



POLAR MUSIC PRIZE

Wayne Shorter – bio.

1933

Roots and Beginnings

Born in Newark, New Jersey on August 25, 1933, had his first great jazz epiphany as a teenager: “I remember seeing Lester Young when I was 15 years old. It was a Norman Granz Jazz at the Philharmonic show in Newark and he was late coming to the theater. Me and a couple of other guys were waiting out front of the Adams Theater and when he finally did show up, he had the pork pie hat and everything. So then we were trying to figure out how to get into the theater from the fire escape around the back. We eventually got into the mezzanine and saw that whole show — Stan Kenton and Dizzy Gillespie bands together on stage doing ‘Peanut Vendor,’ Charlie Parker with strings doing ‘Laura’ and stuff like that. And Russell Jacquet... Illinois Jacquet. He was there doing his thing. That whole scene impressed me so much that I just decided, ‘Hey, man, let me get a clarinet.’ So I got one when I was 16, and that’s when I started music.”

1956

The Newark Flash

Switching to tenor saxophone, Shorter formed a teenage band in Newark called The Jazz Informers. While still in high school, Shorter participated in several cutting contests on Newark’s jazz scene, including one memorable encounter with sax great Sonny Stitt. He attended college at New York University while also soaking up the Manhattan jazz scene by frequenting popular nightspots like Birdland and Cafe Bohemia. Wayne worked his way through college by playing with the Nat Phipps orchestra. Upon graduating in 1956, he worked briefly with Johnny Eaton and his Princetonians, earning the nickname “The Newark Flash” for his speed and facility on the tenor saxophone.

1957

Into the Jazz Scene

Just as he was beginning making his mark, Shorter was drafted into the Army. “A week before I went into the Army I went to the Cafe Bohemia to hear music, I said, for the last time in my life. I was standing at the bar having a cognac and I had my draft notice in my back pocket. That’s when I met Max Roach. He said, ‘You’re the kid from Newark, huh? You’re The Flash.’ And he asked me to sit in. They were changing drummers throughout the night, so Max played drums, then Art Taylor, then Art Blakey. Oscar Pettiford was on cello. Jimmy Smith came in the door with his organ. He drove to the club with his organ in a hearse. And outside we heard that Miles was looking for



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somebody named Cannonball. And I'm saying to myself, "All this stuff is going on and I gotta go to the Army in about five days!"

1959

Jazz Messenger

Following his time in the service, Shorter had a brief stint in 1958 with Horace Silver and later played in the house band at Minton's Playhouse in Harlem. It was around this time that Shorter began jamming with fellow tenor saxophonists John Coltrane and Sonny Rollins. In 1959, Shorter had a brief stint with the Maynard Ferguson big band before joining Art Blakey and the Jazz Messengers in August of that year. He remained with the Jazz Messengers through 1963, becoming Blakey's musical director and contributing several key compositions to the band's book during those years. Shorter made his recording debut as a leader in 1959 for the Vee Jay label and in 1964 cut the first of a string of important recordings for the Blue Note label.

1962

Down Beat Poll Winner, New Star Saxophonist

1964

For Miles and Miles

In 1964 Miles Davis invited Wayne to go on the road. He joined Herbie Hancock (piano), Tony Williams (drums) and Ron Carter (bass). This tour turned into a 6 year run with Davis in which he recorded a number albums with him. Along with Davis, he helped craft a sound that changed the face of music. In his autobiography, the late Miles Davis said about Wayne... "Wayne is a real composer... he knew that freedom in music was the ability to know the rules in order to bend them to your satisfaction and taste..." In his time with Miles he crafted what have become jazz standards like "Nefertiti," "E.S.P.," "Pinocchio," "Sanctuary," "Fall" and "Footprints"

1964

On His Own

Simultaneous with his time in the Miles Davis quintet, Shorter recorded several albums for Blue Note Records, featuring almost exclusively his own compositions, with a variety of line-ups, quartets and larger groups including Blue Note favourites such as Freddie Hubbard. His first Blue Note album (of nine in total) was *Night Dreamer* recorded at Rudy Van Gelder's studio in 1964 with Lee Morgan, McCoy Tyner, Reggie Workman and Elvin Jones. The later album *The All Seeing Eye* was a free-jazz workout with a larger group, while *Adam's Apple* of 1966 was back to carefully constructed melodies by Shorter leading a quartet. Then a sextet again in the following



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year for Schizophrenia with his Miles Davis band mates Hancock and Carter plus trombonist Curtis Fuller, alto saxophonist/flautist James Spaulding and strong rhythms by drummer Joe Chambers. These albums have recently been remastered by Rudy Van Gelder.

1970

Weather Man

In 1970, Shorter co-founded the group Weather Report with keyboardist and Miles Davis alum, Joe Zawinul. It remained the premier fusion group through the '70s and into the early '80s before disbanding in 1985 after 16 acclaimed recordings, including 1980's Grammy Award-winning double-live LP set, 8:30. Shorter formed his own group in 1986 and produced a succession of electric jazz albums for the Columbia label — 1986's Atlantis, 1987's Phantom Navigator, 1988's Joy Ryder. He re-emerged on the Verve label with 1995's High Life. After the tragic loss of his wife in 1996 (she was aboard the ill-fated Paris-bound flight TWA 800), Shorter returned to the scene with 1997's 1+1, an intimate duet recording with pianist and former Miles Davis quintet bandmate Herbie Hancock. The two spent 1998 touring as a duet.

1979

Grammy Award for Best Jazz Fusion Performance for Weather Report's 8:30

1987

Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition for Dexter Gordon's Call Sheet Blues

1989

After Weather Report

After Weather Report, Shorter continued to record and lead groups in jazz fusion styles, including touring in 1988 with guitarist Carlos Santana, who appeared on the last Weather Report disc *This is This!* In 1989, he scored a hit on the rock charts, playing the sax solo on Don Henley's song "The End of the Innocence" and also produced the album "Pilar" by the Portuguese singer-songwriter Pilar Homem de Melo.

1994

Grammy Award for Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Individual or Group for A Tribute to Miles



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1995

The 90's

In 1995, Shorter released the album *High Life*, his first solo recording for seven years. It was also Shorter's debut as a leader for Verve Records. Shorter composed all the compositions on the album and co-produced it with the bassist Marcus Miller. *High Life* received the Grammy Award for best Contemporary Jazz Album in 1997.

Shorter would work with Hancock once again in 1997, on the much acclaimed and heralded album *1+1*. The song "Aung San Suu Kyi" (named for the Burmese pro-democracy activist) won both Hancock and Shorter a Grammy Award.

In 2009, he was announced as one of the headline acts at the Gnaoua World Music Festival in Essaouira, Morocco.

1996

Grammy Award for Best Contemporary Jazz Album for High Life

1997

Grammy Award for Best Instrumental Composition for Aung San Suu Kyi

1998

Receives Honorary Doctorate of Music from Berklee College of Music

1998

NEA Jazz Master Award

1999

Grammy Award for Best Jazz Instrumental Solo for In Walked Wayne

2001

The Quartet

By the summer of 2001, Wayne began touring as the leader of a talented young lineup featuring pianist Danilo Perez, bassist John Patitucci and drummer Brian Blade, each a celebrated recording artist and bandleader in his own right. The group's uncanny chemistry was well documented on 2002's acclaimed *Footprints Live!* Shorter followed in 2003 with the ambitious *Alegria*, an expanded vision for large ensemble which earned him a Grammy Award. In 2005, Shorter released the live *Beyond the Sound Barrier* which earned him another Grammy Award. "It's the same mission...fighting the good fight," he said. "It's making a statement about what life is, really. And I'm going to end the line with it."



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2003

Grammy Award for Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Individual or Group for Alegría

2005

Grammy Award for Best Jazz Instrumental Performance, Individual or Group for Beyond The Sound Barrier

2006

Wayne Shorter Quartet wins Jazz Journalists Association Jazz Award for Small Ensemble Group of the Year

2010

Wayne awarded Honorary Doctorate from NYU