

Cootie Williams & His Orchestra 1941–1944 (1995)

Written by bluesever

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1. *G-Men* 2:45 2. *West End Blues* 3:13 3. *Ain't Misbehavin'* 2:39 4. *Blues In My Condition* 3:07
5. *Fly Right (Epistrophy)* 2:32 6. *When My Baby Left Me* 2:42 7. *Floogie Boo* 2:39 8. *Gotta Do
Some War Work, Baby* 3:04 9. *I Don't Know* 3:12 10. *You Talk A Little Trash* 3:02 11. *Things
Ain't What They Used To Be* 3:14 12. *Tess' Torch Song (I Had a Man)* 2:31 13. *Now I Know*
2:58 14. *Cherry Red Blues* 3:04 15. *My Old Flame* 3:15 16. *Echoes Of Harlem* 3:07
17. *Honeysuckle Rose* 3:11 18. *Sweet Lorraine* 3:11 19. *Air Mail Special* 2:26 20. *Roll' Em* 2:55
21. *The Boppers (You Talk a Little Trash)* 3:11 22. *Somebody's Gotta Go* 3:15 23. *'Round
Midnight* 3:15 24. *Is You Is Or Is You Ain't My Baby?* 2:44 25. *Blue Garden Blues (Royal
Garden Blues)* 3:17 # (1-4) Charles "Cootie" Williams (tp), Lou McGarity (tb), Les
Robinson (as), Skippy Martin (bs), Johnny Guarneri (p), Artie Bernstein (b), Jo Jones (dm).
NYC, 07/05/1941. # (5-6) Cootie Williams, Louis Bacon, Milton Fletcher, Joe Guy (tp),
Jonas Walker, Robert "Bob" Horton, Sandy Williams (tb), Charlie Holmes (as), Eddie
"Cleanhead" Vinson (as, vo on 6), Bob Dorsey, Greely Walton (t) John Williams (bs), Kenny
Kersey (p), Norman Keenan (b), George Ballard (dm), Dave McRae (arr on 5). Chicago,
01/04/1942 # (7-10) Cootie Williams (tp, vo on 8), Eddie Vinson (as), Eddie "Lockjaw"
Davis (ts), Earl "Bud" Powell (p), Norman Keenan (b), Sylvester "Vess" Payne (dm). NYC,
04/01/1944 # (11-14) Cootie Williams, Ermit Perry, George Treadwell, Harold "Money"
Johnson (tp), Ed Burke, George Stevenson, Bob Horton (tb), Charlie Holmes (as), Eddie
Vinson (as, vo on 11,14), Eddie Davis, Lee Pope (ts), Eddie De Verteuil (bs), Bud Powell (p),
Norman Keenan (b), Sylvester Payne (dm), Pearl Bailey (vo on 12,13). NYC, 06/01/1944.
(15-18) Same as for (7); vo chorus on 16. NYC, 06/01/1944. # (19-20) Cootie Williams,
Ermit Perry, George Treadwell, Lammar Wright, Tommy Stevenson (tp), Ed Burke, Bob
Horton, Ed Glover (tb), Charlie Parker, Rupert Cole, Frank Powell (as), Sam "The Man"
Taylor, Lee Pope (ts), Eddie De Verteuil (bs), Bud Powell (p), Leroy Kirkland (g), Carl Pruitt
(b), Sylvester Payne (dm). Hollywood, 02/05/1944. # (21) Cootie Williams (tp), poss.
Charlie Parker (as), prob. Sam Taylor (ts), Bud Powell (p), Carl Pruitt (b), Sylvester Payne
(dm). Hollywood, 02/05/1944. # (22-25) Same as for (19) but Eddie Vinson (as, vo on 22,24)
replaces Parker and Cole. NYC, 22/08/1944.

In addition to serving as a primal ingredient in the Duke Ellington Orchestra, Charles "Cootie"

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Williams led a series of outstanding small groups and big bands during the 1940s, employing and encouraging young, innovative musicians at a time when other bandleaders resisted the inevitable evolution of swing to bop. This collection assembles eight sessions' worth of rare recordings made over a relatively short period of time. Vocalists are Pearl Bailey, Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson, and Williams himself. Four superb septet sides from May 1941 feature the trumpeter bolstered by a well-oiled front line of trombone and alto and baritone saxophones driven by drummer Jo Jones, pianist Johnny Guarnieri, and bassist Artie Bernstein. "West End Blues" and "Blues in My Condition" are without question two of Williams' greatest achievements on record. Two recordings dating from April 1942 are emblematic of major stylistic movements that were evolving rapidly among Afro-American musicians. Cleanhead Vinson established himself as a modern blues vocalist with "When My Baby Left Me" and the Cootie Williams Orchestra served up what was without question the most advanced piece of music on the scene at that time: "Fly Right," also known as "Epistrophy," is credited to Thelonious Monk, Kenny Clarke, and Cootie Williams. What the senior members of this band -- Louis Bacon, Charlie Holmes, and John Williams, musicians whose careers reached back to the 1920s -- thought of this futuristic opus is food for thought. Beginning with "Floogie Boo," the remaining 19 tracks all date from the year 1944, and illustrate Cootie Williams' position near the eye of the hurricane of modern jazz. For now he had begun to employ remarkably imaginative musicians, taking the young Bud Powell under his wing and welcoming into the pack such fiery personalities as Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis and Charlie Parker. The most exciting record of all is saved for the last track, as Cootie Williams demonstrates his uncanny ability to talk through his trumpet using the mute in a mysterious manner with a facility equaled only by Joe "Tricky Sam" Nanton. This rare recording of "Blue Garden Blues," a gloriously modern big-band treatment of the old "Royal Garden Blues," is an astonishing, startling, mind-blowing treat, one of the greatest accomplishments in all of recorded jazz. ---arwulf arwulf, Rovi

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