

Granz, including a 1952 jam session that teamed him with fellow altoists Benny Carter and Charlie Parker and organist Wild Bill Davis.

Despite the excellence of all his other forays, however, it is for his work with Ellington that he will be remembered. The liquid beauty of Hodges' contribution to the sound of the Ellington band, and especially to the manner in which it played ballads, was so crucial that his death in May 1970 marked the end of an era: as Ellington himself observed, 'our band will never sound the same'. Throughout his long career Hodges was indisputably among the finest alto players in jazz. Even though, after the early 40s, Charlie Parker took the alto saxophone in other directions, Hodges remains one of the giants of the instrument.



**HD TT**  
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**JOHNNY HODGES**

John Cornelius Hodge, 25 July 1907, Cambridge, Massachusetts, USA, d. 11 May 1970, New York City, New York, USA. One of the greatest alto saxophonists in jazz, Hodges first tried other instruments before settling upon the one that would best serve his glorious romanticism. Largely self-taught, Hodges played in a number of minor bands in Boston and New York in the early 20s but also spent a little time with Willie 'The Lion' Smith, in whose band he replaced Sidney Bechet - who had given him some of the little instruction he ever received. In 1926 he joined Chick Webb, where his brother-in-law, Don Kirkpatrick, was pianist-arranger. Two years later Hodges began an association with Duke Ellington that would continue virtually uninterrupted for the rest of his life. Apart from playing on hundreds of records with Ellington, soloing magnificently on many, Hodges also originated several tunes that Ellington

developed, among them 'Jeep's Blues' and 'The Jeep Is Jumpin'" ('Jeep' was one of Hodges' nicknames; others were 'Rabbit' and 'Squatty Roo').

From 1951-55 Hodges led his own band, which briefly included John Coltrane in its ranks, and had a hit record with 'Castle Rock'. In 1958 and again in 1961 he worked outside the Ellington orchestra but always in an Ellingtonian style. Although capable of playing low-down blues, Hodges was in his true element as a balladeer. The lush beauty of his playing was perfectly exhibited on compositions created for his special talents by Ellington and by Billy Strayhorn. Among the many tunes on which he played, and frequently recorded, were 'I Let A Song Go Out Of My Heart', 'Warm Valley', 'Black Butterfly', 'Isfahan' (from the 'The Far East Suite') and 'Empty Ballroom Blues'. Hodges recorded several albums for Norman

# Johnny Hodges and Friends

1. M-H & R 5:57 in Stereo
2. Broadway Babe 2:53 in Stereo
3. 3 & 6 2:21 in Stereo
4. Johnny's Blues 7:03
5. Through the Night Take 1 3:18
6. Through the Night 3:23
7. Come Sunday 2:33
8. The Shiek of Araby 3:13
9. Latino 2:53

## Tracks 1-3:

Roy Eldridge, Ray Nance - Trumpet

Lawrence Brown - Trombone

Jimmy Hamilton - Clarinet

Johnny Hodges - Alto Sax

Ben Webster - Tenor Sax

Billy Strayhorn - Piano

Jimmy Woode - Bass

Sam Woodyard - Drums

Recorded September 10, 1958, at

Penthouse Sound Studios New York recorded in Stereo

## Tracks 4-9:

Emmett Berry - Trumpet

Lawrence Brown - Trombone

Johnny Hodges - Alto Sax

Arthur Clarke - Tenor Sax

Leroy Lovett - Piano

Ray Brown - Bass

J.C. Heard - Drums

Track 4 - Recorded October 17, 1953

at Fine Studios New York in Mono

Track 5-9 Recorded December 11, 1952

at Fine Studios New York in Mono