

National Endowment for the Arts



America's Highest Honor in Jazz



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National Endowment for the Arts



America's Highest Honor in Jazz

2009 Fellows

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Cover Photo: NEA Jazz Masters (from left) Candido Camero, Joe Wilder, and Paquito D'Rivera perform during the finale of the 2008 NEA Jazz Masters awards ceremony and concert in Toronto, Canada. Photo by Tom Pich

The following reference texts were used in researching biographical information of the Jazz Masters:

All Music Guide to Jazz by Vladimir Bogdanov, Chris Woodstra, and Stephen Thomas Erlewine, Backbeat Books

American Musicians II by Whitney Balliett, Oxford University Press

Biographical Encyclopedia of Jazz by Leonard Feather and Ira Gitler, Oxford University Press

Four Jazz Lives by A.B. Spellman, University of Michigan Press

Jazz: The Rough Guide by Ian Carr, Digby Fairweather, and Brian Priestley, Rough Guides

Penguin Guide to Jazz on CD, 4th Edition by Richard Cook and Brian Morton, Penguin

Talking Jazz: An Oral History by Ben Sidran, Da Capo Press



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A Message from the Chairman



Photo by Vance Jacobs

In 2003 the NEA made the historic decision to increase significantly its support for the great America art form of jazz. An ambitious new national initiative was created that eventually included touring, festivals, television, radio, recordings, and school programs. At the heart of this national initiative was the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships, the nation's highest honor in jazz. First created in 1982 as a lifetime achievement award, the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships were well respected in the jazz world but little known outside it. The plan was to heighten the recognition of this singular award to make it worthy of the great art and artists it honored.

Six years later, I am proud to report that the program has been enormously successful. It has brought jazz to millions of Americans in all 50 states—best of all, introducing the art to seven million students through the NEA Jazz in the Schools curriculum which the NEA developed in partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center. Meanwhile hundreds of *Jazz Moments* radio features are broadcast daily on SIRIUS XM Radio, reaching millions of adult listeners many times a day.

But most important, we honor the artists themselves through the NEA Jazz Masters award. By doubling the number of annual recipients, we also celebrate the breadth of talent in this distinctively American tradition.

The NEA Jazz Masters constitute an artistic legion of honor. These living legends embody the best of our nation's creative culture. As NEA chairman, it is hard for me to describe the extent of my pleasure and pride to see these master musicians recognized officially by their nation in their own lifetime.

The NEA's investment in jazz has influenced other institutions. The United States Department of State, for example, recently bestowed its first individual Benjamin Franklin Award for Public Diplomacy to Dave Brubeck in honor of his legendary work in the Jazz Ambassadors program. This award reminds us that jazz musicians are more than just performers. They are cultural ambassadors, introducing America's music to new audiences around the world.

We welcome the 2009 NEA Jazz Masters to their rightful place among the immortals of America's hottest—and coolest—musical tradition.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Dana Gioia". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Dana Gioia
Chairman
National Endowment for the Arts



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NEA Jazz Master Gerald Wilson leads his orchestra at the 2005 NEA Jazz Masters awards concert in Long Beach, California.

Photo by Vance Jacobs

Photo by Michael Wildeman



NEA Jazz Master Slide Hampton takes a solo at the 2007 NEA Jazz Masters awards concert in New York City.



A Brief History of the Program

A melding of African and European music and cultures, jazz was born in America, a new musical form that used rhythm, improvisation, and instruments in unique and exciting ways. Jazz came to prominence in the early 20th century on the dance floors of major cultural centers such as Kansas City and New York. With the advent of sound recording techniques, the increased availability of affordable gramophones, and the rise of radio as popular entertainment, jazz quickly conquered the country. By the 1930s and 1940s, jazz had become America's dance music, selling albums and performance tickets at dizzying rates and sweeping millions of fans in foreign countries off their feet.

By the 1950s, however, with the advent of rock and roll and the tilt in jazz toward bebop rather than the more popular swing, jazz began a decline in its popularity. It was still seen as an important and exciting art form, but by an increasingly smaller audience. Jazz was still being exported overseas, though, especially by Voice of America radio broadcasts and U.S. Department of State goodwill tours that featured such musicians as Dizzy Gillespie, Louis Armstrong, and Dave Brubeck.

By the 1960s, when the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) was created by Congress, jazz album sales were down and jazz performances were becoming more difficult to find. Large dance orchestras disbanded for lack of work, and musicians found themselves in stiff competition for fewer and fewer gigs. The music, starting with bebop and into hard bop and free jazz, became more cerebral and less dance-oriented, focusing on freeing up improvisation and rhythm. It was moving to a new artistic level, and if this high quality were to be maintained, it would need some assistance.

NEA assistance to the jazz field began in 1969, with its first grant in jazz awarded to pianist/composer George Russell (who would later go on to receive an NEA Jazz Master award in 1990), allowing him to work on his groundbreaking book, *Lydian Chromatic Concept of Tonal Organization*, the first major academic work in jazz. In a decade, jazz funding went from \$20,000 in 1970 to \$1.5 million in 1980 to more than \$2.8 million in 2005, supporting a wide range of activities, including jazz festivals and concert seasons, special projects such as Dr. Billy Taylor's Jazzmobile in New York and the Thelonious Monk Institute of Jazz's Jazz Sports

program, educational jazz programming on National Public Radio, artists-in-schools programs, and research.

While the NEA recognized and acted on the need for public funding for jazz, the pioneers of the field were rapidly aging, and often dying without the appropriate recognition of their contribution to this great American art form. Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, two of the giants of jazz in terms of both musicianship and composition, both died in the early 1970s without the importance of their contributions being fully acknowledged and appreciated.

In an effort to nationally recognize outstanding jazz musicians for their lifelong achievements and mastery of jazz, the Arts Endowment in 1982 created the American Jazz Masters Fellowships—now the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships—given to musicians who have reached an exceptionally high standard of achievement in this very specialized art form.

In addition to the recognition, the NEA included a monetary award of \$20,000 for each fellowship. The rigors of making a living in the jazz field are well documented. Jazz is an art form to which the free market has not been kind. Despite their unparalleled contributions to American art, many jazz greats worked for years just barely scraping by. The monetary award often has provided a much needed infusion of income.

That such recognition was long overdue is exemplified by Thelonious Sphere Monk, one of the great American composers and musicians. Monk was nominated for an NEA Jazz Master Fellowship in the first year of the program, but unfortunately passed away before the announcement was made (the fellowship is not awarded posthumously). The three who were chosen certainly lived up to the criteria of artistic excellence and significance to the art form: Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie, and Sun Ra. The panel in that first year included stellar jazz musicians themselves, including some future NEA Jazz Masters: trumpeter Donald Byrd and saxophonists Frank Foster, Chico Freeman, Jackie McLean, and Archie Shepp. In addition, legendary Riverside record company co-owner and producer Orrin Keepnews was on the panel.

From that auspicious beginning, the program has continued to grow and provide increased awareness of America's rich jazz heritage. In 2004, the number of fellowships awarded increased, and a new award was created for those individuals who helped to advance the appreciation of jazz. In 2005, the advocacy award was designated the A. B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy in honor of A. B. Spellman, a jazz writer, accomplished

poet, innovative arts administrator, and former NEA Deputy Chairman, who has dedicated much of his life to bringing the joy and artistry of jazz to all Americans. Additionally, the amount of the fellowship was increased to \$25,000.

In 2005, Chairman Dana Gioia greatly expanded the NEA Jazz Masters initiative to include several new programs in addition to the fellowships. A two-CD anthology of NEA Jazz Masters' music was produced by Verve Music Group. NEA Jazz Masters on Tour, sponsored by Verizon, brought jazz musicians to all 50 states throughout 2005-07 for performances, community events, and educational programs. This led to a new program, NEA Jazz Masters Live, which brings these jazz legends to selected events for performances, master classes, and lectures. A new arts education component was created in partnership with Jazz at Lincoln Center and with support from the Verizon Foundation, NEA Jazz in the Schools. This educational resource for high school teachers of social studies, U.S. history, and music includes a five-unit, Web-based curriculum and DVD toolkit that explores jazz as an indigenous American art form and as a means to understand U.S. history (more information can be found at www.neajazzintheschools.org). New broadcasting programming was created, such as 14 one-hour shows on NEA Jazz Masters featured on the public radio series *Jazz Profiles*, hosted by NEA Jazz Master Nancy Wilson, and *Jazz Moments*, radio shorts for broadcast on SIRIUS XM Radio.

Each passing year brings increased international recognition of the NEA Jazz Masters awards as the nation's highest honor for outstanding musicianship in the field of jazz. The recipients of the NEA Jazz Masters award cover all aspects of the music: from boogie-woogie (Cleo Brown) to swing (Count Basie, Andy Kirk, Jay McShann); from bebop (Dizzy Gillespie, Kenny Clarke) to Dixieland (Danny Barker); from free jazz (Ornette Coleman, Cecil Taylor) to cool jazz (Miles Davis, Gil Evans, Ahmad Jamal); and everywhere in between. What ties all these styles together is a foundation in the blues, a reliance on group interplay, and unpredictable improvisation. Throughout the years, and in all the different styles, these musicians have demonstrated the talent, creativity, and dedication that make them NEA Jazz Masters.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary in 2007, the award continues to offer a solid platform for raising worldwide awareness of America's rich jazz heritage by not only honoring those who have dedicated their lives to the music, but also by leading the way in efforts encouraging the preservation and nourishing of jazz as an important musical form for generations to come.



Photo by Tom Pich

2008 NEA Jazz Masters Gunther Schuller, Quincy Jones, and Candido Camero at the NEA Jazz Masters panel discussion in Toronto, Canada.



Program Overview

The National Endowment for the Arts recognizes the importance of jazz as one of the great American art forms of the 20th century. As part of its efforts to honor those distinguished artists whose excellence, impact, and significant contribution in jazz have helped keep this important tradition and art form alive, the Arts Endowment annually awards NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships, the highest honor that our nation bestows upon jazz musicians. Each fellowship award is \$25,000.

The NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship is a lifetime achievement award. The criteria for the fellowships are musical excellence and significance of the nominees' contributions to the art of jazz. The Arts Endowment honors a wide range of styles with awards currently given in the categories of rhythm instrumentalist, solo instrumentalist, vocalist, keyboardist, arranger/composer, and bandleader. There is also a special award given to a non-musician, the A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Master Award for Jazz Advocacy, which is awarded to an individual who has made major contributions to the

appreciation, knowledge, and advancement of jazz.

Fellowships are awarded to living artists on the basis of nominations from the general public and the jazz community. The recipients must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. An individual may submit only one nomination each year, and nominations are made by submitting a one-page letter detailing the reasons that the nominated artist should receive an NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship. Nominations submitted to the Arts Endowment by the deadline are reviewed by an advisory panel of jazz experts and at least one knowledgeable layperson. Panel recommendations are forwarded to the National Council on the Arts, which then makes recommendations to the Chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts. Nominations remain active for five years, being reviewed annually during this period.

Information on submitting a nomination and on the NEA Jazz Masters award is available on the NEA Web site: www.arts.gov.

Photo by Lee Tanner



2009 NEA Jazz Master
Toots Thielemans



2009 Fellows

SOLO INSTRUMENTALIST
Goerge Benson

RHYTHM INSTRUMENTALIST
Jimmy Cobb

SOLO INSTRUMENTALIST
Lee Konitz

SOLO INSTRUMENTALIST
Toots Thielemans

SOLO INSTRUMENTALIST
Snooky Young

**A.B. SPELLMAN NEA JAZZ
MASTERS AWARD FOR
JAZZ ADVOCACY**
Rudy Van Gelder

NOTES:

Names in **bold** in biographies denote NEA Jazz Masters awardees.

All recordings listed in Selected Discography are under the artist's name unless otherwise noted.

Years listed under recordings in Selected Discography denote the years the recordings were made.



Photo by Lee Tanner

George
Benson

GUITARIST VOCALIST

Born March 22, 1943 in Pittsburgh, PA

Appreciated as both a musician and performer, George Benson plays the dual role of expert improviser and vibrant entertainer. Rounding out his singular approach with a strong sense of swing, he is considered one of the greatest guitarists in jazz.

Benson began his career as a guitarist working the corner pubs of his native Pittsburgh. Legendary jazz guitarist Wes Montgomery came across Benson early on, complimenting him and urging him to continue his already impressive work. In the early 1960s, Benson apprenticed with organist Brother Jack McDuff; he found the organist's gritty swing a fertile ground for the sly, confident, and adventurous guitar lines that earned him an early reputation as a master.

By the time legendary talent scout John Hammond signed Benson to Columbia, the guitarist's name was becoming known throughout the industry. In the late 1960s he sat in on Miles Davis' *Miles in the Sky* sessions, and also put a personal spin on the tunes from the Beatles' *Abbey Road*. Joining the CTI

label in 1970, Benson was united with many of jazz's finest instrumentalists—including Stanley Turrentine, **Ron Carter**, and **Freddie Hubbard**—and released classic albums, such as *Beyond the Blue Horizon*.

Despite his success, Benson's desire to combine his singing and guitar playing was blocked until he worked with music producer Tommy LiPuma. The result was *Breezin'*, the first jazz record to attain platinum sales. The 1976 blockbuster, his first in a long association with Warner Brothers Records, brought Benson to the attention of the general public with such hits as his soulful rendition of Leon Russell's "This Masquerade," which featured the guitarist scatting along with his solo break. He followed up with many pop hits, including a sultry version of "On Broadway" and the irresistible "Give Me the Night" (produced by **Quincy Jones**).

In the mid-1990s Benson followed LiPuma to the GRP label where they released three well-received albums highlighting Benson's vocal and guitar prowess. In 2006, Benson and vocalist/songwriter Al Jarreau released *Givin' It Up* with Benson's current label, Concord Music Group.

Benson has won ten Grammy Awards, thrilling many crowds around the world with his performances, including recent appearances at Malaysia's 50th Merdeka celebration and the Mawazine Festival in Morocco.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

The New Boss Guitar of George Benson,
Prestige/OJC, 1964

The Other Side of Abbey Road, A&M, 1969

Weekend in L.A., Warner Brothers, 1977

Tenderly, Warner Brothers, 1989

Absolute Benson, GRP, 1999

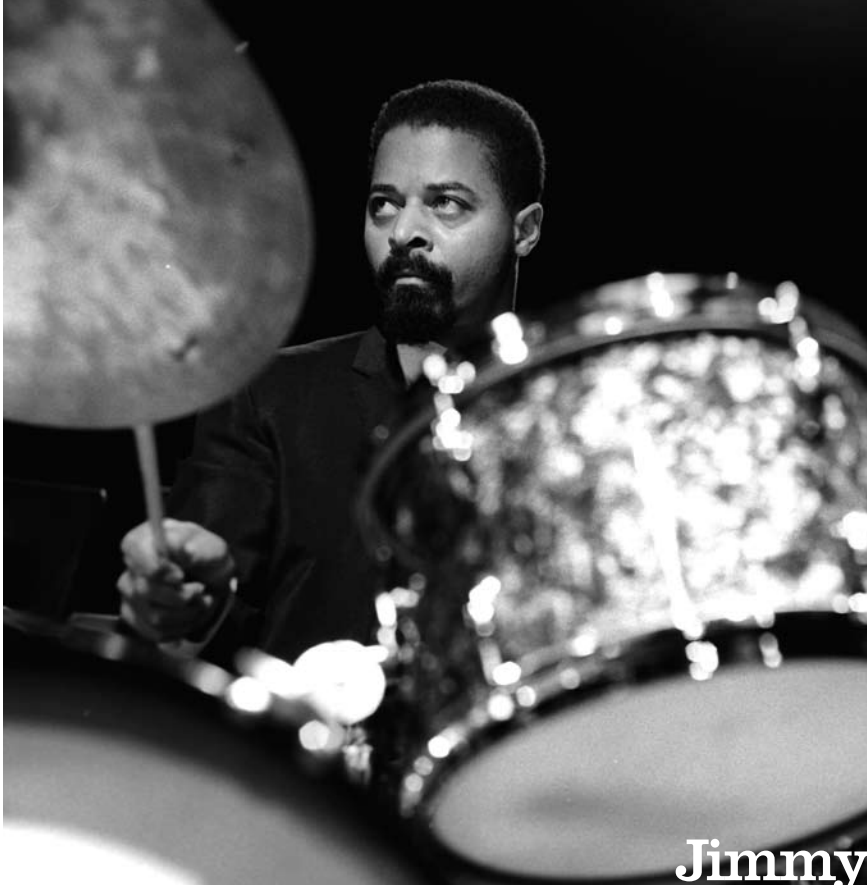


Photo by Lee Tanner

Jimmy

Cobb

DRUMMER EDUCATOR

Born January 20, 1929 in Washington, DC

An accomplished accompanist and soloist, Jimmy Cobb is best known for being a key part of **Miles Davis'** first great quintet in the late 1950s.

Largely self-taught, Cobb spent his younger days in his hometown Washington, DC, playing engagements with Charlie Rouse, **Frank Wess**, and Billie Holiday, among others. He left DC in 1950, joining Earl Bostic, with whom he cut his first recordings, before finding work with Dinah Washington, Pearl Bailey, **Clark Terry**, **Dizzy Gillespie**, and Cannonball Adderley.

In 1957, Cobb began playing with Miles Davis, eventually becoming part of a formidable rhythm section that included Paul Chambers on bass and Wynton Kelly on piano. Between 1957 and 1963, Cobb played (along with saxophonists John Coltrane and Cannonball Adderley) on some of Davis' most noted records: *Kind of Blue*, *Sketches of Spain*, *Someday My Prince Will Come*, *Live at Carnegie Hall*, *Live at the Blackhawk*, and *Porgy and Bess*, among others. In 1963, Cobb left the Davis band to continue working as a trio with Chambers and Kelly. The trio disbanded in the late 1960s, and Cobb worked with singer **Sarah Vaughan** for nine years. He then freelanced for the next 20 years with artists such as Sonny Stitt, Nat Adderley, Ricky

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Miles Davis, *Kind of Blue*,
Columbia, 1959

Wes Montgomery, *Smokin' at
the Half Note*, Verve, 1965

Joe Henderson, *Four!*, Verve, 1968

Marsalis Music Honor Series,
Marsalis Music/Rounder, 2005

Cobb's Corner, Chesky, 2006

Ford, **Hank Jones**, **Ron Carter**, George Coleman, David "Fathead" Newman, and **Nancy Wilson**.

Cobb released his first CD (and music video) for the A&E network in 1986 that featured **Freddie Hubbard**, Gregory Hines, and Bill Cosby. In 2006, Cobb was produced by Branford Marsalis for the *Marsalis Music Honor Series*, recorded around Cobb's 75th birthday. In the last few years, he has released several albums as a leader—*New York Time*, *Cobb's Corner*, and *West of 5th*—playing with stalwart musicians such as pianists Cedar Walton and Hank Jones and

relative newcomers such as bassist Christian McBride and trumpeter Roy Hargrove.

Jimmy Cobb continues to play music in New York City, where he lives with his wife and two children. He now leads the Jimmy Cobb "So What" Band, celebrating 50 years of *Kind of Blue* and the music of Miles Davis, and travels the international circuit as he approaches his 80th birthday. Cobb currently teaches master classes at Stanford University's Jazz Workshop and has taught at The New School for Jazz and Contemporary Music, the University of Greensboro in North Carolina, the International Center for the Arts at San Francisco State University in California, and international educational institutions.



Photo by Michael Wilderman

Lee

Konitz

SAXOPHONIST COMPOSER EDUCATOR

Born October 13, 1927 in Chicago, IL

Lee Konitz is one of the more distinctive alto saxophonists in jazz since Charlie Parker (and one of the few that did not outright copy Parker's style), pairing his individual style and voice with a strong sense of innovation.

Born to an Austrian father and a Russian mother in Chicago, Konitz as a youth studied clarinet, then alto saxophone with various teachers.

In the early 1940s, Konitz met noted pianist Lennie Tristano, under whose influence and tutelage Konitz's mature style in jazz began to emerge. His recordings with Tristano include the 1949 releases "Intuition" and "Digression"—precursors to the "free jazz" movement of the 1960s.

In 1947, Konitz played with the Claude Thornhill Orchestra, meeting **Gil Evans**, who was then arranging for Thornhill. Evans brought Konitz along to participate in **Miles Davis'** nonet performances and recordings (*Birth of the Cool*, 1948-50), considered the beginning point for what came to be called "cool jazz." Konitz went on to play with Gerry Mulligan and Chet Baker's influential band and worked from 1952-53 in Stan Kenton's big band. From then on, he mainly led his own small groups, occasionally touring abroad.

In the early 1960s, as opportunities for performances declined, Konitz withdrew from the music business and took on day work. He continued to develop his unique sound, however, occasionally working with such musicians as Paul Bley, Martial Solal, Charlie Haden, and Brad Mehldau. He also worked as a private teacher, conducting lessons by tape with students worldwide.

Konitz joined with Warne Marsh, his fellow sideman from early Tristano sessions, to tour Europe and record in 1975-76; he also founded his own nonet and performed regularly during the 1980s. In 1992, Konitz won the prestigious Danish JAZZPAR Prize.

With his insatiable musical curiosity, Konitz records in a variety of different settings. His later albums include French impressionist music with a string quartet (*Lee Konitz & The Axis String Quartet Play French Impressionist Music from the 20th Century*), work with the Orquestra Jazz de Matosinhos (*Portology*), and an album with the big band Mark Masters

Ensemble (*One Day with Lee*). Konitz divides his time between residences in the United States and Germany and continues to travel and perform around the globe.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- Subconscious-Lee*, Prestige/OJC, 1949-50
- The Lee Konitz Duets*, Milestone/OJC, 1967
- The New York Album*, Soul Note, 1987
- New Nonet*, Omnitone, 2006
- Lee Konitz-Ohad Talmor Big Band, *Portology*, Omnitone, 2007

Photo by Lee Tanner



Toots

Thielemans

HARMONICA PLAYER GUITARIST

Born April 29, 1922 in Brussels, Belgium

Harmonica player, guitarist, and whistler Jean Baptiste “Toots” Thielemans has been credited by jazz aficionados as being among the greatest jazz harmonica players of the 20th century, improvising on an instrument more known in folk and blues music. Thielemans is known to audiences young and old, his harmonica heard on the Sesame Street theme and his whistling heard in an “Old Spice” commercial.

Thielemans learned to play the accordion at the age of three, took up chromatic harmonica at 17, and taught himself to play the guitar. Influenced by Django Reinhardt and Charlie Parker, he became interested in jazz. In 1950, Thielemans toured Europe as a guitarist with the Benny Goodman Sextet. He immigrated to the United States in 1952, getting a chance to play with Charlie Parker’s All-Stars. His performance so impressed George Shearing that he invited Thielemans into his band, where he stayed until 1959.

In 1961, Thielemans composed and recorded “Bluesette” using unison whistling and guitar, and ever since has been greatly in demand—particularly for his harmonica and his whistling—on pop records and as a jazz soloist. Thielemans began freelancing, playing and recording with **Ella Fitzgerald**, **Quincy Jones**, Bill Evans, Paul Simon, Billy Joel, Astrud Gilberto, and Elis Regina, among others. He also made prominent appearances on movie soundtracks, notably on *The Pawnbroker*, *Midnight Cowboy*, and *The Sugarland Express*.

Thielemans has appeared as a leader of swing and bop quartets on recordings and at international festivals. At the Montreux International Jazz Festival, he recorded as a sideman with Oscar Peterson in 1975, then with **Dizzy Gillespie** in 1980. Thielemans’ two-volume *Brasil Project* was popular in the 1990s and featured top Brazilian musicians.

A perennial winner of *Down Beat* readers and critics polls in the category “miscellaneous instruments,” Thielemans was called “one of the greatest musicians of our time” by Quincy Jones in 1995. Thielemans has received many awards and titles, including the French “Chevalier des arts et des lettres” honors and honorary doctorates from both universities in the city of Brussels. In 2001, Belgium’s King Albert II bestowed on him the title “Baron,” making him Baron Jean “Toots” Thielemans.

SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Man Bites Harmonica,
Riverside/OJC, 1957-58

Do Not Leave Me, Vintage Jazz, 1986

Only Trust Your Heart, Concord Jazz, 1988

East Coast West Coast, Private Music, 1994

Toots and Kenny Werner, Verve, 2001



Photo by Ray Avery/CTSIIMAGES

Snooky Young

TRUMPETER

Born February 3, 1919 in Dayton, OH

Known for his prowess with the plunger mute, Eugene Edward “Snooky” Young’s trumpet playing is most often heard in the context of the big band. For 30 years, he was heard every week night as a member of the *Tonight Show* orchestra.

Young began playing the trumpet at five and by his early teens was working in various regional bands. From 1939-1942 he made a name for himself as lead trumpeter and soloist in the Jimmie Lunceford band. From 1942 to 1947 Young worked with Les Hite, **Benny Carter**, and **Gerald Wilson**, as well as with the **Count Basie** band, where he replaced trumpet player Ed Lewis. Young led his own band in his hometown of Dayton from 1947 to 1957 and continued to perform periodically with both **Lionel Hampton** and Basie from the early 1960s.

Upon leaving Basie in 1962, Young began his longest engagement with a band as a trumpeter for the Doc Severinson band on the *Tonight Show*. In 1972, he moved

to Los Angeles when the show relocated to the West Coast, and remained until Johnny Carson left in 1992.

Young continues to work on other projects as well. He was a founding member of the Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra in 1966, and throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, he played with a variety of big bands, including on recordings by such jazz greats as **Louis Bellson**, **Gil Evans**, **Quincy Jones**, Charles Mingus, and **Jimmy Smith**. Young has worked outside of jazz as well, playing with the rock group the Band on New Year’s Eve in 1971 and on the classic 1976 blues recording *Bobby Bland and B.B. King Together Again...Live*.

Young has worked since with several Los Angeles big bands, and has issued three albums under his own name, including *Horn of Plenty*, which demonstrated his solo gifts as a strong lead trumpeter. Young has appeared as a soloist at jazz festivals in Montreux, Switzerland; The Hague, Holland; Antibes, France; and Concord, California. His work has appeared on numerous soundtracks as well, including *The Color Purple*. He continues to perform and tour with the Clayton-Hamilton Jazz Orchestra and the Gerald Wilson Orchestra.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

- Jimmie Lunceford, *1939-1940*, Classics, 1939-40
- Count Basie, *Kansas City Suite*, Roulette, 1960
- Thad Jones-Mel Lewis Orchestra, *Live at the Village Vanguard*, Solid State, 1967
- Horn of Plenty*, Concord Jazz, 1979
- Gerald Wilson, *State Street Suite*, MAMA Foundation, 1994

Photo by Francis Wolff © Mosaic Images



Rudy

Van Gelder

RECORDING ENGINEER

Born November 2, 1924 in Jersey City, NJ

Considered by many the greatest recording engineer in jazz, Rudy Van Gelder has recorded practically every major jazz musician of the 1950s and 1960s on thousands of albums.

Van Gelder became involved with amateur radio as a teenager, which led to his interest in microphones and electronics. Since recording consoles were not then manufactured commercially, he created his own equipment and set up a studio in his parents' living room in Hackensack, New Jersey. An optometrist by day, Van Gelder began recording local jazz musicians in his free time.

In 1953, saxophonist Gil Mellé introduced Van Gelder to Blue Note founder Alfred Lion, beginning a 14-year association with the label. He recorded practically every session that Blue Note produced during that time period, from obscure sessions like *Jutta Hipp with Zoot Sims* in 1956 to the popular *Maiden Voyage* by Herbie Hancock in 1965. Van Gelder's notable recordings helped establish Blue

Note's reputation as an elite jazz label. They also enticed other labels, such as Prestige, Savoy, and Impulse!, to seek out his recording skills.

In 1959, needing a larger space for Blue Note and his other clients, Van Gelder finally quit his day job and moved his studio to a new facility he built in Englewood Cliffs, New Jersey, where he has remained ever since. He became the house engineer for Creed Taylor's CTI label in the early 1970s.

The signature Van Gelder sound features a clearly defined separation among the instruments, ensuring that every sonic detail is clear and audible. This was accomplished by the strategic placement of instruments in the studio, though his exact technique has always been a closely guarded secret. Van Gelder's main goal was to create the best mood for the musicians to perform in, and from the results, he seems to have greatly succeeded. Among the timeless recordings made under his aegis are John Coltrane's *Blue Train* (Blue Note) Miles Davis' *Workin'* (Prestige), Andrew Hill's *Point of Departure* (Blue Note), Freddie Hubbard's *Red Clay* (CTI), and Wayne Shorter's *Speak No Evil* (Blue Note).

Van Gelder still freelances for a variety of labels and since 1999 has been instrumental in the modern remastering of his original recordings—most notably the Blue Note RVG series—with the conversion from analog to digital formats.

SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

Sonny Rollins, *Volume 2*, Blue Note, 1957

Cannonball Adderley, *Somethin' Else*, Blue Note, 1958

Eric Dolphy, *Outward Bound*, Prestige/OJC, 1960

John Coltrane, *A Love Supreme*, Impulse!, 1964

Joe Henderson, *Lush Life: The Music of Billy Strayhorn*, Verve, 1991

NEA Jazz Masters Award Ceremony

Ornette Coleman
Photo by Katja von Schuttenbach

NEA Jazz Masters events include a luncheon for all attending NEA Jazz Masters (and a group photo), portraits of the new class of honorees, and a special concert and awards ceremony. Below are a few candid moments from the last few years.



David Baker,
Freddie Hubbard,
James Moody
Photo by Tom Pich

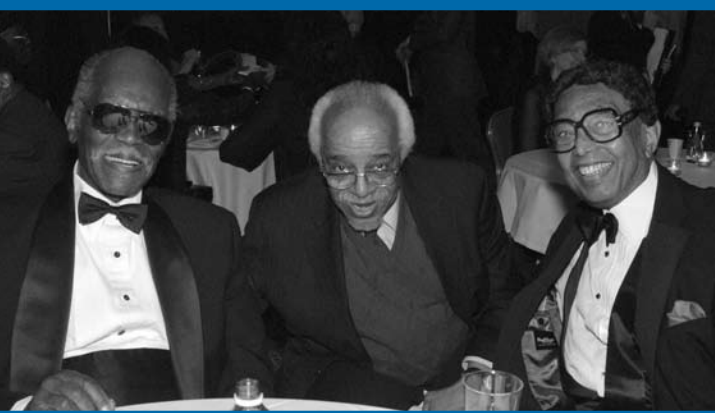


Frank Wess, Gerald Wilson, Jon Hendricks
Photo by Tom Pich

Jimmy Smith, Kenny Burrell, Slide Hampton, Paquito D'Rivera
Photo by Vance Jacobs



Chico Hamilton,
Roy Haynes
Photo by Vance Jacobs



Hank Jones, Barry Harris, Billy Taylor
Photo by Tom Pich



Benny Golson,
Jimmy Heath,
Percy Heath
Photo by Tom Pich

Chick Corea,
Roy Haynes,
Ron Carter
Photo by Tom Pich





1982–2009

1982

ROY ELDRIDGE*
DIZZY GILLESPIE*
SUN RA*

1983

COUNT BASIE*
KENNY CLARKE*
SONNY ROLLINS

1984

ORNETTE COLEMAN
MILES DAVIS*
MAX ROACH*

1985

GIL EVANS*
ELLA FITZGERALD*
JO JONES*

1986

BENNY CARTER*
DEXTER GORDON*
TEDDY WILSON*

1987

CLEO BROWN*
MELBA LISTON*
JAY McSHANN*

1988

ART BLAKEY*
LIONEL HAMPTON*
BILLY TAYLOR

1989

BARRY HARRIS
HANK JONES
SARAH VAUGHAN*

1990

GEORGE RUSSELL
CECIL TAYLOR
GERALD WILSON

1991

DANNY BARKER*
BUCK CLAYTON*
ANDY KIRK*
CLARK TERRY

1992

BETTY CARTER*
DOROTHY DONEGAN*
SWEETS EDISON*

1993

JON HENDRICKS
MILT HINTON*
JOE WILLIAMS*

1994

LOUIE BELLSON
AHMAD JAMAL
CARMEN McRAE*

1995

RAY BROWN*
ROY HAYNES
HORACE SILVER

1996

TOMMY FLANAGAN*
BENNY GOLSON
J.J. JOHNSON*

1997

BILLY HIGGINS*
MILT JACKSON*
ANITA O'DAY*

1998

RON CARTER
JAMES MOODY
WAYNE SHORTER

1999

DAVE BRUBECK
ART FARMER*
JOE HENDERSON*

2000

DAVID BAKER
DONALD BYRD
MARIAN McPARTLAND

2001

JOHN LEWIS*
JACKIE McLEAN*
RANDY WESTON

2002

FRANK FOSTER
PERCY HEATH*
McCOY TYNER

2003

JIMMY HEATH
ELVIN JONES*
ABBIE LINCOLN

2004

JIM HALL
CHICO HAMILTON
HERBIE HANCOCK
LUTHER HENDERSON*
NAT HENTOFF
NANCY WILSON

2005

KENNY BURRELL
PAQUITO D'RIVERA
SLIDE HAMPTON
SHIRLEY HORN*
JIMMY SMITH*
ARTIE SHAW*
GEORGE WEIN

2006

RAY BARRETTO*
TONY BENNETT
BOB BROOKMEYER
CHICK COREA
BUDDY DEFRANCO
FREDDIE HUBBARD
JOHN LEVY

2007

TOSHIKO AKIYOSHI
CURTIS FULLER
RAMSEY LEWIS
DAN MORGENSTERN
JIMMY SCOTT
FRANK WESS
PHIL WOODS

2008

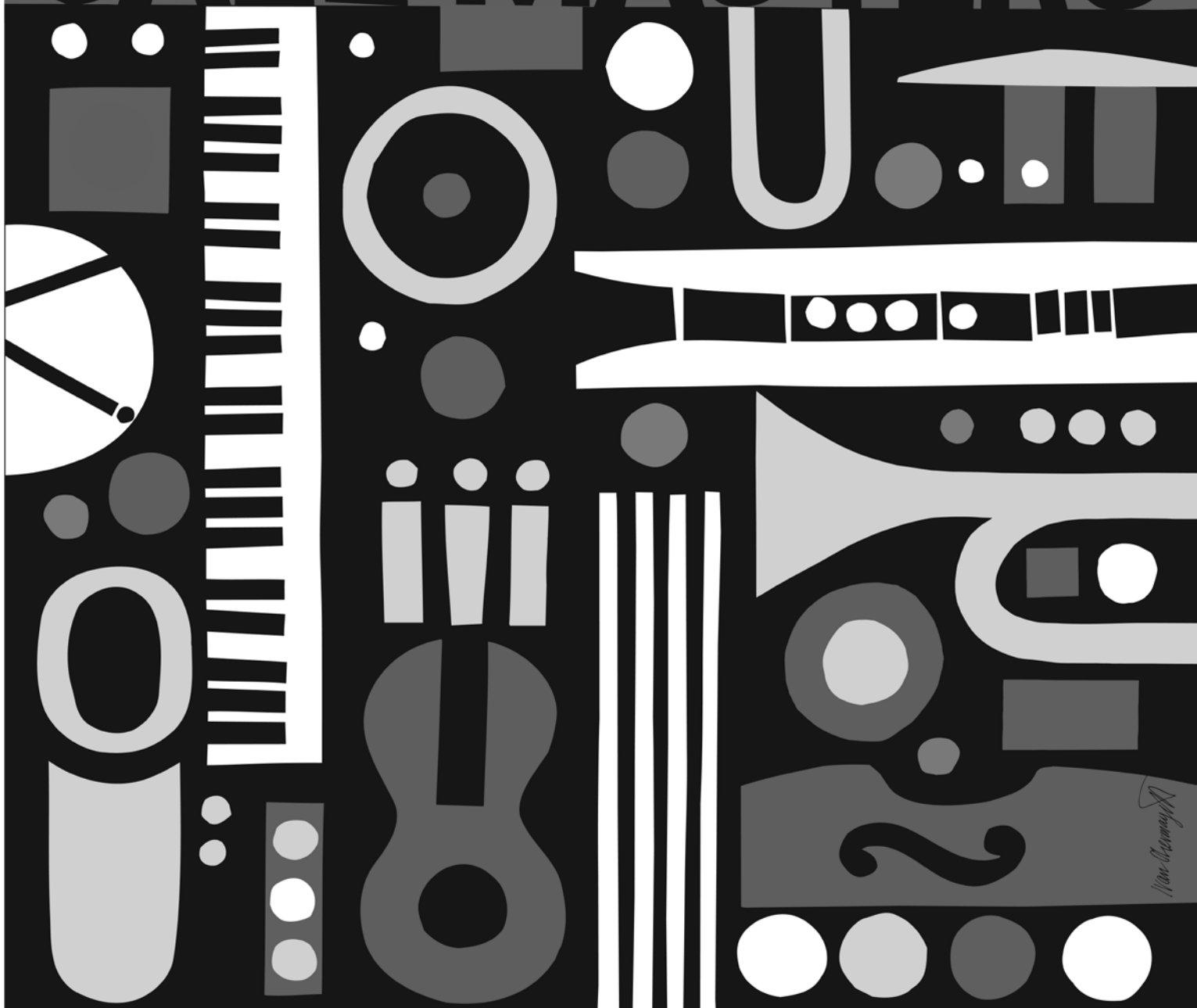
CANDIDO CAMERO
ANDREW HILL*
QUINCY JONES
TOM McINTOSH
GUNTHER SCHULLER
JOE WILDER

2009

GEORGE BENSON
JIMMY COBB
LEE KONITZ
TOOTS THIELEMANS
RUDY VAN GELDER
SNOOKY YOUNG

* DECEASED

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Photo by Tom Pich

NEA Jazz Master Billy Taylor and his trio perform during the 2004 NEA Jazz Masters awards ceremony and concert in New York City.

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