

Miles Ornette Cecil: Jazz Beyond Jazz

Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, and Cecil Taylor were three of the most influential jazz musicians of the 20th century. They each made groundbreaking contributions to the genre, pushing the boundaries of improvisation and challenging conventional notions of what jazz could be. This article will explore their lives, careers, and lasting impact on jazz and beyond.



Miles, Ornette, Cecil: Jazz Beyond Jazz by Howard Mandel

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Miles Davis: The Master of Cool

Miles Davis was born in Alton, Illinois, in 1926. He began playing trumpet at an early age and quickly developed a prodigious talent. In the 1940s, he moved to New York City and joined the bebop scene, playing with Charlie Parker, Dizzy Gillespie, and other jazz luminaries. However, Davis soon grew dissatisfied with the limitations of bebop and began to explore new musical directions.

In the 1950s, Davis developed a new sound that was more relaxed and lyrical than bebop. He called this new style "cool jazz" and it quickly became popular with critics and audiences alike. Davis's cool jazz recordings from this period, such as "Birth of the Cool" and "Kind of Blue," are considered some of the greatest jazz albums of all time.

Davis continued to experiment with new musical ideas throughout his career. In the 1960s, he turned to electric jazz and fusion, and in the 1970s, he explored funk and soul. Davis was always pushing the boundaries of jazz, and his music continues to inspire musicians and listeners today.

Ornette Coleman: The Father of Free Jazz

Ornette Coleman was born in Fort Worth, Texas, in 1930. He began playing alto saxophone at an early age and developed a unique approach to improvisation that was heavily influenced by blues and gospel music. In the 1950s, Coleman moved to Los Angeles and began to perform with other avant-garde jazz musicians, such as Eric Dolphy and Don Cherry.

In 1959, Coleman released his debut album, "The Shape of Jazz to Come." This album was a groundbreaking work that challenged conventional notions of jazz harmony and melody. Coleman's music was often chaotic and dissonant, but it was also full of energy and vitality. He was one of the pioneers of free jazz, a style of jazz that is characterized by its lack of traditional structure and its emphasis on improvisation.

Coleman continued to push the boundaries of jazz throughout his career. He experimented with different musical forms, including chamber music, orchestral music, and world music. He also collaborated with a wide range of musicians, from jazz legends like Charlie Haden to rock stars like Lou Reed.

Cecil Taylor: The Avant-Garde Jazz Giant

Cecil Taylor was born in New York City in 1929. He began playing piano at an early age and quickly developed a formidable technique. In the 1950s, Taylor began to play with other avant-garde jazz musicians, such as Ornette Coleman and John Coltrane.

Taylor's music was often highly complex and challenging. He employed a wide range of techniques, including extended piano techniques, polytonality, and free improvisation. Taylor's music was not for everyone, but it was always stimulating and thought-provoking.

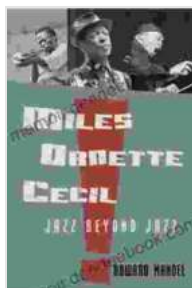
Taylor continued to experiment with new musical ideas throughout his career. He collaborated with a wide range of musicians, from jazz legends like Archie Shepp to experimental musicians like Derek Bailey. Taylor's music was always pushing the boundaries of jazz, and he was one of the most important and influential jazz musicians of his generation.

Their Lasting Impact

Miles Davis, Ornette Coleman, and Cecil Taylor were three of the most important and influential jazz musicians of the 20th century. They each made groundbreaking contributions to the genre, pushing the boundaries of improvisation and challenging conventional notions of what jazz could be. Their music continues to inspire musicians and listeners today, and their legacy will continue to endure for generations to come.

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