

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT  
FOR THE ARTS

# JAZZ MASTERS



40<sup>TH</sup> ANNIVERSARY



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This publication is published by:

**National Endowment for the Arts**

Office of Public Affairs

Don Ball, Editor

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Thanks to Elizabeth Auclair, Ann Meier Baker, Paulette Beete, and Aunye Boone for editorial assistance.

The 2023 NEA Jazz Masters tribute concert is produced in collaboration with the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts in Washington, DC. For more information, go to **kennedy-center.org**.

March 2023

National Endowment for the Arts

400 7th Street, SW

Washington, DC 20506-0001

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Additional copies of this publication can be obtained for free by contacting the NEA website: **arts.gov**.

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# A Message from the Chair

As I have traveled around the country this past year, one of the concepts I have been lifting up as I share my vision for the National Endowment for the Arts is the idea of “artful lives”—which encompasses both non-professional but deeply meaningful aesthetic expressions and practices, and the production, presentation, and experience of professional art.

NEA Jazz Masters embody the idea of artful lives through their own arts practice and the gifts of music that they make available to the world in a range of places, including concert halls, schools, communities, and homes. They have forged new ways of



approaching this ever-changing music as professional artists; new improvisations, new conversations. And they find ways to share that vision with their audiences, and teach newer practitioners the depth of their knowledge.

Jazz is an art form born and bred on American soil, with origins in the experiences of enslaved people and their descendants in times of oppression. And yet it is music that strives for beauty, connection, and transcendence. It is music of the human experience, of resilience and of triumph.

Three of the 2023 class of NEA Jazz Masters emerged from the fertile cultural scene of Detroit, Michigan. Regina Carter, a student at the legendary Cass Technical High School, doesn't confine her violin expertise to jazz but is a virtuoso in other genres of music as well. Kenny Garrett has journeyed to explore his ancestors musically, from his hometown to Africa and beyond. Louis Hayes worked with many of the jazz greats of Detroit that came before him—Yusef Lateef, Kenny Burrell, Curtis Fuller—before embarking on his own path.

This year's class also includes Sue Mingus, who sadly passed away in September 2022. She truly lived up to the idea of a jazz advocate, preserving the legacy of her husband Charles Mingus—one of the foremost American composers of the 20th century, whose music often commented on issues of racism and inequality—through her work as an archivist, director of bands performing his music, and founder of a nonprofit that has focused on publishing and educational activities.

As we celebrate the new class of NEA Jazz Masters—and the 40th anniversary of the program—it is worth remembering that these artists have had not just an impact on American music. Their reach and impact can be seen in American culture and history, from literature to fashion to efforts focused on justice and collective uplift.

We thank our partner, the John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts, for bringing this year's tribute concert to you live in Washington, DC and streaming at [arts.gov](https://www.arts.gov).

Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD  
Chair, National Endowment for the Arts

◀ NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD, at the 2022 NEA Jazz Masters Tribute Concert at SFJAZZ in San Francisco, California. Photo by Scott Chernis

# A Brief History of the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships

In an effort to recognize outstanding jazz musicians nationally for their lifelong achievements and mastery of jazz, in 1982 the National Endowment for the Arts created the American Jazz Masters Fellowships (renamed the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships in 2004). These awards are given to musicians who have reached an exceptionally high standard of achievement in this very specialized art form. In addition to the recognition, the Arts Endowment included a monetary award 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.

The three individuals who were chosen as the inaugural class certainly lived up to the criteria of artistic excellence and significance to the art form: Roy Eldridge, Dizzy Gillespie, and Sun Ra. The advisory panel in that first year included stellar jazz musicians themselves, including some future NEA Jazz Masters: trumpeter Donald Byrd and saxophonists Frank Foster, Jackie McLean, and Archie Shepp. In addition, legendary Riverside record company co-owner and producer Orrin Keepnews (also to receive the NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy) 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, a new award was created for those individuals who helped to advance the appreciation of jazz. In 2005, the 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 National Endowment for the Arts deputy chairman who has dedicated much of his life to bringing the joy and artistry of jazz to all Americans.

The Arts Endowment has also supported the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program to document the lives and careers of nearly 100 NEA Jazz Masters. In addition to transcriptions of the hours-long interviews, the website also includes audio clips that provide unique views on everything from their early years and first introduction to music to the working life of a jazz musician in the artists' voices.

The NEA has long supported jazz from its first grant in the field in 1969 (to jazz composer, musician, theoretician, and eventual NEA Jazz Master in 1990, George Russell) to special projects such as Dr. Billy Taylor's Jazzmobile and the Jazz Sports program to today's support of concert seasons, educational programs, and festivals, often featuring NEA Jazz Masters.





Each passing year brings increased international recognition of the National Endowment for the Arts Jazz Masters Fellowships as the nation's highest honor for outstanding musicianship in the field of jazz. The award offers 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 nourishment of jazz as an important musical art form for generations to come.



▲ Nancy Wilson performing at the 2007 NEA Jazz Masters Concert in New York City. Photo by Tom Pich

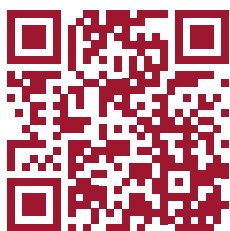
# 40 Years of NEA Jazz Masters

Over the past 40 years, the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship program has celebrated the exceptional musicians behind the powerful American-born art form, jazz.

Awardees have worked in various incarnations of jazz, from early New Orleans-style to swing to bebop to fusion, and on a variety of musical instruments, with some new ones still being celebrated (in 2023, Regina Carter was honored for her work on the violin, the first time that instrument had been noted with the award).

The NEA has talked with many of the honorees about their lives and work. In the following pages, we have excerpts from some of the interviews that the NEA conducted or commissioned or that the Smithsonian conducted through their Oral History Program. Overall, it gives a glimpse of the power of the music these artists create and the artists themselves.

If you want to read more from these and other interviews, you can go to the NEA website or the Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program page.



[NEA Jazz Masters page](#)



[Smithsonian Jazz Oral History Program page](#)



National Endowment for the Arts



▲ In this 1947 photo, a smitten Dizzy Gillespie admires Ella Fitzgerald's singing—Gillespie would be honored as an NEA Jazz Master in the first class of 1982 and Fitzgerald would be the first woman awarded in 1985. Photo by William P. Gottlieb, Ira and Leonore S. Gershwin Fund Collection, Music Division, Library of Congress.



# Sonny Rollins

**1983 NEA Jazz Master**

*First Decade*



National Endowment for the Arts

# 2017 interview by Josephine Reed

## The Power of Improvisation

I know that improvisation is really the pinnacle. All music I respect, great arrangements and everything. But to be able to create music on the spot as it comes to you, that's really the top because you're getting the music from above or from wherever around you. The music is coming through you. See, this is different than knowing what you're going to play and reading music. And then, you know, playing your solo, which is very much close to what the music is, it's a completely different thing.

## Practice

I remember one time, I was playing in Germany, in München. But it was something that I was trying to work out, and after the job was over, and everybody ended the job, people going home, I was trying to work this thing out. You know, "Oh, Sonny," blah-blah, "The guys have packed up, they're leaving." I'm not into that. I'm trying to work out something musically. Has nothing to do with playing at a concert, or anything of that sort. It's the music that we're trying to do. So, I shared that feeling with Coltrane. We both were like that. So yeah, I like to practice all the time anyplace I can, outside, inside, on the bridge.

I wanted the universe to tell me something. In other words, as a soloist, when you're soloing, you're not going to get lost and not know where the bridge of a song is or the first eight. No, no. That is embedded, so that's okay. So, you have to practice your material and know what piece of music you're working on. Once you get that you're not even there. You're standing up there blowing and whatever is in the universe is coming to you. You are the music. You are the music and boy, you can't get much higher than that. I don't care what kind of drugs you take. You're not going to get that high.

◀ Sonny Rollins receiving the National Medal of Arts in 2010 from President Obama. Photo by Ruth David



# Melba Liston

**1987 NEA Jazz Master**

*First Decade*

## 1996 interview by Clora Bryant

### Meeting Randy Weston

I was playing with Dizzy—I guess Birdland. I came out and did my usual thing. [Randy Weston] stayed over and met me when I finished the gig.... We just hit it off right away. I didn't expect to see him or to write for him or anything like that. He said, "Can I bring some lead sheets up to your house and you make them for me?" I said okay. He brought "Little Niles" and all those things up to the house, and he said, "I think you should write these things for an album for me." And I wrote them. I think it's the best thing. It's a nice album.

### Composing and Arranging

I do all [my arrangements] from my soul, and if it sounds like somebody, well it sounds like somebody. It's my inspiration. It's from my soul.

Some people, they ask for this and that and the other, and you have to write for them like a stage act, but mostly I write for bands, and they tell me go ahead, do whatever you want to do. Sometimes I'm writing for bands that have criteria and then sometimes I'm free to write. Randy, I have all the freedom I want. He gives me the song and the changes, and that's all. But we've been together—what?—'56 to '96. How many is that? Forty years. He don't tell me anything.

I'm still writing for Randy. I wrote for him up until I had the stroke [in 1985]. After I had the stroke and got over a little bit, I'm writing for him again. I think he pulled me out of it—helped anyway. I thank him very much for sticking with me, because nobody else did.

◀ Melba Liston (center) with Dizzy Gillespie (with trumpet) in Karachi, Pakistan, on a State Department tour in 1956. Photo courtesy of the Marshall Stearns Collection, Institute of Jazz Studies, Rutgers University



# Gerald Wilson

**1990 NEA Jazz Master**

*First Decade*



## 2014 interview with Josephine Reed

### **Growing up in Shelby, Mississippi**

I was right in the middle of jazz, you know. I remember when the bands would come through from New Orleans. My home is 250 miles from New Orleans. It's a direct line, straight line, from New Orleans to Chicago. When King Oliver left, he left in 1918, and he went to Chicago. And he went there and he taught the musicians there. And I'm talking about Black musicians, now. He taught them because the Black musicians who had been born there, they didn't know how to really play jazz. Because there were no recordings. There was no radio in the early days. So they didn't have anything to listen to, unless you had been to New Orleans. I got a chance to see many of those guys coming up with the bands, going to Chicago.

### **Moving to California**

When I went to L.A., actually the very first time with Jimmie Lunceford, we had just left Chicago. In the winter time, it's very bad; snow and ice and everything. So when I got to Los Angeles with the Jimmie Lunceford band, I said, "Well, this is the place for me because I like the weather out here." So later on, I moved to Los Angeles. And I've been living there for 60 years now. But I knew that Los Angeles would be big in television, which was not in, yet. There was no television at that time. And I said, "The movies are here. It's a good place to live, to work in the movies, and write music for movies and things like that. This is a good place to be." And that's what I did. And I was lucky, because I actually wrote for movies. I wrote for television. I was Redd Foxx's music director on the ABC variety show he had. And so it's turned out to be a nice thing for me living there.

◀ Gerald Wilson at the 2005 NEA Jazz Masters concert in Long Beach, California.  
Photo by Vance Jacobs



# Danny Barker

**1991 NEA Jazz Master**

*First Decade*

# 1992 interview by Michael White

## New Orleans Music

A banjo picker lifts up a band, if you didn't get in a monotonous thing, which I try to eliminate. I try to conform with the harmony, chord structure. There's so much about this New Orleans music that people away from here don't know.

You go on a job, they see a banjo, everybody tries to get as far as they can from here. I watch them, how they do that. Maybe give you a false-ass smile, but they don't like it. Everybody wants to be modern. But a real jazz band had a banjo. A good banjo player and a good bass player and a good drummer, you can't beat that sound. That's why our music was so great.

If you hear some of the King Oliver records, "Canal Street Blues" with Armstrong and Oliver, and you listen to Count Basie's band, you'll hear the same thing there, which was done ten years earlier or maybe 15 years earlier. You see, people began to dance to a subtle sort of thing, not a blasting thing, but a bouncing. A heartbeat in the music. That's what King Oliver had in his music with Baby Dodds and Bill Johnson. They had that old New Orleans funky sound. So that's what you got. Later on, that's what musicians all over the country tried to imitate, tried to get that sound. Basie had it, because he's not an explosive piano player. He plays subtle piano.

## Changing to Guitar in NYC

In New Orleans you had a banjo, and the banjo set the rhythm, the harmony for the foundation of the band. But in New York, it was a piano player and playing on guitars. So you have to go and watch and get books and listen to what Eddie Lang and them people is doing. [John] Truehart was the boss of the rhythm guitar players. Everybody went to hear Truehart with Chick Webb. They had a lifting rhythm they played, the way he inverted them chords, and you can hear it. It wasn't amplified. That band was swinging. You go to Savoy and there were 20 guitar players standing in front of the bandstand, watching Truehart.

◀ Danny Barker (right) with Kermit Ruffins at the 1990 French Quarter Festival in New Orleans, Louisiana. Photo by Infrogmation of New Orleans, Wikimedia Commons



# Jon Hendricks

**1993 NEA Jazz Master**

*Second Decade*

## 2008 interview by Molly Murphy

### First Exposure to Jazz

My father was a minister in the African Methodist Episcopal Church, and in those days African American people couldn't stay in White hotels, you know.... Always had families that took in boarders, or rented rooms out to traveling bands like Andy Kirk's Clouds of Joy, or Basie, or Luis Russell's orchestra—you know, territory bands. They always had places to stay because these people would have these big old houses and there would be the man and wife, and she would do the cooking and the cleaning, and he would do the upkeep. And bands would stay like that. A lot of the bands used to come to our house to eat dinner. They would solicit an invitation to come to dinner because my mother was a fabulous cook.

### Composing

I like the way it happens with me. I get an idea that I want to do the lyrics to a song. I put it on, and I play it, and then I play it again, and then I put it on again, and I start writing. And the words come so fast that it can't be me thinking and putting it down. I'm taking dictation, and sometimes—well no, not sometimes, most of the time—my original lyrics are one-time. And sometimes later I go over it and change maybe one word or something, but it comes out perfect. So I don't want to mess with that with any machine or any outside force. Because I think it's a gift from God.

### Audiences

I think what it's called is “establishing an intimacy,” but I think that's just a phrase to describe how much you respect your audience or not, and I think when you're in show business your audience is everything. Your audience is everything, because if they love you, you're going to work for 40 years, you know? So your respect for them is boundless, and if you show that respect, they return it with love for what you do. It's a kind of a marriage. I think if you respect and love your audience, they'll adore you.

◀ Jon Hendricks performing at the 2004 NEA Jazz Masters Concert in New York City. Photo by Tom Pich



# Roy Haynes

**1995 NEA Jazz Master**

*Second Decade*

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## 1994 interview by Anthony Brown

### The Beauty of Harlem

New York at that time was so beautiful. Harlem, oh, man. Sugar Ray Robinson's bar. It was just very exciting. You could see anybody. Joe Louis—all the champions, they'd come to the clubs and listen to you play. It was an exciting period almost all over the world, but New York was the mecca. The music. A lot of old people would say they wouldn't leave Harlem to go to heaven. That was the saying. It was everything there, everything, so much beauty, so much life, so much warmth, so much togetherness.

### Gigging with Bird

I'll never forget the summer of—I guess it was June or July of 1950. We go into Café Society in the Village for four weeks, which was a long gig in New York, opposite Art Tatum. Imagine playing opposite Art Tatum, and you're playing with Bird, for four weeks. Opening night you can't get in the place, and Billie Holiday comes up and sings with us. Can you imagine all that? We're wearing ties and suits. I don't even know if they had it air-conditioned in the club in those days. But it was such a beautiful period. That was a beautiful time. I couldn't wait to go to work at night. The feeling. Lovely.

### Coltrane

A lot of critics said at some times that he was playing scales. They didn't realize that every time this guy would play a note, it would be right in the pocket. It was right there. When someone else plays a note, it's either a little bit ahead, it's rushing, it's not in the pocket, and it's hard to play with, for me, you understand? This guy, it was right there. It was so easy. It was like playing with Count Basie's big band when Joe Newman, Thad Jones, the two Franks, and all those guys were there. That was one of the greatest thrills for a drummer. That's the way Trane was. All you had to do was accompany this guy. You could decorate him.

◀ Roy Haynes at the 2005 NEA Jazz Masters concert in Long Beach, California.  
Photo by Vance Jacobs



# Dave Brubeck

**1999 NEA Jazz Master**

*Second Decade*



## 2007 interview by Ted Gioia

### Early Influences

I grew up listening to Bach—from my mother—and Beethoven. All the classic literature for piano: Debussy, Ravel, and many other things, but those were the main things that she practiced all the time. So I had a knowledge of the good piano literature just by hearing it from her—hearing her teach it during the day, and then after dinner, she usually went into her studio, and when I was in bed, I'd be hearing her practicing. So I had a lot of influence of great piano music. Then I loved Gershwin and Bartok, Stravinsky especially. Then there were the great jazz things. Ellington I loved, and Stan Kenton.

### The Cool Label

When people talk about “cool,” I recommend that they listen to an NBC broadcast from a club live in Los Angeles, “This Can't Be Love” and “Look for the Silver Lining.” To this day, I think that's some of the most spontaneous, hard-swinging, far from West Coast “cool,” so to speak. How can they call us “cool”? That is wild.

### State Department-Sponsored Tours

Poland was very responsive. Turkey was good. Very good musicians in Turkey. In those days in Europe—and consider that Turkey's almost part of Europe—there's always big bands at the radio stations. Sometimes more than one. Really great jazz players.... In England and Germany, to this day they still have radio bands, and they're great. They're on call every day. That's the kind of job that jazz musicians want to get. Get off the road. It pays well, and it's steady work.

◀ Dave Brubeck performing at the 2004 NEA Jazz Masters Concert in New York City. Photo by Tom Pich



# Marian McPartland

**2000 NEA Jazz Master**

*Second Decade*

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## 1997/98 interviews by James Williams

### Working at the Hickory House

We would seriously screw up the schedule, because we were just across from Birdland. It would be a half an hour on and half an hour off. We'd go running over there if it was Duke or Count Basie or Billy Eckstine, Sarah [Vaughan], whoever it would be. Then tear back in time—maybe be a little late, even—and do our next set. We used to do that every night. Then people would come to the Hickory House. I can remember Oscar [Peterson] being there and sitting in. Duke [Ellington] used to sit in periodically. He was there every night when he was in town.

### Meeting Thelonious Monk

I met Monk on the street. At that time, he was more communicative than in later years. He could say “hello” or something, without too much trouble. We stopped and spoke to each other, and I said, “Gee, I’m at the Hickory House. I’m so enjoying playing some of your tunes. I’m trying to learn your tunes. I’d love it if you’d come by some night.” A dumb thing, to invite *Monk* to hear *me* play his music. Anyway, he came one night. The tall, thin guy looking sinister. He had on a black raincoat and a beret, and he had a friend with him who was just as tall and sinister-looking. The two of them came in, walked to the back of the room, and sat down, ordered some drinks. I kept looking to see if there was any reaction. They were just in earnest conversation the entire set, talking back and forth. Then they got up and left, and Monk left me the check. That was his comment on my rendition of “Round Midnight,” probably. But I think that’s so funny.

### The Beginnings of *Piano Jazz*

It actually came from Alec Wilder, who a few years previous to that had written this book called *American Popular Song*.... Shortly after that, NPR started a series for Alec as a result of the book. He would have guests like Tony Bennett and Margaret Whiting, all singers. He had a little trio, and he would interview the singer, and the singers would sing and talk. It would be like *Piano Jazz*, except that it was done with Alec and done with singers. That ended. Right after that, somebody from down there, the same station, asked me, would I like to do a show to follow on what Alec was doing, something musical and yet educational? I said I would love to do it. We just started like that.... All of a sudden everybody thought this thing is going to take off, and we got a studio. We got more money. It’s just a thing that’s kept going.

◀ NEA Jazz Master Marian McPartland plays a duet with Chicago jazz musician Jodie Christian during a taping of her weekly National Public Radio series, *Piano Jazz*. Photo by Melisa Goh



# Jimmy Heath

**2003 NEA Jazz Master**

*Third Decade*

## 2007 interview by Molly Murphy

### Switching from Alto to Tenor Sax

When I got back to Philadelphia after the war, World War II, the fourth person hired for the gig was the tenor saxophone—trumpets and trombones and altos wouldn't get the gig. If there was a rhythm section, the fourth instrument hired around town was a tenor. So I went to the tenor for commercial reasons. And because I was playing so much of Charlie Parker's lyrics that people were calling me "Little Bird." So I said, "Well, maybe, if I play a tenor, I could play these same lyrics, and I wouldn't be called 'Little Bird' all the time. I would be called 'Jimmy Heath.'" People like Lester [Young] and all of them had made the tenor such an important voice. Coleman Hawkins, Ben Webster, Don Byas. Dexter [Gordon], and Sonny Stitt had played bebop on the tenor so well.

### The Power of the Big Band

The big band is jazz music's symphony orchestra. We can take soloists. We can have duos, trios, quartets, quintets, sextets, septets, and the whole works from a big band. When we get 16 people and you got four trombones, four trumpets, five reeds, and a rhythm section—heaven.

### Bebop versus Swing

Trane and I, and Paul Gonzalez...were in the saxophone section with Dizzy [Gillespie]'s band. When we got to Little Rock, Arkansas, the people seemed to have scouts. They sent people out to hear what we were playing before they went back to the neighborhood and told people. When we started warming up and all that stuff, people came and listened, and a guy said, "What are y'all playing? All them bebops and stuff? Why don't you go back and send Buddy Johnson or Count Basie down here?" They wanted dance music and Dizzy realized that. That night we could have beat the audience up in a fight—there were more of us on the stage than them!

◀ Jimmy Heath at the 2007 NEA Jazz Masters Concert in New York City.  
Photo by Tom Pich



# Paquito D'Rivera

**2005 NEA Jazz Master**

*Third Decade*

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## 2008 interview by Molly Murphy

### Starting on Saxophone

My father decided for me that I was going to be an alto [saxophone] player who doubles on clarinet. I learned the soprano first because he was an agent for the Semper Company in Havana in the 1940s and 1950s, so he ordered for me a soprano saxophone, and then the clarinet when I was like eleven or something. I started with the saxophone. In those days, alto players were supposed to play the clarinet. Instead of that, I became a classical clarinet player as well as a classical saxophone player. I developed both instruments almost at the same time.

### Thoughts on Cuban Jazz

They have the same roots, but the branches and the leaves are totally different. That's why many people do [Cuban jazz] in the wrong way. The scene is improving now, there are more books and more recordings, and people are more used to mixing up with others that know the fundamentals of every style. But I have seen some very crazy things during my long career, people trying to mix Cuban music with jazz and sounding like, I don't know, like Ricky Ricardo or something. It sounds very, very funny to me, like a burrito on a Spanish hat. And the castanet, that instrument never crossed the Atlantic Ocean. There are absolutely none of the many Cuban genres that use castanets.

### Favorite Composer

The original Cuban music, you know, it's in my blood and all that, and so that is part of me already. My favorite classical composer is Stravinsky, but my favorite composer overall is Antonio Carlos Jobim. I don't know, that man has so much passion and melody and harmony and music in his music, you know. It's so much music in his music, even his lyrics. He's such an artist and has such a huge body of work also. You know, so much of the music that he has written seems to be absolutely perfect.

◀ Paquito D'Rivera performing at the 2004 NEA Jazz Masters Concert in New York City. Photo by Tom Pich



# Toshiko Akiyoshi

**2007 NEA Jazz Master**

*Third Decade*

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## 2006 interview by Molly Murphy

### The Influence of NEA Jazz Master Teddy Wilson

Teddy Wilson, as everybody knows, he's a very clean pianist. I think most swing-era pianists were very clean. I think it's easy to understand, but Teddy Wilson in particular, because he was always one of the best, very clean and nice. And then from a classical training, a pianist like myself, that was [something with which] I can identify. I think that was the main thing. People always ask me why I became a jazz player, and it's not an intellectual decision. It really appealed to me.

### Composing

There are two different things. One is to create a vehicle for the certain player. That's one. Two is, it's a story. I'm very concerned about social issues and political issues, especially political decisions affecting us and society. *Kogun*, which is my very first [big band] LP, is about a Japanese soldier discovered in a Philippine jungle not knowing the war was ended. He spent 29 years there. He didn't go to war because he wanted to go to war; he was drafted. *Hiroshima: Rising from the Abyss*, I think that one is really important and I think came out very well. What I always think is that the one who commissioned me is the priest from Hiroshima and probably he prayed every day. That's why it came out good.

### Starting a Big Band

There are many, many reasons that I felt that I really wanted to have a large ensemble, because I came to the point where it's not enough for me to just improvise tunes. I would like to be able to convey my thoughts on a certain subject. I needed more color. My original music was a trio or quartet format but I felt like I needed more color. When I did that new writing, at the first rehearsal I felt that's what I would like to do. I felt more comfortable. But I didn't have enough money to keep the band. If you form the band, you have to keep it, and in those days there wasn't any rehearsal room; even the cheapest rehearsal studio would have cost, and then I just didn't have that kind of money, so that was that. Lew's [Tabackin, Akiyoshi's husband and saxophonist with her band] job brought us to L.A., and Los Angeles doesn't really have much jazz activity, so Lew suggested that he would get the musicians together. He said, "I'll get the musicians together to play your music." That's how it started in March 1973. No one expected it to become a working band.

◀ 2007 NEA Jazz Master Toshiko Akiyoshi. Photo by Tom Pich



# Muhal Richard Abrams

**2010 NEA Jazz Master**

*Third Decade*

## 2015 interview by Josephine Reed

### **The Creation of the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM)**

We were in the '60s. There was quite a bit of music going on, of course. And we were about music. Politically, there was many things going on politically. You know, whole groups of people becoming self-sufficient and whatnot in their endeavors and their ideals and their rights. And the city was quite active, politically and culturally in terms of music and the other arts. We were associated as Chicago local musicians for many years prior to that. I had formed what I called the Experimental Band. It served as a forerunner to the AACM. So the other musicians, the other founders, suggested that we have a meeting to discuss forming a larger group of musicians based on the ideals that structured the Experimental Band. Those ideals were to develop a workshop and a forum whereby musicians could develop their individual perspectives on improvising and composing music. And so that was the basic premise that went into the initial structure of the AACM.

### **Finding the Audience**

The audience was there all the time from the beginning. The people on the South Side of Chicago were with us. So once we started up, they became our patrons. The people in Chicago on the North and South Sides included Black and White people. Chicago became our audience; the population of Chicago. Music lovers; they became our students. One of our purposes was to teach young, aspirant musicians.

### **Expanding East**

I started coming to New York City around 1973. I didn't move here until 1977 with my family. By that time, the first wave of AACM musicians anyway, we had become quite famous around the world because of the Delmark Records. And so I found it necessary to move to New York to function in a more expanded business atmosphere as well as musical atmosphere. It was wall-to-wall music. Just great music. People from all over the states were really perpetuating and moving what some called "the tradition" forward... the opportunity to learn from each other was very great. But we didn't come to New York to join other people's bands. We created our own forums for performing our music, just as we did in Chicago.

◀ Muhal Richard Abrams performing at the 2010 NEA Jazz Masters Concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City. Photo by Tom Pich



# Pat Metheny

**2018 NEA Jazz Master**

*Fourth Decade*

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National Endowment for the Arts

## 2018 interview by Josephine Reed

### Thinking Trumpet

My dad was a very good amateur trumpet player, and my mom's dad was a professional trumpet player, so trumpet was everywhere. And me, too; I started on the trumpet when I was eight. The trumpet thing has remained kind of a constant for me. I mean, even now, when I'm playing on the guitar, I'm kind of thinking trumpet. So it's real deep, that trumpet thing for me, and I would list among my most important influences trumpet players. Certainly, Miles Davis is—like so many people, probably the major reason that I'm even involved in this general area of music. Hearing one of his records when I was about 11 changed my life.

### The Importance of NEA Jazz Master Gary Burton

Gary is such an important, huge figure for me in so many ways, starting with the fact that that band, the Gary Burton Quartet of the late '60s, that was like the Beatles for me. That was the band that somehow seemed to have their finger on the pulse of that moment within the realm of improvised music that was unlike anything else. I think they're well noted for that as well. Beyond that, the particulars of the language that Gary was addressing were especially resonant to me in the sense that it was kind of a rhythm section band. You know, there wasn't a piano player. The guitar was almost functioning in the role of a horn player. And, you know, when I heard those records, I just couldn't get enough of them and followed that band really closely.

### Composing on Deadline

There is one thing I would say, and I note that a lot of people seem to agree with this. There's nothing like a deadline to help you focus, and I've certainly found myself facing that deadline thing with oftentimes useful results. Sometimes, waiting it out is a good idea. The one thing I do know is that you've got to show up, and when I go into periods where I'm going to be on output, that's kind of the way I think of it. It's like I'm going to generate some stuff. You know, just sitting there sometimes is not a bad thing.

◀ Pat Metheny at the 2018 NEA Jazz Masters Tribute Concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Photo by Shannon Finney



# Dianne Reeves

**2018 NEA Jazz Master**

*Fourth Decade*

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National Endowment for the Arts

## 2018 interview by Josephine Reed

### **Early Singing**

I had this one aunt, Kay, who played the piano and sang the blues, and a lot of them, her sisters and brothers, were a part of vaudeville, and they did all of this wonderful music. But she would sing these blues that were Ma Rainey or Bessie Smith, that had these dual meanings. And when we'd get together during the holidays, she would play, and my uncle would play bass, and she would always teach me one of those songs. Then I'd be singing them and doing the dance that she showed me how to shimmy, and the adults would be cracking up laughing. And it took me to about the age of 22 to realize what I was actually singing about. But it was wonderful, you know, exciting times.

### **Working with NEA Jazz Master Clark Terry**

I was learned the language of the music working with him. And it was extraordinary because through that experience, I realized that the music was a kind of language and that there was a conversation going on on the stage musically that, at that time, I wasn't a part of, and I knew I wanted to be a part of the conversation. So part of that was listening, and I would listen, and I'd hear Clark play something, and I would answer, and then it just started to open up for me, and I started to understand. Like Abbey Lincoln said, jazz is a spirit, and it's something that you feel inside and you don't think about.

### **Working on the Movie *Good Night, and Good Luck***

When they asked me to do it, I thought I would just be on the credits of the film. And then they sent a script, and I'm like what, Jazz Singer? I was like, that's me.... So, okay, I figure we'll go in the studio and record all of these songs, and then I'll lip synch, so I was getting ready for that. And then George Clooney, who wrote and directed the film, he said, "Oh, no, no, no, no, no, no. We'll do those live in the film. You'll deliver these songs like the actors will deliver their lines." And I thought, man! He said, "Well, that's the best way to enjoy this music." I said, "You're absolutely right about that."

◀ Dianne Reeves performing at—as well as hosting—the 2022 NEA Jazz Masters Tribute Concert at SFJAZZ in San Francisco, California. Photo by Scott Chernis



# Reggie Workman

**2020 NEA Jazz Master**

*Fourth Decade*

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National Endowment for the Arts



## 2020 interview by Josephine Reed

### Sound Scientists

First of all, you have to consider it like part of you, and it becomes your vocal cord. And through that bass you project your sound and your thoughts, through your bones as you deal with the instrument. There's a vibration that goes into your body and it affects you as a human being. As the Hindus would say, each person has a particular decibel and a particular note that is attuned to your being, how you were influenced by the planets when you were born. So each of us, you and everyone else involved, has a particular note that relates to you. All of us who are musicians—I call us sound scientists—have to study that and know how that affects us.

### In the Coltrane Band

We would have the opportunity to make music in a club for a week, sometimes two weeks. Every night, five, six nights a week we would be making the same music or making new music and becoming stronger and stronger and stronger, and the group's development was really on the podium with the people. We were able to develop stronger and stronger during those years because of that. Now, you're lucky if you have a job that lasts two days, once a month. It was a much different scene then. It's how we grew and consequently, we gave to this country something very important, gave to the world something very important like a musical language and a message from on high that's coming through us to the people.

### Working for Others

In the jazz world, as a supporting artist, you are expected to have your own voice, first of all. One has to really bring their own sound. Secondly, they have to bring the technique and the ability to perform whatever composition is before you, and have to bring a concept and an awareness of what has been done before so that you don't travel the same path and step in the same sound, do it the same way that it's been done before. People want to hear something new.

◀ 2020 NEA Jazz Master Reggie Workman performing during the taping of his tribute video. Photo by Don Ball



# Terri Lyne Carrington

**2021 NEA Jazz Master**

*Fourth Decade*

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National Endowment for the Arts

# 2021 interview by Josephine Reed

## **The Mission of Jazz**

I think that an opportunity arises in the face of adversity. I think creative people, which jazz musicians are, are finding ways to still be creative and still do what they're going to do and do what is important to them, and I think that most of us have a mission even if we're not able to articulate it. I think that we don't just play because it's fun; I don't think that we play because we think we'll make a lot of money. I think that it's driven from a place far deeper, and these times have made us really buckle down and focus on that more, which I'm grateful for.

## **Versatility**

My versatility did not work in my favor as an artist, though it seemed to work in my favor as a drummer. A phrase that kept coming back is, "She's all over the place." I kept trying to find a focus or a center to make records because it seemed like you need to be in a nice, neat box for labels and for marketing and for the system that puts out music. But, gradually, independent music became more and more necessary as streaming happened, and labels changed and people were able to control their own destiny a lot better.

## **Mentors**

There were many women that I played with and talked to and developed with like Geri Allen and Ingrid Jensen and Renee Rosnes, but they were more peers; there weren't so many women from another generation that could show us the ropes. So my mentors were mostly men, and they understood gender equity back before people were even talking about it. Wayne Shorter always had a lot of women, Clark Terry too. I think that it's important to give credit to the older-generation musicians that grew up and came through the music in a certain way and recognized that it needed to be different. They took it upon themselves to really foster talent in young women.

◀ 2021 NEA Jazz Master Terri Lyne Carrington performing during the taping of her tribute video. Photo courtesy of Elephant Quilt

# A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy

In 2004, a new award under the auspices of the NEA Jazz Masters was created for those individuals who helped to advance the appreciation of jazz. In 2005, the 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 National Endowment for the

Arts deputy chairman who has dedicated much of his life to bringing the joy and artistry of jazz to all Americans. Awardees have ranged from producers and engineers and record label owners to club owners to authors to administrators of organizations that assisted jazz musicians. Here are the words of a few of the advocate awardees over the years.



# Nat Hentoff

**2004 NEA Jazz Master**

## 2003 interview by Molly Murphy

### Discovering Jazz

When I was about 11 years old, I was walking down one of the main streets, and in those days the record stores had a PA system, and I heard some sounds coming out. I was so excited that I yelled out in pleasure, which was not what a Boston boy would have done then. I rushed into the store, ‘What was that? Who was that?’ It was Artie Shaw’s “Nightmare.” And that got me involved. And I was working already—it was the Depression. So with whatever I earned I would haunt the secondhand record stores and I would buy, oh, one Billie Holiday, one Count Basie, and one Howlin’ Wolf for a dollar. And when I was 19, there was a place called the Ken Club—Sidney Bechet used to come there—and the Savoy. And the Savoy is where I practically lived when I wasn’t working. That was the jazz place in town. And when I was 19, I’d gone into radio at WMEX, and I had a regular jazz show, because they couldn’t sell that time. And we started to do remotes from the Savoy. So I got to know a lot of the musicians, both on and off the air. I interviewed a number of them and began writing, first for a very small jazz magazine. Then I became a stringer for *DownBeat*, and eventually came to New York as the New York editor of *DownBeat*.

### Learning to Listen

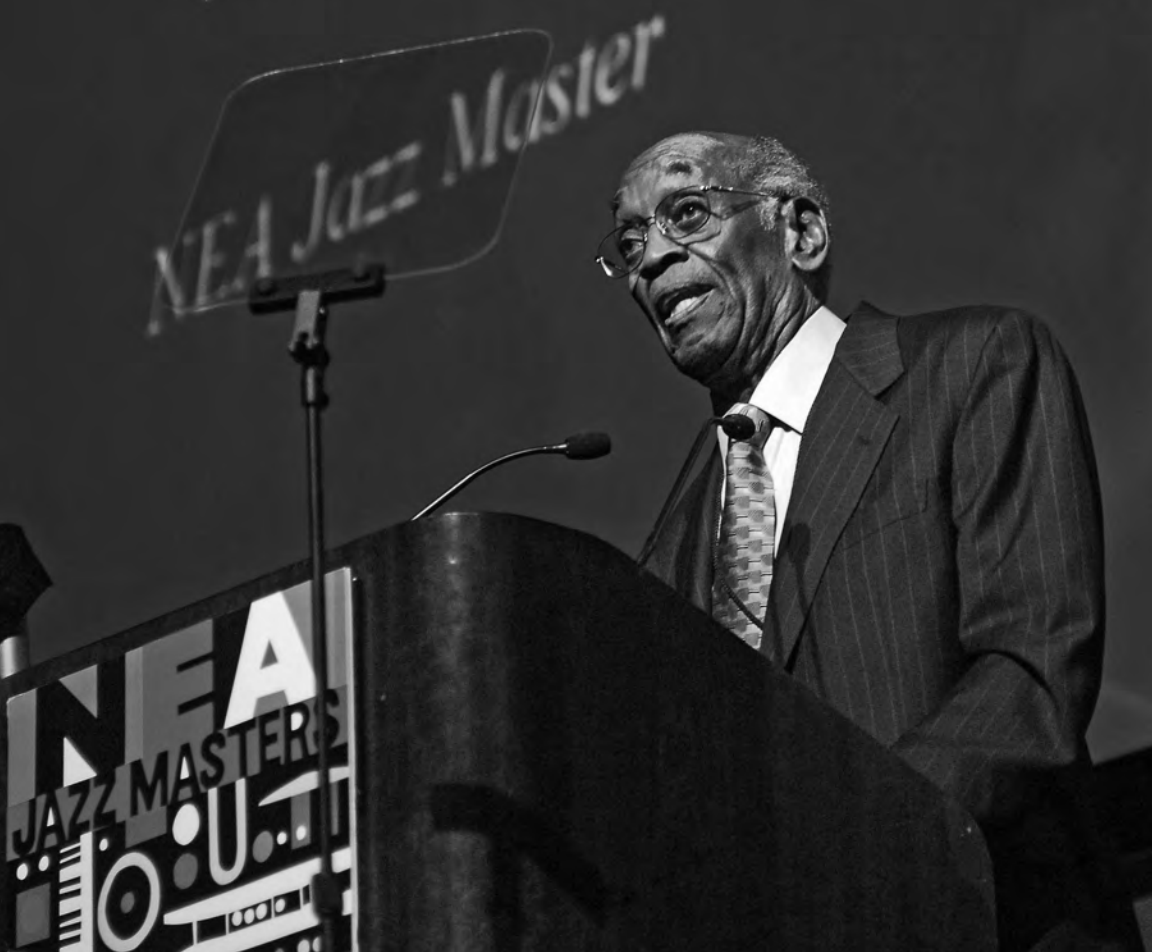
Don Ayler, the trumpet player, who was the brother of Albert Ayler, gave me an important lesson. Albert Ayler was even more controversial than Bird when he first came on the scene. And his brother said, “Don’t listen for the melody or where the rhythms are going, or the harmonies. Listen. Open yourself to the whole thing, the whole mosaic, as it were.” And that was very useful, and that also helped in listening to the later Coltrane.

### The Life Force

I get burnt out writing about the Constitution and what’s happening to it, or something personal, and I’ll put on Billie or Ben Webster or Wycliffe Gordon, and it lifts you up. It’s more than therapy; it’s the life force. Jazz is the life force for the musicians and for the listeners, and that’s why it’s invaluable.

◀ Nat Hentoff at the 2004 NEA Jazz Masters Concert in New York City.  
Photo by Tom Pich

**A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award  
for Jazz Advocacy**



**John  
Levy**

**2006 NEA Jazz Master**

## 2007 interview by Molly Murphy

### **Transitioning from Playing to Managing**

What I found was that in each group that I worked with, I would always end up being, like I called it, a straw boss; in other words, you take care of this or you take care of that and I always ended up taking care of the business end of things for them. After being in charge a while, George [Shearing] all of a sudden got very famous after “September in the Rain” and that whole group of songs. He didn’t have any manager; his wife Trixie Shearing was like the manager and I was advising her, telling her how it worked in this country and how, each city we went into, we had to report to the union. I used to take care of all of that for them. Finally I said, “You know, I can’t do this and play bass because I’m up all day doing all this other stuff and arranging stuff.” So they looked around for somebody to do that kind of work and finally, the final decision was “Well, you’re doing it, why don’t you take over as road manager?” So that’s how it started.

### **Becoming an Artist Manager**

That was unknown for jazz musicians at that time. I mean, you had like Jackie Gleason and all those people on radio and everything and they had managers, but your average musicians didn’t have any managerial help. I had the experience of working with people like Phil Moore, who had done movie scores and everything—not under his own name because he couldn’t be recognized being Black—and then later on Benny Carter and people like that I got to know, so I knew how it worked and I advised anybody on the way to set up their business end of it. I set up business entities with all these people with their publishing firms and oversaw the management of their publishing. I didn’t take over their publishing, and that was unusual at that time.

### **Management Style**

Each person that I’ve managed, I’ve looked at their career in a different way and then tried to find out what their aims were and where they were trying to go and did my very best to put people around them and to work with people to help them reach their potential. I have no aims in any of it for me personally.

◀ John Levy accepting his award at the 2006 NEA Jazz Masters Concert.  
Photo by Tom Pich

**A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award  
for Jazz Advocacy**



# Rudy Van Gelder

**2009 NEA Jazz Master**



## 2008 interview by Molly Murphy

### **Recording in His Parents' House**

They built a house, which was my parents' home, and they knew what my interests were. I asked them if I could put a little control room next to the living room. They spoke to the architect. There was a window between the little control room and the living room. It wasn't big. It wasn't big at all. It was a U-shaped house, a horseshoe shape, and there was a large center section and then the kitchen would go off on one leg and the bedrooms would go off on the other leg and the studio was right in between so that if you can picture the studio in the larger part. The kitchen was just like a hallway away from where I used to put Kenny Clarke.

### **Building His Own Studio/House**

It's concrete block in part but that's how we got to the Frank Lloyd Wright concept, because he knew how to handle materials like that in a way that I could afford and actually.... I didn't go to him because he'd have given me a work of art, and I wouldn't be able to build it. So we got to one of his apprentices and we discussed in great detail how I wanted the materials to be, what materials, how they should be finished, and he was my one hope of actually being able to build a place that was sonically what I wanted and yet looked the way it should look.

### **The Job of a Recording Engineer**

Jazz essentially is improvised, so to sit there and listen to a musician improvising with a band and everyone playing together, hopefully that creates an atmosphere that can never be reproduced, because you're there at the presence of the creation of the music. You can't reproduce that. What I do is I endeavor to reproduce that moment and make sure that what they're trying to say is presented in the best possible way.

◀ Rudy Van Gelder accepting his award at the 2009 NEA Jazz Masters Concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City. Photo by Tom Pich

**A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award  
for Jazz Advocacy**



**Wendy  
Oxenhorn**

**2016 NEA Jazz Master**

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National Endowment for the Arts

## 2016 interview by Josephine Reed

### **The Creation of the Jazz Foundation of America**

It was this wonderful older man, Herb Storfer, who had really formed the Jazz Foundation with Ann Ruckert, Phoebe Jacobs, Billy Taylor, Cy Blank. And then Jimmy Owens, Vishnu Wood, and Jamil Nasser came to them and said, “Hey, there are musicians out there that are in trouble.” That’s when they changed the focus. It had just been to promote and keep jazz alive. And then it really began. And then Dr. Frank Forte and the Englewood Hospital that took care of Dizzy and started treating musicians for free—that doesn’t come along every day. That man is a saint. It was really Herb Storfer in his apartment pulling money out of his pocket and helping. And he would give them a couple of month’s rent, and he was helping about 35 musicians a year.

### **Financial Insecurity of a Musician’s Life**

The road is brutal. The road is truly brutal. And when you look at some of these musicians who have been doing it for 30, 40, 50 years, it wears you down. It wears you down. And this business really doesn’t take care of the music makers. You know, it never really has. In most cases, as far as pay—all of these great old legends that did recordings—even with Frank Sinatra, you would get that one-time buyout for the album. You know, your day of recording, you get \$300, you figured that’s great, you’ll pay the rent, and then you would never get any royalty. The record could sell millions and you never got anything further. Usually, only the band leader got a royalty.

### **Jazz in the Schools Program**

It’s so important that when we have this moment to help someone that we think of the most creative solutions that are dignified. You know, the Jazz in the Schools program and Blues in the Schools that allow [senior musicians] to perform for the kids. They’re maybe too old or too ill to go on tour anymore or to handle a three-hour gig at a club, but they can do a 45-minute concert for the kids and the kids run up and ask for autographs. And they’ve got a reason to get out of the house again. They’re loved again. And they also get paid, so they can pay their own rent. These are the kinds of solutions we try to work on the most.

◀ Wendy Oxenhorn at the 2016 NEA Jazz Masters Tribute Concert at the Kennedy Center in Washington, DC. Photo by Shannon Finney

# 40 Facts about the

1. When the honorary award was first funded in 1982, it was originally called the American Jazz Masters Fellowship. In 2004, it was changed to the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship.
2. The first panel to determine the inaugural class of honorees included five future NEA Jazz Masters: Donald Byrd, Frank Foster, Orrin Keepnews, Jackie McLean, and Archie Shepp.
3. George Russell, named an NEA Jazz Master in 1990, was the recipient of the first NEA grant in the jazz field, in 1969.
4. The first NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship for Jazz Advocacy went to critic/producer Nat Hentoff in 2004.
5. 1982 NEA Jazz Master Sun Ra claimed to have come from the planet Saturn.
6. 2001 NEA Jazz Master Jackie McLean opened the Artists Collective, a widely hailed combination community center and fine arts school, in Hartford, Connecticut, in 1968.
7. 2009 NEA Jazz Master Rudy Van Gelder is the only recording engineer to have received a fellowship.
8. 2005 NEA Jazz Master Paquito D'Rivera defected from Cuba and applied for asylum at the United States embassy while on tour in Spain in 1980.
9. 1999 NEA Jazz Master Dave Brubeck wrote a musical, *The Real Ambassadors*, about the U.S. State Department program that sent jazz musicians around the globe as music envoys of the government from the mid-1950s to the 1970s.
10. Ella Fitzgerald was the first woman awarded a fellowship, in 1985.
11. In 2011, the Marsalis family became the first (and currently only) group awarded the fellowship.



Cándido Camero and Paquito D'Rivera performing at the 2008 NEA Jazz Masters Concert in Toronto, Canada. Photo by Tom Pich

# NEA Jazz Masters

12. At least five NEA Jazz Masters had their own radio series: Ramsey Lewis, Marian McPartland, Phil Schaap, Billy Taylor, and Nancy Wilson.
13. At least four NEA Jazz Masters appeared in feature motion picture releases: Dexter Gordon, James Moody, Dianne Reeves, and Annie Ross (Gordon was nominated for the Academy Award for Best Actor for his role in *Round Midnight*).
14. 1983 NEA Jazz Master Sonny Rollins and 2022 NEA Jazz Master Stanley Clarke have both played with the Rolling Stones' Keith Richards.



15. 2021 NEA Jazz Master Terri Lyne Carrington played her first professional gig at ten years old with 1991 NEA Jazz Master Clark Terry.
16. Several NEA Jazz Masters were born and lived in other countries: Toshiko Akiyoshi (Manchuria/Japan), Cándido Camero (Cuba), Paquito D’Rivera (Cuba), Dave Holland (England), Abdullah Ibrahim (South Africa), Dan Morgenstern (Germany), and Toots Thielemans (Belgium).
17. 2005 NEA Jazz Master Artie Shaw retired from music in 1954.
18. 2004 NEA Jazz Master Herbie Hancock produced soundtracks for numerous feature films, including *Blow-Up* (1966), *Death Wish* (1974), *A Soldier’s Story* (1984), and *Round Midnight* (1986), for which he received an Academy Award (fellow NEA Jazz Master Dexter Gordon starred in the film).
19. All three Heath Brothers have received NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships, although not in the same year: bassist Percy received his award in 2002, saxophonist/composer Jimmy in 2003, and drummer Albert “Tootie” in 2021.
20. 2011 NEA Jazz Master Hubert Laws was the first awardee whose primary instrument was the flute.

21. Several NEA Jazz Masters have also received the National Medal of Arts, awarded by the president of the United States: Dave Brubeck, Benny Carter, Betty Carter, Paquito D’Rivera, Ella Fitzgerald, Dizzy Gillespie, Hank Jones, Quincy Jones, Wynton Marsalis, Sonny Rollins, and Billy Taylor.
22. 2015 NEA Jazz Master Charles Lloyd has performed with two NEA National Heritage Fellows: B.B. King and Zakir Hussain.
23. Several NEA Jazz Masters were honored primarily for their composing and arranging rather than their performing ability: David Baker, Gil Evans, Luther Henderson, Bill Holman, Quincy Jones, Johnny Mandel, George Russell, and Maria Schneider.
24. 2015 NEA Jazz Master Carla Bley, while a formidable pianist, is considered one of the premier composers in jazz, and has written entire albums for other musicians, such as *A Genuine Tong Funeral* for fellow NEA Jazz Master Gary Burton and *Nick Mason’s Fictitious Sports* for Pink Floyd’s drummer Nick Mason.
25. One NEA Jazz Masters celebratory concert was held outside the United States: in 2008, it was held in Toronto, Canada, as part of the International Association of Jazz Educators conference.
26. Five NEA Jazz Masters claimed membership to the Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians (AACM), a collective of musicians in Chicago, Illinois, dedicated to improvising and composing original creative music: Muhal Richard Abrams, Anthony Braxton, Jack DeJohnette, Roscoe Mitchell, and Henry Threadgill.
27. 2009 NEA Jazz Master Toots Thielemans is the only fellow given an award for playing primarily harmonica.
28. 2023 NEA Jazz Master Regina Carter is the only violinist to receive the award.
29. The instrument most played by NEA Jazz Masters? The piano, followed by the saxophone.
30. All four original members of the Modern Jazz Quartet received NEA Jazz Masters Fellowships, though not as a group: Kenny Clarke in 1983, Milt Jackson in 1997, John Lewis in 2001, and Percy Heath in 2002.



Carla Bley performing with Steve Swallow on bass, Tony Malaby on saxophone, and Billy Drummond on drums at the 2015 NEA Jazz Masters Concert at Jazz at Lincoln Center in New York City. Photo by Michael G. Stewart

31. 1993 NEA Jazz Master Milt Hinton, the first bassist to receive the award, was also a widely exhibited photographer, capturing the life of being a jazz musician in pictures.
32. 1987 NEA Jazz Master Melba Liston was a principal trombonist in the bands of two fellow NEA Jazz Masters—Dizzy Gillespie and Quincy Jones—as well as the arranger for many of NEA Jazz Master Randy Weston’s recordings.
33. Members of the numerous bands of 1984 NEA Jazz Master Miles Davis, from the 1950s to the 1980s, have also received NEA Jazz Masters awards—from his 1950s bands: Gil Evans and Jimmy Cobb; from his 1960s bands: Ron Carter, George Coleman, Herbie Hancock, and Wayne Shorter; from his 1970s bands: Chick Corea, Jack DeJohnette, Keith Jarrett, and Dave Liebman; from his 1980s bands: Kenny Garrett.



34. 1991 NEA Jazz Master Clark Terry could (and often would in concert) play two trumpets simultaneously.

35. In addition to his jazz work, 2019 NEA Jazz Master Bob Dorough is known for his compositions and vocals for the animation series *Schoolhouse Rock!*

36. In 2005, the NEA partnered with Verve Music Group to release a two-CD anthology of NEA Jazz Masters music.

37. 1989 NEA Jazz Master Hank Jones played the piano when Marilyn Monroe sang “Happy Birthday, Mr. President” to President John F. Kennedy for his 45th birthday celebration at Madison Square Garden in 1962.

38. The two NEA Jazz Masters who play the organ are both named Smith (not related): Jimmy Smith, receiving the award in 2007, and Dr. Lonnie Smith, receiving the award in 2017.

39. While jazz is not known as a big seller in the music industry, 2006 NEA Jazz Master Tony Bennett has sold more than 50 million records in his career.
40. Three NEA Jazz Masters have received the Pulitzer Prize for Music for their jazz compositions: Ornette Coleman, Wynton Marsalis, and Henry Threadgill.

# How to Nominate an NEA Jazz Master

The National Endowment for the Arts recognizes the importance of jazz as one of the great American art forms of the 20th and 21st centuries. As part of its efforts to honor those distinguished artists whose excellence, impact, and significant contributions in jazz have helped keep this important art form alive, the NEA 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 NEA honors a wide range of styles while making the awards. There is also a special award, the A.B. Spellman NEA Jazz Masters Award for Jazz Advocacy, which is given 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. Nominees must be citizens or permanent residents of the United States. An individual may submit one or more nominations each year. Nominations are made by submitting a one-page letter detailing the reasons that the nominated artist should receive an NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship and a resume or biography (maximum two pages) that outlines the career of the nominee. Nominations submitted to the NEA 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 chair of the National Endowment for the Arts. Nominations remain active for five years, being reconsidered annually during this period.

Posthumous nominations will not be considered. Individuals who have previously received an NEA lifetime honor award (National Heritage Fellowship, Jazz Masters Fellowship, or an Opera Honor) are not eligible.

Information on the NEA Jazz Masters Fellowship is available on the NEA website: [arts.gov/honors/jazz](https://www.arts.gov/honors/jazz).



# NEA Jazz Masters 1982-2023

**1982**

Roy Eldridge\*  
Dizzy Gillespie\*  
Sun Ra\*

**1989**

Barry Harris\*  
Hank Jones\*  
Sarah Vaughan\*

**1996**

Tommy Flanagan\*  
Benny Golson  
J.J. Johnson\*

**1983**

Count Basie\*  
Kenny Clarke\*  
Sonny Rollins

**1990**

George Russell\*  
Cecil Taylor\*  
Gerald Wilson\*

**1997**

Billy Higgins\*  
Milt Jackson\*  
Anita O'Day\*

**1984**

Ornette Coleman\*  
Miles Davis\*  
Max Roach\*

**1991**

Danny Barker\*  
Buck Clayton\*  
Andy Kirk\*  
Clark Terry\*

**1998**

Ron Carter  
James Moody\*  
Wayne Shorter\*

**1985**

Gil Evans\*  
Ella Fitzgerald\*  
Jo Jones\*

**1992**

Betty Carter\*  
Dorothy Donegan\*  
Sweets Edison\*

**1999**

Dave Brubeck\*  
Art Farmer\*  
Joe Henderson\*

**1986**

Benny Carter\*  
Dexter Gordon\*  
Teddy Wilson\*

**1993**

Jon Hendricks\*  
Milt Hinton\*  
Joe Williams\*

**2000**

David Baker\*  
Donald Byrd\*  
Marian McPartland\*

**1987**

Cleo Brown\*  
Melba Liston\*  
Jay McShann\*

**1994**

Louie Bellson\*  
Ahmad Jamal  
Carmen McRae\*

**2001**

John Lewis\*  
Jackie McLean\*  
Randy Weston\*

**1988**

Art Blakey\*  
Lionel Hampton\*  
Billy Taylor\*

**1995**

Ray Brown\*  
Roy Haynes  
Horace Silver\*

**2002**

Frank Foster\*  
Percy Heath\*  
McCoy Tyner\*

\*deceased

## 2003

Jimmy Heath\*  
Elvin Jones\*  
Abbey 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\*

## 2010

Muhai Richard Abrams\*  
George Avakian\*  
Kenny Barron  
Bill Holman  
Bobby Hutcherson\*  
Yusef Lateef\*  
Annie Ross\*  
Cedar Walton\*

## 2011

Orrin Keepnews\*  
Hubert Laws  
David Liebman  
Johnny Mandel\*  
The Marsalis Family

## 2012

Jack DeJohnette  
Von Freeman\*  
Charlie Haden\*  
Sheila Jordan  
Jimmy Owens

## 2013

Mose Allison\*  
Lou Donaldson  
Lorraine Gordon\*  
Eddie Palmieri

## 2014

Jamey Aebersold  
Anthony Braxton  
Richard Davis  
Keith Jarrett

## 2015

Carla Bley  
George Coleman  
Charles Lloyd  
Joe Segal\*

## 2016

Gary Burton  
Wendy Oxenhorn  
Pharoah Sanders\*  
Archie Shepp

## 2017

Dee Dee Bridgewater  
Ira Gitler\*  
Dave Holland  
Dick Hyman  
Dr. Lonnie Smith\*

## 2018

Todd Barkan  
Joanne Brackeen  
Pat Metheny  
Dianne Reeves

## 2019

Stanley Crouch\*  
Bob Dorough\*  
Abdullah Ibrahim  
Maria Schneider

## 2020

Dorthaan Kirk  
Bobby McFerrin  
Roscoe Mitchell  
Reggie Workman

## 2021

Terri Lyne Carrington  
Albert “Tootie” Heath  
Phil Schaap\*  
Henry Threadgill

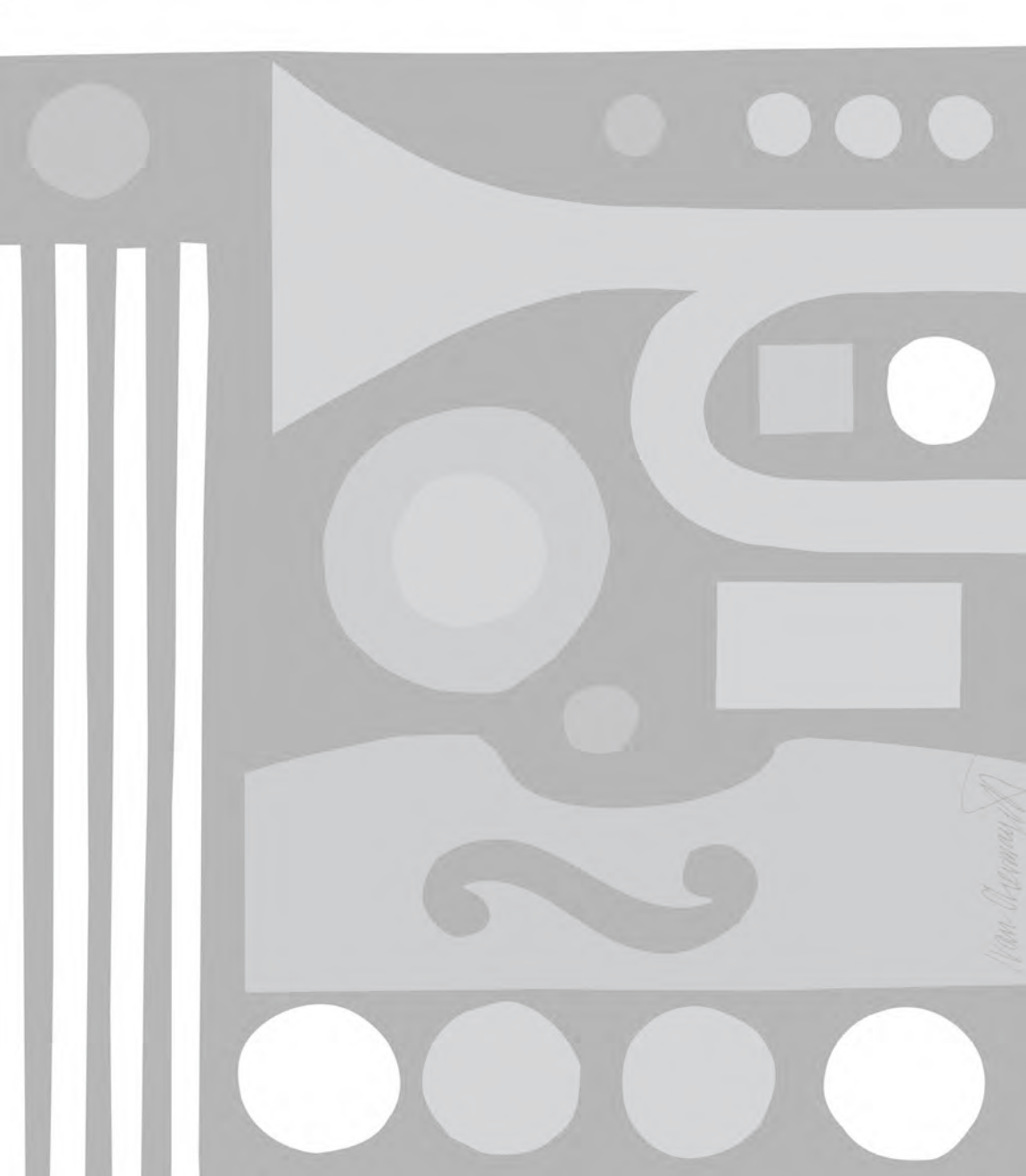
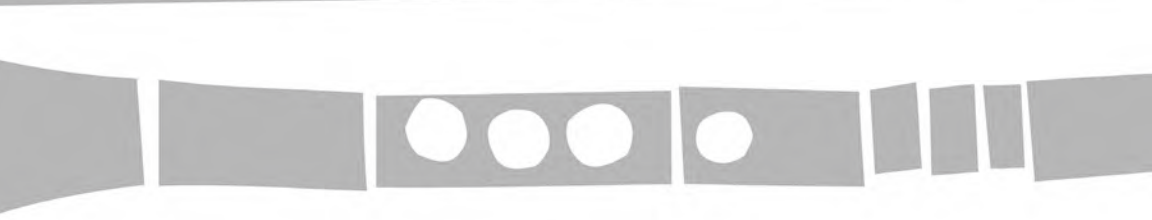
## 2022

Stanley Clarke  
Donald Harrison, Jr.  
Billy Hart  
Cassandra Wilson

## 2023

Regina Carter  
Kenny Garrett  
Louis Hayes  
Sue Mingus\*

\*deceased





2022 NEA Jazz Masters Stanley Clarke, Billy Hart, and Donald Harrison, Jr. playing Duke Ellington's "Take the Coltrane" at the tribute concert at SFJAZZ in San Francisco, California. Photo by Scott Chernis

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