

# MASTERARBEIT

*An exploration of the clarinetists who performed with Duke Ellington from 1924-1942*

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## *Foreword*

As a jazz clarinetist, I really enjoy learning about the rich heritage that my instrument possesses, and for me the Duke Ellington Orchestra really provides a great 50+ year window of exploration. When I was 21 years old I was a member of the Birmingham Conservatoire Duke Ellington Orchestra where we played original arrangements of Ellington classics, and I had the privilege of playing the reed 3 part which formerly belonged to the great clarinet and tenor players Jimmy Hamilton and Barney Bigard. This experience was really memorable for me during my university education, and inspired me to research the Ellington music on a deeper level.

I'm also a great fan of transcription and analysis and believe that it undoubtedly made a massive difference in my own musical understanding with regards to jazz music and improvisation. I do however, believe that this is a very personal process, and feel that musicians have the drive to make self-discoveries and use transcriptions as their own unique practice tools. Therefore, my approach in this master thesis with regards to the transcription analysis side is not as a narrator, but that of someone trying to reach an overview of the musician's overall improvisational characteristics. I also believe that it's easily possible to fall into a trap of assuming one's musical understandings can parallel those of the musician you are transcribing- which can never be 100% reality.

One thing to consider while reading my paper is the reference to Duke Ellington's ensemble; the band changed names numerous times throughout it's early career, ranging from "The Washingtonians", to "The Cotton Club Orchestra" and "The Kentucky Club Orchestra". They are all belonging to the same band, more commonly referred to as "The Duke Ellington Orchestra" today.

In the pursuit of educating myself and sharing some interesting findings (with the addition of my own transcription material\*) I hope that this master thesis can prove to be useful to anyone wishing to learn more about the clarinet players who worked with Duke Ellington from 1926-1942.

Samantha Wright

\*All solo transcriptions used in this Master Thesis were transcribed by Samantha Wright

## Introduction

The Duke Ellington Orchestra was one of the longest running large-ensembles of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, rising in the early 1920's originally under the name "Elmer Snowden and his Back Sox Orchestra" and later renamed "The Washingtonians". It was the following year in 1924 when Duke Ellington officially took over this group (following the departure of Snowden), officially marking Ellington's leadership in a musical pursuit which would last for more than five decades and ending with his death on the 24<sup>th</sup> May, 1974.

In this thesis, I will explore the clarinetists who worked with Duke Ellington in his ensemble from 1926-1942, including their musical beginnings and clarinet education, as well as looking at examples of their improvisations in order to achieve a clearer insight into their improvisational techniques and characteristics as a clarinetist.

## Sidney Bechet

The first "Ellington clarinetist" who I will investigate in this thesis is none other than Sidney Bechet. Bechet was born on the 14<sup>th</sup> May 1897 in New Orleans and was the youngest of five sons and two daughters to a middle-class creole family [1]. The family was undeniably musical, with Bechet's father and brothers all playing musical instruments ranging from woodwind, brass and strings. Although he became more famous later in his life as a soprano saxophonist, [2] he began to teach himself on his brother's clarinet when he was 7 or 8 years old [1]. When Bechet was 10 years old, the Freddie Keppard band came over to his house to play for his older brother's 21<sup>st</sup> birthday party. Keppard was also a creole from New Orleans and among his band members was clarinetist George Baquet who was coincidentally late for the engagement. In the meantime, Bechet had begun to play in one of the rooms of the house and the guests at the party had assumed that it was in fact Baquet warming up.

As a result, Baquet became Bechet's first teacher along with other prominent New Orleans clarinetists such as the Tio family (specifically Louis "Papa" Tio and Lorenzo Tio) and Louis "Big Eye" Nelson. Although Bechet was eager to learn, having practiced day and night prior to receiving lessons, he was quite resistant to formal teaching methods [3].

George Baquet found that Bechet had already developed his own fingerings for the clarinet, but advised him on embouchure, reeds, mouthpieces and articulation. Lorenzo Tio Jr., along with his brother Louis and father Lorenzo Tio Snr., were the most popular clarinet teachers in New Orleans and taught practically all of the jazz clarinetists living there [4]. The Tio family clarinet training was well known to be based very heavily in the footsteps of the French Classical tradition, as a reflection of their creole heritage. Teaching materials included the methods of Klose, Lazarus and Langey [5], and also the emphasis of a good sound, tone production [6] and articulation.

"The Tio training insured technical proficiency and the ability to read music, skills needed for playing at more formal society functions [7]." This contrasts with the musical education of players from the black community during this time (pre-World War II), which drew much less on the European tradition and instead focussed on black folk traditions and the blues [8]. Combined with the strong classical influence, there was an extra element of teaching that made the Tio's so pioneering, and that was their early steps into teaching improvisation through the focus on transposition and ear training/solfege. Lorenzo, Tio, Jr. always told his students, "If you learn the basics, improvising will come naturally [7]."

Interestingly Bechet himself, years later, admitted to growing up in this melting pot of New Orleans clarinet tradition, but was diffident about admitting that he had teachers, and described himself largely as self-taught [2].

Throughout his career, he always somehow resisted learning to read music and instead relied on his ears and musical memory. This musical “illiteracy” however, could be a reason why some band leaders decided against hiring Bechet for their orchestras, such as Jim Europe. In addition, his clarinet was always “on the brink of falling apart and saved by tape and rubber bands. Despite this, Bechet developed an unparalleled woody sound, wide vibrato and a virtuosic technique [2]. Like many New Orleans creole clarinetists, Bechet grew up playing an Albert System clarinet. These clarinets tend to have a richer and fuller sound, which Sidney amplified.

### **Sidney Bechet with Duke Ellington**

Although there are no existing recordings of Sidney Bechet playing with Duke Ellington’s Washingtonians, Bechet was one of the first clarinet players to join the band for a short while. In June 1924, he sat in with the band for the first time while they were playing at the Hollywood club. Leo Bernstein, manager of the club, was impressed by the impression that Bechet made, and insisted that Ellington should hire him. Leonard Bechet, Sidney’s nephew recalled in the 1950’s that Ellington had taken on Bechet to help the band with New Orleans standards, such as “High Society.” Initially Bechet fit the band very well, and in July 1924 he was already accompanying them on a trip to New England. However, after just a few days he was beginning to upset a few of his sidemen due to his dominant personality and tendency to “outplay” everybody, even to the point where one club manager requested that the band play waltzes and no more jazz. His style was high-spirited and flamboyant, but completely overshadowed other members of the group. It was only a matter of time until the other members would clash with his musical personality, and they began to resent him. It only added fuel to the fire when Bechet also insisted on bringing his full-grown German shepherd “Goola” to the job every night [15].

After missing 3 days of work in a row, Ellington made the decision to let Bechet go, parting amicably. Although Bechet’s destiny didn’t belong with the band, Ellington later described Bechet as “the very epitome of jazz. Everything he played in his entire life was completely original. I honestly think he was the most unique man ever to be in this music [26].”

After Bechet’s official “departure” from the band, Ellington continued to record and perform with the six-piece Washingtonians, and cut two sides from a New York Blu-Disc recording session in November 1924 [9]. It is highly likely that these records did not circulate widely, as the only known advertisement for Blu-Discs suggests that the distribution of the music was limited to certain New York theatre lobbies. For The Washingtonians however, this signified their first personal breakthrough in the record market [10].

The personnel from this session was Bubber Miley on trumpet, Charlie Irvis on trombone, Otto Hardwick on the alto saxophone (taking clarinet solos on both tracks: Choo Choo and Rainy Nights), Duke Ellington on piano, George Francis on the banjo and Sonny Greer on drums [9]. Otto Hardwick, who had been in the ensemble since the beginning, was predominantly a lead alto player, in comparison to Bechet who earlier specialised as a clarinetist.

Over the next few months, The Washingtonian’s continued to gain popularity and started to perform in larger halls. This led to personnel changes, and the addition of a new seventh member of the group: Prince Robinson.

### **Sidney Bechet’s playing characteristics**

Despite there being no listening material available of Sidney Bechet’s time working with The Washingtonians, there are a few recordings of him playing the clarinet in his own bands.

### **Black Stick**

“Black Stick” is an up-tempo tune composed by Bechet in 1932 for the six-piece band “The New Orleans Feetwarmers”, a group that he later described as “the best band” because “people liked it and the musicians involved all understood what jazz really meant”. The band was co-lead by trumpet player Tommy Ladnier, described as Bechet’s most important sideman of the 1930’s [11]. Although the recording I have transcribed is allegedly from 1938, over a decade after Bechet’s appearance in the Ellington band, it’s still interesting to be able to analyse some features of his playing to gather an idea of what we could have expected had he have recorded with Ellington in 1924.

By the very first note that Bechet plays, we are already introduced to his technique of sliding and pitch bending to lower (and later higher) notes, here the distance of a semi-tone throughout the thematic pattern within the 8-bar introduction:



Glissandi and pitch bends certainly aren’t an uncommon characteristic of jazz clarinet playing, especially that of creole decent, however it’s possible that the origins of this stylistic device could have something to do with the mechanics of the most popular clarinet system used in New Orleans at the time: The Albert System, which was cheap and easily available in Eb (for playing with Brass Bands), C and Bb [12]. Many clarinetists considered the Albert System to be more adaptable than the Boehm, claiming that a wider bore and less key-work allowed for a bigger and more resonant sound, and the lack of key-work also made bends and slurs easier to execute and control [13].



In the above photos, Bechet can be seen playing a Buffet Albert System clarinet, with a Selmer “Goldentone” mouthpiece and Selmer “ArtDeco” ligature. One example of a “Goldentone” mouthpiece that I found online implies that the 121mm tip opening is just a fraction wider than the classic Vandoren B45 mouthpiece which has a 119.5mm tip opening. Bechet even at times utilized a steel reed on his mouthpiece, creating a huge sound that could easily compete with the brass [14].

In addition, Bechet’s playing boasts a wide range of dexterity on the clarinet and in this solo alone utilizes almost 3 octaves of the clarinet’s range, from the low E to D. He could not read music and therefore every tune that he played relied on his memory and ears. From looking at the variety of notes and their combinations in “Black Stick”, it’s hard to imagine that

none of it was notated for Bechet's use. However, when examining the recording at a slower tempo, there are a few little inconsistencies which could be linked to Bechet's musical illiteracy:

The simple 8 bar theme from bars 13-20 consists of a 2-bar phrase which is played 3 times (bars 13-18), and then a concluding 2 bar phrase based around the A minor arpeggio (bars 19-20). The phrases are referred to as "Phrase A" and "Phrase B" in the above excerpt.

Although this is the first reference to the overall theme in the music, the rhythm and articulation of "Phrase A" varies slightly each time it is played: In bar 13, the Eb and A on beats 3 and 4 are played as crotchets, and when the phrase is repeated in bar 15, they are then divided into two quavers each. In bar 17 the phrase is again played differently, with the Eb reverting to a crotchet, and the A remaining as two quavers. In a similar way, the C in bars 16 and 18 is pushed forward half a beat due to the subtraction of the repeated D which is played on the 2 + in bar 14.

Another small detail to consider is the emphasis on staccato at the end of the phrase in bar 16, note C. This articulation feature is then mirrored in bar 18, where the D is played as an accented staccato and the C is now played for its whole note value.

It is possible to speculate and examine Bechet's phrasing in detail and assume that his inability to read music could be responsible for any irregularities, however it is important to also consider Bechet's own artistic interpretation and possible intention to find room for expression through articulation and rhythmic freedom.

One further feature of Bechet's playing in "Black stick" that I would like to mention is his overall rhythmic placement, particularly when beginning a phrase. At the start of almost every 2-bar phrase in the entirety of this transcription, he begins on beat 1. Some could describe this approach in jazz music as very "controlled" or "disciplined", even perhaps reflecting the attitudes of his creole classical training or the music of the early New Orleans marching bands.

### **Egyptian Fantasy**

Another recording of Sidney Bechet playing the clarinet comes from 1941, and is called "Egyptian Fantasy". The tune, originally a jazz tango written in 1916, was used as a theme by the "Original Creole Band of New Orleans" to introduce their shows. This version from Bechet is the earliest known recording, but apparently very close to the original which was first played by his mentor George Baquet [13].

One can appreciate Bechet's unique coarse tone and rich vibrato from the onset of the recording, but also his extreme versatility to move from almost-funeral march sounding phrasing and lamenting feel to flowing patterns in the higher register with almost fluid like bends between the notes (from bar 18). His ability to move through the high range down to the lowest range effortlessly in bar 20 is also impressive, in addition to the quick moving chromaticism in the bar preceding.

Interestingly, some people would consider this kind of playing to be extremely difficult on the Albert System clarinet, and that the Boehm system instrument was the preferred model for musicians interested in playing fluid and chromatic passages. This is because the Boehm system clarinet has keys, allowing for more options and flow.

Harmonically, Bechet utilises a variety of options for his improvising, often referring to arpeggiated patterns (e.g. bar 19 and bar 20: descending A minor), intervallic development and the use of the harmonic minor/minor-major 7<sup>th</sup> (a clear example of this can be seen in bar 19).

### Prince Robinson

Prince Robinson was born on the 7<sup>th</sup> June 1902 in Portsmouth, Virginia. He was mainly self-taught on the saxophone and clarinet, beginning with the latter at the age of 14 [15]. After playing locally in his home-city, Robinson moved to New York in 1923 where his first jobs were from playing with Lionel Hampton's Musical Aces and Elmer Snowden's band. By 1925, Ellington had apparently lured the reed player away from Snowden, and in May an ad for the Washingtonians in "Variety" magazine published Robinson's name in the billing [10].

Doubling on tenor saxophone and clarinet, Robinson enhanced the instrumental colour of the group, and increased Ellington's options for arrangements. Despite Robinson being self-taught, he was a very accomplished clarinet player, with a high level of proficiency in the high and low registers. Coleman Hawkins spoke very highly of Robinson's playing, and in fact, many audiences find Robinson comparable to Hawkins himself stylistically [10].

Prince Robinson's stint with the band lasted for around 2 years, according to The Washingtonian's discography records [9]. There is however speculation about a Summer recording session where he was replaced by Bechet. Supposedly the band cut two sides for Brunswick with the tunes "12<sup>th</sup> Street Rag" and "Tiger Rag", however according to the discography archives, "Tiger Rag" wasn't recorded until the 8<sup>th</sup> January 1929, which is when Barney Bigard was playing with the band (The Jungle Band as it was then renamed for this session. [10]) Bechet did, however, continue to sit in with the band regularly after hours at the Kentucky Club and when it performed in larger spaces. Furthermore, he and Robinson were both billed for a proposed 9-piece arrangement of "Rhapsody in Blue" with the



Washingtonians in 1925. Ellington had already hired Robinson, as stated, in May 1925, then Tuba player Henry Edwards during the late summer/early autumn, but required the 9 musicians in total due to the demanding doubling requirements in his arranged woodwind parts. According to the Ellington discography, this version may have been performed, but certainly not recorded during this period [9].

### Prince Robinson's playing characteristics

Throughout Robinson's 2 years of commitment to The Washingtonians, Ellington managed to get him in the studio for a total of 4 sessions, taking clarinet solos on just 6 tunes [9]. Because of recording limitations at the time, tracks were notoriously short in length and arguably not a realistic reflection of how long they would be played live in the dance halls and hotels. Furthermore, most harmonic progressions in the repertoire were quite heavily based around the blues progression, with not much deviation.

### Trombone Blues

In Ellington's 6<sup>th</sup> ever recording session and first session for The Washingtonians (according to the archives [9]) he welcomed Prince Robinson to the ensemble to record "Trombone Blues", a tune written in January 1925 by Spencer Williams, with lyrics by Ted Nixon (trombonist with Fletcher Henderson- a logical link to the song title) [10].

Over the blues solo, which ends neatly on the 1<sup>st</sup> beat of the 11<sup>th</sup> bar, Robinson's phrases are very clearly executed in 2 bar portions, arguably in a "question and answer" form:

The "question" starts with a simple 3 note phrase, ascending to the higher register, "answered" by a descending phrase which is loosely based around the same 3 notes. The phrases also switch between on-beat and off-beat beginnings.

Robinson continues his solo utilizing very few additional notes, mainly those from the common chord tones with the 6<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> also featuring. In bar 5 he makes an accented reference to the blues with the F natural over the D7, and deploys a subtle hint of chromaticism to round off the solo in bar 10.

### Parlour Social Stomp

"Parlour Social Stomp" was recorded in March 1916. It's a tune written by Duke Ellington derived from rag-time influences [15]. It's said that during this time, the band's sound was still massively influenced by Sidney Bechet's previous musical contributions, and that as a result the orchestration of the band reflects the textures heard in a New Orleans front line [16].

One thing which immediately stood out for me as I heard Robinson's solo for the first time were his switches from jumping and almost "spring" like articulations (for example in the first 6 bars) compared to the very slurred and flowing phrasing in bars 7-9:

**230 BPM**

As discussed in "Trombone Blues", Robinson divides his phrases clearly in 2 bar segments, again perhaps in a "question and answer" intention. This pattern is broken however in bar 6 where he pushes the phrase over into the next half of the solo, ending in bar 10.

Harmonically speaking, within the first 4 bars Robinson chooses to use notes just from the dominant chord tones, breaking loose in the anticipation to bar 5 where he jumps in to highlight the blue tones over G7.

### Georgia Grind

In the same session, The Washingtonians record a second tune, entitled "Georgia Grind", written by Spencer Williams and arranged for by Ellington's alto saxophonist, Don Redman [15].

With a 21-bar solo, a bit of a luxury for a band recording session during this period, Robinson plays a lot faster and fills the space as lot more that previously over this blues form. However, a lot of his ideas continue to develop from a previous statement played:

**230 BPM**

The descending phrase starting on beat 3 of bar 1 could be perceived as a reflection of the opening 4 note pattern. At the end of the second phrase at beat 3 of bar 2, this is developed and stretched out rhythmically in bar 4.

In bar 5 this short burst of the notes C and A continues to develop through to the next bar in a descending sequence, culminating to another reference to bar 2 in bar 8.

These are just a few examples of how we could interpret Robinson's improvisational thought process.

In a similar way to "Parlour Social Stomp", Robinson again makes strong contrasts with his articulation, accenting the root note 3 times in bar 13, then taking a softer and slurred choice of phrasing in bars 14-16 and 17-19.

The image shows three staves of musical notation. The first staff is labeled '13' and has a 'C7' chord above it. It contains a series of notes with slurs and accents. The second staff is labeled '17' and has a 'Dm' chord above it. It contains a series of notes with slurs and accents. The third staff is labeled '20' and has a 'G7' chord above it. It contains a series of notes with slurs and accents.

### Animal Crackers

Prince Robinson's final official recording session with the band took place on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1926, cutting two tracks: "Animal Crackers" and "Li'l Farina" [9]. This was supposedly a very important session in early Ellington history, for "it was this during this session that the creative seeds were planted that would begin the evolution of Ellington's style" [15], and the influence of Ellington's love of theatre and drama began to blossom into his writing. "Animal Crackers" was a song written by Coslow/Link/Rich and had already been previously recorded by other bands such as "The California Ramblers" and "The Seven Wild Men". Although it was a stock arrangement provided for the band, Ellington made some major edits to the structure and made several alterations to the music [15].

Robinson begins the solo with an almost animated feel in terms of articulation: very short pricks of staccato gradually smoothing out over the first 4 bars with the use of sporadic slurring:

### 220 BPM

The image shows four staves of musical notation. The first staff starts with a 'B7' chord and contains a series of notes with slurs and accents. The second staff starts with a 'Bb7' chord and contains a series of notes with slurs and accents. The third staff starts with an 'Abm' chord and contains a series of notes with slurs and accents. The fourth staff starts with an 'F#7' chord and contains a series of notes with slurs and accents. The tempo is marked as 220 BPM.

The 3-note pattern starting on beat 1 of bar 3 (F#, B, D#) is developed into the next bar and transposed up a major third (trading the concluding note for a 9<sup>th</sup>) over the F#7 chord. The original shape is then seemingly inverted in bar 6 and further developed over the next 4 bars. Robinson then plays with more thematic ideas through to bar 14 where he hints back to the opening statement of his solo. In a contrast to his earlier solos, most of his phrases here begin on the first beat of the bar, and vary in phrase length. For example, in bars 1-4 the phrase runs through the first four bars, and then in bars 6-7 the phrasing is broken up into 1 bar segments.

### Li'l Farina

With just a small 8 bar solo, Robinson concludes his time with the Ellington group, on the song "Li'l Farina", inspired again by Ellington's love of theatre: "Li'l Farina" was an urchin character from the "Our Gang" comedy, a series of silent films from 1922 [10].

220 BPM

The musical notation shows an 8-bar solo in treble clef. The tempo is marked as 220 BPM. The chords are C#7, F#7, B, E7, B7, and Bb7. The melody is written in eighth and quarter notes, with some triplet markings at the end of the solo.

During this short solo, Robinson utilizes arpeggiated shapes, for example in bars 4-5 based around B major 6, and then continues with the same tonality throughout the rest of the solo, not stretching out too far away from the chord tones of B major. We hear Robinson's use of triplets for the first time at the very end of his solo too.

### The unnamed clarinetist

After Robinson left the band in 1926 (his last credited recording was on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 1926), Ellington recorded once in a trio session in October, but didn't record again with the full band until the 29<sup>th</sup> November. The personnel was adjusted with a few small changes, but the biggest mystery to most is the unnamed clarinetist who, in the Ellington archives, is referred to as "n/k" from the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1926 up until the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1927 [9].

Upon listening to the clarinet solos from this time, and taking into consideration Prince Robinson's playing characteristics and style, I believe that the clarinetist in the November recording session is still Prince Robinson. It is, nonetheless, unclear why he isn't credited for this. In the session 3 tracks were cut: "Immigration Blues" and two takes of "The Creeper", both composed by Duke Ellington.

### The Creeper

During the solo, the phrases are developed in a very similar way to Robinson's previous solos with the Ellington band, for example the phrase in bars 5-6 is then developed again in bars 7-8.

**230 BPM**

The musical score is written in treble clef and consists of four staves. The first staff starts with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked '230 BPM'. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. Chord symbols 'A' and 'E7' are placed above the staff. The piece ends with a double bar line.

Another very *Robinson-esque* technique which is utilized during this solo is the contrasting use of articulations, changing from short, “jumpy” and animated in the first half of the solo, to very long and flowing sequential lines in bars 11- 13.

After taking into consideration these factors, in addition to his distinctive full and flexible tone and great time feel, I believe that it’s justified to assume that this uncredited clarinet playing belongs to Prince Robinson.

In written recollections and biographies of Duke Ellington and his band, it is mentioned that Rudy Jackson joined the band as Prince Robinson’s replacement in the summer of 1927 and stayed for around 6 months only. However, this also conflicts with Harry Carney’s account of the recording session on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1927, where he shares that Rudy Jackson was playing in the tune “Song of the Cotton field” [10]. I personally agree with Carney and believe that Jackson was playing in this session, which subsequently marked the beginning of his time with Duke Ellington. I will attempt to justify this case in my analysis of these clarinet solos, in addition to speculating if Jackson played the whole time with the band until January 1928.

### Rudy Jackson

Rudy Jackson was born in 1901 in Fort Wayne, Indiana. His parents were musicians, and he began to learn the clarinet as a child while growing up in Chicago. By the age of 17, he was already playing in the local bands, and a few years later in 1923 he gained some valuable experience working with King Oliver’s well known band. Ellington was seeking a replacement for Prince Robinson and Jackson was subsequently invited to join the Washingtonians playing clarinet and tenor saxophone, a seat that was established by Robinson’s doubling abilities and made a permanent fixture with Jackson’s hiring. Jackson played regularly with the ensemble until 9<sup>th</sup> January 1928, when he was sacked by Duke Ellington. The story goes that Jackson brought an “original” compositional idea to him and suggested that Ellington could orchestrate it (with the addition of Harry Carney to the group in 1927, the bands instrumental possibilities continued to expand, and allowed Ellington to experiment with 3 clarinet lines.) The blues tune which featured the melody harmonised for all 3 clarinets was completed and recorded four months later, and Ellington named it “Creole Love Call” [15]. The song was a hit with the band, but Jackson, who shared composing credit for it, apparently neglected to inform his collaborators that the backbone of the song was in fact stolen from his former boss, King Oliver [17].

### Song of The Cotton Field

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1927, Duke Ellington's 10-piece ensemble, The Kentucky Club Orchestra, recorded 2 new songs in the studio, one of which may have featured Rudy Jackson (uncredited) on the clarinet called "Song of The Cotton Field", written by Porter Grainger [10].

The tone of the clarinet is reminiscent to the woody and chalumeau clarinet sounds of the creole tradition, in an extreme contrast to Robinson's bright sound. The playing is also a lot looser in time feel, with tone and expression taking the focal point.

Because of the almost mechanical placement of the phrases and repetition rather than development or embellishment, I would tend to view this solo as a written passage, rather than improvised:

145 BPM

### Hop Head

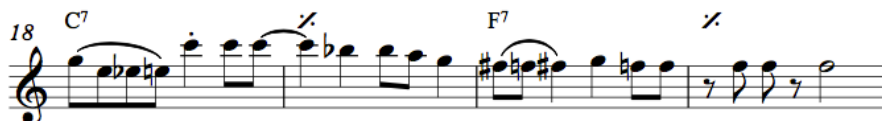
1 month later, on the 22<sup>nd</sup> March 1927, the band returned to the studio to record another song, this time a much faster tune named "Hop Head", another Ellington original. The term "Hop Head" refers to an opium addict: "I'm gonna' get myself some hop" [10].

In contrast to "Song of The Cotton Field", the clarinetist breaks into the higher clarinet register here, and plays some fast and complex patterns, requiring high dexterity on the instrument.

With a sound and feel stylistically contrasting significantly to "Song of The Cotton Field", it's difficult to judge whether it's the same player on both tracks.

One distinct feature in the first section is the repetition and embellishment of the phrase played in the first 4 bars of the solo form. This is referenced to in bars 10-13, and although there is a variation in rhythm and notes, the basic skeleton of this phrase is mirrored. This detail makes me think back to Robinson's trait of phrase development, with the addition of the clear 4 bar phrases demonstrated here. One could even contrast this to Robinson's solo on "Trombone Blues" and his arguable use of "Question" and "Answer" phrases.

The same phrase which is played over bar 4 over the C chord is then referenced again over the B section:



This time it is adjusted slightly to fit with the new harmony.

There is a strong use of chromaticism and enclosures embedded in phrases to connect ideas together over the harmony, but in contrast to Robinson's earlier solos, there are less arpeggiated lines occurring. I am, however, feeling rather convinced by the phrasing and range to predict that this could be Robinson sitting in on a session with Ellington, as appose to Rudy Jackson. With the archival material failing to provide a name [9], nobody can be 100% certain without further evidence.

### Down in Our Alley Blues

In the same session, Duke Ellington and The Washingtonians (the name was often changed during the 1920's) also cut another Ellington original, this one called "Down in Our Alley Blues". Throughout the piece there are little solo features by most of the band, offering a 7-bar pocket for the unnamed clarinetist.



In a similar way to the last solo, I am inclined to predict that it is Prince Robinson also playing on this track, due to the overall range of the solo; In all of the solos that we have discussed so far, Robinson very rarely touches the lower range of the instrument, mostly playing above the clarinet break. There are also elements of blues in his playing, for example in bars 2 and 3 where he plays the flattened 3<sup>rd</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> over the Bb major tonality. This can be compared again to Robinson's playing in "Trombone Blues" especially.

### Washington Wobble

On the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1927, The Duke Ellington Orchestra recorded a new original entitled "Washington Wobble". This is the last session where the clarinet player is mysteriously unnamed, and from the 3<sup>rd</sup> November, Rudy Jackson is officially a member of the band according the archives. Several factors leave me to believe that it is again Prince Robinson playing the clarinet in this last session. Firstly, as previously mentioned, the range of the overall solo fits my prediction; it's out of

character for Robinson to play below the clarinet break, and this solo is focussed on the middle-high range of the clarinet.

Secondly, when we look at the first segment of this solo, the technique that we have already discussed about the repetition of lines is already being deployed in the 4 bars over the F#major chord:

The image shows a musical score snippet with two staves. The top staff is marked '240 BPM' and 'F#maj7'. The bottom staff is marked 'Eb7'. Blue boxes highlight specific melodic lines in both staves, illustrating the repetition of lines over the F#major chord.

Furthermore, the use of sequential movement is also utilized in bar 16 in a descending manner:

The image shows a musical score snippet with a single staff starting at bar 15. The staff is marked 'F#maj7'. A bracket under the first three notes of bar 15 indicates a triplet. The music shows a descending melodic line.

In conclusion, I believe that the unnamed clarinetist from 29<sup>th</sup> November 1926 up until the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1927 is predominantly Prince Robinson, with the possibility that Rudy Jackson sat in for a session on the 3<sup>rd</sup> February 1927 for “Song of The Cotton Field”. As I have mentioned, it is impossible to confirm this 100% due to the lack of archival crediting, but the findings from transcription and analysis have led me to this verdict.

### **Barney Bigard**

Barney Bigard was born in New Orleans on the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 1906 and came from a family of creoles with French decent. Bigard’s mother died while giving birth, and his soon father remarried and left Barney in the care of his grandmother [19].

At the age of 14, Bigard had made the decision to pursue a career in music, beginning with the Eb clarinet. Bigard recalled years later: “In those days they used to use an E flat clarinet on parades and things. With me being real small, my uncle borrowed an E flat clarinet from Johnny Dodds for me to learn on and that’s how it started.” His first paid concerts were at house parties where he would play in “kid bands” formed by himself and other children, earning 10 cents each per night, along with playing in “all day parades” for 75 cents [19].

His formal musical education followed in the footsteps of the French Classical tradition, and he received lessons from Lorenzo Tio Jr. Like with Sidney Bechet, it is probable that these clarinet lessons covered a mixture of ear-training, classical repertoire and reading skills, scales and tone production. As with the other clarinetists that we have discussed so far, Bigard learned (and continued to play for the rest of his career) an albert system clarinet, which aided him in producing expressive low-register, chalumeau passages in the authentic creole style, supposedly due to the wider bore of these clarinets. When the Boehm system clarinets became available, Bigard chose not to change because he considered the tone to be much better on the Albert system [18].

In the early 1920’s, Bigard moved to Chicago where he played the tenor saxophone in King Oliver’s band, although not at the same time as Rudy Jackson. Bigard had stopped playing the clarinet a few years before in favour of the soprano saxophone, and in the band Albert Nicholas and Darnell Howard were both playing the clarinet until they both left to work in China. It was King Oliver



himself who asked if Bigard could play the clarinet in his band, and subsequently bought him one to play. He soon realised that he enjoyed the clarinet playing too, and so from this moment on Bigard decided to focus primarily on the latter instrument [19].

### **Barney Bigard with Duke Ellington**

It was Wellman Braud, the bass player of the Duke Ellington band, who invited Ellington to hear Bigard play. At the time Bigard was already earning enough money from his various musical jobs and lots of money in tips, therefore the first offer that Ellington made to Bigard was declined because it didn't pay as much. A while later Ellington increased his offer (to 72 dollars per week) and Bigard accepted; he saw possibilities with playing in a big group rather than a small one [19].

When Bigard joined the band officially in 1928, he contributed with his mellow, warm, New Orleans tone that became one of the main instrumental sounds "from which Ellington wove his arrangements. As a composer, he wrote the tunes "Mood Indigo," "Saturday Night Function," "Clarinet Lament" and "Clouds in My Heart," in collaboration with Ellington [20].

### **Barney Bigard's playing characteristics**

During the 14 years of Bigard's commitment to The Ellington Orchestra (with his last recording taking place on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 1942) [9] he played in countless numbers of live concerts and hundreds of recording sessions, with at least 20 sessions per year.

The Ellington style of writing and arranging for the orchestra developed significantly during this time, but the roots of the music remained heavily influenced by the New Orleans traditional style of playing thanks to Bigard's sound and style.

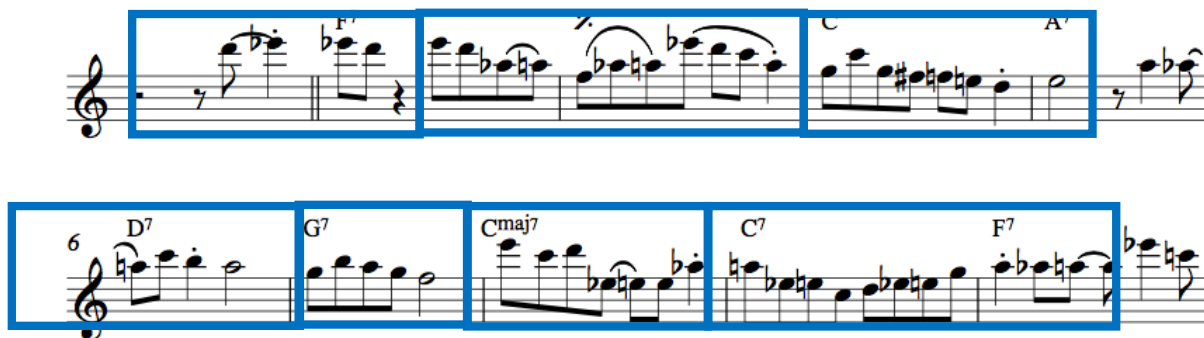
### **Bugle Call Rag**

The recording which sparked drama amongst the clarinet community: "Bugle Call Rag", written by Pettis/Meyers/Schoebel. The tune was first recorded in 1922 by the New Orleans Rhythm Kings, and since then became a standard popularised by the renditions of Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller and Duke Ellington [21].

This was Bigard's debut recording with The Washingtonians, taking place on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1928 [9]. When other clarinet players in the New York scene heard his "unorthodox way of swinging" on the instrument, they all apparently wanted to get him in a session with him to try and steal his licks or out-play him [26].

On first impressions of hearing Bigard's solo, I found his style in this fast tempo very similar to that of Prince Robinson's: lots of 8<sup>th</sup> note patterns and phrasing, with great bounce in the higher register on the clarinet. However, there is an undeniable difference between the two players sounds, with Bigard's sounding much lighter.

After transcribing the solo, there were a few key points which amazed me about his improvisational technique. Although I have mentioned that the phrasing is similar to Prince Robinson's (in the sense that it is very clear), I have noticed that Bigard takes it "one step further" in terms of variation. He mixes up the lengths of each phrase while also playing with thematic development and the unique use of articulation.



From my perspective, I would consider the first phrase to be the opening 4 notes (D, Eb, Eb, D). The second phrase is then separated by a crochet rest, following a 1 ½ bar phrase which is a development of the first; it uses the descending Eb-D motif then transforms into a brief blues reference before returning to the motif again in bar 3, beat 3. The third phrase is then separated by a staccato articulation on the last beat of bar 3 which introduces a new C triad-based idea that is connected to the last phrase by the reference of the staccato crotchet, again on beat 4. The Following 2 bars (6 and 7) demonstrate sequential development in 1 bar phrases, with the scalic pattern almost being reflective of a classical study (and the Tio clarinet school influence):



### Stack O’Lee Blues

In the same recording session on the 9<sup>th</sup> January 1928, The Washingtonians recorded one more tune, this one named “Stack O’Lee Blues”, another Ellington original.

The record really shines a light on Bigard’s contrasting style in the chalumeau register of the clarinet. Here, his articulation is very smooth, loose and almost “sleepy” sounding, creating the perfect tone to compliment the bluesy intention of this slow section in the piece.

I would tend to refer to this kind of playing as a very authentic demonstration of the creole style of playing, extremely similar to that of the unnamed clarinetist playing in “Song of The Cotton Field.” The phrasing here is again very clear and almost vocal-like (i.e. phrases that I can imagine sounding like a written song). Here they are mostly at the length of 2 bars each, with the exception being bars 10-12 where the phrase here is stretched out to 3 bars (as well as the rhythm which is also stretched to crotchets instead of the usual quaver movement).



Bigard doesn't use a wide variety of notes to achieve his melodic solo, but we can again see examples of developed sequences, for instance in bar 6 where the shape of the small phrase (consisting of D to Bb) is modulated two semi-tone's lower all the way to the resolution in bar 7.

Bigard's tone still possess this characteristic lightness, despite him now focussing in the lower register of the clarinet. Although he played an Albert System clarinet (like the other clarinetists we already discussed before him who played with Ellington), Bigard's was a specially customised Selmer Albert system clarinet which was specially made for him by Selmer in New York [22]. Overall, he preferred to play clarinets with 5-6 rings over the tone holes (with 5 being standard for most clarinets in present day performance, and a clarinet with 6 rings being referred to as a "Full Albert") [23].

Despite Bigard's New Orleans training and sound, his favourite clarinetist was said to be Artie Shaw, whom he admired for his ability to "make the clarinet sound unusually beautiful in the upper register" [20].

### High Life

One year later, on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 1929, Duke Ellington and (now renamed) his Cotton Club Orchestra made some more recordings in the studio [9]. Here we can already hear the development of Bigard's playing techniques in the tune "High Life", another Ellington original. The phrasing again is very clear, and he continues to experiment with a range of staccato and legato articulations to give character and shape to certain areas.

One big feature throughout this solo is Bigard's impressively quick dexterity around the clarinet, with great examples being the chromatic/triadic finger-twisting phrases in bars 1-3 and bars 15-19. As previously mentioned, the Albert System clarinet was not the easiest to manoeuvre around due to its lack of keys, and the Boehm system was the preferred instrument for tricky chromatic passages because of the wider options available.

One can also perceive the descending triplet phrase in bar 9 to be an example of what many musician's (upon hearing him live) described as one of Bigard's characteristic "waterfall" phrases [4]. More clear examples of the "waterfalls" can be heard in the recording of "Jubilee Stomp" 1928.

The image shows a musical score for the clarinet part of "High Life". It consists of three staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a B $\flat$  key signature. It contains a melodic line with various articulations like accents and slurs. The second staff starts with a 5-measure rest, followed by a melodic line with an F $^7$  chord indicated above it. The third staff features a triplet of eighth notes in the first measure, followed by another triplet in the second measure, and continues with a melodic line.

### Barney Bigard's post-Ellington career

After over 24 years with the ensemble, Barney Bigard made the decision to leave Duke Ellington in July 1942. Following his departure, clarinetist Chauncey Haughton temporarily took his chair before the permanent fixture of Jimmy Hamilton. Before Hamilton, Ellington had initially made an offer to Edmond Hall, which was subsequently rejected because he wanted to start working with Teddy Wilson [15]. The decision to hire Hamilton surprised many due to his complete separation to the

iconic and characteristic creole inspired clarinet sound which had been long associated with the ensemble. In comparison to Bechet and Bigard, Hamilton was well known for his sophisticated, delicate and controlled work on the clarinet. He was also classically trained and received lessons from Leon Russianoff, a prolific clarinet pedagogue who taught at the Julliard and Manhattan schools of music [24].

Bigard's performing career continued, and he resumed focus on his own small ensemble music, notably with his septet named "The Jazzopaters" and "The Pelican Trio".

### Don't Get Around Much Anymore

In 1978 Barney Bigard entered the recording studio with The Pelican Trio, featuring Barry Martyn on drums and Duke Burrell on piano. Together the trio recorded 10 jazz standards, including classic clarinet features recorded by Benny Goodman and Artie Shaw such as "Stardust", "Rosetta" and "The Man I Love" [25].

In the recording of "Don't Get Around Much Anymore" Bigard's playing still possessed this undeniable sense of the blues and the same iconic lightness in his sound. Furthermore, his clear sense of phrasing and referencing can be identified already within the first opening bars of his solo:

The image displays a musical score for the clarinet solo in "Don't Get Around Much Anymore". The score is written in treble clef with a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked as BPM. The solo begins at measure 10. The first phrase, highlighted in blue, spans measures 10 and 11. This phrase is then referenced in measure 13, measure 15, and measure 17. The score includes various chords such as A7, Dmaj7, Em7, F#m7, C#, and C7. The solo is characterized by its use of triplets and a bluesy, phrasing-oriented style.

In the above example, the opening highlighted phrase is again referenced in bar 3, almost identically played with the exception to the sustained F# at the end of the phrase in bar 4.

In bar 7 the phrase shape is utilized again, but camouflaged an octave lower and with a slight variation of the original notes. The A is sustained as with the original, and the "second-half" of the phrase (i.e. the one in bar 2) is again referenced.

This "second-half" of the phrase is then referenced again in bar 10, trading the original opening for a "tension building" blues preparation, which is then repeated again in bar 11.

One interesting development in Bigard's playing is his movement away from basic triadic patterns. Instead, it can be interpreted that his attention is shifted to a larger focus on phrase and line development in addition to swooping lines of expression, rather than a big emphasis on harmonic "accuracy".

### Conclusion

From 1924-1942, The Ellington sound was seemingly heavily influenced by the clarinet's connection to the creole tradition and New Orleans music. With the introduction of Sidney Bechet to the ensemble, this undoubtedly paved the way for the clarinets who followed, with the reinforcement of

Bigard's strong influence for 16 years from 1928-1942. Furthermore, it is important to note the strong relationship between the Albert System clarinet and the Ellington band during this time which was the only clarinet system used and arguably helped to contribute to the ensemble's sound and character.

Although the Ellington Orchestra's sound developed more after the entrance of Jimmy Hamilton, and perhaps further away from the creole tradition, it's also important to consider technological advances which enabled the ensemble to record and write longer musical works and albums with themes. Furthermore, the growing popularity of the band may have allowed them to take more risks and travel further afield, gaining a wealth of more influences and ideas.

Another point to take away from this exploration of this music is the importance of accurate archival information. It's unknown why from the 29<sup>th</sup> November 1926 up until the 26<sup>th</sup> October 1927 the clarinetist in these recording sessions was uncredited. In addition, some information that was recorded from this time can in fact turn out to be false for one reason or another, for example the composer credits of some songs. One thing, however, which can be trusted to be accurate to a point, is the use of transcription to analyse the characteristics and style of a musician. During this period, it's highly unlikely that recordings could have been manipulated in anyway, and can display a true reflection of a musical snapshot in history.

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## *Discography*

*(In order of MasterArbeit reference)*

### **Sidney Bechet (1980)**

*Black stick 1931-1938* [CD] US,  
MCA Records – MCA 1330

### **Sidney Bechet and his New Orleans Feetwarmers (1941)**

*Egyptian Fantasy* [Vinyl] US,  
Victor – 27337

### **Duke Ellington's Washingtonians (1925)**

*Trombone Blues* [Vinyl] US,  
Pathé– Pt 36333

### **Duke Ellington's Washingtonians (1926)**

*Parlour Social Stomp* [Vinyl] US,  
Pathé– Pt 7504

### **Duke Ellington's Washingtonians (1925)**

*Animal Crackers* [Vinyl] US,  
Gennett–Ge 3342

### **Duke Ellington's Washingtonians (1925)**

*Li'l Farina* [Vinyl] US,  
Gennett–Ge 3342

### **Duke Ellington and his Kentucky Club Orchestra (1926)**

*The Creeper* [Vinyl] US,  
Vocalion–Vo 1077

### **Duke Ellington and his Kentucky Club Orchestra (1927)**

*Song of the Cotton Field* [Vinyl] US,  
Vocalion–Vo 1086

### **Duke Ellington and his Washingtonians (1927)**

*Hop Head* [Vinyl] US,  
Columbia–Co 953D

### **Duke Ellington and his Washingtonians (1927)**

*Down in our Alley Blues* [Vinyl] US,  
Columbia–Co 1076D

### **Duke Ellington and his Orchestra (1927)**

*Washington Wabble* [Vinyl] US,  
Victor–(F)RCA 731043

### **The Washingtonians (1928)**

*Bugle Call Rag* [Vinyl] US,  
Columbia–Ha 577-H

### **The Washingtonians (1928)**

*Stack O'Lee Blues* [Vinyl] US,  
Columbia–Ha 577-H

**Duke Ellington and his Cotton Club Orchestra (1929)**

*High Life* [Vinyl] US,  
RCA Victor–Vi V -38036

**Barney Bigard & “The Pelican Trio” (1978)**

*Don't Get Around Much Anymore* [Vinyl] US,  
Crescent Jazz Productions–CJP-5



# Blackstick

Sidney Bechet, 1938

## Introduction

Musical notation for the introduction, featuring a melodic line with various accidentals and a long slur.

Musical notation for measures 6-12, including a triplet of eighth notes.

13 Am F7 F7 E7 Am F7 F7 E7

Musical notation for measures 13-16, with chord changes: Am, F7, F7, E7, Am, F7, F7, E7.

17 Am F7 F7 E7 Am

Musical notation for measures 17-20, with chord changes: Am, F7, F7, E7, Am. Ends with a double bar line and a slash.

21 Am F7 F7 E7 Am F7 F7 E7

Musical notation for measures 21-24, with chord changes: Am, F7, F7, E7, Am, F7, F7, E7.

25 Am F7 F7 E7 Am

Musical notation for measures 25-28, with chord changes: Am, F7, F7, E7, Am. Ends with a double bar line and a slash.

29 Dm Bb7 Bb7 A7 Dm Bb7 Bb7 A7

Musical notation for measures 29-32, with chord changes: Dm, Bb7, Bb7, A7, Dm, Bb7, Bb7, A7.

33 Dm Bb7 Bb7 A7 Dm E7

Musical notation for measures 33-36, with chord changes: Dm, Bb7, Bb7, A7, Dm, E7.

37 Am F7 F7 E7 Am F7 F7 E7 Am F7

Musical notation for measures 37-41, with chord changes: Am, F7, F7, E7, Am, F7, F7, E7, Am, F7.

42 F7 E7 Am

Musical notation for measures 42-45, with chord changes: F7, E7, Am. Ends with a double bar line and a slash.

48  $\text{B}$   $\text{A}^\circ$

Musical staff 48-52: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). Measure 48 starts with a slash. Measure 49 has a B chord. Measure 50 has a slash. Measure 51 has an A° chord. Measure 52 ends with a slash. The melody consists of eighth and quarter notes, with a triplet of eighth notes in measure 52.

53  $\text{A}$

Musical staff 53-56: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measure 53 has an A chord. Measure 54 has a slash. Measure 55 has a slash. Measure 56 has a slash. The melody features eighth notes and quarter notes, with triplets of eighth notes in measures 55 and 56.

57  $\text{E}^7/\text{B}$   $\text{E}^7$   $\text{A}$

Musical staff 57-60: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measure 57 has an E7/B chord. Measure 58 has an E7 chord. Measure 59 has an A chord. Measure 60 has a slash. The melody includes eighth notes, quarter notes, and a quarter rest in measure 59.

61  $\text{A}$

Musical staff 61-64: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measure 61 has an A chord. Measure 62 has a slash. Measure 63 has a slash. Measure 64 has a slash. The melody consists of eighth notes and quarter notes, with triplets of eighth notes in measures 63 and 64.

65  $\text{E}^7/\text{B}$   $\text{E}^7$   $\text{A}$

Musical staff 65-68: Treble clef, key signature of two sharps. Measure 65 has an E7/B chord. Measure 66 has an E7 chord. Measure 67 has an A chord. Measure 68 has a slash. The melody includes eighth notes, quarter notes, and a quarter rest in measure 67.

# Egyptian Fantasy

Sidney Bechet with The New Orleans Feetwarmers, 1941

100 BPM

Am / / /

6 Bm / Am / Am

11 / / / Bm E7

16 Am / Am *Lip Slur*

20 / / Bm /

24 Am 3 3 3 / Am /

28 / 3 / Bm E7 Am

33 G7 C / / 6

37 / G7 Dm G7 C

41 Dm G7 C / /

*Trumpet melody*

*Lip Slur*

45  $\text{G}^7$  Dm  $\text{G}^7$  C

49 C

53  $\text{G}^7$  Dm  $\text{G}^7$  C

57 Dm  $\text{G}^7$  C

61  $\text{G}^7$  Dm  $\text{G}^7$  C

65 Am

70 Bm E7 Rubarto Cadenza tr Am

# Trombone blues

Prince Robinson with The Washingtonians, September 1925

205 BPM

A7

5 D7 A7 Bb7

9 B7 E7 A7

3

# Parlour Social Stomp

Prince Robinson with The Washingtonians, March 1926

230 BPM

The musical score is written in 2/4 time and consists of four staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one flat (B-flat major). It contains measures 1 through 4. Above the staff, the chord A7 is indicated above the first measure, and D7 above the third measure. Measure 4 features a dynamic marking of *pp*. The second staff begins with a bass clef and contains measures 5 through 8. Above the staff, the chord G7 is indicated above the first measure, and C above the fourth measure. The third staff begins with a treble clef and contains measures 9 through 12. Above the staff, the chord A7 is indicated above the first measure, and D7 above the third measure. The fourth staff begins with a treble clef and contains measures 13 through 16. Above the staff, the chords F7, Em, A7, Dm, G7, and C are indicated above measures 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, and 18 respectively. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic markings.

# Georgia Grind

Prince Robinson with The Washingtonians, March 1926

230 BPM

Musical score for 'Georgia Grind' in 2/4 time, 230 BPM. The score is written in treble clef and consists of six staves of music. The key signature is one flat (B-flat major). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings. Chord symbols are provided above the staff: C7, C7/E, C7/Eb, Dm, G7, F7, and Dm. The score is divided into measures, with measure numbers 5, 9, 13, 17, and 20 indicated. The piece concludes with a double bar line at the end of the sixth staff.

# Animal Crackers

Prince Robinson with The Washingtonians, 21st June 1926

220 BPM

6

10

13

B7

F#7

B7

B<sup>b</sup>7

Abm

C#7

F#7

B7

3



# Li'l Farina

Prince Robinson with The Washingtonians, 21st June 1926

220 BPM

Musical score for 'Li'l Farina' in G major, 2/4 time. The score consists of two staves of music. The first staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). The tempo is marked as 220 BPM. The first staff contains measures 1 through 5. Measure 1 starts with a quarter rest followed by a quarter note G4. Measure 2 contains a quarter note A4, a quarter note B4, and a quarter note C#5. Measure 3 contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note E5, and a quarter note F#5. Measure 4 contains a quarter note G5, a quarter note F#5, and a quarter note E5. Measure 5 contains a quarter note D5, a quarter note C#5, and a quarter note B4. The second staff begins with a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp. It contains measures 6 through 10. Measure 6 contains a quarter note G4, a quarter note A4, and a quarter note B4. Measure 7 contains a quarter note C#5, a quarter note D5, and a quarter note E5. Measure 8 contains a quarter note F#5, a quarter note G5, and a quarter note A5. Measure 9 contains a quarter note B5, a quarter note A5, and a quarter note G5. Measure 10 contains a quarter note F#5, a quarter note E5, and a quarter note D5. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and triplets. Chord symbols are placed above the notes: C#7 above measure 2, F#7 above measure 3, B above measure 4, E7 above measure 6, B7 above measure 8, and Bb7 above measure 10. There are also slash symbols (∕) above measures 5, 7, and 9. A triplet of eighth notes is marked with a '3' above it in measure 10.

# The Creeper

Untitled Clarinetist with The Kentucky Club Orchestra, 29th December 1926

230 BPM

A

A

6

E7

11

14

# Song of The Cotton Field

Untitled Clarinetist with The Kentucky Club Orchestra, February 1927

145 BPM

The musical score is written in treble clef and consists of four staves of music. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The tempo is marked as 145 BPM. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, triplets, and dynamic markings.

**Staff 1:** Measures 1-4. Chords: Gm, C7, Gm. Includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 3.

**Staff 2:** Measures 5-8. Chords: Gm, C7, Gm, G. Includes triplets of eighth notes in measures 6 and 7.

**Staff 3:** Measures 9-10. Chords: C7, C#0. Includes triplets of eighth notes in measure 9.

**Staff 4:** Measures 11-14. Chords: Gm, C7, Gm. Includes a triplet of eighth notes in measure 13.

# Hop Head

Unnamed clarinetist with The Washingtonians, 22nd March 1927

250 BPM

6

10

14

18

23

28

31

3

# Down in Our Alley Blues

Unnamed clarinetist with The Washingtonians, 22nd March 1927

240 BPM

The image displays a musical score for a blues piece. The top staff is a single melodic line in treble clef, starting with a rest followed by a grace note. It features a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a slur over a group of notes marked with a 'Bb' chord symbol. The bottom staff is a piano accompaniment in treble clef, starting with a '4' and an 'F' chord symbol. It consists of eighth and sixteenth notes, with a 'D' chord symbol above the second measure and a 'G' chord symbol above the fourth measure. The piece concludes with a double bar line.

# Washington Wobble

Unnamed clarinetist with the Duke Ellington Orchestra 1927

240 BPM

F#maj7

4

7

11

15

19

23

27

30

33

F#maj7

Chord symbols: F#maj7, Eb7, B7, G#7, F#7, F7, Eb7, C#7, Bb7, Abm, B7, C7, Bbm, F7, Abm, C#7, F#maj7.

Tempo: 240 BPM

# Bugle Call Rag

Barney Bigard with The Washingtonians, 9th January 1928

240 BPM

The musical score is written in treble clef and consists of four staves of music. The tempo is marked as 240 BPM. The key signature has one flat (B-flat). The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and a triplet. Chords are indicated above the notes: F7, C, A7, D7, G7, Cmaj7, C7, F7, C, A7, D7, G7, Cmaj7, F, and Cmaj7. The piece ends with a double bar line.

6

11

14

3

# Stack O'Lee Blues

Barney Bigard with The Washingtonians- 9th January 1928

140 BPM

The musical score is written on a single treble clef staff. It begins with a key signature of one flat (B-flat) and a 12-measure blues structure. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, rests, and various chord symbols. The first line (measures 1-5) features a melodic line starting with a quarter rest, followed by eighth notes. Above the staff, the chords F7, Cm, and F7 are indicated. The second line (measures 6-9) continues the melody with eighth notes and a quarter note. Above the staff, the chords Bb7, /B, C7, D7, G7, and C7 are indicated. The third line (measures 10-12) concludes the piece with eighth notes and a quarter note. Above the staff, the chord F7 is indicated. The score ends with a double bar line.



# High Life

Barney Bigard with Duke Ellington and His Cotton Club Orchestra

16th January 1929

250 BPM

B $\flat$  / / /

5 / / F $^7$  /

9 / / / / /

14 / B $\flat$  / /

18 / / / /

22 / Eb / / / Eb $^7$

27 F / / / / 3 3 3

29 Cm / F $^7$  / B $\flat$

# Don't Get Around Much Anymore

Barney Bigard with "The Pelican Trio", 1978

100 BPM

The musical score is written in treble clef and 4/4 time. It consists of 32 measures, with measure numbers 1, 5, 9, 11, 14, 19, 24, 27, and 30 indicated at the start of their respective lines. The key signature has one sharp (F#). The score includes various chords and rhythmic patterns:

- Measures 1-4: A7, Dmaj7, Em7 F°7, F#m7, Dmaj7, C#7, C7. Features triplets of eighth notes.
- Measures 5-8: B7, Em7, A7, D6. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 5 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 8.
- Measures 9-10: A7, Dmaj7, Em7, F°7. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 9.
- Measures 11-13: F#m7, Dmaj7, C#7, C7, B7. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 11 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 13.
- Measures 14-18: Em7, A7, D6, Am7, D7, Gmaj7. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 14 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 18.
- Measures 19-23: C7, Dmaj7, D7, Gmaj7, G#°7, C#7(b9). Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 19 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 23.
- Measures 24-26: F#m7, F°7, Em7, A7, Dmaj7, Em7, F°7. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 24 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 26.
- Measures 27-29: F#m7, Dmaj7, C#7, C7, B7. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 27 and a quintuplet of eighth notes in measure 29.
- Measures 30-32: Em7, A7, D6, A7. Features a triplet of eighth notes in measure 30 and a triplet of eighth notes in measure 32.