

The
TRUMPET
of
ANTHONY FRUSCELLA
“TONY”

Solographers: Jan Evensmo & Per Husby
Last update: Dec. 4, 2020, Jan. 3, 2023

Born: Orangeburg, NJ, Feb. 4, 1927
Died: NYC. Aug. 14, 1969

Introduction:

The legendary Tony Fruscella was early identified as a very special, personal and creative modern trumpeter and made to an icon in Oslo Jazz Circle. We even competed on who had most TF records (the late John Bergh won, then)! Since then, we have continuously been looking for more!!

History:

After playing in an army band he worked with Lester Young and Gerry Mulligan (1954) and performed and recorded with Stan Getz (1955). He also made recordings with his own groups in 1955, including the album *I'll Be Seeing You* (Atlantic 1220). From the late 1950s, Tony Fruscella's career was impeded by his addiction to drugs, but he played occasionally with the trumpeter Don Joseph (ref. The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz).

Quote from Robert Reisner, taking from liner notes of the recently issued Atlantic session of Tony Fruscella / Brew Moore: "If I were an artist, I would paint Fruscella in the Renaissance manner. A side portrait of him bent in concentration over the horn which produced the flowing and delicate music. The usual background landscape would be strewn with a couple of wives, countless chicks, barbiturate containers, and empty bottles. His artistic life, however, was in sharp contrast. He was completely austere and disciplined. There was not a commercial chromosome in his body".

TONY FRUSCELLA SOLOGRAPHY

TONY FRUSCELLA QUINTET

NYC. Dec. 10, 1948

Tony Fruscella (tp), Wilfred Robert "Chick" Maures (as), Bill Triglia (p), Red Mitchell (b), Dave Troy (dm).

Six titles were recorded by Sam Heltzer for the Century label, 152 "Body And Soul" and 154-A "Oh Yeah" are presumably lost but:

151-A	Foo's	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
153-A	Flues	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
153-B	Flues	Solo 36 bars. (FM)
154-B	Oh Yeah	Solo 34 bars. (FM)
155-A	Little Orgg	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
155-B	Little Orgg	As above. (FM)
156-A	Out Of Nowhere	Soli 32 and 8 bars. (M)
156-B	Out Of Nowhere	Soli 32 and 16 bars. (M)

Tony Fruscella's first recording session is not a particularly outstanding one. Traces of his later style can be heard, such as the fluffy, almost insecure attack and a penchant for the lower register of his horn. All in all, however, one could hardly call TF a particularly promising player at this stage of his career. Even for a player not known to lean very much on rhythmic elements in his soloing, the problems of time seem to get in his way, possibly due to sheer indecisiveness, as in "Oh Yeah". Many soli seem to be repetitive in ideas, like "Foo's". The two takes of "... Orgg" contain quite nice playing though, even if TF in take A suffers from the slight confusion created by the horns disagreeing upon whether the head statement should be repeated or not. A nice, personal statement can also be heard on the first chorus of take B of "... Nowhere". Note that 151, 153 and 155 are the blues, while 154 is a standard. The session also as a whole suffers from a onesidedness in choice of tempi, as well as a rather inferior piano.

JAM SESSION

New Orleans, Aug. 13-17, 1950

Tony Fruscella (tp), unknown (bar), (p), (b), (dm).

One title, digitized by Drew Techner:

9:10	Part 1	Intro to solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
	Part 2	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (SM)
	Part 3	Solo 48 bars. (SM)

Comments later. Postscript of Jan. 3, 2023: A real gem with more TF than you can imagine, because the recording has been edited somewhere, giving the baritone sax and piano little chance. So much for the better, because there is something with TF's extremely laidback trumpet playing that strikes you right in your heart. His tone is among the most beautiful played on the jazz trumpet, and his superficially simple but in fact highly inventive improvisations cannot but amaze me again and again.

BILL TRIGLIA SEPTET

NYC. mid-Jan. 1952

Personnel as Feb. 16 below.

One title, digitized by Drew Techner:

7:45	P. U. Stomp	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
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Postscript of Jan. 3, 2023: Probably this acetate comes from a rehearsal session for the session below. As TF artistry comes rare, this is a wonderful discovery, a long and very exciting trumpet solo, full of delicious and inventive details, truly confirming his legendary status. This solo alone would have made a solo graphy!!

BILL TRIGLIA SEPTET

NYC. Feb. 16, 1952

Tony Fruscella (tp), Herb Geller (as), Phil Urso (ts), Gene Allen (bar), Bill Triglia (p, arr), Red Mitchell (b), Howie Mann (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Progressive (never issued on 78 rpm.), no TF on "Damn That Dream" but:

P. U. Stomp	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Tangerine	Solo 16 bars. (M)
Loo-Padoo	Solo 24 bars. (M)

More than three years have passed since the first session, and there is a notable improvement in TF's playing, no doubt also due to the generally relaxed and laidback feeling of the session. There are several first-rate trumpet soli. The gem of the session is "Loo-Padoo". The term 'simplicity speaks' is really put to good use when describing TF's two blues choruses on this track. His entire solo is constructed around a few brief, melodic elements performed with warmth and subtle variations. Indeed, each of the two choruses might have been put to use as blues heads in their own right. Add to this his velvety, slightly imperfect but highly personal solo on "P. U. ...", where a particularly rewarding moment occurs in going into the bridge. After a quite untypical flurry of sixteenth notes, he suddenly pauses, and the following contemplative entrance note is quite a surprise both in terms of timing and pitch. The solo on "Tangerine" opens up beautifully but after eight bars seems to get hesitant about it and loses momentum. As a whole, a most satisfying session!

TONY FRUSCELLA

Brooklyn, NY. 1952

Personnel given on CD: Tony Fruscella (tp), Charlie Kennedy (as-items 1,2), Hal McKusick (as-items 3,4,7-9), Gene Di Novi (p), Joe Shulman (b-items 1-4,7), Red Mitchell (b-items 8,9), Billy Exiner (dm-items 1-4), Buddy Lazza (dm-item 7), Harold Granowsky (dm-items 8,9). However, most items are edited to focus on Fruscella and Di Novi, and only items 2 and 4 contain altosax soli.

Nine titles were recorded in Gene Di Novi's house in Brooklyn, issued as "Brooklyn Jam 1952":

All The Things You Are	Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. (M)
Idaho	Solo 2 choruses of 44 bars. (F)
Donna Lee	Soli 3 and 4 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
Johnny Mandel Tune	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
Over The Rainbow	Duet with (p) ca. 64 bars. (S)
Blue Lester	Duet with (p) 3 choruses of 32 bars. (SM)
Minor Blues	Solo 11 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
Broadway	Solo 8 bars. Soli 4 and 5 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
Strike Up The Band (NC)	Soli 6 ½ and 5 choruses of 32 bars (NC). (F)

Tony Fruscella is such an important trumpeter that any new discovery has great value. Thus this Japanese CD from Gene Di Novi's home is received with great interest. The main problem is of course that being recorded informally, the sound quality is mainly below par, making this music available only for those who are particularly interested and knowledgeable. There are several sessions here, all with their own qualities and problems. The two opening items, "All ..." and "Idaho", have some of the worst sound quality, but TF plays very competently on these, if you just listen! However, the next two, "Donna ..." and "Johnny ...", with pretty good sound, have TF in a very different mood, obviously uninspired and music seems to stand still or even move backward sometimes. Then a very exciting duo session, close cooperation between TF and De Novi, and here the trumpet is all raw nerves. Particularly the very slow "... Rainbow", which lacks the first 4 bars, is very moving, and we get close to TF's greatness here. It is also surprising to hear a rare tune like "Blue Lester" here, possibly it signals something, we know he played with Prez, although nothing of their music is preserved. The "... Blues" is competently played without being particularly noteworthy. Finally the two last titles, "Broadway" and "Strike ..." with quite extended soli. The first one is pretty ok, but on the latter, TF is very unconcentrated, with long sections of silence, then some phrasing, often quite nice though. Some splicing has also been done in the first trumpet solo here. There is no doubt that TF's music is most extraordinary in the slow tempi, and here he just doesn't make it. In general and summing up: This CD has absolutely great value, giving additional insight into Tony Fruscella's artistry, presenting some very nice and some surprisingly mediocre trumpet playing, but all the time show us a very personal and easily identifiable performer. It is absolutely well worth a purchase!!

TONY FRUSCELLA QUARTET

NYC. mid 1953

Tony Fruscella (tp), Bill Triglia (p), Teddy Kotick (b), Art Mardigan (dm).
Three titles were recorded at the Open Door, Greenwich Village:

Bernie's Tune	Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. 3 choruses 4/4 with (dm) to 1 chorus of chaos to solo 2 choruses and 1 chorus run-down. (F)
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Loverman	Solo 64 bars. Long coda. (S)
Night In Tunisia	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 2 choruses to 1 ½ choruses of 8/8 with (p) to solo 16 bars. (M)

We must admit not being able to buildup any particular enthusiasm for this session. The sound quality is pretty bad, even if the trumpet is up front and clearly audible. A theory that TF was better cast in a supporting role than as the solo horn could well be cast on the evidence given here. Although his soli contain quite a few nice elements, he does not seem to have the stamina to keep up interest throughout such long solo parts as here, and the soli suffer from a general feeling of discontinuity. The group as a whole also sounds quite rugged and unrehearsed. Best of the lot is his solo chorus in “Loverman”, where the ballad tempo gives him good time to bring out his particular gift of melodic improvisation.

TONY FRUSCELLA QUINTET

NYC. mid 1953

Tony Fruscella (tp), Brew Moore (ts), Bill Triglia (p), Teddy Kotick (b), Art Mardigan (dm).

Five titles were recorded at the Open Door, Greenwich Village:

Sometimes I'm Happy	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 2 choruses 8/8 and 4/4 with (ts) to close. (FM)
Blue Lester	Duet with (ts) 32 bars. Solo 96 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (ts) to close. (SM)
Hackensack	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 1 chorus 8/8 and 1 chorus 4/4 with (ts) to close. (M)
Imagination	Solo 16+12 bars, (ts) on bridge. Solo 8 bars. Duet with (ts) 12 bars to coda. (S)
Donna	Duet with (ts) 32 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

The music on this session fares quite a lot better than the previous one. One reason is that the group as a whole seems to be more together – possibly both sessions are taken from the same engagement, this being the later date. Another factor is the presence of Moore, who seems to inspire TF and also take some of the soloist duties off his shoulders. An interesting point about TF as a soloist is again evident: As opposed to many musicians whose soli seem to build and gain momentum as they go, TF almost without exception goes the other way in his live recordings. A solo will start with a lovely opening phrase and live on that for a while, then the solo will gradually fade in interest, often ending up in rather disjunct phrases and general confusion. “Donna” is particularly typical example of this. The same thing happens on “Hackensack”, after two outstanding choruses he seems to run out of ideas in the third one. He reenters strongly on the chase, however, producing two simple and personal eight bar statements effectively contrasting Moore’s more fluent style. “Imagination” is top quality ballad playing, even if the final bridge never really goes anywhere. The remaining two tracks also feature good, if somewhat uneven trumpet soloing. That TF’s rhythmic concept was maybe less than perfect is illustrated throughout the faster numbers. When going into double-time phrases, he often runs away from the rhythm section, and around the bar 13 of the first chorus of “Sometimes ...” he manages to turn the beat completely around, so that a common beat is not re-established until the beginning of the next chorus!

TONY FRUSCELLA / DAVE SCHILDKRAUT

NYC. 1953

Tony Fruscella (tp), Dave Schildkraut (as), Bill Triglia (p), unknown (b), (dm).

Three titles were recorded privately:

You Stepped Out Of A Dream	Brief duet with (as). Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 4 bars. (M)
Now's The Time	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. 4 choruses 4/4 with (as)/(p). (M)
Emanon (NC)	Solo 3 ½ choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

The sound here is quite lousy, obviously a private party, and Bird is definitely very structured, as is not the jam itself. However, with these geniuses, anything is interesting. “... Dream” starts out in pure chaos, but TF still makes a useful solo. However, coming to “... Time”, he is more interesting. “Emanon” is so and so, the drummer makes so much unnecessary noise. This is definitely a historical occasion, for those of you who are really interested in jazz, you should go through this session carefully. Postscript of July 29, 2012: This is perhaps not such a historical occasion after all, because recent research has shown that the alto sax player, believed to be

Charlie Parker, in fact is Dave Schildkraut!! The mistake is rather embarrassing, but I am not the only one to make it, and it tells a lot about Dave's qualities!

TONY FRUSCELLA / BREW MOORE QUINTET NYC. March 22, 1954

Tony Fruscella (tp), Brew Moore (ts), Bill Triglia (p), Teddy Kotick (b), Bill Heine (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Atlantic:

1241	Blues Medium I	Duet with (ts) 12 bars. Solo 24 bars. Solo 4 bars. Duet 12 bars. (M)
1241	Blues Medium II	As below. (M)
1241	Blues Medium III	Duet with (ts) 24 bars. Solo 36 bars. 24 bars 4/4 with (ts) to duet 24 bars. (M)
1242	Minor Blues I	Duet with (ts) 12 bars. Solo 24 bars. Duet 12 bars. (M)
1242	Minor Blues II	As above. (M)
1243	Bill Triglia's Original I	Soli 8 and 64 bars. (M)
1243	Bill Triglia's Original II	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (M)
1244	Slow Blues	Duet with (ts) 12 bars to solo 24 bars. Duet 12 bars. (S)
1245	Fast Blues I	Duet 12 bars. Solo 36 bars. Duet 12 bars. (FM)
1245	Fast Blues II	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. 6 choruses 4/4 with (ts). (FM)
1246	Brew's Nightmare I	Solo 24 bars. (M)
1246	Brew's Nightmare II	As above. (M)

This previously unissued Atlantic session, believed to be lost, turns out to be a wonderful get-together, and why it remained in the vaults for so long escapes my understanding. Now on Fresh Sound, it presents a Brew Moore on the top of his great tenorsax swinging capabilities, excellent piano playing by the the most underrated Bill Triglia, and TF par excellence. The trumpet/tenorsax tight copleying is remarkable all through. Everything from this session is magnificent, and to pinpoint details is unnecessary, but I cannot but mention the "Slow Blues", the longest track, 6:42 of the loveliest music you can imagine! The "... Nightmare" also is a must, or in fact two musts, two great takes. Note also that what is called "Fast Blues" I and II in fact are two quite different blues tunes. To give a simple statement and summing up: This CD is a strong candidate to the "Record of The Year"!!!

GERRY MULLIGAN QUARTET Newport, Rh. I., July 17, 1954

Tony Fruscella (tp), Gerry Mulligan (bar), Red Mitchell (b), Frank Isola (dm).

Three titles were recorded live at the Newport Jazz Festival:

Bernie's Tune	In ens 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. Duet with (bar) 16+8 bars, (dm) on bridge. In ens 32 bars. (FM)
The Lady Is A Tramp	In ens intro and 48 bars. Solo 48 bars. In ens 48 bars and coda. (FM)
Lullaby Of The Leaves	In ens 32 bars. Solo 16+8 bars, (bar) on bridge. Duet with (bar) 24 bars to fade out. (M)

This aircheck from the Newport festival represents the only preserved evidence of the Fruscella/Mulligan constellation. The sound quality is not too good, and the soli are all quite brief for a live concert performance. Musically, TF does not seem to be the ideal player for Mulligan's counterpoint-based quartet, he sounds best when soloing on his own. When backed by or improvising together with Mulligan, the other horn seems to disturb TF's one lines. At the same time, his lines do not seem to interact well with Mulligan's own style, so that the counterpoint part of the music has a rather uneasy, disjunct feeling to it. Solo-wise for TF, "Bernie's ..." is by far the best effort, with a nice, flowing solo, spiced with quite original choices of notes. The repeated riff that constitutes the second eight of his first chorus starts off sounding as if he is actually playing the wrong notes for the changes, but the way he develops his solo shows that he is harmonically in control. The same thing happens in his repeated-note figure at the end of the solo, where his handling of a seemingly 'wrong' note makes it come out sounding right in the end. The other

tracks have their nice moments, but are generally more uneven, and the feeling that TF is not at ease with the musical surroundings pervades throughout.

STAN GETZ QUINTET

Ft. Myer, Virginia, Dec. 10, 1954

Personnel probably as Jan. 23, 1955 below.

Six titles were recorded by Bill Potts at U. S. Army Rehearsal Hall (TF not present on two additional titles, "Tangerine" and "Wonder Why", featuring Getz), (Getz not present on items 3 and 5):

Stan & Tony's Blues	Duet with (ts) 2 choruses to solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 4 and 1 choruses. Duet 2 choruses to coda. (FM)
Air Mail Special	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Duet with (ts) 3 choruses. (F)
Blue Moon	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars to fade out. (M)
Anthropology	Straight 1 to solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Tony's Blues	Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars (S) to 4 choruses of 24 bars to fade out. (FM)
Bernie's Tune	Acc. (ts) 2 choruses of 32 bars to solo 3 choruses with (ts) acc. to acc. (ts) 2 choruses. (F)

This session, supplied by collector Johan Helø, is obviously not a club date, nor a casual private home recording, sounding rather like extracts from a rehearsal session with excellent sound quality. It is obviously an important discovery, supplementing our sparse TF treasure chest, and with regard to several fade outs, possibly the full date exist somewhere. The highlight is the second version of ad-lib blues, almost six minutes of lovely trumpet playing, starting in the most caressing slow tempo to continue with some uptempo, great!! Getz grabs most solo space, like in the first blues and "Anthropology", and TF often seems sort of unconcentrated, taking rather unmotivated brief pauses in his soli, but generally he is in good shape here.

STAN GETZ QUINTET

NYC. Jan. 23, 1955

Tony Fruscella (tp), Stan Getz (ts), Johnny Williams (p), Bill Anthony (b), Frank Isola (dm).

Three titles were broadcasted from Birdland:

Get Happy	Solo 64 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (ts) to close. (FM)
Dear Old Stockholm	Acc. (ts) 16+8 bars, solo on bridge. Solo 32 bars. In ens 8 bars to coda. (SM)
Pernod (NC)	Solo 64 bars. (FM)

Unfortunately TF is underrecorded on these live tapes and is sometimes a bit drowned out by the piano or Getz's riffing. I say unfortunately since TF plays some really good and confident soli. The confidence is felt on both the up-tempos, where he is more coherent rhythmically than on the Open Door sessions. The stellar track, however, is "... Stockholm". I once heard TF's style described as 'vulnerable', and it is an apt description taken in the best of meanings. Surely there are imperfections, his style is not of the stream-of-consciousness type - sometimes he falters, needing time to think. But the velvety tone and fluffy attack, the melodic simplicity and the penchant for the instrument's low register - they all go together to form an intensely personal style, which in its best moments could create shy masterpieces, like "... Stockholm". One can only wish for further tapes of this Getz group, in which TF seems to thrive, to surface!

STAN GETZ QUINTET

NYC. Jan. 31, 1955

Personnel as above.

Two titles were recorded for Verve:

2229-2	Blue Bells	Duet with (ts) 40 bars to solo 32 bars to duet 32 bars. Duet 64 bars to slow coda. (M)
2230-1	Round-Up Time	Duet with (ts) 32 bars to solo 64 bars. Duet 32 bars to coda. (M)

The only studio date of this quintet presents two neat Phil Sunkel originals. What one remembers the most from TF is his lovely, airy tone and attack, which never were better captured on record! I don't think anyone but TF could make a theme

like “Blue Bells” sound like this! Both titles are good, but the soli are perhaps lacking in continuity. He quite often pauses or plays a riff of one repeated note, a device he seems to resort to when not knowing quite what to do. Maybe the tunes were not too familiar, and he seems a bit puzzled sometimes when Getz starts riffing behind him. As is often the case with TF, there are lots of lovely details around if one just takes the time to look for (and listen to) them in a maybe hesitant-sounding whole. Just note the lovely first eight bars of his solo on “... Time”, and you will understand what I mean!

TONY FRUSCELLA**NYC. March 29, 1955**

Tony Fruscella (tp), Chauncey Welsch (tb), Allen Eager (ts), Danny Bank (bar), Bill Triglia (p), Bill Anthony (b), Junior Bradley (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Atlantic, 1468 “Ta Ra Ra Boom” is unissued but:

1466	Muy	Straight 16+8 bars, solo on bridge, to solo 64 bars. Straight 16+8 bars, solo on bridge, to solo 16 bars. (FM)
1467	Salt	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

NYC. April 1, 1955

Same except Welsch and Bank omitted. Seven titles:

1469	Metropolitan Blues	Soli 4 and 1 choruses of 12 bars, first 2 and last with (ts) acc. (S)
1470	Raintree Country	Solo 64 bars. Prominent in opening and closing ens. (M)
1471	Blue Serenade	Brief intro to solo 64 bars. Solo 12 bars to coda. (SM)
1472	Old Hat	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
1473	His Master’s Voice	Duet with (ts) 14 bars (S) to break and solo 54 bars (M). Duet with (ts) 14 bars to coda with (b). (S)
1474	I’ll Be Seeing You	Soli 64 and 16 bars. (SM)
1475	Let’s Play The Blues	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)

This is TF’s only LP under his own name. As with the Getz studio session, the repertoire leans heavily on Phil Sunkel compositions. As a whole the sessions are uneven with regard to TF’s performances. Instrumentally he seems more confident than before. What might have been mistaken for imperfections have by now become clearly intended elements of a highly personal style. A prerequisite for a successful TF solo seems to be that the underlying chord progression is fairly familiar or natural sounding. Whenever Sunkel’s compositions take on unexpected harmonic twists, TF seems to be in a bit of trouble. He either seems to be groping for ideas in a stop-and-go fashion, as in “Raintree ...” or “Salt” (a minor blues with a different turnback), or he will continue a melodic idea based on a familiar harmonic starting point, even if the actual progression after a while goes a different way, thus ending up on notes with quite dubious relationship to the underlying chord. When the progressions are more familiar, though, he produces some outstanding soli, most notably on “I’ll Be Seeing You”, which has been a classic, also due to Red Mitchell setting lyrics to Tony’s solo. His blues reading on “Metropolitan ...” is also exceptional! The way he plays the theme on this one and “Muy” (as well as on most of the other tracks) is so rewarding to the tunes themselves, that it must make any composer smile. Even for its flaws, this is a most adorable session, presenting a mature musician with a musical personality all of his own.

TONY FRUSCELLA QUARTET**NYC. Nov. 8, 1955**

Tony Fruscella (tp), Hank Jones (p), Wendell Marshall (b), Shadow Wilson (dm). Two titles were recorded for Coral in concert at “Phytian Temple”, 88974 “I Can’t Get Started” is unissued but:

88973	Tony’s Blues	Soli 9 and 7 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
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This item comes from an album consisting of material from a concert program of various artists presented by disc jockey Al ‘Jazzbo’ Collins and issued under his name. TF’s feature is simply an ad lib blues performance with the house rhythm section of the evening. His opening nine choruses are perhaps a bit stiff rhythmically, but this is compensated for by a constant forward motion seldom heard from TF in this kind of tempo. He stays mainly in the ‘normal’ mid-register of the horn, but the solo is full of unusual melodic twists, slurs, glissandi and sudden dips into the extreme low register that makes it typical of TF, to be mistaken for nobody else. After the piano solo, some of the inspiration seems to be gone, but the overall impression of the performance is very satisfactory. One is also struck

with the comparative modernity of some of TF's ideas, bearing in mind that they were recorded at a time when some of them must have sounded quite unusual – to say the least.

TONY FRUSCELLA / DON JOSEPH

NYC. ca. 1955

Don Joseph (cnt), Tony Fruscella (tp), unknown (g), (b), (dm).

Six titles were recorded privately at "Open Door" (note: Due to mediocre recording quality and similarity of styles, some simplifications have been made, and the details are sometimes of dubious quality, sorry for that):

Now's The Time	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. 7 choruses 4/4 with (cnt). (FM)
Embraceable You	Duet 32 bars. Solo 32 bars. 64 bars 8/8 and duet. (SM)
I Got Rhythm	3 choruses of 32 bars 8/8 with (dm). (F)
'S Wonderful	Duet with (cnt) 32 bars. Soli 8 and 8 bars. Duet 32 bars. (M)
What Is This Thing Called Love	Duet with (cnt) 32 bars. Solo 64 +8 bars (NC). 3 choruses of 32 bars 4/4 with (cnt). 3 choruses 4/4 with (dm). Duet 64 bars to coda. (FM)
Ash Wednesday Blues (NC)	Solo 5 choruses of 12 bars. (F)

Postscript of Dec. 4, 2020, written by Enrico Caniato: "These recordings, supplied by Phil Grenadier, are particularly important because they are the only existing tracks which prove the collaboration between TF and Don Joseph. The atmosphere is informal and there are several elements suggesting that, for example the laughs that can be heard in the background. Although Joseph is in a very good shape and seems to be the protagonist of this gig, TF doesn't seem frightened by his virtuosistic playing and swings and improvises with his own style and personality. TF does frequently quote famous tunes and plays in a higher range than his usual habits, perhaps he's influenced by the flashy and high playing of Joseph. On this occasion, TF seems to be at ease and his musical style fits perfectly with Joseph's one".

TONY FRUSCELLA QUINTET

NJ. Aug. 3, 1959?

Tony Fruscella (tp), Phil Woods (as), Bill Triglia (p), Bill Keck (g), Paul Chambers (b), Roy Hall (dm). Date uncertain, also given as 1955.

Three titles were recorded live by Bill Triglia at Ridgewood High School:

Night In Tunisia	Straight 16+8 bars, (as) on bridge. Break 4 bars to solo 104 bars. 1 chorus of 4/4 with (as/dm) to straight 16+8 bars to coda, (rhythm) on bridge. (M)
Night Train	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
Scrapple From The Apple	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. 3 choruses chase with (as/dm). (F)

TF seems to have developed greater instrumental control over the years, however, at the cost of some originality. Possessing the technical efficiency to perform more traditional bebop licks even in slight uptempi, he seems to be leaving his earlier, more melodic, thoughtful and often erratic solo style. His lovely tone and attack are still there to a certain extent, and the warmth of the 'old' TF still prevails, however, most of his soli are less personal, though quite enjoyable examples of a post-bop trumpet style slightly reminiscent of the mid-50s Miles Davis or Kenny Dorham. By far the best item is "Night Train", where he delivers four thoughtful blues choruses, playing for beauty rather than for drive, as the saying goes. Listening to this item, I was struck with TF's closeness to the music of Lester Young in his later years (they played together briefly). And come to think of it, there are quite a few interesting parallels to be drawn here. I'll leave the elaborating of this point to record appreciation societies around the jazz world as a tempting bait for getting acquainted with the musical world of Tony Fruscella.

TONY FRUSCELLA DUO

NJ. 1959?

Tony Fruscella (tp), Bill Keck (g).

One title was recorded privately, probably around same time as above:

Lover Man	Solo 64 bars. (S)
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This poignant reading of a familiar ballad should serve as a fitting last tribute to Tony Fruscella, the ballad player. Recorded under circumstances that sound like

rehearsing in an empty concert hall (before the session above?), but most probably in a private apartment, TF's cloudy sound and relaxed delivery are well captured. Even if the sing-along four-to-the-bar type of guitar backing can hardly be called inspiring, he nevertheless seems to enjoy himself. His chops are in reasonably good condition, creating a fluent, thoughtful solo. The item as a whole, however, lacks some of the originality of ideas that made "I'll Be Seeing You" and "Dear Old Stockholm" so outstanding.

No further recording sessions.

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