

# DIZZY GILLESPIE

Story and photos by  
Angela Wheelock

Dizzy Gillespie, one of the principal founders of bebop jazz, is in Edmonton at the Wintergarden Room for two weeks. Edmonton seems a million miles away from the nightclubs of New York City where bebop was born in legendary all-night jams in the 1940's. But Dizzy brings that era of jazz alive through his performances and through his memories of the past.

His jazz is no moribund relic of the past, however, but living, breathing music. As Dizzy said on opening night, "It'll set your soul on fire and make you go to church on Tuesday!"

Dizzy cites appreciative audiences as one of the reasons he returns to Edmonton regularly. But he can't resist poking a little fun at Americans' conception of Canada.



Dizzy Gillespie above with band members clockwise; Steve Bailey on bass, Sayyd Abdul Al-Khybyr on reeds, and Masyr Abdul Al-Khybyr on drums.

**It'll set your soul on fire and make you go to church on Tuesday.**

"The last time I came here," he recalls, "I told somebody I was going to Edmonton, and they said, 'What's that place with the dogsleds? - You know - The Yukon! They think this is the Yukon.'"

Dizzy, after many visits to Edmonton, even knows who Wayne Gretzky is and agreed to play the national anthem at the Oiler's game on Sunday. He isn't a hockey fan, however, and terms the sport "brutal."

Dizzy is famous today, and secure in a musical career that has spanned 50 years, but this fame was not achieved without struggle and determination. Black musicians in the US suffered under discrimination and poor working conditions in the 1930's and 1940's.

"They treated musicians like trash," Dizzy remembers.

This discrimination was indicative of the whole history of black music in the United States.

"They wouldn't let the slaves play the drums," Dizzy said, "so they had to devise a new means of expression. They invented spirituals and from spirituals they developed blues and jazz."

In 1939 Dizzy was playing with Teddy Hill's band at the famous Savoy Ballroom in Harlem. During the 1939 World's Fair the Savoy had a pavillion where the band put on seven shows a day. The musicians believed they deserved better wages because of this gruelling schedule and took their grievance to the union.

**It was just an idea of four or five souls that felt the same way about music.**

"We went right into the mouth of the lion," Dizzy remembers. They won their case but became the victims of union corruption. The union's secretary was the brother-in-law of the Savoy's owner, and not surprisingly the band was fired.

Discrimination was a benefit in disguise when Teddy Hill became the new manager of Minton's, where it all started.

"That's where the music developed," Dizzy said, "so I was down there every night."

"It really got hot with the bebop after I left Cab Calloway (in 1941)," Dizzy recalled. "We were down there at Minton's. It really got steamed up. Then Charlie Parker came to New York and that really got hot then." Dizzy, Thelonius Monk, and Charlie Parker shared ideas and songs, creating a new music in the process.

"It was just an idea of four or five souls that felt the same way about music," Dizzy said. "When we learned something we would put that information over to the other guy."

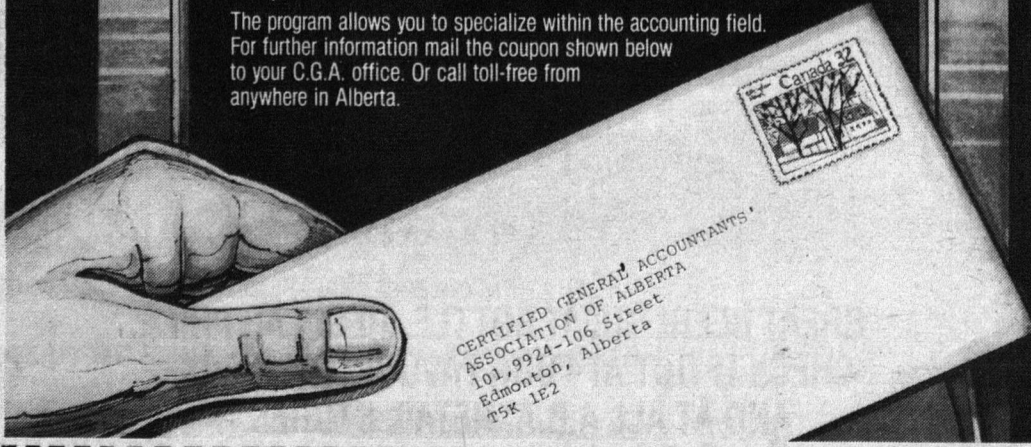
He especially remembers the day he first heard a minor C chord with a sixth in the bass.

"Monk showed me that chord," he remembers, "and I thought that was the loveliest chord in music. After that, I used it so many times in compositions and arrangements." Dizzy, caught up in his memories, sang

## Address yourself to your future

For the price of a stamp, you can obtain full details of the comprehensive C.G.A. accounting program. It's a home study program designed for students graduating from high school, college or university. For more than 70 years the professional association known as the Certified General Accountants has offered a complete program that can earn you the prestigious C.G.A. accounting designation. Employers recognize the professional status of individuals who have the C.G.A. designation. You will have an employment edge with your sound accounting knowledge, combined with your demonstrated ability, drive and initiative.

The program allows you to specialize within the accounting field. For further information mail the coupon shown below to your C.G.A. office. Or call toll-free from anywhere in Alberta.



CERTIFIED GENERAL ACCOUNTANTS  
 ASSOCIATION OF ALBERTA  
 101, 9924-106 Street  
 Edmonton, Alberta  
 T5K 1E2


**Make your mark as a Professional**  
**Certified General Accountants' Association of Alberta**  
 101, 9924 - 106 St., Edmonton, Alta. T5K 1E2  
 (403) 428-0689 Toll free 1-800-332-1078

Please send the C.G.A. Information Kit to:

NAME \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS \_\_\_\_\_

POSTAL CODE \_\_\_\_\_



**MARK OF A  
PROFESSIONAL**