

# TEXAS MUSIC

**KENNY DORHAM GOT HIS BIG BREAK IN 1948, WHEN HE REPLACED MILES DAVIS IN THE CHARLIE "BIRD" PARKER QUINTET. THE NEXT YEAR, DORHAM APPEARED WITH THE BIRD IN PARIS AT THE FIRST INTERNATIONAL JAZZ FESTIVAL.**



delightful vocal treatment of the witty lyrics ("I'm a ridin' fool who is up to date/I know every trail in the Lone Star State/For I ride the range in a Ford V-8"). This recording was reissued in 2001 in a box set by Mosaic Records that includes, among several photographs of Teagarden, one from 1926 when he was touring in El Paso with Doc Ross and His Jazz Bandits. This CD set illustrates the serious attention that continues to be given to Jack Teagarden, considered by critic Gary Giddins to be "the best trombone player in the world."

Born in Post Oak, **Kenny Dorham** (1924-1972) was introduced to jazz through his piano-playing sister, who once commented to their parents that KD would one day be a great musician like Louis Armstrong, because he "jumps around when he hears music." But only after he moved to Austin did Dorham pick up the trumpet, playing it first in high school and later at Wiley College in Marshall.

During World War II, he joined various outstanding bands, including those of Dizzy Gillespie and Billy Eckstine, but he got his big break in 1948, when he replaced Miles Davis in the Charlie "Bird" Parker Quintet. In 1949, Dorham appeared with the Bird in Paris at the first international jazz festival.

Dorham's boyhood dream had been to become a cowhand, and in his youth he did drive cattle to the dipping vats. But he was destined instead to achieve a worldwide reputation as a fleet-fingered trumpeter whose "running" style exhibits a remarkable melodic and intellectual gift. His solos rarely repeat the same musical ideas, although they are immediately identifiable as his own, full of half-valve effects, unexpected twists and turns, and a mellow tonal quality that makes his sound endlessly appealing.

As a member of Parker's bebop quintet, Dorham demonstrated his ability to keep pace with one of the greatest jazz musicians of all time. Later, as a founding member of the Jazz Messengers, he was at the forefront of the Hard Bop movement, with its gospel-informed, soulful "preaching" style. Dorham also contributed to the jazz repertoire classic compositions like "Blue Bossa" and "The Prophet," the former inspired by his appearance at a jazz festival in Brazil in 1961. In 1960 and 1963, he was invited to Norway and Denmark to record with local Scandinavian musicians. Some 10 years



Kenny Dorham played with Dizzy Gillespie, Billy Eckstine, Charlie Parker, and the Jazz Messengers, and also recorded some outstanding sessions that featured Dorham solo and with his Jazz Prophets.

before his untimely death from kidney disease in 1972, the Texan composed "Dorham's Epitaph," a lovely piece lasting only one minute and nine seconds but played with his inimitable blend of passionate expression and secure technique.

In 1960, Kenny Dorham also recorded his version of "I'm an Old Cowhand," turning it into an exemplary piece of Hard Bop Texana, and in a way fulfilling through this piece his early ambition to be a real Texas cowboy.

Both Dorham and Teagarden were often referred to as Texas mavericks. They certainly shared a Texas brand of jazz, with their rugged individualism and their pride in place. In the lyrics to the aforementioned Mercer pop song, Teagarden sings, "Look out Texas, here I come/Right back where I started from." Texans have tended to congregate with their fellow natives and choose tunes that remind them of their roots.

Many of these Texans eventually returned to their home state, and this was true of two Dallas legends, reedman Buster Smith (1904-1991) and pianist **Red Garland** (1923-1984). Before resettling in Big D, these men made a profound impact on jazz history, with Professor Smith, as he was called (see *Speaking of Texas*, June 2001), serving as a direct influence on Charlie Parker, the seminal figure in the bebop revolution. But perhaps no other Dallas musician was so closely associated for such a long period of time with the careers of major jazzmen as was Red Garland. The pianist's recorded work with Miles Davis and John Coltrane, from the mid- to late 1950s, typifies the fundamental supporting role that many Texans have played in jazz, whether or not their style has been identified as Texan.



Red Garland first joined forces with Miles Davis in 1955, some five years after the trumpeter had moved from bebop to a cooler, more nuanced, and introspective style. In this regard, Davis moved away from bebop's largely technical exhibitionism, which, with its sheer speed and number of notes, had left many listeners unable to respond emotionally. In forming his own quintet (which would eventually include new star tenor saxophonist John Coltrane), Davis found in Red Garland a pianist whose relaxed rhythmic sense and expansive chords fit perfectly with the hauntingly intimate sounds that Davis was beginning to explore. In a series of historic recordings by the Davis Quintet, Garland not only backed up two of the most daring horn soloists of the 1950s, but contributed as well his own swinging solos, full of his trademark block chords and long, single-note runs.

Typical of his role in the Davis Quintet was Garland's comping and soloing on driving pieces like "I Could Write a Book" and "Bye Bye Blackbird," both from 1956.

After leaving Davis in 1958, Garland would record extensively on his own, forming groups that sometimes included fellow Texans, among them trumpeter Richard "Notes" Williams (1931-1985) of Galveston and alto saxophonist-flutist Leo Wright (1933-1991) of Wichita Falls. If not the innovator that Davis and Coltrane proved to be, Garland was one of the most influential pianists of his generation. His creative artistry



Red Garland (CD cover above, and inset) was one of the most influential jazz pianists of his generation.



Tenor saxophonist David "Fathead" Newman, a contemporary of Red Garland, has produced a distinguished body of work as both an accompanist and a bandleader.