

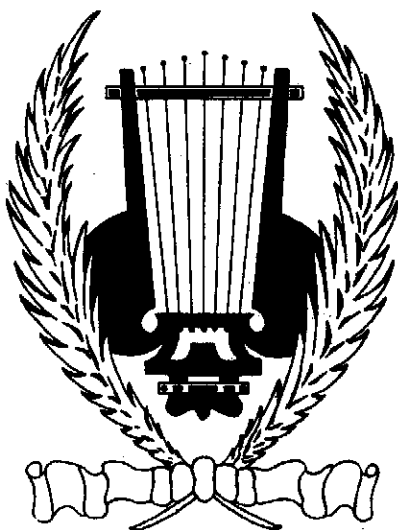
Barnhouse Jazz Band

NOW'S THE TIME

Lennie Niehaus

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“Bird” Lives!

by LEONARD FEATHER

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As I write this, in early May, the movie *Bird* is a couple of months away from its American release, but it is impossible to resist the temptation to write about it so far in advance. The fact is, *Bird* works.

Since I saw it at a private screening at Warner Brothers, *Bird* has had its world premiere at the Cannes Film Festival, where it won two awards: one for Forest Whitaker, who plays the title role, and a technical award, accepted by Clint Eastwood but effectively for Lennie Niehaus' musical direction. It is fairly safe to assume, too, that Whitaker will be in the running for an Oscar nomination.

Bird, in short, is the first truly authentic motion picture ever made about an actual jazz musician: not fiction like *Round Midnight* or semi-fiction like *Lady Sings the Blues* or sheer nonsense like *The Benny Goodman Story*. *Bird* is a triumph on several levels; compellingly written by Joel Olianski, superbly directed by Clint Eastwood, acted with total conviction by Forest Whitaker (and by Diane Venora as Chan), it is believable from the first minute to the last.

As much as anyone, Lennie Niehaus deserves his share of the credit for a sound track that is a true technological miracle. Charlie Parker's original solos were isolated; everything else on the old monaural tapes or records was erased, and replaced by state-of-the-art sound with such musicians as Monte Alexander, Barry Harris or Water Davis Jr. on piano, Jon Faddis or Red Rodney on trumpet, Ray Brown on bass, John Guerin on drums, and here and there, an enlarged string section that greatly enhances such numbers as *April in Paris* and *Laura*. In other words, it's as though Bird were still among us, recording with today's musicians in today's digital sound.

Five minutes into the film, I had forgotten that this was Forest Whitaker, an actor. His portrayal reflects countless hours studying Bird, discussing his personality traits with anyone who knew him.

The balance between bittersweet drama and comedy is well maintained; the scenes involving Mike Zelnicker, who plays Red Rodney, are based on fact (Rodney pretending to be an albino so the white southern audiences would tolerate his presence in a black band; Rodney taking Bird with him to play a Jewish wedding). But the contrasting aspects of the complex character who was Bird — kind, articulate, phenomenally gifted, uncontrolled, strung out, impulsive, generous — are effectively brought into play in what is, of course, ultimately a downbeat story.

There will be complaints that this is yet another movie about a junkie musician, yet the message comes across loud and clear that drugs, as Bird himself was the first to tell you, are devastatingly damaging. The scene toward the end, in which Bird and Chan try to live a peaceful life in a country home in Pennsylvania, is an accurate reflection of Bird's basic motivation, to which he was never able to remain loyal for more than short periods.

The music, from the inexorable flow of *Lester Leaps In* at the beginning to the heartbreaking sounds of *Parker's Mood* during the closing credits, is magnificent. A few tunes use Bird's solo from his original commercial recordings, but most are taken from rare tapes supplied by Chan, using airchecks from the Rockland Palace in Harlem and a couple of items taped when Bird visited Lennie Tristano's apartment. The soundtrack album on CBS, which, of course, includes complete numbers rather than the excerpts that dominate the film footage, is a unique document for which Niehaus and his chief engineer, Bob Fernandez, worked endless hours trying to match up every beat of each Parker solo and the new sounds that were added.

Nit-pickers may note that some of the important people in Bird's life are missing, but the dramatic license was not taken to excess. If Miles Davis didn't want to be represented, it was not central to Bird's story to involve him; as for Doris Parker, the other woman in Bird's later years, it was apparently deemed advisable to concentrate on the very close relationship with Chan. What comes across vividly is a portrait of an immensely gifted, driven man whose life was ruined by drugs but who left a magnificent musical legacy — one that Clint Eastwood, Niehaus and everyone else who took part in this project clearly respected.

Present plans call for an American premiere September 30 at the Museum of Modern Art in New York, with a general release to follow a few weeks later.

Clint Eastwood, it was easy to discern in conversation with him, is prouder of this movie than of anything else he has ever done. He might well be; he has taken a project that could so easily have been botched (originally it was the property of Richard Pryor, who would have been all wrong for the role of Bird), and has produced and directed it with tender loving care.

If I may borrow a phrase long associated with Clint, he has made our day, or rather our decade, with this unprecedented example of how to treat a jazz movie subject with honesty and dedication.

LENNIE NIEHAUS

Lennie Niehaus' music career has been varied and most distinguished. Graduating cum laude from California State University-L.A. with a degree in composition he joined the Stan Kenton Orchestra as a feature Alto soloist where he won Downbeat magazine awards and recorded a number of albums. Many of them included his own arrangements. Later, he was to record six of his own albums with a "who's who" list of West Coast jazz greats.



More recently he has achieved considerable success as a composer for movies and TV films. Some of the latest film credits include "Tightrope," "City Heat," "Sesame Street Presents Follow That Bird," "Pale Rider," and "Heartbreak Ridge." Lennie has just finished work on the film score for "Bird," a new movie about the life of jazz giant Charlie Parker which will be released by Warner Bros. in the Fall of 1988.

In addition to his busy film writing work he continues to maintain an active career in the educational field where he composes and arranges music for jazz ensemble, concert band, and orchestra. He is well known as a clinician, Alto Saxophonist and adjudicator in high schools and colleges around the country.

NOW'S THE TIME

MODERATE SWING (♩=126) (♩=♩)

(STRAIGHT 8'S)

(SOLO - UNIS.)


Clarinet 1-4, Trumpet 1-4, Trombone 1-4, Piano, Bass, Drums, and Soloist parts for the song "Now's the Time". The score is in 4/4 time with a tempo of moderate swing (♩=126). The key signature has one sharp (F#). The arrangement includes a piano introduction, a main body of music with various instrumental parts, and a solo section for the soloist. The piano part includes chord symbols written on the staff. The soloist part includes a section marked "(S.D.)" and "(SOLO - TAMS)".

Clarinet 1-4: (STRAIGHT 8'S)
 Trumpet 1-4: (STRAIGHT 8'S)
 Trombone 1-4: (STRAIGHT 8'S)
 Piano: (CHORD SYMBOLS WRITTEN ON PART)
 Bass: (CHORD SYMBOLS WRITTEN ON PART)
 Soloist: (S.D.) (SOLO - TAMS)

Measure numbers: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8

9 [5] REPEAT ON D.S.
(♩ = 75)

9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16

(TO CODA) 

Musical score for measures 17-22, top system (measures 1-5). This system contains five staves of music. The first two measures (17-18) are marked with a first ending bracket (1.) and a repeat sign. The next two measures (19-20) are marked with a second ending bracket (2.) and a repeat sign. The final measure (22) is marked with a coda symbol. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex melodic line in the upper staves.

Musical score for measures 17-22, middle system (measures 6-10). This system contains five staves of music. The first two measures (17-18) are marked with a first ending bracket (1.) and a repeat sign. The next two measures (19-20) are marked with a second ending bracket (2.) and a repeat sign. The final measure (22) is marked with a coda symbol. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex melodic line in the upper staves.

Musical score for measures 17-22, bottom system (measures 11-15). This system contains five staves of music. The first two measures (17-18) are marked with a first ending bracket (1.) and a repeat sign. The next two measures (19-20) are marked with a second ending bracket (2.) and a repeat sign. The final measure (22) is marked with a coda symbol. The music is in 4/4 time and features a complex melodic line in the upper staves.

17

18

19

20

21

22

23 BIRD'S RECORDED SOLO (WITH MODIFICATIONS)

(SOLO) (SOLO) (SOLO) (SOLO)

1
2
3
4
E 1
IE 2
IE 3
IE 4

F6 F9 Cb7/B7 Bb7 F6 C7 F6 Am7 D9

23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30

35

R
IR
E

Violin I, Violin II, Viola, Cello/Double Bass

1
2
3
4

Flute 1, Flute 2, Flute 3, Flute 4

NE 1
NE 2
NE 3
NE 4

Trumpet 1, Trumpet 2, Trumpet 3, Trumpet 4

Chord progression: F#m7 Gm7 C1(b9) F6 Gm7 A/B B/C F6 F/Cb Bb/D Bb F/C C1 F9 Cb7(b9)

Piano

31 32 33 34 35 36 37 38

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top two staves contain intricate melodic lines with many slurs and ties. The bottom three staves provide harmonic support with chords and rhythmic patterns. The key signature has one sharp (F#) and the time signature is 4/4.

The second system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top two staves continue the melodic lines from the first system. The bottom three staves focus on harmonic accompaniment, with the bass line providing a steady rhythmic foundation. The notation includes various chord symbols and rhythmic markings.

B^7 $Bb_7(b9)$ Am_7 $F\#A$ Am_7 D^7 Gm_7 C^7 Fb Gm_7 $A^b(b9)$ Gm_7 C^9

The third system of the musical score consists of two staves. The top staff shows chordal accompaniment with various voicings and accidentals. The bottom staff continues the bass line from the previous system.

The fourth system of the musical score consists of two staves. The top staff shows chordal accompaniment with various voicings and accidentals. The bottom staff continues the bass line from the previous system.

39 40 41 42 43 44 45 46

47

47 48 49 50 51 52 53 54

59

(SOLO AD-LIB) (FOR 1 TRP.)
G6 OR UNIS. SOL

(MILES DAVIS' RECORDED SOLO)

Gmi7 C1(69) F6 Gmi7 C1(69) F6 Bb13 F9 Cm1 F9

55

56

57

58

59

60

61

62

1
3
DR
DR
VE

T 1
T 2
T 3
T 4

DNE 1
DNE 2
DNE 3
DNE 4

B7(b5) F6 Am7 D7(b9) Gm7 Gm7/c C9 Fm7 Gm7 C7(b9)

Chord symbols: C7, G9, G9(b9), C7(b9), C9, C13

Chord symbols: F9, Bb7, F9, F9(b9), Bb(b9), Bb9, Bb13

71

72

73

74

75

76

The first system of the musical score consists of five staves. The top two staves appear to be vocal lines with lyrics. The bottom three staves are instrumental accompaniment. The music is written in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes quarter notes, eighth notes, and rests.

The second system of the musical score includes guitar-specific notation. It features four staves with melodic lines and a fifth staff with guitar chord diagrams. The chords are labeled as follows: G6/9, Bm7, E7(b9), Am7, D7(b9), G6, E7(b9), Am7, and E7 D7 END SOLO. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, often beamed together.

The third system of the musical score consists of four empty staves, each with a bass clef. These staves are likely intended for a double bass or electric bass player but contain no musical notation.

The fourth system of the musical score includes guitar-specific notation. It features a staff with guitar chord diagrams and a staff with a melodic line. The chords are labeled as follows: F6/9, Am7, D7(b9), Gm7, C7(b9), F6, D7(b9), Gm7, D7, and C13. The notation includes eighth notes and rests.

The fifth system of the musical score features piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The notation includes chords, single notes, and rests.

The sixth system of the musical score features piano accompaniment. It consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The notation includes chords, single notes, and rests.

77

78

79

80

81

82

Chord progression: F#m, Bb7, F#m, Gb9, F#m, F7(9b9), CbB, Bb7, B0

(2.)

S
 A
 T1
 T2
 T3
 T4
 BONE 1
 BONE 2
 BONE 3
 BONE 4
 F#C
 Am7
 D5(b9)
 A6(b5)
 Gm7
 Gm7/C
 D7/C#
 F6
 G6

89 90 91 92 93 94

(2.)

(P.S. AL CODA)
(SOLO-UNIS.)

95 96 97

(CODA)

98 99 100 101