

Charlie Parker The Long Lost Bird Afro-Cubop Recordings

Rockbeat Records ROC 3460 (2 LP)

★★★★ RECOMMENDED

Charlie Parker (as, ts), Dizzy Gillespie (t) with Machito and his Afro-Cuban Orchestra, Stan Kenton and his orchestra and Woody Herman and the Third Herd. Rec. 1947-54



The 'Afro-Cubop' moniker is derived from Norman Granz's idea to feature Parker with Machito and his Afro-Cuban Orchestra on December 20, 1948.

'Mango Mangué' was released as a single, and, according to contemporaneous DJ Symphony Sid, "caused a sensation," so the term 'Afro-Cubop' was a no-brainer. However, this collection is by no means devoted to Afro-Cubop jazz, (long lost or otherwise), but is nonetheless an important release - paradoxically more for the non-Afro-Cubop recordings it pulls together. Many of these tracks have surfaced here and there on bootlegs over the years, and together they make for a very interesting compilation.

The liner notes are enthusiastic but couched in generalities, so considering the historical significance of these recordings, here is a guide to what is going on: The set opens with a Parker/Gillespie sextet recorded shortly after Parker's Savoy debut, when Dizzy took a bop sextet with Parker to Billy Berg's nightclub in Los Angeles in December 1945, an event now part of Parker folklore. They didn't go down well with the locals, most of whom had never heard bebop before. 'Dizzy Atmosphere' is extracted from an Armed Forces Radio Service (AFRS) broadcast of 29 December 1945, taken from the original 16 inch transcription disc, Programme 162. It is of considerable historical interest as this band did not record commercially, and since it's a radio broadcast, solos last beyond the constraints of a 78 rpm record. Then follows another Gillespie/Parker collaboration, a quintet from a concert from 29 September, 1947 at Carnegie Hall, which is generally regarded as bop's coming of age. Featuring the Dizzy Gillespie Big Band, Ella Fitzgerald plus an "exclusive appearance of Charlie Parker" (who turned up late), the Gillespie/Parker quintet (with piano, bass and drums drawn from the big band) perform 'A Night In Tunisia', 'Groovin' High' and 'Confirmation'. Again, a valuable documentation of an important moment in jazz history.

Side Two of the first LP is the real Cubop deal - 'Lament for the Congo' and 'Mambo Fortunato' with Parker live with Machito's Afro-Cuban Orchestra at the Renaissance Ballroom, NYC, on 18-19 May 1950. It's worth noting that elsewhere, in an interview with Symphony Sid on 1 January 1949, Parker said he "extremely" enjoyed working with Machito. Again, important historical stuff. Side Two concludes with an exuberant Parker

quintet with Red Rodney (trumpet) live from Birdland on 20 December 1950 on 'Salt Peanuts'. Side Three comprises five tracks by the Woody Herman Third Herd with Parker sitting in as featured soloist, live from Kansas City on July 22, 1951. These tracks have been available on bootleg (*Bird With The Herd*, Queendisc QSR 24420). Parker came up in the big band era, touring as featured soloist with the Jay McShann Orchestra, the Earl Hines Big Band and Billy Eckstine's band. Thus, no stranger to the idiom, he effortlessly fits in with Herman, although his ballad features 'You Go To My Head', 'The Nearness of You' and 'Laura' and the Herd anthem 'Four Brothers' are not included - a shame since the latter has Parker soloing more or less throughout.

Side Four comprises six tracks featuring Parker and Dizzy Gillespie sitting-in with the Stan Kenton Orchestra at the Civic Auditorium Portland, Oregon on 25 February, 1954. These tunes, except 'A Short One', were previously available on the two LP set *The Definitive Kenton* (Artistry Records AR-2-102). 'Night and Day', 'My Funny Valentine' and 'Cherokee' feature Parker (the latter has almost three minutes of solid Parker improvising), while 'On the Alamo' and 'Manteca' feature Gillespie (but no Parker). The album has an amusing end - after Gillespie's huge ovation for 'Manteca', he says he has only time for a 'Short One', beats off a brisk four, and plays one high note. That's it, the audience loved it.

The liner notes say Candido is added "on track 11," but there is no track 11; 'Manteca' is the track Candido appears on and that's track five. However, the music, once you know what you're getting, is an important documentation of Parker's genius, which flowers with abundance on these tracks (which vary in sound quality, dependent as they are on the source recordings from over 70 years ago). **Stuart Nicholson**



Shirley Scott A Walkin' Thing

Candid CCD32062 (CD, LP) ★★★★★

Shirley Scott (org), Terrell Stafford (t), Tim Warfield (ts), Arthur Harper (b) and Aaron Walker (d). Rec. 17 November 1992



After almost a 10-year hiatus from recording in the 1980s, Shirley Scott

came back to the studios for a brief burst of activity between 1989 and this final album from 1992. The last three of her records were produced by Britain's Alan Bates, who was stewarding the Candid label at the time. The first pair of these were piano trio sessions, but *A Walkin' Thing* saw her back at the Hammond, albeit with her regular colleague Arthur Harper taking care of the basslines that she would formerly have negotiated with her feet.

Unlike the searing *Queen Talk* (reviewed last month) from 20 years before, where the excitement comes from her own playing as much as from her colleagues, this is a gentler, more subdued Scott and the fireworks are mainly left to the front-line of Stafford and Warfield. They acquit themselves well, both as a team on the heads and in their individual solos. After Stafford's extrovert outing on his own *DI Blues*, Scott's choruses create an oasis of calm. The lengthy title track has a long, slow-build solo from the organ, showing that Scott still has the sense of form and drama of all her best work.

Amid the originals, there are standards, and 'When a Man Loves a Woman' - played as an unaccompanied organ solo - has an almost hymnal solemnity, and what seems like a wistful look back at earlier days. By contrast, 'How Am I To Know' picks up at a medium soul tempo, but has a rather messy head from the horns. Everything comes together for the album closer,

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