

TONY CARR (Oct. 24, 1927 – Jan. 2, 2026) Born George Caruana in Malta, the drummer-percussionist died at age 98. He began his musical career in Malta, forming an early jazz trio and in 1952 emigrated to the UK, joining Billy Eckstine in 1954 for a tour. Carr became a sought-after session musician for a diverse array of artists, with credits ranging from Danny Moss, Cleo Laine, Vic Lewis, Jack Parnell and Freddy Cole to pop/rock work with the likes of Paul McCartney, Roger Daltrey, Bryan Ferry and Roy Harper.

BRIAN CARRICK (? – Dec. 31, 2025) The British reeds player, known for his New Orleans jazz style in the tradition of George Lewis, died around age 82. He first began visiting Nola in the '80s and would perform and record with various ensembles there, but became best-known as the leader of the Heritage Hall Stompers. Carrick also collaborated with vocalist Topsy Chapman on the album *Jazz In New Orleans: The Nineties* (504 Records), leading the band and playing clarinet. He also had his own or collaborative albums on P.E.K., G.H.B., Jazz Crusade and Blue Dixie, and credits with Taff Lloyd, Reg Koeller, Kurt Jensen, Gentlemen of Jazz, Texas Sam Mooney, Frank Oxley, New Orleans Delight, Red Wing Band and others.

CHRIS CORTEZ (1956 – Dec. 21, 2025) The guitarist, vocalist and producer, passed away at age 69 from glioblastoma, an aggressive form of brain cancer. He played across various genres, including jazz, rock and blues, was founder of his own Blue Bamboo Music label and also founded the Blue Bamboo Center for the Arts (in Winter Park, FL). Cortez released his own dates as well as albums by Woody Witt, Fred Hamilton, Ed Soph, Mark Piszczek, Carol Morgan, Harvie S, Matija Dedić and Glenn Ackerman.

CARMEN DE LAVALLADE (Mar. 6, 1931 – Dec. 29, 2025) Recipient of a 2017 Kennedy Center Honor, the dancer-choreographer and actor died after a short illness at age 94. She intersected with jazz throughout her broad career, including with Jane Ira Bloom, Bill Evans and Quincy Jones. She starred in the 1957 TV production of Duke Ellington's *A Drum Is a Woman* and is said to have brought Ellington and Louis Armstrong to tears in 1960 with her embodiment of Billie Holiday in her work, *Portrait of Billie*. De Lavallade received an inaugural Berklee Legacy Award in 2021 alongside Ellington, Sarah Vaughan and violinist Joseph Douglass.

STEVE ERQUIAGA (1966 – Dec. 30, 2025) The guitarist, who played over a wide range of musical styles, including Latin, funk and modal jazz, died at age 59. He had albums on the Christian label, Maranatha! Music, as well as Advance Music, Windham Hill and Imaginary Road, plus credits with Joe Henderson, John Handy, Art Van Damme, Les McCann, Kenneth Nash, Frank Mantooth, Sadao Watanabe, Barbara Higbie, Jim McNeely, Alex De Grassi, Pete Escovedo and Jacqui Naylor.

ROBERTO "FATS" FERNANDEZ (Jun. 7, 1937 – Jan. 7, 2026) The Argentine trumpeter passed away in Buenos Aires at age 88. He learned to play bugle in primary school, transitioning to the trumpet at 17. In 1958, he joined The Georgian's Jazz Band and also performed with various Latin combos, including those led by Eddie Palmieri, Ray Barretto and Larry Harlow. He played with Ray Charles and Jorge Anders and was a member of saxophonist Gato Barbieri's quintet, as well as the group Sanata y Clarificación, led by guitarist Rodolfo Alchourrón. As a session musician, Fernández contributed to over 300 albums. He consistently participated in NYC's Annual Brass Conference. Fernández had albums on Interdisc and Melopea and additional credits with Jorge López Ruiz, Angel Pocho Gatti, Nestor Astarita, Alfombra

Magica, Fernando Tarrés, Pocho Lapouble, Sergio Paolucci, Orquesta Sinfónica Nacional Argentina, Quintino Cinalli, Chick Corea, Randy Brecker and Larry Coryell, among others.

LADISLAV FIDRI (May 30, 1940 – Dec. 17, 2025) The Croatian trumpeter, flugelhorn player, arranger, composer and conductor, who for 40 years was the soloist for the Croatian Radio-Television Big Band, died at age 85. He also led the Audi Big Band in Ingolstadt, Germany, for more than nine years and was a member of the Gerry Mulligan International Big Band. Throughout his career, Fidri also led small combos, and was a member of the Zagreb Jazz Quintet, as well as Plesni Orkestar RTV Zagreb, B. P. Convention Big Band, Jazz Art Quartet, Kastav Blues Sextet and Jazz Orkestar HRT-a. He had albums on Croatia and Cantus and credits with Tihomir Pop Asanović, Trumpets & Rhythm Unit, Boško Petrović-Damir Dičić Big Band and others.

REBECCA KILGORE (Sep. 24, 1949 – Jan. 7, 2026) The vocalist, known for her interpretations of the Great American Songbook, died at age 76. Kilgore had been experiencing cognitive decline a decade ago, which was eventually diagnosed as Lewy body dementia, forcing her early retirement. The singer had moved to Portland, OR, at the age of 30, where she fronted the swing band, the Wholly Cats. In 1991 she began a fruitful partnership with musician-composer Dave Frishberg, resulting in numerous duo recordings. Her discography includes over 50 albums as a leader or featured vocalist, with the likes of Harry Allen, Bucky Pizzarelli, Rossano Sportiello, Frank Tate and others, and albums on PHD Music, Arbors, Jazzology, Jump, Audiophile, HeavyWood Music, Blue Swing, PDX Uke, Swingbros Co. and Cherry Pie Music.

RICK HAYDON (Jun. 24, 1950 – Jan. 11, 2026) The guitarist and educator, who died at age 75, was a Professor Emeritus at Southern Illinois University in the Department of Music, where he had headed the guitar program and managed the recording studio. He studied with master guitarists such as Johnny Smith, Howard Roberts and Pat Martino, and was particularly influenced by Bucky Pizzarelli, who donated several of his important guitars to the university. In 2006, his album *Just Friends* (Mel Bay), with John Pizzarelli, reached No. 15 on the Jazz Week Top 100 charts. Haydon performed with many jazz greats, and worked with Mulgrew Miller, Asa Harris, Ray Kennedy, Jim Widner, Birch Creek Academy Band, Brett Stamps and others.

WIRO MAHIEU (1964 – Jan. 5, 2026) The Dutch bassist, who died at age 61, attended Conservatory in Arnhem, Holland, subsequently pursuing a professional career, primarily in jazz. He performed with various bands nationally and internationally and was a member of Low Motion Trio and One Warp. He had 30 albums and sideman credits for Luluk Purwanto & The Helsdingen Trio, Loek Dikkens' Waterland Sextet, Rob van den Broeck International Quartet, Jeroen Pek Band, Eric Vloeimans Trio, Tony Levin, Charlie Mariano, Kenny Wheeler and John Engels, among others.

FRANCIS MARMANDE (Jan. 10, 1945 – Dec. 25, 2025) The French writer and bassist passed away from cancer in Paris at age 80. He was director for Littérature au Présent at Paris Diderot University, as well as a contributor to *Jazz Magazine* (1971-2000) and a regular columnist for *Le Monde* since 1997. As a bassist, Marmande recorded with the Jac Berrocal Group and had credits including Sunny Murray and Cat Quartet. He also wrote liner notes for albums on Cy, All Life, L'Escargot, Gaumont Musique, Harmonia Mundi France, CELP, Owl, Blue Note, Nocturne,

Dreyfus Jazz, Frémeaux & Associés, OutNote, Cristal, Naïve, L'Empreinte Digitale and other labels.

JACQUES MUYAL (1940 – Jan. 4, 2026) The Morocco-born, Swiss-French engineer and producer, who had a close friendship with Dizzy Gillespie, died at age 85. Muyal discovered jazz through Voice of America broadcasts and in 1956, hosted his first radio show, "Le Club du Jazz" on Radio Tangier, producing his first record in 1959 (featuring pianist Oscar Dennard). After moving to Paris, he became an assistant to concert organizer Frank Ténot and later, in Switzerland, he established his own business, eventually forming Laser Swing Productions in 1987 with Ténot and Norman Granz. In 1995, he established his own label, Groovin' High, through which he produced the likes of Claudio Roditi, Mario Rivera, Roberta Gambarini and Roy Hargrove. Muyal also produced projects for Gillespie, Oscar Peterson, Idrees Sulieman, Thelonious Monk, Count Basie, Duke Ellington, Joe Pass, Ed Cherry, Tommy Flanagan, Randy Weston and others.

STANLEY NORMAN "STAN" RUBIN (Jul. 14, 1933 – Dec. 28, 2025) The clarinetist and bandleader, from New Rochelle, NY, died at age 92 in Delray Beach, FL. Rubin fell in love with big band music as a boy and took up the clarinet early on. He attended Princeton University, graduating in 1955. At Princeton, he joined the '50s college Dixieland movement, forming the Tigertown Five, which gained a national collegiate following and led to a sold-out concert at Carnegie Hall as well as an appearance at the second annual Newport Jazz Festival in 1955. Rubin reached international attention the following year when the band was invited to perform during the wedding festivities of Grace Kelly and Prince Rainier III of Monaco. Post-Princeton, Rubin founded the Stan Rubin Orchestra, which performed classic arrangements of the bands of Benny Goodman, Glenn Miller, Tommy Dorsey and others of the period. In 1984, he underwent brain surgery, which ended his ability to play the clarinet, but he continued to lead and present music, remaining a fixture at New York venues and Princeton reunions. Rubin released albums on Jubilee, RCA, Carr, Coral, United Artists and Festival.

MICHał URBANIAK (Jan. 22, 1943 – Dec. 20, 2025) The Warsaw, Poland-born musician, who played violin and saxophone, and who fused jazz with rock, rap, hip-hop and Polish folk music, passed away at age 82. His funeral was a state event held at the Powązki Cemetery in Warsaw. His interest in jazz was sparked at age six after hearing Louis Armstrong's "Mack the Knife" on Voice of America radio, leading him to teach himself the saxophone. He played with D.K. Pierwszy Maja's All Stars and collaborated with Six Boys Strombers and Tiger Rag, and played at the 1961 Jazz Jamboree festival. A 1962 tour of the US with Andrzej Trzaskowski's The Wreckers, included the Newport Jazz Festival and the Village Vanguard. Urbaniak spent time in Scandinavia, forming the band Stavanger, returning to Poland and eventually emigrating to NYC in 1973, signing with Columbia Records and becoming a US citizen. He returned to Poland in the late '90s. As a composer, he created music for 25 American and Polish films and briefly ventured into acting. He had his own or collaborative albums on Atlas, Polskie Nagrania Muza, MPS, Spiegelei, CBS, Arista, Inner City, Motown, Four Leaf Clover, SteepleChase, Sonet, Storyville, Gramavision, Sony Jazz and many others, and credits with Rolf Kühn, Oliver Nelson, Boško Petrović, Larry Coryell, Don Pullen, Jakob Magnússon, David Chesky, Billy Cobham, Miles Davis, Michael Franks, George Benson, Earl Klugh, Gil Evans, Paul Bley, Freddie Hubbard and many others.