

"VOICES FROM THE DARKNESS"

African-America & Sherlock Holmes
by
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Part Four - "Readers' Comments Addendum"

Readers of earlier parts of this article have posted comments or sent me e-mails with other possible performers to add. Thus, part four the "Readers Comments Addendum" becomes a reality. These additions will just be randomly posted in the order I receive them, not in any type of timeline order of their actual happening.

"Thomas Wright "Fats" Waller (1904 – 1943) was an influential **jazz pianist**, organist, composer, singer, and comedic entertainer, whose innovations to the Harlem stride style laid the groundwork for modern jazz piano, and whose best-known compositions, 'Ain't Misbehavin' and 'Honeysuckle Rose' were inducted into the Grammy Hall of Fame, posthumously, in 1984 and 1999."¹



Peter Blau remembered these Lyrics from "Somebody Stole my Gal" (1935) by Fats Waller:

Sherlock Holmes, is you round here?

¹ Tenenholtz, David. "[Waller, Fats \(Thomas Wright\)](#)". JAZZ.COM. 7/10/2013.

Go off and find that woman now.
You know I can't take it,
Yeah, Sherlock Holmes, find her now.
Quick, Watson, the needle! Ha, ha.

She's up the back, at Joe's;
You go on up there and get her.
Her ol' man liable be there.
I don't wanna get hurt--no.

You ain't heard nothin' yet?
Ah--my goodness, call up; and do something--yeah!

Quick, Sherlock, bring her right . . .
Bring her right back on roller skates, will ya?
Bring her!

Hear Fats Waller sing "Somebody Stole my Gal" at:
http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=xFy_bBzP9tY

"Charles "Charlie" Parker, Jr. (1920 - 1955) also known as 'Yardbird' and 'Bird', was an American jazz saxophonist and composer. Miles Davis once said, "You can tell the history of jazz in four words: Louis Armstrong, Charlie Parker."² I don't think Charlie ever performed in a



² Griffin, Farah Jasmine; Washington, Salim (2008). *Clawing at the Limits of Cool: Miles Davis, John Coltrane, and the Greatest Jazz Collaboration Ever*. New York: Thomas Dunne Books.

deerstalker, and may never have written any lyrics about Holmes, but he sure did like sitting around with friends and other musicians talking about the great detective. It sure does seem Holmes was a popular subject among black jazzmen. From Brenda comes this tidbit of information; If you listen to this NPR feature on Charlie Parker, and listen to an interview with him in the 40s, he says that he just didn't just always play his alto sax, but also had discussions with friends about....Sherlock Holmes:

www.npr.org/2013/10/19/237040499/the-birth-of-bird-young-charlie-parker-found-focus-faith-in-music

The Jubalaires, Orville Brooks, Ted Brooks, Caleb Ginyard and George McFadden, an American gospel group of the forties and fifties from Florida, all donned deerstalkers in the soundie "Brother Bill".

"*Brother Bill* (1945) is an unusual soundie which begins with a skit featuring Eddie Rochester Anderson in turban, seated by his crystal ball. Mable Lee walks up to him in a skimpy showgirl outfit...Mabel asks Eddie of the mystic hat if she can see the Jubalaires singing *Brother Bill*. 'Quicker said than done!' replies Eddie, who adjusts his turban & rubs his crystal ball. The Jubalaires then appear, dressed in deerstalker caps & ridiculous hunting jackets, holding shotguns. These four guys stand harmonizing in a hunting cabin, with some gals & a



guitarist seated round about the room. It's a song about going to hunt game in eastern Maine, & is pretty much a revisit of *The Preacher & the Bear*, but without a preacher. According to the lyrics, when they encountered a grizzly bear: "I drop that gun/ And away I run/ Brother

Bill said boy what's the matter wid you/ Had he knowed like me he'd a run some too/ I run so fast they say/ They couldn't catch me all day/ The way I run across that field/ They couldn't catch me with an automobile." The joke is he ran all the way home to Alabama. It's not jazzy enough to be a good song, nor funny enough to be a comical novelty number, but it's not as horrible as their jackets."³ View the Jubalaires in "Brother Bill" at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BiGU7mJAaeM>

"Carl 'Sherlock' Holmes started gigging in the early sixties forming Carl Holmes & the Commanders with whom he recorded a full length album for Atlantic in 1962 entitled 'Twist Party At The Roundtable'. Later on he recorded a couple of 45's for the Parkway and Verve labels. In May of 1966 a pre-Experience Jimi Hendrix gigged with the group but never recorded with them. After a final 45 for the local Philly label, Black

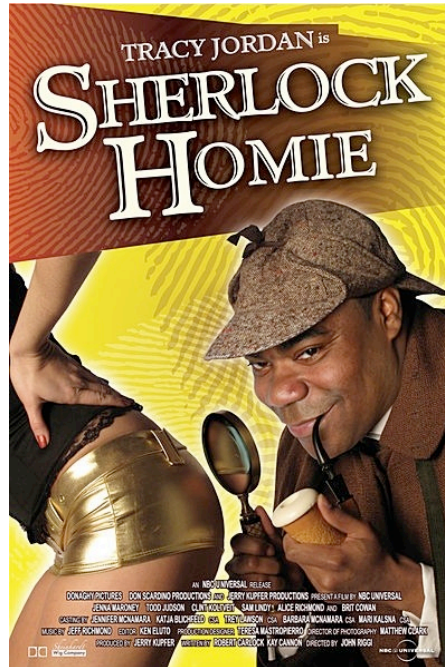


Jack, the group disbanded and Carl formed the Sherlock Holmes Investigation. The Sherlock Holmes Investigation...only released one album, 'Investigation #1', in 1974...The band included Chico Green on bass, John Hammond on keys, John Daves on flute, Jimmy Towns on bass, Chubby Brown on guitar, Art Grant on sax and vibes, congas and organ by guys called Dickie, Peachie and Sly."⁴ 'Investigation #1' can be heard at: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FqHgZhzGaIA>

³ http://www.weirdwildrealm.com/f-delta_rhythm_boys.html

⁴ <http://www.parisdjs.com/index.php/post/Carl-Sherlock-Holmes-Investigation-No.1>

Tracy Jamal Morgan (1968 -) is an American actor and comedian known for his eight seasons as a cast member on Saturday Night Live, and for his role of Tracy Jordan on the NBC TV series '30 Rock'.⁵ James O'Leary left the comment, "On the TV show '30 Rock' Tracy Morgan's character Tracy Jordan starred as 'Sherlock Homie'. The movie's poster was prominently displayed in the character's dressing room."



The above poster can be found at:
<http://www.nbc.com/30-rock/photos/tracys-movie-posters/6456/#item=145983>

⁵ http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tracy_Morgan