

**The**  
**PIANO**  
**of**  
**EARL RUDOLPH POWELL**  
**“BUD”**

Born: NYC. Sept. 27, 1924  
 Died: NYC. Aug. 1, 1966

*Introduction:*

Oslo Jazz Circle was originally based on the swing era (with Chu Berry as the primary idol), but a heavy minority managed to achieve equally high status for bebop and other modern forms. Bud Powell was discovered early, and personally I bought my first Blue Note LPs as a teenager. Bud Powell also played in Metropol Jazzclub, Oslo, Sept. 24-27 with Bjørn Pedersen (b), Jon Christensen (dm). I was there and remember how he looked ahead with a glassy stare when playing, almost like he did not know where he was. But sometimes he looked at his watch to the right of the keyboard, and after 45 minutes he stopped abruptly, even if the tune was not finished! An unforgettable experience for all of us!

*History:*

From 1940 BP took part in informal jam sessions at Minton's Playhouse, New York, where he came under the tutelage and protection of Thelonious Monk and contributed to the emerging bop style. By 1942-44, when he played in the band of Cootie Williams, he had already developed his individual style in most of its essentials. After sustaining a head injury during a racial incident in 1945, he suffered the first of many nervous collapses, which were to confine him to sanatoriums for much of his adult life. Thereafter, in the late 1940s and early 1950s, he appeared intermittently in New York clubs with leading bop musicians or in his own trio. From the mid-1950s, as his mental health and musical powers deteriorated, he gradually restricted his public appearances. He moved in 1959 to Paris, where he led a trio (1959-62) with Kenny Clarke, the third member of which was usually Pierre Michelot, and enjoyed a certain celebrity status. After returning to the USA in August 1954, he made a disastrous appearance at Carnegie Hall (1965), and soon was obliged to abandon music altogether (ref. "The New Grove Dictionary of Jazz").

*Message:*

Note the magnificent book: Peter Pullman: "Wail – The Life of Bud Powell" (2012), ISBN 978-0-9851418-1-3, [pullman\\_peter@yahoo.com](mailto:pullman_peter@yahoo.com) After reading it, I seriously considered skipping this solography, what more can be said about Bud Powell? However, I changed my mind, just to have the opportunity to go through his music once more, long time since. My comments though will be very modest, this great artist's work cannot easily be compressed into a solography by an amateur like me (JE Dec. 2019).

## BUD POWELL SOLOGRAPHY

**COOTIE WILLIAMS SEXTET** **NYC. Jan. 4&6, 1944**

Cootie Williams (tp, vo), Eddie "Cleanhead" Wilson (as, vo), Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis (ts), Bud Powell (p), Norman Keenan (b), Sylvester Payne (dm).

Eight titles were recorded for Hit/Royale:

345	You Talk A Little Trash	Duet with (b) 8 bars. Strong acc. (M)
346	Floogie Boo	Intro 4 bars. Strong acc. Solo 16 bars. Acc. (b) 8 bars. (FM)
347	I Don't Know	Chord intro 4 bars. Solo 8 bars. Strong acc. (M)
348	Gotta Do Some War Work, Baby	Strong acc. Acc. (vo). Solo 8 bars. (M)
349	My Old Flame	Intro 2 bars. Strong acc. Solo 8 bars. Coda. (S)
350	Sweet Lorraine	Intro 2 bars. Strong acc. Solo 8 bars. "Coda". (S)
351	Echoes Of Harlem	Strong acc. (S)
352	Honeysuckle Rose	Intro. Solo 16 bars. Strong acc. (M)

Bud Powell is only a few months above nineteen years of age when he enters a recording session for the first time. From this very beginning, the intro on "... Boo"; one can hear that he represents something quite new, later a firm and well conceived solo. Obviously Cootie knows what magnificent talent he has in this young man, because he allows him to solo on almost all titles, and his trust is paid back. On the slow titles "... Flame" and "... Lorraine" he sets the mood with brief but beautiful intros, later highly beautiful and original soli with "Tatumesque touches" to quote PP. In medium tempi we can already hear the elements that later would be his typical style; strong and very concentrated, and all examples here are highly noteworthy and should be listened to carefully by all reading this. Note also his very professional comping of Cootie's vocal on "... Baby".

**COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS ORCHSTRA** **NYC. Jan. 6, 1944**

Cootie Williams, Ermit V. Perry, George Treadwell, Harold "Money" Johnson (tp), Ed Burke, George Stevenson, Bob Horton (tb), Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson (as, vo), Charlie Holmes (as), Eddie "Lockjaw" Davis, Lee Pope (ts), Eddie De Verteuil (bar), Bud Powell (p), Norman Keenan (b), Sylvester Payne (dm), Pearl Bailey (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Hit:

353	Now I Know	Soft acc. (SM)
354	Tess's Torch Song	Soft acc. (SM)
355	Cherry Red Blues	Soft acc. (S)
356	Things Ain't What They Used To Be	Soft acc. (S)

The complete bigband is present on these titles, and there is no solo space for BP. He can hardly be heard at all, but try "... Know" and "... To Be".

**COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Hollywood, May 1, 1944**

Bigband personnel including Bud Powell (p), Ella Fitzgerald (vo-"A-Tisket ...", "... From Me"). Sextet: Cootie Williams (tp), Eddie "Cleanhead" Vinson (as), Sam Taylor (ts), Bud Powell (p), Norman Keenan (b), Sylvester Payne (dm): "You Talk A Little Trash".

AFRS Jubilee No. 78. Six titles ("Let's Toot" is the same item as "You Talk A Little Trash", also issued as "Smack Me"):

Roll 'Em	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
A-Tisket A-Tasket	Soft acc. (FM)
Do Nothin' Till You Hear From Me	Strong acc. (S)
You Talk A Little Trash	Solo 8 bars. Break. Acc. (b) 8 bars. Strong acc. (FM)
Air Mail Special	Soft acc. (FM)
One O'Clock Jump	Strong acc. (FM)

A jumping piano solo on “Roll’ Em” and yet typical BP’s style sounding almost like an anachronism in the middle of a typical postswing orchestra like Cootie’s. He must obviously have had very high reputation with the leader to have an arrangement like that. Also “... Trash” is a very exciting item with prominent BP.

**COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Jan.-May 1944**

Bigband personnel same/similar to Aug. 22 below.

Broadcast from Apollo Theatre, four titles, no BP on “Air Mail Special” and “One O’Clock Jump” but:

Perdido	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
When My Baby Left Me	Obbligato parts. (S)

**NYC. Jan.-May 1944**

Same. Broadcast from Savoy Ballroom, one title:

RoyalGarden Blues	Solo 24 bars. (F)
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First and foremost, a full chorus on “Perdido” is a real treasure! “... Garden ...” is faster than the studio session later and played rather strangely and not typical, the first chorus in particular.

**COOTIE WILLIAMS** **NYC. July 4, 1944**

Cootie Williams (tp), Bud Powell (p).

Canada Lee show, War Loan Drive Transcription, one title:

West End Blues	Strong acc. (tp). Solo 12 bars. (S)
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This is a real treasure!! Cootie and Bud, just the two of them, make history with this version of “West End ...”!! First the vintage trumpet with Bud actively comping behind and then a perfect modern piano solo, telling about things to come. A must for all of you!!

**COOTIE WILLIAMS & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Aug. 22, 1944**

Cootie Williams, Ermit V. Perry, George Treadwell, Lammar Wright (tp), Ed Burke, Ed Glover, Bob Horton (tb), Eddie “Cleanhead” Vinson (as, vo-448,49), Frank Powell (as), Sam “The Man” Taylor, Lee Pope (ts), Eddie De Verteuil (bar), Bud Powell (p), Leroy Kirkland (g), Carl Pruitt (b), Sylvester Payne (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Hit/Majestic:

448	Is You Is Or Is You Ain’t My Baby	Acc. (vo). (SM)
449	Somebody’s Gotta Go	Acc. (vo). (S)
450	‘Round Midnight	Soft acc. (S)
451	RoyalGarden Blues	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
451-alt.	RoyalGarden Blues	As above. (FM)

On this bigband session BP gets one solo opportunity, and by sort of miracle two takes of “Royal ...” appeared!! Great and quite different piano soli!! In addition he can clearly be heard comping Cleanhead’s vocal. Note also that this is the first appearance of Thelonious Monk’s “... Midnight”, something that must have pleased BP very much, although he does not solo but can nevertheless be heard in the background.

Some sources have incorrectly claimed Bud is the pianist heard on the soundtrack of a 1944 short subject featuring Cootie Williams. Mark Cantor has proven that this short is a reissue of the “Film Vodvil” film produced in the summer of 1943 with Fletcher Smith on piano.

Pullman writes that Charlie Parker wanted BP to take part in his first recording session as a leader, on Savoy, Nov. 26, 1944, but BP did not show up.

On Jan. 19, 1945, BP was mugged by the Philadelphia police. After that he suffered from violent headache all his life. Probably this terrible and racist incident had a lasting influence on his personality and made it impossible to live a normal life.

**FRANK SOCOLOW’S QUINTET** **NYC. May 2, 1945**

Freddy Webster (tp), Frank Socolow (ts), Bud Powell (p), Leonard Gaskin (b), Irv Kluger (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Duke, "Blue Fantasy" is unissued and probably lost but:

The Man I Love	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (ts). (S)
Reverse The Changes	Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. (M)
September In The Rain	Solo 16 bars. (M)

Although BP has given us quite a lot very interesting piano soli with Cootie Williams, this is where he really begins his career as the foremost of all modern jazz pianists. A beautiful intro on "... Love" and although only background playing afterwards, his lyrical side comes clearly through. The two remaining items have exciting and original soli.

**DEXTER GORDON QUINTET** **NYC. Jan. 29, 1946**

Leonard Hawkins (tp-except 5880), Dexter Gordon (ts), Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

5878-1	Long Tall Dexter	Solo 24 bars. Strong acc. (FM)
5878-2	Long Tall Dexter	As above. (FM)
5879-1	Dexter Rides Again	Intro. Strong acc. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
5880-3	I Can't Escape From You	Strong acc. (S)
5880-7	I Can't Escape From You	As above. (S)
5881-2	Dexter Digs In	Soli 8 and 16 bars. (FM)
5881-3	Dexter Digs In	As above plus strong acc. (FM)
5881-4	Dexter Digs In	As above. (FM)

The first true bebop session!! The key and introduction to BP's originality, his position as the most creative of all pianists in this era of budding modern jazz. The three fast medium items all have those typical tight, dynamic soli so full of unpredictable details, so exciting! You should play these six items again and again to get into the right appreciation mood. Note also his active comping with flashing runs behind Dexter's magnificent tenorsax playing on "... Escape...!"

**SARAH VAUGHAN VOCAL WITH THE TADD DAMERON ORCHESTRA** **NYC. May 7, 1946**

Freddy Webster (tp), Leroy Harris (as), Hank Ross (bcl), Leo Parker (bar), Bud Powell (p), Tadd Dameron (arr), Ted Sturgis (b), Kenny Clarke (dm), nine (strings), Sarah Vaughan (vo).

Four titles were recorded for Musicraft:

5485	If You Could See Me Now	Strong acc. (S)
5686	I Can Make You Love Me	Solo 8 bars. (S)
5487	You're Not The Kind	Strong acc. (SM)
5488	My Kinda Love	Strong acc. (SM)
5488-alt.	My Kinda Love	As above. (SM)

This is Sarah's session with little space for soloists, but piano can be heard quite clearly, with a flowery nice solo on "... Love Me".

**JAY JAY JOHNSON'S BEBOPPERS** **NYC. June 26, 1946**

J. J. Johnson (tb), Cecil Payne (as), Bud Powell (p), Leonard Gaskin (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

3309-1	Jay Bird	Intro 8 bars. Strong acc. Solo 32 bars. Acc. (b) 8 bars. (FM)
3309-9	Jay Bird	Intro 8 bars. Strong acc. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
3309-11	Jay Bird	As take 1. (FM)
3310-1	Coppin' The Bop	Strong acc. Solo 16 bars. (M)
3311-1	Jay Jay	Intro 8 bars. Strong acc. Solo 32 bars. (F)

3311-2	Jay Jay	As above. (F)
3311-4	Jay Jay	As above. (F)
3312-1	Mad Bebop	Strong acc. Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Savoy knew what they were doing those days, and gave BP his second bebop session, this time with J. J. Johnson's group. Again we meet a concentrated piano artist doing his comping dutifully and then exploding into those memorable soli. All eight items here have excellent contributions, and particularly interesting are "... Bird" and "... Jay" with three issued takes each, showing that BP was a true improviser with inexhaustible creativity.

#### **BEBOP BOYS / KENNY DORHAM**

##### **SONNY STITT QUINTET**

**NYC. Aug. 23 (morning), 1946**

Kenny Dorham (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Bud Powell (p), Al Hall (b), Wallace Bishop (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy (morning):

3338-2	Bebop In Pastel	Strong acc. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
3338-3	Bebop In Pastel	As above. (FM)
3338-4	Bebop In Pastel	As above. (FM)
3339	Fools Fancy (Wail)	Strong acc. Solo 32 bars. (F)
3340	Bombay	Intro 4 bars. Solo 16 bars. Strong acc. (M)
3341	Ray's Idea	Soli 8 and 32 bars. Strong acc. (M)

**NYC. Aug. 23 (afternoon), 1946**

Personnel as above except Kenny Clarke (dm) replaces Bishop.

Four titles were recorded for Savoy (afternoon):

3342	Serenade To A Square	Intro. Solo 32 bars. Strong acc. (F)
3343	Good Kick	Strong acc. Solo 16 bars. (M)
3344	Seven Up	Intro 4 bars. Strong acc. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
3344-alt.	Seven Up	As above. (FM)
3345	Blues In Bebop	Intro 4 bars. Strong acc. Solo 24 bars. Acc. (b). (FM)
3345-alt.	Blues In Bebop	As above. (FM)

Note: "Since the beginning all sources indicate by mistake two more titles: "Blues A La Bud" and "Diz-iz". In fact "Blues A La Bud" is "Blues In Bebop", and "Diz-iz" is "Boppin' The Blues" by The Bebop Boys, Sept. 25, 1946, including Dizzy Gillespie and James Moody and has nothing to do with this session (ref. Claude Schlouch).

Savoy continues with its progressive policy, and the two Stitt sessions have excellent modern music with BP as the most important soloist among his equals. All with typical bebop themes in upper tempi, and again BP is in excellent shape. Note that "... Pastel" sounds very familiar, and it was retitled later as "Bouncing With Bud" and re-recorded in 1949. It strikes me that he is not playing piano like most people, he pushes the keys so strongly, almost as to overcome the resistance they are giving him. Again it is impossible to select any particular highlight, everything is just so exciting, and one can only lament that there are so few recording sessions from this time period, where he seems to be closest to his real, undamaged self.

#### **KENNY CLARKE & HIS 52<sup>nd</sup> STREET BOYS**

**NYC. Sept. 5, 1946**

Fats Navarro, Kenny Dorham (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Ray Abrams (ts), Eddie De Verteuil (bar), Bud Powell (dm), John Collins (g), Al Hall (b), Kenny Clarke (dm), Gil Fuller (arr).

Four titles were recorded for French Swing, seemingly organized by Victor:

2792-1	Epistrophy	Straight 4 bars. Break 2 bars. Solo 16 bars. (M)
2793-1	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme	Soft acc. only. (FM)
2794-1	Oop Bop Sh-Bam	Solo 16 bars. (M)
2795-1	Rue Chaptal	Intro 4 bars. Solo 24 bars. Acc. (b). (FM)

Thanks to the foresight of French jazz enthusiast Charles Delauney, this star lineup was collected for a recording session. Today they would perhaps have had

a few hours to their disposal, then only enough for two 78 rpm. records, thus not much blowing space for each. BP nevertheless gets a lot out of his three opportunities. Take the relaxed and yet intense "... Sh-Bam" as a fine example, but don't forget "Epistrophy" nor "Rue ..."!

**FATS NAVARRO / GIL FULLER**

**NYC. Sept. 6, 1946**

Fats Navarro, Kenny Dorham (tp), Sonny Stitt (as), Morris Lane (ts), Eddie De Verteuil (bar), Bud Powell (p), Al Hall (b), Kenny Clarke (dm), Gil Fuller (arr).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

3346/47	Boppin' A Riff	Strong acc. Solo 32 bars. (M)
3347-alt.	Boppin' A Riff	As above. (M)
3348/49	Fat Boy	Strong acc. Solo 60 bars. (FM)
3348-alt	Fat Boy	Solo 30 bars (NC). (FM)
3350/51	Everything's Cool	Strong acc. (M)
3352/53	Webb City	Solo 64 bars. Strong acc. Solo 32 bars. (F)

The end of some very fruitful days for BP, in fact the year 1946 represents in my opinion one of the most important years of his record production, although there is no solo longer than 32 bars (except on this final session), thus giving us just a tiny and perhaps quite misleading impression of what this piano giant could accomplish. This session is only one day after the previous one, and with almost the same personnel, so there must have been a connection. Note that these are two-sides items of close to six minutes, giving blowing space for everybody, but on "Fat Boy", BP's solo is broken into two parts, the same goes for his second solo on "... City", on the other hand the first one is the first with two choruses, imagine!

**JAM SESSION / ALLEN EAGER**

**NYC. probably Spring 1947**

Charlie Parker (as-items 2,3, ts-item 1), Allen Eager (as-item 1, ts-item 3), Bud Powell (p), Specs Goldberg (b), Max Roach (dm-item 1), Morty Yoss (dm-item 2), unknown (dm-item 3). Date also given as April 1953.

Three titles:

4:35	Swapping Horns	Intro 4 bars. Solo 64 bars. (FM)
4:42	All The Things You Are	Intro 4 bars. Solo 36 bars. (M)
4:48	Original Horns	Intro 4 bars. Solo 24 bars. (M)

Of course an interesting session as such but in toto not as exciting as it could have been. BP seems rather passive and has not a particularly good day.

**CHARLIE PARKER ALL STARS**

**NYC. May 8, 1947**

Miles Davis (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Bud Powell (p), Tommy Potter (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

3420-1	Donna Lee (NC)	No solo.
3420-2	Donna Lee	Strong acc. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
3420-3	Donna Lee	As above. (F)
3420-4	Donna Lee	As above. (F)
3420-5	Donna Lee	As above. (F)
3421-1	Chasin' The Bird	Strong acc. Solo 16 bars. (FM)
3421-2	Chasin' The Bird (Breakdown)	No solo.
3421-3	Chasin' The Bird	As above. (FM)
3421-4	Chasin' The Bird	As above. (FM)
3422-1	Cheryl (NC)	No solo.
3422-2	Cheryl	Solo 24 bars. (FM)
3423-1	Buzzy	Strong acc. Solo 36 bars. (FM)
3423-2	Buzzy (NC)	Strong acc. (FM)
3423-3	Buzzy	Strong acc. Solo 24 bars. (FM)

3423-4	Buzzy (NC)	Strong acc. (FM)
3423-5	Buzzy	Strong acc. Solo 12 bars. Acc. (b) 12 bars. (FM)

BP meets the Bird in studio for the first, and last, time. The extremely difficult relationship between the two giants is well described in PP's book, and probably the pianist missed important recording opportunities, he did not even record with Savoy again. Too bad, because he plays brilliantly here, even with Bird's pretty tough music material. Luckily Savoy made and preserved complete sessions, thus we have the opportunity to hear extremely strong piano playing, although in most cases rather brief soli.

BP was readmitted to institutions in Nov. 1947, staying for nearly a year.

**LEONARD FEATHER's BOPERA  
HOUSE SESSION / ROYAL ROOST ALL STARS NYC. Dec. 19, 1948**

Collective personnel: Benny Harris (tp), J. J. Johnson (tb), Buddy DeFranco (cl), Lee Konitz (as), Budd Johnson (ts), Cecil Payne (bar), Bud Powell (p), Barbara Carroll (p-"All The TYA), Chuck Wayne (g), Nelson Boyd (b), Max Roach (dm), Leonard Feather (mc).

WMGM broadcast "Jazz At Its Best", from RoyalRoost, eight titles:

0:28	Introduction	Soloing behind announcer. (M)
5:02	Perdido	Intro 4 bars. Solo 8 bars. Acc. (cl). (FM)
2:49	Indiana	Intro 8 bars. Acc. (tb). (F)
3:42	All The Things You Are	Not present.
5:39	Jumpin' With Symphony Sid	Intro 8 bars. Strong acc. Solo 48 bars. (FM)
2:16	I'll Be Seeing You	Intro 4 bars. Strong acc. (S)
4:00	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme	With ens 32 bars. Solo 6 choruses of 32 bars. With ens 32 bars. (F)
12:23	Ornithology	Intro 4 bars. Solo 2 ½ choruses of 32 bars. Strong acc. (FM)

If you look closely, you see that BP is heavy on intros but meagre on soli. The reason is the structure of the program; each musician gets his solo feature; (cl) on "Perdido", (tb) on "Indiana", (p-BC) on "... You Are", (as) on "... Sid", (ts) on "... Seeing You". However it seems that they change their mind on "... Sid", which opens up for others after the altosax solo, thus a fine BP solo. His solo feature is "52<sup>nd</sup> ...", solid four minutes, a great performance! The date closes with a jam session oriented "Ornithology", but it seems that he loses control here, ending up with half-a-chorus.

BP was readmitted to institutions in early 1949, to stay two to three months.

**BUD POWELL TRIO NYC. Feb. 23, 1949**

Bud Powell (p), Ray Brown (b), Max Roach (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Mercury:

242-5	Tempus Fugit	2:25. (F)
243-3	Celia	2:57. (M)
244-1	Cherokee	3:37. (F)
245-1	I'll Keep Loving You	2:40. (S)
246-4	Strictly Confidential	3:08. (M)
247-3	All God's Chillun Got Rhythm	2:59. (F)

Quoting Peter Pullman: Bud Powell's recording session for Mercury, his first as a leader, was done on Wednesday, February 23, 1949. It was a unique scenario in jazz history: An artist was given a day pass to leave a psychiatric hospital that he was involuntary confined in and, with an escort, was taken to make a record. After having led his sidemen through the session, the artist was returned to confinement by 5:30 p.m., in time for dinner with the other inmates". Six magnificent sides were made in a variety of tempi. The session is so vividly described by PP that only two final quotes shall be given: ""All God's Chillun ..."



... is one of Powell's greatest performances of a standard", yes magnificent! "So ended Powell's premiere session as a leader. It produced the hard-driving, percussive modern music that Powell had long wanted to make; music that converted all of the great harmonic and rhythmic ideas of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie to the piano-trio format. While this wasn't the very first piano-trio recording that could be called modern, it was a landmark session".

**BUD POWELL TRIO** **Linden, NJ. probably late Summer 1949**

Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Date has been given as Jan. 10, 1947, but this is reported (ref. PP) to be false.

Eight titles were recorded for DeLuxe but sold to and issued by Roost:

2991	I'll Remember April	2:40. (M)
2992	Indiana	2:31. (F)
2993	Somebody Loves Me	2:41. (M)
2994	I Should Care	2:47. (S)
2995	Bud's Bubble	2:23. (F)
2996	Off Minor	2:16. (FM)
2997	Nice Work If You Can Get It	2:07. (F)
2998	Everything Happens To Me	2:28. (S)

Another magnificent trio session, supposed to contain only four titles (read PP's description of the proceedings). BP is less aggressive on his studio dates compared to many of his club dates, sometimes downright modest, but then his brilliant runs change the mood, "... Loves Me" is a good example. Hard swinging items like "Indiana" and "... Bubble" make great impact on the listener, while the elegance of the slow "... Care" and "... Me" is of a different world. Fine variation of tempi here, but a serious drawback is their brevity, an average of 2:29 is much less than optimal, even gives leftover space on a 78 rpm! But the total is just great!!

**BUD POWELL's MODERNISTS** **NYC. Aug. 8, 1949**

Fats Navarro (tp), Sonny Rollins (ts), Bud Powell (p), Tommy Potter (b), Roy Haynes (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Blue Note:

360-0	Bouncing With Bud	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (M)
360-1	Bouncing With Bud	As above. (M)
360-2	Bouncing With Bud	As above. (M)
361-0	Wail	Intro 8 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)
361-3	Wail	As above. (F)
362-0	Dance Of The Infidels	Solo 48 bars. (M)
362-1	Dance Of The Infidels	As above. (M)
363-1	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme	With ens 32 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)

One of the greatest bebop sessions, highly memorable for all participants. This is the BP I personally grew up with, and I still treasure these items after sixty years. The essence of his art can be felt both in fast and medium tempo, and all items here must be considered highly noteworthy. Play the three versions of "Bouncing ..." rapidly after each other, and you will understand his improvisational artistry. To select highlights is too difficult for me here, everything is utterly interesting, but quoting PP again: "The masterpiece from the date, and the fullest flowering of Powell's leading, composing and arranging talent, is "Dance Of The Infidels"". Note the final piano bar of the master take!

**BUD POWELL TRIO** **NYC. Aug. 9, 1949**

Bud Powell (p), Tommy Potter (b), Roy Haynes (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Blue Note:

364-0	You Go To My Head	3:11. (S)
365-0	Ornithology	2:19. (M)
365-1	Ornithology (alt.)	3:06. (M)

The day after ... why couldn't the whole group continue? And only two titles? Possibly these were just played as a kind of winding down after the memorable quintet performance, because these items are also masterly and some of my BP

trio favourites! A beautiful, clean, perfect "... My Head", a must! Also two brilliant takes of the famous "Ornithology", note that the alternate take has an extra chorus compared to the master.

**SONNY STITT / BUD POWELL QUARTET** **NYC. Dec. 11, 1949**

Sonny Stitt (ts), Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

1000A	All God's Chillun Got Rhythm	Intro 8 bars. Solo 64 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (F)
1001	Sonny Side	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
1002B	Bud's Blues	Acc. (ts) 12 bars. Solo 24 bars to acc. (ts) 12 bars. (M)
1003A	Sunset	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (ts). (S)

BP had worked quite a lot with Stitt, and this recording session is magnificent, just read the SS-solography! The piano playing here is superb, whether the tempo is high as in "... Chillun ...", up-medium as in "... Side" or medium groove like the "... Blues", and there is nothing to point at possible mental problems here. Too bad he does not get solo opportunity on Stitt's masterly "Sunset" ballad, reminding suspiciously of "These Foolish Things".

**STARS OF MODERN JAZZ CONCERT** **NYC. Dec. 24, 1949**

Miles Davis (tp), Benny Green (tb), Sonny Stitt (as), Serge Chaloff (bar), Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm). "... Rhythm" is by the trio.

Voice of America Transcriptions – Xmas 1949, concert at Carnegie Hall, four titles:

2:49	All God's Chillun Got Rhythm	(F)
5:32	Move	Intro 8 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)
7:50	Hot House	Free intro. Solo 64 bars. (FM)
3:34	Ornithology (NC)	Intro 8 bars. (F)

A sparkling piano solo in extreme uptempo on "Move", and an equally great one on "... House" in a more moderate tempo on this exciting session with so many famous jazz greats. "Ornithology" unfortunately runs out before it is BP's turn. And don't forget an amazing and remarkable and incredible version of "... Rhythm", are we getting closer to the real BP here, what he really could do?!

**SONNY STITT / BUD POWELL QUARTET** **NYC. Jan. 26, 1950**

Sonny Stitt (ts), Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Prestige:

1004?	Strike Up The Band	Intro 8 bars. Solo 64 bars. (F)
1004D	Strike Up The Band	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. (F)
1005B	I Want To Be Happy	Solo 64 bars. (F)
1006D	Taking A Chance On Love	Intro 8 bars. Solo 32 bars. (FM)
1007A	Fine and Dandy	Intro 8 bars. Soli 32 and 32 bars. (F)
1007B	Fine and Dandy	As above. (F)

The same group as on Prestige above, and if possible, even a notch sharper, this is immortal swinging jazz music, not so much bebop as standards. If one should pick highlights here, one would have to admit that something could have been better, and that is simply impossible. Nevertheless, one cannot let go without mentioning "... Dandy", BP seems to be incredibly inspired here and challenging Stitt for blowing space, and although take A belongs to a 'jazz hall of fame', take B is really not far below. "... Happy" also has a gorgeous, fast piano solo. As well as the rest. Dig this session!!

**BUD POWELL TRIO** **NYC. Feb. 1950**

Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Seven titles were recorded for Clef:

341-2	So Sorry Please	3:14. (M)
342-2	Get Happy	2:51. (F)
343-1	Sometimes I'm Happy	3:36. (M)
344-2	Sweet Georgia Brown	2:48. (F)

345-1	Yesterdays	2:49. (S)
346-1	April In Paris	3:08. (S)
347-1	Body And Soul	3:20. (S)

Another great trio session, and as one can see from the matrix numbers, everything went smoothly with most of seven titles finished with one take. One cannot help marvel at BP's effortless uptempo versions of standards like "Get Happy" and "... Brown", the latter, quote PP: "is, in tempo, a close variant of the very modern, aggressive renditions of "... Chillun ..." that Powell was doing in this period". Three slow items show the other side of BP's artistry; flowery, lyrical, beautiful Tatumesque versions; one can only regret that the 78 rpm. limit still confines the creative improvisations; what would have happened if he had been allowed to go on, and on and on ...?

#### **CHARLIE PARKER QUINTET**

**NYC. May 15/16, 1950**

Fats Navarro (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Art Blakey (dm), "Little" Jimmy Scott (vo-"Embraceable You").

Date May 17 is handwritten on the box, but Leif Bo Petersen argues for May 15/16.

Fifteen titles were recorded at Birdland for Boris Rose by Bill Hirsch:

1:46	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme	In ens. (F)
6:53	Wahoo	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
5:21	'Round Midnight	Acc. (as). Solo 32 bars. (S)
6:29	This Time The Dream's On Me	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)
7:18	Dizzy's Atmosphere	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
5:39	A Night In Tunisia	Acc. (tp). Solo 64 bars. Acc. (b). (M)
6:28	Move	Intro 8 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
0:26	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme	In ens. (F)
9:28	The Street Beat	Intro 8 bars. Acc. (tp). Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
6:25	Out Of Nowhere	Acc. (tp/as). Solo 64 bars. (M)
8:12	Ornithology	Intro 6 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
8:02	I'll Remember April	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (as). Solo 3 choruses of 48 bars. (FM)
1:31	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme	In ens. (F)
5:35	Little Willie Leaps	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
0:18	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme	In ens. (F)
6:20	Embraceable You	Intro 4 bars. Acc. (as/tp/vo). (S)

"This session is remarkable for documenting a unique gathering of Parker, Powell and Navarro", as stated by LBP. Yes, this session is the only surviving example of a meeting between these giants of modern music. The sound quality is not very good, but if one plays the music several times to be familiar with it, the details come through and most of the noise disappears. BP always takes his soloing after Bird, then Fats, and he never gets involved in the 4/4 chases. Studio sessions are all very well, but for Bud the live session seems to stimulate him very much, and there are some quite long soli here, most in the very uptempi. He seems to be in a world of his own, aiming to go on forever until the surroundings pull him down. Play any of those items. However, there are a few gorgeous items in a more civilized tempo, like "Ornithology" and "... Nowhere", and these will probably thrill the average listener the most. Note also the beautiful solo on Monk's "... Midnight". Explore this session yourself!!

#### **BUD POWELL TRIO**

**NYC. June or July 1, 1950**

Bud Powell (p), Ray Brown (b), Buddy Rich (dm).

Two titles were recorded for Clef:

435-6	Hallelujah	2:58. (F)
435-5	Tea For Two	4:13. (F)
435-6	Tea For Two	3:29. (F)

436-10 Tea For Two 3:46. (F)

Quoting PP again: “The abbreviated session probably indicated that Powell’s struggles in his personal life had intensified and, therefore, he couldn’t collect himself enough to record the kind of work – certainly, the original work – that he was capable of”. BP would never have selected Granz’ boys for bass and drums, and only two titles were recorded, typical standards, both needing numerous takes. On the other hand, he is playing great all the time, and it is very exciting to hear the different takes of “Tea ...”, how different they are (read what PP says about them). Imagine the whole session could be issued one day, maybe it is still ‘in there’.

**SARAH VAUGHAN VOCAL ACC. BY  
NORMAN LEYDEN’s ORCHESTRA NYC. July 20, 1950**

Bigband personnel including Bud Powell (p).  
Two titles were recorded for Columbia:

044130 I Love The Guy Soft acc. (M)  
044131 Thinking Of You Strong acc. (S)

In the larger picture, nothing of particular importance is happening here.

**BUD POWELL NYC. Feb. 1951**

Bud Powell (p) solo.  
Eight titles were recorded for Verve:

571-1 Parisian Thoroughfare 2:28. (F)  
572-1 Oblivion 2:08. (F)  
573-1 Dusk In Sandi 2:13. (S)  
574-5 Hallucinations (Budo) 2:25. (FM)  
575-2 The Fruit 3:16. (FM)  
576-1 A Nightingale Sang In Berkeley Square 3:41. (S)  
577-1 Just One Of Those Things 3:50. (FM)  
578-1 The Last Time I Saw Paris 3:16. (M)

BP’s first solo session, and quoting PP: “Whether Granz chose to feature Powell solo, or he acceded to the artist’s wishes to present him that way, it was clear from the results that Powell didn’t need bass or drums”. He probably felt free from interference and could play without external challenges, making his music here less aggressive than at many sessions with accompaniment, but also perhaps not so challenging and exciting. However I cannot resist another quote: “In “Just One ...” Powell sets himself a harmonic trap from which he makes repeated, bravura attempts to escape”. Also note his stride piano on “... Paris”. Anyway a great session!

**COLEMAN HAWKINS NYC. Feb. 31, 1951**

Bennie Green (tb), Coleman Hawkins (ts), Bud Powell (p), others unknown.  
Broadcast from Birdland, three titles, “Stuffy”, “Body And Soul” and “The Man I Love”, info from Boris Rose’s “Birdland Book”, appearing in Claude Schluoch’s discography, not available.

**CHARLIE PARKER & THE ALL STARS NYC. March 31, 1951**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Bud Powell (p), Tommy Potter (b), Roy Haynes (dm), Symphony Sid Torin (mc).  
Broadcast from Birdland, five titles:

7:17 Blue’n Boogie Solo 8 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)  
5:58 Anthropology Solo 64 bars. (F)  
4:15 ‘Round Midnight Acc. (tp/as). Solo 8 bars. (S)  
6:17 A Night In Tunisia Solo 32 bars. (FM)  
0:46 Theme No solo. (M)

PP explains in detail how Birdland managed to get these bebop giants together at Birdland and how everything went along. Here were not three friends in a spring afternoon tea party but antagonists who might get into a fight anytime on the stage. Nevertheless they produced as expected music that had to be historical, just because they were what they were. BP seems to manage very well, and particularly the opening “... Boogie” shows him to great advantage. A beautiful

solo on “... Midnight”, while “... Tunisia” has “ominous pauses in his playing”. The session must be considered a very valuable jazz treasure!

**BUD POWELL TRIO****NYC. May 1, 1951**

Bud Powell (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Five titles were recorded for Blue Note:

382-1	Un Poco Loco	3:40. (F)
382-2	Un Poco Loco	4:27. (F)
382-4	Un Poco Loco	4:37. (F)
383-0	Over The Rainbow	2:51. (S)
384-0	A Night In Tunisia	4:10. (M)
384-1	A Night In Tunisia	3:47. (M)
385-0	It Could Happen To You	3:09. (S)
385-1	It Could Happen To You	2:19. (S)
	Parisian Thoroughfare	3:22. (F)

Another famous recording session for Blue Note, the last before he went to the hospital for a long stay. The famous latin influenced “... Loco”, a BP composition with three takes, is more an exciting piano/drums cooperation to me rather than a piano item as such; read PP for interesting details. Don’t forget “... Thoroughfare” among all this famous music, although it runs out into nothing and was not given a mx number. The slow items have some “excessive, Tatumesque lacework” but are nevertheless “robust and clear”, well worth noticing. The highlights for me though are, not unexpectedly, the fascinating “... Tunisia”s, played in the tradition with fine bridges, and Bird’s four bars break into two magnificent choruses. Both takes are musts for this listener.

BP was institutionalized from June 1951 to Feb. 1953.

**BUD POWELL TRIO****NYC. Feb. 7, 1953**

Bud Powell (p), Oscar Pettiford (b), Roy Haynes (dm).

Broadcast from Birdland, four titles:

Lullaby Of Birdland (Theme)	0:44. (M)
Tea For Two	5:33. (F)
It Could Happen To You	3:27. (S)
Bean And The Boys	6:53. (FM)

**NYC. Feb. 14, 1953**

Same. Six titles:

Lullaby Of Birdland (Theme)	2:52. (M)
I Want To Be Happy	3:25. (F)
Embraceable You	4:09. (S)
I’ve Got You Under My Skin	2:37. (M)
Ornithology	2:55. (FM)
Theme	0:38. (FM)

BP opened a week’s engagement at Birdland only hours after he was released from hospital. It turned out that 1953 would be the most active year in his career. Quoting PP: “He probably spent more hours at Birdland in 1953 than he did anywhere else – even more than he did sleeping in one place, given his erratic domestic habits”. From these first broadcasts it is evident that he is in very good shape, particularly evident in fast items like “Tea ...” and “... Happy” where his technique seems to be as good as ever, but the beautiful “Embraceable ...” should also be noted.

**BUD POWELL TRIO****NYC. March 7, 1953**

Bud Powell (p), Franklin Skeete (b), Sonny Payne (dm).

Broadcast from Birdland, seven titles:

Lullaby Of Birdland (Theme)	1:40. (M)
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Hallelujah!	2:44. (F)
I've Got You Under My Skin	2:37. (M)
Embraceable You	4:32. (S)
Ornithology	2:53. (FM)
Budo	2:01. (FM)
Lullaby Of Birdland (Theme)	2:32. (F)

See comments March 14, 1953 below.

**MARIAN McPARTLAND / BUD POWELL NYC. probably March 11, 1953**

Marian McPartland, Bud Powell (p).

Three titles were recorded in Sherman Fairchild's apartment, private collection (several additional titles exist):

4:16	Lullaby Of Birdland	(FM)
4:29	Embraceable You	(S)
2:19	Oblivion	(SM/F)

Interesting jazz archeological treasure, with good sound, but they could have gotten more out of it, great musicians as they both are. On "Lullaby ..." they play four-handed and accompany each other, while on "... You" BP solos first, then comes MMP. "Oblivion" seems to be all BP's.

**BUD POWELL TRIO NYC. March 14, 1953**

Bud Powell (p), Charles Mingus (b), Roy Haynes (dm).

Date falsely given as March 21. Seven titles:

I Want To Be Happy	3:06. (F)
I've Got You Under My Skin	2:27. (M)
Sure Thing	1:57. (M)
Embraceable You	3:31. (S)
Woody'n You	2:53. (F)
Salt Peanuts	4:15. (F)
Lullaby Of Birdland	1:12. (F)

With Mingus back as his regular bassist, BP's piano playing continues on a high level, and with the reasonably acceptable sound on these Birdland recordings, there is much great music to be heard. From what exists, it seems that he often repeated his choice of tunes from one evening to next, giving us the opportunity to marvel at his endless creativity. Take the "Embraceable ..."s as instructive examples. Note however he rarely sticks to a tune for more than three minutes; whether he wants it that way or is asked to do it, is unclear but often we may wish for more extended versions. The dynamic "Ornithology", "... Happy" and "... Peanuts" are such cases. Also, enjoy the final "Lullaby ..." theme; although he must have played this tune numerous times, he still seems to enjoy it.

**BUD POWELL TRIO Washington, D.C. April 5, 1953**

Personnel as above.

Eleven titles were recorded at Club Kavakos, issued as "Inner Fires":

3:43	I Want To Be Happy	(F)
3:45	Somebody Loves Me	(FM)
3:15	Nice Work If You Can Get It	(FM)
9:03	Salt Peanuts	(F)
3:19	Conception	(F)
1:47	Lullaby Of Birdland No. 1	(FM)
7:07	Little Willie Leaps	(S/F)
4:20	Hallelujah	(F)
2:44	Lullaby Of Birdland No. 2	(F)
1:52	Sure Thing	(FM)

7:58 Woody'n You (F)

There is really nothing wrong with this session, but it seems that BP is slightly more passive here than usual; his playing seems to have less of the enormous dynamic approach we find in his best works, although everything goes in uptempo. Nevertheless there is much good music here. Three items are longer than the others, also due to blowing space for bass and drums. On "Little Willie ..." he also involves in a rare long 4/4 chase with the drummer, and note the exceptional slow forty seconds introduction to this one! Try also "... Peanuts" for a good example of his playing here. Also to mentioned "Sure ...", almost like listening to classical music!

**BUD POWELL TRIO WITH  
JOE TIMER'S ORCHESTRA**

**same date**

Personnel as above plus Ed Leddy, Marky Markowitz, Charlie Walp, Bob Carey, Jon Eardley (tp), Earl Swope, Bob Swope, Don Spiker (tb), Jim Riley (as), Angelo Trompos, Ben Lary (ts), Jack Nimitz (bar), Joe Timer (ldr), Bill Potts (arr).

One title was recorded at Club Kavakos, issued as "Tiny's Blues" and "Big Band Blues" but is really:

6:10 Gabardine And Serge (FM)

Strange item; BP's trio plays like it is a trio session for five minutes, certainly good, and then comes a bigband in without piano for the last minute.

**QUINTET OF THE YEAR**

**Toronto, Canada, May 15, 1953**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp, vo-"Salt ..."), Charlie Parker (as), Bud Powell (p), Charles Mingus (b), Max Roach (dm). Note that the bass playing was badly recorded and later overdubbed.

Concert at "Massey Hall", seven titles (1<sup>st</sup> set: items 1-4, 2<sup>nd</sup> set: items 5-7):

7:06	Perdido	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
7:20	Salt Peanuts	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
7:03	All The Things You Are	Acc. (as/tp). Solo 36 bars. (M)
0:36	52 <sup>nd</sup> Street Theme	Coda. (F)
6:34	Wee	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
8:53	Hot House	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (FM)
7:15	Night In Tunisia	Solo 2 ½ choruses of 32 bars. (FM)

**same date**

Bud Powell (p), Charles Mingus (b), Max Roach (dm).

Six titles, "performed after the 1<sup>st</sup> set:

I've Got You Under My Skin	2:47. (S)
Embraceable You	4:15. (S)
Hallelujah! / Jubilee	3:47. (F)
Sure Thing	2:03. (M)
Cherokee	4:42. (F)
Lullaby Of Birdland	2:25. (F)

I became familiar with this monumental occasion way back in the late fifties, and I still remember my fascination for the incredible happenings. My general impression was that Bird was not quite at his very best, that Dizzy was in better shape, but that Bud Powell stole the show and was the best artist at this legendary occasion. Now sixty years later, I stick to my old opinion; at least for BP; he is fantastic here! Starting with "Perdido", he builds up his solo logically and the third and last chorus is magnificent. Then going into a very fast "... Peanuts" with dynamic drumsticks pushing him forward into an incredible performance. A beautiful chorus in a more moderate tempo on "... You Are" follows, and don't miss his final runs on "... Theme"! Then comes the trio set that should not be forgotten among all this jazz history. "Hallelujah!" and "Embraceable ..." are only two very notable examples. The quintet is then back with "Wee" and "Hot ...", both having brilliant, solid soli, particularly the latter has some beautiful constructions. Then finally "... Tunisia" with another great piano solo. Quoting PP on the very end of the concert: "... but there's a last gasp, and ... it's Powell's. ... For good for the night ... and it had to be good, as it was forever. The three

giants, Gillespie, Parker, and Powell, never again took the stage together to play a set". But what a day for BP!!!

**BUD POWELL TRIO**  
**WITH DIZZY GILLESPIE** **NYC. probaby May 16, 1953**  
 Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Bud Powell (p), Charles Mingus (b), Roy Haynes (dm).  
 Broadcast, probably from Birdland, two titles:

Woody'n You	Intro 8 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. Acc. (b). (FM)
Salt Peanuts (NC)	Acc. (vo). Solo 20 bars (NC). (F)

Fine piano (and trumpet) solo on "... You", note in particular the last chorus!

**BUD POWELL TRIO**  
**WITH CHARLIE PARKER** **NYC. May 22, 1953**  
 Charlie Parker (as), Bud Powell (p), Charles Mingus (b), Art Taylor (dm).  
 Broadcast from Birdland, three titles, private collection:

4:11	Cool Blues (NC)	Acc. only. (FM)
4:35	All The Things You Are (NC)	Acc. only. (SM)
0:45	Lullaby Of Birdland (NC)	Acc. only. (M)

I thought that only Benedetti could entertain himself by doing such vandalism, but here is another example, all of piano soli are excised. Bird plays great here, so why shouldn't BP do the same?

**BUD POWELL TRIO**  
**WITH CHARLIE PARKER** **NYC. probaby May 23, 1953**  
 Charlie Parker (as), Bud Powell (p), Charles Mingus (b), Art Taylor (dm).  
 Broadcast, probably from Birdland, one title:

5:26	Dance Of The Infidels	Intro 8 bars. Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
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Five minutes of magnificent music; first Bird in excellent shape, and then BP who takes a highly memorable, long and inspired solo, ranking high among my favourite items!!

**BUD POWELL TRIO** **NYC. May 30, 1953**  
 Bud Powell (p), Charles Mingus (p), Art Taylor (dm).  
 Broadcast from Birdland, three titles:

I've Got You Under My Skin	2:31. (M)
Autumn In New York	2:06. (S)
I Want To Be Happy	4:16. (F)

**same date**

As above plus Charlie Parker (as), Candido Camero (cga).  
 Three titles:

4:55	Moose The Mooche	Intro. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
7:00	Cheryl	Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
0:41	Lullaby Of Birdland	Acc. (as). (M)

Several strong piano soli here, the highlight probably being the blues of "Cheryl".

**CHARLIE PARKER / BUD POWELL** **unknown loc., probably May 1953**  
 Charlie Parker (as), Bud Powell (p), others unidentified.  
 One title ("Round Midnight", 2:00) is marked "Bud" in a list of Chan Parker's holdings, grouped with a second title ("Ow", 7:40) which may also have BP. Not available.

The Bud Powell solography has to take a stop somewhen, and for the time being it will be right here.