

**The**  
**VIOLIN**  
**of**  
**HEZEKIAH LEROY SMITH**  
**“STUFF”**

Solographer: Jan Evensmo  
Last updated: Sept. 24, 2021

Born: Portsmouth, Ohio, Aug. 14, 1909  
 Died: Munich, Germany, Sept. 25, 1965

*Introduction:*

Stuff Smith was one of Oslo Jazz Circle's favourites back then, and the members fought each others for the Vocalion 78s!

*History:*

His father, a barber and part-time boxer, also played all the string instruments and doubled on reeds. When Stuff was seven his father made him his first violin, at 12 he began playing in his father's band. At that time the family lived in Masillon, Ohio. Stuff won a musical scholarship to study at the Johnson C. Smith University in North Carolina, he left in 1924 to tour with the Aunt Jemina Revue Band. After two years on the road he joined Alphonso Trent (then played in Kentucky). Subsequently played with that band during their long residency at the Adolphus Hotel, Dallas. He moved to New York (with Edwin Swayzee) in 1928 to join Jelly Roll Morton, but soon returned to Alphonso Trent's Band. After various residencies and tours through Texas, Tennessee, Ohio, Canada, etc., he finally left Trent in Syracuse. He settled in Boiston and began leading his own bands. After playing long residencies at the Little Harlem Club, The Vendome Hotel and The Silver Grill (usually with Jonah Jones in the band), he took the quintet to New York in 1936. Long stay at The Onyx Club (during this booking Stuff began to play amplified violin). The band played in Hollywood from summer 1937 until early 1938 then, facing union problems and a bankruptcy order, Stuff temporarily disbanded. He re-formed again later in 1938 and continued leading until the early 1940s. In 1942 he fronted the band that had previously been led by Fats Waller (Sammy Benskin on piano). This set-up ended when Stuff contracted pneumonia. After his recovery he led own trio at Garrick Lounge, Chicago (1943) and at The Onyx, New York (september 1944 to spring 1945), then moved to Chicago. He openend his own restaurant and formed a new trio for regular work in Chicago, the trio also played residencies in Milwaukee, Washington, New York, etc., then Stuff moved to California. Worked mainly on the West Coast during the 1950s, sometimes as a soloist. In the spring of 1957 his tour of Europe (with JATP) was cut short by the recurrence of a serious stomach ailment. He returned to California and began leading own small group in early 1958. Continued to work regularly on West Coast (including appearance at Monterey Jazz Festival). Played for a year in Toronto, Canada, before working at the Embers, New York, with Joe Bushkin (spring 1964). After a spell in California he began touring Europe early 1965 (played residency in London during March 1965), he then did guest star appearances in Denmark, France, Belgium, Germany, etc.. He died in Munich but was buried in Denmark (ref. John Chilton: Who's Who of Jazz).

*Message:*

This solography would not have been possible, at least not very interesting, without the magnificent research, analysis and production of the violin jazz CD-series on AB Fable, of which Stuff Smith comprises the most important part, by Anthony Barnett. Thank you very, very much!!

## STUFF SMITH SOLOGRAPHY

**ALPHONSE TRENT & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Richmond, Ind., Oct. 11, 1928**  
 Irving Randolph, Chester Clark (tp), Leo "Snub" Mosley (tb, vo), James Jeter, Charles Pillars, Lee Hilliard, Hayes Pillars (reeds), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Alphonse Trent (p, ldr), Eugene Crooke (bjo, g), Robert Jackson (tu), A. G. Godley (dm), John Fielding (vo).

Two titles were recorded for Gennett, no (vln) on 14327 "Louder And Funnier" but:

14328 Gilded Kisses Solo 32 bars. (F)

**Richmond, Ind., Dec. 5, 1928**

Same. Three titles, two issued:

14518 Black And Blue Rhapsody Solo 4 bars. (FM)

14519 Nightmare Soli 4 and 4 bars. (SM)

**Richmond, Ind., March 5, 1930**

Same with George Hudson, Peanuts Holland (tp) added.

Two titles, no (vln) on 16349 "After You've Gone" but:

16350-A St. James Infirmary Solo 16 bars. (F)

The greatest violinist in vintage jazz, if ever, is introduced to us with the fascinating pre-swing orchestra of Alphonse Trent, and his early solo contribution "... Kisses" proves that he already is a musician whose talent is appreciated, and that he is allotted a solo seems quite natural. Unfortunately the band got few recording opportunities, and almost 1 ½ years pass until the next real solo, "... Infirmary". It seems that Stuff Smith already was ready for greater challenges, but nevertheless half-a-decade passed before he appeared with his own group, to establish himself firmly forever as one of the most swinging jazz musicians ever.

**ZACH WHYTE'S**  
**CHOCOLATE BEAY BRUMMELS** **Richmond, Ind., Nov. 12, 1931**

Personnel including Stuff Smith (vln).

Three titles were recorded for Gennett, rejected, fate unknown.

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. Jan. 17, 1936**

Jonah Jones (tp, vo), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Raymond Smith (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), John Washington (dm).

One title, 18508 "With All My Heart", was recorded for Vocalion, rejected.

**NYC. Feb. 11, 1936**

Same. Four titles:

18654-1 I'se A-Muggin' – Part 1 In ens. (M)

18655-1 I'se A-Muggin' – Part 2 In ens 16 bars. Coda 4 bars. (M)

18655-2 I'se A-Muggin' – Part 2 In ens 8 bars. Coda 4 bars. (M)

18656-1 I Hope Gabriel Likes My Music Solo/straight 36 bars. Solo 36 bars. Acc. (tp). (F)

18657-1 I'm Putting All My Eggs In One Basket Intro 2 bars. Acc. (tp). Soli 8 and 32 bars. Coda 4 bars. (FM)

It is time now; Stuff Smith appears with his own band, one of the most swinging ones in jazz history! The session starts with a great waste, "I'se ..." has slight jazz value, and the numbers game on part 2 is now outdated. However, the two remaining items are gigantic swingers, with SS himself in charge, also with charming vocals, but with Jonah Jones having an important role with his great trumpet soli. SS turns out to be a magnificent artist, performing the essence of swing jazz on his violin, a solid improviser! Dig the two full chorus soli on "... Music" and "... Basket"; if you don't enjoy these, then skip the rest of this solography!!

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. Feb. 23, 1936**

Same. Broadcast "Paul Whiteman Show", two titles:

I'm A Ding Dong Daddy Solo 2 ½ choruses of 32 bars. In ens/acc. (tp). (F)

I'se A-Muggin' In ens. (M)

“... Daddy” is a very noisy and exhibitionistic piece, easy to lose track of the music qualities, particularly in the trumpet ending. However, SS sets the pace with an exciting vocal, and his following violin solo is a magnificent example of what swing really used to be in those vintage years!

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. March 13, 1936**  
Jonah Jones (tp, vo-18820), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), James Sherman (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), Cozy Cole (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion:

18817-1	I Don't Want To Make History	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (tp). Coda 4 bars. (FM)
18818-2	'Tain't No Use	Break. Acc. (tp). Duet with (tp) 16 bars. Coda 4 bars. (SM)
18819-1	After You've Gone	Intro 4 bars. Duet with (tp) 36 bars. Solo 80 bars. (F)
18820-1	You'se A Viper	Solo 64 bars. Acc. (tp). (FM)

Possibly the greatest of the Stuff Smith Vocalion sessions, with an upgraded rhythm section, swinging like ....!!! On “After ...”, later one of Roy Eldridge's show numbers, SS really goes for it, sparkling duet with trumpet, later a magnificent solo! Same goes for “... Viper”. And although these are the most important items violin-wise, the remaining two are just musts; the charming “... History” and finally and, for once, in a very pleasant slow medium tempo with memorable cooperation with his trumpeter, the delightful “... No Use”. Can you get better vintage jazz than these?

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. March 29, 1936**  
Same. Broadcast “Swingtime At NBC”, Bill Savory collection, one title:

I'se A-Muggin' (NC)	In ens. (M)
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**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. April 23, 1936**  
Same. Broadcast “The Fleischmann's Yeast Hour”, two titles:

After You've Gone	Solo appr. 56 bars, partly destroyed by announcer. Acc. (tp). (F)
I'se A-Muggin'	In ens. (M)

Somebody is talking too much, and thus we can only glimpse at a white hot swinging violin solo on “After ...”!

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. May 12, 1936**  
Personnel as March 13.  
Two titles were recorded for Vocalion:

19239-1	Robins And Roses	Duet with (tp) 16+8 bars, solo 8 bars on bridge. Solo 8 bars. Duet 14 bars to coda. (M)
19240-1	I've Got A Heavy Date	Duet with (tp) 16+8, solo 6 bars on bridge. Solo 32 bars. Break. Acc. (tp). (FM)

Only two titles on this session, but what lovely constructions!! Beautiful cooperation between SS and his trumpeter, even closer than before, and you should check the Jonah Jones solography. However then note the magnificent violin soli on this date, the gigantic eight bars on “... Roses” and even better thirtytwo bars on “... Date”, better do not exist. Some Oslo Jazz Circle members almost killed for the possession of these!

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. July 1, 1936**  
Personnel as March 13.  
Four titles were recorded for Vocalion, 19502 “Swing Time” was rejected (no test pressings known to exist) but:

19500-1	It Ain't Right	Duet with (tp) 16+8 bars, solo 8 bars on bridge. Solo 8 bars. Duet 16+8 bars, solo 8 bars on bridge. (FM)
19501-1	Old Joe's Hittin' The Jug	Intro with (tp) 8 bars to duet with (tp) 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F)
19503-2	Serenade For A Wealthy Widow	Solo/straight duet with (tp). (FM)

Another two highly noteworthy items! On "... Right" the cooperation between SS and Jonah is superb with fine but brief violin soli. Nevertheless the highlight is "... The Jug", swing de luxe, with magnificent vintage drum breaks, and with a dynamic violin solo only SS could make. "Serenade ..." is however the odd item, a tune of strange structure, and the guys play and play, ok enough, but not very exciting, and why did they choose something strange like this?

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. Aug. 21, 1936**

Same. Three titles were recorded for Vocalion:

19731-1	Knock, Knock, Who's There?	Solo 24 bars. Acc. (tp). (F)
19732-1	Bye Bye, Baby	Intro/acc. (tp). Break. Solo 8 bars. Duet with (tp). Break. (M)
19733-1	Here Comes The Man With The Jive	Solo 32 bars. Acc. (tp). (FM)

We have already arrived at the end of the everlasting Vocalion sessions, without which we would have had a quite incomplete picture of SS as a major swinger, a great improviser, one of the major personalities in vintage jazz. The material here is unfortunately not as exciting on the previous sessions, note the nonsense vocal parts of "Knock ..." and "... Jive", and the atmosphere is slightly less jubilant, however there are highly notable hot violin moments on all three items.

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS** **NYC. Aug. 1936**

Same. Broadcast possibly from Onyx Club:

Here Comes The Man With The Jive	Acc. (tp) 32 bars. (FM)
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Not the best of sound.

**NYC. Oct. 3, 1936**

Same, except probably Clyde Hart (p).

Broadcast "Saturday Night Swing Club", three titles, one issued:

Oh! Lady Be Good	Intro 2 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F)
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Another hard swinging broadcast item with excellent soloing by all.

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. 1937**

Jonah Jones, Mario Bauza, Bobby Stark, Taft Jordan (tp), Sandy Williams, Nat Story (tb), Garvin Bushell, Andrew Brown (cl, as), Edgar Sampson (as, arr), Walter Thomas, Ben Webster (ts), Stuff Smith (vln), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Ella Fitzgerald (vo).

WMCA broadcasts from Hotel Biltmore, "Let's Listen To Lucidin" eye lotion commercials. All programs have the same theme before and after.

**Jan. 6, 1937**

Five titles, one has SS:

Stompin' At The Savoy	Solo 18+6 bars, (ts) on bridge. (FM)
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**Jan. 8, 1937**

Five titles, four have SS:

I Got Rhythm	Solo 34 bars. (FM)
Goodnight My Love	Acc. (vo). (SM)
Blue Prelude	Solo 2 bars. (SM)
Copper Colored Gal	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

**Jan. 11, 1937**

Two titles (incomplete program), one has SS:

The Organ Grinder's Swing	Solo 24 bars. (M)
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**Jan. 15, 1937**

Five titles, two have SS:

I've Found A New Baby	Solo 14 bars. (FM)
Put On Your Old Grey Bonnet	Solo 36 bars. (F)

**Jan. 18, 1937**

Five titles, one has SS:

Clouds / Love	Solo 24 bars. (SM) to solo 46 bars. (FM)
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**Jan. 22, 1937**

Four titles, two have SS:

Copper Colored Gal	Acc. (vo). (M)
My Last Affair	Acc. (vo). (M)

**late Jan./early Feb. 1937**

Two titles (incomplete program), one has SS:

Copper Colored Gal	Acc. (vo). (M)
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SS led a band with an incredible personnel, but it never recorded. The existence of these commercial broadcasts is thus a real wonder and one of the truly most important jazz archeology wonders!! The leader gladly distributes out soli to everybody and limits himself to a selected few. I find everything he does these days is of excellent quality, so play and judge for yourself! Nevertheless, listen to his swinging "... Grey Bonnet" and in particular his solo feature "Clouds" with two tempi, did this one!!

**TEDDY WILSON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. late Feb./early March, 1937**

Jonah Jones (tp), Ben Webster (ts), Stuff Smith (vln), Teddy Wilson (p), Lawrence Lucie (g), John Kirby (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Helen Ward (vo).

Date erroneously given as Nov. 25, 1936, but this program was made after Lucidin was on the market.

Broadcast, commercial for Lucidin eye lotion:

Them There Eyes (Theme)	In ens. (M)
You Turned The Tables On Me	Intro 4 bars. (S)
Darling, Not Without You	Acc. (vo). (S)
Them There Eyes (Theme)	In ens. (M)
I Got Rhythm	Solo 34 bars. (F)
Did You Mean It?	Acc. (vo). (M)
Them There Eyes (Theme)	In ens. (M)

A lovely follow-up Lucidin broadcast, but SS has a minor role here; a great violin solo on "... Rhythm" makes up for it though!

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ONYX CLUB BOYS NYC. May 4, 1937**

Jonah Jones (tp), Buster Bailey (cl), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Decca:

62172-A	Twilight In Turkey	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (F)
62173-A	Where Is The Sun?	Solo 8 bars. Acc. (tp). (SM)
62174-A	Upstairs	Duet with (tp) 24 bars. Solo 24 bars. In ens. (F)
62175-A	Onyx Club Spree	Soli 4, 8 and 8 bars. Acc. (tp). (M)
62175-B	Onyx Club Spree	As above. (M)

This is a different kind of Stuff session, possibly due to Decca which usually messed up everything in their recording sessions ... The group increase with clarinet also seems contraproductive. The material here is not particularly exciting, "... Turkey" is rather artificial, "Upstairs" forced and rather vulgar, the setup in general somewhat messy compared to the wonderful Vocalion sessions earlier. However, it is fair to say that SS plays his solo parts very well, so don't bypass the session!

**STUFF SMITH Randall's Island, NY. May 29, 1938**

Jonah Jones (tp), Ben Webster (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Bobby Bennett (g), Mack Walker (b), Cozy Cole (dm), Stuff Smith (vln, ldr).

WNEW broadcast "Carnival of Swing Festival", Bill Savory collection, one title:

Crescendo In Drums	In ens. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
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Strong and hot chorus here!

**STUFF SMITH NYC. June 29, 1939**

Personnel probably as below.

Broadcast WJZ, one title:

Big Wig In The Wigwam Solo 32 bars. Acc. (vo). (F)

SS is just incredible!! His dynamic approach to the essence of swing in high uptempo has few equals in the history of jazz. Point made.

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Sept./Oct. 1939**  
Jonah Jones (tp), George Clarke (ts), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Sam Allen (p), Bernard Addison or Carl O. Seaman (g), John Brown (b), Herbert Cowans (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Varsity:

7792-3	Sam The Vegetable Man	Soli 8 and 8 bars. (F)
7793-2	My Thoughts	Solo with ens 40 bars. Coda. (S)
7794-2	My Blue Heaven	Intro. Solo 30 bars. (FM)
7795-3	When Paw Was Courtin' Maw	Solo 16 bars. (F)

One cannot but compare with sadness the deterioration of Stuff Smith sessions since the unforgettable 1936-37 period. The choice of material is now quite commercial, even vulgar. Stupid vocals seem to be preferred to serious music. This is even more a shame because the violinist obviously has all his capabilities retained. Try to keep everything else out, concentrate on the violin soli, and you will find nice things here!

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. March 18-22, 1940**  
Jonah Jones (tp, vo), George Clarke (ts, vo), Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Eric Henry (p), Luke Stewart (g), John Brown (b), Herbert Cowans (dm), Stella Brooks (vo).  
Four titles were recorded for Varsity:

1506-1	It's Up To You	Acc. (vo). (SM)
1506-2	It's Up To You	As above. (SM)
1507-1	I've Got You Under My Skin	Solo 8 bars. (M)
1507-2	I've Got You Under My Skin	As above. (M)
1508-1	Crescendo In Drums	Solo 32 bars. In ens. (F)
1508-2	Crescendo In Drums	As above. (F)
1509-1	Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho	Solo 16 bars. In ens. (FM)
1509-2	Joshua Fit The Battle Of Jericho	As above. (FM)

Better than the previous Varsity session but not close to what could have been achieved with more interesting material. Not even alternate takes make things very interesting. Note some swinging violin on "... Drums" and "... Jericho" though.

**STUFF SMITH** **Milwaukee, Wisconsin, April 16, 1940**  
Personnel as above.  
WEMP broadcast, two titles:

Bugle Blues	Solo 48 bars. In ens. (F)
Body And Soul (NC)	(NC) Solo 20+32 bars. (S) Solo 64+32 bars. (NC). (F)

After all that has been written earlier in this solography, this is the best of all the Stuff Smith broadcasts, although it is quite late, after the group's real prime time. Dig the "Bugle ..." and believe you have reached the point of swing perfection. But you have not. If one should choose *the* most swinging item in jazz history, Stuff Smith's version of "Body ...", incomplete in both ends but nevertheless taking a long solo, this is it!! You have never heard anything like it, believe me!!!

**JAM SESSION** **Chi. Feb. 27, 1941**  
Karl George (tp), Stuff Smith (vln), Lionel Hampton (vib), Teddy Wilson (p), Vernon Alley (b).  
WGN Mutual broadcast, one title:

Jam Five (NC)	Solo 8 bars (NC). In ens. (FM)
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A magnificent 8 bars solo opening with good sound but then suddenly stop. Is it a camouflaged change of acetate, or done on purpose somewhere in the production line?

**STUFF SMITH & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Cincinnati, mid/late Aug. 1942**

Herman Autry (!) (tp), Ted McCord (ts), Stuff Smith (vln), Sammy Benskin (p), Al Casey (g), Al Hall (b), Slick Jones (dm).

WLW broadcast from Old Vienna Restaurant, eight titles:

In A Little Riff	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Begin The Beguine	In ens. Solo 16 bars. (M)
The Umbrella Man	Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. Acc. (tp). Coda 8 bars. (FM)
My Thoughts (Theme)	In ens. (S)
That Naughty Waltz	Solo 32 bars. Coda 8 bars. (FM)
My Thoughts (Theme)	In ens. (S)
Upstairs	Soli 62 and 52 bars. (F)
Our Jump (NC)	In ens. (FM)

Another great jazz archeological discovery, an excellent swing group! Some of the most exciting SS ever, particularly the "... Umbrella ...", an item that can compare with the "Body And Soul" above, insanely hot and jumping, something to bring with you to a desolate island! What a fantastic improviser SS was!! Nevertheless this session makes me somewhat sad, because it represents the end of an era. Never again will we find SS playing this kind of legendary vintage music of which we have had marvelled since 1936. New times are arriving, and in just more than one year the greatest jazz fiddle artist in jazz history will be constrained in a trio, no more a rhythm guitar, not even a drummer. Sad.

#### STUFF SMITH TRIO

Chi. Nov. 17, 1943

Stuff Smith (vln), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (b).

Ten titles were recorded for World Transcriptions, no violin solo on 24957-2 "The Red Jump" (false start) but:

24954-1	Humoresque	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
24955-1	Ghost Of A Chance (NC)	Solo 14 bars (NC). (S)
24955-2	Ghost Of A Chance (NC)	Solo 21 bars (NC). (SM)
24955-3	Ghost Of A Chance	Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge to solo 32 bars to coda. (SM)
24956-3	Minuet In Swing	Straight/solo 64 bars. Acc. (b). Solo/straight 16 bars to coda. (F)
24957-1	The Red Jumps	Soli 32 and 32 bars. (FM)
24957-2	The Red Jumps (NC)	No solo. (FM)
24957-3	The Red Jumps	As take 1. (FM)
24958-1	Melody In F	Straight/soli. (F)
24959-1	She's Funny That Way	Soli 32 and 16 bars. (SM)
24960-1	To A Wild Rose	Solo 24 bars. (SM) to solo 64 bars to coda. (FM)
24961-1	Bugle Call Rag	Intro 4 bars to soli 48 and 48+24 bars. (F)
24961-2	Bugle Call Rag	Intro 4 bars to soli 36 and 48+24 bars. (F)
24962-1	Desert Sands	Straight/soli. (FM)
24963-1	La Cinquantaine	Straight/soli. (F)

It is best to get used to it right a way; times have changed in a very short time. This is the first time SS appears with his trio, and having the thirties in mind, a trio is a very bad idea, and a fine but typical soft pianist like Jones is far from an obvious choice. Nevertheless, it is SS's choice, and to survive in the upcoming bebop era, to appear with a trio was probably a good idea. Shake off your disappointment and accept things as they are. SS plays as good as ever and is an excellent improviser, so concentrate upon his playing if you don't like the surroundings. Try "Bugle ..." first and enjoy!

#### RED NORVO & STUFF SMITH QUARTET

Chi. April 5, 1944

Stuff Smith (vln), Red Novo (vib), Remo Palmieri (g), Clyde Lombardi (b).

Four titles were recorded for Steiner-Davis in John Steiner's House, three issued:

4544-00	Red's Stuff (rehearsal)	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
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4544-4b	Red's Stuff	As below. (FM)
4544-5b	Red's Stuff	Acc. (vib). Solo 36 bars. (FM)
4544-7b	Confessin'	Soli 16 and 8 bars to long coda. (S)
4544-11b	A Fawn Jumped At Dawn	Acc. (vib). Duet with (vib) 16 bars. (M)

Oh, what can a guitar accompaniment do! The session is rather amputated, but nevertheless it has an atmosphere, and SS's contributions sound much more real accordingly.

**STUFF SMITH QUARTET** **Chi. May 30, 1944**  
 Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Jimmy Jones (p), Mary Osborne (g, vo), John Levy (b).  
 Four titles issued on French Selmer:

2343-1	Blues In Mary's Flat	Obbligato parts. (SM) Solo 24 bars. (FM)
2344-1	Blues In Stuff's Flat	Solo 24 bars. (M)
2345-2	I Got Rhythm	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (FM)
2346-2	Sweet Lorraine	Intro 4 bars to solo 32 bars. Solo 8 bars to coda. (SM)

The quartet gives slightly more variation than the trio, and whenever SS gets the opportunity, he swings his fiddle very nicely, although there is no swing guitar background as on the previous session. Nice to hear him play that old "... Lorraine".

**STUFF SMITH TRIO** **Chi. prob. June 1944**  
 Stuff Smith (vln), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (b).  
 WBBM broadcast from Garrick Lounge:

Blue Skies	Soli 32 and 36 bars to coda. (M)
Rip (NC)	Solo 48 bars (NC). (F)

Two fine straightforward hot violin items, well worth noticing.

**STUFF SMITH & ROBERT CRUM DUO** **NYC. Aug. 25/26, 1944**  
 Stuff Smith (vln), Robert Crum (p). Note that the CD AB Fable XABCD1-X013 has Jimmy Jones (p), while Tom Lord has Robert Crum, the latter must be correct.  
 Two titles were recorded in Timme Rosenkrantz / Inez Cavanaugh's apartment:

Desert Sands	1:56. (M)
Minuet In Swing	2:47. (S/F)

For comments see Oct. 21, 1944.

**STUFF SMITH TRIO** **NYC. Sept. 1, 1944**  
 Stuff Smith (vln), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (b). Note bigband in intro and coda.  
 CBS broadcast "Music 'Til Midnight" – Mildred Bailey show, one title:

Bugle Call Rag rehearsal	Soli 56, 12 and 80 bars to coda. (F)
Bugle Call Rag	Soli 68, 12 and 80 bars to coda. (F)

Two very hot and exciting versions of "Bugle ..." with the bass working hard to assist SS's swinging efforts, but it seems that the piano style is not well tailored to the leader's dynamic approach.

**STUFF SMITH TRIO** **NYC. Sept. 8, 1944**  
 Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (b).  
 Six titles were recorded for Asch:

736	Midway	Intro 4 bars. Solo 7 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
736-alt	Midway	Intro 4 bars. Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
737	Look At Me	Acc. (b). (M)
738	Skip It	Soli 8, 8 and 24 bars. (M)
738-alt.	Skip It	As above. (M)
739	Stop-Look (rehearsal)	Practice/talking. (M)
740	Stop-Look	Intro 4 to solo 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M)

740-alt.	Stop-Look	As above. (M)
741	Don't You Think?	Soli 36 and 8 bars to coda. (S)
742	Desert Sands	Solo/straight 44+44+24 bars. (M)

Accepting SS's choice of partners, it is obvious that he enjoys himself, and that leaving the swing era does not mean much to him. He swings his hot fiddle heartily in the uptempo "Midway", plays softly in medium tempo on "Skip ..." and "... - Look" (note my trio comments here), and takes a nice and slow "... Think?" but with some violent outbursts. The highlight seems to be the final number, the original "Desert ...", the solo part here is delightful, and SS is still a great swinger!

**STUFF SMITH TRIO** **NYC. Sept. 11, 1944**

Stuff Smith (vln), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (b).  
WEAF NBC broadcast, two titles were recorded for V-Disc:

Stop-Look	Intro 4 bars. Solo 32 bars. (M)
Humoresque	2:44. Solo/straight. (M/F)

"Stop- ..." here goes slightly faster than the former Asch recordings, the structure is different, and SS sounds also more inspired. Inspired is also the word for "Humoresque", a tune that SS seems to enjoy these days, since there are several broadcast versions. I prefer to skip details but note the hot fast section at the end!

**STUFF SMITH TRIO** **NYC. Sept. 26, 1944**

Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (b), Rosalie Young, Billy Daniels (vo).

Five titles were recorded for Savoy, four issued:

5726-3	Don't Cha Pay Him No Mind	Obbligato 32 bars (vo-SS). Solo 32 bars. Obbligato 18 bars to coda (vo-RY). (SM)
5727-1	Is Is?	Solo 16+8 bars, (p) on bridge. (M)
5728-3	Two-Faced Woman	Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. Coda. (S)
5729-5	Always	Intro 4 bars. Obbligato 32 bars (vo-BD). Solo 16 bars. Coda. (S)

If I had managed to get SS into a recording studio, I would certainly find something more useful for him to do, these are rather boring items. Except when he is soloing, because he always has something to offer. Take the solo on "... Woman" as a typical example.

**STUFF SMITH TRIO** **NYC. Oct. 16, 1944**

Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (b).  
Broadcast from CBS Radio Theatre, AFRS Jubilee 101 & 102, two titles:

Perdido	Solo/straight 4 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
Stop-Look	Solo 48 bars. (M)

Yet another structure for "Stop- ..." with longer solo. SS plays very nicely both here and on "Perdido".

**STUFF SMITH & ROBERT CRUM** **NYC. ca. Oct. 21, 1944**

Stuff Smith (vln), Robert Crum (p).  
Timme Rosenkrantz apartment transcriptions duets, "New World" 30:07, "Windy City" 4:36, "Fugue In Swing" 4:50, "Lullaby" 5:03, "Two Souls Touch" 23:04, "Interlude" 4:05, issued on AB Fable ABCD2-004/5.

The relation between SS and RC is described in detail in the liner notes. RC is a classical pianist, and the cooperation is thus rather unique. However, their music tends much more to classical than jazz music. Nothing wrong with that, but the more than one hour performance will probably have little appeal, as to me, for jazz listeners and/or SS fans. Also I find myself quite incompetent in trying to write anything sensible, and I thus suggest you do your own evaluations.

**STUFF SMITH SEXTET** **NYC. Nov. 3, 1944**

Stuff Smith (vln), Red Norvo (xyl), Teddy Wilson (p), Remo Palmieri (g), Al Hall (b), Specs Powell (dm).

CBS broadcast "Music 'Til Midnight" – Mildred Bailey show, one title:

Humoresque	3:05. Long intro to solo/straight. (S/M/F)
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This version has a long and slow introduction, and SS seems to joke with the public both musically and probably also with his body. Great music and entertainment! Exhibitionism as an art!!

**STUFF SMITH QUINTET** **NYC. Nov. 24, 1944**

Stuff Smith (vln), Mary Lou Williams (p), Remo Palmieri (g), Al Hall (b), Specs Powell (dm).

CBS broadcast "Music 'Til Midnight" – Mildred Bailey show, one title:

Humoresque 3:27. Long intro to solo/straight. (S/M/F)

Three weeks and then another version of "Humoresque" with more or less the same structure, equally fascinating and highly enjoyable, but not quite as outward directed to the public.

**ERROLL GARNER / LUCKY THOMPSON** **NYC. Dec. 1944**

Bobby Pratt (tb), Gene Sedric (ts-"Toe ..."), Lucky Thompson (ts-"Test ..."), Stuff Smith (vln), Erroll Garner (p), George Wettling (dm).

Two titles were recorded on Timme Rosenkrantz's apartment:

Toe Jam Blues Fooling around. Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Test Pilots Fooling around.  
Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to ens. (M)

Friendly jam session, but there are so much more interesting SS sessions.

**STUFF SMITH & ROBERT CRUM** **NYC. Dec. 16&18, 1944**

Stuff Smith (vln), Robert Crum (p).

Timme Rosenkrantz apartment, two titles, "Waltz With Me" (aka "Adventure In Feeling") 9:51 and "Rehearsing" 7:01. No further comments.

**STUFF SMITH TRIO** **NYC. Dec. 20, 1944**

Stuff Smith (vln), Jimmy Jones (p), John Levy (dm).

Four titles were recorded at Times Hall:

Perdido Solo/straight 5 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

My Thoughts Solo/straight. 3:38. (S)

Our Waltz Solo/straight. 4:35. (S)

Bugle Call Rag Intro 8 bars to solo 5 choruses of 12 bars.  
Soli 12 and 80 bars. (F)

Nice for once to hear SS on two slow items, played with solemnity and beauty, and here the piano backing is quite proper. On "Perdido" there seems to be a misunderstanding of the proceedings in the beginning of the third chorus, and "Bugle ..." is more exciting, but the contrast piano/bass to SS's hot fiddle seems to strengthen my point that this trio was not the most homogenous one.

**STUFF SMITH & ROBERT CRUM** **same date**

Stuff Smith (vln), Robert Crum (p).

Two titles, "Fugue In Swing" 6:17 and "Waltz With Me" 8:26. No further comments.

**STUFF SMITH QUARTET & SEPTET** **NYC. Feb. 1, 1945**

Nat Brown (cl-"My ..."), Stuff Smith (vln), Frank Froeba (p), Al Caiola (g-"My ..."), Dick Kissingner (b), Teddy Snyder (dm), Art Ford (mc).

WNEW broadcast Saturday Afternoon Swing Club, two titles:

Swing Test 2149 Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

My Rhythm Intro 12 bars to solo 32 bars.  
Solo 2 ½ choruses of 34 bars. (F)

Quite interesting violin soli on this broadcast.

**STUFF SMITH ACC. BY PAUL BARON & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Feb. 2, 1945**

Stuff Smith (vln), (rhythm), large orchestra intro & coda, Mildred Bailey (mc).

CBS broadcast "Music Till Midnighnt", Mildred Bailey Show, one title:

La Cinquantaine Solo/straight 64 bars. (M)

Soft and pleasant, although SS obviously makes something making the audience laugh.

**STUFF SMITH TRIO** **NYC. June 9, 1945**

Stuff Smith (vln), Billy Taylor (p), Ted Sturgis (b).

Three titles were recorded in concert at Town Hall:

4976 Perdido Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to fade out.

- Acc. (b). Solo/straight 32 bars to coda. (M)
- 4977 Bugle Call Rag Solo 20+48 bars. Acc. (b).  
Soli 36 and much more bars. (F)
- 4978 Desert Sands Straight 24 bars. Solo 8 bars. Straight  
12 bars. Acc. (b). Solo 20 bars. Coda. (M)

Lots of fine violin here, but nothing comparable to the great heights. Piano and bass have prominent roles. On “Bugle ...” the heat is too much, at least for my taste.

**JAM SESSION** **NYC. Aug. 20, 1945**  
Collective personnel: Buster Bailey, Herbie Fields (cl), Don Byas, Dexter Gordon, Ben Webster (ts), Stuff Smith (vln), Duke Ellington, Erroll Garner (p), Al Lucas (b), Eddie Nicholson (dm) and others.  
Three titles were recorded live at Onyx Club or Lincoln Square Center, issued as “Ben And The Boys – Ben Webster”:

- Riffs to solo 64 bars. (FM)
- The Romp
- Solo ca. 3 choruses of 32 bars (NC). (FM)
- Honeysuckle Rose (NC)
- Solo ca. 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
- Lullaby In Rhythm

Jam session in bad sound, and particularly SS suffers. It seems that “The Romp” and “... Rhythm” have slight interest, but that there are interesting details in “... Rose” although almost drowned in noise. No session of importance for our friend.

**STUFF SMITH TRIO WITH SARAH VAUGHAN** **NYC. Oct. 1, 1945**  
Stuff Smith (vln, vo-5305), Freddie Jefferson (p), Pete Glover (b), Sarah Vaughan (vo-5304).  
Two titles were recorded for Musicraft:

- 5304-4 Time And Again Obligato parts. (S)
- 5305-3 Is! Is! Straight 32 bars. Solo 16 bars. (M)

Sarah sings pretty on “... Again” with SS in the background executes what is expected of him. “... Is!” is rather boring, possibly except for the 16 bars solo.

**STUFF SMITH QUARTET** **St. Louis, Dec. 1946**  
Stuff Smith (vln, vo), Charles Fox (p), Bill Jennings (g), Wendell Marshall (b).  
Four titles were recorded for Town & Country, 509 “Won’t You Take A Lesson In Love?” and 511 “Take A Walk” have not been available but:

- 510 Night Falls Again Solo 8 bars. (S)
- 512 Up Jumped The Devil Solo 32 bars. (M)

The last recording session in a long time. SS is now quite far from the hot music he made back in the vintage years, but whenever he takes to the fiddle, there is always something there.

**SUN RA** **Chi. Nov. 1948 – Mid-1949**  
Sun Ra (p, solovox), Stuff Smith (vln).  
One title was recorded in Sun Ra’s apartment:

- Duet with Sun Ra. 3:56. (S)
- Deep Purple (NC)

A fascinating and quite unique item during a period of almost five years when there is no Stuff Smith to be heard.

**DIZZY GILLESPIE SEXTET** **Chi. Oct. 25, 1951**  
Dizzy Gillespie (tp, vo), Bill Graham (bar), Stuff Smith (vln), Milt Jackson (p, vo-2305), Percy Heath (b), Al Jones (dm), Joe Carroll (vo).  
Six titles were recorded for Dee Gee, no SS on 2301 “Nobody Knows The Trouble I’ve Seen” and 2302 “The Bluest Blues” but:

- 2300 Caravan Solo 16 bars. (M)
- 2300-alt. Caravan As above. (M)
- 2303 On The Sunny Side Of The Street Solo 16 bars. (M)
- 2304 Stardust Acc. (tp). (S)
- 2305 Time On My Hands Obligato 32 bars (vo-MJ). (SM)

Long time since we heard a proper violin solo by SS, but then he appears surprisingly with Dizzy. One should think that SS was much too funny to team up with Dizzy which was quite funny himself, and he gets no vocals either. However,



The Stuff Smith solography stops here for the moment, but only for practical reasons, not because there is anything wrong with Stuff Smith's music. On the contrary he seems to survive all changes in music environment and swings his violin with strong energy for many more years. Thus the solography will possibly be continued later. Last session in 1967.

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