

PR 24009 A SPECIALLY PRICED TWO RECORD SET

This is not a high-fidelity album.
The historical importance of this
album transcends fidelity of sound.


Prestige

Charlie Parker



Parker

SIDE I & II Spring 1948
SIDE III & IV 2/18/50

Onyx Club, New York City
St. Nicholas Arena New York City

Side 1

1. Theme 2:17
2. Shaw Nuff 1:32
3. Out of Nowhere 3:02
4. Hot House 2:13
5. This Time the Dream's on Me 2:20
6. A Night in Tunisia 3:27
7. My Old Flame 3:22
8. 52nd Street Theme 1:06

Side 2

1. The Way You Look Tonight 4:41
2. Out of Nowhere 2:33
3. Chasin' The Bird 1:45
4. This Time the Dream's on Me 3:28
5. Dizzy Atmosphere 3:00
6. How High the Moon 3:37
7. Theme 1:15

Side 3

1. I Didn't Know What Time It Was 2:30
2. Ornithology 3:22
3. Embraceable You 2:13
4. Visa 2:53
5. I Cover the Waterfront 1:41
6. Scapple from the Apple 4:30
7. Star Eyes & Theme 3:00

Side 4

1. Confirmation 3:08
2. Out of Nowhere 2:14
3. Hot House 3:14
4. What's New 2:39
5. Now's the Time 4:10
6. Smoke Gets in Your Eyes & Theme 4:40

The leading figure in the early revolution of modern jazz, Charles Parker, is featured on these performances with two trumpet players each of whom was closely associated with him. Miles Davis himself became a leader in jazz and Red Rodney, after a brilliant beginning with Parker in performances such as these, has dropped into obscurity. The program of the album consists of some of the best known literature of the bop era as well as a number of standard ballads particularly attractive to these musicians.

Personnel:

On Sides 1 & 2:
Charlie Parker—alto sax
Miles Davis—trumpet
Duke Jordan—piano
Tommy Potter—bass
Max Roach—drums

On Sides 3 & 4:
Charlie Parker—alto sax
Red Rodney—trumpet
Al Haig—piano
Tommy Potter—bass
Roy Haynes—drums

Sides 1 & 2 previously released as Fantasy/Debut 6011—
"Bird on 52nd Street"

Sides 3 & 4 previously released as Fantasy/Debut 6012—
"Bird at St. Nick's"

Remastering: Rudy Van Gelder
Art Direction: Tony Lane

He had a round face and a smile that could beam, yet he could be evil and nasty when he wished, as well as sweet as a child. In later years, his weight made him look like Buddha.

But no matter what he did, no matter how many times he disappointed them, hit on them for bread, blew gigs, missed planes, passed out, or otherwise punished them for liking him, Charlie "Bird" Parker remained until the day he died, loved and admired and venerated by jazz musicians.

And he is still loved and venerated, his image joining that of Lester "Pres" Young and Billie "Ladyday" Holiday as the three dead saints of jazz' middle period.

Like Pres, Charlie Parker has yet to be discovered by the young jazz listeners of the 60s and 70s. But he will be. It is inevitable. His music was so drenched in the blues (even when he played a ballad it sounded like a blues, in a way) that it comes easy to the ear of a jazz neophyte of the 70s educated in the blues idiom from rock 'n roll. And why shouldn't it? One of the earliest hits of the rock era was "The Hucklebuck", a rhythmic instrumental taken faithfully (and without credit) from Bird's "Now's the Time".

And today's audience is being prepared for the resurrection of Bird by the numerous solos of his musical offspring sprinkled among the jazz/rock albums and incorporated in the instrumentals of the soul records which they dig. Blood, Sweat & Tears, for instance, has in Fred Lipsius, an alto saxophone player whose first solo on an LP with that band was such a faithful reproduction of a Charlie Parker improvisation that it was eerie. And as this is being written Gene Washington, a fine saxophone soloist in his own right, has reached the radio play lists and the best seller charts with an instrumental of "Ain't No Sunshine"

on which the long saxophone improvisation is a pure emulation of the Parker style, sound, and feeling.

Just as Bob Dylan unconsciously has paved the way for Jimmy Rushing, George E. Lee and Count Basie with his line (from "It Takes a Lot to Laugh/It Takes a Train to Cry") "don't the moon look lonesome shinin' through the trees," so have the Parker descendants paved the way for Bird, even though the imperative of "Now's the Time" (with Jon Hendricks' additional line, "Not later, but right now") did not prove feasible. The time *is* coming, though. Believe me, it is coming.

They named a nightclub after Charlie Parker—Birdland—and in its time it was as famous as Fillmore East or West. And the cult that emerged after his death spread his name throughout the land as part of an unorganized but effective campaign of graffiti—"Bird Lives"—scrawled on the walls of night club johns and abandoned buildings. ("The words of the prophet are written on the subway walls . . ." ?)

It got so bad—the legend's pervasiveness—at one point that Lenny Bruce even had a bit worked out, the concept of which was to satirize that legion of pretenders who claimed to have been close friends with Parker. "I got Bird's axe," one of them would remark, "we were real tight." Max Roach, who WAS close to Bird and who played with him in innumerable sessions and on innumerable records, went into helpless laughter when he first heard that.

The only thing consistent about Charlie Parker was his music. It always flew like a bird and it always swung and it always, with the same kind of other-worldly logic of inevitability that Johnny Hodges had, seemed to be exactly right. I think it was because Bird lived in the music in a way he never did as a person. They couldn't make Bird conform to the real world even though there was a time, in between his bouts with dissipation, in which he was pictured in a food advertisement, sitting at the table like any other middle class success story scarfing up the goodies.

Like Louis Armstrong and Pres and Dizzy and Miles, Bird carved out a style of playing that was so big and so deep and so broad that

countless others rode on it successfully. They still do. When he died, musicians from all over remarked on how much everyone took from Bird and they are still taking from him. They probably always will. Mingus put it better than anyone when he told *Down Beat*, "Most of the soloists at Birdland had to wait for Parker's next record in order to find out what to play next. What will they do now?"

Mingus' tribute was the reality of Parker, the musician. He was the wellspring of an entire way of playing and it was not only imitators who learned from him. All of jazz, after he made his initial appearance on the Jay McShann record of "Hootie Blues" playing the quote from the Saturday afternoon radio broadcasts by "the Reverend Elder Lightfoot Michaux and his Happy Am I Congregation from the banks of the Potomac in Washington, D.C." learned from Charlie Parker. And it is an important point about his playing that was so simple and yet so complex, that his first recorded solo was that quote from "Happy Am I, I'm Always Happy", which in later years became a base phrase he was to repeat throughout his life, a classic bebop phrase. Parker's concept was complete when he emerged. Fascinating.

The stories about Bird are just as much a part of the jazz culture as his music. He went on the road with Jazz at the Philharmonic and Norman Granz hired a detective to watch him so that Bird would get to the shows on time and not get hung up along the way trying to score. Bird promptly got the private cop to score for him.

When JATP played a concert in Canada once, crossing the Canadian-US border on the way to Vancouver, the border guards asked for his identification. Bird just stood there repeating, "My name is Charlie Parker. I play the alto saxophone" over and over as if that should have been enough. And indeed it should have been.

Sometimes when he was introduced, he would smile benignly and say, "People call

me Bird" and he could recite from the Rubiyat ("The Bird of Time has but a little way to flutter—and the Bird is on the Wing") and poets were his friends. He loved music. All of music. And he would raid a record store buying anything from bebop to country and western as well as classical and Broadway show original cast recordings. He'd lie back on the bed in a hotel room and listen to them, smiling.

He wore chalk striped suits sometimes and he never pressed the pants. Some musicians copied the suit style and even rumped the pants just to think they looked like Bird. A musician from Susanville, California, named Dean Benedetti (who died a short time after Bird) followed Charlie Parker all around the country with an old wire recorder faithfully permanentizing, in night clubs and concert halls, huddled in a basement or crouched in a corner, every Golden Note that Bird played. I have known people to buy an LP with Bird on it, tape the Bird solos by themselves and only play that. The rest of the music was of no interest to them.

Bird loved to play. That was obvious. In fact he really couldn't keep from playing. He walked into a dance hall in Kansas City one night where Woody Herman and the Herd were playing and blew with the band for hours. Bird loved to play with the big bands when they hit New York and sometimes his life style just couldn't accommodate it. Musicians remember nights when they would come up to the street after the last set only to find Bird chugging up to the club toting his sax, asking if he was too late again.

Countless night club owners and small concert promoters from New York to California hired Bird to play and then found him working for free on the other side of town. He meant no

harm, really. He just wanted to play and the club was there and the band was willing. The band was always willing for Bird. He could sit in with anybody.

He hung around San Francisco once for over a month. It began with a gig at the Say When during which he fired the band the first night and then broke in a new one. Chet Baker, a private in the Sixth Army at the Presidio at the time, played his first real jazz gig as Bird's trumpet player on that one. Half the time he never got to the Say When at all but blew at the Black Hawk across town, and he always made the late sessions at Jackson's Nook, Jimbo's Bop City, or any other spot that was open. He even got involved in a Jerry Lewis Muscular Dystrophy marathon on television in which he played for more than an hour, to the astonishment of the producers.

He inspired fiction writers as well as musicians. You can read "Sparrow's Last Flight", that great short story by Elliot Grennard and not taken too literally it is about Bird in Los Angeles at the time he had a breakdown. And you can read about him in Ross Russell's novel, "The Sound", as well.

But reading about him is no good at all. What the world needs is to hear him. Hear his lovely singing music with its life pulse throbbing like the pulse beat, hear his marvelous flights of lyricism and pick up on the fascinating free flow of ideas. The art is what counts. True, he was a dooper's dooper and the junkies made him into a cult hero in addition to his jazz stature, but Bird always said smack was bad and that nobody played better when he was high. The junkies didn't believe Bird any more than they believed anybody else. They never believe anybody but the horse. Not even themselves.

Like I say, listen to the music; it's all there and if you need some words to help, then think of King Pleasure's lyric to "Parker's Mood":

"Sing a little song for me and let the world know I'm really free"

"Don't cry for me, 'cause I'm goin' to Kansas City."

—Ralph J. Gleason



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My Old Flame
52nd Street Theme
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Smoke Gets In Your Eyes

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Notes by
Ralph J. Gleason

Charlie Parker
with
Miles Davis
Al Haig
Roy Haynes
Duke Jordan
Tommy Potter
Max Roach
Red Rodney

Charlie