

Big Boy Goudie and Ramon Usera in London 1930

Previously, the information that Frank “Big Boy” Goudie did not go to England with Noble Sissle in 1930 has been spread. New studies show that Goudie did go to England.

Without doubt, Frank “Big Boy” Goudie and Ramon Usera were present when the film clip from *Ciro’s* London was shot. Their presence has been established by comparison with contemporary photos.



Big Boy Goudie (l to r): two samples from the *Ciro’s* film, Goudie in Paris 1927, Goudie in Paris 1930



Ramon Usera (l to r): From the *Ciro’s* film, Usera in Paris 1930, Usera in New York 1934

Howard Rye, in *Storyville 105*, suggests that Frank Big Boy Goodie, usually displayed in discographies on the Sissle 1930 recording session, was dropped from the group before the London engagement.

However, Goudie is definitely present in the *Ciro’s* film clip, whereas Duquesne is not shown. Duquesne left Plymouth on 17 December for New York with the rest of the orchestra, as shown on the Passenger list on the New York arrival on 22 December. This passenger list shows 9 musicians traveling together – Sissle traveled in another class. Goudie is not on this passenger list and he probably returned to France and stayed there after the *Ciro’s* engagement.

Goudie had gone to Europe in 1925 and played with Sissle in Paris during the summer of 1930. e spent the war years in Brazil and returned to France in 1946, staying there until 1956. Therefore, the Sissle plans to go back to U.S.A. after the *Ciro’s* engagement was not appealing; he had grown accustomed to the European life. It is even possible that the Tommy Ladnier letter of October 9 to Roy Butler really concerned a replacement for Goudie, despite the fact that Tommy Ladnier was asking for a “good first saxophone player,” which normally would mean a first alto saxophonist.

The statements made by Howard Rye in *Storyville 105* must therefore be re-evaluated. Rye’s statement that four men (Revey, Goudie, Spaulding, and Edwards) were dropped before the *Ciro’s* London engagement, as reported by the *Afro American* of 19 July 30, is certainly odd. This report was given five months before the engagement! From all available information, only three men were definitely dropped: Revey, Spaulding, and Edwards

Also reported by Rye is the information given in the December 1930 *Melody Maker*, stating that the band appearing at *Ciro’s* had ten members. This could be true and according to the contract, but it certainly does not verify the identity of the saxophone players. It is therefore possible that Goudie and

Duquesne both played at Ciro's but not at the same time; this due to the stipulated size of the orchestra. Another scenario is that these men followed suite but we don't know for certain in what order since the recording date for the film clip could be either before or after the sound recording date.

The conclusions made are thus:

- Big Boy Goudie did go to England in 1930 and played with Sissle at Ciro's London
- Big Boy Goudie and Ramon Usera were present during the film shooting at Ciro's London.
- Ralph Duquesne was not present during the film shooting at Ciro's London.
- It can not be concluded which saxophone players were present during the London recording session December 11 1930.