

PARCELLS

THE CHARLIE PARKER STORY #

ELECTRONICALLY RE-RECORDED  
TO SIMULATE STEREO

V6-8000

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*The*  
*Charlie Parker*  
*Story*

SUPERVISED BY NORMAN GRANZ

# **1**

# THE CHARLIE PARKER STORY # 1

I'd like to make a few observations about Charlie Parker and his relations with me during his lifetime. I won't attempt to give any biographical data on Charlie, and the generalizations concerning his musicianship are obviously extraneous coming from me because by now they have become part of jazz-lore known by every fan. But there was an exchange of points-of-view, as it were, that I think needs retelling here.

I first heard about Charlie in 1944 from a tenor saxophonist by the name of Merle Anderson who worked for me in my various jam sessions on the West Coast. Merle, who, unfortunately has since died, played with Charlie in Kansas City in the early days. He played some scratchy, beat-up acetates for me of this saxophonist that he raved about called Charlie Parker. Incidentally, he never alluded to Charlie as Yardbird, or Bird, but always as Charlie. I confess that I heard nothing then of what was the genius of Charlie and I was remarkably and unforgivably unimpressed. I quite forgot the incident when I heard Parker in person for the first time two years after that, when in 1946 he came to Hollywood and played in a night club as part of Dizzy Gillespie's small band. By the way, this was the first time I saw and heard Ray Brown, later to become a permanent member of Jazz at the Philharmonic, who was a part of that incredible musical organization. The others, if you're interested, were Stan Levey on drums; Milt Jackson on vibes; and Al Haig on piano (I think Al Haig on piano, but my memory isn't too clear on that). I became friendly with Charlie, and I confess that though I still didn't understand his playing, I nevertheless was moved by him as a human being, enough so that I began to use him on my jazz concerts—frankly, because he needed the money. It was only afterwards, on listening to some of the Jazz at the Philharmonic concert albums on which he played, that I began to appreciate his contributions, especially after that incredible solo of his on "Lady Be Good" which appeared on one of my earlier Volumes from that series, was I completely captivated.

I didn't see Charlie very much after that engagement until 1948, when he signed with my record company, Clef Records, and I took Charlie on tour with Jazz at the Philharmonic. I must say, to put it mildly, that it was a trying experience for me, and possibly, as far as I know, for Charlie too, because Charlie suddenly found himself in the highly disciplined groove in which my concerts move, and it may have made him restless; but whatever he did I normally would forgive and forget when I heard him play.

In later years I became enmeshed, if that be the word, in the various problems of Charlie Parker, but like a lot of people who respect and admire, and possibly are even awed by talent, I would forgive and forget.

Charlie, I think, understood my love for what he did and went along with my various experiments, though I felt that he probably had his doubts, but like any true genius, and I use this word, I think, quite accurately in whatever context the reader chooses, he was willing to try anything. As a result I was able to record Charlie with strings, Charlie with a big band; and I insisted that Charlie play pretty tunes written by good song writers instead of just the blues, though apparently no matter what he played had blues roots and overtones. I also had Charlie combine his talents with the Afro-Cuban bands of Machito and Chico O'Farrill, and, in short, was able to give Charlie some stimuli in other than the familiar, well-worked quartet and quintet sides to which he had been accustomed.

However, I did one quintet session with Dizzy Gillespie which was, I think, if not the best music that Charlie played, then certainly among the best; it was the "Bird and Diz" Album. (Verve Album V6-8006). Charlie was absolutely superb that day as was Dizzy, and the rhythm section with the addition of Buddy Rich in the anomalous company of Thelonius Monk and Curly Russell provided the necessary drive by Buddy Rich on the one hand, and proper chording by Thelonius Monk and Curly Russell on the other.

Later on, on the West Coast, I was able to get Charlie to make what I believe to be one of the important sessions in jazz history, when I had him record with Benny Carter and Johnny Hodges in which was clearly delineated the three greatest alto stylists in jazz.

Towards the end, Charlie's contacts with me became less frequent except for the constant need for economic help, and I confess that he became more difficult for me to try things with on a musical level. There was, for me, an abortive attempt to combine voices with Charlie, but by then I had the feeling that these things weren't coming off. I think Charlie had that feeling too. In any event, the last session that we made just prior to his death was the one in which he did an album dedicated to the music of Cole Porter. (Verve Album V6-8007).

Again no matter how personally unhappy I may have occasionally been with Charlie, there were still those great flashes of human beauty as told through his horn and again all would be forgiven and forgotten. The only thing, I trust, that will never be forgotten is Charlie's contribution to music and I hope this album helps to implant forever what he has done in the memory of every jazz fan.

NORMAN GRANZ

*The Tunes and Personnel in this Album Are:*

## Side 1

**Just Friends**

**Laura**

**April In Paris**

**I'm In The Mood For Love**

### CHARLIE PARKER WITH STRINGS

**What Is This Thing Called Love**

**Lover**

### CHARLIE PARKER BIG BAND

**Lover Man**

**Si Si**

Featuring RED RODNEY, *Trumpet*; JOHN LEWIS, *Piano*; RAY BROWN, *Bass*; KENNY CLARKE, *Drums*.

## Side 2

**Back Home Blues**

Featuring RED RODNEY, *Trumpet*; JOHN LEWIS, *Piano*; RAY BROWN, *Bass*; KENNY CLARKE, *Drums*.

**Visa**

**Passport**

Featuring TOMMY TURK, *Trombone*; KENNY DORHAM, *Trumpet*; AL HAIG, *Piano*; TOMMY POTTER, *Bass*; MAX ROACH, *Drums*, and VIDAL BOLADO, *Bongos*.

**My Little Suede Shoes**

Featuring WALTER BISHOP, *Piano*; TEDDY KOTICK, *Bass*; ROY HAYNES, *Drums*; JOE MANGUAL, *Bongos* and RALPH MIRANDA, *Conga Drum*.

**Mango Mangué**

**Okiedoke**

CHARLIE PARKER, SOLOIST, WITH MACHITO AND HIS ORCHESTRA

**In The Still Of The Night**

**Old Folks**

Featuring TONY ALESS, *Piano*; MAX ROACH, *Drums*; CHARLIE MINGUS, *Bass*; JUNIOR COLLINS, *French Horn*; HAL MCCUSICK, *Clarinet*; TOMMY MACE, *Oboe*; AL BLOCK, *Flute*; MANNIE THALER, *Bassoon*. Vocal Arrangement and Chorus under the direction of DAVE LAMBERT.



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