

The

ALTOSAX

of

EDWARD STITT
“SONNY”
“EDWARD HAMMOND
BOATNER”

Born: Boston, Massachusetts, Feb. 2, 1924
 Died: July 23, 1982

Introduction:

I remember very well the controversy over Sonny Stitt, and many of us fell for those contemporary anti-Stitt attitudes, led us to believe he was just a Charlie Parker clone. Of course he was not, although admittedly his altosax playing could indicate a certain knowledge of Bird. Personally I never go for the theories that held that a few artists are models for all the rest; art does not work that way, young talents often find the same solutions without any particular close connections to the greatest names. Sonny Stitt was a creative artist, and with regard to his tenor saxophone, nobody can blame him for copying anyone, he has his own style and with a great technique he created some of the most memorable music on his instrument. My personal meeting with Stitt is from Molde Jazz Festival in 1963, when his first words after descending from the airplane was "Where is Dexter, I wanna play!". And he did, and those who were there never forget it.

History:

Comes from a musical family, his father being a professor of music and his brother a concert pianist. Started to play the piano, at seven switched to clarinet and altosax. First jobs around Newark and Detroit and a short tour with the band of Tiny Bradshaw 1943. Was heard with Dizzy Gillespie in 1945-46 as the first important Charlie Parker-inspired altosaxophonist. Was almost inactive 1947-49 due to illness, in this period started doubling on tenorsax. Led together with Gene Ammons a band 1949-51, also with baritonesax. Throughout much of the rest of his career he led a variety of small groups, often assembling them ad hoc for each new engagement as he traveled from city to city. However, he rejoined Gillespie for a time in the late 1950s, also traveled with Jazz At The Philharmonic, replaced John Coltrane in the Miles Davis Quintet in 1960, played with Ammons again in the early 1960s, and from time to time worked during short tours with various all-star groups such as the Giants of Jazz (1971-72, with Gillespie, Kai Winding, Thelonious Monk, Al McKibbon and Art Blakey). His last performance took place in Japan just a few days before his death (ref. The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz a.o.).

SONNY STITT ALTOSAX SOLOGRAPHY

TINY BRADSHAW & HIS ORCHESTRA **Hollywood, Jan. 1944**
Bigband personnel supposed to be including Sonny Stitt, Don Hill (as).
AFRS Jubilee No. 62 and 64, not available.

TINY BRADSHAW & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. 1944**
Bigband personnel including Sonny Stitt (as).
Four titles were recorded for Regis, but no altosax soli.

TINY BRADSHAW & HIS ORCHESTRA **Hollywood, July 1944**
Bigband personnel supposed to be including Sonny Stitt, Don Hill (as).
AFRS Jubilee No. 90 and 93, no altosax on 90, but two on 93, "The Major And
The Minor", Solo with orch 16 bars. (M), but it does not sound like SS, however:

Ready, Set, Jump Solo with orch 16 bars. (M)

This sounds exactly like what one would expect, a fine altosax solo though too buried in orchestra, modern phrasing, no doubt, this is Sonny Stitt!!

BILLY ECKSTINE & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. May 2, 1945**
Bigband personnel including Sonny Stitt (as).
Four titles recorded for National, but no altosax soli.

DIZZY GILLESPIE SEXTET **NYC. May 15, 1946**
Dizzy Gillespie (tp, vo-5498), Sonny Stitt (as), Milt Jackson (vib), Al Haig (p),
Ray Brown (b), Kenny Clarke (dm), Gil Fuller (vo-5498), Alice Roberts (vo-
5499).
Four titles were recorded for Musicraft:

5497	One Bass Hit No. 1	Solo 8 bars. (M)
5498	Oop Bop Sh'Bam	Solo 16 bars. (M)
5499	A Handfulla Gimme	Solo 12 bars. (S)
5500	That's Earl Brother	Solo 16 bars. (M)

One cannot be but surprised and impressed at the quality of the altosax soli here. It is obvious that Sonny Stitt already has come a long way towards being one of the best performers on this instrument in early modern jazz. Where did he get it from, where was his starting point? Did he get it from Bird? The true fact is that we will never know. SS himself said it was his personal way of playing, and I believe him; I think he would have been exactly the same artist with young Bird dying in measles. The music was in the air for picking up; Bird was first, SS a few years later. To blame him for a style resembling one of the greatest artists in jazz is highly unfair. Enough of that. He solos confidently on all four items, and he already has developed the technique that became so impressing ten years later. No beginner's problem, here it is all out, bebop at its very best!!

**KENNY DORHAM / THE BEBOP BOYS /
SONNY STITT QUINTET** **NYC. Aug. 23, 1946**
Kenny Dorham (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Bud Powell (p), Al Hall (b), Wallace
Bishop (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Savoy (morning):

3338-2	Bebop In Pastel	Solo 16 bars. (M)
3338-3	Bebop In Pastel	As above. (M)
3338-4	Bebop In Pastel	As above. (M)
3339	Fool's Fancy	Solo 32 bars. (F)
3340	Bombay	Intro 4 bars. Soli 8 and 16 bars. (M)
3341	Ray's Idea	Solo 16 bars. (M)

NYC. Aug. 23, 1946
Personnel as Aug. 23, except Kenny Clarke (dm) replaces Bishop.
Date falsely given as Sept. 4.
Four titles (afternoon):

3342	Serenade To A Square	Soli 64 and 64 bars. (F)
3343	Good Kick	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (M)
3344	Seven Up	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (FM)

3344	Seven Up (alt.)	As above. (FM)
3345	Blues In Bebop	Soli 24 and 12 bars. (M)
3345	Blues In Bebop (alt.)	As above. (M)

A long day which gives a fine introduction to SS's music in this early period. He seems to be well integrated in the style, although he is more modest in the use of long runs as used later. His tone also lacks the roundness of the fifties. He has no problem with high tempo, "... Square", which in fact is "Cherokee", is a good example.

KENNY CLARKE & HIS 52nd STREET BOYS **NYC. Sept. 5, 1946**

Fats Navarro, Kenny Dorham (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Ray Abrams (ts), Eddie De Verteuil (bar), Bud Powell (p), John Collins (g), Al Hall (b), Kenny Clarke (dm).
Four titles were recorded for French Swing / Victor:

2792-1	Epistrophy	Solo 16 bars. (M)
2793-1	52 nd Street Theme	Solo with ens 16+8 bars, (bar) on bridge. (FM)
2794-1	Oop Bop Sh-Bam	With ens 16 bars to coda. (M)
2795-1	Rue Chaptal	Solo 12 bars. (FM)

Another legendary bebop session, and it is obvious that SS has been accepted as one of the prominent performers of the new and modern music. Since there are so many good musicians on the session, the blowing space for each is limited, but SS must be noted on all four items. The highlight may be "Rue ...", but note also the solid ending of "... Sh-Bam", in fact all are of historic interest.

THE BEBOP BOYS **NYC. Sept. 6, 1946**

Fats Navarro, Kenny Dorham (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Morris Lane (ts), Eddie De Verteuil (bar), Bud Powell (p), Al Hall (b), Kenny Clarke (dm), Gil Fuller (arr).
Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

3346/47	Boppin' A Riff	Soli 8 and 48 bars. (M)
3347-alt.	Boppin' A Riff	Solo 48 bars. (M)
3348/49	Fat Boy	Soli 24, 12, 12 and 12 bars. (FM)
3348-alt.	Fat Boy	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
3350/51	Everything's Cool	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (M)
3352/53	Webb City	Solo 32 bars. (F)

The day after, and almost the same personnel. To me, SS does not sound much like Bird to me, tone is different. All items have interesting altosax soli, and note "Webb ...", no problems with uptempo!

BILLY ECKSTINE & HIS ORCHESTRA **NYC. Oct. 5&6, 1946**

Bigband personnel including Sonny Stitt (as).
Eight titles were recorded for National, but no altosax soli.

RUSSELL JACQUET & HIS ALL STARS **Detroit, May 1948**

Russell Jacquet (tp, vo), J. J. Johnson (tb), Sonny Stitt (as), Maurice Simon (ts), Leo Parker (bar), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Al Lucas (b), Shadow Wilson (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Sensation:

B-4009	Relaxin'	Soli 16 and 8 bars to coda. (S)
B-4010	Lion's Roar	Intro 8 bars. (M)
B-4011	Suede Jacquet	Solo 18 bars. (M)
B-4011 alt.	Suede Jacquet	As above. (M)
B-4012	Scamper Roo	Solo 16 bars. (M)

When listening to the beautiful "Relaxin'", I have the feeling that SS has gone through important development and taken his artistry to higher level. Sometimes, excuse me, bebop can be felt as a technical exercise with little deeper emotions. Now SS has left this stage and showed us where he was going. The soli on the other items confirm this. Briefly back to Bird: From the first sessions, exciting as they are, I don't see SS as a challenge to the master. Now I do.

LORD NELSON & HIS BOPPERS **Detroit, June 1948**

Willie Wells (tp), Sonny "Lord Nelson" Stitt (as), Milt Jackson (vib), Will Davis (p), Jimmy Glover (b), Dave Heard (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Sensation:

B-4017	Stardust	Solo 32 bars to coda. (S)
B-4018	Red Shoes	Soli 8, 8, 8, 4, 4 bars. (FM)
B-4019	Body And Soul	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
B-4020	Ratio & Proportion	Solo 24 bars. (FM)

“Stardust” and “... Soul” are the first examples of SS’s ballad playing, that we shall meet so many times in the years to come. Beautiful, technically advanced, with the long elaborate endings that he loved. Excellent playing also in medium tempo. Since so many people had ideas, why didn’t they call him Vice-Bird?

LORD NELSON & HIS BOPPERS **Detroit, June 1948**

Russell Jacquet (tp), Sonny “Lord Nelson” Stitt (as), Milt Jackson (vib), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Ray Brown (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Sensation:

B-4021	Royal Wedding	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (FM)
B-4022	Be Bop Blues	Intro 4 bars. Solo 24 bars. (FM)
B-4023	Fine And Dandy	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F)
B-4024	3 rd Song	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (FM)

Except for the lack of ballads, this is a fine follow-up session to the previous two. Everything is in rather fast tempo, but SS executes them without problems.

STARS OF MODERN JAZZ **NYC. Dec. 25, 1949**

Miles Davis (tp), Bennie Green (tb), Sonny Stitt (as), Serge Chaloff (bar), Bud Powell (p), Curly Russell (b), Max Roach (dm), Symphony Sid (mc).

Voice of America Transcription from concert in Carnegie Hall, three titles:

6:10	Move	Soli 64, 4 and 4 bars. (F)
7:54	Hot House	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
3:37	Ornithology (NC)	Solo 32+24 bars (NC). (F)

A very exciting concert when you look at the personnel. SS gets his share of soloing, but he is not at his best here, possibly because the tempo is very high his soli do not quite have the flow one would expect. Best is Hot House”. Note that the last number “Ornithology” runs out before it is finished, and the altosax solo loses the last eight bars.

Note: The 1940s has been altosax only, but 1950 is introducing the tenorsax (Oct. 1949 to be precise). For most sessions SS uses both instruments, sometimes also with a baritonesax.

SONNY STITT QUARTET **NYC. Dec. 15, 1950**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, two have altosax:

122	Imagination	Solo 48 bars to coda. (S)
123	Cherokee	Solo 3 choruses of 64 bars to long coda. (F)

SS is extremely eager to play on this session, and on both instruments his eagerness is matched by his creativity. There is no space for even a brief piano solo. This is the second version of “Cherokee”, there will be many more later, but he already seems to master the high tempo very well. My favourite though is the beautiful slow “Imagination”, which promises well for the future.

SONNY STITT QUARTET **NYC. Jan. 31 or Feb. 1, 1951**

Sonny Stitt (as), Charles Bateman (p), Gene Wright (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Prestige:

133	Liza	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to 32 bars 4/4 with (b/dm) to solo 24 bars to coda. (FM)
134	Can’t We Be Friends?	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (SM)

Fine follow up of the session a fortnight earlier with a swinging “Liza” and a softer “... Friends?”.

SONNY STITT ACC. BY**JOHNNY RICHARDS ORCHESTRA****NYC. March 18, 1953**

Don Elliott (mellophone), Kai Winding (tb), Sid Cooper (fl, ts, pic), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), George Berg (bar), Horace Silver (p), Charles Mingus (b), Don Lamond (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Roost, two have altosax:

- R1157-2 Sweet And Lovely Soli 32 and 8 bars to very long coda. (S)
R1158-1 If I Could Be With You Soli 32 bars to very long coda. (S)

Beautiful session and arrangements and with the most exquisite sax playing everywhere. The altosax is used in slow tempo, two lovely performances!

SONNY STITT ACC. BY**JOHNNY RICHARDS ORCHESTRA****NYC. Nov. 16, 1953**

Don Elliott (mellophone), Kai Winding (tb), Jerry Sanfino (pic, ts), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), George Berg (bar), Al Williams (p), Charles Mingus (b), Jo Jones (dm), Santo Miranda (cga).
Four titles were recorded for Roost, two have altosax:

- 1179-3 Pink Satin Solo 40 bars to coda. (S)
1180-4 Shine On Harvest Moon Soli 48 and 16 bars. (M)

Fine followup of the March session! Pretty "... Satin", but the highlight is "... Moon", note the last half of first chorus, SS has good control of his horn by now!!!

SONNY STITT QUARTET**Boston, early 1954**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts, bar), Dean Earl (p), Bernard Griggs (b), Marquis Foster (dm).
Issued as "Live At The Hi-Hat Vol. 1".

Eight titles, six have altosax soli:

- 3:50 Sweet Georgia Brown Soli 4 and 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
2:35 I'm In The Mood For Love Soli 48 and 8 bars to coda. (SM)
11:20 Tri-Horn Blues Solo 14 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
4:40 If I Should Lose You Soli 64 and 32 bars to coda. (SM)
2:50 Wigwam Soli 4 and 2 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
3:17 My Melancholy Baby Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars.
Solo 8 bars to coda. (M)

The Hi-Hat recordings present SS in top shape, it does not matter that the piano occasionally is out of tune, and the recording balance is not quite professional. Formally so to speak, "Tri-Horn Blues" is the most exciting item, since SS plays all three saxophones, and the altosax solo is particularly exciting. All items here have something to offer, as the swinging "... Baby" as a good example, and he shoes his command of high tempi through "Wigwam", but my personal highlight is the beautiful and strong "... Lose You".

Boston, Feb. 11, 1954

Same. Issued as "Live At The Hi-Hat Vol. 2".

Fifteen titles, four have altosax soli:

- 8:06 S. O. S. Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
4:24 They Can't Take That Away From Me Solo 36 bars to coda. (M)
12:22 One O'Clock Jump Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
6:10 How High The Moon Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

One might believe that Vol. 2 only contains the leftovers, but such is not the case. Note in particular "... Jump", another item having all three saxophones!

SONNY STITT QUARTET**Chi. possibly May 1955**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Norman Simmons (p), Victor Sproles (b), Vernell Fournier (dm).

Three titles were recorded at the Bee Hive Lounge (Bob Roberts collection "Chicago Jazz Spots"), one has altosax:

- 1:53 Rhythm Changes (NC) Solo 12+32 bars (NC).
56 bars 4/4 with (dm) (NC). (F)

This item, which may be “Seven Come Eleven”, starts in the altosax solo, and we probably get only a small part of it.

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC

NYC. Sept. 17, 1955

Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge (tp), Bill Harris (tb), Sonny Stitt (as), Flip Phillips, Ben Webster, Lester Young (ts), Oscar Peterson (p), Herb Ellis (g), Ray Brown (b), Louie Bellson (dm).

Concert in Carnegie Hall, only two titles have SS:

Slow Blues	Solo 12 bars. (S)
Lover Man – Ballad Medley	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)

Particularly the beautiful version of “Lover Man” should be noted.

**SONNY STITT WITH
QUINCY JONES’ ORCHESTRA**

NYC. Sept. 30, 1955

Jimmy Nottingham, Ernie Royal (tp), J. J. Johnson (tb), Anthony Ortega (fl, as), Sonny Stitt (as), Seldon Powell (ts), Cecil Payne (bar), Hank Jones (p), Freddie Green (g), Oscar Pettiford (b), Jo Jones (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Roost:

My Funny Valentine	Solo 56 bars to coda. (S)
Lover	Break. Solo with orch 3 choruses of 64 bars. Long coda. (F)
Sonny’s Bunny	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
Love Walked In	Soli/straight 8, 8, 32, 8, 8, 8 and 8 bars. Coda. (M)

NYC. Oct. 9, 1955

Personnel as above except Thad Jones, Joe Newman (tp), Jimmy Cleveland (tb) replace Nottingham, Royal and Johnson.

Four titles were recorded for Roost:

If You Could See Me Now	Solo 64 bars. (S)
Quince alt.	As below. (SM)
Quince	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Coda. (SM)
Come Rain Or Come Shine alt.	As below. (S)
Come Rain Or Come Shine	Solo 72 bars to coda. (S)
Star Dust alt.	As below. (S)
Star Dust	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)

Maybe you have not thought about it, but these are the first recording sessions after Bird passed away. My imagination possibly carries me away, but I consider his altosax playing here more free and void of stress than ever before. Beautiful ballads and gorgeous uptempo as in “Lover”, or the elegant “... Bunny” and “Love ...” combining simple phrases close to the melody with long flashing runs. The sessions here have also the pleasure of having Green’s guitar, listen to learn how much that means for swing!! And back to the ballads, even with alternate takes, is it necessary to compare Sonny with Bird, they are both great artists with more difference in their expression than ‘common knowledge’ tells you.

SONNY STITT

NYC. Dec. 15, 1955

Sonny Stitt (as), Hank Jones (p), Freddie Green (g), Wendell Marshall (b), Shadow Wilson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Roost:

There Will Never Be Another You	Soli 64 and 64 bars. (M)
Yesterdays	Soli 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S)
The Nearness Of You	Soli 32 and 20 bars to long coda. (S)
The Nearness Of You alt.	As above. (S)
Biscuit Mix	Intro 8 bars. Soli 4 and 2 choruses of 12 bars. Coda. (FM)

NYC. prob. Dec. 16, 1955

Personnel as above except Green omitted.

Four titles:

Afterwards	Soli 3 and 2 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
If I Should Lose You	Soli 64 and 32 bars. (SM)
If I Should Lose You alt.	As above. (SM)
Blues For Bobby	Soli 36 and 12 bars. (S)
My Melancholy Baby	Solo 3 and 2 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

The first of the ‘altosax only’ sessions for Roost, and the format is now fixed; a mixture of ballads and blues, slow and very fast, and possibly by clear purpose, a total program combining easy listening with high class playing. And rarely any of the famous bebop tunes, smart choice... Here you can pick and choose, among delicate piano and Freddie Green, but don’t bypass the two lovely versions of “... Nearness ...”!

MODERN JAZZ SEXTET

NYC. Jan. 12, 1956

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), John Lewis (p), Skeeter Best (g), Percy Heath (b), Charlie Persip (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Norgran:

2652-6	Tour De Force	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
2653-1	Dizzy Meets Sonny	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 3 choruses 4/4 with (tp). (F)
2654-1	Ballad Medley – Old Folks	Solo 32 bars. (S)
2655-1	Blues For Bird	Intro with (tp). Solo 36 bars to duet with (tp) 12 bars and coda. (S)
2656-1	Mean To Me	Duet with (tp) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. Duet to coda. (M)

A touch of genius (by Norman Granz?) brings SS together with Dizzy, let us remember that in fact that ten years earlier, just these two made SS’s first studio recording session together, which forever placed this great sax player into the hall of jazz fame. SS has come a long way since then, as evident on the fast “...Sonny” and particularly the chase at the end! Excellent solo in medium tempo on “Tour ...” and even better on “Mean ...”. Finally space was made for two slow tunes, a delightful ballad in “... Folks”, and then “... Bird” (I am not confident that the name of this blues was suggested by SS, tired as he must have been by now of the neverending comparisons, never to his benefit) (having a fine guitar solo) having a magnificent altosax solo (and I am sure he was saying hello to Bird through his first bars of his solo). A session you just have to play!!

SONNY STITT QUARTET

NYC. Sept. 14, 1956

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jimmy Jones (p), Ray Brown (b), Jo Jones (dm).

Date also falsely given as Jan. 1957.

Ten titles were recorded for Verve, issued as “New York Jazz”, seven have altosax soli (4014, 4015, 4018 and 4021 also with tenorsax soli):

4013-5	I Know That You Know	Straight 1 to solo 7 choruses of 32 bars. Straight 32 bars to coda. (F)
4014-2	If I Had You	Solo 64 bars. (S)
4015-2	Alone Together	Solo 40 bars to long coda. (SM)
4017-2	Down Home Blues	Soli 36 and 36 bars. (S)
4018-2	Sonny’s Tune	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
4019-1	Stars Fell On Alabama	Solo 64 bars to coda. (S)
4021-1	Between The Devil And TDBS	Solo 32 bars to coda. (FM)

Magnificent session! The inspiration and creativity SS in general had in the fifties should not be forgotten! Here you get the slow and groovy blues in “Down ...” and the most lovely ballads in “... Had You” and “... Alabama” (how much did Bird leave us of this?...), and at the same time strong and swinging uptempo playing with the flashing long “... You Know” as an obvious highlight!

DIZZY GILLESPIE’S ALL STARS

LA. Oct. 16, 1956

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Stan Getz (ts), John Lewis (p), Herb Ellis (g), Ray Brown (b), Stan Levey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Verve, issued as “For Musicians Only”:

4029-2	Be-Bop	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. 64 bars 8/8 with (dm) to solo 32 bars. (F)
4030-2	Wee	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
4031-2	Dark Eyes	Solo 7 ½ choruses of 32 bars. (F)
4031-3	Dark Eyes	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
4032-3	Lover Come Back To Me	Solo 3 choruses of 64 bars. (F)

This must be one of the fastest recording sessions in jazz history, tempowise that is! Everybody seem to be on their toes, trying to convince the others that this is child’s play, of course they can manage these tempi with no effort. And they can!! Dizzy, Sonny and Stan (a marvellous addition to the Dizzy/Sonny cooperation) give everything they have got through 52 minutes of full speed, “for muscians only”, no not at all, for all of us to marvel more than sixty years later. This programming of course suits SS very well, open as he always was for competition, as well having the technique and inventiveness to join it. “Be-Bop” is almost thirteen minutes, “Wee” ‘only’ eight and a half. Where are the unissued takes!?! This magnificent session is really a must, a long and uninterrupted highlight!

JATP ALL STARS

Seattle, Autumn 1956

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Stan Getz (ts), John Lewis (p), Percy Heath (b), Connie Kay (dm).

Five titles were recorded at concert, three have SS:

Groovin’ High	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
The Nearness Of You	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
Shaw ‘Nuff	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Nothing can beat the previous session, but the guys seem to thrive well together, and SS plays up to his very best in uptempo, with a nice ballad version of “The Nearness ...” added.

SONNY STITT QUARTET

NYC. late 1956 or Jan. 23, 1957

Sonny Stitt (as), Charles “Dolo” Coker (p), Edgar Willis (b), Kenny Dennis (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Roost:

What Is This Thing Called Love?	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 32 bars to long coda. (FM)
Sweet Georgia Brown alt.	As below. (F)
Sweet Georgia Brown	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 32 bars to coda. (F)
Blues For Yard alt. 1	Solo 48 bars. (S)
Blues For Yard alt. 2	Solo 60 bars. (S)
Blues For Yard	Solo 48 bars. (S)
Harlem Nocturne alt.	As below. (S)
Harlem Nocturne	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
Blue Moon	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 24 bars to coda. (FM)
Because Of You	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to long coda. (FM)
Windy Ride	Solo 7 and 7 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 3 choruses 4/4 with (dm). Solo 24 bars to coda. (FM)
But Not For Me	Solo 3 and 1 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
Scrapple From The Apple	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 64 bars to coda. (F)

Quoting Mosaic, this was SS’s first working band, lasting at least a year, but it made only this session, quite unfortunate because it is a solid and groovy one. As you can see, it has all kinds of variations; try good old “... Georgia ...” in a violent

tempo, so exciting that they wanted two takes! And I suggest you dig "... Yard", could Yard himself have done it better than this slow blues? And throw in some time for "... Nocturne", you will not regret it. Otherwise, the excellent liner notes tells you everything you need to know, or don't need to know, but of course you must have the box!!

SONNY STITT**NYC. May 12, 1957**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Bobby Timmons (p), Edgar Willis (b), Kenny Dennis or Dave Bailey (dm).

Twelve titles were recorded for Verve, eleven issued, five have altosax:

20985-3	Easy To Love	Straight 32 to solo 32 bars. 16 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 16 bars to coda. (M)
20988-4	Autumn In New York	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
20994-5	Original	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses. Solo 8 bars to coda. (F)
20995-4	Avalon	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 32 bars to coda. (F)
20996-1	Blues Greasy	Solo 36 bars. (S)

"Attention should be paid the crisp, functional accompanying unit" says the LP liner notes, and just so, even with some obvious rhythmic miscommunication, the bass in particular swings the whole session strongly, note the gorgeously swinging "Avalon" that could fit into a 78rpm., obviously to SS's delight (Bobby Timmons is only one of the brilliant pianists of the fifties that deserves a solography to keep his memory alive). Dig his "Blues ..." and his beautiful version of "... New York"! Or the whole session, alto or tenor, for that matter!!

OSCAR PETERSON**Newport, R.I., July 7, 1957**

Collective personnel: Roy Eldridge (tp), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Oscar Peterson (p), Herb Ellis (g), Ray Brown (b), Jo Jones (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Verve at Newport Jazz Festival, two have altosax soli ("Roy's ..." also tenorsax):

Autumn In New York	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
Roy's Son / Allen's Alley	Solo 8 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Note another beautiful version of "... New York". The uptempo item of many names starts out with fine altosax playing but changes to tenorsax for another solo and chase.

SONNY STITT QUARTET**NYC. Aug. 30, 1957**

Sonny Stitt (as), Hank Jones (p), Wendell Marshall (b), Shadow Wilson (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Roost:

Cherokee	Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 64 bars. Straight 32 bars to coda. (F)
Engos, The Blues alt.	As below. (M)
Engos, The Bloos	Straight 2 to solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 24 bars. (M)
Body And Soul	Soul 64 bars to long coda. (S)
I Didn't Know What Time It Was	Solo 3 choruses of 36 bars. Straight 36 bars to coda. (M)
The Best Things In Life Are Free	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. Straight 32 bars. (FM)
People Will Say We're In Love alt.	Solo 4 choruses of 48 bars. Solo 48 bars to coda. (M)
People Will Say We're In Love	Solo 3 choruses of 48 bars. Solo 12 bars to long coda. (M)
Bloosey	Straight 2 to solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 24 bars. (FM)
Bird's Eye	Straight 32 to solo 64 bars. 64 bars 4/4 with (dm). Straight with (b) to coda. (FM)

It Might As Well Be Spring alt.

As below. (S)

It Might As Well Be Spring

Intro 4 bars to solo 40 bars.
Solo 24 bars to long coda. (S)

Yet another rhythm section, and another excellent 'altosax only' session! Again Mosaic's liner notes gives you detailed information, but it cannot hurt to point out that there are some magnificent ballad items here; "Body ..." and "... Spring"s, or that you will have difficulties choosing among the various medium swingers but possibly end up with "... Best Things ..." as a highlight. Anyway, everything is highly enjoyable here!

JATP ALL STARS**Chi. Sept. 29, 1957**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Lester Young, Flip Phillips, Illinois Jacquet (ts), Oscar Peterson (p), Herb Ellis (g), Ray Brown (b), Jo Jones (dm).

This session was previously unissued but appears now on Mosaic's JATP box.

One title was recorded at the Civic Opera House, SS plays (ts) on "Merry-Go-Round", and his solo on "Ballad Medley" is obviously edited out, but:

The Slow Blues Solo 24 bars. (S)

LA. Oct. 9, 1957

Same. Three titles were recorded at the Shrine Auditorium, SS plays (ts) on "Merry-Go-Round" but:

The Slow Blues Solo 24 bars. (S)

Ballad Medley: This Is Always Solo 24 bars to long coda. (S)

The two concerts are pretty much similar, but it is always a pleasure to hear SS in this slow tempo. The applause before Illinois on "Ballad ..." proves that most likely another version of "... Always" is lost.

ELLA FITZGERALD**LA. Oct. 9, 1957**

Large personnel including Sonny Stitt (as), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).

Date as erroneously been given as Oct. 25.

Two titles were recorded at the Shrine Auditorium, but no soli (whatsoever).

SONNY STITT QUINTET**Hollywood, Oct. 11, 1957**

Roy Eldridge (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Oscar Peterson (p), Herb Ellis (g), Ray Brown (b), Stan Levey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "Only The Blues":

21592-1 Blues For Bags Solo 14 choruses of 12 bars.
3 choruses 4/4 with (tp). (M)

21593-1 Cleveland Blues Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars.
Soli 12 and 4 bars. (S)

21594-1 The String Solo 8 bars. Solo 8 choruses of
32 bars. 3 choruses 4/4 and
8/8 with (tp). Solo 8 bars. (F)

21595-1 B. W. Blues Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars.
6 choruses 4/4 with (tp). (M)

Most probably this session will be highly appreciated by SS enthusiasts. The presence of Eldridge, and their coplaying are highly fascinating, combining modern trends with vintage tradition into excellent mainstream, well supported by the very professional rhythm section. "The String" is perhaps not that exciting, SS has executed fast soli better, and he also comes in eight bars late. The rest of the session is however all old-fashioned blues. The two medium blues are quite similar in structure and execution, and the results are outstanding, with Roy's presence and the chases contributing to the excitement. And of course, the slow groovy blues of "Cleveland ..." is magnificent, dig this one!!

same date

Same except Eldridge omitted.

Three titles, 21598-2 – 21598-8 are false start and breakdowns, barely out of the straight chorus, having no interest. In addition there are several 'inserts' where SS practices the tempo shift to a slower ending. There are only two complete takes (also issued is something called a 'composite mastertake', probably take 9 coupled with one of the inserts).

21596-1 I Didn't Know What Time It Was Solo 3 choruses of 36 bars. (M)

21597-1 I Remember You Solo 4 choruses of 36 bars. (M)

21598-1 I Know That You Know Straight 1 to solo 11 choruses of
32 bars to straight. (F) and coda. (SM)

21598-9 I Know That You Know As above. (SM)

Obviously there were both time and energy left after doing four tunes with Roy, needing only one take of each. SS continues with two standard tunes, ok but nothing special, but then finishes with an "I Know ...", almost 24 minutes of hard work, that must be the fastest in jazz altosax history, eleven improvised choruses in less than four minutes. And even then, SS manages to get music out of it! The first take proceeds perfectly for seven choruses until problems arise but SS continues playing. Both the two complete takes have problems with the finale, thus some editing was prepared, acceptable under the circumstances.

JATP ALL STARS **Chi. Oct. 20, 1957**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Stan Getz (ts), John Lewis (p), Percy Heath (b), Connie Kay (dm).

Five titles were recorded at the Opera House, issued on Hall of Fame as "The Titans", three have SS:

12:05	Now's The Time	Solo 15 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 4 bars. (FM)
4:00	Autumn In New York	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
7:05	Wee	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Although not as hot as last time these three horns played together, this session is nevertheless filled with exciting music, and SS's contribution to "... The Time" is long and highly noteworthy. No problem with "Wee" either but unusually brief. A lovely ballad performance with "... New York"!

DIZZY GILLESPIE **NYC. Dec. 11, 1957**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Sonny Stitt (as-"Anythin'", ts), Ray Bryant (p), Tommy Bryant (b), Charlie Persip (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "Duets", one has altosax:

Anythin'	Altosax solo 4 choruses and tenorsax solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (S)
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"Anythin'", an untitled themeless blues, only released on CD. Here SS plays both instruments in the most convincing way, dig this!!

SONNY STITT QUARTET **NYC. April 2, 1958**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jimmy Jones (p), unknown (b), Charles Persip (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Roost, issued as "The Saxophones Of Sonny Stitt", four have altosax:

I'll Be Seeing You	Solo 32+20 bars to coda. (SM)
In A Little Spanish Town	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Straight 16 bars to coda. (M)
Foot Tapper	Soli 11 and 3 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
Wind-Up	Intro 8 bars to solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 24+8 bars to coda. (SM)

Fine altosax playing here! Note particularly "... Seeing You", only two minutes long, and the very fast blues "... Tapper". Believe it or not but almost five years have passed since SS's previous Roost-tenorsax-sessions, the alto being allconsuming in this period. The Mosaic reissue is a great benefit, and good liner notes almost make comments unnecessary, this is great music!

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC **Paris, April 30, 1958**

Roy Eldridge (tp), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Lou Levy (p), Herb Ellis (g), Max Bennett (b), Gus Johnson (dm).

Concert at Olympia Theatre, three titles with SS, (ts) only on "The Walker" but:

6:27	Idaho	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
4:41	Autumn In New York	Solo 64 bars to very long coda. (S)

Good solo on "Idaho", but note in particular the magnificent "... New York"!

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC **Paris, May 1, 1958**

Dizzy Gillespie, Roy Eldridge (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Stan Getz, Coleman Hawkins (ts), Oscar Peterson (p), Herb Ellis (g), Ray Brown (b), Gus Johnson (dm).

Soundtrack to movie "Les Tricheurs", seven titles (possibly one more, "Finale" on French LP Versailles MMB600), three have SS:

- 1394 On The Alamo Solo 64 bars. (M)
 1395 Get Happy Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars.
 Solo 16 bars. (F)
 1396 Sweet Georgia Brown Solo 7 choruses of 32 bars.
 4 choruses 8/8 with (tp-DG, ts-SG). (F)

“Get ...” and “Sweet ...” have an insane tempo, and it is truly a marvel that these guys, including SS, can get interesting music out of it. More pleasant though is to listen to “... Alamo”.

JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC Manchester, May 17, 1958

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Lou Levy (p), Ray Brown (b), Gus Johnson (dm).

First concert from Free Trade Hall, three have SS, tenorsax on “Blues After Dark” and “The Blues Walk” but:

- 2:53 Autumn In New York Solo 32 bars to very long coda. (S)

same

Same. Second concert, three have SS, tenorsax on “Blues After Dark” and “The Blues Walk” but:

- 2:43 Lover Man Solo 32 bars to very long coda. (S)

Brussels, May 19, 1958

Same. Four titles have SS, tenorsax on “Blues After Dark”, On The Sunny Side Of The Street” and “The Blues Walk” but:

- 3:04 Lover Man Solo 32 bars to very long coda. (S)

Stockholm, May 20, 1958

Same. Four titles have SS, tenorsax on “Pennies From Heaven” and “Rock And Roll” but:

- 3:40 Stardust Solo 16+32 bars to very long coda. (S)

- 3:18 If I Should Lose You Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars
 to very long coda. (S)

Oslo, May 23, 1958

Same. Concert, two titles were preserved, both altosax:

- 3:38 Lover Man Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)

- 4:21 Cherokee Solo 4 choruses of 64 bars.
 Solo 16 bars to straight 16 bars. (F)

Zürich, June 2, 1958

Same. Four titles, two have altosax:

- 3:27 Cherokee Solo 3 choruses of 64 bars.
 Solo 32 bars to coda. (F)

- 3:43 Lover Man Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)

SS is in brilliant shape with the JATP on this European tour, where he is coupled with Dizzy in a quintet setup. Most of his altosax performanes are slow ballads, always played with superb taste, combining emphasis on the melody with flashing runs. Add a few very fast “Cherokee”s, and you have lots of excellent music ready for listening.

SONNY STITT / SAN SALVADOR QUINTET Newport, Rh. I., July 7, 1958

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Gildo Mahones (p), San Salvador (g), Martin Rivera (b), Louis Hayes (dm).

Two titles were recorded at Newport Jazz Festival, one has altosax:

- Cherokee Straight. Solo 3 choruses of 64 bars.
 Straight 64 bars to coda. (F)

Another exciting “Cherokee”, this time with a guitarsolo.

SONNY STITT QUARTET Chi. Aug. 1, 1958

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Barry Harris (p), Bill Austin (b), Frank Gant (dm).

Ten titles were recorded for Argo, nine issued as “Burnin’” (most easily found on spotify as Barry Harris Trio!), eight have altosax:

8942	Ko-Ko	Intro. Solo 2 choruses of 64 bars. Solo 64 bars. Coda. (F)
8943	I’ll Tell You Later	Soli 24 and 24 bars. (S)
8944	It’s Hippiier Than That	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 36 bars to coda. (M)
8945	Lover Man	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
8946	A Minor Sax	Straight 16 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 32+12 bars to coda. (M)
8948	Reed And A Half	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Straight 36 bars to coda. (FM)
8949	Look For The Silver Lining	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 36 bars to coda. (M)
8950	How High The Moon	Intro 4 bars to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo/straight 32 bars to coda. (M)

Here you can have SS copying Bird’s “Ko-Ko”, you can have another great “Lover Man”, and you can have a “... Moon” in slower tempo as usual! Nevertheless, the merit of this session lies primarily in the piano and associates, creating a solid swinging session of great quality, making tunes like “... Half”, “... Lining” and others in similar tempi sound fresh and groovy. Also, don’t forget “... Later”, one of SS’s typical slow blues tunes.

SONNY STITT QUARTET

Chi. ca. 1958

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), possibly Barry Harris (p), Bill Austin (b), Frank Gant (dm).

Note: Barry Harris claimed he was not on this session. Maybe personnel and date are all wrong.

Eight titles were recorded for Argo, four have altosax:

Propapagoon	Soli 32 and 12 bars to coda. (S)
This Is Always	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
Cool Blues	Soli 7 and 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
Everyone Does	Intro 8 bars to solo 7 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars to coda 8 bars. (F)

A very lively session with SS in his most inspirative mood on both instruments, and particularly the altosax is treated like it is organically connected to the artist’s body; try the fast “Everyone Does”, incredible! “Cool...” shows that not only Bird could play this one, and the beautiful ballad “... Always” as well as the slow blues “Propapagoon” have magnificent altosax artistry. There is not much more to say; this swings, and if you are a SS fan like me, you will have a very nice time with this session!!

SONNY STITT QUARTET

NYC. Feb. 9, 1959

Sonny Stitt (as, ts, vo-22678), Amos Trice (p), George Morrow (b), Lennie McBrowne (dm).

Twelve titles were recorded for Verve, issued as “The Hard Swing”, eight have altosax:

22676-2	Presto	Soli 5 and 3 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
22677-2	If I Had You	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
22678-1	That’s The Way To Be	Solo 16 bars. Coda. (M)
22679-10	I’ll Remember April	Soli 3 and 1 choruses of 48 bars. (FM)
22683-16	What’s New?	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
22685-6	After You’ve Gone	Intro (SM) to solo 5 choruses of 40 bars (F) to coda. (SM)
22686-3	I Got Rhythm	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars to long coda. (F)
22687-6	Blues For Lester	Soli 48 and 24 bars to coda. (S)

Another great session with SS in playing mood (as if he wasn’t that always!!). Very interesting to hear him treat good old vehicles like “After...” and “... Rhythm”,

and he even sings, very informally on "... To Be" but also produces a solo. The highlights must nevertheless be in slow tempo; his typical blues for "... Lester", and the magnificent "I Had You", where he demonstrates his unique ability to play parts of the melody quite straight forward, for then throw in some long runs, and the separate approaches always fit perfectly together.

**SONNY STITT WITH
JIMMY GIUFFRE'S ORCHESTRA**

Hollywood, Feb. 16, 1959

Lee Katzman, Jack Sheldon (tp), Frank Rosolino (tb), Al Pollen (tu), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jimmy Rowles (p), Buddy Clark (b), Lawrence Marable (dm), Jimmy Giuffre (arr, cond, comp, ts).

Ten titles were recorded for Verve, tenorsax only on 22697-2 "Uptown" but (notation somewhat simplified for improved readability):

22688-17	New York Blues	With orch. Soli 4 and 20 bars. Long coda. (S)
22689-22	Giuff	Solo with orch 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
22690-23	Laura	Long intro to solo 48+8 bars, orch on last bridge, to coda. (S)
22691-15	Down Country	Soli 12, 24 and 12 bars. 36 bars 4/4 and 2/2 with (ts-JG). Solo 12 bars. Duet 12 bars to coda. (SM)
22692-31	I Let A Song Go Out OMH	Solo/straight 64 bars with orch. (S)
22693-5	Singin' In The Rain	Soli 32, 64 and 16 bars to coda. (M)
22694-12	Two For Timbucktu	Solo 16 choruses of 12 bars, 4 choruses with orch. (F)
22695-	Sonny Boy	Soli 64, 4 and 4 bars. Long coda. (M)
22696-9	Downtown	Soli 80, 4 and 12 bars. Long coda. (SM)

Exciting with some orchestral background and arrangements for a change, although the personnel is in my opinion to sparse. SS in an excellent shape is flying, and there is another incredible uptempo item in "... Timbuc(?)ktu". Another highly interesting item is the seven minutes "... Country", were SS's altosax battles with Giuffre's tenorsax. Otherwise there is something to find everywhere.

SONNY STITT

NYC. April 10, 1959

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jimmy Jones (p), probably Aaron Bell (b), Charlie Persip (dm). Ten titles were recorded for Roost, issued as "A Little Bit Of Stitt", seven have altosax:

60029-6	Star Eyes	Solo 72 and 20 bars to coda. (SM)
60030-1	Laura alt.	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
60030-2	Laura	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
60033-3	Cocktails For Two	Soli 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S)
60035-8	When The Red, Red Robin	Solo 64+8 bars to coda. (SM)
60036-10	Don't Take Your Love From Me	Solo 64 bars to coda. (S)
60037-4	After The Late, Late Show	Soli 36 and 20 bars to coda. (S)
60038-11	For All We Know	Soli 64 and 20 bars to coda. (M)

This is a magnificent session, performed with such elegance that one almost cannot trust what is heard! The tempi are all pleasantly quite low, with "... Know" as an exception, played faster than usual. SS however colours his improvisations with long runs, creating fantastic contrasts. If one should introduce SS to a newcomer, this session could be a good example. All items are highly noteworthy ballads, though "... Late Show" being a blues, and if highlights are needed, the choice is quite difficult with "Cocktails ..." and "... Your Love" as strong candidates!

**SONNY STITT WITH
OSCAR PETERSON TRIO**

Manchester, May 9, 1959

Personnel as below.

Recorded at Free Trade Hall, first concert, three titles, (ts) only on "Blues" but:

2:26	Wee	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
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3:36 Old Folks Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)

same

Same, second concert, three titles, (ts) only on "Easy Living" and "Blues" but:

3:29 There'll Never Be Another You Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Incredible how SS expresses his joy of playing, a more enthusiastic sax player cannot be found in jazz!! Three fine tunes covering a variety of tempi.

SONNY STITT WITH

OSCAR PETERSON TRIO

Paris, May 18, 1959

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Oscar Peterson (p), Ray Brown (b), Ed Thigpen (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Verve, five have altosax:

50001-7 I Can't Give You Anything But Love Straight 32 to solo 64 bars.
Solo/straight 36 bars to coda. (M)

50002-4 Au Privave Soli 6 and 5 choruses of 12 bars. (F)

50003-2 The Gypsy Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)

50007-3 I'll Remember April Straight 1 to solo 2 choruses of 48 bars.
Straight 48 bars to coda. (FM)

50008-10 Scapple From The Apple Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of
32 bars. Straight 32 bars to coda. (F)

A session almost disappearing amongs so many magnificent sessions, but SS does nevertheless a very good job on both instruments. Particularly noteworthy seem to "Au Privave" and "The Gypsy".

SONNY STITT

NYC. Sept. 21, 1959

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jimmy Jones (p), unknown (b), Roy Haynes (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for Roost, issued as "The Sonny Side Of Stitt", six have altosax:

Day By Day Solo 16 bars. (S) to soli
32 and 20 bars to coda. (SM)

Don't Worry 'Bout Me Solo 16 bars. (S) to solo
24 bars. (M) to very long coda. (S)

Skylark Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)

I'll Remember April Solo 3 choruses of 48 bars to coda. (M)

Moonray Solo 64 bars to long coda. (SM)

Old Fashioned Blues Soli 36 and 24 bars to coda. (S)

Roost certainly has found a receipt the company is satisfied with, and this session is an excellent follow up of April 10 some months earlier. The tempi are quite slow, even "... April" is played slower than usual. SS is having a ball, bathing in double-time, and all items sound wonderfully great! Play all but start with the haunting "Moonray", as well as "... Blues" where the piano also is remarkable.

SONNY STITT QUARTET

L.A. Dec. 21/22, 1959

Sonny Stitt (as), Lou Levy (p), Leroy Vinnegar (b), Mel Lewis (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Verve:

26551-3 Blue Devil Blues Straight 24 to solo 36 bars.
Straight 24 bars. (M)

26552-1 Blues Offering Soli 36 and 12 bars. (S)

26553-7 Two Bad Days Blues Straight 2 to solo 7 choruses.
Solo 3 to straight 2 horuses. (FM)

26554-1 Blue Smile Straight 2 to solo 6 choruses.
Solo/straight 11 choruses to fade out. (F)

26555-9 Blue Sunday Solo 36 bars. Coda. (S)

26556-1 Mornin' After Blues Solo 36 bars. (S)

26557-3 Home Free Blues Straight 24 to solo 36 bars.
Straight 24 bars. Coda. (M)

26558-3	Blue Prelude	Solo 80 bars. (S)
26559-8	Frankie And Johnny	Soli/straight 48 and 48 bars. (SM)
26560-1	Birth Of The Blues	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo/straight 24 bars. (SM)
26561-3	Hymnal Blues	Straight 2 to solo 5 choruses. Solo 3 to straight 2 choruses to fade out. (M)

Two days of wonderful altosax blues (three items are not really blues, or blues only in name), and SS is an expert in this. The receipt is well known; combining strong, groovy laidback phrases with long flashing runs over several bars, highly impressing. My favourites are the slow blues, like "... Sunday" and "Mornin' ...".

LA. Dec. 23, 1959

Same. Ten titles:

26562-2	The Gypsy	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
26563-1	I CoverThe Waterfront	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (SM)
26564-2	Lazy Bones	Straight 32 to solo 32 bars. Solo 8 to straight 8 bars. (S)
26565-3	It's You Or No One	Straight 32 to solo 32 bars Solo/straight 40 bars to coda. (M)
26566-2	There Is No Greater Love	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
26567-3	Sunday	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to long coda. (M)
26568-4	Jaunty	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 24 bars to coda. (M)
26569-12	All Of Me	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
26570-8	Lonesome Road	Straight 32 to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 16 bars. (M)
26571-7	Just Friends	Soli 64 and 32 bars. (M)

Two days of blues seem to be enough, thus the third day is allocated standards. Good music although the routine aspect is quite obvious.

SONNY STITT

LA. June 20, 1960

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Lou Levy (p), Paul Chambers (b), Stan Levey (dm).
Ten titles were recorded for Verve, nine issued as "Previously Unissued Recordings", six have altosax:

23270-4	Don't Get Around Much Anymore	Straight 32 to solo 32 bars. Solo/straight 48 bars to coda. (M)
23271-3	I Let A Song Go Out Of MH	Straight 32 to solo 32 bars. Straight 16 bars to coda. (SM)
23274-10	Solitude	Soli 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S)
23277-12	I'm Beginning To See TL	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo/straight 28 bars to coda. (M)
23278-5	Perdido	Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Straight 16 and 12 bars to coda. (M)
23279-2	Sophisticated Lady	Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)

This session smells of Duke Ellington. The emphasis is on altosax, and "... Lady" and the only two minutes "Solitude" are nice highlights. Many fine details also on the other items, although the session seems somewhat passive and sort of routine. But aren't most session just that, and does it matter as long as it sounds good?

SONNY STITT

NYC. ca. June/July 1960

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jimmy Jones (p), unknown (b), Roy Haynes (dm).
Date is probably early June (ref. Mosaic).

Ten titles were recorded for Roost, four have altosax:

60142	Angel Eyes	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (SM)
60143	It All Depends On You	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

- 60145 Embraceable You Intro 8 to solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)
 60151 Spinning Straight 2 to solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

There may be more exciting SS sessions, but each of these items has its merits. My favourite is the swinging "... Depends ...".

SONNY STITT**NYC. Aug. 8, 1960**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jimmy Jones (p), probably Aaron Bell (b), Roy Haynes (dm). Eleven titles were recorded for Roost, issued as "Sonny Side Up", three have altosax:

- 60162-8 My Blue Heaven alt. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars + 8 bars. (SM)
 60162-12 My Blue Heaven Soli 64 and 20 bars. (M)
 60154-3 The More I See You Solo 64 bars to coda. (S)
 60155-2 Beware Rocks Comin' Down Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

Mostly tenorsax on this session, but some interesting altosax items. Note that SS uses both instruments on "... Rocks ...". The two versions of "... Heaven" are quite different both in structure and tempo, dig these!

MILES DAVIS QUINTET**Manchester, England, Sept. 27, 1960**

Miles Davis (tp), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Wynton Kelly (p), Paul Chambers (b), Jimmy Cobb (dm).

Ten titles issued from two concerts at Free Trade Hall, eight have altosax:

1st concert:

- 10:50 Four Solo 8 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
 14:08 All Of You Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

2nd concert:

- 7:58 Four (NC) Solo 10 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
 14:42 All Blues Solo. (SM)
 13:02 Well You Needn't Solo 8 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
 17:10 Autumn Leaves Solo 4 choruses of 40 bars. (M)
 4:14 Stardust Solo 16+32 bars to very long coda. (S)
 0:37 The Theme Solo 24 bars. (FM)

Paris, France, Oct. 11, 1960

Personnel as above (MD not present on "Blues").

Eight titles were issued from 1st concert at Olympia, five have altosax:

- 13:12 Autumn Leaves Solo 88 bars. (M)
 8:46 Four Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
 5:41 Round About Midnight Solo 32 bars. (S)
 14:32 No Blues Solo 15 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
 0:47 The Theme Solo 24 bars. (F)

same date

Same. Seven titles were issued from 2nd concert at Olympia, two have altosax:

- 7:24 Fran Dance Solo 40 bars. (SM)
 13:03 All Of You Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Stockholm, Sweden, Oct. 13, 1960

Same. Ten titles were issued from 1st concert at Konserthuset, six have altosax:

- 13:21 Autumn Leaves Solo 3 choruses of 40 bars. (M)
 6:09 Round About Midnight Solo 32 bars. (S)
 0:46 The Theme Solo 24 bars. (FM)
 4:20 Stardust Solo 16+32 bars to very long coda. (S)
 13:47 All Blues Solo 36 bars. (M)
 0:38 The Theme Solo 24 bars. (FM)

same date

Same. Ten titles were issued from 2nd concert at Konserthuset, five have altosax:

15:33	All Of You	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
13:56	Autumn Leaves	Solo 88 bars. (M)
0:37	The Theme	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
4:14	Lover Man	Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)
0:40	The Theme	Solo 24 bars. (FM)

Amsterdam, Holland, Oct. 15, 1960

Same, eleven titles recorded at Concertgebouw, nine have altosax:

11:12	But Not For Me	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
15:20	Walkin'	Solo 30 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
15:20	All Of You	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
9:00	So What	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
0:50	The Theme	Solo 24 bars. (F)
4:08	Stardust	Solo 16+32 bars to very long coda. (S)
3:46	Old Folks	Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)
12:36	All Blues	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
1:23	The Theme	Solo 56 bars. (F)

SS replaces John Coltrane in Miles Davis' quintet, first appearance June 17 but no known recordings until undertaking a European tour in September/October, leaving upon homecoming. Although Stitt and Davis were modern jazz pioneers fifteen years earlier, their ways have since parted, and it is not clear why SS was recruited into the quintet. They keep an obvious distance in all performances, as little ensemble as possible, no exchanges, just doing their soloing as if the other one did not exist. On slow titles, where SS always plays altosax, and very beautifully also, Miles lays off. On faster titles SS is not afraid to play long soli, competent as always, but rarely as coherent and inspired as on his best sessions with own groups. Time and capacity prohibit this solographer to go into further details, but it seems that Paris is the best!!

SONNY STITT**NYC. Jan. 30, 1961**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), rest unknown.

Ten titles were recorded for MGM/Verve, unissued.

SONNY STITT WITH**THE RALPH BURNS STRINGS****NYC. March 6&7, 1961**

Sonny Stitt (as), large orchestra including (strings), Ralph Burns (arr. dir).

Ten titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "The Sensual Sound Of Sonny Stitt" (note: Tom Lord's disco is wrong here, altosax only):

23502-4	They Say It's Wonderful	Soli 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S)
23503-3	Time After Time	Soli 48 and 8 bars to coda. (SM)
23504-2	I Love You	Soli 36 and 16 bars to very long coda. (S)
23505-2	Once In A While	Soli 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S)
23506-1	Talk To Me	Soli 32 and 12 bars to long coda. (S)
23507-2	Try A Little Tenderness	Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
23508-2	Back To My Home Town	Solo 72 bars to coda. (SM)
23509-3	All Of You	Soli 32 and 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to long coda (fade out). (SM)
23510-1	I Never Felt That Way Before	Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)
23511-6	World Really Isn't	Solo 72 bars to coda. (SM)

It easy to see and hear that this session is not made for the typical reader of this solography. Nevertheless SS has the strange capability to make commercial sessions into jazz; although he has to present the melodies, he always manages to put in jazz phrasing and later a real solo. This is really a magnificent session worth full attention!!

SONNY STITT**Chicago, June 1961**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Johnny Board (ts), Eddie Buster (org), Joe Shelton (dm).
Six titles were recorded live at the D. J. Lounge, two have altosax:

- 11019 It All Depends On You Soli 32, 8 and 8 bars. Solo
4 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (FM)
- 11022 I'm In The Mood For Love Solo 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S)

This is primarily a session for tenorsax battles, but quite nice altosax on "... Love". On "... You", when one believes the music is coming to an end, SS takes a long formless solo of which I cannot quite get head or tail on.

SONNY STITT NYC. Aug. 2/3, 1961

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), rest unknown.
Nine titles were recorded for Verve, unissued.

GENE AMMONS / SONNY STITT Chicago, Aug. 26, 1961

Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (as-11185,87, ts-all except 11187), John Houston (p), Buster Williams (b), George Brown (dm).
Ten titles were recorded for Argo, issued as "Dig Him" and "We'll Be Together Again", two have altosax (11185 has both horns):

- 11185 Time On My Hands Duet with (ts-GA) 32 bars. (M)
- 11187 My Foolish Heart Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S)

Chi. Aug. 27, 1961

Same. Eight titles were recorded for Verve, five issued as "Boss Tenors", one has altosax:

- 385 There Is No Greater Love Soli 8, 8 and 64 bars.
Soli/duet to coda. (M)

These great encounters involve mostly tenorsaxes, but SS's three altosax contributions are highly noteworthy. A beautiful duet opens "... My Hands", and he closes "... Heart" with a magnificent solo, after no inferior tenorsax by GA. His cowork with Jug on "... Love" is also highly enjoyable. Finally, don't forget the session as such just for some altosax...

GENE AMMONS / SONNY STITT Englewood Cliffs, NJ. Feb. 18, 1962

Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Don Patterson (org), Paul Weeden (g), Billy James (dm).
Five titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "Boss Tenors In Orbit", one has altosax:

- 269 Why Was I Born? Duet with (ts-GA) 32 bars.
Solo 48 bars. Duet. (SM)

A unique item of eight minutes, nothing really like it; close duetting first between these two giants, later after an organsolo and strong Ammons, an elaborate altosax solo.

SONNY STITT NYC. Feb. – April 1962

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Don Patterson (org), Paul Weeden (g), Billy James (dm).
Nine titles were recorded for Roost, issued as "Feelin's", three have altosax:

- 60174-3 Stretch Pants Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars.
Solo 70 bars to coda. (M)
- 60175-4 If I Should Lose You Soli 32 and 88 bars. (SM)
- 60177-2 Hollerin' The Blues Soli 24 and 12 bars to coda. (S)

Mostly tenorsax here, and the altosax does not sound as good as usual, as evident in "... Lose You", but guitar livens up the atmosphere. Best is "Hollerin' ...".

SONNY STITT NYC. Feb. – June 1962

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Hank Jones (p), possibly Tommy Potter (b), Roy Haynes (dm).
Five titles were recorded for Roost, issued as "Stitt In Orbit", three have altosax:

- 60183-4 No Cal Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
- 60185-2 Eye Ball Soli 8, 64 and 24 bars. (M)
- 60186-2 Saginaw Soli 5 and 1 choruses of 12 bars. (S)

Three nice items of which I dig the slow blues "Saginaw" the most.

SONNY STITT QUARTET**NYC. April 4, 1962**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Don Patterson (org), Paul Weeden (g), Billy James (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Jazzland, issued as "Low Flame", five have altosax:

Donald Duck	Solo 36 bars. (M)
Close Your Eyes	Soli 64 and 32 bars to coda. (M)
Cynthia Sue	Duet with (g) 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to long coda. (S)
Baby, Do You Ever Think Of Me?	Solo 36 bars to long coda. (S)
Fine And Dandy	Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 5 choruses to coda. (FM)

Groovy session but without particular charm. SS plays competently but lacks the charisma of earlier years. Best in slow tempi. "Fine ..." is rather flat compared to what he made out of this tune before. The ugly CD cover streamed says "legends of acid jazz"...

SONNY STITT QUARTET**NYC. May 5, 1962**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), (org), (g), (dm) probably as above.

WADO broadcast "The Symphony Sid Show" from Birdland, four titles (James Accardi collection), three have altosax:

4:25	Stardust	Solo 16+32 bars to very long coda. (S)
5:35	Cherokee	Intro to solo 3 choruses of 64 bars. Solo/straight 64 bars. Coda. (F)
0:42	Jumpin' At Symphony Sid	Solo/straight 24 bars. (FM)

Beautiful "Stardust" and note that "Cherokee" now uses the Bird's "Ko-Ko" intro and ending.

SONNY STITT QUARTET**NYC. May 12, 1962**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Paul Weeden (g), Don Patterson (org), Billy James (dm).

WADO broadcast "The Symphony Sid Show" from Birdland, three titles (James Accardi collection), two have altosax:

3:58	There Is No Greater Love	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (S)
4:32	Bye Bye Blackbird	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

Particularly "... Love" is an enjoyable item.

SONNY STITT / DEXTER GORDON Englewood Cliffs, NJ., May 14, 1962

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Dexter Gordon (ts), Don Patterson (org), Paul Weeden (g), Billy James (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Blue Note, but the only issued item has tenorsax.

SONNY STITT & HIS ORCHESTRA**NYC. July 16, 1962**

Reunald Jones, Billy Mitchell, Dick Vance (tp), Jimmy Cleveland, Matthew Gee (tb), Willie Ruff (frh), Sonny Stitt (as), Perry Lee (org), Joe Benjamin (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm), Tadd Dameron, Jimmy Mundy (arr).

Five titles were recorded for Atlantic, issued as "Sonny Stitt & The Top Brass":

6347	Boom Boom	Solo with orch 76 bars. (M)
6348	Souls Valley	Solo with orch 5 and 3 choruses of 12 bars to fade out. (M)
6349	The Four Ninety	Solo with orch 8 and 32 bars to long coda. (S)
6350	On A Misty Night	Solo with orch 4 choruses of 32 bars to long coda. (M)
6351	Stittsie	Solo 8 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars Solo 40 bars to coda. (FM)

NYC. July 17, 1962

Same except Duke Jordan (p), Frank Brown (dm) replace Lee and Jones.

Four titles:

6352	Poincana	Solo with orch 36 and 48 bars. (SM)
6353	Coquette	Solo with orch 20 and 64 bars to coda. (SM)
6354	Hey Pam	Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

6355 See See Rider Soli with orch 48 and 24 bars. (S)

SS seems to enjoy these sessions as much I do, having a real bigband with professional arrangements behind him, or to be correct, brass – no reeds. He plays his altosax only with great inspiration in a fine variation of music material. This time I dare not single out any particular item for special attention; you find fine soloing everywhere.

SONNY STITT QUARTET

Chi. Sept. 24, 1962

Sonny Stitt (as), Ronnie Matthews (p), Arthur Harper (b), Lex Humphries (dm).
Seven titles were recorded for Argo, issued as “Rearin’ Back”:

11918	Cut Plug	Solo 48 bars. (SM)
11919	Bunny Rabbit	Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars and 60 bars to coda. (M)
11920	Carpis’s Grove	Soli 36 and 12 bars. (SM)
11921	We	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 32 bars to coda. (F)
11922	Queen	Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars and 60 bars to coda. (M)
11923	Little Girl Blue	Solo/straight 48 bars to long coda. (S)
11924	Rearin’ Back	Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars and 60 bars to coda. (M)

This session is not impressing. The sound of the horn is not the beautiful it used to be. The music material is quite meagre with same structure on several items. In fact, this is close to boring, and it seems SS executes the same opinion. Only “Cut ...” and “... Grove”, both slow medium blues, are reminding us of the golden years of the fifties.

SONNY STITT QUARTET

NYC. Nov. 3, 1962

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), unknown (p), (b), (dm).

WADO broadcast “The Symphony Sid Show” from Birdland, seven titles (ref. James Accardi), four have altosax:

0:33	Lullaby Of Birdland	With (mc). (M)
5:43	Autumn In New York	Solo 64 bars to very long coda. (S)
4:16	Cherokee	Intro to solo 3 choruses of 64 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Coda. (F)
1:26	Lullaby Of Birdland	Solo/straight 64 bars. (FM)

NYC. Nov. 10, 1962

Same. Six titles, four have altosax:

1:05	Lullaby Of Birdland	Solo with (mc). (M)
3:31	The Gypsy	Solo 64 bars to very long coda. (SM)
6:03	Groovin’ High	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 2 to straight 1 choruses to long coda. (FM)
5:02	Cherokee	Intro to solo 4 choruses of 64 bars. Solo 32 bars. Coda. (F)

Beautiful ballads, particularly “Autumn ...” makes great impact on the listener. And more “Cherokee”s, executed with bravura, here with piano solo. The highlight is nevertheless “... High”, only recorded once earlier by SS, and this is a very active and inspired version!

SONNY STITT QUARTET

NYC. Jan. 29, 1963

Sonny Stitt (as), John Lewis (p), Jim Hall (g), Richard Davis (b), Connie Kay (dm).

Eleven titles were recorded for Atlantic, issued as “Stitt Plays Bird”:

6748	Now’s The Time	Soli 48 and 12 bars. (FM)
6749	My Little Suede Shoes	Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
6750	Parker’s Mood	Intro. Soli 24 and 12 bars. Coda. (S)
6751	Constellation	Soli 80 and 8 bars to coda. (F)
6752	Au Privave	Soli 36 and 12 bars. (FM)

6753	Hootie Blues	Soli 36 and 12 bars to coda. (S)
6754	Confirmation	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
6755	Ko-Ko	Intro to solo 5 choruses of 64 bars. Coda. (F)
6756	Yardbird Suite	Straight 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to coda. (SM)
6757	Scrapple From The Apple	Soli 8, 64 and 24 bars. (FM)
6758	Ornithology	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to straight 16 bars. (M)

Surprisingly enough this is a very successful session, because I assume that SS was damned tired of being associated with Charlie Parker again and again. However, he has a perfect rhythm section behind him, and he throws himself into the most well known Bird vehicles. In some cases, the origins are fully evident as the Savoy records of “Ko-Ko” and “... Mood”, but mostly he plays tunes that Bird played again and again. SS obviously plays himself, not trying to sound like Bird, nor avoid it. The background creates a mainstream atmosphere quite different from the bebop inspiration behind the session, giving more pleasant listening than the fire and anger and protest behind the fifteen years old models. There may be many opinions on this; what is yours?

SONNY STITT QUARTET **NYC. March 15, 1963**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Walter Bishop (p), Butch Warren (b), Art Taylor (dm).
WADO broadcast “The Symphony Sid Show” from Birdland, five titles, three have altosax:

3:50	Stardust	Solo 16+32 bars to long coda. (S)
5:30	Cherokee	Intro. Solo 3 choruses of 64 bars. Solo/straight 32 bars. Coda. (F)
3:54	Lullaby Of Birdland	Solo/straight 32 and 80 bars to coda. (M)

One of his numerous “Stardust”s but we never get tired of them, do we? Or “Cherokee”s? “... Birdland is however rather lacklustre.

SONNY STITT **Chi. June 7, 1963**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Nicky Hill (as), Eddie Buster (org), Joe Diorio (g), Gerald Donovan (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Argo, issued as “Move On Over”, four have altosax soli by SS:

Stormy Weather	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. (S)
Love Letters	Soli 32 and 8 bars to long coda. (S)
The Lady Is A Tramp	Soli 16 and 8 bars. Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 2 choruses to coda. (FM)
Dexter’s Deck	Solo 36 bars (2 nd (as)-solo). 36 bars 4/4 with (as-NH). (M)

Something out of the ordinary, but Hill (who is playing altosax and not tenorsax as the CD cover states) is not a real match to SS. “The Lady ...” is pretty chaotic, not properly structured. The slow items feature SS only and are more or less what could be expected. The only item of real interest is “... Deck”, where the two of them ‘battle’ on altosax, spend some time with this one.

SONNY STITT **NYC. June 10, 1963**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Hank Jones (p), Al Lucas (b), Osie Johnson (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Impulse, issued as “Now!”, three have altosax:

11591	Never Sh!	Soli 36 and 12 bars to coda. (S)
11592	I’m Getting Sentimental Over You	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 60 bars to coda. (M)
11596	Estralita	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 8 bars to straight 12 bars. (M)

SS plays very good on this session with Jones’ fine piano backing him, though tenorsax is better than altosax. He has some problems with “... Sentimental ...”, while “Estralia” is nice, and “Never ...” is a slow blues of the good old kind. However, there is one thing I don’t like with this session; Johnson irritating doodling on the small drum.

ART BLAKEY **NYC. July 16, 1963**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), McCoy Tyner (p), Art Davis (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Impulse, six issued as "A Jazz Message", three have altosax:

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------|---|
| 11625 | Just Knock At My Door | Straight 24 to solo 36 bars. Acc. (b).
Straight 36 to solo 36 bars to coda. (SM) |
| 11628 | Blues Back | Solo 24 bars. (S) |
| 11629 | The Song Is You | Straight 64 bars to solo 64 bars.
Straight 32 bars to coda. (FM) |

It seems that SS's playing is not so confident as before, and that he does not seem quite comfortable nor active on this session. His tone seems thinner than before. Of course he still plays satisfactory, but there are so many more interesting examples.

SONNY STITT **Molde, Norway, Aug. 3, 1963**
 Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Einar Iversen (p), Erik Amundsen (b), Jon Christensen (dm).
 NRK broadcast from Molde Kino (Cinema), Molde International Jazz Festival, two titles, tenorsax only on "Bye Bye Blackbird" but:

- | | | |
|------|----------|---|
| 6:10 | Cherokee | Straight 1 to solo 5 choruses of 64 bars. (F) |
|------|----------|---|

An unusually long "Cherokee" performance!

SONNY STITT / PAUL GONSALVES **NYC. Sept. 5, 1963**
 Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Paul Gonsalves (ts), Hank Jones (p), Milt Hinton (b), Osie Johnson (dm).
 Five titles were recorded for Impulse, issued as "Salt & Pepper", one has altosax:

- | | |
|----------|---|
| Stardust | Intro 16 bars to duet with (ts-PG)
16 bars to solo 16 bars. 32 bars
4/4 with (ts) to long coda. (S) |
|----------|---|

This one of the "Stardust" versions you will remember! Gorgeous playing by the two great saxophonists!!!

SONNY STITT / JACK McDUFF **NYC. Sept. 17, 1963**
 Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jack McDuff (org), Leonard Gaskin (b), Herbie Lovelle (dm).
 Eight titles were recorded for Prestige, six issued as "Soul Shack", two have altosax:

- | | | |
|------|---------|---|
| 3968 | Hairy | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars.
Solo 36+32 bars to fade out. (M) |
| 3974 | Shadows | Soli 48 and 12 bars to coda. (S) |

"Shadows", and most of "Hairy", are blues, and particularly the very slow former is very nice!

SONNY STITT **NYC. Nov. 6, 1963**
 Thad Jones (tp), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Chick Corea (p), Larry Gales (b), Willie Bobo (dm), Carlos Valdes (cga, bgo), Osvaldo Martinez (cowbell, maracas, jawbone).
 Eight titles were recorded for Roost, issued as "Stitt Goes Latin", five have altosax:

- | | | |
|----------|-----------------------|------------------------------------|
| 60208-6 | Amigos | Solo 32 bars. (M) |
| 60210-2 | Chic | Solo 64 bars. (M) |
| 60211-8 | Are You Listening? | Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM) |
| 60212-8 | Ritmo Bobo | Solo 8 choruses of 16 bars. (F) |
| 60213-17 | My Little Suede Shoes | With (tp). Soli 64 and 8 bars. (M) |

Latin rhythm instruments tend to spoil any jazz session, but if you accept them, there are some interesting things here, particular "... Listening?", a blues, is noteworthy.

SONNY STITT **Englewood Cliffs, NJ., Dec. 31, 1963**
 Sonny Stitt (as), Ronnie Matthews (p), Leonard Gaskin (b), Herbie Lovelle (dm), Marcelino Valdez (cga), Osvaldo Martinez (bgo).
 Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Primitivo Soul":

- | | |
|---------------|--|
| Slave Maidens | 7 ½ choruses of 16 bars.
Solo 40 bars to fade out. (SM) |
| Baion Baby | Straight 32 to solo 64 bars. |

	Solo/straight 36 bars to fade out. (M)
Estrellita	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo/straight 20 bars to coda. (S)
Blue Blood Ritual	Soli 36 and 12 bars to coda. (S)
Island Shout	Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 80 bars to fade out. (FM)
Barefoot Ball	Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 56 bars to fade out. (M)

This is a rare session where jazz and latin rhythm go very well together, and thus very pleasant. SS is not really out of his high level ordinary, but who cares? "Blue ..." is different from the other items by being a conventional blues, while I choose "Estrellita" as my highlight.

SONNY STITT **London, May 1964**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts, vo), Terry Shannon (p), Rick Laird (b), Benny Goodman (dm). Five titles were recorded at Ronnie Scott's Club, two have(as):

9:51	My Mother's Eyes	Long solo to coda. (SM)
1:20	Sonny's Theme Song	Solo. (F)

Slow speed salvages "... Eyes", otherwise this is an awful session, see the tenorsax solography.

SONNY STITT **NYC. Aug. 25, 1964**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Booker Ervin (ts), Don Patterson (org), Billy James (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, five issued, two have altosax:

Sonny's Book	Soli 24, 24 and 12 bars. (S)
Medley: I'm Afraid The Masquerade Is Over	Soli 2 choruses of 56 bars to long coda. (SM)

Exciting session with the intense Booker Ervin supplying Stitt perfectly. As expected, SS uses primarily his tenorsax, but there is two very nice altosax items in pleasant tempo.

SONNY STITT / ROLAND KIRK **Berlin, Sept. 24, 1964**

Sonny Stitt (as), Roland Kirk (ts), Tete Montoliu (p), Jimmy Woode or Tommy Potter (b), Kenny Clarke (dm).

One title:

Au Privave	Solo 20 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 12 and 12 bars. 10 choruses 4/4 with (ts-RKK). (FM)
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This fifteen minutes long item is worth noticing, for its rarity of personnel, but also because of good playing by both participants.

J. J. JOHNSON's ALL STARS **Berlin, Sept. 26, 1964**

Howard McGhee (tp), J. J. Johnson (tb), Sonny Stitt (as), Walter Bishop (p), Tommy Potter (b), Kenny Clarke (dm).

Broadcast TV, three titles:

10:12	My Little Suede Shoes	Solo 8 bars. Soli 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (FM)
5:09	Lover Man	Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S)
9:35	Now's The Time (NC)	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

London, Oct. 18, 1964

Same. Broadcast BBC TV "Jazz 625", four titles:

13:05	Buzzy	Solo 16 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
6:32	Lover Man	Solo 64+16 bars to long coda. (S)
13:24	Now's The Time	Solo 11 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. (FM)
1:09	Theme (NC)	In ens. (FM)

Great to see the great SS and his companions!! With regard to the music, London seems generally much more inspired than Berlin, and that also goes for SS

himself. Two long versions of "Lover Man", the Berlin version the longest ever and the best one, magnificent! The rest, all blues, are exactly the kind of quality one expects at this point of time, excellent, but not quite up the highlight days.

SONNY STITT / ZOOT SIMS**Chi. Jan. 25, 1965**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Zoot Sims (ts), John Young (p), Sam Kidd (b), Philip Thomas (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Cadet, issued as "Interaction", one has altosax:

13695	Fools Rush In	Intro to solo 16 bars. (S) to solo 32 bars. Solo 48 bars to coda. (M)
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Mostly tenorsax here, but fine altosax soloing on this item.

SONNY STITT**NYC. Feb. 13, 1965**

Thad Jones, Ernie Royal (tp), Jimmy Cleveland (tb), Phil Woods (as), Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Zoot Sims, Budd Johnson (ts), Jerome Richardson (ts, bar), Roger Kellaway or Walter Bishop (p), Milt Hinton (b), Osie Johnson (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Colpix, issued as "Broadway Soul", tenorsax only on "A Room Without Windows" but:

Hello Dolly	Soli with orch 24, 32 and 36 bars to coda. (FM)
Better All The Time	Solo with orch. Coda. (S)
You'd Better Love Me	Solo with orch. (FM)
Night Song	Solo with orch. (F)
Gimme Some	Solo with orch. (SM)
Loads Of Love	Solo with orch. (F)
If I Gave You	Solo with orch. (M)

Nothing wrong with this session, but there are so many others more interesting.

SONNY STITT QUARTET**NYC. April 14, 1965**

Sonny Stitt (as), Harold Mabern (p), Ben Tucker (b), Roy Haynes (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Roost:

10028-2	How Do You Do	Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 52 bars to coda. (M)
10028-3	How Do You Do alt.	Solo 12 bars. 36 bars 4/4 with (dm). Solo 36 bars to coda. (FM)
10029-2	Don't Worry	Soli 8, 64, 8, 8 and 8 bars.(FM)
10030-2	Mother Tucker alt.	As below. (S)
10030-5	Mother Tucker	Soli 36 and 12 bars.(S)
10031-4	Cut It Off	Soli 8 and 64 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Soli 8 and 32 bars to coda. (FM)
10032-1	For All We Know	Solo 20 bars to long coda. (S)
-2	Cut It On	Soli 4 and 3 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 20 bars to coda. (FM)
10033-1	I Know That You Know	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (F)
10034-2	Round Robin	Soli/straight 6 and 5 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)

More than twenty years have passed since SS was recorded for the first time, and he has had great artistic success through those years and particularly in the fifties. Listening closely to this altosax session, it seems that on the whole, most of his capabilities are still intact, and at his best, his music ranks with the best of the previous decade. There is a lot of blues here, and "... Tucker" and "... Robin" are great performances. He can move his fingers as quickly as ever, take "I Know ..." as an example. It happens that he make choices that are not so elegant as before, but he still is one of the greatest modern altosax players. And nobody thinks of Bird anymore, why should they, SS's artistry is completely his own.

This is a convenient place to stop this Sonny Stitt altosax solography, but he continues to play his horn with great success and with high quality for many years, last session in 1982.

...000...