



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

1917-1993

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- Louis Armstrong, to Roy Eldridge, to Dizzy (further developments of trumpet range as well as technique)
- One of bebop's "true" composers and master of re-harmonization
- Translated bebop (i.e., small group) to the big band format successfully
- One of the first to regularly use Latin-American & Western African rhythms in jazz



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Timeline

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- Born in Cheraw, SC
- Moved to Philadelphia in 1935
- First important gig w/Frankie Fairfax in 1935
- Joined Teddy Hill's band in 1937 and made first recording (strongly influenced by Roy Eldridge)
- Next w/Lionel Hampton in 1939 and begins to show early signs of bebop in solos (i.e., recordings)
- Also influenced by the drumming of Kenny Clarke
- Joins Cab Calloway band later in 1939
- Begins to take part in bebop jam sessions in 1941

# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Timeline (2)

- Leaves Calloway in '41 & w/various bands
- Joins Earl Hines band in 1942 & Billy Eckstine's band in 1943 (1st "modern" big band)
- Leads own small group in 1944 & makes 1st recording as a leader on 1.9.45
- The 1945 recordings includes Diz's tunes (**Groovin' High**, Salt Peanuts & Bebop) & Diz's reharmonization of "I Can't Get Started"

C                      Dm7   G7       E7       Cm7       Em7  
 | / / / / | / / / / | / / / / | / / / / |  
 C              Am7       Dm7       G7              Bm7E7Bbm7Eb7 Am7D7Abm7Db7



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Timeline (3)

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- Began big band in 1945, but failed
- To L.A. in 1945 w/Bird
- Begins big band again in 1946 w/Eckstine's materials
- Successful big band 1946-49 (**video**)
- Introduces Cuban virtuoso on percussion (Chano Pozo)
- Toured Europe in 1948
- Height of popularity in 1948



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Timeline (4)

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- Starts Dee Gee records in 1951
- Bird & Diz together at Massey Hall (5.15.53)
- Big band fades in 1950's, but remains active with various groups from small groups to big band throughout remainder of career.
- With OP in 1980 ([video](#))
- Dies in 1993



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Jazz Contributions

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- Expand trumpet range & capabilities
- Establish bebop big band
- Used “exotic” scale choices (e.g., bebop, diminished, whole tone)
- Extensive use of altered chords (e.g., b5 & b9)
- Brought Latin-American influences to jazz
- Unique compositions and arrangements (i.e., tunes with intros, tags, interludes, and the use of the m7b5 chords)

# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Performance characteristics

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- Bebop scale & other systematic use of chromatics



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Performance characteristics

- Emphasis of the b9 or b5





# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Performance characteristics

- Signature triplet figure



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Performance characteristics

- Imaginative use of passing chromatic chords



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Performance characteristics

- Four favorite chord patterns

The image displays two lines of musical notation in treble clef, representing a jazz melody. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and slurs. Handwritten annotations in black ink are placed above the notes to indicate specific chord patterns and fingering. The first line starts with a treble clef and a '23' marking below the first note. The second line also starts with a treble clef and a '23' marking below the first note. The annotations include: F7(#9), Bb, D-7, G7(b9), A-7, G-7, and C7(#9)(b13). Slurs with the number '5' are placed over groups of notes, indicating a five-finger pattern.

# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Performance characteristics

- Distinct Patterns
  - Diminished



- Whole tone scale patterns



# John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie

## Performance characteristics

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- Notes of indefinite pitch
- Lip curls
- Double time
- Command of high notes
- Hot House analysis (Massey Hall concert)