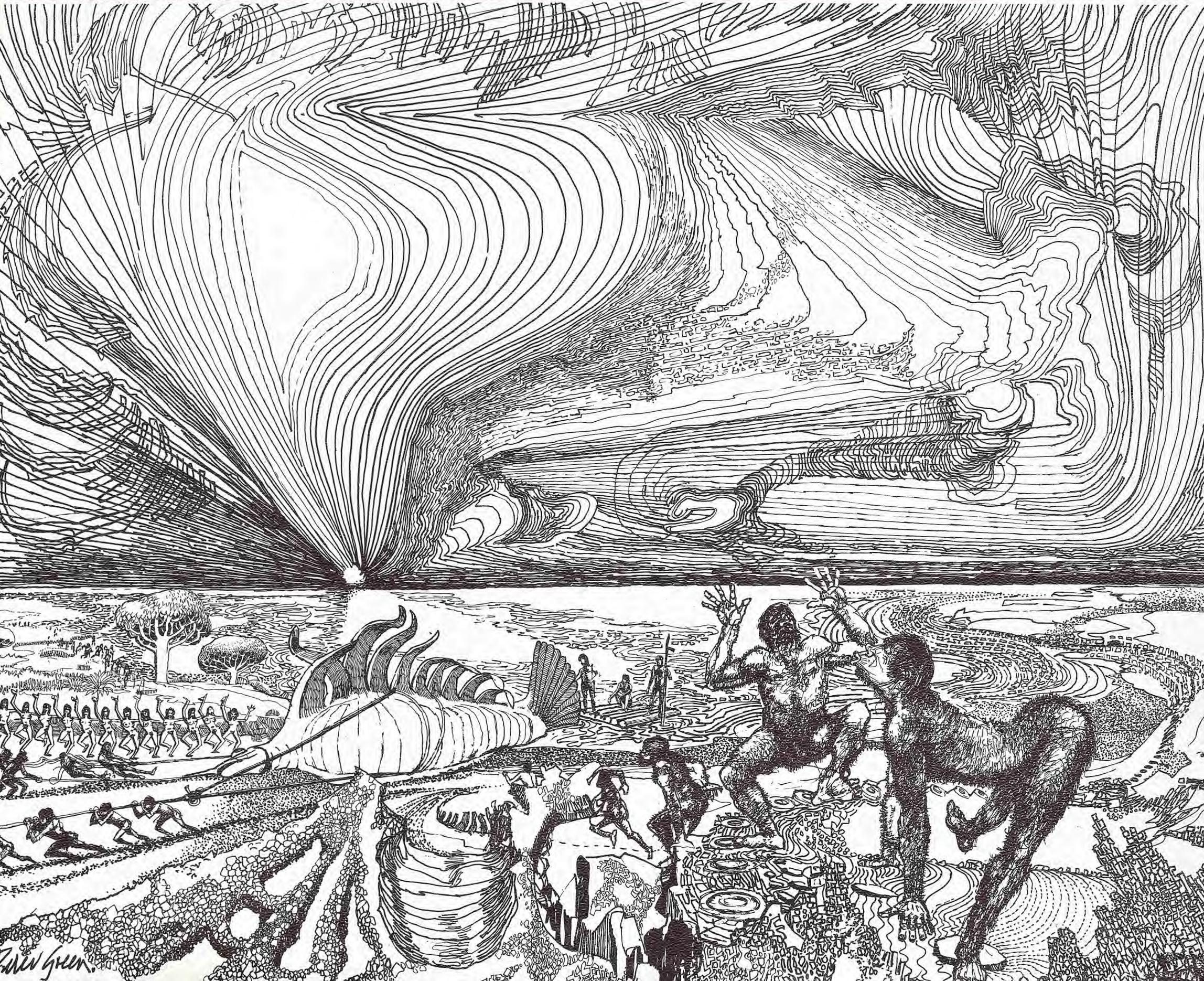


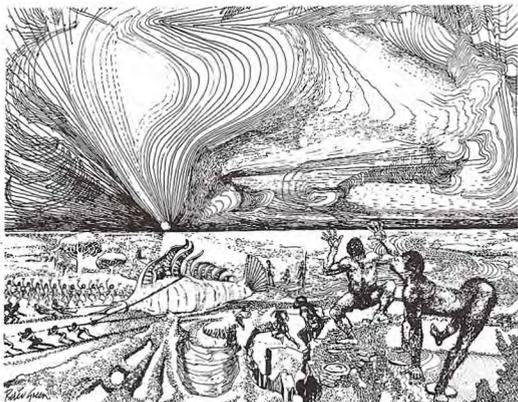
Spotlite 108

ANTHROPOLOGY

C 79 2
MUSIC GALLERY
\$ 6.99



ANTHROPOLOGY



The pen and ink drawing on the front cover is entitled *Prehistoric boogie*. The artist, local Harlow man Pete Green did not draw it specifically for this album but as one of a series of drawings shortly to appear in an exhibition in London. My problems for an appropriate photograph to use as a sleeve design were immediately solved one night when Pete produced the picture to show me.

Before and during the war little was heard of Jazz in this country but Pete who went to sea in those days first experienced Jazz in New York whilst listening to Eddie Condon at Nick's in Greenwich Village. After the war while he was at art school, he found a lively interest in the music amongst the students and has been listening to British Jazz from the days when Humphrey Lyttleton and Wally Fawkes played in George Webb's Dixieland Band at the Red Barn.

His listening these days varies between Bird, Coltrane and Ornette Coleman on one hand and Nucleus, John Surman and Mike Westbrook from the British Jazz Scene on the other. He plays records incessantly and feels that whilst his conscious mind is largely occupied with the music his subconscious or that part of his mind which draws from the archives of his memory influence his drawing.

The bonds between the pioneer figures of modern jazz were immensely strong. In the musical climate of the 1940s, and later, Gillespie, Parker, Monk, Powell, Miles and Navarro were rebels who had absorbed their fill of big bands, confining arrangements and all the other conventions of the Swing Era. They were creating something new. To some it was "Chinese music" and "nonsense" and they rejected it outright. Few musicians could really play in the Bebop style to start with, and those who could naturally formed almost a closed circle.

There were disagreements of a personal nature — hardly surprising in view of the intense and individualistic characters of the men involved — but they seldom stood in the way of the music. Although Fats Navarro might attempt to use his trumpet to crush Bud Powell's hands in a moment of anger and frustration, they were still able to communicate and interact when it was time to play. And while there was undoubtedly more than a grain of rivalry in the relationship between Diz and Bird, they were soulbrothers to the end.

Anyway, friction keeps the world going and all the Beboppers had enough of it to contend with from external sources without paying much attention to arguments among themselves. Goodman, the Dorsey Brothers and other jazz establishment figures held up modern jazz to ridicule, probably as a defence mechanism. They felt, perhaps, threatened by these sounds which they could not comprehend. A schism opened in the jazz world, hotly fanned by the music Press and fostered by the partisan followers of both the Dixieland/New Orleans (mouldy figs) fans and the smaller pro-Bop wing. In all the argument a lot of great "mainstream" figures were forgotten, but that's another story.

Amidst all this absurd bickering, modern musicians were apt to record vicious parodies of Trad jazz (like Chubby Jackson's "Moldy Fig Stomp" for example) to which there was no musical reply because the older men were unable to blow in the new vein at all so had to resort to verbal insult.

In retrospect the entire episode appears childish and distasteful and today nobody thinks twice about Dizzy making an album with Bobby Hackett or any other pairings which would have been unthinkable in the atmosphere that prevailed a quarter of a century ago.

By 1947, Bop was looming much larger and 99 per cent of young musicians were adopting it as their mode of expression. In late summer of that year, critics Barry Ulanov and Rudi Blesh hit upon the idea of having a battle of styles — Moldy Figs vs. Moderns. The two men selected all star bands of their choice and each group played in turn on a radio show called "Bands For Bands", a programme geared to make post-

War Americans save their money and help the Treasury. Listeners were requested to write in, stating which of the jazz styles they preferred.

If the whole thing sounds dreadfully contrived — yet another variation on the poll syndrome which equates "popular" with "best" — at least it had an extremely durable by-product — the music. The two broadcasts from September 1947 produced nine titles by the modernists who, on those occasions, comprised Gillespie, Parker, John LaPorta, Lennie Tristano, Billy Bauer, Ray Brown and Max Roach. These selections, together with additional and interesting Bird material, are available on *Lullaby in Rhythm* (Spotlite 107). Now we have the "victory sequel". — *Anthropology*.

For this November 8, 1947, airshot the nucleus of Barry Ulanov's All Star Modern Jazz Musicians was retained. Bird, LaPorta, Tristano and Bauer were again on hand. Fats Navarro replaced Gillespie, Tommy Potter and Buddy Rich came in for Brown and Roach, Allen Eager's tenor was an added starter in the front line and the peerless modern singer Sarah Vaughan was featured on one title.

This distinctive and distinguished array of bop and "cool" musicians with a swing drummer played a highly stimulating set. The personnel is most unusual. It went under the banner of Barry Ulanov and His All Star Metronome Jazzmen and four of the participants — Parker, Navarro, Tristano and Bauer — recorded together yet again in January 1949 as part of the Metronome All Stars. Eager and Navarro, of course, were no strangers having worked together in Tadd Dameron's Band. They were also on the famous Saturday Night Swing Session of April 1947 which featured Buddy Rich too.

At any rate, whatever adjustments had to be made — and one can imagine that Tristano was less than comfortable with Rich behind him — they did not result in a stylistic impasse. One might ponder at the inclusion of the rather bloodless clarinet of LaPorta in this heavy company and the amount of prominence he is accorded but it does not really matter because the rest are so good.

Of course, Charlie Parker was one of the few prominent musicians of the day who would never be drawn into the petty squabbles about Bop and Moldy Figgery. There are those who saw his generous reactions to a Leonard Feather blindfold test as a cop-out, but the fact was that to his ears there was only good music and bad music; style was a matter of personal taste. As for his reluctance to put down other musicians, this could be interpreted as a charitable attitude rather than any cussed evasion. Having been slated and scorned himself, he knew only too well the feeling of being misunderstood and misrepresented. It has been said that he could play with anybody and the recorded evidence bears out that

claim. Certainly this rare collaboration with Navarro, Tristano and Eager turned out to be valuable. Bird and Lennie travelled different roads but they held each other in high esteem and were able to collaborate successfully.

The date opens with *52nd Street Theme* and announcer Bruce Elliot introducing Fats, Bird, LaPorta, Eager, Tristano, Bauer, Potter and Rich in that order. Then Ulanov calls *Donna Lee*, exclusively a feature for Bird who had recorded this original for Savoy six months earlier. Eager and LaPorta do not play and Navarro is heard only in ensemble. Parker is in impressive form, moulding a typically swirling line on these astringent changes, reputedly written for a lady bass player.

Everything I Have Is Yours finds Sarah Vaughan imaginatively accompanied by the rhythm section. Sarah had cut this side for Musicraft in 1946 and it had been rather successful. Her wild note-bending indicates how carefully she had listened to Bird and Diz when they were all members of the Hines and Eckstine Bands.

Fats Flats puts the spotlight on Fats Navarro. Fans of the trumpeter will recognise this variation on *What Is This Thing Called Love?* as *Barry's Bop*, made by Fats for Savoy and a dedication to Ulanov. Origins aside, this is one of Navarro's finest solos, a model of musical architecture with every note placed in precision fashion. Fats was the nearest thing to a perfect trumpet soloist who could, apparently, execute exactly what he thought. He is joined for the last eight bars by Bird as they move into the theme of *Hot House*.

Tea For Two is LaPorta's showcase but he does little to impress. With the exceptions of Tony Scott and Stan Hasselgard, modern clarinet players did sound pretty cold. Somehow the instrument seemed unsuited to the music, although of course it was ideal for expressing earlier jazz forms. LaPorta's lines, complex though they may be, seem to lead nowhere and the emotional content is nil. Main focus for listening here is once again the rhythm section. *Don't Blame Me* is an off beat reading of the standard by Tristano, Bauer and Potter. Lennie and Billy are of the same mind as their melodic patterns intertwine majestically. It is no surprise that Lennie had Buddy Rich lay out on this one.

Groovin' High has Allen Eager blowing potent choruses on the *Whispering* changes. It must have been an unnerving experience for the young tenorman, standing right next to Bird, who with Diz had created the classic original. And Bird does not get a solo! Still Eager does very nicely and sounds the epitome of confidence. Dig those big fat chords that Lennie and Billy put in at the close of the melody statement. Bauer also sounds groovy in his brief solo.

Koko is yet another masterful version of Bird's virtuoso setpiece which never failed to throw up new beauty shocks. He is followed by Fats who maintains the breathtaking atmosphere of excitement established by Parker. But when LaPorta comes on things sag noticeably. Eager picks it up again and Lennie waves a spidery web. *Koko* resolves into *Anthropology* as Bruce Elliot wraps up his spiel.

We are fortunate (a) that the broadcast has survived at all and (b) that it was so well recorded and the masters were not damaged. Many commercial records of the period are not up to this standard so far as sound quality goes.

Alas, we cannot claim the same for the last three titles on this album. These are by a Tadd Dameron Quintet and were probably recorded in September 1948 when Tadd's combo were into a long residency at the Royal Roost. These five musicians — Wardell Gray, Allen Eager, Tadd, Curley Russell and Kenny Clarke — recorded for Blue Note on September 13 when they were augmented by Fats Navarro and bongo player Chano Pozo.

Why wasn't Fats on this particular club session? Well, Dameron has recounted the story of how Fats would often be asking for more money and if he didn't get it would go off with some other group for a week or two. This might have been one of those times.

Incidentally look out for the remainder of the Dameron/Roost material on *Spotlite*. The intention is that all of it will be released on this label in chronological order to make up three essential LPs with generous samplings of the Navarro trumpet.

The tenor tandem of Wardell and Allen works wonderfully, and despite the ghastly surface noise — and despite the ghastly surface

noise — and incidentally *Spotlite* went to the trouble of borrowing the original acetates from source in an effort to get the best sound possible — we can hear the air of unrestrained joy that pervaded this particular session. The tenor playing is so good it would be a crime *not* to make these selections available.

Now's The Time opens with Tadd's piano and Allen makes a false entry before the first ensemble. Through the radio bleeps, occasional groove jumps and steady hiss (not Klook's drums!) you will dig that Eager solos first, followed by Wardell The Great and Tadd.

The fast *Lady Be Good* has Allen leading off again but this time the tenor solos fall either side of a Dameron passage. Then some lively fours between the horns precede the closing statement.

Craziest of all is Bean's famous variation on *Just You, Just Me* which builds, as only the

best performances do, steadily and inexorably to a devastating climax. Wardell is my man but Allen runs him mighty close here. In fact it is just about an honourable draw, with each guy drawing inspiration from the other.

It occurs to me that Allen Eager is the link man between these two sessions. In a sense Eager personified Bebop. He was a restless experimenter in music and life. The experience he drew from living he pushed back through his horn. He was hip to everything that was happening. Legend (and the Tony Williams Bird Discography) has it that Allen and Parker once exchanged horns and blew a session which was recorded. The cat who recorded it wiggled out on the subway and the tape was left on the train. Will it ever be found? Probably not but I bet it would be explosive listening!

Meanwhile so is *Anthropology* (or *Bebop Bonds*, as we first called it). It brings together for the first time on record two significant sessions which are at once intriguing and entrancing. Again we are forcibly reminded that in every bit of Charlie Parker's musical work his genius was evident. It is primarily for Bird that you will buy this record, but you'll find a lot more in there by way of a pleasant bonus.

Notes: Mark Gardner (April 1972)
Sleeve design: Malcolm Walker
Cover art: Pete Green
Produced by TONY WILLIAMS



PERSONNEL

BARRY ULANOV AND HIS ALL STAR METRONOME JAZZMEN

: Fats Navarro tpt; John LaPorta cl;
Charlie Parker alt; Allen Eager ten;
Lennie Tristano p; Billy Bauer g; Tomr
Potter bs; Buddy Rich d.

† delete LaPorta and Eager

= Sarah Vaughan vcl. acc. by rhythm
section only.

†† delete Navarro, Parker and Eager.

* p, g, bs only.

WOR Mutual Studios, New York City
Saturday, November 8, 1947.

** TADD DAMERON AND HIS ORCHE ORCHESTRA

Allen Eager, Wardell Gray ten; Tadd
Dameron p; Curley Russell bs; Kenny
Clarke d.

Royal Roost, New York City – c.
August-September 1948.

SIDE ONE (playing time 16:30)

: 52nd. street theme (theme) into
Introduction by Barry Ulanov

† Donna Lee

= Everything I have is yours

† Fats Flats

†† Tea for two

* Don't blame me

SIDE TWO (playing time 21:15)

: Grooving high

: Koko into

: Anthropology

** Now's the time

** Lady be good

** Just you, just me