

# Dan on Tadd Dameron

Producer: Hank Hehmsoth

[music]

[Dan Morgenstern] Tad Dameron, I didn't know anything very much about him, except that, when Don Redman brought the band to Denmark, and he brought the band to Europe, and they performed in Copenhagen, in 1947, that big band he had with Tyree Glenn, and Ynez Cavanaugh, And Don Byas, and Peanuts Holland. There was one brand new arrangement, which was called "For Europeans Only" and Redman introduced that:

*"Thank you. About two years ago in America, there originated a new jazz. We thought we'd bring along one such selection, to give you an insight, on what to look for in the future of American jazz. This number was composed by a young American named Tad Dameron, and I'm sure you'll hear more of him in the future."* "For Europeans Only" [band plays]

So that's an unusual name so it stuck with me. But in any case, Tad, of course, was one of the great arrangers in modern jazz in the bebop era. He did wonderful things for Dizzy's big band. "Our Delight" is one of them, which I, really, that's one of my favorites of his. And had a beautiful relationship with Fats Navarro, who quite possibly was the greatest of the bebop trumpet players..... Short as his life was.... I got to see a wonderful band that he had at the Royal Roost with Fats Navarro. He had two tenors [sax], I think Charlie Rouse, Was it Alan Eager? It was Alan Eager. The first time I went to the Royal Roost was again with the same girl, her name was Faye, who took me to the Apollo. With a girlfriend of hers who was also very pretty, and we had a table right in front. Between two pretty girls, one redhead, and the other black hair, [laughter] And, Tad, when the band got off, a break, Tad came over to the table and, I don't know under what pretext he, [laughter] he introduced himself. Obviously, it was the girls that attracted him. But I was able to tell him that I had heard the Redmond band in Copenhagen and that I remembered. And he was really thrilled by that, because that was the first one to ever tell him. I mean, he knew that was in the band's book, because he had written it especially for them. But as a priority he really wanted to know how it went how it was received. From then on we became friendly. And I got to know Chris Albertson. Chris and Timmie Rosencrantz shared an apartment which had belonged to to Billie Holiday. [laughter] It was on 95th St., right next to the Thalia and where now Symphony Space was then a movie theater, also. Downstairs it was a nice big apartment and Timmie and Chris, they were like the "Odd Couple". Literally, just like that! One was neat, [laughter] the other sloppy. But they used to have some really nice parties. And that's where I got to see Tad again, he was playing piano. They had little jams there. Those parties at Chris and Timmie's were quite memorable. Pete Brown was there once. They recorded Pete. Doug Dobell, I think, came over with the 77 label and they recorded at that. I was there at that session. It was too bad, because Pete was well past his prime then. He'd been so good when he was younger. And at that point Tad was hooked up with Maily Dufty. And Maily Dufty was a whole thing in herself. She was, Bill Dufty was the guy who did the Billy's biography. Tad played piano at these parties and stuff. And that's not why he was there. He was there as a guest, but, to play the piano.

There's that famous photo of Charlie Parker, in the kitchen, with the pans and pots hanging on the ceiling. Do you know that photo? That's her kitchen, that was her kitchen. She had been married to Freddy Bartholomew. He came to fame in the David Copperfield movie with W. C. Fields [laughter] and, Tad.....

It's a bit open to question whether she was good for him or not. Some people say no. Because he was ailing then. At one point he had wanted to become a doctor, but he found that he couldn't deal with blood. That was a turn off. What was the matter with him..., it turned out to be cancer. And eventually, after Maily, there was a very nice English woman, who actually had been a nurse. and someone who got with him and took care of him in the last stages of his life. He was an extraordinarily sensitive guy in terms of the music. He wasn't a great piano player. He was very good harmonically. He didn't have the most wonderful lively time. But he was very good, he was a very good accompanist. And he did beautiful things. Both he and Fats were very fond of "Out Of Nowhere". So he did, one thing is called "Nostalgia". It's a really beautiful take-off, on what you call a "contrafact", you know, a tune based on another . And the other "Out Of Nowhere" he did is a thing called "Casbah" which he also recorded. Symphony Sid played that constantly. It also used the voice as an instrumental element. It started out with the vocal thing. I can still hear it. I heard it so many times. Sid would play it every night. There's another topic, Symphony Sid... my God! [Symphony Sid on radio] "I'd like to introduce you to individually the great Tad Damron organization. First, the gentleman who is had so much to do with modern jazz, on piano, Tad Dameron. Let's give Tad a wonderful hand.." [applause] Tad had a moment of a little bit of limelight. He recorded for Blue Note. And "Casbah" was actually made for Capital. Which is why Sid played it a lot. Because he was plugging it and was getting "payola" from Capital. Tad, his music was the kind of "romantic aspect of bebop" that was in tune with his personality. He was special.....