

= Richie Powell =

Richard Powell ( September 5 , 1931 ? June 26 , 1956 ) was an American jazz pianist , composer , and arranger . He was not assisted in his musical development by Bud , his older and better known brother , but both played predominantly in the bebop style .

After early work around Philadelphia and New York City , Richie Powell played in the bands of Paul Williams ( 1951 ? 52 ) and Johnny Hodges ( 1952 ? 54 ) . He switched in the spring of 1954 to being pianist and arranger for the quintet co @-@ led by trumpeter Clifford Brown and drummer Max Roach . This band toured extensively across the U.S. for two years , and released both studio and concert recordings , including the Grammy Hall of Fame inductee Clifford Brown & Max Roach .

Powell , his wife , and Brown were killed in a car crash when traveling overnight from Philadelphia to Chicago . Powell was beginning to achieve recognition at the time of his death , but he never had the chance to record as a leader . He had a playful piano style , and was fond of using musical quotations . His relatively heavy touch and use of left @-@ hand fourths influenced fellow pianist McCoy Tyner .

= = Early life = =

Powell was born in New York City on September 5 , 1931 . He was the youngest of three sons , after William , Jr . , and Bud , seven years Richie 's elder . Their parents were William , Sr. and Pearl Powell . The family was musical : William , Sr. was a stride pianist ; William , Jr. led bands as a trumpeter and violinist ; and pianist Bud became one of the leaders of bebop .

One account of why Richie took up the piano is that he pestered drummer Max Roach , who lived nearby , for drum lessons , and Roach , eventually fed up , suggested that he play the piano instead . Bud did not assist his brother at all in his musical endeavors ; instead , according to a biographer of saxophonist Jackie McLean , " it was an excellent but now forgotten pianist named Bob Bunyan who taught Richie Powell chords on the piano . Richie would study with Bunyan , and then go home and watch his brother practice . [ ... ] Richie and Jackie became tight friends and used to rehearse together " . Richie also studied music with Mary Lou Williams , and attended the City College of New York .

= = Later life and career = =

From 1949 to 1951 Powell worked around Philadelphia and New York City . He then played in the bands of Paul Williams ( 1951 ? 52 ) and Johnny Hodges ( 1952 ? 54 ) . With Williams ' R & B @-@ oriented band he recorded four tracks late in 1952 that were released as singles . Powell also played on a medley track for a 1954 Hodges album , Used to Be Duke .

Powell was with Hodges ' band in Los Angeles in the spring of 1954 when Roach needed a new pianist for the quintet that he co @-@ led with trumpeter Clifford Brown . Powell was offered , and accepted , the job . He also became arranger for the quintet . They performed and rehearsed a lot , then had several recording sessions that August for EmArcy Records , which resulted in their first album , Brown and Roach Incorporated . In the same month , Powell was involved as pianist for some tracks at a session arranged for singer Dinah Washington that featured a studio audience . In September the quintet played for a fortnight at the Black Hawk in San Francisco , then began a tour of the eastern United States the following month . The band 's saxophonist , Harold Land , reported that , when touring , " Richie was a little busy with the ladies . He had harems in almost every city " .

Further recording sessions for Powell with Brown and Roach took place in New York during January and February 1955 . The tracks cut in January , with arrangements by Neal Hefti , were released as Clifford Brown with Strings . The February sessions yielded the albums Study in Brown , and , combined with tracks from the previous year , Clifford Brown & Max Roach . The latter was added to the Grammy Hall of Fame in 1999 . At the Newport Jazz Festival in July 1955 Powell played with Roach and others as backing for Washington . Recordings made of the Brown ? Roach quintet at the same event were released decades later .

The quintet with Sonny Rollins , who replaced Land on tenor saxophone , recorded what became their last official album early in 1956 . Clifford Brown and Max Roach at Basin Street contained playing at even faster tempos than on their earlier album releases . Several of the tunes were composed by Powell ; on one , " Time " , Powell played celeste in addition to his usual piano . Another was " Gertrude 's Bounce " , which Powell said was named following his admiration for the way in which artist Gertrude Abercrombie walked . The third of his originals , " Powell 's Prances " , was " a modal composition , with Brown and Rollins improvising on the scale rather than on the usual chord changes " , a form popularized three years later by Miles Davis .

The band continued touring in 1956 , including to Toronto . In late February or early March , Powell and Rollins , traveling together near Philadelphia , were involved in a crash that destroyed Powell 's car , but they were not seriously injured . The quintet recorded under the leadership of Rollins in March for Prestige ; this was released as Sonny Rollins Plus 4 . They also had live national CBS Radio broadcasts from the Basin Street club in April and May . Two years of exposure with the Brown ? Roach ensemble meant that Powell was beginning to achieve some recognition in his own right .

On June 26 , 1956 , Powell and his wife , Nancy , together with Brown , were traveling overnight by car from Philadelphia to Chicago . On the Pennsylvania Turnpike outside Bedford , in heavy rain , Nancy lost control of the vehicle , which crashed off the road and rolled down an embankment . All three were killed instantly . Nancy was 19 ; Brown , 25 ; and Powell , 24 .

= = Playing style = =

Although he also played swing and R & B , Powell was known as a bebop player . This included using right @-@ hand single @-@ note lines . In his playing with Brown and Roach , he was fond of inserting musical quotes , including from nursery rhymes and opera .

Powell usually played as part of a rhythm section in ensembles , so there are few recorded examples of him in smaller bands . In one 1954 session he recorded a trio version of " I 'll String Along with You " , on which he used " heavily chorded patterns with intriguing flourishes . " Another exception to Powell being in a supporting role is his extended introductory section to a 1954 Hodges recording of " Autumn in New York " . On this track , in the words of critic Marc Myers six decades later , Powell 's playing was " regal , bouncy and appropriately lush , with shades of Erroll Garner , Al Haig and Richie 's brother , Bud . [ ... ] In ' Autumn in New York ' , we clearly hear a dramatic , playful pianist who was fast becoming an extraordinary talent . "

= = Influence = =

Pianist McCoy Tyner , who grew up close to the Powell brothers in Philadelphia , was influenced by their relatively heavy keyboard touch and their liking of percussive piano sounds . Tyner also got some of his inspiration for chord voicings from hearing Richie 's use of left @-@ hand fourths . Tyner 's voicings became the norm for young jazz pianists .

= = Discography = =

Powell did not make any recordings as a leader .  
Bootlegs and other unofficial recordings are not included .

= = = Albums as sideman = = =