

DOWNBEAT HALL OF FAME

Hank Mobley MASTER OF CONTRASTS

One night in November 1955, a cooperative then known as The Jazz Messengers took the stage of New York's Cafe Bohemia. Their performance would yield two albums (*At The Cafe Bohemia, Volume 1* and *Volume 2* on Blue Note) and help spark the rise of hard-bop.

By Aaron Cohen

A t 25 years old, tenor saxophonist Hank Mobley should already have been widely acclaimed for what he brought to the ensemble: making tricky tempo changes sound easy, playing with a big, full sound on ballads and penning strong compositions. But when his name was introduced on the first night at Cafe Bohemia, he received just a brief smattering of applause. That contrast between his incredible artistry and an audience's understated reaction encapsulates his career.

Critic Leonard Feather described Mobley as "the middleweight champion of the tenor saxophone." Likely not intended to be disrespectful, the phrase implied that his sound was somewhere between a heavy, aggressive style (like Sonny Rollins), and gently swinging one (like Lester Young). But the "middleweight" designation left him underappreciated in the annals of jazz history.

Additionally, Mobley retreated from the public eye for a number of years, which earned him a reputation for reclusiveness. Still, just as middleweight champion boxer Sugar Ray Robinson inspired the legendary Muhammad Ali, Mobley set the pace for many celebrated tenor saxophonists who followed his path, including his friend John Coltrane.

Now, with his induction into the DownBeat Hall of Fame more than 33 years after his death at age 55, Mobley's name has joined the ranks of the esteemed artists he influenced. Much of his best work has been assembled for the newly released eightdisc box set *The Complete Hank Mobley Blue Note Sessions 1963–70* (Mosaic). The collection illustrates the evolution of Mobley's instantly identifiable sound and his unique compositional approach. His muted harmonic twists and flowing rhythmic exchanges—while often hewing close to the bluesoffer a crucial statement on how jazz was transformed during that decade. Dissonance, electronic experimentation and more open-ended collective improvisation were not the only stylistic advances that marked what became known as "The '60s." Mobley's warm tone didn't necessarily coincide with clichés of the tumultuous era, as the saxophonist purposefully placed himself beyond perceived trends.

That individualism came across in one of his rare interviews, which he gave to writer John Litweiler for "Hank Mobley: The Integrity of the Artist–The Soul of the Man," which ran in the March 29, 1973, issue of DownBeat.

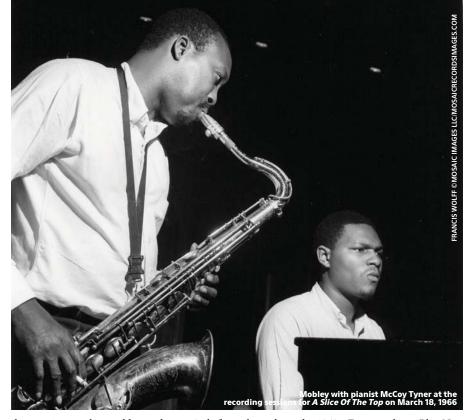
Mobley said to Litweiler: "When I was about 18, [my uncle] told me, 'If you're with somebody who plays loud, you play soft. If somebody plays fast, you play slow. If you try to play the same thing they're playing, you're in trouble.' Contrast."

That uncle, multi-instrumentalist Dave Mobley, encouraged the musical inclinations of his nephew, who picked up the tenor saxophone at around age 16. During the late 1940s and early 1950s, Mobley's experiences ranged from playing in r&b bands to a brief stint in the Duke Ellington Orchestra. But the bop revolution captured Mobley's passion as he started recording his own compositions in 1953, two years after drummer Max Roach brought him to New York.

In the early Jazz Messengers (before Art Blakey took the helm), Mobley's writing and improvisations incorporated advanced harmonic ideas while maintaining strong ties to the blues. On his mid-'50s Savoy records, Mobley's challenging compositions emboldened teenage trumpeter Lee Morgan, who would become one of the saxophonist's ongoing musical foils.

Blue Note signed Mobley as a bandleader in 1955, and for





the next 15 years he would record extensively for the label. The fervor in his playing and writing while he was in his mid to late twenties remains astonishing. Mobley recorded one of his landmark albums, Soul Station, in 1960, highlighting how, as the sole horn player, he engaged with a formidable rhythm section of Blakey, bassist Paul Chambers and pianist Wynton Kelly. The results are a triumph, especially the group's modern-leaning take on Irving Berlin's "Remember" and Mobley's assertiveness on his own "This I Dig Of You."

Mobley gained much wider attention when he joined Miles Davis' group in 1961. He plays on the trumpeter's album Someday My Prince Will Come, as well as two live LPs recorded at The Blackhawk in San Francisco. Mobley's earlier experience with Chambers and Kelly, Davis' rhythm section stalwarts, proved valuable. The saxophonist's tone highlighted what he described as "not a big sound, not a small sound, but a round sound," most vividly on ballads. This approach blended impeccably with the bandleader's muted tone.

In the Davis biography So What, writer John Szwed noted that with Mobley's blues inflections, "There was a hipness to his playing that reinforced Davis' popularity in black communities across America." But Davis did not speak so favorably about the saxophonist, and Coltrane and Wayne Shorter's roles with the trumpeter historically have overshadowed Mobley's short tenure in the band.

Just after leaving Davis, Mobley said that he delved into a recurring drug addiction that frequently kept him away from performing and recording. While incarcerated for drug possession, he used prison time to compose, and his sound continued to evolve after each setback

throughout the 1960s. Fortunately, as Blue Note Sessions shows, Mobley's record company stood by him, despite such episodes.

On 1964's No Room For Squares, Mobley conveyed quiet authority while allowing ample room for an especially spirited quintet. The group's unison lines on his "Three Way Split" give way to shifting rhythms in a fierce exchange among Mobley, bassist John Ore and drummer Philly Joe Jones.

Mobley extended his musical palette for the sextet LP A Caddy For Daddy (recorded in 1965). His waltz "The Morning After" sounds like it was written specifically for pianist McCoy Tyner.

Dippin' (also recorded in 1965) featured pianist Harold Mabern, whose robust blues feeling was a quality he shared with the leader. Mabern, who spoke to DownBeat about two weeks prior to his Sept. 17 death, somewhat agreed with a consensus that Mobley could be personally withdrawn. But he described the saxophonist as far from distant.

"Hank was a joy to be around, he never created problems, never got loud and boisterous," Mabern said of the sessions that produced Dippin', the only album the two musicians made together. "He was pure in heart. Those are the things that made the date easy for us, but he was no pushover: He knew what he wanted; you couldn't jive him."

Mobley did not always adhere to a standard format, as illustrated by his 1966 octet recording, A Slice Of The Top. His sharp timing and command of all registers remained steadfast while he created long choruses for a distinctive brass section that included euphonium and tuba. While Duke Pearson was nominally in charge of the arrangements, they flowed from Mobley's instructions. The tracks range from a waltz in 6/8 time ("Cute 'N Pretty") to the title track's multidirectional groove.

The groundbreaking LP sat unreleased until 1979, about six years after Mobley expressed frustration at the amount of his material sitting in the Blue Note vault. His exasperation seems understandable, and the new Mosaic collection includes tracks from five compelling albums that were recorded in the 1960s but not released until the late '70s and mid-'80s. Still, as Mosaic producer Michael Cuscuna pointed out, Mobley and his contemporaries-including Morgan, Jimmy Smith and Grant Green-created more tracks than any label could have been expected to issue around the time they were recorded.

During Mobley's last years in the studio, his work also included covers of r&b hits, like the Four Tops' "Reach Out I'll Be There," as well as original compositions that emphasized immediately attractive melodies with repeating motifs, such as "The Flip." In some ways, these tracks show that after 20 years of invention, he never lost his feel for r&b.

Bassist Mickey Bass, who played on the saxophonist's 1970 Blue Note album, Thinking Of Home, said Mobley's compositional skills remained honed, regardless of the distractions or hardships he faced. "With both Hank and Lee Morgan, their genius was so great that in spite of their addictions, they would write out most of the tunes for the record date in the cab on the way to rehearsal," Bass recalled. "That genius was unheard of at that particular time."

In 1972, Mobley recorded his last album, Breakthrough!, a collaboration with pianist Cedar Walton. (It was released on the Cobblestone label and later reissued by Muse).

Mobley continued his peripatetic lifestyle in the years that followed, but with the possibility of new music always out there. At the time of his 1973 DownBeat interview, Chicago was his home and he had started working with pianist Muhal Richard Abrams. No recording of the two is known to exist, which is a shame. Mobley's final years remain mysterious, but he was known to have suffered from lung cancer and bouts of homelessness. It's conceivable that he saw how his advanced ideas for composing and arranging on A Slice Of The Top became part of the lexicon for some of the groups coming out of Abrams' Association for the Advancement of Creative Musicians.

As Bob Blumenthal writes in the liner notes to Blue Note Sessions, Mobley did achieve a moment of acclaim shortly before his death. When Blue Note experienced its rebirth in 1985, the label invited him to participate in a relaunch concert at New York's Town Hall. Mobley appeared at the event, but he chose to speak to the audience, rather than perform. In some regard, he didn't have to, as everyone present seemed to acknowledge that the label, and jazz itself, had thrived because of Mobley's contributions.



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JAZZ ARTIST JAZZ ALBUM SOPRANO SAXOPHONE

Wayne Shorter 'PROBING INTO THE UNLIMITED'

Members of Wayne Shorter's quartet have heard some intriguing anecdotes over the years. "Miles believed in so much of Wayne's orchestral writing, his large-form writing," said bassist John Patitucci, referring to Shorter's stint in Miles Davis' band. "Not long before Miles passed, he kept saying to Wayne, 'You gotta expose yourself.' Because he wanted him to expose all his orchestrational power, and all the large-form things that he'd been working on all his life, sketches and things.

Wayne the idea to [record Shorter's arrangement of] 'Vendiendo Alegría,' which was on the *Alegría* record," Patitucci added. "We played it live a lot too, with orchestras."

It's clear that the orchestral portion of Shorter's *Emanon* (Blue Note)—which won Jazz Album of the Year in both the 2019 DownBeat Readers Poll and Critics Poll—has been a long time coming. (Shorter also topped the Jazz Artist and Soprano Saxophone categories in the Readers Poll.)

The iconic saxophonist has been performing with symphony orchestras for years with his quartet, which, in addition to Patitucci, includes pianist Danilo Pérez and drummer Brian Blade. "We did stuff with the St. Louis Symphony, the Concertgebouw Orchestra, a lot of European [orchestras]," Patitucci said. "There are a lot of recordings that exist, I'm sure, but they have not come out. We were thrilled that *Emanon* could happen, frankly."

The hurdles for having a project like *Emanon* come to fruition involve not only the cost of recording a large ensemble, but the fact that jazz and classical are seen by many as separate poles in music culture. Shorter, however, frequently has understood and explored many connections between the two genres.

"It's all wrapped up in forging ahead," Shorter said. "Like, do you know Mozart's G minor Symphony No. 40? That can be the cymbal beat in jazz, straight jazz." He then demonstrated by singing the opening theme. Then he translated the phrase into a rhythmic pattern: "*Danga-dang, danga-dang, danga-dang, danga-dang,*" making it sound like a skip-ride beat. "I'll just throw it out there: Mozart was probing into the unlimited.

"In classical, there is an extreme, a desire to increase what you'd call musical vocabulary," Shorter continued. "And then in jazz, you have a kind of vocabulary which, when increased, or expounded, or blown up, you have the birth of avant-garde, a birth of this, a birth of fusion, a birth of that. But the actual musical vocabulary, and what jazz was driving at, was the democratic gateway to increasing the expressive vocabulary of what you're doing. Not just doing jazz."

"He has his style," Patitucci said of Shorter's orchestral compositions. "We have the benefit of poring over the scores, and being inside that music for many years—whether it's directly related to that piece or many others that he's written and performed with orchestras all around the world."

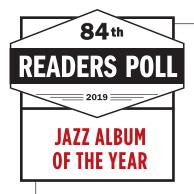
Many aspects of Shorter's orchestral writing seem vertical in structure; for instance, "the way he stacks harmonies up," according to Patitucci. But what the bassist most admires are the horizontal elements. "There are a lot of lines—the woodwind line, the string line that shoot across horizontally, commenting on those blocks of harmony that he lays out."

Patitucci emphasized that he, Pérez and Blade, who are all composers, are "huge students of orchestration." They typically study Shorter's scores and then collaborate on the final piece: "Wayne trusts us to come up with our own stuff. So, Danilo will get the score, a piano reduction. Sometimes I'll look at that, but I'll also have the orchestral bass part, and will improvise around that, writing in aspects of the piano part, if needed. Brian will look at the bass part or the score ... and Danilo will write in parts of the orchestration coming from the woodwinds or whatever, lines that he might want to double. What we do in those situations is carve out our own parts, to complement what Wayne has written."

Screenwriter Monica Sly worked on a different aspect of Shorter's writing: the graphic novel that provides the visual element of the *Emanon* package. Sly framed the narrative arc around the four orchestral compositions on the recording. (The graphic novel's illustrations are by Randy DuBurke.)

"You have four different songs, with four different meanings," she explained. "Each song is going to be a different journey to overcome fear. Wayne's biggest thing in life, what he's always trying to get people to do, is to face their fears and embrace the unknown—which is a very scary thing for most people."

Although she'd never written text for a graphic novel before, she found working on *Emanon* to be a deeply satisfying experience. "Nothing I've done has ever been like writing with Wayne," she said. "But that's because there's no one like Wayne." —*J.D. Considine*





() WAYNE SHORTER

Emanon (Blue Note)

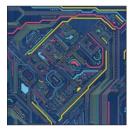
Shorter's quixotic and nonlinear approach to music (and language) has made him an unlikely candidate for a high-profile spotlight. Yet he's been in lofty situations for decades as a critical player and composer in Art Blakey's Jazz Messengers dating back to the 1950s, in the Miles Davis Quintet of the '60s and as cofounder of Weather Report in 1970. This ambitious, three-disc set, recorded with both the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and his long-standing quartet, reinforces Shorter's status as one of jazz's paradoxical superheroes.



2 TONY BENNETT & DIANA KRALL

Love Is Here To Stay (Verve)

Bennett and Krall collaborate with pianist Bill Charlap on a collection of 12 Gershwin tunes that conjure both animated and intimate moods. The material is suffused with vernacular—from the opening "S Wonderful" (which employs the kind of street-corner slang of which the Gershwins were fond) to the closing "Who Cares?" (which supplies plenty of attitude).



3 CHRIS POTTER

Circuits (Edition)

Potter's latest showcases some of the groove and r&b feel that marked his Underground group. But this new trio originally was assembled for a tour. Potter wanted to pursue an electric project, so he brought in drummer Eric Harland, who in turn recommended pianist James Francies. The live shows went so well, it seemed as if studio time was in order. It was.

4 KAMASI WASHINGTON

Heaven And Earth (Young Turks)

Musical representations of struggle, love and redemption, expressed through lush orchestration and a malleable mix of styles, ranging from futuristic post-bop to fusion and folk, constitute Washington's most recent longform recording. But *Heaven And Earth* traces a personal evolution that speaks to larger issues around justice and unity.

5 COUNT BASIE ORCHESTRA

All About That Basie (Concord)

The Count Basie Orchestra was founded in 1936 in Kansas City, Missouri, and continues to this day, decades after its namesake bandleader died in 1984 at the age of 79. Just don't call it a repertory, or worse, "ghost" band. And while the troupe plays true to its roots, it handles everything from Adele's "Hello" to Leonard Cohen's "Hallelujah" with aplomb.

WIND

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6. CÉCILE MCLORIN SALVANT

The Window (Mack Avenue)

In many ways vocalist Salvant is, first, an actor. She knows that actors are dependent upon their roles and that, for her, the song is the role. She chooses carefully from high-end theater and cabaret songs, sometimes unexpectedly if not always successfully. But her repertoire mixes the safety of the familiar with the risks of the obscure.

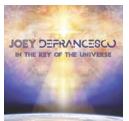
🕡 | SNARKY PUPPY

Immigrance (GroundUP)

There's usually a thematic conceit to Snarky Puppy records, and when writing the tunes for *Immigrance*, Michael League was thinking about migration and movement. Snarky has developed as a live band, driven by a studio technician's ethic, and during the past dozen years, its music has become a genre of its own—one with remarkable popular appeal.







WYNTON MARSALIS

"Bolden" Original Soundtrack (Blue Engine)

If the notion of Marsalis' tentet cutting loose on "Tiger Rag" or an original piece designed to evoke what Bolden's band might have sounded like is intriguing, then this wildly entertaining excursion into early styles of the genre, expertly delivered by members of the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, should be in your collection.



The Secret Between The Shadow And The Soul (OKeh/Sony)

Whether leading his own groups; playing alongside artists as diverse as Public Enemy, Tina Turner and the Grateful Dead; appearing on Broadway, in films and on TV; and pursuing classical music, Marsalis' ability to shape-shift remains central not only to who he is, but who he's becoming. The bandleader's journey continues here, with his inimitable quartet.



In The Key Of The Universe (Mack Avenue)

Organ virtuoso DeFrancesco takes on a contemplative aura for his collaboration with saxophonist Pharoah Sanders, a celebration of "The Creator Has A Master Plan," the half-century-old song of praise that was the revelatory centerpiece of Sanders' earthshaking album, *Karma*. Everyone benefits from this kind of musical exchange.

11.	CHRISTIAN SCUTT ATUNDE ADJUAH Ancestral Recall (Ropeadope)
12.	TOM HARRELL Infinity (HighNote)
13.	BRAD MEHLDAU Finding Gabriel (Nonesuch)
14.	ESPERANZA SPALDING 12 Little Spells (Concord)
15.	FRED HERSCH TRIO Live In Europe (Palmetto)
16.	JOHN SCOFIELD Combo 66 (Verve)
17.	AMBROSE AKINMUSIRE Origami Harvest (Blue Note)
18.	CHARLES LLOYD & THE MARVELS + LUCINDA WILLIAMS Vanished Gardens (Blue Note)
19.	JOSHUA REDMAN Come What May (Nonesuch)
20.	MELISSA ALDANA <i>Visions</i> (Motéma)

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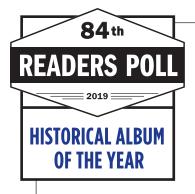
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JOHN COLTRANE

Both Directions At Once: The Lost Album (Impulse!)

Above all, Both Directions At Once works as a snapshot of a wondrous band on the cusp of revolution. The 14 studio performances, all recorded March 6, 1963, by engineer Rudy Van Gelder at his New Jersey studio, fill out the history of Trane's classic quartet, the song selection offering fresh insight into the way the group developed and grew. There are four takes of "Impressions" (each strikingly unique in terms of tempo and approach), three untitled originals and two versions of "One Up One Down." Basically, this is a Coltrane fan's fantasy come true.



2 THE BEATLES

The White Album (Anniversary Edition) (Apple Corps Ltd./Capitol/UMe)

Sgt. Pepper's might be The Beatles' most feted recording, but an argument for The White Album being the group's most feral is easy to make. Adding to the darkness, joviality and rough-hewn blues are new stereo mixes, the 27-track Esher Demos, overseen by Paul, Ringo and George Martin's son, Giles.



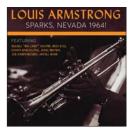
(3.) JOHN COLTRANE

Coltrane '58: The Prestige Recordings (Craft)

The eight-LP set Coltrane '58: The Prestige Recordings captures the saxophonist at a pivotal point in becoming one of jazz's most influential leaders and soloists. The seven sessions he cut as a leader for Prestige were but a fraction of the 20 studio dates on his calendar in 1958, just a year before recording both Kind Of Blue with Miles Davis and Giant Steps.









Evans In England (Resonance)

Having just formed a trio with bassist Eddie Gomez and drummer Marty Morell the year before, as well as temporarily kicking his heroin habit, '69 marked Evans entering a new era of stability and exploratory creativity. And it's this nascent self-discovery that's documented on this double album of Evans' trio playing at London's Ronnie Scott's club that year.

THE ART ENSEMBLE OF CHICAGO

ECM's





Sparks, Nevada 1964! (Dot Time)

A stop at the Circus Room of the Nugget Casino in Sparks, Nevada, is typical of what Armstrong's All Stars brought to audiences in 1964. The program touches on his New Orleans roots, showcases the musicians' chops and peaks with a couple of energetic vocal turns by Jewel Brown. And, of course, the show gives ample room for Pops to just be Pops.

headed up by U.K. improviser Evan Parker.

ARETHA FRANKLIN (7.)

The Atlantic Singles Collection 1967-1970 (Rhino)



Spanning one of Franklin's most fruitful periods, this collection finds The First Lady of Soul getting comfortable on her new label after leaving Columbia. Compiling 34 cuts issued from the beginning of her relationship with the imprint, hits that would elevate Franklin beyond "crossover star" status are plentiful, as are covers of Sam Cooke, The Band and others.







BETTY CARTER (8.)

The Music Never Stops (Blue Engine)

Blue Engine Records, the recording arm of Jazz at Lincoln Center, launched singer Betty Carter's first posthumous album, a live 1992 recording. She's backed alternately by a jazz orchestra, a string section, and three different piano trios, and her distinctive melodic alterations engage both musically and emotionally. It's hard to remain detached while listening.



Musical Prophet: The Expanded 1963 New York Studio Sessions (Resonance)

Whether wielding alto sax, flute or bass clarinet, Dolphy was a godsend to those who were on a mission to expand the language of jazz. He might never attain the stature and notoriety that Trane has, but the previously unreleased music from 1963 on this three-disc set goes a long way toward bolstering Dolphy's legacy.

10. FRANK SINATRA

Frank Sinatra Sings For Only The Lonely (60th Anniversary Edition) (Capitol)

If the title and cover weren't enough to convey the album's theme, its somber torch songs did the trick, propelling the disc to charttopping success in 1968. Included on Capitol's anniversary edition are the original 12-song program in both a mono and a new stereo mix, as well as four bonus tracks.

11.	WES MONTGOMERY Back On Indiana Avenue: The Carroll DeCamp Recordings (Resonance)
12.	DEXTER GORDON QUARTET Tokyo 1975 (Elemental)
13.	WOODY SHAW Tokyo 1981 (Elemental)
14.	THELONIOUS MONK Mønk (Gearbox)
15.	PAUL BLEY/GARY PEACOCK/PAUL MOTIAN When Will The Blues Leave (ECM)
16.	GARY BURTON Take Another Look: A Career Retrospective (Mack Avenue)
17.	CHARLIE HADEN & BRAD MEHLDAU Long Ago And Far Away (Impulse!)
18.	DUKE ELLINGTON In Coventry, 1966 (Storyville)
19.	CHARLES MINGUS Jazz In Detroit/Strata Concert Gallery/46 Selden (BBE)
20.	KEITH JARRETT <i>La Fenice</i> (ECM)
21.	ART PEPPER Unreleased Art Pepper, Vol. 10: Bourbon Street–Toronto, June 16,1977 (Widow's Taste)



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FAREWELL TO A BELOVED MENTOR

As the jazz world continues to mourn the death of Roy Hargrove, the bandleader has been given a posthumous honor, winning the Trumpet category in the DownBeat Readers Poll.

oy Hargrove died suddenly on Nov. 2, 2018, at the age of 49, from cardiac arrest caused by kidney disease, an affliction with which he had long struggled.

Hargrove was, among many other things, a kind of binding agent in jazz, as trumpeters are wont to be; artistically generous and open-minded, he helped connect all sorts of musicians in a genre that has had its share of aesthetic schisms.

It was entirely uncontroversial—and also extremely cool—to dig Roy Hargrove. He stood apart from the neo-bop musicians who had preceded him by a decade or so—particularly Wynton Marsalis, who helped launch Hargrove's career—in that he was part of the jazz tradition but not stuffy about it. Hargrove wasn't supercilious about crossing genres or blending styles or even moving away from jazz.

His nonchalant, unaffected air lent him a

magnetic quality. "When he played, everybody just sat up a little bit straighter and there was this excitement in the room," said Rio Sakairi, who since 2000 has served as the artistic director of the Jazz Gallery, the Manhattan club Hargrove founded with Lezlie Harrison and Dale Fitzgerald in 1995. "He left a gaping hole."

That was apparent last January during a tribute concert held at Jazz at Lincoln Center's Rose Theater and hosted by bassist Christian McBride. Around 200 performers lamented the loss of a musician who meant so much to so many people.

There was Marsalis leading a traditional second line, summoning the feel of a New Orleans funeral. And here was Hargrove's big band, along with different iterations of his celebrated quintet. There was the Dizzy Gillespie All-Star band, in which Hargrove had played. And there was Dee Dee Bridgewater, Jon Batiste and Norah Jones, who delivered a moving solo-piano rendition of "The Nearness Of You," which Jones told the crowd she had learned by listening to Hargrove.

The trumpeter was raised in Dallas and relocated to New York in 1990, and was a prodigy from the start, moving easily among different sounds, styles and generations. His band, the RH Factor, was a loud, funky vehicle, while his quintet was a smooth-running, straightahead machine.

He won two Grammys, one for his 1997 Latin jazz album, *Habana*, and another for *Directions In Music: Live At Massey Hall*, his famed collaboration with Michael Brecker and Herbie Hancock, released in 2002. In the late 1990s, he became involved with the Soulquarian movement, working with stars from hip-hop and r&b, such as D'Angelo and Erykah Badu.

Hargrove released more than 20 albums as a leader, and his 2008 release—*Earfood*, the second-to-last recording he led—is one of his most highly regarded. He performed on many other artists' recordings, but his greatest impact as a musician was perhaps at the interpersonal level. He was an avid club-goer, and often sat in at jam sessions throughout New York, particularly at Smalls, the basement jazz hangout in the West Village that operates as a proving ground for young musicians.

Such mingling kept Hargrove fresh, according to Marc Cary, a pianist/keyboardist who performed frequently with the trumpeter. "Because he was driven by a need to keep his chops together, and his love for the music, he was out most nights in pursuit of that," Cary said. "Because he communed so frequently with the young musicians, he could pass on his wisdom of the music, the etiquette and the correct changes to a composition."

Hargrove was a ubiquitous and outsized presence on the scene, with his stylish suits, sunglasses and fedoras. In the months leading up to his premature death, he could be found blowing away at clubs and embodying the tradition, helping to pass it along to younger players.

Sakairi said that no one's yet risen to take Hargrove's place as a kind of community organizer capable of bringing everyone together while also standing apart as one of the most talented musicians in the field.

Although Hargrove leaves behind an acclaimed discography, Sakairi said it is unfortunate that fans who are just discovering him—or are yet to discover him—won't be able to experience the trumpeter in person. "It's disheartening to think that new audiences are going to come to Roy only through his recordings," said Sakairi, "and never understand what he was capable of in a live situation."

-Matthew Kassel



SPIRITUAL CONNECTIONS

DownBeat devised the term "Beyond" to apply to music that defies easy categorization and no one is a better example of that than Dr. John.

eah, Mac was 'beyond' even when he was still with us," observed guitarist and Grammy award-winning producer Shane Theriot, who produced Dr. John's final gift to the world: the last album he recorded and signed off on before his June 6 death at 77.

That as-yet unreleased album, which at press time wasn't attached to a label, caps a genre-busting career. Steeped in the funky second-line rhythms of his hometown of New Orleans where he joined a pantheon of piano greats from Professor Longhair to Fats Domino—Dr. John ranged far beyond his roots, without ever losing that deep connection, collecting six Grammys along the way and earning his rightful place in the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame.

Born Malcolm John Rebennack Jr., he was still a kid when he started channeling Pinetop Perkins on the keys and Lightnin' Hopkins on guitar. As a teen in the mid-'50s, he dove headfirst into the steamy cauldron of r&b boiling over in New Orleans, wrote a couple of regional hits himself, and was touring the South as a guitarist when he sacrificed the tip of one finger to the gods in a Florida motel altercation.

That fortuitous mishap reignited Mac's uncanny ability to "radiate the 88s," as he put it,

first as a Bourbon Street strip-joint organist and later as Dr. John The Night Tripper, the bone-andbead bedecked stage persona he unveiled on his 1968 debut, *Gris-Gris.* Inspired by a Senegalese healer and conjurer who arrived in 19th century New Orleans via Haiti, Dr. John soon became inseparable from Mac himself.

"Mac did incantations and chants before the gigs," recalled jazz keyboardist and bandleader David Torkanowsky, who played Hammond B-3 with Dr. John on and off for several decades and accompanied Mac every year to get a New Year's blessing and gris-gris bag from their spiritual mentor, Frank Lastie. "It was sort of a spiritual reset."

"It wasn't a jive thing," noted Theriot, a Neville Brothers veteran who played guitar with Dr. John on before signing on as Mac's producer. "Everyone would hold hands in a circle, and I always felt different when we got done with that."

Those spiritual resets carried even more weight when Theriot and Torkanowsky were both working on what they sensed would be Mac's swan song. And while some fans might be surprised that the as-yet untitled album invokes the spirit of Hank Williams and other country pioneers, taken in context of Mac's career, it makes perfect sense.

Ske-Dat-De-Dat: The Spirit Of Satch (2014), the last studio album Mac released before his death, salutes Louis Armstrong and follows tributes to Duke Ellington and songwriter Johnny Mercer. Now, Williams joins that illustrious list.

"[T]hose songs were dear to his heart," said Theriot, who helped Mac fulfill a dream of following Ray Charles' lead by making his own country album. "This record wasn't intended to be posthumous; that's just the way things happened. It was a cohesive artistic statement Mac put together while he was here."

Like Dr. John's concerts, the forthcoming album has some surprises. Willie Nelson joined in for a joyous rendition of "(Give Me That) Old-Time Religion" and Rickie Lee Jones circled back to put a spell on "I Walk On Gilded Splinters." But even the country standards were "completely Rebennack-ed out," as Torkanowsky put it.

"Mac basically channeled ancestry, which is what great jazz players do," Torkanowsky said. "Every time you played music with him, you were speaking to several of his ancestral griots at the same time. That's why his music was so deep. It was informed by history and a deep reverence for those who came before him." —*Cree McCree* DERS POLL COMPLETE RESULTS

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84th

2019

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