

The
BARITONESAX
of
TATE HOUSTON

Solographer: Jan Evensmo
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Born: Nov. 30, 1924
Died: Oct. 18, 1974

Introduction:

I don't think we noticed Tate Houston back then, but listening to his early baritone sax efforts with Sir Charles Thompson and others, his solo work should be made.

History:

Tate Houston was "Detroit-based" (ref. Wikipedia). He played with Lionel Hampton's band, then with Billy Eckstine, later he played with Sonny Stitt and Milt Jackson with whom he would continue to play, and record, into the early 1960s. He was headlined with Phil Hill's trio at Detroit's Blue Bird Inn jazz club until 1949. There he also played in line-ups with Milt Jackson, Alvin Jackson, Billy Mitchell and Tommy Flanagan. No further information at this time of writing.

TATE HOUSTON SOLOGRAPHY

BILLY ECKSTINE & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. Jan. 3, 1946

Bigband personnel including Tate Houston (bar), Billy Eckstine (vo).

Four titles were recorded for National, no baritonesax soli, but the instrument is clearly heard in the orchestra.

SIR CHARLES THOMPSON & HIS ALL STARS NYC. May/June 1947

Joe Newman, Taft Jordan (tp), Benny Morton (tb), Rudy Williams (as), Bob Dorsey (ts), Tate Houston (bar), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Hank Morton (g), John Simmons (b), Shadow Wilson (dm). Note that the baritonesax earlier has been believed to be played by Leo Parker.

Four titles were recorded for Apollo:

| | | |
|--------|--------------------|--|
| 1305-1 | Benson Alley | Solo 8 bars. (M) |
| 1305-3 | Benson Alley | As above. (M) |
| 1306-1 | Sir Charles Boogie | Solo 12 bars. (M) |
| 1307-1 | Harlem Jump | Solo 16 bars. (M) |
| 1307-2 | Harlem Jump | As above. (M) |
| 1308-1 | Mr Big Horn | Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars to coda. (FM) |

Tate Houston's most important session is in fact his second one, when he was only 22 years old. His colourful feature number "Mr. Big ..." shows confident modern baritonesax playing, pointing towards a successful future, which not really materialized. Competent soloing also on the other three items.

J. C. HEARD

NYC. May 1948

Joe Newman (tp), Bennie Green (tb), Wardell Gray (ts), Tate Houston (bar), Al Haig (p), Al McKibbin (b), J. C. Heard (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Apollo, no TH on 1318 "This Is It" but:

| | | |
|-------|---------------------|---|
| R1317 | Olopa | Solo 24 bars. (FM) |
| R1319 | Sugar Hips | Solo 14 bars. (M) |
| R1320 | Coastin' With J. C. | Solo 32 bars to 32 bars 4/4 with (ts-WG). (FM) |

Or maybe this one instead should be considered his most important session, teaming up with the great Wardell Gray. Active and professional baritonesax playing here. Note how he hands it over to Wardell on "... Hips"! The best solo is the two blues choruses on "Olopa", but the most exciting is "... J. C." with the solo goes into a fine chase with tenorsax.

HAL SINGER

NYC. Feb. 9, 1949

Willie Moore (tp), Alfred "Chippy" Outcalt (tb), Hal Singer (ts), Tate Houston (bar), George Rhodes (p), Walter Buchanan (b), George "Butch" Ballard (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy, but no baritonesax soli.

LUCKY MILLINDER / BIG JOHN GREER

NYC. June 27, 1949

Personnel including Tate Houston (bar).

Five titles were recorded for Victor, but no baritonesax soli.

WILD BILL MOORE

Detroit, Aug. 28, 1950

Personnel including Tate Houston (bar).

Four titles were recorded for King, two issued, but no baritonesax soli.

WARDELL GRAY SEXTET

Chicago, Jan. 19, 1955

Gene Phipps (tp), Wardell Gray (ts), Tate Houston (bar), Norman Simmons (p), Victor Sproles (b), Vernell Fournier (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Vee Jay, only one has baritonesax solo:

| | |
|-------------|------------------|
| Sweet Mouth | Solo 4 bars. (M) |
|-------------|------------------|

Almost a lifetime has already passed since we last heard from TH, and the solo opportunity he gets with Wardell this time is almost an insult, four bars!

JAMES MOODY

Chi. Dec. 14, 1956

Johnny Coles (tp), Donald Cole (tb), James Moody (fl, ts), Tate Houston (bar), Jimmy Boyd (p), John Latham (b), Clarence Johnston (dm), Eddie Jefferson (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Argo, one has baritonesax solo:

8357 Billie's Bounce Solo 12 bars. (M)

An easy swinging chorus here, should have been much longer before he gives in to Moody's flute.

MAYNARD FERGUSON & HIS ORCHESTRA NYC. July 1957

Bigband personnel including Tate Houston (bar).

Twelve titles were recorded for EmArcy, four have been available from Verve CD, no baritone sax soli on those.

CURTIS FULLER Hackensack, NJ. Aug. 4, 1957

Curtis Fuller (tb-except "Again"), Tate Houston (bar), Sonny Clark (p), Paul Chambers (b), Art Taylor (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Blue Note, issued as "Bone And Bari", TH not present on tk10 "Heart And Soul", no solo on tk7 "Nita's Waltz" but:

tk2 Algonquin Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

tk5 Bone And Bari Solo 64 bars. (FM)

tk8 Again Soli 64 and 16 bars to coda. (S)

tk13 Pick Up Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (F)

Postscript of late June 2018: This is quite embarrassing. Nikolaus Schweizer recently informed me that I had missed this particular session, which in fact is one of TH's most important ones, maybe the most important! As always with Blue Note it gets the best out of everybody. Two well played items in fast medium are interesting, but the highlights are the two extremes; a long and beautiful ballad and solo feature for baritone sax, "Again", and a very fast "Pick Up" showing that TH easily could play in uptempo, dig these in particular!

MILT JACKSON NYC. Feb. 23/24, 1960

Henry Boozier (tp), Tom McIntosh (tb, arr), Jimmy Heath (ts), Tate Houston (bar), Milt Jackson (vib), Tommy Flanagan (p), Alvin Jackson (b), Connie Kay (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Atlantic, six issued, issued as "Vibrations", one has baritone sax solo:

4267 Darbin & The Redd Fox Solo 24 bars. (M)

Although we read about recording sessions with Milt Jackson, he is not much featured. Two fine blues choruses here, such a shame!

ERNESTINE ANDERSON VOCAL ACC. BY NYC. 1960

Clark Terry, Ernie Royal (tp), Frank Rehak (tb), Yusef Lateef (fl, ts), Tate Houston (bar), Mac Ceppos (vln), Hank Jones (p), Kenny Burrell (g), Art Davis (b), Charlie Persip (dm), Willie Rodriguez (perc), Ernie Wilkins (arr, cond).

Twelve titles were recorded for Mercury, issued as "My Kinda Swing", only one has TH:

20134 My Kinda Love Solo 18 bars. (M)

Fine swinging solo here too, but again, why not give him some more?

NAT ADDERLEY & THE BIG SAX SECTION NYC. Aug. 9, 1960

Nat Adderley (cnt), Cannonball Adderley (as), Yusef Lateef (fl, ts, oboe), Jimmy Heath, Charlie Rouse (ts), Tate Houston (bar), Wynton Kelly (p), Jim Hall (g), Sam Jones (b), Jimmy Cobb (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "That's Right", but no baritone sax soli.

NYC. Sept. 15, 1960

Same except Les Spann (g) replaces Hall.

Five titles, one has TH:

That's Right Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (M)

Surprisingly modest here; with this fine, pushy rhythm section, he could have stepped more on the gas. Not at all bad though.

YUSEF LATEEF NYC. Oct. 4&6, 1960

Clark Terry (tp, flh), Richard Williams (tp), Curtis Fuller (tb), Hosea Taylor (bassoon), Yusef Lateef (fl, ts, oboe, argol), Tate Houston (bar), Joe Zawinul (p), Ben Tucker (b), Lex Humphries (dm), Billy Frazier (cga), Kenny Barron (arr).

Seven titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "The Centaur And The Phoenix", two have TH:

Revelation Solo 36 bars. (M)

The Centaur And The Phoenix Solo with ens 8 bars. (M)

Fine baritonesax solo on "Revelation".

SAM JONES NYC. Jan. 13&26, 1961

Personnels including Tate Houston (bar).
Eight titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "The Chant", but no TH.

TADD DAMERON NYC. Feb. 17 & March 9, 1962

Bigband personnels including Tate Houston (bar).
Six titles were recorded for Riverside but no baritonesax soli. However TH has an important place in the arrangements and can be heard clearly on many sections.

TADD DAMERON NYC. April 16, 1962

Clark Terry (tp), Jimmy Cleveland (tb), Jerry Dodgion (fl, as), Jerome Richardson (fl, ts), Johnny Griffin (ts), Tate Houston (bar), Bill Evans (p), Ron Carter (b), Philly Joe Jones (dm), Tadd Dameron (arr), Barbarta Winfield (vo).
Four titles were recorded for Riverside, issued as "The Magic Touch", one has TH:

Just Plain Talkin' Solo 24 bars. (SM)

Just Plain Talkin' alt. Solo 12 bars. (SM)

Three highly professional and enjoyable blues choruses here!

MILT JACKSON NYC. June 19 & July 5, 1962

Bigband personnels including Tate Houston (bar).
Seven titles were recorded for Riverside, but no baritonesax soli.

EDGAR BATTLE & HIS JAZZ PIONEERS NYC. 1964

Eddie Barefield (cl, as), Tate Houston (bar), Lloyd Phillips (p), Eddie Durham (g), Al Hall, Bill Pemberton (b), Slick Jones (dm), Edgar Battle (ldr, arr).
Twelve titles were recorded for Cosmopolitan, issued as "House Rent Party Music For A Harlem House Hop", three have TH:

House Rent Shout Solo 8 bars. (F)

Cat Walk Solo 8 bars. (M)

Flim Flam Solo 8 bars. (M)

Brief contributions of no particular interest.

FREDDIE McCOY NYC. Jan. 25, 1965

Personnel including Tate Houston (bar), Freddie McCoy (vib).
Four titles were recorded for Prestige, but no (bar) soli.

THE KILLER JOE ORCHESTRA NYC. Feb. 10/11, 1965

Personnel including Tate Houston (bar), Killer Joe Piro (dm).
Thirteen titles were recorded for Atlantic, but no (bar) soli.

FREDDIE McCOY NYC. Feb. 16, 1965

Personnel including (dm), Dave Wilborn Vo). Tate Houston (bar), Freddie McCoy (vib).
Four titles were recorded for Prestige, but no (bar) soli.

THE NEW

McKINNEY'S COTTON PICKERS Warren, Mich., Oct. 21, 1972

Tom Saunders, Paul Klinger (cnt), John Trudell (tp), Al Winters (tb), David Hutson (cl, as, vib, arr), Ted Buckner (cl, as), George Benson (cl, ts), Tate Houston (cl, ts, bar), Milt Vine (p), Orren Foslien (bjo), J. R. Smith (tu), Chet Forest (dm), Dave Wilborn (vo).

Ten titles were recorded for Bountiful, two have TH:

I'll Make Fun For You Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Black Maria Solo with orch 32 bars. (FM)

Rather ordinary baritonesax playing here.

No further recording sessions.

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