

SUSAN ALCORN (Apr. 4, 1953 – Jan. 31, 2025) The pedal steel guitarist and composer died of natural causes at age 71. The Allentown, PA-born musician began playing music at age three, first on viola, cornet and guitar; discovering the pedal steel guitar at age 21, she took it beyond its country roots through the study of classical and world music and visionary jazz. Alcorn was included in the “Best Miscellaneous Instrument” category in *DownBeat*’s 2016 Critics Poll. She released more than a dozen albums as a leader or co-leader, including, most recently, *Filament* (Relative Pitch), with Catherine Sikora. Though known for her solo work, she collaborated with artists including the London Improvisers Orchestra, Glasgow Improvisers Orchestra, Joe McPhee, Ingrid Laubrock, Evan Parker, Michael Formanek and Mary Halvorson, among others.

MARIO ALLARD (1983 – Jan. 12, 2025) The 42-year-old Canadian saxophonist died after accidentally falling from a third-floor balcony of his Montreal apartment. After studying with renowned saxophonist Donny McCaslin, he became well-known in the city’s clubs, played with Quebec star Robert Charlebois and was a member of Papagroove and Jazzlab Orchestra.

DAVE BARGERON (Sep. 6, 1942 – Jan. 18, 2025) The low-brass player (trombone, tuba, euphonium, sackbut), who hailed from Athol, MA, died at age 82. His first lead trombone job was Clark Terry’s Big Band; from 1968-70 he played bass trombone and tuba with Doc Severinsen, before joining Blood, Sweat and Tears. Other collaborations ranged from the Gil Evans Orchestra, Gerry Mulligan, David Sanborn, Pat Metheny and Stanley Turrentine to Paul Simon, Mick Jagger, James Taylor and Eric Clapton, and many others. He was a member of Super Trombone and had a handful of albums on Mapleshade and Enja.

PAT CAPLICE (Apr. 4, 1927 – Jan. 13, 2025) The Australian vibraphonist-drummer died at 96. He was a bandleader (with sessions on Pacific and Columbia) in addition to performing with the Art Ray Quintet and the Music Maker All-Stars.

WILLIAM “BILL” CARTER (Dec. 25, 1934 – Jan. 1, 2025) The noted L.A.-born photographer and clarinetist, whose work included the book *Preservation Hall: Music from the Heart*, died at age 90. He led his own groups as a jazz musician and was also a member of Turk Murphy’s band in the ‘50s, later playing with the Magnolia Jazz Band, Sunset Music Company, William Warfield and Hot Club of San Francisco.

PADDY COLE (Dec. 17, 1939 – Jan. 22, 2025) The Irish showband singer and saxophone player, diagnosed with lung cancer in 2022, died at age 85 in hospice care in his hometown of Castleblayney. His first performance was at age 12, billed as “Ireland’s youngest saxophone player.” Active since the ‘50s, he joined The Capitol Showband in the ‘60s, then moved to Las Vegas in the early ‘70s to join The Big Eight Showband (featuring singers Brendan Bowyer, Tom Dunphy and Twink). Returning to Ireland, Cole began a long tenure as a radio host, and had albums on Dolphin, Top Spin, K-Tel International, Owl and RTÉ.

ABDOULAYE DIABATE (1959 – Jan. 16, 2025) The Senegalese pianist died at age 65. Born in Dakar, he studied music at the Conservatoire de Dakar before joining l’Orchestre National du Sénégal. Diabate co-founded the Kora Jazz Trio, which has new millennium albums on Mélodie, Celluloid and Cristal.

PAUL FONTAINE (Apr. 8, 1937 – Jan. 11, 2025) The trumpeter and longtime educator at his alma mater, Berklee College of Music, died at age 87. He studied with Herb Pomeroy, then with Jimmy Mosher and also a big band that played locally around Peabody, MA. Fontaine worked with Woody Herman, Maynard Ferguson, Greg Abate, and the White Heat Swing Band with Craig Ball and Greg Hopkins as well as Tony Bennett, The Supremes, Frank Sinatra and many others.

LEE HILDERBRAND (Mar. 28, 1945 – Jan. 24, 2025) The prolific music writer (an expert in the blues) passed away at age 79. He had also suffered a stroke in November 2017. Active in the San Francisco Bay area since the mid ‘60s, he was also a drummer and producer. Hilderbrand’s many liner notes appear on albums for labels such as Shubra, Milestone, Contemporary and Prestige.

LAURENCE (LAURIE) HOLLOWAY (Mar. 31, 1938 – Jan. 9, 2025) The English pianist, musical director and composer died at age 86. Holloway music directed and wrote themes for many BBC programs. Music director for Engelbert Humperdinck, he also had albums on Columbia, CBS, RCA and Universal Classics, and worked with John Dankworth, Vic Lewis, Cleo Laine, Sacha Distel, Stéphane Grappelli, Joe Williams, J.J. Johnson and others.

MARTIN HUMMEL (Feb. 2, 1955 – Jan. 10, 2025) Born in Montclair, NJ, the producer was long-based in the UK, where he died, in London, at age 70. Hummel co-founded the multi-pronged jazz company Ubuntu in 2015. Of the label’s over 100 releases, featured artists include: Yoko Miwa, George Colligan, Darius Brubeck, Laurence Hobgood, Harold Mabern, Eric Alexander and Alina Bzhezhsinska.

MARK IZU (Sep. 30, 1954 – Jan. 12, 2025) The Japanese-American pioneer of the Asian American Jazz Movement, died at 70 in San Francisco, CA. Izu played a variety of instruments in the groups of Jon Jang, Fred Ho, Francis Wong, Miya Masaoka, Hafez Modirzadeh, Kent Nagano, James Newton and Anthony Brown’s Asian American Jazz Orchestra, among others. In the early ‘80s he was a member of United Front. He had albums on RPM and Asian Improv Arts.

KRISTIAN JØRGENSEN (Sep. 1967 – Jan. 16, 2025) The Danish violinist, who was also proficient on piano and organ, died in Copenhagen at age 57. From a musical family, he started playing violin at age 8 and at 15 he recorded with pianist Duke Jordan. Jørgensen graduated from the Rhythmic Music Conservatory (1990), where later he served as a teacher. He was the leader of his own band and a key member of Tango Orkestret, which played the music of Astor Piazzolla. Jørgensen also played regularly in a trio with guitarist Paul Banks and accordionist Thor Backhausen. He had five solo albums, among them *Meeting Monty* (Stunt), as well as recordings on Music Mecca. Other associations included Kirk Lightsey and Lars Jansson.

MIKE MILLER (May 8, 1953 – Jan. 18, 2025) Born into a musical family in Sioux Falls, SD, Miller died from a heart attack at age 71. He was the third of four bass-playing brothers, performing with his father’s jazz band and in garage bands in his teens. He also played bass in the Sioux Falls Symphony. Miller moved to Colorado in 1972 where he played with Bill Frisell, Larry Coryell, Robben Ford and others. In 1975, he moved to California, playing with a variety of artists, then in 1981 began an eleven-year stint with Gino Vanelli, touring and recording five albums. Of his many career highlights: he appears on Chick Corea’s *Elektric Band II: Paint the World* (1993); played with the Seattle and Portland Symphonies, the Israel Philharmonic Orchestra and the Los Angeles Philharmonic New Music Group; toured with Boz Scaggs and played/recorded with Bette Midler; and worked with film composer Mark Mothersbaugh. His other credits include Brand X, Stanley Turrentine and Herb Alpert.

TONY PASSARELL (Jun. 17, 1956 – Jan. 13, 2025) The saxophonist, a stalwart of the Sacramento scene, died at 69. He produced and curated numerous jazz events, including various local Northern California festivals such as Airwaves Jazz Festival, Davis Jazz and Beat Festival and Fringe Arts Festival.

BOB PERKINS (Dec. 6, 1933 – Jan. 19, 2025) An award-winning radio DJ and Philadelphia stalwart, Perkins died at Jefferson Abington Hospital in Abington, PA, at age 91.

Best known for 25 years as the host of “Evening Jazz” at WRTI, Perkins also wrote liner notes and was a first call Master of Ceremonies for regional jazz events. Perkins got his first job in radio during a trip to visit his two brothers in Detroit. He worked as a newsman and assistant director at WJLB-AM in Detroit, then returned to Philadelphia in 1969, where he joined WDAS-AM/FM for 19 years. From 1988-97, he hosted a jazz program on Saturday nights on WHYY-FM. In 1997, Perkins became the PM drive-time jazz radio personality and host for Temple University Radio. He stepped down from full-time broadcasting in 2022 and retired from WRTI-FM in April 2023. Perkins also independently produced a radio documentary on the life of African American icon, singer-actor-activist Paul Robeson, a Pennsylvania native who spent his last years living in Philadelphia.

MIKE RATLEDGE (May 6, 1943 – Feb. 5, 2025) The keyboard player and founding member of Soft Machine passed away at age 81 after a short illness. Early on, Ratledge was inspired by the music of Cecil Taylor, Thelonious Monk, Miles Davis and John Coltrane, and was influential in shifting the focus of Soft Machine from rock to jazz. He also played in the David Allen Trio. Interested in furthering his education, Ratledge earned a degree in psychology and philosophy from University College Oxford. In the ‘80s, he was active as a composer and musical producer for commercials and theater.

HOWARD RILEY (Feb. 16, 1943 – Feb. 8, 2025) The English pianist and composer passed away at a care home in Beckenham, South London from Parkinson’s disease at age 81. Born in Huddersfield, York, he worked in jazz and experimental music idioms. Alongside university studies, he professionally performed with Evan Parker and then with his own trio. In addition to his many collaborations and credits he taught at the Guildhall School of Music and Goldsmiths University of London.

MANFRED SCHÜTZ (Jul. 5, 1950 – Jan. 3, 2025) An entrepreneur and founder of SPV and founder and managing director of MIG Music, Schütz passed away at age 74 after a long illness. Among the producer’s accomplishments were the MIG Music releases of archival recordings of Gary Bartz, Marion Brown, Joachim Kühn, Airtro Moreira/Flora Purim, Oregon, Manfred Schoof, Weather Report and Tony Williams.

EMILIO SOANA (1942 – Jan. 13, 2025) The Italian musician, who was the first trumpet of the RAI Orchestra of Milan, died at 81. A member of the Civica Jazz Band, he released an album, *Dizzy Forever (Live in Iseo Jazz 2015)*. Soana had collaborations with Gerry Mulligan, Art Farmer, Francis Boland, Harry Edison, Kenny Barron, Curtis Fuller, Ray Brown, Kai Winding, Clark Terry, Bruno De Filippi, Bruno Tommaso, Gianni Basso and others.

DON STILLE (1946 – Jan. 5, 2025) The St. Louis, MO-born pianist-accordionist died at age 78. Stille began formal music instruction at age 5. For over 20 years he was the featured pianist and accordionist for the Chicago blues, folk and jazz vocal recording artist, Bonnie Koloc. He was also the house pianist and accordionist and often-featured jazz artist on NPR’s “First House on the Right” and was a member of the Artist-Ensemble-in-Residence at the University of Chicago. Stille’s many credits include Claudia Schmidt, Chicago Metropolitan Jazz Orchestra, Clark Terry, Red Holloway, Roy Hargrove, Terry Gibbs, Ira Sullivan, Eddie Daniels, Doc Severinsen, Lew Soloff, Harry Connick Jr., The New York Voices, Mark Murphy, Dr. Billy Taylor, Marian McPartland and Scott Hamilton.

BOB VENIER (? – Jan. 15, 2025) The Melbourne-based Australian trumpet, flugelhorn, trombone and percussion player passed away at an advanced age. He was a member of Pyramid, The ABC Showband and the Australian Jazz Orchestra. He recorded once as leader and has credits with Brian Brown, Peter Martin, Graeme Lyall and others.