

# Thad Jones Chronology

*Compiled by David Demsey*

- **1923/March 28 - Born, Pontiac Michigan**; father a lumber inspector for General Motors, had moved to MI from Vicksburg, MS. One of ten children – Thad: “We lost one sister in a drowning accident, and Elvin had a twin brother that died at an early age, but the remaining eight survive.” (Source: liner of H. Jones *Have You Met This Jones?*)
- Professional career began during high school (later 1930s)
- C. 1936-7, started to play trumpet at age 14
- C. 1936 in Arcadia Club Band in Pontiac, MI, led by trumpet-playing uncle Bill; band also contained Hank Jones
- C. 1939, Formed The Hungry Five, played school dances; contained pianist Vivian Scott, tenorist Dan Turner
- Last year in high school (1939?) played in 13-piece band in Saginaw, MI; had first contact with Big Nick Nicolas and Sonny Stitt, formed group with others from Flint, MI, went on road for 2.5 years, broke up in Indianapolis
- 1941 traveling with Connie Cornell band through South
- 1943 in Dallas for about six months, with band led by altoist Red Calhoun
- **1943/December-April 1946 – U.S. Army**; first big band experience in G.I. band led by Jack Teagarden, Jr.; arranged for G.I. band that toured with the show “Bedtime Stories”
- 1946, formed own band in Oklahoma City
- 1946, played in Des Moines with Harold and Seymour Gray for 7 months
- 1948, recorded *Swing, Not Spring*, w/Billy Mitchell, Terry Pollard, piano/vibes; James Richardson? Alvin Jackson?, b; Elvin Jones, d.
- 1950-53 formed group with tenor saxophonist Billy Mitchell, also included Tommy Flanagan, bassist James Richardson, Elvin Jones
- 1950 subbed for Clark Terry with Basie’s small group, for one week in Boston (stated as 1952 by Thad in interview, but Basie small group was in Boston only in 1950)
- 1953-4, tours with Larry Steele’s *Smart Affairs* Review [earlier???] pre-1950?

- **1954/May 12 – joins Count Basie Orchestra**, recommended by Frank Wess
- 1954/August 11 - recorded *The Fabulous Thad Jones*, also known as *Thad Jones*
- 1954/August 15-17 – Basie recording sessions for *Count Basie Dance Session Album #2* and *Basie* [**first recording with Basie?**]
- 1954/September 17 – recorded *Thad Jones with Strings*, one cut that appeared on Debut Records *Autobiography in Jazz*
- 1954-55 with Mingus Jazz Workshop
- 1954/December - recorded *Jazz Experiment*, Charles Mingus
- 1955/February – recorded *The Happy Jazz of Osie Johnson*
- 1955/May 9, 14, 18 Recorded *The Jazz Workshop: Four Brass, One Tenor* with Al Cohn
- 1955/May 16 – recorded *The Wailing Buddy Rich*
- 1955/May 17 – Basie recording sessions for *Count Basie Swings and Joe Williams Sings*
- 1955/July 26 – Basie recording sessions for *April in Paris* and *Count Basie Swings and Joe Williams Sings*
- **1955/August 29 – Thad Jones and Mel Lewis meet** in Detroit at “battle of bands” with Count Basie Orchestra and Stan Kenton Orchestra. Soupy Sales is emcee. See newspaper ad, donated by Gary Carner.
- 1955/October 17 – recorded *Sonny Stitt Plays Arrangements from the Pen of Quincy Jones*
- 1955??., son Bruce Thaddeus born
- 1956/January 4, 5, 11, 23 – Basie recording sessions for *April in Paris, Ella Fitzgerald, Count Basie, Joe Williams, Hall of Fame* [*Hall of Fame* rec. 1/5/56 contains “Move,” credited by Kirchner as Thad’s first Basie arrangement]
- 1956/January – recorded with Leonard Feather/Dick Hyman, *West Coast vs. East Coast*
- 1956/March 13 - recorded *Detroit/New York Junction*
- 1956/April 28, May 1 – Basie recording sessions with Joe Williams for *The Greatest: Count Basie Plays, Joe Williams Sings Standards*
- 1956/June 11 – recorded with Leonard Feather/Dick Hyman, *Hi Fi Suite with Feather*

- 1956/June 25-27– Basie recording sessions with Ella Fitzgerald for *Ella, Basie, Joe Williams: One O’Clock Jump, Hall of Fame* and *Metronome All-Stars 1956* NOTE: these sessions include “Move,” co-credited to Thad, his first Basie arrangement per B. Kirchner.
- 1956/July 9, 14 - recorded *The Magnificent Thad Jones*
- 1956/December 12, 1/6/57 - recorded *Mad Thad*
- 1956 – Winner, Down Beat Critics’ Poll – “New Star”
- 1957/January 6 - recorded *The Jones Boys*, w/Thad Jones, Reunald Jones, tpts; Quincy Jones, flgl; Jimmy Jones, p; Eddie Jones, b; Jo Jones, d.
- 1957/February 2 - recorded *The Magnificent Thad Jones, Volume 3* [what was Volume 2?]
- 1957/February 7 – recorded *Holiday for Jazz* with Joe Holiday
- 1957/February 16 – recorded *Olio – Prestige All-Stars* – later released as *Touché – Thad Jones & Frank Wess*
- 1957/April 23-30 – Basie recording sessions in Los Angeles for *Jamboree*
- 1957/June 21 - recorded *After Hours*
- 1957/July - recorded *Bop* w/Phil Woods, George Wallington, p; Curley Russell, b; Art Taylor, d.
- 1957, September 19, Basie recording session for *Every Day I Have the Blues*, other unissued takes
- 1957, October 21-22, Basie recording session for *Atomic Basie*
- 1958, January 5, Basie Recording sessions for *No Count Sarah* with Sarah Vaughan; contains “No Count Blues” and others (TJ wrote other charts for this, arrangers not credited; TJ also receives conductor credit)
- 1958, March 4 – Basie recording session for *Chairman of the Board*, incl. “H.R.H. (Her Royal Highness)” and other unreleased material
- 1958/March 7 – recorded *After Hours at the London House* with Sarah Vaughan
- 1958/March 24 - recorded *Keepin’ Up with the Joneses* w/Thad, Hank, Elvin Jones and Eddie Jones, includes “Three and One”
- 1958/April 3-4, 14 – Basie recording session for *Basie Plays Hefti*

- 1958/April 28-29 - Basie recording session for *Chairman of the Board*, incl. "Mutt and Jeff", other unissued material
- 1958/July 16 – recorded *Kid from Denver* with Paul Quinichette
- 1958/December 10, 12 - Basie recording session for *Chairman of the Board*, incl. "The Deacon," "Speaking of Sounds"
- 1958/December 18-20, 24 - Basie recording session for *Basie – One More Time*
- 1959 February – Basie European tour; UK program lists "Deacon," "Brushes and Brass"
- 1959/February – Basie UK concert recorded as *The Count in England*, incl. "The Deacon," "Brushes and Brass"
- 1959/February 6 – Basie Europe concert recorded, location unknown released as *The Atomic Period* and again as *Atomic Band in Europe*; incl. "H.R.H.," "The Deacon"
- 1959/February 23, live Basie concert recorded as *Live in Stockholm*, incl. The Deacon, Brushes and Brass (aka Speaking of Sounds)
- 1959/April 24, live Basie concert recorded as *Fresno, California, April 24, 1959*, incl. "H.R.H.," "Sweet and Purty"
- 1959/May 31 – recorded live with Basie at Americana Hotel in Miami, *Breakfast Dance and Barbeque*; band played this on an off night during a week at Birdland in New York
- 1959/June 1-2 - recorded *Five By Monk By Five* [n.b. - next day after Miami Basie date!]
- 1959/September 24-25, Chicago – Basie recording sessions for *Every Day I Have the Blues*
- 1959/October 24, 31 - recorded *Motor City Scene*
- 1959/December 8 – recorded with Frank Wess, *I Hear Ya Talkin'* (unreleased until 1984)
- 1959/December 16, 18, 28, 30, 31 – Basie recording sessions for *Dance Along With Basie*, incl. Thad Jones arrangements of "It Had To Be You," "Give Me the Simple Life," "It's a Pity to Say Goodnight," "Fools Rush In," "Makin' Whoopee," "Easy Living," "Can't We Be Friends," "How Am I To Know?"
- 1959/December 17 – recorded *Imagination* with Curtis Fuller
- 1960s/Early – wrote arrangements for Harry James
- 1960/May 12 – recorded *Minor Strain* w/Thad Jones, Lee Morgan, Billy Mitchell, Frank Wess, Hank Jones, Richard Davis, Osie Johnson, incl. "Subtle Rebuttal," "Tip Toe," "H&T Blues." This recording contains material from *Birdland Story*.

- 1960/June 7-9, 14-16, 22-24, July 12-13 – Basie recording sessions for *Not Now, I'll Tell You When*, *Best of Basie, Vol. 1*, *Best of Basie Vol. 2*, incl. “Mama’s Talkin’ Soft” (6/9), “Not Now, I’ll Tell You When” (6/16 – titled “Super Chief” in TJ Archive pencil score), “Sweet ‘N’ Purty” (6/24)
- 1960?June Recorded *Jazz is a Kick* with Bob Brookmeyer
- 1960/August 24-27, Chicago – Basie recording sessions for *Just the Blues*
- 1960/September 6-7, Los Angeles – Basie recording sessions for *Kansas City Suite*
- 1960/December 13-15 – Basie recording sessions for *Big Band Scene '65, Easin' It, Back With Basie*, and other unreleased material
- 1961/June 27-28 – recorded with Basie, live at Birdland, NYC (includes “To You”), appeared as *Basie at Birdland*
- 1961/July 6-7 – recorded *First Time – Count Meets the Duke*, includes “To You”
- 1961/October 30-31, November 1-2 – Basie recording sessions for *The Legend*
- 1961/62, December 27, January 3 – recorded *Elvin!* w/Elvin, Hank Jones, Wess, A. Davis
- 1962/July 1, 3, 5, 13, 25-26 – Basie recording sessions for *Big Band Scene '65, Easin' It, Back With Basie, World of Count Basie*, incl. “The Elder” (7/1), “Toot Sweet” (7/1), “Bluish Grey” (7/25)
- 1962/August 9-12 – recorded with Basie, live at Dans Inn, in Grona Amusement Park, Stockholm, Sweden (w/Thad’s “The Elder,” “To You,” “Sweet ‘N’ Purty,” “Deacon,” “Counter Block,” 2 versions of “Bluish Grey” and his arrangement of “The Touch of Your Lips”)
- 1963, recorded *A Little Juicy*, Billy Mitchell
- 1963/March 18 – recorded *For Someone I Love* with Milt Jackson
- 1963/June 17-18, recorded *Great Day*, James Moody, H.Jones, Mel Lewis, R. Davis)
- 1963/August 22, 24 – recorded *Members Only* with Shirley Scott
- 1963/September 20, October 14 – recorded *Soulmates* with Ben Webster
- 1963 began doing studio work in New York City
- 1963/November 15-16 – recorded *Right Here* with Billy Taylor w/Oliver Nelson Orchestra

- 1963/November 29 – recorded *Me and the Blues* with Joe Williams
- 1963/December 30 – appears on Thelonious Monk *Big Band and Quartet in Concert*
- 1963 – records *Sitt Goes Latin* with Sonny Stitt
- **1963/December – leaves Count Basie Orchestra**
- After leaving Basie, with George Russell’s group for about six months
- Just after leaving Basie (63?), with Duke Ellington Orchestra for about 10 days
- 1963/December 30, recorded *Monk Big Band and Quartet in Concert*, Philharmonic Hall
- 1964/February 4 – recorded *Today and Tomorrow* with McCoy Tyner
- 1964/March 9-10 – Harry James Orchestra records *Plays New Versions of Down Beat Favorites*, containing twelve Thad Jones arrangements
- 1964/March 11 – recorded *See You at the Fair* with Ben Webster
- 1964/August 1, 4, recorded *Running the Gamut*, James Moody, P.Brown, Workman, A. Heath
- 1964/November 10-11 – recorded *More Blues and the Abstract Truth* with Oliver Nelson
- 1964/November, joined brother Hank as CBS-TV staff studio musician
- 1964/Autumn, co-led with Mel Lewis a small group appearing at the Jazz Scene in New York, including Pepper Adams, Jerry Dodgion, Quentin Jackson and Benny Powell
- 1964/December 8 – recorded *J.J. Johnson and His Orchestra*
- 1965/March 18 – recorded *And Then Again* with Elvin Jones
- 1965 formed rehearsal band with drummer Mel Lewis, first mention in December
- **1966/February 7 - First Monday night appearance of “The Jazz Orchestra”** at Village Vanguard jazz club, New York City - string of four Mondays [Opening night recorded by Alan Grant, released in 2000 as *Opening Night*, also in 2016 as *All My Yesterdays*; both also contain music from March Vanguard week]
- 1966/March – full week at Vanguard [Monday, March 21 recorded], concert debut at Hunter College, appearance at Town Hall at benefit for late clarinetist Hank D’Amico [also recorded, in Local 802 vaults, broadcast in 1987 on WKAP “Stars of Jazz” with host Sammy Anderson]

- 1966/March 23-24 – recorded *Midnight Walk* with Elvin Jones
- 1966/May 4-6 - recorded *Presenting Thad Jones, Mel Lewis and the Jazz Orchestra*
- 1966/April 26, May 4, 9 - recorded *Mean What You Say*, Thad Jones / Pepper Adams Quintet
- 1966/July 4 Appeared at Newport Trumpet Workshop Session w/Howard McGhee, Kenny Dorham; released as *Best of Jazz Trumpet*
- 1966/September 30 - recorded *Joe Williams with TJMLO*
- 1967 – Winner, Down Beat Critics' Poll – “Best Arranger”
- 1967/January 23-24 – wrote five arrangements for Sarah Vaughan LP *Sassy Swings Again*; other arrangers included Manny Albam, J.J. Johnson, Bob James
- 1967/February 14-15 – recorded *Spirit of '67* with Oliver Nelson
- 1967/April 24 – recording sessions for TJMLO 45 rpm release “Hawaii”
- 1967/April 28 - recorded *Live at the Village Vanguard*
- 1967/May – Harry James Orchestra records *Our Leader!*, containing “That’s Thad,” original Thad Jones composition/arrangement
- 1968/March 6, 9 – recorded *Speak Like a Child* with Herbie Hancock
- 1968/April 22 – recorded TV broadcast to appear as *Jazz Casual*
- 1968/April – recorded *Look of Love* with Stanley Turrentine
- 1968/October 17 - recorded *Monday Night*
- Late 1960s – “brushes up” with arranging studies with clarinetist/arranger Bill Stegmeyer
- 1969/April 22 – recorded television show “Jazz Casual” hosted by Ralph Gleason, KQED television studios, San Francisco
- 1969, recorded *TJML Miss Ruth Brown*
- 1969, toured Europe, recorded *Jazz Wave*
- 1969/September 11 - recorded *Basle, 1969*
- 1969/June 17-18 - recorded *Central Park North*

- 1970/January 21, 28, May 25 - recorded *Consummation*
- 1972-1975 – Winner four consecutive years, Down Beat Readers Poll,
- 1972/January 25, 26, 31 September 1 - recorded *Suite for Pops*
- **1972/April - May – U.S. State Department tour of Soviet Union – Leningrad 4/2-6; Kiev 4/8-11; Rostov 4/13-16; Yaroslavl 4/19-21; Moscow 4/23-24; Tbilisi 4/29-5/2**
- 1972/June 28 – recorded sessions with Dexter Gordon that were released as *Tangerine* and *Ca Purange*
- 1972/July 12-13 – recorded *Mr. Jones* with Elvin Jones
- **1972/September 1 [source: WP HR], began teaching at William Paterson College**
- 1973/February 8-9 – records *Portuguese Soul* with Jimmy Smith; Thad wrote entire album; uses entire TJMLO, but not credited because Smith used B. Purdie instead of Mel
- 1973/April 17-18 Recorded *Sassy Soul Strut* with Lou Donaldson
- 1973/ September 13-14, July 29, 1974 - recorded *Thad Jones Mel Lewis, Manuel De Sica and the Jazz Orchestra*
- 1973/February 2, 4 [CD source says 1983] recorded with Teresa Brewer, wrote all arrangements, conducted *Songs of Bessie Smith* featuring Basie Orchestra, including Basie on piano
- 1974-1975 – Winner, Down Beat Critics' Poll, Best Big Band
- 1974/March 12-13 – recorded Thad Jones Mel Lewis Orchestra, *Live in Tokyo*
- 1974/June – recorded *Potpourri*
- 1974/September 12 – performs faculty concert at William Paterson College; recorded live [in Archive].
- 1975/January 5 – performs second lecture demonstration and concert at William Paterson College
- 1975 – Winner Playboy All-Stars
- 1975/June 27-28 – recorded five cuts for *Greetings and Salutations* with Swedish Jazz Radio Group
- 1975/June 22, December 16-17 - recorded *New Life*



- 1975/November 14 Recorded *You Made Me Love You* in Tokyo w/G.Herbert, G. Mraz, Mel Lewis
- 1975-76 Academic Year: National Endowment for the Arts Jazz grant enables William Paterson College to become the nation's first college to sponsor a professional jazz group in residence: Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Quintet presents sixteen concerts and lecture-demonstrations at WPC (ticket stubs for 5/16/76; Krivin flyer lists 9/24-25-26/75, 12/17-18, 21/75; 1/22/76; 1/28-29-30/76. Press releases also list 2/10-11-12-13, 19/76).
- 1976 – wrote arrangements of *Cherokee* for trumpeter Harry James, *King James Version* recording (also arrangement of *Tuxedo Junction* and alternate takes of *More Splutie Please* and on LP *Comin' From a Good Place* (also 1976)
- 1976/March 11 – Bergen Record Dave Spengler interview with Thad published
- 1976/May 3, 4, 8, 12 – Carmen MacRae records *Can't Hide Love* containing three arrangements by Thad Jones
- 1976/June 2-3 – recorded *Rhoda Scott in New York with TJMLO*
- 1976/August 8 – recorded live *Thad Jones Mel Lewis 1* [Poland]
- 1976/September 9 – recorded *Live in Munich*; Domicile Club [Winner of 1978 Grammy Award; last major recording before Thad's move to Denmark]
- 1977/January 28-29- recorded *Thad Jones and Aura Rully*, in Sweden, also final three cuts for *Greetings and Salutations* with Swedish Jazz Radio Group
- 1977/February 6 – recorded *Lite Flight* with Kenny Drew
- **1977/May 21 - awarded honorary doctorate by William Paterson College.**
- 1977/August 20, 21, 23 – Finland, recorded *Monica Zetterlund w/TJMLO*
- 1977/September 24 – recorded *Thad Jones Mel Lewis Quartet* w/Harold Danko, Rufus Reid, Mel Lewis
- 1977/December 3-4 – recorded *Thad Jones and Mel Lewis and UMO*, Helsinki
- 1978/January 17-19, 25 – recorded *Tribute to Monk and Bird*, Heiner Stadler
- 1978/March 21-22 – recorded *Thad Jones and Danish Radio Big Band, Live at Montmartre, Copenhagen* aka *By Jones, I Think We've Got It*
- 1978/May 23-25 – recorded *Back Again*, Bob Brookmeyer

- **1978 May [source: WP HR] stopped teaching at William Paterson University** Note: was on leave without pay for 78-79 academic year, per WP HR
- 1978 injured “by drunk who put fist through cab window” - takes up valve trombone
- 1978/October 26 – recorded live *Thad Jones Mel Lewis 2* [Poland]
- 1978/November – recorded TJMLO *Touch of Class*
- **1978 began living in Denmark**, began working with the Danish Radio Orchestra
- 1979-80, lead Thad Jones Eclipse big band in Denmark
- 1979/September 17-18 - recorded *Eclipse*
- 1984/October 4 – recorded *Three and One*, Thad Jones Quartet with Ed Thigpen, Danish pianist and bassist
- 1984 – recorded *Don't Stop Now* with Louie Bellson Orchestra
- 1985/February 10 – began leadership of the Count Basie Orchestra, invited by Willard Alexander
- 1985/October – Miami, recorded, wrote arrangements for Caterina Valente on *Valente '86*
- 1985/November 11 – recorded *Way Out Basie* as conductor of Count Basie Orchestra
- 1985 – Manhattan Transfer records *Vocalise* with musical supervision on three tracks by Thad Jones w/Basie Orchestra
- 1986 European tour with Caterina Valente (see above recording)
- 1986, work on pieces commissioned by Swedish National Symphony [do these exist?], as well as new music for Danish Radio Orchestra
- August 20, 1986 died in Copenhagen of prostate cancer; buried in Vestre Kirkegard (Westside Cemetery), Copenhagen.