



Dexter Keith Gordon

DEXTER GORDON

bud powell / pierre michelot / kenny clarke

**OUR
MAN
IN**



PARIS

Dexter Gordon had such a colorful and eventful life (with three separate comebacks) that his story would make a great Hollywood movie. The top tenor saxophonist to emerge during the bop era and possessor of his own distinctive sound, Gordon sometimes was long-winded and quoted excessively from other songs, but he created a large body of superior work and could battle nearly anyone successfully at a jam session. His first important gig was with Lionel Hampton (1940-1943) although, due to Illinois Jacquet also being in the sax section, Gordon did not get any solos. In 1943, he did get to stretch out on a recording session with Nat King Cole. Short stints with Lee Young, the Fletcher Henderson Orchestra, and Louis Armstrong's big band preceded his move to New York in December 1944 and becoming part of Billy Eckstine's Orchestra, trading off with Gene Ammons on Eckstine's recording of "Blowin' the Blues Away." Gordon recorded with Dizzy Gillespie ("Blue 'N' Boogie") and as a leader for Savoy before returning to Los Angeles in the summer of 1946. He was a major part of the Central Avenue scene, trading off with Wardell Gray and Teddy Edwards in many legendary tenor battles; studio recordings of "The Chase" and "The Duel" helped to document the atmosphere of the period.

After 1952, drug problems resulted in some jail time and periods of inactivity during the '50s (although Gordon did record two albums in 1955). By 1960, he was recovered and soon he was recording a consistently rewarding series of dates for Blue Note. Just when he was regaining his former popularity, in 1962 Gordon moved to Europe where he would stay until 1976. While on the continent, he was in peak form and Gordon's many SteepleChase recordings rank with the finest work of his career. Gordon did return to the U.S. on an occasional basis, recording in 1965, 1969-1970, and 1972, but he was to an extent forgotten in his native land. It was therefore a major surprise that his return in 1976 was treated as a major media event. A great deal of interest

was suddenly shown in the living legend with long lines of people waiting at clubs in order to see him. Gordon was signed to Columbia and remained a popular figure until his gradually worsening health made him semi-active by the early '80s. His third comeback occurred when he was picked to star in the motion picture 'Round Midnight. Gordon's acting was quite realistic and touching. He was nominated for an Academy Award, four years before his death after a very full life. Most of Dexter Gordon's recordings for Savoy, Dial, Bethlehem, Dootone, Jazzland, Blue Note, SteepleChase, Black Lion, Prestige, Columbia, Who's Who, Chiaroscuro, and Elektra Musician are currently available.

This 1963 date is titled for Dexter Gordon's living in self-imposed Parisian exile and recording there with two other expatriates and a French native. Along with Gordon, pianist Bud Powell and Kenny "Klook" Clarke were living in the City of Lights and were joined by the brilliant French bassman Pierre Michelot. This is a freewheeling bop date with the band working out on such categoric standards as "Scrap-ple from the Apple," and "A Night in Tunisia." In addition, American vernacular tunes such as "Willow Weep for Me" and "Stairway to the Stars" are included. Gordon is at the very top of his game here. His playing is crisp, tight, and full of playful fury. Powell, who at this stage of his life was almost continually plagued by personal problems, never sounded better than he does in this session. His playing is a tad more laid-back here, but is nonetheless full of the brilliant harmonic asides and incendiary single-note runs he is legendary for. The rhythm section is close-knit and stop-on-a-dime accurate.



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OUR MAN IN PARIS

- 1 Scrapple From The Apple 7:19
- 2 Willow Weep For Me 8:44
- 3 Broadway 6:42
- 4 Stairway To The Stars 6:54
- 5 A Night In Tunisia 8:12
- Total Time: 37:51

Recorded by Blue Note Records Engineer - Claude Ermelin

Date of Recording recorded at the CBS Studios in Paris on May 23, 1963

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