

The Ultimate Jazz Archive Vol.129 - Bennie Moten [1930-1932] [2005]



*01.New Moten Stomp 02.As Long As I Love You 03.When I'm Alone 04.Professor Hot Stuff
05.Get Goin' (Get Ready To Love) 06.The Count 07.Liza Lee 08.Somebody Stole My Gal
09.Now That I Need You 10.Bouncin' Round 11.I Wanna Be Around My Baby All The Time
12.Ya Got Love 13.Toby 14.Moten Swing 15.The Blue Room 16.Imagination 17.New
Orleans 18.The Only Girl I Ever Loved 19.Milenberg Joys 20.Lafayette 21.Prince Of Wails
22.Two Times*

Bennie Moten is today best-remembered as the leader of a band that partly became the nucleus of the original Count Basie Orchestra, but Moten deserves better. He was a fine ragtime-oriented pianist who led the top territory band of the 1920s, an orchestra that really set the standard for Kansas City jazz. In fact it was so dominant that Moten was able to swallow up some of his competitors' groups including Walter Page's Blue Devils, most of whom eventually became members of Moten's big band. Moten formed his group (originally a sextet) in 1922 and the following year they made their first recordings. Among Moten's 1923-1925 sides for Okeh was the original version of his greatest hit "South." During 1926-1932, Moten's Orchestra recorded for Victor and, although none of his original musicians became famous, the later additions included his brother Buster on occasional jazz accordion, Harlan Leonard, Jack Washington, Eddie Durham, Jimmy Rushing, Hot Lips Page, and (starting in 1929) Count Basie. So impressed was Moten by Basie's playing that Count assumed the piano chair for recordings from that point on (although in clubs Moten would generally play a feature or two). The most famous Bennie Moten recording session was also his last, ten songs cut on December 13, 1932 that found the ensemble strongly resembling Basie's five years later. In addition to Hot Lips Page, Durham, Washington, and Basie, the band at that point also starred Ben Webster, Eddie Barefield, and Walter Page and one of the high points was the debut of "Moten Swing."

Tragically, Bennie Moten died in 1935 from a botched tonsillectomy operation. Buster Moten briefly took over the band, but many of its top members (along with some important additions like Lester Young) eventually gravitated towards Count Basie. ---Scott yanow, Rovi

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Tuesday, 12 November 2013 16:44 -

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