**  
Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Dick Katz (p), Lauderic Caton (g), Coleridge Goode (b), Ray Ellington (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Esquire, three have (vln):
- 58-2 Moon Mist Solo/straight 48 bars to long coda. (S)
- 59-2 Sometimes I'm Happy Solo 16 bars. (M)
- 61-2 Blues For Duke Soli 4 and 4 bars. (S)

It seems maybe rather strange that RN should chose "... Mist" for a rare record session of his own, in fact the first one, a tune he might have tired of playing numerous times, but maybe for once wanted to play the whole tune through as he wanted it without interference? The result is anyway magnificent! A good half-chorus on "... Happy" also. "Blues ..." is in fact "Rocks In My Bed" and has some great trumpet, while the middle of his violin chorus is given to the bowing bass.

**DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Nov. 13, 1948**

Shelton Hemphill, Al Killian, Harold Baker, Francis Williams (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Lawrence Brown, Quentin Jackson (tb), Tyree Glenn (tb, vib), Russell Procope (cl, as), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Johnny Hodges (as), Al Sears, Ben Webster (ts), Harry Carney (bcl, bar), Duke Ellington (p), Fred Guy (g), Wellman Broad (b), Sonny Greer (dm).

Concert in Carnegie Hall:

4802u Humoresque Solo 48 bars? (F)

**Philadelphia, Nov. 23, 1948**

Same. NBC broadcast from Click Restaurant:

4804e Humoresque

**Philadelphia, Nov. 24, 1948**

Same. NBC broadcast from Click Restaurant:

4805d It Don't Mean A Thing

**Ithaca, NY., Dec. 10, 1948**

Same. Concert in Cornell University:

4808t Humoresque

**LA. Feb. 1949**

Same. ABC broadcasts from Hollywood Empire:

4901a Caravan

4906f Humoresque

4908e Caravan

**IVORY JOE HUNTER** **LA. Feb. 28, 1949**

Harold Baker (tp), Tyree Glenn (tb), Russell Procope (as), Ray Nance (vln), Ivory Joe Hunter (p, vo), Wendell Marshall (b), Sonny Greer (dm).

Six titles were recorded for King, five have (vln):

5683 Waiting In Vain Obligato parts with (as). (S)

5684 It's You Just You Duet with (as) 8 bars. (S)

5685 That's The Gal For Me Obligato parts. (M)

5687 Guess Who? Obligato parts. (S)

5688 Too Late Obligato parts. (S)

RN is a master of playing behind the vocalists, and so also here. It does not really matter that there are no soli, because his sound is clearly recorded, to be enjoyed! Dig the hot jumping and handclapping on "... The Gal ..."!

**BABS GONZALES & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. April 27, 1949**

Ray Nance (vln-3782), J. J. Johnson (tb), Alberto Socarras (fl), Don Redman (as), Sonny Rollins (ts), Wynton Kelly (p), Bruce Lawrence (b), Roy Haynes (dm), Babs Gonzales (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Capitol, one has (vln):

3782 When Lovers They Lose Solo 12 bars. Obligato parts. (S)

Interesting session here, and solid violin on "... Lose".

**DUKE ELLINGTON & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Philadelphia, Aug. 31, 1949**

Same/similar.

Broadcast from Click Restaurant:

4914c Caravan

4914f Maybe I Should Change My Ways

**Philadelphia, Sept. 3, 1949**

Same. Broadcast from Click Restaurant:

4917d Caravan

**Note:** From 1950 and onwards, RN's soloing with DUKE ELLINGTON is presented in a sketchy fashion in the Appendix. Only non-Duke sessions are presented below in proper solography manner.

**HARRY CARNEY WITH STRINGS** **NYC. Dec. 14, 1954**

Ray Nance (tp, vln), Tony Miranda (frh), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Harry Carney (bar, bcl), Leroy Lovett (p), Billy Bauer (g), Wendell Marshall (b), Louis Bellson (dm), (strings), Ralph Burns (cond).

Eight titles were recorded for Clef, one has (vln):

2125-3 Take The A Train Solo 16 bars. (M)

A somewhat modest violin solo introduces the 'non-Duke' sessions of the fifties, but of course Duke's spirit is all over.

**JOHNNY HODGES & THE ELLINGTON ALL-STARS WITHOUT DUKE** **Chi. Sept. 1, 1956**

Clark Terry (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Quentin Jackson (tb), Johnny Hodges (as), Jimmy Hamilton (cl, ts), Harry Carney (bar), Billy Strayhorn (p), Jimmy Woode (b), Sam Woodyard (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Verve, two have (vln):

2978-3 It Had To Be You Solo 32 bars. (S)

2980-6 Take The A Train Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Now here we really get something! A beautiful violin solo introduces "... Be You" before it continues with altosax, dig this one! As RN uses to play trumpet on "... A Train", it comes as a surprise that he lets Terry take it instead, and then proceeds with two full choruses.

**JOHNNY HODGES** **NYC. June 26, 1957**

Personnel including Ray Nance (tp, vln?).

Four titles were recorded for Verve but no (vln)-soli.

**JOHNNY HODGES** **NYC. Sept. 3, 1957**

Personnel including Ray Nance (tp, vln?).

Four titles were recorded for Verve but no (vln)-soli.

**BILLY STRAYHORN** **Chi. 1958**

Bigband personnel including Ray Nance (tp, vln), Jimmy Jones (p), Billy Strayhorn (ldr).

Eight titles were recorded live for Roulette, one has (vln):

Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool Solo 72 bars. (SM)

Note this one; a very long and groovy violin solo!!

**CAT ANDERSON & THE ELLINGTON ALL STARS** **NYC. 1959**

Cat Anderson (tp), Quentin Jackson (tb), Rudy Powell (cl, as), Ray Nance (vln), Leroy Lovett (p), Jimmy Woode (b), Sam Woodyard (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Wynne, three have (vln):

Chelsea Straight. (S)

Lovelinessence Solo 8 bars. Straight. (S)

A Flower Is A Lovesome Thing Straight. (S)

Beautiful music but of no particular solistic interest.

**NYC. 1959**

Same except Budd Johnson (cl, ts).

Four titles, three have (vln):

Summertime Solo 12 bars. (S)

Like Dig Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Between Some Place, Goin' No Place Solo 32 bars. (M)

More interesting here, both "... Dig" and "... No Place" have great violin contributions.

**PAUL GONSALVES** **NYC. Feb. 29, 1960**  
 Personnel including Ray Nance (tp, vln?).  
 Seven titles were recorded for RCA, but no (vln)-soli.

**BUDD JOHNSON** **NYC. Aug. 22, 1960**  
 Nat Adderley (cnt), Harry Edison (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln), Clark Terry (flhn, tp),  
 Budd Johnson (cl, ts), Tommy Flanagan (p), Joe Benjamin (b), Herbie Lovelle  
 (dm).  
 Four titles were recorded for Riverside, one has (vln):

Don't Blame Me Solo/Duet with (ts) 16, 4 and 4 bars. (S)

**NYC. Sept. 6, 1960**

Same except Jimmy Jones (p) replaces Flanagan.  
 Four titles, one has (vln):

Driftwood Solo feature. (S)

Further away from the Duke here with lots of brass supporting Budd. Their cooperation on the delightful "... Blame Me" should be definitely noted. But there is more! Not very much violin in the session though, but "Driftwood" makes up for that, an unexpected and remarkable piece of concert music, a rare opportunity for RN to really show his emotions, great!!

**JOHNNY HODGES** **NYC. Sept. 8, 1960**  
 Personnel including Ray Nance (tp, vln?).  
 Nine titles were recorded for Verve but no (vln)-soli.

**PAUL GONSALVES** **NYC. Jan. 5, 1961**  
 Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Paul Gonsalves, Harold Ashby (ts), Sir Charles Thompson  
 (p), Aaron Bell (b), Jo Jones (dm).  
 Four titles were issued on British Columbia, one has (vln):

You Can Depend On Me Solo 32 bars. (M)

An easy swinging solo with a funny opening, handing it over to Harold, not Paul.

**JOHNNY HODGES SEPTET** **Stockholm, March 14, 1961**  
 Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Lawrence Brown (tb), Johnny Hodges (as), Harry Carney  
 (bar), Al Williams (p), Aaron Bell (b), Sam Woodyard (dm).  
 Concert, issued on Spook/Ariston, no (vln) soli.

**JOHNNY HODGES SEPTET** **Copenhagen, March 17, 1961**  
 Personnel as March 14.  
 Concert at Falkoner Centret, twenty titles, one has (vln):

Autumn Leaves Solo 32 bars to duet with (bar)  
 32 bars to long coda. (S)

This one item is worth the whole CD, four minutes of magnificent violin with Carney having an important role.

**JOHNNY HODGES SEPTET** **Scandinavia, March 22, 1961**  
 Personnel as March 14.  
 Concert, issued on Rarities, nine titles, but no (vln) soli.

**JOHNNY HODGES SEPTET** **Berlin, March 1961**  
 Personnel as March 14.  
 Concert at Sportspalast, issued on Pablo, twentyone titles, one has (vln):

Autumn Leaves As March 17. (S)

Another one!!

**DUKE & COUNT** **NYC. July 6, 1961**  
 Bigband personnels of Duke Ellington Orchestra, including Ray Nance (tp, vln?)  
 and Count Basie Orchestra.  
 Several titles were recorded for Columbia, but no (vln) soli.

**JOHNNY HODGES WITH**  
**OLIVER NELSON'S ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Aug. 6&15, 1962**  
 Johnny Hodges (as), Bernie Leighton (p, org), unknown (g), George Duvivier (b),  
 Osie Johnson (dm), (strings), Oliver Nelson (arr, cond), + Ray Nance (vln-569).  
 Twelve titles were recorded for Verve, one has (vln):

62VK569 Guitar Amour Solo 32 bars. (M)

RN plays this fascinating tune many times with the Duke, but there is something with this version that grasps you, also including gorgeous altosax, and with a magnificent arranger at the bottom.

**DUKE ELLINGTON**

**MEETS COLEMAN HAWKINS**

**NYC. Aug. 18, 1962**

Ray Nance (vln), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Duke Ellington (p), Aaron Bell (b), Sam Woodyard (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Impulse (additional titles without (vln) but (tp), and with augmented personnel):

|       |             |                              |
|-------|-------------|------------------------------|
| 6237i | Solitude    | Solo 32 bars. Acc. (ts). (S) |
| 6237j | The Ricitic | Solo 64 bars. Acc. (ts). (M) |

Excuse me for putting this under non-Duke items, but it makes sense does it? For me they could have made the whole session with this personnel combination. Fine violin on the latin "The Ricitic". On "Solitude" RN's playing in the beginning is rather straight, but creates a perfect introduction to a majestic tenorsax solo, and the final duet is a lovely highlight!

**PAUL GONSALVES SEXTET**

**Europe, 1963**

Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Rolf Ericson (tp), Paul Gonsalves (ts), Otto Francker (p, org), Jimmy Woode (b), Sam Woodyard (dm).

Seven titles were record in concert, three have violin:

|                         |                    |
|-------------------------|--------------------|
| Blues                   | Solo 36 bars. (SM) |
| Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool | Solo 72 bars. (SM) |
| I Can't Get Started     | Solo 16 bars. (SM) |

Interesting session and personnel! Fine violin, particularly interesting to hear half a chorus of "... Started"!

**DUKE ELLINGTON's JAZZ VIOLIN SESSION**

**Paris, Feb. 22, 1963**

Collective personnel: Ray Nance (vln-except "... Mood", "... Anymore"), Stephane Grappelly (vln), Sven Asmussen (viola), Buster Cooper (tb), Rudy Powell (as), Paul Gonsalves (ts), Duke Ellington, Billy Strayhorn (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Sam Woodyard (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Reprise:

|        |                               |            |
|--------|-------------------------------|------------|
| 6332a  | Limbo Jazz                    | 5:28. (M)  |
| 6332c  | Pretty Little One             | 4:29. (S)  |
| 6332g  | String Along With Strings     | 6:28. (S)  |
| 6332m  | The Feeling Of Jazz           | 3:23. (SM) |
| 6332n  | Take The A Train              | 4:23. (M)  |
| 6332u  | Tricky's Lick                 | 3:19. (SM) |
| 6332v  | Blues In C                    | 3:57. (FM) |
| 6332aa | In A Sentimental Mood         | 3:46. (S)  |
| 6332ad | Don't Get Around Much Anymore | 3:58. (S)  |
| 6332af | Day Dream                     | 3:11. (S)  |
| 6332aj | Cotton Tail                   | 4:40. (FM) |

Fifty minutes of jazz violin with three of the greatest performers ever, could one wish for anything else?! Well, looking at the positive side, there is much to be pleased about here, all three take their task seriously, with nice details in abundance. However, the sound quality is rather woolly, or like putting the artists in a bucket. Also the programming is unnecessary complicated, trying to preserve the feeling of Duke and his compositions within all those strings. Better structure would also have been to great benefit. To suggest that they should have chosen some evergreens, and a rhythm guitar and gone ahead as a traditional jam session, probably will fire back on me ...

**PAUL GONSALVES**

**NYC. Sept. 4, 1963**

Rolf Ericson (tp), Ray Nance (tp, vln), Johnny Hodges (as), Paul Gonsalves (ts), Walter Bishop (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Osie Johnson (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Impulse, one has (vln):

|              |                                   |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|
| Duke's Place | Break 4 bars to solo 24 bars. (M) |
|--------------|-----------------------------------|

This is nothing else but a retitled “C Jam Blues”, but the soloing is superb!

**JOHNNY HODGES****NYC. Feb. 6, 1964**

Personnel including Ray Nance (tp, vln?).

Eight titles were recorded for Impulse, but no (vln)-soli.

**AHMED ABDUL-MALIK****NYC. March 12, 1964**

Ray Nance (tp, vln), Seldon Powell (fl, ts), Paul Neves (p), Ahmed Abdul-Malik (b), Hamza Aldeen (oud), Walter Perkins (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Status, five issued, two have (vln):

Song Of Delilah Soli 8, 64 and 8 bars. (M)

Spellbound Soli 64 and 32 bars to long coda. (SM)

RN's violin, together with Seldon Powell's flute, makes this "... Delilah" into a delightful experience! Postscript of Jan. 20, 2024: How could I forget the beautiful "Spellbound", thank you to my Danish friends!

**STUFF SMITH****NYC. March 23, 1964**

Stuff Smith (vln, vo-309), Ray Nance (vln), unknown (p-“Play”), Kenny Burrell (g), Milt Hinton, George Duvivier (b), Osie Johnson (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Verve, issued on Mosaic:

308-10 Up Jumps Sally (NC) Solo 24 bars. (M)

308-11 Up Jumps Sally (NC) Soli 24, 4 and 4 bars. (M)

309-4 Miracles (NC) Obligato 16 and 12 bars. (SM)

tk 4 Play / Timme's Blues Solo 24 bars. In ens. (M)

Very interesting to hear these two violin giants together with such different styles and both with all artistic capabilities intact, although time flies... One might have gotten much more out of this encounter. RN is first and is best on “Play”, but the question of who would win a violin battle I leave to your own taste and judgement.

**EARL HINES****NYC. Nov. 6, 1964**

Ray Nance (cnt, vln), Earl Hines (p), Aaron Bell (b), Jimmy Crawford (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Victor, two have (vln):

7408 The Hour Of Parting Solo 48+8 bars, (p) on second bridge, to coda. (S)

7408-alt. The Hour Of Parting As above. (S)

7409 It's A Pity To Say Goodnight Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. Solo 16 bars to coda. (M)

7409-alt. It's A Pity To Say Goodnight As above. (M)

RN has the four minutes of “... Parting” almost all for himself, going deep, a moving piece of music. “... Goodnight” is more ordinary and belong to Hines.

**JOYA SHERRILL****NYC. Jan. 20, 1965**

Ray Nance (tp, vln), Billy Strayhorn (p), Joe Benjamin (b), Shep Shepherd (dm), Joya Sherrill (vo).

Four titles were recorded for 20<sup>th</sup> Century Fox, two have (vln):

Day Dream Intro 4 bars. Obligato 48 bars. (S)

A Flower Is A Lonesome Thing Intro 4 bars. Obligato parts. (S)

Particularly “Day ...” has some excellent violin, dig this one!!

**MERCER ELLINGTON****NYC. Jan. 22, 1965**

Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Lawrence Brown (tb), Johnny Hodges (as), Paul Gonsalves (ts), Harry Carney (bar), George Butcher (p), John Lamb (b), Sam Woodyard (dm), Jimmy McPhail (vo), Mercer Ellington (arr, cond).

Four titles were recorded for Jobel 45-1000&1001, not available.

**TUBBY HAYES &****THE PAUL GONSALVES ALL STARS****London, Feb. 1965**

Collective personnel: Ray Nance (tp, vln, vo), Tubby Hayes (fl, ts, vib), Tony Coe (fl, as, ts), Paul Gonsalves, Ronnie Scott (ts), Jackie Sharpe (bar), Terry Shannon (p), John Lamb (b), Ronnie Stephenson (dm).

Three titles were recorded for World Record Club (several others without RN), two have (vln):

|                 |  |
|-----------------|--|
| Child's Fancy   | Soli with ens 32 and 16 bars<br>to very long coda. (S) |
| Speedy Gonzales | Solo 32 bars. (M)                                      |

Honestly these are rather boring with regard to violin.

**RAY NANCE** **Copenhagen, April 4, 1966**

Ray Nance (cnt-"Blues", vln), Jørgen Borch (p), Erik Mølbach (b), Mkaya Ntshoko (dm).

Broadcast from Vingården, two titles:

|       |          |                                       |
|-------|----------|---------------------------------------|
| 10:10 | Blues    | Solo 13 choruses of 12 bars. (M)      |
| 7:50  | Tenderly | Soli 64 and 16 bars to long coda. (S) |

Postscript of Jan. 9, 2024: Very nice with good sound! RN starts the "Blues" with an excellent (cnt)-solo; don't forget that among all the beautiful violin sounds! He closes also this one with violin, which is his only instrument on the beautiful "Tenderly".

**RAY NANCE** **Copenhagen, April 19, 1966**

Stuff Smith, Ray Nance, Søren Christensen (vln, vo), Jørgen Borch (p), Erik Mølbach (b), Ove Rex (dm).

Two titles were recorded for TV-program (RN was the main artist, but not present on "Swingin' Softly" (FM)), Studio 5, TV-City:

|                     |     |
|---------------------|-----|
| Soft Winds          | (M) |
| When You're Smiling | (M) |

I don't think they got much out of this violinist encounter, although there are some solo parts that is reminding of good old days. I would like to see the TV-program before making final decisions on who's who.

**same date**

Same, except Ray Nance (cnt-"Blues In F", vln), Smith and Christensen omitted. Three titles, (postscript of Dec. 2023, ref. Tom Buhmann):

|      |                            |  |
|------|----------------------------|--|
| 2:30 | Yesterdays                 | Solo 2 ½ choruses of 32 bars. (M) to coda. (S) |
| 7:32 | Blues In F                 | Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)              |
| 5:10 | Between The Devil And TDBS | Soli 32 and 64 bars. (M)                       |

The sound is not of same quality as April 4, but RN's contributions are nevertheless quite noteworthy on all three items.

**LEE KONITZ** **NYC. Sept. 25, 1967**

Lee Konitz (ts), Ray Nance (vln).

One title, unknown origin:

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| Duplexity | 6:17. (S) |
|-----------|-----------|

This is the kind of surprises we enjoy excavating, although I guess it was there already for many of you Lee Konitz fans!! Raw, uninhibited jazz, two giants meeting and playing together, highly serious creation. Was this really intended for public release or was it only a casual meeting an opportunity to have some fun at the time of uprising freejazz? Go straight to the net and play it!!!

**DIZZY GILLESPIE / JAM SESSION** **NYC. Oct. 1, 1967**

Collective personnel: Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Garnett Brown (tb), Pepper Adams (b), Ray Nance (vln), Chick Corea (p), Richard Davis (b), Elvin Jones, Mel Lewis (dm). Seven titles were recorded for Village Vanguard, issued as "Jazz For A Sunday Afternoon" and "Live At The Village Vanguard", four have (vln):

|                       |   |
|-----------------------|---|
| Blues For Max         | Solo 36 bars. (S)                                     |
| Birks Works           | Solo/Duet with (tp). (SM)                             |
| Lullaby Of The Leaves | Acc. (tp). Solo 64 bars. (M)                          |
| Lover Come Back To Me | In ens. (S). Soli 1 and<br>3 choruses of 64 bars. (F) |

One hour of something that seems like an informal jam session, long tunes giving everybody the chance to stretch out. The "Blues ..." goes very slowly with RN preceding Dizzy, while they cooperate closely on "... Works". The highlight is after some hard thinking the conventional "... Leaves", such an improviser RN was! Or maybe the typical Dizziesque slow opening of "Lover ..." with the

trumpeter as boss? Later RN goes all out in uptempo but his first try ends with one chorus, later he needs another three, such energy and enthusiasm!

**SOL YAGED****NYC. late 1967**

Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), Sol Yaged (cl), Dave Martin (p), Ronnie Markowitz (b), Sam Ulano (dm).

Nine titles were recorded at the Gaslight Club, issued on Lane LP 154, two have (vln):

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Autumn Leaves | Duet with (cl) 32 bars to solo 16 bars. (SM)<br>to duet 16 bars to coda. (SM/S)     |
| Crazy Rhythm  | Duet with (cl) 32 bars to solo 64 bars.<br>32 bars 4/4 with (cl). Solo 8 bars. (FM) |

**NYC. ca. 1968**

Same. Seven titles on Lane LP 155, one has (vln):

|                           |  |
|---------------------------|--|
| It Might As Well Be Swing | Duet with (cl) 32 bars to solo 64 bars.<br>64 bars 4/4 with (cl). Solo 8 bars. (M) |
|---------------------------|--|

Postscript of Jan. 2024: This sounds well rehearsed, almost ‘civilized’ rather than a casual club date (probably the two dates are very close in time), but the music is pleasant and well worth one’s listening efforts. Nice to hear “Autumn ...”, obviously one of RN’s violin favourites, with clarinet support, and “Crazy ...” and “... Swing” are strong and highly notable items. Note the pleasant violin/clarinet chases on these!!

**JAKI BYARD****NYC. April 2, 1968**

Ray Nance (vln, vo-“... Blues”), Jaki Byard (p, org), George Benson (g), Ron Carter (cello), Richard Davis (b), Alan Dawson (dm, vib).

Five titles were recorded for Prestige:

|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Music To Watch Girls By     | With ens. (FM)  |
| Cat’s Cradle Conference Rag | Solo 64 bars. With ens. (M)   |
| Falling Rains Of Life       | Duet with (p). (S)  |
| How High The Moon           | Long intro. (S) to solo 4 choruses of<br>32 bars. (FM). With ens 32 bars. (F)<br>to very long coda. (S) |
| Ray’s Blues                 | Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (M)   |

Having the pleasure to hear this great piano artist here in Norway several times, anything he made of unexpected projects is met with pleasure and expectation. Whether his work with RN is successful or not can be discussed. The gospel based “... Blues” is a groovy sequence of violin choruses with some so-called ‘vocal’, nothing much related to Byard. “... The Moon” is also a typical RN vehicle with change of tempi, great music, but the backing is too modern to give RN the swing he needs. The remaining items are Byard’s with RN in a more modest role, though he has a long and strong solo on “... Cradle ...”.

**BABS GONZALES****NYC. Dec. 10, 1968**

Ray Nance (vln), Horace Parlan (p), Michael Fleming (b), Pola Roberts (dm), Babs Gonzales (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Expudience/Chiaroscuro:

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| You’ve Changed       | Obbligato 32 bars. Solo 32 bars.<br>Obbligato 18 bars to coda. (S) |
| Beginning Of The End | Obbligato parts. Solo 32 bars.<br>Obbligato 8 bars to coda. (S)    |
| Lonely One           | Obbligato parts. Solo 32 bars.<br>Obbligato 16 bars to coda. (S)   |
| Babs Mood For Love   | Obbligato 32 bars. Solo 32 bars.<br>Obbligato 16 bars to coda. (S) |

Except for the fact that all four items are in the same slow tempo and structured the same way, this is a magnificent vocal session, with some of the best RN-violin you can find! He seems so intensely emerged in his music, in fact always so, never any temptation to go commercial although his warm style might invite to it. You will find this session on the net, go ahead!!

**CHICO HAMILTON SEXTET****NYC.? ca. 1969**

Steve Potts (as), Russ Andrews (ts), Ray Nance (vln), Eric Gale (g), Jan Arnet (b), Chico Hamilton (dm).



Eight titles were recorded for Solid State, issued as “The Head Hunters”, four have (vln):

|                      |  |
|----------------------|--|
| Reach And Grab It    | With ens. (M)                                  |
| Conglomerates        | Soli 5 x 16 bars. Solo 8 bars to fade out. (M) |
| Ol’ Man              | Duet with (narr). (S)                          |
| Them’s Good Ole Days | Soli. (F)                                      |

RN fits perfectly into these modern experiments, particularly “Conglomerates” and “... Ole Days” have lots of hot fiddle. “... Grab It” is rather collective noise to my perception. The highlight must be “Ol’ Man”, where RN plays softly behind somebody telling a story.

**RAY NANCE** **NYC. May 1969**

Collective personnel: Brew Moore (ts), Jaki Byard (p), Sir Roland Hanna (p, org), Ray Nance (vln, vo, arr), Tiny Grimes, Tommy Lucas (g), Cal Pruitt (b), Steve Little (dm).

Twelve titles were recorded for Solid State, issued as “Body And Soul”:

|      |                      |   |
|------|----------------------|---|
| 2:42 | Take The A Train     | Solo 48 bars. (S)   |
| 3:20 | Get Happy            | Soli 64, 8, 32, 48 and 16 bars. (F)   |
| 3:06 | Sunny                | With ens 32 and 32 bars. (M)  |
| 4:30 | Body And Soul        | Solo 52 bars. (S)   |
| 4:30 | Mimi                 | Intro to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars.<br>Soli 16 and 72 bars to fade out. (FM) |
| 3:50 | A Hard Day’s Night   | With ens. (M)   |
| 2:50 | Oh Happy Day         | Solo 16 bars. (M)   |
| 2:36 | Stardust             | Soli 16 and 4 bars. (S)   |
| 3:52 | She’s Funny That Way | Soli 32, 16, 32 and 8 bars to coda. (M)                                       |
| 2:40 | Jolie Janice         | Solo feature. (S)   |
| 6:15 | Guitar Amour         | Intro. (S) Solo 48 and<br>108 bars. (M) to long coda. (S)                     |
| 2:00 | Tranquility          | Solo feature. (S)   |

How do I say this? This session is one of the worst programmed I have ever heard! What does it matter when RN plays his violin competently as ever, when the sound scene is a chaos of instruments going against each other instead of playing together? Guitars and keyboards coming and going with no system at all. Several items here give me really headache, particularly those with some tempo. Even a slow “Stardust” they manage to destroy, and although “Body ...” is acceptable, the violin/piano combination does not work. If one is to have something positive out of this session, the three last items, slow and written by Duke and RN himself, sound quite nice.

**RAY NANCE QUARTET & SEXTET** **Europe, probably 1969**

Collective personnel: Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), unknown (ts), Earl Washington, Jackie Byard (p), Tiny Grimes, Tommy Lucas (g), Truck Parham, Charlie Pruitt (b), Hillard Brown, Steve Little (dm).

Date is suggested based upon the preceding studio session.

Concert, issued on Unique Jazz UJ11, five have (vln):

|             |  |
|-------------|--|
| Summertime  | Solo 16 bars. (S). Solo 56 bars. (SM)<br>to long coda. (S)       |
| Get Happy   | Intro 8 bars to solo 64 bars.<br>Soli 8, 32, 32 and 16 bars. (F) |
| Sunny       | Intro to solo 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (M)                         |
| Mimi        | Intro to solo 96 bars.<br>Soli 16 and 72 bars to fade out. (FM)  |
| C Jam Blues | Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (M)                                 |

Much better this concert with similar personnel to above, an informal and non-nonsense event with RN in fine shape whatever he performs. “Summertime” is obviously one of his favourite tunes, always performed with style, also “C Jam ...”,

where he for once really stretches out. Note also the very fast "... Happy", so enthusiastic violin playing!!

**CHARLIE PARKER MEMORIAL CONCERT** **Chi. Aug. 16, 1970**

Kenny Dorham (tp), Ray Nance (cnt, vln), Joe Daley (ts), Muhal Richard Abrams (p), Rufus Reed (b), Wilbur Campbell (dm).

Two titles were recorded at North Park Hotel, one has (vln):

|            |   |
|------------|---|
| Summertime | Solo 32 bars. (S) to solo 48 bars. (SM)<br>Solo 28 bars. (SM) to coda 4 bars. (S) |
|------------|---|

Postscript of Jan. 2024: Almost ten minutes with RN's intense violin as the main ingredient, but note interesting trumpet and piano soli, an item out of the ordinary.

**PAUL GONSALVES / RAY NANCE** **NYC. Aug. 28, 1970**

Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), Paul Gonsalves (ts), Raymond Fol (p), Al Hall (b), Oliver Jackson (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Intercord / Black Lion, two have (vln):

|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| Lotus Blossom | Intro. (S)  |
| Tea For Two   | Intro. (S). Solo 32 bars.<br>Duet with (ts) 32 bars to coda. (SM) |

**NYC. Sept. 3, 1970**

Same, except Norris Turner (as) added, Hank Jones (p) replaces Fol.

Five titles, one has (vln):

|                        |                  |
|------------------------|------------------|
| I Cover The Waterfront | Intro. Coda. (S) |
|------------------------|------------------|

One remarkable violin item among the ten recorded, "Tea ..."; there is no doubt that RN still is in complete control of his instrument, and I guess he has more than enough experience with Gonsalves, although this turns out to be their last recording together. Nevertheless, dig the beautiful intro on "... Blossom" (and continue all the way ...").

**JIMMY RUSHING** **NYC. April 29, 1971**

Ray Nance (cnt, vln), Zoot Sims (ts), Dave Frishberg (p), Milt Hinton (b), Mel Lewis (dm), Jimmy Rushing (vo).

Seven titles were recorded for RCA, issued as "The You And Me That Used To Be", one has (vln):

|                              |   |
|------------------------------|---|
| When I Grow Too Old To Dream | Intro 16 bars. (S). Solo<br>32 bars (FM). Coda. (S) |
|------------------------------|---|

Perfect slow intro accompanied by a lonely bass, then change to uptempo main stream with typical vocal and various soli, to have RN return with a hot chorus, though his tone here is not quite what it used to be.

**RAY NANCE QUARTET** **Villingen, Black Forest, Germany, Nov. 1971**

Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), Kenny Drew (p), Ron Mathewson (b), Daniel Humair (dm).

Seven titles were issued on MPS/BASF, four have (vln):

|                     |  |
|---------------------|--|
| I Can't Get Started | Soli 32 and 8 bars. (S)  |
| Russian Lullaby     | Intro. (S) to Solo 32 bars. (M)<br>Solo 56 bars. (M) to Coda. (S)          |
| Some Of These Days  | Intro. (S) to Solo 32 bars. (M)<br>Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (F) |
| Wild Child          | Intro. Solo. Coda. (S)   |

It seems that RN now is not quite what he used to be, the playing is not as firm and controlled as earlier. However, this can also be due to the fact that he has chosen a modern rhythm section not at all tuned to his own violin art. Even a brilliant pianist like Drew is out of place here. We have mentioned it before but are happy to repeat it: Modern blowing with swing rhythm works fine, swing blowing with modern rhythm (like here) is a disaster. Saying all this, you can find some interesting things particularly on "... These Days". (b),

**RAY NANCE** **Flushing, NY., March 26, 1972**

Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), Garnett Brown (tb), Herb Hall (cl), Frank Wess (fl, ts), Hank Jones (p), Bill Butler (g), Milt Hinton (b), Al Foster (dm).

Broadcast from Queen College, recorded by swingyoucats (available on YouTube), one has (vln):

The Man I Love Solo 32 bars. (S) to solo 112 bars. (M)  
to long coda. (S)

Postscript of Dec. 2023: This turned up recently, not the best of sound qualities, but several interesting details if you listen closely.

**RAY NANCE** **Hicksville, NY., Sept. 10, 1973**  
Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), Charlie McLean (el-p), Arvell Shaw (b), Al Beldini or Joe Coleman (dm), Harry Sheppard (vib).  
Recorded at Charley K's Lounge by swingyoucats (available on YouTube), five titles have (vln):

Blues Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (M)  
Autumn Leaves Solo 32 bars. (S) to 32 bars. (M)  
Solo 56 bars. (M) to long coda. (S)  
A Hard Day's Night Solo 44 bars to coda. (M)  
Embraceable You Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)  
Blues Solo 23 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

Postscript of Dec. 2023: The two "Blues" have mediocre sound quality makes them close to unplayable, but in slow tempo, the music comes through much better, adding fine violin to the treasury chest!

**RAY NANCE / EARL HINES** **NYC? Sept. 11, 1973**  
Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), Earl Hines (p, vo).  
Six titles were recorded (for whom?), no violin on "Black And Blue" and "I Can't Give You Anything But Love" but:

You Brought A New Kind OLTM Solo 64 bars to long coda. (M)  
It's The Talk Of The Town Long intro. Solo 64 bars. (S)  
Everybody Loves My Baby Intro 8 bars to solo 64 bars. (FM)  
When Your Lover Has Gone Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)

Postscript of Dec. 2023: This session has recently become available, and it has the best of the Nance/Hines cooperation. The duo format is transparent but the best when everything works, which is done here. Whether the very slow and emotional slow items, or the faster moving, these are highly noteworthy!! To choose a highlight is difficult, but "... Lover ..." is a very hot candidate, the saddest tune ever written, and the duo makes this unforgettable.

**CHRIS BARBER BAND** **Hannover, Sept. 28, 1974**  
Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), Chris Barber (tb-"... Good"), John Slaughter (g), Johnny McCallum (bjo, g), Jackie Flavelle (b), Graham Burbridge (dm).  
Two titles were recorded at concert (other titles with larger personnel and (vo) only), issued on Black Lion:

8:14 Summertime Duet with (g) 32 bars. (S)  
3 ½ choruses of 64 bars. (M)  
Long coda. (S)  
5:34 Lady Be Good Solo 32 bars.  
3 choruses 4/4 with (tb). (FM)

A magnificent way to end one's recording career! Many musicians seem to be fed up with everything, only waiting for oblivion. Not so with Ray Nance!! His final eight violin minutes on "Summertime" show that he still has all his artistry complete and could have gone for many years. A very enthusiastic and truly swinging rhythm section helps a lot, and an excellent trombone leader also, and an amazing guitar player, and why didn't he seek out such friends before, but the results nevertheless rest on himself. A colourful "Lady ..." with a lovely violin/trombone chase adds to the pleasure. I don't know if one might consider Ray Nance underrated in jazz history, but I am sure that his name would have been equally remembered if he had played only violin!!

**RAY NANCE WITH**  
**WES BELCAMP TRIO** **East Massapequa, NY., Oct. 18, 1975**  
Ray Nance (cnt, vln, vo), Wes Belcamp (el-p), unknown (b), (dm).  
Recorded at Penthouse Lounge by swingyoucats, three titles have (vln):

C Jam Blues Soli 10 and 12 choruses of 12 bars. (M)  
Poor Butterfly Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (SM)

Mood Indigo Solo 64 bars to long coda. (SM)

**same, Oct. 24, 1975**

Same, four titles have (vln):

Autumn Leaves Solo 32 bars. (S) to 3 choruses of  
32 bars. 3 choruses + 24 bars. (M)  
to long coda. (S)

C Jam Blues Soli 10 and 17 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

I Can't Get Started Solo 64 bars. (SM)

It Don't Mean A Thing Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Postscript of Dec. 27, 2023: No, the above (1974) was not the end! Long soli and reasonably good sound bring evidence that Ray Nance this is an artist with most his capabilities intact. I strongly get the impression that the violin was his preferred instrument, and even more interesting; the instrument producing his most important artistic results!

No further recording sessions.

## APPENDIX

DUKE ELLINGTON 1950 – 1973

RECORDINGS ISSUED

(according to Massagli & Volonte: The New Desor, Milano 1999)

|        |                         |                                       |
|--------|-------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 5016c  | Great Times             | Solo 16 bars. (M)                     |
| 5124e  | C Jam Blues             | Solo 16 bars. (FM)                    |
| 5208k  | Sophisticated Lady      | Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)        |
| 5208l  | C Jam Blues             | Solo 28 bars. (M)                     |
| 5213d  | Bakiff                  | Solo with orch. (S)                   |
| 5216f  | Sophisticated Lady      | Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)        |
| 5225d  | C Jam Blues             |                                       |
| 5230i  | Sophisticated Lady      |                                       |
| 5315e  | Flamingo                | Solo with orch 24 bars. (S)           |
| 5318c  | Maybe I Should Change   |                                       |
| 5318r  | Sophisticated Lady      |                                       |
| 5318ad | C Jam Blues             |                                       |
| 5319c  | Bakiff                  | Solo with orch. (S)                   |
| 5323d  | C Jam Blues             |                                       |
| 5327h  | Blue Moon               |                                       |
| 5338a  | Chili Bowl              | Soli 12, 24 and 12 bars. (M)          |
| 5338b  | Blue Moon               | Solo 32 bars. (SM)                    |
| 5404j  | Sophisticated Lady      |                                       |
| 5404p  | Caravan                 |                                       |
| 5406d  | C Jam Blues             | Solo 32 bars. (M)                     |
| 5407f  | Maybe I Should Change   | Solo 32 bars. (S)                     |
| 5407z  | Blue Moon               |                                       |
| 5415a  | Smile                   | Solo 8 bars. (S)                      |
| 5415e  | Bakiff                  | Solo with orch. (S)                   |
| 5417c  | Caravan                 |                                       |
| 5606o  | I Can't Get Started     | Solo 16 bars. (S)                     |
| 5632y  | Zajj's Dream            | Acc. (vo-DE). (S)                     |
| 5735c  | Autumn Leaves           |                                       |
| 5738c  | Autumn Leaves           | Obbligato 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (S)  |
| 5807a  | Come Sunday             |                                       |
| 5808a  | Come Sunday             |                                       |
| 5809ai | Autumn Leaves           |                                       |
| 5810j  | C Jam Blues             |                                       |
| 5810r  | Autumn Leaves           |                                       |
| 5810ae | Blue Moon               |                                       |
| 5812c  | Poor Butterfly          | Duet with (p) 32 bars. (S)            |
| 5816b  | Gypsy Love Song         | Solo with orch.(S)                    |
| 5824f  | Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool | Solo 64 bars. (SM)                    |
| 5826f  | Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool |                                       |
| 5837i  | Autumn Leaves           |                                       |
| 5838u  | Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool | Solo 64 bars. (SM)                    |
| 5926v  | Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool |                                       |
| 5937e  | C Jam Blues             | Solo 32 bars. (M)                     |
| 6029k  | Lay-By                  |                                       |
| 6032d  | Lay-By                  | Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars to lc. (M) |
| 6207b  | Guitar Amour            | Soli 48 and 48 bars to lc. (M)        |

|       |                          |                                    |
|-------|--------------------------|------------------------------------|
| 6220a | Mr. Gentle And Mr. Cool  |                                    |
| 6301a | At The Woodchoppers Ball | Solo 24 bars. (M)                  |
| 6301b | Artistry In Rhythm       | Solo with orch. (S)                |
| 6303e | Frontin / Sempre Amore   | Solo with orch. (M)                |
| 6306b | C Jam Blues              |                                    |
| 6310l | Lay-By                   |                                    |
| 6315m | C Jam Blues              | With orch to solo 28 bars. (M)     |
| 6316d | Guitar Amour             |                                    |
| 6319j | Stalking Monster         | Solo with orch. (SM)               |
| 6329g | Guitar Amour             |                                    |
| 6336b | Guitar Amour             |                                    |
| 6508k | Come Sunday              |                                    |
| 6528l | Come Sunday              |                                    |
| 6533y | Fiddle On The Diddler    | Solo with orch 112 bars to lc. (M) |

Life is brief, mine as yours, and to go into details on RN's violin soling with the Duke Ellington Orchestra in the fifties and sixties simply takes too much time. As a suggestion however, don't spend much time on looking for new versions of old vehicles, but listen to later compositions such as "Lay-By", "... Mr. Cool" and "Guitar Amour", many times you will be very surprised and pleased with your discoveries!

...ooo...