Moten, Bennie

(b. Nov. 13, 1894, Kansas City, Mo., U.S.--d. 1935), U.S. pianist, one of the earliest known organizers of bands in the Midwest in the emergent years of jazz.

Moten became a bandleader in and around his hometown in 1922 and remained so until his death. His recording debut was in 1923; and, although many of his recordings sound unremarkable, he is regarded as a figure of great importance in the development of the larger jazz orchestra, his achievement being verified when, after his death, the remnants of his group were taken up by his second pianist, Count Basie, and fashioned into a new, far more streamlined orchestra destined to become one of the outstanding orchestras in jazz history.