



Bird & Diz

a bibliography

Edited by Dan Morgenstern, Ira Gitler and Jack Bradley

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Introduction

by Ira Gitler

Since the time that modern jazz, or bebop, emerged as the fully formed musical statement of an era, it has been referred to as a musical revolution. Revolution it was, to be sure, but, significantly, the music was the product of evolution. When Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie recorded "Groovin' High" in 1945, a musical manifesto had been issued, but it hadn't just burst into being; several musicians—men like Lester Young and Charlie Christian—contributed to it directly, and they in turn had their forerunners. On the other hand, if the Parker-Gillespie quintet wasn't the first group to play bebop it surely displayed the ideas and personality of the movement. And one of the great events of jazz history had occurred.

Benny Harris' comments in a 1961 interview reveal some of the thinking that went into the development of the new music. "We listened to Artie Shaw instead of Benny Goodman," said the trumpeter. "Goodman swung, but Shaw was more modern. We jumped on a record like Bobby Hackett's 'Embraceable You' (the 1939 Vocalion version) because it was full of beautiful extended harmonies and unusual changes. Bobby was a guitarist and knew his chords, just as Dizzy and Kenny Clarke knew keyboard harmony. And I think one of the big early influences was Teddy Wilson. We admired very much the way he made the changes, always picking the best harmony and putting new chords in all the right places. Teddy would do all that while playing fast and clean. Art Tatum was another musician we liked very much. Benny Carter, like Teddy, played long lines, and that appealed to some of us."

One of the reasons people looked on the advent of bebop as a revolution was the lack of communication with the public at a crucial time in the development of the music. The American Federation of Musicians declared a ban on recordings on August 1, 1942. There were no instrumental records made again until the fall of 1943, when Decca signed with the union and many new, independent labels sprang into being on the same terms. It was more than a year later when Columbia and Victor stepped into line. As a result of the ban, no mass audience heard Earl Hines's band, in which people like Gillespie, Parker, and Harris were playing the new music, encouraged by tenor saxophonist-arranger Budd Johnson and singer-trumpeter Billy Eckstine.

At the same time, a war was being fought—another "war to end all wars"—and while it affected the emotional climate and character of the entire period it also kept a good portion of our young male population away from the United States. Those who returned were completely unaware of the transformation that jazz had gone through.

The early 1940's was a time of experimentation in jazz, not in the form of analytic laboratory study, but in the field—in the free musical exchanges of the jam session. The modernist pioneers were injecting their fresh ideas into the formal contexts of the big bands, but that was not enough. The need to escape the strictures of large ensembles led to a great deal of after-hours jamming. "Sitting in" was of course a common practice, but the real developments were made when a coterie of musicians who were thinking along similar lines came together in jam sessions in order to try out their new ideas. It was a musically rich period, and soon New York's jazz clubs could boast that the leaders of a previous generation, such as Coleman Hawkins, were working alongside the modernists, helping to advance the new musical expression.

By 1945, the new music—first known as bebop and rebop, then finally as bop—was firmly entrenched despite the protestations of some older musicians and numerous critics. Even *Metronome*, a magazine that supported the new music, gave poor ratings to some of Charlie Parker's most important records. But the proof of a new musical form's power is the degree to which musicians begin to use it. By 1946, the influence of bop could be heard in the most commercial dance bands. The music had reached a peak of creativity and popularity in 1947-1949. Most of the greats had by this time established themselves with their fellow musicians and the jazz public.

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THE BEBOP ERA: Bird and Diz

The exhibit, THE BEBOP ERA: Bird & Diz, was presented at the N.Y. Jazz Museum from August 21, 1973 to November 9, 1973. It featured photographs, artwork, memorabilia, film and audiotapes of Charlie Parker (Bird) and Dizzy Gillespie.

A poster designed especially for the exhibit by LeRoy Neiman is available at the Museum's Jazz Store.

The exhibit is available for touring to educational institutions, museums, jazz festivals, community organizations, etc.

For information call Howard E. Fischer at (212)765-2150.

New York Jazz Museum

125 West 55th Street
New York, N.Y. 10019
(212) 765-2150

The Museum was opened on June 16, 1972, in its own building—a converted carriage house in the heart of New York City. It is the only museum in the world devoted to the entire jazz scene. When visiting the museum, you will not only learn about what has happened in jazz, but also about what's going on right now and what's yet to come. You can ask questions and often meet visiting jazz musicians.

Exhibits — relating to jazz greats and legendary places.

Live Jazz — featuring the greatest performers.

Films — on a regular basis featuring the top jazz artists.

Jazz Panorama — a unique audio-visual outline of jazz history (for groups only).

Archives — collection of rare recordings, tapes and jazz memorabilia.

The Jazz Store — featuring "hard-to-find" jazz records, books, periodicals and novelty items.

Jazz Touring Program — available to colleges, schools, community organizations, etc.

Membership — open to people of all ages who are interested in JAZZ, its history, heritage and performance. Includes many special privileges and monthly issues of "HOT NOTES," the Jazz newsletter.

