



DIZZY GILLESPIE
To beep is not to bop

themselves as progressives and their opponents as reactionaries. "How can they play that square stuff?" they ask. They call themselves the left wing of jazz and their opponents the right wing. By the same token they claim to have had a liberating influence on jazz. A drummer explained that "in bebop each beat is given an equal value, and that liberates the melody. It also liberates the accents. The closest thing to it in regular jazz is what the drummer does when he has a break (an interpolation during which elaborate and free rhythmic passages are improvised)."

Counterpoints of Rhythm

Actually bebop is hard to explain in musical terms, unless you have heard it. Here are a few sample descriptions: "Bebop is full of complicated chord and melodic subtleties." "It changes time from bar to bar like Stravinsky and Art Tatum, and sometimes even changes the beat *inside* each bar." "It's full of counterpoints of rhythm as well as melody. To some people it sounds off key. There's a terrific element of the unexpected." Richard Boyer, in a recent issue of the *New Yorker*, makes the position a little clearer. "The rhythm instruments—drums, bass, and piano," he says, "often attempt the complex figures that are being played by the brass, and the rhythm is at best oblique and merely implied. The music, difficult and sometimes called 'head music' to indicate that its appeal is to the intellect rather than to the emotions, is frequently loud, aggressive, and defiant."

The high priest of bebop is a Negro trumpeter named John Birks (Dizzy) Gillespie. Other famous practitioners are Charlie Parker (the Bird), Bud Powell (the Great), Thelonius Monk (the Monk), and Max Roach (the Roach).

Gillespie was born in 1917 in South Carolina. His father was a bricklayer and the leader of the local band. Young Dizzy had won prowess as a trumpeter by the time he was 14, and later he studied musical theory and harmony at a Negro industrial school. As the popularity of bebop increased, so did his earning as a trumpeter, and in the past eight years he has earned about

20,000 dollars in royalties from his recordings. This year he expects to make about 25,000 dollars from recordings and performances.

Dizzy Gillespie is reputedly an unusual character, like his music. He will wear strange and exotic clothes. He often uses cant words like "weird" and "square" that have a special meaning within the cult. He apparently bursts into cackling laughter at the slightest provocation. But he is also a first-class trumpeter and a good band leader. In a poll conducted by a prominent jazz magazine in 1947 he was voted the outstanding trumpeter of the year. Recently he and his band made a triumphal tour of France and Scandinavia.

"Oopapada"

The more fervent admirers ape Dizzy's "beard" (a tuft of hair on the lower lip), his horn-rimmed spectacles, and his bebop cap—a floppy blue beret with a narrow brim. Some Negro beboppers like to pretend they are Arabs. They read translations of the Koran, study Arabic, and bow towards Mecca at sunset. Bebop classics include compositions with names like *Groovin' High*, *He Beeped When He Should Bopped*, and *Oopapada*.

Perhaps bebop is just a passing phase, born of the post-war years. Perhaps it has come to stay. It is difficult to say, but its emergence seems to indicate at least that jazz is still an active musical form, capable of infinite changes and developments with the passing of time.

Figaro in Diplomacy

IN a broadcast in the BBC's Third Programme the Earl of Lytton recently gave a vignette of Paris in the 1880's and the flowering of the Entente Cordiale. Of the two men most responsible for giving an informal touch to the diplomacy of their day one was his father, the British Ambassador in France, who made the Embassy a sort of Salon des Arts frequented by actors and actresses, poets, sculptors and painters; the other was the future King Edward VII, then Prince of Wales, whose popularity caused him to be adopted as "the prototype of the ideal prince."

But there were other personalities who contributed to the understanding between England and France. One, said Lord Lytton, was his father's valet, William Henry Todd, "spiritual descendant of the great Figaro. He talked fluent French, but with an accent certainly no better than that of Mr. Winston Churchill, and he had the habit of joining quite naturally in the conversation at diplomatic dinners. Walking round the table behind the chairs he would check M. Blowitz, correspondent of *The Times*, who was said to be the most powerful man in Europe, when he seemed to be monopolising too much of the conversation. When he felt that some *faux pas* was going to be made he would suddenly hand a dish and save the situation. He knew so much about European history that he could lead the conversation into desired channels."



**When style's
in the picture—**

