

JAZZ IN REVOLUTION

The Big Bands in the 1940s

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Jazz moved to a new and more intense level of creativity in the forties. Redefined and reassembled by a number of key figures, it entered what critics tightly tied to the past called an “impossible” phase—a stormy adolescence. No longer a charming, entertaining, ingratiating child, the comparatively sophisticated jazz of the forties challenged the listener and musician, motivating a complete reassessment of position.

The decade's changes offered but two options: one either dismissed the “modern” harmonies, melodies, and rhythms and the imaginative, facile players, arrangers, and composers who created this music, negating their need for self assertion and identity, and retreated into the comfort of the past; or one listened—a new experience for some—and came to terms with the times. For a surprising number it was difficult to accept the revolution. Battle lines were drawn. The traditionalists, including several leading musicians —Louis Armstrong was one—and those with contemporary inclinations found little or no common ground.

By its nature an evolving form, jazz had been undergoing modifications through the thirties. The next ten years, however, brought together the right circumstances and gifted, discontented people seeking to offer an accurate musical picture of the period and themselves—the components for rebellion.

In the first half of the forties the activities of a group of pathfinders had caused widespread reverberations. Against a background of global war, the opening of the atomic era, and the beginning of the cold war, America's adventurous young jazz musicians made sometimes abrasive, frequently memorable, even beautiful music. A product of experimentation and often lacking a sense of resolution, the new jazz was not for the timid, who favored the assurance, the consistency, the balance and completeness of fairytales.

The jazz of the decade expanded into relatively unexplored areas and introduced new techniques and ways of viewing, feeling, and playing. The music took on a bubbling sense of revival, typical of a period of great activity. And though it might not have seemed so then, the creations of this stormy, apparently self-contained ten years were very much part of a continuum —between accessible, danceable, pulsing swing and the sometimes seemingly chaotic free jazz abstractions of almost twenty years later.

In any discussion of the forties the names of Charlie (“Bird”) Parker and Dizzy Gillespie immediately leap to the foreground. Without their contributions and those of pianist Thelonious Monk, drummer Kenny Clarke, and others, the music made by both big and small bands would not have been terribly different from what was heard ten years earlier.

The strides made in the thirties had led to increased rhythmic freedom, more common use of harmonic extensions, the emergence of the long melodic line. Particularly in the Southwest, bands, including those led by Count Basie, Andy Kirk, Harlan Leonard, and Jay McShann, loosened up bigband playing, bringing to it much of the spontaneity of smaller groups. Their rhythm had the fire of the big cities, the relaxation of the wide open spaces.

Some players began to use chord changes as the base of improvisation, creating lines the changes suggested rather than merely varying and manipulating the existing melody. Pee Wee Erwin, a leading horn man in the thirties and a jazz historian, says you cannot pinpoint exactly when improvisation began to change. But it is certain that the work of piano wizard Art Tatum, tenor sax pioneer Coleman Hawkins, saxophonisttrumpeter- arranger-composer Benny Carter, and trumpeters Louis Armstrong, Rex Stewart, Red Allen, and Roy Eldridge provided the foundation of what was to come.

In 1930, “when I first came to New York,” Eldridge told critic Barry Ulanov (see Bibliography), “I was full of ideas. Augmented chords. Ninths. The cats used to listen to me.” Obviously he had inclined an attentive ear toward those improvisers who were into chord changes, chord alterations, and unusually creative modulations.

Things were happening in certain thirties rhythm sections as well. The drumming of Sid Catlett and Basie's Jo Jones brought a new flexibility, flow, and explosiveness, suggesting what Kenny Clarke would completely define a bit later. Clarke was at work on his ideas as early as the mid-thirties. In a 1963 Down Beat interview I did with him in Paris, he reported that in 1935 in the Lonnie Simmons band at a Greenwich Village club he had begun superimposing irregular patterns against the basic four and two beats to the bar.

As the thirties were drawing to a close, the music continued to march forward, given momentum by several visionary musicians. In the vanguard were Coleman Hawkins; Basie tenor saxophonist Lester Young; the guitarplaying Oklahoman Charlie Christian, who came to fame with Benny Goodman and brought a decided hornlike quality to his performances; and Ellington bassist Jimmy Blanton, who raised the bass to new levels of consequence as a rhythmic and solo instrument.

Also important in the transition to modern jazz were several other musicians, some based in Kansas City, including Dick Wilson, the tenor saxophone soloist with the Andy Kirk band; alto saxophonist Buster Smith, out of Dallas, who played with Walter Page's Blue Devils and the Bennie Moten band; pianist Clyde Hart; Basie trombonist Dickie Wells; and trombonist Fred Beckett, tenor saxophonist Henry Bridges, and pianistarranger- composer Tadd Dameron, who were featured with Harlan Leonard and His Rockets in 1940.

As usual, progress was not immediately embraced by fans and musicians. In an interview concerning his 1939 landmark recording of "Body and Soul," Coleman Hawkins commented:

Everybody. . . said I was playing wrong notes. A lot of people didn't know about flatted fifths and augmented changes. Of course, that sort of thing is extremely common now, but it certainly wasn't before I did "Body and Soul." (Arnold Shaw; see Bibliography.)

Hawkins, Young, Christian, and the others were among those who structured new melodies on the song's chord changes, who used a more erudite harmonic language, getting into extensions and alterations of basic chords that gave their work a highly expressive feeling, particularly to the trained ear.

Christian and Young, in particular, flowed more freely than their predecessors. Their improvised legato lines were longer, cooler, subtly accented. Their lean, functional sound tended to be airy, sometimes almost nonchalant, completely suited to their concept of improvisation. They avoided the dottedeighth and -sixteenth rhythms that had dominated and strictered the work of earlier players, and performed with understated but evocative drive and constant variety. The structure of their solos was consistently interesting. Both intelligently alternated sparseness with abundance of notes, the expected with delightful surprise. They were singularly adroit in handling harmonies, following inner personal needs rather than falling back on the habits of the past. With admirable elan they extended chords, often using intervals unusual for the period (ninths to thirteenth). Christian's and Young's rhythmic thrust, in combination with their 2 enviable ability with harmonic sequences, resulted in supple, pulsing improvisations rich in melody.

These musicians not only freshened and personalized jazz; they swung with unusual persuasiveness. But their influence had not yet become predominant by the early forties. As a result, much of the jazz being played was repetitive and somewhat monotonous, relying as it did on formulas.

Discerning musicians and listeners believed jazz should be brought back to a more flourishing condition. According to *Esquire's World of Jazz*:

As the decade of the Forties opened and the big band swing movement went into drastic decline, Duke Ellington publicly and vigorously stated his belief that jazz was badly in need of something new, that it needed some sort of musical blood transfusion to restore its waning vigor. At the time, the Duke's charge was held treasonable by those of his fellow titans who were smugly content with their music or too deaf to hear the anemic note that had crept into it. Yet anyone who cared to listen objectively could tell that jazz had fallen into a rut.

Jazz had to be enlarged beyond melodic formulas, a limited number of chords, and overly symmetrical rhythm and relatively simple syncopations. Musicians, particularly the young and restless, sought new ways.

As usually happens in jazz, significant people surface when the need is most pressing. In the forties Dizzy Gillespie, Charlie Parker, and their associates consolidated the jazz past with their own ideas, creating a contemporary music and movement.

Though Gillespie and Parker were primarily responsible for what happened to jazz in the forties, the new music was not really the responsibility of only two men, or the product of a particular section of the country. In retrospect, it is clear that new ideas surfaced in Kansas City, Oklahoma City, the Southwest, and later in New York. The music that would center around Gillespie, Parker, Monk, Clarke, and the others was suggested in the work of several musicians, unfortunately forgotten today. According to alto saxophonist Buster Smith, among those who quietly helped conceive the basic design of the forties rebellion were Detroit pianist Julius Monk, Erskine Hawkins' trumpeter Dud Bascomb, and the influential Freddie Webster, a trumpet man heard with Lucky Millinder, Benny Carter, and Tadd Dameron.

But every cause needs leaders, sources of strength and ultimate direction. Parker and Gillespie supplied both, and a central core of inspiration as well, for young musicians.

Gillespie first became known as Roy Eldridge's replacement in the Teddy Hill band in 1937. He experimented in that unit and on a 1939 Lionel Hampton record called "Hot Mallets." According to Leonard Feather in an article in *Jazz*,

...he had begun to stretch out; the phrases were longer and he'd begun to make use of melodic ideas that were unconventional. For example, while ad-libbing over a G chord he might play notes that would imply an A Flat chord before returning to ground zero; and while the rhythm section was working over a G 7th he might suggest a D Minor 7th before resolving to the incumbent chord.

The presence of Kenny Clarke in the Hill band certainly had its effect on the developing Gillespie. They were moving in parallel lines, Clarke expanding Jo Jones's work with Basie into a style that would work well with what Gillespie was getting into on his horn. Clarke's playing became increasingly independent, flexible, and responsive to what the music was saying. In small and large groups he made drums a contributing instrument rather than just a keeper of the beat; he colored the basic time by playing patterns between the snare and bass drums, superimposing these explosions or "bombs" against the pulse he established on his cymbals. The result was polyrhythmic percussion, which taxed the understanding of a significant number of musicians and fans and cost Clarke at least one key job. The dramatically propulsive, visionary quality of his work was lost on Teddy Hill, who fired him because he felt the drummer's methods annoyed dancers.

This was not unusual. Clarke, Gillespie, Parker, and those who eventually allied themselves with the movement often felt quite alone with their innovations. Many people, some quite accomplished—including Fats Waller, who one night at Minton's in Harlem made his position clear—insisted they were far off-course. But the modernists proceeded.

Gillespie made capital of the situation when his music began to take hold at mid-decade. He emphasized the more flamboyant, comedic aspects of his extroverted personality. People seemed more comfortable with unusual musical ideas if they were combined with equally uncommon accouterments like beards and distinctive clothing.

While passing through a variety of bands before teaming with Parker in the 1943 Earl Hines orchestra, Gillespie built a reputation as a character with a bubbling sense of humor. He consistently revealed in his music, however, that he was far more serious than his behavior generally indicated. At several points along the way Gillespie left recorded evidence of his intentions and goals. With Cab Calloway he recorded several solos, one of the most provocative of which is on his own composition "Pickin' the Cabbage." (See New World Records NW 217, *Jammin' for the Jackpot: Big Bands and Territory Bands of the Thirties*.) With Les Hite's band he recorded "Jersey Bounce" and with Lucky Millinder "Little John Special." (Unfortunately, nothing remains of his work with Ella Fitzgerald's band, the Benny Carter group, or the Charlie Barnet band.)

Gillespie's arrangements and compositions, too, illuminate the nature of his music, particularly such early-forties work as "Down Under," recorded by Woody Herman, and "Night in Tunisia," a minor-key piece of exotica that is now a jazz standard.

The 1942-44 recording ban declared by the American Federation of Musicians made it impossible to document for posterity what Gillespie, Parker, and their associates accomplished in the Hines band. But those who were on the scene say that the organization was a great incubator for modern ideas and for the development of players and singers, including trumpeters Gail Brockman, Freddie Webster, Shorty McConnell, and Little Benny Harris, trombonist Benny Green, drummer Shadow Wilson, pianist-singer Sarah Vaughan, and that champion of progressive music Billy Eckstine. Parker was greatly admired for his ability, but Gillespie was the band's leading light. He soloed a good deal, wrote some of the arrangements, and generally defined how and what the orchestra performed.

In the thirties Parker discovered a new way to work with chords and began to deal with extensions. According to Ira Gitler (see Bibliography):

While playing “Cherokee” with Fleet, he found that by utilizing the higher intervals of a chord as a melody line and using suitably connected changes with it, he could make the thing he had been hearing [in his mind] an actuality. As Bird put it, “I came alive.”

During this period, prior to his return to Kansas City, Parker was heard with some regularity at Monroe's Uptown House in Harlem. Back in Kansas City he joined an important transitional band, Harlan Leonard and His Rockets, for five weeks, playing with important musicians: facile trombonist Fred Beckett, former Basie drummer Jesse Price, and tenor saxophonist Henry Bridges. The drama deepened in 1939, when Bird became a sideman with the Jay McShann band, a deeply blues-oriented territory unit that made it nationally. The McShann group recorded for Decca and broadcast frequently, reaching people from coast to coast. “The alto solos on those broadcasts opened up a whole new world of music for me,” John Lewis remembers. Parker “was new and years ahead of anybody in jazz. He was into a whole new system of sound and time.” Alto saxophonist Sonny Criss felt that the alto man on the McShann records, specifically “Hootie Blues,” “had discovered a new way through the blues progression.”

Young musicians who admired Dizzy and Bird began finding one another in the early forties. Bandmen congregated wherever Parker appeared, with McShann and later with Gillespie and Ben Webster and on his own. Many people in music and show business, veterans and enthusiastic young alike, flocked to the now legendary sessions at Minton's, where Gillespie, Parker (for a while), Clarke, Monk, trumpeter Joe Guy, Charlie Christian, Tadd Dameron, and a number of older men participated in lively jazz symposiums.

The new music was beginning to register. The rebels had evolved something of their own. For a time, feeling it would be stolen or commercialized by white musicians, they endeavored at Minton's to keep it private, playing material with unfamiliar, tricky, or difficult chord changes to keep the out-landers at bay. For all that, those who attended evenings of music at Minton's and Monroe's in the first years of the forties, when Harlem still was a caldron of creativity, remember how exciting it all was. At Minton's Gillespie finally managed to put Roy Eldridge in the shade, if only for one night. Lester Young and Ben Webster engaged in a singular musical battle. And Bird turned everybody around, living up to the word of the jazz underground. Kenny Clarke told historian Ross Russell (Bird Lives!; see Bibliography):

Bird was playing stuff we'd never heard before. He was into figures I thought I'd invented for drums. He was twice as fast as Lester Young and into harmony Lester hadn't touched. Bird was running the same way we were but he was way out ahead of us.

The more conservative critics and musicians disparaged the rebels' efforts, making rather extravagant claims for older jazz and jazz musicians. But the curious and the discerning continued to go to the Harlem centers to check out what was happening. Duke Ellington made the trip several times. Ben Webster was so impressed with Charlie Parker that he championed his cause all over New York. The word spread. Along Fiftysecond Street, New York's midtown jazz thoroughfare, where modernists would soon find a home, “everybody was experimenting around 1942,” clarinetist Tony Scott says, “but nobody had a style yet. Bird provided the push.” (*Esquire's World of Jazz*; see Bibliography.)

Bird and Dizzy loomed over the highly important Billy Eckstine band, formed in 1944. The handsome singer filled his ranks with musicians into the contemporary thing. Gillespie was Eckstine's first musical director. For a time Parker helped establish the tone for the band by setting the pace for such other players as Dexter Gordon, Gene Ammons, Fats Navarro, Sonny Stitt, John Jackson, Shorty McConnell, Kenny Dorham, Miles Davis, and Tommy Potter. What had been initiated in the Hines band was developed into what would eventually be called bebop. The identifiable components of this music—unusual harmonies, sometimes fragmented and irregularly accented lines and rhythms, and more than a little double-timing—were there.

The records only in a small way document the power and flavor of this great organization. According to Dexter Gordon:

There was an unbelievable sense of commitment among the players. Bird and Dizzy meant a great deal to us. We realized the music we were playing was not only different but significant. “B” drew audiences with his singing. We made converts for the music. I think the band did a great deal to help bebop reach a larger public.

The Gillespie-Parker influence soon was strongly felt in other big bands, which still were the dominant medium in the mid-forties. Cootie Williams played modern material, including compositions by Kenny Clarke and Thelonious Monk. The Boyd Raeburn band, which at one time or another featured Gillespie, Little Benny Harris, trombonists Earl Swope and Trummy Young, bassist Oscar Pettiford, and drummer Don Lamond, used Gillespie compositions and those of other advanced writers, including Budd Johnson, Eddie Finckel, Tadd Dameron, and George Handy. Ex-Raeburn alto saxophonist Johnny Bothwell had a modern unit as well. Tenor saxophonist Georgie Auld, though on a Basie kick, played charts by Dameron and Neal Hefti and hired such incipient modernists as trumpeter Al Porcino, saxophonists Serge Chaloff and Al Cohn, and drummer Art Mardigan.

Woody Herman increasingly involved himself with arrangers and instrumentalists influenced by Bird and Dizzy, which led in 1945-46 to his most memorable band. With Herman were many in sympathy with the forties rebellion, such as trumpeter-arranger Hefti, arranger-composer Ralph Burns, trumpeters Sonny Berman and Shorty Rogers, pianist Tony Aless, bassist Chubby Jackson, drummers Dave Tough and then Don Lamond, and leading soloists Flip Phillips (tenor sax), Bill Harris (trombone), and Pete Candoli (trumpet).

Gerry Mulligan and Ed Finckel scores updated the Gene Krupa band, and soloists Red Rodney and Don Fagerquist (trumpets) and Buddy Wise and Charlie Kennedy (saxophones) kept the band that way. Buddy Rich followed the trend and took modern people 5 into his band, including Rodney and tenor players Warne Marsh and later Allen Eager, and played charts reflective of the times by Johnny Mandel and others. About this time, as well, Henry Jerome had a bebop band in Child's Restaurant in the basement of Manhattan's Paramount Building that featured tenor saxophonist Al Cohn and drummer Tiny Kahn and arrangements by Kahn and Mandel.

Pianist Elliot Lawrence, out of Philadelphia, became enamored of the music of the modern revolution and supported it in a band that provided an outlet for Gerry Mulligan's first boppish scores and the early work of Robert Chudnick, who became Red Rodney. Gil Evans, who understood the work of Parker and Gillespie very well, did much to turn the mellifluous Claude Thornhill band into a unit that spoke the contemporary jazz language with some authority. He was given considerable aid by an assemblage of players into Parker-Gillespie concepts, including the omnipresent Rodney, alto saxophonist Lee Konitz, guitarist Barry Galbraith, bassist Joe Shulman, and drummer Billy Exiner.

It became important in the middle forties for a bandleader to have a few bop scores in his library. Even rather commercial units—for instance the Hal McIntyre and Art Mooney bands—acceded to the way things were going. Like swing before it, bebop became a moneymaking commodity.

Of course the big-band performance of bop-influenced music gave the music currency. But a series of other events really made possible a widespread breakthrough for the modern movement.

Its change of New York address from uptown to Fifty-second Street and later to midtown Broadway was most helpful. Once established midtown—the first bebop band, headed by Gillespie, opened on Fifty-second Street at the Onyx Club in 1944—the music reached a less specialized audience. Then the press discovered it. And though most writers emphasized only its most flamboyant aspects, the music and its makers got space, and more people became interested.

That the music was being recorded—though mostly by small labels—was also important in fostering interest. The most significant of these recordings were smallband offerings cut between 1945 and 1948 by Parker and Gillespie together (“Shaw 'Nuff” “Salt Peanuts,” “Ko Ko”) and Parker with his own quintet (“Parker's Mood,” “Bird Gets the Worm”). (See New World Records NW 271, *Bebop*.) With the release of these sides it was apparent that the new music, though potent in big-band form, made its point best in small groups—quintets were especially favored—which more clearly exposed the unisons, contrapuntal themes and solos against polyrhythmic designs.

The Parker-Gillespie and Parker units made a point of playing tunes with interesting melodies and key changes and provocative chord sequences. The material ranged from blues to standards. Among the more popular of the latter were “I Got Rhythm,” “Honeysuckle Rose,” “Whispering,” “How High the Moon,” “All the Things You Are,” and “Cherokee.” Generally the song's structure was revamped. What emerged was a new, usually long melody line; even over the twelve-bar blues changes the modernists preferred a sweeping phrase to three four-bar segments.

The rhythm section, which gave the music its foundation, worked differently from its swing predecessor. The bassist was freer; he not only kept time but responded more readily to his musical surroundings, commenting and soloing with some frequency. Rather than playing four-to-the-bar, stride style, the pianist used his left hand to punctuate and suggest rhythmic direction. The drummer also performed in a more diversified manner than in the past, laying down the pulse but also filling in around it. The horn players, with equal sophistication, leaned to comparatively complicated syncopation, unexpected accents, off-center triplets, distinctive phrasing, and evocative harmonies.

By the middle forties a community of players, both black and white, began to grow up around Parker and Gillespie. Nurtured on Parker's and Gillespie's uptown and downtown New York appearances but most of all by their recordings, they first imitated their idols, then, moving more deeply into the music, contributed something of themselves.

Dealing with the new music was not easy, even for the young players. They had to achieve melodic, harmonic, and rhythmic competence and sophistication beyond that of the average swing-era player. Parker in particular intimidated and inspired his disciples. He was looked on as something of a superman and was revered and copied in almost every way.

Not only was the young generation confronted by demanding music and by criteria established by two musicians of extraordinary talent; they were also faced with a hostile music establishment. They felt alienated from the mainstream and drew closely together until modern music achieved acceptance; they behaved in an understated, "cool," almost withdrawn way, in contrast to the more outgoing older players. They viewed their music as the medium through which a strong contemporary image could be projected; they were concerned with the present and with making a sharp break with the musical men and mores of the past.

Conceptually they laid the foundation for the more outspoken, politically and socially aware musicians of coming generations by negating the tedious and unworkable formulas of yesterday. Their music was ambitious and mirrored their aspirations. It was not unusual to hear musicians of this period speak of Stravinsky, Hindemith, and Bartók and their effect on modern jazz, nor to converse with them about ultimate freedom for blacks and receive deeply thoughtful responses. Many of the boppers may have looked limp and relaxed to the point of sleep, but there were more than a few who lived extremely active inner lives.

By the later forties a working nucleus of players able to fill spots in large and small modern bands had developed, musicians who had assimilated much from Gillespie, Parker, and those close to them. And as the number of contemporary players grew and their language became more widespread, modern music itself gained strength and unity. No longer was it necessary to reach beyond the pale for older "sympathetic" players—like drummer Sid Catlett—as Bird and Dizzy had done on some of their early recorded collaborations. In the last five years of the decade there were enough adept young players to fill all the slots.

As a result, big and small bands more accurately reflected the period and the emerging trends. Dizzy Gillespie fielded an excellent orchestra featuring fine soloists and scores by Walter "Gil" Fuller, Tadd Dameron, and John Lewis that brought his musical ideas—including his interest in Afro-Cuban rhythms—into sharp focus. Woody Herman's decisively modern Second Herd, formed in Hollywood in 1947, made history playing masterful charts by Ralph Burns, Shorty Rogers, Neal Hefti, and Johnny Mandel and showcased such gifted soloists as saxophonists Stan Getz, Zoot Sims, Al Cohn and Serge Chaloff; trumpeters Shorty Rogers & Red Rodney; trombonists Bill Harris & Earl Swope, and vibraphonist Terry Gibbs.

The Stan Kenton band of the late forties modified its approach and demonstrated that bop had permeated most large jazz bands. One of the least rhetorical of Kenton units, it performed loudly but well, often with a strong undercurrent of Afro-Cuban rhythms and gave evocative support to such able soloists as alto saxophonist Art Pepper and trombonist Eddie Bert.

About this time two swing figures, Charlie Barnet and Benny Goodman, flirted with modernism. Their bands, while not as impressive as the Gillespie and Herman organizations, derived power and a sense of identity from their primary players and arrangers, all versed in the bebop arts. Arranger-composer Chico O'Farrill helped chart the way for Goodman. The soloists, notably saxophonist Wardell Gray, trombonist Eddie Bert, and trumpeter Doug Mettome, gave the former King of Swing a foothold in the present. Like Goodman's bebop experiment, the Barnet band had little commercial success. But it is warmly remembered for high-level performances of scores by Tiny Kahn and Manny Albam; solos by alto saxophonist Vinnie Dean, trumpeter Doc Severinsen, trombonist Dick Kenney, and pianist Claude Williamson; and Kahn's provocative drumming.

Most small bands of the last years of the forties were an amalgam of what had been happening throughout the decade. One of the key small units, a quintet headed by pianist-arranger Tadd Dameron, appeared at various Downtown New York sites. Its personnel list reads like a Who's Who of the period. Most closely associated with Dameron were trumpeter Fats Navarro, tenor saxophonist Allen Eager, bassist Curly Russell, and drummer Kenny Clarke. Though a product of the bop revolution, the group extracted positive elements out of the jazz past. Like Dameron, it had a sense of perspective unusual for such a turbulent time. What I remember best are Dameron originals-like "Our Delight" and "The Squirrel," a blues performed by the band with an enormous sense of swing, enthusiasm, and life. The players spoke individually and collectively in a manner that is difficult to forget. Their music, particularly the work of Eager, Navarro, and Clarke, sound as pertinent today as it did then.

As 1950 approached, what was though difficult a few years earlier was managed with considerably more ease. There also appeared more variation in style and approach. Pianist George Shearing, working with a quintet and relying on an amplified guitar-piano-vibraharp voicing, brought melody to the forefront over quietly stated rhythm. Music was more a comfort than a source of provocation. He commercialized bop to a point he achieved pop like acceptance as the decade came to a close. The heat of rebellion seemed to be abating in favor of cooler, more premeditated music.

The trend was implicit in the work of pianist-teacher-experimenter Lennie Tristano and his disciples. Tristano, saxophonists Lee Konitz and Wayne Marsh, guitarist Billy Bauer, and others expressed themselves in a linear, highly cerebral way. Playing with rare precision, Tristano and his colleagues made some Capitol sides in 1948, recently re-released on LP that in many ways predicted the direction taken in the first years of the next decade. The music, a matter of counterpoint, tightly stated unisons, and solos that sounded etched directly from the fabric of the thematic material, had a continuity of feeling and a sense of relaxation. But, unlike the music of a few years earlier, it seemed lacking in fire.

The direction was clear. At a Woody Herman recording session the same year, "Early Autumn," the final section of Ralph Burns's suite *Summer Sequence*, was committed to wax. It was a work of great beauty, combining an attractive theme, mellifluous voicings, well-crafted orchestral writing, and a flower-fresh tenor sax solo by Stan Getz. The major stir caused by the record offered decisive evidence that reflective music was coming into favor.

A series of recordings made in 1949-50 under Miles Davis' leadership by nine foremost musicians of the forties-including Gerry Mulligan, Max Roach, Lee Konitz, Al Haig, and Davis himself-summed up the decade. The music was out of the Parker-Gillespie idiom but expressed with the harmonic and tonal finesse and color pioneered by the Thornhill band. Arrangers Gil Evans, Gerry Mulligan, John Casrasi, John Lewis, and Davis kept a precarious balance between the written and improvised. The music was a fusion of personalities and ideas, a comment on what had passed and what was to come. Titled *Birth of the Cool*, it made a point for unruffled performance of well-made music that gracefully moved. Another phase had begun.

Side One

Bands 1 & 2

A-La-Bridges (Arr. Tadd Dameron)

Harlan Leonard and His Rockets: Edward Johnson, William H. "Smitty" Smith, and James Ross, trumpets; Fred Beckett and Richmond Henderson, trombones; Darwin Jones, Ben Kynard, Harlan Leonard, Henry Bridges, and James Keith, saxophones; William S. Smith, piano; Stan Morgan, guitar; Billy Hadnott, bass; Jesse Price, drums. Recorded July 15, 1940, in Chicago. Originally issued on Bluebird Bb-10899 (mx #053211-1).

Dameron Stomp (Arr. Tadd Dameron)

Harlan Leonard and His Rockets: Same as above, except Walter Monroe replaces Fred Beckett and Winston Williams replaces Billy Hadnott. Recorded November 13, 1940, in Chicago. Originally issued on RCA Vintage LP "Harlan Leonard and His Rockets," RCA LPV-531 (mx #053638-2).

Harlan Leonard, an accomplished saxophonist, had been leading a band in Kansas City and the Midwest and Southwest on and off for six years when, in 1940, Music Corporation of America (MCA) began to handle its business affairs. The Rockets were booked into some major spots, including the Aragon Ballroom in Chicago and the Savoy and the Golden Gate ballrooms in Harlem. And in four sessions in 1940 the group recorded twenty-four titles for Bluebird.

Though “A-La-Bridges” and “Dameron Stomp” give no clear indications of burgeoning modernism, these Tadd Dameron charts are competent, coherent, and, in the case of “A-La- Bridges,” particularly pleasant to the ear. “A-La-Bridges” is also notable for the integrated quality that later would identify his work. Dameron, who joined the band in the summer of 1940, had only been writing for about two years but already had composed “Good Bait” and “Hot House,” a variation on “What Is This Thing Called Love?” He would soon go on to writing assignments for the Jimmie Lunceford, Count Basie, George Auld, Billy Eckstine, and Dizzy Gillespie organizations.

These two performances show the transitional nature of the Leonard unit. Essentially a Kansas City-style swing band with a strongly pulsing rhythmic foundation, it provided fertile ground for some good players, notably Hank Bridges and Fred Beckett. Both are heard on “A-La-Bridges,” one of the band's best performances on record. The Rockets provide an agreeable muted foundation for Bridges, who, in a manner reminiscent of Basie tenor saxophonist Herschel Evans, melodically charms his way through the opening chorus and the closing sixteen bars. His sound is full-bodied, almost luxuriant. Beckett, a rangy, facile player who suggests the mastery of the modern players who would follow him, makes the best of his sixteen-bar appearance. “Dameron Stomp,” very much in the traditional riffy Kansas City mold, gets off to a moving start and retains a strong sense of swing through sectional interchanges, ensemble portions, and a series of short solos by James Ross, Bridges, Walter Monroe, and William H. “Smitty” Smith.

Band 3

The Saint (Gerald Wilson and Snooky Young; arr. Gerald Wilson)

Gerald Wilson and His Orchestra: Al Killian, James Anderson, Joe “Red” Kelly, and Hobart Dodson, trumpets; Melba Liston, Henry Coker, Robert Huerta, and Vic Dickenson, trombones; Floyd Turner, Maurice Simon, Eddie “Lockjaw” Davis, Vernon Slater, and Gus Evans, saxophones; Vivian Fears, piano; Irving Ashby, guitar; Red Callender, bass; Henry Green, drums.

Recorded 1946 in Los Angeles. Originally issued on Black & White 813.

After playing trumpet and writing for Jimmie Lunceford and the Great Lakes Naval Station band, which included such luminaries as Willie Smith, Clark Terry, and Ernie Royal, Gerald Wilson formed his first band in November, 1944. Within six months the unit was out on the road. Wilson recalls:

It was an “advanced” band; we were into all sorts of very contemporary harmonic and rhythmic ideas. Joe Williams was our featured singer and we had some wonderful musicians, like trumpeter Hobart Dotson, trombonist Melba Liston, alto saxophonist Floyd Turner and pianist Jimmy Bunn.

The band played a lot of theaters with Louis Jordan, a top attraction in those years, and did particularly well at New York's Apollo Theater and the El Grotto Club in Chicago. We made about 90 sides, for Excelsior, Black and White, and the United Artists label. “Come Sunday” and “One O'Clock Jump” were hits.

“The Saint,” a blues, is notable for the way it develops and moves. Wilson's venturesome orchestral thinking mixes splashes of ensemble and sectional color and makes excellent use of dynamics. By this time Wilson had fallen under the influence of Parker and had begun to translate, with enviable success, the modern saxophonist's ideas to the big band.

After an introduction and four bars by Red Callender that set the tone, “The Saint” unfolds, in an unimpeded rhythmic flow, through a series of twelve-bar sequences. The chief soloist is Maurice Simon, for whom the piece was named (“Simon [Templar]” is the name of the fictional detective known as the Saint). Simon has two and a half choruses. After his commentary and two bars more of bass, “The Saint” is a group effort. The sections and the full orchestra are showcased playing the blues in a language, particularly in its harmonies, that is contemporary even today.

“On this and other recordings of the period, 'Dissonance in Blues,' for example, we got into some interesting harmonic areas. I believe I introduced the use of raised ninths in the large jazz band,” Wilson says. “I had been involved with unusual harmonies for some time. Our version of Dizzy Gillespie's 'Groovin' High' featured augmented elevenths.”

Bands 4 & 5

Elevation (Arr. Elliot Lawrence)

Elliot Lawrence and His Orchestra: Joe Techner, Johnny Dee, and Jimmy Padget, trumpets; Sy Berger, Vince Forrest, and Chuck Harris, trombones; Bill Danzien, trumpet and French horn; Joe Soldo, Louis Giamo, Phil Urso, Bruno Rondelli, and Merle Bredwell, saxophones; Elliot Lawrence and Bob Karch, pianos; Tommy O'Neill, bass; Howie Mann, drums.

Recorded April 13, 1949, in New York. Originally issued on Columbia 38497 (mx #CO 40656).

Five O'Clock Shadow (Arr. Elliot Lawrence)

Elliot Lawrence and His Orchestra: Alec Fila, Johnny Dee, and Ralph Clemson, trumpets; Frank Rodowicz, Joe Verrechico, and Tony Lala, trombones; Ernie Angelucci, French horn; Mitch Miller, oboe; Harold Goldozer, bassoon; Ernie Cantonucci, Mike Giamo, Jerry Fields, Andy Pino, and Mike Donic, saxophones; Elliot Lawrence and Mike D'Aquila, pianos; Hy White, guitar; Andy Riccardi, bass; Max Spector, drums. *Recorded May 12, 1946, in New York. Originally issued on Columbia 37084 (mx #CO 36271).*

In 1944, shortly after graduating from the University of Pennsylvania, the young pianist-arranger-conductor Elliot Lawrence took over as musical director of station WCAU in Philadelphia and developed an excellent band devoted to contemporary jazz. Before long the group was heard on radio by big-band devotee and critic George T. Simon, who raved about it in *Metronome*, the widely read music magazine.

By 1946 the band was in New York, playing the Cafe Rouge of the Hotel Pennsylvania and recording for Columbia. Lawrence recalls:

We had gotten into bop-influenced music while in Philadelphia. Gerry Mulligan, one of our chief arrangers, insisted upon it, so did trumpeter Red Rodney, who was quite taken with Charlie Parker.

“Five O’Clock Shadow,” arranged by Lawrence, documents the bandleader’s interest in bop. The twenty-four-bar theme, the figures played by the band, and even Lawrence’s commentary at the piano stem from what Parker and Gillespie were doing.

Like many early bop pieces, this unresolved-sounding composition brings into play extensions of basic chords. During the course of the performance one hears Lawrence dabbling with the famed flatted fifth, so strongly associated with bop. Max Spector indicates a grasp of the basics of bop percussion by breaking the rhythmic flow with offbeat accents and explosions. Of the soloists—Andy Pino, Alec Fila, and Joe Verrechico—only Pino seems to respond to the music in a contemporary way. Some of the interesting intervals he plays during his solo reflect an involvement with up-to-date concepts. The performance overall, however, has a novelty feel to it. The band and the solo players don’t seem to be completely into the techniques and implications of the new music.

On “Elevation,” Gerry Mulligan’s treatment of the blues, the band gives every indication of having matured and fully come to terms with the sounds and rhythms, the language of modern jazz. The score is lean, harmonically interesting (using ninths, sevenths, and augmented elevenths), and compactly made. Based on a long, sweeping twelve-bar line over blues changes, it allows sufficient room for soloists Phil Urso, Vince Forrest, Joe Techner, Lawrence, and Howie Mann to have their say. Excellent ensemble writing tightly links thematic material and solos, giving the work flow and a strong pulse. According to Lawrence:

I believe we got such an excellent performance of “Elevation” because the guys in the band were so happy to have a chance to record it. The company was a little leery about letting us do it. Columbia executives wanted to develop interest in our ballad things rather than our jazz arrangements and soloists.

Band 6

Good Jelly Blues

Billy Eckstine and His Orchestra: Dizzy Gillespie, Freddie Webster, Shorty McConnell, and Al Killian, trumpets; Trummy Young, Claude Jones, and Howard Scott, trombones; Jimmy Powell, Budd Johnson, Wardell Gray, Thomas Crump, and Rudy Rutherford, saxophones; Clyde Hart, piano; Connie Wainwright, guitar; Oscar Pettiford, bass; Shadow Wilson, drums.

Recorded April 13, 1944, in New York. Originally issued on Deluxe De- 2000 (mx #108).

A bebop laboratory in which Dizzy Gillespie and other members of the modern movement worked out their music from 1944 to 1947, the Billy Eckstine band helped change the face of jazz and the habits of the American public. It moved people away from dancing—though Eckstine's vocal things were usually danceable—and motivated many to just listen. “We weren't trying to be commercial,” the singer asserted in an interview in the British jazz weekly, *Melody Maker*. “We were busy experimenting with new chords and effects.”

The Eckstine band made its debut in June, 1944. Two months earlier an Eckstine pick-up band featuring many incipient beboppers, including Gillespie and Oscar Pettiford, recorded three sides. All the sides—“Good Jelly Blues” among them—incorporated ideas that had been developing in the Earl Hines band and more recently in the Gillespie- Pettiford group on Fifty-second Street.

“Good Jelly Blues” is a follow-up to (indeed something of a paraphrase of) the Eckstine- Earl Hines hit “Jelly, Jelly.” In Gillespie's arrangement the song, a traditional blues in form, becomes a commentary on what was going on in the boppers' minds. The now famous introduction later appeared on the Dizzy-Bird recording of “All the Things You Are” done February 25, 1945, and on subsequent Parker versions of the song. From the intro on, the Gillespie influence is quite undeniable. The double-timing, the trumpet figures, and almost all the instrumental responses to the blues lyrics are right out of the bebop bag. Incidentally, one of the fragments behind Eckstine eventually became “High on an Open Mike,” as recorded by saxophonist Charlie Ventura.

“Good Jelly Blues” is a potent comment on what was happening in 1944 and pointed the way jazz was going. It is also something of a paradox. An attempt on Eckstine's part to please the people with a familiar theme, it is simultaneously a stark reflection of the revolution that was taking place in jazz.

Band 7

Mingus Fingers (Charles Mingus)

Lionel Hampton and His Orchestra: Wendell Culley, Duke Garrett, Walter Williams, Teddy Buckner, and Leo Sheppard, trumpets; James Robinson, Andrew Penn, Jimmy Wormick, and Britt Woodman, trombones; Jack Kelson, Bobby Plater, Ben Kynard, Morris Lane, Johnny Sparrow, and Charles Fowkes, reeds; Lionel Hampton, vibraharp; Milt Buckner, piano; Billy Mackell, guitar; Joe Comfort and Charles Mingus, basses; Earl Walker, drums.

Recorded November 10, 1947, in Los Angeles. Originally issued on Decca De 24428 (mx #L4544).

“I play and write me, the way I feel,” Charles Mingus once told Nat Hentoff (in an article in *Stereo Review*), adding: “And I'm changing all the time.” He told another key jazz journalist: “Writing comes natural. I heard things in my head—then I'd find them on the piano. Jazz to me was Duke and church but I thought all music was one . . . jazz, symphony.”

“Mingus Fingers,” the bassist-arranger-composer's recording debut, is a showcase for his instrumental virtuosity and compositional ideas. Very much a composite of tendencies and interests, in a multiplicity of colors, it indicates that Mingus had been listening to Bird and Dizzy and Duke and a variety of adventurous concert composers.

One of the basic impulses here is bebop. But “Mingus Fingers” goes beyond that. The composer puts together chords in particularly evocative combinations in an expansive conception. The work goes in several directions at once. It is episodic, experimental, and imaginative up through its bitonal closing.

Mingus makes himself felt. Indeed he changes the character of the Hampton orchestra, which seldom played thought provoking compositions. Even Hamp's conception of a solo is affected here, and sounds more like Milt Jackson than himself.

This is a landmark composition, not so much for its basic excellence as for what it implies will be coming from Charles Mingus.

Band 8

Donna Lee (Charlie Parker; arr. Gil Evans)

Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra: Louis Mucci, Red Rodney, and Eddie Zandy, trumpets; Allan Langstaff and Tak Takvorian, trombones; Sandy Siegestein and Fred Schmidt, French horns; Bill Barber, tuba; Danny Polo, Lee Konitz, Mickey Folus, Mario Rollo, and Bill Bushey, reeds; Claude Thornhill, piano; Barry Galbraith, guitar; Joe Shulman, bass; Billy Exiner, drums.

Recorded November, 1947, in New York. Originally issued on Harmony HL-7088 (mx #CO38337).

Claude Thornhill was a man of vision who desired to move music forward. He experimented with dance-band instrumentation through the forties, introducing instruments associated with concert ensembles— piccolo, French horn, tuba—and new, sometimes opulent sounds to popular music.

When Thornhill arranger Gil Evans became deeply immersed in the music of Charlie Parker in the mid-forties, the bandleader gave him the freedom to fashion scores that mirrored Parker's advances. The result was a series of recordings, including "Thrivin' on a Riff," "Robbins' Nest," "Lover Man," "Anthropology," and "Donna Lee," most of which were issued by Columbia.

Displaying unusual finesse and understanding for his materials, Evans cogently adapted the music of the modernists to the instrumentation of the Thornhill band. He accurately and sensitively captured the linear movement and essential qualities of the new music while giving it the weight and color resources of the orchestra.

"Donna Lee," a Charlie Parker invention (sometimes attributed to Miles Davis) based on "Back Home in Indiana," is a fine example of Evans' arranging expertise and knowledge of bebop. It exploits the possibilities of the Thornhill band while emphasizing the suppleness of the music.

Thornhill, the first soloist, plays a chorus over flowing rhythm. A stark statement of the theme by a minimum of instruments, strongly reminiscent of the original Parker- Davis unison, sets the stage for a series of solos by Tak Takvorian, Mario Rollo, and Barry Galbraith, which inevitably lead to restatement of the original theme. The modernism of the solos, with the exception of Galbraith's, is questionable. But the music surrounding them, particularly sixteen bars of extraordinary ensemble writing preceding Galbraith's appearance, indicates that Evans worked with contemporary jazz from the inside. That half chorus alone is a measure of Evans' excellence.

Side Two

Band 1

Perdido (Juan Tizol)

Ben Webster Quartet: Ben Webster, saxophone; Marlowe Morris, piano; John Simmons, bass; Sid Catlett, drums.

Recorded March 25, 1944, in New York. Originally issued on Session 10-010 (mx #170).

Ben Webster had a wide range of jazz experience, performing in territorial bands when Kansas City was at its height, then working with Fletcher Henderson, and from 1939 to 1943 making an international name with Duke Ellington. After leaving Ellington he played in New York on Fiftysecond Street and paid close attention to the rebels of the period, notably Charlie Parker.

During the years on the Street, Webster often worked with Sid Catlett, a great drummer much admired by his colleagues, who was at home in almost any type of band. Catlett played with unusual grace and insight but without calling too much attention to himself. Most important, he truly listened to what was going on around him and contributed an extra dimension to the music. "He reined in the obstreperous, pushed the laggardly and celebrated the inspired," *New Yorker* critic Whitney Balliett once very accurately declared.

"Perdido" is one of several excellent recordings Webster, Catlett, Marlowe Morris, and John Simmons made together that show what was happening on the Street during the first years of bop.

As always, Webster remains very much an individual, offering his own version of Coleman Hawkins' warm, almost luxuriant style. After an eight-bar rhythm-section intro, half in 4/4, half in 3/4, the rhythm players shift gears and establish a 2/4 feeling as Webster plays the theme. He follows with a relaxed chorus of variations in straight 4/4. Catlett keeps the timing kicking and moving, providing color as well as pulse. He unobtrusively buoys up Morris, who solos in the manner of the early boppers, emphasizing the single line in the right-hand doubletime passages. Simmons is heard for eight bars before Webster returns to announce the theme in the manner of the opening.

Band 2

Zonky (Andy Razaf and Thomas “Fats” Waller; arr. Gil Evans)

Six Men and a Girl: Earl Thomson, trumpet; Buddy Miller, clarinet; Dick Wilson, tenor saxophone; Mary Lou Williams, piano; Floyd Smith, guitar; Booker Collins, bass; Ben Thigpen, drums.

Recorded January 26, 1940, in New York. Originally issued on Varsity 8190 (mx #US1319- 1).

A septet out of the Andy Kirk band elaborates in the informal manner of the jam session on a relatively undistinguished Andy Razaf-Fats Waller thirty-two-bar song. The essential simplicity of the performance, the nature of the solos, and the little riff at the close suggest the thirties and swing.

Mary Lou Williams and Dick Wilson bring “Zonky” a degree of interest and dimension it would not otherwise have. They are the only soloists who are at ease with the brisk tempo— unusually fast for the period— and who structure their comments with conciseness and a feeling of involvement.

Within the space of a chorus Williams generates a great sense of swing. Her ideas move one into the other without pause, and she seems very much in control as she lends almost tangible excitement to this effort. Stylistically she reminds one of Teddy Wilson at his most concentrated.

Dick Wilson, who was considered quite advanced for the time, died in 1941 at thirty before fulfilling his great promise. His recorded performances with the Kirk band— “Walkin' and Swingin',” “Bearcat Shuffle,” “Christopher Columbus”—fall between the warmth and buoyancy of Herschel Evans and the cooler abstraction of Lester Young. In “Zonky” Wilson consistently builds through his two choruses (actually one chorus plus twenty-four bars), reaching a memorable level on the bridge of the second. His continuity and rhythm are arresting.

Bands 3 & 4

Tea for Two (Vincent Youmans and Irving Caesar; arr. Gil Evans)

Joe Mooney Quartet: Joe Mooney, vocal and accordion; Andy Fitzgerald, clarinet; Jack Hotop, guitar; Gate Frega, bass.

Recorded December 30, 1946, in New York. Originally issued on Decca 23842 (mx #W73769).

I Can't Get Up the Nerve (George Weiss and Bennie Benjamin)

Joe Mooney Quartet: Same as above. *Recorded April 21, 1947, in New York. Originally issued on Decca 23909 (mx #W73769).*

Joe Mooney got the idea for the quartet that brought him fame while in the hospital recovering from an automobile accident that resulted in the loss of his sight. According to Andy Fitzgerald:

The group was together between October 1945 and 1948. There were no charts, only “head” arrangements, in the real sense of the word. We were into free-blowing, jazz conversation, a salon style. Of course some of the unison lines, counterpoint, opening and closing themes were memorized, but the improvised choruses always were different.

Intimacy was our thing. We all were an extension of Joe's playing and singing. The group was like school. We were learning all the time. The harmonies were very modern for the time. I believe Joe was something of a visionary when it came to harmonic thinking in popular music.

“Tea for Two” and the George Weiss-Bennie Benjamin tune “I Can't Get Up the Nerve” provide two views of the unit.

The first reveals how very personal a stamp Mooney could put on material. He makes something of a hip fairy tale out of the Vincent Youmans-Irving Caesar soft-shoe favorite, combining a fetching delivery of the original lyrics with wry variations on them and quietly interesting instrumental performances.

"I Can't Get Up the Nerve" documents the quartet's open, warm, romantic side. Mooney, singing in that yearning way of his, is spotlighted while his associates surround him with a cushion of sound. His accordion work on both songs is ear-catching. There were very few accordionists playing with his finesse and imagination in the forties, particularly in jazz.

Band 5

Mellow Mood

(Dodo Marmarosa) Dodo Marmarosa Trio: Dodo Marmarosa, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Jackie Mills, drums.

Recorded January 11, 1946, in Hollywood. Originally issued on Atomic 225 (mx #225A).

Dodo Marmarosa's performances in the forties, on his own and with Charlie Parker, Lester Young, Lem Davis, Lucky Thompson, Teddy Edwards, Howard McGhee, and the big bands of Charlie Barnet, Boyd Raeburn, Artie Shaw, Gene Krupa, and Tommy Dorsey, excited the jazz community. His playing spanned a number of styles, was simultaneously historical and contemporary. He was the perfect transitional figure.

Marmarosa surfaced and blossomed during the forties and then slipped into obscurity. Only rarely since has he recorded and made major public appearances. One wonders if he would have fulfilled the possibilities implicit in his early work.

"Mellow Mood," a relaxed, highly melodic Marmarosa composition, was recorded at the zenith of his creativity. The performance brings into focus his admirable technique, discipline, and buoyant spirit. Over the record's three choruses I was consistently impressed by the high level of his work and by how well the players worked and thought together.

After a colorful eight-bar intro Marmarosa states the thirty-two-bar theme, mostly in close block harmonies, over a quiet yet persuasive brush pulse. The bridge has its individual sense of color. Marmarosa's improvised chorus illuminates his roots in swing-stride piano, his ability to structure tight, provocative harmonies, and his facility with the burgeoning bop style. The last is particularly apparent in the bridge and the final eight of his chorus, where his comments are hornlike, the single line—with shifting accents—predominant. Ray Brown's sixteen-bar solo, memorable for a series of frighteningly well-executed triplet figures, leads directly into Marmarosa on the bridge and the final trio statement of the theme in the last eight bars.

The record is important for the unity and relaxation and good feeling of the performance and for the introduction of a chordal approach that would be used to greater commercial advantage by George Shearing. Most important, it catches a significant jazz musician making a statement that worked then and has aged well.

Band 6

Royal Roost (Kenny Clarke; arr. Walter "Gil" Fuller)

Kenny Clarke and His 52nd Street Boys: Fats Navarro and Kenny Dorham, trumpets; Ray Abramson, Eddy DeVertevill, and Sonny Stitt, saxophones; Bud Powell, piano; John Collins, guitar; Al Hall, bass; Kenny Clarke, drums.

Recorded September 5, 1946, in New York. Originally issued on Swing 244 (France)(mx #D6VB2795).

"Royal Roost," a boppish blues by Kenny Clarke arranged by Walter "Gil" Fuller, is dedicated to a Broadway basement niter that successfully presented modern jazz. A cut-down version of the Dizzy Gillespie orchestra, the group retains some of the flavor of the larger organization. The players, all stylistically in Gillespie's or Parker's debt—with the possible exception of Al Hall and John Collins—offer a performance that is unified in conception. From the scene-setting four-bar intro by Bud Powell on, this is bebop as it was in the mid-forties. The rather staccato blues theme solidifies the impression, and the series of solos completes a homogeneous picture.

The enormously talented Powell leads off with two excellent choruses notable for their linear quality, varied accentuation, and rhythmic thrust. With Powell providing chordal direction, Eddy DeVertevill plays a chorus on baritone, followed by four alternating choruses by Fats Navarro and Kenny Dorham, with Navarro—the more mature and technically more accomplished—leading off. Hall walks through a chorus, then Sonny Stitt and Ray Abramson, on alto and tenor respectively, add a chorus each before the performance concludes with statement of the opening theme.

Band 7

The Chase (parts I and II) (Dexter Gordon)

Dexter Gordon-Wardell Gray Quintet: Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray, tenor saxophones; Jimmy Bunn, piano; Red Callender, bass; Chuck Thompson, drums. *Recorded June 12, 1947, in Hollywood. Originally issued on Dial 1017 (mx #s D1083D & D1084D).*

In the jam session, long the chief competitive arena for jazzmen, musicians do battle, hoping to emerge victorious by virtue of their invention and general excellence. The friendly-adversary relationship between Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray, both strongly influenced by Lester Young and Charlie Parker, was born at a Los Angeles after-hours place called Jack's Basket and at other sessions in the area during the middle forties. As Gordon told critic Ira Gitler (See Bibliography)

There'd be a lot of cats on the stand, but by the end of the session, it would wind up with Wardell and myself. "The Chase" grew out of this. Wardell was a very good saxophonist who knew his instrument well. His playing was very fluid, very clean. Although his sound wasn't overwhelming, he always managed to make everything interesting, very musical. I always enjoyed playing with him. He had a lot of drive and a profusion of ideas. He was very stimulating to me.

The great excitement of the Gordon-Gray duels certainly was the motivation factor for recording "The Chase," which originally was a two-sided 78rpm release. The players worked hand in glove, one often amplifying the other's commentary.

The vehicle for this battle is based on the chords of "I Got Rhythm." After a sixteen-bar introduction played by the duo and their colleagues, the thirty-two-bar theme is stated and the improvisatory exchanges begin. Gordon has the first of six choruses. He alternates with Gray until the fifth go-round, when Jimmy Bunn comes in for thirty-two bars. Gordon, the more aggressive sounding of the two tenors, has the last thirty-two before Gray initiates a chorus of eight-bar exchanges. A chorus of alternating four-bar statements comes next; the first to play is Gray. The last chorus of fours is played as follows: Gordon and Gray, unison; Gordon; unison; Gray; Gordon; Gray; unison; Gordon. The record concludes with the theme, featuring Bunn on the middle eight, and a restatement of the introductory sixteen bars.

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Side One

Total time 24:59

- 1 **A-LA-BRIDGES** (arr. Tadd Dameron) 3:20
 (publ. Bregman, Vocco, & Conn, Inc.)
 Harlan Leonard and His Rockets

- 2 **DAMERON STOMP** (arr. Tadd Dameron) 3:02
 (publ. Bregman, Vocco, & Conn, Inc.)
 Harlan Leonard and His Rockets

- 3 **THE SAINT**
 (Gerald Wilson and Snooky Young; arr. Gerald Wilson) 3:08
 (publ. unknown)
 Gerald Wilson and His Orchestra

- 4 **ELEVATION** (arr. Elliot Lawrence) 2:35
 (publ. Elliot Music Co., Inc.)
 Elliot Lawrence and His Orchestra

- 5 **FIVE O'CLOCK SHADOW** (arr. Elliot Lawrence) 3:18
 (publ. Elliot Music Co., Inc.)
 Elliot Lawrence and His Orchestra

- 6 **GOOD JELLY BLUES** 2:52
 (publ. unknown)
 Billy Eckstine and His Orchestra

- 7 **MINGUS FINGERS** (Charles Mingus) 3:08
 (publ. Jazz Workshop)
 Lionel Hampton and His Orchestra

- 8 **DONNA LEE** (Charlie Parker; arr. Gil Evans) 3:02
 (publ. unknown)
 Claude Thornhill and His Orchestra

Side Two

Total time 25:03

- 1 **PERDIDO** (Juan Tizol) 2:59
(publ. Tempo Music, Inc.)
Ben Wehster Quartet
- 2 **ZONKY** (Andy Razaf & Thomas "Fats" Waller; arr. Gil Evans) 2:57
(publ. Chappell & Co., Inc.)
Six Men and a Girl
- 3 **TEA FOR TWO** (Vincent Youmans & Irving Caesar; arr. Gil Evans) 2:44
(publ. Warner Bros. Music, A Division of Warner Bros., Inc.)
Joe Mooney Quartet
- 4 **I CAN'T GET UP THE NERVE** (George Weiss & Bennie Benjamin) 3:17
(publ. Chappell & Co., Inc.)
Joe Mooney Quartet
- 5 **MELLOW MOOD** (Dodo Marmarosa) 3:12
(publ. unknown)
Dodo Marmarosa Trio
- 6 **ROYAL ROOST** (Kenny Clarke; arr. Walter "Gil" Fuller) 2:57
(publ. J. J. Robbins & Sons, Inc.)
Kenny Clarke and His 52nd Street Boys
- 7 **THE CHASE**, Parts I & II (Dexter Gordon) 6:31
(publ. American Academy of Music, Inc.)
Dexter Gordon-Wardell Gray Quintet

Full discographic information and a complete list of the performers for each selection may be found within the individual discussions of the works in the liner notes.

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