

The
TRUMPET
of
PAUL THADDEUS KING

Solographer: Jan Evensmo
Last update: Feb. 21, 2020

Born: Topeka, Kansas, March 31, 1911
 Died: Chicago, Illinois, Dec. 21, 1971

Introduction:

With regard to the famous orchestra 'Andy Kirk & his 12 Clouds of Joy', listeners' (at least those I know) attention seems to be given solely to the soloing of the brilliant pianist Mary Lou Williams and the legendary tenorsax player Dick Wilson who passed away so early. However the band had in fact more to offer, and in Paul King I found a highly competent swing trumpeter, almost forgotten, perfect for eternal fame in Jazz Archeology!

History:

Paul King was a veteran swing trumpeter who played with the Andy Kirk band in the 1930s. Later he moved to Chicago and was a member of the "Dream Band" at the Rhumboogie Club in the first half of 1944. In the late 1940s he often led his own combo and wrote arrangements for other leaders, including Buster Bennett. Recorded with trumpeter and vocalist Bill Martin (1946) and vocalist and saxist Willie Mabon (1953-54) (ref. Robert L. Campbell, Yves Fernand).

Postscript of April 2019:

Additional information from Kent Rausch, Musical Director – Kansas City's VINE STREET RUMBLE Jazz Orchestra: His middlename was Thaddeus. In 1934 Paul King was with a group of students at Wiley College in Austin, Texas who studied jazz with Nat Towles, Buddy Tate was also one of the students. He joined Local 208 September 1939; and designated his wife, Sybil, as his beneficiary. Paul King was playing with the King Kolax Orchestra in Chicago in 1940. He left the trumpet section by 1941 but continued to write arrangements for Kolax. In 1954 he and a partner founded Drexel Records and did office work out of his house at 7319 S. Vernon in Chicago. He died of heart and lung disease; and his burial is Lincoln Cemetery, Worth Township, Il..

PAUL KING SOLOGRAPHY

ANDY KIRK & HIS TWELVE CLOUDS OF JOY NYC. March 2-11, 1936

Harry Lawson, Paul King (tp), Earl Thomson (tp, arr), Ted Donnelly, Henry Wells (tb), John Harrington (cl, as, bar), John Williams (as, bar), Dick Wilson (ts), Andy Kirk (bsx, dir), Claude Williams (vln), Mary Lou Williams (p, arr), Ted Robinson (g), Booker Collins (b), Ben Thigpen (dm, vo), Pha Terrell (vo).

Twelve titles were recorded for Decca, nine have trumpet soli, all by PK:

60853-A	Moten Swing	Solo 16 bars. (M)
60854-A	Lotta Sax Appeal	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
60861	Git	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
60861-alt.	Git	As above. (FM)
60862-A	All The Jive Is Gone	Solo 8 bars. (FM)
60865	Froggy Bottom	Solo 12 bars. (M)
60865-alt.	Froggy Bottom	As above. (M)
60866-A	Bearcat Shuffle	Solo 8 bars. (M)
60867-A	Steppin' Pretty	Solo 8 bars. (M)
60874-A	Christopher Columbus	Solo 16 bars. (M)
60886-A	I'se A Muggin'	Solo 16 bars. (FM)

Paul King's fame (or lack of such) is wholly and only connected to the few recordings Andy Kirk made during little more than one week back in 1936, in fact all trumpet soli are recorded on March 2-7. They are not perfect, fluffs here and there, some uncertainties can occasionally be noticed. Nevertheless I have a certain affection for the qualities I seem to see in this almost unknown trumpeter. Take the first item, "Moten ..." and then "Git", and the the introduction of his solo on "Froggy ..." as good examples of his confident and fine playing. There are some fluffs on the otherwise good soli on "Lotta ..." and "... Columbus", but don't bother. Play these sessions and try to avoid listening to piano and tenorsax, and you might be surprised! Note: When researching PK, I could not find the alternates of "Git" and "Froggy Bottom", although I went carefully through a lot of record candidates, also the British Columbias which I found identical to the CD versions, contrary to discographical info. Can anybody explain and help? Postscript of Jan. 3, 2015: "I'se ..." was omitted from the previous solography version, because I felt it was slightly different from the other soli, could be another player, but I have decided to change my mind. Postscript of March 12, 2015: The rare takes are on Decca, but note that both takes of "Froggy Bottom" appear on Decca 729! PK plays with the necessary variations, no problems!

ANDY KIRK & HIS TWELVE CLOUDS OF JOY NYC. March 31 – April 10, 1936

Personnel as above.

Six titles were recorded for Decca, one has trumpet solo:

60974-A	Cloudy	Solo 12 bars (mute). (SM)
---------	--------	---------------------------

NYC. Dec. 9, 1936

Same. Four titles, one has trumpet solo:

61466-B	Dedicated To You	Solo 8 bars (mute). (S)
---------	------------------	-------------------------

"Cloudy" has a lovely muted trumpet solo, also believed to be played by PK. Note the beautiful opening and the fine development of the solo, and realize that the performer has important things to say on his instrument, enough to deserve a solography and inclusion in jazz archeology. "Dedicated ..." is more ordinary, and I am not certain this is the same performer as on "Cloudy".

ANDY KIRK & HIS TWELVE CLOUDS OF JOY Cleveland, Jan. 29, 1937

Personnel as above.

Broadcast from Trianon Ballroom, three titles have trumpet soli:

You Turned The Tables On Me	Solo 8 bars. (M)
Sepia Jazz	Solo with orch 16 bars. (F)
Gypsy	Solo 4 bars. (SM)

Cleveland, Jan. 30, 1937

Same. Two titles have trumpet:

Yours Truly	Solo 8 bars (mute). (M)
All The Jive Is Gone	Solo 8 bars. (M)

Cleveland, Feb. 5, 1937

Same. Four titles have trumpet:

Honeysuckle Rose	Solo 32 bars. (M)
There's Frost On The Moon	Solo 6 bars. (FM)
Medley (One, Two, Button Your Shoe)	Solo 4 bars. (FM)
King Porter Stomp	Soli 16 and 16 bars. (FM)

Cleveland, Feb. 6, 1937

Same. Three titles have trumpet:

Froggy Bottom	Solo 12 bars. (M)
Moten Swing	Solo 32 bars. (M)
Organ Grinders Swing	Solo 16 bars. (M)

These broadcasts, which should be issued on CD in their entirety as soon as possible, are very valuable additions to the knowledge of Andy Kirk orchestra in its prime, sounding exactly like on the fine studio recordings almost one year earlier. Note again "Moten ..." as a very fine example of PK's playing, no amateur this guy! A lovely solo on "Organ ..." is also something! Not all items are available right now, but I remember there are much to our trumpet pleasure here!

ANDY KIRK & HIS TWELVE CLOUDS OF JOY NYC. Feb. 15, 1937

Personnel as March 2, 1936, except Claude Williams (vln) omitted, Eddie Miller (as) added. Leslie Johnakins (arr).

Four titles were recorded for Decca, one has trumpet solo:

61951-A	In The Groove	Solo 16 bars. (M)
---------	---------------	-------------------

Another quite remarkable trumpet solo, but from now on it seems that PK's solo opportunities are becoming fewer.

ANDY KIRK & HIS TWELVE CLOUDS OF JOY NYC. April 17, 1937

Personnel as above.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, but no trumpet soli.

NYC. July 26 & 27, 1937

Same. Eight titles, four have trumpet soli:

62446-A	A Mellow Bit Of Rhythm	Solo 6 bars. (M)
62447-A	In My Wildest Dreams	Possibly straight 16 bars (mute). (SM)
62448-A	Better Luck Next Time	Possibly solo 6 bars (mute). (SM)
62456-A	I Want To Be A Gypsy	Solo 4 bars. (SM)

The fine but open horn soli on "... Rhythm" and "... Gypsy" are the last PK soli known with reasonable certainty, the style is very much like what we have heard before. The muted soli cannot be identified with certainty, there is little ("Cloudy") to compare with, but they sound quite nice.

BUSTER BENNETT**Chi. Sept. 30, 1946**

No information except Paul King (arr), Buster Bennett (as, vo). Postscript of March 2017: (tp), (as), (ts), (rhythm), (vo-ens).

Four titles were recorded for Columbia, only one, "It Can Never Happen", issued:

4661	It Can Never Happen	Solo 8 bars. (M)
------	---------------------	------------------

A trumpet solo on the bridge of a tenorsax solo, a mixture of swing and bebop, difficult to evaluate.

BILL MARTIN**Chi. 1947**

Paul King (tp), Dave Young, Buck Douglas (ts), G. Dixon (bar), R. Claxton (p), H. Fort (b), R. Barnett (dm), Bill Martin (vo).

