

**The**

**ALTOSAX**

**&  
TENORSAX**

**of**

**CHARLES PARKER**  
**“CHARLIE”**  
**“BIRD”**

Born: Kansas City, Kansas, Aug. 29, 1920  
 Died: NYC. March 12, 1955

*Introduction:*

Charlie Parker, the Bird, or even Yardbird, should need no introduction. Being the most important personality in the process of creating modern jazz, he excited us immensely from the first day we heard his music. Oslo Jazz Circle was firmly based upon swing and the glorious 1930s, but when we learned that among Bird's most important inspirators were Chu Berry and Lester Young, everything seemed to be put in place, and bebop filled our hearts!

*Early history:*

The only child of Charles and Addie Parker. CP had his first music lessons in the local public schools of Kansas City, began playing alto sax in 1933 and worked occasionally in semiprofessional groups before leaving school in 1935 to become a full-time musician. From 1935 to 1939 he worked mainly in KC with a variety of local blues and jazz groups. In 1939 he visited New York, staying for nearly a year. His name first appeared in the music press in 1940; from this date his career is more fully documented. From 1940 to 1942 he played in Jay McShann's band, with which he toured the Southwest, Chicago and New York, and took part in his first recording session in Dallas (1941). In December 1942 he joined Earl Hines' bigband, which then included several other young modernists such as Dizzy Gillespie (no records/broadcasts surviving). By May 1944 they formed the nucleus of Billy Eckstine's band.

During these years CP regularly participated in afterhours jam sessions at Minton's Playhouse and Monroe's Uptown House in New York, where the informal atmosphere and small groups favoured the development of his personal style, and of the new bop music generally. Unfortunately a strike by the American Federation of Musicians silenced most of the recording industry from August 1942, causing this crucial stage in CP's musical evolution to remain virtually undocumented. When the recording ban ended, CP recorded as a sideman (from Sept. 15, 1944) and as a leader (from Nov. 26, 1945), which introduced his music to a wider public and to other musicians.

The year 1945 marked a turning-point in CP's career: in New York he led his own group for the first time and worked extensively with Gillespie in small ensembles. In December 1945 he and Dizzy Gillespie took the new jazz style to Hollywood, where they fulfilled a six-week nightclub engagement. CP continued to work in Los Angeles, recording and performing in concerts and nightclubs, until June 29, 1946, when a nervous breakdown and addiction to heroin and alcohol caused his confinement at Camarillo State Hospital. He was released in January 1947 and resumed work in Los Angeles. Returned to New York in April 1947 (ref. New Grove Dictionary of Jazz).

## CHARLIE "BIRD" PARKER SOLOGRAPHY

**CHARLIE PARKER****Kansas City, Mo., prob. April/May 1940**Charlie Parker (as).  
Private recording.Honeysuckle Rose (2:14) (into) (NC) start to appr.  
3 choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Body And Soul (0:49) Solo 16 bars (NC). (S)

This cratchy acetate may be said to represent the birth of bebop. The not yet twenty years old Charlie shows that he already has taught himself things on the alto saxophone that nobody has ever done before. It takes experts to analyse this music properly and put it into its right context (enlightening liner notes exist). I will only say that if this had been the only example of his music in existence, he nevertheless would have achieved the status of 'legend', no casual amateur could have made anything similar to this, only a genius in his developing phase. Postscript of Sept. 2016: According to some sources (including Carl Woidek's book on Charlie Parker (1996)), the date is quite indeterminate, 1940 to even late 1941, in that case this is not Bird's first recording.

**JAY McSHANN ORCHESTRA****Wichita, Kansas, Aug. 9, 1940**

Buddy Anderson, Orville Minor (tp), Bud Gould (tb), Charlie Parker, John Jackson (as), Bob Mabane (ts), Jay Mc Shann (p), Gene Ramey (b), Gus Johnson (dm).

Live recordings from Trocadero Ballroom, fragment of "Jumpin' At The Woodside" is not supposed to have CP solo but:

I Got Rhythm Possibly solo 8 bars. (FM)

This might be Bird, but the solo is ordinary, and I don't think we should be too sure about this

**JAY McSHANN COMBO****Wichita, Kansas, Nov. 30, 1940**

Orville Minor, Buddy Anderson (tp), Bud Gould (tb, vln), Charlie Parker (as), William J. Scott (ts), Jay McShann (p), Gene Ramey (b), Gus Johnson (dm).

Transcriptions made for Fred Higginson, manager of local radio station KFBI, two titles:

I've Found A New Baby Solo with ens-riffs 32 bars. (F)

Body And Soul Solo 32 bars. (SM)

**Wichita, Kansas, Dec. 2, 1940**

Same, except Bob Mabane (ts) replaces Scott. Five titles:

Coquette Solo 16+8 bars, (tp) on bridge. (SM)

Moten Swing Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Oh! Lady Be Good Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Wichita Blues No solo. (S)

Honeysuckle Rose Soli 32 and 8 bars. (F)

"That the original 1940 transcriptions should be preserved after a lapse of thirty years, let alone in good condition is something of a miracle" says Ross Russell's liner notes. "They were discovered by McShann on one of his visits to Wichita in the late 1960s". Although this is a medium sized group with several good musicians, it is obvious that Bird is its main asset, given ample solo space on all items. Highly remarkable is "... Be Good", where it is obvious that he knows his Lester Young and his famous 1936 recording. But equally interesting is the way he "soars effortless above the orchestra, a jet stream of notes, propelled by a comfortable reserve of wind" on "... New Baby" and "... Rose" in high tempo. A delightful opening of "Moten ...", but he has troubles (believe it or not!) with the second eights. "Body ..." and "Coquette" are played rather straight and are not that exciting. As a total, these sessions are extremely important demonstrations of how advanced Charlie Parker already was at the age of just 20.

**JAY McSHANN & HIS ORCHESTRA****KC? Feb. 6, 1941**

Personnel probably similar to below.

Broadcast, two titles (private possession):

Margie Solo 12 bars. (M)

I'm Getting Sentimental Over You Solo 36 bars. (SM)

A remarkable recent discovery! "Margie" is good enough, but "... Over You" is a real treasure with Bird playing a full chorus in a pleasant tempo, a unique item!

**JAY McSHANN & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Dallas, April 30, 1941**  
Harold Bruce, Buddy Anderson, Orville Minor (tp), Taswell Baird (tb), John Jackson, Charlie Parker (as), Harold Ferguson, Bob Mabane (ts), Jay McShann (p), Gene Ramey (b), Gus Johnson (dm), Walter Brown (vo).  
Three titles were recorded for Decca, all have altosax soli, JJ on 93732 "Dexter Blues" but:

93730-A Swingmatism Solo 16 bars. (M)

93731-A Hootie Blues Solo 12 bars. (SM)

Bird's first visit to a proper recording studio, after Jay McShann had signed up with Decca records. He takes two exciting soli in his light, airy style, not at all like the hard and bitter style of later years. On "Hootie ..." we hear him play the blues for the first time, a nice premonition of things to come, and "Swingmatism" is a brisk swinger, also featuring him to advantage.

**JAY McSHANN & HIS ORCHESTRA** **Chi. Oct. 11, 1941**  
Similar. Broadcast, one title, "One Woman Blues", not available.

**Chi. Oct. 18, 1941**

Similar.

One title, "One Woman Blues", was recorded for Decca, but altosax solo by JJ.

**CHARLIE PARKER** **NYC. early 1942**  
Charlie Parker (as), Clark Monroe (vo-"I Remember You"), possibly Allen Tinney (p), Ebenezer Paul (b) and others.  
Two titles (acetate in my possession), possibly recorded at Clark Monroe's Uptown House:

Cherokee (NC) Solo 1 ¾ choruses of 64 bars (NC). (F)

I Remember You No solo. (S)

This is the first version of "Cherokee", a vehicle that should be famous later, also renamed as "Ko Ko". Although Monroe's was a cooking oven for modern jazz developments, as evident from the preceding piano, Bird is given a straight swing backing in his soloing, making the solo comparable, but of course different, to the September version below.

**JAY McSHANN & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. Feb. 13, 1942**  
Buddy Anderson, Bob Merrill, Orville Minor (tp), Lawrence Anderson, Taswell Baird (tb), Charlie Parker, John Jackson (as), Fred Culliver, Bob Mabane (ts), James Coe (bar), Jay McShann (p), Leonard "Lucky" Enois (g), Gene Ramey (b), Harold "Doc" West (dm), Al Hibbler (vo).  
NBC broadcast "Blue Network" from Savoy Ballroom, six titles (note that JJ solos on "I Got It Bad"):

St. Louis Mood Solo 32 bars. (M)

I Got It Bad No solo. (S)

I'm Forever Blowing Bubbles Break 4 bars to solo 30 bars.  
Solo with orch 20 bars. (M)

Hootie Blues Solo with orch 24 bars. (SM)

Swingmatism Break 2 bars to solo 32 bars. (M)

Theme (NC) No solo. (SM)

This dance date from the Savoy is preserved in good quality, although a few 'holes' occasionally, revealing several brilliant Bird soli! The Decca titles of almost one year earlier, "Swingmatism" and "Hootie ..." appear here with double-length altosax, and even more exciting! Listen to the former and note how the preceding piano is jumpin' to throw Bird into orbit! On the latter, the first chorus is quite similar to the record, but then comes a second one, unfortunately damaged, but nevertheless, wow! However, the two other items heavily compete for our attention. A brilliant swinging "... Mood" has a 'buoyant, joyful and smooth' solo, highly memorable. Even after all this, my favourite Bird item is "... Bubbles", cannot be described, has to be heard! The break is the first one preserved, leading up to the famous ones like "Night In Tunisia" some years later. Finally: Apart from Bird: In 1942, the Jay McShann orchestra must have been the swingiest organization on earth!!

**JAY McSHANN & HIS ORCHESTRA** **NYC. July 2, 1942**

Personnel as Feb. 13 except Gus Johnson (dm) replaces West.

Four titles were recorded for Decca, no altosax on 70994 "Get Me On Your Mind" but:

70993-A	Lonely Boy Blues	Solo 12 bars. (S)
70995-A	The Jumpin' Blues	Solo 12 bars. (M)
70996-A	Sepian Bounce	Soli 10 and 8 bars. (M)

We have already arrived at the end of the Jay McShann era, gone all too fast, a wonderful swing machine only equalled by Count Basie. Bird thrills us with the opening phrase of "... Jumpin' ...", later to become "Ornithology". "Lonely ..." is not that exciting, but in "Sepia ..." he really breaks out and flies high! Postscript of Sept. 30, 2016: Chuck Haddix in his book "Bird: The Life and Music of Charlie Parker", page 57, tells that Jay McShann himself stated that John Jackson played these soli!! Buy the book and read the details!!

**CHARLIE PARKER** **Chi. Feb. 1943**

Charlie Parker (as) playing along with a Hazel Scott (p) recording from Feb. 27, 1942:

Embraceable You	Solo 64 bars (M) to coda. (S)
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An early example of 'music minus one', and although very scratchy, it is a thrill to hear Bird 'blend in so seamlessly' as the CD-liner notes expresses it.

**CHARLIE PARKER** **Chi. Feb. 1943**

Charlie Parker (as) playing along with Benny Goodman's trio and quartet 78 rpm. Recordings from April 24, 1936 and July 30, 1937 respectively:

China Boy	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Avalon	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)

Two other fascinating examples of Bird practicing with records. Playing in uptempo all the way through, he is heard most clearly when he flies with Teddy Wilson's piano. It is amazing how easily he assimilates the fast tempi of these recordings, already at this early stage, his technique is excellent.

**THE REDCROSS RECORDINGS** **Chi. 1943**

Recorded in Room 305 of the Savoy Hotel by Bob Redcross. Seven items:

**Feb. 15, 1943**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (ts), Oscar Pettiford (b).

Sweet Georgia Brown	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 5 choruses (first half chorus missing). Duet with (tp) 8 bars. (F)
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**Possibly Feb. 15, 1943**

Charlie Parker (ts) with unknown sidemen (Postscript: Dizzy Gillespie (tp) on "Indiana").

Indiana	Soli 32, 4 and 4 bars. (F)
Unknown Title (NC)	Solo ca. 52 bars (NC). (F)

**Feb. 28, 1943**

YARDBIRD INC.: Billy Eckstine (tp), Charlie Parker, unknown or possibly Andrew Gardner (ts), Hurley Ramey (g).

Three Guesses	Duet with (ts) 36 bars. Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Soli 4 and 4 bars. (M)
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**Feb. 28, 1943**

THE ADDICTS: Billy Eckstine (tp), Charlie Parker, unknown (ts), Bob Redcross (brushes), unknown announcer.

Boogie Woogie	Intro 4 bars to duet with (tp) 24 bars, to solo 60 bars, to acc. (tp) 72 bars. (FM)
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**Unknown date**

Shorty McConnell (tp), Charlie Parker, unknown (ts), possibly Hurley Ramey (g), unknown (dm).

Yardin' With Yard  
(Shoe Shine Boy)

Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars.  
Acc. (tp) 2 choruses. (FM)

**Unknown date**

Charlie Parker (ts), Hurley Ramey (g).

Body And Soul

Solo 32 bars. (SM)

These recordings, once believed to be recorded for the American Red Cross (!), were unearthed in 1985 and twisted our perspective on the development of modern jazz: Charlie Parker, the famous altosax player, was in 1943 more advanced on the tenorsaxophone than anyone else! He just transferred his style to the larger instrument and it worked like hell!! I wonder what would have happened if he had stuck to the tenorsax; would Sonny Stitt have been the great altosax star, with Dexter Gordon going for the baritonesax?? Anyway, these items are just invaluable treasures and musical documents from an unrecorded era. Remember that CP at this time played tenorsax with the Earl Hines band, but the recording ban prohibited any documentation of what happened in that exciting organization. The 7 minutes and 40 seconds "Sweet Georgia Brown" is a pure thriller, but "Three Guesses", named as a hybrid of "Cottontail", "Mop Mop" and "I Got Rhythm", also has some incredible soloing. "Boogie ..." and "Indiana", while interesting enough, cannot quite compare with those magnificent items. The sound quality and informality of these private recordings can give no complete picture of Bird's tenorsax playing, and not everything is perfect by far. But if he had wanted to, he would have been equally famous and legendary and border-crossing on any instrument he had chosen. Postscript: Three more titles have appeared. "Body ..." is rather experimental, the tempo is quite undecided, and the entrance to the bridge is a mess, thus this item has mostly historical value (which of course means a lot with this performer!). Fine uptempo on an unknown title should be noted. Most interesting is however "... Yard", starting searchingly but getting into a firm second chorus of which the first half is quoted from Prez' famous "Shoe Shine Swing". Reason good enough to add the CD to your Stash LP!

**CHARLIE PARKER**

**Kansas City, Mo., late 1943/1944**

Charlie Parker (as), Efferge Ware (g), Little Phil Phillips (dm).

Private recordings, four titles:

Cherokee

Solo 3 choruses of 64 bars. (F)

My Heart Tells Me

Solo 2 choruses of 36 bars. (SM)

I Found A New Baby

Solo 4 ½ choruses of 32 bars. (M)

Body And Soul

Solo 32 bars (SM) to 64  
bars (M) to 16 bars. (SM)

"The discovery of these 1942 acetates from KC is a revelation for all musicologists and Parker fanatics" to quote CD-liner notes. "On subsequent listenings one comes away from these performances realizing that their historical value is the least of their virtues – they constitute four of the crème de la crème performances of Bird's incredible career". So right, oh yes, this session is unique and magnificent!! This listener is almost hypnotized by the long, brilliant, clean and happy soli, and this is pure swing music, based upon the traditions of the great 1930s The most suitable backing, perfect guitar and reticent drums not interfering with Bird's developing of ideas, just make the whole session swing so heavenly. The most interesting item will of course to many be "Cherokee", a tune Bird played under different circumstances through the years; this version is if not the most advanced, certainly the most delightful! But then the lovely and wistful "My Heart ...", there is really nothing like it among Bird's works, play it again and again!! Finally two great evergreens, "... Baby" (note his 'Phil Woods phrasing' in the second chorus!) and "Body ..." of equal greatness. Few jazz treasures can compete with these, jazz archeology of the very best quality!!! Postscript: Date has earlier been given as Sept. 1942. However "My Heart Tells Me" wasn't copyrighted until Sept. 1943, and recordings of it didn't come out till the fall of 1943 (ref. M. Sasaki). Thus the date must be later than previously assumed.

**TINY GRIMES QUINTETTE**

**NYC. Sept. 15, 1944**

Charlie Parker (as), Clyde Hart (p), Tiny Grimes (g, vo-5711,12), Jimmy Butts (b, vo-5712), Harold "Doc" West (dm).

Four titles were recorded for Savoy:

5710-1 Tiny's Tempo

Solo 36 bars. Coda. (FM )

5710-2 Tiny's Tempo

As above. (FM)

5710-3 Tiny's Tempo

As above. (FM)

5711-1	I'll Always Love You	Break to obbligato 32 bars to solo 16 bars. Obbligato 16 bars (S)
5711-2	I'll Always Love You	As above. (S)
5712-1	Romance Without Finance	Obbligato 16 and 8 bars to solo 16+8 bars (p) on bridge. Obbligato 28 bars. (M)
5712-2	Romance Without Finance (NC)	Cut after solo 4 bars. (M)
5712-3	Romance Without Finance	As take 1. (M)
5712-4	Romance Without Finance (NC)	Cut after (vo) 24 bars. (M)
5712-5	Romance Without Finance	As take 1. (M)
5713-1	Red Cross	Straight 8 bars. Soli 32, 2 and 2 bars. (FM)
5713-2	Red Cross	As above. (FM)

This is Charlie Parker's first small band session in a recording studio, and great it is! "... Tempo" was one of my first encounters with him, and when I heard the three takes (at that time faded out after the altosax solo!), I was lost forever. Tiny and his men makes this really a true swing session. "Red Cross", of course named after the notable Bob Redcross above has also some fine Bird. Nevertheless, some serious attention should be given to the vocal numbers, took a long time to find these 78s in the old days, and particularly the slow "... Love You" has some gorgeous altosax playing! Postscript: There are only two takes of 5711.

**CLYDE BERNHARDT  
& HIS KANSAS CITY BUDDIES**

**NYC. prob. Jan. 1945**

Clyde Bernhardt (tb, vo), Charlie Parker (as), Jay McShann (p), Gene Ramey (b), Gus Johnson (dm).

Demo session reported on Blue Moon CD BMCD 6016 to be from Jan. 1945. I have been in heavy doubt about this, putting the session as early as 1942. However according to Clyde Bernhardt, the CD is correct after all. Four titles:

Triflin' Woman Blues	Obbligato 48 bars. Solo 12 bars. Obbligato 24 bars. (SM)
Would You Do Me A Favor?	Obbligato 48 bars. Solo 16 bars. Obbligato parts. (M)
Lay Your Habits Down	Obbligato 36 bars. Solo 12 bars. Obbligato parts. (M)
So Good This Morning	Obbligato 32 bars Solo 12 bars. Obbligato 8 bars. (M)

This session seems to belong to the McShann period; why should he and Bird take part in a demo as late as 1945? The sound quality of these acetates is not impressing but more than good enough to show a lot of Bird, playing behind almost all vocal, and soloing on all items. This is the young Bird playing the blues in his early happy and jumping prebebop style. It seems that he has some reed trouble on "Triflin' ...", but he is wailing along, and the soli have a lovely logic to them, all items are highly noteworthy!

**CLYDE HART's ALL STARS**

**NYC. Jan. 1945**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Trummy Young (tb, vo-3305-3308), Charlie Parker (as), Don Byas (ts), Clyde Hart (p), Mike Bryan (g), Al Hall (b), Specs Powell (dm), Rubberlegs Williams (vo-3301-3304).

Eight titles were recorded for Continental:

3301	What's The Matter Now?	Solo 18 bars. (M)
3302	I Want Every Bit Of It	Solo 4 bars. Obbligato 4 and 4 bars. (S)
3303	That's The Blues	Solo with (vo)-comments 8 bars. (S)
3304	4-F Blues	Obbligato 24 bars. (M)
3304	G. I. Blues (alt. of 4-F Blues)	As above. (M)
3305	Dream Of You	Intro 4 bars to solo with ens 16 bars. (SM)
3306	Seventh Avenue	Obbligato 6 and 6 bars. (M)
3307	Sorta Kinda	32 bars 8/8 with (tp). (FM)
3308	Oh, Oh, My, My, Oh, Oh	No solo. (SM)

Of what a great party this must have been!! First four sides with the hilarious "singer" "Rubberlegs" and then cooling it down with Trummy Young's more sober vocal efforts. In between the guys seem to have a hell of a good time, playing their heads off, excellent contributions by everybody, everywhere!! To highlight Bird, where to start? On where he flies like a bird in the background on "... Avenue? Or his lovely straight on "Dream ..."? Or how he fights with Rubberlegs on "That's The Blues"? Or the wonderful chase with Dizzy on "... Kinda"? Or his driving background on "4-F/G. I."? Or perhaps the main solo here, "... Matter Now?", great!! I have played this session now and then through fifty years and never get tired of it!!

**COOTIE WILLIAMS SEXTET** **NYC. Feb. 12, 1945**

Cootie Williams (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Sam Taylor (ts), Arnold Jarvis (p), Carl Pruitt (b), Sonny Payne (dm).

One title was recorded at broadcast from Savoy Ballroom (several other titles with the full Cootie Williams Orchestra, with CP as supposed member, but he cannot be heard):

Floogie Boo Solo 32 bars. (FM)

Interesting item, something different, but the sextet is not particularly remarkable and neither is Bird's solo.

**DIZZY GILLESPIE SEXTET** **NYC. Feb. 28, 1945**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Clyde Hart (p), Remo Palmieri (g), Slam Stewart (b), Cozy Cole (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Guild:

554-1 Groovin' High Break 2 bars to solo 16 bars. (M)

556 All The Things You Are Solo 8 bars. (SM)

557 Dizzy Atmosphere Solo 32 bars. (F)

Dizzy and Bird have recorded together before, but this session is the real eye and ear opener and a milestone in modern jazz and development of bebop. This was also, in all modesty, our encounter with this music back here on a Savoy LP, and it immediately changed our musical perception. Note however that this also is a session with swing rhythm, propelling D&B forward with great effect, and with soloing even by bow-bassing Slam. We were so thrilled by the jubilating ensemble introducing "... High" which is built upon the chords of "Whispering", and even more so when Bird went into his solo, only half a chorus, but he seemed so happy, as wanting to show the world something important. His soli on "All ..." and "Dizzy ..." are likewise magnificent. One of the great events of jazz!

**BEN WEBSTER AND HIS GROUP** **NYC. early 1945**

Charlie Parker (as), Ben Webster (ts), Argonne "Sadik Hakim" Thornton (p), Rail Wilson (b), Hillard Brown (dm).

Unknown number of titles recorded at the Onyx Club, unissued.

**DIZZY GILLESPIE & HIS ALL STAR QUINTET** **NYC. May 11, 1945**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp, vo-565), Charlie Parker (as), Al Haig (p), Curly Russell (b), Sid Catlett (dm), Sarah Vaughan (vo-567).

Four titles were recorded for Guild:

565 Salt Peanuts Soli 8 and 32 bars. (F)

566 Shaw 'Nuff Solo 32 bars. (F)

567 Lover Man Intro with ens 6 bars. Obligato 6 bars. (S)

568 Hot House Solo 32 bars. (M)

But this is the 'real' bebop encounter between Dizzy and Bird, the rhythm section has been changed profoundly, and this is the first recording session by the most important bebop piano player Al Haig. Bird plays with great elegance and inspiration also on this session (same Savoy LP, still have got it!), no problems with "... Peanuts" in high tempo, he flies!!

**SARAH VAUGHAN WITH  
DIZZY GILLESPIE & HIS SEXTET** **NYC. May 25, 1945**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Flip Phillips (ts), Nat Jaffe (p-3325, 3327), Tadd Dameron (p-3326), Bill De Arango (g), Curly Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Continental:

3325 What More Can A Woman Do? Faint obligato parts. (S)

3326 I'd Rather Have A Memory Faint obligato parts. (S)



3327 Mean To Me Intro 4 bars. Solo 8 bars. (M)

Primarily a vocal session but Bird's intro, and solo, on "Mean ..." is worth the whole session, which has some excellent vocal by the young Vaughan.

**CHARLIE PARKER SEXTET** **NYC. May 30, 1945**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Don Byas (ts), Al Haig (p), Curley Russell (b), Stan Levey (dm).

One title recorded at Lincoln Square Concert:

Sweet Georgia Brown Solo 8, 16, 8, 8 and 8 bars  
(chase with (tp/ts)). (FM)

A most exciting discovery with the three bebop greats chasing and playing with each other for 6 choruses (with an incomplete start there were originally more)! All play with great enthusiasm!!

**CHARLIE PARKER QUINTET** **Philadelphia, June 5, 1945**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Al Haig (p), Curley Russell (b), Stan Levey (dm).

Recorded live at the Academy of Music, one title:

Blue 'N' Boogie Solo 6 choruses of 12 bars,  
first two with ens. (FM)

Not the best of sound quality, but Bird swings this "Blue ..." very nicely, so don't miss it!

**RED NORVO & HIS SELECTED SEXTET** **NYC. June 6, 1945**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Flip Phillips (ts), Red Norvo (vib), Teddy Wilson (p), Slam Stewart (b), Specs Powell (dm-8,9), J. C. Heard (dm-10,11).

Four titles were recorded for Comet:

8-A	Hallelujah	As below. (F)
8-B	Hallelujah	As below. (F)
8-F	Hallelujah	Solo 32 bars. (F)
9-B	Get Happy	As below. (FM)
9-D	Get Happy	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
10-A	Slam Slam Blues	As below. (S)
10-B	Slam Slam Blues	Solo 12 bars. (S)
11-AA	Congo Blues (NC)	Solo 20 bars (NC). (F)
11-BB	Congo Blues (NC)	Solo 28 bars (NC). (F)
11-A	Congo Blues	As below. (F)
11-B	Congo Blues	As below. (F)
11-C	Congo Blues	Solo 40 bars. (F)

A "mixed" session, combining the best of modern jazz with a swinging rhythm section based on the best of traditions, with great success (the opposite never seems to work). Bird sings along happily, note his entrance on the "Get Happy"s, and he plays with usual creativity and enthusiasm on all titles. The highlights are the two versions of "Slam ...", he really knows how to play the slow blues!!

**CHARLIE PARKER / DIZZY GILLESPIE** **NYC. June 22, 1945**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Don Byas (ts-item 1), Al Haig (p), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm-items 1-4), Sid Catlett (dm-items 5-6), "Symphony Sid" Thorin (mc).

Six titles recorded at concert in Town Hall:

Bebop	Solo 5 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
A Night In Tunisia	Break 4 bars to solo 64 bars. (M)
Groovin' High	Break 4 bars to solo 64 bars. (M) Coda with (tp). (S)
Salt Peanuts	Solo 8 bars. Solo 20 bars to 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Hot House	Solo 32 bars. (FM)

52<sup>nd</sup> Street Theme

Solo 4 bars. (FM)

A magnificent concert, one of the greatest!! In fact, the first time a real bebop concert was recorded!! Bird is in a sensational form, playing absolutely on the top of his enormous creative powers with bottomless inspiration. Since Bird was late, Don Byas was taken in as a replacement on “Bebop”, but then Bird appears and takes five choruses with no warming up, excellent! The concert continues with several old bebop favourites, all treated masterly by all; Dizzy is brilliant, and listen to Al Haig, perfect! Note also that here we find the first recorded Bird version of “... Tunisia”, but listening to the break, it is obvious that he has practiced a lot and played it before... The break in “... High” is different from the 78 rpm. Version four months earlier. A long solo on “Salt ...” should also be noted. An important occasion in Bird’s career!!

**SIR CHARLES THOMPSON****NYC. Sept. 4, 1945**

Buck Clayton (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Dexter Gordon (ts), Sir Charles Thompson (p), Danny Barker (g), Jimmy Butts (b), J. C. Heard (dm).

Three titles were recorded for Apollo (a fourth title: 1031 “If I Had You” does not feature CP):

1030	Takin’ Off	Solo 16 bars. (M)
1032	20 <sup>th</sup> Century Blues	Solo 12 bars. (SM)
1033	The Street Beat	Break 2 bars to solo 32 bars. (FM)

A session appearing in many solographies ... Bird seems to enjoy himself very much with this swing accompaniment, and his three soli are most delightful, my favourite is “... Beat”.

**CHARLIE PARKER’S REBOPPERS****NYC. Nov. 26, 1945**

Miles Davis (tp-5850,51,52), Dizzy Gillespie (tp-5853, p-5849,50,51,53), Charlie Parker (as), Argonne Thornton alias Sadik Hakim (p-5852), Curley Russell (b), Max Roach (dm).

Six titles were recorded for Savoy:

5850-1	Billie’s Bounce	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
5850-2	Billie’s Bounce (NC)	Solo 3 choruses + 7 bars (NC). (M)
5850-3	Billie’s Bounce	Solo 4 choruses. (M)
5849-1	Warming Up A Riff	Fades in to 16 bars and 2 choruses of 64 bars to cutoff. (FM)
5850-4	Billie’s Bounce (NC)	Solo 3 choruses + 4 bars (NC). (M)
5850-5	Billie’s Bounce	Solo 4 choruses. (M)
5851-1	Now’s The Time (NC)	No solo. (M)
5851-2	Now’s The Time (NC)	Solo 2 bars (NC). (M)
5851-3	Now’s The Time	Solo 3 choruses of 12 bars. (M)
5851-4	Now’s The Time	As take 3. (M)
5852-1	Thriving From A Riff	Solo 64 bars. (FM)
5852-2	Thriving From A Riff (NC)	No solo. (FM)
5852-3	Thriving From A Riff	As take 1. (FM)
No mx	Meandering (NC)	Solo 32 bars. (S)
5853-1	Ko Ko (NC)	Solo 8 bars. (F)
5853-2	Ko Ko	Solo 8 bars. Solo 2 choruses of 64 bars. Solo 8 bars. (F)

A famous bebop session with several alternate takes demonstrating Bird’s endless improvisational capabilities. He is the star here, Dizzy has a minor role, and Miles is still in his early learning phase. Some reed trouble terminates some attempts, but in general Bird is in excellent form here. “... Bounce” and “... Time” are both blues in medium tempo, a total of 23 choruses, most interesting, particularly the latter has some nice surprises! “Thriving ...” is a tune that later was developed into “Anthropology”, fine playing. The odd tune, “Meandering” is an improvisation on “Embraceable You”, a most moving item, somewhat out of context here, but so beautiful, possibly too long for a 78 issue. Finally the famous “Ko Ko”, a development of “Cherokee”, a tune Bird played back in the old days. The boys forget themselves on take 1, going to the melody, but on take 2. As Alun Morgan puts it: “Bird launches into the two choruses of improvisation



A brief version of only two minutes, and Bird only gets the bridge within Dizzy's vocal.

**JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC**

**Los Angeles, Jan. 28, 1946**

Collective personnel: Dizzy Gillespie, Al Killian, Howard McGhee (tp), Charlie Parker, Willie Smith (as), Lester Young, Charlie Ventura (ts), Mel Powell, Arnold Ross (p), Billy Hadnott (b), Lee Young (dm).

Five titles were recorded (note that these titles have been given different dates, but the above is taken from the JATP CD series):

Sweet Georgia Brown	Solo 4 choruses of 32 bars. (F)
Blues For Norman	Solo 10 choruses of 12 bars. (F)
I Can't Get Started	Solo 32 bars. (S)
Lady Be Good	Solo 64 bars. (M)
After You've Gone	Solo 3 choruses of 40 bars. (F)

An exciting JATP session, possibly the best ever recorded! However this is not necessary because of Bird who tries to fly high but has occasional reed and conceptual problems, "Sweet ..." is a good example of the latter, and does not offer his best logic in this very high tempo, sandwiched between between an incredible Mel Powell and a highly inspired Lester Young. His uptempo work on "... Norman" also seems somewhat forced, and "After ..." is his definitely best uptempo item. Going down in tempo, he obviously thrives with the "Lady ...". The concert highlight is "... Started", where Bird follows Pres, the two giants together. More reed trouble, but otherwise a memorable encounter!

**CHARLIE PARKER / DIZZY GILLESPIE**

**Los Angeles, Feb. 4, 1946**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), unknown (p), Red Callender (b), Harold "Doc" West (dm).

Recorded at jam session at Freddie James' house, one title:

Lover Come Back To Me	(NC) start to solo 124 bars to duet with (tp) 32 bars (NC). (M)
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An inspired solo with Bird in his most happy mood; the opening is unfortunately missing.

**DIZZY GILLESPIE JAZZMEN**

**Glendale, Ca., Feb. 5, 1946**

Dizzy Gillespie (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Lucky Thompson (ts), George Handy (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Ray Brown (b), Stan Levey (dm).

One title was recorded for Dial:

1000	Diggin' For Diz	Solo 16 bars. (FM)
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This session was Bird's first with Dial records, a contact which turned out to be very fruitful. However, it was originally planned to have Lester Young and Milt Jackson, and upon recording, chaos prevailed, producing only one title. Bird seems to be in good shape though.

**CHARLIE PARKER QUINTET**

**LA. Feb.-March 1946**

Miles Davis (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Joe Albany (p), Addison Farmer (b), Chuck Thompson (dm).

Broadcast from Finale Club:

Anthropology	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
Billie's Bounce	Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars. (FM)
Blue 'N' Boogie	Duet with (tp) 16 bars. Solo 4 choruses of 12 bars (ens 4 on first two). (FM)
All The Things You Are	Acc. (tp) 16+12 bars, solo 8 bars on bridge to solo 36 bars. (SM)
Ornithology (NC)	Soli 64, 8 and 8 bars. (FM)

A very interesting session for two good reasons: It is the second time only that an encounter with Miles Davis is recorded (he is in excellent shape). And we meet for the first time the legendary and highly original pianist Joe Albany (who gets lots of solo space here). Bird is in a happy mood, and all items here have notable altosax soli.

**BENNY CARTER**

**LA. March-April 1946**

Benny Carter, Charlie Parker, Willie Smith (as), Nat King Cole (p), Oscar Moore (g), Johnny Miller (b), Buddy Rich (dm), Ernie "Bubbles" Whitman (mc).

AFRS Jubilee programs, three titles played as a medley, no CP on “Tea For Two” (WS) and “Body And Soul” (BC) but:

Cherokee	Solo 3 choruses of 64 bars, ens on last 16. (F)
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A sparkling solo on “Cherokee” with swing rather than bebop backing, exciting to compare with other versions!

Note: An “Ornithology” dated LA. March-April 1946 has been removed from an earlier version of the solography, the correct date is May 23, 1948.

**CHARLIE PARKER SEPTET** **Hollywood, March 28, 1946**  
Miles Davis (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Lucky Thompson (ts), Dodo Marmarosa (p), Arvin Garrison (g), Vic McMillan (b), Roy Porter (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Dial:

1010-1	Moose The Mooche	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
1010-2	Moose The Mooche	As above. (FM)
1010-3	Moose The Mooche	As above. (FM)
1011-1	Yardbird Suite	Soli 8 and 32 bars. (FM)
1011-4	Yardbird Suite	As above. (FM)
1012-1	Ornithology	No solo! (FM)
1012-3	Ornithology	Solo 32 bars. (FM)
1012-4	Ornithology	As take 3. (FM)
1013-1	“Famous Alto Break” (NC)	Break 4 bars to solo 16 bars. (M)
1013-4	Night In Tunisia	Solo 8 bars, then as take 1. (M)
1013-5	Night In Tunisia	As take 4. (M)

In his memo, Ross Russell, the owner of Dial, states that “the session was notable – for being the only occasion on which Bird was on time”. Anyway, the session was highly successful, although the drummer is a bit heavyhanded for my taste. Both “... Mooche” and “Ornithology” are excellent Bird vehicles, and the altosax playing is excellent on all titles with the variations you need from take to take, compare! Note that for some reason he is absent on the first take of “Ornithology”, letting Dodo solo instead. On this we are also introduced to the delightful “... Suite” for the first time, and obviously Bird enjoyed it, open and happy soloing, first 8 bars are straight. And then the most exciting “... Tunisia” with Bird starting his solo with a fantastic break, of which three versions are in existence (but one, supposed to be the best one, only have Bird’s solo). By the way, can somebody with better ears than mine tell whether the breaks themselves are very different, really? In general, this is an exciting session, obviously inspiring Ross Russell to go ahead.

**JAZZ AT THE PHILHARMONIC** **Los Angeles, April 22, 1946**  
Buck Clayton (tp), Charlie Parker, Willie Smith (as), Coleman Hawkins, Lester Young (ts), Ken Kersey (p), Irving Ashby (g), Billy Hadnott (b), Buddy Rich (dm).  
Two titles (additional titles without CP):

JATP Blues	Solo 36 bars. (M)
I Got Rhythm	Solo 3 choruses of 32 bars. Solo 8 bars. (FM)

Bird plays the blues quite convincingly in a crisp “JATP ...” Although coming in late, he proceeds well on “... Rhythm”, but then he takes some unmotivated pauses, and I don’t think he is quite comfortable with the JATP atmosphere. Note his strain compared to a relaxed Pres who succeeds him!

**CHARLIE PARKER /**  
**HOWARD MCGHEE QUINTET** **Hollywood, July 29, 1946**  
Howard McGhee (tp), Charlie Parker (as), Jimmy Bunn (p), Bob Kesterson (b), Roy Porter (dm).  
Four titles were recorded for Dial:

1021-A	Max Is Making Wax	Solo 32 bars. (F)
1022-A	Loverman	Solo 32 bars. Duet with (tp) 8 bars to coda. (S)

1023-A	The Gypsy	Solo 48 bars. (S)
1024-A	Bebop	Solo 32 bars. (F)

The day of total collapse! A dramatic session, nothing like it in recorded jazz history!! The session starts with an extremely fast “Max ...”, and Bird’s solo is quite incoherent, a real mess. Then an unforgettable “Loverman”, with an empty first bar, and then, to quote: “the solo is one of strange beauty full of gasping pauses and heartbreak phrases”. It is quite obvious that Bird here is ill and not his usual self. Continuing with another slow number, “The Gypsy”, the pianist is prodding him forward and “... the notes he plays are halting and tragic and the three minute performance seems to take a very long time”. Finally the group goes back to the very uptempo with “Bebop”, and the result is for Bird equally miserable. Under ordinary circumstances, this session should have been rejected in toto, but I feel the decision to issue it was a correct one; we are dealing one of jazz’ most important performers, and his works are important whatever quality or circumstances. When listening to “The Gypsy” I get the same creepy feeling as when looking at Vincent van Gogh’s painting of the church and the night and the stars – a lonely soul in deep distress.

This is a natural place to halt this Charlie Parker solography. Time stopped. After spending six months in Camarillo State Hospital, Bird was reborn.

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