

M THE SPRINGFIELD GARDEN YEARS McCOY TYNER

McCoy Tyner was a New York based jazz pianist, recognized as one of the great musicians of his era. This exhibition also commemorates Tyner after his passing on March 6th 2020. From 1960 – 1965 he was a member of the John Coltrane Quartet (aka The Classic Quartet). The other members were Jimmy Garrison (bass) and Elvin Jones (drums). It was at times during this period that he resided in Springfield Gardens. This exhibition will focus upon these years of his life and music, as well as his musical background and achievements.



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McCoy TYNER



McCoy Tyner by John Abbott



McCoy Tyner by Blue Note Records

Tyner was born in Philadelphia, as the oldest of three children. His mother encouraged him to study piano at age 13 and supported his aspirations to become a jazz musician. He studied at West Philadelphia Music School and the Granoff School of Music. Tyner joined The Jazztet led by Benny Golson and Art Farmer in 1960. Six months later, he joined the quartet of famous jazz musician John Coltrane, which included Elvin Jones and Steve Davis (later replaced by Art Davis, Reggie Workman, and, finally, Jimmy Garrison). Coltrane had known Tyner for a while growing up in Philadelphia. He recorded the pianist's composition "The Believer" on January 10, 1958 which became the title track of Prestige's 1964 album ***The Believer*** issued as a John Coltrane record. Tyner is considered to be one of the most influential jazz pianists of the late 20th century, an honor he earned during and after his time with Coltrane.

McCoy Tyner's unique approach to playing the piano including sophisticated chord structures and an explosively percussive left hand, had transcended conventional styles and became one of the most recognizable sounds in improvised music. He contributed rhythmic and harmonic characteristics from the vocabulary of a majority of jazz pianists. The John Coltrane Quartet, which also included drummer Elvin Jones and bassist Jimmy Garrison, had an extraordinary chemistry, fostered in part by Tyner's almost familial relationship with Coltrane. Tyner also began to explore his own solo talents as well at this time, releasing several albums on the Impulse record label, including his first-ever album ***Inception*** (1962) and ***Today and Tomorrow*** (1964). From 1960 through 1965, Tyner developed a new vocabulary that transcended the piano styles of the time, providing a uniquely extended harmonic and rhythmic interpretation of piano playing on classic Coltrane recordings.

With the goal to explore more of his identity as a composer and bandleader, Tyner left the group to release his Blue Note Records debut in 1967. The Real McCoy, assembling an ensemble of extraordinary musicians, featured saxophonist Joe Henderson, bassist Ron Carter and fellow Coltrane alumnus Elvin Jones. Between 1972 and 1980, Tyner advanced to be recognized as one of the most successful jazz artists under the Milestone label as he released some of the most well known recordings of his career: ***Enlightenment*** (1973), ***Fly With The Wind*** (1976), and ***Inner Voices*** (1977). Continuing throughout the 1980s and 1990s, Tyner kept expanding at an immensely high level, allowing him to record albums with different record labels and offering him the freedom to explore various musical settings. His collaborations with different instruments and a diverse array of musicians of distinct musical backgrounds can be observed in his trio, quartet or solo appearances.

QUEENS JAZZ SCENE



Jazz Memorial on the northern side of Linden Boulevard as it passes under the Long Island Railroad.
Image credit: Forgotten New York.



Jazz Memorial on the northern side of Linden Boulevard as it passes under the Long Island Railroad.

Though many people may be unaware, Queens has a rich history of the jazz scene and jazz musicians in the borough. Many renowned musicians have brought soulful music to the borough since the mid-twentieth century. Today, Queens is still determined to keep the scene alive and bring awareness to the public.

Among many jazz clubs and organizations in Queens is the Creative Jazz Organization (CJO). CJO has been thriving for over 35 years and works to provide musicians, especially college students with awards and scholarships. The Creative Jazz Organization is one of those hidden gems that few people know about. For the musicians that play at the American Legion Benjamin Moore Post 1946 hall, Wednesday signifies "Jazz night," a tradition the Creative Jazz Organization (CJO) has been keeping alive for over 35 years. As one of the oldest active jazz organizations in NYC since 1975, the CJO provides live jazz music awards and scholarships to many musicians, especially aspiring jazz college students.

Queens has been home to many famous jazz musicians such as Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong and Count Basie. Eventually the Landmarks Preservation Commission of New York City recognized the value of these individuals and granted landmark status the Queens' neighborhood of Addisleigh Park where many of them lived.

When you think of jazz, you think of New Orleans, Chicago or Harlem. But Queens, New York, has long been a hometown for great Jazz Musicians and big band names. Ella Fitzgerald, Louis Armstrong and the big bandleader Count Basie all lived in Queens, New York. The Landmarks Preservation Commission granted landmark status to Queen's neighborhood of Addisleigh Park in St. Albans where all these greats lived. There is even a landmarked historic house in which Louis Armstrong lived in Corona, Queens. Some of the many jazz music venues in Queens include: Brownstone Jazz, Terraza 7, Charlotte's Speakeasy, and Domaine Wine bar. One of the few memorials commemorating the Queen's jazz scene is the mural on the northern side of Linden Boulevard as it passes under the Long Island Railroad.

AWARDS AND HONORS

2018

Lifetime Achievement in Jazz
Award from The Jazz Journalists
Association (JJA)

2018

Honorary Board Member Award
from The Coltrane Home in Dix
Hills, N.Y.

2016

Lifetime Achievement Award from
The Jazz Foundation of America

2015

Honorary Doctorate Degree from
Duke University

2014

Legends of Jazz Award from The
National Jazz Museum in Harlem

2013

African American Classical Music
Award from Spelman College

2008

Presidential Merit Award from
the GRAMMY Foundation

2005

Berklee College of Music
President Roger Brown confers
honorary doctor of music degrees
upon pianists McCoy Tyner and
Hank Jones

2004

Steinway and Sons confers a
special gold medallion to McCoy,
honoring his fiftieth year as a
professional musician and his
association with Steinway as a
Steinway Artist since 1977

2004

Illuminations wins a GRAMMY
Award for Best Jazz Instrumental
Album, Individual or Group

2003

The Philadelphia Chapter of the
BMI Recording Academy presents
McCoy with a "2003 Hero Award,"
honoring outstanding individuals
and institutions in the Philadelphia
region who have improved the
environment for the creative
community

2002

McCoy Tyner receives a Jazz
Master Award from the National
Endowment for the Arts ("NEA")

2002

McCoy Tyner Plays John Coltrane
– Live At The Village Vanguard
receives a GRAMMY nomination
for Best Jazz Instrumental Album,
Individual or Group 1995 Infinity
wins a GRAMMY Award for Best
Jazz Instrumental Performance,
Individual or Group

1994

Journey wins a GRAMMY Award
for Best Large Jazz Ensemble
Performance

1992

The Turning Point wins a
GRAMMY Award for Best Large
Jazz Ensemble Performance

1989

Uptown/Downtown receives a
GRAMMY nomination for Best
Jazz Instrumental Performance,
Big Band

1988

Blues for Coltrane – A Tribute to
John Coltrane wins a GRAMMY
Award for Best Jazz Instrumental
Performance, Group

1978

Rotunda receives a GRAMMY
nomination for Best Arrangement
for Voices

1977

McCoy Tyner is named "Pianist of
the Year" in the DownBeat Critics
Poll for the fourth consecutive
year (1974 – 1977)

1977

McCoy Tyner's band is selected
"Acoustic Jazz Group" of the
year in the DownBeat Critics Poll
for the fourth consecutive year
(1974 – 1977)

1974

"Naima" receives a GRAMMY
nomination for Best Jazz
Performance by a Soloist

1974

"Sama Layuca" receives a
GRAMMY nomination for Best
Jazz Performance by a Group

1973

Sahara is named 'Record of the
Year' in the DownBeat Critics Poll

1972

Sahara receives a GRAMMY
nomination for Best Jazz
Performance by a Soloist

1972

Sahara receives a GRAMMY
nomination for Best Jazz
Performance by a Group