

# Charlie Parker (“Bird”)

---

- # Greatest single musician in history of jazz
  - # Considered one of the most influential jazz performers in jazz history
-

# Charlie Parker

## General style characteristics

---

- # Tone quality varied from strident to lush
  - # Vibrato slightly slower and narrower than predecessors
  - # Longer phrases than predecessors
  - # Unexpected accents at key points in the phrase
  - # Tremendous command of technique (virtuoso)
  - # Large repository of material to draw upon
  - # Complete mastery of the bebop language (i.e., harmonic as well as melodic)
-

# Charlie Parker Timeline

---

- # Born 8/29/20 in Kansas City, KS
  - # Moved to Kansas City, Missouri in 1927
  - # Played baritone horn in high school
  - # Quit HS in 1935 & played 1st gig
  - # Joined George E. Lee band in 1937 (Ozark Mountains and Prez recordings)
  - # In New York City ca. 1938-39 (Tatum?)
  - # Rejoined Jay McShann Band in 1940 (earliest recordings)
-

# Charlie Parker Timeline, cont.

---

- # Joins Earl “Fatha” Hines in 1943 w/Diz & on tenor \*Sweet Georgia Brown
  - # Plays in Billy Eckstine’s band in 1944
  - # Records with Tiny Grimes (9-15-44) \*Tiny’s Tempo
  - # Swing meets Bebop (1945) \*Hallelujah
  - # Records w/Diz’s group (2-29-45) & again in June that year \*Groovin’ High
  - # First true bebop recording (“Charlie Parker Beboppers”), 11-29-45 (Parker, Diz/Miles, Sadik Hakim, Curley Russell, Max Roach) \*Koko
  - # Bird & Diz in California, 1946
  - # Committed to Camarillo Hospital (7-29-46) for six months
-

# Charlie Parker Timeline, cont.

---

- # 1947 begins Bird's best periods
  - # Records with quintet ca. 1947-49 (Miles/Dorham, Duke Jordan/Al Haig, Tommy Potter, Max Roach) \***Dexterity**
  - # **Leap Frog** (11 takes)
  - # Misc. ensembles 1948-1955, in particular, recordings with strings (November 1949)  
\***Just Friends**
  - # Poll Winner (**video with Diz**)
-

# Charlie Parker Timeline, cont.

---

- # Historic recording at Massey Hall with Dizzy, Bud Powell, Charlie Mingus, Max Roach (May 15, 1953) \*Hot House
    - One of the last time these musicians played together
    - All tunes are typical bebop tune-types
    - “Magic” of Bird & Diz
    - Good solos!
    - Some of the best playing by all
-

# Charlie Parker Timeline, cont.

---

- # Parker's last appearance, March 3/4, 1955 at Birdland with Dorham, Powell, Mingus, and Art Blakey
  - # Died 3-12-55 in the apartment of the Baroness Pannonica ("Nica") de Koeningswarter
-

# Charlie Parker's Style & Impact

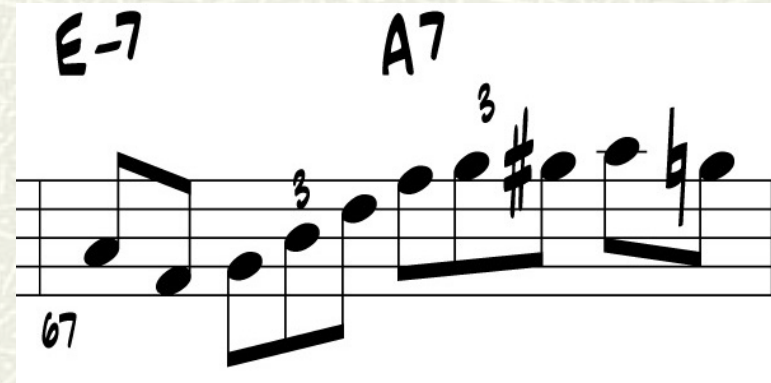
---

- # Influenced by Buster Smith, Lester Young, Johnny Hodges, Jimmy Dorsey, Art Tatum, Dizzy Gillespie
  - # Influenced everyone! Specifically, Phil Woods, Sonny Stitt, Dexter Gordon, Sonny Rollins, Cannonball Adderley, Frank Morgan, Jackie McLean, Coltrane, etc...
  - # Bird the Movie (clip)
-



# Parker's Formulae: #1

- # Chord arpeggio outline beginning on the root or the major seventh & usually as a triplet (most frequent, ca. once every 8 bars).



# Parker's Formulae: #2 & #3



- # Use of the inverted mordent with various rhythms, but usually triplets and eighth with two sixteenths (ranks 2nd in his use)
- # Use of flat-ninth (i.e., scale motion down to the 3rd of the V chord with outline to the b9 or skip to the b9 with resolution to the next chord). Parker's use of this is rank 3rd.

# Parker's Formulae continued

- # Use of harmonic minor scale

Handwritten musical notation in treble clef showing two chords:  $C\#-7(b5)$  and  $F\#7(b9)$ . The notes between the two chords are circled in yellow and labeled "Harmonic minor". The notes are:  $C\#$  (quarter),  $D$  (quarter),  $E$  (quarter),  $F\#$  (quarter),  $G$  (quarter),  $A$  (quarter),  $B$  (quarter),  $C\#$  (quarter). The  $F\#$  note has a sharp sign above it.

- # Pervasive use of the bebop scale as well as other systematically placed chromatic notes

Handwritten musical notation in treble clef showing three chords:  $A-7$ ,  $D7$ , and  $G7$ . The notes are:  $A$  (quarter),  $B$  (quarter),  $C$  (quarter),  $D$  (quarter),  $E$  (quarter),  $F$  (quarter),  $G$  (quarter),  $A$  (quarter),  $B$  (quarter),  $C$  (quarter),  $D$  (quarter),  $E$  (quarter),  $F$  (quarter),  $G$  (quarter),  $A$  (quarter),  $B$  (quarter),  $C$  (quarter),  $D$  (quarter). The  $F$  note has a flat sign above it. The  $G$  note has a sharp sign above it. The  $A$  note at the end has a sharp sign above it. The notes are labeled with "7b" and "7#" below them.

# Parker's Formulae continued

- Tri-tone subs. (e.g., bar 8 of the blues) and cycles (Blues for Alice).



- Pattern emphasis with the third moving to the seventh during the first four bars, or fifth bar, of the blues.



# Parker's Formulae continued

- # Use of quotes (e.g., familiar tunes, opera, his own tunes) were often used during live performances and rarely used in studio recordings. Examples include Grainger's Country Gardens and Bizet's Habanera from Carmen, among others.
- # The b5th was used sparingly, but was obvious when he did use it.



# Parker's Formulae continued

Musical notation for Parker's Formulae continued, showing a sequence of chords and notes. The notation is in treble clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). The sequence consists of six measures, each with a chord symbol above it and a measure number below it:

- Measure 46: C#-7(b5)
- Measure 47: F#7
- Measure 48: B-7
- Measure 49: E7
- Measure 50: A-7
- Measure 51: D7

The notes in each measure are: 46 (F#, G, A, B, C#, D), 47 (E, F#, G, A, B, C), 48 (D, E, F, G, A, B), 49 (C#, D, E, F, G, A), 50 (B, C, D, E, F, G), 51 (A, B, C, D, E, F).

- # Improvisations are considered “goal” oriented (i.e., resolving tendencies of notes).



# Charlie Parker: End Notes

---

# Confirmation Analysis

# Parker interview

---