

The
TENORSAX
of
WILTON GAYNAIR
“BOGEY”

Born: Kingston, Jamaica, Jan. 11, 1927
 Died: Germany, Feb. 13, 1995

Introduction:

When I bought the “Blue Bogey” LP many years back, I filed it quickly without listening much; he was a complete unknown name. Later I discovered that in him we had one of the most exciting tenorsax players around! The Molde and Konfsgsberg festivals in Norway in the early sixties could probably had a tenorsax sensation on stage for a quite reasonable price, since he lived in Europe!

History:

WG hails from Kingston, Jamaica. Early in his career he played with musicians such as Ossie Williams (who later led the reggae group Count Ossie and Mystic Revelation of Rastafari). Was a schoolday contemporary of trumpeter Dizzy Reece who persuaded him to go to Europe in 1955. After performing and recording in England he settled in Germany, where he studied arranging and composing; he worked there with George Maycock for eight years and with Kurt Edelhagen from 1964 until the latter's death in 1982. He also played in jam sessions with Randy Weston, Stan Getz, Johnny Griffin, Gerry Mulligan and Nat Adderley, and with Alan Skidmore, Kenny Wheeler and Ali Haurand formed the sextet Third Eye. He worked regularly with Peter Herbolzheimer until ill health curtailed his career in 1985. A confident player in the post-bop mold, Gaynair produced adventurous and driving soli; he seldom allowed his impressive technique to intrude upon his thoughtful approach to ballad playing. He was influenced principally by Coleman Hawkins, Don Byas and Lucky Thompson (ref. The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz).

Message:

In the period 1965 to 1982 Tom Lord lists several Wilton Gaynair recording sessions, mostly in Germany, starting with Kurt Edelhagen's orchestra, later also with Peter Herbolzheimer and others. I encourage you all to help getting together a comprehensive solography! Postscript of March 30, 2023: Great progress has been made, please continue!!

of Hank Mobley or James Moody?), all very exciting. And finally a self-composed, beautiful ballad, no tricks, no sentimentality, just honest playing in the best modern tenorsax tradition. This session is a must!! And if anybody can report more WG recordings, maybe in private surroundings, please take action!!! Postscript: The original Tempo LP was offered for sale in a Tokyo store recently (December 2014) for a sum approximately USD 1500!!

WILTON GAYNAIR

London, June 1960

Ellsworth "Shake" Keane (tp, flh – items 2,4,6), Wilton Gaynair (ts), Terry Shannon (p), Jeff Clyne (b), Bill Eyden (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Tempo, never issued as scheduled, but now on CD, issued as "Africa Calling":

Kingston By Pass	Straight 2 choruses of 12 bars to solo 5 choruses. Solo 5 choruses to straight 2 choruses and coda. (M)
Blue Ghana	Solo 8 bars and 3 choruses of 12 bars. 12 bars 4/4 with (dm). (M)
The Way You Look Tonight	Solo 4 choruses of 64 bars. Solo 2 choruses to very long coda sequence. (F)
Just For Jan	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. Long coda. (F)
Rianyag	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). Straight. (SM)
Africa Calling	Solo 6 choruses of 16 bars. 32 bars 4/4 with (dm). (M)

When presenting the WG session of Aug. 26, 1959 in an earlier tenorsax volume, I asked for more recordings, possibly in private surroundings, because I felt he was a most extraordinary tenorsax performer! And my prayers were heard with a recently issued CD from a long forgotten recording session!! And what a session!!! These items are one hell of a tenorsax fire, so inspired and original, with an excellent rhythm section. Apart from a missing ballad, we get everything we need here. To choose favourites is a difficult task, but "... Jan" has really got something, note for instance the fourth chorus! But possibly "... Tonight" takes the prize, incredible! Why didn't he take his place among the greatest tenorsax swingers???

KURT EDELHAGEN & HIS ORCHESTRA

1964-1972

Bigband personnels including Wilton Gaynair (ts).

At present time (June 2021), the following WG items have been found:

Praha, 1965

Two items from International Jazz Festival have been found on YouTube:

Unknown Tune	Solo with orch 4 choruses of 12 bars. (SM)
Unknown Tune	Solo with orch 64 bars. (FM)

Køln (Cologne), Aug. 12, 1965

One item found on CD ("The Unreleased WDR Recordings 1957 – 1964"), also including Karl Drews (ts):

6:53	Yah-Yah Blues	Solo 8+36 bars. (SM)
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Berlin, 1966

Two items item found on YouTube:

6:29	You Shouldn't	Solo with orch 64 bars to long coda. (S)
5:16	Dedication to Berlin (12 Ton Musik)	0:36. (FM)

Køln, Nov. 11, 1966

One item found on CD:

4:47	4 For Berlin	Solo/straight with orch 32 bars. (FM)
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Køln, June 1, 1967

One item found on CD:

7:28	KE	Solo 36 bars. (M)
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Køln, Jan. 17, 1968

One item found on CD:

5:32 Our Delight Break to solo 64 bars. (FM)

Køln, Jan. 17, 1969

One item found on CD:

8:37 The Sentence Solo 12 choruses of 12 bars.
4 choruses 4/4 with (tp/tb/as). (F)

Køln, April 9, 1969

One item found on CD:

4:10 Mo' Joe Solo 64 bars. (F)

Køln, June 12, 1970

One item found on CD:

3:23 4 + 3 Solo with orch 28 bars. (M)

German dance music was not in high esteem with us in the fifties and sixties, but we must have been quite unfair towards Kurt Edelhagen, because the 3 CDs recently (April 2021) supplied by good friends show a great bigband with excellent soloists. With regard to WG, he takes several excellent soli, like "KE" and "Yah-Yah ...", three blues choruses, with great technique exhibition on the former, more laidback on the latter. Swinging uptempo on "... Delight" and "... Joe" also have high class tenorsax soli. And a superb "The Sentence", what more can you wish for? Finally, the video items. Foremost is the beautiful ballad "You Shouldn't", one very soft chorus, then a flashing follow-up, as great as great tenorsax players can make it! Note also his great playing in Praha. Let us hunt for more Kurt Edelhagen, and WG, please!

The discographical information is taken from Tom Lord's disco. It contains a lot of sessions, many indicating WG's work with Kurt Edelhagen. However, many also seem unlikely to have much of WG. So I have chosen below to present for a start the sessions which are most likely to be interesting, and obviously must have him soloing. If those are excavated, we can certainly go further. And there must be numerous broadcasts floating around!!

CHARLY ANTOLINI

Køln/Cologne, Aug. 1968

Shake Keane (tp, flhn), Jiggs Whigham (tb), Wilton Gaynair (fl, ts), Francis Coppieters (p), Karlheinz Kastek (g), Werner Dies (el-b), Jean Warland (b), Charly Antolini (dm).

Nine titles were recorded for MPS(G), issued as "Soul Beat", six have WG:

4:24 St. James Blues Solo 20 bars. (SM)

3:23 Locomotion Solo 14 bars. (M)

5:29 La Belle Solo 48 bars. With ens 24 bars to fade out. (M)

4:40 Dear Chaples Solo 40 bars. (F)

5:10 Woe's All Over Me Solo 20 bars. With ens. (SM)

3:32 Skin Burns Break to solo 32 bars. (FM)

Very pleasant group, playing exactly soul beat led by the dynamic 'no-cymbal-drumming' of the leader. Solid tenorsax contributions in various tempo with "La Belle" as a typical highlight!

PETER HERBOLZHEIMER Hannover, Jan. 18 & Wiesbaden, Jan. 23, 1976

Bigband personnel including Wilton Gaynair, Johnny Griffin, Stan Getz (ts), Gerry Mulligan (bar), Peter Herbolzheimer (b-tb, ldr), Grady Tate (dm, vo) and many others.

Ten titles were recorded for Atlantic, issued as "Jazz Gala Concert", one has WG:

Moon Dance Solo 24 bars. (M)

A very fine, groovy and swinging tenorsax solo here!

ROB VAN DEN BROECK

Kirchhellen, Germany, Aug. 29/30, 1977

Wilton Gaynair (sop, ts, perc), Gerd Dudek (fl, ts), Rob van den Broeck (p, synth), Ali Haurand (b), Frank Köllges (dm, perc), Steve Boston (cga).

Four titles were recorded for Ring(G)1030, issued as "Third Eye - Connexion":

10:50 Maroon Dance Solo 2:17. (FM)

8:36 The Healer Solo 72 bars (2nd (ts)-solo).

Chase with (ts-GD). Duet. (FM)

12:43 Landings (sop)-Solo. (M)
8:52 Ogetnom Soli 3:08 and 2:38. (SM)

This session is close to the outskirts of what the readers of this solography is looking for. WG is certainly exploring the new trends in jazz, and the music here is quite far removed from what he made almost twenty years earlier. Nevertheless, with an open mind, it is easy to recognize the same dynamic style, solid tone, technique in abundance. The highlight is "Ogetnom", solid tenorsax playing!

DIETER REITH QUINTET **Germany, Aug. 1978**

Wilton Gaynair (ts), Dieter Reith (org), Stephan Diez (g), Jean Warland (b), Joe Nay (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Intercord(G)145025, (sop)-Solo on "Join Us", not present on "4 A. M." but:

B. M. F.	With ens. Solo 32 bars to coda. (FM)
Per Favor Senior	Solo 24 bars. (M)
Ogetnom	Solo 20 bars. (M)
Maroon Dance	Solo 36+8 bars. (FM)
Silly 'Ol Funk	With ens. (M)
Partly Cloudy	Solo 64 bars. (FM)

We are no longer in 'vintage land', the funk is a side branch of jazz that I can manage without. WS though may play whatever he like, and two items in particular have definite good jazz value; "Maroon ...", which is mostly a blues, and "... Cloudy", with a long proper solo of familiar structure.

"RIFFS" **Germany, 1979**

Carmell Jones (tp), Slide Hampton (tb), Wilton Gaynair (as, ts), Dave Kamein (p, speech), John Marshall (g), Bert Thompson (b), Willie Ketzner (dm).

WDR-TV program "Let's Swing" Jazz Kursus No. 7", 28:19, the following tunes have WG:

Muskrat Ramble	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Limehouse Blues	(as)-Soli 32 and 32 bars. (FM)
Tea For Two	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

This was very nice and a great surprise! A typical educational jazz program for TV, quite outdated today of course, where anything can be called jazz... Fine music by all participants, and interesting to see and hear WG plays 'vintage' music, also using alto sax, first time in this solography. On tenorsax, "... Ramble" is the highlight.

FRANCIS COPPIETERS **Germany, 1980s**

Bigband including Wilton Gaynair (ts), Francis Coppieters (p, ldr), (vo)-group.

One title was recorded for KTS(G)LM2907:

Black Pearls	Solo 16 bars. (S)
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Contribute to the musical painting, of no particular jazz interest.

HORACE PARLAN QUARTET **Innsbruck, Austria, March 1980**

Wilton Gaynair (sop, ts), Horace Parlan (p), Isla Eckinger (b), Billy Brooks (dm). Five titles were recorded for Ego(G)4018 (WG not present on "Panatika"), issued as "One For Wilton", (sop) only on "Billie's Bossa" but:

One For Wilton	Solo 11 choruses of 12 bars. Soli 4, 4 and 4 bars. (FM)
Shade	Straight 32 bars. Solo 64 bars to straight 32 bars to coda. (SM)
I'll Close My Eyes	Intro to straight 32 and solo 64 bars. Straight 40 bars to coda. (SM)
Firm Roots	Straight 1 to solo 4 choruses of 44 bars. 2 choruses 8/8 and 4/4 with (dm). Straight 44 bars to long coda. (FM)

This could have been a top session in WG's recording career, but he has some technical problems and occasionally bad intonation. The mike is also focussed on Parlan with WG placed in the background, and I wonder if this has been done on purpose to camouflage his shortcomings. When this is said, he plays with great

energy and inspiration. In slower tempo, "Shade" is the most important item, soft and laidback. "One For ..." is an uptempo blues, absolutely noteworthy, but the highlight is "... Roots", the structure is 32 bars with a 12 bars tag; solid playing!

ALAN SKIDMORE

Bonn, Germany, Jan. 13, 1982

Kenny Wheeler (flhm), Alan Skidmore (sop, ts), Wilton Gaynair (ts), Rob van den Broeck (p), Ali Haurand (b), Tony Levin (dm).

Four titles were recorded live for View(G)VS0012 at Jazz Galleria, issued as "Third Eye Live!", two have WG:

16:59	Nr 12 / Skid	(F)
23:57	River Run	(FM)

This is definitely not 'vintage jazz', and I have no competence in evaluate the performances, not even who is first and who is last of the two tenorsax players, but if I have to guess, I think WG is first on both items.

WILTON GAYNAIR QUINTET

Köln, 1982

Allan Botschinsky (tp), Wilton Gaynair (ts), Rob van den Broeck (keyboards), Ali Haurand (b), Joe Nay (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Konnex(G)KCD5032:

4:25	Spotlight	Solo 56 bars. (F)
6:54	One For Joan	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
4:21	Blues For Erica	Solo 3 choruses of 24 bars. (FM)
8:00	Sophisticated Lady	Soli 32 and 32 bars to long coda with (tp). (S)
8:43	St. Petrian	Solo 2 choruses of 40 bars. (M)
4:50	Quick Sand	Solo 64 bars. (M)
5:37	Song For Helga	Solo 52 bars. (M)

This seems to be WG's last studio session, and it is therefore a pleasure to state that it is a very successful one, and that he still is in excellent command of his artistic capabilities. The format is perfectly conventional with a quintet, a topquality trumpeter as his companion and a highly competent rhythm section. Four titles are his own compositions. A beautiful "... Lady" should of course be noted, and all the other faster items have strong and inspired tenorsax playing. We can only conclude that Wilton Gaynair should have his name along with the better known modern tenorsax stars.

"In September 1983 I got a stroke during a concert with Peter Herbolzheimer. Since that time up till now I'm unable to play any instrument" (Wilton Gaynair, liner notes to CD above, Nov. 1991).

No further recording sessions.

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