

CHARLIE PARKER



the cole porter songbook



NIGHT AND DAY
WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE
I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN
EASY TO LOVE
BEGIN THE BEGUINE
IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT
I GET A KICK OUT OF YOU
JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS
MY HEART BELONGS TO DADDY
LOVE FOR SALE
I LOVE PARIS

CHARLIE PARKER



the cole porter songbook

- 1 EASY TO LOVE 3:24
- 2 BEGIN THE BEGUINE 3:10
- 3 NIGHT AND DAY 2:45
- 4 WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE 2:38
- 5 IN THE STILL OF THE NIGHT 3:18
- 6 I GET A KICK OUT OF YOU 3:31
- 7 JUST ONE OF THOSE THINGS 2:39
- 8 MY HEART BELONGS TO DADDY 3:17
- 9 I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN 3:31
- 10 LOVE FOR SALE 5:33
- 11 I LOVE PARIS 5:10
- *12 WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE 15:51
*CD BONUS TRACK



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All songs by Cole Porter.

Personnel: Charlie Parker, alto saxophone.

1. Edwin C. Brown, oboe; Sam Caplan, Howard Kay, Harry Meinikoff, Sam Rand, Zelly Smirnof, violins; Isadore Zor, viola; Maurice Brown, cello; Verley Mills, harp; Bernie Leighton, piano; Ray Brown, bass; Buddy Rich, drums. Arranged and conducted by Joe Lippman. Recorded July 5, 1950 in New York.
2. Walter Bishop, piano; Teddy Kotick, bass; Max Roach, drums; Luis Miranda, conga; probably Jose Mangual, bongo. Recorded January 23, 1952 in New York.
- 3-4. Jimmy Maxwell, Carl Poole, All Porcino, Bernie Privin, trumpets; Bill Harris, Lou McGarity, Bart Varsalona, trombones; Harry Terrill, Murray Williams, alto saxophones; Flip Phillips, Hank Ross, tenor saxophones; Danny Bank, baritone, saxophone; Oscar Peterson, piano; Freddie Green, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; Don Lamond, drums. Arranged and conducted by Joe Lippman. Recorded March 25, 1952 in New York.
5. Junior Collins, French horn; Hal McKusick, clarinet; Al Block, flute; Tommy Mace, oboe; Manny Thaler, bassoon; Tony Aless, piano; Charles Mingus, bass; Max Roach, drums; Dave Lambert Singers. Arranged and conducted by Gil Evans. Recorded May 22, 1953 in New York.

- 6-9. Walter Bishop, piano; Jerome Darr, guitar; Teddy Kotick, bass; Roy Haynes, drums. Recorded March 31, 1954 in New York.
- 10-11. Walter Bishop, piano; Billy Bauer, guitar; Teddy Kotick, bass; Art Taylor, drums. Recorded December 10, 1954 in New York.
12. Charlie Shavers, trumpet; Benny Carter, Charlie Parker, Johnny Hodges, alto saxophone; Flip Phillips, Ben Webster, tenor saxophone; Barney Kessel, guitar; Ray Brown, bass; J.C. Heard, drums. Recorded July 1952 in Los Angeles.

Original sessions produced by Norman Granz.

Prepared for Compact Disc by Richard Seidel and Paul Ramey.

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CHARLES Mingus once said that when Charlie Parker was playing at the top of his form, you could tell the color of the hair of the woman he was thinking of while soloing. Extra sensory perceptions notwithstanding, there is something deeply ironic about offering a Cole Porter songbook without singing. For if Porter wasn't the finest lyricist produced by the Broadway stage, he was certainly a major contender — rivalled only by Irving Berlin (the other great words-and-music man), Johnny Mercer, Ira Gershwin, and Lorenz Hart. There is further irony in pairing Parker and Porter, the former an uneducated saxophonist struggling against unceasing adversity and yet changing the course of American music in a very short time, and the latter a wealthy Yale and Harvard graduated songwriter indulged from birth and wildly acclaimed all his life. Yet they had much in common — their genius, love of pure melody, appetites for pleasure, capacity for pain. This is a poignant collection, because it shows Parker

at the peak of his powers and at his nadir; still, every selection reveals his abiding regard for Porter's unique sense of song. Mingus was right, up to a point. If you know Porter's songs, words and music, you will hear Parker ruminating on both, singing the words and commenting on them at the same time.

Easy to Love. Porter wrote this for the 1934 stage show, *Anything Goes*, but it was dropped. Two years later Jimmy Stewart (singing) and Eleanor Powell (dancing) introduced it in the movie, *Born to Dance*. It turned up again in the inane 1946 bio-pic *Night and Day* and as the title of a 1953 movie musical. Parker loved this song; at least a dozen of his interpretations exist, of which this is the first, arranged by Joe Lippman for a 1950 Parker and strings session. Later he commissioned Jimmy Mundy to write a new and improved arrangement.

Begin the Beguine. This unlikely standard, from the 1935 stage hit *Jubilee*, is one of the longest songs

ever written (108 bars, as opposed to the usual 32). Artie Shaw's famous recording helped insure its popularity, but Parker's 1952 performance — combining Latin and jazz percussion — puts the accent on the exotic rhythm of the dance it presumes to describe.

Night and Day. This is another complicated song, yet with a melodic strain so compelling that it too became an immediate hit. Porter wrote it for the 1932 show, *The Gay Divorce*, which marked Fred Astaire's farewell to Broadway. Two years later, Astaire sang it in the movie, retitled *The Gay Divorcee* because Hollywood's censorship bureau couldn't accept the idea of a gay divorce. Parker's performance is from a 1952 big band session, and includes a brief solo by Bill Harris and longer ones by Bernie Privin and Oscar Peterson.

What Is This Thing Called Love. Porter wrote this for a 1930 show with the Kafkaesque title, *Wake Up and Dream*. It was quickly taken up by jazz musicians, beginning with trumpet stylist Bubber Miley, and was es-

pecially admired by Parker's generation: Tadd Dameron's "Hot House" is based on it. Parker begins his solo with one of his most famous licks, the "Cool Blues" riff, and Privin and Peterson also get to solo.

In the Still of the Night. Nelson Eddy emoted this one in the 1937 film, *Rosalie*. Parker's version comes from an odd 1953 session featuring an octet with woodwinds, flute, and French horn, arranged by Gil Evans, plus the Dave Lambert singers. They sing the only words on the album. Parker completely transcends his surroundings with an inspired performance.

I Get a Kick Out of You. Ethel Merman, for whom Porter wrote so many songs (hence their deliberately condensed range) introduced this in the legendary 1934 musical, *Anything Goes*, and reprised it in the movie two years later.

The next five selections are from Parker's last album, a Porter anthology (presented here in its entirety but for three alternate takes) completed a

few months before his death at 34. Despite severe pitch problems and obvious weakness, he managed to communicate urgency and a feeling for the tunes.

Just One of Those Things. This is another major hit from the 1935 show, *Jubilee*, a sophisticated romp on gossamer wings that Parker might have better appreciated on a sunnier day.

My Heart Belongs to Daddy. This minor-keyed marvel inspired performers as diverse as Helen Humes, Ella Fitzgerald, and, of course, Mary Martin, who made it a showstopper and herself a star when she introduced it in the 1938 musical, *Leave It To Me*.

I've Got You Under My Skin. Virginia Bruce sang it in the 1936 *Born to Dance*, for which it was written; Ginny Simms sang it in *Night and Day* a decade later; and two years after that, Marina Koshetz took her turn in *Luxury Liner*. But everybody knows Frank Sinatra owns the thing.

Love for Sale. These next two selections were recorded nine months after the previous session, and dem-

onstrate unmistakable signs of renewed vitality. Parker seemed to be rebounding on this, his last session; yet he died the following March. "Love for Sale," the earliest song on the album, was introduced in the 1930 show, *The New Yorkers*, which starred the vaudeville team of Clayton, Jackson and Durante; many jazz musicians in addition to Parker were inspired by the prostitute's lament, including Sarah Vaughan, George Russell (whose "Ezz-thetic" is based on it), and Roy Eldridge.

I Love Paris. An ingenious juxtaposition of minor and major keys gives this song its intriguing character. Porter wrote it late in his career, for the 1953 show, *Can Can*. Parker hears the blues in Porter's mournful cadences and mines them for all they're worth.

GARY GIDDINS

Gary Giddins is the author of *Riding on a Blue Note* (Oxford, 1981) and *Rhythm-a-ning* (Oxford, 1985).

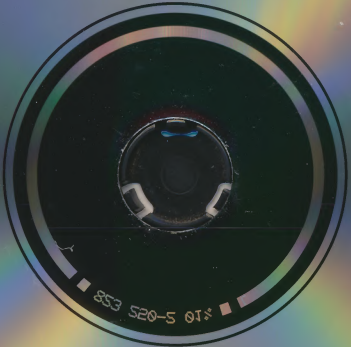


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THE COLE PORTER SONGBOOK**

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Compilation
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COMPACT
disc
DIGITAL AUDIO



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OF THE NIGHT 6 I GET A KICK OUT OF YOU 7 JUST ONE
OF THOSE THINGS 8 MY HEART BELONGS TO DADDY
- 9 I'VE GOT YOU UNDER MY SKIN
- 10 LOVE FOR SALE 11 I LOVE PARIS
- 12 WHAT IS THIS THING CALLED LOVE

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