

The
TENORSAX
of
EDWARD STITT
“SONNY”

Solographer: Jan Evensmo, heavily assisted by James Accardi
Last update: March 22, 2021, Feb. 13, April 27, 2023

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 TENORSAX SOLOGRAPHY

J. J. JOHNSON's BOPPERS

NYC. Oct. 17, 1949

J. J. Johnson (tb), Sonny Stitt (ts), John Lewis (p), Nelson Boyd (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

| | | |
|-------|--------------------|--|
| 600-A | Afternoon In Paris | In ens. Solo 16 bars. (M) |
| 600-? | Afternoon in Paris | As above. (M) |
| 601-B | Elora | Soli 32 and 4 bars. (FM) |
| 601-? | Elora | As above. (M) |
| 602-A | Teapot | Solo 64 bars. (F) |
| 602-B | Teapot | Solo 64 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (tb). (F) |
| 603-B | Blue Mode | Solo 24 bars. (S) |
| 603-C | Blue Mode | As above. (S) |

Sonny Stitt, the most underrated of the tenorsaxophone players growing out from the bebop era! Although the altosaxophone was his main instrument, in my opinion his talents were best exploited through the larger instrument. SS always struggled to achieve recognition, and understandably, to compete with Bird on the altosax was an impossible task. His technique was not at all inferior and without the unavoidable comparison to the ultimate jazz genius, he might himself have been considered the most important modern altosax player. SS, closely scrutinized in the light of Charlie Parker, seems to lack the micro-details of variations in upper tempi, therefore sounding "slick" and in slower tempi he is not quite the sorrowful, naked soul; he seems to be able to play anything but sometimes mechanically. However, SS on tenorsax is different!! One thing is that the comparison is not there, he has his own style unlike anybody else. Second, his incredible technique allows him to play exciting music out of bounds for most contemporaries. And thirdly, the slickness of the altosax is transformed to a firm, soulful tenorsax sound, not with the juicy groove of Gene Ammons but in a lighter, persistent yet beautiful and very easily identifiable style. His first tenorsax session with J. J. Johnson shows him to the best advantage, in all tempi and moods. There is nothing but gold here; play his four blues choruses on the two takes of "Blue Mode" and tell me if you believe he's copying somebody! Masterpieces, I say. And then go to "Teapot", a slightly camouflaged "Sweet Georgia Brown" in a tempo which bothers him not at all. As J. J. plays beautifully, and all items are great with exciting variations from take to take, we should note this session in the development of jazz tenorsaxophone.

SONNY STITT-BUD POWELL QUARTET

NYC. Dec. 11, 1949

Sonny Stitt (ts), Bud Powell (p), Curly Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

| | | |
|------|-------------------------------|---|
| 1000 | All God's Children Got Rhythm | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 4, 4 and 16 bars. (F) |
| 1001 | Sonny Side | Solo 2 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (F) |
| 1002 | Bud's Blues | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. (M) |
| 1003 | Sunset | Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S) |

If the first SS tenorsax session was great, this one is nirvana!! The reason lies in the incredible backing of Bud Powell in his prime, and together the quartet makes every bar a rare pleasure. "Bud's Blues" has the same compressed emotion today, in my modest perception, as when I heard it first in the late fifties. And "Sunset", a tune very similar to "These Foolish Things" and a solo feature for SS, has the most beautiful of intense ballad playing, note for instance how he "sings" the bars 25-26 and 41-42! In the fast titles he just wails along, only stopping to let Bud have his say, but expressing a joy of playing which is quite rare. SS seems to be able to and willing to play forever in a happy state of mood and mind. He is not an 'intellectual' like Wardell Gray, and 'exploiter' like Dexter Gordon nor a 'bulldozer' like Gene Ammons, 'only Sonny' shining brightly and strongly.

SONNY STITT - BUD POWELL QUARTET **NYC. Jan. 26, 1950**

Sonny Stitt (ts), Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

| | | |
|-----------|-------------------------|--|
| 1004 | Strike Up The Band | Soli 96 and 32 bars. (F) |
| 1004-alt. | Strike Up The Band | As above. (F) |
| 1005 | I Want To Be Happy | Intro 8 bars to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F) |
| 1006 | Taking A Chance On Love | Soli 64 and 32 bars. (FM) |
| 1007-A | Fine And Dandy | Soli 64, 32 and 32 bars. (F) |
| 1007-B | Fine And Dandy | As above. (F) |

I let the 1940s run out by praising SS for his extremely important contributions to jazz tenorsax, and I will pick up the theme here; a second quartet session with the incredible Bud Powell on piano gives the 1950s a flying start! All items are in upper tempi, but SS has less problems than any of his contemporaries in improvising convincingly in such cases, he just floats along on a driving rhythm section among the best jazz ever offered. Possibly the previous session is a notch sharper, but by all means, here you have tenorsax of a quality rarely ever heard. All items are of the same brilliant quality, and I cannot recommend one in particular, pick your own choice!! Postscript of Oct. 2018: The alternate of "Strike ..." has appeared, very interesting but not as sharp as the originally issued take, and with only one piano chorus.

SONNY STITT QUARTET **NYC. Feb. 17, 1950**

Sonny Stitt (ts), Kenny Drew (p), Tommy Potter (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

| | | |
|------|-----------------------|--|
| 1008 | Avalon | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F) |
| 1009 | Later | Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo 4 choruses. Straight 2 choruses. (M) |
| 1010 | Ain't Misbehavin' | Solo 1 ½ choruses of 32 bars to coda. (S) |
| 1011 | Mean To Me | Solo 1 ½ chorus of 32 bars to coda. (S) |
| 1012 | Stairway To The Stars | Solo 1 ½ chorus of 32 bars to coda. (S) |

The problem with superlatives is that you use them enthusiastically and abundantly, and so what? Here SS records again for Prestige three weeks after his last memorable session with a brilliant rhythm section, changes to an equally brilliant one, and here we go again! With Bud replaced by Kenny, the atmosphere gets calmer and more lyrical, as is evident on the three beautiful ballads. Noting that two of them rarely are played in this slow tempo, they nevertheless are utterly memorable, executed with perfect timing and feeling. I am particularly fond of "Mean ...". "Later" is a blues a la "Bud's Blues" from late 1949, and in up-tempo "Avalon" SS shows his technical virtuosity. A lovely session!!

GENE AMMONS / SONNY STITT **NYC. Feb. 18, 1950**

Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt (ts), Dick Hyman (p), Gene Ramey (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Broadcast from Birdland. Dates Feb. 2 and Feb. 10 have been suggested.

| | |
|--------------------------|--|
| You're Driving Me Crazy | No solo. |
| The Way You Look Tonight | Soli 128 and 32 bars. (FM) |
| Fine And Dandy | Solo 96 bars. 96 bars 4/4 with (ts-GA) to coda. (F) |

It seems that SS is in slightly better shape than GA on this date, comparing "... Tonight" to "... Crazy". On "Fine ..." they break even on the date's best title.

GENE AMMONS BAND **NYC. March 5, 1950**

Bill Massey (tp), Eph Greenlea (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (ts, bar), Duke Jordan (p), Tommy Potter (b), Jo Jones (dm), Teddy Williams (vo 1224,25).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, no SS on "Bye Bye" and "Let It Be", while "Soft Winds" and "Keep Your Head From Ammons" were rejected.

same date

Personnel as above minus Massey and Greenlea.

Four titles were recorded, no SS on 1224 "Touch Of The Blues" and 1225 "Dumb Woman Blues" but:

| | | |
|--------|------------------------|--|
| 1222-1 | Blues Up And Down (NC) | Solo structure: GA 12, SS 12, 24 bars 4/4 GA/SS, breakdown. (FM) |
| 1222-2 | Blues Up And Down | Solo structure: GA 12, SS 12, 36 bars 4/4 GA/SS, 12 bars 2/2 GA/SS, GA 12, SS 12, breakdown. (FM) |
| 1222-3 | Blues Up And Down | Solo structure as take 2, but concluding ensemble intact. (FM) |
| 1223-1 | You Can Depend On Me | Solo structure: Ens 16, 8 bars 2/2 GA/SS, ens 8, GA 32, SS 32, 32 bars 8/8 GA/SS, 32 bars 4/4 GA/SS. (F) |
| 1223-2 | You Can Depend On Me | As above. (F) |

I refer to my comments on these famous tenorsax battles in the Gene Ammons section, and I will only repeat that they belong to the most important of modern tenorsax not only of the early fifties but in jazz history as such. SS plays with incredible technique and inspiration, and since GA is unconquerable, the result is a draw. He has some reed problems in the first take of "Blues..." which therefore terminates early, but then it's all out and even the battles of Dexter/Wardell get some serious competition here!

GENE AMMONS **NYC. April 26, 1950**
 Bill Massey (tp), Bennie Green (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (bar), Duke Jordan (p), Tommy Potter (b), Art Blakey (dm).
 Four titles were recorded for Prestige, one has SS:

JRC85 Chaboote Baritone sax solo 12 bars. (M)

A fine, groovy baritonesax solo on a "Perdido" inspired blues theme.

SONNY STITT **NYC. June 28, 1950**
 Sonny Stitt (ts), Duke Jordan (p), Gene Wright (b), Wesley Landers (dm).
 Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

| | | |
|----|-------------------------------|--|
| 90 | Count Every Star | Intro 4 bars to solo 40 bars to coda. (S) |
| 92 | Nice Work If You Can Get It | Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM) |
| 93 | There'll Never Be Another You | Solo 36 bars. (S) |
| 94 | Blazin' | Straight 32 bars to solo 96 bars to straight 32 bars. (FM) |

SS is now settling into a comfortable "routine" of Prestige recording sessions, there are several with and without Gene Ammons in 1950-52. However, the music itself is never routine, only confident professional playing of a quality very few contemporaries attained. This is not a remarkable session in the sense of those with Bud Powell, it only produces four tenorsax items, of which the two fast medium ones are good, while the slow ones are excellent, in particular "... Every Star".

GENE AMMONS ORCHESTRA **NYC. July 27, 1950**
 Bill Massey (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (bar), Duke Jordan (p), Gene Wright (b), Wesley Landers (dm).
 Four titles were recorded for Prestige, one has SS:

JRC103 Seven Eleven Baritonesax solo 24 bars. (M)

It is a shame that SS did not record more on the baritonesax, because he plays it very professionally. Here we have two excellent blues choruses.

Chi. July/Aug. 1950

Same. Four titles were recorded for Chess, but no SS.

SONNY STITT BAND **NYC. Oct. 8, 1950**
 Bill Massey (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Sonny Stitt (ts), Gene Ammons (bar), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Wesley Landers (dm), Larry Townsend (vo-112).
 Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

| | | |
|-----|---------------------------|---|
| 112 | To Think You've Chosen Me | Intro with orch 4 bars. Solo 8 bars. (S) |
|-----|---------------------------|---|

- 113 After You've Gone Break to solo 3 choruses of 40 bars
to 32 bars and slower coda. (F)
- 114 Our Very Own Solo with orch 54 bars. (S)
- 115 S' Wonderful With orch 32 bars to solo 64 bars. (M)

The presence of the larger Stitt/Ammons or Ammons/Stitt band makes a variation, but the ball is here belonging to SS alone; GA plays baritone sax in the ensemble only. The commercial "To Think ..." has mostly academic interest, and I feel not quite comfortable with the otherwise nice ballad "... Very Own". My rough taste leads me to a sparkling "After ...", although I should have preferred it a quartet version, and a "... Wonderful" with some exhibitionistic double-tempo phrases to be admired. Fine tenorsax playing, but there are more important SS-Prestige-sessions.

GENE AMMONS - SONNY STITT BAND NYC. Oct. 28, 1950

Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt (ts), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Wesley Landers (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Prestige (two more without SS):

- 116 Stringin' The Jug Pt 1 Solo 32 bars. 32 bars
8/8 with (ts-GA). (FM)
- 117 Stringin' The Jug Pt 2 32 bars 16/16 to 32 bars 8/8
to 32 bars 4/4 with (ts-GA). (FM)

Another exciting chase with both tenorsax players in fine shape, perhaps SS a notch sharper. An item difficult to find, why so rare and unreissued?

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, (as) only on 122 "Imagination" and 123 "Cherokee" but:

- 120 Nevertheless Intro 4 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo 16 bars. (M)
- 121 Jeepers Creepers Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

SS is extremely eager to play on this session, and on both titles his eagerness is matched by his creativity, although he seems to overrun his fellow musicians; Mance tries to get a solo on "Jeepers ..." without succeeding. Note for a highlight the second chorus on "Nevertheless".

GENE AMMONS BAND NYC. Jan. 16, 1951

Bill Massey (tp), Matthew Gee (tb), Gene Ammons (ts, vo), Sonny Stitt (ts, bar), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, "Around About 1 A. M.", "Jug", "Wow!" and "Blue And Sentimental" but no SS.

SONNY STITT QUARTET NYC. Jan. 31, 1951

Sonny Stitt (as, ts-135?), Charles Batesman (p), Gene Wright (b), Art Blakey (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Prestige, 133 "Liza" and 134 "Can't We Be Friends" have altosax only, while 135 "This Can't Be Love" never was issued on the scheduled Pr 832.

GENE AMMONS BAND NYC. Jan. 31, 1951

Bill Massey (tp), Al Outcalt (tb), Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt (ts), Charles Batesman (p), Gene Wright (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Prestige:

- 136/ New Blues Up And Down Pt 1 & 2 Solo 12 bars to 24 bars
137 4/4 with (ts-GA). Solo 7
choruses of 12 bars to
24 bars 4/4 with GA. (F)

Surprisingly enough the recreation of an old hit has not been reissued at the time of writing, and it is a real pleasure to note that it is not a pale copy but as inspired and almost as successful as its great predecessor. The guys follow each other like twins, and the winner, whoever he is, takes only 50.1%!

SONNY STITT NYC. Jan. 31, 1951

Personnel as on the Gene Ammons session same day except Gene Ammons plays (bar), Larry Townsend (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Prestige:

- 138 The Thrill Of Your Kiss Intro 4 bars. Solo 10 bars. (SM)

139 If The Moon Turns Green Intro 4 bars. Solo 8 bars. (S)

Although a commercial session highlighting the sweet vocal, the beautiful tenorsax intros are reward enough for a dedicated SS fan! As he also takes two good soli, you should not overlook these titles; personally I have a weakness for such combinations of sweetness and real jazz.

SONNY STITT

NYC. Feb. 1, 1951

Sonny Stitt (bar), Charles Bateman (p), Gene Wright (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).
Two titles were recorded for Prestige (two more, "Liza" and "Can't We Be Friends?" with SS (as) only):

146 P. S. I Love You Baritonesax soli 64 and 14 bars. (SM)

147 This Can't Be Love Baritonesax soli 64 and 40 bars. (FM)

These are the only baritonesax soli SS ever recorded says Bob Porter in the Prestige liner notes, and at present time I cannot challenge this statement (postscript of April 2023: he plays one on July 27, 1950). However, I wish it were false, because he plays like he was one of the major jazz performers on the instrument!!! I believe I can recognize his personal tenorsax sound in a lower register, he improvises gorgeously as ever, and his technique so amazing on the higher instruments also comes through here. Thus the world of jazz baritonesax suffered a major loss when SS decided to give priority to the altosax and tenorsax.

GENE AMMONS - SONNY STITT

NYC. March 10, 1951

Bill Massey (tp), Wade Marcus (tb), Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt (ts), Junior Mance (p), Gene Wright (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Six titles recorded at Birdland, "My Foolish Heart" has not been available, but most likely a GA feature, but:

More Moon No solo.

After You've Gone Solo 4 choruses of 40 bars
to slower coda. (F)

Ain't Misbehavin' Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)

Blues Up And Down See Gene Ammons!

Jumpin' With Symphony Sid Soli 36, 4 and 4 bars. (M)

SS is in a hell of a mood here, his 18 choruses on "... Up And Down" is a rare occasion of inspired tenorsax blowing, and he outblows Ammons, not a bad feat! Also his two feature numbers "... Gone" and particularly "Ain't ...", the latter in an unusual slow tempo with incredible double tempo are beautiful and impressive examples of SS's masterful command of technique and inventiveness. And note also the exuberant playing on "... Sid"! I repeat a gain and again: Sonny Stitt is extremely underrated when tenorsax history usually is presented. I will try to correct this false impression!

SONNY STITT

Chi. probably May 3, 1951

Sonny Stitt (ts), Charles Bateman (p), Gene Wright (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Chess:

U7335 I Cover The Waterfront Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

U7336 Don't Worry 'Bout Me Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars
to coda 4 bars. (M)

Two magnificent blowing performances, leaving not a single bar for a piano nor bass solo, and SS' technique and inventiveness are in perfect blend as usual. Particularly "... Waterfront" makes your hair stand up!!

SONNY STITT

NYC. Aug. 14, 1951

Sonny Stitt (ts), Clarence "Sleepy" Anderson (p), Earl May (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

156 Down With It Straight 24 bars to solo 36 bars.
Solo 12 bars to straight 24 bars. (FM)

157 For The Fat Man Straight/solo 32 bars to solo 64 bars.
Solo 8 bars to straight 8 bars. (FM)

158 Splinter Straight 24 bars to solo 36 bars.
Solo 12 bars to straight 24 bars. (FM)

159 Confessin' Solo 80 bars to coda. (M)

Yet another very good quartet session. The rhythm section with the Erroll Garner influenced Anderson is perhaps not quite up to the top standard of some earlier sessions, but it does not matter, SS just blows! Two versions of the blues and "... Fat Man", a standard, not much preparation but go for it!! And a lovely "Confessin'" for a climax, dig this one!!

GENE AMMONS AND HIS BAND NYC. Nov. 14, 1951

Bill Massey (tp), Eli Dabney (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (ts, bar), Clarence Anderson (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Teddy Stewart (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige, but no SS.

SONNY STITT Chi. 1951

Sonny Stitt (ts), rest unknown.

Many titles were wire-recorded at Pershing Hotel Ballroom, only excerpts have been available:

| | | |
|------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 0:44 | Unknown Blues | (SM) |
| 1:32 | Unknown Blues | (SM) |
| 2:30 | Sweet And Lovely | Solo 64 bars. (SM) |
| 0:22 | I Cover The Waterfront | Solo 14 bars (NC). (M) |
| 1:18 | Nice Work If You Can Get It | Solo 48 bars to fade out. (M) |
| 1:34 | After You've Gone | Solo 80+36 bars. (F) |
| 1:17 | Confessin' | Solo 32 bars to coda. (SM) |
| 1:47 | Body And Soul | Solo 32 bars (NC). (S) |

Postscript of April 10, 2023: These excerpts indicate a magnificent night at the ballroom, and the waiting for the complete program is just intolerable!.

SONNY STITT QUARTET / BAND NYC. Feb. 25, 1952

Bill Massey, Joe Newman, John Hunt (tp-335,337), Sonny Stitt (ts), John Houston (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Shadow Wilson (dm), Humberto Morales (cga-336,338, timb-335,337).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

| | | |
|-----|--------------|---|
| 335 | Cool Mambo | Break to solo 3 choruses of 24 bars. Coda. (FM) |
| 336 | Sonny Sounds | Solo 8 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. Coda. (F) |
| 337 | Blue Mambo | Break 6 bars to solo 36 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm). (M) |
| 338 | Stitt's It | Solo 8 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. Coda. (F) |

This time SS's quartet is supplemented with a "trio de trompettes" and a latin rhythm backing. However, this does not change his music much, SS plays with his usual fire regardless of any circumstances! The two fast titles, quite similar, present him in a fast tempo which he masters to perfection. The mambo selections should be unfamiliar material, but apart from a slight tendency of running out of gas, they also have lots of interesting details. This is the end of the Prestige period, an immense success for one of the most prominent and colourful representatives of modern jazz tenorsaxophone.

GENE AMMONS AND HIS BAND NYC. March 24, 1952

Bill Massey (tp), J. J. Johnson (tb), Gene Ammons (ts), Sonny Stitt (bar), John Houston (p), Ernie Shepard (b), Bob Wilson (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, but no baritone sax soli.

SONNY STITT QUARTET NYC. Nov. 20, 1952

Sonny Stitt (ts), Fletcher Peck (p), John Simmons (b), Jo Jones (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige (date falsely given as May 1952):

| | | |
|---------|-------------------------|---|
| R1138-1 | They Say It's Wonderful | Straight 32 bars and solo 32 bars to coda. (SM) |
| R1138-2 | They Say It's Wonderful | As above. (M) |

| | | |
|---------|---------------------|---|
| R1139-2 | Why Do I Love You? | Straight 32 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to straight 16 bars. (FM) |
| R1139-3 | Why Do I Love You? | As above. (FM) |
| R1140-1 | Symphony Hall Swing | Straight 32 bars to solo 56 bars to straight 8 bars and coda. (M) |
| R1140-2 | Symphony Hall Swing | As above. (M) |
| R1141-1 | Sonny's Bunny | Straight 24 bars to solo 36 bars. Solo 12 bars to straight 12 bars. (M) |
| R1141-2 | Sonny's Bunny | As above but only straight 12 bars in the opening. (M) |

Most of the material from this session was unissued when it was recorded, but in fact it has a lot of excellent tenorsax playing. SS has that lovely singing sound in his horn and plays with his usual inspiration on all items. With regard to the magnificent rhythm sections on the famous 1950 sessions, this one cannot compare, but it does not really matter; SS wails along. There are beautiful details on "They Say ...", the gutty blues on "... Bunny" and the two other items. Again the presence of two takes of each title shows SS's incredible abilities as an improviser. A session to be noted, even in a period with so much fine Stitt!

**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), Charlie Mingus (b), Don Lamond (dm).
Four titles were recorded for Roost, no tenorsax on "Sweet And Lovely" and "If I Could Be With You" but:

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| R1156-2 | Sancho Panza | Soli 8, 34 and 16 bars. (M) |
| R1159-2 | Hooke's Tune (Stitt's Tune) | Soli 8, 64 and 16 bars. (FM) |

Beautiful session and arrangements and with the most exquisite altosax and tenorsax playing everywhere. Note for instance his sovereign first half of the last solo on "Sancho ...".

BUDDY RICH QUARTET **NYC, March 30, 1953**
Sonny Stitt (ts), Hank Jones (p), Curly Russell (b), Buddy Rich (dm).
WMGM "Jazz Caravan" broadcast from the "Bandbox", five titles, "Confessin'" and "Caravan" not available but:

| | | |
|------|-----------------------|--|
| 2:15 | The Man With The Horn | Solo 32 bars to long coda. (S) |
| 8:37 | Lester Leaps In | Straight 1 to solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F) |
| 5:48 | Seven Come Eleven | Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 3 choruses 4/4 with (dm). (F) |

Long and good solo on this "... In". Postscript of Jan. 2020: There is more from this session, and SS is really cooking on the two fast numbers, and playing a nice ballad on "... Horn".

JAM SESSION **NYC. June 23, 1953**
Charlie Parker (as), Hank Mobley, Sonny Stitt (ts), Bud Powell (p), George Duvivier (b), Max Roach (dm) and others.
Broadcast from Birdland, recorded off line from the radio by Chan Parker, cutting out other musicians besides Bird. There is however two titles where SS can be heard:

| | |
|------------------|--------------------------|
| Moose The Mooche | Solo 64 bars. (F) |
| Ornithology | In chase 3 choruses. (F) |

Postscript of June 2020: The sound quality is not good, but it seems that SS takes the second tenorsax solo on "... Mooche". The chase on "Ornithology" is very unstructured and no comments can be made.

**SONNY STITT ACC. BY
JOHNNY RICHARDS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Nov. 16, 1953**
Personnel as March 18, except Jerry Sanfino (fl), Al Williams (p), Jo Jones (dm, bgo) replace Cooper, Silver and Lamond. Santa Miranda (cga) added.
Four titles were recorded for Roost, no tenorsax on "Pink Satin" and "Harvest Moon" but:

1178 Loose Walk Soli 36 and 24 bars. (M)
 1181-6 Opus 202 Solo 2 ½ choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Same excellent quality as on March 18. Note the fine blues choruses on "Loose ...".

SONNY STITT QUARTET **Boston, early 1954**

Sonny Stitt (ts), Dean Earl (p), Bernard Griggs (b), Marquis Foster (dm).

Four titles were recorded live at the Hi-Hat, issued on Roost:

R1204/05 Every Tub Solo 10 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
 Blue And Sentimental Solo 3 choruses of 18 bars to coda. (S)
 Pennies From Heaven Soli 4 and 5 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
 Thou Swell Soli 5 and 4 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Boston, early 1954

Same, with Sonny Stitt (as, ts, bar).

Issued as "Live At The Hi-Hat Vol. 1".

Eight titles, altosax only on "Sweet Georgia Brown", "I'm In The Mood For Love", "If I Should Lose You", "Wigwam", "My Melancholy Baby" but:

Tri-Horn Blues Baritonesax solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. Tenorsax solo 7 choruses. Altosax solo 14 choruses. Tenorsax solo 4 choruses. (M)
 Indiana Soli 7 and 1 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
 Flyin' Home Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

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, but there are many better items when real tenorsax blowing is concerned, "Indiana" is one, "Thou Swell" another one, a beautiful version of "... Sentimental", it is just to wish for more Hi-Hat recordings turning up!

Boston, Feb. 11, 1954

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

Fifteen titles, thirteen have tenorsax (the remaining two have baritonesax, also listed below):

S. O. S. Tenorsax 7 choruses of 32 bars. Altosax solo 6 choruses. Tenorsax solo 1 chorus to coda. (F)
 (Columbus Avenue Rhythm)
 Rockin' At The Hi-Hat Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars to coda. (F)
 Indiana Soli 6 and 2 choruses of 32 bars (opening not complete). (F)
 They Can't Take That Away From Me Baritonesax solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. Altosax solo 36 bars to coda. (M)
 Lover Solo 2 choruses of 64 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to solo 32 bars to close. (F)
 Flying Home Solo 4 ½ choruses of 32 bars (fade out). (FM)
 Mass Ave Swing Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (M)
 They Say It's Wonderful Solo 2 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (M)
 One O'Clock Jump Tenorsax solo 13 choruses of 12 bars. Baritonesax solo 12 choruses. Altosax solo 8 choruses. Tenorsax solo 8 choruses. (M)
 Jeepers Creepers Solo ca. 5 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 18 bars to coda. (FM)
 Baritonesax Blues Baritonesax solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
 How High The Moon Altosax solo 5 choruses of 32 bars.

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| | Tenorsax solo 5 choruses. (FM) |
| Body And Soul | Solo 32 bars (S) to 48 bars (M) to 8 bars and long coda. (S) |
| If I Had You | Solo 32 bars. (S) |
| Jumpin' With Symphony Sid | Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars, straight in the beginning and end, also with announcer. (FM) |

Yes, they turned up! Although I have a slight feeling that Vol. 1 collected some of the best material, with some leftovers for Vol. 2. Nevertheless, again SS plays with his own, insatiable energy, obviously enjoying himself. Note for instance the very fast titles "Indiana" and "Lover", what a technique! He knows his Illinois on "... Home", but not as well his Prez on "One O'Clock ...", one of the few weak items here. Try "... Wonderful" instead!

SONNY STITT - EDDIE DAVIS **NYC. Spring 1954**

Sonny Stitt, Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (ts), Doc Bagby (org), Charlie Rice (dm).

Thirteen titles recorded live at Birdland (ref. Jazz Records), eight issued:

| | |
|------------------------|---|
| Jaws | Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. 7 choruses 4/4 with (ts-ELD). (M) |
| I Can't Get Started | Solo 32 bars. Solo 8 bars to long coda. (S) |
| Marchin' | Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. 5 choruses 4/4 with (ts). (M) |
| S. O. S. | Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 16 bars. 2 choruses 4/4 with (ts). (F) |
| Whoops! | Solo 8 bars. Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. 1 chorus 8/8. 2 choruses 4/4 with (ts). Solo 8 bars. (FM) |
| All The Things You Are | Soli 8 and 10 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 36 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (M) |
| Rollercoaster | Soli 12 and 12 bars. 7 choruses of 4/4 with (ts) a.o.. Solo 18 choruses of 12 bars. 6 choruses 4/4 with (ts/dm). (F) |
| Don't Blame Me | 32 bars 8/8. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to 32 bars 8/8 with (ts). (M) |

To make it simple; just look up on ELD to read what I feel about this session, it is a happy tenorsax battle of rare inspiration by both men! SS gets tough competition but gives all he has got, using his incredible technique to good taste. More than one hour of music, mostly all white hot tenorsax soloing. This is extrovert music but always to good taste, never is there overstepping into honking, this is wholehearted improvisation in the best sense. An essential SS (and ELD) session and a continuous highlight, and no title needs to be particularly mentioned, they are all good!

Note: Jepsen gives under SONNY STITT – EDDIE DAVIS the following titles on Roost 608: "It Ain't Gonna Be Like That" and "Look Cruel Mama". This is however an unexplained mistake which has survived, though not on Mosaic. The session is listed in Blues Records as by vocalist AL JACKSON, 1952, also including Roost 607: "Jelly Roll" and "Let's Drink Some Whiskey", personnel unknown (tp), (tb), (ts), (bar), (p), (b), (dm). There is a tenorsax solo on "... Like That" but definitely not SS/ED.

Note: Only sessions with tenorsax are listed below!

QUINCY JONES AND THE ALL STARS **NYC. Feb. 25, 1955**

Ernie Royal, Bernie Glow, Al Porcino, Jimmy Nottingham (tp), J. J. Johnson, Kai Winding, Urbie Green, Jimmy Cleveland (tb), Herbie Mann (fl), Dave Schildkraut (as), Sonny Stitt, Al Cohn (ts), Jack Nimitz (bar), Horace Silver (p), Oscar Pettiford (b), Osie Johnson, Art Blakey (dm), Quincy Jones (arr, cond)..

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, one issued:

| | |
|-------------|--|
| Grasshopper | Solo structure: SS break to solo 12 bars to AC 12 bars to SS 12 bars to 24 bars 4/4. Coda AC 2, SS 2, AC 2, SS 2 bars. (F) |
|-------------|--|

How come all these beautiful guys managed to produce only one item!?!? Lots of exciting things happened (note the trombones!!), and the Stitt/Cohn tenorsax duet is only one of the highlights. Fine way for SS to start the late fifties!!

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"), two have tenorsax:

| | | |
|------|--------------------------|--|
| 5:26 | I'll Remember April (NC) | Solo 7 choruses of 48 bars? (FM) |
| 7:03 | Blues Up And Down (NC) | Straight 2 to solo 20 choruses of 12 bars. 3 choruses 4/4 with (dm). Straight 24 bars. (FM) |

An exciting discovery with SS still in some kind of youth, able to improvise for ever on any tune. "... April" is, after a piano intro, all SS to the end, possibly the solo continues even longer. On "Blues ..." the piano solo is not recorded, but no interference with the dynamic tenorsax solo.

SERGE CHALOFF SEPTET**Boston, Dec. 1955**

Carl "Doc" Severinsen (tp), Boots Mussuli (as), Sonny Stitt (ts), Serge Chaloff (bar), probably Ray Santisi (p), Everett Evans (b), Jimmy Zitano (dm), Steve Allen (mc).

One title recorded at "Tonight Show":

| | | |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------|
| 2:45 | Stompin' At The Savoy | Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
|------|-----------------------|--------------------|

Interesting performance but much too brief. Good but not remarkable tenorsax playing.

J. J. JOHNSON & KAI WINDING QUINTET**NYC. April 7, 1956**

J. J. Johnson, Kai Winding (tb), probably Ronnie Ball (p), probably Al Cotton (b), probably Al Harewood (dm), Sonny Stitt (ts) guesting.

CBS broadcast "Basin Street Jazz" from Basin Street (James Accardi collection), SS not present on "Thou Swell" and "Happiness Is A Thing Called Joe" but:

| | | |
|------|---------------------|----------------------------------|
| 4:00 | Blues For Trombones | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (FM) |
| 1:09 | Buzzy/Theme (NC) | Solo with announcer 12 bars. (M) |

SS is introduced on "... Dot", which for some reason falsely is named "Blues For Trombones" by the announcer, and plays a solo of fine quality. He continues sitting in on the final "Theme" but disappears behind the announcer.

SONNY STITT QUARTET**NYC. Sept. 14, 1956**

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Jimmy Jones (p), Ray Brown (b), Jo Jones (dm). Date also given as Jan. 1957.

Ten titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "New York Jazz", altosax soli only on 4013-5 "I Know That You Know", 4017-2 "Down Home Blues", 4019-1 "Stars Fell On Alabama", seven have tenorsax (altosax also on "If I Had You", "Alone Together", "Sonny's Tune"):

| | | |
|--------|-------------------------|--|
| 4012-4 | Norman's Blues | Intro 4 bars to straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo 6 choruses to straight 2 choruses and coda. (F) |
| 4014-2 | If I Had You | Solo 16 bars to long coda. (S) |
| 4015-2 | Alone Together | Solo 88 bars. (SM) |
| 4016-2 | Twelfth Street Rag | Solo 8 choruses of 32 bars. (F) |
| 4018-2 | Sonny's Tune | Straight intro and 1 chorus of 12 bars to solo 12 choruses. Straight 2 choruses to coda. (M) |
| 4020-1 | Body And Soul | Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S) |
| 4021-1 | Between The Devil ATDBS | Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM) |

If there is any doubt; SS is still among the most important tenorsax performers of the fifties! Backed by a brilliant rhythm section he pours forth everything he has got, on both instruments in all tempi. To start with the slow tempi, a brilliant "Body ..." and "... Had You" as well (note the altosax solo here!), are some of my SS

favourites, magnificent!! Whether medium blues as on "... Tune", ballads like "Alone ..." and standards like "The Devil ...", he swings, combining exquisite technique with lyrical passages. There are also two uptempo items, "Norman's ..." and even "... Rag" are excellent, although he seems somewhat tired at the end, no wonder! In all, an excellent SS session!

SONNY STITT QUARTET

NYC. May 12, 1957

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), Bobby Timmons (p), Edgar Willis (b), Kenny Dennis (or possibly Dave Bailey (dm)). Date also given as Aug. 1957.

Twelve titles were recorded for Verve, eleven issued as "Personal Appearance", seven have tenorsax:

| | | |
|----------|-------------------------|--|
| 20986-8 | Easy Living | Intro 4 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to long coda. (S) |
| 20987-16 | You'd Be So Nice TCHT | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to coda. (FM) |
| 20990-9 | I Never Knew | Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm) to solo 8 bars and coda. (F) |
| 20991-6 | Between The Devil ATDBS | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 2 choruses to long coda. (FM) |
| 20992-3 | For Some Friends | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 6 choruses to coda. (M) |
| 20993-6 | East Of The Sun | Solo 3 choruses of 36 bars. Solo 1 chorus to coda. (M) |
| 20994-5 | Original | Solo/straight 1 chorus of 32 bars to solo 3 choruses. Long coda. (F) |

"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, obviously to SS's delight. The playing on both instruments are most successful. There is a slight tendency to "stumble" in some of the soli, but in general this is high quality SS, no problem! One highlight is easily "... Friends", a swinging blues, note for instance the second and third chorus. Or the fascinating fast "I Never ..." with a lovely conclusion of the chase. Or the swinging "... Nice" and "Original", wow!! You will enjoy this session!!

OSCAR PETERSON

Newport, RI. July 7, 1957

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

Two titles were recorded for Verve at the Newport Jazz Festival:

| | |
|---------------|---|
| Monitor Blues | Solo 15 choruses of 12 bars. (F) |
| Roy's Son | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 8, 8 and 8 bars to 3 choruses to 3 choruses 4/4 and duet with (tp), (dm) on the last bridge, to coda. (F) |

Although SS never plays badly, this is not likely to be the session you listen to very often. Both titles and particularly "Monitor ..." are quite impressive, not easy these extreme uptempi, but whether this frantic music is good jazz is absolutely debatable.

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 (as) on "Slow Blues", and his solo on "Ballad Medley" is obviously edited out, but:

Merry-Go-Round Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

LA. Oct. 9, 1957

Same. Three titles were recorded at the Shrine Auditorium, SS plays (as) on "Slow Blues" and "Ballad Medley" but:

Merry-Go-Round Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

The two concerts are pretty much similar, and SS is rather ordinary on his tenorsax playing here.

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":

21847-1 Con Alma Duet with (tp) 32 bars to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Duet to coda. (M)

21847-X Con Alma (alt.) As above. (M)

21848-4 Haute Mon' Duet with (tp) and solo/straight. (SM)
Anythin' Altosax solo 4 choruses and tenorsax solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (S)

"Con Alma" is a magnificent piece of music with excellent and exciting soli by Dizzy and Sonny. I have not at all the same feeling for "Haute ...", which I find noisy and without shape, just a lot of messy blowing. But the big thing here is "Anythin'", an untitled themeless blues, only released on CD. Here SS plays both instruments in the most convincing way, dig this!!

DIZZY GILLESPIE**NYC. Dec. 19, 1957**

Personnel as above plus Sonny Rollins (ts).

Four titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "Sonny Side Up":

21857 The Eternal Triangle Solo 8 choruses of 32 bars to 3 choruses 4/4 and 3 choruses 8/8 with (ts-SR). (F)

21857-A On The Sunny Side Of The Street Solo 32 bars (first tenorsax solo). Obbligato parts. (SM)

21857-B After Hours Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars (last tenorsax solo). (S)

21857-C I Know That You Know Solo 3 1/2 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Wow, what a session! SS really gets some competition this time, and on the very fast "... You Know" he definitely comes in second. However, he is fighting very well to make a draw on the other three titles, He plays a magnificent blues on "After Hours", and takes a fine chorus on Dizzy's old bebopping favourite "... Sunny Side ...". Finally the "... Triangle", a solo followed by a chase with SR having few competitors for quality and excitement in this book!!!

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", seven have tenorsax:

Happy Faces Straight 2 to solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. Straight 2 choruses. (M)

Am I Blue? Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (M)

When You're Smiling Solo 1 chorus of 32 bars to break and another 4 choruses to long coda. (FM)

| | |
|---|---|
| Them There Eyes | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 1 chorus to coda. (M) |
| Back In Your Own Backyard | Solo 2 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to coda. (SM) |
| Sometimes I Feel Like A Motherless Child | Solo 18 bars. Solo 10 bars to long coda. (S) |
| Shadow Waltz | Solo 3 choruses of 36 bars to long coda. (M) |

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! Possibly, in comparison with the exuberant sessions of the very early fifties, SS has calmed down a little, the intensity is slightly lower, and there is some mass production effects here. However, take one item by itself, play it repeatedly, dig it, and you will end up by admitting that past should not be used against present. There is a lot of Prez around here, "... Smiling", "... Eyes" and "... Backyard" are well known, and played with inspiration, note by the way the second chorus of the latter! But maybe the highlight is the simple but very beautiful "... Motherless Child", "less sometimes is more" as notes state it, so true, so true!

SONNY STITT QUARTET

Chi. ca. 1958

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

Eight titles were recorded for Argo, four have tenorsax:

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Jack Spratt | Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo 13 choruses. Solo 3 choruses to straight 2 choruses. (M) |
| Just You, Just Me | Straight 1 chorus of 32 bars to solo 4 choruses. 1 chorus 4/4 with dm to straight 1 chorus. (FM) |
| Mr. Son | Intro 8 bars to solo 11 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 3 choruses to close. (M) |
| Dancing On The Ceiling | Intro 4 bars to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 1 chorus to coda. (FM) |

A lively session with SS in his most inspirative mood on both instruments (try the fast "Everyone Does" on altosax!!), and there is not much more to say; this swings, and if you are an SS fan like me, you will have a very nice time with these items!!

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, (as) only on "Idaho" and "Autumn In New York" but:

| | |
|------------|----------------------------------|
| The Walker | Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM) |
|------------|----------------------------------|

Active and inspired but rather staccato tenorsax playing here.

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, altosax on "Autumn In New York" but:

| | | |
|------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 6:57 | Blues In The Dark | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (SM) |
| 4:07 | The Blues Walk | Solo 9 choruses of 12 bars. (F) |

same

Same. Second concert, three have SS, altosax on "Lover Man" but:

| | | |
|------|-------------------|----------------------------------|
| 8:33 | Blues In The Dark | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (SM) |
| 4:52 | The Blues Walk | Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. (F) |

Brussels, May 19, 1958

Same.

Filmshort with live audience, Four titles have SS, altosax on "Lover Man" but:

- 10:07 Blues After Dark Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
 7:11 On The Sunny Side Of The Street Solo 64 bars. (SM)
 6:48 The Blues Walk Solo 15 choruses of 12 bars. (F)

Stockholm, May 20, 1958

Same. Concert at Konserthuset, three titles have SS, alto sax on "Stardust" and "If I Should Lose You" but:

- 5:58 Pennies From Heaven Solo 8 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (FM)

same date

Roy Eldridge (tp), Sonny Stitt (ts), Pete Johnson (p), Herb Ellis (g), Max Bennett (b), Gus Johnson (dm), Joe Turner (vo).

Same JATP concert, one title:

- 4:30 Rock And Roll Duet with (p) 24 bars. (M)

Oslo, May 23, 1958

Same. Concert, two titles preserved, "Lover Man" and "Cherokee" but alto sax only.

Zürich, June 2, 1958

Concert, four titles, alto sax only on "Cherokee" and "Lover Man" but:

- 4:02 Walkin' Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo
 9 choruses to straight 2 choruses. (M)
 3:50 Blues Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars
 to solo 14 choruses. Solo 3 choruses
 to straight 2 choruses. (F)

SS is in brilliant shape with the JATP, and the main item is the gorgeous "Lover Man", but it doesn't belong to this book unfortunately!! The tenorsax takes the blues, an extremely fast "... .." and a moderate "Walkin'", very good tenorsax playing here!

same date

Personnel as Joe Turner above.

Two titles, no SS on "St. Louis Blues" but:

- 2:51 I Want A Little Girl Obligato parts. (SM)

SS obviously enjoys his European tour, with Dizzy as his main companion on the concerts. Though there are beautiful ballads on alto sax, he plays mainly tenorsax, also on the somewhat 'vulgar' items like the fast "The Blues Walk" (often falsely named as "Loose Walk". For a highlight note a six minutes version of "... Heaven"!

SONNY STITT / SAL SALVADOR Newport, Rh. I., June 1958

Sonny Stitt (ts), Sal Salvador (g) and backupband. One title:

- Loose Walk Soli 36 and 12 bars. (FM)

Rather ordinary performance this one.

SONNY STITT QUARTET Chi. Aug. 1, 1958

Personnel as above.

Ten titles were recorded for Argo, nine issued as "Burnin'", but only one has tenorsax:

- 8947 Easy Living Solo 48 bars to very long coda. (S)

One beautiful tenorsax item among a lot of fine alto sax!

SONNY STITT QUARTET NYC. Feb. 9, 1959

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

Eleven titles were recorded for Verve, issued as "The Hard Swing", four have tenorsax:

- 22680 Subito Straight 2 to solo 9 choruses of 12 bars.
 Solo 3 to straight 3 choruses. (FM)
 22681 Street Of Dreams Solo 48 bars to long coda. (S)
 22682 Tune Up Solo 16 choruses of 16 bars. (F)

22684 The Way You Look Tonight Solo 4 choruses of 64 bars. (FM)

A lot of excellent tenorsax playing on this session! Dig the swinging blues in "Subito", lovely ballad playing in "... Dreams" and two more colourful items!

**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, only one has SS on tenorsax:

Uptown Soli 1, 1, 6 and 1 choruses
of 12 bars. Coda. (FM)

"Uptown" is in fact a duet number with JG also tenorsax, sharing brotherly the solo space, and although not a real cutting contest, it has an exciting atmosphere.

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", three have tenorsax:

| | | |
|---------|-----------------------|---|
| 60031-5 | J. B. Blues | Straight 2 to solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 3 choruses to long coda. (M) |
| 60032-3 | Slow Boat To China | Soli 2 and 1 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (M) |
| 60034-1 | I'm Confessin' | Solo 2 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 16 bars to long coda. (M) |
| 60034-5 | I'm Confessin' (alt.) | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 40 bars to coda. (FM) |

Tenorsax is preferred on only three out of ten titles, but these are very successful performances, a lovely "... China", the swinging blues on "J. B. ..." and particularly exciting, "... Confessin'" with two utterly different takes in all respects, tempo, atmosphere, ideas. What a playmaker SS was!!

**SONNY STITT WITH
OSCAR PETERSON TRIO**

Manchester, May 9, 1959

Personnel as below.

Recorded at Free Trade Hall, first concert, three titles, (as) only on "Wee", "Old Folks" but:

4:01 Blues Solo 21 choruses of 12 bars. (F)

same

Same, second concert, three titles, (as) only on "There'll Never Be Another You" but:

2:43 Easy Living Solo 52 bars to coda. (S)

5:39 Blues Solo 32 choruses of 12 bars. (F)

Incredible how SS expresses his joy of playing, more happy tenorsax player cannot be found in jazz!! Nice ballad, but the two versions of "Blues" are some of the most exciting I have heard in a long time!!!

**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, three have tenorsax:

| | | |
|----------|----------------|--|
| 50004-2 | Moten Swing | Straight 1 chorus of 32 bars to solo 3 choruses. Solo 2 choruses to coda. (M) |
| 50005-3 | Blues For Prez | Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo 8 choruses. Straight 2 choruses to long coda. (M) |
| 50008-10 | Easy Does It | Solo 3 choruses of 24 bars. |

Straight 16 bars. (SM)

SS is one of my favourite tenorsax players of the fifties and with his capabilities intact when closing the decade. Therefore I dare to be a little bit critical and hint that maybe, maybe, his perfectness is just a little bit reduced compared to that of his great performances a few years earlier. A few times he chooses non-optimal solutions to the musical challenges. When this is said, the three titles here are swinging and quite pleasant, no problems! My favourite is the delicate "... Does It"! Postscript: Lawrence Collins wrote me the following: "... although I generally agree with everything you say, I do feel you have much under-rated (this session) which produced "Moten ..." and "Easy ...", which I think are almost perfect performances". I replayed the three items above, and I must have had a bad day, cannot quite understand my reservations. Possibly my ears rejected a few high notes.

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", three have tenorsax:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Red Top | Straight 2 to solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 2 choruses to coda. (M) |
| I Never Knew | Solo 1 chorus to break and 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 40 bars to coda. (M) |
| Hitsburg | Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 3 choruses to coda. (M) |

Another three fine Roost tenorsax performances! SS takes it smooth here, with the exception of a gutsy third chorus on "Red Top", and some vibrato on the "Hitsburg" blues, but the results are good as usual.

SONNY STITT QUARTET**LA. Dec. 21-23, 1959**

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

Twentyone titles were recorded for Verve, but altosax soli only.

SONNY STITT**NYC. ca. early June 1960**

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

Ten titles were recorded for Roost, six have tenorsax:

| | | |
|-------|------------------------|---|
| 60144 | Stormy Thursday | Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (SM) |
| 60146 | It Could Happen To You | Intro 8 bars to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars to coda 8 bars. (M) |
| 60147 | But Not For Me | Intro 8 bars to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars to coda 8 bars. (FM) |
| 60148 | Memories Of You | Solo 2 ½ choruses of 32 bars to long coda. (S) |
| 60149 | I Cried For You | Solo 3 choruses of 40 bars to 8 bars coda. (M) |
| 60150 | Bright As Snow | Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. (FM) |

There may be more exciting SS sessions, but there are many fine items here. He is on top in the slow "Memories ...", and in medium tempo "I Cried ..." is a lovely swinging thing. "Stormy ..." is somewhat sluggish with heavy accents on two and four. Nothing wrong with the other three items. Note also the enlightening comments to this and other Roost sessions in the liner notes of the Mosaic 7 CD box.

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", three have tenorsax:

| | | |
|---------|----------------------------------|--|
| 23272-3 | Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me | Soli/straight 64 and 16 bars. (S) |
| 23273-3 | C Jam Blues | Straight 2 to solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 3 to straight 2 choruses. (FM) |
| 23276-1 | It Don't Mean A Thing | Straight 1 to solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. Solo/straight 2 choruses to long coda. (F) |

This session smells of Duke Ellington, not at all a bad smell, and SS plays his usual good self with an excellent rhythm section. The emphasis is on altosax, but a “Do Nothin’ ...” on tenorsax is beautiful. Good but not particularly noteworthy in uptempo.

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”, nine have tenorsax:

| | | |
|---------|--------------------------------|--|
| 60161-2 | On Green Dolphin Street | Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to coda. (M) |
| 60152-2 | My Mother’s Eyes | Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars to 12 bars and coda. (SM) |
| 60153-4 | Sunny Side Up | Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars to 4 bars and coda. (FM) |
| 60155-2 | Beware Rocks Comin’ Down | Soli 14 and 4 choruses of 12 bars. (FM) |
| 60156-2 | Don’t Take Your Love From Me | Soli 64 and 16 bars to coda. (S) |
| 60157-2 | When I Grow Too Old Too Dream | Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars to 4 bars and coda. (M) |
| 60158-3 | I’ve Got The World On A String | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 52 bars to coda. (M) |
| 60159-5 | Bye Bye Blues | Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm) to solo 40 bars to coda. (FM) |
| 60160-5 | Six-O-Seven Blues | Solo 17 choruses of 12 bars. 4 choruses 4/4 with (dm) to solo 4 choruses to coda. (FM) |

This is a tenorsax session, the altosax is sparsely used. The playing is all high quality, and one should only offer a few highlight suggestions; like the laidback “... Eyes” and the swinging “Sunny ...”, “... Dream” and “... String”. There are also some strong blues items here too, both “Beware Rocks ...” and “Six-O-Seven ...” in particular show that the blues was one of SS’s favourite playing grounds.

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, two have tenorsax:

| | | |
|-------------------------|--------------|---|
| 1 st concert | Walkin’ (NC) | Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars to fade out. (F) |
| 2 nd concert | So What | Solo 7 choruses of 32 bars. (F) |

Paris, France, Oct. 11, 1960

Personnel as above (MD not present on “Blues”).

Eight titles were issued from 1st concert at Olympia, two have tenorsax:

| | |
|---------|-----------------------------------|
| Walkin’ | Solo 14 choruses of 12 bars. (F) |
| Blues | Solo 20 choruses of 12 bars. (FM) |

same date

Same. Eight titles were issued from 2nd concert at Olympia, five have tenorsax:

| | |
|------------------|--|
| Walkin’ | Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars. (F) |
| If I Were A Bell | Solo 9 choruses of 32 bars. (F) |
| Two Bass Hit | Solo 23 choruses of 12 bars. Coda. (F) |
| So What | Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (F) |
| The Theme | Solo with ens 24 bars. (FM) |

Stockholm, Sweden, Oct. 13, 1960

Same. Ten titles were issued from 1st concert at Konserthuset, three have tenorsax:

| | |
|---------|----------------------------------|
| Walkin’ | Solo 22 choruses of 12 bars. (F) |
|---------|----------------------------------|

So What Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
 On Green Dolphin Street Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

same date

Same. Ten titles were issued from 2nd concert at Konserthuset, three have tenorsax:

Walkin' Solo 24 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
 If I Were A Bell Solo 8 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
 No Blues Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

Amsterdam, Holland, Oct. 15, 1960

Same, eight titles recorded at Concertgebouw, but Sonny Stitt (as) only.

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 (very beautiful) altosax, Miles lays off. The tenorsax items are with very few exceptions in very fast tempi, and while SS is technically more than competent, there is more quantity than real remarkable quality, obviously he is doing his job professionally, putting occasionally in a bit of extrovert jatz into his long soli. Historically his presence in this quintet is noteworthy, but his fans will probably stick to smallband studio session for repeated listening. The same tunes appear in the different concerts with "Walkin'" as the obvious winner with five versions. The highlight for this listener is the final solo, "No Blues", in a decent swinging medium tempo.

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", but Tom Lord's disco is wrong here, altosax only. A magnificent session though!!

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, four have SS's tenorsax:

McKie's Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars.
 12 choruses 12/12 with (ts-JB). (FM)
 Blue Moon Solo/straight 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses
 of 32 bars to straight 36 bars. (M)
 Free Chicken Solo 22 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
 Jay Tee Straight 32 bars. Solo 5 choruses of
 32 bars to 4 choruses 8/8 with (ts-JB). (F)

Interesting to have SS teaming up with another tenorsax player not Gene Ammons, but Johnny Board known mostly from his participation in the Lionel Hampton orchestra. Both players get lots of blowing space, and "McKie's" and "Jay Tee" also have some trading. The results are good handicraft but not really remarkable.

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", no tenorsax on 11187 "My Foolish Heart" but:

11183 A Mess Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
 11184 New Blues Up And Down Soli 1 and 6 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------|---|
| 11185 | Time On My Hands | (as)-Duet with (ts-GA) 32 bars. (ts)-Solo 32 bars to duet 36 bars. (M) |
| 11186 | We'll Be Together Again | Solo 32 bars to long coda (with (ts-GA)). (S) |
| 11188 | Red Sails In The Sunset | Soli 8 and 8 bars. Solo 32 bars to chase/duet 64 bars. (M) |
| 11189 | Headin' West (Water Jug) | Solo 32 bars. (FM) |
| 11190 | A Pair Of Red Pants | Solo 4 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Duet 3 choruses. (M) |
| 11191 | Autumn Leaves | Soli 32, 8 and 8 bars. (M) |
| 11192 | But Not For Me | Duet 32 bars. Solo 64 bars to duet 44 bars to coda. (FM) |

Chi. Aug. 27, 1961

Same. Eight titles were recorded for Verve, five issued as "Boss Tenors", (as) only on 385 "There Is No Greater Love" but:

| | | |
|-----|---------------------|--|
| 380 | Blues Up And Down | Solo structure: (GA 12 SS 12)x2 to 24 4/4 to GA 12x12 to SS 16x12 to GA 12 SS 12 to 24 4/4. (FM) |
| 384 | Counter Clockwise | With ens 12 bars. Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 4 bars. (SM) |
| 386 | The One Before This | Soli 64 and 4 bars. (M) |
| 387 | Autumn Leaves | 32 bars 8/8 with (ts-GA). Chase/duet 40 bars to coda. (M) |

Quoting myself from the Gene Ammons solography: "One might think that when GA and SS meet together in studio after ten years, it would be a dogfight, a cutting contest, winner takes all. But that is not the case here, the two tenorsax players create an atmosphere of friendly reunion and do their best to play *together*, for common benefit. There is very little 4/4 here, mostly only on the famous "... Up And Down". Possibly it is my imagination, but it seems that GA and SS in style are closer to each other here than when they are recording separately. The two sessions produce altogether fifteen titles ranging from the 2 ½ minutes "Water ..." to the almost 10 minutes of "Counter ...", a slow medium blues. There is not one item here which does not measure up to a very high standard of tenorsax" for both players. There is simply no point of trying to single out highlights here, (but give anyway "The One Before ..." a try, both play magnificently here!) SS is cooking all the way and play up to his very best the two sessions through!

SONNY STITT & JACK McDUFF**NYC. Feb. 16, 1962**

Sonny Stitt (ts), Jack McDuff (org), Eddie Diehl (g), Art Taylor (dm), Ray Barretto (cga).

Seven titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as "Nuther Fu'ther":

| | | |
|-------|--------------------------|---|
| 3396 | Thirty-Three, Ninety-Six | Straight 2 to solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Solo/straight 5 choruses to coda. (M) |
| 3397 | All Of Me | Intro 8 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 40 bars to coda. (SM) |
| 3398 | Pam Ain't Blue | Soli 7 and 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M) |
| 3399 | When Sonny Gets Blue | Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S) |
| 33400 | 'Nuther Fu'ther | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Straight to solo 44 bars and coda. (SM) |
| 3401 | Ringin' In | Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. 4 choruses 4/4 with (org). Solo/straight 32 bars to coda. (M) |
| 3402 | Time After Time | Solo 64 bars to long coda. (S) |

SS seems to thrive very well in the company of McDuff. It comes as no surprise that there is a lot of blues here, the majority of titles in fact, and although one might argue that we have heard similar things before, this listener anyway gets a feeling of pleasure and happiness listening to such uncomplicated and yet very professional jazz, dig particularly the album title. The drums and conga are really not necessary here, a trio would have worked even better. Two very slow ballads are played par excellence as solo features with the organ shimmering softly in the

background. Finally a good old medium standard in “All Of Me”, certainly SS knows how to play that one!

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”, altosax only on 269 “Why Was I Born?” but:

| | | |
|-----|-----------------------|---|
| 267 | Long Ago And Far Away | 64 bars 8/8 to duet 16 bars. (S) |
| 268 | Walkin’ | Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (M) |
| 270 | John Brown’s Body | Solo 5 choruses of 16 bars. Solo 8 bars to 3 choruses 4/4 with (ts-GA). Very long duet coda sequence. (M) |
| 271 | Bye Bye Blackbird | Soli 8 and 8 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to 3 ½ choruses 8/8 with (ts-GA) to 4/4 and ens/duet. (M) |

This session cannot be compared to the brilliant August 1961 ones, that one having an almost electric atmosphere. The presence of organ and guitar makes it looser and more commercial as if feeding from old success. Nevertheless, there are lots of excellent tenorsax playing here, and particularly one cannot be but moved by the beautiful “Long Ago ...”.

GENE AMMONS / SONNY STITT NYC. Feb. 19, 1962

Gene Ammons, Sonny Stitt (ts), Jack McDuff (org), Charlie Persip (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Prestige, issued as “Soul Summit”:

| | | |
|------|---------------------------|---|
| 3403 | Dumplin’ | Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars to 4 choruses 4/4 with (ts-GA). (M) |
| 3404 | Tubby | Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (M) |
| 3405 | Shuffle Twist | Soli 12, 12 and 24 bars. (M) |
| 3406 | Sleeping Susan | Soli 64 and 4 bars. (M) |
| 3407 | Out In The Cold Again | Soli 32 and 8 bars to duet and very long coda with (ts-GA). (S) |
| 3408 | When You Wish Upon A Star | Soli 32 and 4 bars. (SM) |

Only one day since they recorded together for Verve, now for Prestige, but the sound is different without guitar and with a change of organ player. The highlight is the beautiful ballad “... Cold Again”, SS is in his nirvana here (GA not so bad either!...). A charming “... Star” concludes the session. Before that there are five titles in medium tempo, of which SS is most interesting on “... Susan”. Note that this is the last Ammons/Stitt recording session in their prime, the next is nine years into time, when particularly the former has lost much of his greatness.

SONNY STITT QUARTET NYC. Feb. 24, 1962

Sonny Stitt (as, ts), unidentified (org), (g), (dm) (possibly as below).

WADO broadcast “The Symphony Sid Show” from Birdland, three titles, “What’s New?” and “Jumpin’ Woth Symphony Sid” have not been available but (James Accardi collection):

| | | |
|------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 8:08 | Bye Bye Blackbird | Soli 4 and 2 choruses of 32 bars. (M) |
|------|-------------------|---------------------------------------|

SONNY STITT QUARTET NYC. Feb. – April 1962

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

Recorded in Feb. when SS was working in New York, or before April 9.

Nine titles were recorded for Roost, issued as “Feelin’s”, six have tenorsax:

| | | |
|----------|------------------|--|
| 60172-3 | S’posin’ | Straight 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Solo/straight 48 bars to coda. (M) |
| 60173-6 | Goodnight Ladies | Soli/straight 48 and 44 bars to coda. (M) |
| 60176-5 | Nightmare | Solo/straight 48+40 bars to coda. (M) |
| 60178-4 | O Sole Mio | Soli/straight 64 and 16 bars to very long coda. (M) |
| 60179-10 | Look Up | Soli/straight 60 and 48 bars to coda. (FM) |
| 60180-5 | Feelin’s | Soli 24 and 12 bars. (S) |

The rhythm section on this session is the same as the one on the Ammons/Stitt session Feb. 18, and what makes it noteworthy is Weeden. His soloing is perhaps not that exciting but his guitar accompaniment is a rare and very special event! Try to listen closely without being bothered with the other things going on! SS seems to enjoy himself in this environment, but the choice of material could have been more varied, almost everything is in the same medium tempo and all are standards. Only one exception, as the liner notes states it:” Stitt keeps the big horn in hand for the crawl-paced “Feelin’s”, an opportunity for him to play soft, pretty notes, others that shout, groups that fly by, and some that just seem to walk very slowly”.

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”, two have tenorsax:

| | | |
|---------|-----------------|---|
| 60184-1 | Corn Flakes | Straight 2 to solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 3 to straight 1 choruses. (M) |
| 60187-6 | Fine And Frisky | Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses + 8 bars to coda. (FM) |

Strong blues playing on “Corn ...”, supported by a surging bass, is the highlight here, but nothing wrong really with “... Frisky”.

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”, three have tenorsax:

| | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| Low Flame | Soli 36 and 12 bars. (S) |
| Put Your Little Foot Right Out | Soli/straight 80 and 32 bars. (M) |
| Silly Billy | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 24+40 bars to long coda. (FM) |

Groovy session but mostly altosax, with somewhat corny material and lacking the particular charm Weeden’s guitar creates on the Roost session with the same rhythm section. The slow blues on “Low Flame” makes good impression though, and the upper tempo blues “Silly ...” has some fascinating choruses, particularly in the opening.

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), one has tenorsax:

| | | |
|------|---------------------------|---|
| 8:01 | Jumpin’ With Symphony Sid | Straight 1 to solo 20 choruses of 32 bars. Solo/straight 36 bars. (FM) |
|------|---------------------------|---|

Interesting to hear SS uses “... Sid” as a vehicle for improvising, not only a theme tune.

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), one has tenorsax:

| | | |
|------|-----------|------------|
| 6:55 | Stitt’s B | Solo. (FM) |
|------|-----------|------------|

Don’t get quite head and tail on this one.

DEXTER GORDON / SONNY STITT**NYC. May 14, 1962**

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

One title was recorded for Blue Note, issued as part of “The Lost Sessions”:

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Lady Be Good | 32 bars 8/8 with (ts) to solo 64 bars. 3 choruses 8/8 with (ts). Solo 2 choruses to long coda. (FM) |
|--------------|---|

The liner notes to the CD “The Lost Sessions” should be quoted: “Sonny Stitt’s style of making records (pick some standards, make up some blues and play your ass off) was antithetical to the Blue Note system of planning, composing, rehearsing and refining. It was no surprise that he recorded for just about every label but Blue Note. It turns out that he did, in fact, do a session for the label, but with generally disastrous results. ... Everybody was a little juiced and getting more so as the date went on ...”. Well, “Lady ...” is not that bad, has good

moments, but they should have made it quit after five minutes, not stretching it another three.

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), three have tenorsax:

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------|--|
| 8:18 | Jumpin' With Symphony Sid | Straight 2 to solo 17 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 5 choruses to straight 2 choruses and 20 bars close. (M) |
| 3:19 | Polka Dots And Moonbeams | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to long coda. (M) |
| 2:23 | Autumn Leaves | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to long coda. (M) |

NYC. Nov. 10, 1962

Same. Six titles, two have tenorsax:

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------|--|
| 8:39 | Jumpin' With Symphony Sid | Straight 2 to solo 14 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 12 choruses to straight 3 choruses to coda. (FM) |
| 7:28 | The Blues Walk | Straight 2 to solo 21 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 2 to straight 2 choruses. (FM) |

A great surprise here! "... Sid" is, as you know, almost always used as a theme, but here SS uses it as an improvisational vehicle for his tenorsax, playing an endless row of choruses, but easy swinging and highly enjoyable in two versions. Also fine versions of "Polka ..." and "... Leaves". A superb night at Birdland!

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, two have tenorsax:

- | | | |
|------|---------------------------|--|
| 7:31 | Jumpin' With Symphony Sid | Straight 1 to solo 15 choruses of 32 bars. Solo/straight to long coda. (M) |
| 6:02 | My Mother's Eyes | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 40 bars to coda. (M) |

Another fine night at Birdland!

SONNY STITT QUARTET**LA. May 1963**

Sonny Stitt (ts), Charles Kynard (org), Ray Crawford (g), Doug Sides (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Pacific Jazz, issued as "My Mother's Eyes":

- | | |
|-----------------------|--|
| Summer Special | Straight 12 to solo 36 bars. Straight 16 bars to fade out. (M) |
| My Mother's Eyes | Soli 32 and 16 bars to long coda. (S) |
| My Mother's Eyes alt. | Soli 32 and 48 bars to coda. (SM) |
| Stitt In Time | Soli 8, 64 and 8 bars. (M) |
| Blue Skies | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to long coda. (M) |
| S. O. P. Blues | Soli 5 and 1 choruses of 12 bars. (FM) |
| Don't Go To Strangers | Soli 32 and 24 bars to coda. (S) |
| Red Top | Straight to solo 5 choruses of 12 bars to straight with (org). (M) |

SS is obviously very inspired on this date, but the items of medium tempo and up seem to be rather frenetic with prominent organ backing. The highlights are the wonderful ballad "... Strangers, as well as the two versions of the title number "... Eyes", and note how different they are, both tempi and structures are different, very exciting!

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 only, three have tenorsax only, "The Lady ..." has both (three have Nicky Hill's altosax, not tenorsax as is given on CD-cover and discs):

| | |
|---------------------|--|
| A Natural Fox | Soli 64 and 32 bars. (M) |
| Move On Over | Soli 5 and 2 choruses of 12 bars. (FM) |
| The Lady Is A Tramp | Straight 16 and 8 bars. (FM) |
| Shut The Back Door | Soli 4 and 1 choruses of 12 bars. (SM) |

Quite pleasant session although there are no tenorsax chases. SS is his normal self, with some very nice altosax playing in slow tempo, while the tenorsax highlight is the slow medium blues on "... Back Door".

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!", five have tenorsax:

| | | |
|-------|---------------------------------|--|
| 11584 | Touchy | Soli 7 and 5 choruses of 12 bars. Coda 8 bars. (FM) |
| 11585 | Please Don't Talk About ME WIAG | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32+20 bars to coda. (M) |
| 11588 | Surfin' | Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (FM) |
| 11589 | My Mother's Eyes | Solo/straight 64 and 28 bars to coda. (SM) |
| 11590 | Lester Leaps In | Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 3 choruses + 24 bars to coda. (M) |

SS plays very good on this session with Jones' fine piano backing him. "Touchy" and "Surfin'" are two quite similar blues items, otherwise the session consists of standards with "Please ..." as my personal highlight. However, there is one thing I don't like with this session; Johnson irritating doodling on the small drum, particularly in the upper tempo this is very irritating.

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 tenorsax:

| | | |
|-------|------------|--|
| 11626 | Sunday | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 32 bars to long coda. (SM) |
| 11627 | Café | Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm). Long coda sequence (FM) |
| 11631 | Summertime | Soli 80 and 32 bars to long coda. (M) |

It seems that SS's playing is not so confident as before, and that he does not seem quite comfortable on this session. Of course he still plays satisfactory, but there are so many more interesting examples.

JAM SESSION **Molde, Norway, Aug. 2, 1963**

Dexter Gordon, Sonny Stitt (ts), Lars Werner (p), Kurt Lindgren (b), Jon Christensen (dm).

NRK broadcast from Molde Kino (Cinema), Molde International Jazz Festival, one title (Norwegian Jazz Archives):

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| But Not For Me (NC) | Solo almost 4 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (FM) |
|---------------------|---|

Unfortunately the beginning of this item is almost completely destroyed by an interview taking place between radio reporter Thorleif Østereng and Festival leader Otto Sættem. Only part of SS's solo is audible, sounds good though!

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, altosax only on "Cherokee" but:

| | | |
|------|-------------------|---|
| 3:30 | Bye Bye Blackbird | Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (M) |
|------|-------------------|---|

Fine performance, SS takes it all from beginning to end.

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", (as) on "Stardust" (lovely!) but:

| | |
|--------------------------------|--|
| Salt And Pepper | Solo 15 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 12 bars. Duet 8 choruses. (FM) |
| S'posin' | Solo/straight 16 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M) |
| Theme From "Lord Of The Flies" | Solo 24 bars. (SM) |
| Perdido | Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. 64 bars 4/4 with (dm/ts). Duet 8 bars. 64 bars 8/8 with (ts) to duet 16 bars. (FM) |

Should SS be criticized for anything, it must be that he produced so many quartet blowing sessions, that they almost cannot be separated from each other. Blowing sessions like this one are therefore a fresh change in the fixed pattern. Paul Gonsalves is not an easy match, and if one has to make a judgment, SS comes in second here. The former also seems to be the boss, starting the proceedings on the two most exciting and important items, "Salt ..." and "Perdido". A good mainstream rhythm section helps them along, and in general, this is a quite pleasant session, well worth knowing.

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", four have tenorsax:

| | | |
|------|------------|---|
| 3967 | Sunday | Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 48 bars to fade out. (SM) |
| 3969 | Love Nest | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo/straight 32 bars to coda. (SM) |
| 3971 | Soul Shack | Straight 2 to solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. Solo/duet with (org) 7 choruses to solo/straight 44 bars to coda. (FM) |
| 3972 | For You | Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 48 bars to fade out. (SM) |

The second McDuff session is also very nice, and an inspired SS seems to have got priority and space to develop his ideas; quite long soli on all items. The three slow medium items should all be noted; if you only have time for one, pick "For You", utterly pleasant! The album title is the least interesting, rather commercial.

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", three have tenorsax:

| | | |
|---------|---------------|---|
| 60207-1 | Senor Jones | Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M) |
| 60209-2 | I Told You So | Duet with (tp) 12 x 8 bars and coda. (M) |
| 60214-8 | Autumn Leaves | Duet with (tp) 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. Duet 32 bars to very long coda. (M) |

Except for the fact that these latin rhythm instruments tend to spoil any jazz session, there are some interesting things here. "... Jones" is a rather conventional blues, but "I Told ..." is quite unusual with a tight coplaying tenorsax/trumpet for the whole item, "a pleasant change from the theme – solo – theme format" as the liner notes states it. And "Autumn ...", never has SS messed it up so badly as he does here, the start of his solo should have led to immediate termination, listen yourself, but he continues quite shaken. A really negative highlight!

SONNY STITT & BENNIE GREEN**Chi. March 10/11, 1964**

Bennie Green (tb), Sonny Stitt (ts), Bobby Buster (org), Joe Diorio (g), Dorrell Anderson (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Argo, seven issued as "My Main Man" and "Stitt Goes Green":

| | | |
|-------|-------------------------------|---|
| 13053 | Our Day Will Come | With ens/(tb) 8+32 bars to solo 32 bars. Soli 8 and 8 bars to ens/(tb) 32 bars. (M) |
| 13054 | The Night Has A Thousand Eyes | Ens/Duet with (tb) 64 bars. Solo 32 bars. Duet 40 bars to coda. (M) |
| 13055 | Let's Play Chess | Soli 8, 32 and 8 bars. (M) |
| 13056 | Broilin' | Soli 3 and 1 choruses of 12 bars. (SM) |
| 13057 | Flame And Frost | Soli 8, 32 and 8 bars. (M) |
| 13058 | My Main Man | Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (SM) |
| 13060 | Double Dip | Soli 8 and 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (tb). Soli 8, 16 and 16 bars. (FM) |

This session has a commercial flavor with slightly echoed sound (no Blue Note production this one!...), but when you get used to the sound, you will find many qualities here. Pleasant trombone, organ and guitar soloing, and SS seems to be quite happy with the setup, playing good soli without going very deep. For highlights, the blues on "... Main Man" and "Broilin'" rank high, as well as "Flame ...", a nice song, and duetting with Green on "The Night ...".

SONNY STITT **NYC. March 19, 1964**

Sonny Stitt (ts, vo-"Mama ..."), Don Patterson (org), Billy James (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Prestige:

| | |
|------------------------------|--|
| Shangri-La | Solo/straight. (M) |
| Mama Don't Allow It | Vocal 32 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 16 bars. Solo/straight 3 choruses to coda. (M) |
| Soul Food | Solo/straight. (FM) |
| My New Baby | Soli 4 and 2 choruses of 12 bars. (S) |
| The Eternal One | Solo/straight 5 choruses of 32 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (dm) to straight/coda. (M) |
| Misty | Solo/straight 64+12 bars to fade out. (M) |
| Please Don't Talk About MWIG | Solo/straight 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo/straight 48 bars to fade out. (M) |
| 42639 | Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. Solo 6 choruses to 3 choruses 4/4 with (dm) to very long coda statement. (F) |

This session is neither up the standard of the best SS sessions in the early sixties, he could do so much better. But dig his slow blues on "... New Baby"! Sonny Stitt is still a major performer in the jazz tenorsax world!!

SONNY STITT **London, May 1964**

Sonny Stitt (ts, p?), Ernest Ranglin (p), Phil Bates (b), Benny Goodman (dm).

Two titles were recorded at Ronnie Scott's Club:

| | | |
|-------|-----------------|------------------------------------|
| 15:18 | Ernest's Blues | Solo 22 choruses of 12 bars ++ (M) |
| 0:32 | Home Sweet Home | Solo. (SM) |

SS know how to play the blues, but this is quite low intensity compared to the good old days. He changes to some other well known tune when he is tired of it. A very brief "... Home" has academic interest only.

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, (as) on "Theme" but:

| | | |
|-------|------------------------|----------------------------------|
| 2:37 | Mother | Vocal. Solo 28 bars to coda. (M) |
| 9:51 | My Mother's Eyes | Solo/straight 32 bars. (SM) |
| 10:39 | It Could Happen To You | Solo. (FM) |
| 8:29 | Lady Be Good | Solo. (M) |

What happened here? The two first items are more or less acceptable, brief or straight as they are, but the rest ..., 'awful' is an appropriate characteristic. Listen

to the beginning of his solo on "... Happen ..."! Or how he continues after one bad chorus on "... Good"! Only too much of something unnameable can explain this!!!

SONNY STITT & DICK MORRISSEY **London, May 1964**
 Sonny Stitt, Dick Morrissey (ts), Harry South (p), Phil Bates (b), Bill Eyden (dm).
 One title was recorded at Ronnie Scott's Club:

14:55 Blues With Dick & Harry Solo 14 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

SS takes the first solo and DM the second, and so far this item is interesting, but the rest is quite messy, and no further listening is necessary.

SONNY STITT & RONNIE SCOTT **London, May 8, 1964**
 Sonny Stitt, Ronnie Scott (ts), Stan Tracey (p), Malcolm Cecil (b), Jackie Dougan (dm).

Two titles were recorded at Ronnie Scott's Club:

18:39 The Night Has Thousand Eyes Solo/Duet. (FM)

25:46 Secret Love Solo 14 choruses of 32 bars
 (2nd (ts-solo). Duet. (FM)

London, May 29, 1964

Same except Ronnie Stephenson (dm) replaces Dougan.
 Two titles were recorded at Ronnie Scott's Club:

29:24 A Sunny Day For Ronnie Solo 35 choruses of 12 bars
 (2nd (ts-solo). 16 choruses 12/12.
 9 choruses 4/4. (F)

20:31 Bye Bye Blackbird Solo/Duet. (M)

This was a pleasant surprise, because on both sessions both tenorsax players are in very good shape, eager to play, and in fact, this is some tenorsax battles that fit nicely into the good old tradition!! The solo notation above is slightly simplified, please have understanding, life is short.

CHARLIE PARKER MEMORIAL **Newport, Rh. I., July 4, 1964**
 Howard McGhee (tp), J. J. Johnson (tb), Sonny Stitt (ts), Harold Mabern (p), Arthur Harper (b), Max Roach (dm).

Three titles were recorded for RCA Victor at Newport Jazz Festival:

3862 Buzzy Solo 15 choruses of 12 bars.
 Soli 4 and 4 bars. (FM)

3863 Now's The Time Solo 18 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

3864 Wee Soli 64 and 32 bars. (F)

As always SS loves to play very long soli when he get the opportunity, and so also here. The quality is good, no problem, well worth listening to, but not quite the coherence as on his best recordings in the fifties.

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

...ooo...