In the decades since Charlie Parker's death in 1955, his name has become so synonymous with compilations and newly uncovered live dates--there have been literally hundreds of releases around the world--that coming across a studio album that was actually released during his lifetime feels almost strange. 1952's NOW'S THE TIME is an all-time jazz classic, possibly the finest studio set of Parker's career. Backed with the sympathetic all-star trio of Hank Jones on piano, Teddy Kotick on bass, and the legendary Max Roach on drums, Parker's alto playing is in full bop mode, largely avoiding the blues side of his musical personality in favor of tricky,
complex solo passages. Yet Parker plays with such a fine combination of grace and passion that NOW'S THE TIME lacks the abstract, cerebral quality that marks many bop dates. This Verve reissue contains five alternate takes, including a fiery, previously unreleased, run-through of "Chi Chi." ---Rovi