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# CHARLIE PARKER

## THE COMPLETE SAVOY STUDIO SESSIONS

FIVE RECORD SET



## CHARLIE PARKER DISCOGRAPHY

### TINY GRIMES QUINTET

Charlie Parker, alto sax; Clyde Hart, piano; Tiny Grimes, guitar, vocal; Jimmy Butts, bass, vocal; Doc West, drums.

Recorded in New York (WOR Studios) September 15, 1944

Produced by Buck Ram

Engineer: Doug Hawkins.

S5710-1	Tiny's Tempo	Side A track 1
S5710-2	Tiny's Tempo	Side A track 2
S5710-3	Tiny's Tempo	Side A track 3
S5711-1	I'll Always Love You Just The Same	Side A track 4
S5711-2	I'll Always Love You Just The Same	Side A track 5
S5712-1	Romance Without Finance	Side A track 6
S5712-2	Romance Without Finance	Side A track 7
S5712-3	Romance Without Finance	Side A track 7
S5712-4	Romance Without Finance	Side B track 1
S5712-5	Romance Without Finance	Side B track 1
S5713-1	Red Cross	Side B track 2
S5713-2	Red Cross	Side B track 3

### CHARLIE PARKER'S REBOPPERS

Miles Davis, trumpet; Charlie Parker, alto sax; Dizzy Gillespie, trumpet (*Koko* only); piano; Sadik Hakim, piano (*Thriving On A Riff*, *Koko* only); Curly Russell, bass; Max Roach, drums.

Recorded in New York (WOR Studios) November 26, 1945

Produced by Teddy Reig

Engineer: Doug Hawkins

5850-1	Billie's Bounce	Side B track 4
5850-2	Billie's Bounce	Side B track 5
5850-3	Billie's Bounce	Side B track 5
5849-1	Warming Up A Riff	Side B track 6
5850-4	Billie's Bounce	Side C track 1
5850-5	Billie's Bounce	Side C track 1
5851-1	Now's The Time	Side C track 2
5851-2	Now's The Time	Side C track 2
5851-3	Now's The Time	Side C track 2
5851-4	Now's The Time	Side C track 3
5852-1	Thriving On A Riff	Side C track 4
5852-2	Thriving On A Riff	Side C track 5
5852-3	Thriving On A Riff	Side C track 5
	Meandering	Side D track 1
5853-1	Koko	Side D track 2
5853-2	Koko	Side D track 2

### CHARLIE PARKER ALL-STARS

Miles Davis, trumpet; Charlie Parker, alto sax; Bud Powell, piano; Tommy Potter, bass; Max Roach, drums.

Recorded in New York (Harry Smith Studios) May 8, 1947

Produced by Teddy Reig

Engineer: Harry Smith

3420-1	Donna Lee	Side D track 3
3420-2	Donna Lee	Side D track 3
3420-3	Donna Lee	Side D track 4
3420-4	Donna Lee	Side D track 5
3420-5	Donna Lee	Side D track 6
3421-1	Chasin' The Bird	Side D track 7
3421-2	Chasin' The Bird	Side E track 1
3421-3	Chasin' The Bird	Side E track 1
3421-4	Chasin' The Bird	Side E track 2
3422-1	Cheryl	Side E track 3
3422-2	Cheryl	Side E track 3
3423-1	Buzzy	Side E track 4
3423-2	Buzzy	Side E track 5
3423-3	Buzzy	Side E track 5
3423-4	Buzzy	Side E track 6
3423-5	Buzzy	Side E track 6

### MILES DAVIS ALL-STARS

Miles Davis, trumpet; Charlie Parker, tenor sax; John Lewis, piano; Nelson Boyd, bass; Max Roach, drums.

Recorded in New York (Harry Smith Studios) August 14, 1947

Produced by Teddy Reig

Engineer: Harry Smith

3440-1	Milestones	Side F track 1
3440-2	Milestones	Side F track 1
3440-3	Milestones	Side F track 2
3441-1	Little Willie Leaps	Side F track 3
3441-2	Little Willie Leaps	Side F track 3
3441-3	Little Willie Leaps	Side F track 4
3442-1	Half Nelson	Side F track 5
3442-2	Half Nelson	Side F track 6
3443-1	Sippin' At Bells	Side F track 7
3443-2	Sippin' At Bells	Side F track 7
3443-3	Sippin' At Bells	Side F track 8
3443-4	Sippin' At Bells	Side F track 8

### CHARLIE PARKER ALL-STARS

Miles Davis, trumpet; Charlie Parker, alto sax; Duke Jordan, piano; Tommy Potter, bass; Max Roach, drums.

Recorded in Detroit (United Sound Studios) December 21, 1947

Produced by Teddy Reig

Engineer: Jim Syracuse

D830-1	Another Hair Do	Side G track 1
D830-2	Another Hair Do	Side G track 1
D830-3	Another Hair Do	Side G track 1
D830-4	Another Hair Do	Side G track 2
D831-1	Bluebird	Side G track 3
D831-2	Bluebird	Side G track 4
D831-3	Bluebird	Side G track 4
D832-1	Klaunstance	Side G track 5
D833-1	Bird Gets The Worm	Side G track 6
D833-2	Bird Gets The Worm	Side G track 7
D833-3	Bird Gets The Worm	Side G track 7

### CHARLIE PARKER ALL-STARS

Miles Davis, trumpet; Charlie Parker, alto sax; John Lewis, piano; Curly Russell, bass; Max Roach, drums.

Recorded in New York (Harry Smith Studios) September 18, 1948

Produced by Teddy Reig

Engineer: Harry Smith

900-1	Barbados	Side H track 1
900-2	Barbados	Side H track 2
900-3	Barbados	Side H track 2
900-4	Barbados	Side H track 3
901-1	Ah-Leu-Cha	Side H track 4
901-2	Ah-Leu-Cha	Side H track 4
902-1	Constellation	Side H track 5
902-2	Constellation	Side H track 5
902-3	Constellation	Side H track 6
902-4	Constellation	Side H track 7
902-5	Constellation	Side H track 7
903-1	Parker's Mood	Side I track 1
903-2	Parker's Mood	Side I track 1
903-3	Parker's Mood	Side I track 2
903-4	Parker's Mood	Side I track 2
903-5	Parker's Mood	Side I track 3

### CHARLIE PARKER ALL-STARS

Miles Davis, trumpet; Charlie Parker, alto sax; John Lewis, piano; Curly Russell, bass; Max Roach, drums.

Recorded in New York (Harry Smith Studios) September 24, 1948

Produced by Teddy Reig

Engineer: Harry Smith

908-1	Perhaps	Side I track 4
908-2	Perhaps	Side I track 5
908-3	Perhaps	Side I track 5
908-4	Perhaps	Side I track 6
908-5	Perhaps	Side I track 6
908-6	Perhaps	Side I track 6
908-7	Perhaps	Side I track 7
909-1	Marmaduke	Side J track 1
909-2	Marmaduke	Side J track 1
909-3	Marmaduke	Side J track 1
909-4	Marmaduke	Side J track 2
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All masters transferred from original session acetates by Rudy Van Gelder.

REISSUE PRODUCED BY BOB PORTER  
EXECUTIVE PRODUCER: STEVE BACKER

Illustration: Lynn Groskinsky  
Art Direction: Maude Gilman



“It’s just music.  
It’s playing clean and looking  
for the pretty notes.”

## INTRODUCTION

**T**HE music in this box is, in effect, a documentary of the Savoy studio recordings of Charlie Parker. Original source discs were used for all transfers. The programming is chronological. Thus, the music is presented in the actual sequence it occurred at the original recording sessions more than thirty years ago.

Much of the music here has been issued previously on Master Takes (SJL 2201) and Encores (SJL 1107), but in this collection you will find all the fragments, false starts and breakdowns, that would have no real place otherwise. Many of the new takes, presented here for the first time, fall into the category of false starts and breakdowns, but we have also included all studio talk so that, in a few cases, you'll actually be able to hear Bird giving instructions to his band.

Included is a discography of these sessions which is accurate for the first time anywhere. Parker specialists will enjoy the task of determining which takes are brand new.

Also included here is an interview with Teddy Reig, the producer of the Parker and Miles Davis sessions. Reig's personal insights into working with Charlie Parker present a good deal of new information for the Parker researchers.

Finally, there is extensive musical analysis by James Patrick, which will allow greater understanding of how Bird did what he did.

There is little else to say. Personally I can think of no other recording artist who warrants such treatment. Art Tatum, Lester Young and others might qualify but the recording careers of those men spanned a good deal longer period of time. Parker's recording career, as a leader, lasted just about ten years. Teddy Reig puts it well when he suggests that we should all be happy for the additional takes of the thirty songs presented here. It gives us more Bird to hear and for many of us there will never be enough.

—Bob Porter



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## THE MUSIC OF CHARLIE PARKER

AMONG the millions of words that others have written about Charlie Parker, perhaps Bird himself unwittingly supplied our best guide to his art: "It's just music. It's playing clean and looking for the pretty notes." Even in his early career, Parker had become a legend for the insiders and hipsters who unfailingly populate the jazz scene and this homely aphorism (from the famous "Chili Parlor Interview" in *Down Beat*, September 9, 1949) is but one of the many simple but not simple-minded instructions he offered to zealous pilgrims who approached him. Fictional literature could not have provided a more poignant folk hero: the supreme hipster, the sexual superman, and the alienated genius consumed by destructive forces from within and without. Much of the literature on Bird has been concerned with the more bizarre aspects of his personal behavior and with "psychological profiles," but the fact remains that Parker was one of the great musicians of this or any other century. It is Parker's music—his virtuoso playing and his magical ability to find the "pretty notes"—that above all else has sustained the legend.

In recent years several projects have immensely improved our understanding of Parker's music. Thomas Owens' *Charlie Parker: Techniques of Improvisation* (Owens' 1974 U.C.L.A. doctoral dissertation) and Lawrence O. Koch's "Ornithology: A Study of Charlie Parker's Music" (*Journal of Jazz Studies*, Volume 2, Numbers 1 and 2, 1975) are excellent studies of the musical mechanics of Parker's craft. Tony Williams' *Charlie Parker Discography* (*Discographical Forum*, September, 1968-September, 1970) and Piet Koster's and Dick M. Bakker's *Charlie Parker* (*Micrography*, 1976) are the first thorough catalogues of the musical sources, i.e. sound recordings, for the Parker corpus. Important recordings, hitherto unreleased on commercial disc, have helped to fill historical vacuums: the 1940 McShann/Wichita transcriptions, an incomplete *Cherokee*, probably originating from Monroe's Uptown House in 1942, the Jubilee transcriptions of the Billy Berg's group in Hollywood 1945-1946, a 1946 Los Angeles broadcast from the Finale Club with Miles Davis and Joe Albany, the Christmas Eve, 1949 Carnegie Hall concert, Bird in Boston, Chicago, Montreal, Kansas City, Harlem, Inglewood, and so much more. In addition, the chaotic jumble of Parker's Dial re-issues has been clarified by Spotlight's well-planned, six-disc series *Charlie Parker on Dial*. And now, for the first time, we have the complete Charlie Parker on Savoy. This is indeed a Charlie Parker feast!

Of the one thousand or so recordings by Parker that are known to survive, 125 takes were originally made for the Savoy Record Company, Incorporated of Newark, New Jersey. The bulk of the remainder is comprised of his other studio efforts for Dial (102), Clef/Norgran/Verve (121), various small independents—Guild, Musicraft, Comet, Apollo, Continental, and Bell Tone—in 1945 (55), and the seemingly endless supply of broadcast and on-location recordings. Bird is captured in virtually every setting in which he worked his magic: record, radio and television studios, nightclubs, informal jam sessions, theaters, and concert halls; he is preserved with big bands, small groups, singers, string orchestras, Latin ensembles, with the great, near great, and the humble. Among this wealth of material the Savoy recordings are particularly important because they include many of the finest performances on record from the period of his emergence as the seminal figure of new jazz in 1944-1945 and from the period of his absolute dominance of the idiom in 1947-1948.

Historically speaking, the Savoy recordings mark several milestones in Parker's career. The Tiny Grimes date of September 15, 1944, produced his first small group recordings and his first relatively extensive exposure as a soloist. The *KoKo* date of

November 26, 1945, was Parker's first as session leader. The May 8, 1947, date was his first studio appearance upon returning to New York after the turbulent sixteen-month sojourn in California. The Miles Davis *Milestones* date of August 14, 1947, offers a rare example of Bird as tenor saxophone sideman. The two September, 1948, dates were Parker's last sessions before two major turning points in late 1948: the reforming of the band to include Al Haig on piano and Kenny Dorham on trumpet, and the beginning of his exclusive contract with Norman Granz.

Although Herman Lubinsky, founder of Savoy, claimed the distinction of being the first to record Parker, he could hardly be described as a fervent disciple of the legendary herald of the new jazz. As quoted in an April 16, 1961, *New York Post* article on the Parker estate, Lubinsky explained, "That was the early '40's. I needed a lot of convincing before I went into it. I didn't believe in what he was doing—I didn't think it would be commercial." Despite the fact that Savoy would become famous for marketing the avant-garde jazz of the 1940's, commercial was an important word and concept at 58 Market Street in Newark. Perhaps Savoy's *modus operandi* were typical of the small, independent companies of the time, but Lubinsky seems to have possessed a special talent for producing great jazz records at minimum expense to himself.

Under the prevailing copyright laws there were three rights in a piece of music: the right to cause a work to be recorded (referred to as the recording or mechanical right), the right of publication, and the public performance right (including broadcasting). Under the mechanical right, if a work were duly copyrighted and licensed through a publisher, the record company was obliged to pay two cents per side for each 78 rpm disc sold, one cent each to the composer and the publisher. If, for example, an artist recorded George Gershwin's *I Got Rhythm*, the record company would have to pay out two cents for every record sold in addition to the musician's session fees, and artist royalties. If, on the other hand, an artist recorded an "original" composition using only Gershwin's chord progressions to which a new melody had been fit, the record company might save substantial sums or even produce additional income. If the work was uncopied, as was the case for the bulk of Parker's Dial recordings, there is no legal obligation to pay royalties to anyone. The record company, however, might conclude an agreement with the composer of the "original" whereby, in exchange for a small advance on royalties, the composer agrees to license his work through the record-company-as-publisher. Such was the arrangement between Parker and Lubinsky, as illustrated in the contract for *Ah-Leu-Cha* (following page). Thus, for the price of an advance, Savoy could not only save one half of its own mechanical rights obligations (had they recorded copyrighted works), but also could establish its legal claim to one half of any future royalties the work might generate. There were, of course, numerous abuses of this system of rights. But in general, the system provided a legal substructure for a climate that was mutually beneficial to both Parker and Lubinsky.

Parker's revolutionary statements of the 1940's must be viewed against the fact that above all else, Bird was a great improviser, deeply rooted in tradition. Whenever he was given a free hand in the selection of material—as was the case in his Dial and Savoy recordings—his repertory consisted largely of blues and "originals" using the chord changes of familiar popular songs. Moreover, his performance routines for individual numbers almost always minimized the use of pre-conceived material and focused on the improvised solo. Even when compared to Gillespie's recordings of the 1940's, which often involve composed introductions, interludes, internal choruses, and codas,

Parker's "off the top" approach to music making is striking.

The Savoy studio procedure was simple, if somewhat hectic. Parker was allowed to select all material, with the proviso that the pieces be "original" compositions. Occasionally Parker would prepare rough sketches for his new tunes, but more often instructions were conveyed orally and there were no regular lead sheets and no rehearsals. The routine for individual numbers would be verbally outlined and the band would then record. Thus, the producer's main contribution was to locate the musicians already booked and to get them to the session on time (no small task).

Tommy Potter, Parker's bassist, recalled his studio experiences for Robert Reisner in *Bird: The Legend of Charlie Parker*: *On record dates he could compose right on the spot. The A and R man would be griping, wanting us to begin. Charlie would say, "It'll just take a minute," and he'd write out eight bars, usually just for the trumpet. He could transpose it for his alto without a score. The channel (the B section of thirty-two measure AABA pieces) could be ad libbed. The rhythm section was familiar with all the progressions of the tunes which were usually the basis of originals.*

Using chord progressions that were already well known, Parker could compose a twelve-measure blues melody and have a new piece that could serve as the thematic basis for the improvised solos which would constitute the creative substance of these performances. Other cases required even less newly-composed melodic material. Several of the Savoy pieces are based on the chord structures of thirty-two measure AABA popular songs, in which the first eight measure phrase is repeated (AA), then followed by a new eight measure phrase (B), and concluding with a third statement of the first phrase (A). Often Parker would compose a new melody for the A phrase, but would improvise the B phrase in the opening and closing thematic sections. Such an "original" would require only eight measures of newly composed melodic material for the entire performance. *Marmaduke*, using the borrowed chords of Fats Waller's *Honeysuckle Rose*, is an example:

### MARMADUKE Theme

Melody	A	A	B	A
(Parker)	composed	repeated	improvised	repeated
Harmony	A	A	B	A
(Waller)	8	8	8	8

On other occasions (*Bird Gets the Worm*, *Klaunstance*, *KoKo*, *Meandering*, *Merry Go Round*, *Parker's Mood*) themes were omitted altogether, the first chorus being entirely improvised by Parker to a borrowed chord pattern. Thus, none of Parker's own Savoy sessions, which were aimed at producing four "original" sides, required any more than fifty-six measures of newly-composed melodic material. Most, in fact, required half that much.

The Savoy recordings, of course, are not merely slapdash artifacts, but rather some of Parker's most brilliant recordings—which is to say that they are among the very greatest of all jazz records. The sense of musical thrift to which I refer above, seems to have been a basic component of Parker's musical sensibilities. Some raw data about the Savoy material further underscores this tradition/improvisation nexus of Bird's creative temperament.

The entire Savoy corpus consists of thirty titles. Of this repertory there are only three outright originals—that is, pieces which have both an original melody and chord structure—and none are composed by Parker. Eleven of the pieces are twelve measure blues, five are harmonically based entirely on *I Got Rhythm*, one on *Honeysuckle Rose*, two combine the chord patterns of *I Got Rhythm* and *Honeysuckle Rose*, and eight use the

AGREEMENT made this 18th day of September 1948  
by and between SAVOY MUSIC CO., 58 Market Street, Newark, N. J., herein called "PUBLISHER" and  
CHARLES PARKER, JR.

jointly and/or severally, herein called "WRITER(S)";

WITNESSETH:

1. The WRITER(S) hereby sells, assigns, transfers, sets over and delivers to the PUBLISHER, its successors and assigns, that certain song or musical composition now entitled AH-LEU-CHA

together with any and all claims or demands which I (we) may have therein, including any copyrights heretofore secured therein, and including the title, words and music thereof, and the right to secure copyright therein throughout the entire world, and the right to have and to hold the said copyrights and all rights of whatsoever nature thereunder existing, together with any renewals or extensions of the said copyrights.

2. The WRITER(S) warrant that the said composition is an original work; that no part of the said composition is an infringement of any copyrighted work; that the said composition was written and composed in its entirety by him (them); that he (they) have not sold, assigned, set over, mortgaged or hypothecated any of his (their) right, title or interest in the said composition, or any part thereof; that he (they) have not entered into any contract with any person, firm or corporation whatsoever, affecting the said composition or any of his (their) right, title or interest therein; and that he (they) have the full right and power to make, execute and deliver the present instrument and sale.

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4. The failure of the PUBLISHER to print copies of said musical composition shall not be considered a breach of this agreement.

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(a) An advance of \$62.50 Dollars paid by the PUBLISHER to the WRITER(S), receipt of which is hereby acknowledged, which advance shall be deducted from any payments which may hereafter become due to the WRITER(S) under the terms of this agreement.

(b) As regards regular piano copies and orchestrations sold and paid for at wholesale in the United States, the following royalties per copies: 2 cents piano, 3 cents orch. cents per copy

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(d) A sum equal to 50 per cent (50 %) of all net receipts of the PUBLISHER from any licenses issued by it authorizing the manufacture of the parts of instruments serving to mechanically reproduce the said composition, from the use of the said composition in synchronization with sound motion pictures, and from the reproduction of the said composition upon electrical transcriptions for broadcasting purposes.

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Writer CHARLES PARKER, JR. Share FULL

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9. The PUBLISHER shall have the sole right to institute any legal action in its own name for any infringement of the said composition. The legal action shall be prosecuted at its own expense, and in the event of any recovery, the PUBLISHER shall first deduct all its expenses in connection with the said action, and Fifty per cent (50%) of the balance shall be divided equally among the WRITER(S) of the said composition.

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IN WITNESS WHEREOF, the parties have hereunto set their hands and seals the day and year first set forth.

SAVOY MUSIC CO.

By [Signature] L. S. WRITER Charles Parker L. S.

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ Address \_\_\_\_\_

Witness: \_\_\_\_\_ WRITER \_\_\_\_\_ L. S.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

WRITER \_\_\_\_\_ L. S.

Address \_\_\_\_\_

TITLE AND COMPOSER	HARMONIC SOURCE AND KEY	COMMENTS
Ah-Leu-Cha (Parker)	I Got Rhythm (F)	B Improvised
Another Hair-Do (Parker)	Blues (Bb)	Measures 5-8 improvised
Barbados (Parker)	Blues (F)	
Billie's Bounce (Parker)	Blues (F)	
Bird Gets the Worm (Parker)	Lover Come Back to Me (Ab)	No Theme
Blue Bird (Parker)	Blues (Eb)	
Buzzy (Parker)	Blues (Bb)	
Chasin' the Bird (Parker)	I Got Rhythm (F)	B Improvised
Cheryl (Parker)	Blues (C)	
Constellation (Parker)	I Got Rhythm—A phrase	
	Honeysuckle Rose—B phrase (C)	B Improvised
Donna Lee (Parker)	Indiana (Ab)	
Half Nelson (Davis)	Ladybird (C)	
I'll Always Love You		
Just the Same (Grimes)	Original (C)	
Klaunstance (Parker)	The Way You Look Tonight (F)	No Theme
KoKo (Parker)	Cherokee (Bb)	No Theme/Measures 9-24 of
		Introduction improvised
Little Willie Leaps (Davis)	All God's Chillun Got Rhythm (F)	
Marmaduke (Parker)	Honeysuckle Rose (F)	B Improvised
Meandering (Parker)	Embraceable You (Eb)	No Theme
Merry Go Round (Parker)	I Got Rhythm—A phrase	
	Honeysuckle Rose—B phrase (Bb)	No Theme
Milestones (Davis)	Original (Bb)	
Now's the Time (Parker)	Blues (F)	
Parker's Mood (Parker)	Blues (Bb)	No Theme
Perhaps (Parker)	Blues (C)	
Red Cross (Parker)	I Got Rhythm (Bb)	B Improvised
Romance Without Finance (Grimes)	Original (Eb)	
Sippin' at Bell's (Davis)	Blues (F)	
Steeple Chase (Parker)	I Got Rhythm (Bb)	B Improvised
Thriving From a Riff (Parker/Gillespie)	I Got Rhythm (F)	
Warming Up a Riff (Parker)	Cherokee (Bb)	No Theme
Tiny's Tempo (Grimes/Hart)	Blues (Bb)	

progressions of other standard songs. Twenty-two of these pieces are credited to Parker and they contain 213 measures of new melodic material, on the average, less than ten measures each.

Under different circumstances, slightly later in his career, Parker's repertoire changed markedly. He signed an exclusive recording contract with Norman Granz and achieved a significant measure of popular success. Granz, at the helm of a more affluent organization, along with Bird's judges (as he called his managers), and Bird himself, were eager to exploit his growing popularity. Granz especially encouraged Parker to record popular songs as such and "...insisted that Charlie play pretty tunes written by good song composers instead of just blues." In the process, blues and *I Got Rhythm*-based pieces receded to the background and, some claim, so did Parker's creative energies.

In the pre-Granz era, the economic facts of life and Parker's musical sensibilities seem to have re-inforced each other to produce a rich body of recorded music. Parker's musical preferences and methods offered a cheap and convenient way to record "new" material with a minimum of rehearsal, retakes, studio time, and composer royalties; Bird for his part could play pretty much what he liked and get quick money up front. The Parker Savoy's are in many ways unique among his studio recordings and embody the same spontaneity of the broadcasts and jam sessions where commercial interests were not involved. Bird was not a saint and neither was Herman Lubinsky; both used each other for their own immediate advantage. Like many great geniuses, Parker was misunderstood and undercompensated. I only hope he had some idea of the profound joy that these recordings can bring to all of us who will listen.

## THE TINY GRIMES DATE

**D**URING 1944 and 1945 Lubinsky recorded several of the most promising younger musicians appearing along New York's flourishing West 52nd Street, many of whom would later record with Parker: Jimmy Butts, Don Byas, Miles Davis, Dexter Gordon, Clyde Hart, Slam Stewart, Argonne Thornton, Harold "Doc" West, Lester Young, and Trummy Young. Bird's first Savoy recordings were simply part of the informal milieu of the time. Guitarist Tiny Grimes was playing at the Downbeat Club and Parker regularly sat in with his group. Grimes, as he recalled in a 1973 interview for WKCR-FM (New York), was contacted on September 14, 1944, and asked if he would assemble a group for a Savoy record session to be held the following day at the WOR studios. The Savoy agent, probably Buck Ram who supervised the date, wanted as many original tunes as Grimes could supply for the three hour/four side session. Grimes chose Clyde Hart, piano; Jimmy Butts, bass; Harold West, drums; and Charlie Parker. The requested originals—two instrumentals, *Tiny's Tempo* and *Red Cross*, and two vocals by Grimes—*I'll Always Love You Just the Same* and *Romance without Finance* would be worked out in the studio.

Grimes not only admired Parker's music, but also, unlike many slightly older and more established musicians, was un-intimidated by its brilliance and novelty ("I wanted that new sound"). As session leader he shared solo time equally with Parker and even gave Bird the first solo on the instrumentals. As a result of Tiny's wisdom and generosity, Parker received his first significant exposure on records as an improvising soloist.

The immediate response, however, was not exactly overwhelming, if one can judge by a January 15, 1945, *Down Beat* review of Savoy 526 (*Tiny's Tempo/I'll Always Love You Just the Same*):

*Grimes, the guitarist with Art Tatum's trio, has charge of this session. All in all, it comes off pretty well. Tiny himself gets plenty of opportunity to display his single-string technique, which is, after all, the main attraction on these sides. Tempo is perhaps the better number, at least insofar as Tiny's work is concerned.*

Although the A side contains Parker's memorable solo on the instrumental blues *Tiny's Tempo*, Parker's name is not mentioned in the review. Yet the winds of change in critical recognition were fairly swift. Capitalizing on Parker's growing reputation, Savoy reissued the two vocal sides on Savoy 613. By mid-1946 these recordings already had become part of the Parker saga, as evidenced by another *Down Beat* review from July 28, 1946:

*Made two years ago with Clyde Hart's piano, Doc West on drums, Jimmy Butts, bass, Tiny's guitar and vocals, these become caliber A for one reason: Charlie Parker on alto...Here are easy, bouncing beats with Parker noodling some thoroughly good, well-phrased jazz back of Grimes. You may perhaps find his tone a little hard and underbodied, but these sides prove conclusively, Parker is no re-bop freak. He plays. Period.*

This date is a valuable document in two major respects. First, it produced some very good, straightforward music with interesting solo work from Parker, Grimes, and Hart. Second, it allows us a rare glimpse of Bird in a transitional setting preceding the great early modern classics of 1945. The band retains much of the rhythmic sense of late swing music. The relatively heavy beat of the rhythm section has a slight two-beat feel compared to the lighter, more fluid pulse of the bop ensembles. Likewise, much of the thematic material, such as *Red Cross*, is rhythmically conservative. (fig. 1) The contrast between Parker's and Hart's solo playing is revealing. Although Bird's improvised lines here are somewhat more square cut and closer to the beat than in the 1945 recordings, the feeling is distinctly modern.

*RED CROSS*, Beginning of Theme (fig. 1)



*RED CROSS*, Beginning of Parker Solo (fig. 2)



*RED CROSS*, Parker Solo, Beginning of B Section (fig. 3)



Bird's irregular accentuation and phrasing and his flowing chains of "laid back" eighth notes contrast sharply with Hart's much more on-the-beat and choppy playing. Yet occasional flashes of the modern harmonic sensibility appear in both Tiny's and Clyde's solos, especially the use of the soon to be ubiquitous flat fifths and the chromatic chord substitutions for the B section of the *I Got Rhythm*-based *Red Cross*.

Several highlights stand out. The third take of *Tiny's Tempo*, which is taken a bit faster than takes 1 and 2, has very clean, tight ensemble work, particularly in the closing unison riff passage (obviously worked out in advance) by Parker and Grimes. All the solos are good, with Parker really biting into a dirty blues and Tiny improving on the melodic continuity of the earlier takes. The two vocals, a ballad (*I'll Always Love You Just the Same*) and a novelty number featuring hip patter between Tiny and Jimmy Butts (*Romance Without Finance*), have been unfairly maligned as awkward attempts by Tiny to promote a singing career. The facts are that the vocal numbers were almost certainly suggested by producer Buck Ram and that Tiny sings them rather well. Moreover, *Love You* is a very attractive tune with a fine Bird solo on take 1. Also note the end of Tiny's guitar solo on *Romance* as he quotes the *Tempo* unison riff figure. Two takes of *Red Cross* conclude the date. Both versions are interesting and take 2, despite a slightly rushed opening ensemble, has an excellent Parker solo with a modernistic blues-like opening and chromatic passing chords in the B section. (fig. 2 & 3)

## THE KOKO SESSION

A number of misunderstandings about the *KoKo* date persist and this is the place to clarify the record. Documents from the Savoy files and the recollections of Teddy Reig, who produced the session, indicate the following. A standard three hour/four side session was scheduled for November 26, 1945, at the WOR studios in New York for which Parker would supply original compositions. A Union contract was arranged the preceding week and Parker; Miles Davis, trumpet; Bud Powell, piano; Curly Russell, bass; and Max Roach, drums, were booked for the date. On the 26th Reig went to Parker's apartment to bring Bird to WOR and was informed that Powell had gone with his mother to Philadelphia where she was buying a house. No need to worry, however; Dizzy Gillespie was present and introduced to Reig: "Here's your piano player." Parker also had contacted pianist Argonne Thornton (later a.k.a. Sadik Hakim), who had played on Dexter Gordon's September date for Savoy, and asked that he appear at the studio.

Lubinsky and Reig were installed in the recording booth and Parker, Davis, Gillespie, Russell, and Roach in the studio. It had been agreed that the four sides would be two new Parker blues and two "heads" on *I Got Rhythm* and *Cherokee* that were familiar to the musicians Bird had been working with at the time. The proceedings began with three rather awkward takes of a Parker blues *Billie's Bounce*, which, according to Thornton, in the February 1959 *Jazz Review*, had been composed that morning.

Unaware they were being recorded, the musicians momentarily shifted gears with an unscheduled warmup on the chords of *Cherokee*. Originally titled *Savoy Tea Party* in the Savoy files, this performance was issued as *Warming Up a Riff*. Two more tries at *Billie's Bounce* produced an acceptable master (take 5) of the first contracted side. Four takes of another Parker blues *Now's the Time* followed. At this point, Dizzy relinquished the piano to Thornton who had been observing from the sidelines. Three takes of *Thriving From a Riff* (the *I Got Rhythm* head, later called *Anthropology*) were logged before the session was halted temporarily. All during the session thus far Parker was having some very audible mechanical problems with his instrument. Upon completion of take 3 of *Thriving*, Bird left WOR to get his horn repaired.

Parker returned shortly with a functioning instrument, but in the meantime Miles had vanished. *Meandering*, another unscheduled warmup (on the chords of *Embraceable You*) was performed with Dizzy back on piano. Miles was still missing, so Dizzy was enlisted on trumpet for the session's last scheduled number. Two takes were made, as represented in figures 4 & 5.

The exact personnel is problematic. Thornton says he played piano during the introduction and coda (while Dizzy played trumpet) and then moved over so that Dizzy could accompany Parker. Teddy Reig, on the other hand, recalls that Thornton did not play on this number and that Max Roach's drum solo was added to give Dizzy time to return from the piano at the end of Parker's solo to play trumpet in the closing coda. The musical testimony, however, contradicts both Thornton and Reig. There is no piano present during the introductions or coda of either take. Yet piano is played behind the sax-trumpet statement of the incomplete *Cherokee* theme of take 1. On take 2 (as in take 1) the introduction concludes with an eight measure sax-trumpet phrase, but this time the *Cherokee* theme is omitted and the performance leads directly into Parker's solo, which is accompanied by piano on the very first beat of measure 1. Clearly, Dizzy could not have simultaneously played both trumpet and piano on take 1 and he could not have shifted from trumpet to piano in the half second that separates the last note of the in-



Date Nov 26. Name of Organization ~~Don~~ CHAS PARKER Leader Chas Parker

Studio \_\_\_\_\_ Directed by \_\_\_\_\_ Time \_\_\_\_\_ Run Down 10" \_\_\_\_\_

Safety \_\_\_\_\_

Master # \_\_\_\_\_

<u>Title</u>	<u>SELECTIONS</u> <u>Matrix No.</u>	<u>Composer</u>	<u>Publisher</u>
Bellis Bounce	SAV-5850		
Now's the time	1		
Thru on a Riff	2		
<del>Allegria</del>	3	RoRo	
SAVOY TEA PARTY	5849.		

<u>Name</u>	<u>INSTRUMENTATION</u> <u>Social Sec. No.</u>	<u>ADDRESS</u>	<u>Phone</u>	<u>Instrument</u>
Chas Parker				alt sax
Dizzy Gillespie				piano
Miles Davis				trumpet
Max Roach				drum.
DILTON ROSS				Bass.

KOKO, Take 1 (fig. 4)

	Introduction			Theme (unison)			
unison	trumpet sax		unison	incomplete <i>Cherokee</i>			
(composed)	(improvised)		(composed)				
8	8 8		8				

KOKO, Take 2 (fig. 5)

	Introduction			Solo (sax)			
unison	trumpet sax		unison				
(composed)	(improvised)		(composed)				
8	8 8		8				
A	A	B	A	A	B	A	
16	16	16	16	16	16	16	16
	Coda						
drums	unison	trumpet ssax	unison				
	(composed)	(improvised)	(composed)				
32	8	8 88	8				

roduction and the first note of Parker's solo on take 2. The total evidence suggests that Dizzy plays trumpet on the introduction and coda of both takes and plays piano during most of Parker's solo on take 2; Thornton plays piano only during the *Cherokee* theme of take 1 and at the beginning of Parker's solo on take 2.

As for the title *Koko*, Teddy Reig claims responsibility. Reig and Lubinsky were in the booth when the band began the last scheduled side. Upon completion of the 32 measure introduction, Parker and Gillespie began playing *Cherokee*. Lubinsky, vaguely recognizing the melody and fearful of royalty payment for a previously copyrighted work, shouted, "What's that tune?" Reig, in order to placate him, quickly answered, *KoKo*. Thus, in take 2, the original melody of *Cherokee* was deleted and the issued performance titled *KoKo*. The fact remains, however, that no matter what Lubinsky's wallet may have dictated at WOR, there are also simple and practical musical explanations. *Cherokee* is an unusually long tune, 64 measures, rather than the more customary 12, 16, or 32 measure framework. Had Parker followed the normal practice of stating a theme (in this case *Cherokee*) at both the beginning and the end of the piece, preceded and followed by the new 32 measure introduction and coda, there would have been no time—that is, clock time allowed by one side of a 10-inch 78 rpm disc—to accommodate the two improvised solo choruses by Parker that are the hallmark of the piece.

One substantial mystery remains. The Library of Congress Copyright Office Catalogue of Copyright Entries, Part III, Group 1, Unpublished Musical Compositions, 1946, page 897, lists a composition by Parker titled *Alesia*. Although no recording of this title survives, this copyright claim was filed by Lubinsky on February 12, 1946, and appears in the same L.C. entry with *KoKo*. Searches in the Savoy files have unearthed a lead sheet titled *Alesia* with composer credit given to Parker. Moreover, a file sheet from the *KoKo* session reveals that the fourth side (matrix 5853) was first titled *Alesia*, crossed out, and *KoKo* entered. The lead sheet, however, bears no resemblance to any of the recordings from the *KoKo* session and little resemblance to Parker's style in general. Perhaps this puzzle leads to a Don Byas date for Savoy which took place in New York on exactly the same day. In fact, *KoKo* was issued with Byas's *How High the Moon* (from his November 26, 1945 Savoy date) coupled on the flip side.

The session begins with three takes of *Billie's Bounce*. Take 1 has a good Parker solo, but the sloppy execution of the theme and Miles' repetitious auxiliary note figures in his solo, dictate another master. Take 2 is taken a shade slower, has a much cleaner theme, a top notch solo from Bird and is strangely cut at mid-point. Take 3, as is so familiar in the Parker studio recordings, has a good rendition of the theme and a solid Miles, but a merely adequate solo from Bird who seems to have momentarily lost interest during the foregoing process of working up a tight performance of the theme. The proceedings temporarily shift to an informal jam on *Cherokee*, which starts here at the beginning of the last phrase of Parker's first chorus, when the microphones were secretly turned on. Note Bird's quotations (and Dizzy's appreciative laughter) of *Irish Washerwoman* and *Cocktails for Two*. Another awkward, short take of *Billie's Bounce* follows, and the tune is retired with a fifth master, which would become the original issue.

*Now's the Time* presents much less trouble. Dizzy's Monkish introduction begins all four takes. After two false starts, a slightly slower tempo is adopted. Take 3 has a fine Bird solo featuring a paraphrase of the theme. Take 4, however, is a classic with great Bird, good comping by Dizzy, and a first rate solo by Miles.

Although this was not Miles' first record date (he had appeared on Savoy sessions with Herbie Fields and Rubberlegs Williams), this is his debut as soloist. Miles' early work often has been misunderstood and unfairly criticized, usually on the basis that he was a technically inept follower of Dizzy Gillespie. This point of view is expressed in a April 22, 1946 *Down Beat* review of Savoy 573 *Billie's Bounce/Now's the Time*:

*The trumpet man, whoever the misled kid is, plays Gillespie in the same manner as a majority of the kids who copy their idol do—with most of the faults, lack of order and meaning, the complete adherence to technical acrobatics...This can be as harmful to jazz as Sammy Kaye.*

These sentiments are echoed nearly a decade later by John Mehegan in his notes for Savoy 12079. He refers to Miles' trumpet work as "lugubrious, unswinging, no ideas," "tone certainly approaches the ludicrous," "a put on by Dizzy [?]" The truth of the matter is that Miles greatly admired trumpeter Freddy Webster and these early solos reflect not a failure to successfully imitate Dizzy, but rather Miles' respect for Webster's lush tone, lyricism, and economy of expression.

Any doubts about Miles' technical capabilities should be erased by the trumpet playing on *Thriving From a Riff*, which Mehegan describes as "Technique—ideas—tonal control beyond Miles—must be Dizzy sitting in." *Thriving* is another great composition by Parker and careful audition of the theme's B section will reveal a melodic figure that extends back to Bird's *The Jumpin' Blues* solo with McShann which would later be incorporated as the opening of *Ornithology*. For some unknown reason, this theme is discarded at the opening of takes 2 and 3, which, after a piano intro, begin with solos by Miles. Takes 1 and 3 have fine Parker solos, but are marred by a brief fluff on the closing theme of take 1 and by Thornton's unbelievably primitive solos, which are conceived almost entirely of descending chromatic scale passages.

*Meandering* is an improvisation on *Embraceable You*. This sensitive and moving performance, which was another warmup, not intended for release, is Parker's only Savoy recording of a ballad standard.

The crowning achievement of the date is Parker's two-chorus solo on *KoKo*—which is not to underestimate the very exciting exchanges between Parker and Gillespie in the introduction and coda and Max Roach's excellent and innovative drum solo.

Parker's solo is a summary of Bird's most brilliant playing style, his virtuoso command of the saxophone at blistering tempi, and, justifiably, one of his most revered recordings. *Cherokee*, whose chord structure, of course, forms the basis of this piece, held a particular significance for Bird. Parker's own description of how he "came alive" while jamming on *Cherokee* in a Harlem chili house in 1939 is one of the most famous quotations in jazz literature. In addition, *Cherokee* was one of his featured numbers with the Jay McShann band and among his most frequently performed pieces throughout his career.

Twelve recordings from 1942 to 1954 preserve Parker improvisations on the *Cherokee* chord pattern. Bird obviously associated particular melodic patterns with this tune and invariably would manage to re-cycle many of these licks (or close variants) in each of the *Cherokee*-based solos. Curiously, many of these figures are atypical of Parker's generally free flowing, continuous line and they involve an unusual degree of melodic repetition. Moreover, as in this classic performance and in the preceding *Warming Up a Riff*, these figures often are used as a kind of guide-post at the most prominent places in the chorus—at the very beginning and end or at the beginning of the B section. Some, such as examples 3 and 5 (actually a quotation from the New Orleans standard *High Society*) occur in many different tunes and harmonic contexts, but the remainder seem to have been reserved strictly for use with the *Cherokee* chords. (fig. 6-12)

*KOKO SOLO*, Example 1 (fig. 6)  
Chorus I, measures 5-8



*KOKO SOLO*, Example 2 (fig. 7)  
Chorus I, beginning of B section



*KOKO SOLO*, Example 3 (fig. 8)  
Chorus I, measures 28-29



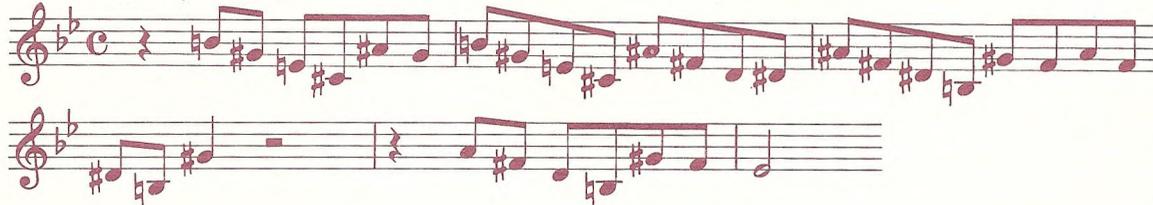
*KOKO SOLO*, Example 4 (fig. 9)  
Chorus I, conclusion



*KOKO SOLO*, Example 5 (fig. 10)  
Chorus II, beginning



*KOKO SOLO*, Example 6 (fig. 11)  
Chorus II, beginning of B section



*KOKO SOLO*, Example 7 (fig. 12)  
Chorus II, measures 41-43



## THE 1947-1948 SESSIONS



Herman Leonard

**S**HORTLY after the *KoKo* session Parker and Gillespie journeyed to Hollywood where they opened at Billy Berg's on December 10, 1945. The Berg engagement ended on February 3, 1946, and the band returned to New York minus Parker. The turbulent tale of Bird's extended stay on the coast—his associations with Dial Records, Emery “Moose the Mooche” Byrd, and Camarillo—is graphically told in Ross Russell's biography, *Bird Lives*, and need not be repeated here. Suffice it to say that after his release from Camarillo in January, 1947, Parker recorded for Dial on two occasions, worked Berg's club on Sunday afternoons with Errol Garner's trio, and joined Howard McGhee at the Hi-de-Ho Club in Los Angeles in late February. McGhee, recounting this period in an August 29, 1973 interview for WKCR-FM (New York), remembers that Parker received good, if not spectacular, money (\$250 a week), often drew his entire week's salary on the first night, and was broke the next day.

The return to New York was finally arranged via a stop-over in Chicago. Parker and McGhee were booked for an Easter one-nighter at the Pershing Ballroom on April 6. The date was a success, the musicians well-paid, but, as McGhee recalls:

*We got \$750 apiece for the night and the next morning Bird called me and asked me to loan him plane fare to get to New York...So I gave Bird the money to get to New York...I could never figure out what he could do with the money...I don't think it's possible for him to spend \$750 for drugs, just drugs alone...He was amazing like that. But that was Bird. What can I tell ya.*

Shortly after his arrival in New York, Parker played a date in Brooklyn organized by Max Roach and set about the task of forming his own band. The quintet of Parker, Davis, Duke Jordan, Tommy Potter, and Max Roach that recorded three sessions for Dial in New York from October to December 1947 has assumed the historical status as *the Parker band* from early 1947 to late 1948, and certainly this is the regular personnel with which Parker toured. Yet contemporary press notices and current discographical data indicate that while in New York John Lewis and Jordan frequently alternated on piano and that Curly Russell and Potter alternated on bass. In addition, Bud Powell, whom Parker used on his May 8, 1947 date for Savoy, may have been Parker's first piano choice before Powell's emotional stability rapidly deteriorated in later 1947; and Tadd Dameron was an occasional stringer for New York jobs. Parker also frequently traveled to major cities as a single attraction playing with pickup groups.

It is interesting to recall some of the common associations and cross fertilization revealed in the earlier careers of these musicians. Both Tommy Potter and Miles (as well as Parker and Gillespie) had played in Billy Ekstine's legendary band. Not as frequently noted is that Benny Carter's bands of the early and middle forties included Miles, Roach, and Russell, and, at various times, Gillespie, Dexter Gordon, Wardell Grey, Joe Albany, J.J. Johnson, and Tadd Dameron and George Russell as arrangers. As for the others: John Lewis had come to New York to study and replaced Al Haig as Dizzy's pianist; Duke Jordan was working with the Teddy Walters trio at the Three Ducees when he was “discovered” by Parker; and Nelson Boyd was active around New York, associated most prominently with Tadd Dameron and Fats Navarro.

Bird at the time was under exclusive contract to Ross Russell and Dial Records. This technicality, however, would deter neither him nor Lubinsky from renewing their earlier association. Parker's five remaining Savoy sessions were clandestine, being either violations of his contract with Dial, or violations of the American Federation of Musicians second recording ban in

I 558 W 149<sup>th</sup> St  
N. Y. C.

Savoy records inc.  
58 Market St.  
Newark N. J.

Sir: —

on Nov 19, 1945

I entered into a contract  
with you and gave you  
an option for eight  
additional recordings to  
be made within three  
years of the date of  
the contract. This option  
was to be exercised by  
you not later than Dec. 4,  
1945.

II

I hereby acknowledge that  
you exercised that option  
before December 4, 1945, and  
I became obligated to record  
eight additional recordings  
for you within three years  
of the date of that  
contract

Very truly  
yours

Charlie Parker

1948—or both. An undated letter in Parker's handwriting indicates the extent to which Bird and Lubinsky could co-operate to their mutual advantage. The meaning and significance of the document seem reasonably clear. Parker was persuaded to draft the letter, referring to a fictitious 1945 agreement that gave Savoy the right to record him until late 1948. The purpose was to provide Lubinsky some quasi-legal defense in the event that Russell might take action against Savoy. In any case, 1947 was a great year for Charlie Parker records. The Dial sessions produced *Dewey Square*, *Embraceable You*, *Klactoveedsedstene*, *Scrapple From the Apple*, *Don't Blame Me*, and *Crazeology* and the Savoy dates the masterpieces in this collection.

After less than three weeks back in New York, Parker had put together a band and arranged a recording session at the Harry Smith studios. The personnel here, excepting Bud Powell on piano, would make beautiful music for the next year and one half. Bird prepared three of his finest and most sophisticated compositions—*Chasin' the Bird*, *Donna Lee* (named for Curly Russell's daughter), and *Cheryl* (named for Miles' daughter). His fourth original, *Buzzy* (named for Lubinsky's son), is a simple, but attractive riff blues. Yet this "back home" date is a distinct disappointment.

The performances are generally rough and disturbingly tense. Both Bird and Miles are plagued by consistent mechanical trouble or, less charitably, by sloppy execution. Cracked notes and squeaks foul the solos and Parker's wonderful thematic material is assaulted by missed entries. In addition, there is an indecision about tempos, which vascilate between successive takes of each title. With the exception of *Ah-Leu-Cha*, Bird would never again attempt such challenging thematic material at a recording session. Unable to bring himself to hold rehearsals, Parker henceforth took the path of least resistance and relied on relatively simple themes or pure improvisations.

First up is *Donna Lee*, Bird's new line for the *Back Home Again in Indiana* changes. Throughout the four complete takes (numbers 2-5) Bird's tone is uncomfortably strident and the Parker theme never does get satisfactorily pulled together. Takes 3 and 4 offer ample evidence that even the giants are human and, thus, fallible. Bud misses a couple of chords in the abbreviated reprise of the theme. Bird's solos contain a number of bad fluffs, his line is occasionally halting, as if he were groping for ideas, and, quite uncharacteristically, are loaded with cliché-like licks used as filler material. Take 2, however, is a reasonably solid performance with excellent drum work from Max.

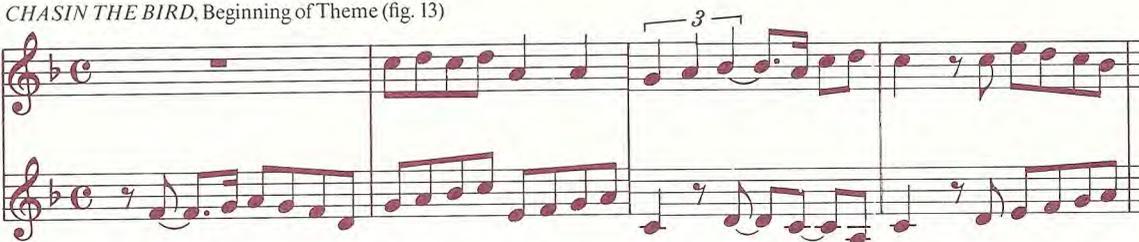
*Chasin' the Bird* is a rare example (*Ah-Leu-Cha* being the only other) of a contrapuntal Parker theme, and it is a significant departure from the bebop norm of saxophone-trumpet unison or octave statements of theme melodies. Based on the *I Got Rhythm* chords, *Chasin'* is a thirty-two measure AABA structure with the B section melody improvised. The opening of the A phrase is given in figure 13.

*Cheryl* is one of Parker's greatest lines and the classic example of a distinct variety of his blues composing. As opposed to *Buzzy*, which has a simple, phrase-by-phrase, repetitive riff structure, or to *Billie's Bounce*, which repeats only a very short, three-note figure, *Cheryl* avoids any hint of melodic repetition. (fig. 14)

The only complete take of *Cheryl* features a wonderfully driving, percussive solo from Bud and a good, if somewhat sluggishly-phrased presentation by Bird. Miles is very boppish, offering liberal doses of flatted fifths and chromatic chord substitutions.

*Buzzy*, taken through five takes, is distinguished mainly by Bud Powell's superior solo playing. One senses that Miles was never entirely comfortable with the mainstream bop idiom and

CHASIN THE BIRD, Beginning of Theme (fig. 13)



CHERYL, Theme (fig. 14)

nearly a decade later he commented on this earlier phase of his development in a Columbia Records Biographical Service press release (November 26, 1957):

*You don't learn to play the blues. You just play. I don't even think about harmony. It just comes. You learn where to put the notes so they'll sound right. You just don't do because it's a funny chord. I used to change things because I wanted to hear them—substitute progressions and things. Now I have better taste.*

This good taste begins to surface in the remaining Savoy sessions.

Bird was back in the Harry Smith studios on August 14, this time as a tenor sax sideman for a Miles Davis date. However else we might laud Parker, he certainly was not a great bandleader, as Miles, beginning with this session, would become. As session leader, Miles selected John Lewis on piano and Nelson Boyd on bass; Max Roach is retained from the regular Parker quintet. The compositions are all Davis originals and Miles took the trouble to prepare written charts and to hold rehearsals before the session—facts which help to explain his own very assured playing, the clean execution of the thematic material, and the small number of retakes. A new maturity surfaces in Miles's solo playing. Several of the same melodic gestures that appear in his *KoKo* date solos—auxiliary/neighbor note patterns, a fondness for thirds, ascending scale passages—re-appear here, but are used more judiciously. The tasteful use of silence and a general economy of relaxed expression now become identifiable Davis trademarks. This is Miles' date and he shines throughout it.

*Milestones* is a completely different composition than the epoch-making modal piece of the same title first recorded by the Adderley-Coltrane Davis sextet in 1958. This extremely attractive tune (with original chord progressions by Miles) has never achieved the popularity it deserves in the jazz repertory. It does, however, receive a thoroughly satisfying reading here in its

debut performance, with fine solos by Miles (exercising his prerogative as first soloist), a precise, but relaxed group feel, and a very nice, loose half chorus by Bird. The two complete takes each of *Little Willie Leaps* and *Sippin' at Bell's* are taken at brighter tempos and Parker's solos appear first in line. Bird's tenor work—if one can judge by these recordings and his only other tenor date, an appearance on another Davis session for Prestige in 1953—is rooted in his alto style, but is leaner, less aggressive, and generally less concerned with virtuosity. His relative inexperience with the larger horn would seem to account for the smaller, less focused sound and the occasionally flat intonation.

Miles' other original, *Half Nelson* (named for Nelson Boyd), is actually half original, the chords borrowed from Tadd Dameron's *Lady Bird*. Although *Lady Bird* itself would not be recorded until 1948, this piece, as well as at least two other well known Dameron compositions, *Good Bait* and *Stay on It*, originated in the early forties when Tadd was working with his brother in their home town of Cleveland. Here, as elsewhere on this date, John Lewis' fluid, legato piano is a joy.

The touring quintet of Parker, Davis, Jordan, Potter, and Roach played the jazz club circuit in later 1947—New York, Baltimore, Washington, Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, etc. The band had just completed the third and final Dial session in New York on December 17 and were now in Detroit where a Savoy date was arranged at the United Sound studios on the 21st. Perhaps the experience of working together for several months accounts for the high level of rapport and cohesion on this date or, maybe, everyone just felt good. In any event, this is top drawer Charlie Parker: beautiful tone, razor sharp execution, and flowing ideas.

The thematic material is held to a bare minimum. The first two titles are riff blues and the last two are pure improvisations

ANOTHER HAIR-DO (take 4), Theme (fig. 15)

AH-LEU-CHA, Beginning of Theme (fig. 16)

AH-LEU-CHA (take 2), Parker's Improvised B Section (fig. 17)

(with no theme) on the chords of standard songs, the whole lot requiring only twenty measures of new (and very simple) melody. Judging by the few number of takes and the very high quality of the out takes, the session apparently ran quite smoothly.

*Another Hair-Do* is a simple riff blues with an interesting wrinkle: measures 5-8 of the twelve-measure theme are improvised, a device reminiscent of Bird's familiar practice of improvising the B phrase melody of thirty-two measure AABA themes. *Hair-Do* receives three short takes (including Parker's beautiful four-measure ad lib on take 2) and only one complete take. The fourth master begins with two statements of the theme, measures 5-8 improvised by Parker the first time (fig. 15) and by Miles the second. The solos are excellent. Bird's shifting and irregular phrase construction is a marvel and Miles displays the beautiful tone and motivic development that became hallmarks of his solo style. The piece closes with a single statement of the theme, this time with Bird and Miles exchanging one-measure ideas in measures 5-8.

The two complete masters of *Bluebird* are both jewels. Take 3 includes an easy going, one-chorus piano solo by Jordan, but honors go to take 1 with Bird's cracklingly-articulated intro and Miles' subtle, refined solo. *Klaunstance* (originally issued as *Klausan's Vansen's* and copyrighted as *Klaun Stance*) goes down in only one take and his solos from everyone. Based on Jerome Kern's *The Way You Look Tonight*, Parker plunges right in, omitting an opening thematic statement. The use of Kern material for jazz recordings had become something of a sensitive issue since the Kern estate had caused Paramount to withdraw four Kern titles "inappropriately" recorded by Dizzy Gillespie and Johnny Richards in 1946. Given the situation and Savoy's general avoidance of standard song material, it is surprising that Lubinsky's cautious ears missed the lengthy quotation of Kern's original melody that concludes this performance. *Klaunstance* also is noteworthy for a formal device which Parker pioneered. In the penultimate chorus Tommy Potter and Max Roach exchange four-measure solos for sixteen measures. To my knowledge, this is the first recorded example of "drum fours", the practice of interpolating short drum solos of uniform length in an improvised chorus. The session concludes with three takes (take 2 is strangely terminated while Bird absolutely soars) of *Bird Gets the Worm*, a flashy, up tempo jam on *Lover Come Back to Me*.

Due to the American Federation of Musicians' second ban on recording it would be almost ten months before Parker recorded again. But 1948 was an otherwise very busy year. The quintet, with Kenny Hagood occasionally added as vocalist, worked often in New York at The Three Deuces, The Onyx Club, and The Royal Roost (from which several broadcast recordings survive). Bird traveled from coast to coast with the quintet on the club circuit, with Norman Granz's Jazz at the Philharmonic concert troupe, and as a single. On at least two occasions he appeared with Dizzy's big band in Chicago and in the Bronx as featured soloist. By the end of the year Parker had made his first recordings for Granz and Miles had left to form his famous *Birth of the Cool* nonette. Duke Jordan was replaced by Al Haig and Kenny Dorham was installed on trumpet.

The two final Savoy dates took place at the Harry Smith studios in September and are unique in that they both involve the same personnel of Bird, Miles, John Lewis, Curly Russell, and Max. Among these sides are some fine Parker compositions and one of the great jazz monuments, *Parker's Mood*.

*Barbados* is a handsome blues line played with a Latin feel on the first thematic statement and with a jazz beat on the second. Take one has good solos from everyone, but Bird apparently is hampered by reed trouble. A slightly faster, short take 2

and a relatively uninspired take 3 follow. The final and originally-issued master is a more driving performance, again with good solos all around.

*Ah-Leu-Cha* is Bird's only other contrapuntal composition. As with *Chasin' the Bird*, the *I Got Rhythm* chords in the key of F provide the harmonic scheme and the theme's B section melody is improvised. The first take is cut short by Parker with a loud "Hold it!" at the B of the opening theme. The second version offers a polished rendition of the A phrase theme and an exquisite B line from Bird. Note here a couple of prime features of Parker's rhythmic style: the frequent fragmentation of the line into short figures separated by silences, the discontinuous (as André Hodeir has termed it) succession of phrases of irregular length, and the continually varied subdivision of the beat—as in the very last measure where, although Parker's line avoids any syncopation and the notes fall on the beat, the quarter note pulse (♩) is successively divided into three parts (♩), two parts (♩), four parts (♩) and left undivided (♩). The piece also has a somewhat more adventuresome plan of solo routines than the chorus-by-chorus norm for most of Parker's recordings:

<i>Theme</i>		<i>Variations</i>	
A	A B A	A A B A	
8	8 8	8 8 8 8	
T pt-sax composed		Parker	

<i>Theme</i>				<i>Theme</i>
<i>(Short Reprise)</i>				A
A A	B A	A A	B	A
8 8	8 8	8 8	8	8
Davis	Lewis	Parker	2+2+2+2 (Russell-Roach bass-drum "twos")	T pt-sax composed

*Constellation* is an up tempo number, which, like *Scrapple From the Apple*, borrows its chord scheme from two sources: the A phrase harmony of *I Got Rhythm* is used for the new A phrase and the B section harmony of *Honeysuckle Rose* appears in the new B section. Again, the B section melody of the theme is improvised, but, in addition, improvisation also enters into the A phrase melody.

Take 1 is very brief and is halted after the first statement of the A phrase which consists of a repeated four-measure riff figure:

<i>Theme</i>	
A	[A B A]
8	stop
4	+
T pt-sax riff	T pt-sax riff

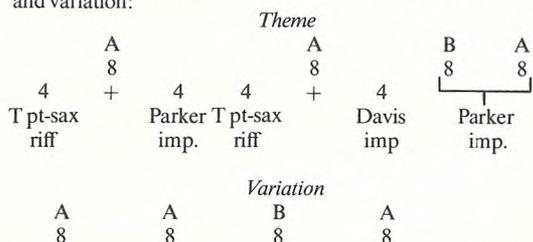
The plan is changed in take 2 and now the second half of the A phrase is improvised, first by Parker and then by Miles on the first repeat. This is followed by Bird's improvised B section. In the last eight measures, however, rather than repeating the four-measure riff figure/four-measure improvisation procedure of the first eight measures, Bird simply improvises the entire phrase and moves on to the second, entirely improvised

*PARKER'S MOOD*, Introduction (fig. 18)

*PARKER'S MOOD* (Take 2), Solo (fig. 19)

*PARKER'S MOOD* (Take 5), Solo (fig. 20)

chorus—thus creating an interesting ambiguity between theme and variation:



etc.

The same opening procedure is used in all remaining takes. Takes 2 and 5, the only complete masters, use a slightly different procedure for the last chorus or closing theme. Here the four-plus-four riff/improvised pattern is used for all three statements of the A phrase and the B phrase is improvised by Max Roach.

A great deal of Parker's music, both composed and improvised was rooted in the traditional form of the twelve-measure blues. The entire compass of his music ranges within this basic framework, from the complex and oblique to the simple and direct. One can surmise that the blues offered two contrasting possibilities or meanings to Parker: a familiar referential idea that could be elaborated upon in the "modern" or "progressive" manner and a cherished inheritance by which the tradition of the jazz past might be perpetuated and transmitted. As in all of Parker's best work, *Parker's Mood* exquisitely embodies both the progressive and the traditional in performances that, at the same time, are dazzling and moving.

Take 1 has the distinction of being the shortest master of this set, consisting only of the first two notes of the sax introduction (also used as a coda) that appears in the remaining takes. (fig. 18) Take 3 is another false start and take 4, after an almost too casual-sounding opening solo, is halted at the squeak in the sixth measure of Bird's second solo.

The two complete masters, takes 2 and 5, are *rara avis*. My preference goes to take 2, but each is a treasury of intricate detail and ballsy blues playing. Interestingly, similar short figures appear in both versions, the most outstanding being an aggressive, stuttering "signifying" lick that Bird often used in blues performances. Here it surfaces near the beginning of the second and fourth (after the piano solo) choruses in each take. (fig. 19)

The rhythmic subtlety of these performances is fantastic—the complexity of individual phrases, the staggered, not-quite-on-the-beat flow, and the remarkable interplay between Bird and John Lewis.

The final Savoy session concludes what might be termed Bird's "middle period" before he moved into the Granz stable. *Perhaps*, a medium tempo blues in C, is taken through seven masters. Along the way we get tolerably good solo performances in takes 1 and 3 before the theme gets pulled together in the last two renditions. Take 6 has very nice Miles and Lewis' idiosyncratic comping, but take 7 is the superior version with an excellent Bird solo.

*Marmaduke* is one of Parker's finest themes and strangely has been ignored by jazz players. The tune, although not particularly difficult, seems to have caused Miles some trouble. Takes 1 and 4 do not get beyond the pick up figure to measure one of the theme and in takes 5 and 8 Miles falls out of the ensemble on repeats of the theme's A section phrase. Bird is apparently dissatisfied with some of his own solo playing and takes 2, 3, and 7 are cut short. Although the last take was the original

(presumably because Miles gets through all the statements of the theme), take five is easily the better of the two with a terrific Bird solo which refines some of the ideas from take 2.

After one false start, *Steeple Chase* goes down nicely in one take. Both Bird and Miles take excellent solos on the *Rhythm* changes, Miles quoting, of all things, *Tiptoe Through the Tulips*. Our collection closes fittingly with two polished performances of *Merry Go Round*. There are wonderful solos from Bird, Miles, and Lewis, especially, in his chorus on the first take.

It is difficult to overestimate Charlie Parker's impact on the music of our time and, as Max Roach has put it so well,

*"Bird was kind of like the sun, giving off the energy we drew from him. We're still drawing on it. His glass was overflowing. In any musical situation, his ideas just bounded out, and this inspired anyone who was around...Bird contributed more and received less than anybody."*

Listen. And remember:

*"It's just music. It's playing clean and looking for the pretty notes."*

—James Patrick

James Patrick has taught jazz history at Princeton and Cornell Universities, and is Director of the Program in Jazz Studies at the State University of New York at Buffalo. He is currently writing a jazz history text for Schirmer Books and working with Morroe Berger of Princeton University on a book about Benny Carter.

## TALKING WITH TEDDY

**T**EDDY REIG is a big man. Physically big. He is also loud, outgoing, Runyonesque, Bunyanesque and many other things that words do not adequately describe. You have to know him.

Reig was as much a part of the 52nd Street scene as anyone but he was hustling on behalf of jazz and jazz musicians prior to the boom of jazz on the street. In 1948 he founded Roost Records, one of the finest labels of the next decade. In 1958 he moved to Roulette where he built one of the best jazz catalogues of the time. From 1958 to 1970 he produced all of Count Basie's LPs.

Today, at 60, he is still a very visible and vocal part of the New York jazz picture, but in the Spring of 1945 he was out of work.

**BOB PORTER:**

How did you come to work for Savoy?

**TEDDY REIG:**

Herman Lubinsky used to come to clubs on the street. He'd sit down at a table and pull out his big cigar and spread his contracts out all over the table but he'd never order a drink. He'd never spend any money in the club. This night he was in the Deuces—I think he was trying to get to Don Byas. And it was the same thing. So Sammy Kaye and Irving Alexander, the owners, threw him out on his head. I was sitting on the fender of a car when I hear this scuffle and Herman comes flying out the door with his hat flying off and somebody yells, "If you come back in here, I'll break your jaw." So I says to him, "Mister, you're crazy! You don't know how to deal with these people. Give me \$100.00 for four weeks and I'll make money for you."

**BP:** Had you seen him there before?

**TR:** Sure, he was known up and down The Street as a cheap bum! He'd come into a joint like The White Rose, spread out his contracts and have an office! He'd never buy a glass of water!

**BP:** You made him an offer, what did he say?

**TR:** He brought me out to Newark and we made the deal. That's how I started with Herman.

**BP:** When did you first hear Bird?

**TR:** It was on records. "Hootie Blues" with Jay McShann.

**BP:** When did you first hear him in person?

**TR:** At Monroe's. He was playing for tips with little Vic (Coulson).

**BP:** Where was Monroe's? What was Monroe's?

**TR:** Clark Monroe's Uptown House was an after hours place where the old Rhythm Club was. 132nd Street and 7th Avenue. It was a musician's hangout with a pool table and a bandstand. It was the headquarters when you were looking for cats. It preceded the Braddock. It was *the* after hours joint uptown.

**BP:** When you say after hours, what specifically do you mean? Did it open, say, at Midnight?

**TR:** After hours was what it meant. There were legitimate hours to run a joint and the license said you had to close at 4 am. Monroe's used to serve breakfast at 4 am and the action would continue until the money ran out or the folks ran out. There wasn't any business early in the evening because the clientele was working then. Remember that when we got off work the joints were all closed so we had to go to the unlicensed pubs.

**BP:** So you heard Bird first with Vic Coulson? Was he there most nights?

**TR:** It depended on whatever else was happening because



there was very little money for playing at Monroe's. See, Charlie had come from Kansas City and in those days you had to wait six months before you could transfer from one musician union local to another. You couldn't work as a musician so you had to take like odd jobs as a waiter or something just to keep going. If he could get another little gig he might not be there but if he needed money he'd be there every night! It was all based on economics.

BP: Was this during the time before he went with Earl Hines?  
 TR: Yeah, it was '41 or '42 maybe. Then he went with Earl Hines with Little Benny, Dizzy—all climbed with him—and they were in this band with Budd Johnson and, unfortunately, that was during the first record ban and nobody ever heard this band. That was a loss.

BP: Then he went with B and his band.  
 TR: Well there was a lull there for awhile. He worked Chicago for a while then came back to New York. He went with Eckstine for a short while then he came downtown and he had a union card. I don't know if he ever observed the transfer or like whether somebody pushed a few dollars and got him in. But by then the legend of Bird was here. He became a valuable attraction—not like the Beatles or something—but in those toilets on The Street where they held like 140 or 150 people, he could fill those rooms three times a night. Those were different times remember; it wasn't like you'd spend \$8 to go hear somebody. For \$8 in those days you could have slept with Bird—for a week—another \$2 and he'd throw his old lady in!

BP: Where did Bird work on The Street?  
 TR: He was in all of them! But I'd more likely see him at The White Rose on 6th Avenue, around the corner. That was where everybody tanked up before they went to work or between sets and that's where you got tight with everybody. I met my wife in The White Rose.

BP: Do you recall hearing Bird with any specific groups on The Street?  
 TR: He was around somewhere all the time. But The Street was unique! There was so much running around! There was like a nucleus of guys but it would change every week. One week the band would be say Don Byas with Oscar Pettiford and Dizzy. The next week it would be Dizzy's band but with the same guys across the street! So he played with everybody.

BP: What was Bird's connection with Billy Shaw? Is that where *Billie's Bounce* came from?  
 TR: Billy Shaw had a personal secretary named Billie Miller. An old, hard working and devoted second wife like. I think it was named for her.

BP: Did the first Bird Savoy records contribute to the gig with Dizzy at Billy Berg's?  
 TR: No, that was done before the session.  
 BP: How was the first session set up?  
 TR: Bud Powell was hired for the date but he went to Philadelphia. I went to pick up Bird at the Mariette Hotel on 7th Avenue. He was walking down the street with Dizzy and I saw them and I said, "Where are you two nuts going?" Dizzy says, "I'm your piano player." I says, "Where's Bud?" Dizzy says, "He went to Philadelphia to buy a house with his mother."

BP: Where was Argonne Thornton in all this?  
 TR: He was a spectator. He didn't have a union card. When we went out to get Bird's horn fixed and Thornton was at

the piano, the union delegate came in and saw him so he split.

BP: So your basic band was Miles, Dizzy, Curly and Max with Bird. Let's talk about this session since it was Bird's first as a leader and certainly one of his most important.  
 TR: Bird was having trouble with his horn. We tried everything to get it straight. Bird even poured a pitcher of water into the horn to try to get the pads wet. We had a big pool of water in the middle of the floor at WOR.

BP: This was Bird's first session as a leader. Did he seem nervous or ill at ease for this first date?  
 TR: Bird was in charge. Always. There was never any question about Bird. Everybody knew what he could do. He played with so much authority! He'd play things and all the guys like John Lewis, Miles, Dizzy, would run to the piano to check the harmonic progressions to determine whether he was crazy or right. And he was always right! He'd turn away and laugh.

BP: Back to the horn. Do you think that because the instrument was giving him trouble it affected what he played?  
 TR: Yeah, listen to the squeaks. It was obvious. See, now this (*Warmin' Up A Riff*) was Herman's idea. Bird was playing this to just check out his horn and Herman is screaming—"take it, take it." Listen to Miles on these tunes. You can really hear Freddie Webster. When I did the date with Rubberlegs (Williams) and Herbie Fields, Miles shows up with Freddie, who was like his coach. Freddie would take him in the corner and give him suggestions as to what to play. He gets better as the date goes on. Now this (*Thriving On A Riff*) has Thornton on piano and Miles is still getting better. Now Bird still isn't ready to play *Cherokee* so he plays this thing on *Embraceable You* and the horn is still giving him trouble. Dizzy is on this, you can hear those *Chang Chang* kinds of chords.

BP: Is this where you went out to get the horn fixed?  
 TR: Yeah, we went to 48th street off 6th, there was this little guy in the back next to Mannie's. He was Bird's man—he took care of Bird's horn.

BP: You went with him?  
 TR: Of course! You think I'd leave Charlie Parker alone in midtown? What am I crazy?

BP: So *KoKo* was done after the horn was fixed?  
 TR: Right. Now when we got back Miles was in no condition to continue. So Thornton is on piano here (*KoKo* breakdown). We had to stop it because they started playing the melody (of *Cherokee*). See, Bird would get money from Lubinsky for tunes so we couldn't play *Cherokee*. Then the union guy comes in and sees Thornton so he split. Now we got to figure out how to do this thing with no piano player. So Dizzy plays trumpet on the opening and then goes to the piano and we put in the drum solo so Dizzy would have a chance to get back for the ending. All the time this craziness is going on, Herman is yelling at me "what's the name of this," so I just yelled back at him, *KoKo*, K-O-K-O.

BP: How long did it take to get records on the street in those days? Could you get them out quickly?  
 TR: Sure, like if it was Paul Williams and we were going to follow *The Hucklebuck* you'd get them out in two weeks.

BP: Did *Billie's Bounce/Now's The Time* come out quickly? Was it a big seller?  
 TR: It didn't come out that fast. Probably the normal amount of time. It started slowly but it built. In maybe six months

it was like The Bible.

BP: Any other thoughts on this date?  
 TR: You can really hear how Miles was like a disciple. Bird and Max always had it. And that should be emphasized. Max was a giant—from the beginning. He was the followup to Klook (Kenny Clarke). But as we go through these sessions you can really hear Miles finding himself. Listen to Bird's entrances—immediately the garbage can cover comes off and out comes the funk! You can hear Dizzy becoming a piano player through the takes of *Now's The Time*. He becomes a little more sure of himself. You can hear where Moody came from on this (*Now's The Time*). If you had been at this session you'd be lucky to remember anything. I was like a policeman on duty—where's Miles, where's Bird, where's Dizzy? The only one who tended to be normal was Curly. Max stood around and took it all in. To him it was like a floorshow!

BP: Now we skip ahead to 1947. The session with Bud Powell.  
 TR: Bud was young and you can really hear the youth in Bud here. I remember Bud in '41 or '42, before Cootie's band, we took him to Brooklyn one night and he drove everybody crazy. He couldn't count bars. This tune was named for Curly Russell's kid, Donna Lee. Miles has really found his own style here.

BP: There are a lot of takes on *Donna Lee*. How did you determine which take to use?  
 TR: When I felt we had it, we'd listen to a playback and come to a mutual decision.

BP: Where was Harry Smith Studios? Was Harry Smith his own engineer?  
 TR: Harry Smith was the engineer. The studio was located in the penthouse above Steinway on 57th Street. And there was like a terrace overlooking the city and guys would go out on the terrace and get high. I had to play round up. Keep my eye on the terrace, my other eye on the men's room and make sure nobody got lost. Harry Smith wasn't a great studio. I loved WOR—Doug Hawkins was a great engineer—but you know Herman was always looking for a bargain.

Listening to Bird on successive takes is something. The disciples like Sonny Stitt, great as he is, don't have the ability to go from take to take like Bird. Bud plays with great authority on this session.

BP: Who named the tunes, Bird's original tunes?  
 TR: Usually me, unless it was one of Bird's weird titles like *Klaunevanstance*. But those titles like *Chasin' The Bird* and *Bird Gets The Worm* were mine.

BP: How about Miles session? How did that come about?  
 TR: Miles was ready and I wanted to show Bird on tenor because nobody had ever heard his tenor in Earl Hines band. Give Miles credit, he had to put up with a lot working with Bird and really, like we owed him this date because of all the shit he took.

BP: This session sounds more organized, did Miles rehearse?  
 TR: Right. Miles wrote out charts and had rehearsals. The first rehearsal, Bird went to The Braddock Bar and borrowed a tenor from Warren Luckey. I had to watch out for that tenor to make sure Bird didn't hock it! The second rehearsal was up at Nola's, which was over Lindy's, and had like a whole floor of rehearsal studios. Bird showed up without a horn but he found some young white kid hanging around and invited the kid to come listen while he used the kid's horn. For the session I think



Bob Parent

he went back to Luckey. But the whole thing is he hadn't picked up a horn since he left Hines, yet he sounded like he'd never been away.

BP: Bird doesn't play much on *Milestones*. How come?

TR: It was Miles date. There wasn't any thought that it would be all Bird. Miles really flows beautifully on this session. You know there is almost no Dizzy in Miles and it really is a tribute to his creative ability.

BP: *Half Nelson* was obviously named for Nelson Boyd. How about *Little Willie Leaps* or *Sippin' At Bells*?

TR: I don't know about *Little Willie Leaps* but *Sippin' At Bells* was named for Bells Cocktail Lounge at 147th Street and Broadway in Harlem. Miles used to live with the Bell brothers in a brownstone off Riverside Drive. They were all originally from St. Louis.

BP: What kind of contribution did John Lewis make to these and other sessions?

TR: John was like Clyde Hart a few years earlier. The musicians would go to him—Miles, Dizzy, everybody—and they'd have their little chit-chats about harmonies. John was pretty well educated.

BP: Any general thoughts about Bird on tenor?

TR: He just seemed to get better and better as the date went along. By the time *Sippin'* comes along he proves his mastery beyond any doubt.

BP: Now we comes to the Detroit date. How did that go down?

TR: This was the working quintet. They were in Detroit working the El Sino I think. At any rate they were staying at The Mark Twain Hotel. They were all stalling around before the date and I couldn't figure out what was going on. Then it came out that Sonny Stitt had been sent out on an errand and he hadn't come back. When he got to the studio the arithmetic wasn't right and Bird was mad. Sonny was sitting about five feet away from Bird and Bird just pointed the horn right at him. Just blew at him all day like saying "top that."

BP: Where did the title *Another Hair Do* come from?

TR: That was just Bird's way of saying it was the same old thing with a new look.

BP: Who engineered this date? Where was it done?

TR: The engineer was Jim Syracuse and his studio was in the living room of a two family house. The echo chamber was in the bathroom. We had a session there once—not with Bird—when somebody used the toilet while the cutter was going. We didn't hear it until the playback when all of a sudden you heard the water running, the flush, right in the playback.

BP: This session is one of my all time favorites. The blues on the first two (*Bluebird* later was the basis for Moody's *Last Train From Over Brook*) and then the themeless *Klaunstance* and *Bird Gets The Worm*. How did these themeless performances evolve?

TR: I told you about the problem with Sonny Stitt which made us a little late in starting. The group also had to play a matinee that day so we were rushed but the decision to do them that way was Bird's.

BP: Duke Jordan and Tommy Potter were in the band. Any comments about them?

TR: Tommy was from Washington and I knew him when he came up with John Malachi to work with Trummy Young. Duke was from Brooklyn. He had a thing I never figured out—he could push his glasses up while playing without missing anything.

Bird's entrances always remind me of *Hootie Blues*. He was right there—pow! Listen to this (*Bluebird*) Honky Tonk Willie! He's playing that right in Sonny's face. Who else in jazz will last this long? All this still sounds fresh—30 years later. Dave Garroway used to love to hear Bird play blues, any time he heard Bird he'd always request some blues. Listen to this (*Bird Gets The Worm*) and you can really hear Max and his contribution to the music. He'd get almost sadistic some times. He'd get behind a cat and really drive him! You have to play this at a slower speed to really hear the ideas.

BP: These two 1947 sessions were done while Bird was under contract to Dial. There is a handwritten note from Bird in the Savoy files acknowledging an option on Savoy's part for an additional eight sides after the *Now's The Time* date. What can you tell me about this?

TR: If you say it's there, it's there but I don't remember it. I'm pretty sure the original deal didn't have any option so it was probably Herman's way of covering up. I certainly didn't have anything to do with it. You know Teddy Reig—can you see me and Herman Lubinsky communicating by inter-office memos?

BP: The last two sessions were done in 1948 during the second AFM recording ban. It has always confused me about activities of record companies at this time because the first ban (August 1942—late 1943) was solid and virtually nothing was recorded. But it seems that the 1948 ban was a joke. The major labels were pretty much shut down but many of the smaller labels recorded right through the ban.

TR: The musicians came to the realization that they didn't gain anything by the ban. They didn't gain anything from the first ban. The musicians—the jazz guys—simply said the Hell with it and made records anyway.

BP: Did you have to be cool about it? You couldn't very well announce to the world that you were recording Bird?

TR: The delegates were so busy checking Leidercranz Hall or RCA on 24th Street that they couldn't cover everything. There were too many places to check. Like the studio in the back of Schirmer's with the one armed engineer where we cut the *Running Water* with Getz. You had to ride a freight elevator to get to the studio. Union delegates were gentlemen—they wouldn't ride in a freight elevator.

BP: So actually the documentation of 1948 is a bit more complete than the earlier ban.

TR: You have to remember that in the first ban there were very few independent labels. Maybe if there was a Savoy, a Roost or a Prestige, we would have gotten the job done. Maybe there would be Bird on tenor with Earl Hines.

BP: So Bird was technically still under contract to Dial during the ban?

TR: At that point Bird would not record for Ross Russell—ban or no ban—for personal reasons between him and Dial. Now Herman never had anything to do with Bird. When I wanted Bird I'd go find him at 118th Street and Manhattan Avenue. The dealings were between Bird and me. Bird was my friend and Herman was just the creep I was working for. Bird was always in money trouble. A lot of sessions during the ban were the results of guys needing money. Now I hung out with Bird, we were together all the time. I'm still cursing him out for taking all my Marcel Mule records. I had three copies of

the Concertina de Camera for Saxophone And Orchestra and Bird got every one.

BP: Where did the title *Barbados* come from?

TR: I had a friend in Brooklyn named Otto Wilkinson. Otto's family had a print shop and he had a little record section in the front. I used the place to get phone messages. I'd meet with musicians there. See I didn't go out to Savoy because it was impossible to be around Herman. My whole thing was based on letting the musicians do their own thing—to play the music they wanted. Herman was always after the buck. If Boogie Woogie was selling he'd want everybody to record Boogie. I couldn't work like that so I stayed away. If Herman was here today I think he'd admit that it worked. At any rate, Otto was from the islands and that whole Brooklyn scene had a lot of West Indian flavor. So *Barbados* was for Otto and that whole thing.

BP: Bird clearly asserts himself on the breakdowns from this session.

TR: Like I said, Bird was in complete charge. In a sense he made it easier for me because I could concentrate on other things.

BP: Was *Constellation* named for the airplane?

TR: Yeah, this was another fast tune and, at the time, the *Constellation* was the fastest thing out there. This is another example of where you should really play these things at a slower speed in order to hear all the ideas. This is also a good example of what Miles is all about. Hear how he plays fast without playing loud. That calls for tremendous control. Hear Max? He'd just breathe with Charlie.

BP: Would you comment on *Parker's Mood*?

TR: I loved to hear Bird play in this groove. I still get choked up listening to this—the way the man expressed himself! Now, for me, there were only two guys who could play the blues on alto: Charlie Parker and Eddie Vinson. Now Eddie Vinson was a blues specialist and he'd play the blues in the good old way. But Bird! He'd take the blues and play yesterday, today and tomorrow!

BP: That first take was so good I'm surprised you did another.

TR: Who was I to dispute Charlie Parker? You should be happy there are so many takes because it gives you more Bird to listen to. I don't think we'll ever hear enough.

BP: Next up is *Perhaps*.

TR: Hear how Bird floats out of the ensemble! Fantastic!

BP: Is Bird having horn trouble again?

TR: Maybe, I don't recall. But the thing to remember is that Bird listened to everybody and he'd wait for them to catch up. Most of these things were heads—no arrangers, no conductors, no batons. Bird conducted with eyeballs! Listening to this session you can hear how there was a serious side and a playful side to Bird. *Everything* comes out in his playing! Sometimes he'd get into nursery rhymes. Another thing is his vocabulary. He'll drop into an older groove for three or four bars and then leap right into the modern. Like shifting gears.

Bird was very businesslike with his music. He never prodded his musicians to get what he wanted but he was firm in that he kept going until he got it right. Then he'd turn to Miles-like a father to his son—and say “that was pretty good.” I can see him with the big suspenders and the sweat pouring off him.

BP: *Marmaduke*. How was that named?

TR: That was for Doris' (Bird's wife) cat.

BP: And *Steeplechase*?

TR: That was on account of the melody which was up and down. I guess horses were on my mind so that's probably where we got *Merry-Go-Round*.

BP: There is no theme on *Merry-Go-Round*. Were you rushed again?

TR: Yeah, I guess. There were a lot of takes on the other tunes. Max is great on this.

BP: Any final thoughts on Bird?

TR: You know Dizzy was over here the other day and I had to tell him, with all due respect to him, that I felt there would never be another musician as influential as Charlie Parker. Dizzy didn't say anything, he just smiled. I think it is still difficult for Dizzy to talk about Bird because he remembers the sadness at the end.

Bird came on us like a Prophet. If you look back in history, all the great artistic geniuses paid heavy dues. Some never received recognition until after they were dead. Fortunately we were able to hear Bird and follow him. Think of the disciples who had the opportunity to play with him and learn from him. Everybody who is anybody played with him. For me it was a pleasure and an honor to record him.

Everything in music comes from something else. There aren't any new notes! New rhythms, new interpretations, yes, but no new notes. So it was Bird the interpreter who really left a mark. He showed the way for Miles, Bud, Coltrane—all of it goes back to Bird.

He was always a friend. I was happy for him when he went with Norman Granz because I knew Norman would pay him good money and work hard to get him the recognition he deserved. He was my friend ever since I met him. It's hard to put my feelings into words. I'm not going to say anything derogatory about him because that has been blown up too much. That's all over now and all we have left is the music. That's Bird's legacy.

The funeral was crazy. The wives kept moving the body around from one place to another but then Dizzy got Adam Clayton Powell into the picture at Abyssinian Baptist Church. It was probably the biggest funeral ever in Harlem. I was one of the pallbearers. You've probably seen that famous picture coming out of the church where the whole coffin was on my shoulders. That was a sad day and that was a heavy coffin but if they had asked me I would have carried it myself.

(Teddy Reig was the producer of all Bird's sessions as a leader for Savoy. He also produced Miles Davis' first recording session included here. He is currently working on a book of reminiscences. The interviews here were done in several sessions during July and August 1978.)

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