

“Bird”- The Film Collection (AC97)

Introduction:

Released in 1988, “Bird” is a film about the life of Charlie Parker, the renowned jazz saxophonist. Directed by Clint Eastwood, this film aimed at taking an objective look at the life of this musical genius. The collection contains several film photographs and promotional material for the film. The collection also contains non-film material.

Descriptive Summary:

Creator: FIC

Title: “Bird”- The Film Collection

Date Range: 1988-1989

Size: 0.16 linear feet (1 box) & 1 folder (13.5 x16)

Collection Number: AC97

Donor Information: FIC

Citation Note: “Bird”- The Film Collection. (AC97), Black Archives of Mid-America, Kansas City, Missouri.

Related Collections:

None.

Administrative Information:

Reproduction Restrictions: unrestricted.

Access Restrictions: unrestricted.

Historical Sketch:

Charlie Parker is perhaps the most recognizable jazz musician in the history of the industry. He was known as a solo saxophonist and pioneered the style of bebop. Parker was born in Kansas City in 1920 and lived with his family until the early 1940’s. Early in his career, Parker worked with notable jazz musicians like Jay McShann, Earl Hines, and Billy Eckstine. By 1940, Parker

made his way to New York with the Jay McShann Band. He also developed distinctive working relationships with other great artists like Dizzy Gillespie and Miles Davis. Parker went on to achieve great success until his premature death at 34 years old.

The film “Bird” won the 1988 Oscar for Best Achievement in Sound. Clint Eastwood won the 1988 Golden Globe for Best Director. The film also earned positive reviews at the *Cannes Film Festival* that same year. “Bird” stars Forrest Whitaker, as Parker, and Diane Venora, as Parker’s love interest.

Scope and Content Note:

The collection features several film photographs. It also has non-film related items. There is a small poster of the original painting of Charlie “Bird” Parker” by the Photorealist painter Ben Schonzeit and a lamented printed poem called “Bird” from the poet Charlie E. Gilbert.

Series 1: Film Photographs

The “Bird” Film Collection is comprised of 27 film photographs.

Series 2: Correspondence

Correspondence Letter from Malpas Productions on behalf of Clint Eastwood from 1988.

Series 3: Pamphlets

This series contains a Warner Bros. presents “Bird” brochure and a movie release pamphlet for the Glenwood Theatre in Overland Park, Kansas “Bird” on *Sunday, October 9, 1988*.

Series 4: Posters

This series contains a 10 x10 poster of the original painting of Charlie “Bird” Parker” by Photorealist painter Ben Schonzeit and a 11x14 lamented printed poem called “Bird” from an unknown poet. (folder 7: items are held in 13.5 x16 folder by itself)

Collection Inventory

Series 1: Film Photographs

- f. 1 Photographs from the film “Bird”
- f. 2 Photographs from the film “Bird”
- f. 3 Photographs from the film “Bird”
- f. 4 Photographs from the film “Bird”

Series 2: Correspondence

f. 5 Correspondence Letter

Series 3: Pamphlets

f. 6 Brochures and pamphlets

Series 4: Posters

f. 7 Posters

Processed by: Kat Miller, Assistant Archivist, May 2024.

Sources: Feather, Leonard. 1987. "Eastwood Gives 'Bird' Wings: Legendary Saxophonist Charlie Parker Is Subject of a Movie." Los Angeles Times. November 1, 1987.
<https://www.latimes.com/archives/la-xpm-1987-11-01-ca-18036-story.html>. "Home | Charlie Parker's Kansas City." n.d. Charlieparkerskc.org. <https://charlieparkerskc.org/>.