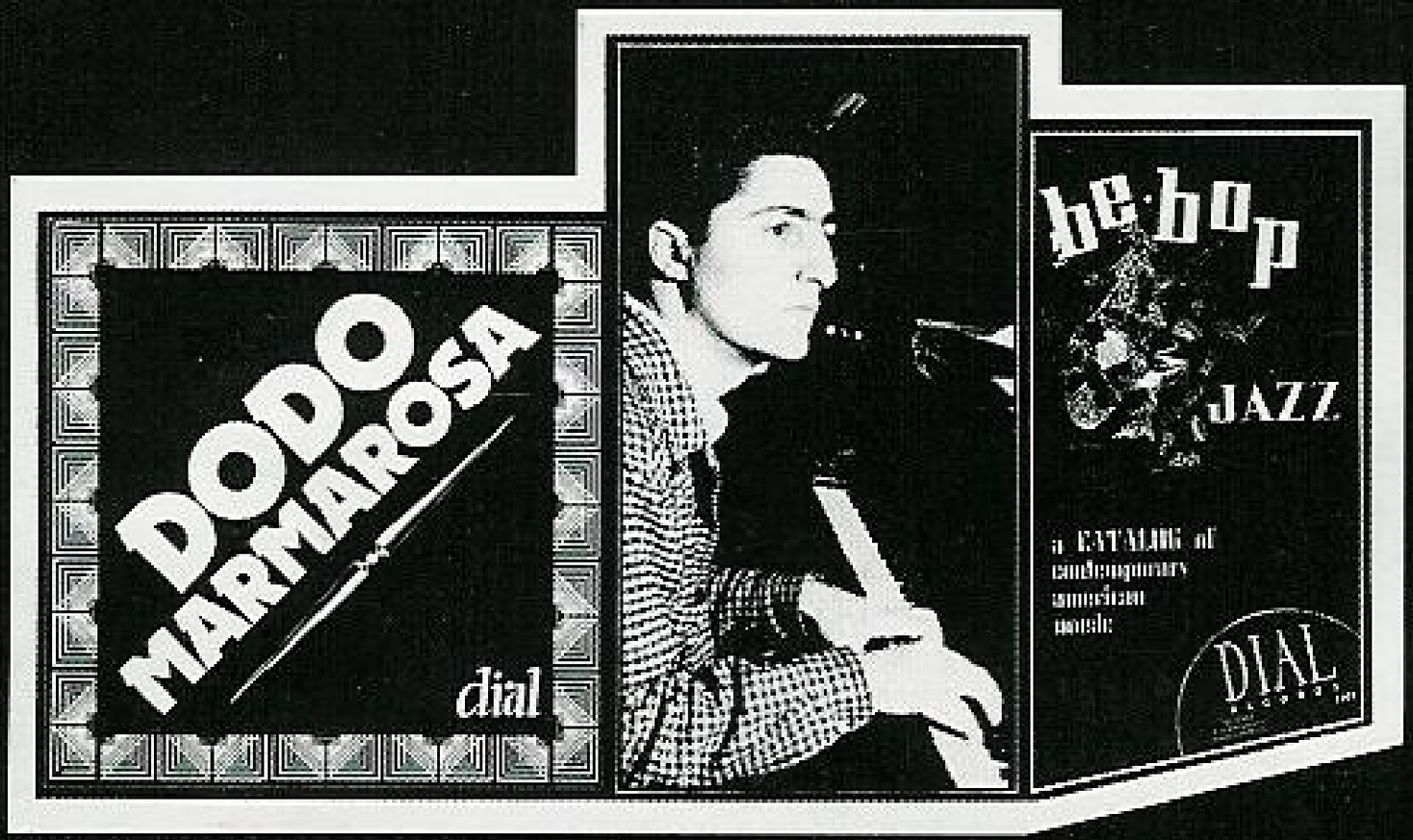
THE DIAL MASTERS

DODO MARMAROSA
DODO'S DANCE



SPOTLITE SPJ128

THE ESSENTIAL CLASSIC DIAL RECORDINGS

DODO MARMAROSA ON DIAL

[01]	DEEP PURPLE	(JUB 169)
[02]	TEA FOR TWO	(JUB 169)
[03]	BIRD LORE	(D1012-1)
[04]	DIALATED PUPILS	(D1041-4)
[05] *	DIALATED PUPILS	(D1041-5)
[06] *	MIDNIGHT AT MINTON'S	(D1042-4)
[07]	UP IN DODO'S ROOM	(D1043-1)
[08] *	UP IN DODO'S ROOM	(D1043-2)
[09] *	HIGH WIND IN HOLLYWOOD	(D1044-2)
[10]	TONE PAINTINGS I	
[11]	TONE PAINTINGS II	
[12]	BOPMATISM	(D1131-C)
[13] *	BOPMATISM	(D1131-F)
[14]	DODO'S DANCE	(D1132-A)
[15] *	DODO'S DANCE	(D1132-C)
[16]	TRADE WINDS	(D1133-A)
[17] *	TRADE WINDS	(D1133-C)
[18]	DARY DEPARTS	(D1134-E)
[19]	DARY DEPARTS	(D1134-F)
[20] *	DARY DEPARTS	(D1134-G)
[21]	COSMO STREET	(D1135-D)
[22] *	COSMO STREET	(D1135-E)

* *Original 78 rpm release*

The bebop era produced one giant, Charlie Parker, a handful of first-line jazzmen, and a sprinkling of potential greats who never quite lived up to an extraordinary promise. One of the latter who came very close was Dodo Marmarosa. At the peak of his career he was one of the most exciting pianists in jazz. For Bird watchers awaiting the appearance of a Messianic "Charlie Parker of the piano", Dodo Marmarosa seemed to have the inside track. Eventually that nomination went to Bud Powell but for two or three years, when Dodo was in an exalted state of musical grace, he was in the running and the New Star most likely to inherit the royal mantle of Art Tatum.

Dodo Marmarosa was a product of Pittsburgh, the industrial city that had given jazz piano its first major innovator, Earl Hines, its first distaff star, Mary Lou Williams, and would later send along Erroll Garner (Spotlite 129) and Billy Strayhorn. He was born Michael Marmarosa, December 19, 1925, into a lower middle class Italian family. Like many who had emigrated to America, his parents set high value on their native musical culture. The Marmarosa home was furnished with a piano and recordings of famous opera stars; music played a vital part in its cultural life.

Dodo began piano lessons at an early age, under the direction of martinets schooled in European disciplines. As a boy he was required to practise hours daily, was a slave to Hanon and Czerny, and subject to the attentions of knuckle-rapping instructors totally

ignorant of jazz. There was no time for sports or social activities. Dodo's idea of fun was to play through the Bach Two-Part Inventions, gradually building up speed until he could run them off at double the indicated metronome marking.

At school the young piano freak was odd man out, denied participation in sports because of his inaptitude and the demands of his music teachers. Socially he was not better off. His alienation was exposed to all by his nickname, inspired by the small, dry, wiry frame and the over-sized head with its fierce falcon nose. 'Dodo' stuck to him all of his life, the Michael relegated to public documents and, after he became a boy wonder piano player in name boards, his payroll vouchers.

His escape hatch was jazz. Unbeknown to his instructors, Dodo began studying the Pittsburgh pianists who had made history, Hines and Mary Lou. Later he became a Tatum man, as did everyone else then who aspired to play jazz piano. Tatum's overwhelming keyboard mastery was not beyond Dodo's expectations. Few have been better disciplined or more soundly based in classical disciplines. At the age of fifteen Dodo was in command of a formidable keyboard technique. His touch was clean, precise and mallet-like. Thanks to the Two-Part Inventions, his left hand was as good as his right. He was a rapid, accurate sight reader. He was extraordinarily fast and sure-fingered, capable of the velocities only Tatum seemed able to generate.

In the early 1940s dance bands were suffering crippling casualties from the military draft and opportunities abounded for the young and ambitious. Dodo, with his impressive facility and easy sight-reading ability, was a band leader's dream. He joined Scat Davis, then moved on to the treacly sound world of Ted Fio Rito. Finally, his jazz abilities recognized, and at the age when he might have been preparing for his senior prom, Dodo Marmarosa caught on with the 1945-46 Artie Shaw Orchestra that included Roy Eldridge, Barney Kessel and Georgie Auld. He was in the big time, installed on the piano bench of a prestigious swing band, as he described it, "right in the middle of all those great sounds". After Shaw came bands of equal renown, Gene Krupa, Charlie Barnet and Tommy Dorsey. All this before the spindly kid from Pittsburgh reached his majority.

The attractions of California and the rising interest there in bop and small band jazz prompted Dodo to leave T. D. after an engagement in Ocean Park at the Casino Gardens. He fell in with the Los Angeles miniboppers, attached himself to the progressive Boyd Raeburn organization, and became part of the jazz renaissance on the West Coast while Lester Young and Charlie Parker were in residence, furnishing leadership for the lusty young disciples of the new music.

During this period Dodo was living alone in a tiny two-storey frame house in West Hollywood, off Santa Monica Boulevard. In it

he had installed thrift store furniture and a good upright piano. The inside of the bath-tub was painted green. Dodo would draw a tepid bath and lie in the tub and luxuriate, watching the rays of sunlight glint through an open window and bounce around the greenish water.

He was a born dreamer, a man enslaved in a universe of sound. Every sound had a secret meaning for him. Certain sounds issued imperious orders. If he were walking down the street and a cathedral began chiming vespers he would stop and listen, rooted to the spot until the sounds stopped and he was released from their spell. One of his favourite things was to stay up all night so that he could stand barefoot on the dewy plot in front of the house, listening to the cries of birds as they awakened to the California dawn. For kicks he continued to whiz. through the Bach Two-Part Inventions, playing them at perilous speeds, never faltering on a note. He confided to intimates that he was doomed as a piano player because his hands were too small, the hands that were so quick, sure and equally matched.

DODO MARMAROSA

Dodo Marmarosa solo piano.

Unknown Studios, Los Angeles—Early 1946

01 JUB 169 (2:14) *Deep purple* (De Rose)

02 JUB 169 (1:30) *Tea for two* (Yeomans/Caesar)



These two solos illustrate this and the Tatum influence perfectly. These are not Dial recordings but are from an AFRS Jubilee broadcast and were recorded at a time that Marmarosa and Lucky Thompson were both at the point of leaving the Boyd Raeburn Orchestra to form a small group of their own. Marmarosa's versatility is brought to the listener's attention on these two performances a fact that was immediately apparent to Charlie Parker.

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After his four week appearance at Billy Berg's with Dizzy Gillespie he invited Dodo to take the piano stool over from Joe Albany in a band that was contracted out to work the after-hours Finale Club. As a result the pianist was brought in to record with Parker on the saxophonist's first recording session for Dial. It is from this famous session that BIRD LORE comes and the tune played is actually Ornithology. This first take was a rehearsal - such was Bird's respect for Dodo - he was invited to take the leader's solo and it has been included here for obvious reasons. The complete session is issued Spotlite CD101-4.

CHARLIE PARKER SEPTET

Miles Davis tpt; Charlie Parker alt; Lucky Thompson ten; Dodo Marmarosa p; Arvin Garrison g; Vic McMillan bs; Roy Porter d.

Radio Recorders Studios, Santa Monica Boulevard, Hollywood-

-Thursday, March 28, 1946

03 D1012-1 (3:03) *Bird Lore* (Parker)



1356 NORTH VINE STREET

HOLLYWOOD

Marmarosa was also selected to play on what was Howard McGhee's first contractual session for Dial. On this session his piano solos are nothing less than brilliant and this session although issued on Spotlite CD131 (Howard McGhee "The Dial Masters") is included here as they are relevant to the Marmarosa Dial story.

HOWARD McGHEE SEXTET

Howard McGhee tpt; Teddy Edwards ten; Dodo Marmarosa p; Arvin Garrison g; Bob Kesterson bs; Roy Porter d.

C.P. Macgregor Studios, 729 SW Avenue near 8th. Street, Hollywood—Friday, October 18, 1946.

04	D1041-4	(2:30)	*Dialated pupils*	(Parker/McGhee)
05	D1041-5	(2:55)	*Dialated pupils*	(Parker-McGhee)
06	D1042-4	(2:57)	*Midnight at Minton's*	(McGhee)
07	D1043-1	(3:07)	*Up in Dodo's room*	(McGhee)
08	D1043-2	(3:14)	*Up in Dodo's room*	(McGhee)
09	D1044-2	(2:37)	*High wind in Hollywood*	(McGhee)

At the time McGhee was fronting a sextet at an assorttment of local LA clubs such as the Suzie-Q, Hi De Ho and Streets Of Paris. The band was built around Marmarosa, Teddy Edwards and Bob Kesterson although Teddy Edwards and guitarist Arvin Garrison left to be replaced by saxophonists Wardell Gray and Sonny Criss. UP IN DODO'S ROOM is a tribute to the green bath tub. The up-tempo McGhee original DIALATED PUPILS shows how close to Tatum Dodo could play when he was really on.


DIAL
RECORDS
10-18-46
Contemporary
American Music
1011 A
DIALATED PUPILS
(Parker-McGhee)
HOWARD McGHEE SEXTET
featuring Dodo Marmarosa
Howard McGhee, trpt.; Teddy Edwards, tenor
Dingbod, bass; Dodo Marmarosa, piano
Arv Garrison, guitar; Roy Porter, drums
(D-1041-4)


DIAL
RECORDS
1050-B
UP IN DODO'S ROOM
DODO MARMAROSA SEXTET
DODO MARMAROSA....Piano
HOWARD McGHEE....Trumpet
TEDDY EDWARDS....Tenor Sax
DINGBOD....Bass
ROY PORTER....Drums
(D-1043-2)

1946 and 1947 were the Golden Years of Marmarosa's career and in 1947 he won the Esquire New Star Award for piano.

DODO MARMAROSA

Dodo Marmarosa solo piano

Unknown Studios, probably Los Angeles—early/mid 1947.

10	(3:00)	*Tone paintings I*	(Marmarosa)
11	(2:56)	*Tone paintings II*	(Marmarosa)

TONE PAINTINGS I and II were privately recorded by the artist in a Hollywood studio and were not intended for commercial release. They recall In a Mist, a similar impressionistic keyboard experiment recorded by Bix Beiderbecke in 1925 for Okeh, a minor landmark in discography that foreshadowed the Debussyian harmonies of the late swing and bop periods. TONE PAINTINGS likewise forecast changes to come. They are early explorations in serial improvisation suggesting the break away from twelve and thirty two bar forms that would begin ten years later with Ornette Coleman and lead to the free form jazz of John Coltrane and Cecil Taylor.

On the eve of yet another AFM recording ban, Dodo made a final date for Dial, backed by his favourite drummer, Jackie Mills and Harry Babasin on cello. This session was supervised by Eddie Laguna of Sunset Records and it produced five sides that reveal Dodo in top form: BOPMATISM, DODO'S DANCE, TRADE WINDS (You Go to my Head), DARY DEPARTS and COSMO STREET (Lover).



Howard McGhee and Miles Davis, Nola Studios, New York City, 1947

DODO MARMAROSA TRIO

Dodo Marmarosa p; Harry Babasin cello; Jackie Mills d.
C.P. Macgregor Studios, 729 SW Avenue near 8th. Street,
Hollywood—Wednesday, December 3, 1947.

12*	D1131-C	(3:06) *Bopmatism*	(Marmarosa)
13	D1131-F	(2:56) *Bopmatism*	(Marmarosa)
14	D1132-A	(3:05) *Dodo's dance*	(Marmarosa)
15	D1132-C	(3:08) *Dodo's dance*	(Marmarosa)
16	D1133-A	(3:07) *Trade winds*	(Marmarosa)
17	D1133-C	(3:10) *Trade winds*	(Marmarosa)
18	D1134-E	(2:45) *Dary departs*	(Marmarosa)
19	D1134-F	(2:45) *Dary departs*	(Marmarosa)
20	D1134-G	(2:35) *Dary departs*	(Marmarosa)
21	D1135-D	(3:28) *Cosmo Street*	(Marmarosa)
22	D1135-E	(2:53) *Cosmo Street*	(Marmarosa)

Harry Babasin's pizzicato cello work is the first use of that instrument on a jazz record date. Babasin was one of the first of a long line of distinguished alumni from the School of Music at North Texas State University. The session was a lengthy one. Dodo cut a total of twenty-nine tracks that day. The perfectionist in his nature compelled him to try again and again. The alternate takes afford a valuable insight into the pianist's methods.

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As a piano stylist Dodo Marmarosa is a direct descendant of the high school of Tatum pianistics. He has Tatum's clarity, chisel-like tone, assured fingering, and the same authoritative command of scale runs and pulsed arpeggios. Dodo uses stabbing chords in the left hand. He is less complex and polyrhythmic than the master, preferring to work with the support of a light, steady rhythm section. An unerring jazz instinct, a perfect sense of phrasing, and an iridescent keyboard texture are the hallmarks of his style.

Dodo's manifest potential as the authentic bebop pianist was a casualty of that turbulent period, a fate shared with scores of other jazzmen dehorned by the fiery eminence of Charlie Parker. As Hampton Hawes put it, "Bird was so overpowering that he destroyed lesser talents. No matter how many good ideas you came up with, Bird had better ones. Whatever you played, he topped. You wanted to give up. A lot of guys did." But for two years Dodo Marmarosa was Bird's piano player. Those two years were enough to yield a discography of high quality if not quantity.

When the jazz renaissance in Los Angeles fizzled out at the end of 1947, most of the boppers followed Charlie Parker back to The Apple, leaving California by default to the West Coast cool school of Chet Baker and Gerry Mulligan. Dodo followed as far as his native Pittsburgh, then went underground. Very little has been heard from him since. There were two casual sides for Savoy in

1949, and an Argo album in 1961, but the fire had gone. Dodo's discography is so meagre that one has the feeling that, like the legendary Peck Kelley, who never recorded in spite of many opportunities, Dodo deliberately went out of his way to bypass the sound studio. Lack of self-assurance, one of the secrets of the giants, and an obsession with his small, but entirely adequate and beautifully trained hands, blinded him to his own great talent.





DODO MARMAROSA

Dodo Maramarosa solo piano

Los Angeles—Early 1946

CHARLIE PARKER SEPTET

Miles Davis tpt; Charlie Parker alt; Lucky Thompson ten;
Dodo Marmarosa p
Arvin Garrison g: Vic McMillan bs; Roy Porter d.

Hollywood - March 28, 1946

HOWARD McGHEE SEXTET

Howard McGhee tpt; Teddy Edwards ten;
Dodo Marmarosa p;
Arvin Garrison g: Bob Kesterson bs; Roy Porter d.

Hollywood - October 18, 1946

DODO MARMAROSA

Dodo Marmarosa solo piano

Los Angeles - Early/Mid 1947

DODO MARMAROSA TRIO

Dodo Marmarosa p;
Harry Babasin cello; Jackie Mills d.

Hollywood - December 3, 1947



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