

CHARLIE PARKER ON DIAL VOL 5

The reissue of Charlie Parker's historical recording sessions for Dial Records continues on Spotlight Volume 5 with the complete chronological sequence of the November 4, 1947 date at WOR Studios, Thirty-Ninth Street and Broadway, New York City. This session took place early Tuesday evening and was supervised by Ross Russell, president and director of artists and repertoire for Dial Records. The recording engineer, as with all Dial sessions in New York, was Doug Hawkins, who combined a license as an acoustical engineer with a music degree from Juilliard School of Music.

The personnel of the Charlie Parker Quintet—Parker, Miles Davis, Duke Jordan, Tommy Potter and Max Roach—was the one that Bird had put together following his return to New York after his disastrous winter in California and six months confinement at Camarillo State Hospital. Charlie arrived in New York on Monday, April 7, 1947, the day following Easter Sunday when he had stopped over in Chicago to play a one nighter at the Pershing Ballroom with a local rhythm section. His return was welcomed by hundreds of musicians and jazz fans. This enthusiasm carried over to practical matters and within days Charlie had assembled the group and was booked into the Three Deuces for what proved to be an extensive stay.

The Quintet, as we hear it on these takes, was to remain intact for more than twenty months, something of a record. It was, in the opinion of many critics, the best of all Parker combos and one of the great small bands of jazz. Miles Davis, who was twenty-one when these recordings were made, was to achieve jazz stardom within a few years and in 1947 Max Roach was already established as the top bop percussionist. Duke Jordan and Tommy Potter have both drifted into obscurity and undeservedly so, it is difficult to imagine a more suitable pianist or bassist for the Parker Quintet. They were small band rhythm section men par excellence. Although Charlie had his choice of several more brilliant brass men he picked the young and still immature Miles Davis because Miles was, for Parker's purposes and current musical objectives, the most compatible trumpet player available.

The Quintet made three recording sessions for Dial during the fall of 1947, of which this is the second. Six tunes were recorded at each session. These eighteen performances, together with the alternate takes are being assembled by Spotlight from world-wide sources in order to afford the collector a complete, final and definitive edition of Charlie Parker's Dial recordings. They have the very great advantage of being performances by a working band, as contrasted with the pick-up groups that one hears so often in the recording studio. The musicians had been playing together night after night in clubs and concert situations, including a Jazz at the Philharmonic tour, for more than six months when the final Dial sessions were made. The tunes played were solidly set in the band's repertoire and have nothing in common with the hastily-prepared heads and run-downs cooked up in so many recording studios. They are sufficiently aged as compositions and completely realized as performances.

Considering the high quality of the music this session went very quickly. A total of thirteen takes was required for the six tunes played and the entire session occupied scarcely more than three hours at the WOR studios. The material in Volume 5 represents ten of the thirteen takes cut that night. Three are missing. These were never issued by Dial in any form (1111-A, 1111-B, the first two takes of BIRD FEATHERS, and 1113-A, the first take of SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE). The take most difficult to come by was 1115-C, the final version of OUT OF NOWHERE, which turned up in the form of a Dial 78 rpm test pressing. OUT OF NOWHERE was never released by Dial as a 78 rpm record. The 78 had been superseded by the 33 rpm disc by the time the company was ready to distribute this performance by Charlie Parker and for some reason the other versions were used, later 1115-A appeared on a Dial ten-inch LP (DLP207) and 1115-B on a Dial twelve-inch LP (DLP904) a special limited pressing of alternate Parker masters available as a collector's edition.

In its master number system Dial assigned a serially-evolved set of numbers to each session, in this case 1110, covering everything recorded on Tuesday, November 4, 1947. The first tune is here designated as 1111 (BIRD FEATHERS) and each take in turn was lettered A, B, C &c. Charlie Parker had the authority to select the first choice take of his Dial performances and invariably this was the last one cut (as 1115-C). In most instances the first choice take was used for the original 78 rpm release. Alternate masters appeared on Dial when new press runs were made to bring up inventories on catalogue items, and on ten-inch and twelve-inch 33 rpm long playing records on which Dial was the first record company to issue jazz recordings.

KLACT-OVEESEDs-TENE is one of Charlie Parker's most fascinating and original compositions. The stirring, march-like introduction is a Parker creation, although some reviewers accused Bird of plagiarism when the record first appeared, because the same figure had been used as the theme on THE CHASE by Dexter Gordon and Wardell Gray, recorded for Dial in Hollywood, June 12, 1947. Actually the tenor saxophonists had picked Bird's brains at a jam session on Central Avenue in Los Angeles earlier that year and, remembering the strange and effective figure, and being stuck for a theme for their saxophone duel, had fallen back on Charlie's material. It was Charlie's all along and may have been first played by him much earlier than 1947.

After the introduction KLACT-OVEESEDs-TENE moves through an ensemble chorus and then Charlie plays thirty-two bars made up of short fragmented phrases. His solo seems excessively cryptic and disjointed right until the very end when the entire sequence suddenly and miraculously falls into place and we realize we have heard a fully-realized and altogether unique solo. The march-like figures are heard again following a Parker channel and the last eight bars of the final ensemble chorus. The record ends with Max Roach's intricate and compelling percussion figures fading off into the distance.

The title is Charlie's own. Ross Russell recalls conferring with Bird at the Three Deuces one night early in 1948 and asking him to provide titles for several un-named tunes recorded at the fall sessions. Bird supplied the baffling title, upon which he refused to elaborate. After asking a number of persons, including a psychiatrist and a philologist, what the word might suggest, and drawing blank answers, Russell finally sounded one of the hipsters on The Street and was told immediately, "Why, it's just a sound man!—like one of Bird's little things on the horn."

Another footnote to the KLACT-OVEESEDs-TENE story is that Bird wrote the title out on a Three Deuces minimum charge card (the minimum was then \$2.00!!) which recently came to light in the Dial files and which is reproduced on the cover of this record. It reveals that the correct spelling is the one given here and that due to a mistake appeared on Dial releases and subsequent issues on other labels as KLACTOVEESEDSTENE.

SCRAPPLE FROM THE APPLE, here represented by the last two takes, is a pleasant little number taken at what Bird called "medium bounce tempo" and finds him playing effortlessly over a faultless rhythm section. This title was invented by the late Bruce Mitchell, American painter of jazz scenes whose work appeared in Esquire's World of Jazz (Grosset and Dunlap, New York, 1962).

The November 4 session is notable in that on it Parker recorded three of the six ballads made at the New York sessions. MY OLD FLAME and DON'T BLAME ME went so well that Bird approved the first take on each, a rarity in itself. OUT OF NOWHERE required three takes before he was satisfied with the performance. These came a few minutes apart, which is surprising because the concept and even the mood seems to change from one to the next. It will be a long time before someone comes along to play ballads like this again!

Volume 5 has been rounded out with three Parker cuts from earlier sessions recently acquired by Spotlight. MOOSE THE MOOCHE is the previously unissued third take from the initial Dial Parker session, March 28, 1946, just after he had signed with that label. DARK SHADOWS is the long missing 1052-D take from the famous session of February 19, 1947. This was Parker's first recording session following his release from Camarillo. DARK SHADOWS was written by a Los Angeles trumpet player named Shifty Henry for Earl Coleman, a younger singer of the Eckstine school, who was featured on the date at Bird's insistence. HALLELUJAH is an alternate take from the June 6, 1945 Red Norvo session for Comet Records of New York. The masters were acquired by Dial in 1947 and some appeared as quasi-micro-groove 78 rpm releases and later a twelve-inch LP (DLP903) containing all the original Comet material and some alternate takes was issued. This version of HALLELUJAH appeared on one of the original Dial quasi-micro-groove ten-inch 78 rpm issues as SING HALLELUJAH (Dial 1045) and for some reason or other was not included on the micro-groove LP issue. It therefore appears on this record for the first time on LP micro-groove. There exists sufficient unissued material from this session for a further twelve-inch LP record but the whereabouts of the original masters is unknown. This was Bird's first outing with established, in fact eminent musicians of swing persuasion—Norvo, Phillips, Stewart and Teddy Wilson. Supported by his comrade in arms, Dizzy Gillespie,

Bird turns these famous jazzmen around with his solo on HALLELUJAH.

The reconstruction of the final Parker date for Dial Records at WOR, Wednesday, December 17, 1947 will appear on Spotlight 106.

PERSONNEL

- : CHARLIE PARKER QUINTET
Miles Davis tpt; Charlie Parker alt; Duke Jordan p; Tommy Potter bs; Max Roach d.
WOR Studios, 39th. St. and Broadway, New York City—Tuesday, November 4, 1947.
- + CHARLIE PARKER SEPTET
Miles Davis tpt; Charlie Parker alt; Lucky Thompson ten; Dodo Marmarosa p; Vic McMillan bs; Roy Porter d.
Radio Recorders Studios, Santa Monica Blvd., Hollywood Thursday, March 28, 1946.
- = CHARLIE PARKER QUARTET
Charlie Parker alt; Erroll Garner p; Red Callender bs; Doc West d; Earl Coleman vcl.
C.P. MacGregor Studios, Western Avenue near Eighth Street, Hollywood—Wednesday, February 19, 1947.
- † RED NORVO AND HIS SELECTED SEXTET
Dizzy Gillespie tpt; Charlie Parker alt; Flip Phillips ten; Teddy Wilson p; Slam Stewart bs; Specs Powell d; Red Norvo vib.
New York City—Wednesday, June 6, 1945.

SIDE ONE

- : Bird feathers (2:47) D1111-C
- : Klact-oveeseds-tene (3:02) D1112-A
- : Klact-oveeseds-tene (2:58) D1112-B
- : Scrapple from the Apple (2:36) D1113-B
- : Scrapple from the Apple (2:52) D1113-C
- : My old flame (3:05) D1114-A

SIDE TWO

- : Out of nowhere (3:57) D1115-A
- : Out of nowhere (3:46) D1115-B
- : Out of nowhere (3:01) D1115-C
- : Don't blame me (2:43) D1116-A
- + Moose the Mooche (2:58) D1010-3
- = Dark shadows (2:57) D1052-D
- † Hallelujah (4:09) T8-2

SPOTLITE 105

KLACT-OVEESEDs-TENE