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Dizzy Daze

When World War II ended, what was deemed a revolution came to jazz. Primarily the innovation of Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie, it had an enormous and disorienting effect on jazz musicians and fans alike. Some loved it, some hated it. Among the latter were Benny Goodman and Louis Armstrong, whose animus lay in the fact that they not only couldn't play it, they couldn't even understand it. It was contemptuously called "Chinese music" by some, nor was it helped by the nickname attached to it: bebop, a term that trivialized the music and to an extent still does.

So, for that matter, did the nickname given to John Birks Gillespie — Dizzy. He was an extraordinarily funny man, more so on stage than off, where he was for the most part thoughtful and serious, and inordinately kind and generous with his knowledge, the great teacher. He once told me, "I don't know that I know that much, but what I do know I'm willing to share." He was occasionally, by younger and militant black musicians, called an Uncle Tom, but that he was not. He simply loved to be the merry Andrew on stage, not as sycophancy, but because he liked to make people laugh. He once told me, "If making people laugh makes them more receptive to my music, then I'm going to do it, and I don't care what anyone says." By those who knew him well, he was more than liked, more than respected, he was loved. And of course he was an astonishing musician.

Critic Gary Giddins got it right. He wrote in 1991: "Dizzy Gillespie is an American paradox: a quintessentially innovative artist who plays, often superbly, the clown. Of musicians of his stature, only Louis Armstrong and Fats Waller were his equal at walking the tightrope from jazz complexity to inspired silliness and back. Yet Armstrong and Waller played a relatively accessible music. Gillespie is a fearsome modernist — that man who, with Charlie Parker, invented jazz modernism in part to repudiate the very entertainment values that were thought to have dimmed the music's power during the commercially extravagant Swing Era."

When in high school in St. Catharines, Ontario, I heard my first Parker-Gillespie record — it was *Salt Peanuts,* a classic example of the hilarious Dadaism Dizzy scattered to the winds — I thought they were crazy. Some of my friends did not, especially a young trumpet player, Kenny Wheeler. If Kenny took Parker and Gillespie seriously, I felt it behooved me to find out why. When it hit me, it hit me hard

Reflections on these and collateral matters have come with the issue of two things. One is a Gillespie-Parker CD of material, largely unknown, from a concert in New York's Town Hall on June 22, 1945, with Al Haig on piano, Curly Russell on bass, and Max Roach or (on two tracks) Sidney Catlett on drums. The CD is on Uptown Records (PO Box 394, Whitehall MI 49461), and that so monumentally important a record could be issued by an almost unknown label when the major labels are doing almost nothing to the arts but damage is a comment on our times. The other is a biography by Donald L. Maggin titled *Dizzy: The Life and Times of John Birks Gillespie.*

The PBS series on jazz produced by Ken Burns with Wynton Marsalis as his *éminence grise* left — or tried to — the impression that jazz has had only three great masters, Louis Armstrong, Duke Ellington, and of course Marsalis himself. You heard nothing about Benny Carter — a three-hour interview done with Benny was completely left out — and not enough about Lester Young. Aside from generating the impression that no white man ever contributed anything to jazz, the series overlooked Nat Cole, didn't say a lot about Teddy Wilson; briefly mentioned Oscar Peterson over a still photo of him; did not mention J.J. Johnson; and I don't recall whether Big Sid Catlett and Jimmy Blanton got so much as a look-in. I recall that the series slid pretty casually over Sidney Bechet, and the only importance ascribed to Bill Evans is that Miles Davis hired a white musician.

Dizzy Gillespie didn't get much screen time either. And after years of exposure to his work and reflections upon it, I hold the opinion that he was the greatest jazz musician who ever lived, and one of the greatest of any idiom. Try saying that to jazz musicians. You will be surprised at how often you hear, "I agree!" But the consensus in the jazz world is that Parker was the great innovator, and Gillespie his acolyte. Even Dizzy helped perpetuate the myth, for he was a modest, even a humble, man and to interviewers he deferred to Parker, his close friend, and the one horn player who could keep up with him. Aside from the breath-taking solos on this

Town Hall recording, some of the most amazing passages are the unisons. They are not only perfect, the two horns blending into an almost single sound, their stops and starts preternaturally together. They seem to be the expression of one soul. Finally, Dizzy was the great academic theoretician of the music, constantly exploring it in his mind and passing his discoveries along with cornucopian generosity to anyone who was interested. One trumpet player after another — Nat Adderley and Art Farmer come immediately to mind — has described this experience with him.

Trumpeters of his generation, such as the magnificent Clark Terry, tell to what lengths some of their elders would go to keep the younger players from learning, such as playing with a handkerchief over the horn to keep others from seeing the fingering, or, in Clark's case, giving him wrong advice on embouchure. Not so Dizzy. As I have written before, I once saw Nat Adderley emerge from the band tent backstage at a jazz festival with a grin so radiant that one could only wonder about it. When I asked what he was so happy about, he said, "Dizzy just showed me some shit on the horn I don't believe!" Years later, when I reminded him of the encounter, he said, "Yeah, and I still remember what he showed me!" In Toronto, in those days when Dizzy was with Cab Calloway, Dizzy once found himself in a jam session with a trumpeter named Robert Farnon. They would remain friends for life, and when Bob had an estate on Guernsey, Dizzy would make trips from England to stay with him for a few days. Bob told me of a time they went to the horse races. Dizzy took his horn along and insisted on playing the post time bugle call. The people loved him for it. I asked Birks (and that's the only name by which I can speak comfortably of him; it was, I think, the name he preferred) how good a trumpet player Bob was. He answered, "One of the best I ever heard." Years later, at a party in New York held by musicians in Farnon's honor, Bob said that it was knowing Dizzy that made him give up playing for composing and arranging, and Milt Hinton told Dizzy, "That may be the greatest thing you ever did for music." Bob wrote a concerto for Dizzy that is now lost.

Dizzy was of course a formidable composer himself. One of the first mentions of him I can remember was the composer credit for *Down Under* by the Woody Herman band on the old Decca label. It was of course radically modern for its time, which is no doubt what attracted me to it. I was never that fond of the old Woody Herman band — "the band that plays the blues" — and I don't think Woody was either. It was a co-operative, and one of its veterans said they couldn't make a decision without a meeting in the men's room. Woody obviously had a mutual-admiration relationship with Dizzy, thought he was such a talent as a writer that Woody urged him to give up playing to devote himself to it. Later he said, "I'm glad he didn't listen to me."

Woody bought up the shares of the other members of the co-operative until the band was entirely his. James Caesar Petrillo, head of the American Federation of Musicians, called his infamous and immensely damaging strike against the record companies. During the years toward the end of World War II, instrumental records could not be made, although some were made illicitly to emerge years after the war. That's how the Herman band made its march into the future in a cloud of seeming silence, even while Gillespie and Parker and their colleagues were evolving the language that would be called bebop. When the Herman band emerged from that cloud with the first recordings of the wild band containing Chubby Jackson, Dave Tough, Ralph Burns (the *Caldonia* band) and a trumpet section full of Dizzy Gillespie fans, it seemed revolutionary, rather than evolutionary. So too Gillespie and Parker, and the Town Hall session of June, 1945, made only months after the "strike" ended, tells one how revolutionary it seemed: we had been denied by Petrillo the right to hear their growth.

I have often quoted something Artie Shaw said to me, because it illuminated something about music — and culture in general. He said that since I did not hear Louis Armstrong before I'd heard all the trumpeters influenced by him, I could not imagine how radical he seemed to the young musicians buying his early recordings. And this has to be so of younger musicians hearing such things as the Parker-Gillespie Town Hall recording. It isn't that they don't get it; it's just that they have grown up listening to so much music that derives from them that they can't know how crazy it seemed to many people. I wish I were one of those who can say, "I dug Bird the first time I heard him." Well I didn't. I had grown up with idols such as Edmund Hall, Jack Teagarden, Trummy Young, Teddy Wilson, Gene Krupa, and Roy Eldridge — whose influence you can hear in early Gillespie records, and, at some moments, even his later records.

The other night, I was watching Robert Altman's period movie *Kansas City*, which features a good deal of jazz. The art direction and costuming on that movie are fantastic, capturing the look of the time in an almost mysterious way. The clothes are perfect, and in the street scenes the old automobiles with the big round detached headlights and chrome bumpers make it seem as if we lived then on another planet. And in a way we did. But those cars and clothes did not seem antiquated to the denizens of that era. They were the last word in chic. Those cars seem to have nothing to do with the bubble-shaped cars in which we drive around now.

This reinforces what Artie Shaw said, and we can go further. We cannot possibly guess how Mozart's music sounded to the ears of his contemporaries, and Beethoven was denounced as a madman. In the Paris newspaper *Le Siecle* on May 27, 1872, a critic named Oscar Comettant wrote of Georges Bizet:

> M. Bizet is a young musician of great and incontestable worth who writes detestable music, one of this group of French composers who have abdicated their individuality to place themselves in the harmonies of Wagner. *The Flying Dutchman* drags them into the path of endless melody on that Dead Sea of music without key, without rhythm, without stature, elusive and horribly enervating. . . . To the listener of sound mind and ear, these chromatic meows of an amorous or frightened cat — heard over a chord with a double pedal, or accompanied by as many diminished-seventh chords as there are notes in those meows — will never replace an expressive tonal melody, well pondered, of original turn, distinguished and yet natural, and accompanied by chords that are correct.

Three years later, M. Comettant still had not relented. In March 1875, he wrote:

> The heart of M. Bizet, made callous by the school of dissonance and experimentation, needs to recapture its virginity. *Carmen* is neither scenic nor dramatic. One cannot express musicallly the savagery and caprices of Mlle Carmen with orchestral details. Nourished by the succulent harmonies of the experimenters of the music of the future, Bizet opened his soul to this doctrine that kills the heart.

M. Bizet, meet M. Gillespie. What is fascinating is that the other denunciations in the press not only equal in viciousness those of the moldy figs toward Gillespie and Parker but often use virtually the same language. And it's too bad that M. Comettant, writing from his high perch about "many diminished seventh chords" didn't know there are only three diminished seventh chords in the whole system, since the others are inversions of those three. Whether Bizet cared much about that review is unknown to me: he was very sick when it came out, and died three months after it appeared, convinced he was a failure. (He never got to hear his lovely *Symphony in C*, written just after his seventeenth birthday: it was first performed in 1935 — 110 years after it was written.)

No wonder Dizzy baffled and intimidated the "moldy figs" and stirred a storm of ire. Initially Louis Armstrong put Dizzy down, as we are told. (What is less often recounted is that when Dizzy and Clark Terry were neighbors of his in Queens, they were often over at Armstrong's house, having become his close friends.) Dizzy and Charlie Parker were scary. And they still are. Nobody could do what they did. Nobody can even now. The music on this Town Hall recording is joyous, celebrant, vertiginous, dangerous, and thrilling.

We also have this new biography titled *Dizzy: The Life and Times of John Birks Gillespie*. It contains inaccuracies. Most biographies do. The requisite exploration of detail is daunting, and errors slip in often, alas to be discovered by the writer only when the book is in print and readers point them out. And Maggin's book has some good stuff, especially the author's exploration of Dizzy's childhood and roots going back through the era of slavery to the Yoruba people of Africa. The British writer Alyn Shipton's 1999 biography *Groovin' High: The Life of Dizzy Gillespie* did not uncover this much of Dizzy's family background. But Shipton is also a musician, a bass player and a respected one, and he avoided technical discussions the reader would not understand. Maggin does address them, and the result is dismaying. It lies in the author's ignorance of music, music theory, and music history. Maggin is neither a journalist nor a musician. In fact, he is a creature of politics; he was chairman of the Democratic National Committee during Jimmy Carter's presidency. I am told that he is also a nice guy.

There are two (at least) cardinal sins a writer can commit: one is to assume knowledge of the subject in the reader; the other is to assume lack of it. Donald Maggin manages to commit both in the same book.

The center of the problem is Chapter 11, in which Maggin presumes that every reader is ignorant of harmony and must be taught the essence of bebop harmony — and by him. And he knows precious little about it. The chapter is written like pronouncements from Olympus. I had the feeling all the way through that someone had tried to explain the subject to him, probably with a tape recorder running, after which he dutifully transcribed the material and passed it off as his own knowledge. In this the book he reminds me of the French film *Round Midnight*, which left an impression that its director and *auteur*, Bertrand Tavernier, had followed some of his jazz idols around, note pad in hand, wrote down quaint things he heard them say, and used them in the dialogue. Maggin is like a little boy who has just learned from a friend where babies come from

and runs around the neighborhood writing the revelation on walls and fences.

I did some checking, and learned the following:

Donald Maggin took two or three lessons from Jill McManus, a respected New York pianist with a background as a journalist at *Time* magazine. She had also helped him with research on his earlier biography of Stan Getz. Mike Longo, who played piano for Dizzy Gillespie on and off over a period of twenty years and was his close friend, gave Maggin several dissertations, which Maggin taped, on bebop harmony and the change from what had gone before.

In an interview with Boston disc jockey John McClellan — I've heard a tape of it but do not have a copy — Parker said that bebop was not revolutionary, it was evolutionary. He said that he and his fellows were not revolting against anything. They simply thought this was the way the music should go.

Harmony in jazz has followed the evolutionary development of the practices in European classical music which, some scholars have said, was exploration farther up the overtone series. Prior to bebop, jazz was centuries behind European classical music in harmonic practice. With the arrival of bebop, harmonic practice in jazz caught up to being only about fifty years behind classical music.

Once when Dizzy was playing Cleveland, he sat in a hotel room with the jazz critic, journalist, and musician Doug Ramsey. Ramsey recounted, "I asked him how harmony changed in the transition to bop, and he said that bop harmonies were not new, that the chord applications he, Bird, Bud Powell and the others used had all been done by Stravinsky, Bartok, and Ravel. I believe he also mentioned Shostakovich. He said that what really changed with bop was rhythm, and that rhythm — he didn't use the word 'swing' — was the most important element in jazz."

When I mentioned this to Mike Longo, he said that Dizzy had worked it out all for himself at the keyboard, and had told him so. What Doug reported in no way contradicts this. I'm sure Dizzy worked it out for himself; but in his mature years, he was aware that others had used similar harmonies. There is nothing odd about that. I remember when I was about twelve working out the chords of *I Surrender Dear* without being able to name them. When I was studying harmony and composition with Bob Share, I came across a chord I did not know how to name. Stan Kenton said, "Show me." He said, "It's a suspended fourth, and the fourth resolves to the third, although you don't have to resolve it." Once, in Jim and Andy's, I was talking with Johnny Carisi about tunes such as *How High the Moon* and *Green Dolphin Street*, in which the first chord is major and drops the third to make it minor. And Johnny came up with an aphorism I've never forgotten: "The third is always moveable." The third is of course a modal tone. If I were an instructor in harmony, I think that's one of the first things I'd teach a kid. Bill Evans once remarked that what you discovered on your own was always more powerful than what you learned in an academic way. And when I showed him the harmony studies that Tony Aless used with me and other pupils, Bill said, "Man, this is wonderful. We had to work all this out for ourselves." I always remember who taught me something. For example, I once asked Bill why the flat nine worked on dominant seventh chords unless, of course, it clashes with the melody. Bill said, "It has more to do with counterpoint than harmony." It was a long time before the implications of that sank in.

And were Dizzy and friends listening to classical music? I think so. How else explain the 1943 Lester Young recording *Afternoon of a Basie-ite*? It would seem that *somebody* had been listening to Debussy's *Afternoon of a Faun*.

So when Donald Maggin "explains" to us things he himself doesn't fully understand, he creates the impression that what was done in bebop was unprecedented and unique. Neither is true, and the whole chapter on this subject, Chapter 11, is, as one musician put it, "eerily naive." The more significant revolution is, as Dizzy said, rhythmic. It was incredibly disconcerting when you heard it for the first time, those displacements, phrases starting and stopping in unexpected places.

(Mel Powell, a great jazz pianist and arranger and later a classical composer and assistant and then successor to Paul Hindemith as head of the composition department at Yale, told me once, "I'll shock you. The real revolution of Debussy was not harmonic, it was rhythmic.)

In his need to relieve us of our ignorance and establish the authority of his own voice, Maggin writes passages such as: "The great majority of the vehicles for jazz improvisation have been thirty-two-bar popular songs with an AABA structure (where the B segment is commonly called the bridge) and the twelve-bar blues with an ABC structure." Maggin assumes ignorance in the reader in explaining this at all and knowledge in mentioning the AABA structure without explaining that these letters represent eight-bar units. And incidentally, the "bridge" is also commonly referred to as the release and occasionally, for reasons I have never fathomed, the channel. (A bit of trivia: it is called *le pont* in French. Whether they got that from us or we got it from them is probably lost history.)

What is deeply interesting is what Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie did with the blues, particularly harmoni-

cally. Maggin doesn't get into that. Parker said once that the blues was like a blank slate: it was what you wrote on it that mattered. I do not recall reading that in Maggin's book, and I assuredly am not going to re-read it to be sure.

In the egregious Chapter 11, Maggin tells us the early bebop players loved to spin out *lines* [his italics, not mine] of notes, melodic statements of odd lengths that ignored the boundaries of bars . . . ." So did Artie Shaw and, as I recently quoted him, "In the Mozart A-major quintet, I can show you a phrase that's eleven bars long followed by one that's nine, and they're completely organic."

On page 92 of the Maggin book he comes up with this jewel:

"Western music is based on a scale of twelve notes . . . ." Well, not exactly, most of it is based on two seven-note scales (eight if you include the octave), called the major and minor. And to focus more closely, the major scale comprises symmetrical tetrachords, in the key of C from C to F and from G to C: a tone, a tone, a semitone, and, a tone above it, another tone tone semitone. He writes, "On the piano they appear as seven white and five black ones. A chord contains three or more notes, and a song's chord sequence . . . ." (He doesn't explain what a chord sequence is, thereby committing that first cardinal sin, assuming knowledge in the reader) ". . . . provides the spine or structure of the harmony." No, it *is* the harmony. "When a chord is notated on sheet music," he writes, "it says to the interpreter that its tones will be the mellow, 'comfortable' tones until the next chord appears. If it is a three-note chord, then the other nine notes of the twelve-note scale are in varying degrees dissonant or 'uncomfortable.' For example, a D-flat . . . ." he commits that sin again, the assumption of knowledge in the reader. How many complete laymen know what he means by D-flat? As a matter of fact, Wes Montgomery didn't know; but he assuredly could hear it. "For example," Maggin goes on, "a D-flat played against a C-E-G chord sounds far more dissonant than a B-flat played against the same chord." But of course, unless in some special sequential use, such as the movement of a bass line, the D-flat is meaningless, a minor second without purpose (what Hugo Friedhofer used to call a "grinder") while the B-flat turns the C triad into a dominant seventh chord, putting you at least temporarily in the key of F. Maggin says: "The chords are thus an essential guide for the improviser when he or she chooses what notes to play."

And this: "Lester Young was the first great linear improviser in jazz." No kidding? How about Louis Armstrong and Bix Beiderbecke (one of Lester Young's heroes) and Benny Carter and Sidney Bechet and a few more? Furthermore, there is no other way to play a non-chordal instrument but linearly — horizontally, as it were. *Begin the Beguine* is linear. So is the Bach-Gounod *Ave Maria*. Indeed, there is nothing more linear than Bach.

It gets even sillier when Maggin starts to discuss the upper partials, not knowing, apparently that they are built into the overtone series. Composer and teacher Gordon Delamonte made students learn the overtone series at the very beginning of their studies, along with the Greek modes.

About the flatted fifth, Maggin says, "Dizzy discovered the magic of the interval in 1938 . . . . The flatted fifth divides the octave exactly in half; for example, a G-flat is equidistant from the two Cs that frame its octave." Oh wow! And did you know that the earth isn't flat?

The flatted fifth is used mainly in dominant chords. Maggin doesn't mention that a C-7 flat five actually contains not one but two tritones, in a kind of cruciform: C to G-flat and B to F. Dizzy of course used the flatted fifth as a melody note, as Jobim did in *Desafinado*.

If you are a lay reader and don't know what a tritone is, but you are familiar with the *West Side Story* score, try singing the song *Maria*; it begins with a tritone: Mah-reeeeee. Incidentally, the tritone — once known as "the devil in music" and forbidden in early polyphony — was not infrequent in the arias of Mozart. And composer Hale Smith assures me that the minor seventh flat-five chord, sometimes called half diminished, supposedly pioneered by Thelonious Monk (and one of the most poignant chords in all music), also goes back to Mozart.

Maggin gets all bent out of shape over the chromaticism of bebop, again suggesting (by omission of any mention of precedents) that it was introduced by Parker, Gillespie, et al. He evidently is unaware of poor M. Bizet's *Variations chromatiques de concert*, not to mention Bach's *Chromatic Fantasy*, written in 1720. What's more, Jimmy Raney, who played cello as well as guitar and, like many jazz musicians, was a Bach devotee, once showed me in a piece of Bach's a perfect tone row à la Schoenberg, using all twelve tones without a repeat. *The Harvard Dictionary of Music*, says, "Chromaticism appeared first in Greek music . . . probably as a result of Oriental influence . . . . [In] the early part of the 14th century the full chromatic scale was not only discussed by theorists but also found on organs (at least in the middle octave) . . . . True chromaticism was introduced by Adrian Willaert (1480-1562) and his pupil Cypriano de Rore (1516-65) who, in his madrigal *Calami sonum ferentes* (1561), starts out a chromatic subject (b-c-c#-d-d#-e-f#-g). Luca de Maenzio and particularly Gesualdo (1561-1614) exploited the new material harmonically . . . ." And

Hayden's *Fourth Piano Concerto* contains minor seconds. At the end of the release of *The Song Is You*, Jerome Kern goes from a B7 to a C chord.

In even discussing these issues, I am doing what Maggin shouldn't have done: examining matters the lay reader can't understand and the educated musician already does. It's the trap one falls into if one is going to discuss this book.

And we can certainly do without yet another resurrection of the story that Charlie Parker saw a dead chicken on the road ahead, stopped, picked it up, and cooked it, thereby acquiring the name Yardbird, then Bird. It isn't even certain that the story is true.

Maggin's lack of knowledge of musical — and specifically jazz — history prompted me to revisit the review I wrote in 1997 of his 1996 book *Stan Getz: A Life in Jazz*, in which he demonstrated nothing so much as his lack of understanding of the depth of Stan's depravity. One passage in particularly leaped out at me:

> For example, of "[Gary] Burton was a pioneer in the use of four mallets — rather than the conventional two — on the vibraphone and, as a consequence, could play resonant four-note chords on the instrument." That's just in case you didn't know two mallets are the usual. The passage surely embarrassed Gary Burton, if he read it: he was ten years short of being born when Red Norvo recorded *Dance of the Octopus* in 1933. (Let's not split the hair that Red was playing xylophone; vibraharp is a metal xylophone with resonators, and the mallet technique is essentially the same.) Teddy Charles was doing it in the 1950s or earlier, and Mike Mainieri was skillful at four mallets at least as far back as the late 1950s.
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> Reverently in love with Stan Getz's playing, Maggin tries to blame Stan's panoply of faults on something or someone else. The book is full of faux psychiatry, tracing Stan's behavior to the defects of his mother (Mama always gets it!) or those of his feckless father.
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> After a time I found myself skipping over Maggin's endless and tedious reviews of seemingly every record Stan made. He clearly is a record reviewer *manqué*, and these descriptions of the tracks of albums are full of words and phrases like "slashingly sardonic, softly romantic, and fiercely lyrical . . . virile . . . contemplative, darkly hued . . . . " It gets a little thick. If you removed these exhaustive descriptions of Stan's albums, and the reviews by others that the author quotes, you'd reduce the book by about a third of its length.

And it's the same with the Gillespie book: too many dates, too much personnel listing, too much itinerary, in addition to those bizarre attempts at technical pedagogy in a field he doesn't understand.

Dorothy Parker once wrote of a book she was reviewing that it should not be casually tossed aside: "It should be thrown with great force."

One is tempted to say the same of Donald L. Maggin's book on Dizzy. But it has a modicum of value. Anything that contributes to the body of information on Dizzy Gillespie has value; but this is balanced in this book by what it contributes to the body of misinformation.

Emerson wrote, "There is properly no history; only biography."

But the problem with biography us that it is subjective, even when written by the most disciplined scholar — which Maggin assuredly is not — and no form of it is more subjective than autobiography, which is inevitably self-justifying. Since much history depends on autobiographies, and since much information is lost forever anyway, we are compelled to genuflect to Voltaire's aphorism that history is an agreed-upon fiction. Even the biographer who has had direct communication with the subject must face the fact that memory is fallible, and, again, self-justifying, which is the point of the Japanese film *Rashomon*. I don't think Dizzy's autobiography, *To Be or Not to Bop*, can be considered reliable. If nothing else, his humility and deference to Parker make some of it questionable.

Even "authoritative" references can be wrong. The 1972 *Britannica* repeats uncritically the myth that Fauré composed his exquisite *Requiem* after the death of his father. He wrote it before his father died. Yet the myth keeps turning up in other writings.

The disservice done to Dizzy's memory by Maggin's book is that it will be quoted by future writers.

The book is, I suppose, worth reading, so long as you do so with a skeptical mind and skim over the more yawnsome passages and above all skip entirely its inept technical discussions of bebop.

But better, get that CD of Parker and Gillespie at Town Hall in 1945. In that word favored by valley girls, it's awesome.

This is genius in radiant flower.