BY MARILYN LESTER

CHARLES ELLERBE (ELLERBEE) (1950 – Oct. 5, 2026) Known as "the Harmolodic Kid," the guitarist-composer died at his home in North Philadelphia at age 76 after a long illness. Initially drawn to R&B, soul and rock, and intending to work as a studio arranger, Ellerbe instead became best-known for his 15-year tenure in alto saxophonist, free-jazz pioneer Ornette Coleman's electric band, Prime Time, having been recommended in the mid '70s by his friend, bassist Jamaaladeen Tacuma. He recorded numerous albums with Coleman, including *Dancing in Your Head* (1977), *Body Meta* (1978), *Of Human Feelings* (1982), *In All Languages* (1987) and *Virgin Beauty* (1988). Following his work with Prime Time, Ellerbe performed with the Sun Ra Arkestra and taught at Philadelphia's Clef Club of Jazz & Performing Arts and founded his own ensemble, Matrix 12:38, to continue advancing Coleman's Harmolodic concept. Ellerbe's 1976 recording debut was with Catalyst. His credits also include Tacuma's *Renaissance Man* (1984).

KENT CARTER (Jun. 12, 1939 – Sep. 30, 2026) The New England-born bassist-composer, long based in France, died at age 87. Son of Alan Carter, founder of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra, Carter initially studied cello, bassoon and banjo, moving toward the bass during the '50s while playing in regional dance bands and studying at the Berklee College of Music. Carter began exploring improvisation with saxophonist Steve Lacy, for what was a prolific, two-decade long partnership. By 1970, he settled in France permanently, where he eventually ran an artists' residence with his wife, dancer Michala Marcus Carter, in the village of Juillaguet. As a leader, he released albums primarily on the British label Emanem—including his 1975 solo *Beauvais Cathedral*, *The Willisau Suites* and *Oratorios and Songs*—as well as for labels Soul Note, Ictus, Trio and NoBusiness. Carter's collaborations encompass Paul and Carla Bley, Don Cherry, Roswell Rudd, Mal Waldron, Noah Howard, Alan Silva, Trevor Watts, the Jazz Composer's Orchestra, John Stevens' Spontaneous Music Ensemble, Giorgio Gaslini, Robin Kenyatta, Bobby Bradford, Mototeru Takagi, ICP Orchestra and Frode Gjerstad.

TONY FISHER (February 27, 1936 – Sep. 27, 2026) The Manchester, UK-born trumpeter died at age 90. A child prodigy on the cornet, by age 13 he was working as a solo artist touring theaters and concert halls. In 1950, he appeared on the *Carroll Levis Discovery Show*, launching a five-year touring stint and subsequent BBC radio broadcasts. Settling in London in 1965, Fisher became an in-demand session musician, often working up to three sessions a day, seven days a week. Fisher can be heard on movie soundtracks, including most of the early James Bond films. He contributed to The Beatles' "Strawberry Fields Forever", as well as *Magical Mystery Tour* and *Sgt. Pepper's Lonely Hearts Club Band*. His session resumé features vocalists Frank Sinatra, Ella Fitzgerald, Tom Jones (the trumpet hook on "It's Not Unusual"), Bing Crosby, Fred Astaire, Tony Bennett, Sammy Davis Jr., Barbra Streisand and Judy Garland. Fisher led the Bert Kaempfert Orchestra, was a core member of the Kenny Clarke/Francy Boland Big Band and performed with John Dankworth, Stan Tracey, Tubby Hayes, Humphrey Lyttelton and Ronnie Scott. Other credits include Georgie Fame, Mike Westbrook, Allan Ganley, Clark Terry, The Manhattan Transfer, Eartha Kitt, Harry James, Freddy Cole, Alexis Korner, Marlene VerPlanck and Kenny Wheeler.

CLIFTON "JACKIE" JACKSON (Mar. 22, 1947 – Sep. 23, 2026) The Kingston, Jamaica-born bassist died at age 79. Initially studying piano, he became fascinated with the bass after attending a rehearsal of the The Skatalites and then switched to the bass guitar. His career launched with Ty and the Titans and later Lester Sterling's Cavaliers. Saxophonist Tommy McCook recruited him to join his newly formed band, Tommy McCook and the Supersonics, the house band for Duke Reid's Treasure Isle label, where Jackson became the principal bass guitarist, anchoring important records throughout the '60s and '70s. Jackson was also a member of The Upsetters and had a lifelong musical partnership with Frederick "Toots" Hibbert of Toots & The Maytals. Among his credits are Paul Simon, Bob Marley, Jimmy Cliff, Augustus Pablo, Robin Kenyatta, Doris Troy, Monty Alexander and Herbie Mann.

UDO KISTNER (Jan. 30, 1954 – Sept. 28, 2026) The German bassist, born in Offenbach am Main, who was known for his fretless and electric bass playing, died at age 72. Largely self-taught, Kistner was deeply influenced by Jaco Pastorius. In 1976, he co-founded the Sagmeister Trio alongside guitarist Michael Sagmeister; their self-titled 1978 debut album, which was supervised by legendary German guitarist Volker Kriegel, was also Kistner's recording debut. The bassist also performed with Henryk Darlowski's Virgo and had a tenure, starting in 1989, with fusion band, the Daniel Guggenheim Group. In the 1990s and 2000s, Kistner moved into the European blues and cabaret scenes, joining the Frankfurt City Blues Band in 1992, and recording an album with jazz guitarist Thomas Langer in 1998. Kistner co-founded the ZZ Top tribute, blues-rock project Blow Your Top in 2003, alongside guitarist and singer Friedrich Pfeifer and drummer Werner Fromm. He performed with Backroots, the Manfred Häder Bluesband and R&B band Skywalk.

ALEXEI KOZLOV (Oct. 13, 1935 – Sep. 25, 2026) The Russian saxophonist-composer, who was born into music, died at age 90. His mother was a chorus conductor and music theory teacher, and his grandfather sang in opera and church choirs. In 1959, he co-founded a pioneering jazz quintet with trumpeter Andrei Tovmasyan, which debuted at Estonia's Tartu Festival in 1960. He also helped start the Molodezhnoye jazz cafe in 1961, USSR's first official jazz club. Kozlov performed with the Vadim Sakun Sextet at the 1962 Jazz Jamboree Festival in Warsaw (his recording debut, released by Polskie Nagrania Muza) and toured with Yuri Saulsky's VIO-66 orchestra. In 1973 he formed the jazz-rock ensemble Arsenal, which bridged the gap between underground improvisation and state-sanctioned performance. Kozlov was also the author of several books on modern music history, including his memoir, *Goat on a Sax* (1998). Kozlov had credits with Anatoli Kulikov, Önder Focan, Dmitry Ilugdin, Andrei Razin and Alexey Kruglov/Jaak Sooäär and albums on Melodiya, Solyd, Arsenal, RDM, ArtBeat Music and Mirumir.

NINA MICHELLE (May 1, 1968 – Oct. 7, 2026) The Vancouver-born Canadian singer-songwriter, who spent the majority of her professional career in Munich, Germany, died at age 58. Her Czech father, a professional jazz trumpeter and pianist, exposed her to bebop and swing from an early age, and musicians, such as Dizzy Gillespie, were visitors to the family home. Michelle began studying classical piano at age five, and while still a student began singing in local jazz clubs and piano bars alongside her father, recording her debut album, *Nina Michelle Live*, at Vancouver's Jazz Cellar in 1996. An invitation to join a German recording production with the New Orleans Dixie Stompers led to her relocation overseas. Michelle sang in five languages across varied styles, was a featured performer at festivals such as the Ascona Jazz Festival in Switzerland and the Vancouver Jazz Festival, and appeared in major venues including the Wiener Konzerthaus, the Munich Philharmonic and the Deutsches Theater München. Her *Love Confessions* (2018) featured her original compositions. Michelle's credits include Charly Antolini, Max Greger, Hugo Strasser, Pete York, Munich Swing Orchestra, Dusko Goykovich and Scott Hamilton.

STEVEN REMOTE (Oct. 21, ? – Sep. 19, 2026) Estimated to be in his 70s, the Queens, NY-born audio and mixing engineer, record producer and recording studio designer, passed away at his home after a career that began in the early-mid '70s and included three GRAMMYs. In 1977, Remote established Aura-Sonic, a mobile and location production studio, which brought professional multi-track recording capabilities directly to the client, with full capability to handle live albums, TV and radio broadcasts, film scores and video concert remotes. Remote led the archival recording team for events including the Newport Folk Festival and Newport Jazz Festival, NPR's *Toast of the Nation*, segments for *Good Morning America* and the US Open Tennis Championships. Album credits—many recorded live at New York clubs (many at the Blue Note)—include Gil Evans, Irvin Mayfield, Paquito D'Rivera, Marcus Miller, Conrad Herwig, Jeff "Tain" Watts, Odean Pope Saxophone Choir, Avishai Cohen, McCoy Tyner, Charles Tolliver, Mingus Big Band, Lee Konitz/Bill Frisell, Kenny Werner, Elvin Jones, Will Calhoun, Randy Brecker and Jon Batiste.

ANGELA STRIBLING (Oct. 13, 1967 – Sep. 26, 2026) Diagnosed with brain cancer in 2024, the Buffalo, NY-born multimedia personality, radio and TV host and jazz singer died at age 58. Initially planning on a career in fashion merchandising, a trip to Washington, DC, during the Congressional Black Caucus weekend, inspired her to relocate there from NYC. Stribling auditioned for Black Entertainment Television (BET), rising to the position of host of *Screen Scene*, working alongside Melvin Lindsey. When BET sought to expand its musical programming, Stribling became host of BET Jazz, incorporating Jazz Central, BET Jazz Discovery and BET Jazz Scene. Stribling frequently described herself as "a jazz singer first," backing the statement with appearances at venues such as Blue Note, The Rainbow Room, The Supper Club and The Soul Cafe. She performed at a gala tribute for Congressman Charles Rangel and was also the featured jazz vocalist for Hennessy's international smooth jazz tours. She released several albums including *Live* and *Tokyo Sundays*.

YOSHIO "CHIN" SUZUKI (Mar. 21, 1946 – Sep. 23, 2026) The Nagano, Japan-born bassist, who died at age 80, began studying violin at age three, then moved to the guitar. He was hooked by jazz at age 17 by hearing Dave Brubeck's "Take Five". At Waseda University, Suzuki immersed himself in the campus jazz circle, picking up the bass. His recording debut was on *Groovin' with My Soul Brother* (1968) with Roy Haynes and George Otsuka. In the late '60s, he recorded with the likes of Yoshiaki Masuo, Sadao Watanabe, Masabumi Kikuchi, Ryo Kawasaki, Kazumi Watanabe, Takehiro Honda and Joe Henderson. By the early '70s, he had moved to NYC where he joined Stan Getz' group. He toured with Sonny Rollins and spent over two years with Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers, in addition to recording with Ronnie Mathews and Bill Hardman. Suzuki returned to Tokyo in 1985, leading his own ensembles such as Bass Talk, East Bounce and Yoshio Suzuki the Blend. Suzuki's albums include *Matsuri* (1979), *Alone in the Pacific* (1991), *Dancing Luna* (2012) and *Expectation* (2025). He also had albums on labels including CBS/Sony, Trio, JVC, Electric Bird, One Voice, EWE and Seven Seas, alongside credits with Johnny Hartman, Ray Bryant, Elvin Jones, Steve Grossman, Tsuyoshi Yamamoto, Yasuko Ogawa, Lew Tabackin, Toshiko Akiyoshi and Bobby Watson.